

Public Meeting Question and Answers

Written and oral comments were received at public meetings that were held on February 18, 2009 and July 30, 2009. Below are a list of the types of concerns and comments made by attendees, along with answers provided by DSATS to address these questions:

- 1. Why is this new corridor being considered when Somonauk Road or Peace Road are already built as major north-south higher speed roads serving this part of the county? Since Peace Road connects with the Tollway and Plank Road, why not widen Peace Road if traffic growth is the issue?**

While a possible new corridor is considered in the long term transportation planning for this region, improvement of the existing infrastructure is the preferred first alignment. As development continues in the region, improvements to the existing roadway system will continue. The alignment corridor along the eastern portion of the County is a sensible highway link that could occur if urban growth is sustained, unlike the present down economy, with orderly growth from Sycamore, DeKalb County, and Cortland. Should the municipalities in the area adopt policies that limit development in the area, the need for a possible new corridor could be greatly reduced. Those kinds of policies must be adopted by the local governments and is not something DSATS has control over.

- 2. Why put all the traffic on Plank Road when we know Plank is a dangerous high accident two lane road for area commuters?**

Plank Rd. is a major traffic corridor in the region, and roadway improvements are likely along this roadway whether or not any new roadway corridor is implemented. Should a single corridor alignment be identified, impacts along the existing roadway system will have to be thoroughly identified and addressed before any kind of implementation could take place.

- 3. If the Eastern Corridor has a connection to the Tollway then “if you build it they will come” is bound to happen, and the toll charges seem to be a great windfall for the Tollway. Why promote building the road ahead of the area’s traffic demand for it?**

The intention DSATS had when it implemented this study was to identify possible corridors that are logical and guide transportation decisions ahead of growth and new generated traffic. DSATS is not endorsing that this corridor be built and currently would advocate that improvements to the existing transportation system be implemented first. However, should circumstances in the future warrant the development of such a corridor, DSATS would prefer a coordinated transportation corridor linking the area, rather than individual uncoordinated development.

- 4. The DSATS sketch at the proposed Hinckley Road interchange is shown as a clover leaf with the circular ramps taking up needless acreage (some said 120 acres) versus minimizing the ramp acreage according to how a Cortland developer study coordinated with the Tollway used a diamond ramp**

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configuration. Would the DSATS study ramps be changed to minimize loss of farmland?

This study shows a cloverleaf ramp configuration, but a diamond ramp configuration, or even an alternate area are all possibilities. An in depth study and public hearings would all be required should any interchange be proposed.

5. Why do all corridor alignments connect to the Tollway at Hinckley Road?

When Baxter & Woodman began this process, Pritchard, Hinckley, and Chase were all identified as possible locations for an interchange. There were concerns by members of the study committee that Chase and Somonauk would be too close to Peace as an interchange point. Pritchard Rd. was identified as too far away from the urbanized area. Hinckley Rd. was chosen as it already has an existing bridge, although, it was noted that if funding was available, that an alternate location near Hinckley was possible should a final alignment study identify another location as more feasible.

6. Why were alternatives not considered within the Sycamore City limits besides the north piece by Heron Creek?

Part of the selection process was to identify a limited access corridor where access was limited to the State highways, the Tollway, and Major Collector Streets. The problem with identifying a corridor within the existing Sycamore city limits is that there are too many roads already in existence to develop a roadway as limited access. It is also anticipated that by the time any corridor would be implemented, the Sycamore urban area (as identified in their Future Land Use Map) would be much closer to any proposed roadway.

7. The Hinckley area township road superintendent said Hinckley Road is not built to take a large volume of heavy trucks as a connection to the Tollway would invite their using the road to the Village of Hinckley. He promotes the interchange at Hinckley Road direct traffic west to Somonauk Road so Hinckley Road south of the Tollway is not burdened.

Any final corridor selection study will have to identify the impacts to Hinckley Rd. to the south as well as Plank Rd. to the north and identify ways to mitigate the impacts that any new corridor would have to these roadways.

8. There were some questions as to why this study ended the corridor alignments at Plank Road and did not continue on further north, possibly to the I-90 Tollway. There were also questions as to why DSATS did not coordinate planning with the Prairie Parkway planners for the corridor north of the Tollway. Another person thought the corridor should bend over to Route 47 and discuss expansion of Route 47 to four lanes to the I-90 Tollway.

This study was mainly focused on identifying corridor alignments near the DeKalb urbanized area for possible future development. As DSATS and its member communities are not at the point of feeling that this corridor will be warranted, especially if development in this area does not occur, it was felt that

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coordination of plans is not yet needed. DSATS officials feel if a process were started to identify a single preferred alignment, it would be at that time that coordination with Prairie Parkway officials and other communities throughout DeKalb County would be most productive.

- 9. Some thought a motive for a south connection to the Tollway at Hinckley Road was to immediately benefit Waste Management with their proposed venture to haul Kane County garbage to the DeKalb County landfill on Somonauk Road nearby. They questioned whether the consultants, Baxter and Woodman, had done work or were presently doing work for Waste Management.**

DSATS staff has talked with Baxter & Woodman and they have stated that they currently do no work with Waste Management nor have they ever done any work with them. Waste Management has had no influence on the development of the Corridor Study. The DSATS officials who also worked on this study have also not had any contact with Waste Management while this study was being produced. It was only recently that any of the officials working on the study became aware of the expansion of the County landfill site.

- 10. A number of people commented that a gas pipeline runs very near to parts of Alignments 1, 2, & 3 and wonder if building a roadway in that area will be feasible.**

If a final single alignment is chosen at some point, a more extensive study would have to be performed which would identify all public utilities in the area in greater detail. In that larger study, it will have to be identified how any new roadway would deal with the pipelines and other utilities crossing or following near any new roadway.

- 11. Were Baxter & Woodman instructed (directly or indirectly) not to route through annexed Sycamore?**

One of the factors in determining route locations was the Comprehensive Plans of DeKalb County, the City of Sycamore, and the Town of Cortland. In the Comprehensive Plan which was adopted by Sycamore, their future land use map shows the area north of Swanson Rd. as future residential. As part of the planning process we needed to consider the intentions for development that the local communities have already adopted, therefore on Alignment 2, the roadway is moved further eastward to avoid the proposed new residential development. While the consultants were not directly told to avoid this area, the intentions for the area, as stated in Sycamore's Comprehensive Plan had to be considered. As this roadway is to be a limited access roadway, the intent was to identify locations where there would be limited local access.

- 12. Why did Baxter & Woodman not follow stated guidelines and travel through the center of parcels and not between property owners along a section line (as is evident in the east west portion of route B [alignment 2])?**

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Alignment 2 runs north until Swanson Rd. In the Sycamore Future Land Use Map, published July 1, 2008, the area between Swanson and Plank Roads is identified as future residential. As this roadway is to be a limited access corridor the roadway runs east-west along the Swanson Rd. right-of-way, past the residential area, and then curves northward again to Plank Rd. once it is past Sycamore's proposed residential area. When alignment 2 ("B") was developed the consultants looked at using the Swanson Rd. Right Of Way (ROW), but because of a sharp curve in Swanson Rd., following the road completely as it moves eastward was impractical as this roadway is intended to be a higher speed roadway and following the exact Swanson Rd. ROW would create too many curves within the roadway. In this proposed alignment, it moves eastward along the portion of Swanson that is further north and goes through farm property as it moves east. Another option could be following farmland parcel boundaries on the western portion and hooking into Swanson Rd. further east. If a selection was made and Alignment 2 was chosen, much more in depth discussion would have to be involved in the decision to follow property lines, or following portions of Swanson Rd. which involves the taking of less property. As this study only identifies potential corridors and a detailed Environmental Study would be required on any final selection, the exact roadway locations are subject to alterations before any final route is adopted.

13. It is suggested that the lack of representation of any individuals and/or organizations with agricultural interest is a major oversight.

This study by DSATS was just the first step in a long process of identifying a potential corridor. DSATS is made up of representatives from each of the communities in the DeKalb Urbanized Area, and as such, they are expected to bring to the table the concerns of the people who reside and work in the communities they serve. While DSATS understands the importance of input from other organizations, it was felt that input from those organizations is better served in this forum. Should the County move forward with identifying a single corridor, it would be at that point where the County could invite members of organizations or individuals to be on any committee that looked at identifying a single preferred alignment.

14. There have been rumors that the Tollway Intersection and development of this corridor are already in the process of being implemented and that use of federal stimulus funds may be involved.

There are no plans to implement either a Tollway interchange or development of any of the proposed alignments at this time. In addition to no plans for implementation of such a corridor, there is also not any funds available from either federal, state, or local sources to implement such a project. Also, should a project move forward, an extensive environmental impact study with an extensive amount of further public input must be performed before any such project could move forward. At this time, there are not even funds available to perform a comprehensive environmental impact study on a single preferred alignment.