



STUDY

## Harlem Avenue between 63<sup>rd</sup> and 65<sup>th</sup>

Community Advisory Group Meeting #1

January 24, 2017

Bedford Park Public Library



# Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome/Introductions
2. Study Process
3. Community Advisory Group (CAG) Overview
4. Study Overview
5. Questions/Break
6. Public Meeting #1 Review
7. Facilitated Discussion
8. Next Steps

A large, light gray, stylized number '42' is positioned in the background of the slide. The '4' is composed of several thick, parallel lines, and the '2' is also formed by similar thick, curved lines. The text 'Welcome and Introductions' is centered over this graphic.

# **Welcome and Introductions**

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# Project Team Introductions



**Jessica Feliciano**

Project Manager

**Anna Kutryn**

Project Engineer

**Steve Schilke**

Major Projects

Unit Head

## SUBCONSULTANTS

Blue Daring

**Michael Baker**

INTERNATIONAL

**Wendy Vachet**

Environmental & Public  
Involvement Lead

**Isaac Yun**

Project Engineer

**Jim Peyton**

Environmental Support



## CAG Introductions



Please stand and state your name,  
affiliation, and interest in the project.



# Study Process

**Project Development Process**

**Phase I Study Process**

**NEPA Process**

**Context Sensitive Solutions**



IDOT projects are typically implemented in three distinct phases.

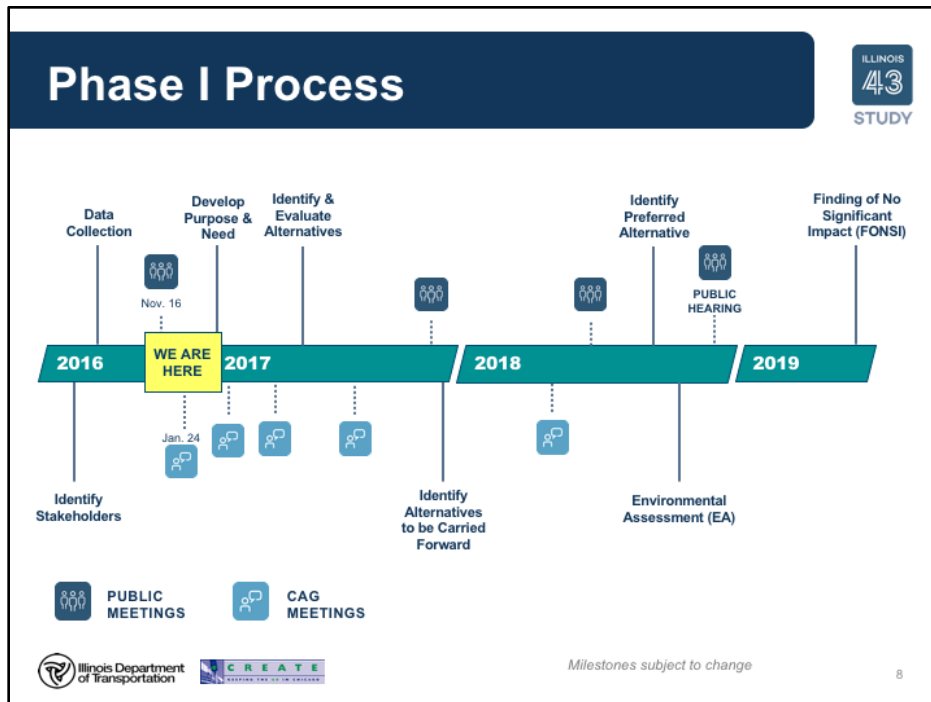
Phase I is often referred to as the preliminary engineering and environmental studies. It involves analyzing existing and future conditions, defining the Purpose and Need for an improvement, and developing and evaluating improvement alternatives. Phase I concludes with the selection of the preferred alternative.

Phase II is the design and land acquisition stage. During this phase, plans are developed and any necessary right of way is acquired.

When all Phase II activities are complete and funding for construction is secured, we begin Phase III – project construction! This is the phase which is most visible to the public.

At this time, only Phase I is funded.



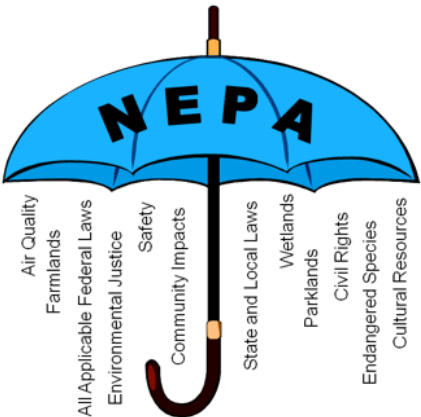


Currently, the study is in the very early stages of the Phase I process. We are proceeding with stakeholder identification and data collection in order to analyze and understand existing and future conditions within the study area.

## National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969


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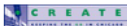
- Federal law that outlines policies to protect the environment
- Must consider the effects on the quality of human environment
- The IL 43 study will adhere to NEPA



The umbrella graphic has 'NEPA' written on its canopy. Below the canopy, a list of environmental factors is written vertically, as if being protected by the umbrella:

- Air Quality
- Farmlands
- All Applicable Federal Laws
- Environmental Justice
- Safety
- Community Impacts
- State and Local Laws
- Wetlands
- Parklands
- Civil Rights
- Endangered Species
- Cultural Resources

 Illinois Department of Transportation

 CREATE  
KEEPING TRAILS IN EXCELLENCE

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The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, often referred to as NEPA, is a federal law that outlines policies to protect the environment.

In enacting NEPA, Congress recognized that nearly all federal activities affect the environment in some way and mandated that before federal agencies make decisions, they must consider the effects of their actions on the quality of the human environment.

The IL 43 study will adhere to the NEPA process.

# **Community Advisory Group**

**Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)**

**Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP)**

**Meeting Goals**

**Responsibilities**

**General Understanding of Agreement**

**Ground Rules**

## Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)



### The CSS Process makes sure...

- Scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources are considered
- Stakeholders are engaged
- Stakeholders' views are considered







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IDOT uses the Context Sensitive Solutions Process or CSS to make sure...

The project keeps scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources in mind while improving safety and mobility.

Stakeholders are engaged in a collaborative way.


And Stakeholder's views are carefully considered


## Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP)




**The SIP provides a framework for implementing a meaningful plan and engaging stakeholders. It is publicly available and in it you'll find:**

- A list of stakeholders
- The roles and responsibilities of participants
- A description of ways stakeholders can participate
- A tentative schedule of public involvement activities







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A stakeholder involvement plan – or SIP – was developed to provide a guide for implementing a meaningful public involvement plan for the study and a framework for engaging stakeholders.

The Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP) includes:

A list of stakeholders

The roles and responsibilities of participants

A description of ways stakeholders can participate

And a tentative schedule of public involvement activities

## Meeting Goals



- Introduce the project and study process.
- Establish ground rules and operating guidelines.
- Understand the CAG role in the CSS process.
- Begin building a general understanding agreement framework.
- Set CAG Meeting Schedule with preferred meeting dates/times.
- Understand the Community Context.
- Understand traffic, rail, safety, community, and economic needs.
- Prepare Problem Statement based on the outcome of the meeting.



# Responsibilities



## **ATTEND**

CAG and public meetings

## **SUPPORT**

the CSS process

## **IDENTIFY**

community, environmental,  
economic, and transportation  
issues and resources

## **REVIEW**

study data and  
technical analyses

## **SHARE**

information with  
other stakeholders

## **ENCOURAGE**

broader community input



## General Understanding of Agreement



**A general understanding of agreement has been reached when the stakeholders agree that their input has been heard and duly considered and the process as a whole was fair.**

The intent is to maximize stakeholder participation and ownership of project decisions. General agreement may or may not be achieved on every issue.





## CAG Ground Rules (1 of 2)



- Stakeholder input is considered to yield the best solutions to problems.
- Input from all participants is valued and considered.
- All participants must keep an open mind and participate openly, honestly, and respectfully.
- All participants should work collaboratively and cooperatively to seek a general understanding of agreement. Once a general understanding of agreement is reached on a topic, it will not be readdressed.
- The project must progress at a reasonable pace, based on the project schedule.



## CAG Ground Rules (2 of 2)



- The IDOT and Federal Highway Administration will serve as the lead agencies and make final project decisions.
- Meetings will be documented and meeting summaries will be made available to the public
- All participants in the process must treat each other with respect and dignity.
- Participants should express their ideas, feelings, and concerns so that the group can consider them during the study.
- Participants should support the guidance provided by the CAG facilitator.



# Study Overview

**Study Location**


**Project History**

**Traffic Volumes**


**Crash Analysis**

## Study Location


The study is located along IL 43 between 63<sup>rd</sup> and 65<sup>th</sup> Streets within the City of Chicago, the Village of Bedford Park, and the Village of Summit in Cook County, IL.



★ Study Location



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The study is located along IL 43 between 63<sup>rd</sup> and 65<sup>th</sup> Streets within the City of Chicago, the Village of Bedford Park, and the Village of Summit in Cook County, IL.

## Previous Studies



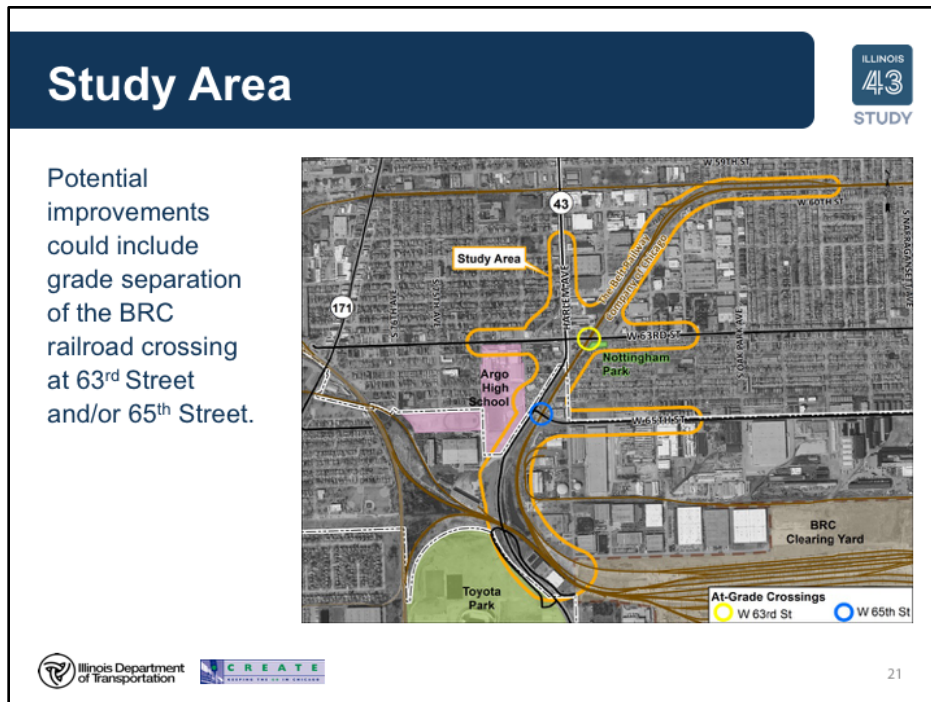
### 2005

The Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program conducted a feasibility study of this area, which was identified by CREATE as GS1.

### 2011

An addendum to the project proposed grade separations at both 63<sup>rd</sup> and 65<sup>th</sup> Streets.






Potential improvements could include grade separation of the BRC railroad crossing at 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and/or 65<sup>th</sup> Street.

## BRC and the BRC Clearing Yard



**The study area is located Northwest of the BRC Clearing Yard which is the largest switching railroad terminal in the United States.**

*The clearing yard is used by BNSF, CN, CP, CSX, NS, and UP railroads.*

The Belt Railway dispatches more than **8,400 railcars** per day and is able to classify between **40 and 50 miles of train** every 24 hours.



Source: Belt Railway Company of Chicago

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STUDY

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The study area is located just to the northwest of the Clearing Yard which is owned and operated by the Belt Railway Company of Chicago or BRC

The BRC Clearing Yard is the largest switching intermediate railroad terminal in the United States and is used by multiple railroads.

The Belt Railway dispatches more than 8,400 railcars per day and is able to classify between 40 and 50 miles of train, or groups of rail vehicles, every 24 hours.

## At-Grade Crossings



- 2 tracks
- The Belt's Clearing Yards span 5.5 miles
- 300 miles of switching tracks
- Trains operate at 10-25 mph

IL 43 & 63<sup>rd</sup> Street



IL 43 & 65<sup>th</sup> Street

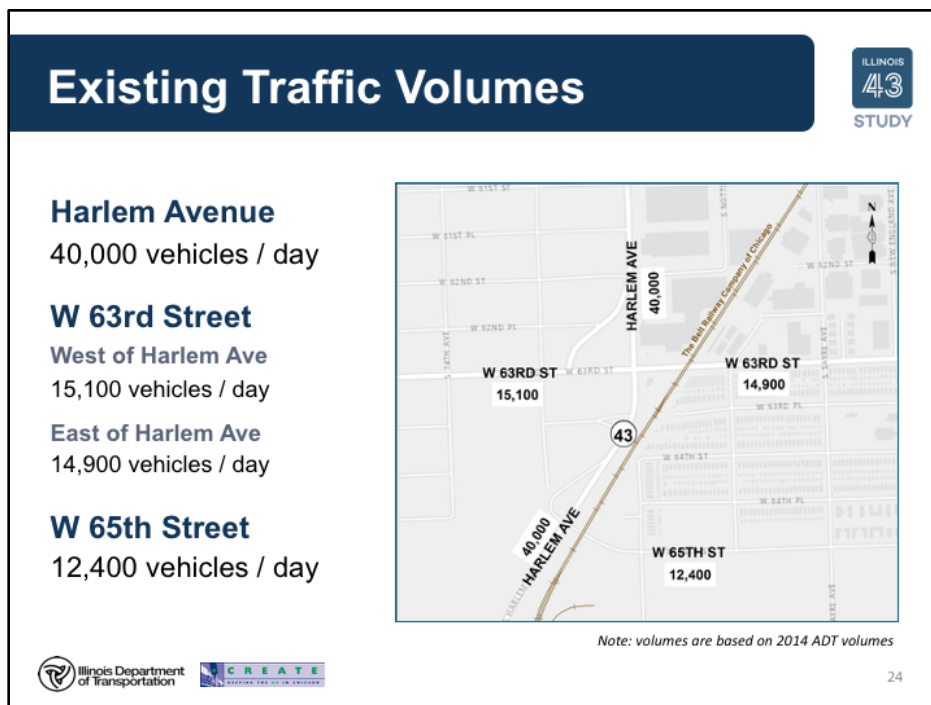


Source: Belt Railway Company of Chicago

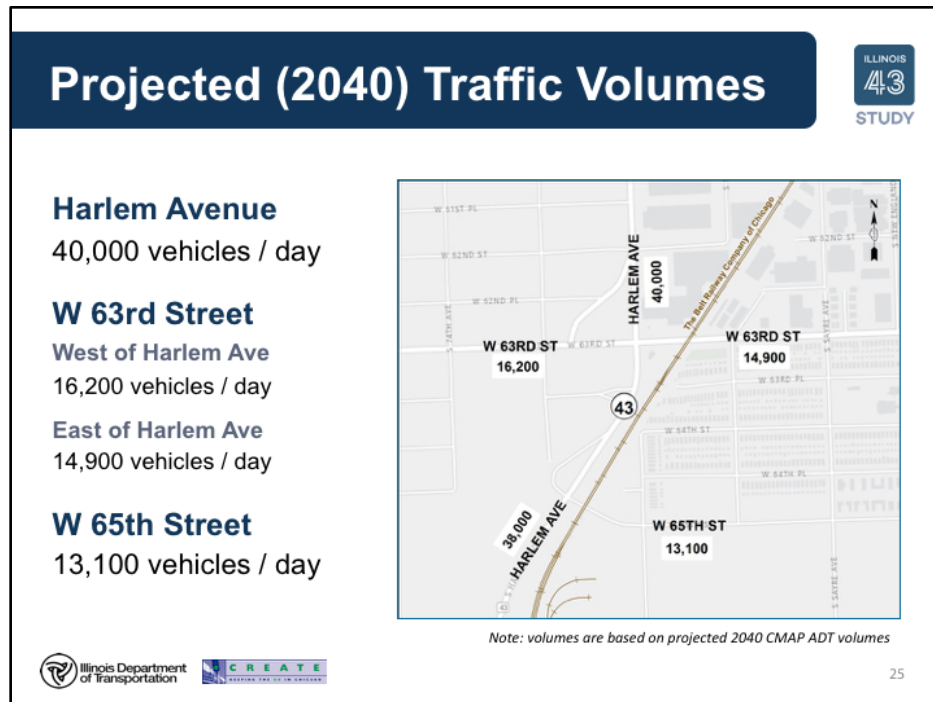
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The railroad crossing at the intersections of Harlem Ave with 63<sup>rd</sup> and 65<sup>th</sup> Streets has two tracks. The Belt's Clearing Yards span a 5.5 mile distance and has more than 300 miles of switching tracks, allowing it to interchange with every railroad serving the Chicago rail hub. The trains are operating on the tracks at 10-25 miles per hour.

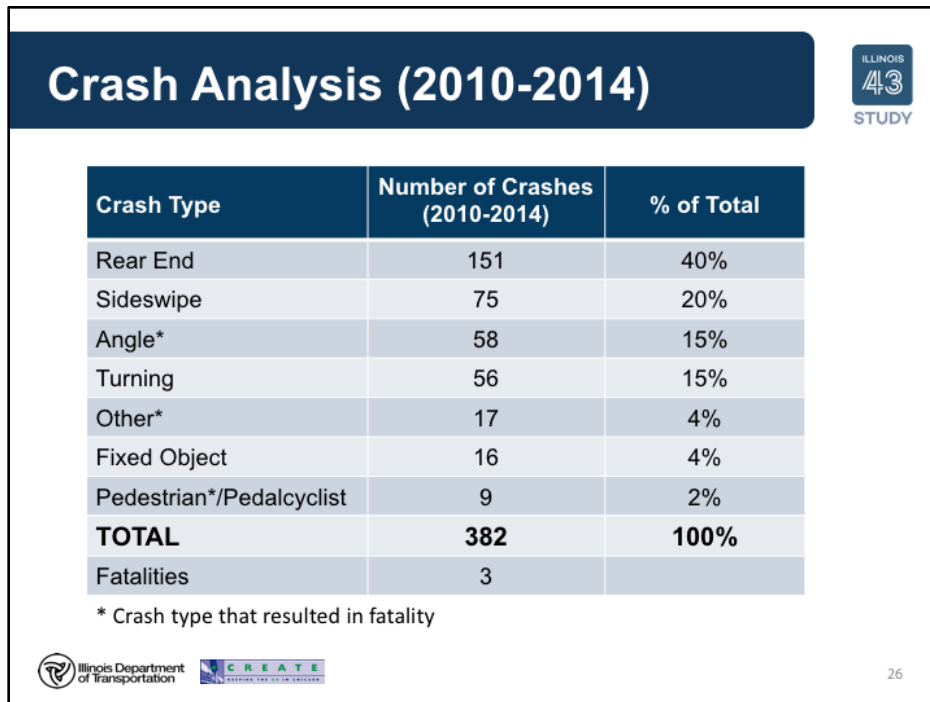




This is a busy area! 40,000 vehicles use Harlem Avenue every day. More than 14,000 vehicles per day travel along 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and more than 12,000 travel along 65<sup>th</sup> Street.



Projected traffic is expected to grow by 1.2% within the Project Study Area. Nearly half of the roadway segments experience no change in traffic demand, with most of those roadways being high volume segments. However, the current and future presence of train traffic at the 63rd Street and 65th Street BRC crossing, will continue to result in lengthy vehicular delays.



With high traffic volumes, areas affected by freight and recreational uses typically experience a higher crash frequency. A total of 382 crashes occurred over four years with 40% of them being rear-end collisions. 59% of those rear-end collisions occurred at the intersections of 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and 65<sup>th</sup> Street with IL 43. Rear end collisions are often attributed to congested conditions. There were 3 fatalities between 2010 and 2014 with 2 of those occurring at the intersection of Harlem Avenue and 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and 1 occurring along Harlem Avenue between 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and 65<sup>th</sup> Street.



**Questions**

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# **Public Information Meeting Results**

**Public Information Meeting #1 Summary**

**Comments Overview**

**Preliminary Community Context Audit Results**

## Public Information Meeting #1



**The first public information meeting was held on Wednesday, November 16, 2016 at the Summit Park District.**

The meeting was held in an open house format where attendees were asked to view a 10-minute presentation, view exhibit boards, and discuss the study with the project team. Attendees were encouraged to provide feedback on an aerial roll map.

**105**

**People attended  
the meeting**

**8**

**Comments  
were received\***

**58**

**Community context  
audit forms were  
received\***



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\*between November 16<sup>th</sup>–December 1<sup>st</sup>

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## PIM #1 Comments Overview



### Common comment themes include...

- Grade separating at both 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and 65<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Concerns about relocation and construction timeline.
- Utilizing Indiana Harbor Belt RR tracks to the north.
- Eliminating throughway traffic on Nottingham Ave.
- Expediting the process.
- Expanding the notification area.



# Community Context Audit



**The CCA is an effective tool  
for making good decisions.  
It helps us:**

**Identify** various community  
characteristics

**Develop** a Problem Statement

**Lead** to a quality design

## TOPICS COVERED

- Economics
- Environment
- Aesthetics
- Right-of-way Constraints
- Land use
- Social & Cultural
- Mobility
- Safety & health





## Community Context Audit Results



**A third of the respondents work  
in Bedford Park, but majority  
reside in the City of Chicago.**



*Preliminary Survey Results November 16 – December 15*

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## Community Context Audit Results



### TRAVEL FREQUENCY

**45 %**

of respondents report **traveling through the study area multiple times a day**, mostly to get to and from work.

**60 %**

of respondents **encounter delays due to the train** traffic at these intersections.



Preliminary Survey Results November 16 – December 15

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## Community Context Audit Results



### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**43 %**

of respondents **travel to the study area to shop**

**85 %**

of respondents **feel improvements would benefit them** and more than half feel it will lead to economic development



Preliminary Survey Results November 16 – December 15

## Community Context Audit Results



### AESTHETICS

45%

of respondents report that **aesthetics are very important** within the study area.



Preliminary Survey Results November 16 – December 15

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# Community Context Audit Results



## INFRASTRUCTURE FEATURES

### High importance infrastructure comments



The sidewalks are in poor condition



The street lighting in the study area is in poor condition



Traffic signals and pedestrian accommodations need to be improved



Preliminary Survey Results November 16 – December 15

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## Community Context Audit Results



### INFRASTRUCTURE FEATURES



**75%**

of respondents feel bicycle lanes  
and multi-use paths are needed in  
the study area.



Preliminary Survey Results November 16 – December 15

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# Facilitated Discussion

**Group Exercise #1** *Community Context*

**Group Exercise #2** *Problem Statement*

## Exercise 1 Community Context



**Identify community and economic issues/needs that should be addressed by:**

- 1** Understanding an appreciation for community assets and how those relate to project-related concerns.
- 2** Identification of social, economic, transportation, safety, accessibility, and environmental issues to resolve.





## Group Exercise Process



- 1 Meet in a group and identify issues and concerns
- 2 Reveal group results
- 3 Draft a **Problem Statement** using issues and concerns  
*This will assist in the development of the **Purpose and Need Statement***



# Identify Issues and Concerns



## Individual

List transportation related  
issues and concerns



## Small Group

Identify prominent  
issues and concerns



## Large Group

Discuss results in  
large group forum



## Exercise 2 Problem Statement



### What is a Problem Statement?

- Summarizes the most important issues and concerns within the study area
- States the important aspects of the study area
- Provides focus in developing the more detailed Purpose and Need Statement



## Exercise 2 Problem Statement



### FORMULATE PROBLEM STATEMENT

**“The transportation problem(s) on IL 43 (Harlem Ave.) between 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and 65<sup>th</sup> Street to be solved by this project is/are...**

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**In addition,** 

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## Exercise 2 Problem Statement



### EXAMPLE

**The transportation problems along Wood Street/Ashland Avenue, from south of US Route 6 (159<sup>th</sup> Street) to 138<sup>th</sup> Street, include:**

- Inadequate pedestrian/bicycle accommodations
- Poor drainage/storm water management and roadway conditions
- Safety concerns
- Traffic operational issues, especially at intersections and railroad crossings.

*Additional items that need to be addressed include inadequate and substandard public infrastructure/utilities, insufficient support of community and economic development, and environmental concerns.*



## **Next Steps**

**Purpose and Need Statement**  
**Future Meetings**

## Purpose and Need



The problem statement will be used as the basis for the development of the project purpose and need statement.

### The Purpose and Need:

**Provides context and criteria** for the development and screening of alternatives to the proposed action.

**Reflects transportation needs, environmental and community values.**

**Influences the rest of the project development process**, including the range of alternatives studied and, ultimately, the preferred alternative.



## CAG Meeting #2



- 1 Determine project vision
- 2 Provide input to Purpose and Need
- 3 Establish criteria for alternatives
- 4 Identify initial alternatives that address the community and transportation needs







# Questions

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# Thank You!

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