



## Circle Interchange Project

# Project Working Group Meeting #1 Summary

August 16, 2012

The first Project Working Group (PWG) Meeting for the Circle Interchange Project was held on August 16, 2012 at the Marriott Chicago- Medical District/UIC, 625 South Ashland Avenue Chicago, IL 60607, from 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM. The meeting included a presentation on the study process, schedule, public outreach program, PWG roles and responsibilities, and two workshops. During the workshop portions of the meeting, attendees were asked to identify transportation issues/concerns in the study area, potential interchange concepts, and alternatives evaluation criteria.

To announce PWG Meeting #1, the following email invitation was sent on July 30, 2012, with an RSVP reminder that followed on August 8, 2012.

The graphic is an email invitation for the Circle Interchange Project Working Group Meeting #1. It features a header with the Circle Interchange logo and the Illinois Department of Transportation logo. Below the header is a banner with a cityscape and a road interchange. The main body of the invitation is divided into two columns. The left column contains the text of the invitation, including details about the study, the PWG, and the meeting. The right column is a light blue box containing the meeting details and an RSVP reminder. The footer contains the copyright information for the Illinois Department of Transportation.

**You're Invited to Participate!**

The Illinois Department Transportation (IDOT) has initiated a study of Interstate 90/94 at Interstate 290/Congress Parkway (Circle Interchange). The Circle Interchange is located in Chicago, Cook County. The study is a two-year planning and design project which will identify the scope of improvements and potential cost and construction schedule. The study will focus on addressing the geometric and operational issues of the Circle Interchange.

As part of our public outreach program, a Project Working Group (PWG) has been established. This group consists of staff, governmental bodies, transportation agencies, study area municipal leaders, interested groups and organizations. The PWG will serve an important role in assisting IDOT throughout the planning phases of the project. The PWG will discuss transportation system needs, a range of potential alternatives and an evaluation of these alternatives.

**Please let this serve as an invitation to participate as a member of the PWG for the project and attend the first PWG meeting. You are welcome to appoint a designee to represent you or your agency/organization.**

At the first meeting there will be a presentation on the study process, schedule, public outreach program, PWG roles and responsibilities, and a workshop. During the workshop portion of the meeting the group will be asked to identify transportation issues/concerns in the study area and potential interchange concepts. Please be prepared to share your ideas with the group.

We encourage your participation and look forward to working with you on this important project.

If you have any questions please contact Mr. Paul Schneider, IDOT Project Manager Consultant at (847) 705-4725 or [Paul.Schneider@illinois.gov](mailto:Paul.Schneider@illinois.gov).

**The first PWG meeting will be held:**

**AUGUST 16, 2012**

**Marriott Chicago  
at Medical District/UIC  
625 South Ashland Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60607  
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

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**Please RSVP your attendance to the meeting and the workshop to Sara Kopinski of Images, Inc. at (630)510-3944, or via email at [sara.kopinski@imagesinc.net](mailto:sara.kopinski@imagesinc.net) by Friday, August 10, 2012.**

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## **PWG #1 Workshops**

PWG #1 included two workshops:

1. Group Exercise 1: Issues, Constraints, Problem Statement
2. Group Exercise 2: Initial Concepts and Preliminary Evaluation Criteria

## **Workshop Participants by Table**

### **Table 1:**

Facilitator: Chuck Stenzel

- Luann Hamilton – CDOT
- Mark Donovan – UIC
- Jacky Grimshaw – CNT
- Bonnie Sanchez-Carlson – Near South Planning Board
- Tom Murtha – CMAP
- Jerry Lockwood – UIC

### **Table 2:**

Facilitator: Grace Dysico

- Brenda McGruder – CDOT
- Gabriel Magana – Illinois Medical District Commission
- Derek Boeldt – CTA
- Nicole Nutter – RTA (observing)
- Peter Fahrenwald – RTA
- Jesus Yopez – CDOT

### **Table 3:**

Facilitator: Paul Schneider

- Chris Wuellner – CDOT
- Dennis McClendon – South Loop Neighbors
- Paul Swanson – CTP for CTA
- Dennis O'Neill – C4C
- Bob O'Neill – Grant Park Conservancy

### **Table 4:**

Facilitator: Gina Trimarco

- Juan Valenzuela – Illinois State Police



- Randy DeShazo – CMAP
- Adam Lintner – Illinois Tollway

### **Table 5:**

Facilitator: Mike Eichten

- Michael Kraft – Illinois State Police
- Mike McLaughlin – CTA
- Chrissy Nichols – Metropolitan Planning Council
- Khaled Elkhatib – HACIA
- Donna Firman – West Central Association Chamber of Commerce

## **Workshop Part I: Issues, Constraints, Problem Statement**

*(Transcribed Workshop Feedback)*

The goals/objectives of Exercise 1 included:

- Affirming what has already been identified on constraints map.
- Identifying any new issues and constraints.
- Identifying problems/deficiencies in the area.
- Identifying areas that are important to stakeholders.

### **Table 1 (Yellow)- Issues, Constraints**

#### **Issues**

- Conflict between traffic flow and access
- Merging northbound at Roosevelt and Taylor
- Problems south of Roosevelt and north of I-55
- Lane drops
- We should assess building acquisition
- Flooding

#### **Constraints**

- Only 1 lane northbound to westbound is a constraint and issue
- Buildings are at property line – enough room?
- High demand but not lanes/room

### **Table 2 (Green)- Issues, Constraints**

#### **Issues**

- Pedestrian environment
- Pedestrian safety
- Land acquisitions
- Driver behavior
- Signage
- Lane balance in middle section
- Use of technology



### Constraints

- Short decision distance
- Station access
- Transit corridors
- Right-of-way & drainage

### **Table 3 (Pink)- Issues, Constraints**

#### Issues

- Growing community
- Fiscal
- Design constraints
- Interaction with local systems
- Pedestrian/bicycle amenities – lack of
- Aesthetics of roadway & CTA – chainlink fences, etc.
- Dark underpasses
- Landscaping

#### Constraints

- Local access (limit or preserve)
- Morgan exit – close?

### **Table 4 (Blue)- Issues, Constraints**

#### Issues

- Safety - Wrong way drivers, panhandlers
- Driver demographics aging
- Emergency situations
- Drainage
- Outside weaves between service and system ramps
- Pedestrian access
- Aging infrastructure aesthetics
- High accident locations
- Freight choke point
- Homeland security – ability to evacuate quickly

#### Constraints

- Greyhound terminal
- Lack of managed lanes
- Affordability
- Maintenance of traffic

### **Table 5 (Purple)- Issues, Constraints**

#### Issues

- Safety
- Congestion
- Ramp/access
- Weaves at ramps



- AIS – trucks merging back in
- Coordination with agencies on Blue Line and Eisenhower

#### Concerns

- Confirmed observations, higher barrier walls, CTA, access

### **Workshop Part II: Initial Concepts & Preliminary Evaluation Criteria**

*(Transcribed Workshop Feedback)*

Exercise 2 was divided into two parts:

1. Review potential interchange reconfiguration concepts and obtain input on other ideas.
2. Develop a list of Evaluation Criteria to compare the various concepts.

#### **Table 1 (Yellow)- Initial Concepts & Preliminary Evaluation Criteria**

##### Concept Comments-

- Coordinate UIC Master Plan with work at Peoria Street
- Incorporate aesthetics into flyover
- Extend westbound to Racine to offset Morgan, if needed
- Doesn't seem that Taylor is bad enough to warrant a 4<sup>th</sup> level bridge
- Focus on primary movements
  - Do we need all ramps (such as southbound to eastbound)

##### Alternatives Evaluation Criteria

- Logical termini – consider problems
- Neighborhood impacts
- Truck impacts
- User perceptions (drivability/signage)

#### **Table 2 (Green)- Initial Concepts & Preliminary Evaluation Criteria**

##### Concept Comments-

##### Concept 1

- None noted

##### Concept 2

- New backup on the northbound to eastbound ramp
- Maintain pedestrian access at Harrison Street
- Potential short weave on the entrance ramp from Taylor Street to northbound mainline

##### Concept 3

- None noted

##### Concept 4

- Do not like southbound exit to Taylor Street from mainline because the decision is too far downstream
- Local street congestion at W. Roosevelt Road and South Des Plaines Street



### Concept 5

- None noted

### Alternatives Evaluation Criteria

- Long term solution
- Traffic O-D's
- Evaluate "new" weaves
- Evaluate "new" congestion points
- Truck maneuvers
- Non-typical inside exit ramps
- Right of way (impacts to CTA ROW)
- Local street network operations/congestion
- Pedestrian access (new underpasses, safety)
- Impacts to traffic outside of Study Area
- Local - Local connections (stay on local grid or go to interstate)

### **Table 3 (Pink)- Initial Concepts & Preliminary Evaluation Criteria**

#### Concerns

- Fly-over and aesthetics over Harrison/Halstead gateway
- Height of interchange – view shed
- Compromises pedestrian environment
- Hamper future decking/green space
- Iconic interchange
- UIC connect to downtown
- Bike/pedestrian design
- Morgan access

### **Table 4 (Blue)- Initial Concepts & Preliminary Evaluation Criteria**

#### Concept Comments-

##### Concept 1

- **Pros:** Northbound to westbound decision point is now at Roosevelt; northbound to eastbound separated from northbound to westbound (all concepts)
- **Cons:** Just adding lanes does not solve problem- should look at managed lanes etc.; have not improved the eastbound lke movement

##### Concept 2

- **Pros:** Support flyover as a good solution provided it's 2 lanes; helps with emergency response; northbound to eastbound separated from northbound to westbound (all concepts)
- **Cons:** Does not improve eastbound lke movement

##### Concept 3

- **Pros:** I-55 northbound weave removed; support flyover; northbound to eastbound separated from northbound to westbound (all concepts)
- **Cons:** Impact on Accident Investigation Site; snow/ice issues possible with flyover (4 level); creates southbound to I-55 weave; does not help eastbound movement



#### Concept 4

- **Pros:** South leg improved; retains southbound Taylor access; separate eastbound gores; higher speed directional ramps; northbound to eastbound separated from northbound to westbound (all concepts)
- **Cons:** Mixing of local and long distance traffic; accident investigation site impacted; possible ice/snow on 4 level flyover

#### Concept 5

- **Pros:** Improved eastbound to northbound movement improves north leg; improved northbound Kennedy access; decision point moves north; northbound to eastbound separated from northbound to westbound (all concepts)
- **Cons:** Mixing of local and long distance traffic; possible ice/snow on 4 level flyover

#### Additional Comments:

- A fire suppression system would be a beneficial addition to the interchange. It would be a water line that can be turned on and tapped by the fire department. While a fire engine carries enough water to extinguish a common vehicle fire, it is not enough for a gas tanker truck fire. According to Adam Lintner, the Tollway already has a similar system on their roadways.
- On the concepts with a Ramp NW left-handed takeoff from NB I-90/94, consider that truck traffic will be approaching the Circle Interchange from the local lanes on the Dan Ryan. Trucks would have to merge left two lanes to access the ramp.

#### Alternatives Evaluation Criteria (add)

- Homeland security
- Special events
- Evacuation
- Emergency access
- ITS
- Managed lanes
- Ramp metering
- Freight – support of 120,000 lb trucks

#### **Table 5 (Purple)- Initial Concepts & Preliminary Evaluation Criteria**

##### Alternatives Evaluation Criteria

- Access (on and off issues)
- Potential to attract additional vehicles/congestion
- Improvements to transit facilities
- Good signage necessary
- Truck access
- View sheds
- Morgan exit disputable
- Impacts to local streets
- Future revitalization areas
- Pedestrian/student impacts
- Future economic development