



The I-74 Iowa-Illinois Corridor Study is jointly sponsored by the Iowa and Illinois Departments of Transportation

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Work Accomplished During 2004

- Analyses of Mississippi River Navigational Requirements
- Updating 2035 Traffic Forecast and Analyses
- Traffic Analyses in Downtown Moline, Bettendorf, and at 53rd Street
- Investigating Trail Crossing and Connector Design Options

Comments Welcome!

- Complete and return the comment form inserted in this newsletter.
- Visit the Project Web site at i74corridorstudy.org and send us an electronic message

Message from the Project Advisory Committee

The I-74 Advisory Committee has continued to work with the Iowa and Illinois Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to evaluate alternatives that would improve travel efficiency and reliability along the I-74 corridor and across the Mississippi River. We are pleased to announce a major milestone for the Project Study as the DOTs and FHWA have identified a Preferred Alternative for the corridor. Details about the Preferred Alternative are found on page 2 of this newsletter.

Prior to the identification of the Preferred Alternative, the public was given an opportunity to comment on the alternatives at public hearings held in December 2003. These hearings presented the findings of the corridor study, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft 4(f) Statement. Information presented at the hearings included a summary of the alternatives considered; alternatives still under consideration; and potential adverse and beneficial effects of the alternatives. The meetings were attended by nearly 400 people. If you were unable to attend the hearings you can visit the project Web site (i74corridorstudy.org) to view the handouts and exhibits.

As a result of the hearings, 111 written and 24 verbal comments were received. These comments indicate that the public generally supports improvements along the I-74 corridor and has a strong desire to see a pedestrian and bicycle crossing of the Mississippi River included in the project design. Comments also indicate that the public is concerned with travel

times and access to cross the river during construction.

In response to the DEIS, seven federal and state agencies provided written comments on the project affirming the need for improvements in the corridor. The agency comments stressed safety and infrastructure concerns in the area, as well as the current congestion issues related to capacity limitations in the corridor.

Work accomplished during 2004 included updating traffic forecasts and analyses for the year 2035; investigating trail crossing design options across the Mississippi River; investigating navigational requirements along the Mississippi River; and conducting additional traffic analyses in downtown Moline, downtown Bettendorf, and near the 53rd Street interchange.

The project advisory committee will continue to meet regularly to ensure that local interests are addressed at every stage of the project. In partnership with the project team, we will address maintenance of traffic during construction and corridor aesthetics.

The project advisory committee is made up of various City and County officials, Iowa DOT, Illinois DOT, FHWA and Bi-State representatives. This committee has met 11 times since the project's inception and has provided critical local insight. The project team has coordinated with the advisory committee throughout the project. The committee will continue to meet on a regular basis to discuss various design and project implementation issues.

Introducing...the Preferred Alternative

Based on input from local officials, the Advisory Committee and the public, the DOTs in conjunction with FHWA have identified the Preferred Alternative. Engineering criteria, environmental and social factors, and public input were considered in the process. Alternatives were developed and evaluated on the basis of their ability to: improve transportation, meet established planning and design standards, avoid or minimize impacts to environmental resources, and maintain economic viability along the I-74 corridor.

Information regarding alternatives considered in the early stages of this project was presented in earlier newsletters (Spring 2001, Winter 2002, and Fall 2003), at public information meetings (Summer 2001 and Summer 2002), at the public hearings (December 2003), and on the project Web site.

The Preferred Alternative consists primarily of a new river crossing and roadway improvements along mainline I-74 and connecting local roadways. It also incorporates non-roadway improvements to encourage the use of alternative travel modes and optimize the performance of the entire transportation system.

The Preferred Alternative is illustrated on the adjacent page, and the principal features are briefly described in the following sections.

South Section

Along the Illinois approach of I-74, extending from Avenue of the Cities (23rd Avenue) to 12th Avenue in Moline, the Preferred Alternative includes widening and reconstructing I-74. It has been tentatively identified that the improvements would be accomplished within existing highway right-of-way (ROW). The Avenue of the Cities interchange would be improved with enhanced design features at entrance and exit ramps and at the ramp intersections.

Central Section (Mississippi River Crossing)

Between approximately 12th Avenue in Moline and Lincoln Road in Bettendorf, the Preferred Alternative includes widening and reconstructing I-74, and constructing a new I-74 Mississippi River Bridge along a new alignment to the east of the existing Mississippi River bridges (the existing bridges would be removed); interchange reconstruction in downtown Moline and Bettendorf (with associated improvements to connecting local roadways); and opportunities for a pedestrian/bike trail crossing along the new I-74 Mississippi River Bridge. Specifically, the Preferred Alternative includes the following design features:

I-74 Alignment (Alignment F)

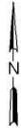
- Incorporates an easterly shift from the existing alignment, which eliminates the reverse curvature of mainline I-74 in Illinois.
 - Results in fewer environmental impacts (including impacts to historic properties, wetlands, and business displacements).

Downtown Moline (Interchange M1)

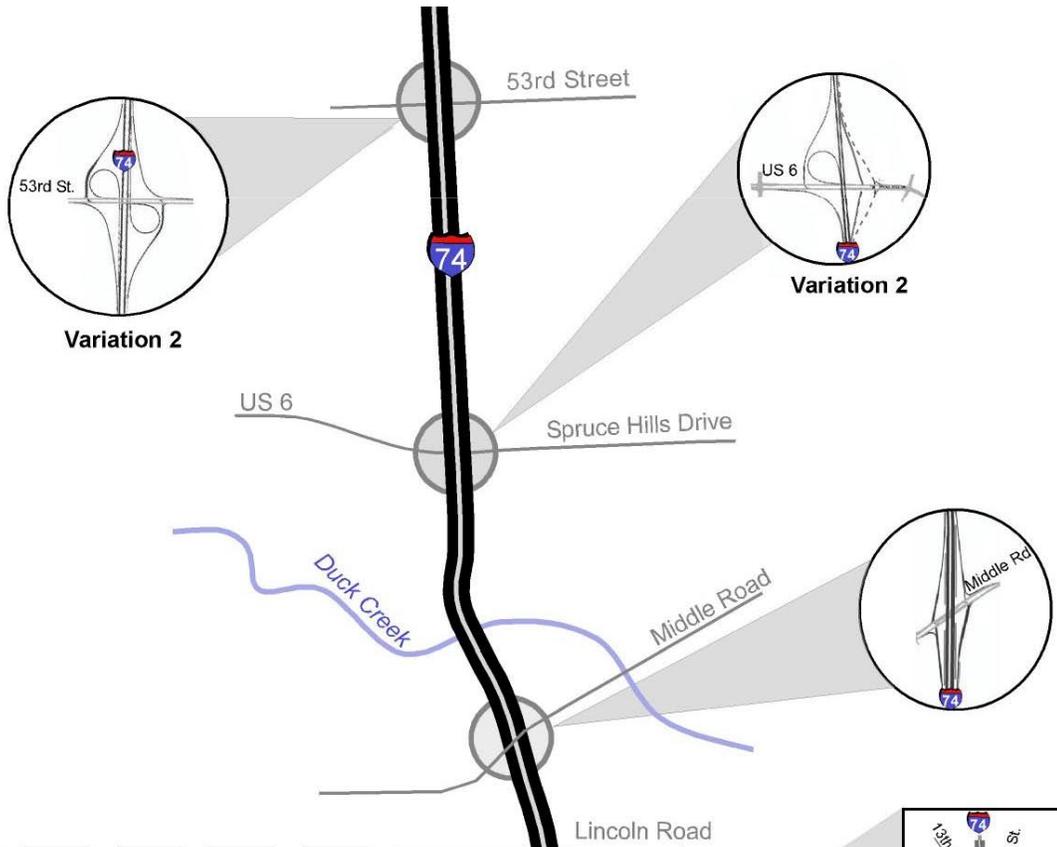
- Provides an improved full access interchange with ramp connections at 7th Avenue/19th Street and at 6th Avenue (IL 92 east bound), and a partial interchange with ramps to and from the north at River Drive.
 - Results in fewer environmental impacts and ROW impacts as compared to other interchange variations considered, and generally maintains existing travel patterns.

Downtown Bettendorf Interchange (B1)

- Provides an improved full access interchange at Grant Street (U.S. 67).
- Eliminates existing ramps at State Street and at Kimberly Road.
- Converts Grant Street in the vicinity of I-74 to a two-way street with 3 lanes in each direction.
 - Provides a connection between 13th Street and U.S. 67 and an underpass at Holmes Street/Mississippi Boulevard, minimizing impacts to local traffic circulation.

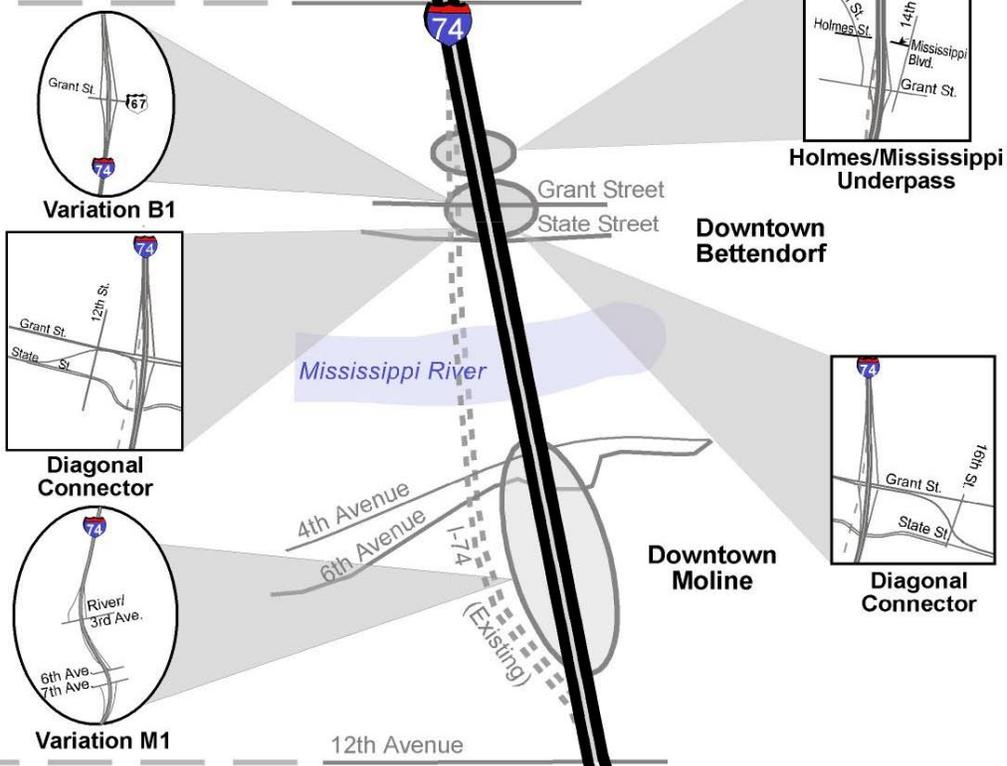


NORTH SECTION

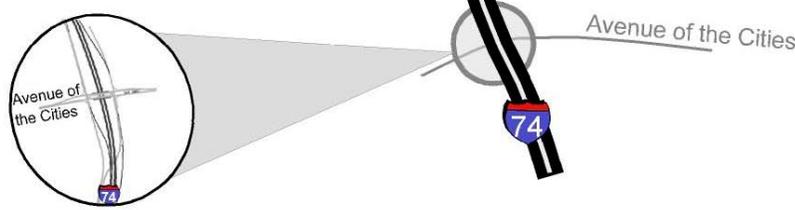


CENTRAL SECTION

F (Far East) Alignment Alternative



SOUTH SECTION



U.S. 67 Diagonal Connector

- Provides new connector roadways to route State Street traffic towards the I-74 interchange ramps at Grant Street.
- Provides continuous traffic flow along U.S. 67 and maintains existing north-south travel patterns.

Several improvements will be required to local roadways in downtown Bettendorf in conjunction with the proposed interchange location changes.

Holmes Street Underpass

- Maintains the existing Holmes Street/ Mississippi Boulevard underpass, but closes the Kimberly Road underpass.
- Serves the need for a direct east-west connection for local neighborhood traffic, facilitating traffic circulation and minimizing the need for neighborhood traffic to re-route to U.S. 67.

Mississippi River Bridge Pedestrian/Bike Accommodations

- The I-74 corridor design would accommodate a pedestrian/bike trail crossing along the new I-74 Mississippi River Bridge.
- Enhances regional multi-modal connections and is compatible with the 2025 Regional Transportation Plan. Continued local support, including funding participation and maintenance responsibility, will be required for the trail crossing to eventually be built. Local funding participation will include items such as connecting the river crossing trail with the local trail system.

North Section

Along the Iowa approach of I-74, extending from Lincoln Road through 53rd Street, the Preferred Alternative includes widening and reconstructing I-74. It has been tentatively determined that the improvements would be accomplished within existing highway ROW. The Middle Road interchange would be improved with enhanced design features at entrance and exit ramps and at the ramp intersections along Middle Road. Additionally, the Preferred Alternative includes the following improvements at the U.S. 6 and 53rd Street interchanges:

U.S. 6 (Spruce Hills Drive) Interchange (Variation 2)

- Shifts the existing northbound exit and entrance ramps and the ramp intersection west of its present location, and provides improved design features for the existing southbound exit and entrance ramps.
- Provides improved traffic flow along U.S. 6, with increased spacing between the ramp intersection and Utica Ridge Road.

53rd Street Interchange (Variation 2)

- Provides an improved interchange with loop ramps in the northwest and southeast quadrants and associated improvements along 53rd Street.
- Provides improved traffic flow and design features between I-74 and 53rd Street.

What's Next?

The project team is now working on the next stage of the I-74 project. During the next 24 months the team will refine the design features of the Preferred Alternative to the level required to support selection of a recommended improvement plan, preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), and completion of the Record of Decision (ROD).

Preliminary roadway design efforts will begin for a large portion of the corridor, including the new I-74 Mississippi River Bridge. With this work, the project team will refine the design features for I-74 mainline, ramps, and connecting local roadways. This will allow us to: finalize the analysis of environmental impacts, identify ROW requirements, and develop a more precise estimate of construction duration and costs for the project.

A two-step approach will be used to advance preliminary bridge design efforts (see page 6 for more details). The project team will identify, evaluate and screen a broad range of feasible bridge types, and then further refine and evaluate finalist bridge types. A recommended bridge type for the Mississippi River crossing will then be selected by the DOTs on the basis of engineering, constructability and cost considerations. Following selection

of the recommended bridge type, preliminary plans for all structures in the corridor will be developed. This effort will enable us to better establish construction staging concepts, refine environmental impacts, estimate the construction duration, and update project costs.

The project team recognizes that the I-74 corridor is an important gateway to the center of the Quad Cities. An I-74 corridor aesthetics working group, whose members will include community leaders and local government representatives, will be formed to provide input into the development of an attractive and cohesive design for the I-74 corridor. Aesthetic treatments could include opportunities that will complement natural and man-made features along the corridor. We expect to initiate formation of the corridor aesthetics working group in the latter part of 2005 (following selection of the recommended bridge type). The aesthetic plan will be guided by consideration of feasibility, future maintenance costs, and responsibility for upkeep of any corridor enhancements.

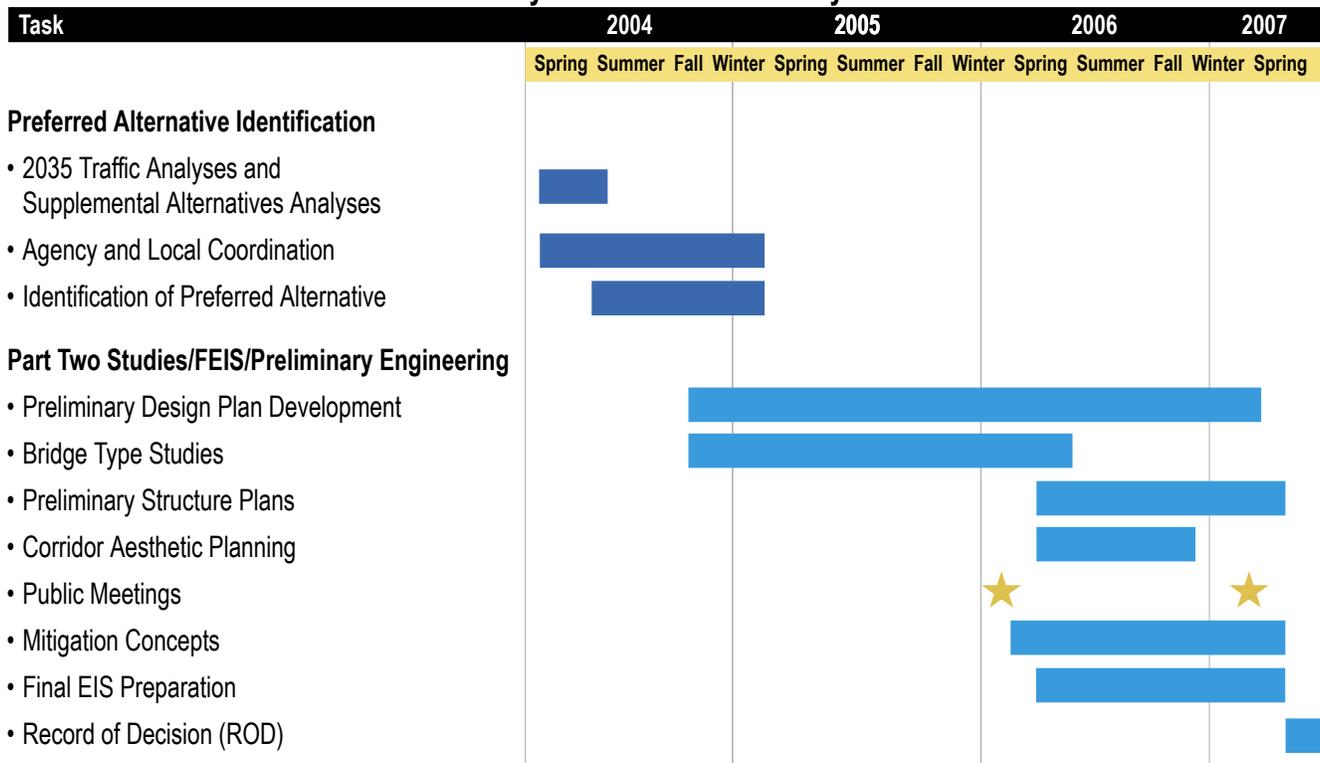
Public involvement remains an important part of the I-74 project development process. We invite the public to stay informed of project

efforts and to continue to provide input. Two additional public meetings will be held during this stage of project development, encouraging public input prior to key project milestones. You are encouraged to stay involved and informed through the various public involvement opportunities discussed on page 7 of this newsletter.

The goal of this next stage of the project is to complete the environmental analyses, to develop mitigation concepts, to prepare the Final EIS, and to secure a ROD for the recommended I-74 improvement plan. The ROD will be issued by FHWA following concurrence by the Iowa and Illinois DOTs regarding the recommended I-74 improvement plan.

There is currently no construction schedule for the I-74 improvements. The schedule for future efforts, including the preparation of final design plans, ROW acquisition, and construction, will be determined on the basis of future funding availability and statewide priorities.

I-74 Study Schedule as of January 2005



Designing a New I-74 Bridge

With the first phase of the study, the project team established the need to replace the existing I-74 bridges and the basic location and concept for the new I-74 bridges, including identifying the preferred roadway alignment across the Mississippi River (Alignment F) and determining the required number of travel lanes on the bridge (three through lanes plus auxiliary lanes in each direction). The study also determined that the existing I-74 bridges would need to be removed. Another important early decision made was that the new bridge could accommodate a bicycle and pedestrian crossing. However, continued local support, including funding participation and maintenance responsibility, will be required for the trail crossing to eventually be built.

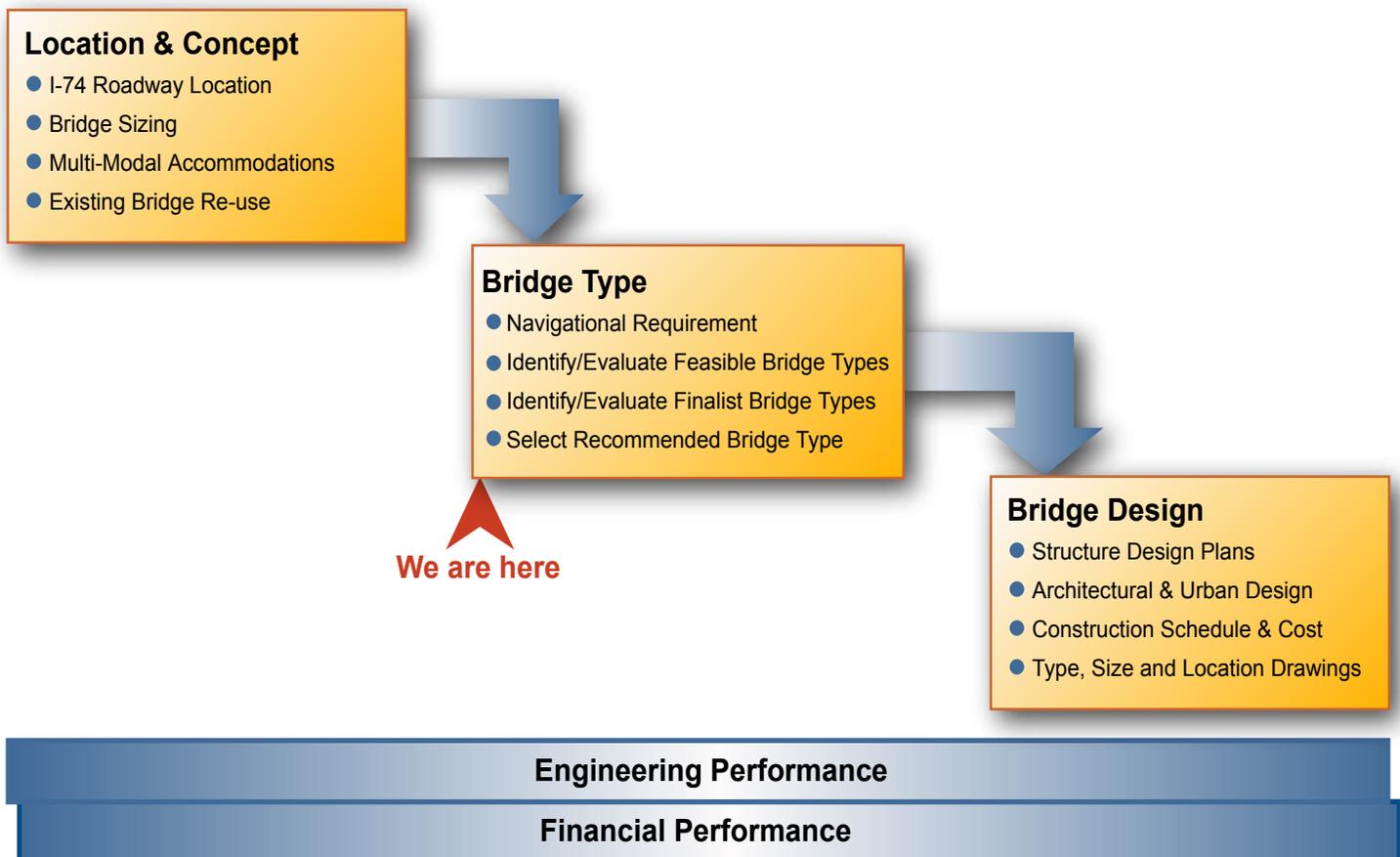
The project team is now gathering information needed to begin the evaluation of potential bridge types for the new I-74 Mississippi River crossing. Bridge types will be determined

feasible by the DOTs based on their ability to meet navigational requirements, engineering criteria, and cost – both construction cost and long-term operations and maintenance expenses. Once the feasible bridge types have been identified, they will be evaluated, and finalist alternatives will be selected by the DOTs. You will have an opportunity to view the selected bridge type(s) at the next Public Meeting.

Bridge design will begin following selection of the recommended bridge type. It is at this time that consideration of specific aesthetic design features for the bridge can begin in earnest. In this regard, the project team will seek assistance from the I-74 corridor aesthetics working group (see explanation on page 5) to establish suitable aesthetic design treatments for the bridge.

Through the bridge design process outlined in this article, we will work to ensure that the final bridge design will be reasonable in terms of engineering, constructability, costs, and aesthetic considerations.

I-74 Mississippi River Bridge Design Process



Getting Involved, Staying Involved

The goal of the I-74 Iowa-Illinois Corridor Study Public Involvement (PI) Program is to engage interested persons and groups in the study. The PI Program for the next phase of the project will build on the foundation of previous PI activities. Project updates will be shared with the public through:

- Project Web site
- Newsletters
- Public Meetings
- Corridor Visualizations/Simulations
- Small Group/Property Owner Meetings

Project Web site. The project Web site (i74corridorstudy.org) will be updated throughout the project. Visit the site to learn up-to-date project information, to submit comments, add a name to the mailing list, or for contact information.

Project Newsletters. Project newsletters, like this one, will be mailed at major project milestones. The newsletters will summarize the work that has been completed since the last publication, and will explain the findings of any completed studies. Each newsletter will contain a mail-back form that can be used by the recipient to provide comments on the project or to add a name to the project mailing list. The newsletters will also inform you of any upcoming public meetings.

Public Meetings. Two additional Public Meetings will be held during the next phase of the project. The meetings will be in an open-house format, meaning no formal presentation will be made, but project staff will be on hand for one-on-one discussion with interested persons. These meetings will provide detailed project information and will also provide you with an opportunity to ask questions or comment on the project.

Corridor Visualizations/Simulations. It has been shown that people understand proposed roadway projects and associated impacts better through the use of visualizations and simulations – essentially “pictures” of the future design and roadway travel characteristics. Visualization technologies will be used to enhance understanding of the project concepts and to illustrate how the roadway will function in the future – both during construction and following completion of construction activities.

Small Group/Property Owner

Meetings. The project team enjoys the opportunity to speak to local groups about the project. If you would like someone from the project team to come and speak to your organization, please contact us. In addition, meetings will be scheduled with affected property owners to provide the opportunity to meet one-on-one with DOT and project staff.

We are very excited about this next phase of the project, and hope that you stay involved. The project Web site will be kept up-to-date throughout the process, and members of the project team are always available to speak to interested parties. For more information, contact Catherine Cutler, Iowa DOT, at 800-866-4368 (toll free).

The goal of the Public Involvement Program is to ensure that all interested parties are informed and involved throughout the I-74 study process.



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For Further Information

Please contact the project office.

**Iowa Department of
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