
*Tier One
Record of Decision*

**Elgin O'Hare - West Bypass
Cook and DuPage Counties,
Illinois**

June 2010

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

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1. Decision

This Record of Decision approves Alternative 203 with South Bypass Connection Option D as the Selected Alternative for Tier One of the Elgin O'Hare – West Bypass (EO-WB) Study. The Selected Alternative is an integrated set of multimodal transportation improvements that will help address major congestion and mobility problems in the area bounded by I-90 on the north, I-294 on the east, I-290/US 20 on the south, and the western terminus of the existing Elgin O'Hare Expressway. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) determined that the Selected Alternative best accomplishes the project's purpose and need, which is as follows:

- Improve regional and local travel by reducing congestion
- Improve travel efficiency
- Improve access to O'Hare Airport from the west
- Improve modal opportunities and connections

FHWA and IDOT are advancing this project using the tiered process. Tier One involved an examination of the overall transportation system needs, a study of alternative improvements to satisfy them, and consideration of the environmental and social impacts of the reasonable alternatives. The Tier One analysis was completed at a sufficient level of engineering and environmental detail to assist decision makers in selecting the modes, type and location of transportation improvements that address the project's purpose and need, as well as allow for advanced acquisition. The Selected Alternative will be advanced into Tier Two, where detailed engineering and environmental studies will focus on refinement of the planned improvements and the corridor footprint. The outcome of Tier Two will be preliminary roadway geometry; defined right-of-way requirements; environmental documentation including Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) and a Record of Decision; commitments for the mitigation of impacts to environmental and social resources; a financing plan that identifies the sources of funding and the timing of their availability; and a management plan that lays out the time phased development of the project. The conclusion of Tier Two will set the stage for developing the final design drawings, construction documents and acquisition of all needed property.

This Record of Decision complies with the regulations of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) under 40 CFR 1505.2 and 23 CFR 771 and concludes Tier One of the EO-WB study. The remainder of this document describes the Selected Alternative and the responses to comments received on the Final EIS.

2. Description of the Selected Alternative

The Selected Alternative is comprised of both roadway and multimodal elements.

2.1 Roadway Improvements

2.1.1 Elgin O'Hare Expressway

The highway improvements consist of upgrading and extending the Elgin O'Hare Expressway between IL 19/Gary Avenue to the O'Hare West Bypass for about 10 miles. Between IL 19/Gary Avenue and I-290, the expressway would be widened and upgraded along the existing alignment. East of I-290, extending to the West Bypass and the proposed

the Union Pacific Railroad and proceed south, paralleling the east side of the railroad, to a new system connection with I-294 near Grand Avenue. A new bridge that reconnects Taft Road across the Bensenville Yard, linking Franklin Avenue and IL 19 would be constructed, and a full-access system interchange would be provided at I-294. Part of I-294, extending roughly from Grand Avenue south to North Avenue, would be improved to accommodate system ramp connections and lane balance requirements.

The freeway would consist of four basic lanes in each direction with additional auxiliary lanes at interchanges, and a 70-foot median would accommodate transit service north of Thorndale Avenue. System interchanges are proposed at I-90, the Elgin O'Hare Expressway, and I-294. Service interchanges are proposed at IL 72, Devon/Pratt, the proposed O'Hare West Terminal, IL 19, and Green Street/Franklin Street.

2.1.3 Supporting Improvements

The Selected Alternative would be supported by crossroad improvements needed to manage efficient traffic circulation to and from the mainline improvements. In some cases, the crossroad improvements would extend several hundred feet from the mainline intersections, and in other situations, more extensive capacity improvements are needed for adjacent roadways. Appendix F in the Final EIS summarizes those improvements.

2.2 Multimodal Improvements

2.2.1 Transit

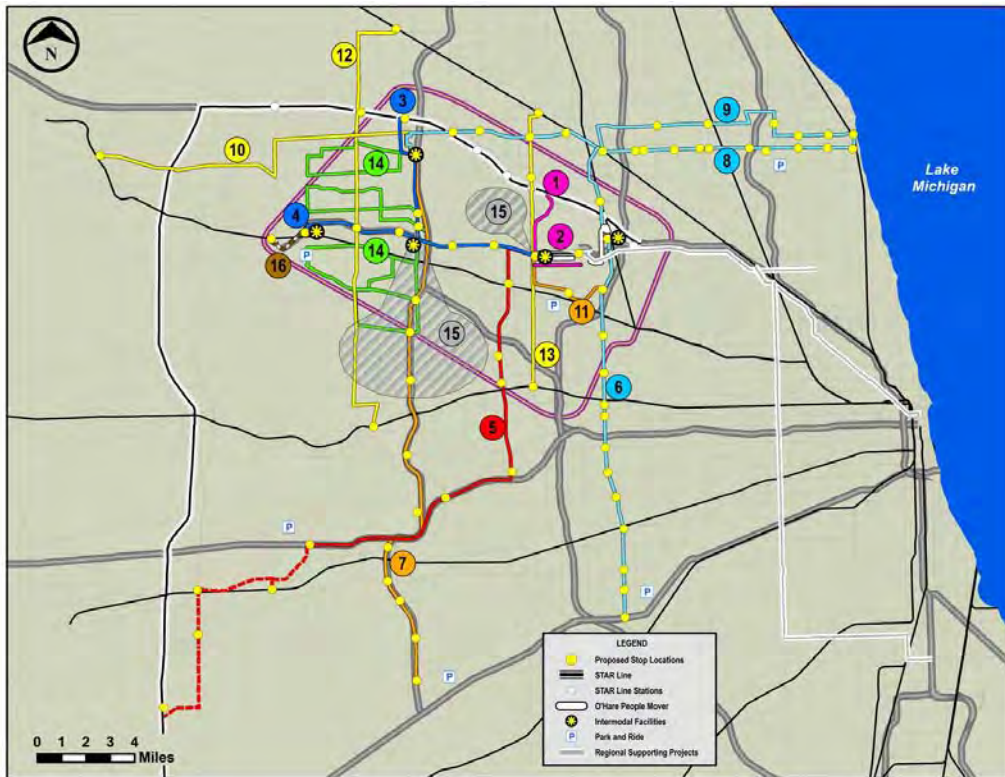
The set of proposed transit improvements has 16 elements (see figure on Page 4). These elements consist of corridors providing commuter rail service, rail or bus rapid transit (BRT), express bus, local bus, and shuttles (to be built by others). Other facets include new stations, intermodal facilities or transit centers, and park and ride facilities. Improvements include a transit corridor along the J-Line west corridor from the proposed O'Hare West Terminal station to the Schaumburg Metra Milwaukee District West station. This transit improvement would be either BRT or commuter rail, and would be located in the median of the proposed roadway improvement. This particular improvement would link residents to jobs in the study area and to downtown Chicago.

Another aspect of the Selected Alternative transit improvement is an extension of the J-Line northwest from the Elgin O'Hare corridor north along IL 53 to the Woodfield Mall area. An element of the J-Line would be an express bus service extending south along IL 83 and then in a westerly direction to a terminus at the proposed STAR Line station in Aurora. Other elements of the transit plan include extending the Chicago Transit Authority Blue Line service from O'Hare's terminal core to the proposed O'Hare West Terminal, and the STAR Line rail service from the O'Hare West Terminal to the I-90 corridor where the service would be extended west. Express bus service is proposed on I-355, Golf Road, Dempster Street, Irving Park Road, and Mannheim Road. Shuttle bus service is proposed between the Schaumburg Metra Station and the Hanover Park Metra Station. Extending the J-Line as a higher capacity transit service to the Hanover Park Metra Station will be evaluated in Tier Two. Circulator bus routes and shuttles are planned to develop better connections to stations and employment and activity centers. Rail and BRT stations have been added at key locations, as well as park and ride facilities to provide convenience and improve system ridership. The sum of these improvements is aimed at providing an alternative to the automobile for area residents and workers.

2.2.2 Non-motorized Improvements

Other supporting transportation improvements were considered in the development of a comprehensive transportation solution for the study area. In particular, non-motorized transportation is an important aspect of the plan that would benefit home to work trips, recreational opportunities, and linkages to transit facilities, activity centers, and employment centers. The types of recommended strategies include bicycle and pedestrian improvements including new bicycle trails and pedestrian paths that would provide better connections to transit stations; transportation centers; park and ride facilities; community activity centers; regional trail systems; and employment areas. Transportation system management (TSM) and travel demand management (TDM) strategies will be considered in Tier Two when engineering details are identified.

Transit Improvements



Corridor Name (Mode)	
1	Star Line Spur (Commuter Rail)
2	Blue Line Extension to West Terminal (Heavy Rail)
3	J-Line Northwest to Woodfield (Rail or Bus Rapid Transit)
4	J-Line West to Schaumburg MD-W Metra (Rail or Bus Rapid Transit)
5	J-Line South to Naperville and Aurora (Bus Rapid Transit to Naperville; Link Service From Naperville to Aurora)
6	Mannheim (Arterial Rapid Transit)
7	I-355 (Express Bus)
8	Dempster (Arterial Rapid Transit)
9	Golf East (Arterial Rapid Transit)
10	Golf West (Local Bus)
11	Irving Park (Express Shuttle Bus)
12	Roselle Road (Local Bus)
13	York Road Shuttle (Local Bus)
14	Circulators (Local Circulators)
15	Employment Shuttle Zones
16	Shuttle Bus Service ** (between Schaumburg Metra Station and Hanover Park Metra Station)

**As part of Tier Two Studies, an evaluation to extend the "J-Line West Transit Corridor" west to the Hanover Park Metra Station will be conducted.

3. Alternatives Considered

A broad range of alternatives were considered for their ability to meet the purpose and need, limit environmental and socioeconomic impacts, and gain stakeholder support. The project team considered roadway, transit, bicycle/pedestrian, and freight improvements as well as other transportation improvement strategies. The alternatives development process commenced with stakeholders contributing to the identification of transportation problems and concerns, as well as needed physical improvements in the study area.

An initial set of 15 roadway system strategies, which after being evaluated for transportation performance related to purpose and need, were narrowed down to 10. The 10 alternatives were then assessed for their impacts to environmental and socioeconomic resources, resulting in the elimination of three alternatives that had the highest impacts. Engineering detail was added to the remaining seven alternatives, and they were compared using both quantitative and qualitative analyses of travel performance, design feasibility, cost, environmental and social impact data, and stakeholder input. Ultimately, Alternatives 203 and 402 were determined to be suitable for consideration in the Draft EIS because of their ability to meet purpose and need, their ability to minimize impacts to environmental and socioeconomic resources, and their public support. Parallel to this process was an analysis of options for connecting the O'Hare West Bypass to I-90 on the north and I-294 on the south. After completing the evaluation of many options, North Bypass Connection Option D was selected, and South Bypass Connection Options A and D were selected for consideration in the Draft EIS.

The transit alternatives development and screening process was similar to the roadway alternative process. Twenty initial transit improvement corridors were developed with input from stakeholders and transit agency representatives. The transit improvement corridors were evaluated on the basis of the ability to build within the planning horizon (2030), proximity of service to centers of population and employment, and compatibility with other transportation plans. Based on these measures, five corridors were eliminated. Fifteen transit corridors were identified as improvement corridors that reflected improved ridership demand and benefit, low environmental and socioeconomic impacts, and compatibility with other existing or planned transit facilities either in or near the study area.

The roadway and transit improvements are supported by other improvements that are common to the build alternatives. These include a bicycle and pedestrian plan for the area and freight rail improvements that would assist vehicular and transit travel. Travel demand or system management strategies were deferred until more detail is known in the Tier Two EIS.

3.1 Alternatives Carried Forward to the Draft EIS

The No-Action Alternative, Alternatives 203 and 402, and South Bypass Connection Options A and D were carried forward to the Draft EIS. Alternative 203 and Option D is described in Section 2, Description of the Selected Alternative; the rest of the alternatives carried forward to the Draft EIS are described in the following sections.

3.1.1 No-Action Alternative

The No-Action Alternative consists of transportation improvements to existing roadway and transit facilities in the study area that are expected to be constructed by 2030. It represents investment aligned to current program funding levels; therefore, it does not include the major improvements considered for the EO-WB. The roadway improvements identified in the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning 2030 Regional Transportation Plan and in the IDOT 2007–2012 Proposed Highway Improvement Program were the foundations for developing the No-Action Alternative. The transportation improvements for the No-Action Alternative represent 80 lane miles of additional capacity and 135 miles of rehabilitation improvements to roadways, 54 interchange/intersection location improvements, and bus and rail transit improvements (see Exhibits 3-8 and 3-9, and Table 3-11 in the Final EIS). The No-Action Alternative includes no individual bicycle/pedestrian facilities, but such improvements could be components of specific baseline projects included in the No-Action Alternative. The No-Action Alternative served as the baseline for comparing the performance of the build alternatives in the Draft EIS; however, it does not meet the project's purpose and need.

3.1.2 Alternative 402

Roadway improvements included in Alternative 402, specifically the Elgin O'Hare Expressway improvements and the south portion of the O'Hare West Bypass, are similar to Alternative 203. The only difference is the north portion of the O'Hare West Bypass. Under Alternative 203, the O'Hare West Bypass would be a freeway for the entire length of the bypass (see Section 2.1 for details). However, under Alternative 402, the section north of Thorndale Avenue is proposed as an arterial improvement to York Road/Elmhurst Road north of Thorndale Avenue, about 3.1 miles to I-90. The arterial facility would be upgraded to provide three lanes in each direction separated by a raised median along York Road/Elmhurst Road. Local improvements would include grade separation at Touhy Avenue from the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. The interchange at York Road/Elmhurst Road and I-90 would be upgraded to full access with added access to and from the west.

Alternative 402 would be supported by crossroad, transit and non-motorized improvements. See Section 2 for a description of these improvements. All improvements are common to both Alternative 203 and 402 except for the extension of the STAR Line from the O'Hare West Terminal to I-90. Under Alternative 203, the roadway has been planned to include the STAR Line between I-90 to the O'Hare West Terminal. However, under Alternative 402 there is no right-of-way provision for the STAR Line and the location of the STAR Line alignment would be the responsibility of the transit provider.

3.1.3 South Bypass Connection Option A

South Bypass Connection Option A (Option A) begins at the proposed tunnel under the Bensenville Yard, as Option D does, but extends the freeway south along the western edge of County Line Road to I-294. The freeway would be located west of County Line Road. County Line Road would be retained as a one-way frontage road on the east side, and a new one-way frontage road would be provided on the west side of the proposed facility.

As with Option D, Option A would include a new bridge to reconnect Taft Road across the Bensenville Yard, linking Franklin Avenue and IL 19. The interchange with I-294 would be a

full access interchange and I-294 would be improved to accommodate system ramp connections and lane balance requirements.

4. Basis for Selecting Alternative 203 and Option D

The build alternatives, as previously described, are similar, but there are clear differences that favor Alternative 203 and Option D. Based on an examination of all the evaluation materials used in this Tier One study (including environmental and socioeconomic impacts and benefits, engineering data, comparative travel performance analyses, unanimous concurrence by regulatory resource agencies, and extensive stakeholder input), Alternative 203 with Option D was identified as the Preferred Alternative and has been identified by FHWA as the Selected Alternative. Other needed improvements are companion to the Selected Alternative including transit, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, and freight rail. TSM and TDM are not included as defined improvements in Tier One, but specific strategies will be examined in detail in the Tier Two EIS. The rationale for identifying Alternative 203 and Option D is described below with the decision for the South Bypass Connection option explained first, followed by the decision for the build alternative.

4.1 Summary of South Bypass Connection Option Evaluation

Three factors were used to compare the South Bypass Connection Options, including design performance, environmental and socioeconomic effects, and stakeholder input. Travel performance is commonly a factor in the evaluation of roadway options; however, in this case the location and length of the options are similar. Therefore, the travel demand model would not produce any measurable difference. The results of the evaluation are summarized below and a recommendation is presented in the conclusion (see subsection 4.1.4).

4.1.1 Design Performance

Functionally, the intersection of the freeway ramps to and from the south directly connecting with Taft Road under Option D offers more continuity in access and is more central to existing and planned industrial development in the area. Additionally, the alignment under Option D allows for a longer weaving distance between North Avenue and the I-294 system interchange than under Option A.

4.1.2 Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts

Options A and D are located in a highly developed area and, therefore, have relatively minor impacts to natural resources but more substantial socioeconomic impacts. Option A has a greater number of structures displaced (37 buildings versus 26 buildings), but it has relatively fewer (277 fewer) employees displaced because these businesses are smaller than those along Option D. The tax base impact is also lower for Option A than Option D. However, given that Option A is adjacent to residential areas in Bensenville, there is a potential for impacts to noise sensitive areas. Conversely, Option D is located wholly within non-residential areas, and the Village of Franklin Park considers the implementation of Option D an opportunity to revitalize the adjacent industrial uses through improved access.

4.1.3 Stakeholder Input

Overall, stakeholder comments clearly favored Option D. Bensenville has stated that Option A would be in conflict with the community's vision and passed a resolution in support of

Option D (see page D_3-86 in Appendix D of the Final EIS). The Village of Franklin Park also has passed a resolution endorsing Option D (see page D_5-75 in Appendix D of the Final EIS). As noted above, the Village of Franklin Park foresees the implementation of Option D as an opportunity to enhance the viability of the adjoining land uses through improved access, as well as address existing flooding concerns through drainage improvements.

4.1.4 Conclusion

Effects upon natural resources are not a distinguishing factor between Option A and Option D. While the social impacts for Option D are higher its location and function would be consistent with planning objectives in the local communities it would affect. Lastly, the communities have weighed in on the issue through the stakeholder involvement process, with a consensus position favoring Option D. Therefore, Option D is included in the Selected Alternative.

4.2 Summary of Build Alternatives Evaluation

Evaluation of the build alternatives considered four factors including travel performance, environmental impacts, social impacts, and stakeholder input. The results of the evaluation are summarized below for each factor, and a recommendation is presented in the conclusion (see subsection 4.2.6).

4.2.1 Travel Performance

The travel performance of the two build alternatives is comparable, with Alternative 203 offering slightly better travel performance than Alternative 402 in every category, including both local and regional measures.

4.2.2 Environmental Impacts

The environmental analysis shows a comparable level of impacts for Alternatives 203 and 402 with Alternative 402 having slightly lower impacts. Avoidance and minimization techniques throughout the process have reduced environmental resource impacts, and the impact difference between alternatives is small. Only a few acres of impact separate the alternatives with only three acres of difference for wetlands, surface waters, and floodplains. Effects on Section 4(f) resources are the same for both alternatives. There is no effect on threatened and endangered species, historical structures, and archaeological resources.

In the final analysis, most unavoidable environmental impacts are common to both alternatives, with only the north leg of each alternative accounting for slight differences. Thus, from the perspective of environmental resources, there are no effects that materially distinguish the alternatives.

4.2.3 Socioeconomic Impacts and Costs

Socioeconomic impacts favor Alternative 402 with slightly fewer displacements of residential, commercial and industrial structures, fewer job displacements, and lower tax revenue losses. Alternative 203, however, provides substantially greater economic benefit in terms of job creation.

4.2.4 Stakeholder Input

Consensus on Alternative 203 with Option D as the Preferred Alternative (now Selected Alternative) developed out of a stakeholder involvement process that was integral to the

alternatives development and evaluation process since the start of the project. Throughout Tier One, over 130 meetings were held with project stakeholders involving them in every aspect of the process including identifying travel issues and problems; sensitive community resources that should be avoided; community values; project purpose and need; identification of alternatives; measures to evaluate alternatives; and input on the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 203 with Option D emerged as the alternative with overwhelming community support as it is more consistent with local planning objectives. It results in better traffic management and traffic congestion relief in the study area, both of which were cited as important to communities. Stakeholders favor Alternative 203 because of better access to community businesses and greater potential for reinvestment in aging properties in the area. Lastly, communities agree that Alternative 203 with Option D is most compatible with their land use policies.

4.2.5 Public Hearing Comments

The public hearing for the Draft EIS held in October 2009 produced comments from agencies, municipalities, and the general public. Ninety-four percent of comments that indicated support for an alternative or south bypass connection option named Alternative 203 and/or Option D as preferred. Five agencies (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [USEPA], U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS], U.S. Army Corps of Engineers [USACE], Illinois Department of Natural Resources [IDNR] and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency [IEPA]) submitted comments on the Draft EIS, all of which either commented that the build alternatives resulted in comparable impacts or had no objections to the build alternatives presented in the Draft EIS. Five local government agencies in the study area submitted resolutions. Four of the five local government agencies were supportive of Alternative 203 and/or Option D, and one cited a preference for Alternative 402. Fifty-seven comments were received from the public at-large, and most comments (41) supported Alternative 203 and/or Option D. Other comments included requests for specific information or clarification of the proposed concept.

4.2.6 Conclusion

Extensive technical studies and stakeholder involvement throughout the process resulted in informed decisions that led to a transportation solution that best fit the needs of the area. As the process narrowed the field of the build alternatives, travel performance and environmental impacts proved to be comparable. Whereas, social impacts were mixed, economic benefits clearly favored Alternative 203. Furthermore, the project's stakeholder involvement achieved a degree of partnership in the process that is not often achieved, and resulted with consensus amongst the stakeholders that is rare with such an expansive study area. Over the two-year planning process, communities in the area united in their support for Alternative 203 with Option D as it best fits in with local planning objectives. In consideration of all the technical analysis and stakeholder input to this process, the Selected Alternative is Alternative 203 with Option D.

4.3 Environmentally Preferred Alternative

The Selected Alternative, Alternative 203 with Option D, is the environmentally Preferred Alternative. Unavoidable environmental and socioeconomic impacts are comparable between the two build alternatives and south bypass connection options with only three acres difference for such resources as wetlands, surface waters, and floodplains. However, communities are nearly unanimous in their support for Alternative 203 with Option D

because it better supports their existing and future community land uses and would result in greater economic benefits. Its location along the edges of their communities limits disruption to residential and commercial areas, while maximizing future opportunity for development or redevelopment. Alternative 203 with Option D provides superior travel movement and access to community businesses thereby increasing area businesses' competitive advantage. The fact that Alternative 203 with Option D has environmental and social impacts comparable to Alternative 402 and Option A but has substantially greater economic benefits and widespread community support confirms that it is the environmentally Preferred Alternative.

5. Section 4(f)

Significant publicly-owned parks, recreational areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites of national, state, or local significance, are afforded special protection under Section 23 CFR 774, *Parks, Recreation Areas, Wildlife and Waterfowl Refuges, and Historic Sites (Section 4(f))*. An evaluation of the project's potential impacts to these resources was conducted under §774.7(e), which allows for a preliminary Section 4(f) approval for first tier documents.

The Selected Alternative could involve three Section 4(f) properties: the Medinah Wetland Forest Preserve, the Salt Creek Greenway Trail, and the North Central DuPage Regional Trail. The Medinah Wetlands Forest Preserve could be impacted by improvements to the Elgin O'Hare Expressway and widening of Medinah Road. At this level of detail, approximately 0.75 acres would be required for the new transportation facilities from the 23 acre Forest Preserve. The impacts would occur on the edges of the Forest Preserve property. The Salt Creek Greenway Trail may be temporarily disrupted with improvements to Meacham Road/Medinah Road. The North Central DuPage Regional Trail may be temporarily disrupted during the expansion of the Plum Grove Road bridge that would accommodate the widening of the Elgin O'Hare Expressway. Efforts will be made in Tier Two to ensure trail continuity during construction for both trail facilities.

The Final EIS demonstrated that there are no feasible and prudent avoidance alternatives and describes all possible planning to minimize harm to the extent that the Tier One level of engineering allowed. Decisions made in Tier One will not preclude opportunities to minimize harm to the Section 4(f) resources in Tier Two. Therefore, FHWA grants preliminary Section 4(f) approval in this Record of Decision and the final Section 4(f) approval will be made in Tier Two.

6. Measures to Minimize Harm

Efforts have been made to avoid and minimize adverse effects on the environmental and socioeconomic resources throughout the process by eliminating alternatives with disproportionate impacts and incorporating design measures that limit impacts to unavoidable resources. Measures to further minimize impact were developed at a conceptual level during Tier One with a commitment to explore their applicability in detail in Tier Two. Per IDNR's comment on the Draft EIS, the "avoidance and minimization" concept will be applied to impacts to natural resources during Tier Two. Table 1 identifies resources potentially impacted by proposed improvements and conceptual impact

minimization measures recommended for further investigation in Tier Two. Commitment to specific minimization measures will be defined and identified in the Tier Two documents.

TABLE 1
Tier One Minimization Measures

Resource	Minimization Measure
Traffic	A traffic management plan will be required during the construction period to maintain traffic flow and reliable access to residences, businesses, community facilities and services, and local roads during construction. There would be coordination with fire, police, and emergency services to minimize delays and response times during construction.
Land Use	Coordination will continue with communities to identify design considerations that minimize impacts to adjacent land uses, such as landscaping, buffer areas, and sensitive roadway lighting.
Relocations	IDOT will offer relocation assistance, in accordance with the <i>Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970</i> , as amended, and IDOT's <i>Land Acquisition Procedures Manual</i> , to all occupants of buildings they would purchase and remove. Those policies provide for relocation assistance services to homeowners, renters, and businesses. Participation under the state and federal policies is without discrimination. IDOT will pay property owners the fair market value for all private property purchased and relocation assistance.
Water Quality and Hydrology	<p>Best management practices would be implemented that minimize the volume of stormwater runoff discharge and result in physical, chemical, or biological pollutant load reduction, increased infiltration, and evapotranspiration. Soil erosion and sediment control measures, consistent with Section 404 Clean Water Act permits and IDOT policy, would be implemented to minimize erosion and sedimentation for any build alternative in coordination with the local Soil & Water Conservation District. Disturbance of streamside and riparian vegetation would be kept to a minimum. In-stream construction and soil disturbing activities near streams would be conducted during low or normal flow periods. Discharge points would be protected with rock (or an alternative measure) to minimize scour and erosion. Perimeter sediment control devices would be installed before commencing soil disturbing activities, as necessary.</p> <p>Waterway crossings would be bridged, enclosed in a culvert, or otherwise designed to accommodate expected high water flows, to allow movement of aquatic biota, and not to impede low water flows. Drainage systems, including ditches, would be maintained and restored so as not to impound water (unless designed to do so for a water quality benefit).</p> <p>Vegetated basins/buffers, infiltration basins, and bioswales, would be evaluated to minimize transport of sediment, heavy metals, and other pollutants. Deicing management practices, such as anti-icing chemicals and additives, can minimize salt application quantities.</p>
Wetlands	<p>Shifting roadway alignments and using narrower roadway cross sections to minimize impacts to wetlands will be investigated. Roadway cross sections can be narrowed by incorporating the following into the design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrower center median • Narrower shoulder • Retaining walls • Steeper roadway embankments • Enclosed drainage systems • Bridging critical wetland resources
Floodplains	Floodplain impact minimization measures could include shifting roadway alignments, minimizing the number of piers required within a floodplain, using retaining walls and other measures to minimize encroachment of needed right-of-way into floodplains.
Biological Resources	In areas where large numbers of wildlife are present, such as forest preserves, fencing and other roadside barriers would be limited to areas necessary for public safety. For project sections that are new roadways or alignments, and features to facilitate wildlife movement

TABLE 1
Tier One Minimization Measures

Resource	Minimization Measure
	and reduce vehicle/wildlife collisions would be incorporated into the plans where possible. For sensitive wildlife areas, such as forest preserves and critical wetlands, large box culverts can be installed where practical to serve as avenues for wildlife movement. Efforts to minimize traffic noise impacts on wildlife will be explored with USFWS.
Special Lands	Minimization measures for impacting special lands include potentially shifting the roadway alignment and narrowing the cross section by incorporating such design measures as narrow center medians, narrow shoulders, retaining walls, steeper roadway embankments, and enclosed drainage systems.
Visual Resources	Consideration will be given to design elements to minimize impacts to the visual environment by making them more aesthetically pleasing or better incorporating them into the surrounding environment. Such elements include grading, noise barriers, retaining walls, stormwater management facilities, street lighting, and bridges. Where possible, removal of native vegetation will be minimized, obstructions near natural resources will be minimized to enhance their visibility to motorists, and tree plantings will occur in clusters where they will enhance the viewshed.
Air Quality	Construction will be required to comply with applicable state and local air quality regulations.
Noise	All construction equipment will be required to have mufflers constructed in accordance with the manufacturers' specifications. Mufflers and exhausts must be maintained in good working order. Daily operating hours for construction would coincide with the construction schedule needs, unless otherwise specified. Noise abatement measures for reducing traffic noise levels to residential and other properties will be evaluated for reasonableness and feasibility, and follow the guidance provided by the FHWA policies and procedures, 23 CFR 772; IDOT's Bureau of Design and Environment Manual Section 26-6 (2002a); and IDOT's Highway Traffic Noise Assessment Manual (2007a). Measures to reduce traffic noise, including traffic management measures, shifting the roadway location, and noise barriers will be examined during the Tier Two environmental studies.
Special Waste	Areas of contamination would be managed in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations and in a manner that would protect human health and the environment.

7. Monitoring and Enforcement

It was determined in Tier One that monitoring and enforcement actions will be defined in Tier Two. Regulatory permits are expected to be required including Section 404 of the Clean Water Act from the USACE; Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the IEPA; National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit from the IEPA; IDNR-Office of Water Resources (OWR) permits for impacts to regulatory floodways and stream crossings; and compliance with county stormwater ordinances. Materials to assist in the permit application process will be developed early in Tier Two and will be included in the technical documents and/or Tier Two Draft EIS. For those resources that cannot be avoided, minimization and mitigation measures to be implemented prior to, during, and after construction will be identified in coordination with the appropriate resource agency.

8. Comments on the Final EIS

The Final EIS Notice of Availability was published in the *Federal Register* on May 14, 2010. The 30-day wait period ended June 14, 2010. During that time, letters were received from USEPA and IEPA. USEPA noted that the agency's comments on the Draft EIS had been satisfied and reiterated its request for more detailed analyses of wetland mitigation measures, stormwater treatment, and air emissions in Tier Two. IEPA noted that the agency had no objections to the Final EIS and identified several coordination and permitting activities that may be required in Tier Two. The agencies' comments and IDOT's responses are found in Appendix A of this document. FHWA has concluded that comments received on the Final EIS have been adequately addressed.

9. Approval

Based on the analysis and evaluation contained in the Final EIS, after careful consideration of all the identified social, economic, and environmental factors and input received from other agencies, organizations, and the public; and the factors and mitigation measures outlined in this document, it is the decision of FHWA to approve Alternative 203 with Option D as the Selected Alternative and provide preliminary Section 4(f) approval.

June 17, 2010
Date

Norman R. Stoner
Norman R. Stoner, P.E.
Division Administrator

APPENDIX A



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 5

77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

MAY 27 2010

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF

E-19J

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

Re: Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Elgin-O'Hare West Bypass,
Cook and DuPage Counties, Illinois, EIS No. 20100170

Dear Mr. Stoner:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Elgin-O'Hare West Bypass project, prepared by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). We are providing our comments for your consideration pursuant to our authorities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations, and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The Tier 1 project study area encompasses 127 square miles in Cook and DuPage Counties. Tier 1 evaluated multi-modal options to improve regional and local travel, travel efficiency, access to O'Hare International Airport from the west, and modal opportunities and connections. The Tier 1 process led to the selection of a preferred transportation concept. In November, 2009, IDOT provided information to EPA supporting its selection of Alternative 203 with Southern Bypass Connection Option D as the preferred alternative. EPA concurred with the Tier 1 preferred alternative by letter on February 10, 2010.

At the time of the Tier 1 DEIS, EPA rated the document as a Lack of Objections. However, we recommended that the Tier 1 FEIS include information on conceptual mitigation for unavoidable wetland impacts. We also suggested that the Tier 2 analysis include more specific information on wetland delineation and functional assessment, stormwater treatment, hot spot analysis for particulate matter of 2.5 microns or less (PM_{2.5}), and clean diesel/anti-idling mitigation.

We note that information on compensatory wetland mitigation is included in the FEIS in the Section 4.3 and Section 4.13.5.2. Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this project. We look forward to our continued involvement and cooperation with FHWA and IDOT during the Tier 2 where detailed analysis of discreet

project elements will occur. If you or your staff have any questions concerning our comments, please contact me at (312) 886-2910 or westlake.kenneth@epa.gov, or Sherry Kamke of my staff at (312) 353-5794 or kamke.sherry@epa.gov.

Sincerely,



Kenneth A. Westlake
Chief, NEPA Implementation Section
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

cc: Diane O'Keefe, IDOT ✓



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Highways/Region One / District One
201 West Center Court/Schaumburg, Illinois 60196-1096

Project and Environmental Studies
Elgin O'Hare – West Bypass
Cook and DuPage Counties

June 17, 2010

Mr. Kenneth A. Westlake
Chief, NEPA Implementation Section
United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

Dear Mr. Westlake:

Thank you for your May 27, 2010 comment letter regarding the Final Tier One EIS for the Elgin O'Hare – West Bypass Study. We have appreciated the opportunity to work with USEPA during Tier One and look forward to continuing that working relationship as the project moves into Tier Two.


In your letter, you noted the need to further detail the wetland impacts and develop mitigation plans for those impacts that are unavoidable. Tier Two of the Elgin O'Hare – West Bypass process will provide the complete delineation of wetland resources, including their function. Mitigation will be carefully crafted to replace the loss of wetlands.

Other items of interest noted in your letter included stormwater management and air quality. These areas were addressed conceptually in Tier One, and will be addressed in detail as part of the Tier Two analyses. Your valued input on each of these matters and others will be regularly sought as Tier Two advances.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Ron Krall, Project Manager, at (847) 705-4103.

Very truly yours,

Diane M. O'Keefe, P.E.
Deputy Director of Highways,
Region One Engineer

By: 

Peter E. Harmet, P.E.
Bureau Chief of Programming



ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

1021 North Grand Avenue East, P.O. Box 19276, Springfield, Illinois 62794-9276 • (217) 782-2829
James R. Thompson Center, 100 West Randolph, Suite 11-300, Chicago, IL 60601 • (312) 814-6026

PAT QUINN, GOVERNOR

DOUGLAS P. SCOTT, DIRECTOR

217-782-0547

May 19, 2010

Ms. Diane M. O'Keefe
Deputy Director of Highways
Illinois Dept of Transportation
Division of Highways
Region One/ District One
201 West Center Court
Schaumburg, Illinois 60196-1096

Dear Ms. O'Keefe:

The Agency has reviewed the proposed project for the Elgin O'Hare West Bypass in Cook and DuPage Counties.

The Agency has no objections to the proposed project; however a Section 404 Dredge and Fill Permit may be required from the U S Army Corps of Engineers. A 401 Water Quality Certification will be required by this Agency if the above permit is required. A construction site activity stormwater NPDES permit for more than one acre being disturbed during construction from the Division of Water Pollution Control will be required. For questions or comments, you may contact Al Keller, 217-782-0610.

A permit from the Division of Public Water Supplies may also be required if any water mains are relocated due to the construction. You may contact Jerry Kuhn, 217-782-9470 with questions relating to PWS permits.

Demolition/asbestos notification will be required 10 working days prior to the project start date. Please contact Alan Grimmatt in Bureau of Air, 217-782-2113, for all questions on this matter.

Solid and hazardous waste must be properly disposed of or recycled.

If you have need for an Environmental Review in the future, please submit your information to:
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Deputy Director's Office/MC #1,
PO Box 19276, Springfield, Illinois 62794-9276, **ATTN: DiAnne Schuerman.**

Sincerely,

Lisa Bonnett
Acting Deputy Director



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Highways/Region One / District One
201 West Center Court/Schaumburg, Illinois 60196-1096

Project and Environmental Studies
Elgin O'Hare – West Bypass
Cook and DuPage Counties

June 17, 2010

Ms. Lisa Bonnett
Acting Deputy Director
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
1021 North Grand Avenue East
P.O. Box 19276
Springfield, IL 62794-9276

Dear Ms. Bonnett:

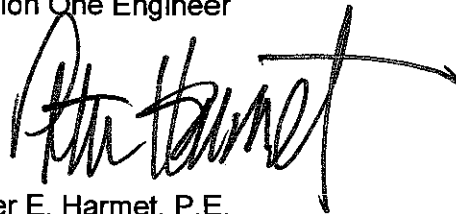
Thank you for your May 19, 2010 comment letter regarding the Final Tier One EIS for the Elgin O'Hare – West Bypass Study. We have appreciated the opportunity to work with IEPA and look forward to continuing that working relationship as the project moves into Tier Two.

In your letter, you note that permits may be required from the Division of Water Pollution Control, the Division of Water Supplies, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Also noted was coordination on matters of demolition and solid and hazardous wastes. With respect to each of these regulatory matters, the Tier Two process will provide the appropriate level of information to aid in your assessment of these permit requirements. Be assured that coordination with your agency is planned to achieve a complete understanding of your concerns and regulatory requirements.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Ron Krall, Project Manager, at (847) 705-4103.

Very truly yours,

Diane M. O'Keefe, P.E.
Deputy Director of Highways
Region One Engineer

By: 

Peter E. Harmet, P.E.
Bureau Chief of Programming