

Thoughts on the Ike

The Village Board wants to know what Oak Parkers think about current plans to reconfigure Interstate 290 through the Village. Comments may be posted on this page through Oct. 20. Comments will be moderated and will not appear immediately. Comments expressed on this page do not reflect the opinions or positions of the Village of Oak Park municipal government or its officers and employees. However, Village staff including [Assistant Village Manager Rob Cole](#) may reply to comments to clarify information or provide details that may be requested in a post.

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The Village reserves the right to delete the following types of comments:

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- Spam or links to other unrelated information or sites
- Discussion not relevant to topic
- Advocates illegal activity
- Promotes particular services, products or political organizations
- Infringes on copyrights or trademarks
- Personally identifies medical information
- May compromise the safety, security or proceedings of public systems or any criminal or civil investigations

A Word of Caution

Comments on this page will not be considered official by the Illinois Department of Transportation, which follows a strict protocol for gathering public input. To submit an official comment to IDOT, [you must use this link](#).

- [Add new comment](#)

Comments

I-290 ramps

Submitted by John Mac Manus on Mon, 2013-10-07 11:45

IDOT is relying on out of date planning to approach our joint future. Almost every other city in the western world is spending on transit not additional lanes to address congestion.

The ramps moving to the north side will bring pollution, noise and visual pollution to the neighborhood. The ramp south of Austin will run at a higher elevation than the park utterly changing the relationship of the Ike to the park, the on ramp at Austin will put Flornoy in a depression and creating dark zone along the expressway and the apartment buildings; the ramps at Harlem will run two stories above the grade of the community. All of the ramps will impact negatively the lives of residents along the north side of the expressway. Parts of the proposed multi-purpose trail will run below grade and would create a major security issue.

Thank you

- [reply](#)

Public Transportation, Environmental Impact

Submitted by Milos Zefran on Mon, 2013-10-07 11:50

The current IDOT proposal lacks any vision in terms of transportation evolution over the next decades. IDOT assumes that modes of transportation and individual choices will be in line with what we see today, a major assumption that is not supported by evidence.

That said, CTA has not been sufficiently engaged in these discussions. CTA and IDOT, together with RTA, should engage in intense dialogue on how to provide alternatives to vehicular traffic. This includes higher-speed trains and upgrades to the Blue Line. Extension to Mannheim Road is welcome, but is clearly not the needed solution A convenient high-speed public transportation system is.

The lack of the environmental impact study is also a serious flaw in the process. Without such a study there is little context to evaluate the offered alternatives, or to improve on them.

- [reply](#)

Public Transportation, Environmental Impact

Submitted by Rob Cole on Mon, 2013-10-07 16:23

Please note that CTA has initiated a Blue Line Vision study, which is described on the study website as follows:

"The Forest Park Branch Feasibility/Vision Study will be prepared and completed in 2013. The work will be conducted in coordination with alternatives prepared for two ongoing Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) studies, including the I-290 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the Circle Interchange Rehabilitation Project. The CTA's study will involve the assessment of transit and highway integrated enhancements, regional mobility issues, and the identification of funding sources and future collaboration opportunities. Concepts for all stations in the study area will include, but not be limited to, station access, redesign opportunities, and right-of-way (ROW) needs at specific stations along the corridor. The study will explore innovative solutions that preserve transit, but also integrate highway and transit operations to maximize mobility in this important regional corridor."

The Village of Oak Park was instrumental in encouraging the Illinois Department of Transportation to work more closely with CTA, as well as in helping to get the CTA study initiated.

For more information, the CTA study website is here:

<http://www.transitchicago.com/bluweststudy>

- [reply](#)

the Blue Line is awful

Submitted by Blue Line Rider on Tue, 2013-10-08 12:50

There is no point in throwing money into the Blue Line at this point. With all the track construction that has been done over the past 10 years, it is slower than ever with more slow points. I could drive downtown in rush hour in less time it takes to get there on the Blue Line. With all the increases in fares, the trains smell of urine half the time and are filled with trash. Throwing more money into the Blue Line without changes to CTA management and union relations is fruitless.

- [reply](#)

the Blue Line is awful

Submitted by Reader on Tue, 2013-10-08 20:47

Those are good points

- [reply](#)

[the Blue Line is awful](#)

Submitted by Rob Cole on Wed, 2013-10-09 12:09

The track work completed in recent years has been akin to the patchwork and repaving IDOT has done on I-290. Both the existing Interstate and CTA Blue Line infrastructure are beyond their useful lives. The CTA study will help to define the investments necessary to eliminate existing slow zones and those anticipated absent a coordinated improvement plan.

Yes, the Forest Park Blue Line branch is presently in the second worst condition of the entire CTA rail network. The Red Line was worse, but is getting improved. Once completed, the Blue Line will have the unsavory designation as the worst. CTA is looking ahead and beginning to identify and prioritize the necessary investments to address that issue.

Modernizing the Forest Park Blue Line branch is an important and valuable outcome, which CTA indicates they intend to achieve.

- [reply](#)

[I-290 proposals](#)

Submitted by Josephine Bellalta on Mon, 2013-10-07 12:16

The current proposals do nothing to suggest that we have been talking about mode share (or as some call it--alternate transportation), quality of life improvements, environmental issues at our doorsteps. As the urban communities make strides to improve each of these, the old ways of plowing highways through our communities for the benefit of those that have chosen to live far from city centers, refuse to change their solo car travel commute are represented in this solutions. I believe we should imagine for the next century and not allow our community to be further eroded, polluted, and blighted.

- [reply](#)

[I-DOT Proposals](#)

Submitted by Elizabeth Rexford on Mon, 2013-10-07 13:20

Residents who live near the expressway are wondering if the time saved per trip (let alone the disruption to our communities) is worth spending all that money for such little gain. Many of us feel the money could be spent better by helping to improve the rapid transit system.

- [reply](#)

[Benefit vs Impact](#)

Submitted by bmw325_num99 on Tue, 2013-10-08 08:02

To echo what you said, my main issues with any expansion or ramp moving plans are this:

-The time and money to accomplish what I view as an outdated "solution" are not worth it. As other cities use HOV lanes, bus express lanes, expanded rail service or carpooling, the method here seems to just "expand to meet capacity" rather than optimize the capacity we already have.

This being said, I have had a couple of conversations with some of the IDOT representatives. Their explanations seem well-reasoned assuming their data is correct. Unfortunately, I do not understand of the data so I feel like I cannot truly dispute the detailed points that they have made.

- [reply](#)

Areas Surrounding the Ike

Submitted by bmw325_num99 on Tue, 2013-10-08 08:10

I live near Austin and I290 so I am very concerned about the effect on the surface streets and neighborhood this expansion will have. I was less stressed about it when I read this from the IDOT email I was sent:

"The alternatives stay within the existing right-of-way in Oak Park, and in particular, within the existing walled section ("trench"), as shown on Attachment 7. As such, a decision on whether or not to add a lane to I-290 would not be driven by urban design or architectural considerations. The interchange concepts at Harlem Avenue and Austin Boulevard are unique designs that were developed on the basis of stakeholder input, which placed a high priority on keeping the intersections in the middle; this design also provides an opportunity to cover a portion of the expressway "

- [reply](#)

Ramp Relocation Costly and Unnecessary

Submitted by Eric Cockerill on Mon, 2013-10-07 12:37

I'm concerned that IDOT not fully evaluated with the ramp relocation portion of the project is necessary or advised. IDOT and the consultants have admitted that relocating the Austin and Harlem Ramps to the right side does not have an appreciable effect on traffic congestion (less than 5% reduction in time of congestion), while adding exorbitant cost and negative aesthetic and economic effects to the surrounding community.

Furthermore, the safety issues alleged by IDOT and its consultants related to left-hand ramps may be true, but they have not admitted that those can be mitigated through increased signage, lengthening of on-ramps, and removing the combination lane reduction/left hand off-ramp at Austin (outbound), all of which do not seem to have been addressed as viable alternatives in IDOT's studies to date. Left-hand ramps are prevalent throughout the country without the associated safety problems alleged in this situation, suggesting the left-hand nature of the ramps are not causal, but that other features create the safety problems.

I strongly encourage IDOT officials and their consultants to evaluate the true cost of the proposed ramp relocation versus the minimal benefit, particularly when other alternatives with lower impact exist.

- [reply](#)

290 Design Changes

Submitted by Paul Bouboutsis on Mon, 2013-10-07 12:45

I'd like to start with an observation: the guardrail separating the eastbound Harlem exit ramp and the left lane seems to be smashed often - though little information is readily available to understand the outcome of collisions such as these. Any change to the current ramp scenario, if it is made safer, and guardrail collisions can be predicted to be reduced - is welcomed. Esthetics and the threat of noise pollution aside, if lives are more likely to be saved with a new plan, then this must be the imperative. Because the left handed ramp scenario has lingered unintended for so long, many of us have become accustomed to the danger that lurks there. Merging westbound from Harlem, I've personally been prevented from entering the left lane by a driver that refused right of way. This happens with regular frequency. Each time it does, I'm all the more adamant that a change to this dumb on ramp scenario to something with a more studied, proven track record must be made.

If it were the case the on and off ramps relative to the 290 in Oak Park were situated safely, I too would be advocating for funds to be used in broadening other means of transit along the Eisenhower corridor. But given the dangerous and sometimes lethal events that happen with regular frequency, I have to emphatically suggest that funds be appropriated to safely correct these glaring on and off ramp design flaws. Frankly, these changes are long over due.

Widening the expressway may local ease congestion as well. As more communities limit street traffic by reducing four lane streets to two lanes, in order to promote pedestrian traffic and improve new local shopping corridors, demand for alternate routes will likely increase, forcing more traffic to the expressway. Moreover, vehicles traveling at higher speeds with less stopping and starting stand to reduce emissions to adjacent neighborhoods. Any plan that is statistically proven to mitigate emissions is indeed worth implementing, in my opinion.

Thanks for this forum.

- [reply](#)

Bring on the changes!

Submitted by Jonathan Schmit on Mon, 2013-10-07 17:27

Some thoughts from a South Oak Parker who actually uses I-290 and the intersections in question at Harlem and Austin.

- Merging with passing lane traffic isn't safe. End of story.
- Increased noise and air pollution from the on and off ramps??? What about the current noise and air pollution on Harlem and Austin Avenues...cars don't move through these intersections efficiently which causes traffic back ups...all day long...all week long. Harlem and Austin are parking lots of idling vehicles. I invite all you North Siders to spend a morning at Maple Park, breathe in all the CO2 emission awesomeness and tell me I'm wrong.
- The intersections at Harlem and Austin are not safe for pedestrians trying to get to the public transportation we claim to love so much (the Blue Line stations at Harlem and Austin). It's like Thunderdome out there.

I'm less concerned with the lanes of traffic and pie-in-sky super trains from Bellwood...the intersections at Harlem and Austin are an unsafe blight on our community. And it's not a matter of opinion...empirically, they are terrible. Ever try to explain that on-off ramp situation to a friend or family member traveling in from out of town? My family lives near Flint, Michigan...and I am the one who is embarrassed about what they have to drive through to get to my home.

- [reply](#)

Alternative Transportation!

Submitted by John on Mon, 2013-10-07 22:25

What will happen a few years from now when there are simply more cars on the highway? Add even more lanes? Eventually, we won't be able to expand our urban highways any more and we'll have no choice to invest in buses, improve the blue line, and encourage people to live closer to where they work. Better to get started now than entrench ourselves even deeper into a dying system of transportation.

- [reply](#)

Future Vehicle Usage

Submitted by bmw325_num99 on Tue, 2013-10-08 08:09

I generally agree with you: More lanes are not the answer. Even though I do not live close to the Kennedy, I am against plans to expand there too.

On the other hand, I asked about environmentally friendlier alternatives to just expanding the lanes. The IDOT representatives I emailed responded. Their standpoint is that cars are becoming more fuel-efficient or electric which means even if there becomes more cars (bad for congestion), they will consume less fossil fuels and resources (better for the environment at least). I was half satisfied with the answer but only if you share the optimistic viewpoint that electric or alternative fueled cars will catch on.

- [reply](#)

I 290

Submitted by stop being obst... on Mon, 2013-10-07 22:54

We should stop being NIMBY obstructionists. Widen the Ike! Spending more money on the Blue Line is a waste of money.

- [reply](#)

The Extra Lane

Submitted by Joyce Porter on Tue, 2013-10-08 06:50

Much as I enjoy the luxury of entering eastbound on Austin without worrying about merging, I think it's a mistake that Oak Parkers insist on the lane reduction. I can't understand the argument that adding a lane would cause more pollution because it would bring more drivers. As it is now, when the long backups begin approaching Austin the drivers either exit and add to the traffic on the streets or sit there emitting fumes. I was pleased to read that IDOT thinks this can be done without destroying buildings. Another possibility would be to convert the el to a subway and use that space.

- [reply](#)

Construction Noise

Submitted by MJ on Tue, 2013-10-08 11:30

Looking at the preliminary plans for ramp construction, it would appear that the ramps will be 20 feet above Harrison Street at a distance of 35-50 feet from many houses. Have you considered what reverse motion alarms on equipment will sound like at night? The alarms are about 95-115 decibels, which at the higher end of the range are deafening, and elevated so that they will be heard for blocks. And how do you demo concrete quietly? If night work isn't allowed, how do Oak Parkers feel about doubling the construction time? How about the traffic on the side streets? How are the south side parents going to get their kids up to Hatch for tball? How about getting kids to school on time (and safely)? I think Oak Park residents and the Village are greatly underestimating the impacts of this construction, whenever it does occur. This construction project will make Barrie Park look like a nice sunny day at Rehm Pool. It might end up nice, but after how many years of aggravation, noise, traffic, etc. And do we really need it?

- [reply](#)

Not sure what the issue is

Submitted by joshv on Tue, 2013-10-08 11:39

Go ahead and widen it, but please don't make it some sort of special HOV or bus only lane - then it will simply be wasted effort for nothing. Sitting stopped in three lanes of traffic is one thing. Sitting stopped in three lanes of traffic, with an empty HOV lane next to you is maddening.

The widening will increase capacity but I doubt it will decrease congestion. It might move the choke points, or make them more variable. If it does, that might be a good thing for OP, as backups can be a significant source of pollution.

I agree with another commenter that the existing on/off ramps are a confused safety nightmare. I cannot imagine how anything IDOT does could be worse, and it will most likely be much better. As for the neighborhood impact, it appears to be limited to a few buildings that already have sight lines down into the Ike, and certainly already have sight lines into the parking lot that is Austin and Harlem at the Ike.

One thing I have not heard being addressed is noise pollution. Will anything be done to deaden or deflect noise from the Ike?

- [reply](#)

Not sure what the issue is

Submitted by Rob Cole on Wed, 2013-10-09 08:50

With respect to noise, the IDOT is contemplating sound walls in certain locations. Whether the walls are installed or not involves additional work on IDOT's behalf, as well as effort to engage the community in that discussion - particularly property owners that would most benefit from or be impacted by any wall that gets constructed. Incidentally, one of the people I spoke with at the IDOT meeting last night (10/8/13) indicated that Milwaukee has used transparent/opaque sound walls on their recent project. I'm not saying walls are good or bad, but rather simply pointing to the observation that walls come in varying sizes and appearance.

- [reply](#)

As a property owner right

Submitted by Susan raphael on Wed, 2013-10-09 11:30

As a property owner right along the highway. I would like to be part of that discussion. Please reach out to us on this discussion. If sound walls work, they should be part of the discussion. I am more concerned about abating sound then whether or not I can see the other side of oak park.

- [reply](#)

As a property owner right

Submitted by Rob Cole on Wed, 2013-10-09 12:16

There will be community engagement on the topic of sound walls as the study progresses. If you have not already done so, please take a moment to sign-up for the Village's e-News, which a great way to receive important updates from the Village on a variety of noteworthy community news, including news related to I-290.

The e-News sign-up link is here:

<http://www.oak-park.us/your-government/village-manager/public-informatio...>

- [reply](#)

I talked to a guy named John at IDOT as well

Submitted by MJ on Thu, 2013-10-10 15:25

He mentioned the opaque sound barriers as well, which may be helpful. The main speaker at the Q&A (Peter?) also mentioned that they may restrict certain construction activities to daytime hours, which would help. Other mitigation methods that were mentioned were vibration measurements, which I think is necessary when they demo the old wall and compact the soil for the ramps. He said that sometimes they would pin the walls laterally into the surrounding soil with cable, which would have the potential to propagate vibration while demolishing the wall. I felt much more comfortable talking to John than the main guy from IDOT.

- [reply](#)

[Pie in the sky? Maybe...but now is the time.](#)

Submitted by revlon on Tue, 2013-10-08 13:40

I can't speak to the effectiveness of HOV lanes and the like, but I do feel that the addition of a lane might at least help to ease the constant traffic bottleneck at Austin Avenue. That said...I am strongly in favor of a much more robust public transit component as a part of the end result. Faster blue line travel times, stations that are better integrated into neighborhoods, and an extension to Mannheim would be a start. Integration of bikeways would be fantastic. Maybe if the trench was sunk deeper the new ramp scheme would have little negative impact.

Overall, this is literally a once in a lifetime opportunity to effect a huge positive change on a number of fronts. We have to think big. I know funding is limited, and the process is messy, but this could be a real feather in the cap for the State of Illinois, IDOT, the CTA, the city, and the region as a whole if a holistic and forward thinking vision can be implemented. Covering portions of the roadway would make a huge impact. Even the most modest proposal for capping portions of the expressway is visionary, and would have a major impact on quality of life. Yep...this is asking a lot. I hope that leadership can rise to the challenge.

- [reply](#)

[Pie in the sky? Maybe...but now is the time.](#)

Submitted by Rob Cole on Wed, 2013-10-09 08:45

Please share your thoughts regarding expanded bridge decking with the Illinois Department of Transportation and your state elected officials.

The shared use path on the north side, which will connect the Illinois Prairie Path to Columbus Park, is a great enhancement, as well.

- [reply](#)

[290 ramps](#)

Submitted by Dan on Tue, 2013-10-08 14:53

I don't plan on living in Oak Park my whole life and I can understand for those of you that do, are more concerned about the pollution and noise traffic brings to OP.

But I honestly do believe the fact there is SO much traffic on 290 between Austin and Harlem is... the location of the on/off ramps. What two exits on the entire 290 are on the left side? Ta-da! Austin and Harlem, it's no coincidence there is traffic at these locations. I do believe moving them to the right side would help but to what extent, I have no idea. Whoever came up with this idea in the first place wasn't a genius. It's abnormal and dangerous to have the exits on the left side.

- [reply](#)

Alternate Routes

Submitted by Carol Southern on Tue, 2013-10-08 21:12

Just make sure that alternate routes are well planned during construction. Good signage, surfaces maintained, traffic control officers during rush hour, etc.

- [reply](#)

Helicopters

Submitted by Susan on Wed, 2013-10-09 12:18

During the 2010 resurfacing, one of our challenges was the constant sound of helicopters during rush hour. Anyway to limit them? They fly so low and so close to homes

- [reply](#)

Helicopters

Submitted by Rob Cole on Thu, 2013-10-10 16:50

Hi, Susan.

The Federal Aviation Administration regulations related to helicopters can be accessed here:

http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/field_offices/fsdo/atl/local_more/me...

The link above also provides information about reporting alleged violations. The Village of Oak Park is unable to regulate helicopter flight.

- [reply](#)

Question on height increases

Submitted by Lisa on Wed, 2013-10-09 12:22

Trying to determine whether or not the height of the expressway ditch will change around East ave. or just near the two exits?

- [reply](#)

IDOT mentioned that they may lower the through lanes

Submitted by MJ on Thu, 2013-10-10 15:31

One item that I heard mentioned by IDOT is that they are looking into lowering the through lanes some to make lessen noise and accommodate decking for the off ramps. My take on that was that, if anything, the through lanes may be lower, but that the off ramps may daylight (be higher than Harrison) for a longer distance. I wouldn't think that would impact East Ave.

- [reply](#)

Question on height increases

Submitted by Rob Cole on Fri, 2013-10-11 16:17

All of the visualizations made available at this point are preliminary and none really shows how far back the ramps will extend, or what the height may be at a particular point along their length. The best estimate of ramp length is depicted in one of the Harlem interchange renderings, which can be viewed on page 12 of the presentation available here:

<http://www.oak-park.us/sites/default/files/eisenhower/presentations/2013...>

As you may note, the ramps extend past the Home Avenue bridge in that drawing, but also drop in height along their length. Again, also keep in mind the renderings are quite preliminary and provided for residents and others to react to concepts, not necessarily the exact details. If ramp height at East Avenue and other locations concerns you, I encourage you to present your concerns in writing to IDOT either by letter or by using their online comment form, which is available using the link below, though you should do so prior to November 7th in order to have your comments included in the formal meeting record:

<http://www.eisenhowerexpressway.com/informed/>

Also, and in the event that you were not able to attend one of IDOT's recent meetings, they have stored the meeting materials here:

http://www.eisenhowerexpressway.com/info_center/meeting_materials.aspx

- [reply](#)

Don't Deepen the Wound

Submitted by Henry Kranz on Wed, 2013-10-09 12:39

I was around in the 50's when the ditch was dug thru Oak Park, severing in two. That wound has not ever healed completely. So, now considerations on how to enlarge the roadway either vertically or horizontally remind those of us who were around just what kind of impact these changes in the name of progress can have on our community. Whatever is done, there needs to be careful consideration of all implications of more noise, more exhaust, more traffic, more congestion and more divisive structure. Make changes, but with a human perspective, not a traffic management mindset.

- [reply](#)

Bridges

Submitted by Elizabeth Rexford on Wed, 2013-10-09 15:25

Currently we have bridges at Austin, Lombard, Ridgeland, East, Home and Harlem. The drawings of the new plans don't seem to show those bridges. Will we still have them under the new plans? These are absolutely necessary to continue civic life in our town of Oak Park.

- [reply](#)

Bridges

Submitted by Rob Cole on Thu, 2013-10-10 16:42

Corridor aeriels the Illinois Department of Transportation has displayed include each of the existing bridges, so it appears none would be slated for removal under preliminary plans.

While none appear slated for removal, we have not yet seen any design work focused on context sensitive, complete streets designs that re-imagine each of the vehicle and pedestrian highway crossings such that they become community assets rather than barriers to community connectivity and threats to public safety. Opportunities for expanded bridge decking, new and expanded public spaces, and other bridge design elements have yet to be fully explored and we encourage the Illinois Department of Transportation and its consultants to make additional progress in presenting creative bridge design concepts for public review and consideration.

The interchange work has shown some steps in the right direction, including transit plazas, increased streetscaping, and some other elements, but even in those areas where IDOT has concentrated most of its efforts to-date, the concepts require additional work.

The shared use trail depicted on the north side of the highway is a nice touch.

- [reply](#)

Toll Lanes - Are they effective?

Submitted by Elizabeth Rexford on Wed, 2013-10-09 15:28

Has IDOT studied actual usage of toll lanes in other places? Is there any way of predicting how many people will want to drive with 2-3 people in the car? I think there may be less of that than IDOT imagines. In that case, you would still be working with 2 lanes, with very little traffic on the third lane.

- [reply](#)

IKE plans

Submitted by Heather McCammo... on Thu, 2013-10-10 21:13

I live less than a block away from the Austin exit and the left side ramps are a nightmare. They are unsafe and unsightly. I have never let my kids even walk across the bridge on Austin Blvd. to Columbus Park because the pedestrian crosswalks are so hazardous. I see people all the time running and dodging from the cars as they exit those ramps. This needs to change and it would be beneficial to include some bike lanes and green streetscaping over the Austin bridge too. I am also in favor of extending the blue line and increasing the use of HOV and mass transit lanes to ease congestion, and to lessen the negative environmental impact. I like IDOT's plan to add "HOT" lanes, and not just HOV lanes. (Option #3 from the current 4 choices) These lanes could be used throughout the day for flexible use--HOV during peak times, and single occupancy/toll based used during slower periods. I also am concerned about noise and pollution, and would recommend any noise retaining walls that we can negotiate. Any type of cap anywhere along the Oak Park corridor is still worth fighting for, as well as support for the CTA's plans to expand west. I think the expansion of the IKE is going to happen, and pragmatically speaking, now is the time to advocate for making that change as beneficial as possible for Oak Park.

- [reply](#)

IKE plans

Submitted by Rob Cole on Wed, 2013-10-16 09:04

If the Illinois Department of Transportation does incorporate tolling options, like a HOT lane, there should be a mandatory transit revenue share in order to help offset the equity implications of a privileged access lane.

There's a decent discussion of the equity implications of road pricing strategies here: <http://www.vtapi.org/tdm/tdm70.htm>

- [reply](#)

Ike moving of Ramps to the east and impact on the community

Submitted by John Mac Manus on Fri, 2013-10-11 11:11

Comments on presentation by IDOT at the Proviso Math and Science Academy
October 8th 2013

1. Ramps moving to east side.

a. The drawings presented by IDOT show the ramps moved to the east side. These ramps will be in part located over a new additional lane.

b. In places these ramps will be 2 to 3 stories above the surrounding community. This will have a major negative impact on our community, increasing noise, pollution and forming a barrier in the heart of our community.

c. Though the construction of the "Ike" created a major chasm in our community's cohesion at least currently there are views across the Expressway. If this proposal goes ahead rather than healing this gap in community cohesion an increased barrier between the north and south parts of our community will be created. The current views across the Expressway will be replaced with views to a 2-3 story sound wall.

d. "30-year normals (1961-1990), the prevailing wind at Chicago is from the south-southwest (210 degrees) The prevailing winds in Chicago are predominantly from the SW. Currently the Expressway is below grade providing some relief from noise and pollution however with the IDOT proposal exhaust fumes starting 2-3 stories above grade, will flow from these ramps into our community.

e. We look forward to a solution from IDOT that does not increase the fracturing of our community.

2. IDOT made these recommendations without the input of a recognized urban designer or Landscape Architect stating there was no need for such in this part of the study. However, the proposed design will have a major impact on Columbus Park which is on the National Register of Historic Places and on our community. I do not believe that any sincere urban designer in all conscience could make the proposal as now presented. FHWA calls for improvement in community cohesion not the opposite.

3. IDOT says a national study "documents that left side entrances or exit ramps have up to 180% more crashes than right side entrance or exit ramps." In a literature review of crash studies, the study cited a Florida study of 19 ramps (4 of the 19 had a left-side exit). The same national study cited another study of 158 ramps in North Carolina (33 of the 158 ramps had a left-side entrance or exit) and said left-side ramps have "70 to 150 percent more total crashes than right-side entrances or exits." IDOT used the highest number they could find to support moving the center ramps to the right-hand side.

4. Congestion now exists on the expressway 17 hours a day on a weekday. The best of the four Build Alternatives would reduce this to 16 and one-quarter hours in the Year 2040 assuming IDOT's projections are correct. Why spend so much money of tax payers' money on such minimal return? The answer for most cities is to invest in transit as it is well known that increasing the number of lanes will only attract more cars and congestion will continue.

5. The CTA representative stated their focus is on fixing the current Forest Park Branch of the Blue Line from Clinton to Forest Park. They do not have any money for a Blue Line Extension but will "review" IDOT's designs. Therefore IDOT's presentations are disingenuous. There should be a concerted effort to improve transit rather than relying on out dated solutions.

6. There was no mention of "Livable Communities" or when IDOT will start the analysis of Environmental Justice.

- [reply](#)

[IDOT Exhibits at the Public Meeting](#)

Submitted by MJ on Fri, 2013-10-11 15:14

IDOT had a couple of very good conceptual design visualizations of the corner of Maple and Harrison to get an idea of what the Harlem ramp will look like at that corner. I'll have to admit that I was overall pleased with what they had come up with as a final plan, but of course the devil is in the details with regards to the construction headaches. Also, it looks like the exhibit may include some bit of lowering of the current through lanes. It would be nice if IDOT or VOP could post the exhibits from the meeting on their website. It would also be helpful for those that live along the expressway that may be in the process of or planning to put their house on the market to allow prospective buyers to visualize what may be constructed. I've been to a number of the IDOT public meetings and it the best visualization that I have seen yet.

- [reply](#)

IDOT Exhibits at the Public Meeting

Submitted by Rob Cole on Fri, 2013-10-11 16:58

Try this link and select the "Public Meeting" tab to see IDOT materials from the public meetings held on October 7th and 8th:

http://www.eisenhowerexpressway.com/info_center/meeting_materials.aspx

Also, the Village has posted presentation materials from the September 30th Village Board Special Meeting here (click on the Irving School text once on the page):

<http://www.oak-park.us/your-government/village-board/eye-ike/eye-ike-pre...>

- [reply](#)

Unfortunately it is not included with these presentations

Submitted by MJ on Mon, 2013-10-14 08:36

The exhibit that I'm talking about isn't included in these exhibits or anywhere that I can find on line (but the stuff you posted did have a lot of good info about the air modeling that will be performed). I was going to take a picture of it with my phone, but I had forgotten my phone. I'll send a request to IDOT/Mark Peterson to see if I can get something posted on their webpage or sent to me. I'll repost here if I can get a copy. Thanks for looking.

- [reply](#)

Unfortunately it is not included with these presentations

Submitted by Rob Cole on Wed, 2013-10-16 08:51

OK - If you receive something you'd like to share, please feel free to email it to me and we'll consider posting it (or a link to it) on Eye on the Ike.

- [reply](#)

I290 Boondoggle

Submitted by Michele Gurgas on Wed, 2013-10-16 21:24

The proposed I290 expansion will create more air pollution, noise pollution, visual blight, and lower our property values. It will not solve highway congestion or safety concerns.

1. Congestion Remains the Same: Currently I290 is congested 17 hours per day. The proposed expansion may decrease congestion to 16.5 hours per day.

2. The Myth of the Left Side Ramp: IDOT "national" study is of 4 ramps in Florida. IDOT needs to provide real I290 ramp safety data before spending potentially \$1 Billion.

3. More Dangerous for Drivers: Half of the highway lanes will be reduced from the recommended 12 feet to 11 feet in width. Eleven foot wide lanes are increasingly unsafe; increased accidents will increase highway congestion.

4. Quality of Life: New elevated right-hand ramps will be higher than our homes, increasing air, noise, and visual pollution in our neighborhood.

5. Provide Real Alternatives: IDOT is repackaging the same road expansion into four separate "alternatives". People need real alternatives like CTA and Metra expansion, buses, transit-oriented development, and intermodal facilities.

6. Community Concerns: IDOT has not considered environmental, economic, financial, and social justice criteria on how this construction project will affect Oak Park and other west side communities. Additionally, with the current plan, all of the bridges will need to be reconstructed due to the pillar locations; causing major disruption to our community.

- [reply](#)

[Eisenhower Plans](#)

Submitted by Chris Donovan on Thu, 2013-10-17 05:14

Is there any public information on the conversations between IDOT and CSX regarding the possible acquisition of the existing railroad right-of-way for use with the expansion of lanes. During the forum at the Proviso Math & Science Academy the CTA and IDOT reps made mention of talks with CSX, including CSX's need to retain one line, presumably for supplying Ferrara Pan, the single use of those tracks. Higher transportation costs for Ferrara Pan could be offset with the State's business retention tax credits (like the ones ADM is requesting) CMAP's own report indicated that the CSX tracks are obsolete, and the connecting CN spur in River Forest is unused since the purchase of the EJ&E. So, what is the problem with getting these negotiations finalized?

- [reply](#)

[Eisenhower Plans](#)

Submitted by Rob Cole on Fri, 2013-10-18 14:24

No, IDOT has not made public any discussions with CSX.

- [reply](#)

[290 Expansion](#)

Submitted by Reshma Desai on Thu, 2013-10-17 09:19

I have heard that the expansion would only reduce congestion from 7 hours a day to 6.5 hours a day. That outcome seems way too insignificant compared to the expense; construction delays; impact on surrounding roads like Roosevelt; and most importantly the impact on the neighborhoods surrounding the 290.

Why can't we expand the public transportation? Thanks

- [reply](#)

[Outdoor Air Pollution a Leading Cause of Cancer: WHO](#)

Submitted by MJ on Thu, 2013-10-17 15:23

<http://news.yahoo.com/outdoor-air-pollution-leading-cause-cancer-1105502...>

Not surprisingly, the World Health Organization has come out and said that one of the leading causes of cancer is air pollution. Those that live along the Eisenhower have for years been exposed to air pollution from the Eisenhower. And now they want to expand lanes, increase noise and air pollution, and put us through the misery of years of construction too? This is exactly what President Clinton had in mind when he developed his directive on Environmental Justice. Oak Parkers and others that live along the expressway deserve more consideration of alternative modes of transportation and/or concessions for putting up with the "progress and improvements" sought by our friends in the western suburbs.

- [reply](#)

I290 Expansion Boondoggle

Submitted by Douglas Chien on Thu, 2013-10-17 22:13

IDOT spent \$140 million on the Hillside strangler. The outcome? Congestion was moved to a different location and travel times went down by a grand 60 seconds. This does not factor in the additional time drivers LOST during the construction. That was \$140 million wasted.

This is way more than a 'reconfiguration.' All 4 alternatives are expansions of the highway, bringing more traffic and its bedfellows: air, visual, and noise pollution. Moving the ramps will bring these negatives that much closer to our individual residences without reducing the number of crashes.

The highway expansion will bring no benefits to Oak Park. Some may think that adding more lanes and moving the ramps will ease congestion on Harlem and Austin but that will not happen. People will see new lanes and decide to drive when they may have used transit before. The end result will be the same congestion we suffer with now.

The only way to reduce congestion on I290 is to give people actual alternatives i.e. better train and service. None of the 4 alternatives does this.

I expect our Village Board to strongly fight this expansion.

IDOT will claim they are constrained by where the dollars come from or that they don't have the authority to do things like mass transit. This is BS. With the right political pressure from the Village Board and our State and Federal representatives we can achieve a solution that works for our community and the region. Adding more lanes is a waste of money. It is an outdated way of thinking. It is NOT a solution.