

# **Community Context Audit (CCA) Survey Results**

Barrington Road at I-90 Interchange Improvements  
Hoffman Estates, Illinois

**Prepared for:**

**Village of Hoffman Estates  
Illinois Department of Transportation  
Illinois Tollway**

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# BARRINGTON ROAD AT I-90 INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENTS COMMUNITY CONTEXT AUDIT

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **OVERVIEW**

The purpose of the Community Context Audit (CCA) is to help understand the fabric of the community surrounding the Barrington Road at I-90 Interchange and create a foundation for the development of a Project Problem Statement and Purpose and Need. The Village of Hoffman Estates, in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Illinois Highway, is utilizing a collaborative approach that involves stakeholders to develop a facility that fits into its surroundings and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources while maintaining safety and mobility. Stakeholders are defined as any person, group or organization that has a direct or indirect impact due to the project.

This project is being developed using the principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS). CSS is an interdisciplinary approach that seeks effective, multi-modal transportation solutions by working with stakeholders to develop, build, and maintain cost-effective transportation facilities that fit into and reflect the project's surroundings—its “context.” Through early, frequent, and meaningful communication with stakeholders, and a flexible and creative approach to design, the resulting projects should improve safety and mobility for the traveling public, while seeking to preserve and enhance the scenic, economic, historic, and natural qualities of the settings through which they pass.

The CSS approach will provide stakeholders with the tools and information they require to effectively participate in the study process including providing an understanding of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, transportation planning guidelines, design guidelines, and the relationship between transportation issues (needs) and project alternatives. The CSS process will provide all project stakeholders a mechanism to share comments or concerns about transportation objectives and project alternatives, as well as improve the ability of the project team to understand and address concerns raised. This integrated approach to problem solving and decision-making will help build community involvement and promote involvement through the project study and development process.

Three primary means of outreach to stakeholders are: a Community Advisory Group, the Project Study Group, and the community members at large. A Community Advisory Group (CAG) has been formed for the Barrington Road at I-90 project to help assess public perception in addition to assisting the study team by identifying community issues related to the project. The CAG consists of community leaders, business interests and some residents. The Project Study Group (PSG) has been formed and consists of a multidisciplinary team of representatives from Hoffman Estates, IDOT, Illinois Tollway, FHWA, and the Project Consultant Team. The PSG will make project recommendations and decisions, and has primary responsibility for the project development process. The community members at large will be involved through providing feedback at the public meetings and public hearing that will be conducted as part of this study.

## **OBJECTIVE**

The Community Context Audit is expected to provide a greater sense of community understanding to Hoffman Estates, IDOT, the Illinois Tollway, and the design team to assist in the decision-making and context sensitive solutions processes. The input of the local officials, stakeholders, and other users of the Barrington Road at I-90 interchange reflect the true needs of people living and working within the area who use the interchange area in some function every day.

## **CONTEXT AUDIT METHODOLOGY**

The Community Context Audit is an assessment of five key community context elements including:

- Transportation Infrastructure
- Community Characteristics & Land Use
- Neighborhood Culture, Aesthetics and Street Amenities
- Economic Development
- Community Planning

This Community Context Audit has been shaped by comments regarding these five topic areas from various community outreach methods and techniques. Information was obtained primarily through community research and the general public, with conclusions for this summary being garnered from surveys and short-form questionnaires gathered from community members and local officials.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

### **Key transportation-related issues:**

- Traffic Congestion
- Access
- Safety

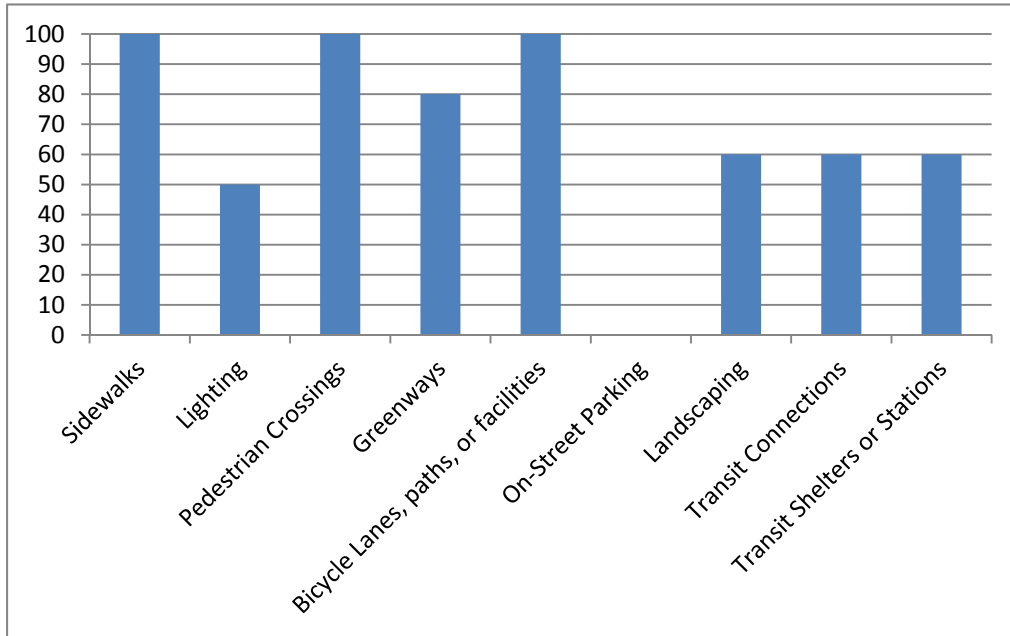
### **Key transportation-related features concerns:**

- Sidewalks
- Pedestrian Crossings
- Greenways
- Bicycle Lanes, Paths, or Facilities
- Transit Connections

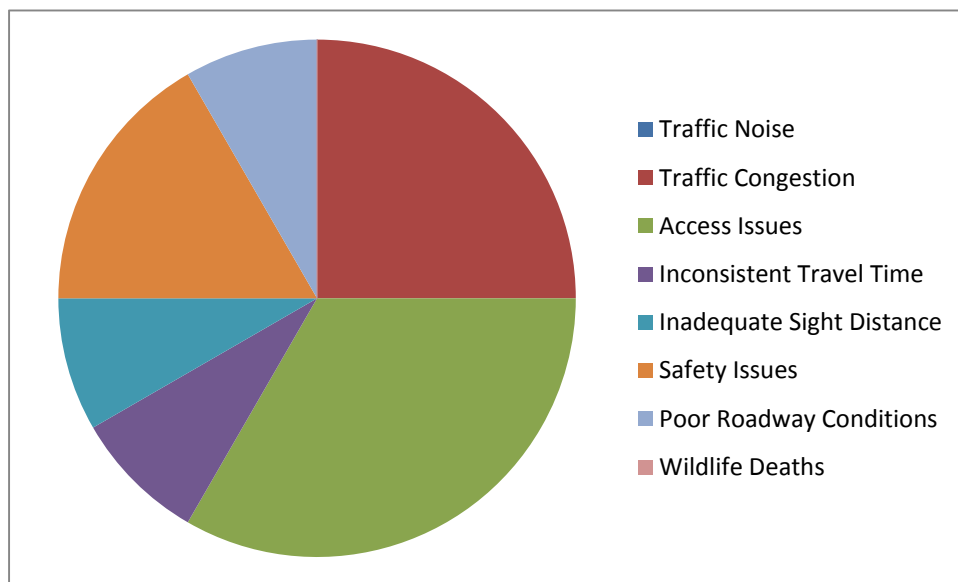
**Key community and economic characteristics:**

- Community Activity Centers
- Surrounding Environment
- Dining, Entertainment, and Lodging

**PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS THAT RANKED TOPIC AS EITHER 'MOST IMPORTANT' OR 'IMPORTANT'**



**TRANSPORTATION-RELATED ISSUES AT BARRINGTON AND I-90**



# COMMUNITY CONTEXT AUDIT

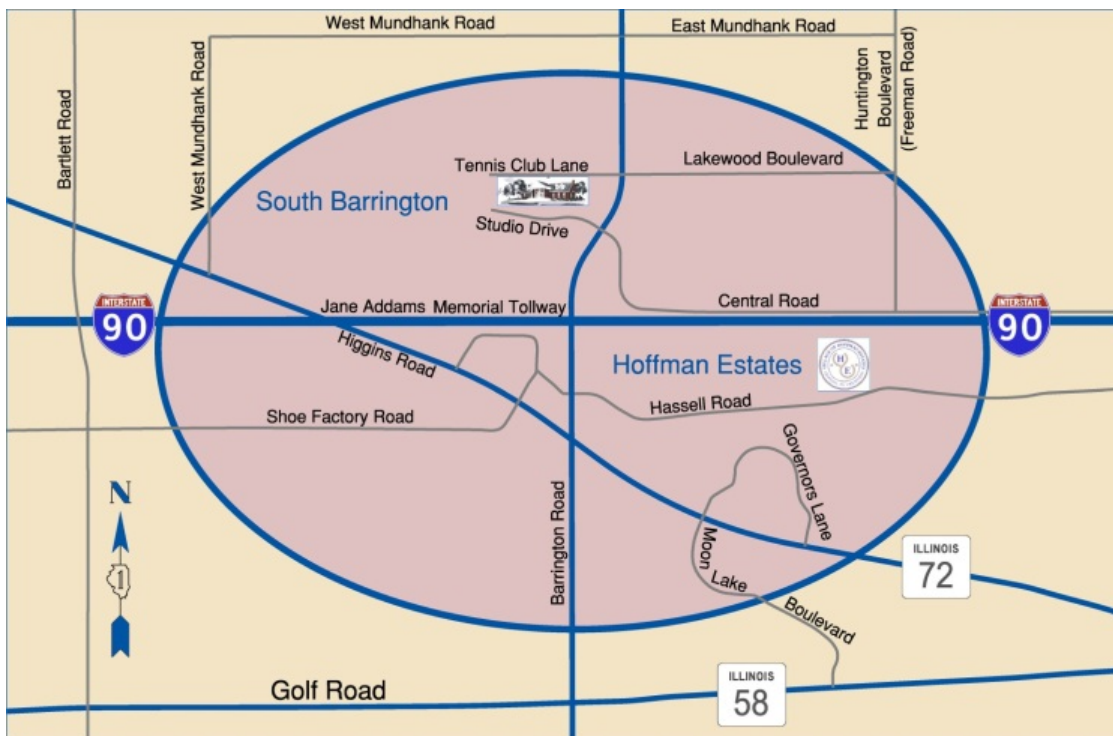
## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Barrington Road at I-90 interchange is a vital highway access component for the Villages of Hoffman Estates and South Barrington, as well as the Townships of Palatine, Schaumburg, Barrington and Hanover Townships. Barrington Road is an IDOT-designated north-south Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA) in northern Cook County. SRA routes supplement the Chicago-area expressway system by handling larger volumes of traffic. The Jane Addams Memorial Tollway is part of Interstate 90, the longest interstate in the United States, covering a 77-mile segment of the Illinois Tollway System. The Jane Addams Memorial Tollway extends from near the Wisconsin Border to the Kennedy Expressway. The Barrington Road interchange provides access for the SRA to and from the I-90 interstate system.

## STUDY AREA

The Barrington Road at I-90 interchange is located within the communities of the Village of Hoffman Estates and the Village of South Barrington, in northern Cook County, Illinois. The transportation needs at the interchange focus on the accommodation of current and future demands, specifically, the addition of access from Barrington Road to and from the west on I-90. The study area for the interchange project extends north from the Lakewood Boulevard to south of Higgins Road (Illinois Route 72); and on I-90, it extends east of Huntington Boulevard and west near Bartlett Road.

Figure 1 – Study Area Map



## **COMMUNITY CONTEXT ELEMENTS**

The following categories are elements identified as significant in the CSS project process for the Barrington Road at I-90 Interchange Study.

### **TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Barrington Road at I-90 interchange is a vital highway access component for the Villages of Hoffman Estates and South Barrington, as well as the Townships of Palatine, Schaumburg, Barrington and Hanover.

Key transportation concerns within the study area as identified by the community:

- Traffic Congestion
- Access
- Safety

#### **TRAFFIC CONGESTION**

Several residents raised concerns about traffic congestion and backups; however, they also commented that changes to the interchange could bring positive change to the community, allowing traffic to flow more freely which could better support the businesses in the area. The project was also noted as potentially shortening commuter trips to and from work and possibly increasing the number of visitors to the area with new access to and from I-90. The intersection of Barrington Road and Higgins Road (Highway 72) was identified as being the most congested intersection within the study area.

#### **ACCESS**

Feedback from the surveys ranked issues related to access as the foremost problem at the interchange of Barrington Road and I-90. Currently, there is no western access to I-90 from Barrington Road. The lack of sidewalks along Barrington Road was particularly apparent; adding them where feasible and planning for more in future development was suggested.

#### **SAFETY**

Safety concerns are closely linked to the previously noted traffic congestion concerns. Backups and traffic congestion on I-90 create safety issues as there are incidents and collisions as well as the concern for emergency vehicles having access to and from area emergency services and medical facilities. Westbound traffic was identified to have higher amounts of traffic accidents.

## **COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS AND LAND USE**

Key community characteristics identified by the community:

- Community Activity Centers

- Surrounding Environment
- Dining, Entertainment, and Lodging

#### COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTERS

Residents identified several community activity centers within the study area, including Willow Creek Church, Barrington Community Center, St. Alexius Medical Center, and other health and mental health services. These were all characterized as important assets to the surrounding area.

#### SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT

Respondents noted the Paul Douglas Forest Preserve is near the study area and identified open spaces for residents as important. Other aesthetic characteristics noted as community characteristics included landscaping and architectural features, minimal billboards, and an open view with elements of nature. These characteristics are important to maintain throughout the project.

#### DINING, ENTERTAINMENT, AND LODGING

According to responses, the study area attracts visitors with the many options for entertainment: restaurants and dining, movie theaters, hotels, and the previously mentioned forest preserve. These elements of the community and access should be considered throughout the project.

### **TRANSPORTATION-RELATED FEATURES**

#### **Key transportation-related features concerns:**

- Sidewalks
- Pedestrian Crossings
- Greenways
- Bicycle Lanes, Paths, or Facilities
- Transit Connections

Much of the concern related to street amenities was based on the lack of pedestrian and bicycle options, specifically the lack of sidewalks and greenways and the ability for bicyclists and pedestrians to cross I-90. Although these were both noted as being present in the study area, they were noted to be very important considerations in the project. It was also noted that the area lacked transit options including transit shelters or stations.

### **LOCAL OFFICIALS AUDIT**

Representatives from local agencies also contributed by completing longer and more detailed Community Context Audit surveys. These surveys included four sections: Community



Characteristics/Land Use; Infrastructure Assessment; Economic Development; and Community Planning. A summary of the results for each section is provided below.

## **COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS AND LAND USE**

Key community characteristics and land use features were identified by the local officials:

- Residential areas
- Commercial centers
- Industrial centers
- Man-made features included pipelines and electric wires
- A proposed future site of Metra's STAR Line route is planned for the median on I-90
- Recreation centers
- Wetlands were identified as being in the northwest corner of the interchange

The overall assessment of the community was characterized as suburban, with a mix of rural facilities nearby. Many of the key characteristics identified were the same as those mentioned by the community respondents – these include the forest preserves, recreation and community centers.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT**

Local officials identified the follow infrastructure characteristics to be important:

- Sidewalks, ADA compliance, and bicycle lanes were all identified as being both present and of high importance, but I-90 is a barrier to their connectivity and safety
- Transit connections were noted as lacking, while the proposed future STAR Line station was also mentioned
- Pedestrian safety features – lighting and crossings – were identified as high importance as crossing I-90 is very dangerous
- The roadways are not compatible with existing community patterns
- Traffic signals at the Barrington Road and Hassell Road intersection were noted as constraining with proximity to the current ramp configuration

Overall, respondents noted issues with I-90 as a barrier to connectivity and safety for pedestrians and vehicular travel.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The following is a summary of future and existing community development indicators:

- There are several areas identified for new development as well as commercial redevelopment of vacant lots and the Barrington Square Mall; it was also noted that there are several infill properties near the study area that need to be developed
- The roadways in the study area serve as major commuter corridors
- Visitors are attracted to the area by the many commercial uses, residential areas, in addition to the cultural and entertainment resources.

Each of these characteristics is important to consider for the project. Minimizing disruption to the many resources and businesses in the area was noted as an important factor. It was also noted that the project could have positive impacts on the economic development in the area.

## **COMMUNITY PLANNING**

Few local planning initiatives in context with the proposed project were mentioned. However, local officials did reference the Village of Hoffman Estates Comprehensive Bicycle Plan and the Village of Hoffman Estates Comprehensive Plan, which identified interchange improvements as desirable. Metra's STAR Line would also be complimentary as it is a transit-oriented improvement proposed for the area. Finally, this project is noted to be important to serve both regional and local transportation needs.

## **CONCLUSION**

The information obtained in the Community Context Audit (CCA) will be used by the project team throughout the project development process. The CCA is essential in defining the key community characteristics that are instrumental in the CSS process and in evaluating potential alternatives.

Of utmost importance to the participants in both audits were issues related to pedestrian access, safety, congestion, and consideration of the local aesthetic and natural environment. Safety in particular was an aspect of community context that was expressed as relevant to numerous other issues, including access and congestion, and was ranked as a premier concern for all modes of travel.

The Barrington Road at I-90 interchange is part of a heavily used transportation network for commuters and nearby residents as well as those looking to access nearby businesses and recreational areas. Traffic congestion and transportation infrastructure that cannot support increasing growth are major concerns for stakeholders.

The study area characteristic was unanimously cited as suburban, and has been identified by participants as an area expecting future commercial growth. However, the current transportation layout threatens that growth.

This input is now a part of the project development process. With it, the CSS process can continue to evaluate the effects that improvements to the Barrington Road at I-90 interchange may have on the community, as well as assisting in identifying suitable courses of action to improve the interchange and address community concerns.