



Welcome to the US 51 Environmental Impact Statement Public Information Meeting – November 23, 2010

GENERAL PROJECT OVERVIEW

The US 51 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) project, which commenced in 2007, is being conducted by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). The US 51 study corridor is approximately 70 miles in length and extends from the Christian/Shelby County line (south of Pana) south to the CR 2150 N (east of Irvington). The study area is located in the counties of Shelby, Christian, Fayette, Washington, Jefferson, Marion, and Clinton. The goal of this EIS is obtain a Record of Decision (ROD) that identifies a Preferred Alternative for a transportation improvement that will address identified transportation needs. The study is expected to conclude in 2013.

This project is using IDOT's Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) approach to public involvement. CSS involves working with stakeholders to develop roadways that fit into and reflect the project's surroundings – its "context." As part of CSS, five Community Advisory Groups (CAGs) were formed for communities directly impacted by the US 51 project. The CAG consists of stakeholders that represent the general public. Throughout this project the CAG members participate in meetings that focus on the issues that most concern the community in relation to the US 51 project.

PROJECT HISTORY

The project team has met with each CAG at least eight times between March 2008 and February 2010. Input from the CAG was used to develop the project's problem statement, Purpose & Need, alternatives, and alternative evaluation screening process. Numerous alternative alignments were developed by the CAG and criteria used to evaluate the alignments were developed with CAG input. Through the course of the meetings, two alignments in Vandalia, called Vandalia S (VS) and Vandalia U (VU), were selected by the CAG to be carried forward for further review. These two alignments were presented at a series of Public Information Meetings held in May, 2010. The project team then presented the alignments to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) at the June 9, 2010, NEPA/404 merger meeting in Springfield, Illinois. The purpose of the meeting was to seek resource agency concurrence on these alternatives to be carried forward for further evaluation in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The resource agencies granted concurrence to carry VS and VU forward into the DEIS.

Subsequent to the NEPA/404 merger meeting, the project team held several additional meetings with Vandalia residents based upon public comments received. Through the course of several meetings held in July and August, 2010, the project team reorganized the Vandalia Community Advisory Group (VCAG) to expand representation in the community. The reformed CAG revisited the steps of the corridor development and analysis process.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

During a series of five meetings held between August and November, 2010, the VCAG developed and evaluated a total of 39 alignments. As a result of the screening process, 35 of these alignments were eliminated by the VCAG, leaving remaining four alignments. These four alignments, in addition to alignments VS and VU identified above, are on display tonight for public review and comment. Public input will help IDOT determine which option(s) to present at the February 2010 NEPA/404 merger meeting. At that time, the project team will seek agency concurrence to study the alignment(s) in greater detail in the DEIS.

The CAG reorganization process was unique to Vandalia; all other alignments for areas outside of Vandalia are being carried forward for further evaluation in the DEIS based upon FHWA concurrence at the June 9, 2010 NEPA/404 merger meeting identified above.