



# Meeting Minutes

<b>Subject:</b>	TAG Meeting
<b>Project:</b>	Village of Richmond
<b>Project Number:</b>	RICH-070421
<b>Meeting Date/Time:</b>	April 24, 2012; 3:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	Village of Richmond

## Attendees:

<b>TAG Members</b>
Mr. Bruce Hunter, Village Business Owner
Mr. Charlie Eldredge, McHenry County Economic Development Corporation
Ms. Charlotte Hollenbach, Village of Richmond Trustee
Ms. Elizabeth Kessler, Executive Director, McHenry County Conservation District
Mr. Ernest Varga, MCDOT
Mr. John Wrzeszcz, Village of Genoa City
Ms. Sandra Fay, McHenry County Board Member
<b>Other Attendees</b>
Mr. Peter Koenig, Village of Richmond
Mr. David Kielpinski Village of Richmond Trustee
Mr. Mark Peterson, IDOT
Mr. Steve Schilke, IDOT
Mr. Sean LaDieu, HRG
Mr. Ed Coggin, HRG
Mr. Dave Johanson, HRG
Mr. Tim Hartnett, HRG

<b>TAG Members Absent</b>
Karen Kabbes, Kabbes Engineering
Rick Gallas, Richmond Township Fire Protection District
Cindy Skrukud, Sierra Club and Friends of the Nippersink
Dave Bockelmann, Richmond Township Highway Commissioner
Jason Osborn, McHenry Co. Division of Transportation Planning
Dr. Dan Oest, Richmond-Burton School District
Scott Lesser, Tamarack Representative
Christopher Hiebert, SEWRPC
Mark Eisenberg, Village of Spring Grove
Soren Hall, US Army Corps of Engineers
Shawn Cirton, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Randy Stowe, Nippersink Creek Watershed Planning Committee
Ed Weskerna, McHenry County Soil and Water Conservation District
Dave Kielpinski, Village of Richmond Trustee

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The meeting began with brief introductions. Sean LaDieu started the presentation by giving a brief review of the project limits, project history, project status and purpose and need. It was noted that the purpose and need was developed from input received from the TAG and public and was concurred by the resource agencies at the September 2010 NEPA merger meeting.

The alternatives analysis was then presented and is based on both the ability to satisfy the purpose and need in addition to the environmental impacts.

## ***Purpose and Need Evaluation Presentation***

The purpose and need is based on four objectives, including:

- Improve regional system linkage and continuity on US 12
- Reduce existing and project traffic congestion and delays through the Village of Richmond
- Improve emergency response and access, safety and community cohesion for pedestrians and residents
- Provide access to the Village of Richmond for regional economic development initiatives

Based on the evaluation of these purpose and need objectives relative to the performance by each of the alternative provided only minor differences. Therefore it was difficult to eliminate alternatives as no single alternative stood out from the others. The two exceptions to this were the Couplet Corridor and the Existing US 12 Corridor.

The Couplet Corridor due to its configuration of one way couplets would increase emergency response times from approximately less than one minute to three to four minutes for destinations just north of the fire and police stations. While this is meant as an example, it would similarly create adverse travel for the business destinations. As one of the purpose and need objectives is to improve emergency response times, it is recommended to eliminate this alternative from further evaluation.

The Existing US 12 Corridor would need a proposed right-of-way width of at least 80 feet, including the area through downtown Richmond. Based on the existing distance between buildings of approximately 65 feet, several business and residences would need to be relocated. In addition, the differing elevations between the roadway and first floor of adjacent structures would make compliance with the American Disabilities Act difficult. As one of the purpose and need objectives is the support and enhancement of Richmond economic development, removal of downtown businesses does not satisfy the purpose and need objectives. It was therefore recommended to eliminate this alternative.

## ***Purpose and Need Evaluation Discussion***

- The Couplets and US Route 12 corridors were eliminated based on purpose and need. There were no objections to these eliminations.
- Charlie Eldredge stated the Route 53 build-out is under study, and will create a major shift of traffic on IL 31 when this happens. He questioned if the CMAP projections would be looking at these increased traffic numbers. Steve Schilke/IDOT stated the plan assumes a no-build, and said after 2020, the numbers should be included in the CMAP projections. He will verify with Rte. 53 team.

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- Dave Kielpinski questioned the cost and amount of studying. Sean LaDieu explained it has been looked at before, but not as a NEPA project.

## ***Environmental Evaluation Presentation***

- Environmental evaluation is based on information obtained to date including recently received Illinois Natural History Survey wetland report.
- Environmental impact evaluation is based on a 300 foot corridor for this preliminary level of impact analysis
- While the environmental evaluation will include all resources, there are a few that vary quite differently between corridors. These include:
  - Relocations
  - Wetlands
  - MCCD
  - Oak trees
- The environmental evaluation will be looked at based on a section basis, as one corridor may perform better at in one location but not another. Therefore, we will look at retaining corridor segments based on the impact analysis.

## ***Southeast Section Presentation***

- Five corridors within SE section (Far East, Solon Mills South, Solon Mills East, North Solon, and Hunt Club)
- Far East and North Solon corridor have the most relocations due to location along existing US 12 in Solon Mills and need for grade-separation at RR tracks.
- Far East and Solon Mills East have 47 acres and 19 acres of MCCD impacts
- Solon Mills South and Solon Mills East have wetland impacts of approximately 6 acres and within wetlands with Floristic Quality Index numbers of more than 40 indicating a high wetland quality.
- Based on the number of relocations, MCCD impacts, and wetland impacts, the Hunt Club corridor is recommended to be considered for further evaluation while the remaining corridors are eliminated for further consideration.

## ***Southeast Section Discussion***

- SL asked if the approach was understood and if it made sense. The group seemed to understand the approach.

## ***Central East Section Presentation***

- Four corridors (Far East, Solon Mills East, North Solon, and Hunt Club)
- North Solon has the most relocations and was removed in SE section
- No MCCD property within section. North Solon touches at north end. The Hackmatack Wildlife Refuge Environmental Assessment identified a “local conservation area” south of IL 173 and west of North Solon Road. It is unknown who owns the site if it is a conservation area.
- Some wetland impacts by all corridors but know of high quality.
- Solon Mills avoids the oak trees stands while the remaining corridors touch on oak tree stands to some degree.

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- Assuming the “local conservation area” needs to be avoided, the recommended alternative is a combination of Hunt Club on the south side to work with this alignment from the southeast section, but move over to North Solon at the north end to avoid the “conservation area”.

## **Central East Section Discussion**

- “Local Conservation Area” needs to be identified. PIN says it is owned by the Hunt Club. Elizabeth Kessler was not aware of a MCCD holding in this area, but would look into it.
- Tim Hartnett/HRG suggested keeping Solon as is. Steve Schilke/IDOT likes this idea and will look into it.
- Eastern bypass would isolate Richmond.
- What about a western bypass? Bruce Hunter said that and eastern bypass would create “no opportunity for a gateway” like Genoa City scenario.
- The discussion turned to the meaning of “gateway”. Bruce Hunter used Galena as an example. “Inviting scenario to the town.” At the location of US 12 and IL 31, using design, signs, and landscaping, a “gateway” feel could be created introducing Richmond. Bruce is concerned that businesses would be impacted. From IL 173, Hebron, IL 31, and US 12, something unique should tell you you’re entering Richmond.
- When looking at traffic counts, the time of day should be factored in, i.e., Sunday traffic is coming home from Wisconsin.
- Elizabeth Kessler said the benefits are no conservation impacts. Thinks the natural areas on the west side are a wonderful asset. The ecotourism potential provides a reason for people to come here.
- **POST MEETING NOTE: Elizabeth Kessler of MCCD provided a map of the area. There are no MCCD or Village of Richmond holdings identified in this area. It was also noted that the Elizabeth Lake area is an IL Nature Preserve.**

## **Northeast Section Presentation**

- Three corridors (Far East, Near East, Hunt Club)
- Residential locations associated with Hunt Club mostly, and Near East. None for Far East.
- MCCD impacts for all, but 7.6 acres and 6.8 acres for Far East and Near East, respectively. Only 0.3 acres for Hunt Club.
- Higher wetland impacts for Far East and Near East compared to almost none for Hunt Club. Far East hits a wetland with FQI above 40.
- Due to impacts associated with all corridors, but a choice between residential impacts or natural area impacts, the choice at this time is to keep all three.
- In addition, the alternative to use existing IL 173 to move traffic to US 12 is an alternative also being considered.

## **Northeast Section Discussion**

- Peter Koenig wanted to confirm that the west end of all these corridors reached US 12.

## **Southwest Section Presentation**

- Four corridors (FAP 420, Solon Mills South, Near West, Keystone)

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- Recommendation was to remove Solon Mills South already as it was removed from the southeast section.
- Relocations will generally occur for all corridors at the intersection of US 12 and IL 31.
- MCCD impacts only occurred for the Solon Mills South corridor.
- Wetland impacts were similar for the three remaining corridors with approximately 3 to 4 acres. None of the wetland impacts were within high quality wetlands.
- Oak stand impacts are similar for all remaining alternatives. Keystone had no oak stand impacts.
- Based on similar impacts, none of the corridors are recommended for removal at this time.

## ***Southwest Section Discussion***

- No discussion developed.

## ***Central West Section***

- Five corridors (FAP 420, Solon Mills South, Near West, Keystone, Railroad)
- Residential impacts are highest along the Keystone corridor as this along existing alignment.
- MCCD impacts are associated with the Near West corridor at the north end.
- Wetland impacts are lowest for the Keystone corridor and highest for the Railroad corridor. The Railroad corridor impacts some higher quality wetlands at the southeast termini north east of the US 12 and IL 31 intersection.
- Oak stand impacts heaviest in this section. Near West had to lowest impacts followed by Keystone. The most occur within the Railroad Corridor.
- Based on the impacts, it is recommended to remove the Keystone Corridor due to the high number of relocations, and remove the Railroad Corridor due to the wetland and oak stand impacts.
- Additionally, the Railroad Corridor crossing of the railroad tracks would be difficult given the angle of approach.
- The remaining corridors include FAP 420, Solon Mills South, and Near West. Since the Solon Mills South corridor is the same as FAP 420, we suggest removing this to simplify the discussion.
- There is still the alternative to use IL 173 to move traffic to west to the US 12 and IL 31 intersection from the north termini of these two alternatives in this section.

## ***Central West Discussion***

It was questioned if extending Hill Road in this section would be considered.

## ***Northwest Presentation***

- Six corridors (FAP 420, Solon Mills South, Keystone, Near West, Railroad, and Existing US 12)
- Remove Keystone from further consideration due to the removal in the central west section due to the number of relocations.
- As expected, the highest number of relocations is associated with Existing US 12.

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- MCCD impacts are highest with the Near West corridor. Keystone corridor had higher impacts but has already been removed. There are no MCCD impacts associated with the remaining corridors as they follow the existing right-of-way already held by IDOT or in the case of Existing US 12, along existing alignment.
- Wetland impacts are similar with the exception of Existing US 12. All wetland impacts in this section are within wetland with FQI values greater than 40, indicating a high quality. Impact acres range between 11 and 12 acres.
- Oak stand impacts occur in the Near West corridor.
- Based on impacts, it is recommended to retain the three remaining corridors, including FAP 420, Near West, and Existing US 12. Since the Solon Mills South and Railroad Corridor share the same corridor as FAP 420, we suggest removing them from further discussion for simplicity.

## ***Northwest Discussion***

- NW – the whole area is high quality wetland. Floodway to be discussed at the next level meeting. Would Richmond embrace this? Charlie wants to see south alternatives.

## ***Central Center Presentation***

- There are generally three corridors including the Couplet, Existing US 12, and Near East.
- The Couplet corridor and Existing US 12 corridor were removed as part of the purpose and need evaluation, leaving the Near East corridor.
- However, the alignment of the Couplet corridor had some advantages.
- A new Central corridor has been added for consideration that is similar in alignment to the Couplet corridor, but does not use the Couplet lane configuration. It would be two lanes in each direction.
- Near East has less relocations compared to the Central corridor due to the use of existing IL 173.
- Near East has more wetland impacts due to the two crossing of the North Branch Nippersink Creek.
- Near East has more oak stand impacts.
- Due to the wetland and oak stand impacts, recommend removing the Near East corridor.

## ***Central Center Discussion***

- The area east of Richmond has soils that may not be suitable for construction.

## ***Intersection of US 12 and IL 173 Discussion***

- The intersection at US 12 and IL 173 was reviewed to evaluate impacts associated with using this intersection with improvements.
- All corridors can be considered to reach IL 173 and then use existing IL 173 to move traffic to US 12.
- The businesses/residences at the intersection would need to be relocated.
- Some trees may also need to be removed.
- Bruce Hunter said it looks like a simple intersection.
- A roundabout concept was discussed.

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- Charlie Eldredge thinks a roundabout would be a problem on weekends, but okay on week days. Bruce said it has to be made attractive.
- Taking trees down changes the character.
- Consideration of this alternative would need to evaluate the impacts associated with relocations versus wetland and MCCD impacts of corridors on new alignment north of IL 173.

## **Resultant Corridors**

- **EAST SIDE:** The resultant corridor starting at US 12 on the south would use Hunt Club up to approximately just south of Hill Road, and then use North Solon Road. Once IL 173 is reached, it could potentially be any of the three alternatives on new alignment north of IL 173 (Far East, Hunt Club, or Near East) or use existing IL 173. If the “local conservation area” is not an issue, then the east corridor could continue using the other corridors to reach IL 173.
- **WEST SIDE:** The resultant corridor is either FAP 420 or Near West starting at the intersection of US 12 and IL 31 and ending at the US 12 interchange in Wisconsin. A subalternative for both of these is to use existing IL 173 to move traffic to the intersection of US 12 and IL 173 rather than new alignment across the North Branch Nippersink Creek.
- **CENTER:** The Central corridor will start from US 12 just north of the railroad underpass. Once at IL 173, the alternatives exist to use existing IL 173 to US 12 or use the Near West of Hunt Club corridor north of IL 173.

## **Next Steps**

- Evaluation of resultant corridors
- Closer review of travel performance, geometry and constraints, parcel acquisitions and severances
- Closer look and environmental impacts and additional resources, such as floodplains
- Public input at public meetings
- Resource agency review and eventual concurrence.

## **Additional Comments**

- Dave Kielpinski questioned all the studying and why cities in southern Illinois have no traffic but 3 lane roads.
- Steve asked about group's willingness to compromise.
- Dave Johanson stated we are not at a point of compromise yet, we are simply reviewing the options presented.
- The Resource Group Meeting in June for their consensus on the process. Assuming all goes well, the project could move forward then. Summer 2013 is the target.
- Public meeting to be held July/August.
- USEPA/USACOE concurrence is needed too.
- Charlie Eldredge said in March, a Richmond Representative would be in the Senate.
- Someone suggested getting a 'ballpark figure' of each alternative after the next meeting.
- Presentation to be posted on website.

*These minutes are assumed correct unless the author is notified within seven calendar days of publication.*



# Meeting Minutes

**Distribution:** All attendees  
Akram Chaudhry

**By:** David Johanson

**Date of Publication:**

**Attachment:** Sign-in sheet

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