



CITIZENS FOR APPROPRIATE TRANSPORTATION (CAT)

ACTION ALERT – JULY 10, 2015

www.CitizensForAppropriateTransportation.org

The Village of Oak Park is holding a Study Session on Monday July 13 starting at 7 PM at Village Hall to consider the Harlem Avenue and Austin Boulevard Interchanges with the Eisenhower Expressway. Typically, the Village Board allows public comments up to three minutes each. Please consider the following comments and add your personal perspective.

IDOT's proposed interchange improvements address design, safety, operations, access to the CTA Blue Line, bus stop locations, bicycle and pedestrian movements, narrow sidewalks, signal timing, and the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All of these are important issues. However, there are additional interchange issues.

1. **Year 2040 Forecasts** – IDOT used Market-Based Forecasts to the Year 2040 for population, households, and employment. They did not use the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's Go To 2040 Policy-Based Forecasts. IDOT assumes more development in the outlying suburbs, while CMAP assumes more development in existing communities. In his ruling on the proposed Illiana Expressway that remanded the Environmental Impact Statement and the Record of Decision to IDOT, Indiana Department of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration, Judge Alonso said, "it would seem unwise" to reject the Policy-Based Forecasts. The forecasts are the basis for the projected traffic volume the interchanges must handle. Forecasting is imperfect, so IDOT should analyze multiple scenarios.
2. **Ramp Design and Height** - Right hand ramps at Austin and Harlem will bring air and noise pollution closer to neighborhoods. IDOT has already decided on right-hand side ramps and widening the expressway before releasing their air quality and noise analyses.
3. **Capacity Analysis** assumes clear weather, no incidents, and good pavement conditions. There are many times when one or more of these three conditions do not exist. This means IDOT's projected performance calculations will be worse than shown when any or all of these conditions occur.
4. **Corridor Edges** are one of several places where IDOT can follow the requirement of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to **AVOID** negative impacts where possible, **MINIMIZE** them if they cannot be avoided, or **MITIGATE** them if they cannot be avoided or minimized. Well-designed edges will mitigate some negative environmental impacts. We have more than three miles of corridor edges in Oak Park.
5. **Livability** – IDOT's interchanges will affect the livability of neighborhoods on both sides of the Corridor.