

Preferred Corridor Report

Tier One
Illiana Corridor Study



Prepared for:

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1.0 Introduction

Corridors A3S2, B3 and B4 were identified to be carried forward for detailed evaluation in the Tier One EIS (along with the No-Action alternative), based on meeting the project Purpose and Need, public input, and providing travel benefits with minimization of socioeconomic and environmental impacts. This report discusses the conclusions reached with respect to the comparative evaluation of socioeconomic and environmental impacts, travel performance, and other factors including stakeholder and agency input, that support the determination of the preferred corridor to be advanced to the Tier Two NEPA studies.

2.0 Preferred Corridor

After consideration of the technical analysis in the Tier One EIS and considering the comments received during the comment period on the Draft EIS, Corridor B3 is the preferred build corridor. Selection of Corridor B3 as the preferred corridor is based on the following primary factors:

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

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, there are constructability issues for Corridor B4 within the Kankakee River floodplain that are not present with Corridor B3. While Corridor B3 has higher wetland impacts than B4, Corridor B3 has lower overall stream impacts and impaired stream impacts, and lower impacts to floodplains and water well protection zones. There is little public support for Corridor B4 as compared to Corridor B3. Since Corridor B3 exhibits better travel performance and is comparable to B4 with respect to overall water resource impacts, Corridor B3 is the preferred corridor.

A more detailed discussion of the factors supporting the selection of Corridor B3 as the preferred corridor is presented below.

2.1 Build Alternative Comparison and Evaluation Factors

The key evaluation factors considered in the comparison of the build alternative corridors carried forward in the Tier One EIS were socioeconomic and environmental impacts, travel performance, and stakeholder and agency input. Additional factors including corridor flexibility and constructability/cost were also considered. Results

from this relative comparison of factors were used to identify the preferred Illiana Corridor.

The build alternative corridors carried forward for analysis in the Tier One EIS included the following:

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, 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, SR 55, and I-65. In addition, two design options are included for an additional interchange in the vicinity of IL-53.

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 South Suburban Airport, 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, two design options are included for an additional interchange in the vicinity of IL-53.

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, two design options are included for an additional interchange in the vicinity of IL-53.

The following discussion highlights the distinguishing results from the comparison of key evaluation factors and the conclusions reached in determining the preferred Illiana Corridor.

2.1.1 Socioeconomic and Environmental Impacts

The potential socioeconomic and environmental impacts associated with a working alignment within Corridors A3S2, B3 and B4 were analyzed based on GIS data available for the Tier One study. The results of this analysis are discussed in Sections 2.0 and 3.0 of the Tier One EIS. As part of the Tier One alternatives evaluation process, iterative layout work of the working alignments within the 2,000 foot wide planning corridors were performed to avoid and minimize impacts. The 2,000 foot wide corridor provides flexibility in Tier Two to refine the working alignment as more outreach and information is collected. The impacts were assessed based on the 400 foot wide working alignment within the center of each corridor, and expanded at anticipated interchange locations.

When assessing the overall environmental and socioeconomic impacts of each corridor, Corridor A3S2 stands out as having potential for more impacts than either B3 or B4.

Corridor B3 has the least impacts overall and tends to have lower or middle of the range impacts for the majority of environmental resources analyzed.

2.1.1.1 Socioeconomic Impacts

The potential socioeconomic impacts associated with a working alignment within corridors A3S2, B3 and B4 were analyzed based on data available for the Tier One EIS. Of the three alternative corridors, Corridor A3S2 has the greatest socioeconomic impact. The location of Corridor A3S2 in the northern more developed areas is a key factor in the number of impacts. The results with respect to the distinguishing socioeconomic impacts between corridors A3S2, B3, and B4 are presented in Table 2-1 and are discussed below.

Table 2-1. Distinguishing Socioeconomic Impacts

| Impact Criterion ¹ | Corridor | | |
|---|----------|--------|--------|
| | A3S2 | B3 | B4 |
| Residential Displacements | 83 | 22 | 12 |
| Intermodal Facilities (acres) | 102.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Business Parks (acres) | 55.6 | 2.7 | 2.7 |
| Population Growth (persons) | 21,391 | 11,180 | 11,746 |
| Employment Growth (jobs) | 13,241 | 7,660 | 7,660 |
| Land Area to Accommodate Growth (acres) | 4,929 | 2,699 | 2,771 |
| Economic Impacts (2010 \$ billions) | | | |
| Long Term (non-tolled) | 4.86 | 4.67 | 4.24 |
| Long Term (tolled) | 3.43 | 3.87 | 3.54 |
| Noise Sensitive Adjacent Land Use (acres) | 2,775 | 1,751 | 883 |

- Residential Displacements – Corridor A3S2 would cross more residential neighborhoods, resulting in a greater number of residential displacements (83) as compared to Corridors B3 and B4 (22, 12). An analysis of potential impacts outside the 400 foot working alignments (but within the 2000 foot corridors) indicates that avoidance of residential displacements by shifting the working alignments is less feasible for Corridor A3S2 than for Corridors B3 or B4. Corridor B4 would have the lowest number of residential displacements and would cross one residential neighborhood, as does Corridor B3.

¹ Results shown represent the greatest impact when a range of impacts would occur based on the interchange design concepts in the vicinity of IL 53.

- Intermodal Facility and Business Park Impacts – Corridor A3S2 would have greater impacts to Intermodal facilities and Business Parks at 102.2 acres and 55.6 acres respectively, as compared to corridors B3 and B4 which would have no impacts to Intermodal facilities and 2.7 acres of impacts to Business Parks. Due to recent development of Intermodal properties and the proximity of Joliet Army Training Area and other constraints, there is little opportunity to adjust Corridor A3S2 to further minimize impacts.
- Population and Employment Growth – Because all corridors improve accessibility and provide congestion relief, some projected regional population and employment growth is expected to shift to the Study Area and South Sub-Region, which in Illinois is a result of outward growth from points north (i.e., DuPage County, west Suburban Cook County, and the City of Chicago), and in Indiana is a result of migration from Illinois. Corridor A3S2 would result in the largest 2040 population and employment increases (indirectly adding about 10,000 more people than either Corridor B3 or B4) and would require the most land to accommodate the growth. Corridors B3 and B4 have similar 2040 population and employment increases and would require less land than A3S2 to accommodate the growth. Corridor B3 would have less potential to shift population and employment from the older and more developed areas north of the Study Area than Corridor A3S2, and it would provide increased accessibility benefits for the South Sub-Region north of the Study Area similar to A3S2.
- Economic Impacts – Corridor A3S2 would generate larger short-term economic impact in terms of output, employment opportunities, and tax revenues which is associated with having the highest capital cost. In comparison to Corridor B3, Corridor A3S2 generates a slightly larger long-term economic impact with the non-tolled scenario (\$4.86 billion vs. \$4.67 billion) while Corridor B3 generates a slightly larger long-term economic impact with the tolled scenario (\$3.87 billion vs. \$3.43 billion). However, for the residential and commercial/industrial development induced by long-term economic impacts, Corridor A3S2 would require greater land (4,929 acres) to accommodate this development as compared to B3 (2,699 acres) and B4 (2,771 acres).
- Noise – Corridor A3S2 has a greater potential for noise impacts with 2,775 acres of adjacent sensitive land use, as compared to 1,751 acres for B3 and 883 acres for B4.

Based on the above information and the comparative analysis of corridors A3S2, B3, and B4, Corridor A3S2 has overall greater socioeconomic impacts as compared to B3 and B4. Corridor B3 and B4 have lower socioeconomic impacts with B3 having the largest long-term economic benefit with a tolled scenario, and requires the lowest amount of land to accommodate the residential and commercial/industrial development associated with this economic benefit.

2.1.1.2 Environmental Impacts

The potential environmental impacts associated with a working alignment within corridors A3S2, B3 and B4 were also analyzed based on data available for the Tier One EIS. Corridor B3 has the least impacts overall with respect to key environmental resources. The results with respect to the distinguishing environmental impacts between corridors A3S2, B3, and B4 are presented in Table 2-2 and are discussed below.

Table 2-2. Distinguishing Environmental Impacts

| Impact Criterion ¹ | Corridor | | |
|--|----------|-------|----------------|
| | A3S2 | B3 | B4 |
| Wetlands (acres) | 75.8 | 34.6 | 15.4 |
| Stream Crossings (each) | 26 | 33 | 53 |
| Streams (acres) | 20.6 | 12.0 | 16.1 |
| High Quality Stream Crossings (each) | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| Impaired Stream Crossings (each) | 10 | 9 | 31 |
| Floodplain Fill (acre-feet) | 52.7 | 45.7 | 108.0 |
| Wells in Wellhead Protection Areas (each) | 0 | 0 | 4 ^a |
| Forested Communities > 20 acres (acres) | 112.7 | 65.3 | 17.0 |
| Des Plaines Fish and Wildlife Area (acres) | 10.3 | 2.9 | 2.9 |
| Farmland (acres) | 2,483 | 2,725 | 2,827 |
| Prime Farmland (acres) | 1,813 | 1,607 | 1,472 |
| Agricultural Diagonal Severances (parcels) | 81 | 0 | 83 |

^a Eight wells are located in the Town of Lowell wellfield.

- Water Resources, including streams, wetlands, and floodplains – Corridor B3 has lower overall water resource impacts as compared to Corridor B4, and lower water resource impacts than Corridor A3S2.

Wetlands and Streams: Corridor A3S2 has greater wetland impacts than B3 or B4 with more than twice the impacted acreage (75.8 acres) as compared to Corridor B3 (34.6 acres). While Corridor B4 has the lowest wetland impacts (15.4 acres), it has notably the highest number of stream crossings with almost twice the number (53) as Corridor B3 (33) or Corridor A3S2, which has the lowest (26). However, when measuring stream area within the working alignments, Corridor A3S2 has the greatest acreage (20.6 acres) compared to the other corridors, followed by Corridor B4 (16.1 acres) and Corridor B3, which has the lowest acreage (12.0 acres).

High Quality and Impaired Streams: All three corridors cross a similar number of streams with higher quality special designations. Corridor A3S2 includes two streams listed on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory (NRI). The NRI is a compilation of free-flowing rivers and river segments that could qualify for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Corridors B3 and B4 do not include any streams listed on the NRI. However, one Biologically Significant Stream (BSS), Trim Creek, is crossed by Corridors B3 and B4. Corridor A3S2 also crosses Trim Creek, but in an area that has not been identified as biologically significant.

Several of the streams in the three corridors are classified as impaired and are included in the Illinois or Indiana Clean Water Act Section 303(d) lists. The majority of the impaired streams are located east of I-57. Corridor B4 has the greatest number of impaired stream crossings (31), with more than three times as many as Corridor A3S2 (10 crossings) and B3 (9 crossings). The higher number of impaired stream crossings may make it more difficult to meet the goal of the Clean Water Act, which is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters, potentially requiring more water quality related remedial measures. The 303(d) impairment sources for the streams within the corridors generally include channelization, habitat modification, agricultural-related activities, and/or municipal point source discharges/stormwater associated with development. These sources are consistent with the current agricultural land use of the corridor subwatersheds and urban development.

Floodplains: Corridor B4 has approximately twice the volume in acre-feet of impacted floodplains (108.0) as Corridor A3S2 (52.7) or Corridor B3 - the lowest (45.7).

Wells in Wellhead Protection Areas: Neither Corridor A3S2 nor B3 impact any municipal wells, while Corridor B4 would impact the wellhead protection areas of the Town of Lowell municipal wellfield in Indiana. Four of eight wells identified in the wellfield are located within Corridor B4.

- Natural Resources – Impacts to forested communities greater than 20 acres in size are the greatest for Corridor A3S2 (112.7 acres) as compared to B3 (65.3 acres) and B4 (17.0 acres). All three corridors cross the Des Plaines State Fish and Wildlife Area, with Corridor A3S2 impacting more area (10.3 acres) than B3 and B4 (2.9 acres each); there is also more flexibility to avoid or minimize impacts to the Des Plaines SFWA with Corridors B3 and B4 as compared to Corridor A3S2.
- Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie – All of the corridors avoid converting any land for transportation use that is owned by the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie (MNTP). Corridors B3 and B4 are located adjacent to the southeast corner of the MNTP property near the intersection of IL-53 and River Road. Corridor

A3S2 is located adjacent to a portion of the Joliet Army Training Area (JATA)² on the east side of the Des Plaines River. There are state and federally-listed Threatened and Endangered species and habitat present at both JATA and MNTP, although no direct impact to these resources were identified in Tier One for any of the three corridors. Additionally, Alternate US Route 66 (located on IL-53 where it bisects MNTP) is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The estimated ADT on IL 53 through the MNTP is 17,000 for the 2040 No-Action alternative. For Corridor A3S2 the ADT would range from 17,000 to 21,000, and for Corridor B3 and B4 the ADT would range from 20,000 to 28,000 depending on non-tolled or tolled scenario, and the IL 53 interchange design concept.

- Agricultural Resources, including farm parcels, total farmland and prime farmland – Corridor B4 has overall the largest impacts to farmland (2,827 acres) as compared to B3 (2,725 acres) and A3S2 (2,483 acres) which is based on the A3S2 northern alignment through the more developed portions of the Study Area. However, Corridor A3S2 has notably the largest impacts to prime farmland (1,813 acres) as compared to B3 (1,607 acres) and B4 (1,472 acres). Corridor B3 has the fewest diagonal parcel severances (0 parcels) due to its generally straight alignment across the central portion of the Study Area, while Corridors A3S2 and B4 both result in notably larger diagonal agricultural parcel severances (81 and 83 parcels respectively) due to their diagonal alignment sections.

Corridor B3 has the overall least amount of potential environmental resource impacts based on the above information and the overall comparative analysis of corridors A3S2, B3, and B4.

2.1.2 Travel Performance

Each of the corridors carried forward into the Tier One EIS improved travel performance as compared to the No-Build alternative and satisfied the project Purpose and Need. The travel performance for Corridors A3S2, B3, and B4 was evaluated using the regional travel demand forecasting model based on a build socioeconomic forecast. This build socioeconomic forecast³ assumes a limited-access corridor is in place in the central portion of the study area. The build socioeconomic forecast is based on the reallocation of regional population and employment based on the change in accessibility provided by the limited-access corridor.

² The Joliet Army Training Area is a property that is to be transferred to MNTP when no longer needed by the Department of Defense, according to the Illinois Conservation Act of 1995.

³ Illiana Corridor Study Forecasted Growth of Employment and Population in the Extended Region of Chicago, May 2012. Refer to Appendix E.

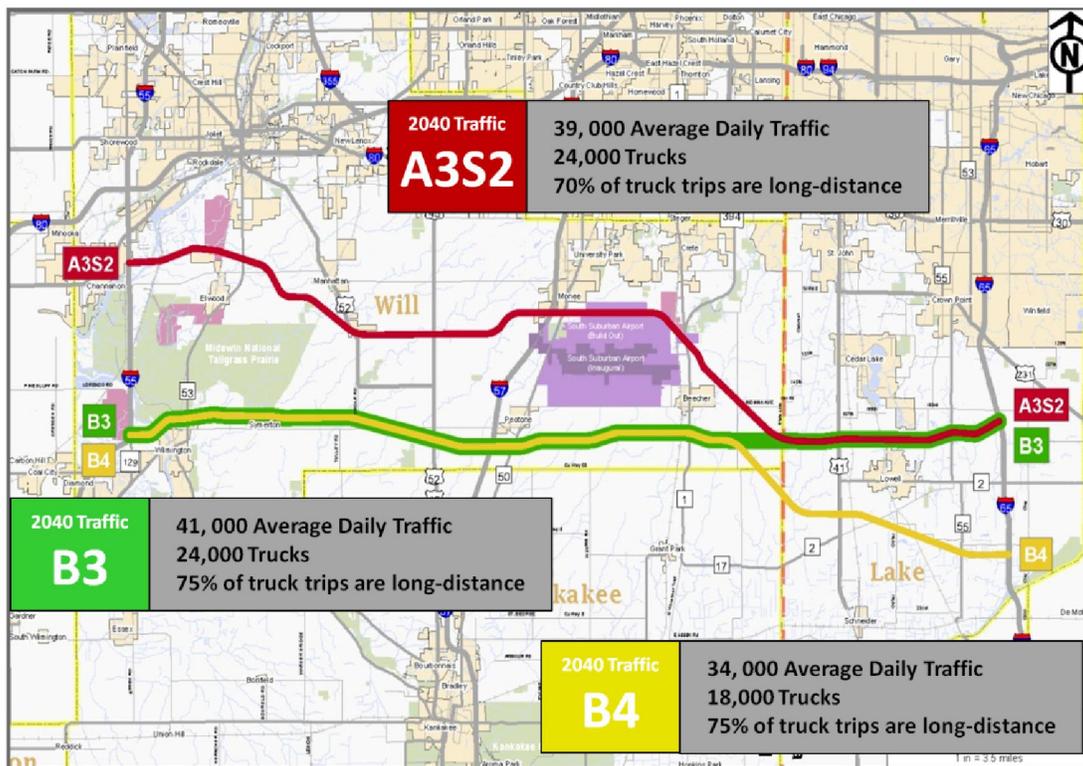
The main travel markets served by the Illiana corridor alternatives are:

- Local trips, or those trips in the study area associated with the projected 2040 population and employment forecasts
- Long distance regional and national traffic that is found on the interstates and major arterial highways
- Intermodal truck activity that distributes in and out from the intermodal centers in all directions both locally and nationally

The new corridors also provide an alternative route, and divert traffic from the I-80/US-30 corridors. The amount of this diversion decreases as the corridors are located farther from I-80. The resulting reserve capacity on I-80 is partially backfilled by traffic from local roads in the South Sub-Region moving to I-80. In turn, reserve capacity on the local roads in the South Sub-Region is increased, creating greater accessibility in the South Sub-Region and the Region overall.

As summarized in Figure 2-1, for the non-tolled scenario, Corridors A3S2 and B3 were the top performers. Corridor B3 has a higher estimated ADT of 41,000 vehicles per day, with both corridors having an estimated 24,000 trucks per day for the 2040 forecast year. Corridor A3S2 had 2,000 less ADT than Corridor B3, and the same estimated truck volume as Corridor B3.

Figure 2-1. 2040 Corridor Travel Performance – Non Tolloed



Corridor A3S2 is closer to population centers, and picks up a greater share of the local population and employment generated trips. However, the effect of the diagonal alignment of A3S2 is that it attracts a lower share of long distance regional traffic and trucks due to its northwest-southeast orientation which is less compatible with the predominant southwest-northeast long distance travel pattern through the region.

Corridor A3S2 offers a travel performance advantage for:

- Reducing Region and South Sub-Region vehicle hours of travel (VHT) and truck hours of travel (THT) meaning congestion is improved resulting in faster speeds and lower travel times
- Reducing Arterials VHT and Congested Arterials vehicle miles of travel (VMT) in the study area meaning congestion is improved resulting in faster speeds and lower travel times
- Improving both east-west and north-south travel due to its diagonal component, and offering shorter trips across the region and study area for trips that desire travel in that direction

Corridor B3 is farther from denser population centers in Illinois, but provides a high speed connection across Indiana and Illinois where no high-type facility exists. As shown in Figure 2-1, while Corridor B3 is not as close to denser population centers as Corridor A3S2, Corridor B3 attracts greater ADT and greater portion of long distance truck trips, due in part to its more direct east-west alignment which can efficiently serve more long distance traffic. Corridor B3 provides a straight and continuous option for the long distance trips, so the regional and truck freight performance is better than the other two corridors. Since the corridor is farther from I-80/US-30, the diversion from I-80 is mostly long distance trips taking an alternative route, so there is less of a shift of population and employment from the South Sub-Region as traffic shifts to utilize the capacity that is opened up on I-80 and US-30.

Corridor B3 offers a travel performance advantage for:

- Serving a higher amount of total daily traffic
- Reducing regional East-West VHT, which indicates travel time improvement to I-80/US30
- Reducing Study Area arterial truck miles of travel, which reflects diversion of through and local trucks from the arterial road system onto the Illiana Corridor reducing truck conflicts on the local roads
- Reducing out of direction travel for long distance travel with its east-west alignment

Corridor B4 underperforms Corridors A3S2 and B3 for all travel performance measures. Corridor B4 had 7,000 less ADT than Corridor B3 and 6,000 less trucks for the non-tolled

scenario. The lower performance of Corridor B4 is attributed to its greater distance from the more densely populated areas in the Indiana portion of the corridor. In addition, while Corridor B4 is similar to Corridor B3 for much of its length, it departs in a southeasterly diagonal route in Indiana. Similar to A3S2, the effect of the diagonal alignment is that it attracts a lower share of long distance regional traffic and trucks due to its northwest-southeast orientation which is less compatible with the predominant southwest-northeast long distance travel pattern through the region, which adversely affects the corridor's ability to serve the travel demands.

Effect of Tolling: For the tolled scenarios, Corridors B3, A3S2, and B4 show similar pattern of travel performance as in the non-tolled scenario. Based on an assumed tolled facility for 2040, Corridor B3 has the highest projected use for all vehicles at 24,000 vehicles per day (VPD) as compared to 23,000 for Corridor A3S2 and 20,000 for Corridor B4. When tolling is applied, Corridor B3 provides slightly better performance relative to Corridor A3S2 for Study Area VHT on arterials, and Regional east-west VHT, with Corridor A3S2 providing slightly better performance for job accessibility, Study Area congested VMT on arterials, and South Sub-Region THT. A3S2 experiences a greater shift of traffic back to the I-80/US 30 corridor than the B3 and B4 corridors because the travel market it serves has more options to use alternative routes.

The ability of Corridor B3 to retain more of the traffic diverted from I-80 improves accessibility in the South Sub-Region. Corridor B3 provides a more direct route better serving the long distance travel and intermodal truck markets which are less averse to paying a toll. Corridor B3 retains more of the traffic under a tolled scenario, with 2,000 additional vehicles per day than Corridor A3S2 for the higher retained toll traffic scenario⁴.

Conclusion: Corridors A3S2 and B3 had the best overall 2040 travel performance with Corridor B4 performing notably worse for both the non-tolled and tolled scenarios.

Corridor A3S2 and corridors B3 and B4 serve slightly different travel markets. With A3S2's greater proximity to populated areas to the north, the corridor has slightly more "commuter" and other shorter trips. Corridors B3 and B4 have fewer commuter trips, and pick up a slightly larger share of longer distance regional and through trips, which results in a higher retention of traffic when a tolled scenario is applied since these trips are less averse to paying a toll.

In determining the transportation performance of each corridor, one key factor is how much a new facility would be used. In a non-tolled scenario for 2040, Corridor B3 would have the highest vehicle ADT volumes and truck ADT (41,000 and 24,000, respectively), with Corridor A3S2 slightly less (39,000 and 24,000, respectively), and B4 having the lowest vehicle and truck ADT (34,000 and 18,000, respectively). Corridor B4

⁴ A 30 to 60 percent range for the percentage of traffic retained on a toll road was assumed for the purposes of analyzing the impacts of tolling on travel performance.

is projected to carry 25% fewer trucks and 17% less overall traffic than B3 in 2040 under a non-tolled scenario.

On this basis, Corridor B3 and Corridor A3S2 have the best overall travel performance, and best address the Purpose and Need by providing travel benefits within the Study Area, South Sub-Region, and Region, and by improving the efficient movement of freight. Although Corridor A3S2 has an advantage in job accessibility, Study Area congested VMT on arterials, and some other measures over the other corridors, Corridor B3 provides travel performance advantages over Corridor A3S2 with respect to serving a higher amount of total daily traffic, reducing east-west VHT, reducing through and local truck traffic from the Study area arterial road system, and reducing out of direction long distance travel. The ability of Corridor B3 to retain more traffic under a tolled scenario improves accessibility in the South Sub-Region. Corridor B4 has relatively poor travel performance as compared to corridors B3 and A3S2, and is not recommended for further analysis.

2.1.3 Constructability and Cost

Over much of their lengths, the three corridors encounter similar construction conditions. Most of the corridors are in agricultural areas with fairly deep top soil horizons, relatively flat topography, and short stream crossings. Corridor A3S2 would have the most challenging constructability issues due to its proximity to development, natural resources and contaminated areas. Corridors B4 and B3 would have constructability issues similar to each other in most of the Illinois section due to their common alignment. Corridor B4 will be more complex in the Indiana section due to floodplain and soil issues.

2.1.3.1 Constructability

The following describes some of the constructability issues that differentiate the three corridors.

Corridor A3S2: Corridor A3S2 would cross the Des Plaines River, which is designated a navigable waterway. Construction of a bridge across the river will require coordination with the United States Coast Guard to minimize disruptions to commercial and recreational river traffic. In order to comply with navigation requirements, the bridge would be required to meet minimum requirements for vertical clearance, pier placement and protection, and construction staging. The required river crossing structure is also anticipated to be approximately one mile in length and may require more complex curved or transitional elements. It also would cross an active freight rail line, with additional considerations for horizontal and vertical clearance.

Corridor A3S2 crosses over Treat Island, which is part of the Des Plaines Fish and Wildlife Area, and a working alignment could not be placed within Corridor A3S2 to avoid impacting Treat Island. A Superfund site is located to the north of Treat Island making avoidance to the north costly in terms of addressing remediation requirements. An interchange to the north between US-6 and Bluff Road on I-55 would have higher

business and residential impacts to Channahon. Avoidance to the south would impact the JATA² property.

Corridor A3S2 would also need to cross over the CenterPoint intermodal facilities and would likely be on an elevated section throughout much of its length to avoid building impacts and maintain traffic circulation needed for the facility to function. This will add to the complexity, cost and time of construction.

Corridor A3S2 has more special waste sites in or near the corridor which may increase requirements for remediation or protection.

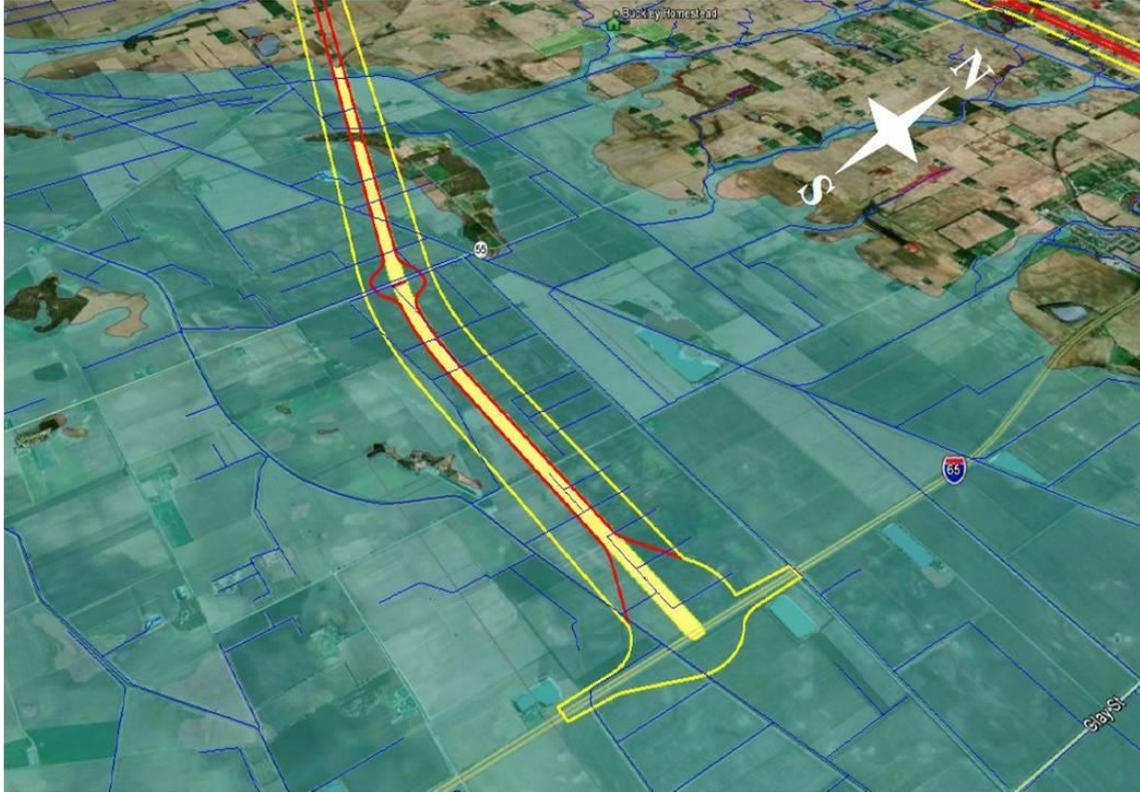
Corridor B3: Corridor B3 would require crossing the Kankakee River. Unlike the Des Plaines crossing for A3S2, the Kankakee River is not a designated navigable waterway. As such, the Kankakee River crossing is anticipated to be shorter (at approximately half the length) and less complex than the Des Plaines River crossing on Corridor A3S2. However, nearby environmentally sensitive features may be present that will need to be mitigated during construction.

Corridor B4: The constructability issues of Corridor B4 are similar to B3 where they share the same alignment in Illinois. Where the alignment departs from Corridor B3 in Indiana, additional measures, such as providing compensatory storage, may be necessary to adhere to permit requirements through the Kankakee River base (100-year) floodplain. Over five miles of mainline for Corridor B4 encroaches on the floodplain, as shown in Figure 2-2.

The ramp areas for a freeway to freeway system interchange at I-65, as well as for a diamond type local interchange at SR 55, would encroach on the floodplain. Encroachment in the floodplain not only creates permitting challenges, but drives up costs for the additional structures required to maintain distribution of floodwater flows across the floodplain as well as to provide compensatory storage. New interchanges are often the focus of desirable new development. Constructability, cost, and permitting issues will inhibit new development in the floodplain areas around the local interchange and the interchange at SR-55.

In addition, at the east end of the B4 alignment, generally poor soils and a high water table are encountered. A surficial formation of muck toward the east end of the corridor will be more expensive to remediate than the typical soils encountered along the rest of the alignment shared with Corridor B3. Corridor B4 also has more stream crossings in Indiana than Corridor B3.

Figure 2-2. Corridor B4 Through the Kankakee River Floodplain



Note: The blue area is the 100-year base floodplain

2.1.3.2 Cost

Corridor B3 is estimated to have the lowest initial conceptual cost of the three alternatives at \$1.25 billion, followed by B4 at \$1.40 billion, and A3S2 at \$1.58 billion. These initial conceptual costs represent costs for construction, utility relocations, right of way purchase, mitigation, and engineering.

The cost factors associated with the western termini for Corridors B3 and B4 are less than for Corridor A3S2. This is based primarily on Corridor A3S2 requiring a longer crossing over the Des Plaines River, and commercial (including existing intermodal facilities) and residential displacements associated with building a system interchange with I-55 and providing local access.

In the middle portion of the corridors, A3S2 is projected to incur more costs than B3 or B4 because of building displacements and wetland impacts. It will also likely result in additional costs for traversing existing pipeline facilities southeast of Manhattan to accommodate the transportation corridor.

Toward the eastern termini, Corridor B4 is projected to have higher costs than A3S2 or B3 due to accommodating poor soil conditions and construction requirements within the Kankakee River floodplain.

It is noted that for Tier One studies the focus is on corridor selection. These conceptual costs are intended to allow relative comparisons between corridors. The projected costs are based on conceptual layouts, with many built in assumptions that will become more developed as the studies proceed. Future studies will identify, refine and detail additional cost factors that will modify these projected conceptual costs. Corridor A3S2 is the longest corridor and is located in the most constrained areas. Therefore, Corridor A3S2 is expected to have the greatest probability of increased costs and mitigation as greater detail is developed.

2.1.4 Stakeholder and Agency Input

Throughout the development of the Illiana Corridor Study, the study team has worked closely with the Corridor Planning Group and Technical Task Forces. The group was organized to be a representative body of the diverse interests of stakeholders across the study area. The members of this group represent elected officials, staff from local governments and agencies, and organized interest groups representing economic development, agriculture, and other environmental interests. Over the course of the DEIS comment period, these units of government and organized interest groups, have offered written statements of their position regarding corridors A3S2, B3, B4, and the No-Action alternative. Of those expressing support or opposition to a specific build corridor or the No-Action alternative, 59% support a build corridor, and 38% oppose corridors or support the No-Action alternative. Corridor B3 has the most support of the preferences submitted being favored by 90% of those supporting a build alternative.

Throughout the development of the study, several rounds of stakeholder and public meetings have been held to obtain input on the issues associated with each corridor. The December 2011 and February 2012 public meetings first presented the Representative Alternatives and then refined the alternatives. Also from January through February 2012, 36 one-on-one meetings were held with stakeholders to discuss the initial Representative Alternatives. In February and March of 2012, five meetings were held after the B3 Corridor was identified and proposed for further study. An additional 30 meetings were held from March through June of 2012 after the A3S2 and B4 corridors were also identified and proposed for further study. The following summaries present the meeting results for the three proposed corridors.

Corridor A3S2: Some local and regional entities have indicated that they believe Corridor A3S2 better serves the region's needs in terms of providing relief to I-80/94 and nearby state and local routes, moving freight from existing and planned intermodal facilities, as well as promoting development and redevelopment in communities that are closer to the urban core. These entities also feel that Corridor A3S2 is the most financially viable corridor in terms of its ability to attract a slightly higher amount of traffic sooner than other corridors. While Corridor A3S2 has received support from some communities in the northern Study Area, and to the north of the Study area, to have a facility placed as close as possible to their communities, however, a majority of the directly affected communities along A3S2 oppose it due to the proximity to adjacent development and potential impacts.

Corridor B3: The majority of communities that support a build corridor, expressed a preference to support Corridor B3 based on its blend of travel performance, community compatibility, reduced impacts and ability to move freight off of local roads. Corridor B3 is viewed by many stakeholders as the corridor that best meets both the current and future needs of the region based on its ability to address traffic demands, provide a regional bypass to existing east-west congested areas and accommodate multi-purpose uses. Many stakeholders also believe that the shorter length, lower cost, and moderate impacts of Corridor B3, combined with better overall travel performance and higher ADT's and a greater distance from I-80, will make it the more financially viable corridor. Supporters of Corridor B3 also believe that it is the most viable corridor in terms of potential future expansion to the east and west.

Corridor B4: Stakeholders supporting Corridor B4 feel it is the best corridor because it would be removed from the population centers where more homes and property owners might be impacted, and because it would provide access to planned rail facilities south of Lowell. However, little formal support has been received for Corridor B4.

Public Hearing Comments: Public hearings were held on July 31 and August 1, 2012 and public comments were invited on the Draft EIS. In addition to stakeholder mailing list, notices were sent to landowners of over 2000 parcels that could be directly affected by the 2000' wide planning corridors of A3S2, B3, and B4. Stakeholders submitted a total of 1,024 unique comments during the Draft EIS Comment Period between July 13, 2012 and August 29, 2012 with the largest single subset of comments (357) concerning alternatives, and a variety of comments on other topics such as land acquisition, public outreach and other issues. Of the comments indicating a preference for or against an alternative, 9 comments support and 97 comments oppose Corridor A3S2, 100 comments support and 38 comments oppose Corridor B3, 14 comments support and 24 comments oppose Corridor B4, 16 comments oppose Corridors B3 and B4, 171 comments were in favor of a No-Action Alternative, 236 comments generally oppose the project without mention of a specific corridor, 17 comments generally support the Illiana Corridor without specific mention of a corridor, and 302 comments are neutral. In summary, 69% of the comments indicating support for a build corridor 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 build alternative.

In addition to comments submitted via verbal public hearing testimony, in writing, or via website, approximately 1,696 signatures were submitted during the Draft EIS comment period through petitions. Of these, 880 signatures opposed Corridor B4 and 816 signatures supported the No-Action alternative.

2.1.5 Corridor Flexibility

Each corridor's flexibility to accommodate a wider alignment was also considered in determining the preferred corridor. In localized areas, a working alignment wider than 400 feet may be desired to provide for environmental mitigation (wetland mitigation, water quality BMPs, expanded habitat and resource protection measures), frontage road

access connections, etc. Project stakeholders identified this factor as an important consideration.

For comparison, each corridor was assessed to determine the increase in impacts if a wider working alignment was considered. Based on this assessment, Corridor A3S2 would result in the highest relative increase in impacts because it would traverse more developed areas, and would therefore be less flexible with respect to accommodating localized wider working alignment areas if determine to be required. Corridors B3 and B4 would have fewer comparative increases in impacts because they both traverse less developed areas.

3.0 Summary

Corridor B3 has been identified as the preferred alternative. When considering socio-economic and environmental impacts, travel performance, constructability, cost, stakeholder input, and corridor flexibility, Corridor B3 performs the best when compared to Corridors A3S2 and B4.

Corridor A3S2 and Corridor B3 have similar travel performance, however, the difference in magnitude in impacts between the two corridors make it unreasonable to carry Corridor A3S2 further into the Tier Two NEPA studies. Corridor A3S2 has constructability and cost concerns related to the mile long Des Plaines River crossing. Corridor A3S2 requires substantially more land to accommodate population and employment growth induced by the corridor, compared to Corridor B3 (4,929 acres vs. 2,699 acres). For these reasons, and the other reasons discussed in Section 2.0 of this document, , Corridor A3S2 has been dismissed from further consideration and will not be carried forward into the Tier Two NEPA studies.

Corridors B3 and B4 have similar environmental impacts, however, Corridor B3 has better travel performance with respect to nearly all travel performance measures related to the purpose and need, for both the tolled and non-tolled scenarios. Corridor B4's poorer travel performance is attributed to its greater distance away from the more densely populated regions in the Indiana portion of the study area. Corridor B4 has fewer wetland impacts than Corridor B3 (15 acres vs. 35 acres), however, there are other factors with Corridor B4 as discussed in Section 2.0 of this document, that require it to be dismissed.

From a total water resources impact perspective, Corridor B3 has lower overall impacts. Corridor B4 would impact 20 more streams than Corridor B3 and Corridor B4 crosses 21 more impaired streams than Corridor B3. Corridor B4 has more than twice the volume in acre-feet of impacted floodplains (108.0), compared to Corridor B3 (45.7).

Corridor B4 impacts wellhead protection areas of four Town of Lowell municipal wells. Corridor B4 introduces substantially more diagonal parcel severances compare to Corridor B3 (83 vs. 0). Corridor B4 also contains a surficial formation of muck soils

toward the east end of the corridor that would be expensive to remediate, compared to the soils encountered along Corridor B3.

The additional cost and impacts of Corridor B4 in Indiana, as compared to B3, is a major factor to overcome with respect to implementation of B4.

For these reasons, and the additional details described in Section 4.2, Corridor B4 has been dismissed from further consideration and will not be carried forward into the Tier Two NEPA studies.

Corridor B3 has the overall least impacts to the natural and built environment, when compared with both Corridor B4 and Corridor A3S2. Corridor B3 provides better travel performance than Corridor B4. Under a tolling scenario, Corridor B3 also performs better than Corridor A3S2. If a toll is applied, Corridor B3 has less traffic diverted away from it than does Corridor A3S2, which is a consideration for future assessment of funding.

Corridor B3 would have less potential to shift population and employment from the older and more developed areas north of the Study Area than Corridor A3S2. Corridor B3 would provide increased accessibility benefits for the South Sub-Region north of the Study Area, similar to Corridor A3S2.

The B3 corridor is located in areas with less environmental feature constraints and built feature constraints. This offers the best flexibility to accommodate mitigation for project impacts.

Corridor B3 is the least costly to construct due to being the shortest corridor, in addition to having footprint flexibility for avoidance of impacts and costly constructability features.

The majority of communities, agencies, and organized interest groups that support a build corridor, expressed a preference for Corridor B3 based on its blend of travel performance, community compatibility, reduced impacts and ability to move freight off of local roads.