

## **What IDOT Is Studying During Phase I or the Preliminary Engineering Process and the Next CAG Meeting**

Area residents are the eyes and ears of all things Willow Road. IDOT appears satisfied with zooming in on a narrow, 1.2-mile linear project study section from I-94 to Waukegan Road, and have gone so far as to say that Willow Road is the solution to the region's transportation problem. Yet many residents are well aware of significant traffic issues that are well beyond the short section of Willow Road in Northfield. These longstanding issues (actually shortcomings in our regional transportation system) contribute greatly to the present state of Willow Road. Issues include the incomplete I-94 Willow Road and Tower Road interchanges, mainline I-94 traffic congestion, incomplete Eden's Spur, missing or incomplete I-294 interchanges, and traffic pressure from recent development activities west of Waukegan Road. Correction of these issues at their respective locations will broaden motorist choices, improve travel time throughout the region, and especially reduce traffic on Willow.

For Willow Road, the Phase I work includes the nuts and bolts of engineering traffic studies, accident analyses, and an evaluation of existing conditions (pavement, drainage, signals, rights-of-ways, vertical and horizontal profiles, cross sections, floodplains, wetlands, air and water pollution, cultural and historic resources, etc.). Deficiencies and constraints in the existing roadway condition and setting are identified. Other elements of the context of the roadway (adjacent land uses; character of the area; cultural, aesthetic, and historic attributes; and performance issues such as safety concerns or delays at intersections, adequacy of turning lanes, missing sidewalks, water on the pavement, confusing pavement markings, inability to walk across the street, poor lines of sight, etc.) are gathered from the public and a variety of stakeholder sources during the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) part of the Phase I work. The work within CSS is conducted by the Community Advisory Group, or CAG, and facilitated by IDOT. Project purpose and needs are established. Then IDOT engineers apply state policies and other federal standards to the project, develop and evaluate several different project alternatives that meet the purpose and needs and correct deficiencies, finally picking the best alternative for detailed plan development (Phase II) and construction (Phase III). The CAG group will also be involved in the alternatives development and evaluation during Phase I.

It is important for as many residents of Northfield as can to attend and comment at future CAG meetings. The next meeting is April 15, 2010 at the New Trier High School West Campus, Room C234 in Northfield from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m... Your continued interest in this most important community project is appreciated.