



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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www.dnr.illinois.gov

JB Pritzker, Governor
Colleen Callahan, Director

Illinois Route 53 Expansion Land Alternative Use Task Force

Wednesday, November 23
2:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

Dan Lewis, Legislative Liaison at the IL Department of Natural Resources and the point-person for administrative support for this Task Force, was absent from the meeting. Providing administrative support on his behalf were Jamie Reynolds, Administrative Assistant, and Jose Burgos, Legislative Liaison. The meeting began shortly after 1:00 PM by confirming that there was a quorum present.

Co-Chair and Senator Melinda Bush ran the meeting and began by asking to postpone the approval and posting of the November 21 meeting minutes on the task force's webpage on the IDNR website, due to the quick turn around between meetings. Hearing no comments or objections, Village of Long Grove Mayor Bill Jacob motioned to approve. The motion was seconded and subsequently approved unanimously.

Senator Bush asked members to direct their attention to the document presented on screen, which was also emailed to members of the Taskforce shortly after the meeting began. The document contained a list of the eight items/clauses/suggestions for the resolution that the task force has been working on and discussing. Senator Bush asked that the items/clauses be voted on individually. Senator Bush reviewed every item listed on the document and read each of the suggested alternatives/versions. She asked members to vote on each one of them and the suggested alternative/version with the highest votes was adopted.

The items of consideration and votes were as follows:

Item #1: Task Force approved changing the name at the top of the document.

Adopted language: IL Route 53 Land Expansion Alternative Use Task Force

Item #2: Task Force adopted Version 3.

Version 1 received 10 votes and was not adopted: WHEREAS, In September of 2019, the Villages of Deer Park, Grayslake, Hawthorn Woods, Kildeer, Lake Zurich, Long Grove, and Mundelein signed a joint letter to Illinois Governor JB Pritzker expressing support for the conversion of the former Route 53 corridor to a greenway designated for public recreation, environmental conservation, and compatible, complementary development.

Version 2 received 2 votes and was not adopted: WHEREAS, In September of 2019, the Villages of Deer Park, Grayslake, Hawthorn Woods, Kildeer, Lake Zurich, Long Grove, and Mundelein signed a joint letter to Illinois Governor JB Pritzker expressing support for the collaboration and coordination of relevant state agencies, local Mayors, County, and State officials to study the corridor and develop a plan for the highest and best use of the land within the Route 53 expansion corridor, which would include contemplation of the land as a greenway designated for public recreation, environmental conservation, and compatible, complementary development; and

Version 3 received 11 votes and was adopted: WHEREAS, In September of 2019, the Villages of Deer Park, Grayslake, Hawthorn Woods, Kildeer, Lake Zurich, Long Grove, and Mundelein signed a joint letter to Illinois Governor JB Pritzker expressing support for the collaboration and coordination of relevant state agencies, local Mayors, County, and State officials to study the corridor and develop a plan for the highest and best use of the land within the Route 53 expansion corridor, to ensure that the public investment that was made over the decades to purchase these parcels culminates in a public space available for community health and enjoyment and to transform this land into a greenway trail and environmental sanctuary, as well as other Village-specific uses for this land; and

Item #3: Task Force tabled the vote until next meeting, when an attorney can be present.

Version 1 (IDOT): WHEREAS, the Illinois Department of Transportation maintains that transportation needs along the Routes 53 and 120 require that portions of the land reserved for the study be kept in the Department's custody for improvements of roadways within the corridor that exist at the time of the writing and adoption of this resolution; and

Version 2 (Barbara Klipp): WHEREAS, the Illinois Department of Transportation maintains transportation needs along the Route 53 corridor where it intersects with state highways and has several projects under construction or in advanced stages of development at the time of this resolution; and

Item #4: Task Force adopted recommended changes.

WHEREAS, Studies reveal that for every dollar invested in restoration, eight dollars flow back to the community in the form of increased property values and reduced health costs, and the creation of trails and open space within the greenway offer economic development opportunities via ecotourism and increased property values; and

Item #5: Task Force adopted Version 2.

Version 1 received 6 votes and was not adopted: WHEREAS, The establishment of a greenway would connect existing parks and preserves with each other, as well as communities throughout the corridor, inviting people across the region and expanding existing public open spaces to link wetlands, habitat, and recreational space; and

Version 2 received 10 votes and was adopted: WHEREAS, The establishment of a greenway and compatible and complementary development would not only connect communities, parks, and

preserves throughout the corridor but also expand existing public open spaces and link wetlands, habitat, sustainable agriculture, and recreational space; and

Version 3 received 6 votes and was not adopted: WHEREAS, The establishment of a greenway would not only connect communities, parks, and preserves throughout the corridor, but also expand existing public open spaces and link wetlands, habitat, sustainable agriculture, and recreational space; and

Item #6: Task Force adopted Version 2.

Version 1 received 7 votes and was not adopted: WHEREAS, The establishment of a greenway would connect existing parks and preserves with each other, as well as communities throughout the corridor, inviting people across the region and expanding existing public open spaces to link wetlands, habitat, and recreational space; and

Version 2 received 11 votes and was adopted: WHEREAS, The establishment of a community-driven greenway with complementary development along the Illinois Route 53 corridor would enable communities along the greenway to create a collaborative vision and a sense of place, fostering engagement and contributions towards healthier, more resilient, and beautiful communities; and

Item #7: Task Force tabled the vote until next meeting.

Version 1: RESOLVED, By the Illinois Route 53 Expansion Land Alternative Use Task Force that we strongly recommend the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority shall transfer all parcels of land reserved for the Illinois Route 53 Expansion to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources; and be it further

Version 2 (IDOT): RESOLVED, By the Illinois Route 53 Expansion Land Alternative Use Task Force that we strongly recommend the Illinois Department of Transportation shall transfer all state-owned parcels of land reserved for the Illinois Route 53 Expansion, and not required for any other improvement and apparatuses to existing roadways, to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in accordance with Federal Regulation 23 CFR 710 and Illinois State Statue 605 ILCS 5/4-508 as amended from time to time; and be it further

Version 3 (Barbara Klipp): RESOLVED, That the Illinois Department of Natural Resources shall work with the Illinois Department of Transportation to develop a memorandum of understanding or agreement to grant the Illinois Department of Transportation easements or rights of way necessary for the minimum amount of land needed for their current roadwork projects that exist at the time of the writing and adoption of this resolution and have completed at least phase II engineering

Version 4 (Long Grove): RESOLVED, By the Illinois Route 53 Expansion Land Alternative Use Task Force that we strongly recommend the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority shall transfer all parcels of land reserved for the Illinois Route 53 Expansion to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, except for sites in excess of 250 acres adjacent to existing railroad facilities [and south of Rt. 176], which sites should be conveyed by the

Illinois Department of Transportation for multi-modal development compatible and complementary to a regional greenway that preserves substantial environmentally sensitive features; and be it further

Item #8: Task Force approved of recommended changes.

RESOLVED, That the Illinois Route 53 Expansion Land Alternative Use Task Force strongly recommends that the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, upon the receipt of the aforementioned state-owned land along the Illinois Route 53 corridor from the Illinois Department of Transportation, shall, by January 31, 2023, form a working group composed of similar stakeholders as the Illinois Route 53 Expansion Land Alternative Use Task Force tasked with determining the development and establishment of a State Park or State Trail and other open space and natural area conservation purposes on the aforementioned land and identifying funding mechanisms to assist the Department with the maintenance and staffing of this new greenway; and be it further

RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be provided to officials of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Lake County Board, the Lake County Forest Preserve District, the Village of Grayslake, the Village of Hawthorn Woods, the Village of Long Grove, and the Village of Mundelein.

Minutes by Jose Burgos, Jamie Reynolds, and Dan Lewis, IDNR
dan.p.lewis@illinois.gov

Dear Task Force Members,

I have reviewed the draft resolution circulated in connection with yesterday's meeting. Although I have not reviewed the resolution specifically with the Long Grove Village Board, it is my strong sense from prior discussions that the resolution is generally consistent with the Village's perspective for the ultimate use of the Route 53 corridor.

I do see one significant variance between the draft resolution and the goals that have driven the Task Force since various members wrote to Governor Pritzker in September 2019. That variance relates to the goal of promoting compatible and complementary development of portions of the Rt. 53 corridor. In particular, development needs to be considered that will enhance non-vehicular transit options to reduce traffic demands on Lake County roadways and thereby enhance related environmental goals.

To that end, I am attaching a proposed revision to the resolution that preserves the overall objective of establishing a greenbelt while promoting complementary development and alternative transit options. The parameters reflected in the revised resolution relate to a large 300+ acre area in the corridor that abuts the EJ&J railroad and that at times has been considered for an additional commuter rail station on that line. This area is large enough to promote appropriate compatible development **and** preserve important natural features within the site.

I ask that the Task Force consider the revisions reflected in the attached modified resolution, which is included in both clean and blacklined format.

Thank you,

Bill Jacob
President
Village of Long Grove

IL Route 53 Land Transfer Resolution

WHEREAS, In August of 2019, the Illinois State Highway Toll Authority declared that it was not in the Tollway's interest to lead further development of the Illinois Route 52/120 project, and terminated the ongoing study and contracts related to the project; and

WHEREAS, In September of 2019, the Villages of Deer Park, Grayslake, Hawthorn Woods, Kildeer, Lake Zurich, Long Grove, and Mundelein signed a joint letter to Illinois Governor JB Pritzker expressing support for the conversion of the former Route 53 corridor to a greenway designated for public recreation, environmental conservation, and compatible, complementary development.

WHEREAS, In October of 2019, the Circuit Court of the 18th Judicial Circuit found that the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority had terminated the Illinois Route 53/120 project; and

WHEREAS, In June of 2021, the Illinois General Assembly authorized the creation of this Task Force to study alternative uses for the land that had been reserved for the study of the now-defunct Route 53/120 project; and

WHEREAS, Studies reveal that for every dollar invested in restoration, eight dollars flow back to the community and the creation of trails and open space within the greenway offer economic development opportunities via ecotourism and increased property values, which are a wealth generator that reduce health costs; and

WHEREAS, During a time when homes and businesses across the country increasingly experience life-changing floods and other extreme weather event due to climate change, an Illinois Route 53 corridor greenway would fortify community resiliency by protecting, restoring, and maintaining hundreds of acres of open space as a front-line defense; and

WHEREAS, The establishment of a greenway along the Illinois Route 53 corridor along with compatible and complementary development could aid Lake County and local units of government in achieving their net zero emission goals through ~~one of~~ the many ecological benefits it would provide and through responsible use and enhancement of existing transportation assets; and

WHEREAS, Lake County has more threatened species, endangered species, and biodiversity than any other county in Illinois and the creation of a greenway would combat the loss of biodiversity and secure habitat for an abundance of wildlife, allowing them to thrive and adapt to a changing climate; and

WHEREAS, The establishment of a greenway along with compatible and complementary development would connect existing parks and preserves with each other, as well as communities throughout the corridor, inviting people across the region and expanding existing public open spaces to link wetlands, habitat, and recreational space; and

WHEREAS, Regional planning authorities report a lasting 300% increase in the use of public open space since the COVID-19 pandemic, and the establishment of a greenway would help

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meet growing demand, facilitate equitable access to nature, and provide recreational opportunities for all residents; and

WHEREAS, The establishment of a community-driven greenway with complementary development along the Illinois Route 53 corridor would enable a collaborative vision of a place neighborhoods could engage and contribute to healthier, more resilient, and beautiful communities; and

WHEREAS, The creation of a greenway along the Illinois Route 53 corridor would catalyze opportunities to advance existing plans and policies such as Lake County Forest Preserve's 100-year vision and green infrastructure mapping, the goal set by conservation partners to protect 20 percent of Lake County by 2030, and the America the Beautiful initiative to protect 30 percent of our nation's lands and waters by 2030; and

WHEREAS, The State of Illinois has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to leverage the transformative power of exceptional planning ~~and~~ that enhances the use of existing transportation assets and to embrace a plan that yields multiple benefits for people, communities, and nature; and therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the Illinois Route 53 Expansion Land Alternative Use Task Force that we strongly recommend the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority shall transfer all parcels of land reserved for the Illinois Route 53 Expansion to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, except for sites in excess of 250 acres adjacent to existing railroad facilities, which sites should be conveyed by the Illinois Department of Transportation for multi-modal development compatible and complementary to a regional greenway that preserves substantial environmentally sensitive features; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Illinois Route 53 Expansion Land Alternative Use Task Force strongly recommends that the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, upon the receipt of the aforementioned state-owned land along the Illinois Route 53 corridor from the other state agencies, shall, by January 31, 2023, form a working group composed of similar stakeholders as the Illinois Route 53 Expansion Land Alternative Use Task Force tasked with determining the development and establishment of a State Park or State Trail and other open space and natural area conservation purposes on the aforementioned land and identifying funding mechanisms to assist the Department with the maintenance and staffing of this new greenway; and be it further

RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be provided to officials of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Illinois State Highway Toll Authority, the Lake County Board, the Lake County Forest Preserve District, the Village of Grayslake, the Village of Hawthorn Woods, the Village of Long Grove, and the Village of Mundelein.

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IL Route 53 Land ~~Transfer~~ **Expansion Alternative Use Task Force** Resolution

Commented [LDP1]: IDOT Suggestion

WHEREAS, In August of 2019, the Illinois State Highway Toll Authority declared that it was not in the Tollway's interest to lead further development of the Illinois Route 53/120 project, and terminated the ongoing study and contracts related to the project; and

WHEREAS, In September of 2019, the Villages of Deer Park, Grayslake, Hawthorn Woods, Kildeer, Lake Zurich, Long Grove, and Mundelein signed a joint letter to Illinois Governor JB Pritzker expressing support for **the collaboration and coordination of relevant state agencies, local Mayors, County, and State officials to study the corridor and develop a plan for the highest and best use of the land** ~~the conversion of the former~~ **within the Route 53 expansion corridor, to ensure that the public investment that was made over the decades to purchase these parcels culminates in a public space available for community health and enjoyment and to transform this land into a greenway trail and environmental sanctuary, as well as other Village-specific uses for this land;** and

Commented [LDP2]: Mundelein Suggestion

Commented [LDP3]: Barbara Klipp's Suggestion

WHEREAS, In October of 2019, the Circuit Court of the 18th Judicial Circuit found that the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority had terminated the Illinois Route 53/120 project; and

WHEREAS, In June of 2021, the Illinois General Assembly authorized the creation of this Task Force to study alternative uses for the land that had been reserved for the study of the ~~now-defunct~~ Route 53/120 project; and

Commented [LDP4]: IDOT Suggestion

WHEREAS, the Illinois Department of Transportation maintains that transportation needs along the Routes 53 and 120 require that portions of the land reserved for the study be kept in the Department's custody for improvements of roadways within the corridor ~~that exist at the time of the writing and adoption of this resolution;~~ and

Commented [LDP5]: Based on suggestions from John Wasik and Jessica Vealitzek

WHEREAS, Studies reveal that for every dollar invested in restoration, eight dollars flow back to the community **in the form of increased property values and reduced health costs**, and the creation of trails and open space within the greenway offer economic development opportunities via ecotourism and increased property values, ~~which are a wealth generator that reduce health costs;~~ and

Commented [LDP6]: Jessica Vealitzek's Suggestion

WHEREAS, During a time when homes and businesses across the country increasingly experience life-changing floods and other extreme weather events ~~due to climate change~~, an Illinois Route 53 corridor greenway would fortify community resiliency by protecting, restoring, and maintaining hundreds of acres of open space as a front-line defense; and

Commented [LDP7]: Dan's edit

WHEREAS, The establishment of a greenway along the Illinois Route 53 corridor **along with compatible and complementary development** could aid Lake County and local units of government in achieving their net zero emission goals through ~~one of the many ecological benefits it would provide~~ **and through responsible use and enhancement of existing transportation assets;** and

Commented [LDP8]: Long Grove Suggestion

WHEREAS, Lake County has more threatened species, endangered species, and biodiversity than any other county in Illinois and the creation of a greenway would combat the loss of

biodiversity and secure habitat for an abundance of wildlife, allowing them to thrive and adapt to a changing climate; and

WHEREAS, The establishment of a greenway ~~would not only connect existing communities, parks, and preserves throughout the corridor with each other, as well as communities throughout the corridor, inviting people across the region and expanding~~ **and compatible and complementary development** ~~existing public open spaces to~~ **and link wetlands, habitat, sustainable agriculture,** and recreational space; and

Commented [LDP9]: Long Grove Suggestion

Commented [LDP10]: Based on suggestions from John Wasik and Jessica Vealitzek

WHEREAS, Regional planning authorities report a lasting 300% increase in the use of public open space since the COVID-19 pandemic, and the establishment of a greenway would help meet growing demand, facilitate equitable access to nature, and provide recreational opportunities for all residents; and

WHEREAS, The establishment of a community-driven greenway ~~neighborhoods could engage and contribute~~ **with complementary development** ~~a collaborative vision of a place~~ **communities along the greenway to create a collaborative vision and a sense of place, fostering engagement and contributions towards** ~~to~~ healthier, more resilient, and beautiful communities; and

Commented [LDP11]: Long Grove Suggestion

Commented [LDP12]: Based on suggestion from Jessica Vealitzek

WHEREAS, The creation of a greenway along the Illinois Route 53 corridor would catalyze opportunities to advance existing plans and policies such as Lake County Forest Preserve's 100-year vision and green infrastructure mapping, the goal set by conservation partners to protect 20 percent of Lake County by 2030, and the America the Beautiful initiative to protect 30 percent of our nation's lands and waters by 2030; and

WHEREAS, The State of Illinois has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to leverage the transformative power of exceptional planning ~~to yield and embrace a plan that yields~~ multiple benefits for people, communities, and nature; and therefore, be it

Commented [LDP13]: Jessica Vealitzek's Suggestion

RESOLVED, By the Illinois Route 53 Expansion Land Alternative Use Task Force that we strongly recommend the Illinois Department of Transportation shall transfer all ~~state-owned parcels of land reserved for the Illinois Route 53 Expansion, and not required for any other improvement and apparatuses to existing roadways,~~ **state-owned** ~~to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in accordance with Federal Regulation 23 CFR 710 and Illinois State Statue 605 ILCS 5/4-508 as amended from time to time;~~ and be it further

Commented [LDP14]: Grayslake Suggestion

Commented [LDP15]: Dan's Suggestion

Commented [LDP16]: IDOT Suggestion

RESOLVED, That the Illinois Route 53 Expansion Land Alternative Use Task Force strongly recommends that the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, upon the receipt of the ~~state-owned land along the Illinois Route 53 corridor from the Illinois Department of Transportation other state agencies,~~ **aforementioned** ~~state-owned land along the Illinois Route 53 corridor from the Illinois Department of Transportation other state agencies,~~ shall, by January 31, 2023, form a working group composed of similar stakeholders as the Illinois Route 53 Expansion Land Alternative Use Task Force tasked with determining the development and establishment of a State Park or State Trail and other open space and natural area conservation purposes on the aforementioned land and identifying funding mechanisms to assist the Department with the maintenance and staffing of this new greenway; and be it further

Commented [LDP17]: Long Grove's Suggestion

Commented [LDP18]: IDOT Suggestion

RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be provided to officials of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Illinois Department of Transportation, ~~the Illinois State Highway Toll Authority,~~ the Lake County Board, the Lake County Forest Preserve District, the Village of Grayslake, the Village of Hawthorn Woods, the Village of Long Grove, and the Village of Mundelein.

Commented [LDP19]: IDOT Suggestion