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March 30, 2005

Mr. Timothy Martin
Secretary
Illinois Department of Transportation
IDOT Administration Building
Room 300
Springfield, IL 62764-0002

Dear Secretary Martin:

I write to inform you of the progress that has been made on the study of the feasibility of a cap over the Eisenhower Expressway (I-290 or "the Ike") as it passes through the Village of Oak Park.

As you know, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) proposal to reconstruct and possibly expand the Ike between Mannheim Road and Cicero Avenue has been a matter of major concern to the Village and its residents. The Ike, which cuts through the heart of Oak Park, already impacts the quality of life in the Village on a daily basis. The community is concerned that the I-290 project will further divide and disturb our community and exacerbate the existing public health, safety and environmental problems caused by the freeway.

In 2003, the Village secured a grant in the amount of \$225,000 from the State of Illinois' Illinois Tomorrow program to study the feasibility of capping the Ike. I am pleased to formally transmit to you a final copy of the Cap the IKE Study report produced by that grant. The Cap the Ike Study was an exercise in context sensitive design. Throughout 2004, a Cap the Ike Stakeholder Advisory Committee, comprised of citizens and agency representatives with an interest in the I-290 corridor including IDOT, with the assistance of a technical assistance team lead by URS Corporation and Village staff, coordinated a thorough scoping and feasibility study process. The process incorporated key person interviews and meetings with key stakeholders, as well as a mail and internet survey. Through extensive community input, six preliminary concepts drawn from community visioning workshops were narrowed down to three and then to one proposed concept. The proposed Community Preferred Cap Concept was unveiled at a public meeting on January 19, followed by a month long public comment period publicized in local papers, on cable television, the project website and on the cover of the Village newsletter.

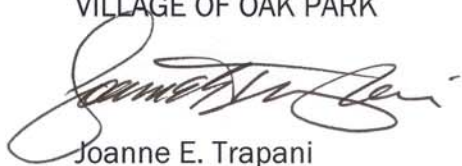
These mechanisms for community involvement have led to a Cap the Ike Concept that represents a consensus on the improvements that Oak Parkers would like to see when the Eisenhower is reconstructed. Briefly, those features include mitigation measures for environmental impacts, enhancing transit usage through reconstruction of Blue Line stations with improved multimodal access, a trail stretching the length of Oak Park from Austin to Harlem, reconnecting the Oak Park Avenue/IKE business district

over the expressway, and tying the community back together with reclaimed land and north-south connections. Reclaimed land is utilized primarily to address the community's shortage of park and open space. To ensure flexibility to respond to the unknown financial situation at the time the Eisenhower is reconstructed in the 7-10 years from now as estimated by IDOT, the Cap the IKE Concept contains three variations of the Preferred Cap Concept with different magnitudes of cost. Each of the variations of the concept retains features determined by the community to be most desirable.

Following review of public comments, of which eighty five percent were positive, the citizen members of the Cap Stakeholder Advisory Committee approved the Community Preferred Concept and the accompanying technical report in February. After a presentation of the report's findings, the Village Board at the March 21, 2005 meeting unanimously adopted a resolution concurring with the Committee recommendations and endorsing the technical report on the feasibility study. A copy of the resolution and supporting materials is attached, as is a copy of the technical report supporting the Preferred Cap Concept. Consequently, the Village requests that the Illinois Department of Transportation consider incorporating the Preferred Cap Concept into the Phase I study for the I-290 project.

Finally, as you may be aware, the Village was able in 2004 to obtain a million dollar grant in federal transportation appropriations to continue to study the Cap the IKE concept in greater detail regarding preliminary design and engineering and environmental issues, as outlined in the attached report. The Village looks forward to continuing to work on this cap concept as part of the ongoing planning efforts related to the I-290 multi-modal corridor. Thanks for your consideration of this initial Cap the IKE report.

Sincerely,
VILLAGE OF OAK PARK



Joanne E. Trapani
Village President