

Case Study:

**Visualizing Sustainability in the Historic Route 66 Corridor Project
Springfield, IL**

Lead Agency: Springfield Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSRPC)

INVEST Module: Project Development

Links: <https://www.sustainablehighways.org/files/487.pptx> (PPT—View in slideshow mode to see animation.)
<https://www.sustainablehighways.org/files/488.pdf> (PDF)

The metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for Springfield, IL applied criteria from the INVEST Project Development (PD) module to a corridor improvement project along the Peoria Road / Route 66 Corridor. This corridor includes the historic Route 66, the state fairground, the SHEA’s Museum, transit service, and a mix of residential and commercial development. Using the INVEST criteria, planners identified improvements that could be made to the corridor that would enhance sustainability.

For instance, INVEST criterion *PD-15: Historical, Archaeological and Cultural Preservation* aims to protect or enhance cultural and historic assets. Installing interpretive signs and improving pedestrian access as suggested by the INVEST criterion could enhance the preservation and enjoyment of historic Route 66 and the museum (see Springfield MPO's artist renderings of these improvements in the figure below). The actions also improve linkage of Historic Route 66 with the State Fairground. The improvements would provide the project with

PD-15: Historical, Archaeological and Cultural Preservation

Goal: Preserve, protect or enhance cultural and historic assets, and/or feature National Byways Program (NSBP) historic, archaeological, or cultural intrinsic in a roadway

1-3 points available
3 points achievable

Prerequisite 2: Any portion of the project is along one of America’s Byways, a State Scenic Byway, an Indian Tribe Scenic Byway, or other route that was designated or officially recognized as such because of its significant historical, cultural and/or archaeological features.

1. Enhance features:
Protect, preserve, and/or enhance historic, archaeological, or cultural resources. This could be done through the installation of informational or interpretive facilities (e.g. Viewpoint, kiosk, sign for visitors detailing historical, archaeological or cultural significance.)



three out of three available points under the INVEST PD-15 criterion.

As another example, INVEST criterion *PD-10: Pedestrian Access* aims to improve the safety and convenience of pedestrian networks for people of all ages and abilities by providing or enhancing facilities within the project footprint. Springfield MPO identified specific improvements at key locations, such as crosswalks and landscaping, and developed visuals showing the placement of these amenities. These improvements would provide two out of two possible points under the INVEST PD-10 criterion for improving pedestrian safety, comfort, connectivity, and aesthetics and environment.

The MPO held a workshop with stakeholder agencies in the region, including city officials and the state department of transportation. Planners explained how the INVEST tool measures sustainability and how it could be applied to the Peoria Road / Route 66 Corridor Improvement Project. They then showed visuals of each of the key criteria analyzed, outlining very clearly the requirements for receiving points, and showing where improvements could be made at specific locations along the corridor. Images demonstrated what that would look like and how it would improve outcomes in the corridor. Planners also showed before and after visuals with photographs depicting the corridor’s current status, and mock-ups depicting its appearance after installation of the sustainability improvements suggested by the INVEST criteria. See before and after visuals below as well as the presentation slides [<https://www.sustainablehighways.org/files/488.pdf>] used at the workshop.

The MPO evaluated 23 of the 29 PD criteria. Examples of criteria highlighted in the evaluation and the corresponding improvements included in the conceptual design appear in the table below. Many of these improvements fall under the rubric of context sensitive solutions and complete streets.

INVEST Criterion	Corridor Improvements included in Conceptual Design	Points Achieved / Points Available
PD-8: Stormwater	Permeable pavers, bioswales, curb cut inlets	4-5/9
PD-10: Pedestrian Access	Side path continuity across five-way intersection, streetscape design, crosswalks, lighting	2/2
PD-11: Bicycle Access	Shared use paths, bicycle parking, signage, landscaping, lighting	2/2
PD-12: Transit and HOV Access	Accessible bus stops with shelters, new park and ride lots	2/5
PD-14: ITS for System Operations	Emergency signal preemption, speed enforcement, special events variable signage	3/5
PD-15: Historical, Archaeological and Cultural Preservation	Public art entrance to state fairground, improved pedestrian access to fairground and museum, interpretive signs	3/3
PD-17: Energy Efficiency	Energy efficient luminaries, solar lights, plan for auditing energy use	6-8/8
PD-18 Site Vegetation	Native species, non-mechanical maintenance, grey/reclaimed water	3/3
PD-19 Reduce and Reuse Materials, PD-20: Recycle Materials	Pavement preservation, reduced pavement materials, repurposed pavements, reuse of industrial by-products, recycled pavements, in-place pavement recycling, recycled luminaries and signal poles	4-8/8, 3/8

The INVEST evaluation showed that if the sustainability improvements included in the conceptual design were implemented, the project would achieve the Gold or Silver level of the INVEST Basic Urban Project Develop-

ment scorecard.

Key Outcomes of Using INVEST:

- Developed a conceptual design showing locations for specific sustainability improvements. Improvements included streetscape design, crosswalks, lighting, accessible bus stops with shelters, public art entrance to state fairground, side path continuity across five-way intersection, improved pedestrian access to fair-ground and museum, ITS upgrades, and vegetation.
- Demonstrated how the improvements would enhance the level of sustainability of the project as measured against a national benchmark.
- Raised interest among stakeholders in implementing sustainability practices.
- Communicated INVEST criteria effectively and concisely through a visual format.

Section of Route 66 showing current conditions (before) and mock-up with sustainability improvements (after)

