

# Chapter 4. Agency Coordination and Public Involvement

*Agency participation and public input is an important component of the US 51 project. This chapter describes the coordination with Federal, State, and local agencies, and public involvement activities throughout the course of the project.*

## 4.1 Agency Coordination

### *What agencies are responsible for the US 51 project?*

The two joint lead agencies responsible for the project are the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). FHWA and IDOT manage the environmental review process and prepare the environmental documents. IDOT provided information on environmental resources in the project area, such as wetlands, stream quality and aquatic species, and historic information. IDOT also provided traffic information such as crash data. IDOT is responsible for managing the public involvement process.



The joint lead agencies are responsible for making project-related decisions. Public input is important and was considered at every step of the project, but all ultimate decisions remain with FHWA and IDOT. An objective of the agencies is to arrive at all decisions in a clear and transparent manner. The lead agencies developed an efficient, teamwork-oriented approach to the agency involvement through a process called Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS). As a result, the Project Study Group (PSG) was formed.

### *What is the PSG and what is its purpose?*

The PSG is a team that includes representatives from FHWA, IDOT, and members of the consultant engineering teams. The purpose of the PSG is to promote partnership with stakeholders and provide project recommendations. Major decision points that the PSG was involved in making was defining the Purpose and Need of the project and developing the range of alternatives. The PSG was responsible for making sure that the public was informed of the project progress and gathering public input.

#### **Project Study Group (PSG)**

Includes representative from IDOT, FHWA, and members of the consultant engineering teams.

### *When did the PSG meet and what was discussed?*

Five PSG meetings were held since the beginning of the project. The meeting dates and main topics discussed are listed in Table 4.1-1. Materials associated with the meetings are presented in Volume 4.

**Table 4.1-1: Project Study Group Meeting Summary**

Meeting Date	Main Topics Discussed
June 20, 2007	Identify PSG members, Discuss data needs
September 27, 2007	Project schedule, Public involvement process
March 25, 2008	Methodology and scoping package, Public involvement update, Study schedule
August 22, 2008	Public involvement status and update, Problem statement, Purpose and Need Outline
April 14, 2009	Range of alternatives developed by stakeholders

***How were Federal, State, and Local Agencies involved in the project?***

**Resource Agency**

A Federal, State, or local agency that has legal authority to provide guidance and make decisions about a specific environmental resource. Resource agencies participate in project meetings, review and comment on project documents, and grant approvals at project milestones.

The PSG encouraged members of Federal, State, and local government and resource agencies to participate in the project through public involvement activities. The agencies were included on the project mailing list and invited to attend the Public Information Meetings (PIMs). Some State and local government agency and resource agency representatives also volunteered to serve as members of the advisory groups. More information on the PIMs and advisory groups is included later in this chapter.

The project team sent out an information/data request letter to Federal, State, and local agencies to gather information on the project study area. A copy of the letter, the mailing list, and its responses are located in Volume 4.

The PSG held meetings with government agencies and resource agencies on an as-needed basis as specific issues arose. Some Federal, State, and local resource agencies were invited to serve as cooperating or participating agencies.

***What are Cooperating and Participating Agencies and what is their role?***

Through the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process, Federal, State, and local agencies were invited to become cooperating agencies and/or participating agencies.

A *cooperating agency* is any Federal or State agency that has jurisdiction by law or expertise with respect to an environmental impact involved in a proposed project. Cooperating agencies develop information and prepare environmental

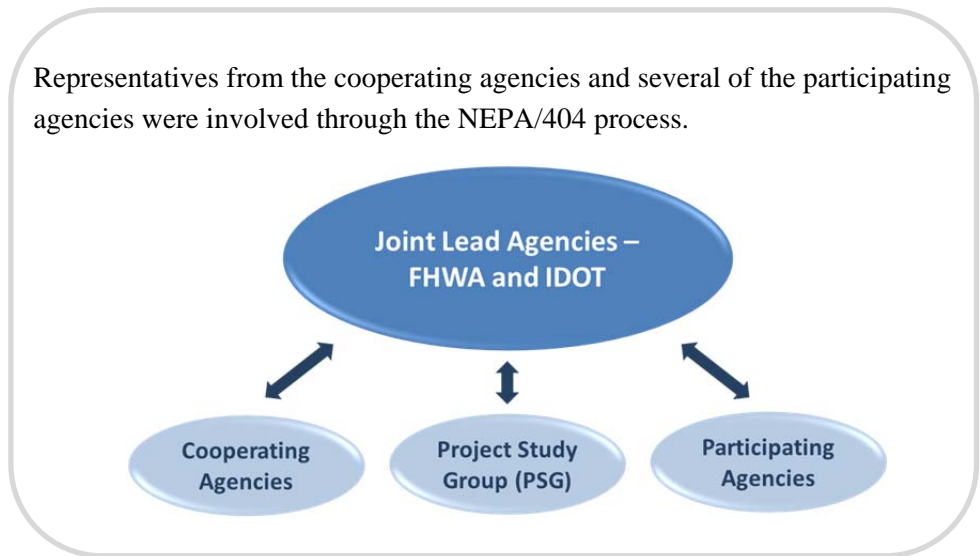
analyses for topics about which they have expertise. The following agencies were invited to serve as cooperating agencies:

- United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

A *participating agency* is any Federal, State, or local agency that may have an interest in the project. It is the responsibility of participating agencies to provide timely input throughout the environmental review process. Participating agencies may provide comments on purpose and need, methodologies, range of alternatives, and the preferred alternative. The following agencies were invited to serve as cooperating agencies:

- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- United States Coast Guard
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- Federal Aeronautics Administration (FAA)/Illinois Division of Aeronautics
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA)
- Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA)
- Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA)
- South Central Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission (SCIRPDC)
- Local Transit Entities
- County Soil & Water Conservation Districts
- County Forest Preserve Districts
- County Government Agencies
- Local Municipalities
- Local Townships

Representatives from the cooperating agencies and several of the participating agencies were involved through the NEPA/404 process.



*The Cooperating Agencies, Participating Agencies, and the PSG review project materials and provide project recommendations to the Joint Lead Agencies, who are responsible for all final project decisions*

***What is the NEPA/404 process?***

All roadway projects with Federal involvement are required to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Any project that involves placing fill material into waters of the United States including wetlands also requires a Section 404 permit from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The NEPA/404 process streamlines the agency cooperation and project decision-making. The NEPA/404 merger process consists of representatives from Federal and State regulatory resource agencies meeting at major project milestones to discuss the project. The goal of the NEPA/404 Merger Group is to involve regulatory resource agencies early and at key project milestones to minimize the potential for unforeseen issues that may arise during the later stages of the NEPA and Section 404 permitting processes. The major topics of the meetings include scoping, project updates, and concurrence on the project’s purpose and need, alternatives to be carried forward, and preferred alternative.

The PSG has presented the US 51 project at seven NEPA/404 merger meetings to date. At four of the meetings, the project team asked the agencies to grant concurrence on key project decisions. Concurrence means that the agencies agree that information is adequate and that the project can be advanced to the next stage of development. The agencies agree not to revisit the previous steps unless conditions change. A summary of the NEPA/404 merger meeting is listed in Table 4.1-2.

**Concurrence**  
 In the NEPA/404 process, concurrence means confirmation by the agency that information to date is adequate to agree that the project can be advanced to the next stage of project development. Concurrence does not imply that the project has been approved by an agency.

**Table 4.1-2: NEPA/404 Merger Meeting Summary**

Date	Topic Presented	Concurrence Sought?	Concurrence Granted?
February 7, 2008	Project Introduction	No	---
September 4, 2008	Project Update	No	---
February 3, 2009	Purpose & Need Statement	Yes	Yes
June 24, 2009	Project Update	No	---
June 9, 2010	Alternatives to be Carried Forward	Yes	Yes
February 15, 2011	Additional Alternatives to be Carried Forward in Vandalia	Yes	Yes
February 20, 2012	Vandalia Alternative Modifications	Yes	Yes

The final concurrence point, the Preferred Alternative, will be presented at a NEPA/404 merger meeting after public and agency review of this DEIS, tentatively in early 2014. Agency and public input will be considered when selecting the Preferred Alternative.

***When were meetings held with Federal and State agencies and what was discussed?***

The project team maintained ongoing coordination with Federal and State agencies. Some coordination efforts were conducted through email or telephone correspondence. Meetings with agencies were held on an as-needed basis. At the meetings, the PSG provided project updates and asked for guidance on issues that the agency has expertise in. For example, wetland impacts were discussed with representatives from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The USACE has jurisdiction over wetlands through the Clean Water Act.

The PSG held five meetings with Federal and State agencies since the beginning of the project. The meetings are summarized in Table 4.1-3.



*The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulates streams and wetlands through the Clean Water Act. The project team met with the USACE to discuss wetland impacts.*

**Table 4.1-3: Federal and State Agency Meeting Summary**



*Representatives from Federal and State agencies visited the project area several times during environmental field reviews.*

Meeting Date	Attendees	Main Topics Discussed
October 23, 2008	United States Army Corps of Engineers, United States Environmental Protection Agency, Illinois Department of Natural Resources	Environmental field review of project study area
September 2, 2009	Illinois Department of Natural Resources	Illinois Natural Area Inventory Sites near Vandalia
February 3, 2010	United States Army Corps of Engineers	Wetland impacts
February 16, 2010	Illinois Department of Natural Resources	Wetland impacts
June 8, 2010	United States Army Corps of Engineers, United States Environmental Protection Agency, Illinois Department of Natural Resources	Environmental field review of project area and alternatives under consideration
June 9, 2011	Illinois Department of Agriculture	Agricultural impacts

***When were meetings held with local agencies and what was discussed?***

Meetings were held with several local community and elected officials early in the project schedule to obtain input and develop an understanding of their issues and concerns. Additional meetings were held on an as-needed basis as specific issues arose, or when a meeting was requested by an agency. The project team met with local agencies nine times during the course of the project. Most of the meetings were with government officials. The project team also met with members of local resource agencies when requested.

The meetings are summarized in Table 4.1-4. Materials associated with these meetings are presented in Volume 4.

**Table 4.1-4: Local Agency Meeting Summary**

Meeting Date	Attendees	Main Topics Discussed
July 23, 2007	Centralia Mayor and Centralia City Officials, Press	Impacts to historic buildings in Centralia’s downtown area
August 6, 2007	Vandalia Mayor and Vandalia City Officials	Impacts to smaller communities along the project
August 27, 2007	Sandoval Mayor and City Administrator	Proximity of frontage roads to communities and interchange access
September 10, 2007	Vernon Mayor, Patoka Mayor and Village of Patoka Officials	Consideration of the oil companies in Patoka
September 17, 2007	Ramsey Mayor and Village of Ramsey Officials	Project funding and project schedule
December 17, 2008	Clinton Mayor and City Administrative Assistant	Importance of the proximity of US 51 bypasses to communities
December 14, 2009	Centralia Mayor and Centralia City Officials	Proposed interchange location
June 9, 2011	Fayette County Farm Bureau	Remaining alternatives around Vandalia
October 26, 2011	Vandalia Mayor	Proposed interchange location



*The project team met with local government agencies to discuss features that are unique to each community, such as the tank farms in Patoka.*

## 4.2 Public Involvement

### *How was the public involved in the project?*

Public involvement is an important element of the US 51 project. Public input was sought and considered throughout the development of the study. The project used IDOT’s Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) approach to public involvement. CSS is an interactive process that engages the public, or stakeholders, throughout the course of the project. CSS involves working with stakeholders to develop roadways that fit into and reflect the project’s surroundings – its “context.” “Context” as it applies to roadway projects can be

#### **Stakeholder**

Anyone who may be affected by the project and has a stake in its outcome.

defined as “all elements related to the people and place where a project is located.” This includes both visible elements such as environmental or historic resources and invisible elements such as community values, traditions, and expectations.

In the past, the public was not typically involved in a project until some level of engineering had already been performed. Through CSS, numerous meetings were held before roadway alignments were developed. Stakeholders were involved in the decision-making process with continuous involvement throughout the entire development of the project. Advisory groups and Public Information Meetings (PIMs) are an important part of the CSS process and are described later in this chapter. The public involvement process was outlined in the Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP).

***What is the Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP)?***

The PSG developed the SIP, which outlines the opportunities for public involvement and establishes ground rules for participation. The SIP also identifies the roles and responsibilities of the lead agencies, identifies cooperating agencies and participating agencies, and outlines the project schedule. The SIP was updated as-needed through the project. The names of the advisory group members are listed in the SIP. The SIP is in Volume 4.

***What are advisory groups?***

Advisory groups are an important component of the public involvement process. The members of the advisory groups serve as representatives of the stakeholders. Two types of advisory groups were formed for the US 51 project: Community Advisory Groups (CAGs) and a Regional Advisory Group (RAG).

Five CAGs were established for communities along the US 51 study area. In some cases communities located in close geographic proximity to each other formed one CAG. The communities that composed the five CAGs are:

- Wamac, Junction City , Central City, Centralia - this CAG will be referred to as the Centralia CAG through the remainder of the document
- Sandoval
- Vernon and Patoka
- Vandalia
- Ramsey

The approximately 70 miles of study corridor are not comprised only of towns, villages, and cities. A majority of the corridor runs through unincorporated



farmland, woodland, and sparse residential areas. The RAG was developed to assist in identifying impacts that the US 51 expansion would have to areas outside of the separate communities, and to bring the interests of the multiple CAGs and communities together to achieve a consensus on the project as a whole.

The CAG and RAG members agreed to follow a set of ground rules that form the basis for respectful interaction for all people involved in the process. The advisory group members and the PSG could, by agreement, revise the ground rules during the study.

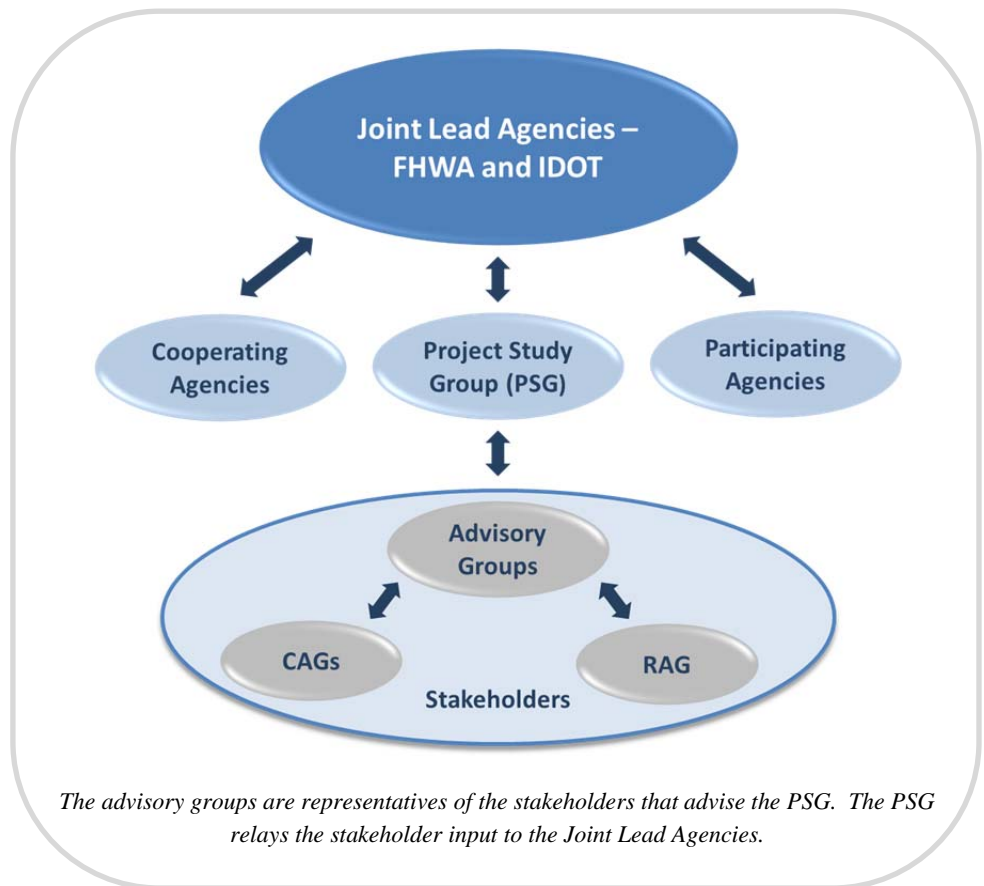
The ground rules are as follows:

- All input from all participants in the process is valued and considered.
- All participants will come to the process with an open mind and participate openly and honestly.
- All participants in the process will treat each other with respect and dignity.
- The role of the advisory groups is to advise the PSG.
- All decisions of the Joint Lead Agencies (FHWA and IDOT) must be made in a clear, transparent manner and stakeholders should agree that their input was duly considered.

***What is the role of the advisory groups?***

The role of the CAG and RAG is to advise the PSG on key project issues, such as developing the range of alternatives considered. The PSG considers advisory group input when making a project decision. The CAG and RAG representatives attend meetings where topics discussed range from existing transportation problems to what resources are important to the community. The advisory group members represent the interests of the individual communities along the corridor. For example, the Vandalia CAG discussed issues unique to Vandalia and its residents. The RAG considers information from the Vandalia CAG as it examines the project as a whole.

The advisory group members were expected to attend the meetings and to provide input. The members were expected to discuss the project with the people they represent and their neighbors. The members were asked to get input from other stakeholders and share it at advisory group meetings. Advisory group members were also expected to attend PIMs.



***Who were the members of the CAGs and how were they selected?***

Stakeholders who attended the first PIM were asked to volunteer to serve on the CAG. Information about the CAGs was placed on the project website so that people who did not attend the meeting could volunteer. Everyone who volunteered to serve on one of the CAGs was invited to become a member. The CAG members represented a diverse range of interest areas and geographic areas. Members of the CAG include stakeholders representing the following interest areas:

- Agriculture/Farmers
- Airport
- Business
- Chamber of Commerce
- County Representatives
- Developer/Real Estate

- Economic Development
- Education
- Emergency Services
- Environmental
- Government
- Historic District
- Homeowner/Resident
- Industry
- Labor
- Law Enforcement
- Municipal Representatives
- Parks/Recreation
- Religious/ministerial alliance



*The advisory group members represented a diverse range of interest areas, including agricultural interests.*

In some cases more than one person represented an interest area. For example, there were multiple farmers who represented agricultural interests on the CAGs.

The Vandalia CAG was reorganized based on public input. The reorganized CAG was referred to as the VCAG. The VCAG is discussed later in this chapter.

Stakeholders who were not members of the CAG were permitted to attend the CAG meetings. The non-members were asked to observe and hold all questions until the end of the meeting.

***When did the CAGs meet and what was the purpose of the meetings?***

A series of nine CAG meetings were held, totaling 42 CAG meetings. Because unique issues were presented in each community, not all CAGs met the same number of times. The Ramsey CAG met eight times. The Centralia, Sandoval, Vandalia, and Vernon-Patoka CAGs each met a total of nine times. The original Vandalia CAG met 7 times and the reorganized Vandalia CAG (the VCAG) met nine times. The VCAG meetings are described later in this chapter.

Table 4.2-1 summarizes the CAG meetings. The meetings are described in the following section.

**Table 4.2-1: Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting Summary**

<b>CAG Meeting Series Number</b>	<b>CAG</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Purpose of Meeting</b>
1	Ramsey Vandalia Vernon-Patoka Centralia Sandoval	March 31, 2008 April 1, 2008 April 28, 2008 May 28, 2008 June 19, 2008	Identifying Community Issues
2	Ramsey Vandalia Vernon-Patoka Centralia Sandoval	May 20, 2008 May 21, 2008 May 27, 2008 June 25, 2008 July 15, 2008	Understanding Community Context
3	Ramsey Vernon-Patoka Vandalia Centralia Sandoval	June 24, 2008 July 7, 2008 July 8, 2008 July 17, 2008 July 28, 2008	Defining the Problem Statement
4	Sandoval Ramsey Vernon-Patoka Centralia Vandalia	September 22, 2008 September 23, 2008 September 30, 2008 October 1, 2008 October 7, 2008	Brainstorming Alternatives
5	Sandoval Centralia Vernon-Patoka Ramsey Vandalia	February 24, 2009 February 25, 2009 March 2, 2009 March 3, 2009 March 11, 2009	Consolidating Alternatives
6	Ramsey Centralia Vernon-Patoka Sandoval Vandalia	May 19, 2009 May 19, 2009 May 19, 2009 May 20, 2009 May 20, 2009	Preliminary Alternative Review
7	Sandoval Vandalia Vernon-Patoka Centralia	February 16, 2010 February 17, 2010 February 18, 2010 February 22, 2010	Modified Alternative Review
8	Ramsey Vernon-Patoka Centralia Sandoval	May 27, 2011 May 31, 2011 June 1, 2011 June 7, 2011	Detailed Alternative Review and Refinement
9	Ramsey Sandoval Centralia Vernon-Patoka	June 10, 2013 June 13, 2013 June 17, 2013 June 20, 2013	Present Remaining Alternatives

### CAG Meeting #1 - Identifying Community Issues

The first step in the project process was to identify transportation problems and community issues. IDOT can identify a transportation problem by collecting and analyzing data, but a community's issues are best heard from the community members themselves. The first CAG meeting got people thinking and talking about transportation issues in their communities by posing the question, "What problems do you foresee by expanding US 51 to four lanes in your community?" Existing problems with US 51 and future benefits of an improvement were touched on as the groups discussed their answers to the question.



*Community issues were discussed at CAG Meeting #1.*

### CAG Meeting #2 - Understanding Community Context

The next step was to understand what is important to each community. The characteristics that make a community unique are best identified by its residents. Representing a cross section of their neighbors, CAG members took a Context Audit to help IDOT better understand their community. A Context Audit is a survey designed to identify unique or important community characteristics. The information from the survey was used to define the Problem Statement based upon community goals and future plans. Participants taking the survey were given the opportunity to prioritize what characteristics in the survey they believe are most important to their community.



*Community characteristics were prioritized at CAG Meeting #2.*

### CAG Meeting #3 - Defining a Problem Statement

The third step in the project process was to define a Problem Statement. The first measure as to whether an alternative should be studied is, "Does this solve the problem statement?" If yes, the alternative was considered. IDOT's problem statement with US 51 started with continuity and connectivity. If people, goods and services cannot efficiently get to where they need to go, problems also develop with economic development potential and safety. Using IDOT's problem as a starting point and with input from the Context Audit taken at CAG meeting #2, each group tailored a statement that was specific to their problems of continuity, connectivity, economic development, and safety.



*The Problem Statements were developed at CAG Meeting #3.*

### CAG Meeting #4 – Brainstorming Alternatives

At the fourth CAG meeting, participants were asked to draw lines on a map for potential US 51 locations. Members of the CAGs were presented with a series of preliminary criteria that engineers, planners, and scientists use when beginning to identify possible locations for a roadway improvement. The information, presented as Engineering 101 and Environmental 101, was considered when the



*Members brainstormed the location of alternatives at CAG Meeting #4.*

groups brainstormed ideas. However, the idea was to brainstorm without any limitations on where the lines could go. The ideas developed at CAG #4 were compiled and served as the starting point for the range of alternatives.

#### CAG Meeting #5 – Consolidating Alternatives



*Members consolidated the alternatives at CAG Meeting #5.*

The purpose of CAG meeting #5 was to review the range of preliminary alternatives for US 51 and consolidate or eliminate alternatives that did not meet the project's Purpose and Need Statement. The range of alternatives included the ideas developed at CAG meeting #4, in addition to alternatives added by the RAG and by the PSG. The RAG and PSG added additional alternatives to ensure that an adequate range of alternatives were considered.

The CAG members reviewed the alternative analysis process and engineering design criteria. The design criteria presented was similar to the information presented at CAG meeting #4 but focused in more detail on specific roadway design elements. The CAG members decided to modify or combine some alternatives if they met the same intent as a similar another alternative (or multiple alternatives), had the same beginning and end points, and were located in the same general area. Some alternatives were modified based upon known environmental information or in order to avoid a community feature, such as a neighborhood or cemetery.

#### CAG Meeting #6 – Preliminary Alternative Review



*The range of alternatives was reviewed at CAG Meeting #6.*

Prior to CAG meeting #6, the alternatives selected by the CAG for further evaluation were reviewed by the RAG and PSG. Some alternatives were consolidated or modified, and some additional corridors were added back to ensure that a reasonable range meeting the project Purpose and Need were evaluated. At meeting #6, the CAG members were given the opportunity to further review the alternatives. From these efforts, a reasonable range of alternatives was identified and the project team began the alternative analysis process to narrow down the alternatives.

The project team met with the Vandalia CAG two times during this step. Some of the alternatives developed by the CAG, RAG, and PSG resulted in access changes to commercial properties along I-70 and were located in the vicinity of residences on the northwest side of Vandalia. The additional Vandalia CAG meeting was held to discuss these issues and get the community's input on the alternative locations.

### CAG Meeting #7 – Modified Alternative Review

After CAG meeting #6, the project team received additional environmental information from field surveys conducted by state biologists and scientists. The information identified high-quality wetland areas around Centralia/Central City, Sandoval, Patoka, Vernon, and Vandalia. After receiving the information, and following consideration of Federal and State law (which says wetlands must be avoided or minimized when feasible), the project team modified some of the alternatives to avoid impacting the high-quality wetland areas. Exhibits of the modified alternatives were presented during CAG meeting #7 to solicit input from members. After the CAG meetings were held, the project study group revisited the alternative evaluation process.

### CAG Meeting #8 – Alternative Refinement

Prior to CAG meeting #8, the project team continued to refine the alternatives to minimize impacts to community and environmental features and based on engineering criteria. Some of the alternatives in the preliminary range had been eliminated through the alternative evaluation process. At CAG meeting #8, each community was given the opportunity to review and comment on the remaining alternatives.

CAG meeting #8 was held for the Centralia, Sandoval, Vernon-Patoka and Ramsey CAGs. The Vandalia CAG was not included in this series of meetings. Instead, the Vandalia CAG was reorganized and the new Vandalia CAG (known as the VCAG) revisited the alternative development process. More information about the VCAG is below.

### CAG Meeting #9 – Remaining Alternatives

The purpose of CAG meeting #9 was to present the remaining alternatives, discuss community and environmental impacts, and seek input on a preferred alternative. A map showing the alternatives and resource impacts, and a summary table of impacts was presented for each community. Comment forms were distributed so that the CAG members could provide input on a preferred alternative.

CAG meeting series # 9 was held for the Centralia, Sandoval, Vernon-Patoka, and Ramsey CAGs. A similar meeting was held for the reorganized VCAG (VCAG meeting #9), described below.

### ***Why was the Vandalia CAG reorganized?***

The remaining alternatives were presented to the public at PIM #4. After the meeting, IDOT received approximately 34 comments concerning the Vandalia alternatives. Most of the commenters were residents who lived in the

#### **Consensus**

A decision-making process that seeks the agreement of most of the participants while acknowledging and working with those that may not agree.

neighborhoods on the north side of Vandalia in the vicinity of the remaining two Vandalia alternatives. The majority of comments expressed concern regarding perceived community effects, including potential noise and visual impacts. IDOT met with the concerned Vandalia residents on June 3, 2010 at Kaskaskia College in Vandalia. Based upon the comments received from the public and discussions with the stakeholders present at the June 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, IDOT decided to revisit the alternative development and evaluation process in Vandalia. In order to do so, the Vandalia CAG was reorganized to expand representation in the community, to build consensus, and to expand local input regarding the alternative selection process. The new Vandalia CAG was referred to as the VCAG.

During a series of meetings, the organized VCAG revisited the steps of the alignment development and evaluation process. The work of the original CAG was not replaced by the work done by the VCAG. The alternatives that remained at the conclusion of the original CAG process presented at PIM#4 were maintained through the VCAG process and remain in consideration in this document. The goal of the VCAG was to identify additional alternatives. The CAG reorganization was unique to Vandalia. The CAGs in the other communities were not reorganized.

**Table 4.2-2: Reorganized Vandalia Community Advisory Group (VCAG) Meeting Summary**

<b>VCAG Meeting Number</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Main Topic Discussed</b>
1	August 11, 2010	CAG Reorganization
2	August 31, 2010	Alternative Development
3	September 22, 2010	Alternative Review and Preliminary Engineering Concepts
4	October 27, 2010	Interchange Concepts
5	November 9, 2010	Environmental and Community Resource Impact Review
6	February 9, 2010	Project Update
7	July 20, 2011	Refined Alternatives
8	February 13, 2013	Alternative Modifications
9	June 11, 2013	Remaining Alternatives



***When did the reorganized Vandalia CAG (VCAG) meet and what was the purpose of the meetings?***

Nine meetings with the VCAG were held. Table 4.2-2 summarizes the VCAG meetings. The VCAG meetings are described in the following section.

**VCAG #1 – Reorganization**

Prior to the first VCAG meeting, notices were placed in the local newspapers inviting stakeholders interested in serving on a reorganized Vandalia CAG to attend the meeting. New members and members of the original Vandalia CAG were invited to attend. At the meeting, the volunteers introduced themselves and stated what interest area they represent and how they represent the interest area. In addition to stating their interest area, volunteers placed a sticker indicating where they live on a large aerial map of Vandalia. The purpose of this activity was to ensure that a diverse geographic area within and around Vandalia was represented by the members.

The attendees discussed any additional interest areas or geographic areas they thought should have representation on the VCAG. Several suggestions were provided. After the meeting, the project team and volunteers from the VCAG found additional representatives to join based on the suggestions.

The project team discussed the objectives of the VCAG. The main purpose of the VCAG was to identify additional alternatives that may be studied in detail. The project team stated that the work of the original Vandalia CAG would not be replaced by the work done by the VCAG. The alternatives that remained at the conclusion of the VCAG process would be added to those identified by the original CAG.

**VCAG Meeting #2 – Alternative Development**

The project team began by asking the VCAG members to brainstorm ideas for a “US 51 that best meets the needs of Vandalia”. The members were then given the opportunity to draw their ideas on large aerial maps and discuss similar ideas within small groups. There were no limitations placed on where the alternatives could be drawn. The small groups then shared their ideas with the entire VCAG. At the end of the meeting, the VCAG reached a consensus that all of their ideas for a new US 51 location had been considered and were satisfied with the range of alternatives developed.

**VCAG Meeting #3 – Alternative Review and Preliminary Engineering Concepts**

Prior to VCAG meeting #3, the project team screened all of the alternatives developed to ensure that the alternatives met the project’s approved Purpose and



*Members brainstormed additional alternatives at VCAG Meeting #2.*

Need. Several of the alternatives were not realistic from an engineering perspective. As an example, some alternates had sharp curves that would not meet IDOT safety standards. In these locations, the project team made adjustments to the alternatives.

The purpose of the VCAG meeting #3 was to review the alignments brainstormed at VCAG #2 and the corresponding adjustments developed by the project team. The meeting began with a presentation of engineering terms and concepts to give the VCAG members a better understanding of roadway geometry. The alternatives developed at VCAG meeting #2 were presented. The adjustments that were made by the project team were discussed and the members agreed with the adjustments. The alternatives were categorized into four groups based on geographic location. The VCAG discussed how the geometry of each alternative impacted the Vandalia community and then came to a consensus on which alternatives to carry forward for further refinement.

#### VCAG Meeting #4 – Interchange Concepts

Prior to VCAG meeting #4, the project team continued to refinement for the remaining alternatives based on engineering considerations. The project team presented preliminary interchange designs the remaining alternatives. Following the same format as VCAG meeting #3, the VCAG discussed each alternative and came to a consensus on which alternatives to carry forward for further environmental impact screening. At the end of the meeting, four alternatives were selected to be carried forward, one from each of the geographic groupings identified in VCAG meeting #3. The project team then performed the community and environmental resource screening analysis on the four alternatives selected by the VCAG in preparation for VCAG #5.



*Impacts to environmental and community resources were evaluated during VCAG Meeting #5.*

#### VCAG Meeting #5 – Environmental and Community Impact Review

The meeting began with a presentation on environmental and community resource considerations and regulations. Next, the results of the environmental and community impacts screening for the remaining alternatives was reviewed by the VCAG members. The impacts were also presented for the two alternatives that remained after the original CAG process. The VCAG discussed the pros and cons of each alternative. The VCAG agreed that all four alternatives remaining after the VCAG alternative development and evaluation process should be presented at a Public Information Meeting (PIM).

#### VCAG Meeting #6 – Project Update

After VCAG meeting #5, additional environmental data from field surveys conducted by state biologists and scientists was received. The information included the location of wetlands and rare plant communities. The project team

discussed the environmental and community resource updates. The Vandalia Public Information Meeting (PIM), held after VCAG meeting #5, was discussed (the meeting is described later in this chapter). A summary of the public comments received after the PIM was presented.

After the meeting, the project team continued to refine the remaining alternatives to avoid community and environmental resources, and based on engineering criteria in preparation for CAG meeting #7. In addition, the interchanges and access locations were further developed.



*The refined alternatives were reviewed at VCAG Meeting #7.*

#### VCAG Meeting #7 – Refined Alternatives

The refined alternatives were presented to the VCAG members for review at meeting #7. The project team encouraged the members to provide input on the alternatives, interchanges, and access locations.

#### VCAG Meeting #8 – Alternative Modifications

The project team modified the remaining Vandalia alternatives after VCAG meeting #7. Specifically, the proposed interchange designs were simplified due in part to input received from previous VCAG meetings and in order to minimize impacts. The VCAG members were asked to provide input on the modifications.

#### VCAG Meeting #9 – Remaining Alternatives

The purpose of VCAG meeting #9 was to present the four remaining alternatives near Vandalia, discuss community and environmental impacts and seek input on a preferred alternative. A map showing the alternatives and resource impacts, and a summary table of impacts was presented for each community. Comment forms were distributed so that the CAG members could provide input on a preferred alternative.

#### ***Who were the members of the RAG and how were they selected?***

The RAG is made up of representatives from the five CAGs. The CAG members were asked to volunteer to serve on the RAG. Some members of the RAG were not members of a CAG but were residents along US 51 between the larger communities. Other members were representatives of State or local resource agencies, including:

- Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
- Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA)
- County Farm Bureaus

- County Soil & Water Conservation Districts

***When did the RAG meet and what was the purpose of the meetings?***

Three RAG meetings were held. At the meetings, the work done by the CAGs was reviewed, and the RAG was asked to provide additional input from a regional perspective. Table 4.2-3 summarizes the RAG meetings. The meetings are described in detail below.

**Table 4.2-3: Regional Advisory Group (RAG) Meeting Summary**

RAG Meeting Number	Meeting Date	Main Topics Discussed
1	August 21, 2008	Develop Regional Problem Statement
2	November 18, 2008	Alternative Development
3	April 13, 2009	Alternative Review



*The alternatives developed by the CAGs were reviewed at RAG Meeting #2.*

RAG Meeting #1 – Develop Regional Problem Statement

At the first meeting, the RAG reviewed the CAG progress to date. The CAG Problem Statements were reviewed. Then the RAG developed a regional Problem Statement.

RAG Meeting #2 – Alternative Development

The project team displayed the preliminary range of alternatives developed by the CAGs on large aerial maps. The RAG was asked to review and discuss the alternatives. The RAG members were asked to draw additional alternatives not considered by the CAG that they thought should be included in the range of alternatives.



*The consolidated alternatives were reviewed at RAG Meeting #3.*

RAG Meeting #3 – Alternative Review

Prior to meeting #3, the project team refined the alternatives based on resource avoidance and engineering criteria. Some of alternatives had been consolidated by the CAGs. At meeting #3, the refined and consolidated alternatives were displayed on large aerial maps. The purpose of the meeting was to review the alternatives, and add more alternatives if necessary to ensure a reasonable range

of alternatives were considered for all communities. The RAG came to agree that all of their ideas were included on the maps.

***How was input from the CAG and RAG members incorporated into the project?***

The Problem Statements, which form the basis of the Purpose and Need Statement, were developed by the advisory groups. The preliminary range of alternatives was developed when the advisory group members developed preliminary alternatives by drawing potential locations on a map. The alternative evaluation process was developed using advisory group input. The alternatives were continually refined based upon the information provided by the advisory group members. For example, members provided information about the location of small family cemeteries and new businesses that were considered for avoidance.

***How was the information gathered from the advisory groups communicated to the public?***

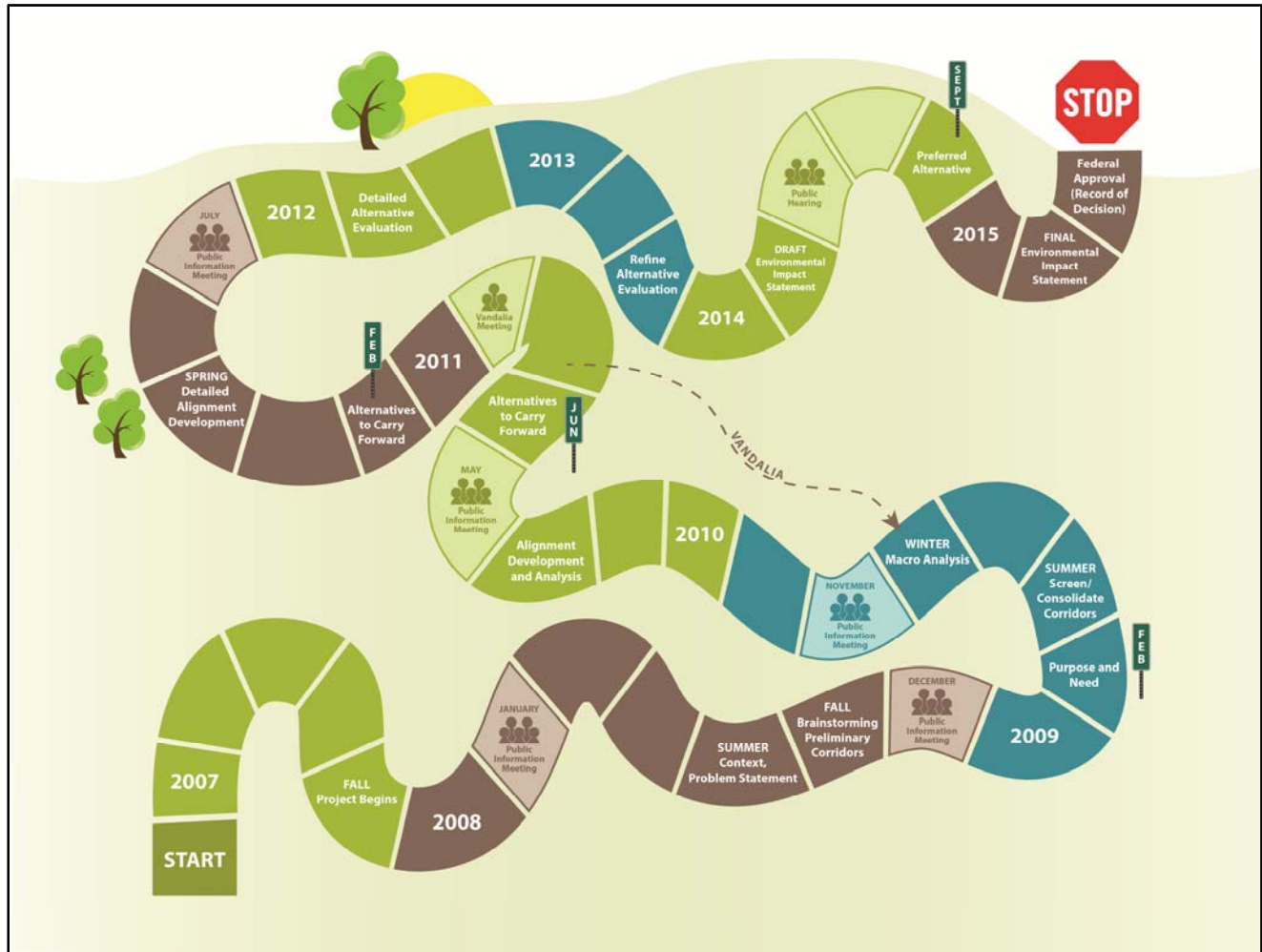
Input generated from the CAG and RAG meetings was available to the public on the US 51 website. The CAG and RAG progress was also included in project newsletters, which were mailed out to those who signed up for the mailing list, available on the website, available at public libraries along the corridor, and available at PIMs. The PIMs were one of the methods used to keep the general public informed on the progress of the study.

***When were the Public Information Meetings (PIMs) held?***

There were five series of PIMs held throughout the course of the project, which totaled 21 meetings. There was one additional PIM that was held only in Vandalia to discuss the unique environmental and community issues in Vandalia. Table 4.2-4 summarizes the PIMs. The attendance numbers of each meeting is based on the number of people who signed in on the meeting sign-in sheets. Materials from the PIMs, including handouts, attendance sheets, presentations, and comment summaries are included in Volume 4.

**Table 4.2-4: Public Information Meeting (PIM) Summary**

<b>PIM Meeting Series</b>	<b>Main Topic of Meeting</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Meeting Location</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
1	Project introduction, Scoping, Introduce public involvement process	January 23, 2008	Centralia City Council Chamber	32
		January 24, 2008	Kaskaskia College, Vandalia	83
		January 24, 2008	Ramsey Community High School	62
		March 5, 2008	Patoka Civic Center	18
		March 18, 2008	Centralia	24
		March 24, 2008	Sandoval Village Hall	30
2	Purpose & Need	December 2, 2008	Centralia Recreation Complex	3
		December 2, 2008	Ramsey Village Hall	7
		December 2, 2008	Vandalia Ramada Inn	2
3	Alternative Development, Range of Alternatives, Alternative Evaluation, and Remaining Alternatives	November 17, 2009	Centralia Recreation Complex	57
		November 18, 2009	Vandalia American Legion	54
		November 19, 2009	Ramsey High School Library	35
4	Alternative Modifications	May 5, 2010	Kaskaskia College	43
		May 6, 2010	America's Best Inn – Bell Tower	35
		May 11, 2010	Patoka Civic Center	28
Vandalia PIM	Additional Alternatives Developed by VCAG	November 23, 2010	Mother of Dolor's Parish Vandalia	102
5	Refined Alternatives, Interchange Geometry, and Access	July 19, 2011	Ramsey High School	68
		July 21, 2011	Sandoval Village Hall	80
		July 26, 2011	Patoka Civic Center	34
		July 27, 2011	Mother of Dolors Parish Center	107
		July 28, 2011	Centralia Reception Complex	78



*This graphic shows when the Public Information Meetings (PIMs) were held in relation to project milestones. It also shows the tentative dates of future public involvement activities that are scheduled for 2014.*

**How was the public notified of the PIMs?**

The four methods used to notify the public of the meetings were:

1. Legal notices in local newspapers
2. Press releases to local newspapers and radio stations
3. Flyers posted in public places, such as libraries, throughout the corridor
4. Newsletters and/or postcards to stakeholders on the mailing list

In addition to the above methods, meeting notices were hung on door knobs of residences in proximity to the remaining alternatives before PIM #5, in which over 300 notices were distributed.

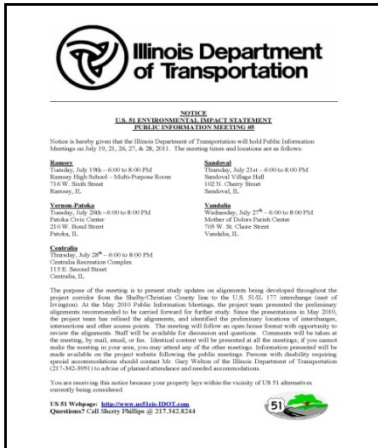
**What information was presented at the PIMs and what public input was received?**

The PIMs were held before each major project milestone. The project team presented an update of the project and sought public input. At each PIM the stakeholders were encouraged to fill out a comment form to provide input on the information presented at the meeting. The attendees could turn the form in at the meeting, or take the comment form home and scan and email, mail, or fax in the form. Stakeholders who did not attend the meeting could comment via the project email, website, by mail, or by telephone. A summary of comments received within the public comment period following each PIM is included below. The public comments received within the PIM comment periods and associated response letters are in Volume 4.

**PIM #1**

The purpose of the first series of PIMs was to introduce the project, the EIS process and the stakeholder involvement process. The public was also encouraged to give input on the project scope and concerns in the study area, and to volunteer to serve on the advisory groups. A presentation was given to introduce the attendees to the project. The remainder of the meetings was an open forum format where attendees were invited to browse exhibits and ask questions.

A total of 58 comments were received following PIM #1. Although alternative development had not yet occurred at this stage of the project, 16 comments discussed alternative location. The comments are summarized below. The number of people who commented on an issue is included in parentheses.



*Meeting notices were hung on door knobs of residences in the proximity of the remaining alternatives before PIM series #5.*



*Stakeholders reviewed the project information handouts at PIM#1.*



- Suggested **Centralia alternatives**: Connect US 51 to I-161 in Centralia (1); Improve existing US 51 through Centralia (1)
- Suggested **Vernon-Patoka alternatives**: Improve existing US 51 through Vernon and Patoka (1)
- Suggested **Vandalia alternatives**: Bypass to the west of town (4); Improve US 51 through downtown Vandalia (4); Bypass to the east of town(1)
- Suggested **Ramsey alternatives**: Bypass to the east (4); Maintain two roads to access Ramsey (1)
- Other suggested alternatives: Add lanes to the east side of existing US 51 in Sharon township (1); Bypass Oconee to the east (1)
- General comments: The project is needed (2); The advisory groups are a good idea (1)
- General concerns: Personal property (8); Pipelines near Patoka (3); Home impacts (1); Cemetery impacts (1); Schools (1); Vandalia historic district and businesses (1); Farmland impacts (1); Farm severances (1)

IDOT did not issue formal responses to the PIM #1 comments. The comments were read and taken into consideration throughout the remainder of the project.

### PIM #2

The purpose of the second series of PIMs was for the public to review and comment on the project’s Purpose and Need Statement before it was finalized. This meeting was an open forum style. Attendees were invited to review the Purpose and Need and ask questions.

PIM #2 was not well attended, and no comments were received following the meetings. The people who did attend the meetings expressed general agreement with the Purpose and Need Statement.

### PIM #3

The purpose of the meetings was to review the project study to date, present the range of alternatives considered and to present the alternatives remaining after the preliminary alternative analysis process. The recommended alternatives for further study around the communities of Centralia, Sandoval, Patoka, Vernon, Vandalia, Ramsey, and along US 51 between these locations were shown on large aerial maps. There was a formal presentation followed by an open-house where questions were answered by representatives of the project team. During



*Attendees who included their contact information on the PIM sign-in sheets were added to the project mailing list.*

the meeting, it was explained that alternative development and evaluation is an on-going process, and that alternatives may continue to be refined based upon engineering, avoidance of environmental and community resources, and public input.



*Stakeholders at PIM#3 in Vandalia reviewed exhibits showing the preliminary range of alternatives.*

A total of 62 comments from 56 commenters (several people submitted two comments) were received following PIM #3. Most of the comments addressed the alternatives that were presented at the meeting. Other comments were associated with resource impacts or other concerns. Formal response letters from IDOT were sent to each commenter who included contact information. Some responses were submitted through the project telephone line. In those cases, the project team responded via a telephone call rather than a letter.

The comments are summarized below. The number of people who made the comment is included in parentheses.

Seventeen comments were submitted about the **Centralia alternatives**.

- Improve existing US 51 and building overpasses over railroads (3); Travel through downtown Centralia (20); Bypass east of Centralia (1); Provide access to Central City (1); Improve existing roads (1); Approve of the remaining alternatives (1)
- General concerns: The remaining alternatives are too far west of Centralia and will not encourage economic growth and development and/or will hurt existing business (8); Environmental impacts such as wetlands and endangered species (5); Personal property (3). Not a good use of money (3). The remaining alternatives would not reduce travel time (2); Emergency response time (1); Gas pipelines (1); Coal mines/sinkholes (1)

Seven comments were submitted about the **Sandoval alternatives**.

- Prefer the eastern alternative over the western bypass (6); Modify eastern bypass to avoid personal property (1)
- General concerns: Proximity of western bypass to high school (4); Personal property (4); Property value (1)

One comment was submitted about the **Vernon-Patoka alternatives**. The commenter liked the one remaining alternative around Patoka because it avoided personal property and did not appear to impact wildlife.

Thirty-four (34) comments were submitted about the **Vandalia alternatives**.

- The majority of the comments were from residents of the north side of Vandalia who expressed concern over personal property, potential noise impacts, property value, home impacts, water quality impacts, and quality of life associated with the Vandalia alternatives. Some people suggested other alternatives such as traversing west around Lake Vandalia, utilizing existing US 51, and going east around Vandalia.
- Do not agree with location of remaining alternatives/ a bypass is not needed (6); Bypass Vandalia to the east through the floodplain (1); Agree with location of remaining alternatives (1).

IDOT invited the commenters to attend a June 3, 2010 meeting where issues unique to Vandalia were discussed. IDOT decided to reorganize the Vandalia CAG based in part upon these comments. The CAGs were discussed earlier in this chapter.

Five comments were submitted about the **Ramsey alternatives**.

- Comment addressing the Ramsey alternatives: The alternative should be located further east (1)
- General concerns: Access to east-west roads (1); School bus routes (1); Emergency response (1); Impact to small town feel (1)



*Stakeholders at PIM #3 in Ramsey reviewed exhibits showing the preliminary range of alternatives.*

#### PIM #4

After PIM #3 the PSG received updated environmental survey information around Centralia/ Central City, Sandoval, Patoka, Vernon, and Vandalia, including the location of high-quality wetlands. The project team reviewed the data and met with the environmental regulatory agencies to discuss impacts. They also met with the advisory groups to discuss alternative modifications. Once input from the regulatory agencies and advisory groups was received, IDOT held the fourth set of PIMs. The meetings consisted of a presentation and an open house. The presentation discussed the environmental information received, the subsequent agency and advisory group coordination, and the alternative modifications. Exhibits showing the refined alternatives were displayed.

A total of 21 comments from 16 commenters were received within the public comment period following PIM #4. Formal response letters from IDOT were sent to each commenter who included contact information. Some responses were submitted through the project telephone line. In those cases, the project team responded via a telephone call rather than a letter.

The comments are summarized below. The number of people who made the comment is included in parentheses

Five comments were submitted about the **Centralia alternatives**.

- Prefer to bypass Centralia to the east (4) because it would encourage business development (4), is closer to the hospital (4), and/or would allow for recreation at Raccoon Lake (1)
- General concerns: Impact of the western bypasses impact on flooding and watershed quality (1)

One comment was submitted about the **Sandoval alternatives**. The commenter said they preferred an eastern bypass around Sandoval because the western route is too close to the school.

One comment was received about the **Vernon and Patoka alternatives**. The commenter said they were pleased with the remaining alternatives.

Ten comments were received about the **Vandalia alternatives**.

- Do not like location of the remaining alternatives (9) because they are too close to their neighborhoods (5), quality of life (2), noise (1), pollution (1), water quality (1), too close to residential areas (1), would not attract customers to downtown business (1), high-quality wetland impacts (1)
- Suggestions for Vandalia alternatives included a western bypass that traversed south of the north side neighborhoods (1), a far western bypass around Lake Vandalia (1), and dual marking the alternative with I-70 (1)

No comments were received specifically about the Ramsey alternatives.

## Vandalia PIM

In the spring of 2010, after the comment period for the fourth PIM had ended, the project team received comments of concern regarding the two remaining alternatives around Vandalia that were presented at PIM #4. A majority of the comments received were from residents of the subdivisions located north of Interstate 70 in the vicinity of the remaining alternatives. Due to the low attendance at the fourth PIM in Vandalia and based upon public input, IDOT decided to revisit the steps in the alternative development and evaluation process in Vandalia with a reorganized advisory group (called the VCAG). Through a series of meetings, the VCAG developed a range of additional alternatives and screened the alternatives to four that the VCAG wished to present to the public for comment. The entire VCAG process was described previously in this chapter.

At the Vandalia PIM, the four alternatives developed by the VCAG, in addition to the two alternatives presented at PIM #4 were displayed for public review. The meeting attendees were asked to review and provide input on the six remaining alternatives.

Approximately 40 completed comment forms were returned to the project team after the Vandalia PIM. The attendees were asked to comment on the six remaining alternatives (the four developed by the VCAG and the two that were presented at PIM #3 and PIM #4).

The comments are summarized by alternative. The number of people who made the comment is included in parentheses.

A total of 37 comments were received about the **Eastern Bypass**, which was developed by the VCAG.

- Prefer the Eastern Bypass (18) because: It is the most direct route (6); Appears to be least costly (5); Minimizes impacts to residences and businesses (5); Uses existing infrastructure (4), Minimizes impacts to farmland (2); Allows for residential development on west side (2); Is close to existing businesses (1)
- Dislike the Eastern Bypass (18) because: Impacts to businesses and residences (7); Floodplain impacts (5); Levee impacts (3); Farmland impacts (2); Wetland impacts (1); Impacts to waste water treatment plant (1); Proximity to statehouse (1)



*Attendees were asked to comment on the six remaining Vandalia alternatives at the Vandalia PIM.*



*The alternatives developed by the original CAG and those developed by the VCAG were displayed at the Vandalia PIM.*

A total of 27 comments were received about **Parallel with I-70** alternative. This was a western bypass developed by the VCAG that traversed east-west north of I-70.

- Prefer the Parallel with I-70 alternative (3) because: It is close to town (1)
- Dislike Parallel with I-70 alternative (22) because: Residential impacts (8); Farmland impacts (2); Wetland impacts (2); Business impacts (2); Prevents residential development (2); Do not think drivers will use it (1)

A total of 44 comments were submitted about the **Western Bypass** (V Alt 1 in this document). This was an alternative developed by the VCAG that bypassed west around Vandalia Lake (V Alt 1 in this document).

- Prefer the Western Bypass (32) because: Minimizes impacts to businesses and residences (17); Promotes growth (10); Minimizes floodplain impacts (1)
- Dislike the Western Bypass (11) because: Located too far west (9); Farmland impacts (3); Perceived high cost (2); Wetland impacts (1)

A total of 40 comments were received about the **Dual Marked with I-70** alternative (V Alt 4 in this document). This was a western bypass developed by the VCAG that traverses parallel with I-70 west of Vandalia before it heads northeast to join existing US 51.

- Prefer the Dual Marked alternative (25) because: Minimized impacts to businesses and residential areas (6); Located close to existing businesses (4); Promotes growth (4); Utilizes existing roads (3); Perceived low cost (2); Minimizes impacts to floodplain (1) and farmland (1); Avoids the north side neighborhoods
- Dislike the Dual Marked alternative (11) because: Residential impacts (6); Will not be used (2); High-quality wetland impacts (1); Floodplain impacts (1); Perceived traffic impact near schools (1)

A total of 34 comments were received about the **Modified VS** alternative (V Alt 3 in this document). This was an alternative developed by the original CAG that was presented at PIM #3 and PIM #4 and received concurrence from the FWHA and the Federal and State agencies prior to the Vandalia PIM.

- Prefer Modified VS (2) because: Minimizes impacts to businesses and residences (2)

- Disliked Modified VS (31) because: Residential impacts (14); Prevents residential development (6); Wetland impacts (3); Farmland impacts (2); Floodplain impacts (1); Business impacts (1); Disrupts nicest area on north side (1); Perceived cost (1); Perceived impacts to county tax revenue (1)

A total of 33 comments were received about the **Modified VU** alternative (V Alt 2 in this document). This was an alternative developed by the original CAG that was presented at PIM #3 and PIM #4 and received concurrence from the FHWA and the Federal and State resource agencies prior to the Vandalia PIM. The comments are summarized below, and the number of people who had the same comment is included in parentheses.

- Prefer Modified VU (4) because: Minimizes impacts to businesses and residences (4); Drivers will use it (1)
- Dislike Modified (29) because: Residential impacts (14); Prevents further residential development (4); Wetland impacts (2); Farmland impacts (1); Disrupts businesses (1); Disrupts nicest area on the north side (1); Perceived cost (1); Perceived impacts to county tax revenue (1)



*Stakeholders reviewed the remaining alternatives at PIM #5 in Ramsey.*

#### PIM #5

Subsequent to PIM#4, the project team continued to refine the alternatives based on engineering considerations and to avoid resource impacts, including homes. The interchanges and access points were refined as well.

The refined alternatives were displayed at PIM #5. The project team asked for public input on the refined alternatives, particularly the proposed access to side roads and residences. The exhibits shown at the meeting highlighted twelve interest areas where the project team was looking for feedback. The comment forms had a space for general comments and for each of the twelve interest areas. The interest areas included asking questions at particular intersections – such as if the stakeholders think that access from a certain side road was required.

Following the meeting, the project team received 57 comment forms. The comments are summarized below. The number of people who made the same comment is included in parenthesis.

- Three comments were submitted about the **Sandoval alternatives**: Oppose the western bypass of Sandoval because of the proximity to the high school, reduced farm impacts, does not encourage growth, and may affect emergency response time (3)



*Stakeholders reviewed the remaining alternatives at PIM #5 in Sandoval.*



Stakeholders reviewed exhibits showing the refined alternatives at PIM#5 in Centralia.

- Five comments were submitted about the **Vandalia alternatives**: Prefer a far western bypass (V Alt 1) that would avoid their personal property and the north side neighborhoods and would have less impact on the future growth of Vandalia (3); Recommend a Vandalia alternative that is dual marked with I-70 (V Alt 2 in this document) (1); Recommend an alternative that travels south through Vandalia to avoid aquifers (1)
- Three people commented on **Ramsey alternatives**: Prefer the more eastern bypass (2); Prefer the bypass that travels closer to town (1)
- General Comments: Widen existing US 51 throughout entire project (3); Request access to specific properties (3); Maintain existing roads (1); Prefer the shortest routes (1); There is no money to pay for project (1); Personal property (1); Home impacts (1)

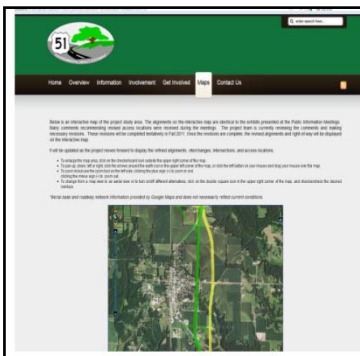
IDOT responded to the comments by summarizing the comments and responding to the general topics on the project website. A postcard was sent to all of the commenters to notify them that their comment was received and to refer to the website for responses.

***How was input gathered from the PIMs incorporated into the project?***

Public input received after each PIM was read and considered. Public input was used when developing the Purpose and Need Statement, during alternative evaluation process, and during the alternative evaluation screening process. IDOT must comply with Federal and State laws. This means that the alternative selection cannot be based entirely on public input. The recommended alternatives must meet the Purpose and Need Statement, and minimize impacts to environmental features that are regulated by Federal and State laws, such as historic sites, parklands, and wetlands.

The alternatives were continually refined based upon the information provided by the public. For example, the public provided information about the location of new homes that were considered during the alternative evaluation process.

All comments received throughout the course of the project were read and considered. Members of the public could comment at any time during the project by email, phone, or through the comment form on the project website. The project team made every attempt to respond to all comments received during the course of the project. Formal response letters were issued for the majority of the comments received within the official comment period following the PIMs.



The project website included an interactive map where users could view the remaining alternatives.



**What other methods of public involvement were used?**

The project team attempted to keep stakeholders informed of the project status through various methods in between PIMs. The methods are described below.

**Project Website and Email**

IDOT established a public website for the project (<http://www.us51-idot.com>). General project information including current project status and upcoming meetings was available in addition to an archive of all the past events, fact sheets/handouts, newsletters, presentations, and project reports. The exhibits displayed at the advisory group meetings and the PIMs were posted to the website, in addition to a summary of each meeting. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page that consisted of commonly asked questions and the project team responses was available on the website. The FAQs were updated throughout the project.

The website included an online comment form that provided the public with an opportunity to submit comments and concerns to the project team at any point during the project. The project team made every attempt to respond to each comment submitted. An interactive map showing the remaining alternatives on an aerial base map was included on the project webpage.

**Project Email and Telephone Line**

Stakeholders were encouraged to send comments or ask the project team questions through the project e-mail address ([US51EIS@clark-dietz.com](mailto:US51EIS@clark-dietz.com)) and telephone line (217-373-8951). The email address and telephone number were included on the website, on the PIM notices, on comment forms, and in newsletters.

**Comment Forms**

Comment forms were provided at all PIMs to encourage participants to provide their comments on the project. The comment forms were also available on the project website. Comments could be submitted in writing or electronically.

**Newsletters**

IDOT developed five newsletters during the course of the project. The newsletters provided updates on project status, notices of upcoming meetings, and contact information for the project. The newsletters were mailed to anyone who signed in at a PIM, the members of the advisory groups, anyone who requested to be added to the mailing list, in addition to the elected officials in the project area and representatives of government agencies. The public had the opportunity to sign up for the mailing list at each of the PIMs, or through the US



*Five newsletters were issued during the project. The first issue, pictured above, was issued in September 2008.*

51 website. Copies of the newsletters were available at the public libraries along the project corridor, on the project website, and at the PIMs. Copies of the newsletters are available in Volume 4.

#### Local Media

Legal notices and reminders were sent to local newspaper and radio outlets in advance of PIMs. In addition, local newspapers independently published articles regarding the project development. Over 20 newspapers articles were independently published in local newspapers regarding the project. IDOT or members of the PSG were available at PIMs to talk to members of the press.

#### Community Group Presentations and One-on-One Meetings

Briefings with community groups, civic groups, business groups, and other interested groups or organizations over the course of the project were used as an opportunity to introduce the project and provide project updates. Upon request, the project team met with the Centralia Rotary Club on July 21, 2008 and the Vandalia Rotary Club on January 13, 2010 to provide a project update and answer any questions the members had pertaining to the project.

The project team has presented an update on the US 51 ES project at three Route 51 Coalition meetings, as requested. The Route 51 Coalition consists of citizens representing various government entities, business interests, labor organizations, and interested individuals along the 99-mile long section of U.S. Route 51 from I-72 in Decatur to I-64 in Illinois.

The project team requested a meeting with representatives from the Murray Development Center in Centralia on February 22, 2010. The Center houses and cares for approximately 300 handicapped residents, and employs almost 600 people. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the alternatives that bypass to the west of Centralia and traverse in the vicinity of the Center. The staff from the Center provided input on how they thought the alternatives would affect the Center, including how the alternatives may affect traffic operations for patrons accessing the Center.