



## Citizens for Appropriate Transportation

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### RECENT FACEBOOK POSTS – Rick Kuner – July 1, 2013

**MEANINGFUL CITIZEN PARTICIPATION** – IDOT asked for public comments last June, but took ten months to respond to them. Does this seem like IDOT values your comments?

**FAIR EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES** – IDOT focused on transportation criteria to develop alternatives in Rounds 1 and 2. They will add other criteria in Round 3. Adding criteria in Round 3 after excluding some viable alternatives in Round 2 is not fair.

**URBAN DESIGNER / ARCHITECT'S ROLE** – IDOT thinks the role of an urban designer or architect is to prepare "renderings or other visualization techniques" after engineers develop conceptual alternatives. No design professor I had in graduate school or design professional I ever worked with agrees with this limited role. We will live with IDOT's project for the next fifty plus years, so we need creative design professionals to generate better alternatives.

**SINGLE-MODE SOLUTIONS** – IDOT says transit will not solve corridor problems by itself. I agree. Transit has smaller service areas than roads. What IDOT does not say is the expressway by itself will not solve corridor problems either because adding two lanes does little to reduce congestion.

**ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS** – In a recent e-mail, IDOT said, "Context Sensitive Solutions is all about engaging stakeholders on every major aspect of a project." Yet there has never been a presentation from either an urban designer or architect at any of the fifteen Corridor Advisory Group / Task Force meetings. Urban designers and architects deal with context every day. When IDOT brings in an urban designer or architect after engineers develop conceptual alternatives, we are not seeing the best alternatives possible.

**MARKET SEGMENTATION PART 1** – A Federal Transit Administration (FTA) report says, "Multimodal corridor transit and freeway systems often are built to compete directly with each other for the same travel markets. When this happens, one mode can dominate, and the freeway typically attracts the most patrons. As a result, the surrounding land uses and activities will be shaped to serve the freeway, leaving transit under patronized."\* The FTA report recommends market segmentation to provide "distinct, separated, and optimized travel markets for each mode – between the transit line and freeway."

\*Transit Cooperative Research Program Report 145, "Reinventing the Urban Interstate: A New Paradigm for Multimodal Corridors," sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration, 2011.

**MARKET SEGMENTATION PART 2** –The 2011 FTA report identifies three forms multimodal corridors can take:

- 1. Transit-Oriented Multimodal Corridors** – Design transit to serve short- and medium-length trips. Design the expressway to serve longer trips.
- 2. Park-and-Ride Access Multimodal Corridors** – Provide Park-and-Ride lots in the corridor and high transit speeds through the corridor.
- 3. Transit-Optimized / Freeway-Constrained Multimodal Corridors** – Design a high performance transit system. Limit the capacity of the expressway.

**CONSTRUCTION COST ESTIMATES** – IDOT is close to completing two (of four) rounds of alternatives development without providing construction cost estimates. In an era with severely constrained budgets, this does not make sense. Although preparing engineering cost estimates now is not reasonable, preparing planning cost estimates is.

**CTA BLUE LINE EXTENSION OR BUS RAPID TRANSIT?** – IDOT is considering two options to provide transit service west of the Forest Park CTA Blue Line Station: extend the Blue Line or Bus Rapid Transit to Mannheim Road. They will not decide between the two, saying both have similar performance. Although there are capital and operating cost differences between the two, IDOT says nothing about either type of costs. Making a major transportation investment decision without considering both performance and costs is a mistake.

**DID YOU KNOW THIRTY YEARS AGO WHAT YOU WOULD BE DOING THIS YEAR?** –IDOT projects impacts to the Year 2040 in three steps:

1. Create a No Build Scenario by projecting impacts to 2040 without any changes to the Eisenhower Transportation Corridor.
2. Project impacts to 2040 for each of the twelve Build Alternatives
3. Compare each Build Alternative against the 2040 No Build Scenario to identify which alternatives to carry forward.

Many differences among alternatives are less than one percent. Computer models are not accurate enough to distinguish such small projected differences. Yet IDOT appears willing to make a major transportation investment decision using these projections.

**CTA BLUE LINE STUDY** – The CTA formally announced a Blue Line Forest Park Branch Feasibility / Vision Study. The intent is a study leading to upgrades in the rail line, stations, and access to stations. Upgrading the Blue Line should encourage economic development in Corridor communities. The Eisenhower Transportation Corridor is multimodal. The CTA Study should add a perspective that complements IDOT's highway perspective.

**GREEN STREET LOFTS NEAR CIRCLE INTERCHANGE** – Jon Hilkevitch's *Getting Around* column in the June 24, 2013 Chicago Tribune illustrates a major problem with IDOT's planning process. IDOT's original design for the Circle Interchange had a ramp 7.5 feet from the Green Street Lofts. After a "buzz saw of public criticism," IDOT's redesign moves the ramp to 20 feet from the Lofts, and adds a sound-abatement wall, landscaping, and equipment to monitor building vibration. IDOT's revisions are slightly better for the Lofts, but they are not a good solution. Instead of preparing a transportation solution and worrying about adverse impacts after public criticism, IDOT would do better by considering the full range of impacts throughout the process of developing alternative solutions.