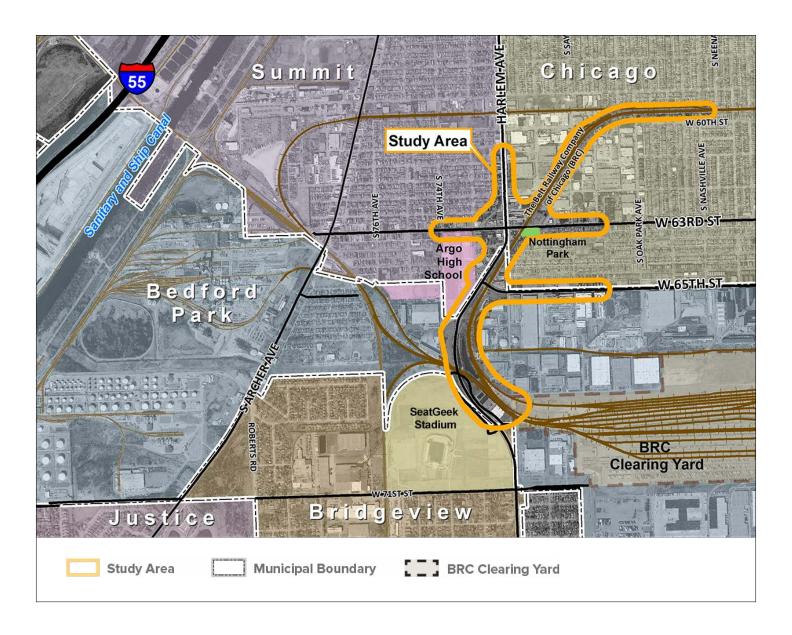


Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Studies

Public Outreach Newsletter | December 2021



The IL 43 study began in 2016 to evaluate a grade separation of the Belt Railway Company of Chicago (BRC) railroad crossings at 63rd Street and/or 65th Street.

This newsletter provides an update on the project, presents the results from the final round of Virtual Public Outreach, and gives an overview of the preferred alternative. Visit the project website at www.il43study.org to view detailed exhibits and learn more about the project's process.



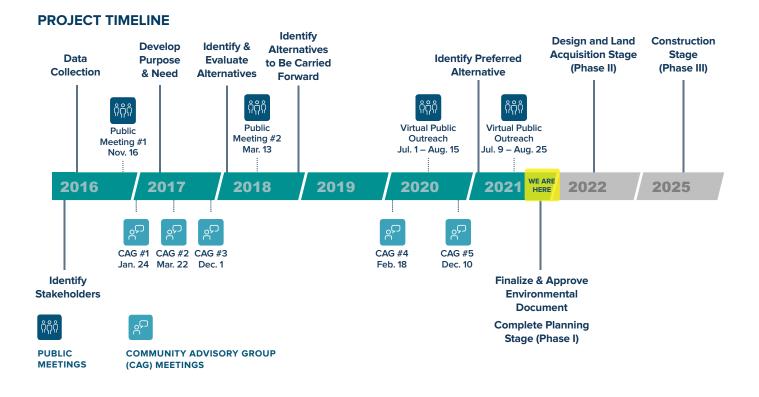


PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The IL 43 study follows the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process to gather public input.

Throughout this project, the study team has held **2** Public Meetings and conducted **2** Virtual Public Outreach periods due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the broader public engagement efforts, the study team held **5** Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meetings, **40** One-on-One Meetings with local elected officials and other stakeholders, and **12** Project Study Group meetings with IDOT and FHWA.

All public meeting summaries can be viewed at il43study.org/documents



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

IDOT typically implements projects in three distinct phases.

This improvement is included in the Department's FY 2022-2027 Proposed Highway Improvement Program. Current engineering efforts are targeted to enable a contract letting in the later years of the multi-year program contingent upon plan readiness, land acquisition, and funding availability through future annual legislative appropriations.



Final Virtual Public Outreach

(July 9, 2021 - August 25, 2021)

The purpose of this final Virtual Public Outreach was to provide an overview on the project's progress, present the preferred alternative, and obtain public input.

Details about the project's process and preferred alternative were shared on the project's interactive website. The public was also given an opportunity to provide feedback during the Virtual Public Forum on August 4, 2021.

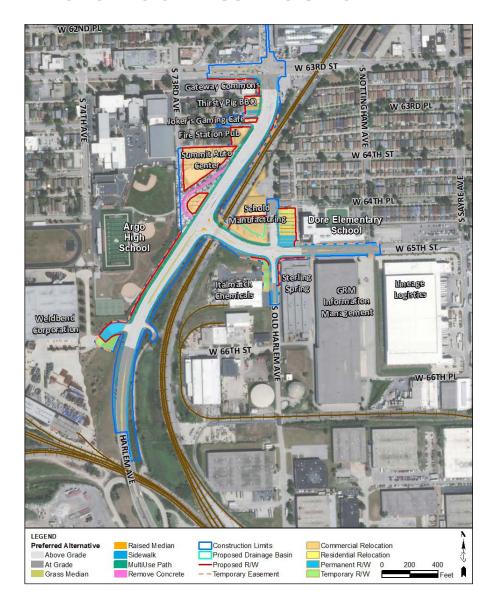
To notify the public of the project's virtual public outreach efforts:

- Advertisements were placed in **5** newspapers
- 700 postcards were mailed to residents, businesses, local elected officials, and public agencies
- 400 people were emailed a notification
- 12 letters were mailed to property owners being impacted



RESULTS 31 people opted to sign in on the website **529** pageviews 1,092 video impressions 332 exhibit clicks Virtual public forum held with **147** registrants and 92 attendees One-on-one meetings with local businesses, schools, municipalities, and other public agencies 55 comments recieved

Preferred Alternative



Based on public input received and in an effort to minimize impacts, the study team recommends constructing a bridge on 65th Street over the Belt Railway Company (BRC) railroad; raising IL 43 (Harlem Avenue) to provide an elevated intersection at 65th Street; bicycle, pedestrian, and traffic safety improvements at IL 43 (Harlem Avenue) and 63rd Street, and drainage improvements.

IL 43 (HARLEM AVENUE) AND 63RD STREET IMPROVEMENTS

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

- High-visibility crosswalks
- Pedestrian refuge island
- · Traffic signal interconnection with BRC
- Corner radius reduction to shorten crosswalks
- Increase of left turn storage capacity
- Increase of right turn storage capacity



NEW DRAINAGE CORRIDOR



A dedicated drainage outfall for the proposed roadway improvement is included as part of the preferred alternative.

The addition of a drainage corridor is based on feedback received from the public to address current localized flooding concerns and account for future redevelopment needs.

Project drainage improvements include:

- Disconnecting the project area from the current 100+ year-old combined sewer system
- Adding a separate storm sewer system that possesses sufficient capacity to collect and convey stormwater through the project area to discharge into the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal

ADDITIONAL IMPROVEMENTS

The following multi-modal, safety and traffic improvements also are proposed:

IL 43 (Harlem Avenue)

- Multi-use path along the west side
- Sidewalk connecting 65th Street to 63rd Street

65th Street

• Dedicated left turn lanes

General project area improvements

- High-visibility crosswalks and pedestrian refuge islands
- ADA compliant intersections

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Throughout this process, the study team adhered to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, NEPA, and conducted several analyses to minimize impacts. Property owners affected by the impacts have been notified.

Property Displacements		Property Impacts	
Residential	7	Permanent Right of Way for Structure	32 parcels
Business	5	Temporary Right of Way during Construction	5 parcels
Wetland Impacts 0.8 acres		Schools, Parks, & Historic Property Impacts NONE	

As part of this project, a noise analysis was conducted to evaluate noise levels.

The study team
determined no
substantial changes
in traffic-generated
noise levels are
expected and noise
walls are not required.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

During the final Virtual Public Outreach comment period, the public had an opportunity to provide comments via mail and email. Verbal and chat box comments were also made during the Virtual Public Forum. Comments and questions received were related to project timeline and next steps, property impacts, construction impacts and detours, and flooding.

How long will the project take to complete?

The study team anticipates to finalize technical reviews and project report by the end of 2021, which will complete the Planning Stage (Phase I). Design Stage and Land Acquisition (Phase II) is anticipated to begin in 2022 and typically takes 24-36 months to complete. Project Construction (Phase III) will begin once Phase II is complete.

What improvements are being made to ensure the area doesn't experience flooding?

To mitigate the increase in proposed peak runoff and to address existing flooding issues, two surface detention ponds will be constructed:

- One (1) Northwest of the intersection of 65th Avenue and Old Harlem Avenue
- One (1) Southwest of the intersection of Archer Avenue and Archer Road

What is the process for land acquisition?

The process for land acquisition is described on Page 7 of this newsletter.

Will there be noise and detour impacts during construction?

During the closure of 65th Street at Harlem Avenue, local traffic is proposed to utilize Sayre Avenue, 63rd Street, 65th St, Narragansett Avenue, and 68th Street to navigate around the workzone.

Truck traffic from/to the I-55/W Archer Avenue interchange are to utilize a truck detour along W Archer Avenue/55th Street, Central Avenue, and 65th Street. Neither the local detour nor the truck detour includes any low clearance structures or load limited bridges.

The north leg of Old Harlem Avenue will be completely closed. The south leg of Old Harlem will be closed to through traffic. Access to local business is anticipated to be maintained and will be coordinated further during the design stage. It is anticipated that a proposed connection of Sayre Avenue will be constructed prior to the construction of the grade separation.

Trucks and equipment used for construction will produce noise that may affect some residents and residential area activities during the construction period. Impacts resulting from construction noise are likely to occur during daylight hours and will be temporary.

To view all individual comments received during the official Virtual Public Outreach comment period, **click here**.

NEXT STEPS

The study team will finalize technical reviews and project reports to complete the Planning Stage (Phase I) and begin the Design and Land Acquisition Stage (Phase II).

IDOT has selected a consultant for Phase II.

LAND ACQUISITION

The Illinois Department of Transportation employs three types of land acquisition. The first is fee simple taking, or the acquisition of all rights and interest of real property. The second type of acquisition involves a permanent easement or use of the property, where underlying ownership is retained by the property owners, but access is provided for maintenance of facilities such as storm sewers and outfall ditches. The third type is a temporary construction easement, where access is required only during construction for grading work, sidewalk or driveway construction, light pole relocation and other minor improvements.

During the Phase II process, IDOT will continue working with property owners affected by the impacts to address specific property-related issues. The process for land acquisition is as follows:

1

Determine
Ownership and
Prepare Plat
of Survey

2

Prepare Independent Appraisal 3

Negotiations with Property Owners

4

Court Proceedings, if necessary

Land acquisition is required for this project. The Department's procedures to acquire property occur during the Design and Land Acquisition Stage (Phase II) of the project process. Affected property owners will be notified of the proposed acquisition via certified mail. Property owners will be compensated for any property acquired.

STAY INVOLVED

To further discuss the project with the study team:



Email us at info@il43study.org



Submit a comment through the project's website at il43study.org/contact-us



Mail a letter to the Illinois Department of Transportation:

Illinois Department of Transportation 201 W. Center Court Schaumburg, IL 60196-1096 Attn: Bureau of Programming

Sagar Sonar