



**Council Bluffs Interstate  
System Improvements**

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# INSIGHT

**"Rebuilding for the Future"**

**Issue Two**

**July 2003**



## 2nd Public Information Meeting To Be Held

The Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) invites you to participate in the second public information meeting for the Council Bluffs Interstate System Improvements Project (CBIS Improvements Project). The meeting will be held Aug. 7, 2003, at the Best Western Crossroads of the Bluffs from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The purpose of this meeting is to update the public on the progress of the project, present the full range of alternatives being considered, and gather feedback from the public about the project. The meeting will be an open house format with a variety of materials available for viewing. In addition, staff will be available to discuss issues and answer questions.



**Directions to Public Meeting**

### **Mark Your Calendars!**

**Public Meeting  
Aug. 7, 2003**

**Where: Best Western Crossroads  
2216 27th Avenue  
(24th Street & I-80)**

**When: 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.**

**Open House Format**



## **A Variety of Needs are Identified for the Interstate System**

Over the past several months, the project team for the CBIS Improvements Project has identified the following needs with respect to the existing Interstate System in the Council Bluffs area:

**Reduce Existing Traffic Congestion.** The majority of the interstate is operating at or near capacity with high levels of congestion during peak traffic periods.

**Provide for Projected Increases in Traffic Demand.** Traffic volumes are expected to increase substantially on most sections of the interstate over the next 25 years, thereby increasing the existing congestion.

**Repair Existing Roadway Conditions.** Most of the interstate pavement is in fair to poor condition; and several of the bridges and overpasses are approaching the end of their useful service life and are eligible for replacement.

**Address Existing Safety Issues.** A large number of crashes occur on the combined I-80/I-29 interstate section.

**Correct Geometric Issues.** There are several areas where the existing interstate could be improved, including: increasing distance between on/off ramps; improving sight distance; eliminating left-hand on/off ramps; and reducing roadway curvature.

**Accommodate Planned Development in the Interstate Corridor.** In some locations along the interstate corridor, improvements to the transportation system would accommodate existing and planned development.

Alternatives being considered for the project will be evaluated against these identified needs; and the solution that best addresses them will be selected for further study and possible implementation.



## CBIS Improvements Project Considers Many Alternatives

Phase 1 of the CBIS Improvements Project consists of an evaluation of the Interstate System and identification of a systemwide solution. In determining the systemwide solution, the project team will evaluate a wide range of independent alternatives including:



**No-build** - maintain the existing Interstate System with no significant improvements;



**Improvements to other metro area roadways** - improvements that would reduce the amount of traffic on the Interstate System;



**Improvements to alternate modes of transportation** - bus improvements, pedestrian/bike improvements, or construction of public rail transit that reduce traffic on the Interstate System;



**Transportation Demand Management (TDM)** - reduction of demand on the transportation system, including: alternative work hour programs, telecommuting, park and ride facilities, van/carpool programs, and transit incentives;



**Transportation System Management (TSM)** - better management of the transportation system that improves traffic flow and results in reduced demand on the Interstate System, including: low cost roadway/intersection improvements, traffic signal improvements and transportation technology (freeway ramp metering, traffic incident/management center, traveler information systems);



**Construction of a new cross-town roadway** - a roadway on new alignment that could potentially reduce traffic on I-80/I-29; or



**Reconstruct all or part of the interstate** - provide additional capacity, improve access, consolidate interchanges, construct new interchanges, revise interchange configurations and/or provide/improve frontage roads.

The ability of each of these alternatives to address the needs identified for the Council Bluffs Interstate System and impacts of the alternatives on the natural and human environment will be documented in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

## What is an Environmental Impact Statement?

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared for the CBIS Improvements Project, documenting the impacts of the preferred system improvement alternatives. But what is an EIS and why is it needed?

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires all federal agencies to evaluate the environmental impacts of their actions. The intent of NEPA is to provide decision makers with full information about the potential impacts of their actions. An EIS is prepared when the environmental impacts of a project are likely to be significant, and normally includes the following: reasons for the proposed project; a description of the area that will be impacted by the project; range of alternatives that could address the need for the project; and potential benefits and adverse effects of the alternatives being

considered. For the CBIS Improvements Project, the system alternatives described in the above section will be screened and evaluated. The remaining alternatives will be evaluated in the EIS for the project.

An EIS typically contains the following sections:

**Section 1 Purpose and Need.** This section explains why the project is necessary and what transportation problems it will solve.

**Section 2 Alternatives.** This section describes the process used to develop, evaluate, and ultimately to select a preferred alternative based on its ability to address the purpose and need for the proposed project and its environmental impacts. For Phase 1 of the CBIS Improvements Project, all potentially reasonable alternatives will be discussed, including: no improvements, improvements to local roadways,



improvements to alternate modes of transportation, TSM/TDM, construction of new roadways, and improvements to the existing Interstate System. When the EIS is complete it will identify the type of improvements that need to be made to solve the problems of the existing Interstate System (e.g. improvements to the existing interstate vs. transit improvements). The decision on how these improvements will be implemented will be deferred until the next phase.



**Section 3 Affected Environment.** This section presents information about the existing project area, including discussion of the existing social, economic and environmental characteristics. This section also identifies environmentally sensitive features.



**Section 4 Environmental Consequences.** This section explains the beneficial and adverse social, economic and environmental effects of the proposed project, and enables the alternatives to be compared. This section generally covers the following subjects:

- Agriculture
- Land use
- Social and economic impacts
- Pedestrian and bicyclist impacts
- Noise, air and water quality
- Rivers, streams and wetlands
- Floodplains
- Parks and recreational areas
- Conservation areas
- Threatened or endangered species
- Historic resources
- Archaeologic resources
- Regulated materials sites
- Visual impacts
- Energy
- Construction impacts
- Right-of-way and relocations

The following resources within the interstate corridor have already been identified by the project team:



**Parks and recreational areas.** There are a number of parks and recreational areas along the interstate corridor, including: Dodge Park, Playland Park, Westwood Park, Westwood Golf Course, the National Western Historic Trails Center, Big Lake Trail, Valley View Trail, Iowa Riverfront Trail, Rosenblatt Stadium, Henry Doorly Zoo, Deer Hollow Park, Spring Lake Park, and Back to the River Trail.

**Conservation areas.** Blackbird Marsh Wildlife Management Area and Narrows River Access are conservation areas located in northern Council Bluffs along the I-29 corridor. The Loess Hills are located along the I-80 corridor in eastern Council Bluffs.



**Rivers, streams and wetlands.** The urban nature of the corridor limits the potential for impacts to rivers, streams and wetlands. However, there are three waterways in the project area: the Missouri River, Indian Creek and Mosquito Creek. These rivers and their associated floodplains will be evaluated, along with several small wetland areas located within the corridor, primarily near the I-80/16th Street interchange and the two I-80/I-29 system interchanges.

**Right-of-way/Relocations.** If reconstruction of the interstate is required, additional right-of-way will be necessary. It is also likely that several residential and commercial relocations would be required.

Care will be taken to avoid or minimize impacts to these, and all important community resources in the corridor.



**Section 5 Comments and Coordination.** This section summarizes the coordination with federal, state and local agencies, as well as the public.

When Phase 1 of the CBIS Improvements Project is complete, the result will be a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) signed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The resulting document will be broad in scope and address the effects of the improvements to the entire Interstate System. After the public hearing and comment period, the DEIS will be modified as necessary and finalized. After all comments are adequately addressed, FHWA will issue a Record of Decision identifying a preferred alternative, addressing the environmental effects of the preferred alternative, and signaling the end of this phase of the project.

During Phase 2 of the project, the preferred alternative identified during Phase 1 will be broken up into several smaller projects; and each of these projects will be refined and evaluated based on detailed environmental and engineering studies. The studies conducted during Phase 2 will provide details on issues such as noise impacts, right-of-way and other environmental impacts.

## Public Involvement Opportunities

Public involvement is an important part of the CBIS Improvements Project. Input from the public is needed to assist the project team in identifying transportation issues and environmental features within the interstate corridor.

There are many opportunities for the public to get information about and provide feedback on the project, including:

**Newsletters.** This edition of the *CBIS Improvements Insight* contains information about the need for improvements, alternatives being considered, environmental constraints in the corridor, and what will be included in the environmental impact statement.

**Public Information Meetings.** The public information meeting to be held in August is the second public meeting on the project. It will provide the public with an opportunity to review the progress of the study and provide feedback to the project team. A public hearing is anticipated in 2004.

**Advisory Committee.** An advisory committee has been established that includes twelve members from the Council Bluffs area. The purpose of the committee is to represent the interests of the community, and provide

feedback to the project team regarding project issues and solutions.

**Speakers' Bureau.** The project team is available to make presentations to civic groups or other organizations. In addition, the project team is available to meet with individuals one-on-one to discuss project issues.

For more information on the Advisory Committee, Speakers' Bureau, or to discuss project issues, contact Tracy Roberts through any of the means listed below.

### Contact Us



**Tracy Roberts**

**Iowa Department of Transportation**

**District 4 Office**

**P.O. Box 406**

**Atlantic, IA 50022**

**Ph. 712-243-3355**

**Iowa Toll Free Ph. 800-289-4368**

**cbinterstate@dot.state.ia.us**

**For Nebraska related issues regarding  
this project, please contact:**

**Terry Gibson**

**Nebraska Department of Roads**

**1500 Highway 2**

**Lincoln, NE 68509**

**Ph. 402-479-4565**

**tgibson@dor.state.ne.us**



### CBIS Improvement Project

C/O Tracy Roberts

Iowa DOT, District 4

P.O. Box 406

Atlantic, IA 50022