



SPRINGFIELD RAILROAD CORRIDOR STUDY MEDICAL ADVISORY GROUP MEETING SUMMARY APRIL 15, 2010, 1:30 PM

Overview

The second meeting of the Springfield Railroad Corridor Study Medical Advisory Group (MAG) was held at 1:30 pm on Thursday, April 15, 2010 at The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce. Two advisory group participants and eight members of the study team attended the meeting. Jimmie Austin, from Hanson, welcomed advisory group members, introduced the study team and asked participants to re-introduce themselves. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Review traffic study findings to date;
- Explore corridor redevelopment concepts;
- Provide an update on the study's environmental activities; and
- Discuss the public involvement program and upcoming public open house.

Advisory Group Members Present:

Mike Boer
Dr. Phil Davis

Mid-Illinois Medical District
S.I.U. School of Medicine

Study Team Members Present:

Jimmie Austin (Hanson)
Rebecca Bennett (Vector)
Gary Lozano (RDG)

Jonathan Martin (RDG)
Sergio "Satch" Pecori (Hanson)
Julie Rutledge (Hanson)

Kevin Seals (Hanson)
Leann Smart (Vector)
Atia Thurman (Vector)

Traffic Delay Studies

Julie Rutledge, of Hanson, gave a 15-minute presentation on the engineering team's traffic delay studies. The presentation included information on:

- Vehicle traffic per railroad;
- Current and projected traffic delays at rail crossings;
- Three traffic delay scenarios; and
- Potential safety impacts, including expected crash frequency.

In response to this portion of the presentation, there were two questions from MAG members. These questions and the study team's responses are summarized in the table on the following page.

MAG Member Question/Comment	Study Team Response
1. When you talked about traffic in the year 2020 and the total delay time, did that take into account that they are predicting longer trains – more cars?	Yes it did.
2. Do the figures include projections for population growth and the increase in vehicle traffic?	No they do not. At this point we are only showing the anticipated impact of increasing train traffic.

Corridor Redevelopment Concepts

Jonathan Martin and Gary Lozano, both of RDG, introduced themselves for the first time to the committee. RDG is a member of the study team and is responsible for preparing corridor redevelopment analyses. Key points of their presentation included:

- RDG's role in identifying potential redevelopment opportunities;
- A comprehensive review of recent planning initiatives and documents being used in their study; and
- A general overview of corridor reuse opportunities.

At the conclusion of this portion of the presentation, Mr. Lozano, and other members of the study team, responded to MAG members' questions and comments, which are captured below.

MAG Member Question/Comment	Study Team Response
1. I am not a cyclist, though my wife is an avid cyclist. There seems to be an overemphasis on bike trails as opposed to economic development. I grant you the opportunities for economic development along the 3 rd Street corridor are not as abundant as some of the others, but there is more than one parcel. The medical district's plan for use of the rail corridor, should it be abandoned, is to use this land for new medical facilities.	<p>There are some available land parcels along the 3rd Street corridor. We traveled each of the corridors and took a look at the vacant land and their adjacent properties to identify any development potential. There was some vacant housing as evidenced by boarded up homes.</p> <p>We are considering what happens to the railroad right-of-way if the corridor is abandoned as well as what happens to those vacant houses.</p> <p>With regard to our emphasis on trails – we noticed that trails in Springfield are located on the city's periphery. Based upon our experience with other midwestern cities, Springfield seems to lag behind in trail development. As part of any redevelopment, it would be good to link these trails in the peripheral system to the downtown area.</p>

MAG Member Question/Comment	Study Team Response
<p>2. I serve on the board at Memorial and am also involved with SIU. The opportunity for economic development that comes with moving rail away from 3rd Street is immense. The City's Q5 initiative emphasizes economic growth. The medical community is the economic engine for the city, which goes without question. This is why that area is key for attracting additional medical professionals and it could change that entire part of the community.</p>	<p>Team members listened.</p>
<p>3. We have been involved in a couple of development projects, and where they can be located differs from past plans because there is a desire to see the rail corridor disappear. If we have to accommodate a rail through the middle of the medical district, then land use would have to be different. We have to look at places along 3rd and 4th Streets as locations for parking lots. I also think pedestrian use is important. If we could think about green spaces between the hospitals, being able to do that in a pleasant environment would be great. It is difficult right now to think about how to develop the healthcare campus without knowing what will happen with this project.</p> <p>There are a number of marginal properties along the 3rd Street corridor in the medical district.</p>	<p>Team members listened.</p>

Environmental Activities Update

Kevin Seals, the study's environmental and public engagement lead, presented an update of the team's environmental studies. Kevin's presentation highlighted the following:

- Status of the team's coordination with the FRA (Federal Railroad Administration);
- Noise and vibration monitoring that has taken place thus far;
- Historic structure survey activities; and
- Endangered and threatened species surveys.

The exchange of questions, answers, and comments is summarized in the table on the following page.

MAG Member Question/Comment	Study Team Response
1. How long do the surveys take?	The surveys do not take that long. The most challenging task is getting permission from the railroads to conduct the surveys on their property. To conduct the surveys probably just takes a couple of weeks of time. We have to verify the presence of the species. If we do find populations there, we have to plan for mitigation, probably relocation.
2. If we run short on time and you don't make that connection with the FRA, could we just go do the surveys and show them the results later?	That is something we are considering.
3. If the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) is not signed, are you not getting paid?	<p>We have been paid. The money has come through IDOT to the city, and the city has received a partial payment for some of the work done to date.</p> <p>The FRA is going to make the decision. We are preparing the study for them. But we want to make sure that everyone is engaged early on in the process.</p> <p>The EIS is a formal process that has to have the lead agency guide the process, and the lead agency is the FRA. That is what we are waiting for. We have kept Senator Durbin briefed of this.</p>
4. Is the FRA the only one that has not signed off on this? Has the state signed off on the MOU?	The state through IDOT drafted the MOU and sent it to the FRA. The city and county have not seen it as well and they will need to look at it and probably be signatories.

Public Involvement Program Update & Open House Overview

Rebecca Bennett, of Vector Communications, facilitated the portion of the presentation on the study's public engagement program. As the manager of public engagement, she covered the following topics:

- Outreach and engagement activities conducted to date;
- Communication and outreach vehicles; and
- A review of the open house process and content.

The public engagement presentation was the last official agenda item and there were no questions in response to this portion of the meeting.

Before adjourning, Gary Lozano (of RDG) asked the MAG if the medical district's plan, completed five years ago, was still relevant. A committee member responded that the plan is still relevant and that it was recently determined that it did not need to be updated.

Conclusion

The MAG meeting concluded at approximately 2:45 pm. The study team thanked the members for their time and reminded them of the open house planned for April 20, 2010.