



# Central Avenue at BRC Railroad Grade Separation Study CAG Meeting #2 Summary

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## Summary

The second Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting for the Central Avenue at BRC Railroad Grade Separation Study was held on October 8, 2013, at the Garfield Ridge Public Library at 6348 W. Archer Avenue, Chicago IL 60638 from 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. The meeting included the following:

- PowerPoint presentation
- Copies of the CAG Meeting #1 summary, revised Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP), draft Problem Statement, and the CAG #2 presentation were passed out to each CAG member to include in their binders
- Facilitated discussion of the draft Problem Statement

To announce the October 8, 2013 CAG meeting, an E-invitation and printed invitation were created (note: printed invitations were sent to those that requested them in their CAG membership forms). The invitations were sent out on September 20, 2013 to 30 CAG members. The meeting was attended by eight (8) CAG members (see attached Sign-In Sheet) and nine (9) project team members.

### PowerPoint Presentation

The major topics of the PowerPoint presentation were:

- Recap of CAG Meeting #1
- Review of draft Problem Statement with facilitated discussion
- Review of preliminary Purpose and Need
- Summary of preliminary alternatives

Questions, issues and concerns were brought up during the presentation and are summarized in the Summary of Comments section of this document.

### Facilitated Discussion of Problem Statement

The project team presented the draft Problem Statement and solicited input from the CAG members with the goal of achieving consensus on a final Problem Statement. CAG members were asked to comment on any language they agreed or disagreed with in the draft Problem Statement and their comments were recorded on a flip chart. A list of the CAG members' comments is summarized in the Summary of Comments section. Scans of the flip chart recordings are attached.



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## Review of Preliminary Purpose and Need

A preliminary *Purpose* based on the draft Problem Statement was presented. In addition, the project *Needs* were listed for comment. These include to: 1) reduce congestion, 2) enhance safety, and 3) improve multimodal connectivity. No comments were received.

## Preliminary Alternatives

A set of preliminary alternatives were presented in a very schematic form. These are considered the “logical alternatives” that come to mind to grade separate the railroad from Central Avenue. The way that each one accomplishes the grade separation was explained and the general types of land uses affected by each were identified. The CAG was asked for input regarding any other options that could be investigated by the study team. For CAG #3, the preliminary alternatives will be expanded upon and the pros and cons of each with respect to meeting the project purpose & need will be discussed.

## Next Steps

The PSG will consider input on the draft Problem Statement from the CAG members and revise it accordingly. The revised Problem Statement will be presented at the next CAG meeting scheduled for November 19, 2013.

## Summary of Comments

The following is a list of comments and questions heard during the facilitated discussion of the draft Problem Statement:

1. One CAG member disagreed with the entire draft Problem Statement and prepared a written rebuttal that was passed around to all CAG members.

*Response: The project team will review the rebuttal and respond at the next CAG meeting on November 19, 2013.*

2. A CAG member felt that the Problem Statement should reflect the whole area, and include the railroad crossings at Harlem/63<sup>rd</sup> and Harlem/65<sup>th</sup> as well.

*Response: This project only includes the crossing of Central Avenue at the BRC Rail Yard near 54<sup>th</sup> St. The project team will continue to meet with Bedford Park and Midway Airport regarding future economic development in the area.*



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3. Delay due to train crossing has not been proven; therefore, language related to this in the Problem Statement should be removed.

*Response: The project team is in the process of collecting train data from the Belt Railway Company (BRC) and various forms of field verification that includes installing cameras to monitor the duration of train blockages and lengths of traffic queues. This data will be presented to the CAG as it becomes available.*

4. Has the BRC considered detouring trains to another set of tracks and eliminating the crossing at Central Avenue?

*Response: The Belt Railroad currently uses both sets of tracks to handle the train traffic that comes through the rail yard. There are no plans to abandon either set of tracks. However, the project team will contact the BRC to verify their position for the project record.*

5. Has the project team considered that there will be secondary impacts associated with any proposed solution that might be worse than the initial problems?

*Response: As part of the Alternatives Evaluation process, the impacts associated with each alternative will be calculated and evaluated before a Preferred Alternative is selected. A No-Build Alternative will also be part of the alternatives evaluation process.*

6. A CAG member representing the Garfield Ridge Civic League commented that he concurred with the Problem Statement as it was presented. He believed that it summarized the issues he has been hearing from many local residents and business owners over the past 30 years.

7. Although current response times for emergency services are not hindered by the Central BRC crossing, a general statement was made suggesting that language be added to the Problem Statement to note that timing could be improved if the crossing was grade separated.

*Response: All present agreed that response times would be improved with a grade separation. Language to a revised Problem Statement will be added and shared with the CAG at CAG Meeting #3.*



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The following is a list of additional comments and questions heard during the meeting:

1. Concerned that grade separating the Central BRC crossing will allow cars to travel faster along Central Avenue making it less safe.

*Response: All proposed alternatives will be evaluated in detail and must meet the Purpose and Need of the project in order to be carried forward for further consideration. Currently, the Purpose and Need contains language regarding enhanced safety in the project area; therefore any alternative that does not enhance safety would be eliminated.*

2. What would be the advantage of the proposed alternative that realigns Central Avenue to the west?

*Response: This alternative would take advantage of vacant property on the west side of Central Avenue, therefore reducing potential business and residential impacts. The realigned Central Ave. alternative could be coordinated with any plans that Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) has for property buyouts along Central Ave. It would also allow existing Central Avenue to remain open during construction.*

3. Will right-of-way (ROW) and easement issues be discussed as part of this project?

*Response: Yes, ROW impacts and easement issues will be part of the Alternatives Evaluation. The Department has a thorough Land Acquisition process, and the impacted property owners will be contacted once the Preferred Alternative is selected.*

4. What is the need for six CAG meetings?

*Response: The Department wants to have a transparent process. There will be six CAG meetings in order to keep project stakeholders informed in every step of the process.*

5. When was the Feasibility Study completed?

*Response: The Feasibility Study was completed in June 2002.*

6. The railroad tracks are very noisy. The BRC should fix this.

*Response: The project team will inform the BRC of this issue.*

7. Do any of the proposed alternatives impact St. Camillus Church (5426 S. Lockwood Avenue).

*Response: None of the proposed alternatives impact the church.*



# CAG #2 SIGN-IN SHEET

Central Avenue at BRC Railroad Grade Separation Study  
Meeting Date: October 8, 2013



#	Name (First and Last)	Organization	Address (Street, City, ZIP)	Email	Phone	Preferred Method of Contact (CIRCLE ONE)	Primary CAG Representative?
1	PAUL Sima	-	5217 South Central	PAULSIMA@YMAIL.COM	773-767-6868	Email	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
2	Richard J. Techman	GARFIELD RIDGE CIVIC LEAGUE, CHGO, IL	P.O. BOX 388792	GARFIELDRIDGE@YAHOO.COM	(708) 264-9094	Email	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
3	Thomas Baniewicz	I.P.O.T.		BANIEWICZTE@ILLINOIS.GOV		Email	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
4	KRISTEN Zawila	Chamber of Commerce		KristenZawila@yahoo.com		Email	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
5	ADAM ROD	CHICAGO DEPT. OF AVIATION		ARODEOHARE.COM		Email	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
6	Soliman Khudeira	Chicago Dept. of Transportation		SKhudeira		Email	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
7	JERRY PONIO	BEDFORD PARK VILLAGE				Email	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
8	Robert Moynihan	United Bus Assn. Midway		ROB@CHOKELC.COM		Email	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
9	Henry Pukala	5540 S. Moody Ave.		hpukala@comcast.net	773-735-0939	Email	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
10						Email	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
11						Email	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
12						Email	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
13						Email	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
14						Email	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
15						Email	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
16						Email	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
17						Email	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
18						Email	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
19						Email	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
20						Email	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

Completion of this sign-in sheet is voluntary and helps the study team keep an accurate record of meeting attendance. Under the Freedom of Information Act, any identifying information provided above will become part of the public record and, as such, must be released to any individual upon request.

**This meeting is going to be photographed.** I give HDR, Inc., its collaborators, assigns, successors in interest, and legal representatives permission to use my picture in all forms and in all media, without restrictions as to changes or alterations for advertising, trade, promotion, exhibition or any other purpose. I also waive any right to inspect or approve the photograph(s), including written copy that may be created and appear in connection with the image(s). I understand that HDR owns the copyright in these photographs and I waive any claims I may have based on any usage of the photographs, including but not limited to claims for either invasion of privacy or libel. I agree that this release is binding on me, my legal representatives, heirs, and assigns. I have read this release and am fully familiar with its terms and contents.

MR. SIMA COMMENTS:

ASSUMPTIONS -  
DELAY TIME

DATA -

FUNDING - none available

RESIDENTIAL NATURE  
OF CORRIDOR

COMMENTS ON IDOT STATEMENT: <sup>10/08</sup>

- FEASIBILITY STUDY - DATA

Traffic

- 65<sup>RD</sup> is a concern

- SOUTHWEST SIDE

- RAILROAD - CAN THEY DETOUR?

- BRC UNWILLING TO CHANGE

OPERATIONS

- PROJECT TEAM TO CONTACT

BRC.

- BE MINDFUL OF SECONDARY IMPACTS.

- ONE DISSENTING OPINION  
NOTED

- GARFIELD RIDGE CIVIC  
GROUP ADVOCATE

- Add: "emergency services"  
discussion  
- ~~is~~ disruption to EM. services  
- is it a problem for 9-11?  
    "critical crossing"  
- language about efficiency  
to emergency response routes  
-



- Safety studies

- Speed is one element  
of safety

# ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION:

- CAN 63<sup>RD</sup> BE ADDED?  
65<sup>TH</sup> ?
- ROADWAY OVER-  
FATALLY FLAWED
- BRC - reroute operations