

My name is Mary Koss. I am the President of the Oak Grove Subdivision Home Owner's Association. Our association wishes to loudly voice our concerns with the proposed construction and sternly rebuke the Illinois Department of Transportation for not educating or informing the member neighbors of our association about the intended expansion of Rt 31, **and** for not inviting or including our Home Owners Association in the activities of the Community Advisory Group.

Within our subdivision located on the southeastern corner of Rt 31 and Ames Rd., there are 82 homes and 8 empty lots awaiting development. As such, our subdivision comprises more than 10% of the entire population of Prairie Grove, the single Village most impacted by the proposed construction.

As the president of the Oak Grove Subdivision HOA, I am not saying the road expansion absolutely must not occur. We knew it would happen, just not when or to what extent. Instead, we are asking IDOT to find ways to lessen the negative impact on our neighborhood.

I have heard from many, many member neighbors voicing their concerns to me over the proposed construction. Those concerns can be narrowed to six distinct areas:

#1) HOA Property. The Oak Grove Subdivision HOA owns a stretch of land east of Rt 31 and west of the homes on the western most portion of our neighborhood. The deeded property runs the length of the neighborhood adjacent to Rt 31 and is a minimum of forty feet wide. The current plan appears to use that property for a dual use walkway. Since the Association has been excluded from any planning or community involvement, we are unaware of the State's intention regarding our property.

#2) Traffic and Safety. The only direct exit from our neighborhood is via Ames Rd heading east one mile to Barreville

road that has a 25 mile per hour speed limit, or west to Rt 31 that has a 55 MPH speed limit. Clearly, this expansion will bring more traffic to Rt 31. The planned construction does not appear in any way to lessen the danger of turning onto Rt 31 from Ames Rd. In fact, the plan appears to increase the danger.

#3) Waterway and storm water runoff. An entire chapter of our HOA Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions is dedicated to ensuring the storm water runoff and collection areas on the western and southern portion of the neighborhood remain untouched. The Rt 31 expansion plan appears to affect significantly the runoff design and may threaten water damage to the private properties on the western most portion of the neighborhood.

#4) Visibility. The developer of the subdivision went to great lengths to hide the neighborhood from Rt 31, and to hide Rt 31 from the neighborhood. He created a dirt berm on the north end of the neighborhood and planted dozens of trees on what is now HOA owned property. The current plan to expand Rt 31 appears to eliminate the berm and remove all the trees by bringing the right of way LITERALLY to the edge of our back yards.

#5) Noise. We all have lived with the current noise level associated with being adjacent to one of only three north/south corridors in northern McHenry County. Rt 31 was here before our neighborhood. However, by expanding Rt 31 by 100% and entirely to the east of the existing roadway, the noise levels will obviously be significantly increased. In your study, you state “Noise barriers were considered, but are not reasonable and feasible.” Noise barriers are not only reasonable, they are absolutely necessary. Not only will this project increase the traffic flow, it moves the roadway 80 feet closer to our homes, literally into our back yards while eliminating natural sound barriers, like trees and distance.

#6) Property values. In 2007, the average value of homes in the Oak Grove Subdivision was nearly \$500,000. In the last three

months, three homes have sold in the neighborhood for less than \$350,000 – a solid 30% reduction in property value over one decade. The proposed expansion of Rt 31 without addressing noise, visibility, safety, and water runoff issues will certainly have a negative impact on our property values.

The Route 31 project may deliver an economic boon to northern McHenry County, but please find ways to lessen the negative impact *on our neighborhood* for the prosperity of others.