



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

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MEMORANDUM

To: CMAP Transportation Committee

From: CMAP Staff

Date: May 15, 2020

Re: **Summary of Public Comment on the Proposed Amendments to ON TO 2050**
I-55 at Airport/Lockport and at IL 126
I-55 from I-80 to US 52 and US 52 from River Road to Houbolt Road

The following summarizes public feedback regarding two proposed amendments to the ON TO 2050 regional plan submitted by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). The proposed amendments designate roadway improvements along the I-55 expressway as Regionally Significant Projects (RSPs). These projects include improvements to **I-55 at Airport/Lockport and at IL 126** and **I-55 from I-80 to US 52 and US 52 from River Road to Houbolt Road** (the I-55 Projects).

The required public comment period for the I-55 Projects was open from **April 10, 2020 to May 11, 2020**. Information about the I-55 Projects was included on a dedicated [page](#) on CMAP's website, with links to CMAP staff analyses and specific project information provided by IDOT. The comments were collected in an email account specifically designated for the proposed amendments: I55projects@cmap.illinois.gov. CMAP also solicited public comment about the I-55 Projects in its Weekly Update newsletter ([April 10](#), [April 17](#), [May 1](#), and [May 8](#)), in the agency's social media, and via email correspondence to municipalities.

Public Comment Summary

CMAP received a total of eight public comments on the proposed amendments for the I-55 Projects, attached to this memorandum.

Four comments addressed both projects. One comment from a resident expressed support for the bicycle elements of the projects. The Will County Governmental League expressed support for both projects. One resident expressed opposition to new expressway interchanges and lanes.

The Center for Neighborhood Technology expressed concern with CMAP's analysis regarding projected impacts and environmental outcomes.

Three comments were specific to the I-55 at Airport/Lockport and at IL 126 project. One resident requested a traffic signal at a subdivision entrance to improve safety if a full interchange is built at I-55 and IL 126. Another resident supported the Airport/Lockport interchange because of the improved interstate access. The Village of Plainfield stated that the proposed interchange at Airport/Lockport must include a bypass roadway to move traffic off of Lockport Street to Route 126 and the proposed 143rd Street extension.

One comment was specific to the I-55 from I-80 to US 52 and US 52 from River Road to Houbolt Road project. The Village of Shorewood stated support for the US 52 improvements but concern about the I-55 from I-80 to US 52 portion.

Terry Witt

Date: 4/11/2020

Correspondence: Email

Subject: 126/55 Project

Improving bicycle and pedestrian safe facilities is important to the mobility in the 55 _ 80 interchange project. Here is my attempt to see the connectivity possibilities in a map my ride picture. <https://www.mapmyride.com/routes/view/2992511497>.

[The I-55 amendment at Airport/Lockport and at IL 126] looks like a good project from a bicycle perspective. Here is a map my doodle I made <https://www.mapmyride.com/routes/view/2992683487>.

Elaine Bottomley on behalf of Hugh O'Hara, Will County Governmental League

Date: 4/16/2020

Correspondence: Email

Subject: WCGL Public Comments for I-55 Projects

The Will County Governmental League supports both of the two amendments under consideration for inclusion in the On To 2050 list of fiscally constrained regionally significant projects. The inclusion of both the I-55 at Airport/Lockport and at IL 126, as well as improvements to I-55 from I-80 to US 52 and US 52 from River Road to Houbolt Road, are critical to the transportation network within Will County.

The I-55 at Airport/Lockport and IL 126 improvements will provide better access to numerous communities by reconstructing and reconfiguring the interchange at IL 126 (partial interchange to full), while also constructing a new interchange at Airport Rd/Lockport Street. The improvements to I-55 from I-80 to US 52 and US 52 from River Road to Houbolt Road includes numerous improvements along a critical Will County corridor to improve regional mobility and provide better local interstate access. These I-55 projects are pivotal for mobility in the area, not just for the freight clusters, but also for the residents. Both projects are recognized as critical to Will County across all levels of government. This can be seen through the numerous local plans that both projects appear in.

Additionally, both of these amendments embody the three principles that guide the goals and recommendations of the On To 2050 Plan: Inclusive Growth, Resilience, and Prioritized Investment. Inclusive growth is seen through improving access to the Will County freight cluster while growing our economy through increasing potential opportunity. Resilience is embodied by improving regional mobility and interstate access all while also providing pedestrian and bicycling improvements that may adapt to growing demand. Lastly, prioritized investment is exemplified by addressing the current needs in the area, which include congestion, safety, and reliability problems.

The Will County Governmental League fully supports the inclusion of these I-55 corridor improvements in the On To 2050 list of fiscally constrained regionally significant projects. Thank you for considering these projects for inclusion within On To 2050. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Hugh O'Hara
Executive Director WCGL

Marcy Tadla

Date: 4/21/2020

Correspondence: Email

Subject: I-55 at IL126 Concern with proposed full interchange

Please consider a traffic light into the 2 subdivisions of The Reserve and Waters Edge, especially if a full interchange is built at the intersection of I-55 and Rt.126.

There have always been too many accidents (often fatal) near our neighborhoods due to the traffic coming off the highway. Installing a full interchange will increase the highway traffic substantially and put all of us in danger as we enter and leave these 2 subdivisions.

Both The Reserve and Waters Edge are full of young families, children heading to school, and teens learning to drive. Please help to keep us safe.

Thank you for your consideration.

Marcy Tadla

Patrick Miner

Date: 4/30/2020

Correspondence: Email

Subject: Comment on I-55 projects

Dear CMAP,

This comment is regarding two proposed amendments to ON TO 2050: I-55 at Airport/Lockport and at IL 126 and Improvements to I-55 from I-80 to US 52 and US 52 from River Road to Houbolt Road.

I strongly oppose these two projects being added as regionally significant projects (RSPs). As stated on CMAP's website, "Selected projects should substantially implement ON TO 2050 by addressing current needs, improving travel over the long term, and having positive impacts on plan priorities, such as investing in existing communities, enhancing environmental quality, and improving quality of life."

Building new expressway interchanges and adding lanes to already expansive roadways is counterproductive to the goals of ON TO 2050. If our region aims to decrease toxic air pollution from motor vehicles, enhance environmental quality, and improve quality of life, we should not be expanding expressways. Transportation funds should be used to maintain existing roads and to expand space for pedestrians, cyclists, transit passengers, and people with disabilities. Please do not encourage more wasteful expressway construction with these projects.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,

Patrick Miner

Michael P. Collins, Village of Plainfield
Date: 5/5/2020
Correspondence: Email
Subject: ON TO 2050 Proposed Amendments

Re: ON TO 2050 Proposed Amendments (I-55 at Lockport/Airport and at IL 126)

Dear Ms. Grover:

The Village of Plainfield appreciates the opportunity to provide public comments for the proposed amendments to CMAP's ON TO 2050 Regional Plan. We rely on CMAP's expertise in modeling existing and proposed conditions for both regional and local projects in order to guide our transportation planning within the Village. The Regionally Significant Component of the ON TO 2050 Regional Plan is of importance to us as it allows larger projects, such as the I-55 at Airport/Lockport and at IL 126 project, to receive appropriate consideration.

The Village of Plainfield, along with Romeoville and Bolingbrook, has expended considerable resources creating a Project Development Report. As part of this process, many alternatives have been considered for both interchange locations. Plainfield has consistently maintained the same position, concerning the proposed interchange at Lockport/Airport, by advocating the need for a bypass roadway that would eliminate truck traffic from traveling west, along Lockport Street, and within our historic section of town. A separate feasibility study has been completed by Plainfield, as noted in CMAP's Memorandum, that identifies potential bypass corridors which would fulfill our need to eliminate trucks from traveling westbound along Lockport Street.

Significant investment has been made by the Village of Plainfield by improving the 143rd Street Corridor (also noted in CMAP's Memorandum) with the purpose of encouraging trucks to utilize 143rd Street while reducing truck traffic on our local roads. The new proposed interchange at Lockport/Airport must include a bypass roadway that will efficiently move traffic to Route 126 and the proposed 143rd Street extension. We are committed to working with the project team regarding design concepts which include a bypass and other measures that will protect and enhance our community.

We thank you in advance for your time and consideration regarding this matter.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael P. Collins
Village President

cc: Brian Murphy, Village Administrator
Allen Persons, Director of Public Works

Jim Culotta on behalf of Richard E. Chapman, Village of Shorewood

Date: 5/8/2020

Correspondence: Email

Subject: Public Comment - 2050 Plan Amendment

RE: ON TO 2050 Plan Amendment Comments for I-55 from I-80 to US 52 and US 52 from River Road to Houbolt Road Project

Ms. Grover:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments related to the ON TO 2050 plan amendment specific to improvements to I-55 from I-80 to US 52 and US 52 from River Road to Houbolt Road. The US 52 improvements are greatly needed from River Road to Houbolt Road, as well documented in the Purpose and Need Assessment for the I-55 at IL 59 Access Project. Not only does the Purpose and Need Assessment identify existing over capacity issues on US 52 at IL 59 and I-55, but there are also major safety concerns with US 52 having multiple five percent locations. ("Five percent locations are a roadway segment or intersection that has been identified as containing at least the top five percent of the severe injury and fatal crash locations within the state", per IDOT's project presentation materials.) We are in agreement that the planned improvements to US 52 will greatly improve safety as well as traffic flow and need to be prioritized for the benefit of the entire region.

In reviewing the requirements for the plan amendment, the proposed projects should address current needs, improve travel over the long term and support the plan priorities. While we agree that the US 52 project from River Road to Houbolt Road meets the requirements for an amendment, we have concerns about the I-55 from I-80 to US 52 meeting the amendment requirements. Specifically, the Purpose and Need Assessment for the I-55 and IL 59 Access Project does not appear to address a current need and also does not seem to account for the already planned I-80 at Houbolt Road interchange improvement and how that project would impact traffic patterns within the study area.

While the Purpose and Need Assessment depicts the region (City of Joliet and Village of Shorewood) as experiencing rapid growth, this is not the case currently and hasn't been the development trend in nearly a decade. Yet, the basis for the project improvements and 2040 traffic flows used the population projections from GO TO 2040 that anticipated rapid growth in the region and have proven to be quite inaccurate to date. The population projections from the GO TO 2040 plan were used to estimate future traffic flows for these projects. However, population projections were later revised for the ON TO 2050 plan to reflect the actual pace of development, which, if used for this project, may greatly reduce the need for this improvement at this time. As an example, the Year 2050 population estimated by the ON TO 2050 is approximately half of the Year 2040 population estimated by GO TO 2040. In order to adequately comment on this portion of the project, revised traffic projections should be provided using the more recent population projections. Additionally, the only way to provide

the desired additional east-west connection at the proposed interchange is through separate projects (Seil Road Widening and Olympic Boulevard Extension), which are not part of this amendment, do not currently have funding in place for Phase II Engineering, ROW acquisition and Construction and are unlikely to occur for some time.

Lastly, given the significant uncertainties of the proposed Rock Run Crossings development it would be more appropriate for the US 52 from River Road to Houbolt Road to be constructed before the I-55 and IL 59 Access Project. The inadequacies of US 52 have been well documented and known for years. The need exists today and is critical to the Village of Shorewood concerning traffic flow and safety issues as previously stated. The same cannot be said of the divergent diamond interchange designed to serve Rock Run Crossings.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed ON TO 2050 plan amendment and look forward to continued discussions on the proposed projects.

Sincerely,

Richard E. Chapman
Mayor
Village of Shorewood, IL

Sara Gentile

Date: 5/9/2020

Correspondence: Email

Subject: My opinion for Airport Rd & I55 interchange

Hello,

I'm emailing you in regards to my opinion to this project. I'm in favor of needing this interchange.

I live in the sub-division that is off of Airport Rd and backed up against Frontage Rd and I55. (Preserve at Fieldstone). We travel to Chicago every day for work and we would love for this interchange to become a reality. It takes us 20 minutes to get to the Weber Rd & I55 interchange and when that is backed up we have to take the path to Rt 53. That trip can take an additional 25-30 minutes. This interchange will only be a two minute drive to get onto I55.

As much as Romeoville's population growth spiked in 2000 and there was really only two ways out onto an expressway made no sense and added to extra travel time. The sub-division next to us is still selling lots for new homes and that will add to traffic on Airport Rd. The landowner south of us will eventually give in to a developer and that will be an increase of another 300 homes.

Plus the amount of new warehouses being built has increased in the last couple of years. This will mean more trucks coming through. Plainfield is also increasing the truck traffic.

Please take care of this interchange now.

Best regards,
Sara Gentile

Robert Dean, Center for Neighborhood Technology

Date: 5/10/2020

Correspondence: Email

Subject: Comment on RSP Addition

Dear CMAP:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed addition of two interchange projects along I-55 to ON TO 2050. We believe that adding new projects to ON TO 2050 should not be done casually, and that thorough analysis should be conducted to evaluate the impact of additions. Further, this evaluation should not simply review projects' transportation impacts, but also their impacts on the natural environment, the economy, equity, and overall quality of life.

With this standard in mind, CMAP's evaluation of the two proposed projects is disappointing. In terms of transportation impacts, the quantitative assessments, while thorough, primarily report on current conditions in the study area, rather than the projected impact of the new projects. It is worthwhile, of course, to understand current crash data, congestion levels, etc, in the general area of a project, but it is far more useful to understand how these projects contribute to improving these outcomes.

Even less satisfying is the environmental analysis. In particular, CMAP has prioritized climate resilience as a goal, but does not calculate even the directionality, positive or negative, of each project's impact on greenhouse gas emissions. We understand that estimating the greenhouse gas emissions impact of individual projects is difficult, but this analysis does not appear to have made the attempt. Reducing our region's emissions is a must, and it is concerning that new regionally significant projects may be added to the regional plan without even knowing if they increase or decrease emissions.

It is difficult to make an informed decision on the addition of these projects to ON TO 2050 in the absence of a more meaningful evaluation of their impacts. We need to hold projects to a higher standard of evaluation than what CMAP has provided here. If we can help in any way, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Robert Dean, CEO

Center for Neighborhood Technology