

Illinois Department of Transportation

IL 120 STUDY

IL60 to Almond Road

IL 120 PEL STUDY COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #3

Date: August 7, 2025

Time: 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Location: College of Lake County and Virtual with Zoom

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. PowerPoint Presentation

1. CAG Meeting #2 Recap:

Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting #3 began at approximately 9:05 AM with a total of 35 CAG members and members of the public in attendance in the room and online. CAG members and non-members were welcomed and given guidance about meeting decorum, including how to ask questions and participate in the meeting online.

The study team began by recapping the second CAG Meeting that was held on Thursday, August 29, 2024, including a refresher on the approved Purpose and Need statement, as well as the current status of the screening process for developing alternatives. Clarification was provided on the progress made on the study between the August 2024 CAG meeting and the current CAG meeting.

2. Screening Criteria Review

The study team discussed how the screening process for the initial alternatives has progressed. To date, there have been three rounds of screening for each alternative:

- i. A feasibility screening that eliminates potential alternatives if they are technically infeasible or have impacts that would be prohibitive;
- ii. Purpose & Need screening that eliminates alternatives if they fail to meet the Purpose or Need for the project;
- iii. Level 1 screening that includes a high-level evaluation of initial alternatives for impacts to environmental resources, community resources, as well as safety improvements and performance improvements to the study area.

The feasibility screening has five main factors for determining technical feasibility and prohibitive impacts:

- Impacts to conservation lands that are not allowed or cannot be mitigated;
- Demolition of historic structures;
- Impacts to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) defined critical habitat;
- Construction, operation, or maintenance constraints that cannot be overcome; or
- An addition of new at-grade crossing.

The only constraint identified through the feasibility screening is a small section within the western-most section of the study area that contains U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-designated critical habitat for the Rusty Patched Bumblebee. It is expected that impacts to this critical habitat (as defined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) can be avoided or mitigated, and all alternatives were subsequently moved to the Purpose & Need screening. Within the Purpose & Need screening, it

was found that all two-lane rural cross section and four-lane urban cross section alternatives did not meet the safety needs of the project and were eliminated prior to beginning Level 1 screening. The results of the Level 1 screening were discussed further later in the meeting. The study team confirmed that field studies conducted as part of the previous Tollway project were considered in development of the screening criteria and that migratory birds are included in the Level 1 screening as they are considered in the “Sensitive Species” criteria. The study team clarified that Level 1 screening criteria is higher level review of and Level 2 screening will be more detailed. The study team noted that noise impacts and safety of non-motorized users will be evaluated as part of Level 2 screening. Finally, the study team addressed a question regarding past environmental analyses conducted during previous Illinois Route 53 studies indicating that environmental analysis for this Illinois Route 120 corridor was not conducted during that project and that even if it had, the amount of time passed since that project was active would necessitate a new review.

3. Presentation of Initial Alternatives

The study team presented the initial alternatives drafted for the study area. These included spot improvements, on-alignment alternatives, and off-alignment alternatives.

Spot Improvements are being considered at the IL83 railroad crossing, Fairfield Road, IL134 (Hainesville Road) and nearby railroad crossing, and US Route 45. Four options for spot improvements at these locations include:

- i. Adding lanes
- ii. Construction of a roundabout
- iii. Grade separation
- iv. Alternate intersection options

Spot improvements were not included within the Level 1 screening alternatives that were reviewed and will be included within the Level 2 screening. Additionally, it was relayed that some spot improvement alternatives had already been screened out during the Purpose and Need screening and that the corridor improvement alternatives include construction of sidewalks and shared multimodal non-motorized considerations as well.

Potential corridor improvements were then discussed, including projects that encompass widening the corridor to potentially reduce congestion and make turns safer for drivers. The study team noted that some members of the community have shared they do not want additional lanes along IL 120 as well as keeping the IL 120 roadway as a local road. The study team reiterated that the PEL process is an opportunity to explore all options and that the alternatives screening process will serve

to reduce the broad set of alternatives to those that best address the purpose and need, avoid or minimize impacts, and align with community goals.

On-alignment alternatives were discussed for feedback on what had been identified to eliminate or advance based on the Purpose & Need screening and the feasibility screening processes. The On-alignment alternatives are all potential projects that would keep improvements within the already existing IL 120 roadway. For screening on-alignment alternatives, IL120 was broken into three sections based on land use and similarities in roadway character:

- i. Section 1 (IL 60 to the IL 134 / Hainesville Road intersection) is primarily used for residential and agricultural purposes, and has a higher posted speed
- ii. Section 2 (IL 134 / Hainesville Road to IL 83) is more suburban and commercial with a lower posted speed and a narrower corridor
- iii. Section 3 (IL 83 to Almond Road) is similar to Section 2 in that it is suburban and commercial with a lower speed, but the roadway throughout is marginally wider than in Section 2.

On-alignment alternatives typical sections within Section 1 included 3-lane rural and 5-lane rural principal arterials while on-alignment alternatives typical sections within Sections 2 and 3 include 3-lane urban and 5-lane urban principal arterials. Rural is used in Section 1 to describe the open drainage features along Section 1 of the corridor, while urban is used Sections 2 and 3 to describe the non-open drainage features present. Projected traffic operations for the 3-lane and 5-lane alternatives were also discussed. The study team identified that the 3-lane on-alignment alternative within Section 2 would provide safety benefits but would not address the operations component as well as the 5-lane option as the Average Daily Traffic counts (ADTs) would remain high, which has been shown to have poor operations with one travel lane in each direction in the No Build alternative.

Off-alignment alternatives were discussed which included a range of possibilities including full bypasses of IL120 and partial bypasses that would bypass problem intersections within the sections as well as grade separations. Additionally, preliminary non-motorized considerations were discussed alongside the off-alignment alternatives to gather input on those options. Input provided by the CAG on non-motorized options included:

- i. preference toward a shared-use path the length of the corridor as an option that would allow for safe commutes to work or school
- ii. closing gaps in existing non-motorized networks
- iii. allowing for safe pedestrian crossings at all major intersections
- iv. better access to Lake Street via non-motorized means
- v. better connections to transit and safe waiting areas;

- vi. service and improved coordination of transit

Projected traffic operations for the 3-lane and 5-lane alternatives were also discussed and the study team identified that if bypasses for some or all of the IL120 Corridor were constructed, it would alleviate traffic on the existing IL120 and would improve the Level of Service (LOS) throughout the corridor without requiring widening or adding of lanes on the existing IL120 corridor.

The following questions were asked by CAG members and the public attending, and were responded to by the study team:

- Does Section 1 of the on-alignment alternatives look at the traditional, 100-year floodplains?
 - Floodplains are considered.
- Section 1 of the on-alignment alternatives, where IL 120 meets the railroad crossings, is dangerous to pedestrians as it exists right now. Why can't we put a gravel path or sidewalk at that location right now while the PEL Study is ongoing, so as to create a safer pedestrian crossing right now?
 - Addition of a shared use path would be a locally led initiative and would require analysis of drainage and right of way impacts among other engineering and environmental considerations.
- The figures depicting the alternatives in the presentation show a path on one side of the corridor and a sidewalk on the other. Is that what is currently planned to be constructed if these alternatives are selected?
 - This is not planned, currently; the figures are just examples of what those alternatives could look like and helped to define the potential alternative footprint for evaluation.
- Are you relying on design speed for the roads or the posted speed limit? Can we consider lowering the speed limits?
 - This will be discussed in the Level 2 analysis of the alternatives; currently we are looking at design speed for the corridor. Changing the speed limit on a section within the corridor would necessitate a speed study which could be conducted as part of the preliminary engineering of a given alternative selected for a future project.
- Can these alternatives be placed on aerial maps for ease of understanding where they are in relation to existing conditions?
 - Yes, and these will be in the roll maps during the breakout sections.
- Are any alternatives currently being evaluated going to be toll roads?
 - None of the alternatives considered include tolling.
- Why look at the bypass alternatives? Those would impact environmental resources and would require displacement of residents, businesses, community facilities, etc.

- Currently, the existing and projected traffic warrants either an added lane and/or a bypass to maintain appropriate Level of Service (LOS) along the corridor. Due diligence needs to be done on all potential alternatives, even those that would require displacement and, for example, floodplain impacts. In order for an alternative to be discarded or rejected, we have to show that we looked at those possibilities and had reasonings to discard them, to maintain Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) support for the project.
- Why not include IL60 and Peterson Road as an off-alignment alternative?
 - IL 60 is within the long-range plan and will be looked at. It is in the build models as shown in add lanes project already and is currently an independent project. The traffic projections from CMAP already take into account the improvements along IL 60.
 - *Post meeting note:* The study team is coordinating with CMAP to confirm and traffic projections are being gathered.
- Why are there not more transit alternatives?
 - This stage of alternatives screening is very high level. Transit specific options would be considered in later stages of alternatives screening.
- Why not look at adjacent arterials and widen those rather than look at the bypass?
 - Those are contemplated in the CMAP model and can be looked into further with this study.
- Is there a way to create enough transit opportunity that would pull enough traffic (a total of 8000 ADT) to clear up the congestion issue right now?
 - Currently, the percentage of those that take transit is relatively small (<10%). Looking at the example ADT of 25,000 as projected for portions of IL 120 by 2050, that warrants a multi-lane road. To improve congestion without any improvements to IL120, we would need an ADT of only 15,000-18,000, a greater than 10% reduction. Additionally, in talking to Metra, there's been a decrease in ridership during and after COVID, with numbers still not back to pre-COVID levels except in the case of weekend ridership. When we look at traffic operations today, we need to ensure that anything built lasts well into the future to accommodate the projected 2050 ADT numbers. IDOT can help facilitate transit connections by providing sidewalks a connections for walking to get to the trains, etc.
- I think what I'm hearing is we want another option that just focuses on strengthening existing transit and on-alignment alternatives.
 - Lake County is currently in the process of creating the 2050 Comprehensive Plan and these require multi-jurisdictional discussion. Looking at the Purpose and Need of this project is what drives the creation of the alternatives we're presenting today along this corridor.

- It seems a lot of our frustrations come from looking at IL 120 as a separate, independent road. What we'd like is a comprehensive plan that includes expanding all alternatives, including transit, road widenings, additional non-motorized considerations, etc. It feels like there is a discussion of just one method to clear up congestion.
 - All modes are being considered in alternatives. The screening process allows us to keep all modes in consideration while narrowing a large range of alternatives, eliminating those that are infeasible due to impacts, constructability, cost and other factors.
- When discussing population estimations that drive the ADT projections, previous population projections have been off by as much as 20-30%. How is the study accounting for potential overestimation of population growth?
 - Alternatives developed during the PEL are based on the best available data today. Should a given alternative move forward as a future project, IDOT can revisit population and traffic data forecasts to determine whether those forecasts are consistent.
- Do the aerials show IDOT owned roads? That would be helpful for our discussions, to know what roads IDOT has jurisdiction over.
 - Noted.
- Why wasn't the sports club engaged as a stakeholder to participate in the CAG meetings since the off-alignment alternatives seem to run through their property?
 - Signup for the CAG was available at the Public Meeting #1 and has remained open on the project website. The club is welcome to signup and participate in the CAG meetings.
- Do the bypasses assume 3-lanes for both the bypass as well as on the main routes?
 - The number of lanes considered for bypass alternatives and/or on-alignment alternatives may vary depending on the needs of specific sections in the study area with multiple lane configurations being considered for all alternatives.

4. Presentation of Initial Alternative Screening Results

Fourteen alternatives were recommended to move forward into Level 2 screening based on the review outcomes and determination of performance considerations and environmental impacts. Many 3-lane Rural alternatives, both On-Alignment and Off-Alignment, were eliminated. The following questions were asked by CAG members and the public attending, and were responded to by the study team:

- On-alignment has the 3-lane eliminated, but you should consider 3-lanes improvements with the 60/Peterson Bypass. The fact that you don't have 5 lanes means people will look for bypass alternatives. As such, that should be an alternative that is looked at.

- Each alternative is evaluated based on whether it meets the purpose and need for the project from the point that each is screened independently on the screening criteria established for the study with input from the CAG and the public. Based on independent screening, the study team can then determine the relative effectiveness of a given alternative at addressing the project's needs.
- Is the data that's informing the operational considerations done based on computer modeling using the projected populations?
 - Yes, it is based on modeling and projections provided by CMAP.
- Please clarify the scoring, since only scores of 1 drop off, and there are no scores of 1 in the environmental impacts section, which surprises me.
 - The scoring for environmental impacts is cumulative of scores based on the numerous individual evaluation criteria (Parks and recreation land, Section 4(f) and/or Section 6(f) protected lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, historic sites, conservation lands, water resources, forested landcover, and sensitive species). Additionally, we aren't just dropping off alternatives with a score of 1. Rather, we're looking at them compared to each other within the section and alignment. If the 5-lane has better operational and safety performance compared to the 3-lane, then the 3-lane gets set aside.
- If other alternatives are going to be provided, wouldn't it make sense to wait for other alternatives?
 - The goal of this study is to start with a large pool of potential alternatives and through the rounds of screening, result in either a preferred alternative or several alternatives to be explored further during the next phase. As we make our way through the levels of screening, the level of detail and design will increase. There is no need for the additional levels of detail and design if the alternative hasn't met the prior screening criteria, such as meeting the Purpose and Need. However, if there is a strong feeling that certain alignments and alternatives that have been set aside should be taken into Level 2, please let us know.
- From what I'm seeing, you cannot fit a 5-lane road between I-83 and at least Almond Road, maybe Alleghany, because of the wetlands and water resources that are present.
 - This is such a high-level screening by necessity that we haven't looked into lane widths, whether there should be a right turn lane at certain points, etc.; that'll all come in Level 2, when the design details will be further refined.
- A lot of money has already been spent on studies for other projects that were funded but not created. It feels like any construction that comes from this process will be much the same; how can we get a few small pieces of relief in the short term?

- We need the CAG and the Public to tell us the specific priorities you have so that individual, small projects can be evaluated. That's part of the PEL process – multiple small projects, as well as larger projects, that can be implemented can come as an outcome of this study. Additionally, these spot improvements could be advanced sooner while the overall corridor improvements are still being defined.

5. Alternatives Workshop

Upon finishing discussion of the Level 1 Screening Results, an alternatives workshop occurred that lasted approximately 25 minutes. During the workshop, aerial maps depicting the proposed alternatives were laid out on four different tables. The first table had a map depicting potential Spot Improvement locations and alternatives, the second table had a map depicting potential on-alignment alternatives locations, the third table had a map depicting potential off-Alignment alternatives locations, and the fourth had a map depicting bike and pedestrian alternative considerations. Each table also had a member of the study team stationed to answer questions or facilitate discussion. Members of the CAG and public present in person were encouraged to spend time at each table, reviewing the alternatives present on each and asking questions to other community members, study team members, and discussing their thoughts. Additionally, CAG and public members were encouraged to leave any additional comments on Post-It notes so the study team could review these inputs after the fact and consider them post-meeting. Online participants had these maps displayed in the online presentation, where they were encouraged to discuss among themselves and leave questions as comments that could be reviewed by the study team post-meeting. A non-exhaustive list of questions and concerns raised by the CAG Members and Non-CAG members present during the breakout session includes:

- Is there any way to bar trucks from utilizing IL 120 due to its current use as a local, community road?
- When talking about adding lanes to Lake Street, that would increase traffic to Lake Street. What are we doing to ensure that those who go to schools, pedestrians, etc. are safe?
- Why are lane increases being discussed?
- How would the mitigated wetlands be taken care of? Specific alternatives have the potential to harm the quality of wetlands by putting anything through them.
- How much ROW would specific alternatives take?
- The noise from the trucks on the IL 120 Alignment at Porter Drive is currently massive since they've begun driving on it.
- Almond Marsh and other natural preserves had vocalized concern around the potential impacts to the resources.
- Concerns were raised regarding exhaust and air quality in relation to a heightened level of traffic that comes with increased lanes and increased traffic numbers.

6. Presentation of Initial Level 2 Screening Criteria

The study team continued the presentation by discussing the criteria for Level 2 screening. These criteria included quantitative review of alternatives' ability to increase safety, mobility, and support

for multimodal connections, and qualitative and quantitative review of impacts to natural and social/economic resources. Technical feasibility, ROW impacts, and cost will also be evaluated in-depth during Level 2. Technical feasibility includes evaluation of logical termini, independent utility, alternatives in construction, anticipated traffic staging, and Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) during construction; ROW impacts include evaluation of number and acres of full acquisitions and partial acquisitions by type (residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, etc.). Additionally, Natural Resources and Social/Economic Resources will be reviewed at a desktop level but will be quantitative for Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) protected lands, prime farmland, forested landcover, wetlands, Waters of the United States, floodplains, habitat and species, and historic properties. Socioeconomic resources review will include air quality impacts, noise levels at sensitive receptors, community facilities impacted and impacts to environmental justice groups. The following questions were asked by CAG members and the public attending, and were responded to by the study team:

- Is the public meeting after this then going to get final input into narrowing down alternatives?
 - The upcoming public meeting will present Level 1 screening and consider public input, and another CAG meeting and Public Meeting will discuss the findings of Level 2. This input will then assist in narrowing down alternatives.
- Does Level 2 include salt spray, noise pollution, light pollution, and other impacts not mentioned?
 - At a high level, yes, since these are more granular and would be better looked at in-depth once the alternatives are further narrowed, but they will be looked at.
- There was mention of construction of depressed roadways to assist in drainage in a previous IL 120 bypass study. Construction of these cost a lot – will that cost be factored into Level 2 screening?
 - Details like this will be considered towards the end of this study, once a preferred alternative or alternatives have been determined.
- There are communities that this bypass would go right next to – if it's a depressed roadway, that will impact the public outcome.
 - This assumes a bypass being selected as the preferred alternative which has not been selected. We don't know that specific outcome yet, and if we look at it in Phase I, then it'll be looked at, but for now, we're unsure what alternatives will be carried forward.
- For the floodplains, what resource is being used to obtain data? How accurate is it?
 - FEMA data is what is being used.

7. Schedule and Next Steps

Finishing off the presentation, the study team relayed the currently expected schedule and what would come next of the public involvement process. A Public Information Meeting that is open to the entire public is expected for Fall of 2025. The next CAG Meeting is anticipated to take place in Winter 2025, which will discuss and present the Level 2 screening results. *Post meeting note:* The study has been modified to gather additional traffic projections and explore preliminary alternative concepts suggested by CAG members during CAG Meeting #3. CAG Meeting #4 is anticipated in Winter 2026 and the next Public Information Meeting is anticipated in Spring/Summer 2026. The schedule may change based on refinement of alternatives and additional effort required to screen other alternatives. The study team will try to hit as many media types as possible for maximized public involvement, but will also rely on representatives of the community (i.e. CAG Members) to inform the public in their community and to push the IL 120 PEL website that is available for other members of the public to get information of the study and corridor up to this point. The following questions were asked by CAG members and the public attending, and were responded to by the study team:

- Can we make the CAG meeting outside normal working hours? Many members of the public may be unable to take time off work to attend the way that I had to.
 - The study team will take that into consideration for future CAG meetings. Note, the expectations provided when the CAG was established advised members that meetings would take place during normal business hours. Additionally, all the materials from the CAG meetings are posted online and those who cannot attend in person are welcome to submit comments and questions.
- How can those who aren't a part of the CAG or who aren't directly local to the corridor but have stake in the study find out about the Public Information Meeting or future CAG Meetings?
 - The study team canvasses around the corridor, and mailers and postcards will be sent out for the formal Public Information Meeting to anyone who lives within the impacted area. Municipalities in the study area are also notified of public information meetings. Public information meetings are also advertised on social media platforms, on the study website, and in local newspapers to help with reaching members of the public who may not live along the corridor and receive a mailer directly but may be interested in the study. Finally, people may sign up for the study email list at www.il120study.com to receive notice of upcoming meetings.
- Can we tap into existing communication networks, i.e. municipal mailers, bills, etc., in order to expand the reach of notification?

- The study team will look into it, as we want as many people as possible so we can get more and better input the whole way through this process.
- Can everything be put online?
 - Yes, everything that is presented today is on the IL 120 PEL website, and notes from this meeting will also be put up once they are complete.

8. Questions and Comments

Once discussion of the schedule and next steps had concluded, the study team opened the floor for additional Questions and Comments, including asking what key takeaways are, what was missing, and if any additional questions were had about the Level 2 screening? The following questions and comments were asked and stated by CAG members and the public attending, and were responded to by the study team when appropriate:

- In the Off-Alignment Roll Plots, it feels like the legend and with text is covering up a forest preserve and local communities, which doesn't feel useful. Can you expand the map so these are not covered up and are visible in the future?
 - Yes, we will look into that for future meetings.
- Can you please also include the medical offices and medical facilities in your analysis? Those are critical points to consider.
 - Those are all components that we factor into safety. We have shown all major medical facilities included in our databases.
- On the roll plots, the aerial imagery does not display all of the work that has occurred on IL 83 and is outdated, making the maps a bit confusing.
 - Noted, that will be looked into for future meetings as well.
- How is the decision for the IL 120 PEL outcome being made? Is it a vote, a referendum, etc.?
 - The jurisdiction owning and aligning is IDOT and FHWA, so technically it is them. That said, their decision takes into account CAG and Public comments and sentiments.
- If it isn't an actual vote, do I just tell people in the community to tell people to email IDOT about comments?
 - We have multiple touch points that the public can reach out through, and that we are always trying to grow the scope of those who are engaged. We sent out 5,700 flyers and postcards for the first public meeting, and that list continues to grow. If you would like to be included on our mailing list, please let us know.
- I'm confused on the timeline – will we be getting a preferred alternatives after a year, or will it just keep going?
 - It will keep going – timelines are usually 3 to 5 years for a Phase I, which includes alternative development, justification for impacts and ROW acquisition, etc. ROW alone is usually about 3 years, engineering analysis is another 2, and construction is another 2. Intersection improvements by IDOT, traditionally, take somewhere between 7 to 10 years in total.

- A large concern is truck traffic along the corridor. Is it an option to petition the City of Grayslake to prevent truck traffic? Would that be an interim solution?
 - The study team responded that legislation would need to be introduced. Freight is allowed by law on all IDOT routes; a special law would need to be put in place to prevent that, and that is well outside IDOT's purview.

The CAG Meeting #3 was concluded at approximately 11:58 AM.

APPENDIX A.

Powerpoint Presentation

