



**ARCHER AVENUE AT BELT RAILWAY COMPANY OF CHICAGO GRADE SEPARATION STUDY
COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP (CAG) MEETING #1**

Tuesday, February 7, 2017

10:30 a.m.

Archer Heights Public Library
5055 S Archer Ave, Chicago, IL 60632

Meeting Minutes

The Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting began at approximately 10:41 a.m. and ended at 11:35 a.m. with the following people in attendance (see attached sign-in sheet):

Soliman Khudeira, Chicago Department of Transportation
Joe Alonzo, Chicago Department of Transportation
Thomas Baliga, Archer Heights Civic Association
Stanley Lihosit, Archer Heights Civic Association
Russell Coate, Belt Railway Company of Chicago
Chris Steinway, Belt Railway Company of Chicago
Jerry Hurckes, Office of Congressman Dan Lipinski, 3rd District of Illinois
David Espinoza, Office of Alderman Edward Burke, 14th Ward
Michael Hurley, CREATE (HNTB Corporation)
Michael Kowalczyk, Federal Highway Administration
Zubair Haider, Illinois Department of Transportation
Jakita Trotter, Illinois Department of Transportation
Frank Kelly, Chicago Office of Emergency Management and Communications
Adam Rod, Chicago Department of Aviation
Jason Biernat, Chicago Transit Authority
Kim Morreale, Morreale Communications
Berenice Vallecillos, Morreale Communications
Allie Goodrich, Morreale Communications
Elena Iovtcheva, AECOM
Dean Smith, AECOM
Dolan McMillan, AECOM
Tim Whalen, AECOM

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

The first CAG meeting included a presentation followed by an open Q&A session. The agenda of the presentation (attached) included:



- Introductions – Soliman Khudiera, CDOT
- Purpose of the CAG Meetings – Berenice Vallecillos, Morreale Communications
- Overview of the Project – Soliman Khudiera, CDOT
- CREATE Program – Joe Alonzo, CDOT
- Stakeholder Involvement Process (2 hard copies present on site; otherwise available at www.archerbrc.com) – Berenice Vallecillos, Morreale Communications
- Community Advisory Group (CAG) Defined – Berenice Vallecillos, Morreale Communications
- Project Details – Timothy Whalen, AECOM
- Next Steps – Berenice Vallecillos, Morreale Communications

MEETING SUMMARY

The Presentation

- Berenice started with a safety moment and welcomed attendees to the meeting. The safety moment included directions to the restrooms and emergency exits, a tripping warning about loose outlet caps on the floor, and a tip about including an emergency contact on smartphones so that emergency responders may access this information from the lock screen should the need arise.
- Soliman then started the PowerPoint presentation and gave introductions of the project and the project team, and then overviewed the purpose of the CAG and the CAG meeting.
 - Soliman explained the project's status – Currently the project is in the Phase I Preliminary Design stage. Should funding become available, the intention is to complete Phase II design and Phase III construction by the end of 2021. Phase II design and Phase III construction are currently not funded.
 - Soliman also reviewed the options for a grade separation:
 - Road over railroad
 - Road under railroad
 - Railroad over road
 - Railroad under road
 - “No-build” option
- Soliman also reviewed project benefits, such as improved safety, congestion and aesthetics, as well as easier access for emergency responders and economic benefits.
- Joe introduced the CREATE Program as part of the presentation
 - Joe discussed the history of CREATE and gave a summary of the completed and ongoing projects. Out of the total of 70 projects under the CREATE program, 28 projects are completed, 23 projects are in various design stages and 19 projects are not started.
- Soliman discussed the project process as part of the presentation, including the planning process and the applicable regulatory processes. Phase I design will collect project data, define the purpose and need of the project, identify the possible design options, evaluate these options and define the preferred alternate. Any potential ROW and easements take-offs will be also identified.
- Berenice overviewed the stakeholder involvement process, explaining what the Stakeholder Involvement Plan is, which stakeholders have been identified, the different phases of the involvement



plan, and details about the CAG. She also provided information about the next two CAG meetings, which are scheduled for Tuesday, May 9, 2017 and Tuesday, July 11, 2017, both at 10:30 a.m.

- Tim covered the project details, including the existing traffic and delay data for the corridor, along with the projected 2040 traffic volume. The corridor is predicted to experience modest traffic growth, as it is currently a built-out urban environment. As a result, the project benefits would be realized immediately upon implementation. The characteristics and limits of the study were covered in conjunction with the operations of the Belt Railway Company (BRC). The crash data analysis was discussed, along with the likely causes of the various types of crashes – especially rear-end collisions in the vicinity of the at-grade crossing. The project benefits were summarized, and the key challenges that will impact the development of the alternatives were also discussed.
- The team fielded the following questions, and pointed to the project website Contact tab for further questions or concerns, should they arise after the meeting.

Summary of Questions and Comments

1. As the CREATE Program lists projects as GS#'s (such as GS9 – Grade Separation), a CAG member asked whether the number associated with the grade separation study denoted the order of construction or completion.
 - Joe Alonzo replied that the numerical number did not indicate an order of construction or completion, and made no impact on when the different projects get constructed.
2. A representative of the Chicago Transit Authority (Jason Biernat) asked about maintenance of traffic and asked that the project team consider transit riders throughout the duration of the project.
 - Tim responded that the Phase I effort will include concept staging and Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) plan development. Additionally, detailed coordination with the involved agencies, including the CTA, will be performed during Phase II design to further develop the MOT plan to ensure that motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit users are safely facilitated through the entire duration of construction.
 - The project team may contact Jason Biernat with any questions related to the transit users.
3. Zubair Haider (IDOT) suggested that the Purpose and Need be presented at the next CAG meeting to help inform the development of the project alternatives.
 - The project team agreed to include that in the agenda for the second meeting on May 9th.
4. The Archer Heights Civic Association indicated that two projects are in process near the GS9 project area – the first mentioned involves a 1,000-car valet parking lot and restaurants at the southwest corner of Archer and Cicero avenues near Midway Airport, and the second involves two boutique hotels coming to 53rd Street and Cicero Avenue. A traffic signal is likely to be installed at this location as well.
 - A member of the project team asked the group member to keep the team apprised of the projects' progress.



5. The Archer Heights Civic Association asked about the potential of losing access at Kolmar Avenue or Knox Avenue.
 - Tim Whalen explained that the potential does exist for impacts to the existing cross streets and driveways within the project limits as a result of the potential grade changes to create the grade separation. As part of the next meeting, the CAG will be informed about the different design alternatives and their potential impacts on the property access, as well as where the new access points may be located. The team will coordinate any potential closures with the property owners and the CAG prior to finalizing the design.

6. It was mentioned that the Dolphin Cartage property is currently for sale. One of the potential buyers is intending to use it for Midway Airport shuttle parking. Also, the former Bobak's property at the southwest corner of the RR crossing and Archer Avenue has a new owner – El Cubano Wholesale Meats`. The business will start operations on February 8, 2017.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY MEETING

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2017

10:30 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

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ARCHER AVENUE AT THE
BELT RAILWAY COMPANY OF CHICAGO
GRADE SEPARATION STUDY - GS9

SIGN-IN SHEET

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NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESS	PHONE NUMBER
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