

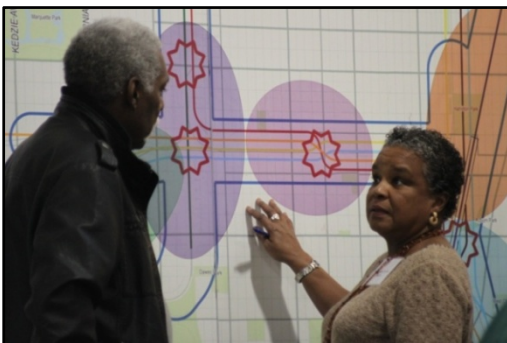


Range of Alternatives Public Meeting Summary Report 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project

October 27, 2011 – 4:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Freedom Temple Church of God in Christ

1479 W. 74th Street, Chicago, Illinois



INTRODUCTION

The 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (75th St. CIP) is the largest project in the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program. It is located in the Chicago neighborhoods of Ashburn, Englewood, Auburn Gresham, and West Chatham along two passenger and four freight rail lines.

The 75th St. CIP team held public meetings in June 2011 to receive comments and input from the public on the Purpose and Need for the 75th St. CIP. Based on that input and additional technical analysis, the 75th St. CIP team developed a Range of Alternatives to address the transportation issues identified in the project's Purpose and Need. On October 27, 2011, the project team held a public meeting to capture input from the public on the Range of Alternatives. Approximately 232 members of the community participated in the meeting.

Team members were on hand to present information, receive comments, and answer questions from those in attendance. Project team professionals available at the meeting included representatives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), and the Association of American Railroads (AAR), including CSX, Norfolk Southern, and Metra.

The meeting was held from 4:00 to 7:30 p.m. at the Freedom Temple Church of God in Christ, 1459 W. 74th St., Chicago, centrally located in the project area. It included both an open house and a formal session that began at 6:00 p.m. The intent of the meeting was to:

- Provide an overview of the project
- Review a range of alternatives developed to address identified project-related transportation issues
- Obtain public input on the alternatives

This report summarizes the tools used to announce the meeting, the information provided, the format used, and the comments received.



GETTING THE WORD OUT

The 75th St. CIP team used several methods to promote the public meeting in order to increase public participation. All of the promotional documents may be found in Appendix A.

Advertising– The project team placed display ads announcing the meeting in the following local and regional newspapers.

Chicago Sun-Times (circulation 251,000): September 28 and October 19

Chicago Citizen (circulation 121,000): September 28 and October 19

Chicago Defender (circulation 16,000): September 28 and October 19

Southwest News-Herald, city edition (circulation 10,000): September 29 and October 20

Postcard Mailing

The project team mailed postcards to 1400 property owners and about 500 individuals

and organizations on the project mailing list, including members of the two Community Advisory Groups and other key stakeholders. Included were invitations to organizations with a known interest in

historic preservation, for the purposes of consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The project team sent 32 Community Advisory Group members each a packet of 50 postcards to distribute as they chose to block clubs, neighbors, and businesses. In all, approximately 3700 postcards were mailed.

Door hangers–In addition to more conventional outreach methods, a local firm was hired to hang public

meeting invitations on doorknobs in areas where there is the most potential for impacts due to the project. Those areas include properties south of Hamilton Park, properties near the Union Avenue viaduct at 75th Street, and properties along the CSX railroad tracks from 71st Street to 79th Street.



The flyer is titled "CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT" and "Moving Forward Together". It features the Illinois Department of Transportation logo and the CREATE logo. The main heading is "You are invited to attend a Public Meeting". The text describes the project's goal to relieve rail and road congestion in the Chicago neighborhoods of Ashburn, Englewood, Auburn Gresham, and West Chatham. It lists the purpose of the meeting, the date and location (Thursday, October 27, 2011, at Freedom Temple Church of God in Christ), and details for an open house and formal session. It also includes contact information for correspondence and a small map of the project area.



On October 18 and 19, the local firm placed the door hangers at 1700 residences and businesses in those areas.

Project Website Posting– The project team posted announcements about the meeting on the project website at www.75thcip.org on the “Overview” and “Get Involved” pages of the site.

Email Blast – The project team sent email notices on October 4th, 12th and the 19th to 77 people who had signed up via the website to receive such notices and to the project’s Community Advisory Group members. The email included a copy of the postcard with all of the meeting information.

Posters in Metra’s SouthWest Service Line (SWS)

Stations – To reach out to Metra’s SWS riders, the project team placed 24 posters in 12 stations along the SWS Line route on October 10 and 12. (Metra does not own Union Station, so the team was unable to hang posters at that location.) Eight participants indicated when they signed in that they were SWS customers.

On the Bi-Level– Metra’s newsletter for customers “On the Bi-Level” also ran a

mention of the meeting in its October issue, which Metra distributed on all Metra trains and posted on its website.



PUBLIC MEETING

When attendees arrived at the meeting location, printed yard signs directed them to parking and to the registration table. When participants arrived, team members asked them to sign in and gave them the following information:

- Project brochure giving a brief project overview, describing the Range of Alternatives, and asking for more input
- Comment sheet (see Appendix E)
- Room layout showing exhibit placements
- Refrigerator magnets reminding community members to call 311 for viaduct maintenance issues and 911 for emergencies.

Also available at the sign-in table and in the exhibits area were:

- CREATE Program Employment Opportunities Fact Sheet
- Environmental Impact Statement Fact Sheet
- Context Sensitive Solutions Fact Sheet



Open House

Upon entering the meeting, participants were invited to watch an automated PowerPoint presentation with a voiceover (see Appendix B) that ran approximately every 25 minutes. It provided background on the project, described the Range of Alternatives, and asked for public input on the Range of Alternatives.

After the presentation, attendees were invited into the area where the “open house” part of the meeting took place and where the exhibits (see Appendix C) were displayed. Team members from the consulting team, IDOT, CDOT, FHWA, AAR, Metra, and the CSX and Norfolk Southern railroads were on hand to answer questions and obtain input from the community. After reviewing the information, the public was asked to provide feedback and comments on the Range of Alternatives via comment sheets, the court reporter (Appendix D), or directly to team members.

Information provided at the meeting, including the PowerPoint presentation and exhibits, was later added to the project website at www.75thcip.org.

Formal Presentation

At 6:00 p.m., attendees were invited to join the project team for the formal presentation. This part of the meeting gave the project team the opportunity to introduce team members and elected officials. It also gave attendees a forum to

EXHIBITS DISPLAYED AT MEETING

CREATE and 75th St. CIP Program Exhibits

1. CREATE Map
2. CREATE Program
3. 75th St. CIP Purpose and Need
4. Environmental Impact Statement
5. Context Sensitive Solutions
6. Previous Community Advisory Group Meetings
7. June Public Meetings
8. Property Acquisition – Federal Uniform Act
9. Property Acquisition – 75th St. CIP
10. Property Acquisition – Timeline
11. Opportunities for Community Involvement
12. Project Timeline
13. Railroad Terms

Alternates Exhibits

1. Large 75th St. CIP Map
2. Improve Metra Reliability: Columbus Avenue Aerial
3. Improve Metra Reliability: Cross Sections – Existing, Recommended, and Not Recommended, Comparison
4. Forest Hill Junction & 71st Street: Aerial
5. Forest Hill Junction & 71st Street: Cross-sections – Near 72nd Street, South of 75th Street, Near 77th Street
6. Forest Hill Junction & 71st Street: Cross-section – 75th Street facing east
7. Forest Hill Junction & 71st Street: Rendering
8. Forest Hill Junction & 71st Street: Plans and Comparison
9. Metra Rock Island Connection: Aerial
10. Metra Rock Island Connection: Alternates and Comparison
11. Metra Rock Island Connection: Rendering
12. Metra Rock Island Connection: Emerald Avenue Cross-section
13. Metra Rock Island Connection: Three alignments and comparison
14. Metra Rock Island Connection: Union Avenue – Cul-de-sac Plan and Bridge Plan
15. 80th Street Junction: Aerial
16. 80th Street Junction: Cross sections – 75th Street, 87th Street & Eggleston Avenue, 88th Street & S. Holland Road
17. 80th Street Junction: Plans and Comparison
18. Viaduct Map
19. Viaduct Inspections
20. Viaduct Maintenance



ask questions and the project team the opportunity to provide answers.

A court reporter recorded the formal session. The entire transcript of the formal session can be found in Appendix D.

As participants entered the formal presentation area of the meeting room, team members handed them index cards. Team members asked participants to write down any questions they had, and collected these cards later in the meeting.

The project team sat at the front of the room and was available to answer questions.

The Agenda:

- I. Gretchen Wahl from the project team introduced Bishop Cody Marshall of the host church, who provided the invocation.
- II. Jakita Trotter of IDOT welcomed guests and introduced a video of welcoming remarks by Marva Boyd, IDOT's Chief of Staff.
- III. Ms. Trotter asked attendees to write questions on index cards provided.
- IV. Danielle Stewart, Acting CREATE Section Chief for IDOT gave brief remarks.
- V. Ms. Trotter introduced Keevin Woods, representing Alderman Latasha Thomas to say a few words. Following Mr. Woods, Chaquita Starks was recognized and said a few words on behalf of Alderman Lona Lane.

IV. Doug Knuth, Project Manager for the 75th St. CIP, gave a 10-minute PowerPoint review of the Range of Alternatives.

V. Throughout the formal session, team members continued to collect, review and sort questions into similar topics and gave them to Ms. Trotter, who then asked the appropriate project team member to respond to the audience.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

The project team encouraged participants to provide comments on the information they were presented and to ask questions. Comments were collected in five ways.

- Attendees were encouraged to complete the comment forms provided to them when they entered the meeting. They were asked to either leave them in the comment box at the meeting or to mail them so the team received them no later than November 17.
- A court reporter was available to record comments from individuals during the "open house" session.
- Project team members who were at the exhibits to answer questions carried clipboards to record new information provided to them.
- Index cards were handed out for the formal session for audience members to ask questions of the project team. The court reporter also recorded the formal session of the meeting, including capturing the questions and



answers. The transcript is published along with this meeting summary.

- The comment forms also directed people to the project website (www.75thcip.org) to submit comments online.

All of the comments received can be reviewed in Appendix E. No comments were received from the historic preservation interests who were sent a postcard invitation.

Comments Received During Formal Session

Forty-nine index cards with questions from the audience were submitted during the formal session. During that session, the team grouped similar questions together and Jakita Trotter directed the question to the appropriate project team member for a response. The cards are transcribed below:

1. Will Hamilton Park be closed? This is a rumor.
2. Can individual and or specific areas be executed or is it an "all or nothing at all" project?
3. The unsightly look of raised (fly-over) railroad cars painted with graffiti is an unacceptable aspect when one wishes to sell their house in the Forest Hill area in the near future. Raised tracks block the view and environment.
4. The infrastructure money for maintenance needs to be appropriated for same and maintenance needs to be accomplished.
5. The raised tracks will create more noise. What can be done to prevent this? The raised

tracks will be an eye sore what can be done to prevent this? What can be done to prevent noise and vibration?

6. Can certain parts of the project be eliminated or is it all or nothing at all?

7. Where are we with the viaduct issues?

8. At the Belt Junction (at 75th and Damen) is there enough space or a need to acquire properties? Please clarify.

9. Will the addition of tracks increase noise? If so, will sound barriers be constructed?

10. Will the railroad increase our property value?

11. Will there be a noise reduction?

12. Will there be employment for the community?

13. The 75th Street Corridor Project at this time is an extensive study project. What are the probabilities of it gaining funding? Where are the funds coming from? What percent of hiring is slated for persons living in the communities?

14. For Metra Rock Island Connect, Option A it appears that you have already selected the option you're going to take as of the last two presentations.

15. What would be the amount of time used to build this improvement?

14. How safe would the flyover be if there is a problem on the line? How safe are the people if they have to get out from such a high area?

15. Is this being done in preparation for high-speed trains? I thought I heard there was a proposal to have high-speed trains goes through Englewood.



16. Can you put the power point presentation (longer detailed version) on website?

17. What is the tie-in between this project and the already approved project breaking ground on/along 63rd Street and the Dan Ryan Expressway? Will even more communities be affected by this as well?

18. Does the proposed elimination of Belt Junction have any impact on people losing their property in that area?

19. What will be done about hazardous material coming through the neighborhoods that are at present sitting behind homes that are 60 feet from the tracks that require two mile evacuation?

20. Where the starting points of construction begin?

21. Will this project bring jobs to residents in the neighborhood? In what capacity?

22. How much construction will be done at street level and where?

23. Do you have the exact address for each property that may be included in this project?

24. 21 to 23 homes will be impacted, what lots, what homes?

25. I live north of 74th Street on Lafayette Avenue, facing Dan Ryan. We have to deal with noise and pollution on all sides what will be done for us?

26. What happens when the demolition begins with all of the property in the surrounding areas foundation?

27. When they begin drilling processes and digging deep will they go as deep as the bedrock?

28. I live in the 89th block of Eggleston Avenue. I have been there for the past 11 years. Which railroad runs/own the north/south tracks that will be impacted by the 80th Junction?

29. There has been tremendous increase in trains sitting on these tracks. Will the 80th Junction proposal help/hurt or do nothing about this? How will noise be impacted by the proposal?

30. Secretary LaHood has said that federally funded transportation projects will have a bicycle component. Have you considered using the funds to connect the Major Taylor Trail in the Dan Ryan Woods north from 81st to 75th and then east to the bicycle trail being planned for the Rock Island elevated lines? Can you use the bike trail to provide more park land?

31. My property is in the center of Marquette and 71st Street, 6800 S. Lowe. The trains Metra, Amtrak and CSX run directly in front of my home. Is this area a part of reconstruction?

32. Will you be hiring in the community? If so what are the qualifications?

33. Will the 75th Street CIP generate (create) jobs for locals, especially our children attending high school/city college (KKC) any offering of student internships, work-study program, on-the-job training, part-time afterschool?

34. Will viaduct maintenance be on-going and vigorously enforced? Concerns are the general maintenance of adequate lights, cleanliness, painting walls as needed, making sure landscaping is regularly maintained and ensure



a line of communication between CIP, the railroads and the communication is on going?

35. Will any Metra Station (s) be impacted with the Hamilton Park re-alignment? After the Wrightwood Station where is the next station north?

36. I care church noise??

37. I am concerned that the additional traffic in the area will increase the crime in our community, what can or will be done to keep crime down?

38. What is going to be done to prevent foundation problems for the homes in the area? Also rodent issues?

39. Is there a DO NOT BUILD ALTERNATIVE?

40. How does page 3 option impact the neighborhood if viaduct is closed? The viaduct is closing (potentially) on Union and what cross street?

41. Reroute to LaSalle - How does re-routing the Southwest line to LaSalle alleviate congestion at Landers Yard and Forest Hill junction?

42. More freight trains will cause more noise and down crossing gates.

43. Aren't Southwest and Rock Island schedules similar enough that the train schedules would have to be changed?

44. Some project areas said no property acquisitions, another said no residential property will be taken, will any commercial property be taken: any industrial property be taken?

45. How will owners know and when will they know if a temporary easement is needed?

46. Will any property be taken in the Belt Junction area? Will any easements be taken in Belt Junction?

47. We have all type of concerns that are current and railroad related, once this meeting is over we will not have access to rail officials. Can the advisory group be extended or another one created to address our rail concerns presently. The railroads should have a citizens group throughout the year, directly not 311.

48. When the temporary tracks _____ at 76, 77, 78th & Hamilton how will those tracks impact residents back yards that are already just outside the tracks. Any movement would be in the back yard of Cul de Sac residents.

49. Why do you refer to Forest Hill as 71st Street there is a separate plan for Forest Hill and a separate plan for 71st.

Comment Sheets

Fifty-five completed comment sheets were submitted at the meeting. To date, the project team has not received any mailed-in comment sheets. Nine people chose to have their comments recorded by the court reporter.

All comments may be read in their entirety in Appendix E. The comment sheets are in a chart that shows verbatim the comment sheets received.

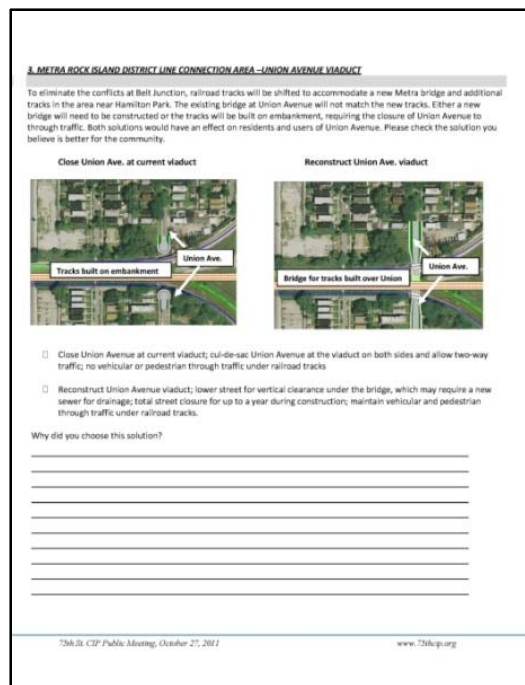
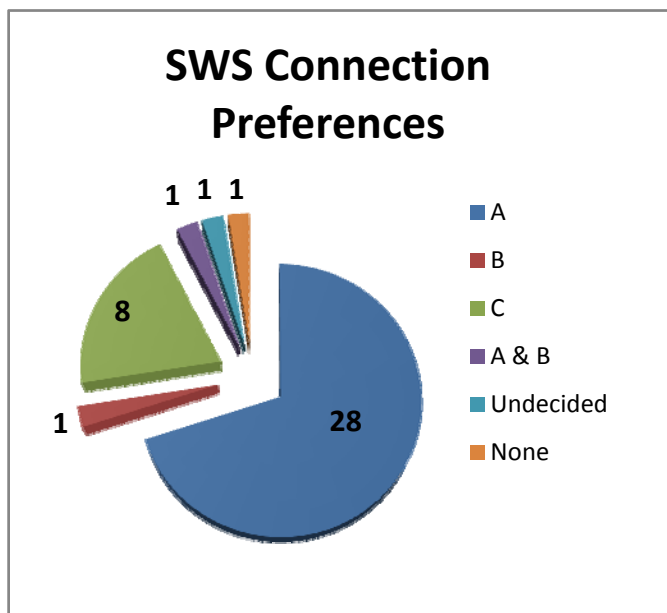
The comment sheet asked for general comments on the Range of Alternatives. It also specifically asked the public to indicate their preference of alignment alternates for the Metra SWS connection to the Rock Island District Line and the two design



options for Union Avenue at the 75th Street Corridor.

Of the 232 people who attended the public meeting, 40 commented on the alignment alternates for the Metra SWS connection to the Rock Island District Line. Support for each alignment alternate was as follows:

- *Alignment A* – 28, with 26 noting that they would like to relocate the I-Care Christian Ministries Church (7500 S. Parnell Avenue) away from the new rail line. The remaining two comment forms choosing Alignment A did not specify why they chose this option.
- *Alignment B* – 1, with reasons not specified.
- *Alignment C* – 8, with 7 noting that it had the least residential impacts.
- *Alignment A and B* – 1, at least partly due to no park impacts.
- *Undecided* – 1, but leaning towards Alignment C.
- *None* – 1, due to property impacts.



Of the 232 people who attended the public meeting, 13 commented on the

Union Avenue design options, with 7 supporting Option 1 (close viaduct), 5 supporting Option 2 (build new railway bridge and viaduct), and 1 person supporting both.

Some of the supporters of Option 1 seemed interested in avoiding the impacts of sewer construction that would be necessary with Option 2, while one noted that through traffic would be reduced. Supporters of Option 2 were concerned with maintaining local access, with two noting the need for people to walk to the CTA bus stop at 74th Street & Union Avenue.

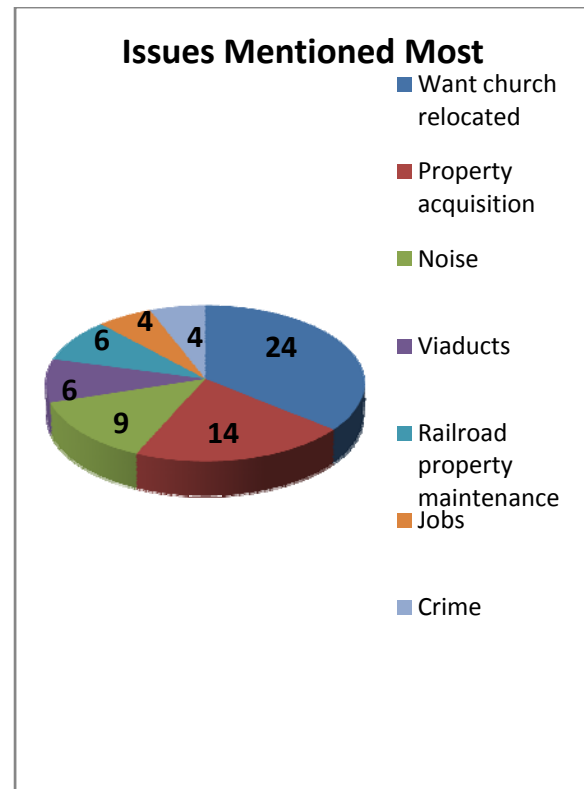
Statements to Court Reporter

Nine people chose to have their comments recorded by the court reporter. Issues they raised or issues mentioned on comment



sheets or in statements to the court reporter are summarized in the following table:

Summary of Issues Mentioned	
Issue	Number of comments
Relocate church These comments generally included a version of the following text: <i>“We support Route A, so that the church would be relocated away from the flyover. We are very concerned about the flyover. We expect that there would be theft, more drug traffic, dumping, rail noise, and other negative impacts. For the above reasons, we support Route A.”</i>	24
Extent of property acquisition	14
Noise	9
Viaducts	6
Railroad property maintenance	6
Jobs	4
Crime	4
Construction impacts	2
Drainage problems	2
Vibration due to train operations	2
Access to CTA route on 74th Street	2
Automobile traffic	2
Property values	2
Air pollution	1
Dumping	1
Business opportunities	1
Visual impacts	1
Increase in train traffic	1
Train crossing gates down	1
Bicycle routes	1
Metra station	1



Emails

The project team also received 1 email comments since announcing the public meetings beginning October 10 through November 17, when respondents were asked to turn in comments. Five of the comments related to specific property concerns and three expressed opposition to the move of Metra’s SWS to LaSalle Street. The remainder of the comments asked about the timeline for the project, indicated their inability to attend or mentioned problems such as idling trains. All of the email comments are documented in Appendix E.





NEXT STEPS

The 75th St. CIP team will respond to each comment submitted via comment sheet or court reporter statement with a letter addressing the concerns stated. The information gathered at this meeting and presented in this document will be incorporated into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which will be presented for public review and comment at a Public Hearing in summer 2012.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Promotional Materials

Appendix B – Scripted PowerPoint

Appendix C - Exhibits

Appendix D - Transcripts

Appendix E - Comments

