

Appendix D.5

Summary of Comments Received at Public Meetings

Public Information Meeting # 1 Summary

Public Information Meeting # 1 Meeting Summary

Date of Meeting: June 15, 2000

Location: Constantine High School Cafeteria

Time: 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Total Number of Meeting Attendees: 121

Meeting Sign-in sheets are attached in Appendix A

Summary of Written Comments Received:

- Utilize existing US-131 as much as possible within Mottville Township.
- Address Three Rivers accidents from the side roads.
- Need for Rest Area.
- Look at roadway west of Three Rivers, such as Roberts Road.
- Existing roadway would not be sufficient for a freeway.
- Do nothing – there are so many roads that need to be fixed, should not add another.
- Alternative C would involve the least amount of home relocation and less break-up of family farms.
- Enforce speed limits within the Village of Constantine, would lessen the impact of truck traffic.
- Prefer Alternative C as it would require less homes and farms to be relocated.
- The sooner a decision is made, the better.
- US-131 north of the Indiana State Line needs pavement improvements.
- Alternatives B and C are unacceptable due to many-generation family properties, prefer existing US-131 with improvements.
- Alternative D is the best looking route
- US-131 and Anderson Road (50 acres) - Potential industrial employer of 800-1,000 people, major divisional headquarters is proposed which would involve the production, distribution, and RandD generating 75+ trucks per day.
- Stone Lake drain is located at US-131 and Anderson Road.
- The best route is Blue School Road from the State Line to Three Rivers.
- Alternatives are varied and all seem to be workable.
- Concerned with school bus transportation resulting in additional costs as a great number of Constantine Public School buses have to travel great distances to the west (Mendon).
- You did a fine job of answering my questions as well as you could.
- The sooner improvements are made the better.

Summary of Map/Verbal Comments Received:

- Parcel being sold south of Anderson's Grain Elevator for future industrial development.

- 50 acre parcel just south of Anderson Road/west of US-131 is going to be developed as industrial – (800 – 1000 employees, 11 acre building).
- Sewer line to be extended from White Pigeon down US-131 to develop industrial site at Anderson Road and US-131.
- Parcel on east side of US-131 south of MedTec Corp. is being sold for industrial development.
- Stone Lake Drainage south of Anderson Road will be moved 100' south if industrial park builds.
- Property south of Stone Lake Road is considering selling to an industrial developer.
- Anderson's Grain Elevator has expanded its services and now provides gravel from its gravel transfer station.
- Alternative F: most clear, unobstructed, logical choice.
- Great Blue Heron reserve on the White Pigeon River west of study area.
- Alternative G: makes more sense.
- Lots of houses would be impacted on Alternative F.
- Cellular Tower is located just east of existing US-131 north of Dickinson Road, a second tower is under consideration at the same location.
- Building a subdivision from Quarterline to N. River Road, between Alternatives C and F.
- New house being built on Millers Mill Road near Alternatives B, C, and C-1.
- Sewer line along the west-side of existing US-131 from the bend in Constantine, up King Road, and ties into Three Rivers sewer system on the west side of US-131.
- Property line shown incorrectly just north of the Constantine Village limits.
- Turf farm located north of Miller's Mill Road between US-131 and Young's Prairie Road
- Property adjacent to Zerbe Road (west of US-131) is farmed by property owner on the east side of US-131.
- Quicksand on Young's Prairie Road just west of the study area.
- Several parcels at Zerbe and Shaffer Roads owned by resident on Zerbe Road
- Much of the farmland north of Constantine is leased by non-tenant farmers.
- Recommendation was made to connect existing US-131 with Alternative E just north of Withers Road in order to provide a more gradual slope than following existing US-131.
- Many accidents occur through the hilly portions north of Withers Road.
- Heaviest volume of traffic occurs between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m.

Public Information Meeting # 2 Summary

Public Information Meeting # 2 Meeting Summary

Date of Meeting: March 15, 2001

Location: Constantine High School Cafeteria
Constantine, Michigan

Time: 4:00 – 5:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Purpose: The purpose of Public Information Meeting # 2 was to present and obtain the public's comments on the preliminary Practical Alternatives developed to date south of M-60.

Total Number of Meeting Attendees: 135

Summary of Written Comments Received:

- Would like to see Visitors Center and Enhancement funding.
- Have an interest in land exchange for wetland development.
- To avoid lots of problems with your project and also to follow the original footprint as much as possible (even thru 3 Rivers) elevate the highway.
- We appreciate your effort. Looking forward to the completion of the 131 route and the removal of most of the truck traffic from the present US-131.
- Thank you for your time and many explanations about my home under your orange alternative. I hope you do not use the existing US-131 because I think Constantine needs a smaller road to get north to Three Rivers and south to White Pigeon without taking elderly drivers on a fast four-lane road or freeway.
- US-131 should be four lanes from Three Rivers to the northern light in Constantine. At the light north of Constantine US-131 should continue on west then curve south and follow Blue School Road. (With this alternative) very little good agriculture land would be chopped up and would be a lot less expensive.
- In the new expanded area of the study north of M-60, please consider the location of Meyer Broadway County Park. This is a 149-acre natural resource based recreation area that could be negatively affected by the placement of roadway. Currently the park is not represented on maps of the study area.
- Please consider the placement of a visitors center within the study area.
- Take the new road down the old road as much as possible bypass Constantine and Three Rivers on the west.
- Alternative P- 3 is o.k.
- Alternative P- 4 runs thru our farm. Home and barn cuts property in half. Also runs thru many of our neighbors homes. River crossing is a wetland marsh. March 2001 is under water. Check w/ DNR regarding wetlands. If you go through our property, we want the total parcel purchased. It would no longer support our interests.
- A welcome center would be perfect in this area. There is nothing as you come into the state from Coldwater to New Buffalo. A welcome center would be an asset to our state.

- We really need a Welcome Center and rest stop for visitor's coming into the state of Michigan. Those who come into our state should be made to feel welcome and shown the variety of activities and services available to them in our state.
- Some highway enhancement and clean up is very much in need.
- This study and road building plan is not needed. The funds could be better spent elsewhere.
- Alternative P-4 would appear to have the least impact on the river and its environment. Working around edges of farmland needs to be taken into account, as that also lessens impacts on people's homes.
- Just get it done!
- Alternative P-3 would appear to be the least disruptive of all alternatives.
- Crossing the river outside the village has some merit for consideration.
- I do not understand why any alternative route is needed. I realize Constantine has a Historic downtown area, however many downtown buildings have been vacant for years with little upkeep except some exterior paint, excluding the thought that extreme traffic is deteriorating structures. Constantine is not Kalamazoo. It is a small town not needing a big town highway.

Summary of Map/Verbal Comments Received:

- The Team should consider constructing an interchange at the Village of Constantine
- Blue School Road may be a better alternative than all the existing ones under consideration.
- Concerns were expressed regarding what would happen if an individual's house was not taken but the road is right behind my background.
- Several people expressed concerns about the cost of Alternative P-4 (far western alternative).
- Alternative P-3 was expressed as the preferred alternative by many individuals,
- People expressed concerns about alternative P-1, because of the level of current truck traffic.
- The Team should explore the option of constructing an elevated structure from the Indiana Toll Road to M-60.
- Questions were raised as to the date when the Preferred Alternative be selected and ROW acquisition begins.
- Hurry up! I do not know if I should sell my house or make improvements to it, or leave it as is since it might be acquired by ROW.
- Questions were raised regarding how far north the study area would be extended to
- Questions were raised as to what effects each alternative would have on a business in Constantine.
- It makes no sense to stop the study where it has been extended to, eventually you will need to extend the study further into Kalamazoo County.
- The public involvement opportunities have been outstanding. I feel much more comfortable with the alternatives now that I have had the chance to discuss them one on one. The open forum makes it very easy and comfortable to grasp the concepts you are presenting.
- Concerns were raised with Alternative P-4 and the cul-de-sac of Blue School Road.
- The Ominpoint Cellular Tower has been renamed to Vertex and the location has been moved west approximately twenty-five feet.
- The existing US-131 is fine the way it is, there is no need for improvement.

- Why are only limited access alternatives being looked at for the off-alignment alternatives?
- There is going to be a new high school on Riverside Drive east of Blue School Road. The funds were passed for this construction project years ago.
- The Planning Team should attempt to keep all roads open to through traffic if a new freeway is built intersecting them.
- I own a large agricultural parcel under several of your alignments and no one to date has coordinated individually with me regarding the alternatives.
- I am very pleased that the planning team to this point has been very considerate and committed to maintaining the present historical conditions of Constantine, yet at the same time attempting to improve the integrity of the downtown by removing noise, vibration, and dirt the large commercial truck bring into town.
- Alternative P-4 crosses the St. Joseph River at a location that is currently severely flooded and has lots of wetlands adjacent to it.
- Alternative P-6 as presented has major impacts on White Pigeon and the existing commercial and residential building along US-131.
- Why is a cloverleaf interchange necessary at US-12 as shown for Alternative P-3?
- Great Blue Heron reserve on the White Pigeon River west of study area
- Please contact so we can attend meetings to object. James Erlandson 14338 US 12, White Pigeon, MI 49099.
- Be sure to invite to special meeting for farmers in April. Jack Roberts, 14571 West M-60, Three Rivers, MI 49093.
- A concrete median barrier, similar to that on I-94 in Kalamazoo should be used for freeway options in lieu of a wide freeway median that would require large amounts of agricultural property.
- What is the typical width for a freeway and four-lane divided roadway section?
- What type of intersection is proposed for US-131 and Anderson Road? There has been talk of a new business on Anderson Road (west of US-131) that could result in 1,000 new jobs.
- The existing US-131/M-60 intersection is unsafe.
- Why can't a proposed bypass of the Village of Constantine use less farmland by moving it closer to the village limits?
- When will this project get built?
- Why can't we just build a five-lane roadway through the Village of Constantine?

Public Information Meeting # 3 Summary

Public Information Meeting # 3 Meeting Summary

Date of Meeting: August 1, 2001

Location: Three Rivers Community Center
Three Rivers, Michigan

Time: 4:00 – 5:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Purpose: The purpose of Public Information Meeting # 3 was to present and obtain the public's comments on the Illustrative Alternatives developed north of M-60.

Total Number of Meeting Attendees: 141

Summary of Written Comments Received:

- We live at 15017 Broadway which appears to be just west of alternative P-3. We would rather lose our property to the right of way than to have a major highway run next to our house.
- Main concern is to keep the new US-131 on the existing ROW as much as possible. The best route I see so far is using P-3 and connecting back to I-6 (existing ROW). I-8a makes no sense as you are out into irrigated agricultural ground. P-7 would take up major residential areas and farm ground. I-8b – I think is a little too tight to Three Rivers and an interchange should take place a little further north (possible I-8c).
- P-3 – You will not be able to find any property comparable to what we currently own. I doubt that even fair market value would be enough to build a comparable home.
- My interests center on the effects of the study on Coon Hollow Road which is my main access to Three Rivers and any travel north or south. My preference is the existing US-131 roadway, to minimize residential disturbance. I also feel that any options that leave farmland undisturbed should be strongly considered.
- Prefer P-3 (black route) which bypasses most residential areas between King and Garber Roads. P-6 (green) and P-5 (blue) cut off Withers Road which is the only crossing of the St. Joseph River between Constantine and Three Rivers. Alternatives P-6 and P-5 also remove access to the Fabius State Game area.
- As we look at the pink and black proposals our home business and church are impacted. Our business, Vetter Chevy-Buick is on both plans in the middle of a ramp. Our home is ¼ mile from the current US-131. Our church is the Church of the Nazarene which won't be affected as much as our livelihood and home. If we had to choose how can we? We need our business even after retirement to maintain adequate insurance. Please consider speaking to us about these serious concerns.
- We would like to see US-131 stay on the west side of the existing railroad around Flowerfield and Muskrat Road south of Schoolcraft.
- I have 15 acres on M-60 . I would like to sell but the state has me tied up and it is costing me interest at 10%, how is the state going to pay for this. I would like to talk to someone that can tell me what to do.

- I-8c makes too many cul-de-sacs. Our preference for the Wilbur Road area is I-8b. As for the route at M-60 to Wilbur Road, we prefer P-7 to Millard Road to the existing route at Coon Hollow.
- The bypass should go west of Wilbur Road and come back in closer to Heimbach Road. This alternative would provide more of a straight shot because then the church on Wilbur Road would not cause problems, it would not cause problems with the houses on Wilbur Road, and it would eliminate any trouble going to and from town because of the nursing home on Wilbur Road.
- P-3 – for benefit of the City of Three Rivers and everyone the road should stay closer to Roberts Road. It would give the city a chance to grow and potential land between road and landfill would be worth less – move road west ¼ mile.
- I still believe nothing should be done. I do however appreciate the opportunity to speak up. Our concern is that the least amount of people be displaced (including us) and the least impact made on the environment. The river and the surrounding area are beautiful and natural, and they deserve to stay that way for us and our kids.
- Thanks for the great visuals and personal guidance on US-131. Nice work! I must say that upgrading existing US-131 w/improvements would be the least disruptive alternative in terms of homes and farm property. To move further west would interrupt some of the best and last remaining farmland in this area, which is not acceptable to anyone in that area. There are also significant wildlife/environmental concerns west of US-131.
- Unrefine practical alternative P-2 to revert back to Illustrative Alternative B. This was the description of proposed rework when purchased property in May 1997. Concern is from Zerbe Road to the intersection of Millers Mill and Youngs Prairie Roads. P-4 interchange at Youngs Prairie is unacceptable. The existing US-131 ROW should be used as the only interchanges. P-3 interchange at Quarterline Road is unacceptable. The existing US-131 ROW should be used as the only interchanges. The preferred corridor is the “D” corridor as per map dated 1997.
- Use P-3 to I-6 down existing ROW. I-8B is not a good idea. I-8A is also not a good idea. Do not use P-7. Please listen to the people who want as much of the existing right-of-way used. Displace as few residential people as possible and disturb as little agriculture as possible.
- Please send newsletter. Coming too close to our house.
- I came to this meeting since you have refused to respond to e-mail and your website is not often updated. I was informed by your representative that you will offer no compensation for the loss of property value to my secluded acreage when you put a bridge and highway just down river. Will you further destroy the value of my property by building a bridge which denies recreational boat access to the river south of Constantine. The person I was referred to could not answer.
- P-6. See note drawn on red road.
- The rail relocation/grade separation project at Schoolcraft is wasteful and unnecessary. Stop this project and continue with a freeway by-pass solution. The north study area at Three Rivers should be extended to Heimbach Road with consideration of relocating M-60 out of Three Rivers with Heimbach as the new connection point between M-60 and US-131.
- Any new US-131 construction should be limited access freeway.
- I am happy to see that the intersection of US-131 and Wilbur Road (N. Main) is being improved. I must cross this on a daily basis – it is a very bad (dangerous) intersection. Also, of the various routing alternatives, I personally prefer I-8A (green).

- I don't think Constantine should be banded tight as shown by the black route around Constantine. I prefer the wider route to give the community the room and houses along the village limits – the orange route. I would like to see the work started from the toll road to M-60 to get the trucks out of Constantine.
- Any that will preserve the nature and wildlife I-7.
- The best way around Three Rivers is to use I-3 and then tie into I-7 except for where I-7 ties back into Old US-131. It should stay west of Wilbur Road until closer to Heimbach and Moorpark area, and then tie back in. Also, because of the number of houses, churches, and the nursing home, this wouldn't cause anymore travel time or problems for emergency services or church travel. As far as the large amount of people on Wilbur Road, cutting through Null Road would be minimal trouble and would allow for increase in city limits, business improvements, and a more friendly roadway. But in all, we need the bypass and without some change, the only other way to go is to use I-6. Inclosing, if Schoolcraft isn't handled, this is all for nothing. If nothing else, go over Schoolcraft by going above the old roadway.

Public Information Meeting # 4 Summary

Public Information Meeting # 4 Meeting Summary

Date of Meeting: May 26, 2004

Location: Three Rivers Community Center

Time: 3:30 –7:30 p.m.

Purpose: The purpose of Public Information Meeting # 4 was to present and obtain the public comments on the Practical Alternatives 5 (PA-5) and 5 Modified (PA-5 MOD).

Total Number of Meeting Attendees: 61

Meeting Handouts:

The US-131 Improvement Study Public Information Meeting #4 handouts which were distributed at the meeting are attached.

Summary of Written Comments Received:

- Utilize existing US-131 as much as possible.
- Minimize impact on effected property.
- Need for Rest Area.
- Utilizing the existing alignment for PA-5 and 5 MOD in Three Rivers is not the solution.
- Identify preferred alternative as soon as possible.
- A freeway is needed.
- Either PA-1, 2 or 3 should be constructed.
- Re-routing US-131 around Constantine will make it a ghost town, and is not necessary
- PA-5 is the best alternative.
- Any of the alternatives would work, but should be at least four lanes throughout the entire county.
- PA-5 and 5 MOD are short term fixes, and not should receive any further consideration.
- How will Fabious Township Fire Department access the community under the freeway options?
- Wal-mart is being proposed west of Millard Road on property considered for the freeway options.
- Consider four-lane options only.
- MDOT should purchase the necessary right-of-way now, while it's still inexpensive.
- PA-5 and 5 MOD have the least impact on the environment and our neighborhood.
- Alternatives are varied and all seem to be workable.
- You did a fine job of answering my questions as well as you could.

Summary of Map/Verbal Comments Received:

- I do not understand why any alternative route is needed.

- Concerns were expressed regarding what would happen if an individual's house was not taken but the road is right behind my backyard.
- Several people expressed concerns that MDOT has already determined the Preferred Alternative.
- Questions were raised as to what effects that a bypass would have on businesses in Constantine.
- People expressed concerns about how P-5 and 5 MOD would solve the high truck traffic problem.
- The delays in determining a preferred alternative is effecting the sell of my property
- The existing US-131 is fine the way it is, there is no need for improvement.
- Questions were raised as to the date when the Preferred Alternative will be selected.
- PA- 5 is o.k.
- Use county road 17 for the new route.