



Illinois Department of Transportation

2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois / 62764

October 11, 2012

Re: Access Justification Report
Federal Aid Interstate 290 (I-290)
At Elgin O'Hare Expressway/Thorndale Ave
Job No. P-91-443-06
Cook/DuPage Counties

Mr. Norman R. Stoner
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
3250 Executive Park Drive
Springfield, Illinois 62703

Dear Mr. Stoner:

Enclosed is the Access Justification Report (AJR) for the proposed interchange reconstruction along I-290 at Elgin O'Hare Expressway/Thorndale Avenue.

The proposed scope of work includes reconstruction of the existing full-movement partial cloverleaf service interchange at I-290 and Thorndale Avenue to a full system interchange at I-290 and the proposed Elgin O'Hare Extension. This interchange reconstruction is central to other improvements proposed with the overall Elgin O'Hare West Bypass (EO-WB) project, including construction of the long-planned extension of the Elgin O'Hare Expressway from west of I-290 to the western border of O'Hare Airport.

The proposed design of the I-290 at Elgin O'Hare system interchange was developed through a comprehensive interchange alternates development and evaluation study. Interchange alternates were developed and evaluated with extensive input from the Geometric Working Group (GWG) consisting of key technical and policy stakeholders from IDOT, the Illinois Tollway, and FHWA. The proposed design represents the configuration that was determined to best balance the objectives of acceptable traffic operations, improved access, enhanced safety, and cost effectiveness.

The NEPA process for the overall EO-WB is being advanced in two tiers. Tier One studies concluded in June 2010 with the completion of the *Tier One Environmental Impact Statement* and Record of Decision; these studies determined the preferred type of improvement and preferred corridor location. Tier Two studies were initiated in 2010 with a focus on detailed preliminary engineering and environmental studies for the Tier One Preferred Alternative.

Mr. Norman R. Stoner
Federal Highway Administration
October 11, 2012
Page Two

These studies include preparation of detailed environmental analyses and documentation that defines associated social, environmental and economic impacts of the proposed improvements as well as possible methods to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts. Completion of the *Tier Two Environmental Impact Statement* and Record of Decision is anticipated in December 2012.

We respectfully request your review of the attached AJR. Should you find the report acceptable, please secure concept approval pending the outcome of the NEPA process. Upon concept approval and completion of the NEPA process we will request formal approval of the AJR.

Sincerely,

William R. Frey, P. E.
Interim Director of Highways



By: John Baranzelli, P. E.
Acting Engineer of Design and Environment

Concept approval


Federal Highway Administration

Date

12/18/2012

Enclosure



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Memorandum

Subject: **ACTION:** Illinois, I-290 at Elgin-O'Hare
Expressway, Access Justification Report,
Cook and DuPage Counties.

Date: November 26, 2012

From: Jeffrey F. Parrati
Executive Director

In Reply Refer To:
HIPA-20

To: Mr. Norman Stoner
Division Administrator
Springfield, Illinois

We have reviewed the Access Justification Report (AJR) submitted on October 20 to modify the subject interchange on I-290 at the Elgin-O'Hare Expressway east of Chicago. The proposed project will extend the Elgin-O'Hare Expressway to the O'Hare Airport and will include the modification of this existing service interchange to a system interchange. The modifications will improve the safety and flow of traffic on I-290, the Elgin-O'Hare Expressway and the local street network.

Based on our review, the proposed modification of this system interchange is acceptable. An Environmental Impact Statement is currently being prepared for this project with a Record of Decision expected in December 2012. Final approval may be given provided that the scope and design of this proposed project is consistent with the design that is included in the October 20 AJR and the approved environmental document. This approval is subject to reevaluation if significant changes occur in the final design or if the construction is delayed (as specified in 23 CFR 771.129).

Should you have any questions, please contact Michael Matzke at (202) 366-4658.

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DEC 03 2012

FHWA