because of their impacts to wetlands, floodplain, and natural areas. The current version of Alternative N-2 does not relocate the railroad and has a narrow median and a retaining wall on the east side to minimize impacts to natural resources in the Miller-Anderson Woods area. Like the Central Section, IL 29 in the North Section is designed as an expressway that can be accessed at local roads and noncommercial driveways.

In the North Section, residential and business relocations are found in Henry and Putnam. The North Section would cost approximately $120 to $130 million to construct. More information about project impacts will be available at the July 14 and 15 meetings.

The project team is developing a plan to locate wildlife crossings along the IL 29 corridor to reduce the number of collisions between animals (particularly deer) and vehicles. The plan could include lengthening bridges at stream crossings, which are wildlife movement corridors, to allow deer and other animals to cross between the stream and the bridge embankment. The project team is also investigating the use of large culverts at various locations along the corridor to allow deer and other animals to cross under the highway. The Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) is continuing field work to evaluate upland and wetland habitat along the project’s reasonable range of alternatives. They are also conducting special studies on mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles, plants, and fish and mussels in the project area. The data gathered by the INHS will be used by IDOT to make design decisions, and it will be reported in the project’s Environmental Impact Statement.

Historical and archaeological studies are also in progress. To date about 1,300 acres have been surveyed by archaeologists. Groundwater studies will be conducted this summer to determine whether the proposed improvements to IL 29 in the Miller-Anderson Woods area would affect groundwater and habitat dependent on existing groundwater levels.

Mark Your Calendar

This is the second issue of 29 update, a newsletter prepared by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and CH2M HILL to provide information regarding the IL 29 Design Study.

In This Issue:
- Alternatives to be Presented at Upcoming Public Meetings
- Map of Alternatives
- Review of Alternatives by Project Section
- Opportunities for Public Participation
- Meeting Dates and Locations

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The Illinois Natural History Survey is continuing their study of alternatives to improve continuity and address efficiency concerns in the Illinois Route 29 (IL 29) corridor between IL 6 near Massville in Peoria County and IL 183 in Bureau County. The second set of public information meetings are scheduled to be held on July 14, 2004 in Henry and July 15, 2004 in Chillicothe to inform community members on project progress. (See the back page of this newsletter for locations and times.)

The first set of public information meetings were held in mid-June 2003. At that time, IDOT informed project-area residents about the purpose of the IL 29 study, presented the preliminary IL 29 corridor alignments, and received input from attendees on transportation issues and the preliminary alignment. IDOT received a wide range of public comments at the two meetings. Listed below are the common themes the public provided at the meetings.

- Concerns about residential, agricultural and other environmental impacts associated with the Henry bypass and the bluff alignment west of Sparland.
- Concerns about the visibility of communities and the impacts on local businesses along IL 29 if a bypass were constructed.
- Questions about the need for improvements to IL 29.
- A desire to improve existing roadways before building new facilities.
- Support for improving IL 29 because it would have fewer agricultural impacts than the bluff alignment.
- Support for the bluff alignment because it would reduce impacts to residences and businesses along existing IL 29.

Based on the comments from the June 2003 information meetings, agency input and additional engineering and environmental work, the project team continued to refine the preliminary alternatives in the project’s South, Central, and North Sections. The alternatives that remain under consideration and the alternatives eliminated from consideration since the June 2003 public information meetings are shown on page 3. A brief description of changes to the alternatives in the South, Central, and North Sections is found on the following page.

The project team has also begun detailed engineering studies on the alternatives in the North and Central sections. The detailed studies for the South Section are forthcoming. These studies will provide IDOT, agencies, and project-area property owners with information such as the limits of new right-of-way required to construct the proposed IL 29 improvements, changes in access to properties, where interchange changes will be needed, and impacts to agricultural land, natural resources such as wetlands and wooded areas, and residences along IL 29. Although the preliminary plans for the alignments may need some adjustments, they are useful in helping elicit further comments and input from communities and property owners along IL 29.

Alternatives Update

South Section

At the first public information meeting, Alternative S-4 crossed over the Cedar Hills Drive/Old Galena Road intersection bisecting the two Massville Catapiller facilities before connecting with the proposed Chillicothe bypass. That portion of Alternative S-4 has been eliminated from consideration. Under the current plan, it now crosses Cedar Hills Drive just west of Catapiller’s facilities and crosses Old Galena Road north of the Tech Center. An interchange is proposed at Cedar Hills Drive.

Now that the options for the South Section have been eliminated, the project team will continue to refine the remaining alternatives for the Central and North Sections. The team will also begin incorporating the feedback received from the public meetings into the alternatives. The Alternatives Update will provide more information about the changes to the alternatives as they are developed.

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and

Hutchison Engineering, Inc.
Lin Engineering, LTD
Alfred Benezech & Company
Martinez Corporation
crossing Old Galena Road the alternative continues northeast crossing Rome West Road and Wayne Road west of Galena Knolls Subdivision. From that point the alignment is generally the same as shown at the June 2003 public meetings. Because of the change in alignment west of Copley, this alignment is now referred to as Alternative S-4B. Alternative S-6B was not displayed at the June 2003 public meetings.

A variation of Alternative S-8B was developed to follow property lines more closely. This alternative, called Alternative S-15C, is the same as Alternative S-6B/E the point where it crosses Old Galena Road. Northeast of there, it has a more east-west alignment than Alternative S-6B, crossing Rome West Road along the east side of Galena Knolls Subdivision before rejoining Alternate S-2E and the alignment displayed at the June 2003 meetings. An interchange is planned at Till Road for Alternatives S-6B and S-C.

North of Chillicothe, three interchanges are being looked to at connecting L 29 to the Chillicothe bypass. The interchange configurations will be displayed at the July public meetings. Between the south project term (L 6) and the proposed interchange north of Chillicothe, the alternatives in the South Section are being designed as a freeway. This means that the only points of access to the highway would be at interchanges.

Central Section

Two alternatives remain under consideration in the Central Section, Alternative C-2, which is located along the bluff west of Hopedale and Sparland, and Alternative C-3/C-3A, which follows existing L 29. Alternative C-2 follows Hopedale Road extended and ties into existing L 29 near Camp Grove Road. An interchange has been developed to connect the bluff alignment with existing L 29 north of Chillicothe. Three interchange options are being considered to connect Alternative C-3/C-3A to existing L 29 north of Chillicothe. In addition, three interchange options have been developed in Sparland with Alternative C-3/C-3A to connect L 29 and L 17.

The segment of Alternative C-3/C-3A from north of Chillicothe through Sparland is being designed with a narrow median and retaining walls to minimize impacts to Department of Natural Resources properties, natural areas, and other properties. The bluff alignment (Alternative C-2) is designed with a wider median, and it does not require retaining walls. Both alternatives are designed as expressways meaning that access to the highway would be permitted at local roads, with medians, and field fences.

Improvements to L 29 from Wilmot Street in Chillicothe, through the viaduct area, to the proposed interchange north of Chillicothe are under consideration. This would be constructed with either alternative in the Central Section.

The bluff alignment would require more new right-of-way and farmland than improvements along L 29. Widening L 29 would affect more acres of wetlands and roadways than the bluff alignment and would displace more residences and businesses. The bluff alignment would cost approximately $180 to $190 million to construct,

North Section

Two Henry bypass alternatives, H-3 and H-4, were displayed at the June 2003 public meetings. Improving L 29 through Henry was eliminated before the June 2003 public meeting because of adverse impacts to the high school, farmlands, and local businesses/residences. After the June meetings, Alternative H-3, which was located about 1 mile west of Henry, was eliminated from further consideration because of its distance from Henry and greater impacts to farmland. Alternative H-4 was carried forward to preliminary design. An interchange is being developed along Alternative H-4 at Western Avenue.

At the June 2003 public meetings, there were two alternatives displayed from the north end of the Henry bypass to the north project terminus at I-180. Alternative N-4, which was located on new alignment east of Putnam, was eliminated from consideration because of its impacts on farmland and wetlands.

Several variations of Alternative N-2, which follows existing L 29, were evaluated after the June 2003 public information meetings. The alternatives widened L 29 to the east (north of Pulham) and required relocating the railroad. Those alternatives were eliminated from consideration.