

# Harlem Avenue Underpass Project

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## GROUP MEMORY NOTES

Harlem Avenue Underpass Project

Steering Committee Meeting No. 2

January 28, 2010

Below is a transcript of the flip chart notes recorded during the second Steering Committee meeting on January 28<sup>th</sup> in River Forest, Illinois. No editing has been done except for basic grammar or spelling corrections. Supplemental text has been added for clarification and appears in brackets.

The blue text indicates a question or comment and the green text identifies any response that was given.

### TRAFFIC and ACCIDENT DATA

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Are the Level of Service (LOS) categories an industry standard?

Yes. They are used nation-wide so that what is considered a certain LOS in one area can be directly compared to another area. What does change is how the LOS is interpreted for different areas. An LOS in one type of setting, such as urban, may be acceptable there but may not be acceptable in a rural setting.

How is safety (accidents) calculated and what is the process for determining priorities?

Accidents used to be grouped into those occurring at individual intersections and the segments between them. Crash rates were calculated by the comparing the number of crashes with the volume of traffic traveling through the intersection or segment. Critical rates were calculated for different regions of Illinois and the crash rates were compared to those critical rates. Crash analyses are now concentrating more on the severity of crashes and recurring patterns and less on sheer numbers.

Jim Budrick noted that more than 3.9 crashes per million is significant.

The use of traffic data and the analysis of alternatives is a work in progress.

### PROBLEMS AND NEEDS

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Even though left turns are prohibited when traveling northbound, traffic still makes the left turn.

A right turn off of South Boulevard is tight and requires going into other lanes.

Thru vehicles need to also be considered.

Is an offset intersection a problem?

Not unless it negatively impacts mobility or safety.

Why are there two train stations so close together?

The two entrances serve the same station.

Could we use only the east CTA entrance?

The buses would still have to make stops along Harlem Avenue. Looping around is difficult for northbound buses because the right turn onto South Boulevard does not provide enough space for the bus.

The crossing by Starbucks is better delineated.

The overall geometrics of the site are a problem.

Can we redirect truck traffic to Madison?

No. Many truck deliveries are made off of Harlem and Madison is a heavy residential area not appropriate for truck traffic.

The bus stop on the northeast corner of South Boulevard does not have a shelter or even a pad to stand on.

Any stopping under the viaduct should be avoided for safety reasons.

The buses block driveways.

Harlem was designated an SRA (Strategic Regional Arterial) by IDOT. Although the bridge was not included in the original study, future IDOT visions should be considered.

Is the traffic light at Circle state controlled?

Yes. IDOT maintains an interconnect system along Harlem Avenue.

The structure height is still an issue.

There is an increase in pedestrian movement heading south during the PM peak.

Some of the sidewalks are too high due to previously lowering Harlem.

Pedestrians play a major role in this intersection.

There is a significant delay due to pedestrians.

Approximately 1800 patrons load the CTA each day.

Pedestrians and buses contribute to the safety issues especially their interaction with the viaduct.

Improve pedestrian movement with increased signage.

Broad safety minimums are crucial and an obvious place to start.

It is hard to cross Circle Avenue because there are no crosswalks or pedestrian signals.

We should aim to better balance vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

Crime is a problem in the area. There are also a lot of pan handlers.

Noise is a concern and negatively impacts the safety of pedestrians.

A lot of issues seem to be maintenance issues.

The site is dark and dirty.

The area around the viaduct is filthy.

Lighting is bad under the viaduct. Increased lighting, murals, or paintings could help.

People jog under the viaduct because it is hard to see.

The entire area needs softening with light and landscaping.

Space under the viaduct might be able to be used as commercial space.

Can the UPRR do anything to clean up the area?

UP is making a lot of improvements on crossings west of Harlem. The UPRR is willing to cooperate with any ideas that the local community has to improve the area under the bridge.

What can we do to obtain more funding for the project?

We don't need to position the project for specific funding sources. There are a number of sources that would work for this project but securing any type of funding has been and continues to be very competitive.

Is there a case to be made to leverage multi-modal money to tie this all together?

That kind of strategy applies to the next stages of the process. The process we are at in this phase of the project will make the improvements eligible for most types of federal funding. Exact sources can be determined and identified later as the project moves closer to construction.

#### ACTION ITEMS

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No action items were made during this meeting.