S.0 Summary

The purpose of the Illiana Corridor project is to provide a sustainable transportation solution that would improve regional mobility, address local and parallel corridor travel deficiencies, and provide for efficient movement of freight in the Study Area in a manner that complements regional transportation and economic development goals. This Tier One Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) identifies Corridor B3 as the preferred corridor for the Illiana Corridor project.

As explained further in the following sections, Corridor B3 was selected as the preferred corridor based on input provided by stakeholders and the public, the technical analysis in the Tier One Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) (which was published on July 13, 2012), and consideration of public comments received during the public comment period on the DEIS (July 13, 2012 through August 29, 2012). On October 12, 2012, a Preferred Corridor Report was made available on the project website explaining the rationale for identifying Corridor B3 as the preferred corridor. The report was also distributed to regulatory and resource agencies, the Illiana Corridor Planning Group (CPG), and local elected officials. Comments on the report were due by November 12, 2012.

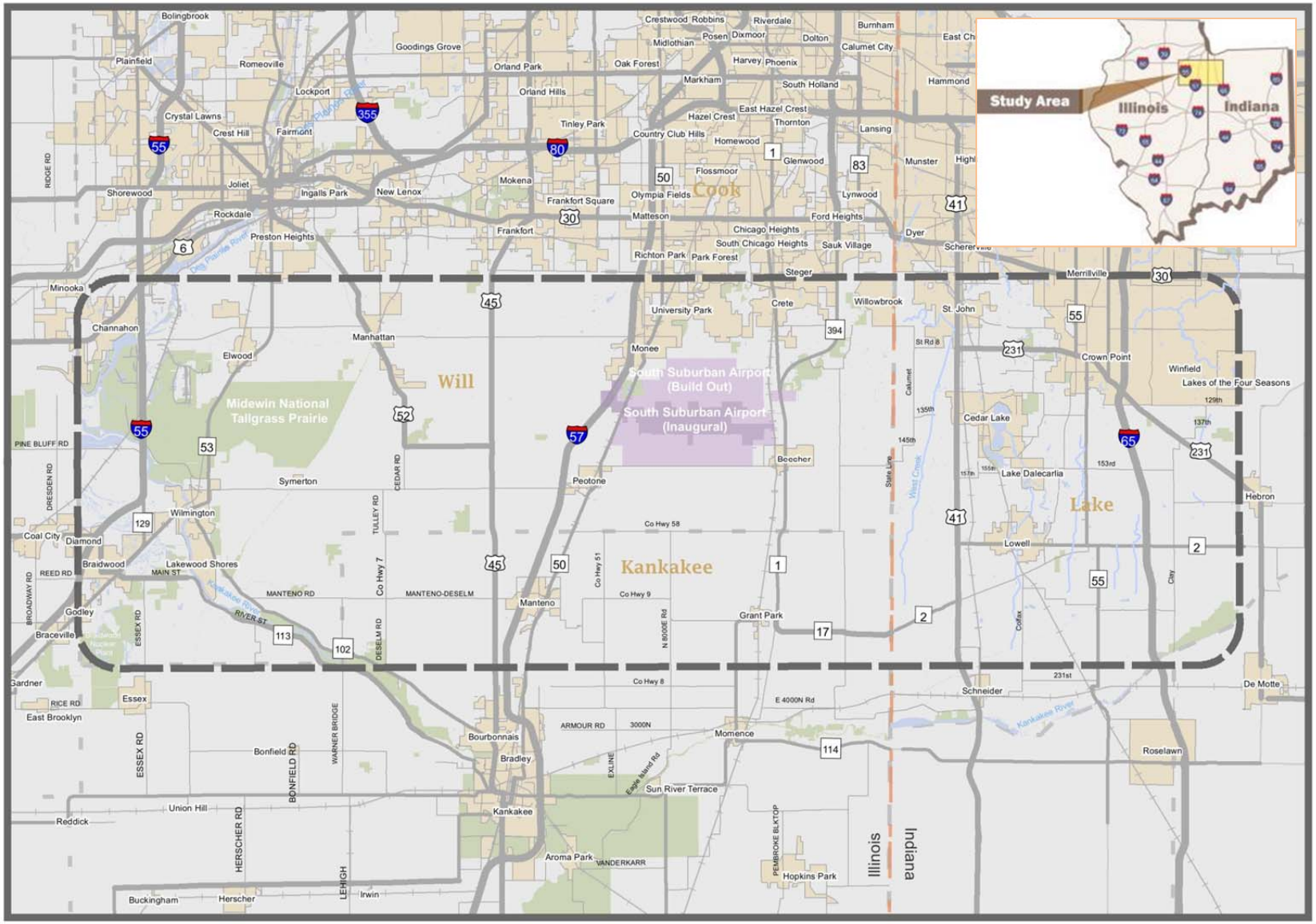
Stakeholders were made aware at the same time that the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) intended to issue a combined FEIS and Record of Decision (ROD). In conformance with Public Law 112-141, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), and effective October 1, 2012, FHWA issued this combined Tier One FEIS and a ROD. The ROD approves Corridor B3 for continued consideration in Tier Two National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) studies, subject to conditions set forth in the ROD. See Section S.7 for further information.

S.1 Project Description

The Illiana Corridor has been a component of long-range plans for the bi-state area since the early 1900s, and was first envisioned as a link in an outer ring of highways encircling the Chicago vicinity. Conceptual highway corridors linking Illinois and Indiana south of I-80 were also studied by metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in the 1960s and 1970s. More recently, a feasibility study for a potential Illiana expressway was completed in 2009 by INDOT and a supplemental study was completed by IDOT in 2010. On June 9, 2010, Governors Pat Quinn of Illinois and Mitch Daniels of Indiana moved the Illiana Corridor forward by signing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). This MOA outlined a mutual commitment by both states to further development of the project.

The Study Area for the Illiana Corridor (shown in Figure S-1) is approximately 950 square miles in portions of Will and Kankakee counties in Illinois and Lake County in Indiana. The general location of the Study Area is between I-55 in Illinois on the west, I-65 in Indiana on the east, US 30 to the north, and the southernmost tip of Will County

Figure S-1. Study Area Map



to the south, including the northern portion of Kankakee County in Illinois. Transportation improvements were considered only for areas within the Study Area. However, to understand the local and regional impacts of the transportation corridors, analysis considered their effects both inside and outside the Study Area.

The NEPA process for the Illiana Corridor is being conducted in two steps or "tiers" that build upon one another.

This Tier One Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared to resolve issues regarding the transportation mode, facility type, and general location. This Tier One EIS analysis provides an evaluation of the transportation problems in the Study Area based on stakeholder input and engineering analysis, which forms the basis for the project Purpose and Need and for identifying potential corridors. The Tier One EIS was completed at a sufficient level of engineering and environmental detail to resolve the mode, facility type (e.g., type of roadway), and corridor location. As required by the NEPA, the No-Action Alternative was considered in the Tier One EIS, along with a range of build alternatives.

The Tier One EIS has resulted in the identification of a preferred corridor; Corridor B3 (See Section 4.0). For the preferred corridor, the FHWA and the states will proceed with Tier Two NEPA studies, which will analyze alignments within the preferred corridor. The Tier Two NEPA studies may be conducted for the entire preferred corridor or for one or more sections with independent utility. During the Tier Two NEPA studies, more detailed design engineering will be performed to better define elements of the proposed improvement plan including interchanges, structures, drainage requirements, etc. Consequently, estimates of environmental impacts will be refined from what has been identified in the Tier One FEIS and ROD. For additional information regarding the Tier Two NEPA studies, refer to Section 4.0.

S.2 Purpose of and Need for Action

Existing and future travel demand in the Region is driven by growth in population, employment, and commuter traffic; growth of the intermodal and freight logistics industry, and the growth in the Region's role as a vital national link for transportation and commerce. The ability for the existing transportation network to accommodate these demands is strained as these travel demands increase. The Study Area does not have the required roadway network to accommodate this growth in local Study Area traffic and regional and national east-west traffic in the South Sub-Region.

The purpose of the Illiana Corridor is to provide a sustainable transportation solution that would improve regional mobility, address local and parallel corridor travel deficiencies, and provide for efficient movement of freight in the Study Area in a manner that complements regional transportation and economic development goals.

The jurisdictions of three MPOs extend over most of the Study Area: the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC), and the Kankakee Area Transportation Study (KATS).

The Illiana Corridor Study Area is included as an unconstrained (unfunded) project[1] in the current long-range (2040) plans of CMAP, NIRPC, and KATS.

North-south feeder routes to I-80 are congested south of I-80, the Study Area does not have a fully functional road network, and the existing grid network of lower functional class roadways was historically developed primarily to serve its predominantly agricultural land use. Study Area land uses are now transitioning in character from rural to suburban, especially in the northern portions. For the Study Area to meet the regional, local, and freight demands, a more balanced functional transportation network is needed.

Transportation system improvements are needed in the Study Area to address the following needs:

- Improve Regional Mobility - addresses the need to develop a transportation system improvement that serves the projected growth in east-west traffic in the Study Area.
- Alleviate Local System Congestion and Improve Local System Mobility - focuses on the need to develop a transportation system improvement that serves the projected growth in local traffic, addresses the lack of continuous higher functional classification east-west routes through the Study Area, and improves travel times/reduces delay.
- Provide for Efficient Movement of Freight - focuses on the need to improve the accessibility of freight movement to and from its distribution points throughout the Region, including providing more efficient freight movement on the roadway network.

S.3 Alternatives Considered

S.3.1 No-Action Alternative

The No-Action Alternative consists of transportation improvements to existing transportation facilities in the Study Area that are expected to be constructed by the year 2040 (see Table S-1 in Section S.11 for a list of the proposed transportation improvements). It does not include the proposed action that is being considered in this study (i.e., the Illiana Corridor). The projects included in the current financially constrained long-range (2040) plans of CMAP, NIRPC, and KATS were included in the No-Action Alternative. Committed projects include those programmed projects that are included in the 2040 "financially constrained" networks of the MPOs, those included in the current 5-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) of the various agencies,

[1] Under federal regulations that govern metropolitan transportation planning, MPOs are required to comply with a "fiscal constraint" requirement when adopting their long-range transportation plans. Fiscal constraint means that the funds needed to carry out the plan are reasonably anticipated to be available. A long-range plan can include projects for which funding sources have not yet been identified; these unfunded projects are referred to in the MPOs' plans as "unconstrained" or "illustrative" projects.

and other projects with a high probability of implementation by 2040 as identified by IDOT, INDOT, and other county and local transportation agencies.

The No-Action Alternative represents a baseline for comparison against the working alignments within the corridors carried forward. The transportation conditions that would exist under the No-Action Alternative are described in Section 1.0. The environmental conditions that would exist under the No-Action Alternative are generally consistent with the "existing conditions" as described in Section 3.0, except to the extent that those existing conditions would be affected by other actions (e.g., other transportation or development projects) identified in the current financially constrained long-range (2040) plans of CMAP, NIRPC, and KATS).

S.3.2 Congestion Management

Federal transportation planning regulations require that for projects within designated Transportation Management Areas (TMAs), congestion management strategies must be fully considered as an alternative to increasing capacity for single occupancy vehicles (SOV). Congestion management strategies were considered as possible alternatives for addressing the project Purpose and Need. It was shown through the analysis contained in the project Illiana Corridor *Transportation System Performance Report* (TSPR) (Parsons Brinckerhoff, 2012c) that rail freight, transit, intercity bus and rail, non-motorized, and air transportation modes do not have the ability to meet the project Purpose and Need as stand-alone modal alternatives (see Appendix A).[2] Additional operational and financial strategies may provide or help sustain transportation benefits. These strategies will be considered further as part of the Tier Two NEPA studies. Therefore, it was determined that a stand-alone congestion management alternative would not satisfy the project Purpose and Need and, consequently, adding SOV capacity as part of the Illiana Corridor was warranted.

S.3.3 Corridors

Preliminary transportation improvement corridors were developed on the basis of technical analyses, environmental constraints, and stakeholder input, with a focus on developing consensus on a preferred corridor that best satisfies the project's Purpose and Need and minimizes impacts to the environment.

More than 80 initial multi-modal corridors were suggested by stakeholders and the public. These initial multi-modal corridors were subsequently evaluated by the study team and grouped into bands with similar location (including starting and ending points) and to create complete full east-west corridors. The grouped corridors were further refined to avoid and minimize impacts to the built and natural environment to represent the initial corridors. The initial corridors included eight limited access highway Corridors (A1, A2, A3, A4, A3S1, B1, B3, and C4), all of which were on new

[2] Conclusions supporting the claims that the additional modes do not have the ability to meet the project Purpose and Need as standalone alternatives can be found in Sections 4.5, 4.6 and 7.0 of the Illiana Corridor TSPR (Parsons Brinckerhoff, 2012c).

locations, and two arterial Corridors (A-1 and B-2), which consisted of improvements to existing arterial roadways.

For this Tier One EIS, within the Study Area, corridors typically 2,000 feet in width were established to frame the analysis of potential transportation improvements and focus the discussion of the existing conditions for all social, economic, and environmental resources that may be affected by the project. Within each corridor, a "working alignment" was identified to represent the location of the potential transportation improvements. The working alignment generally followed the centerline of the corridor and was used to determine potential impacts associated with a transportation improvement in the corridor. The analysis of impacts was based on a working alignment that is on average 400 feet wide, but expands in several locations to accommodate potential interchange improvements.

The Tier One evaluation of impacts was based on existing and available data used in conjunction with a geographic information system (GIS). The determination of impacts for the various resources was produced by overlaying the working alignment within each corridor, including potential interchanges and design concepts located within the corridors, on existing conditions for each resource in GIS, and quantifying those resources within the footprint of the working alignment. For some resource topics (e.g., archaeological, historical, threatened and endangered species), there is more uncertainty regarding the impacts based on the Tier One level of evaluation. The impacts to these resources are described as "potential" to indicate that additional or different impacts could be identified when field investigations are completed as part of the Tier Two NEPA studies.

The corridor evaluation process was a two-stage screening process that included stakeholder input and technical analysis. For each corridor, the first stage of the screening process compared the ability of each corridor to meet the project Purpose and Need, the transportation performance, and the overall socioeconomic and environmental impacts. Corridors A1, A2, A3, A3S1, A4, B1, and B3 were advanced to the more detailed second stage of the screening process, prior to release of the Tier One DEIS.

As part of the second stage of the screening process, refinements to the remaining corridors were identified through stakeholder coordination and ongoing technical analysis and to determine if overall and/or specific socioeconomic and environmental impacts could be avoided or minimized. The second stage of the screening process found that Corridor B3 best balanced travel performance with minimizing impacts and had the highest overall support from project stakeholders.

The preliminary recommendation to carry forward Corridor B3 for detailed study in the Tier One EIS was discussed with project stakeholders during coordination meetings. The coordination meetings also provided further opportunity for stakeholders to comment on the overall corridor development and evaluation process. Based on the feedback received from various stakeholders, including requests for further evaluation

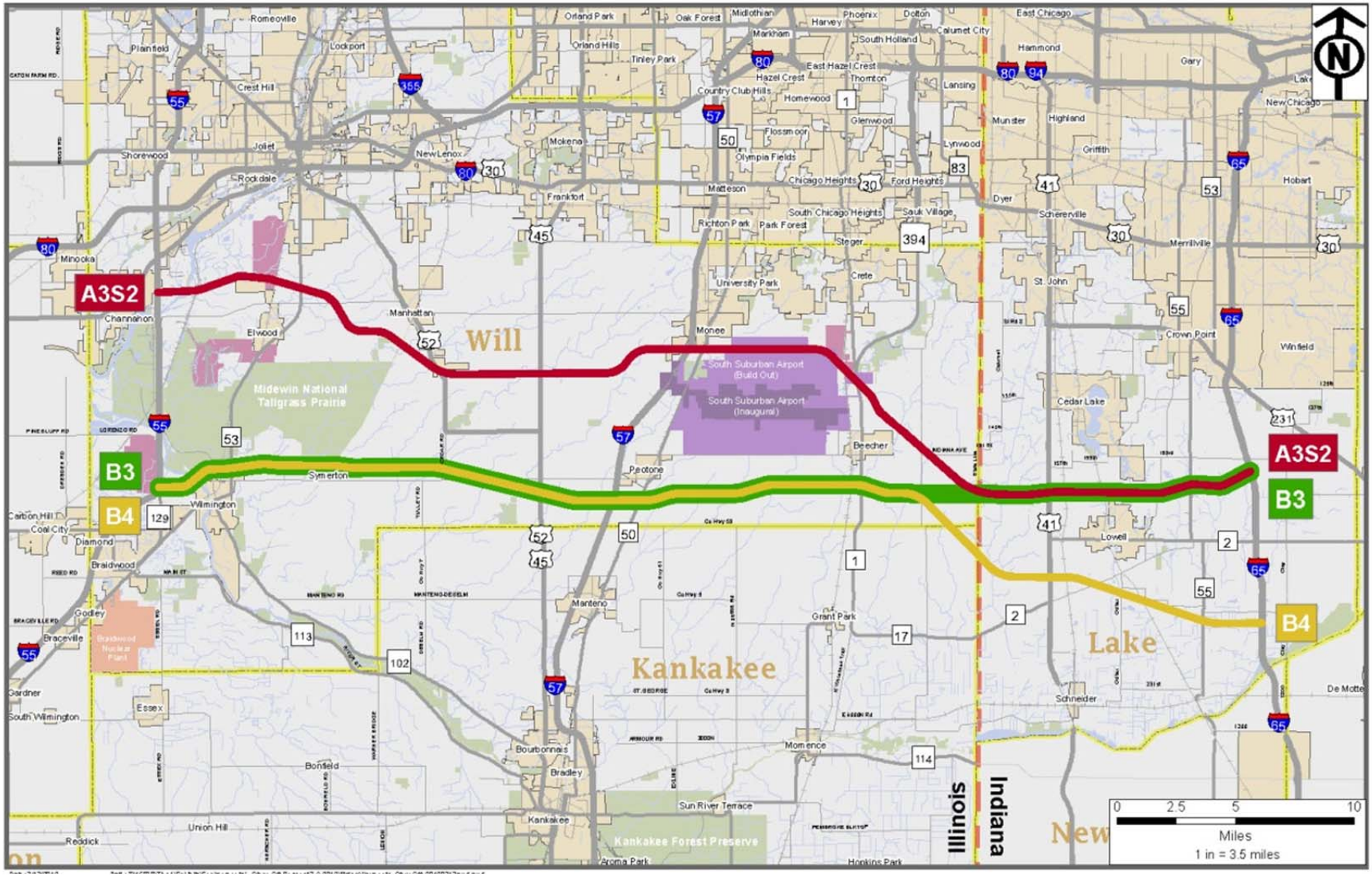
of a northern corridor and requests to look at alignments south of Lowell, Indiana, two new corridors were developed, Corridors A3S2 and B4.

The outcome of the alternatives screening process was that three corridors were evaluated in detail in the Tier One DEIS: Corridors A3S2, B3, and B4 (see Figure S-2).

- **Corridor A3S2** – Corridor A3S2 is a 51.1 mile long east-west corridor that generally traverses the north portion of the Study Area in Illinois and transitions to the central portion of the Study Area in Indiana. Corridor A3S2 generally starts at I-55 near Channahon, Illinois, passes north of the South Suburban Airport (SSA), and connects with I-65 north of Lowell, Indiana. Corridor A3S2 includes eight potential interchanges at the following locations: I-55, US 52, US 45, I-57, IL-1, US 41, State Route (SR) 55, and I-65. In addition, there are three design concepts for an additional interchange in the vicinity of IL-53. Design Concept 1 is a direct interchange connection from Corridor A3S2 to IL-53 with interchange ramps north of that road's intersection with Manhattan Road. Design Concept 2 is a conventional diamond interchange located at South Rowell Avenue approximately 1 mile east of IL-53. Design Concept 3 provides only an overpass at IL-53 with no interchange.
- **Corridor B3** – Corridor B3 is a 46.8 mile long east-west corridor that generally traverses the central portion of the Study Area. Corridor B3 generally starts at I-55 north of Wilmington, Illinois, passes south of the SSA, and connects with I-65 north of Lowell, Indiana. Corridor B3 includes seven potential interchanges at the following locations: I-55, US 45/52, I-57, IL-1, US 41, SR 55, and I-65. In addition, there are three design concepts for an additional interchange in the vicinity of IL-53. Design Concept 1 is a direct interchange connection from the working alignment within Corridor B3 to IL-53 with interchange ramps at that road's intersection with River Road. Design Concept 2 is a conventional diamond interchange located approximately 2.5 miles east of IL-53 between Phillips Road and Old Chicago Road with an overpass at IL-53. Design Concept 3 provides only an overpass at IL-53 with no interchange.
- **Corridor B4** – Corridor B4 is a 48.8 mile long east-west corridor that generally traverses the central portion of the Study Area. Corridor B4 follows the same alignment as Corridor B3 through most of Illinois then transitions to the southern portion of the Study Area in Indiana. Corridor B4 includes potential interchanges at the following locations: I-55, US 45/52, I-57, IL-1, US 41, SR 55, and I-65. In addition, there are three design concepts for an additional interchange in the vicinity of IL-53. Design Concept 1 is a direct interchange connection from the working alignment within Corridor B4 to IL-53 with interchange ramps at that road's intersection with River Road. Design Concept 2 is a conventional diamond interchange located approximately 2.5 miles east of IL-53 between Phillips Road and Old Chicago Road with an overpass at IL-53. Design Concept 3 provides only an overpass at IL-53 with no interchange.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concurred on the project Purpose and Need in June 2012. The resource agencies also provided their concurrence on the Alternatives to be Carried Forward into the DEIS in June 2012.

Figure S-2. Corridors Carried Forward for Detailed Study in the Tier One DEIS



S.4 DEIS Publication and Public Comment

The Notice of Availability for the Tier One DEIS was published in the Federal Register on July 13, 2012, which opened the public comment period on the DEIS. Public hearings were held on July 31, 2012 and August 1, 2012 and public comments were invited on the Tier One DEIS. The public comment period closed on August 29, 2012. During the comment period, 1,122 unique comments were received from five federal agencies, six state agencies, three regional planning organizations, local governments, individuals, and organizations. Of the comments received, 69 percent indicate support for a build corridor and favored Corridor B3. Fifty-eight percent of all the comments indicated a negative response to a build corridor or policies such as land acquisition in general, or favored the No-Action Alternative.

In addition to comments submitted via verbal public hearing testimony, in writing, or via website, approximately 1,954 signatures were submitted during the DEIS comment period through petitions. Of these, 836 signatures opposed Corridor B4, 896 signatures supported the No-Action Alternative, and 222 signatures opposed Corridors A3S2 and B3. All of the comments received on the DEIS can be found in Appendix P. A comprehensive table of all DEIS comments, with responses from the study team, can be found in Appendix Q.

S.5 Identification of the Preferred Corridor

After consideration of the technical analysis in the Tier One EIS and the comments received during the comment period on the DEIS, Corridor B3 has been identified as the preferred corridor.

On October 6, 2012, Corridor B3 was identified and presented as the preferred corridor to the Illiana CPG during their 9th meeting. The Preferred Corridor Report (now Section 4.0 of the FEIS), which identifies Corridor B3 as the preferred corridor to advance for additional analysis in Tier Two along with the No-Action Alternative, was made available to state and federal regulatory agencies on October 12, 2012. On October 12, 2012 the report was also made available to all project stakeholders through posting on the public website. On October 14, 2012 the Preferred Corridor Report was delivered to CPG members, Section 106 consulting parties, and to all invited cooperating and participating agencies.

The distribution of the Preferred Corridor Report on October 14, 2012 also included information about Section 1319(b) of the new federal law, MAP-21, which enables the project to advance more quickly by allowing the FEIS and ROD to be issued concurrently, and that FHWA, IDOT, and INDOT intended to implement that MAP-21 provision for the Illiana Corridor.

Comments on the Preferred Corridor Report were requested by November 12, 2012. A total of 20 agencies and individuals submitted comments during the comment period.

In considering the key factors that provide the best distinction between the corridors, including socioeconomic and environmental impacts, travel performance, constructability, cost, stakeholder input, and corridor flexibility, Corridor B3 performs the best when compared to Corridors A3S2 and B4. Identification of Corridor B3 as the preferred corridor is based on the following primary factors:

Corridor B3 in comparison with Corridor A3S2: Corridor B3 has overall the least impacts to the natural and built environment, more stakeholder support, better constructability, and lower cost than Corridor A3S2. While both corridors perform similarly in meeting the Purpose and Need, Corridor B3 attracts slightly more traffic overall and offers better travel performance for a tolled scenario. Since Corridor B3 has better overall travel performance and compares favorably to Corridor A3S2 for the other factors noted above, Corridor B3 is the preferred corridor over Corridor A3S2.

Corridor B3 in comparison with Corridor B4: Corridor B3 performs better than Corridor B4 for every travel performance measure in both the tolled and non-tolled scenarios. In addition, the constructability for Corridor B4 will be more complex than Corridor B3 due to the extent of high construction risk soils, the number of stream crossings, and the complexities associated with traversing the Kankakee River floodplain. Corridor B3 has the overall least impacts to the natural and built environment with comparable impacts to Corridor B4 relative to water resources. While Corridor B3 has higher wetland impacts than Corridor B4, Corridor B3 has lower overall impacts to streams (number and acres), impaired streams, wellhead protection zones, and floodplains. Since Corridor B3 has overall the least impacts to the natural and built environment, is comparable to Corridor B4 with respect to overall water resource impacts, and exhibits better travel performance, Corridor B3 is the preferred corridor over Corridor B4.

Agencies that provided concurrence on Corridor B3 as the preferred corridor during the November 8, 2012 NEPA/404 Merger meeting are as follows: USEPA, USACE, USFWS, Illinois Department of Agriculture (Illinois DOA), and Illinois State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) did not disagree with concurrence on Corridor B3. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) indicated that all of their issues were pertinent to Tier Two studies and had no comment on the Tier One concurrence. The meeting summary for the November 8, 2012 concurrence meeting can be found in Appendix M.

Written concurrence correspondence was also received regarding Corridor B3 as the preferred corridor from: Illinois Department of Natural Resources (Illinois DNR), Indiana Department of Natural Resources (Indiana DNR), Indiana DNR SHPO, USEPA, USACE, and Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). This written concurrence correspondence can be found in Appendix L.

S.6 Corridor B3 Impacts and Mitigation

A summary of impacts to social and environmental resources for the working alignment within Corridor B3 is provided below. Where provided, the ranges in impacts shown are associated with the three design concepts at the interchange with IL-53. Refer to Section 3.0 for more detail regarding impacts and mitigation.

Social/Economic Impacts

Corridor B3 traverses an area that is largely undeveloped and as a result, housing related impacts from the proposed project are expected to be minimal; however, some neighborhood impacts and residential relocations are anticipated. The working alignment within Corridor B3 would result in 22 residential relocations, 9 non-agricultural businesses, and 1 agricultural business displacements. Efforts will be made to mitigate potential neighborhood impacts as they arise. The specific design and location of the transportation system improvements will be addressed as part of the Tier Two NEPA studies.

Direct impacts to public facilities are expected to be minimal, since there are very few public facilities within Corridor B3. Only three potential impacts have been identified. Of these, it is likely that only one facility (Peotone Township Maintenance Facility) would require relocation with implementation of Corridor B3, with a Wilmington maintenance facility having potential access and property impacts, and a Symerton maintenance facility having property impacts only. In addition, a Radio One Communications transmission tower is located within the working alignment of Corridor B3 at the SR 55 interchange. The proposed interchange at SR 55 would be designed so that it would not encroach into the area around the towers where there are safety concerns and continued access and operation of the tower would remain during and after construction.

An evaluation of environmental justice (EJ) included an assessment of minority and low-income populations within the Study Area consistent with Executive Order 12898. Based on the US Census Bureau's 2010 census of race, ethnic, and poverty level data and location of the corridors in relation to these populations, there would be no direct impacts to EJ populations. Based on the location of the EJ communities within the Study Area, Corridor B3 has minimal potential to indirectly affect EJ communities. Further consideration will occur during the Tier Two NEPA studies to determine whether or not these groups will bear a disproportionate level of impact in accordance with FHWA guidance.

Overall, the existing community plans complement the proposed Illiana Corridor project. Most communities have not specifically included the proposed transportation improvements in their local planning efforts, with the exception of Will County, Illinois, Manhattan, Illinois, and Cedar Lake, Indiana. Most communities intend to incorporate the proposed project in their plans as it becomes more defined, as indicated by their responses in the context audit completed as part of the stakeholder involvement process for the project.

In addition to municipal level planning efforts, the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie is also a local planning stakeholder. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has undertaken planning efforts for the area that outline a vision for a major regional destination attracting over one million visitors per year. Plans for the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie include fostering an enhanced economic relationship with surrounding communities of Elwood, Manhattan, and Wilmington, Illinois.

While Corridor B3 would not have direct impacts to the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, it is located adjacent to its southern boundary. This has the potential to interfere with accessibility between the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie and the adjacent communities, and could conflict with the local planning efforts for the area, including the concept of non-motorized access between the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie and Wilmington.

In addition to providing additional capacity to address the projected increase in traffic and congestion, benefits of the proposed project include providing better access to jobs throughout the Study Area and better access for properties that could be commercially developed.

Agriculture Impacts

Depending on the design concept, the working alignment within Corridor B3 would impact between 359 and 363 farm parcels (totaling 2,666 to 2,725 acres of farmland). The number of farmsteads anticipated to be relocated is 28 to 29 for the working alignment within Corridor B3. Relocated farmsteads include groups of buildings that may or may not include residences. There would be zero agricultural land diagonal parcel severances for Corridor B3. The working alignment would impact prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance and would directly impact farmland production with the conversion of farmland to a transportation right-of-way.

Cultural Resources Impacts

The Illiana Corridor has the potential to affect five known archaeological sites (including two possibly prehistoric mound sites) documented in Corridor B3. Additional unknown prehistoric archaeological resources may also be located in the corridor.

For above-ground historic resources, which includes National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-listed, NRHP-eligible, and previously identified built resources nine historic resources were identified in the Corridor B3 Area of Potential Effects (APE) which is based on the width of the 2,000 foot corridor and extends an additional mile north and south of the corridor boundary. One of the NRHP-listed resources that the corridor crosses and has the potential to cause adverse effects to is Alternate Route 66, Wilmington to Joliet (also known as IL-53). Potential adverse effects could be caused through the introduction of visual elements, such as interchanges, overpasses, road widening, additional turn lanes, or traffic signals that diminish the integrity of the property's substantial historic features in the project area and may change the character of the property's setting that contributes to its historic significance.

The proposed project's potential to adversely affect NRHP-listed and NRHP-eligible cultural resources, and any other cultural resources that have not yet been identified, will be further assessed during intensive-level study in the Tier Two NEPA studies.

Noise Impacts

For Corridor B3, there are 1,751 acres under Land Use Activity Category B (residential land uses), 501 acres under Land Use Activity Category C (includes hospitals, libraries, parks, and recreation areas), and 7 acres under Land Use Category E (includes hotels, offices, and restaurants). The Tier Two NEPA studies will predict and identify noise impacts, conduct a feasibility and reasonableness evaluation for noise abatement, and propose noise abatement, as necessary.

Natural Resources Impacts

The working alignment within Corridor B3 would affect 65.3 acres of forested communities. Other potential project impacts to wildlife resources include 2.9 acres of Des Plaines State Fish and Wildlife Area (DPSFWA) and one Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) site (Kankakee River) crossed by the working alignment.

The proximity of Corridor B3 to the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, the Joliet Army Training Area (JATA), and DPSFWA may impact grassland and migratory bird species. Several studies correlate the average daily traffic (ADT) of a roadway with the presence and breeding (or absence thereof) of birds. Based on these studies, the potential grassland and migratory bird habitat of Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, JATA and Laughton Preserve within 1,200 meters from the northernmost boundary of the working alignment of Corridor B3 is 564 acres. The working alignment would not impact known federal threatened or endangered species locations; however, federal listed threatened and endangered species may be present within the corridor. Several Illinois –state-listed threatened and endangered species and are known to occur within the corridor while no known Indiana state-listed endangered, threatened, or rare species are known to occur within the corridor. Surveys will be conducted during the Tier Two NEPA studies to determine whether any species occur within the preferred corridor. The eastern prairie fringed orchid is known to occur at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie and while direct impacts to Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie and the eastern prairie fringed orchid will not occur, the preferred corridor could impact the primary pollinator to the orchid which is the hawkmoth (*Lepidotera – Sphingidae*) which could be negatively affected by stray roadway lighting.

Water Resources/Quality

Surface water impacts would be associated with both construction and operation of the proposed project. Within existing watersheds, undeveloped land would be disturbed and converted to impervious surfaces. The pollutant loading to a stream is directly proportional to impervious areas and traffic volumes as analyzed by FHWA; the greater the traffic volume and impervious area, the greater the potential pollutant loading. Stormwater detention ponds would be constructed to control the volume of stormwater runoff associated with the additional disturbed land and impervious area within the project right-of-way. The working alignment within Corridor B3 would have 33 stream crossings and include 19,946 to 20,624 feet of stream length and 11.4 to 12.0 acres of

stream surface area. Corridor B3 would result in 3,103 acres of total watershed disturbance. Erosion control measures will be implemented during construction to limit the effects to the streams. No groundwater wells would be impacted under the working alignments within Corridor B3.

Floodplains Impacts

The working alignment within Corridor B3 would add 55.0 acre-feet of floodplain fill volume. Compensation for fill in the floodplain/floodway will be based on IDOT, INDOT, Illinois DNR, and Indiana DNR criteria. Detention storage will be used both to mitigate this impact and to compensate for the additional impervious area created with the proposed project.

Wetland Impacts

The assessment of potential wetland impacts is based upon direct impacts related to construction and the placement of fill material to construct the roadways, ramps, and grading for drainage/stormwater management facilities. In addition to the potential direct loss of wetland acreage associated with a working alignment, wetland functions and values may also be impacted. The working alignment within Corridor B3 would affect 28 known wetlands impacting between 34.4 to 34.6 acres. Corridor B3 will require approval of a permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). As part of the permitting process, the USACE could require the alignment to be shifted within or outside Corridor B3, in order to meet the requirement of Section 404.

Special Waste/Hazardous Waste Impacts

The USEPA listing of potential, suspected, and known hazardous waste or hazardous substance sites in Illinois and Indiana has been reviewed to ascertain whether the proposed project would involve any listed sites. As a result of the review, it has been determined that two sites may pose a risk to the working alignment within Corridor B3. Contaminated soils or groundwater could potentially be encountered during demolition, construction, or earthwork; resulting in the release of contamination into the air, soil, or water. The possibility exists that hazardous building materials, including asbestos and lead-based paint (LBP), may occur in buildings and structures that may be acquired and require demolition. Exposure to environmental contamination can adversely impact construction workers and public safety and lead to diminished quality of natural resources. Encountering such contamination without prior knowledge can also result in increased project costs and project delays to properly manage the resulting wastes. To more fully characterize the possibility of encountering special or hazardous wastes, a more detailed assessment will be completed during the Tier Two NEPA studies, with appropriate mitigation and avoidance measures, if any, developed based on the findings of those studies.

Section 4(f)

The working alignments within Corridor B3 would have an impact on the Wauponsee Glacial Trail. The portion of the Wauponsee Glacial Trail within the working alignments within Corridor B3 is 483 feet of the 19.5 mile southern limestone section of the trail. It is

anticipated that any disruption to the Wauponsee Glacial Trail would be less than the time needed to construct the project. A temporary trail will be constructed during construction of the proposed project so that the trail would remain open. Trail continuity could also be maintained by bridging the proposed project over the trail. The temporary trail and bridge option will be further evaluated during Tier Two NEPA studies. There would be no change in ownership of the trail. Coordination during Tier Two NEPA studies will determine the actual disruption to the trail.

The working alignment within Corridor B3 has the potential to affect Alternate Route 66 by crossing over the resource. One design concept would include interchange ramps that intersect with Alternate Route 66. Two of the design concepts would not have a direct impact on Alternate Route 66, although the proposed project may introduce visual elements that diminish the integrity of the property's substantial historic features and may change the character of the property's setting that contributes to its historic significance. Through the Section 106 process, a determination of effect as a result of the project will be made and an analysis of Section 4(f) use, if any, will be completed.

The working alignment within Corridors B3 would require approximately 2.9 acres of land from the DPSFWA located at the southern edge of the property south of River Road. The portion of the DPSFWA within the working alignment of Corridor B3 is agricultural/open space designated for hunting. Hunting areas are available throughout the 4,950 acres of DPSFWA. Coordination during Tier Two NEPA studies will determine the actual impact to the area.

The working alignment within Corridor B3 has the potential to affect additional Section 4(f) protected historic properties, which may be identified through field work in the Tier Two NEPA studies.

Mineral and Geologic Resources

The working alignment within Corridor B3 would cross approximately 2.3 miles of sand and gravel resources. While there is no active or inactive sand and gravel mining in these areas, future access to these resources within the limits of the working alignment within Corridor B3 would be eliminated with their implementation.

Limestone resources occur as the uppermost bedrock unit within the corridor. These resources are present throughout 84 percent of Corridor B3. There are no inactive or active limestone/dolomite quarries within the corridor and future exploitation of these resources would generally be limited to those localized areas along the corridor where the bedrock is shallow. Since these resources are recovered through surface mining, future access to these resources within the limits of the corridor would be eliminated with construction of the proposed project due to land use incompatibility.

The working alignment within Corridor B3 may be expected to encounter expansive and weak/compressible soils. Extensive areas of peat and muck are known to exist in the Study Area, particularly throughout the Indiana portion of the Study Area, although the corridor avoids larger known deposits.

Visual Resources

Implementation of a new transportation facility along Corridor B3 would result in changes to the existing visual setting. Impacts would result from changes to the terrain, and natural and/or cultural features that would have a long-term impact on the visual environment.

Indirect and Cumulative Impacts

The indirect impacts of the Illiana Corridor would be associated with induced land development resulting from improved accessibility and mobility provided by the project. Cumulative impacts could result from the project, induced development, and other reasonably foreseeable development that would occur with or without the project.

The Study Area forecasted population and employment growth with the No-Action Alternative is substantial and would convert a great deal of farmland into urban development. Population and employment change projections for the year 2040 indicate that under Corridor B3, Will, Kankakee and Lake counties would grow by an additional 11,180 people (0.5 percent increase) and 7,660 jobs (0.7 percent increase). The above forecasts for population and employment were derived by interpolating and/or extrapolating the build socio-economic forecasts for the Northern and Southern Alignments (identified in the *Historic and Forecasted Growth of Employment and Population – Market Driven Forecasts 2010-2040"* (The al Chalabi Group, Ltd. (ACG), 2011), see Appendix E). These latter forecasts were generated reflecting the changes in accessibility resulting from building along these alignments and using the same methodology as that used for similar EIS studies.

To accommodate residential and commercial/industrial development, the projected population and employment growth in the three counties would require an additional 2,699 acres of land with Corridor B3.

The corridor is expected to shift some of the projected population and employment growth in the Study Area toward the proposed project's interchanges with US and state highways because of the increased accessibility to undeveloped land areas near them.

The Study Area forecasted population and employment growth with the No-Action Alternative is substantial and would convert a great deal of farmland into urban development. The Illiana Corridor would have a 1 percent or less additional indirect and cumulative impact on the main resource of the Study Area, i.e., farmland, in comparison with the amount of farmland converted with the No-Action Alternative. (For example, the No-Action Alternative would increase population by 66 percent and employment by 49 percent between 2010 and 2040. In comparison, Corridor B3 would have incremental increases of only approximately 1 percent or less in either population or employment). Of the three most prevalent resources (farmland, forest and wetlands) within 5 miles of each interchange (i.e., the indirect impact area) farmland is the most likely resource to be impacted. Likewise, the combined impact of indirect and cumulative effects on wetlands, forests, and prairies in the corridors would be relatively small.

A summary of potential avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures that could be implemented to compensate for unavoidable impacts associated with implementation of a working alignment are presented.

Potential Mitigation and Minimization Measures

The main objective of mitigation is to compensate for the potential impacts to sensitive resources that cannot be avoided or minimized. The potential mitigation measures that have been identified by the FHWA, IDOT, INDOT and resource agencies are appropriate strategies to offset likely impacts associated with the proposed project. The mitigation measures identified during this Tier One NEPA study represent the proposals and concepts that will be further developed and refined based on more detailed information and public and resource agency coordination during the Tier Two NEPA studies. All mitigation and abatement measures developed at the time will be completed in accordance with the policies and procedures of FHWA, IDOT, and INDOT and the requirements of appropriate federal and state resource agencies. Some of the potential mitigation strategies identified for this Tier One FEIS include:

- Provide relocation assistance and just compensation to any residence or business displaced in accordance with applicable federal and state regulations, and agency guidelines.
- Facilitate land use coordination within the corridor with the various regional and local jurisdictions.
- Prepare a traffic management plan to detail strategies of how traffic flow will be maintained and reliable access and emergency vehicle service will be provided to local roads, residences, businesses, and community services and facilities during construction.
- Coordinate with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Illinois DOA, and the Indiana Department of Agriculture (Indiana DOA) during the Tier Two NEPA studies to determine measures or actions to avoid and minimize impacts or disruption to agricultural operations.
- Coordinate with the Illinois and Indiana SHPOs, Indian Tribes, and other consulting parties to develop appropriate mitigation measures for impacts to historic and archaeological resources.
- Evaluate noise abatement measures where determined feasible and reasonable.
- Complete detailed pre-construction surveys as appropriate and identify best management practices (BMPs) to protect habitats of threatened and endangered species to the greatest extent possible.
- Provide forest mitigation by conducting or participating in the purchase of vacant land and planting trees to replace forested areas removed by construction.
- Implement appropriate IDOT and INDOT construction and design guidance and BMPs as dictated by required permits and approvals to minimization groundwater impacts, soil erosion, and streamside and riparian vegetation disturbance.

- Comply with the implementing measures of the Executive Order 13112 to control and minimize the spread of invasive species.
- Coordinate with appropriate resource agencies to develop measures to mitigate impacts to grassland and migratory birds, and threatened and endangered species, as necessary.
- For project-related fill placed in waters of the US, consideration will be given to on-site stream restoration, preservation of sites adjacent to impact areas, and the purchase of credits in a USACE approved mitigation bank or at an off-site location.
- Create compensatory storage volume through excavation of an area that creates an equivalent volume of storage to offset the loss of existing flood storage.
- Design new and replacement stream crossings to maintain continuity of aquatic habitat and accommodate the passage of fish and other aquatic organisms.
- Mitigate wetland loss following appropriate guidelines and state compensatory mitigation ratios.
- Explore options for bridging a working alignment over the existing Wauponsee Glacial Trail or provide a replacement trail during construction and reroute a section of the trail.
- Coordinate with Illinois DNR regarding potential impacts to the DPSFWA and consider the prospect of a *de minimis* finding for the property.
- Conduct site-specific surveys to identify the presence of any weak and compressible native soils that could impact the project.
- Implement planned design elements, including the use of context sensitive solutions (CSS).

S.7 Record of Decision

The ROD is the official decision document that concludes the Illiana Corridor EIS by FHWA. Approval of the Tier One ROD grants the states the ability to proceed with planning and design as part of the Tier Two NEPA studies. The Tier One EIS was completed at a sufficient level of engineering and environmental detail to allow for an informed decision on the issues under consideration in Tier One, including the preferred mode or means by which mobility will be achieved, facility type, and corridor location.

On July 6, 2012, President Obama signed into law Public Law 112-141, MAP-21. MAP-21 creates a streamlined, performance-based, and multimodal program to address the many challenges facing the US transportation system. An integral part of MAP-21 is to provide an array of provisions designed to increase innovation and improve efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability in the planning, design, engineering, construction, and financing of transportation projects and streamline the project delivery process.

As outlined in Section 1319(b), MAP-21 "provides that the lead agency shall, to the maximum extent practicable, combine the FEIS and ROD unless (1) the FEIS makes substantial changes to the proposed action that are relevant to environmental or safety

concerns; or (2) there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and that bear on the proposed action or the impacts of the proposed action." Since there were no substantial changes in the proposed action or new environmental concerns identified from the preparation of the DEIS to the FEIS, the Illiana Corridor project has prepared a ROD in conjunction with the Tier One FEIS approving Corridor B3 as the selected corridor. With the approval of the combined Tier One FEIS and ROD, Corridor B3 along with the No-Action Alternative, will be advanced for further analysis in the Tier Two NEPA studies.

S.7.1 Corridor

Corridor B3 is generally 2,000 feet in width. This corridor is narrower than 2,000 feet in three locations in order to ensure minimization of impacts on certain sensitive resources to be evaluated in the Tier Two NEPA studies. These three locations are east of IL-53 (to avoid impacts to the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie); west of IL-53 (to avoid impacts at the Waters Edge subdivision); and at the Village of Symerton (to avoid impacts at the village). The corridor is wider than 2,000 feet in three other locations; primarily in order to maximize opportunities for the development of system interchanges at I-55, I-57, and I-65. The ROD approves a selected corridor, rather than a specific alignment, for Corridor B3. The specific alignment, along with appropriate mitigation measures, will be analyzed in the Tier Two NEPA process. The Tier One ROD also decides that the selected corridor will be used for the construction of a limited access highway.

As further discussed below, the Tier Two NEPA process may be conducted as a single study addressing the entire corridor, or may be divided into two separate projects, with termini for one project being I-65 and I-57 and for the other project I-57 and I-55.

S.8 Tier Two Considerations for the Preferred Corridor

Corridor B3 will be further analyzed in Tier Two. This analysis will include: 1) continued analysis and definition of the preferred corridor and supporting transportation modes; 2) further development of engineering plans; 3) completion of more detailed environmental investigations, including field studies; 4) corresponding updates to impacts to social, economic, and environmental resources; 5) identification of mitigation measures for those impacts found to be unavoidable; and 6) development of a financing plan that identifies sources of funding and the timing of their availability. The outcome of the Tier Two process will be the preferred alignment for Corridor B3.

The range of alternatives considered in detail in the Tier Two NEPA document will result in the identification of a single alignment together with multiple route variations or design options in specific areas within the preferred corridor. Key Tier Two issues will include interchange location and design; access to abutting properties; and location of grade separations with intersecting roads. The Tier Two NEPA studies will include consideration of a No-Action Alternative as a baseline for analysis.

In general, the range of alternatives considered in the Tier Two NEPA studies will be confined to Corridor B3. However, the flexibility will exist to consider alternatives

outside of Corridor B3 if necessary to avoid sensitive environmental resources identified as part of the Tier Two environmental field studies, or to address context sensitive design issues in a way that does not materially increase overall impacts.

S.8.1 Implementation Strategy and Tier Two NEPA Studies

By the selection of a preferred corridor, the Tier One decision will serve as a basis for transportation agencies and other transportation providers to prioritize and plan for eventual project implementation. Because project implementation would be costly, it may occur over time in phases or sections. Phased construction of highway projects is guided by the definition of operational independence. Operational independence requires that a phase of work be able to be built and function as a viable transportation facility, even if the remainder of the work is never built. Potential phased implementation scenarios will be considered in detail in the Tier Two NEPA studies.

Based on the preferred corridor as a limited-access highway facility, the logical termini for sections of independent utility would be the existing north-south Interstate facilities within the Study Area. On this basis, should the lead agencies agree to advance the Tier Two NEPA studies in independent sections, the logical sections of independent utility would be:

- I-65 to I-57
- I-57 to I-55

Other factors may influence the project implementation strategy, such as project delivery and procurement options, as well as funding opportunities and strategies. Each Tier Two section of independent utility would be considered in a separate Tier Two NEPA study. Together, the Tier Two sections of independent utility would connect the project termini defined in this Tier One EIS: I-55 on the west and I-65 on the east in the Study Area for the Illiana Corridor. Within the sections of independent utility for which Tier Two NEPA studies are completed, project implementation may further occur in stages based on sections of operational independence as necessitated by these other factors. Ultimately, a detailed implementation plan for improvements will be developed as part of the Tier Two NEPA studies, establishing a proposed sequence for project implementation based on sections of independent utility, and viable financing strategies.

S.8.2 Potential Funding and Financing Options

No funding is currently committed to the Illiana Corridor, other than preliminary engineering. Further funding requirements for the Illiana Corridor will be given detailed attention in the Tier Two NEPA studies.

Major transportation infrastructure projects have traditionally been financed through a combination of federal and state monies. These resources typically are combined to fund projects on a pay-as-you-go basis, meaning that projects often are built in phases or sections as funds become available over time.

Because public funding resources are increasingly limited, state and local governments are faced with the challenge of inadequate funding to meet transportation needs. In an era of

constrained public funding, new funding mechanisms are being considered. Illinois and Indiana have signed an MOA and passed enabling legislation to allow for public private agreements between Illinois and Indiana and one or more private entities to design, build, finance, operate, and maintain the Illiana Corridor. However, additional potential funding sources and financing structures are also anticipated to be required. The range of potential funding and financing strategies includes the following:

- Federal Credit Assistance and Instruments
- Federal Aid Highway Program
- State Funding and Financing
- Public Private Partnerships

S.9 Other Proposed Actions

Additional proposed roadway improvements have been identified in the current financially constrained long-range (2040) plans of CMAP, NIRPC, and KATS. These committed highway improvement projects in the Study Area were not in place as of the study's base traffic year 2010, and were assumed in the future 2040 highway network as shown in Table S-1.

The proposed SSA is located within the Study Area east of I-57 and IL-50 and west of IL-394/1. The initial phase of airport development, known as the Inaugural Airport Program, is designated on approximately 5,200 acres, but the Ultimate Acquisition Area is over 20,000 acres, most of which occurs in unincorporated Will County. For purposes of this study, an Inaugural Airport configuration of one commercial and one general aviation runway, with a four-gate terminal for passenger service, was assumed for all 2040 build and No-Action Alternative scenarios.

S.10 Major Unresolved Issues with Other Agencies

There are no unresolved issues at this time.

S.11 Other Federal Actions Required for the Proposed Action

At this time, no other federal actions are required for the Illiana Corridor Tier One FEIS process, but additional federal actions are anticipated during the Tier Two NEPA studies. During Tier Two, the Selected Alternative must comply with USEPA Transportation Conformity Rule and be included in the financially constrained long-range (2040) plans of CMAP and NIRPC. Additional federal actions will be required for project permits, including the CWA Section 404 and 401 permits and change in access to the Interstate approvals from FHWA. As part of the permitting process, the USACE could require the alignment to be shifted within or outside Corridor B3, in order to meet the requirement of Section 404.

Table S-1. Programmed and Planned Roadway Improvements Within or Near the Study Area

Route	Description	Location
Will County		
I-80	Add lanes	From US 45 in Frankfort to US 30 in New Lenox (C)[1]
I-80	Add lanes	From US 30 in New Lenox to Ridge Road in Minooka (I)
US 30	Add Lanes	From IL-43 in Frankfort to Williams St. in New Lenox (M)
IL-394	Upgrade to Limited Access	From IL-1 in Crete to Sauk Trail in Sauk Village (I)
I-57	New Interchange	At Stuenkel Road in University Park (M)
I-57	New Interchange and Connector Road	At SSA in Monee (I)
Baseline Road	New Road	From Arsenal Road to Schweitzer Road in Elwood (I)
I-55	Add Lanes	From IL-113 to I-80 (I)
Kankakee County		
I-57	New Interchange at 6000 N Road	Bourbonnais (M)
US 45/52	Add Lanes	From Kathy Drive in Bourbonnais to Manteno Road in Manteno (I)
Lake County		
I-65	New Interchange	109th Avenue in Crown Point (M)[2]
Mississippi Street	New Road	From US 30 to 61st Avenue in Merrillville (N)
101st Avenue	Add Lanes	Merrillville (N)
SR 2	Add Lanes, Interchange Improvement	I-65 east of Lowell (N)
Kennedy Avenue	Add Lanes	Schererville (N)

1. Additional lanes were completed and open to traffic after the study's base traffic year of 2010, therefore the project is included in the table.
2. The interchange is now open to traffic, but is included in the table because it was not open to traffic in 2010.

Source: (C) CMAP; (I) interview with state, county, and local transportation officials; (M) inclusion in state multi-year construction program or recent construction; (N) NIRPC.