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**ARCHER AVENUE AT BELT RAILWAY COMPANY OF CHICAGO GRADE SEPARATION STUDY  
COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP (CAG) MEETING #3**

Tuesday, July 18, 2017

10:30 a.m.

Uno Charter School Network – Daniel Zizumbo  
4248 W 47<sup>th</sup> St, Chicago, IL 60632

Meeting Minutes

The Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting began at approximately 10:35 a.m. and ended at 12:05 p.m. with the following people in attendance (see attached sign-in sheet):

Soliman Khudeira, Chicago Department of Transportation  
Joe Alonzo, Chicago Department of Transportation  
Stanley Lihosit, Archer Heights Civic Association  
Zubair Haider, Illinois Department of Transportation  
Jason Biernat, Chicago Transit Authority  
Michael Hurley, CREATE (HNTB Corporation)  
Michael Kowalczyk, Federal Highway Administration  
Jakita Trotter, Illinois Department of Transportation  
Adam Rod, Chicago Department of Aviation  
Mark Ferguson, Belt Railway Company of Chicago  
Kirsten Mawhinney, AECOM  
Elena Iovtcheva, AECOM  
Dolan McMillan, AECOM  
Brent Sears, AECOM  
Tim Whalen, AECOM  
Berenice Vallecillos, Morreale Communications  
Allie Goodrich, Morreale Communications  
Meredith Krantz, Morreale Communications



## PRESENTATION SUMMARY

The third CAG meeting included a presentation followed by a breakout session. The agenda of the presentation (attached) included:

- Welcome – Berenice Vallecillos, Morreale Communications
- Meeting Agenda – Soliman Khudeira, CDOT
- Introductions – Soliman Khudeira, CDOT
- CAG #2 Recap – Soliman Khudeira, CDOT
- Community Updates – Soliman Khudeira, CDOT
- Overview of Road Underpass Alternative – Tim Whalen, AECOM
- Underpass Design Considerations – Tim Whalen, AECOM
- Construction Staging Options – Soliman Khudeira, CDOT
- Evaluation of Impacts – Tim Whalen, AECOM
- Breakout Session – Berenice Vallecillos, Morreale Communications
- Closing Remarks/Next Steps – Soliman Khudeira, CDOT

## MEETING SUMMARY

### The Presentation

- Berenice started with a safety moment and welcomed attendees to the meeting. The safety moment included a reminder to find a safe meeting place during large events or festivals in the event of an emergency or if someone from your group gets lost.
- Soliman then started the PowerPoint presentation, discussed the meeting agenda, introduced the project team, and provided an overview of the purpose of the CAG and the CAG meetings.
- Soliman gave a recap of the second CAG meeting.
  - He discussed the purpose and need, alternatives considered and screening, and construction considerations.
  - He explained the purpose, which is to provide a transportation infrastructure improvement in the Archer Avenue corridor that increases operational efficiency and improves safety.
  - He also addressed the project needs, which are to reduce congestion and eliminate rail-road conflicts. He discussed how each was tied to increasing operational efficiency and improving safety.
  - He also explained alternatives that were considered and screened including the following: road underpass, road overpass, railroad overpass, railroad underpass, no build, and eliminating the crossing. Soliman stated that based on the screening criteria the roadway underpass option was selected.
  - Soliman went into detail on construction considerations which include detours, lane closures, run-around, and railroad operations. Detours would require traffic to use alternate streets. Lane closures would maintain one lane open in each direction on



existing roadway. Run-arounds would provide two-lane facility on alternative alignment to existing roadway. Railroad operations would require a temporary shoofly during construction

- Soliman asked for any community updates. No comments were raised, but attendees were given the opportunity to raise concerns during the breakout session.
  - Tim Whalen reviewed the overview of the underpass alternative. He displayed maps of the road underpass and said the overall goal of the designs is to strike a balance between the project's objectives and impacts.
    - Tim shared two visuals from recent CREATE projects including the 71st St. & CSXT/IHB Grade Separation—GS14 and 130th St. & Torrence Ave. & Norfolk Southern Grade Separation which showed examples of what the underpass would look like including the idea of a separate elevated pedestrian and bicycle accommodations. The Torrence project involved multiple grade separations, longer limits and a bidirectional bike path. He said that the 71<sup>st</sup> St & CSXT/IHB is a representative example of what the road underpass at Archer could look like given that it is a single grade separation. Tim explained in this example, form liners were used for the retaining walls to improve the underpass aesthetics.
    - Tim then began to discuss in detail underpass design considerations. Road considerations included a balance of CDOT and IDOT standards and criteria, vertical clearance, drainage, pedestrian & bicycle accommodations, and vehicular mobility and accessibility. Bridge considerations include railroad bridge design standards and criteria. Other considerations included right-of-way (ROW), lighting, and utilities. He also mentioned the intent is to request design exceptions to limit the length of the improvements.
    - Tim discussed Archer Avenue proposed typical section:
      - ✓ Option A includes 2 lanes in each direction and 10 ft. shared use path on both sides. He said a key factor is possibly property impact.
      - ✓ Option B includes 2 travel lanes in each direction and 10-foot shared-use path on one side and 3-foot emergency walkway on opposite side. He said this idea includes a separated pedestrian/bicycle accommodation. Tim also mentioned that the design likely cannot fit within the existing ROW because of the need to accommodate existing utilities.
    - Tim also discussed the railroad typical section which will include 2 tracks and a service road.
    - Tim discussed various shared-use path elements including at-grade paths, and elevated paths. He explained an at-grade path profile follows road profile, is ADA compliant at a 5% grade, requires longer distance before road reaches existing elevation, and does not need a railing or barrier. He then explained an elevated path profile is separate from the road profile, which allows the maximum road grade of 7%, has a shorter distance before road reaches existing elevation, and requires a barrier with railing to separate vehicles from pedestrians/cyclists.
- Tim concluded that the elevated path design is preferred because it has a minimized impact on the project footprint limits.



- Tim then discussed the need for a pump station to drain the stormwater from the underpass. He said the pump station will be located closer to the low point of the underpass, but behind the retaining walls. He said run-off from the pump station will be outlet into the 51<sup>st</sup> St combined sewer. A possible location for the pump station is at the northeast corner of the railroad crossing. Tim also indicated that detention would likely be necessary and would need to be below the ground surface. Due to the proximity of Midway Airport, surface detention, which could potentially attract birds to the area, is not permitted.
- Soliman said they identified three different staging options, which are a detour, 51<sup>st</sup> St run-around, and a temporary roadway run-around. He then went into details of the road construction staging options:
  - Detour – A detour would involve re-routing all of Archer Ave. traffic. Archer would be closed at the railroad tracks and all traffic uses alternative streets.
  - 51<sup>st</sup> Street Run-around – A run-around would involve local streets being used by all Archer traffic, a temporary crossing of the BRC at the 51<sup>st</sup> St because Archer would be closed at the railroad tracks.
  - Temporary Roadway Run-around - Construct temporary two-lane run-around (north or south of Archer), build temporary RR crossing, provide alternate route for through traffic
  - Soliman explained that the detour concept will be studied in detail and that the final selection may be a combination of the above options.
  - Soliman also discussed the railroad staging. The shoofly concept was presented. The two railroad tracks will be relocated east of the existing tracks during the construction and new temporary track connections and crossings to tie into existing tracks will be constructed. A temporary at-grade railroad crossing will be built if either the 51<sup>st</sup> St. or temporary run-around is used for vehicular traffic.
  - It was also mentioned that pedestrian accommodations would need to be maintained throughout construction.
- Tim went into detail on balancing project trade-offs. Benefits or positives include improved safety, reduced congestions, improved mobility, and aesthetic improvements. Negatives or costs would include ROW Acquisition, loss of accessibility, and temporary traffic impacts.
  - Tim then discussed in detail examples of potential impacts which can be temporary (only during construction) or permanent. Tim explained the 2 major categories of impacts are access and land acquisition and that the goal would be to have any roadway access issues be temporary. Tim said during construction, reasons for impacts could include construction of the run-around, construction of the shoofly, and temporary street closure for regrading of the road. Tim said final conditions could result in retaining walls and bridge abutment, pump station, and relocated utilities resulting in property acquisition or driveway access closure.
- Berenice then announced the breakout session and explained the session’s purpose and goals. She said the purpose is to guide the project team in defining the design alternative and providing opportunity for the CAG to supply input. She then explained the goals are to solicit detailed feedback and input from diverse perspectives and to identify three discussion themes per group.



- Breakout sessions (See summary below)
- Soliman then discussed next steps which include meeting minutes to follow, developing and refining the underpass alternative design, considering and assessing potential impacts, and announcing the next CAG meeting #4 will take place in Fall 2017. He said considering and assessing potential impacts will include avoiding impacts, minimizing impacts, and mitigating impacts if they are determined to be unavoidable.



## Summary of Breakout Group Sessions

### **Group 1**

Mark Ferguson

Elena Iovtcheva

Kirsten Mawhinney

Michael Kowalczyk

Soliman Khudeira

Michael Hurley

#### Group 1 Summary (worksheets attached):

1. **Railroad Property.** This group raised concerns on whether there was sufficient property for the shoofly and the pump station. BRC discussed the ability to accommodate shoofly on the property they already have. BRC is comfortable that there is sufficient ROW north of Archer Ave. to allow for the tracks and the connections, but the space south of Archer Ave. needs to be studied because of the curve in the track. The group noted that it does appear feasible to construct the shoofly.
2. **Bike/Pedestrian Issues.** Bike and pedestrian issues raised include emergency walkway use and pedestrian/bicycle accommodation during construction. The group was concerned that pedestrians may still use a 3-ft. emergency path as a walkway, which could be dangerous. A 5-ft. standard sidewalk may be a better solution. The group also suggested the idea of providing on-street bicycle accommodations adjacent to the 3-ft emergency path if that typical section option is selected.
3. **Adjacent Property.** The group discussed what the property impacts to the four quadrants of the project would be. Concerns were expressed that property impacts resulting from the north run-around have the potential to make this option not feasible. The group discussed the need to better understand the ROW impacts around the nearby properties.
4. **Accelerated Bridge Construction.** The group discussed that it would be preferable to accelerate the bridge construction in order to minimize disruption to BRC services and a weekend would be preferable to conduct this work.
5. **Safety.** There was also discussion of utilities, specifically the Midway jet fuel pipeline. The group stated that it is always an issue to dig near this area because of the utility jet fuel line. The group noted that on a similar project, it was next to a jet fuel pipeline along with distribution tanks, which introduced a homeland security issue.
6. **Sign Detour.** The group discussed how during a detour and the additional re-routed traffic on roadway leads to more impacts and wear and tear on the road. If the case is a signed detour with a functionally eligible roadway to divert traffic, the roadway could be eligible to receive federal funds to restore the detour roadway to its original condition.



## Group 2

Joe Alonzo  
Allie Goodrich  
Zubair Haider  
Jason Biernat  
Stanley Lihosit  
Jakita Trotter  
Dolan McMillan  
Brent Sears

Group 2 Summary (worksheets attached):

1. **Detours/Land acquisition.** Group 2 discussed whether land acquisition was viable or practical. During the discussion, the group noted that the location for one of the detours is near a school, which may contribute to issues with re-routing during construction. He said traffic is already bumper-to-bumper in the mornings. It was also questioned whether route A is a viable option and that a crash analysis will likely need to be completed. The group also noted in this section that CTA prefers a run-around for transit users, as long as it can remain consistent throughout the duration of construction. For the 51<sup>st</sup> option, the major consideration from the CTA's perspective is the turning radius.
2. **Sidewalks elevated on both sides.** Group 2 discussed that if only one side was to be elevated, arrangements would need to be made for pedestrians to cross over to the other side. This group said the sidewalk would be preferable to have on the north side of Archer Ave. This group said if there was to be a detour, then the preference would be 51<sup>st</sup> street, coming down to Kolmar Ave., and connecting to Archer Ave., rather than having to go through the neighborhoods.
3. **Safety.** This group said that pedestrian crossings should be minimized to avoid conflicts with traffic moving through the area. The group specifically noted that during the construction staging, trucks should be kept on Archer Avenue versus going through neighborhoods.

## Summary of Questions and Comments

1. A CAG member asked if in Typical Section Option B the narrower path would be located on the north or the south side.
  - o At this time it is proposed on the south side of Archer Ave.
2. A CAG member asked where the pump station would be located.
  - o Tim responded by saying that the pump station would likely be in the northeast quadrant of the grade separation; however, the exact siting has not yet been determined and further coordination with the BRC would need to occur.
3. A CAG member asked if 47<sup>th</sup> Street is a state route. It was also mentioned that typically when detouring a state route that a state detour route and a local detour route would be provided.
  - o Soliman responded that it is not a state route.
4. A CAG member expressed concern that traffic cannot arbitrarily be re-routed.
  - o Soliman explained that any detour concept will be studied in detail.
5. A CAG member asked whether there was an accurate and current pedestrian count.



- Tim said the recent 24-hour pedestrian/bicycle count showed zero pedestrians and 35 bikes and that another count is something they might consider doing again.
- 6. A CAG member asked whether there would be a crossing point if the pedestrian path were to only be on one side of the underpass.
  - Tim said a crossing point would have to be introduced.
- 7. A CAG member asked a question about ADA compliance of the pedestrian paths.
  - The pedestrian pathway would be ADA compliant.