

Connections



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I-290 Study Kicks Off

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has initiated the I-290 Eisenhower Expressway Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Study, also known as Phase I. This study will take a fresh look at transportation needs through an extensive public involvement process. This fresh look at the project means the project starts at the beginning of the process by collecting data and input from stakeholders on the issues and goals and objectives for the project.

The study area is located along I-290 in Cook County extending approximately seven miles from west of Mannheim Road (US 12/20/45) to east of Cicero Avenue (IL Route 50) and traverses through eight communities: Bellwood, Broadview, Chicago, Forest Park, Hillside, Maywood, Oak Park, and Westchester. Originally designed and constructed in the 1950's, this section of the Eisenhower Expressway is one of the oldest segments of the region's highway infrastructure.

Serving as the western gateway to the City of Chicago, I-290 is a major link in the transportation network serving northeast Illinois. The I-290 corridor is also an important regional multi-modal transportation corridor that includes freight railroads and various modes of public transportation. *(continued on page 2)*

Project Study Team

IDOT will lead the Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Study (Phase I). IDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will act as joint lead agencies for preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A consultant team lead by Parsons Brinckerhoff will conduct the technical studies.

A Guide for Stakeholder Involvement has Been Created

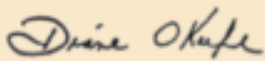
A Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP) has been created and will be utilized as a guide for encouraging stakeholder involvement during the I-290 Study. The SIP will be used as a blueprint for defining methods for engaging stakeholders.

The SIP will be available for review and comment at the November 18, 2009 public meeting, and on the website for a period of 15 days thereafter. As the project proceeds, the SIP will be updated on a regular basis to reflect changes or additions. Future SIP updates will be posted on the project's website at www.eisenhowerexpressway.com.



I am pleased to announce that the Illinois Department of Transportation has re-initiated the I-290 Study. The study team will examine transportation needs and consider all modes of transportation. A fundamental element of the study effort is a public involvement program which will provide meaningful opportunities for stakeholders to participate in defining transportation issues and solutions for this project. We look forward to working with communities, agencies and other interested stakeholders to develop a comprehensive transportation system that fits into its surroundings and that will benefit the project stakeholders and the entire region.

Sincerely,



Diane M. O'Keefe, P.E.
Deputy Director of Highways
Region One Engineer

Project History


The I-290 corridor has a long history in the region. Originally designed in the late 1940's and open to the motoring public in the mid-1950's, this section of the Eisenhower Expressway is one of the oldest segments of the region's highway infrastructure. I-290 was the first multi-modal expressway corridor constructed in the United States, including lanes for automobiles and adjacent facilities for passenger and freight rail lines. Additions to I-290 continued with western extensions constructed in the 1970's and late 1980's.

Prior and Current Studies

- In **1998**, the IDOT High Occupancy Vehicle, known as HOV or carpool lanes, Feasibility Study was completed. Consistent with national trends at the time, this evaluated the feasibility of a dedicated HOV lane.
- Between **1999 and 2001**, the Hillside Interchange Reconstruction project was initiated and completed, and is an important first step towards improving mobility in the I-290 corridor.
- In **2001**, IDOT began the I-290 Phase I Study to identify ways to improve the I-290 corridor between Mannheim Road and Cicero Avenue; however this study was placed on hold pending the results of the Cook-DuPage Corridor Study.
- The Cook-DuPage Corridor Study focused on a broader region and conducted a Travel Market Analysis and an Option Feasibility study. This study established a framework for future planning.
- From **2003 to 2005**, the Village of Oak Park studied the feasibility of "capping" or "covering" the expressway through Oak Park, and is continuing this effort with the **2009** Cap Concept Analysis study.

I-290 Study Kicks Off

(continued from page 1)

IDOT understands that other independent studies within the study area have shared interest with the I-290 project. IDOT will continue to reach out and coordinate with these stakeholder groups throughout the study process. 

Eisenhower Expressway – Phase I Study Area



This project is starting with a **FRESH LOOK** that will continue to coordinate with other independent studies throughout the process.

WHAT'S A STAKEHOLDER?

*Anyone with
an interest
in the project.*

What is Context Sensitive Solutions?

CSS is a collaborative approach that involves all stakeholders to develop a facility that fits into its surroundings and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources while maintaining safety and mobility.




IDOT has designated this study as a Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) project, and public involvement is a key component. There will be many opportunities for stakeholders to provide input regarding needs and potential solutions within the corridor; these include corridor advisory group and task forces, public meetings, small group meetings, website, and Speakers Bureau. Through these and other means, IDOT will proactively seek stakeholder input and partnerships early and often to develop a consensus towards solution.

THE PROJECT WEBSITE: *Your Information Source!*



Get involved, find out more information, sign up for the mailing list, and write your comments to us at www.eisenhowerexpressway.com.

The I-290 Eisenhower Expressway Phase I Study kicks off with the public involvement program at the forefront of the project. The website is an important element of the program. It is designed to communicate and share information about the project and process as it becomes available. More importantly, it offers the stakeholders an opportunity to comment on the project throughout the project process through a comment page on the website.

The website will be maintained throughout the project duration and will include project information, frequently asked questions with answers, meeting information, project publications and reports, mailing list sign-up and a comment form. This is another tool that stakeholders can use to stay involved. 

Corridor Advisory Group and Task Forces Formed to Provide Input

IDOT realizes that feedback from potentially affected communities is important to ensuring that IDOT proposals are consistent with community goals and objectives. To provide a forum for discussions about the goals, objectives, and potential improvements for I-290, IDOT has formed a Corridor Advisory Group (CAG) and is forming Task Forces (TF). The CAG consists of elected officials from two counties and eight municipalities. These include Cook and DuPage County and the municipalities of Bellwood, Broadview, Chicago, Forest Park, Hillside, Maywood, Oak Park, and Westchester.

Corridor Advisory Group

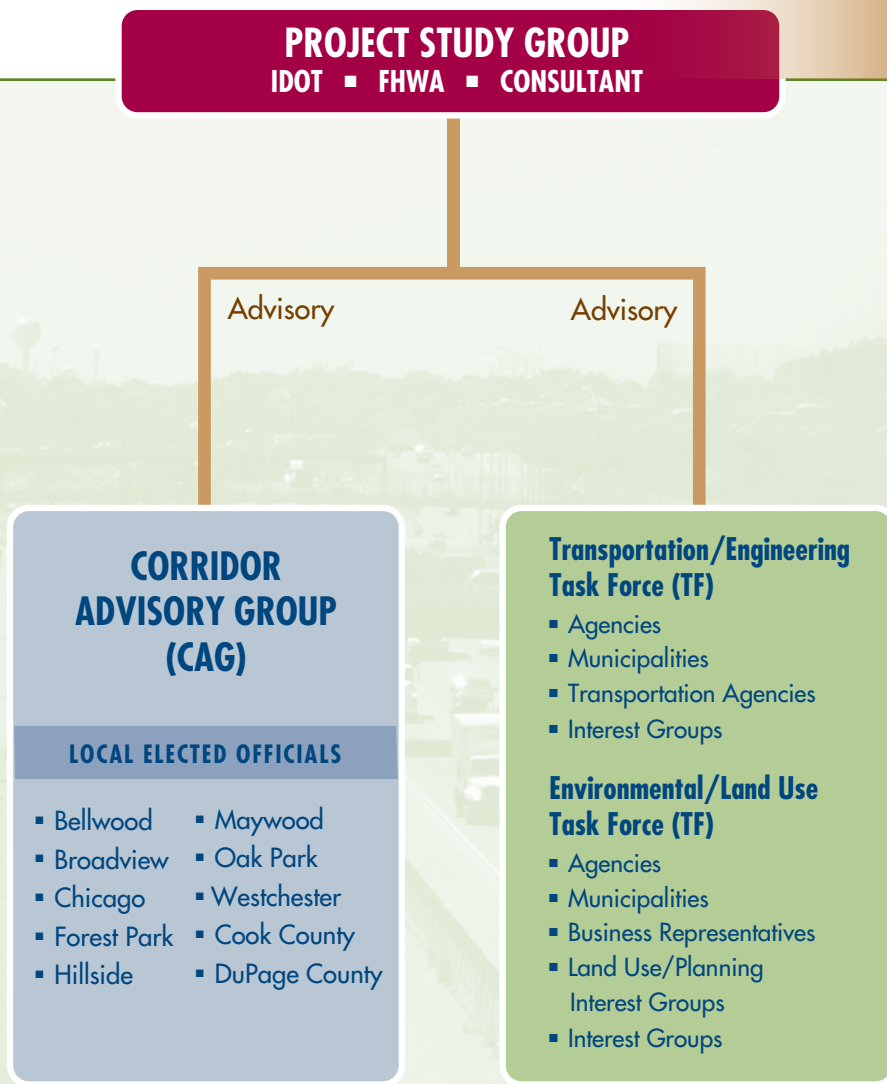
The purpose of the CAG is to provide input on various study elements, including the identification of transportation needs, alternatives, development, and evaluation, as well as the selection of a preferred alternative. The CAG group consists of community leaders (Mayor or Manager from each of the eight communities in the study area and the Chairman or representative from Cook and DuPage Counties) that are directly affected by the study.

Public involvement is an interactive process that provides information to the stakeholders so they can make informed decisions and offer important input into the solutions that address the community's concerns. A public involvement program has been designed to encourage your participation throughout the study. Newsletters, workshops, small group, and public meetings will coincide with key project milestones throughout the duration of the project. Up-to-date information and a way to comment are available on the project website at www.eisenhowerexpressway.com.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

is critical to the project success.



Task Forces

The two TF's (Transportation/Engineering and Land Use/Environmental) intend to focus on technical aspects of the project development. Task Force Groups will be comprised of stakeholders with expertise or particular interest in these categories. The TF members may include CAG members or designated staff and other governmental bodies, transportation agencies, or interest groups.

The TF's will meet throughout the project development process. TF input will be considered and will be shared with the CAG. The TF's would focus on understanding and resolving more specific technical issues as they arise and report back to the Project Study Group. The TF's may be asked to address the CAG to help communicate technical subject matter issues.



Frequently Asked Questions

#1

I heard construction will begin on I-290 next year. Is this the same project as this study?

No. The I-290 Resurfacing Project is separate from this I-290 Phase I Study. The Resurfacing Project that begins at Illinois 53 on the west to Congress Bridge on the east begins spring 2010 and will only address the condition of the bridges and pavement. Please visit www.dot.state.il.us/contact.html if you have specific questions or comments regarding the Resurfacing Project.

#2

What Constitutes a Stakeholder?

Stakeholders for a project include any person or organization which has an interest in the project being considered. This can be anything from a small group of residents and businesses affected by the redesign of a rural intersection to thousands of individuals when a major roadway or transit extension is being built. Stakeholders can include residents and landowners near a project, advocates for policy, community and historic interests, elected officials, government agencies, users of the facility, and many others.

#3

What is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)?

"The NEPA process is intended to help public officials make decisions based on understanding of environmental consequences, and take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment."

NEPA is one of the federal laws that outlines policies to protect our environment and is a framework for the planning process. It establishes policy, sets goals, and provides a means for carrying out policy. Further, the NEPA process makes sure that environmental information is available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and actions are taken.

#4

Will current and prior studies be considered?

The Phase I Study is taking a fresh look at the current and future transportation needs of the corridor, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Other studies, such as the Cook-DuPage Study, provide a wealth of information that will be considered in the planning process. IDOT will continue to reach out and coordinate with stakeholders regarding these studies throughout the study process.



#5

How is this study funded?

State funding is being used for the I-290 study, as part of IDOT's multi year highway program. For more information regarding IDOT's program, please visit our website at www.dot.il.gov, then click on "complete list of featured programs", and scroll to "Illinois Proposed Highway Improvement Program".

#6

What steps are being taken to coordinate with other transportation providers and transportation agencies?

As part of the Stakeholder Involvement Plan, Task Force groups will be formed and are expected to be the primary forum for ongoing coordination with agencies, and providers such as Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra, Pace, CSX Railroad, Canadian National Railroad, the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority, Chicago Department of Transportation, and Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP).

#7

How soon do you expect to complete the "needs" portion of the study? What are the next steps in the process?

A draft needs statement is expected in the winter 2009/2010. If a need is demonstrated, further study could occur, including identifying alternatives, selecting a recommended alternative, and performing further engineering and environmental analysis. In addition, public involvement will be key component throughout the entire study. The entire study process may take up to three years to complete.

#8

Will public transit be part of this study?

We are just starting the study process, so there is much work to do. The I-290 corridor has many existing transit facilities, and as part of the study IDOT will consider all modes when working with stakeholders to develop a solution.

#9

When will construction begin?

There is currently no funding for the reconstruction of I-290. We are currently in the early stages of the Phase I study. This is the only funded phase of the project, and typically takes approximately three years to complete. Phase II Final Design and Land Acquisition generally takes approximately two years, but is not funded at this time. Therefore, construction is at least 5-6 years away.

#10

How will construction contracts be awarded?

Only after the successful completion of Phase II – Design and Land Acquisition, and then securing funds for construction, will the commencement of Phase III – Construction begin. The project would then be bid using standard IDOT procedures, and must be from IDOT pre-qualified contractors. The selection of a successful bidder is based upon the contractor's prequalification, bonding capacity, bid amount, completeness of bid, financial evaluation, and use of Disadvantaged and Minority Business Enterprises, among other criteria.

#11

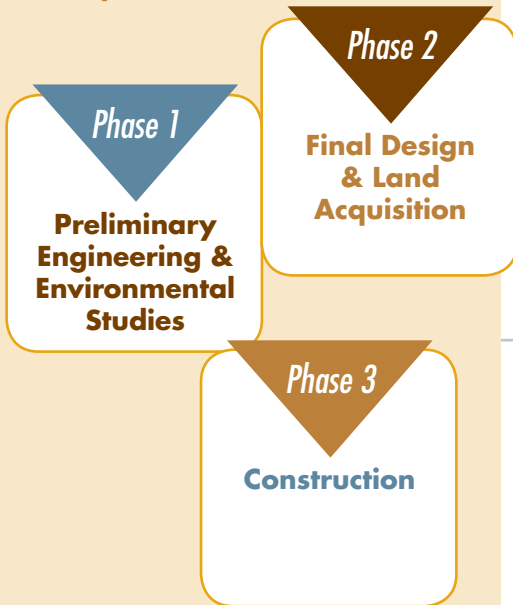
Who can I contact about the Phase I study?

You can direct questions and comments to us via this website. Written correspondence can be sent directly to Illinois Department of Transportation-Region One/District 1, Attn: John Baczek, P.E., c/o: Mark Peterson, 201 W. Center Court, Schaumburg, Illinois 60196 or by fax: 847.705.4159.

Connections

WHAT ARE THE PHASES OF IDOT PROJECTS?

You will often hear reference to the three 'phases' of IDOT projects. What are these phases and what do they mean?



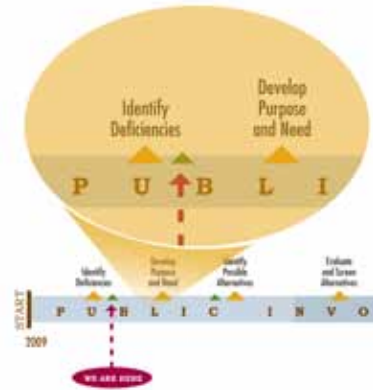
Phase I is also referred to as the Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Study. The **Phase I** process involves the analysis of existing and future conditions, and defining the Purpose and Need for improvements. The culmination of the **Phase I** study concludes with a design approval.

After a design approval and additional funding is identified, **Phase II**, or Final Design and Land Acquisition, begins. During this phase, detailed construction plans are developed and any necessary land is purchased for the project.

When funding for construction is secured, **Phase III** or the actual construction of the project, may begin.

Project to Follow Federal Environmental Process

The study process is expected to conclude in approximately three years and will follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. NEPA is a federal law that requires federally funded projects to evaluate a range of alternatives- including doing nothing, known as "No-Build", and assess the impacts of those alternatives on the environment.



LATE 2009: Analyzing Existing and Future Conditions and Defining Purpose and Need

The first step of the Phase I Study is analyzing and understanding the existing and future conditions, and defining the Purpose and Need for improvements. Step 1 tasks include collecting information on current conditions, future population and employment growth in the area, and then predicting future travel demand. This data will help to evaluate the performance of the transportation system under future conditions. All this information will allow IDOT and stakeholders to identify transportation deficiencies and begin the process for developing solutions to address these needs. Upon completion of the data collection and analysis steps, the study will proceed with the development of a specific Purpose and Need statement that will guide the identification and evaluation of improvements.

EARLY 2010: Analysis of Alternatives

The next step in the study process is working with the public and project stakeholders to identify possible improvement alternatives and potential evaluation criteria. This step concludes with the selection of those improvement alternatives that should be evaluated in detail. Public involvement will continue to be applied through this part of the study.

MID 2011: Further Evaluation of Alternatives and Preferred Alternative Selection

The further detailed evaluation of alternatives includes evaluation of the effect of any possible alternative on the environment. These findings in addition to the findings from previous steps are reported in the Environmental Impact Statement. The last step in this process also includes further detailed evaluation of the engineering and other technical factors associated with the alternatives and the preferred alternative will be chosen.

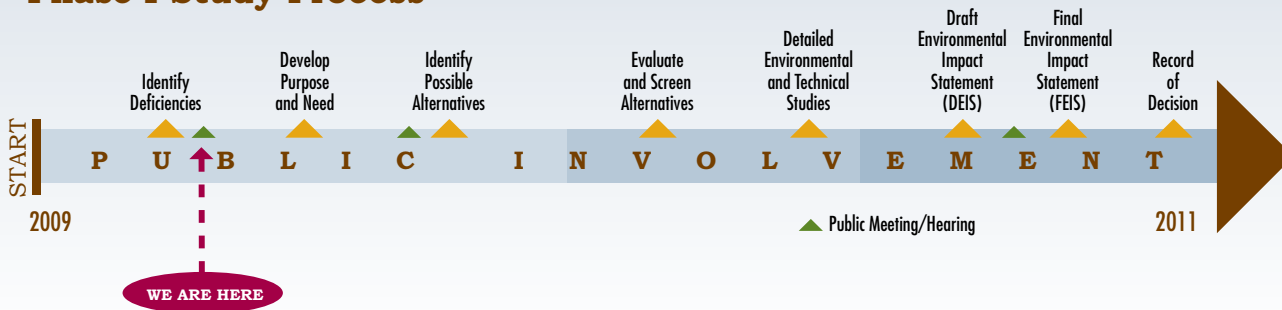
Currently, funding for this Phase I (Planning and Environmental Studies) is available. However, no funding is currently programmed for final design and land acquisition (Phase II), or construction (Phase III).


Get Involved! — Check our website for project updates, sign-up for the mailing list, and send comments to us. Go to www.eisenhowerexpressway.com or contact us at the Illinois Department of Transportation Division of Highways-District One, Attn: Mark Peterson, 201 W. Center Court, Schaumburg, IL 60196. Telephone: Mark Peterson at 847-705-4569 Fax: 847-705-4159

Next Steps

Over the next several months, the study team will continue to meet with community representatives, agencies, and interested parties to obtain their input. During this time, work will continue with the existing conditions analysis, identification of corridor deficiencies, and the collection of technical and environmental data related to the study area. By identifying the current and future project deficiencies and needs, a Problem Statement will be created to help guide the development of the project Purpose and Need. The Purpose and Need will be the basis for the development, evaluation, and evaluation of alternatives.

Phase I Study Process




 Illinois Department of Transportation
 Eisenhower Expressway Project
 Illinois Department of Transportation
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