



McHENRY COUNTY BOARD

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Ms. Patricia Kennedy
President - Alliance for Land Agriculture and Water

Dear Ms. Kennedy,

The County has received your position paper regarding the Randall Road project and after thoroughly reviewing it, we offer the attached response to ALAW's concerns. The County appreciates your interest in the Randall Road project and looks forward to solving issues such as this that face our County in a way that meets all of the needs and desires of the residents of McHenry County.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tina Hill".

Tina Hill
County Board Chairwoman

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anna May Miller".

Anna May Miller
Transportation Committee Chairwoman

c: County Board Members
TranSystems
Joseph R. Korpalski, Jr., P.E. – Director of Transportation/County Engineer

McHenry County has reviewed the May 12, 2014 CAPA position paper on the Randall Road Phase II Engineering Project and offer the following thoughts and clarifications:

Faulty Population Projections

The Randall Road Phase I Study utilized the most current population estimates and growth projections available at that time. Since then, the County has recognized that both the current population and growth projections are likely less than originally thought during the Phase I Study. Therefore, one of the initial tasks of the Phase II Design Team (Design Team) is to re-evaluate the population and growth projections.

Currently, the Design Team has been coordinating with CMAP to obtain these updated population projections. CMAP is in the process of updating their population forecasts. This update utilizes actual 2010 census data, whereas this data was not available during the Phase I process. Additionally, CMAP has reviewed and updated their socioeconomic data which serves as a basis for the future projection growths. The Design Team is reviewing this data provided by CMAP and will be using it to determine future traffic projections.

Lack of Objective Traffic Evidence

The traffic information, consisting of the collection of data and the analysis of said data, has been and is currently being based upon industry accepted engineering and modeling practice.

The Phase I analysis of the Randall at Algonquin intersection indicates that the intersection is already at failing levels of service (as measured by the length of delay) in the afternoon weekly rush hours and on Saturdays during peak shopping hours. While the current traffic and amount of future growth has been debated, there will likely be some increase in population and traffic. Therefore, any additional growth will lead to the intersection continuing to fail, which will continue to negatively impact the intersection and surrounding businesses.

To date, the Design Team has approached over 300 businesses along the corridor and participated in over 15 individual meetings with Algonquin, Lake in the Hills, property owners, and business. There have been two consistent messages received at these meetings: 1) congestion is a problem; and, 2) more traffic (i.e. potential customers) could be a good thing, provided reasonable access is maintained. The Design Team has been working very closely with the stakeholders to understand their needs so that we can provide the best improvement for motorist and businesses.

The Design Team will use the updated CMAP data mentioned previously to determine revised traffic (both existing and projected) and re-evaluate the Randall at Algonquin intersection. Note that it is anticipated that the revised traffic numbers will be less than were originally thought during the Phase I Study. The objective is to determine a final design that will strive to strike a balance between the needs of the motoring public (i.e. safe and efficient movement of traffic) with access to businesses along the corridor. It should be noted that a final intersection type has not been decided and it is expected to have a decision later this year based upon these revised traffic numbers.

Project Cost Relative to Population and Project Scope

The Phase I Study identified approximately 8.5 miles of roadway improvements. Randall Road accounted for 3.5 miles, Algonquin Road 1 mile and the side roads/internal roadways 5 miles. Concept estimates \$90M for construction and other costs associated with utility relocations and land acquisition. At this time a detailed cost estimate has not been prepared, as the type of improvement has not been determined.

Also, in order to be eligible for federal funding, the traffic projections used in determining the final intersection design must follow the process described previously. It is anticipated that much of the project would utilize federal funding, therefore leaving much less of a County share as implied in CAPA's position paper.

As stated, before moving into any detailed design, we want to ensure that the Randall Road at Algonquin Road intersection is not over designed nor under designed. While there are additional costs associated with providing too much of an improvement, having to build the intersection twice is even more costly. Once the intersection is reconstructed, we do not want to revisit it again for another twenty to thirty years.

With respect to how the project will be funded, nearly all funding for roadway projects comes in the form of user fees such as sales tax and the taxes on Motor Fuel taxes. At this time, the County is proposing to utilize these existing funding streams to fund the desired improvements to the Randall Road corridor.

No Evaluation by County of Economic Impact

While moving traffic is important to the County, maintaining access for the adjacent businesses is also very important. One goal of the ultimate design, is to provide an improvement that enables and encourages additional retail opportunities along this vital gateway into McHenry County.

The Design Team is performing an economic development analysis to potentially identify these opportunities. As we move from preliminary concepts into final design, we will incorporate the input received from community leaders and business interests alike to realize this mutually beneficial vision.

Federal studies have shown that access management can have a positive impact on adjacent property values by reducing congestion, improving safety and increasing traffic flow on the arterial roadways like Randall Road. This is supported by stakeholder input received during and after the preliminary study indicating that many drivers currently avoid the intersection and corridor for these reasons. We are hopeful that by making Randall Road more inviting and easier to travel, it will bring additional retail exposure and new opportunities.

There were four questions at the end of the article. The following are our comments to those questions:

Question 1: Does the evidence support spending \$135 million to change Randall Road

As stated earlier, before moving into any detailed design, we want to ensure that the Randall Road at Algonquin Road intersection is not over designed nor under designed. While there are additional costs associated with providing too much of an improvement, having to build the intersection twice is even more costly. Once the intersection is reconstructed, we do not want to revisit it again for another twenty to thirty years.

At this time a detailed cost estimate has not been prepared, as the type of improvement has not been determined.

Question 2: Is there a downside to waiting?

One role of the County is to take a proactive approach in order to strive to identify and solve potential problems before they manifest themselves into larger problems.

At the Randall at Algonquin intersection, many stakeholders already believe there is a problem and waiting will only magnify the problem. It can be debated how much growth will actually happen, however most would agree that some growth will happen, which will result in the continued failure of the intersection, which will impact the motoring public and businesses alike. Waiting may also risk potential funding available for the project.

Question 3: Is there a downside to starting the project now?

The County believes the sooner a solution is put in place, the sooner the motoring public and businesses will realize the benefits of the improvements. Additionally, roadway projects typically are more expensive as project costs increase each year. Therefore, there is a benefit to the overall project cost by constructing it sooner rather than later.

Question 4: If there is a problem, is the proposed solution the right solution?

The County believes that with the aforementioned re-evaluation of the traffic and population projections, the proposed solution will be the right solution. The County continues to stress that the intersection type has not been determined until the Design Team has had a chance to re-evaluate the traffic, access and geometrics.