

### 5.3.7 Web Site

The project Web site ([www.elginohare-westbypass.org](http://www.elginohare-westbypass.org)) provides information that can be accessed at the convenience of the user. The site began service on September 7, 2007, and is updated regularly. General project information and topic-specific details are provided. Materials are available for viewing or downloading, including project documents and reports such as the project purpose and need, meeting materials and minutes, and public involvement materials, such as newsletters and press releases. The alternatives under the various stages of development and screening are posted for public review and comment, including the alternatives carried forward. A page is also provided for those who wish to submit comments. Responses to comments are provided and become part of the project record. The page has received over 700 hits since it began service.

### 5.3.8 Mailing List

A project mailing list was developed using available information including names and addresses of officials from other recent projects in the area, and Internet searches. The list is updated regularly with attendance lists from public meeting, speaker bureau events, and so on. The list is comprehensive including government and business leaders, area residents, and special interest groups. It is used as a distribution list for newsletters, meeting and workshop invitations, and project documents. The mailing list has about 2,000 entries.

## 5.4 Draft EIS Comments

The Notice of Availability for the Draft EIS was published in the Federal Register on September 11, 2009. The comment period closed on October 26, 2009. During that time, 74 comments were received from regulatory/resource agencies, municipalities, and other stakeholders. Overall, agency representatives indicated that the build alternatives' environmental and social impacts are comparable and identified actions to be taken in Tier Two. No comments required reconsideration of the range of alternatives or the technical analyses contained in the document. Nine letters or resolutions were submitted by local governmental entities in the study area, four of which were resolutions passed in favor of Alternative 203 and/or Option D; one expressed a preference for Alternative 402. Others focused on issues important to the communities in the next phase of the project such as noise abatement, stormwater management, and preserving transit as a part of the solution. Fifty-seven comments were received from the public at-large, and most (41) supported Alternative 203 and/or Option D. Other comments included requests for specific information or clarification of the proposed concept.

The following section is a summary of substantive comments from agencies and municipalities. Copies of all comments and complete responses to substantive comments are contained in Appendix D.

### 5.4.1 Resource/Regulatory Agency Comments

#### 5.4.1.1 USEPA

The USEPA noted that the project team provided an abundance of opportunities for stakeholders to be engaged in the process and was able to identify a manageable number of

reasonable alternatives in such a sizeable project area. The agency assigned a rating of “Lack of Objections” to the Draft EIS and the two build alternatives indicating that no changes to the document and alternatives are required. The USEPA identified environmental resources that will require detailed impact analysis in Tier Two along with evaluation and identification of impact mitigation measures including wetlands, air, and stormwater management. Finally, the agency requested that additional information be provided on conceptual mitigation measures for wetland impacts in the Tier One Final EIS. USEPA’s comment (C-1) can be found starting on page D\_5-1.

IDOT, in the agency’s response, acknowledged that the resources identified in the USEPA’s letter would receive detailed evaluation in Tier Two and detailed mitigation measures would be identified. The agency noted that conceptual wetland mitigation measures were described in Section 4.13.5, *Wetland Mitigation*, of the Draft EIS, but that additional information will be added, as appropriate, and a reference to this subsection would be added to the wetland impacts discussion in the Final EIS. IDOT’s response (R-1) can be found starting on page D\_5-5.

#### 5.4.1.2 USFWS

The USFWS acknowledged that detailed engineering studies and environmental impact analysis would occur during Tier Two, but requested information related to potential noise impacts to birds, lists of birds found in forest preserves, and cumulative effects of edge takes on parks and forest preserves be included in the Tier One Final EIS. USFWS’s comment (C-2) can be found starting on page D\_5-6.

IDOT’s response stated that general information relating to potential traffic noise impacts on birds would be included in the Tier One Final EIS. In subsequent discussions regarding this issue, USFWS requested additional information to determine the need for further studies in Tier Two. Data was assembled and showed that current traffic levels far exceeded the threshold of disturbance to birds at locations of concern. The USFWS determined that no further study of the issue was warranted in Tier Two. In the agency’s response, IDOT also confirmed it would include the list of birds found in forest preserves in the Tier One Final EIS. Finally, IDOT noted that it will include a general discussion on the cumulative effects of edge takes on parks and forest preserves in the Tier One Final EIS, but that detailed engineering design developed in Tier Two of the process would be required to provide a more detailed analysis of the cumulative effects of edge takes on such special lands. IDOT’s response (R-2) can be found starting on page D\_5-9.

#### 5.4.1.3 USACE

The USACE remarked that all of the agency’s comments on this project had been successfully addressed and that the agency did not have any additional comments on the Tier One Draft EIS. The USACE also identified activities the agency may require during Tier Two. As a follow-up to the USACE’s letter, IDOT held further discussions with USACE to discuss the preferred alternative and the rationale for its identification. During these discussions, USACE requested additional information to assist the agency in its determination of concurrence. USACE’s comment (C-3) can be found starting on page D\_5-12.

IDOT, in response, provided additional information to support the agency's determination of concurrence. Information included clarification of the tiering process and the purpose and intent of Tier One and Tier Two. Other information included clarification of the wetland data used for Tier One, meeting minutes addressing the agency's agreement to utilize existing and available data for Tier One analysis, and meeting minutes summarizing the outcome of the agency field visit. Information was also included that showed the relative differences of wetland impacts between Alternative 203 and 402 and roadway operational performance. IDOT's response (R-3) can be found starting on page D\_5-14.

#### 5.4.1.4 IDNR and IEPA

IDNR and IEPA noted no objection to the project and described the alternatives' impacts as comparable. Both agencies identified measures to be taken in Tier Two, including evaluating stormwater permit needs and applying the "avoidance and minimization" concept of reducing impacts to environmental resources. IDNR and IEPA's comments (C-4 and C-5) can be found starting on pages D\_5-45 and D\_5-47.

In the agency's responses, IDOT acknowledged the actions required by the resource agencies for Tier Two. IDOT's responses (R-4 and R-5) can be found starting on page D\_5-46 and D\_5-48.

## 5.4.2 Local/Other Agency Comments

### 5.4.2.1 City of Des Plaines

The City of Des Plaines requested a list of businesses and residences that would be displaced by Alternatives 203 and 402. The City also requested clarification as to whether the Des Plaines Oasis would be removed as a result of Alternative 203 and why congestion is expected to worsen on arterials within Des Plaines under both build alternatives. Des Plaines also identified corrections on two exhibits in the Draft EIS. Finally, Des Plaines indicated a preference for Alternative 402 because it satisfies the purpose and need with fewer impacts to Des Plaines than Alternative 203. The City of Des Plaines's comment (C-6) can be found starting on page D\_5-49.

IDOT, in response, noted that a list of businesses and a map showing displacements resulting from Alternatives 203 and 402 were provided at the November 16, 2009 meeting with the city and confirmed that the Des Plaines Oasis would be removed to accommodate the Alternative 203 improvements. Regarding increased congestion on arterials proximate to the Elmhurst Road/I-90 interchange, IDOT noted that travel demand increases on secondary roadways that provide interstate access; as a result, travel performance decreases on arterials near freeway interchanges. In Des Plaines, Alternative 203 would cause slightly greater congestion on local arterials than Alternative 402.

IDOT indicated that as the process moves to Tier Two, more refined traffic studies will be conducted, and further coordination with the City will be necessary to review the new information and supporting improvement needs. IDOT confirmed that the exhibit changes would be made for the Final EIS. Regarding Des Plaines's preference for Alternative 402, IDOT communicated that the agency considered the City's input, but after also considering travel performance, environmental and social impacts and benefits, and other public comments, Alternative 203 was identified as the Preferred Alternative.

IDOT's response and the exhibits showing and listing displaced businesses (R-6) can be found starting on page D\_5-53.

#### 5.4.2.2 Elk Grove Village

Elk Grove Village submitted a resolution passed on September 22, 2009 in support of Alternative 203 and nonsupport for Alternative 402. The resolution also expressed support for full financing strategies rather than staged completion of the project and preferably with as little monetary requirements from municipalities. Finally, the resolution expressed support for rapid completion of the project, specifically by December 31, 2015. Elk Grove Village's comment (C-7) can be found starting on page D\_5-57.

IDOT noted that a financial and implementation plan will be developed in Tier Two and would explore a variety of funding options. IDOT's response (R-7) can be found on page D\_5-62.

#### 5.4.2.3 City of Elmhurst

The City of Elmhurst submitted a resolution passed on October 5, 2009 in favor of Alternative 203 with Option D. Elmhurst's comment (C-8) can be found starting on page D\_5-63.

IDOT responded by saying that the agency, together with FHWA, considered the ability of each alternative to address the project's purpose and need, the environmental and social effects and benefits, and public input. Furthermore, Alternative 203 with Option D was identified as the Preferred Alternative. IDOT's response (R-8) can be found on page D\_5-67.

The City of Elmhurst submitted another comment expressing concern regarding traffic back-ups on the eastbound I-290 ramp to southbound I-294. A letter from resident Robert Jenkins was enclosed, which described his understanding of the causes of the back-ups and offered two potential solutions for capacity improvements. Elmhurst's second comment (C-9) can be found starting on page D\_5-68.

IDOT responded that the traffic volume is the primary cause of the back-ups rather than the ramp configuration. As such, the entire interchange complex needs to be evaluated rather than the one ramp. IDOT does not have sole authority or funding to do this. However, I-290 from I-90/94 to Thorndale Avenue will be resurfaced beginning in the Spring of 2010. IDOT's response (R-9) can be found starting on page D\_5-75.

#### 5.4.2.4 Village of Franklin Park

The Village of Franklin Park submitted the resolution passed on September 8, 2009. The Village supported Option D with provisions for local road and stormwater management improvements. The Village of Franklin Park's comment (C-10) can be found starting on page D\_5-77.

IDOT, in the agency's response, noted that it would work with the Village to identify opportunities to address stormwater issues within the project's area of influence, and that the extent of local road improvements will be determined in Tier Two. IDOT's response (R-10) can be found on page D\_5-82.

#### 5.4.2.5 Village of Hanover Park

Hanover Park, in its comment, requested extension of the BRT component of the transit improvements to the Hanover Park Metra Station. The Village of Hanover Park's comment (C-11) can be found starting on page D\_5-83.

IDOT, in response, noted that based on existing constraints, as well as configuration of the Finalist Alternatives transit service can most reasonably be extended from the Elgin O'Hare corridor through a shuttle service between the Schaumburg Metra Station and the Hanover Park Metra Station in Tier One. This service could be operated with Arterial Rapid Transit features such as a pre-emptive signal control that would be timed to departures of the BRT at Schaumburg to minimize wait times.

IDOT stated that relatively short distance (2.8 miles) between stations and the use of the existing roadway system avoids further impacts and added costs that would be associated with a full extension of a dedicated transit facility. Another factor to consider is that a specific mode for the Elgin O'Hare transit corridor has not been determined. Therefore, a shuttle service is included as a planned improvement in Tier One until the final solution can be determined in Tier Two.

IDOT will coordinate with Hanover Park to further refine this option and others that would improve the Village's connectivity to the regional transit network in Tier Two of the process.

IDOT's response (R-11) can be found on page D\_5-89.

#### 5.4.2.6 Village of Roselle

The Village of Roselle submitted a resolution passed on October 12, 2009. The resolution identified two sources of concern: noise impacts and stormwater drainage. The Village voiced concern over the existing and future noise impacts from roadway facilities and expressed an interest in structural and nonstructural noise abatement measures with future improvements. The Village also expressed concern about existing stormwater drainage issues as well as stormwater drainage plans associated with the proposed improvements. The Village of Roselle's comment (C-12) can be found starting on page D\_5-91.

IDOT, in response, noted that resolution of the issues in the Village's letter would occur in Tier Two. IDOT's response (R-12) can be found on page D\_5-95.

#### 5.4.2.7 DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference

The DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference submitted a letter and resolution (passed on October 21, 2009) urging the funding and completion of the project as well as the consideration of transit accommodations in and proximate to the study area. The DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference's comment (C-13) can be found starting on page D\_5-96.

IDOT noted that a financial and implementation plan will be developed in Tier Two when the project details and funding requirements are further refined and project phasing is known. IDOT emphasized that transit accommodations have been explored as part of the project and will be continued. If the transit type was not identified at the conclusion of Tier Two, space will be reserved for commuter rail or BRT, as not to preclude the inclusion of these in the future. Suggested transit improvements on airport property will be coordinated by the City of Chicago. In addition, coordination will occur with IDOT and transit providers

in order to plan the most efficient linkages between on-airport and off-airport facilities. IDOT also referenced the linkage between the Schaumburg station and the Hanover Park station and will further consider alternatives in Tier Two. IDOT's response (R-13) can be found on page D\_5-100.

#### 5.4.2.8 DuPage County Board Commissioner, Public Transit Committee

A DuPage County Board Commissioner submitted a response in reference to the Village of Hanover Park comments that the DuPage County Commissioner communicated support for the inclusion of the extension of transit accommodations to the Hanover Park Metra Station in the proposed improvements. The DuPage County Board, Public Transit Committee's comment (C-14) can be found starting on page D\_5-102.

IDOT sent a response both to the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference and the DuPage County Board Commissioner since it addressed the Board's comments. IDOT's response to the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference comment (R-13) can be found on page D\_5-100.

#### 5.4.2.9 Metra

Metra requested that the design of the western terminal provide the most direct connection of the proposed STAR line to the terminal and proposed CTA Blue Line extension. Metra also expressed support for the median reservation for transit in the Elgin O'Hare Expressway corridor. Metra's comment (C-15) can be found starting on page D\_5-109.

In response, IDOT noted that design of the transit station at the O'Hare West Terminal is the responsibility of OMP and that continued coordination between IDOT, OMP, and Metra will ensure further opportunities for Metra to advocate the agency's transit needs. Regarding median reservation for transit along the proposed Elgin O'Hare Expressway corridor, IDOT will continue to work with transit agencies to accommodate a preferred transit type and if design is complete before a preferred transit component is identified, adequate space will be provided for either commuter rail or BRT accommodations. IDOT's response (R-15) can be found on page D\_5-110.

#### 5.4.2.10 MWRDGC

MWRDGC requested plans, when developed, of the flyover ramps included in Alternative 203 that span MWRDGC's O'Hare Reservoir as well as any potential mitigation measures; the Alternative 402 alignment along York Road/Elmhurst Road adjacent to the TARP Reservoir and the southwest corner of Elmhurst Road and I-90 as well as IDOT's proposed mitigation measures; and the detailed alignment along the Majewski Athletic Complex. MWRDGC's comment (C-16) can be found starting on page D\_5-112.

IDOT communicated that throughout Tier Two, the agency would coordinate the design aspects of the transportation improvements with MWRDGC. IDOT's response (R-16) can be found on page D\_5-114.

### 5.4.3 Other Stakeholder Comments

Other stakeholders submitted a total of 58 comments orally to a court reporter, via email or on comment sheets. Many individuals (43) expressed a preference for an alternative or south

bypass connection option. Forty-one individuals communicated a preference for Alternative 203 and/or Option D. Others requested clarification on materials presented in the document or at the public hearing. Some individuals requested that considerations be made regarding such resources as bicycle/pedestrian accommodations, further roadway improvements, and classifying roadways near the south bypass connection options so as to allow usage by heavy trucks. Other stakeholders' comments (C-17 through C-74) can be found starting on page D\_5-116.

IDOT provided information to those that requested materials and IDOT's response to individuals that stated a preference for an alternative and/or south bypass connection option is that Alternative 203 with Option D was identified as the Preferred Alternative. It was selected after comparing each alternative's ability to address the project's purpose and need, limit environmental and social effects, produce economic benefits to the local and regional economy, and benefit affected communities. Further, while both alternatives were comparable for travel performance and environmental impacts, the economic benefits of Alternative 203 are notably higher than Alternative 402.

In response to individuals who provided substantive comments, IDOT explained the agency's role in each of the topics and the ability of IDOT to explore the requests as design continues. IDOT's responses (R-22 through R-31) can be found starting on page D\_5-120.

## 5.5 Results of Coordination Activities

The project team developed an outreach program that includes every stakeholder who has interest in or is affected by the proposed transportation improvements. Many venues have been provided, with the goal of establishing a genuine opportunity for stakeholders to participate, be heard, and influence the outcome of the process. Stakeholder involvement has helped to develop the foundation upon which this study rests – the purpose of and need for the transportation project within the study area. Stakeholders have helped to identify the type and location of improvements, information that serves as a starting point for developing the initial roadway and transit alternatives. Later they helped to devise the criteria that would be used to evaluate and compare alternatives. Stakeholders have voiced opinions about what is compatible with their community and what is not. This communication has shaped the alternatives. The participation of Elk Grove Village in public involvement activities resulted in the elimination of alternatives that involved IL 83. The participation of Wood Dale officials resulted in a design that improves access to important properties along Thorndale Avenue between Prospect and Wood Dale roads. Input from Itasca facilitated a conceptual design for the I-290/Thorndale Avenue interchange that optimizes access to adjacent properties and movement through the interchange. Coordination with Bensenville resulted in locating improvements to minimize damage to community resources.

Transportation service providers (ISTHA, Pace, RTA, Metra, CTA, DuPage County, OMP, CPRR, UPRR, and others) have provided valuable input regarding the development and evaluation of roadway and transit proposals, including refinements that would avoid conflicts with their respective plans and operations. Planning and resource agencies also have been integral to the process. CMAP and DuPage County helped in several technical aspects of the study. Both agencies assisted in the identification of transportation projects to be included in the No-Action Alternative. Also, these agencies provided assistance in the