



PROJECT UPDATE: ILLINOIS ROUTE 62

Illinois Route 25 to Illinois Route 68 • Cook & Kane Counties

September 2023

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

In our last newsletter (February 2022), we described the additional analysis and evaluation required to select the preferred alternative due to the presence of federally listed threatened and endangered species: Hine's Emerald Dragonfly (HED) and Rusty Patched Bumblebee. Over the last two years, the project team has continued coordinating with agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPDCC), and the Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS) to prepare a Biological Assessment (BA) for these species. The BA analyzes and determines the project's effect on these species and/or their critical habitat, and documents the measures taken to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate the impacts.



Spring Creek Forest Preserve
Prescribed Burn



Crayfish Burrow With Ejecta

Three critical elements of the BA have been completed: the prescribed burn of the Spring Creek Forest Preserve (2021), the wetland delineation within the Spring Creek Forest Preserve (2023), and the groundwater monitoring and analysis (2023). The prescribed burn cleared existing vegetation to allow field inspectors to identify signs of critical habitat for HED. The controlled burns have the added bonus of clearing invasive species and allowing natives species a better chance to survive. The burn also made it easier for our field crews to access the area when conducting the wetland delineation. Wetlands were delineated in the area between IL 62 and Donlea Road adjacent to Spring Creek and its west tributary. The delineation included the observation of certain plant species that are known to be indicators of high groundwater flows through calcareous soils that are crucial to the HED larval stage, as well as habitat such as crayfish burrows with ejecta. Ejecta is material that is forced or

burrow. The presence of groundwater coming to the surface and mingling with surface water is a key element of HED habitat. The groundwater analysis characterized the groundwater and surface water conditions in the area and determined that the hydrologic and geologic conditions of the study area are suitable for HED larval habitat. The project team will now compile the results of these studies and analyses to determine how the proposed improvements can avoid or minimize impacts to the threatened and endangered species.

ENDANGERED SPECIES OVERVIEW

Hine's Emerald Dragonfly (HED) is among the most endangered species in the United States. The USFWS listed the HED as an endangered species in 1995, and ever since, efforts have been made to protect critical habitat for the HED. HED live in fens, which are unique environments characterized by wetlands that are dominated by grass-like plants and fed primarily by water from a mineral source. A teneral (recently molted) HED was spotted in the IL 62 study area in 2019 and prompted the subsequent studies and analyses to document the HED habitat within the study area. Additional information about the HED can found on the [USFWS website](#).



Hines Emerald Dragonfly

Source: Missouri Department of Conservation

The Rusty Patched Bumblebee (RPBB) is one of approximately 21 species of bumblebee in the eastern United States and is an important pollinator of plants. The USFWS listed the RPBB as an endangered species in 2017. RPBB's live in a wide range of habitats including woodlands, prairies, marshes, agricultural fields, and residential parks and gardens. Since RPBB habitat is present within the IL 62 study area, the proposed improvements will be designed to avoid or minimize impacts to RPBB and their habitat. Additional information about the RPBB can be found on the [USFWS website](#).



Rusty Patched Bumblebee

Source: USFWS



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UPDATES ALONG IL 62 CORRIDOR



IL 62 at Longmeadow Parkway

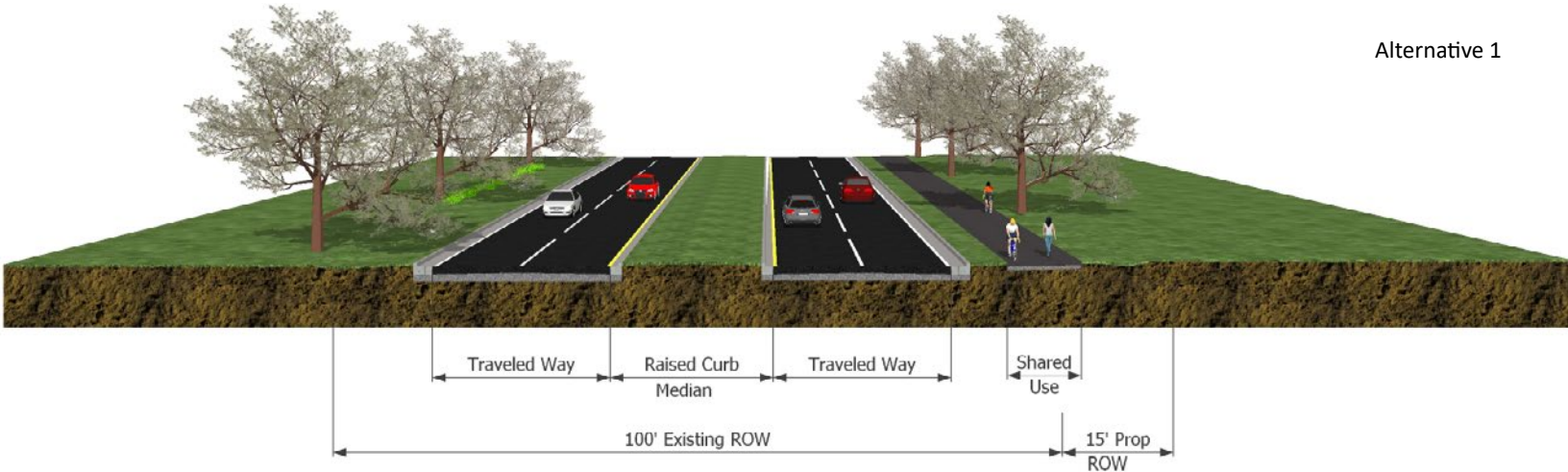
There have been several changes along the IL 62 corridor that will have to be considered in the project design. In 2021, the Longmeadow Parkway intersection with IL 62 opened for traffic. The proposed IL 62 design will consider the new roadway geometrics, drainage, as well as changes in traffic patterns associated with this new connection. The Longmeadow Parkway is not complete and impacts to traffic patterns will not be realized until it is fully operational, which is anticipated in 2025.

In 2019, the Forest Preserves of Cook County purchased the former equestrian estate, Horizon Farms, located off Old Sutton Road. In January 2023, the entire property was opened to the public as Horizon Farm preserve. The site features meadows, wetlands and small streams, as well as a habitat for grassland birds. This property is adjacent to IL 62 and the proposed design will take into consideration the sensitive nature and recreational use of the site.

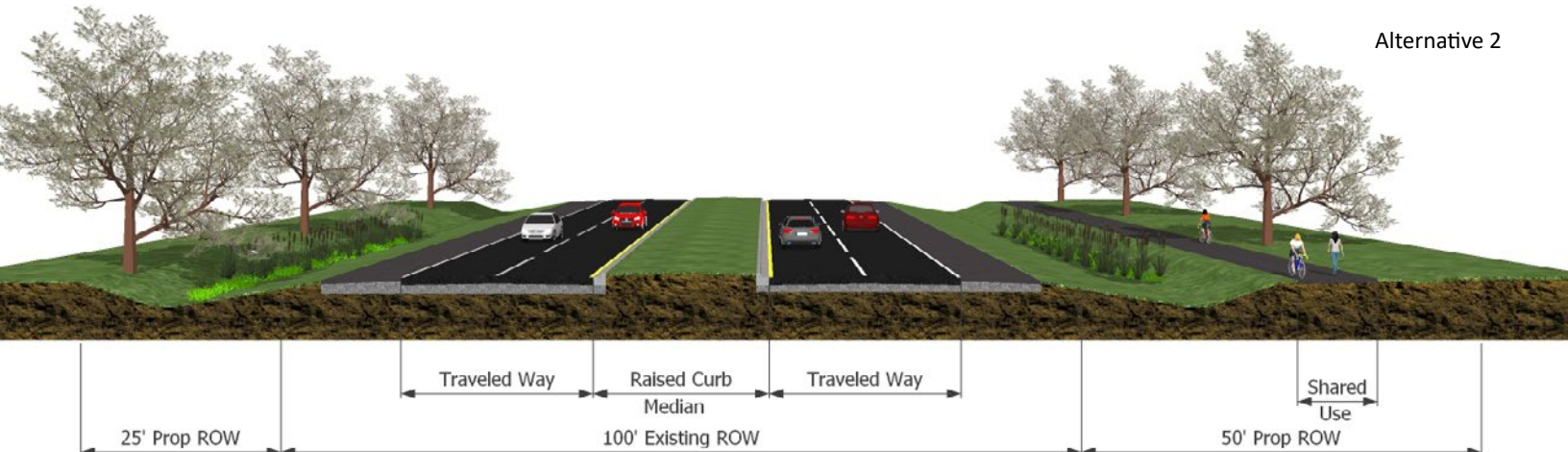
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

A preferred alternative and roadway cross section have not yet been selected for this project. Based on public input and data analysis, various cross section alternatives have been evaluated for their ability to meet the Purpose and Need of the project. Currently there are two alternatives remaining as shown in the figures below. While the two remaining alternatives are both 4-lanes, one has shoulders, and one has curb and gutter. After the preferred alternative is selected, geometric and drainage improvements, and pedestrian accommodations will be refined and presented to stakeholders.

Alternative 1



Alternative 2





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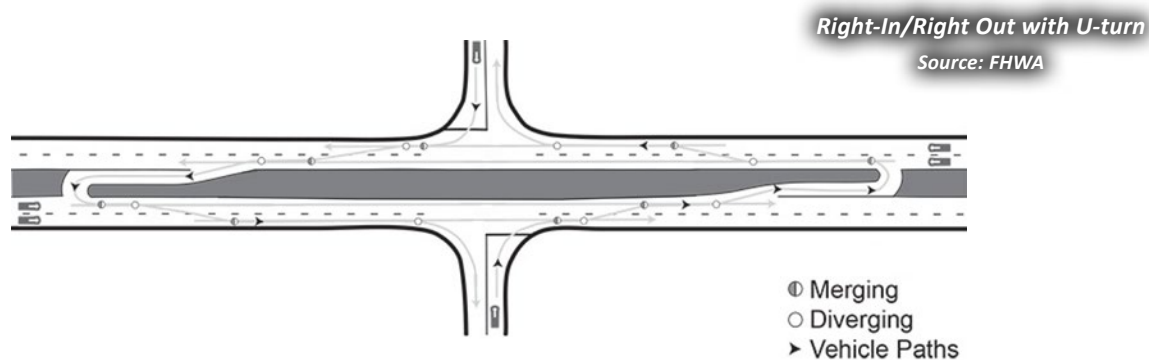
PUBLIC COMMENTS

The last time the project team met with the public was at Community Advisory Group Meeting (CAG) #5 in November 2019. Since then, we have received public comments via phone, email and the project website on a wide range of topics. These comments have been combined into three general categories as outlined below.

Traffic Signal at Bateman Road

The project team is currently developing concept geometrics along the IL 62 corridor, and the proposed improvements at the intersection of IL 62 at Bateman Road have not been finalized. Installation of a traffic signal must be justified based on an engineering study of traffic conditions, pedestrian characteristics, and physical characteristics of a location. For a traffic signal to be installed, at least one of nine warrants described in the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) must be met. In Illinois, roadways that are designated as Strategic Regional Arterials (SRAs), such as IL 62 designated as SRA 403, have further restrictions to the use of traffic control devices. The Bateman Road intersection does not achieve the requirements of the criteria to warrant a traffic signal.

When a traffic signal is not warranted, there are other changes that can be considered to improve the safety and mobility of an intersection. An example of a non-signalized intersection design being considered is a Right-In/Right-Out with a U-turn. This design restricts vehicles from turning left at the intersection. Instead, vehicles turn right and then make a U-turn at a specified median opening to make the left turn movement.



Traffic Noise

As traffic volumes continue to grow in the Northeastern Illinois area the issue of traffic noise close to the highway is sensitive for established residential areas, newly developed areas, and developing areas. It has been recognized and documented that the traffic noise levels experienced by residents living within 500 feet of a highway like IL 62 can generate concerns.

A complete traffic noise analysis will be completed for the IL 62 study area. When evaluating traffic noise, traffic noise impacts, and traffic noise abatement, the Department follows FHWA regulations, policies and procedures. Noise walls or sound barriers to abate identified traffic noise impacts are considered in the environmental analysis throughout the development of a highway project. Projects that are eligible for traffic noise abatement consideration are identified as Type I and Type II projects.

A Type I project is a proposed project for the construction of a State highway on new alignment (a highway where one did not exist before), or the physical alteration of an existing State highway that significantly changes either the horizontal or the vertical alignment or increases the number of through-traffic lanes. A Type II project is a Federal or Federal-aid highway project for noise abatement on an existing State highway. The IL 62 project is considered a Type I project.

Property Impacts to the Polo Facility

The Department has received multiple comments regarding potential impacts to the existing polo field near the intersection of IL 62 at Old Sutton Road. At this time, the preferred alternative and final geometrics have not been determined. Once the preferred alternative has been selected, the proposed roadway geometrics and drainage improvements will be refined and impacts to existing facilities along IL 62 will be avoided or minimized wherever possible.



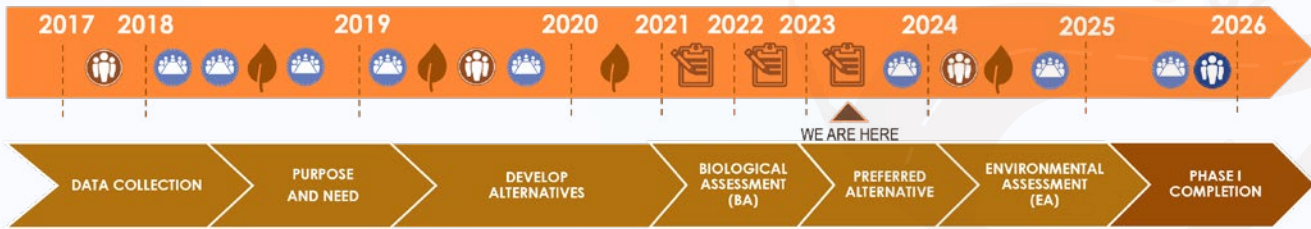
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PROJECT SCHEDULE

The schedule has been delayed by approximately 36-40 months to conduct groundwater monitoring and to complete the Biological Assessment (BA). Our next meeting with the Community Advisory Group is targeted for 2024 when we anticipate additional information will be available to share with the group. In the meantime, we encourage you to continue to Stay Involved.



PUBLIC & AGENCY COORDINATION TIMELINE

- Public Meeting
- CAG Meeting
- Public Hearing
- Agency Coordination Meeting
- Natural Resource Data Gathering

CONTACT INFORMATION

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STAY INVOLVED

Stay involved with the IL 62 Phase 1 Study by visiting the project website at il62study.com

Interested stakeholders can sign up to receive project notifications and newsletters via mail or email. Materials presented at the public meetings and CAG meetings are posted on the project website a few days after the meeting.

