



**I-290**  
**Corridor Advisory Group and Task Force (CAG/TF)**  
**Meeting #18 Summary**  
**July 30, 2014**

The 18th combined CAG/TF meeting for the I-290 Phase I Study was held on July 30, 2014 at the Carleton Hotel of Oak Park, 1110 Pleasant St., Oak Park, IL 60302 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. The Meeting Agenda is included with this summary.

To announce the July 30, 2014 CAG/TF Meeting #18, an E-invitation was created. The invitation was sent out to all CAG and TF members on July 17, 2014. A previous Save the Date email was sent on June 30, 2014. The meeting was attended by 32 people. The following CAG/TF members were in attendance:

1. Brenda Smith – City of Chicago 29<sup>th</sup> Ward
2. David Myers – Village of Maywood
3. Mike Sturino – IRTBA
4. Russ Wajda – Village of Hillside
5. Tammy Wierciak – West Central Municipal Conference
6. President Anan Abu-Taleb – Village of Oak Park
7. Claire Bozic – Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
8. Chris Byars – FHWA
9. JoEllen Charlton – Village of Forest Park
10. Rob Cole – Village of Oak Park
11. Peter Fahrenwald – RTA
12. Andrea Green – Friends of Oak Park Conservatory
13. Henry Guerriero – Illinois State Toll Highway Authority
14. Rick Kuner – Citizens for Appropriate Transportation
15. Phyllis Logan – 29<sup>th</sup> Ward, Community Advisor
16. Eileen Lynch – Senator Harmon’s Office
17. Brenda McGruder – CDOT
18. Cara Pavlicek – Village of Oak Park
19. Theresa Powell – Village of Oak Park
20. Mayor Sam Pulia – Village of Westchester
21. Bob O’Brien – US EPA
22. Erik Llewellyn – Pace
23. Gerald Nichols – CTA
24. Karen Gruszka – Park District of Oak Park
25. Brad Erickson – Neighbor
26. Mark Pitstick – RTA
27. Bart Copeland – IDOT



28. Marion Kessy – Oak Park Resident
29. Carole Morey – CTA
30. Josephine Bellata – Oak Park Resident
31. John McManus – Oak Park Resident
32. Lambrini Lukidis - CTA

The meeting included a PowerPoint presentation with the following agenda topics:

- Introduction
- Public Meeting #3 Recap
- Blue Line Vision Study Update
- Round 3 Evaluation to date
- Noise Analysis Overview
- Aesthetics – existing context exhibits
- Geometrics
- Next Steps

During the presentation, CAG/TF members were invited to comment, ask questions, and provide input. Their comments are arranged in accordance with the presentation topics and are as follows below.

**Introduction:** The meeting began with a brief update of what the study team has been working on since the last CAG/TF and Public Meeting #3. To recap, at CAG/TF #17 the following topics were discussed: bicycle and pedestrian workshop summary, Blue Line Vision Study update, geometrics concept, air quality scope, aesthetics, and pedestrian safety. The I-290 Planning Process is currently in Round 3 of the Alternatives Development and Evaluation phase of the study with the selection of a Preferred Alternative and public hearing in summer of 2015. Round 3 evaluation thus far has included: travel performance and operations; geometry; detailed main drain hydraulic analysis; noise analysis, including existing conditions noise monitoring and traffic noise model development; air quality analysis, including data collection and MOVES model development; ongoing railroad right of way evaluation; and CTA Blue Line Vision Study coordination. Also, the study team has been carefully reviewing comments from stakeholders and preparing responses.

There were no comments on the Introduction

**Public Meeting #3 Recap:** The most recent Public Meetings were held on October 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Approximately 400 total people attended both of the meetings. The main categories of comments submitted at the meeting were: alternatives, transit, safety, lane management, tolling, funding, and construction staging. The comments and the Department's responses are summarized below. Similar comments were received at both the Senator Harmon and Senator Lightford Town Hall meetings.



Alternatives: All four of the remaining alternatives are multimodal, which means that they include a transit, highway and bicycle/pedestrian component. The benefits of these alternatives include: access to additional 146,000 jobs; \$685,000 daily user productivity savings; up to 40% travel time savings in peak periods (in a managed lane); and overall corridor safety improvements. In terms of costs of the alternatives, the majority of the cost will be related to the cost to reconstruct the existing facility, and based upon condition alone, the entire facility warrants reconstruction. All of the alternatives stay within the existing I-290 trench, and no existing crossings will be removed. It is important to note that refined design and traffic information is needed for the detailed social, economic and environmental studies that occur in Round 3.

Transit: The study team has taken a hard look at transit only options and gained a great degree of knowledge regarding modal interrelationships. This analysis discovered that an alternative did not exist that could create (or force) a large mode shift to transit. This was verified by the independent Cook DuPage Study. The Blue Line Extension heavy rail transit as a near term improvement was proven to have less benefit at a relatively high cost. Therefore, the initial transit strategy for the I-290 reconstruction will be express bus service using a reconstructed I-290 shoulder or managed lane.

Safety: The I-290 crash rates were compared for those sections with a lane drop and those without a lane drop. In both cases, the overall crash rate and the injury crash rate was substantially higher at those locations with a left-hand ramp versus a right-hand ramp. Other stakeholder safety concerns include those associated with proposed 11' lanes; they are only proposed between 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Central Avenue, and will be in the two left most lanes each direction. From safety studies thus far, we have identified an overall safety improvement within this roadway section even with a narrowed cross section. Round 3 will continue with a more detailed safety analysis. The next steps for safety evaluation are: evaluate utilization of CSX/CTA ROW; test various lane and shoulder width combinations; and refine the recommendations as appropriate.

Lane Management and Tolling: Managed Lanes are a growing national trend as a means to increase efficiency on an existing facility. Details on the type of managed lane and tolling and pricing scenarios will be further developed in Round 3.

Funding and Construction Staging: The study team is exploring several options for both funding and staging options. The I-290 Study, along with the CTA Blue Line Vision Study, are coordinating different options for possible joint funding opportunities. These will be further developed in Round 3.

There were no comments on the Public Meeting #3 Summary.

**CTA Blue Line Vision Study:** The purpose of this study is to: evaluate existing conditions and infrastructure options; evaluate markets and service options; conduct outreach to project stakeholders; identify policy and funding options; and coordinate planning with IDOT for the I-290 corridor. The Vision Study limits are from Mannheim Road on the west to Canal Street on the east. The summary of the



existing conditions assessment shows that minimal upgrades have been completed as needed and the remaining elements are beyond their useful life and severely worn. The overall recommendation of this study is for complete reconstruction/modernization of the Forest Park branch. The CTA will maintain existing service and work with IDOT on overall corridor improvements.

Specific elements of the reconstruction and modernization include: maintain existing station entrance locations; improve customer experience; improve infrastructure; and improve the Forest Park terminal site. In order to maintain existing entrance locations it is recommended to retain double and triple entry station locations, and if possible, provide dual head houses for single entry stations with bus connections. To improve the customer experience, the conceptual renderings of the new stations include ADA accessibility, landscaping, pedestrian crossings/refuges, reduced noise environment, bike racks, and additional shelters with weather protection. The terminal site at Forest Park will be redesigned within its current parcel to improve site circulation and meet increased yard and shop needs, with a potential dual entry on both sides of DesPlaines Avenue.

The CTA plans to maintain the existing Blue Line Service. This will be done by addressing the short-term, more immediate needs by continuing to perform interim slow zone maintenance work on the branch. The long-term goals include bringing the entire service line up to a state-of-good-repair, no 3<sup>rd</sup> track or express service, and removing stations that were closed in the 1970s.

The CTA will continue work with IDOT on corridor improvements. This includes coordination on overhead bridges to improve stations and access from the street. The study team recognizes that this project may be segmented into stations and track. There is a potential for coordinating long term cost savings for both projects by working together. The CTA will provide a transit alternative during highway construction. The CTA is following a similar schedule to the IDOT Phase I Study, and will present results for public coordination in conjunction with the IDOT I-290 Public Hearing. In the meantime, the CTA will continue to evaluate funding options and project phasing.

There were no comments on the CTA Blue Line Vision Study update.

**Round # 3 Evaluation:** The timeframe for Round #3 completion is from summer 2014 to spring 2015. The data from this evaluation will be presented over multiple CAG/TF meetings and one-on-one meetings with individual villages and agencies. The goal of Round #3 is to move from four concepts to a preferred alternative. Round #3 topics include Blue Line Vision Study results, geometry, drainage, travel performance, environmental effects, cost, aesthetics, funding/financing, and construction staging scenarios.

There were no comments on Round #3 Evaluation.

**Round #3 Initial Results:** Preliminary Round #3 results have been reported for Average Daily Traffic (ADT), Arterial Traffic, Travel Times, Safety, Corridor Transit Ridership, and Costs.



ADT: The 2040 No Build Alternative shows a 7% increase over the 2012 ADT for mainline I-290. Overall, there is a small increase in ADT in all of the alternatives except for the HOT 3+ & TOLL alternative which has a 7% decrease. The mainline ADT decrease with the HOT 3+ & TOLL alternative causes a substantial increase in arterial ADT due to diversion of mainline traffic to the arterial system. For the other alternatives, the growth in the I-290 mainline ADT (an average of 8% over no build) comes from other roadway links including 75% from other arterials and 25% from other expressways.

Arterial Traffic: In general, arterial traffic improves on all of the alternatives except for the HOT 3+ & TOLL. The greatest improvement in arterial traffic is in the HOT 3+ alternative.

Travel Times: The greatest improvement in I-290 mainline travel times is with the HOT 3+ & TOLL alternative that decreases the approximately 31 minute No Build Travel time by 52% in the Toll Lanes and 59% in the managed lane. For the other three alternatives the General Purpose Lane travel time decreases by 31% with no managed lane, 24% with the HOV 2+ alternative, and 25% with the HOT 3+ alternative. The managed lane shows even greater decreases in travel time with the HOV 2+ travel time decreasing by 55% and HOT 3+ decreasing by 56%.

Safety: The greatest safety improvement is with the HOT 3+ alternative. This alternative has the best arterial safety performance with the highest person throughput relative to ADT. The HOV 2+ has the second best overall performance followed by the HOT 3+ & TOLL and lastly the GP Lane.

Corridor Transit Ridership: The initial Round 3 results for transit ridership in the study area show that the HOT 3+ & TOLL has the greatest increase with an additional 6,670 riders. HOT 3+ has the next highest increase with 2,780 riders. The GP Lane has an additional 2,760 riders. HOV 2+ has the least amount of additional riders with only 440.

Construction Costs: The Round 2 cost estimates are \$1.3 billion to replace the highway in kind. The build alternatives increase this number to \$1.5 billion to \$1.6 billion. The cost of an additional lane is only 16% to 19% of the overall cost. These estimates include provisions for a future Blue Line extension (longer bridges for example); which add approximately \$30 million in additional costs.

Overall benefits from Round 3 include large reductions in daily vehicle hours of travel which in turn yield productivity savings. The project study team used a \$24/hour value of time estimate to determine productivity savings. The annual benefit in 2040 is \$92 to \$203 million per year with an overall project benefit of \$1.7 to \$3.8 billion cumulative from the end of construction to the year 2040. This number does not include toll revenues.

There were no comments on the Round #3 initial results.



**Geometry and Operations:** As the Round 3 model results are being updated so are some of the geometric and operational elements, including the west end of the mainline, interchange performance, trunk sewer analysis, profile refinements, and an optional temporary easement at Austin Boulevard to accommodate a multiuse trail extension/connection.

The original concept for the mainline at the west end of study limits added an additional 4<sup>th</sup> lane EB from I-88, an additional 5<sup>th</sup> 'Auxiliary' lane at the CD Road entrance and then ended the 5<sup>th</sup> lane at 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. This concept created a bottleneck condition and lowered the average speed and travel time through this section. The revised eastbound lane concept maintains the existing 3 lanes from I-88 and introduces the 4<sup>th</sup> lane at the CD road entrance. This concept eliminated the bottleneck and showed improved travel times and average speeds (The preferred concept would reduce travel times by 40% over the no-build).

For interchange performance, each of the proposed interchange concepts throughout the study area shows a decrease in both northbound and southbound peak period delay on the cross-streets, and both northbound and southbound peak period maximum queues.

During the spring, the I-290 study team updated the existing drainage system analysis. This evaluation has identified issues west of DesPlaines River at 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, and then east of the DesPlaines River at the CTA/CSX crossings and Austin/Central ramps. Proposed drainage concepts include intercepting and detaining off site drainage at 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue west of the DesPlaines River, and providing underground storage vaults east of the DesPlaines River. These proposed concepts allow for mainline lowering between 7 and 9 feet near Harlem Avenue and 4 feet at Austin Boulevard.

With the drainage analysis showing that the mainline can be lowered, profile refinements have been made at both the Harlem and Austin interchanges. The proposed right side ramp will be one story (10 ft) above the existing frontage road and offset 44 ft to 60 ft from ramp to existing buildings.

At Austin Boulevard, there is an opportunity to connect the Prairie Path to Columbus Park. This shared use path connection would require approximately 0.3 acres of temporary easement. The other option is to utilize the existing path connection at Harrison Street. This would require no temporary easement, and would provide the path connection via sidewalks along Austin Boulevard. No direct impacts to any other park or 4(f) resource are proposed.

The following comments were recorded at the end of the Geometry and operations presentation:

**Comment: In June there was a flooding issue that closed I-290 at 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Are these and other similar flooding events accounted for in the drainage analysis?**

Re: The flooding issue this summer at 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue was a maintenance issue, and ultimately a pipe failure. Yes, similar flooding events are accounted for in the drainage analysis.



**Comment: The Village of Westchester would like IDOT not to drain into Addison Creek.**

Re: I-290 does not drain into Addison Creek. The expressway takes in flow from the surrounding areas. The proposed drainage plan will use 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue loop ramps to detain flood waters from paved and offsite areas.

**Comment: Does the lowering at Harlem and Central still allow those areas the ability to drain into the trunk sewer?**

Re: Yes, there is still a lot of cover with the profile lowering.

**Comment: For the tolled alternatives, what is the reason for the drop in vehicle counts on the expressway? Are the volumes for the managed lanes only?**

Re: The expressway volumes include all lanes, not just the managed lane. Tolling all lanes pushes traffic onto the arterials. The HOT 3+ alternative that doesn't include tolling all lanes, manages capacity more efficiently resulting in a drop in the number of vehicles throughout the entire corridor.

**Comment: Did you calculate productivity for people using transit?**

Re: We based the productivity numbers on the people who are using the expressway. Transit is a relatively smaller portion of overall travel in the corridor.

**Comment: How much more traffic will be on the arterials? Roosevelt and Cermak cannot handle any more traffic.**

Re: Our analysis actually shows that all of the alternatives (besides HOT 3+ & TOLL) show a decrease in arterial volumes, especially in Westchester.

**Comment: Who will enforce the HOT/HOV lanes? With no shoulder how will the police be able to pull violators over?**

Re: The enforcement will most likely be a combination of technology and traditional enforcement. This will be further analyzed as part of Round 3.

**Comment: The central focus is that there are currently only three lanes. If you remove a general purpose lane for a managed lane and no one uses the managed lane how will this help congestion?**

Re: The HOT lane will allow single occupant vehicles to also use the lane for a toll and our analysis to date shows that it will be used by I-290 travelers. The HOT lane allows flexibility, and we are currently drawing on experiences for other managed lanes around the country. More detail will be put into the alternatives in Round 3.

**Comment: These alternatives seem to be negatively affecting the arterials in the City of Chicago. Can the arterials be improved as part of this project?**

Re: HOT 3+ would have a minimal effect; HOT 3 + & TOLL would have greatest effect; thus far, there is no stakeholder support for HOT 3+ & TOLL, and the arterial impact is consistent with round 2 results.



**Comment: In slides 41 and 42 showing the geometrics at the west end of the study area, it does not seem that the plan provides for bus access to the managed lane.**

Re: IDOT has taken this into consideration. The revised lane concept on slide 42 does provide for bus access into the managed lane.

**Comment: Please look into the bicycle and pedestrian crossings at the 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue interchange. There needs to be a better east/west connection to the Prairie Path.**

Re: The bicycle and pedestrian features at every interchange will be enhanced as a part of this project. We will also include the 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue/Maybrook Drive intersection, in the vicinity of the Prairie Path, into the 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue interchange analysis to address pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.

**Comment: Please further explain the slide that shows the Harlem Avenue profile.**

Re: The mainline is 7 feet lower, the building is now 20 feet further away, and the top of the ramp is one story (10 feet) above the existing ground.

**Comment: Will the new ramp be on the right side?**

Re: Yes, the new ramps will enter and exit on the right side of the expressway.

**Comment: How long is the right side ramp at its new height?**

Re: The ramp starts to go down at the east end of the condo building. That distance is approximately 400 feet.

**Comment: Are the HOT lanes always in the center?**

Re: Yes, the theory behind these managed lanes is that they would be used for longer distance travel and we are studying continuous access in and out of the lanes.

**Comment: Do you have the data that shows where vehicles are getting on and off I-290 in the study area?**

Re: Yes, this data is included in the model. We will provide this data.

**Traffic Noise Analysis:** An overview of the traffic noise analysis procedures and results of the ramp geometry sensitivity analysis were presented.

**Noise Analysis Steps:** Traffic noise is measured in a-weighted sound levels (dB(A)), and is reported as the peak hourly equivalent noise level, not a peak momentary noise level. The first step in the noise analysis process is to identify noise receptors. A receptor is a worst case outdoor area of frequent human use that is analyzed for noise impacts due to the project. There are nearly 300 representative receptors identified for this section of I-290, representing thousands of locations. The next step is to predict traffic noise at representative receptors, and this is done using the FHWA Traffic Noise Model (TNM). Some of the factors that affect noise levels are trucks, traffic volumes, land cover, speed, and roadway grade. The study team then does field noise monitoring which measures the existing noise conditions at selected





receptors. These noise levels and traffic volumes are used to validate the model for the existing scenario noise model. Next, the study team will determine future traffic noise impacts using the FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC). The two methods to determine impacts are the absolute noise level reached, and if there is a substantial noise increase from existing levels.

Once the noise data has been collected and the impacts are determined, the study team determines whether noise barriers will be implemented. To be implemented a noise barrier must be feasible and reasonable. The feasibility criteria are that the barrier must be constructible and able to reduce traffic noise. The reasonability criteria are to be cost effective, and supported by those who benefit from the barrier.

The study team completed a ramp geometry sensitivity analysis. The purpose of this analysis was to determine relative noise level change between left-hand and right-hand ramps. It does not define total traffic noise impacts. The assumptions for this were the evaluation of relative noise levels at the condo building located in north east quadrant of Harlem Avenue, and the same traffic volumes were used in order to isolate the effects of ramp design and location. The key findings of this analysis were that: there would be a perceptible overall noise level reduction at the ground floor with the right hand ramps vs. left hand ramps; mainline I-290 traffic noise is the primary noise source; the proposed ramp retaining wall provides the greatest benefit by shielding mainline traffic noise; mainline noise contribution decreases up to -10 dB(A) for the first floor receptor; the proposed right hand ramps split the traffic volumes (and noise) into two separate ramps, and in doing so, shifts the higher volume roadway (EB on ramp) away from the receptor; and ramp only noise contribution decreases up to -8 d(B)A for first floor, -1 d(B)A for third floor.

The next steps for the noise analysis are: Existing and No Build modeling and validation; stakeholder coordination to refine geometry; additional sensitivity testing; model preferred alternative and determine impacts; and abatement analysis. The results are expected by spring 2015.

**Comment: Does the noise model factor in weather conditions such as the wind?**

Re: Yes, meteorological information is included in the model.

Aesthetics: The I-290 study team would like to begin discussions with each of the villages in the corridor concerning I-290 aesthetic treatments along the mainline and the cross roads. The study team has distributed plans and profiles for the entire reconstruction section and individual geometric packages for each of the individual communities. These will serve as a starting point for discussions. The study team is seeking input on: scope of improvements; local connections; local facilities; and aesthetic/enhancement opportunities.

The mainline aesthetics will be taken from the perspective of the expressway and transit users, and should blend with the Blue Line, Circle Interchange, and any other community identifiers. For the local cross-road aesthetic coordination, IDOT would like to coordinate with each community, individually. The



discussion will start out with the current proposed layout including wider sidewalks, lighting, and pedestrian fencing. Also, it will be important for IDOT and the appropriate villages to coordinate design, identify cost participation, maintenance requirements, and grant opportunities.

**Comment: Who owns the buttresses behind the retaining walls at Oak Park Conservatory?**

Re: The study team will look into the exact ownership and condition of these. If their condition is poor and they need to be replaced, that can be done as part of this project.

Post Meeting Note: The preliminary geometry and potential staging scenarios must be developed and discussed prior to having any meaningful information about construction related impacts.