

# PRAIRIE PARKWAY – CORRIDOR PROTECTION

## SYNOPSIS

June 26, 2007

### Overview of Project

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) initiated a corridor feasibility study on March 19, 1999 as a proactive and responsible approach to address the growing demand for a north-south transportation corridor connecting Interstate 80 and Interstate 88 in the far western Chicago suburbs. It was recognized that if a corridor was not protected soon, the ability to reasonably create a corridor without considerable social and economic or environmental impacts would be lost.

### Corridor Protection Basis and Overview:

Corridor protection is a legal process that was added to the Illinois Highway Code (605 ILCS 5/4-510) in 1967. Corridor protection was designed to “establish...the approximate locations and widths of the rights-of-way for future additions to the State highway system to inform the public and prevent costly and conflicting development of the land involved.”

The benefits of Corridor Protection include:

- Transportation agency involvement. Agencies can plan for the future knowing that right-of-way will be available by preventing costly and conflicting development.
- Traveling-public involvement. The traveling public is provided the opportunity to have transportation facilities available when they are needed.
- Cost efficiency. Future public facilities can be delivered more cost effectively.
- Local government involvement. Local bodies can develop land use plans with the knowledge of future transportation corridors.
- Property owner involvement. Property owners have knowledge that allows them to make informed decisions about affected property.
- Commercial and industrial planning. Businesses and industries can plan for future infrastructure that will service their needs.
- Environmental protection. Impacts to the environment will be minimized along the selected corridor. Without this protection, development may occur that could cause the corridor to be sited in a more environmentally sensitive area or needlessly involve additional developed areas.

In general, once a corridor is established, IDOT will make a survey and prepare a map showing the corridor and approximate right-of-way needed for the future highway addition. This map will be made available to the public and show the property lines and owners of record of all land (most current information available at the county assessors office) that will be needed for the future additions. After a Public Hearing(s) is held, the map with any changes resulting from the Public Hearing(s) will be approved and filed in the office of the recorder in all counties in which the corridor lies.

After the approved map is filed and public notice is given, all owners of record of the land identified within the corridor will be notified individually within 60 days. The land is then considered protected on which no one shall incur development costs or place improvements upon or under the ground without first giving 60 days notice to IDOT. IDOT has 45 days to decide whether or not to purchase the property and an additional 120 days to complete the purchase or start condemnation proceedings. Further information regarding the corridor protection procedures can be found in 605 ILCS 5/4-510.

### **Original Corridor Protection Recorded – July 24, 2002**

The corridor protection study began in March of 1999 as a proactive approach to evaluating the ability to develop a north-south transportation corridor between Interstate 80 and Interstate 88. This study was initiated because of concerns that development patterns and increasing travel demands could overload the existing transportation network in Grundy, Kendall, and western Kane counties. Through that study, several north-south corridors were investigated that would connect the major transportation routes of I-80 and I-88, yet still provide access to existing state and US highways. The corridor protection study examined known constraints, including urban areas and existing development, planned growth, floodways, wetlands, parks and preserves, and threatened and endangered species to name a few.

Based on this analysis, IDOT elected to use the Corridor Protection process to select a possible transportation corridor and protect that corridor while it was still reasonably undeveloped and open. In this manner, impacts to future developed areas would be minimized and private and public planners would have time to develop plans that would complement such a facility. A public hearing was held on Dec. 11, 2001 to present three corridors to the public for their review and comment. On July 24, 2002, the Illinois Secretary of Transportation signed the Record of Hearing for the Prairie Parkway Corridor Protection approving the modified Central Corridor. This Corridor Protection Map was recorded in Grundy, Kendall, and Kane Counties.

### **Proposed Corridor Protection Amendments – June 2007**

The Corridor Protection legislation allows IDOT to make changes in the map from time to time recognizing that new information may result in a need for modifications that are in best interest of the public and natural environment. During the studies that led to the recording of the Central Corridor, IDOT recognized the need to take a comprehensive look at the transportation system of the study area. A formal detailed Preliminary Engineering Study for this purpose was proposed by IDOT, and federal funding was obtained. On December 20, 2002, IDOT announced the beginning of the Phase I Preliminary Environmental and Engineering Study to review and refine the existing corridor and identify an alternative. This study was not bound by the results of the previous Corridor Protection Study and meticulously followed the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process.

The NEPA process involved:

- Identifying the purpose and need
- Establishing Logical termini and Independent Utility
- Filing a Notice of Intent
- Continuous and comprehensive public outreach
- Identification and evaluation of alternatives
- Preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
- Selection of a preferred alternative

Based on the findings of the project's statement of purpose and need presented in the DEIS, and consideration of all public and stakeholder comments, IDOT and FHWA identified Alternative B5 with IL-47 Widening as the preferred alternative and intend to identify it as such in the FEIS. The selection of Alternative B5 with IL-47 Widening as the preferred alternative was based upon:

- Local and other government support,
- Meeting the purpose and need of the project,
- Detailed location studies, environmental impact review and a study of the resources affected.

Alternative B5 with IL-47 widening utilized some portions of the existing protected corridor; however, over half of the B5 freeway "footprint" as presented in the DEIS fell outside the protected corridor. Upon the selection of the preferred alternative, a decision was made by IDOT to amend the existing protected corridor to accurately reflect changes/modifications associated with preferred alternative alignment in the corridor.

#### **2007 Corridor Protection Amendment Steps:**

With the determination to amend the existing protected corridor, the corridor protection process was initiated as prescribed in 605 ILCS 5/4-510. This process involves:

- Public hearings – Public hearings scheduled in or near the counties where the corridor protection is proposed and corridor protection maps made available to the public 15 days prior to the scheduled hearings. Hearing notices are published in local papers 30 days prior and letters mailed to directly affected land owners. Any interested person or their representative may be heard at the hearing, and all testimony will be included in the official record of hearing.
- 30 day comment period – written comments will be accepted by IDOT for 30 days following the public hearing to be included as part of the official record.
- Final revisions per comments – Revisions to the amended protected corridor may be made if new information is introduced as a result of the hearing process warrants additional revisions.

- Approval and signature by Illinois Secretary of Transportation.
- Public notice and filing - The approved corridor protection maps are filed in the office of the recorder in each county where corridor protection is proposed. Public notice of the approval and filing is given in each county affected.
- Notify affected property owners – Affected property owners will be notified by registered mail within 60 days of the filing. Because this filing is an adjustment to an existing protected corridor, the affected properties will fall in three categories. Those that:
  - were in the 2002 protected corridor and are *still needed* for corridor protection,
  - were in the 2002 protected corridor and are *no longer needed* for corridor protection,
  - are *newly affected* by the proposed amendments to the 2002 corridor.
- Property acquisition would occur at the time funding is appropriated for the purpose of the Prairie Parkway project. Limited property acquisition may also occur if IDOT needs to protect property from imminent development that would either make future acquisition much more costly to the taxpayers or otherwise place an undue hardship on existing and future residents or businesses.

**Where to find information:**

Corridor Protection information is available for inspection in advance of the Public Hearings beginning on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2007, as well as after the hearings, at the following locations: at the IDOT District 3 Office, 700 East Norris Drive, Ottawa, IL; at the IDOT District 1 Office, 201 West Center Court, Schaumburg, IL; and at the office of Smith Engineering, 759 John Street, Yorkville, IL. This and other information about the Prairie Parkway Study also can be viewed on-line by visiting [www.prairie-parkway.com](http://www.prairie-parkway.com).

**Public hearings scheduled:**

Date:	Wednesday, July 11, 2007	Thursday, July 12, 2007
Time:	5:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.*	5:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.*
Location:	Yorkville High School 797 Game Farm Rd. Yorkville, Illinois	Kaneland John Shields Elementary School 85 South Main Street Sugar Grove, Illinois

\* Presentation and question and answer session at 6:30 p.m.