

# Connections



Issue 5 • January 2017

## I-290 PLANNING PROCESS Nearing Completion

**DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DEIS) RELEASED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON DECEMBER 30, 2016** I-290 is a **vital link** in the region's transportation system, and is a gateway connecting commuters to and from the western suburbs. The I-290 planning process included a thorough examination of transportation problems, potential solutions, and extensive technical analysis and stakeholder input.

## TRANSFORMATION NEEDED!

Improving all travel modes and community connections is critical due to I-290 serving as a primary corridor connecting commuters locally and regionally. Congestion, safety issues, and an outdated facility are significant concerns.

There are thousands of crashes and traffic backs up on the mainline and ramps.



## ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT and Evaluation

**The alternatives evaluation included the examination of ALL MODES OF TRAVEL within the transportation system.**

Beginning with hundreds of alternatives, and three rounds of evaluation, four build alternatives and a "no-build" alternative were evaluated in greater detail and included a combination of highway and transit improvements.



These alternatives add a lane to create four lanes in each direction from Mannheim to Racine and include transit improvements to provide access to employment. The four alternatives vary mainly by how the inside lane will be managed, including car pooling, combinations of tolling and car pooling, or no management strategy.

IDOT also studied the Blue Line Extension and it was determined that there was a lack of supporting land use for a rail extension at this time, however, a corridor is being preserved for future extension.



# Preferred Alternative HOT 3+

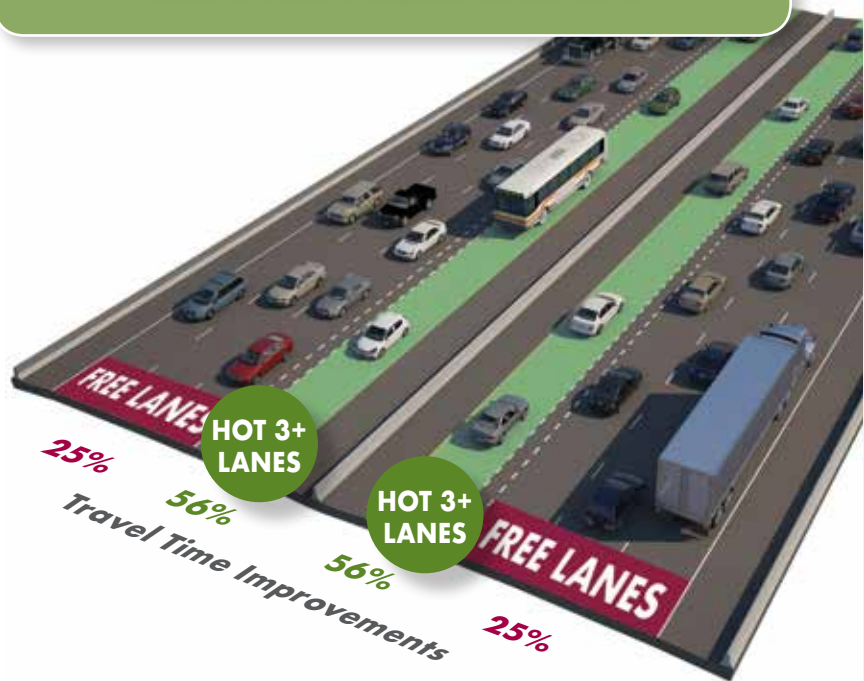
This solution provides a reliable and predictable travel option, is the best balance of I-290 and arterial capacity improvements and provides additional travel choices for motorists and non-motorists.

This alternative would add a HOT lane on the inside, and cars carrying three or more passengers, and buses would ride toll free. Others could use the lane by paying a toll that would rise and fall based on rush hours. From east of Austin Boulevard to Racine Avenue, the existing inside lanes would be re-striped and converted to HOT lanes. The outside lanes would remain toll free.

During peak travel times, it is anticipated the HOT lane drivers will travel at an average speed of 45 miles per hour, **reducing travel times by 56%**. Travel times in the toll free lanes would also **improve by 25%**.

The preferred alternative includes supporting transit features. Initial service would be an express bus in the HOT lane with connections to local bus routes.

The **best performing alternative** is the **High-Occupancy Toll lane**, known as **HOT 3+**, and is the preferred alternative.



The CTA recommends modernizing and reconstructing the infrastructure, starting with track work. Features include:

- > ADA accessible stations
- > Improve customer amenities
- > Maintain existing layouts for double entry stations
- > Add auxiliary entrances for single-entry stations at Western, Pulaski and Cicero
- > Redesign, expand and modernize the Forest Park Terminal, bus, and pedestrian connections

## CTA BLUE LINE VISION STUDY

The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) initiated the Blue Line Forest Park Branch Vision Study in 2013 in coordination with the I-290 alternatives development to determine a long-term planning strategy for the Branch. The Vision Study evaluated the needs of the transit corridor, specifically evaluating existing infrastructure conditions, transit markets and service patterns to provide recommendations for the Branch going forward.

As the Forest Park Branch shares the right of way with I-290, the Vision Study recommended improvements will continue to be planned in coordination with IDOT's current planning for the reconstruction of the Eisenhower Expressway.

The key next steps are Project Development, Engineering and Construction Phases.

# Connections

## What are the findings OF THE DEIS?

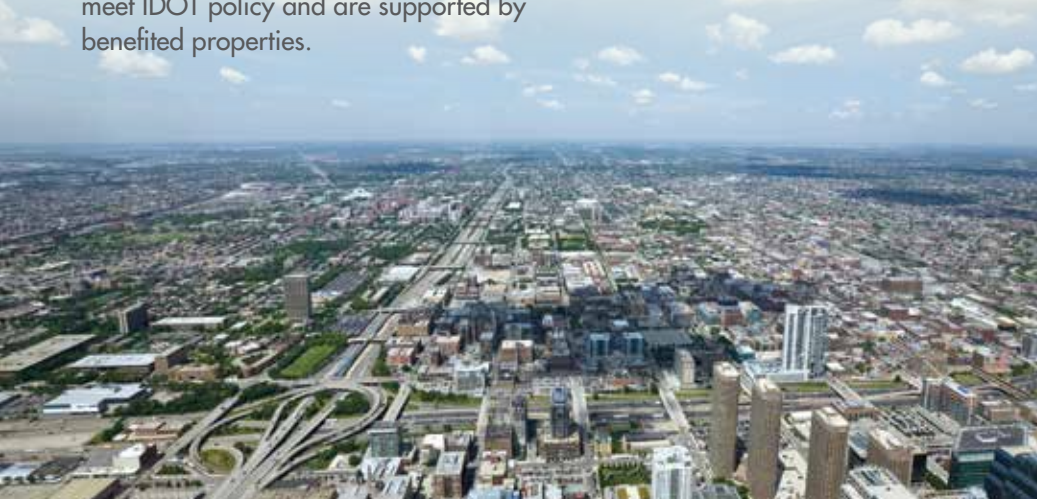
*I-290 is an urban corridor with the existing environment mature and established with limited space for new development. The communities are the environment, and the priority was to avoid direct community impacts.*

As part of the DEIS there were multiple environmental areas analyzed. The following is a summary of the key findings:



- » No residential or business displacements.
- » No adverse impact to low income or minority communities.
- » Slight improvement in air quality, reduces CO<sub>2</sub> by over 700 tons annually.
- » No adverse effects anticipated for historic properties.

- » No adverse impacts beyond the project area (secondary and cumulative impacts).
- » Minor impacts to public parks along Circle Avenue in Forest Park (Veterans Park, Dog Park, Community Center site).
- » The preferred alternative does not result in noticeable change in traffic noise. The majority of the corridor currently exceeds Federal criteria for traffic noise impacts. Noise walls are proposed where they meet IDOT policy and are supported by benefited properties.



## PROJECT BENEFITS

**ACCESS** to jobs increased by **398,000** within 60 minutes

**ADDITIONAL** travel choices

### Multi-Modal:

Improved design for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Wider sidewalks and new east-west multi-use path.



**6% safety** improvement

**IMPROVED** access/interchanges

**Productivity:**  
\$2.7 billion savings

**Travel time SAVINGS**  
56% in managed lanes  
25% in general purpose

»»» **Aesthetics opportunities**

**Transit Trips:**  
Increase of 4,300 east-west daily transit trips



**IMPROVED** community connections

**Improved drainage** for I-290, and in the areas between 25th and 1st Avenue

Over **18,000** construction jobs



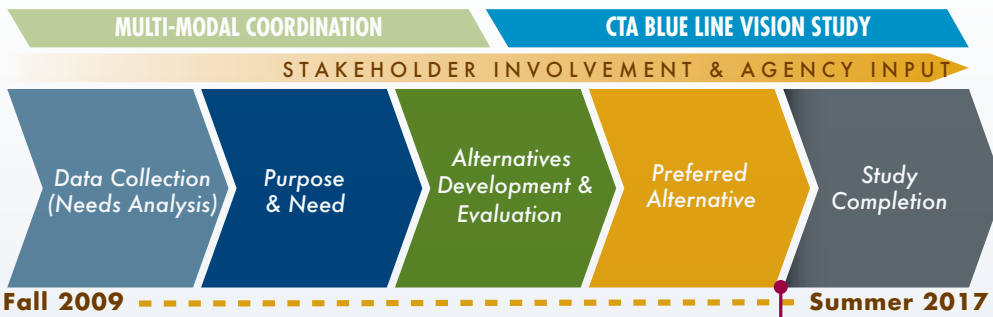
**What is an EIS?** An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is the most rigorous level of analysis for a transportation project. An EIS involves three basic elements: engineering/design studies, environmental analysis, and stakeholder/agency coordination.



Eisenhower Expressway Project  
 Illinois Department of Transportation  
 Division of Highways - District One  
 201 W. Center Court  
 Schaumburg, Illinois 60196



# NEXT STEPS



- COMMENT PERIOD ENDS**  
February 13, 2017
- ▼
- COMMENT RESPONSES, STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION**  
Spring 2017
- ▼
- PUBLISH FINAL EIS/ RECORD OF DECISION**  
Summer 2017

The replacement of the stormwater pump station at the Des Plaines River is included in the Department's multi-year program.

For the remainder of the I-290 project, Phase II or detailed design and land acquisition, and Phase III or construction, are currently not funded.

IDOT and CTA will continue to discuss funding and schedules.

## Stakeholder COLLABORATION

Stakeholder involvement activities allowed the Study Team to gain insight on stakeholder concerns and work to minimize effects on the communities. IDOT and the Study Team have worked extensively with agencies, municipalities, and other stakeholders, resulting in the development of the preferred alternative.

**22** Corridor Advisory Group Meetings

**3** Public Meetings

**7** Noise Wall Meetings

Agency Working Groups

Over **140** One on One Meetings

### Community Working Groups

Project Website

Newsletters

**7,000** Stakeholders

**1,500** Comments Considered

