

December 6, 2022

Ms. Colleen Callahan  
Director  
Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
One Natural Resources Way  
Springfield, IL 62702

Dear Director Callahan:

Please consider our request that the Route 53 expansion land in Lake County remain under the ownership of the Illinois Department of Transportation and not be transferred to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Our community is the largest municipal stakeholder of the Lake County communities with Route 53 expansion land. Enclosed is a copy of the Route 53 Alternative Land Use Resolution (22-11-80) the Village of Mundelein Board unanimously approved, 6-0, at its meeting on November 28, 2022, that elucidates our position on this issue.

As you know, in 2021, HR0006 created the Illinois Route 53 Expansion Land Alternative Use Task Force to study alternate uses for the proposed extension of Illinois Route 53 in Lake County. The study was to include the following:

1. The cost, feasibility, and environmental impact of alternative uses of the expansion land, including any potential impact on flooding in the area.
2. The short- and long-term economic impact to the region.
3. All options for funding alternative uses.


The Task Force fell short in addressing these directives. Instead of exploring alternative uses, the Task Force which had five environmental groups represented (one more than the municipalities represented) focused exclusively on just one use, a nature trail. There was no in-depth analysis of the economic or opportunity cost impacts to the region and there were no meaningful discussions about funding. The Task Force would have benefited greatly by input from Lake County Partners or Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, yet both were conspicuously absent from the proceedings.

Lake County is growing. Our own village has three current projects with national homebuilders and three other projects with large regional apartment builders. Traffic models obtained during this last effort to expand Route 53 revealed that the expanded corridor would be needed eventually considering our county's growth. County residents intuitively knew this when they approved a 2009 county-wide Route 53 advisory referendum that passed with 76% of voters approving.

Finally, please consider that transportation technology is rapidly changing, and may make the Route 53 expansion land very important one day. Electric vehicles, electric semi-trucks, driverless vehicles, and evolving mag-lev rail technology should all give planners pause when making permanent decisions like the one the Task Force will recommend. It's possible, if not probable, that one day the expansion could occur with no air pollution and very little noise pollution.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss our position further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SL' with a stylized flourish.

Steve Lentz  
Mayor

SL/ckp

cc: Route 53 Alternative Use Task Force  
Mr. Dan Lewis Legislative Liaison IDNR

I hereby certify that the attached is an original of

**Resolution No. 22-11-80**

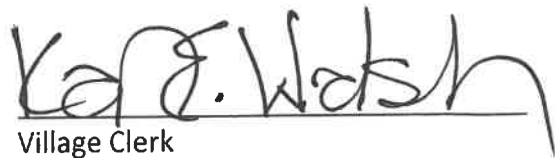
that said Resolution was adopted on **November 28, 2022;**

that it was posted in the Village Hall commencing on the

<sup>29th</sup> day of **November 2022** and for at least 10 days

thereafter. Copies are available for public inspection

upon request in the office of the Village Clerk.

  
Village Clerk

**RESOLUTION NO. 22-11-80**

**A RESOLUTION DECLARING  
THE POSITION OF THE MUNDELEIN BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
REGARDING ACQUIRED LAND RELATED TO THE ROUTE 53 EXPANSION PROJECT AND THE PROPOSED "IL  
ROUTE 53 LAND TRANSFER RESOLUTION" BY THE ILLINOIS ROUTE 53 EXPANSION LAND ALTERNATIVE USE  
TASK FORCE**

**WHEREAS**, beginning in the early 1970s and throughout the years since, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has made significant investments in time and money to acquire land for a transportation corridor in Lake County that could one day impact the Village of Mundelein and the entire region, see **Exhibit A**; and

**WHEREAS**, In July of 2019, the Illinois State Highway Toll Authority terminated the ongoing environmental impact study related to the Route 53/120 expansion project: and

**WHEREAS**, environmentally friendly uses of land such as open green space, hiking and biking trails, and athletic fields are desirable for any community; and

**WHEREAS**, over many years of time, technology and traffic needs can and do significantly change, and these changes should be evaluated for the region; and

**WHEREAS**, it serves the interests of the local community and the broader public that the Mundelein Board of Trustees make its position known regarding the potential use and disposition of the land acquired by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) pertaining to the Route 53 expansion project.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF MUNDELEIN, COUNTY OF LAKE, STATE OF ILLINOIS, as follows:**

**SECTION I.** It is the position of the Mundelein Board of Trustees that the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) should maintain ownership of the land for possible transportation uses in the future.

**SECTION II.** In the interim, the Mundelein Board of Trustees supports the following uses for the land:


1. Open space as it is now, including leased farmland; this being the Village's preferred use.
2. Athletic fields near Hawley Street for use by Mundelein High School, however any such use should include designs to minimize the impact of this type of use to nearby residential neighborhoods.
3. A trail system with adequate parking that connects to existing paths and trails in Mundelein with the understanding that funding for any trail system and the maintenance for same would not come from the Village but instead would come from other funding sources.

**SECTION III.** The Village is not advocating for the construction of the proposed Route 53 Extension or its latest design, rather, the intent of this Resolution is to leave the options open for an area of the County that is growing, and to allow for infrastructure of varying types to address a myriad of needs that may need to be considered and addressed in the future.

PASSED this 28th day of November 2022 by a roll call vote.

**RESULT:** CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]  
**MOVER:** Kerston Russell, Trustee  
**SECONDER:** Erich Schwenk, Trustee  
**AYES:** Wilson, Cabachuela, Ross, Lambert, Russell, Schwenk

PASSED: November 28, 2022

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President

APPROVED: November 28, 2022

ATTEST:   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Village Clerk

# EXHIBIT A: ROUTE 53 EXPANSION LAND

