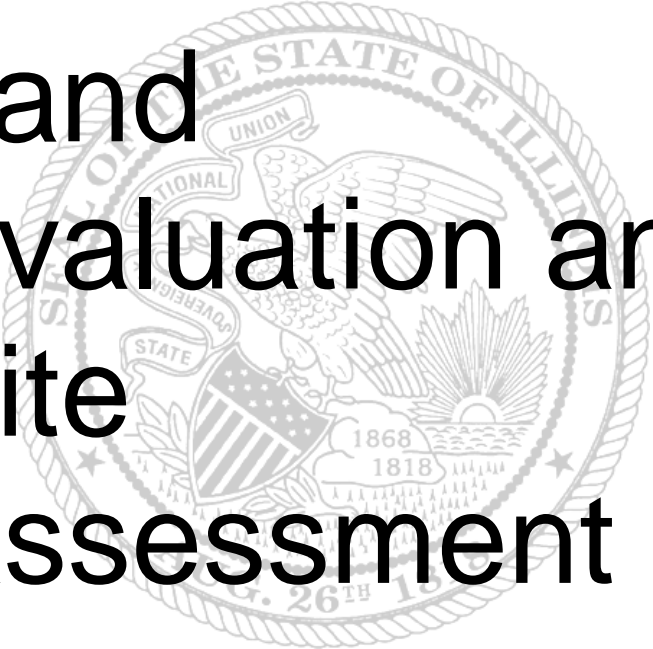


Illinois LESA System

Land Evaluation and Site Assessment

The seal of the State of Illinois is faintly visible in the background. It features an eagle with wings spread, holding a shield with the American flag. The seal is circular with the text "OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR STATE OF ILLINOIS" around the top and "JANUARY 1818" at the bottom. The date "1868" is also present.

Revised
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ILLINOIS LAND EVALUATION AND SITE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Introduction

Illinois is a large and somewhat paradoxical state. The population is concentrated in large urban areas occupying less than 10% of the state's land area. Seventy eight percent of the land area is devoted to agriculture, but industries such as manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, finance, insurance, and real estate employ the majority of the labor force.

Much of this apparent contradiction between labor force and land use can be explained by examining the distribution of the state's population. Approximately 7.8 million of Illinois' 12.1 million residents (65.2%) live in Cook County and the 5 surrounding counties (Lake, Kane, DuPage, McHenry and Will). U.S. Census Bureau statistics for 2000 specify that 82.1% of the total population of Illinois residents (approximately 10.2 million people) lives in the 18 counties that have a population over 100,000 people.

This population distribution allows the overwhelming majority of Illinois' 56,346 square miles of land to be used for agriculture. Farmland in Illinois covers more than 27.9 million acres. The agricultural industry in Illinois is extremely productive and adds substantially to the state's economy. In 1999, cash receipts from Illinois farm marketing totaled \$6.8 billion. This sum was generated by only 1.8 percent of the state's population operating 79,000 farms.

Quality of Illinois Farmland

Illinois is blessed with vast amounts of high quality farmland. In 1997, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS) estimated that Illinois contained slightly more than 20.9 million acres of Prime farmland. Only Texas and Kansas surpassed Illinois in the number of acres of Prime farmland. Another 5.9 million acres are defined as additional farmland of Statewide Importance, hereafter referred to as Important farmland. No unique farmland exists in Illinois.

Farmland Protection Legislation

It is the movement of people and changes in land use that threaten Illinois' farmland base. Farmland is permanently converted to non-agricultural public and private uses at a continually alarming rate. According to 1977 National Resource Inventory, figures compiled by the USDA NRCS (formerly the USDA Soil Conservation Service) indicated that Illinois farmland was converted to non-farm uses at the rate of 106,000 acres per year during the decade 1967-1977. It was the continued magnitude of farmland conversion that brought about major action in the state with regard to protecting the agricultural industry's land base. This major concern manifested itself in the signing of the Governor's Executive Order #4 to protect farmland in 1980 and the passage of the Farmland Preservation Act in 1982 (505 ILCS 75/1 et seq.).

With the passage of the Farmland Preservation Act, the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDA) was legislatively directed to review all state agency projects and activities that may have a direct or indirect effect upon the potential conversion of farmland in Illinois. The IDA reviews such projects and activities to determine compliance with the rules adopted to implement the Farmland Preservation Act, thereby ensuring a minimal impact upon Illinois' agricultural resources.

The U.S. Congress also took an important step toward protecting the nation's farmland with the enactment of the federal Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) in 1981. The FPPA directed all federal agencies to evaluate their programs and projects and to modify their actions so as to produce the least impact on farmland. The FPPA also seeks to assure that federal programs are administered in a manner that, to the extent practicable, will be compatible with state and local government, as well as private programs and policies to protect farmland.

LESA - A Tool in Determining Viability of Land for Agricultural Use

As the Illinois Department of Agriculture began reviewing programs, projects, and activities of state and federal agencies for compliance with the Farmland Preservation Act and the federal Farmland Protection Policy Act, respectively, the Department desired a systematic procedure to assist in determining which proposed governmental actions would incur the least harm to the agricultural environment. The Department determined that the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) System was one very beneficial tool to utilize in making such evaluations. In like manner, the USDA NRCS also utilizes the LESA system to evaluate the viability of farmland proposed for a non-agricultural use by a federally sponsored project.

The LESA System was developed by the USDA SCS to assist in making land use decisions where agricultural land may be involved. It was adapted for use on a statewide basis by the Illinois Department of Agriculture, USDA SCS, University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service, and the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts. In December 1983, the Illinois LESA System was approved by SCS for use. The state's LESA System was revised in September 1992.

The LESA System provides an indication as to the continued agricultural viability of a tract or corridor of land currently used for agricultural purposes. Used properly, the LESA System can serve to protect and strengthen agriculture and, at the same time, allow for needed community growth and development.

Components of LESA

As its name implies, the LESA System consists of two parts, a Land Evaluation section and a Site Assessment section. The Land Evaluation section is used to evaluate a tract, or corridor, of farmland based upon the productivity of its soils. The soils information is derived from USDA NRCS modern detailed soil surveys. The Site Assessment section of the LESA System considers all other factors relative to a specific parcel of land, other than soils, which would further determine the viability of a site or corridor for agricultural or non-agricultural use.

Use of LESA by the Illinois Department of Agriculture

The Illinois Department of Agriculture utilizes the Illinois LESA System as one component of its in-depth evaluation of the agricultural impacts associated with projects involving state and federal agencies. If a county government has adopted its own LESA System, the county's system (rather than the state's system) is utilized when an applicable project is located within that county. The USDA NRCS State Conservationist must approve the County LESA System before a county system can be used in place of the state's system.

Oftentimes a state or federal project proposes to convert farmland in more than one county. In such instances, the Illinois LESA System is always utilized, even though the counties involved may have officially adopted LESA Systems of their own. Corridor-type projects (such as highways and bicycle/hiking trails) are ones that often fit into this category. In applying the Illinois LESA System to corridor projects, special Site Assessment "corridor" factors are used in place of the system's "site specific" factors that place equal emphasis on both the soils and site assessment scoring.

LESA's Point System

The Illinois LESA System operates on a point basis. The land impacted by a project or land-converting activity can earn as many as 100 points on the Land Evaluation section of the LESA System (150 points when corridor-type projects are being considered). The Site Assessment section is worth a maximum of 200 points (150 points when corridor factors are being used). Therefore, a maximum total score of 300 points is possible when combining the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment scores in the application of LESA.

The higher the point value a site or corridor alternative receives, the greater the probability that alternative should remain in agricultural use. In most cases when evaluating a specific state or federal project with several alternatives, the alternative that possesses the lowest score under the Illinois LESA System generally would be considered the most appropriate for the project by the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

The Illinois LESA System applies the **225 point cutoff** when evaluating state and federally funded projects. Site or corridor alternatives receiving **175 or fewer points** have a low rating for protection, and it is not necessary to evaluate additional alternatives. Those alternatives receiving 176 to 225 points are in the moderate range for protection. In most cases, alternatives exceeding the 225 point level should be retained for agricultural use, and an alternate site should be utilized for the intended project. Selecting the alternative with the lowest total points will usually protect the best farmland located in the most agriculturally viable areas. LESA also serves to maintain and promote the agricultural industry in Illinois.

LAND EVALUATION

The Land Evaluation (LE) section of the Illinois LESA System was developed by technical specialists on staff with the USDA Soil Conservation Service state office in Champaign, Illinois. All the different soil types that are found in Illinois were put into 10 different groups, with the soils in each particular group possessing similar crop production capabilities. The first group contains soils that are the most productive, while the tenth group is comprised of the least productive soils possessing the most restrictions on their use for agricultural purposes.

Three criteria were used in assigning each soil type to a particular group:

- 1. Land Capability Classification** - Soils are grouped into eight Land Capability Classes on the basis of their limitations for growing field crops or pasture. They are also grouped into four subclasses that indicate the type of limitation: erosion, wetness, internal soil problems, or climate.
- 2. Identification as Prime or Important farmland and Other land** - Soils are evaluated for their suitability for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. Illinois soils fall into one of three categories: Prime farmland, Important farmland, and Other land. Prime farmland produces the highest yields with the lowest expenditure of energy and economic resources and the least damage to the environment. Important farmland is generally less productive than Prime farmland and/or possesses greater restrictions that negatively affect its use for agricultural purposes. Other land may have the potential for use as farmland, but some restriction(s) prevents its use for agriculture.
- 3. Soil Productivity** - This criterion is based on expected crop yields under a high level of management. A grain crop index (a composite of corn, soybeans, wheat, and oats) was used to provide a comparison statewide. *University of Illinois Circular 1156* was used as the primary source of expected crop yields.

When either a site or corridor alternative is being considered for conversion to a non-agricultural usage, the following steps will be performed to calculate its LE score using the USDA-NRCS booklet, *Prime Farmlands/Important Farmlands - Correlated Mapping Units in Illinois, 1991* and revised in 1999.

1. Determine the acres of each soil type for each site specific or corridor alternative.
2. Determine the Relative Value (RV) of each soil type present for each alternative.
3. Multiply the total acres of each soil type times its respective RV.
4. Add the multiplied RVs (from step 3) of all soil types found on each alternative to obtain a cumulative RV score.
5. Divide the cumulative RV score from step 4 by the total acres in the alternative under consideration. This will yield the final RV score for that alternative.
6. In the event that the proposal is a *corridor* project, each alternative's final RV from step 5 must be multiplied by 1.5 because the Illinois LESA Land Evaluation *CORRIDOR* section is worth 150 points.

SITE ASSESSMENT

The Site Assessment (SA) section of LESA is designed to evaluate the suitability of a tract of land or a corridor alternative for retention in agricultural use based upon factors other than soil quality. The factors used in the Site Assessment evaluation emphasize problems commonly associated with farmland conversion.

Each SA factor is assigned a range of values. The condition that best supports agricultural use is assigned the greatest number of points, while the condition that least supports agricultural use is assigned a value of 0 points. Some factors will be scored on a proportional basis depending on the number of site or corridor alternatives being evaluated.

Some SA factors possess a greater relevance in determining whether a site or corridor alternative should remain in agricultural production. These factors are assigned a greater number of maximum points than other factors of lesser importance. The maximum cumulative points assigned to all SA factors is 200 for site specific projects and 150 for corridor projects.

A narrative is also provided with each SA factor to assist the user in determining exactly what is meant by that factor and what should be considered as the factor is applied to the site or corridor alternative being evaluated. Narratives may also indicate the number of points that should be assigned, given certain pre-existing conditions.

ILLINOIS SITE ASSESSMENT FACTORS

For **SITE SPECIFIC** Projects

1. LAND USE ON THE SITE

Agricultural use	20
Land retired from agricultural use	10
Unmanaged woodland	10
Non-agricultural land use	0

The current agricultural use of a tract of land is an important indicator of a site's agricultural viability. Agricultural land includes cropland, hayland, and pasture; orchards and woodlands; smaller acreages of land used for growing specialty crops; aquaculture; farmsteads, land on which farm buildings are located, and feedlots; drainage ditches, water supplies, land in government set-aside programs, and commercial ag-related facilities. Points are determined by prorating the percentage of land in each use on the site.

2. ADJACENT LAND USE

All sides in ag use	20
3 sides in ag use	16
2 sides in ag use	12
1 side in ag use	8
All sides in non-ag use	0

Parcels that have non-agricultural land uses adjacent to them are better for development purposes than parcels that are surrounded by other agricultural (includes unmanaged woodlands and scrublands) purposes. If a road bounds the property on one or more sides, the adjacent land use shall be determined by the use of the land across the road in all cases **except** with 4-lane highways. Where a 4-lane highway bounds the property on one or more sides, the adjacent land use on that side(s) shall be considered non-agricultural. Scoring will be proportional if a parcel is more than 4-sided.

3. GENERAL CHARACTER OF AREA WITHIN 1½ MILES OF SITE

Agricultural	20
Ag / non-ag use (50/50% mix)	10
Non-agricultural use	0

The general character of an area is important in making land use decisions. Areas dominated by agricultural uses are generally more viable for farm purposes. Since the state of Illinois employs the 1½ mile area as the jurisdictional boundary for municipal planning, the 1½ mile area of consideration was selected as a reasonable and manageable unit for analyzing the land use and overall characteristics of the area.

4. DISTANCE TO CITY

More than 1½ miles	20
1½ miles or less	16
¾ mile or less	12
½ mile or less	8
¼ mile or less	4
Adjacent to municipality	0

Generally, the further a proposed project is from the incorporated boundaries of a city or village, the greater the chance of creating conflict with agriculture. This factor recognizes the planning jurisdiction of municipalities when they properly exercise that authority and the concept that most land within the 1½ mile planning area may be considered for development.

5. ZONED USE OF PROPOSED SITE

No zoning regulations in effect	20
Zoned for agricultural use	20
Zoned for non-agricultural use	0

Zoning ordinances are important tools which local governments employ to regulate land use as well as implement comprehensive land use plans. Each zoning district is established based upon its merits for a proposed use and to reduce conflicts between non-compatible uses. The absence of zoning regulations makes the protection of agricultural land even more imperative.

6. ZONED USE OF LAND ADJACENT TO PROPOSED SITE

No zoning regulations in effect	20
All sides zoned for ag use	20
3 sides zoned for ag use	16
2 sides zoned for ag use	12
1 side zoned for ag use	8
All sides zoned for non-ag use	0

Adjacent zoning is a major indicator of a municipality's or county's development plans. It may also indicate the changing agricultural character of the general area in which the parcel under consideration is located. If a site is bordered by a road on one or more sides, consider the zoning of the land across the road **unless** the road is a 4-lane highway. Where a 4-lane highway bounds one or more sides of a site, the adjacent land should be considered as being zoned for non-ag use. Scoring will be proportional if the site does not have 4 sides.

7. PLANNED LAND USE OF PROPOSED SITE

No comprehensive plan in effect	20
Planned for agricultural use	20
Planned for non-agricultural use	0

Local government has a planning function, and all projects should be compatible with the applicable comprehensive land use plan. In the absence of a comprehensive land use plan, the protection of agricultural land becomes more important as it is much more susceptible to scattered development and fragmentation.

8. COMPATIBILITY OF PROPOSED USE WITH SURROUNDING LAND USES

Not Compatible	20
Somewhat Compatible	10
Compatible	0

Problems are often encountered when ag and non-ag uses are permitted to mix. A subdivision next to an animal confinement operation will definitely result in conflict. However, a residential development on five (5) acre lots located adjacent to traditional row crop farming is more compatible. But some conflicts will result because of this mix. An agricultural supplier (seed dealer, fertilizer dealer, farm implements sale, etc.) would be considered compatible with agriculture.

9. ALTERNATIVE SITES PROPOSED ON LESS PRODUCTIVE LAND

Most productive alternative site	10
Only site proposed	10
Least productive alternative site	0

When considering alternative sites for projects, this factor will acknowledge efforts to locate projects on less productive farmland. Many times, with a little more investigation, alternative project sites consisting of lesser productive land can be found. If more than one alternative site is proposed, sites will be scored relative to one another. The productivity of a site is determined by the relative value of the soils on each site.

10. AVAILABILITY OF CENTRAL WATER SYSTEM

More than 1½ miles	10
1½ miles or less	8
¾ mile or less	6
½ mile or less	4
¼ mile or less	2
Adjacent to site	1
On-site	0

The existence of a central water system can sometimes promote growth and reduce the viability of a site for long-term agricultural use. When a central water system is extended into an agricultural area, the development potential of nearby land is enhanced.

11. AVAILABILITY OF CENTRAL WASTE DISPOSAL SYSTEM (SEWER)

More than 1½ miles	10
1½ miles or less	8
¾ mile or less	6
½ mile or less	4
¼ mile or less	2
Adjacent to site	1
On-site	0

The availability of a central sewer system to a site promotes growth and reduces the viability of a site for long-term agricultural use. Central sewer systems are generally extended to areas that are in close proximity to existing development. Compact, contiguous development is preferable to development that leapfrogs over undeveloped farmland.

12. TRANSPORTATION

Earthen	10
Aggregate (gravel)	8
Oil and chip	6
2-lane hard surface	4
4-lane hard surface	0

The type of road providing access to a site is a major factor in determining the suitability of the proposed use. An earthen road is a more appropriate means of providing access to agriculture than it is for providing access to a residential subdivision. Likewise, a hard surface road is a more appropriate means of providing access to high-density development, such as industrial complexes, commercial developments, and residential areas.

Illinois Site Assessment Factors Score Sheet

PART VI-A Illinois Site Assessment / Site Specific Factors	Maximum Points	Site A
1. Land Use On The Site	20	
2. Adjacent Land Use	20	
3. General Character Of Area Within 1½ Miles Of Site	20	
4. Distance To City	20	
5. Zoned Use Of Proposed Site	20	
6. Zoned Use Of Land Adjacent To Proposed Site	20	
7. Planned Land Use Of Proposed Site	20	
8. Compatibility Of Proposed Use With Surrounding Land Uses	20	
9. Alternative Sites Proposed On Less Productive Land	10	
10. Availability Of Central Water System	10	
11. Availability Of Central Waste Disposal System (Sewer)	10	
12. Transportation	10	
TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS	200	

ROUNDING OFF POINTS

Points accrued for any alternative will be rounded off when the total Site Assessment score is tabulated. A score ending in 0.49 or lower shall be rounded down to the nearest whole number. A score ending in 0.5 or higher shall be rounded up to the next whole number.

ILLINOIS SITE ASSESSMENT CORRIDOR FACTORS

For CORRIDOR Projects

1. AMOUNT OF AGRICULTURAL LAND REQUIRED

30 acres or more per mile <i>(prorate alternatives)</i>	30
No land required	0

The amount of agricultural land required for a corridor project has a direct bearing upon the degree to which the project will adversely impact the agricultural environment. Though the acreage may be spread out over many miles, the cumulative impact to the agricultural environment is generally greater than if the project was located on a square parcel of farmland of the same acreage. ***The 30 acres per mile is based on a right of way width of 248 feet, with 220 feet being the minimum width for a rural 4-lane cross section on level ground.***

2. LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED ALIGNMENT

A. Percent of route utilizing existing pavement

0% utilizing existing pavement <i>(prorate alternatives)</i>	20
100% utilizing existing pavement (if 100%, do not go on to B)	0

B. Percent of route adjacent to the existing alignment (but not utilizing existing pavement)

0% adjacent to existing alignment <i>(prorate alternatives)</i>	10
100% adjacent to existing alignment	0

Four-lane highway projects which utilize existing pavement will usually incur fewer agricultural impacts than those constructed adjacent to existing alignments or on completely new alignments. If the 4-lane facility is adjacent to, but does not utilize an existing alignment, then the highway is considered as being constructed **adjacent** to the existing alignment. Likewise, 4-lane projects constructed adjacent to existing alignments will generally incur fewer agricultural impacts than those projects constructed on entirely new alignments which are not adjacent to existing alignments. Points for this factor can be accrued from **both** A and B.

3. ACRES OF OFF-SITE AGRICULTURAL LAND REQUIRED FOR BORROW MATERIALS

- Unknown quantity or contractor supplied from unspecified location(s) 15
- 10 acres or more of Prime farmland (prorate alternatives) 10
 - 0 acres 0
- 10 acres or more of Important farmland (prorate alternatives) 5
 - 0 acres 0
- From an existing borrow pit or an off-site area not used for agricultural purposes 0

Borrow (fill) materials are often required for many corridor projects. Obtaining borrow from on-site or from existing borrow pits is the most desirable while destroying agricultural land for the acquisition of borrow materials is the least desirable. If the Prime/Important status of the farmland required for borrow is unknown, assume it to be Prime farmland.

4. ACRES OF PRIME AND IMPORTANT FARMLAND REQUIRED FOR MITIGATION

- Acreage unknown, but mitigation required 15
- 10 acres or more of Prime farmland (prorate alternatives) 10
 - 0 acres of Prime farmland 0
- 10 acres or more of Important farmland (prorate alternatives) 5
 - 0 acres of Important farmland 0
- On-site or enhancement of existing natural resource habitats 0

As corridor projects traverse wetlands, woodlands, floodplains, and other environmentally sensitive areas, impact mitigation may be required. Often, agricultural land is used for such mitigation. Prime farmland **should** be avoided for use as mitigation land. Enhancement of existing wetlands does not include the conversion of prior converted wetlands to actual functioning wetlands. If the Prime/Important status of the farmland required for natural resource mitigation is unknown, assume it to be Prime farmland.

5. CREATION OF SEVERED FARM PARCELS

Will any severed parcels be created?

Yes, or unknown (prorate alternatives)	10
No	0

A severed farm parcel, created when a tract of farmland is traversed by a corridor project, results in dividing one larger tract of land into two smaller parcels. Although access is still maintained to the disjointed parcels, the owner/operator is inconvenienced by the necessity of framing two smaller parcels of land rather than one larger tract of land. **For scoring purposes, severed parcels are measured in acres rather than numbers.**

6. CREATION OF UNECONOMICAL REMNANTS

Will any uneconomical remnants be created?

Yes, or unknown (prorate alternatives)	10
No	0

Uneconomical remnants are parcels of farmland that are severed from larger tracts of farmland and are too small to be economically or practically farmed by the existing owner/operator. Uneconomical remnants are generally 3 acres in size or less, but may vary depending upon the opinion of the owner/operator. If no opinion is available, the 3 acre standard will be used. **For scoring purposes, uneconomical remnants will be measured in acres rather than numbers.**

7. CREATION OF LANDLOCKED PARCELS

Will any landlocked parcels be created?

Yes, or unknown (prorate alternatives)	10
No	0

A landlocked parcel is defined as land that is isolated by the proposed corridor right of way so that the parcel becomes inaccessible to the current owner/operator by public road, existing easement, or proposed access roads. **For scoring purposes, landlocked parcels are measured in acres rather than numbers.**

8. CREATION OF ADVERSE TRAVEL

Will any adverse travel be created?

Yes, or unknown <i>(prorate alternatives)</i>	10
No	0

Adverse travel is defined as the length of additional travel that owner/operators must undertake to get to their fields. It is caused when the usual routes of travel are severed by a corridor project. Adverse travel imposes additional costs on the owner(s)/operator(s) in terms of additional time and fuel expense. It is calculated as the extra round trip mileage for a single trip. If the additional travel for an alternative is less than one-eighth ($\frac{1}{8}$) mile per roundtrip, it is not considered to be adverse travel. **For scoring purposes, adverse travel is measured in miles.**

9. RELOCATIONS OF RURAL RESIDENCES AND FARM BUILDINGS

One or more structures displaced, or unknown <i>(prorate alternatives)</i>	10
No displacements	0

Relocations of rural residences and farm buildings can incur significant impacts to farming operations, particularly when the relocation results in adverse travel for the owner/operator. Structures shall include all rural residences and farm buildings with permanent foundations.

10. UTILIZATION OF MINIMUM DESIGN STANDARDS

Will design standards that minimize agricultural impacts be utilized?

No, or unknown <i>(prorate alternatives)</i>	10
Yes	0

When designing a corridor project, there are design changes that can be implemented to reduce the project's impact to the agricultural land. For instance, minimum design standards can be utilized on highway improvement projects to reduce the need for additional right-of-way.

Illinois Site Assessment Corridor Factors Score Sheet

PART VI-B Illinois Site Assessment / CORRIDOR Factors	Maximum Points	Site A
1. Amount of Agricultural Land Required	30	
2. Location of the Proposed Alignment	30	
3. Acres of Off-Site Agricultural Land Required for Borrow Materials	15	
4. Acres of Prime and Important Farmland Required for Mitigation	15	
5. Creation of Severed Farm Parcels	10	
6. Creation of Uneconomical Remnants	10	
7. Creation of Landlocked Parcels	10	
8. Creation of Adverse Travel	10	
9. Relocations of Rural Residences and Farm Buildings	10	
10. Utilization of Minimum Design Standards	10	
TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT CORRIDOR POINTS	150	

PRORATING POINTS - Factors 1, 2, 3 and 4

When prorating points for any factor, points would be assigned proportionately to the various alternatives depending upon their degree of impact.

Use Factor 2 as an example. Consider a highway improvement project in which Alternate A will be constructed on 75% of the existing highway alignment centerline with the remaining 25% to be constructed on new right of way which is not adjacent to the existing highway. Alternate A would score 15 points (5 points on Part A and 10 points on Part B since the remainder of the alignment is not adjacent to the existing alignment). Alternate B will be constructed on 50% existing alignment and 50% on land adjacent to the existing highway. It would receive 15 points (10 points from Part A and 5 points from Part B).

PRORATING POINTS - Factors 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10

When prorating points for factors 5 through 10, points would be assigned on a "yes" or "no" basis for projects when there are no alternatives and proportionately to one another if there are alternatives. The alternative with the greatest impact for any factor will always receive the maximum number of points.

For example, if a highway improvement project without any alternatives will landlock a 4 acre parcel, it would score 10 points on Factor 7. Another highway improvement project has three alternatives. Alternate A will create 5 acres of severed parcels. It would receive a score of 10 points since it is the alternate that will create the most acres of severed parcels. Alternate B will create 1 acre of severed parcels. It would score 2 points (1 is 20% of 5, so 20% of 10 points is 2). Alternate C will not create any severed parcels. It scores zero points.

ROUNDING OFF POINTS

Points accrued for any alternative will be rounded off when the total Site Assessment score is tabulated. A score ending in 0.49 or lower shall be rounded down to the nearest whole number. A score ending in 0.5 or higher shall be rounded up to the next whole number.

G L O S S A R Y

AGRICULTURAL LAND - farmland that is regularly used for agricultural purposes. Agricultural land includes cropland, hayland, and pasture; orchards and woodlands; smaller acreages of land used for growing specialty crops; farmsteads, feedlots, aquaculture, drainage ditches, water supplies, and land on which farm buildings are located; land in government set-aside programs; and commercial ag-related facilities.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (General Plan, City Plan, Master Plan) - a report from a governmental planning agency that describes how its area of jurisdiction should be developed, expressing both policies and a coordinated plan for public and private land use, a transportation system, public services and facilities. The document(s) complies with state statutes, is officially adopted by a county, city or village, is recorded, and sets forth general policies regarding long term development of the jurisdiction. A community's comprehensive land use plan outlines proposed future land uses and distribution within its 1½ mile planning jurisdiction.

FARMLAND - land used for agricultural purposes. Types, as defined in the United States, include:

PRIME - land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is also available for these uses; includes cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forest lands, but not urbanized land or water. It has the soil quality, growing season and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops economically when treated and managed, including water management, according to modern agricultural methods.

IMPORTANT - also called "additional farmland of statewide importance"; land, in addition to Prime farmland, that is of statewide importance for the production of food, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. Generally these lands include those that are nearly Prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods; some may produce as high a yield as Prime farmland if conditions are favorable.

OTHER LAND - land which does not qualify as Prime or Important farmland.

INFRASTRUCTURE - the basic services and facilities that are an integral part of an urban community's continuance and growth; includes transportation, communications, and utility facilities; housing, schools, shopping and recreational facilities.