



**Coordination Meeting
Waukegan Regional Airport**

**Illinois Route 131 (Green Bay Road)
From Russell Road to Sunset Avenue
Lake County
Phase I Engineering
Wednesday, September 28, 2011**

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Waukegan Regional Airport Study Update

The Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives (DOPAA) began in 2006 and served as the starting point of an environmental study to look at a range of alternatives to improve safety and satisfy demand at the Waukegan Regional Airport. The DOPAA evaluated the need for an EIS but it was locally determined to proceed as an EA. The FAA approved the primary action of the DOPAA: to provide a longer runway and the required safety envelopes to meet the current and future demand that is comprised mostly of corporate activity. The airport improvements are obligated to address the Runway Safety Areas (RSA) that is not met with the current runway configuration. The FAA approved a 20-year horizon for the facility forecast.

In 2008, the DOPAA reported 15 alternatives for airport improvement. Two of those alternatives met criteria for further analysis and ultimately Alternative 3b was selected as the preferred alternative. Community awareness of the studied airport improvements and the potential impact to Illinois Route 131 is high and the chosen preferred alternative causes the least impact to the environment than the other expansion options.

The preferred alternative cost was reevaluated in 2011 and the result is the draft Implementation Plan and Financial Feasibility Analysis distributed prior to the meeting. The Port District will share the funding with the state and FAA.

The Airport Master Plan consists of three phases. The first phase was the DOPAA and is complete. A draft of the third phase, the cost analysis, was completed out of

sequence for the benefit of the coordination effort between the highway and airport projects. The second phase is the Environmental Assessment, which is underway. The EA will be necessary to finalize the preferred alternative, but the preferred alternative is strong and certain based on previous studies and agency coordination.

Cost

The Port District has acquired approximately 90% of the right-of-way required for the expansion. Due to the large scope of work and high estimated construction cost, the work will likely have to be staged, perhaps over several years.

The airport plan proposes broad slopes adjacent to the depressed roadway outside of the runway and taxiway safety areas to minimize retaining wall requirements. The depressed roadway could follow an offset alignment adjacent to existing IL Rte. 131 to minimize cost of construction, improve maintenance of traffic, and lessen the encroachment on the runway safety area.

The cost for the tunnel was estimated to be around \$23M. Everyone agreed that the projects need to be kept feasible. There would be benefit between the two projects as the airport will need fill material while the roadway will be in a cut section that will generate some of the fill material.

The airport feasibility analysis estimated the required pump station to cost \$1M, but IDOT-Hydraulics estimates the cost at \$5M. The pump station would need to be constructed at the time of excavation with airport project A-2 and could not wait until project A-7. Preliminary investigation showed that it is not possible to drain the depressed roadway without a pump station. HNTB will determine how much the roadway and runway would need to be raised to drain the site without a pump station.

The airport and IDOT Division of Aeronautics recognize the importance of IL Rte. 131 and believe that synergy between the airport and highway projects will help both improvements become reality. Identifying and securing funding sources, construction scheduling, and wetland mitigation are among the opportunities for benefit of project synergy.

Property Use

Three methods can be used to allocate airport land for IL Rte. 131: concurrent use, outright transfer, or permanent easement. Any method would require completion of the Airport EA but land release or transfer could be the most time-consuming process and may need Secretary of Transportation authorization.

Project Schedule

The airport study will need at least two years to reach NEPA approval before the project could begin. Land acquisition would be the first phase of work, but would proceed much faster once the improvements are declared an FAA project with

dedicated funding. The Port District has been following a reimbursement method for the past several years by buying small parcels as the money becomes available and being reimbursed by the state.

The airport study team is looking for comments from the District on the financial plan. Hanson Professional Engineers distributed a confidential draft of the opinion of probable cost and description of mutual benefits to the airport and roadway studies.

The construction estimate for the IL Rte. 131 improvements is \$60-65M. The grade-separation would add ~\$38 M to that total. If a highway project exceeds \$100M, it requires a detailed financial plan.

Design Issues

Maintenance of the runway and taxiway structures could occur similar to the relationship IDOT maintains with Illinois Tollway crossings: the agency above is responsible for the deck and superstructure while the agency below maintains the substructure.

The airport study team will investigate the requirements, costs, and impacts of fire suppression and ventilation systems under the runway bridge/tunnel (ACTION ITEM).

The airport study team will also determine the hazard caused by an open cut during phased construction of the roadway in the runway safety area (ACTION ITEM). It is recognized that the effective runway length may have to shorten during certain construction phases.

The biggest concern to IDOT Division of Highways is providing access to the remaining homeowners on the west side of IL Rte. 131 near the airport. The access to IL Rte. 131 from these properties would be severed by lowering the roadway. The first phase of the airport improvement project is to acquire the remaining properties in this area. IDOT Highways will not be responsible for access to these properties or for the acquisition of any parcels in this area.

Next Steps

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between IDOT Division of Aeronautics and Highways will be drafted to acknowledge the agreement to partner on the improvements to IL Rte. 131 and Waukegan Regional Airport.

The airport study may need to follow the NEPA/404 Merger process for project approval. To date, the FAA has approved the sponsor's proposed action to provide a 7,000-ft runway and improved RSA (as outlined in the DOPAA).

The highway study team will produce a schedule of upcoming milestone project dates to share with the airport team and for future distribution to FAA and FHWA. The project anticipates preferred alternative concurrence from the NEPA agencies in

February and Design Approval (DA) in late spring / early summer 2012. A schematic bar chart schedule will be included in the MOU. Land Acquisition, if funded, would begin after DA.

IDOT Highways requested the airport team provide documentation of the benefit of the improvements to the state highway system. IDOT Aeronautics is conducting an economic study of state airports. Waukegan had not been analyzed yet, but this document will provide the information desired to help justify the grade separation expense. The previous study is eleven years old.

Comments from IDOT and HNTB on the Implementation Plan and Financial Feasibility Analysis should be sent to John Baczek who will forward all comments to the airport study team.

This group will reconvene in one month to discuss the MOU and prepare how to present the projects to FAA and FHWA.



Illinois Department of Transportation

Attendance Roster

Bureau: Programming

Section: Project Studies

Project/Topic: IL-131 (Russell Rd. to Sunset Ave.) Waukegan Airport Coordination Meeting

Date: September 28, 2011

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: IDOT District #1 Executive Conference Room, Schaumburg, IL

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