



The study to determine how best to accommodate increasing freight and passenger rail traffic through Springfield.

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## Preliminary Alternatives

The Springfield Railroad Corridor Study Team has reviewed the input received from the initial public engagement activities and has been developing and refining various alternatives. Study alternatives include the double-tracking of Third Street, moving the Third Street tracks to Tenth Street, moving the Third and Nineteenth Street tracks to Tenth Street, and moving freight rail traffic out of the City.

These general alternatives have been further refined by adding grade separations and street closures at various cross streets, and possibly adding quiet zones. Quiet zones are areas that trains can pass through without the use of their horns. The Study Team is assessing the impacts of these alternatives, including residential and commercial displacements, new right-of-way needs, environmental impacts and costs.

## Public Engagement Update

### Community Presentations

During the first half of this year, the Study Team made 30 presentations to advisory, neighborhood, civic and business groups across the Springfield community. Working together, the team’s technical experts and public engagement specialists have used the presentations to explain the study’s purpose, process, activities and findings to interested citizens and community stakeholders. More than 1,000 citizens have attended these presentations, where they have learned about the implications of Springfield’s increasing freight and passenger rail traffic. Reaching such a large

number of people would not have been possible without the support and assistance of the presentations’ hosts.

To view a full list of the organizations that hosted the presentations, please visit the study website, [www.springfieldrailroad.com](http://www.springfieldrailroad.com), and click on Study Presentations and Meetings.

If you would like the Study Team to present to your organization or group, email us at [info@springfieldrailroad.com](mailto:info@springfieldrailroad.com) or call us at 1-877-552-5505.



The study’s first open house, held in April, was attended by almost 300 people.

## Public Open House

The first Springfield Railroad Corridor Study open house was held on Tuesday, April 20, 2010 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Prairie Capital Convention Center. More than 290 people attended the public meeting: 1) *to learn about the study's purpose and need, technical activities, engagement process, and deliverables*; and 2) *to share their community values, concerns and desires with the Study Team*. As the first of three public meetings, the April open house provided a comprehensive introduction to the study's components, including environmental analysis, rail safety, traffic studies, noise and vibration, corridor redevelopment, historic structures and public engagement. Team members working in each of these areas met with attendees in small groups and responded to their questions and comments.

### Comment Form Results

To capture public input in a more formal way, the Study Team asked attendees to complete a comment form and to visit a public input station where they could post their



*A citizen completes a comment form.*

thoughts about the study for all to see. A total of 108 comment forms were completed. Respondents, 86% of whom were city residents, indicated that they found the open house to be well planned

and worth their time. In addition, they characterized the study team as informative, helpful and prepared.

On the comment form's two open-ended questions, respondents were able to share a wider range of perspectives and opinions. **The first question asked what would make the study a success.** Ninety-one people answered this question and gave 21 different types of responses. Those that received the greatest support (in order of preference, with the last two bullets tied) included:

- Routing Springfield's rail (freight) traffic out of town,
- Having the study be conducted in a fair and neutral manner,
- Keeping the community informed of the study's activities and findings, and
- Locating rail traffic along the city's eastern corridors.

**The second open-ended query simply asked for any additional comments or questions.** Fifty-four people wrote their thoughts, generating 19 different types of responses. Those that received the most support (in order of preference, with the last three bullets tied) included:

- Concern about negative noise and vibration impacts,
- Appreciation for the study team's efforts to involve the community,
- Suggestions for keeping the public informed about the study,
- A desire to move rail (freight) traffic out of town, and
- Concern about the effects of increased rail traffic on public safety.

### Public Input Station Findings

Many open house attendees not only completed comment forms, but also visited the public input station to answer questions about their study concerns, desires and values. Because some participants had strong affiliations with the Third Street, Tenth Street or Nineteenth Street railroad corridors, they were encouraged to direct their responses to the corridors they cared about most. They were also given an option of answering more broadly, which



*Attendees answer public input questions at open house station.*

involved providing responses that focused on the city as a whole. Presented on the following page are the responses to the three questions that were most cited. Responses by corridor can be viewed on the study's website.

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The Study Team received 186 responses to the first question posed at the public input station, which was, **“What concerns do you have about increasing rail traffic near where you live, work and play?”** Answers fell into 15 comment categories, with the top five categories of concern (in order of priority) focusing on:

- Compromised public safety,
- Damaging noise and vibration impacts,
- Traffic delays,
- Negative effects on the local economy, and
- Increased neighborhood division and destruction.



*Participants view public comments.*

**The second question asked people to articulate their desires for railroad corridor and neighborhood improvement.** A total of 200 responses were put forth and subsequently clustered into 16 different categories. The top four improvement desires (in order of priority) were:

- Spur economic development,
- Route train (freight) traffic outside of town,
- Increase green space and recreation options along the impacted corridors / neighborhoods, and
- Improve traffic flow.

**The last question asked concerned the values attendees thought should inform the Study Team’s decision making on how best to accommodate Springfield’s increasing rail traffic.** Respondents posted 171 comments, which revealed 22 different values. The values thought to be most important (in order of priority) were:

- Doing what is best for the local economy,
- Promoting public safety,
- Protecting and enhancing neighborhoods, and
- Improving traffic flow.

To view the open house meeting results and public input in greater detail, visit the study’s website at [www.springfieldrailroad.com](http://www.springfieldrailroad.com) and click the Public Meetings /Open Houses link.

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## Environmental Field Studies Update

### Noise & Vibration Studies

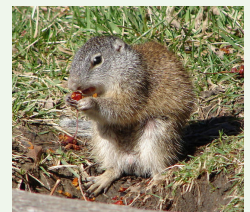
The Study Team collected noise and vibration measurements along the study corridors in April. Over the past few months, this information has been downloaded into computer models that will be used to determine the projected noise and vibration impacts to nearby residences and commercial businesses. If these impacts are too great, noise reducing barriers and vibration dampening techniques may be warranted.

### Historic Structures

One of our local Study Team members, Fever River Research, is completing the historic structure and archaeological documentation within the study area and is beginning to assemble its final report. This document will be used to identify protected structures and sites for avoidance purposes during our alternatives development.

### Threatened & Endangered Species

Members of the Friends of Sangamon Valley contacted the Study Team earlier this spring about the possible presence of the state-threatened Franklin’s Ground Squirrel within the study area. Biologists from Hanson recently assisted the Friends of Sangamon Valley in their ongoing research and study of the ground squirrel. The Team learned about the preferred habitat of the ground squirrel in the Springfield area and even trapped a couple of ground squirrels for identification purposes. Hanson is currently surveying the study corridors for any preferred habitat that ground squirrels may be using for their colonies. The ground squirrels are one of the longest hibernating mammals and typically begin their hibernation towards the end of August and remain asleep until late April.



*Franklin’s Ground Squirrel can be found in Springfield.*



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## Public Information Kiosks

The Study Team has four information kiosks that travel around the city providing information and background materials on the study. These unmanned exhibits are displayed at libraries, local shopping malls, area businesses, community churches and other places with high pedestrian traffic. To date, the kiosks have moved to eight different locations and helped to disseminate a variety of materials including project fact sheets, open house letters and study newsletters.



*One kiosk was located at the Prairie Capital Convention Center.*

If your group or organization would like to host a kiosk for one month, please contact the Study Team at 1-877-552-5505 or email us at [info@springfieldrailroad.com](mailto:info@springfieldrailroad.com).

## Agency Involvement Update

We have received information that the Federal Railroad Administration and the Illinois Department of Transportation are engaged in the Springfield Railroad Corridor Study. The Study Team will provide these agencies with the information and alternatives that have been developed to date. We plan to schedule the next Public Open House upon their review of this information.