



## CITIZENS FOR APPROPRIATE TRANSPORTATION (CAT)

ACTION ALERT – FEBRUARY 16, 2016

[www.CitizensForAppropriateTransportation.org](http://www.CitizensForAppropriateTransportation.org)

The Village of Oak Park is holding a Study Session on Monday February 22, 2016 at 7 PM in the Council Chambers at Village Hall. The topic is “aesthetics.” **The key question is how will IDOT and the Village protect and enhance our neighborhoods.**

I have listed some important issues below. Feel free to add to the list.

1. **Interchange Designs at Harlem and Austin** – Can IDOT and the Village mitigate the negative impacts on our neighborhoods at these two interchanges?
2. **Noise Walls** – Where will they be located? How will they look? What happens to the wood fence on Harrison between Grove and Maple?
3. **Use of the CSX right-of-way** – Since October 2009 when IDOT began preparing an Environmental Impact Statement, they have said discussions with the CSX are “ongoing.” Being able to use all or part of the CSX width would lead to better interchange designs and all 12-foot lanes (the Interstate standard) versus the four 12-foot and four 11-foot lanes in IDOT’s current plans.
4. **Oak Park Pinch Point** – The narrowest part of the Corridor right-of-way is on the east side of the Oak Park Avenue Bridge. See the first photograph on the next page. How does IDOT plan to add two lanes in each direction, provide shoulders on both sides of the east and westbound lanes, account for wider CTA station platforms, and provide a bike-pedestrian way along Harrison Street?
5. **Emergency Vehicle Access** – Will IDOT provide shoulders on both sides of the expressway that are wide enough to allow emergency vehicles to use the shoulders during congested hours?
6. **Width of Harrison and Garfield** – Both Harrison and Garfield have substandard widths. Will IDOT and the Village come up with a viable solution?
7. **Weekday Congestion** - IDOT says weekday congestion lasts for about 17 hours a day under current conditions. They have projected a 45-minute reduction (at best) for the Year 2040. Can they manage demand more effectively to get better results? Can we divert more motorists to the CTA?
8. **South Retaining Wall** – IDOT has not decided whether to rebuild the south Corridor retaining wall. There are large counterfort retaining structures underneath Garfield. Rebuilding the wall would be expensive and add to construction time. Can IDOT eliminate damage from ground vibration?
9. **Long-Term Projections are notoriously unreliable** – IDOT projected population, households, and employment to the Year 2040, then based their Build Alternatives on these projections. What are their contingency plans if their projections are wrong?

**10. Light – Dark Changes at Austin and Harlem** – For structural reasons, IDOT is using horizontal beams across the through lanes at Harlem and Austin. Under some sunlight conditions, the beams will cause a rapid change in sunlight and shade for drivers on the through lanes. See the second photograph below. How will IDOT solve this?

If IDOT and the Village cannot address the above issues in a satisfactory manner, then we have missed the opportunity for a better solution. This is a once in a 50 to 60-year opportunity to enhance the corridor communities.

**The pinch point at Oak Park Avenue**



**IDOT's Model of the Proposed Harlem Avenue Interchange showing the horizontal beams connecting the eastbound and westbound ramps**

