



## **Background**

The City of Springfield and Sangamon County are conducting the Springfield Railroad Corridor Study to determine how best to accommodate increasing rail traffic through Springfield. The study's public engagement program includes open houses, held at study milestones, to share information with and obtain input from Springfield citizens.

The study's second open house was held on Tuesday, November 16, 2010 and 309 citizens attended. The main purpose of this open house was to:

- Present the alternatives for accommodating increasing rail traffic;
- Share the evaluation factors in the alternative selection process; and
- Obtain public input on which alternative would best serve the City of Springfield.

Attendees were encouraged to visit 12 stations, three of which featured information on the proposed alternatives for accommodating rail traffic. The other stations featured: project information; historic structures; noise and vibration; corridor redevelopment opportunities; land acquisition process; high-speed rail; non-viable alternatives; railroad safety; and public engagement. The alternative stations displayed descriptions, maps and technical comparisons based on evaluation factors such as traffic delays, expected crash frequency and estimated displacements. These three stations represented variations of the following alternatives:

- Double track 3<sup>rd</sup> Street;
- Shift 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to 10<sup>th</sup> Street; and
- Shift 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and 19<sup>th</sup> Street to 10<sup>th</sup> Street.

For those unable to attend the open house, the displays were made available on the study's website in the weeks following the event. Citizens had until Sunday, December 5, to review the information and submit a comment form, either by mail, email or through the website.

## **Comment Form Results**

A total of 233 comment forms were received – 199 at the open house, 31 via the study's website and three via mail and electronic mail.

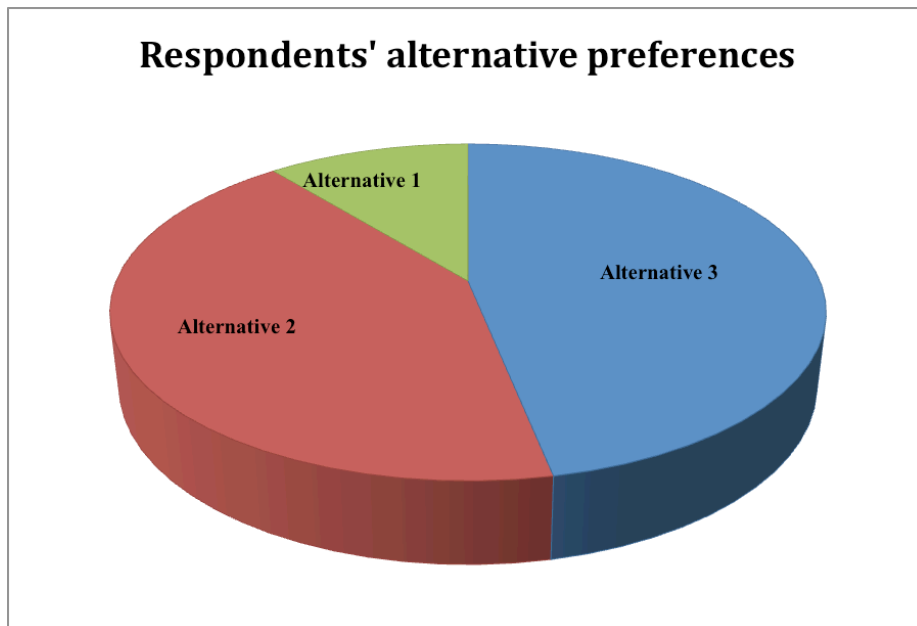
### *Preferred Alternative*

Respondents were asked to select the alternative that they thought would best address Springfield's need to accommodate increasing rail traffic. With 220 responses to this question, approximately 47% of the respondents selected one of the two alternatives that involved shifting both 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and 19<sup>th</sup> Street rail traffic to 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Forty-two percent selected one of two alternatives that involved shifting only 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to 10<sup>th</sup> Street; and the remaining respondents, 11%, favored one of three alternatives to double track 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.

The 220 responses to this question are organized in the following table:

Alternative	Number of respondents choosing the alternative	Percentage of respondents choosing the alternative
<b>Alternative 3B:</b> Shift 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street and 19 <sup>th</sup> Street tracks to 10 <sup>th</sup> Street corridor; fully grade separated; 2 new grade separations on 19 <sup>th</sup> Street corridor; Quiet zones along corridor; close 6 streets along 10 <sup>th</sup> Street.	53	24%
<b>Alternative 3A:</b> Shift 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street and 19 <sup>th</sup> Street tracks to 10 <sup>th</sup> Street corridor; 5 new grade separations on 10 <sup>th</sup> Street corridor; 2 new grade separations on 19 <sup>th</sup> Street corridor; Quiet zones along corridor; close 4 streets along 10 <sup>th</sup> Street.	50	23%
<b>Alternative 2A:</b> Shift 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street to 10 <sup>th</sup> Street; 5 new grade separations on 10 <sup>th</sup> Street corridor; 2 new grade separations on 19 <sup>th</sup> Street corridor; Quiet zones along all corridors; close 4 streets along 10 <sup>th</sup> Street.	50	23%
<b>Alternative 2B:</b> Shift 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street to 10 <sup>th</sup> Street; fully grade separate south of North Grand; 2 new grade separations on 19 <sup>th</sup> Street corridor; Quiet zones along all corridors; close 6 streets along 10 <sup>th</sup> Street.	43	19%
<b>Alternative 1B:</b> Double Track 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street; 7 new grade separations; Quiet zone along 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street corridor.	10	4%
<b>Alternative 1A:</b> Double Track 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street; no new grade separations; Quiet zone along 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street corridor.	8	4%
<b>Alternative 1C:</b> Double track 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street - 7 new grade separations; 5 new grade separations on 10 <sup>th</sup> Street corridor; 2 new grade separations on 19 <sup>th</sup> Street corridor; Quiet zones along all corridors.	6	3%

The chart below shows the respondents' preferences for the three general alternatives.

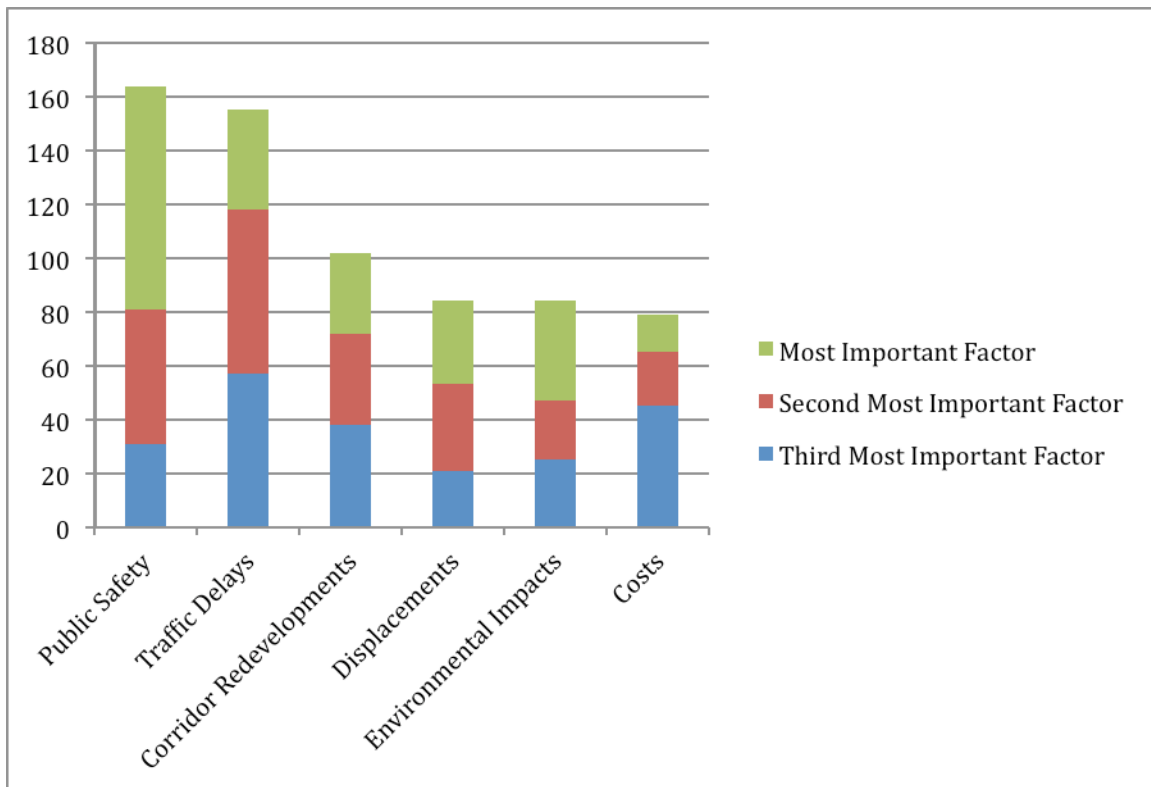


*Evaluation Factors*

After selecting their preferred alternative, respondents were asked to choose the top three factors that they used in their decision-making. The available choices included the factors being considered in the alternative selection process. As indicated by the comment forms, the top three factors were *traffic delays, public safety and corridor redevelopment*.

Factors considered in choosing an alternative	Total number of responses received
Traffic Delays	164
Public Safety	163
Corridor Redevelopment	101
Environmental Impacts	88
Displacements	82
Costs	76

To validate the evaluation factor question, respondents were also asked to rank their three top factors. Most, but not all, of the respondents indicated their factor priority ranking. As shown in the chart below, overall, *public safety, traffic delays and corridor redevelopments* were the factors ranked most important by respondents.



### *Additional Comments*

The comment form also contained a section for respondents to add any additional comments about the alternatives or the factors used in the selection process. One hundred and sixteen, about half, of the comment forms included remarks in this section.

Of those who completed this section, 40% used this opportunity to describe why Alternative 1, double tracking 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, was not the best choice. Citizens cited reasons that generally centered on the following:

- Negative impacts on the local economy, especially on the medical district;
- Disruption to business operations and traffic flow in the downtown area; and
- Overall devastation to the City's downtown, including historical sites.

Another 16% of the comments revealed support for consolidating 3<sup>rd</sup> Street traffic to 10<sup>th</sup> Street (either Alternative 2 or 3) because it would create redevelopment and economic development opportunities, both along an abandoned 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and along an expanded 10<sup>th</sup> Street corridor; and it would improve traffic flow within and through the City.

There were several comments, approximately 7% of the total provided in this section, which demonstrated concern for or opposition to consolidating rail onto the 10<sup>th</sup> Street corridor. Reasons cited included the following:

- Further division between the East Side and West Side of the City;
- Impacts on traffic flow and emergency medical access due to road closures; and
- Negative effects on Lanphier High School and the surrounding area.

Close to 10% of the comments focused on which factors to consider in the selection process. Respondents mentioned displacements, corridor redevelopment, vibration and noise, public safety, tourism, people with disabilities, a minimal number of overpasses/underpasses, and long-term planning for the City.

The remaining comments ranged from suggestions on re-routing the rail corridor out of the City or completely underground to remarks on high-speed rail.

### *Open House Satisfaction*

The final section of the comment form asked participants to describe themselves according to stakeholder categories, and asked them to rate the meeting in terms of the information provided and the study team's competence. Of those who completed this portion of the comment form, 75% identified themselves as City residents and 24% own or operate a business in the City of Springfield.

Most respondents, more than 90%, indicated that they found the open house to be well planned and worth their time. In addition, the majority of those who completed a comment form characterized the study team as informative, helpful and prepared.