

## 6. Stakeholder Input to Definition of Transportation Problems

---

Stakeholder perspectives regarding transportation issues and problems are an important complement to the performance analyses discussed in the preceding sections. The opinions of travelers, residents, and area officials can help focus on key performance issues, and help validate that key performance findings are consistent with the viewpoint of system users.

The EO-WB project is being advanced in conformance with requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, and IDOT's context-sensitive solutions policy. IDOT's approach gives stakeholders a means for sharing comments or concerns about transportation issues, project objectives, and project alternatives, and provides a structured method for the project team to incorporate stakeholder input in developing project analyses and recommendations.

An early focus of the stakeholder involvement program was to invite and elicit input regarding transportation issues and problems. This section describes stakeholder involvement opportunities and summarizes transportation issues and problems identified through this process.

### 6.1 Opportunities for Stakeholder Input

Numerous opportunities were available for interested stakeholders – agencies, officials, interest groups, and the public at large – to provide input regarding transportation issues in the study area. Input was elicited through a transportation context audit, meetings with various project working groups (Corridor Planning Group, Task Forces), and Public Information Meeting #1.

#### 6.1.1 Transportation Context Audit

One early activity identified in IDOT's context-sensitive solutions policy is the preparation of a context audit. The audit serves as a structured mechanism that stakeholders can use to provide early input regarding transportation issues and the project context; in other words, environmental and land use/community features that should be considered when developing potential transportation solutions. In the case of the EO-WB project, the context audit was performed in two parts, beginning with a transportation context audit that invited feedback regarding the existing transportation system and performance issues. A questionnaire was distributed to members of the Corridor Planning Group, which consists of elected representatives of the 25 communities and 2 counties within the project study area. Key transportation issues cited on the eight completed questionnaires received are as follows:

- Enhanced access to O'Hare Airport is important.

- Local roadways in the study area are congested, primarily during A.M. and P.M. peak periods, with Grand Avenue, IL 19, IL 64, IL 83, US 45, Devon Avenue, and Fullerton Avenue cited as the worst congested local roadways.
- Minimizing conflicts between railroad and vehicular traffic is
- a priority in the study area, with particular concerns cited at IL 19/York, IL 72/UPRR, IL 19/Wood Dale, and 25th Ave/CP-Metra.
- Broader use of transportation management strategies is needed.
- The interstate system is congested and inadequate for the study area. I-290, I-90 at I-190/I-294, I-294, I-355, and Elgin O'Hare Expressway were each cited as very congested.
- Commerce is adversely affected by congestion in the study area.
- The available transit system is well used.
- There is insufficient transit coverage in the study area, with notable underserved areas along the I-90 corridor and Pace service to industrial parks.

### 6.1.2 Project Working Groups

A core element of the stakeholder involvement program is ongoing coordination with Project Working Groups established for the EO-WB project. These consist of the following groups:

- Corridor Planning Group, which focuses on providing policy-level input from elected officials representing study area communities.
- Transportation Task Force, which focuses on identifying and evaluating transportation issues and potential transportation solutions. Members include representatives of area transportation agencies, as well as interested representatives of study area communities.
- Environmental Task Force, which focuses on identifying and evaluating environmental issues and concerns. Members include representatives of federal and state regulatory/resource agencies, representatives of area communities, and various interest groups.
- Land Use Task Force, which focuses on identifying and evaluating land use and economic issues and concerns. Members include representatives of regional planning agencies, interested representatives of area communities, and various interest groups.

Early meetings with project working groups were structured to invite input regarding transportation issues and problems in the study area, and to share available early information regarding transportation system performance analysis findings. Table 6-1 summarizes the objectives and input related to transportation issues received at each meeting. The major issues identified through the meetings are summarized on Exhibits 6-1 (Roadway Transportation Issues) and 6-2 (Other Transportation Issues).

TABLE 6-1  
Stakeholder Input to Transportation Issues

Meeting Type	Meeting Objectives	Summary of Transportation Issues Identified
Corridor Planning Group Meeting #1 (October 2007)	Initiate transportation context audit Identify transportation issues in the study area	<p>Congestion along major roadways (I-90, I-290, I-355, I-294, Thorndale), particularly in the P.M. peak period</p> <p>Congestion or poor connectivity at interstate-to-interstate interchanges (I-290/IL 53/I-90, I-290/I-294)</p> <p>Lack of full access at service interchanges along I-90 (Elmhurst Road)</p> <p>Lack of convenient access to O'Hare from DuPage County and northwest Cook County</p> <p>Lack of good local transportation options to and around the study area, including inadequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities</p> <p>Inadequate public transportation service and options</p> <p>Difficulty in moving truck freight traffic through the area</p>
Public Meeting #1 (November 2007)	Project introduction Identify transportation issues in the study area	<p>Congestion on major roadways, intersections, and interchanges</p> <p>Poor access to existing interstate roadways</p> <p>Lack of transit options</p> <p>Lack of bicycle and pedestrian facilities</p>
Joint Task Force Meeting #1/Stakeholder Workshop #1 (Corridor Planning Group /Task Forces) (December 2007)	Present summary of transportation issues identified by stakeholders to date Validate, expand, and prioritize list of transportation issues Identify preliminary stakeholder project goals	<p><b><u>Freeway and Tollway System</u></b></p> <p>Lack of complete access at the interchanges along I-90 and I-294</p> <p>Congestion and poor traffic flow at major system interchanges</p> <p>Congestion on area tollways/freeways, including I-294, I-190, I-290</p> <p>Inadequate access to O'Hare Airport</p> <p>Lack of bypass around Chicago region for interstate through traffic</p> <p><b><u>Major Arterials/Local Road Issues</u></b></p> <p>Congestion on major arterials</p> <p>Congestion and safety concerns at major intersections</p> <p>Congestion caused by multiple at-grade railroad crossings</p> <p>Disproportionately high percentage of truck traffic on local roads</p> <p>Lack of adequate north/south through routes in the northeast part of the study area</p> <p>Need for parking regulations/limits on major arterials</p> <p><b><u>Public Transit, Freight, and Bicycle/Pedestrian System</u></b></p> <p>Inadequate internal bicycle/pedestrian systems within communities</p> <p>Need last mile connection for transit, including biking and walking</p> <p>Lack of north/south transit facilities</p> <p>Need improved transit connections between home/work and station/work</p> <p>Need improved Metra connections with Bus Rapid Transit</p> <p>Need improved connectivity to intermodal facilities to reduce truck traffic on roadways</p> <p>Need adequate parking for vehicles and bicycles at public transit stations</p> <p><b><u>Transportation System/Demand Management</u></b></p> <p>Need to improve coordination of arterial signals</p> <p>Need for traffic signal management on major routes</p>

TABLE 6-1  
Stakeholder Input to Transportation Issues

Meeting Type	Meeting Objectives	Summary of Transportation Issues Identified
Corridor Planning Group Meeting #2 (February 2008)	<p>Present results of Workshop #1 and Public Meeting #1</p> <p>Present highlights of existing transportation system performance analysis</p> <p>Develop "Corridor Planning Group consensus" of stakeholder problem statements</p>	Developed consensus Stakeholder Problem Statements (see Section 6.2.2)
Joint Task Force Meeting #2 (February 2008)	<p>Present results of Workshop #1 and Public Meeting #1</p> <p>Present highlights of existing transportation system performance analysis findings</p> <p>Present "Corridor Planning Group consensus" stakeholder problem statements</p>	Presented consensus Stakeholder Problem Statements (see Section 6.2.2)

### 6.1.3 Public Information Meeting

The first Public Information Meeting for the EO-WB project was conducted on November 14, 2007. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an introduction and overview of the project and to elicit information from the people who live and work in the area. Information regarding the study objectives, process, and schedule was presented. The public was invited to review aerial exhibits of the study area and to identify transportation issues, sensitive community features, and sensitive environmental features on the exhibits.

The public provided a broad range of comments related to transportation issues, sensitive community and environmental features in the study area, and potential improvements. Public comment related to issues with the current transportation system is summarized as follows:

- Major intersections are severely congested, particularly those near at-grade railroad crossings.
- Major area roadways are severely congested.
- Freeways and tollways should be widened to reduce congestion levels.
- Access into and from the study area needs to be improved, particularly at the partial access interchanges along I-90 and I-294.
- Roadway access to O'Hare, including to the proposed west terminal, should be improved.
- Transit service should be expanded through the study area, including public transit service to the proposed O'Hare west terminal.

## 6.2 Stakeholder Transportation Problem Statements

The public's list of performance issues with the current transportation system includes general observations regarding overall system performance gaps, concerns with performance problems at specific locations, as well as observations that parts of the transportation system (e.g. transit) require greater emphasis. The following sections present the priority transportation issues identified by stakeholders, as well as the stakeholder problem statements developed through the stakeholder involvement process.

### 6.2.1 Stakeholder Identified Transportation Issues

Early in the study, IDOT organized a stakeholder outreach that engaged community leaders, the public, regional transportation providers, and regulatory agencies in an effort to gain their perspective on the transportation issues.

As described in Table 6-1, the outreach program offered opportunities for participants to state transportation problems and issues in the study area. The list of issues includes general observations regarding overall system performance gaps, concerns with performance problems at specific locations, as well as observations that parts of the transportation system (e.g. transit) require greater emphasis.

During Stakeholder Workshop #1, participants were first asked to review and expand the list of transportation issues, and second to prioritize the identified issues by spending "transportation bucks" on priority issues. Table 6-2 summarizes the top priority transportation issues identified during this workshop.

TABLE 6-2  
Stakeholder Workshop #1 "Transportation Bucks" Exercise Results

Need	\$ Spent	Rank
A need for expanded public transportation	610	1
A need for a lasting solution that minimizes community impact and maximizes economic development potential	605	2
Poor connectivity from I-290 to I-294 (including North Avenue)	360	3
Lack of access to O'Hare	205	4
Travel delays along at-grade railroad crossings (e.g. Irving Park Road and York Road)	185	5
Western Access to O'Hare needs to be "economic access" not just access to remote parking lots	160	6
Lack of convenient access to the airport from DuPage County and northwest Cook County	160	6
Strategic access to residential, office and industrial centers	150	7
A need for increased emphasis on travel management strategies and public awareness	135	8
Overall congestion on all major routes	135	8
Bicycle/walk to public transit	135	8

## 6.2.2 Stakeholder Identified Transportation Problems

The transportation issues listed in Table 6-2 – “ranked” as the highest priority during Stakeholder Workshop #1 – are mainly representative of transportation issues identified by stakeholders through the early stages of the project development process. As such, they represent the public’s perspectives on eight key transportation problems that the EO-WB project should address, identified and explained below:

- Public transportation requires enhancement of transit options, in terms of both infrastructure and service expansion integrated into roadway improvements and redevelopment projects:
  - Improve and increase overall connectivity between modes.
  - Reduce transit system travel delays.
  - Improve reliability, service for reverse commuters, and connections between suburbs.
  - Fill the gaps in “the last mile.”
- Need for a transportation solution that protects the quality and integrity of communities while maximizing the economic viability of the area:
  - Provide efficient transportation, but maintain valued community assets.
  - Provide improved access to industrial and commercial land uses.
  - Create “gateways” to major employment centers.
  - Buffer residential or other sensitive features.
  - Avoid/mitigate for losses (commercial/industrial) associated with alternatives.
- Poor access and connectivity in the study area:
  - Address delays and out-of-direction travel caused by poor access.
  - Improve system and service interchanges that operate poorly.
  - Improve access at partial interchanges.
- Lack of access to O’Hare Airport:
  - Improve access to reduce roadway operational problems caused by existing single major access point (I-190).
  - Maximize economic opportunity with O’Hare West Access.
  - Enhance western access to serve airport patrons in DuPage and northwest Cook counties.
  - Enhance facilities leading to O’Hare for communities that play a role in economic opportunity in the study area.
- Travel delays caused by numerous at-grade rail road crossings:
  - Average delays can be up to 15 minutes for longer trains.
  - Train/auto conflicts add to already congested roadways.
- Congestion on major routes:
  - Over 90 percent of the major roadway system in the study area is congested (LOS D, E, and F) during A.M. and P.M. peaks.
  - Travel growth has been outpacing population growth.
  - Continued travel growth will increase vehicle hours of delay and travel times.
  - Lack of transit options imposes more travel on roadways.
  - Congestion impairs safety, air quality, and emergency response times.

- Reduced truck/freight mobility:
  - Truck access to facilities in the study area is impeded by congestion and impaired access from major routes.
  - Movement of freight by truck accounts for about 8 percent of the total traffic volume on major routes.
  - Forecasts show that truck traffic will double in the next 15 to 20 years.
  - Travel time reliability for trucks to and from industrial areas is crucial to maintaining competitive position.
  
- Improved pedestrian and bicycle access to transit stations:
  - Improve safety features for pedestrians/bicyclists.
  - Improve connectivity between station and employment centers.
  - Improve or provide additional bicycle storage.
  
- Increase emphasis on travel management strategies:
  - Travel management, in the form of better use of technology or altering driver behavior, will help to improve transportation in the study area.

The stakeholder problem statements were discussed with and endorsed by the Corridor Planning Group at its meeting on February 13, 2008.