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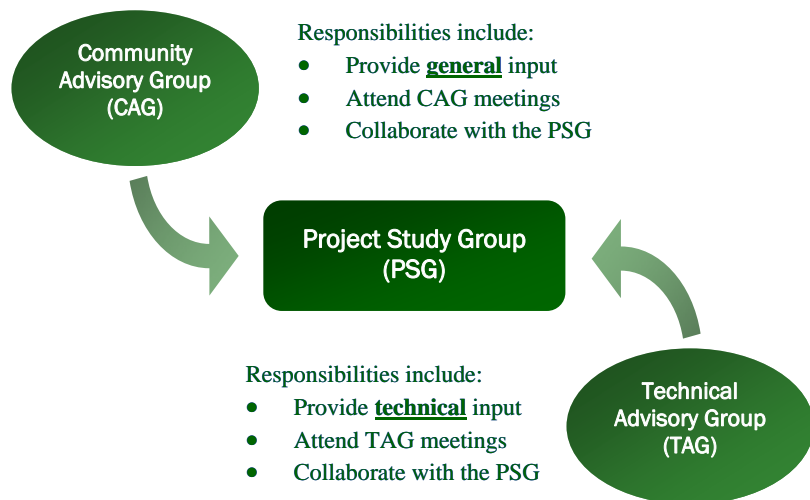
We're on the web! Find out more  
information @ [www.us51eis-idot.com](http://www.us51eis-idot.com)

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## CSS Update

Stakeholder input has been important throughout the entire project process from project kick-off through the alternative development and evaluation process. The project's CAGs helped in the development of and narrowing to the reasonable range of alternatives moving forward in the DEIS. Comments received from the Public Information Meetings held in May 2010 and November 2011 were considered when selecting recommended alternatives.

As the recommended alternatives are refined further for the DEIS, CAG meetings will be held less frequently, and will be scheduled on an as-needed basis. In addition, Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs) may be formed in 2011. The project team will form TAGs to assist the project team with evaluating the alternatives for specific issues during the study process. The TAGs are comprised of members with specific interests and knowledge, such as business owners or farmers. Members of the TAG will be responsible for providing technical input, attending TAG meetings, and collaborating with the project team. TAG members may or may not be members of the CAG.



## How to Stay Involved

Are you a stakeholder in the project? If you live, work, or travel the in the study area, you are a stakeholder. Opportunities for involvement in the US 51 EIS study will continue throughout the project. You can request a speaker for your group or organization by contacting the project team at 217-373-8951 or US51EIS@clarkdietz.com.



# US ROUTE 51 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Issue 5, April 2011

## Special Points of Interest:

- Alternative Development and Analysis
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
- Community Updates
  - Centralia & Sandoval
  - Vernon & Patoka
  - Vandalia
  - Ramsey
- CSS Update

The US 51 EIS is a transportation planning study administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). The purpose of this planning study is to evaluate a transportation improvement that will meet local and regional needs while improving safety and mobility.

## What's New with the US 51 Study?

The project reached a milestone at the June 2010 and February 2011 NEPA/404 merger meetings when the resource agencies approved the recommended alternatives to be carried forward for further evaluation in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). A description of the DEIS can be found below.

Public input is critical to the success of the study and this newsletter is one way the project team keeps residents, businesses, and anyone with a stake in the

project up-to-date on the project's progress and informed of new information.

If you are new to the project or want to learn more about the study and the EIS process, please visit the project website at [www.us51eis-idot.com](http://www.us51eis-idot.com). If you do not have access to the internet and would like additional project information discussed in this newsletter, please call Sherry Phillips, IDOT Project Engineer at 217-342-

## Alternative Development and Analysis

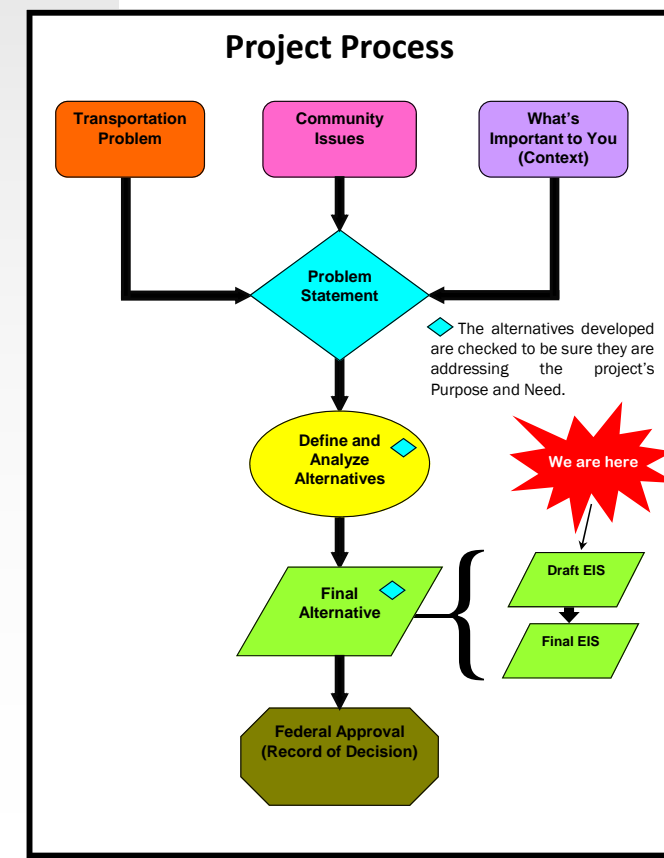
A range of alternatives were developed by the Community Advisory Groups (CAGs) that are composed of local residents and the project team. Alternatives that traversed west of existing US 51, east of existing US 51, and that utilized existing US 51 were considered, and were evaluated based upon meeting the project's Purpose and Need and environmental and cultural resource impacts. The environmental and cultural resources were unique to each community within the study area. As an example, threatened and endangered species were identified near Vandalia, but were not identified in Vernon or Patoka. There is a Nature Preserve north of Ramsey, but there are no Nature Preserves in the other communities within the study area.

The alternatives were narrowed down during a series of CAG meetings and presented to the public at meetings held in November 2009, May 2010, and November 2010. Public input received after the meetings was considered when selecting the recommended alternatives to be evaluated in detail. As part of the NEPA process, the project team presented the recommended alternatives to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the State and Federal resource agencies at the June 2010 and February 2011 NEPA/404 merger meetings. The FHWA and the resource agencies granted concurrence on the recommended alternatives described on the following pages. In addition to these alternatives, there are two options crossing over Ramsey Creek south of Ramsey and two options crossing Opossum Creek north of Oconee. For the remainder of the area between communities, the improved roadway will follow existing US 51 and will be widened from two to four lanes. These alternatives will be studied in greater detail during the development of the DEIS. Detailed information on the alternative development and screening process can be found on the project website.

## Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

The next step in the US 51 study is to develop the DEIS. The DEIS is a document that provides comprehensive information about the project's Purpose and Need, proposed alternatives, and potential environmental impacts of the proposed alternatives in each community. Once the DEIS is completed it will be released to the public for review and comment.

As part of the DEIS development, the project team will continue environmental data collection throughout 2011. Field surveys will be conducted to identify additional environmental, cultural, and economic resources of the region and within each community. The data collection being gathered plays a part in decision-making, but to date no decision has been made as to the future location of US 51.



## Centralia and Sandoval Area Update

For the Centralia and Sandoval area, over 120 alternatives that traverse west, east, or through the center of the City of Centralia and the Village of Sandoval were evaluated. The alternative alignments were developed with an emphasis on avoiding or minimizing environmental resource impacts to floodplains, streams, wetlands, residences, businesses, public facilities, parkland, prime and important farmland, and farm severances.



Centralia City Hall



Existing US 51 through Sandoval

Alternatives that utilized existing US 51 through Centralia and Sandoval were eliminated due to high residential and business displacements. Alternatives on the east were eliminated in part due to impacts associated with crossing Raccoon Lake.

Two alternatives will be evaluated in further detail as part of the DEIS. The alternatives are labeled Centralia-Sandoval DJ and Centralia Sandoval DL. The alternatives are shown on the map to the right, and are described below.

**Centralia Sandoval DJ** is an alternative situated to the west of Centralia and Sandoval. At its furthest point, the alternative is approximately 2.3 miles west of existing US 51 within Centralia and 1.5 miles west of existing US 51 within Sandoval.

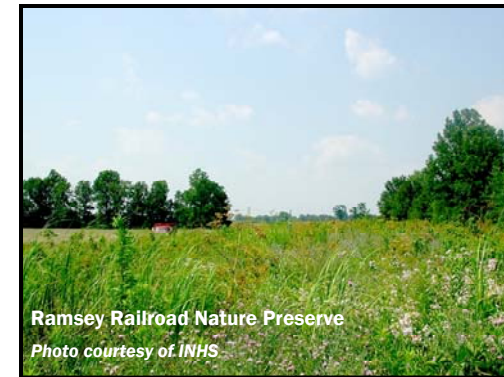
**Centralia Sandoval DL** is an alternative situated to the west of Centralia and east of Sandoval. At its furthest point, the alternative is approximately 2.3 miles west of existing US 51 within Centralia and 0.5 miles east of existing US 51 within Sandoval.



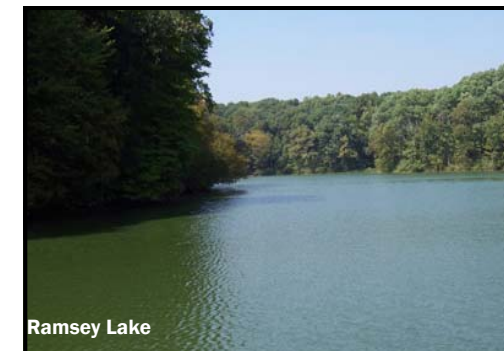
CS DJ	
CS DL	
Existing US 51	

## Ramsey Area Update

For the Ramsey area, 18 alternatives that traverse west, east, or through the center of the Village of Ramsey were evaluated. The alternatives were designed to minimize impacts to resources within Ramsey. The resources considered for avoidance in Ramsey included homes, businesses, public facilities, parkland, prime and important farmland, farm severances, wetlands, and streams.



Ramsey Railroad Nature Preserve  
Photo courtesy of INHS



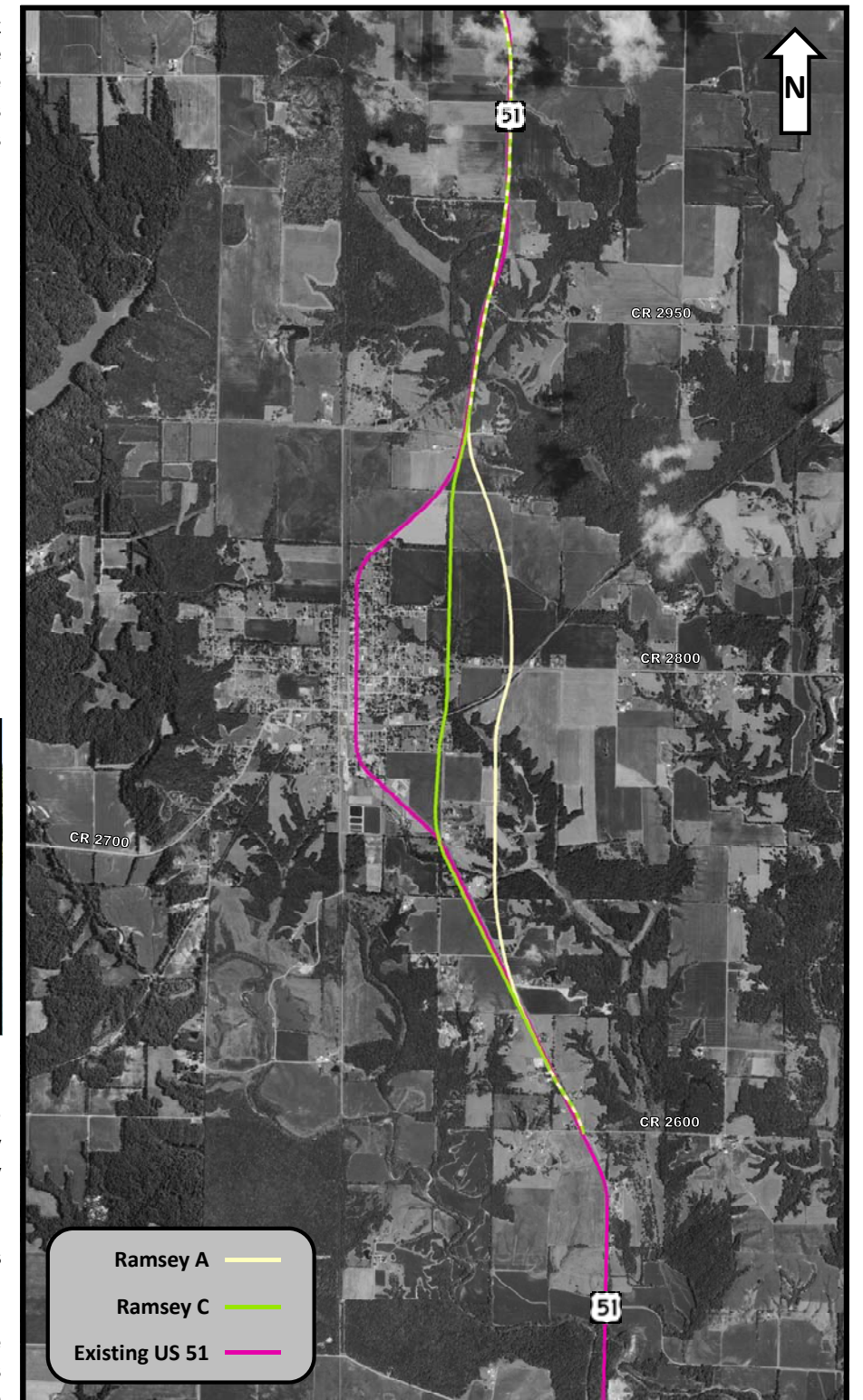
Ramsey Lake

Alternatives to the west of Ramsey were eliminated to avoid impacts to the Ramsey Railroad Prairie Nature Preserve and Ramsey Lake State Park. Alternatives that utilized existing US 51 through Ramsey were eliminated due to high residential and business displacements.

Two eastern alternatives in Ramsey will be evaluated in detail in the DEIS. The alternatives are called Ramsey A and Ramsey C. The alternatives are shown on the map to the right, and are described below.

**Ramsey A** is an alternative situated to the east of Ramsey. The alternative is approximately 3,500 feet east of and parallel to existing US 51.

**Ramsey C** is an alternative situated to the east of Ramsey, and west of Ramsey A. The alternative is approximately 2,000 feet east of and parallel to existing US 51.



Ramsey A	
Ramsey C	
Existing US 51	

## Vandalia Area Update

For the Vandalia area, 91 alternatives that traverse west, east, along Interstate 70 (I-70), or through the center of the City of Vandalia were evaluated. The alternatives were designed to minimize impacts to resources within Vandalia. The resources considered for avoidance in Vandalia included homes, businesses, public facilities, parkland, prime and important farmland, farm severances, wetlands, streams, floodplain, threatened & endangered species, and unique geologic features.

Alternatives to the east of Vandalia were eliminated due to high floodplain, wetland, residential, and business impacts. Alternatives that utilized existing US 51 through Vandalia were eliminated due to high residential and business displacements.

Four alternatives in Vandalia will be evaluated in detail in the DEIS. The alternatives are called Western Bypass, Dual Marked, VS, and VU. The alternatives are shown on the map to the right, and are described below.

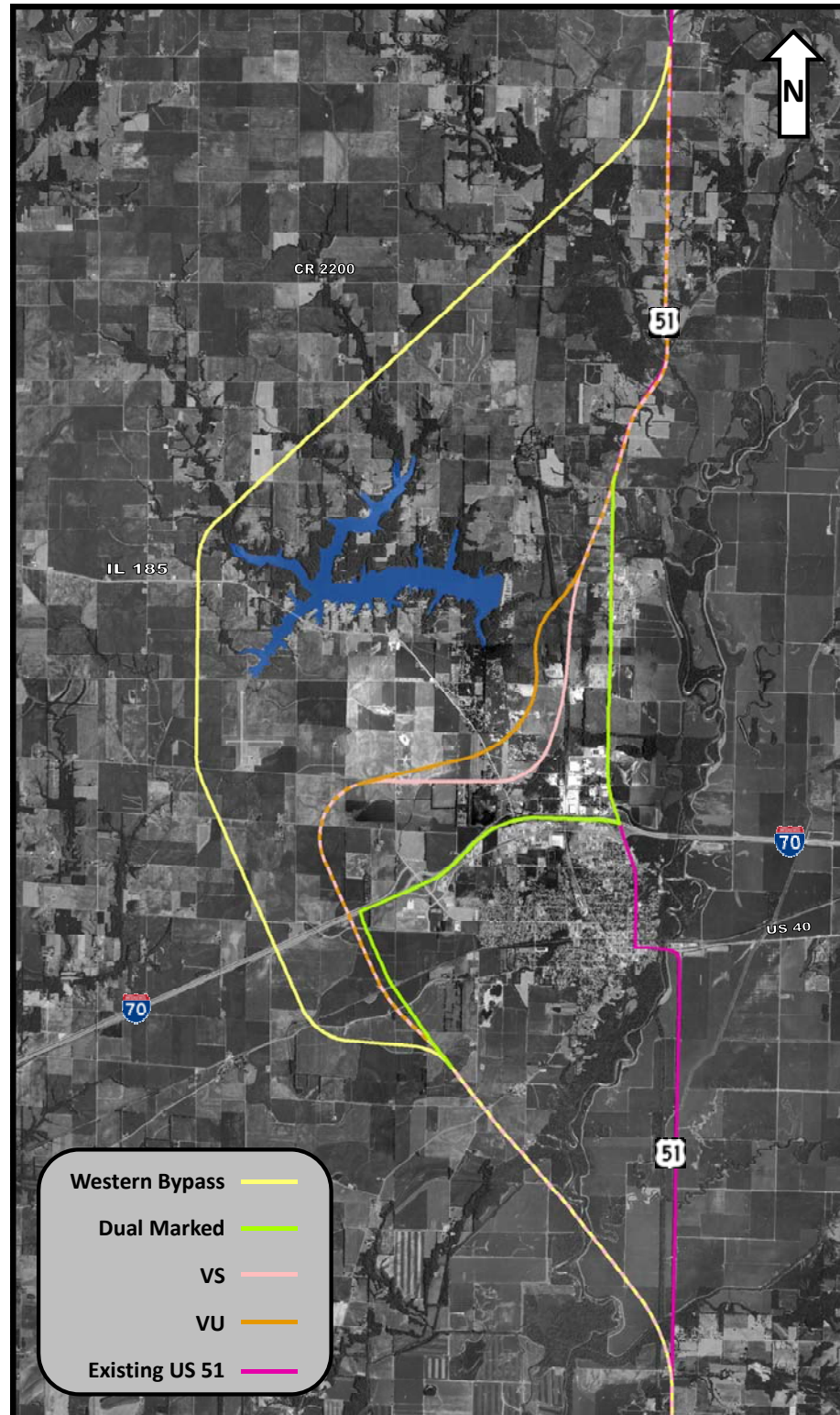


**Western Bypass** is an alternative situated to the west of Vandalia. The alternative crosses I-70 to the west of the existing interchange with US-40, and traverses west of the airport and around Lake Vandalia to join existing US 51 north of town.

**Dual Marked** is an alternative situated to the west of Vandalia until it reaches I-70. The alternative traverses along I-70 west for approximately three miles and then joins the existing I-70/ US 51 interchange east of town.

**VS** is an alternative situated to the west of Vandalia. The alternative crosses I-70 to the west of the existing interchange with US-40, and traverses northeast to join existing US 51 north of town.

**VU** is an alternative situated to the west of Vandalia. The alternative crosses I-70 to the west of the existing interchange with US-40, and traverses northeast, to the north/west of VS, and joins existing US 51 north of town.



## Vernon and Patoka Area Update

For the Vernon and Patoka area 24 alternatives that traverse west, east, or through the center of the Village of Patoka and the Village of Vernon were evaluated. The alternative alignments were developed to avoid or minimize environmental resource impacts to floodplains, wetlands, residences, and farmland.



One alternative will be evaluated in further detail in the DEIS. The alternative is called Vernon Patoka Q. The alternative is shown on the map to the right, and is described below.

**Vernon-Patoka Q** is an alternative that utilizes existing US 51 through Patoka and is situated to the west of Vernon following the alignment of Willet Rd. between Patoka and Vernon. At its furthest point, the alternative is approximately 0.5 miles west of existing US 51 within Vernon.



### What is LIDAR?

If you see a low flying airplane in your town, it just might be collecting data for the US51 project. Over the summer planes fitted with LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) instruments will be flying over the project area to collect survey and mapping data. The information collected from the LIDAR flights will give the project team a highly accurate survey of the project area and will assist in further refinement and design of alignment alternatives.