



MEETING NOTES

Project: East Side Highway Environmental Assessment
Subject: Sustainability FWG Meeting #2
Date: April 30, 2012, 6:15 to 7:30 p.m.
Location: Bloomington Cultural Center, Bloomington, IL

Minutes of this meeting were prepared by Lindsay Birt of Huff & Huff, Inc. (H&H). Please inform her of corrections or modifications.

Project Team Attendees: Sarah Merchan Paniagua (HDR), Lindsay Birt (H&H), Jim Novak (H&H), Linda Huff (H&H), and Jerry Payonk (CDI). The meeting was facilitated by Linda Huff.

1. Introduction

- The attendees introduced themselves.
- Participants included Angelo Capparella (Friends of Kickapoo Creek, JWP Audubon Society and ISU), David Lamb (City of Bloomington), Robin Weaver (Director of Public Works, Town of Normal), Jan Holder (Friends of Kickapoo Creek), Don Roseboom (USGS), and Tom Haynes (Illinois State University).

2. Review of ILAST items of interest to the group

Linda Huff presented the one page summary of responses from the group for each ILAST category. She stated the goal of the meeting was to discuss potential constraints, identify areas to focus on, and then relay the information to the project team.

3. Alignment Selection

- Jerry Payonk explained that the interchange near The Grove subdivision has been refined since the Public Information Meeting (PIM) #4. The interchange west of The Grove has been reconfigured; there are no longer ramps in the NE quadrant nearest The Grove. Per IDOT access spacing standard, the first access point must be no closer than 500 feet from the interchange ramp. Therefore, the existing western access point to The Grove must be removed. The existing eastern access point will remain. Another access point to The Grove further east along Ireland Grove Road will probably be added.

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- Don mentioned there are a lot of bicyclists using the east/west roads east of Towanda-Barnes Road, and asked if they were considered. Jerry responded that the issue will be addressed by the Alternate Mode FWG.
- Angelo asked if the current bridge over Kickapoo Creek on Ireland Grove Road will have to be widened. Jerry stated that this is likely, but has not yet been determined.
- A question was asked about the noise mitigation at The Grove. Jerry explained the shifted alignment is further away from the Grove. Linda stated that the project team will continue to refine the alignments and will inform the FWG when the noise analysis is complete.
- Thomas was concerned with the area south of Ireland Grove Road where the green space is absorbing water. The new alignment will generate additional runoff and this may affect the small tributary in the southwest quadrant of The Grove. Don agreed that this area will be affected because it flows into the detention basin and goes into a storm pipe that eventually drains into the tributary.

4. Design Items

- Buffers
 - Linda presented design items, such as buffers. Linda explained buffers will be used in crossings where the streams run parallel to the freeway. The buffer requirements vary according to stream order.
 - David said any of these tributaries that the alignment is crossing is important, especially Kickapoo Creek and tributaries discharging into Kickapoo Creek; therefore, buffers would be needed at all crossings.
 - Don stated that there are three USGS stream gauges in the area around The Grove. He also mentioned that the west branch has high sediment potential for erosion, with the highest slopes and high sediment load (in terms of tons per acre), east of the alignment and north of The Grove subdivision. The highly erodible soils mapped by NRCS do not give a complete picture of erosion potential in this area. Linda stated that this information will be key for the construction and pointed out the known High Erodible Lands (HELs) areas on the Environmental Resource Map.
 - Robin asked if soils are impacted by the western alignment. David stated that the need for buffers at the stream crossings is the same for both alignments.
 - Don mentioned that the USGS stream gauges might help with runoff calculations.

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- Linda mentioned that there is a buffer width specified in the Normal ordinance, which IDOT will consider. In the ordinance, the lower the stream order, the smaller the buffer width required.
- Angelo asked if Bloomington has an ordinance like Normal. David stated no, but that Bloomington does adopt Normal's ordinances at times.
- David would like to see 100-ft to 150-ft buffers, since this is all open space.
- Angelo asked about the cross section. Linda presented to the FWG the typical cross section of a freeway for discussion. Jerry then explained that the roadway is approximately 135 feet from shoulder to shoulder and extends 30 to 40 feet on each side beyond the shoulder. Linda mentioned that this is a good concept to keep in mind because the open space between the shoulder and the bike trail is one possible location for storm water retention.

5. Habitat Protection

- Tree Replacement
 - According to the IDOT BDE Manual a 1:1 tree replacement is the typical commitment. IDOT has a list of the type of trees to use and native plant seed mix typically used.
 - David would like to see that ratio increase to 2:1 or 3:1, because the trees replaced would be smaller in diameter and don't compare to the wider trees that may be replaced. Robin mentioned that additional trees can serve multiple functions, such as visual screening.

- Fish Passage
 - Jim Novak explained natural bottom culverts: a typical culvert is an 8 foot by 10 foot box, whereas the natural bottom culvert is sunk 2 feet below grade to allow sediment at the bottom of the culvert to create a natural stream bottom for the fish.
 - Robin asked if there are maintenance or ice issues. Jerry responded that he will look into this.
 - Linda informed the FWG that the project team is currently conducting a hydraulic evaluation.
 - One member mentioned that downstream there are more concerns about erosion than fish passage. Fish passage should be considered in the northern part of the project area near Money Creek.

- Miscellaneous

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- Angelo asked where the Franklin ground squirrel trapping locations were on the Environmental Resource Map. He asked whether any squirrels were trapped. Linda responded that none were.
- Angelo asked why mudpuppies and Kirtland snakes were not surveyed by the Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) because he has identified these species in McLean County. Linda responded that they will have to contact the INHS to determine why they didn't survey mudpuppies or Kirtland snakes.

6. Trees and Plant Communities

- Tree preservation
 - Jim explained that the IDOT seed mix is used for many projects. He would recommend using it in the median and shoulders. He said native plants with shorter profiles may be used there for safety. The benefits would be less mowing and aesthetics, but maintenance may have to include burning.
 - Robin asked if IDOT has a list of indigenous trees. Jim said that from his knowledge this is a historic prairie area, so oak savannah would be one consideration. He said that we would have to look at the tree planting and see how the options will work in this area.
 - Robin said some trees are useful for water and that may signify important opportunities.
 - Jim mentioned that conifers are challenging. David suggested Austrian pine as salt tolerant.
 - David said that the biggest concern with prairie is the placement and installation. He stated that he would be concerned with the monitoring of contractors and getting the proper installation.
 - Don asked who typically takes care of the maintenance. Jim said the contractor is responsible for the first and second years.
 - David recommended a performance ecological assessment.
 - Linda said that the team will look into opportunities to use prairie grass.
 - Don asked if the team is considering buffalo grass. Jim said that he would recommend buffalo grass rather than Indian grass or bluestem.
 - Jerry asked about the reach. Jim said that it should affect this, but you can look at different strata when using native vegetation. He recommended using prairie grasses that are shorter near the freeways and bike path and place taller species further back.

7. Stormwater

- Airport Limitations on detention basins

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- David mentioned the airport has 4 or 5 wet-bottom ponds in the property.
- Linda said that there may be wildlife hazard limitations within a two mile radius of Central Illinois Regional Airport (CIRA), which means no open water in that vicinity. The project team will coordinate with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to determine the extent of the limitation but it could be two miles within the glide path.
- Angelo would like to know what species FAA is concerned about because raptors will be in the airport property regardless.
- Bioswales
 - Linda said that the project team would look into bioswales or infiltration. She explained it's a difference of 90% total suspended solids removal vs. 40% removal with dry detention basins. Linda then presented a schematic of a bioswale example and mentioned how there are opportunities to create different vegetation scenarios.
 - Don asked if this is confined to the border. Jim responded by saying along the roadside.
 - David asked what permeable material is used. Jim recalled that it was a CA-6 pebble stone.
 - Don then asked about the slope. Jim mentioned how in a previous project they used ditch checks to remove sediment and localized it. Don asked what the design storm year is. Jim said that it was for a 10-yr storm for the concept drawing. Linda mentioned that this example was a concept to look at soil types, enhance anything where we may be limited to dry detention. These are ideas we still want to investigate, but with the FAA limitation and the project team.
- Detention
 - Don said that his concern was at The Grove development where there will be an immediate impact of how much the city can develop from a stormwater detention based on the highway developments near Ireland Grove Rd. He said that is one of the reasons there are three USGS stream gauges.
 - David agreed and added that this is more of an issue at the eastern alternative compared to the western alternative, and the same concerns are applicable for not only Kickapoo Creek, but Money Creek and Six Mile Creek.
 - Don suggested that there be no increase in runoff from the stream going through The Grove.
- Use of porous or permeable pavement for bike path or shoulder

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- Linda said the best options are the bike path, this is one of the ideas we will be talking to the design team about.
- Miscellaneous
 - A question was asked about when ESH will be constructed. Jerry explained the project team is conducting the environmental assessment – the final phase of preliminary study. Additional steps towards construction include the development of construction documents the purchase of right-of-way, and roadway construction. Currently funding does not exist for any of these subsequent phases. If it did, the project would still be 7-10 years ways from actual construction.

8. Meeting Wrap-Up

Linda thanked everyone for their participation and informed them that rather than schedule another meeting at this time, the project team will collect the FWG comments and proceed with the hydraulic analysis. The project team will inform the FWG of updates by email and will plan a meeting when more hydraulic information is available.