

Council Bluffs Interstate System Improvements

INSIGHT

"Rebuilding for the Future"

Issue Three

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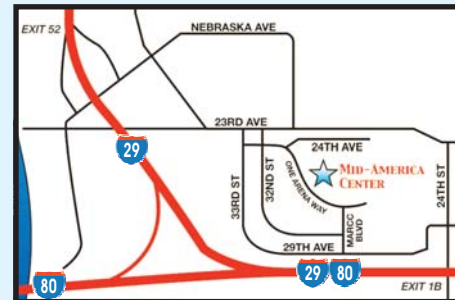


Public Hearing to be Held

Feb. 8, 2005

Where: Mid-America Center
Room H-I-J-K
One Arena Way
Council Bluffs, IA

When: 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Open House Format



Public Input is Encouraged at the Public Hearing

The Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) invites you to participate in the public hearing for the Council Bluffs Interstate System Improvements Project (CBIS Improvements Project). The hearing will be held Feb. 8, 2005, at the Mid-America Center from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. For easiest access to room H-I-J-K, enter the building through the south convention center doors.

The purpose of this meeting is to update the public on the progress of the project, present the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) with the

alternatives being carried forward, and gather feedback about the project and Draft EIS. The project team would like input on key elements of the project that need to be resolved before the project proceeds. These decisions are discussed on page 2.

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. An opportunity for written and verbal comments will also be available.

What Has Been Completed to Date?

The CBIS Improvements Project is a major effort focused on improving the Interstate System in Council Bluffs. Due to the magnitude and complexity of the project, the Iowa DOT decided to develop the project in two tiers. Tier 1 has focused on the entire Council Bluffs Interstate System, including I-80, I-29 and I-480. The purpose of Tier 1 is to identify the needs of the system and solutions to meet those needs. The end product of Tier 1 will be an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that discusses the needs, solutions and general impacts of improving the interstate.

Tier 1 has been ongoing and is nearing completion. Following is a summary of key project activities since the beginning of Tier 1.

January 2003 - A public information meeting was

held to explain the scope of the CBIS Improvements Project and to solicit input from the public on the traffic and environmental issues that exist on the interstate.

Winter/Spring 2003 - During this period, issues identified by resource agencies, Iowa DOT and the public were investigated and documented. Broad-based solutions (alternatives) to address the traffic issues on the entire Interstate System were developed and evaluated.

August 2003 - A public information meeting was held to present the system alternatives and obtain feedback on selection of a preferred alternative.

Fall 2004 - The Tier 1 Draft EIS documented the need for the project, alternatives studied and potential impacts of the preferred alternative.



Key Element Decisions

In addition to general comments, the Iowa DOT would like public input in two areas: access of West Broadway to I-29 and the type of highway section for the overlapping section of I-29 and I-80. Input on these two items will be considered by the Iowa DOT during further development of the CBIS Improvements Project. The DOT's decision will be documented in the Final EIS.

Access at West Broadway

Should access to West Broadway be provided from I-29 or should access remain similar to existing conditions? Providing access at West Broadway will affect access at other existing interchanges. Which access option should be carried forward for evaluation and design in Tier 2?

I-80/I-29 from 24th Street to South Expressway

Two very different concepts have been developed to serve future traffic needs on the overlapping section

of I-80 and I-29 from west of 24th Street to east of South Expressway: the "Combined Freeway" concept; and the "Dual-Divided Freeway" concept. Which concept should be carried forward for evaluation and design in Tier 2?

We Would Like Your Input

The Iowa DOT is seeking input from the public to help make these decisions. Information related to each decision will be presented at the public hearing, including a video illustrating the difference between the two design concepts for I-80/I-29 between 24th Street and South Expressway.

Please attend the public hearing and provide your input on these key issues. An opportunity for written and verbal comments will be available.

A Variety of Needs are Identified for the Interstate System

The CBIS Improvements Project team 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 congestion during peak traffic periods.

Provide for Projected Increases in Traffic Demand. Traffic volumes are expected to increase 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 in this area is in fair to poor condition; and several of the bridges and overpasses are approaching the end of their design 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 Design 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 could accommodate existing and planned development.

Alternatives considered for the project were evaluated against these identified needs; and solutions were selected for further study and possible implementation.



CBIS Improvements Project Considered Many Alternatives

Tier 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 evaluated 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;



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

All of the alternatives were compared and presented at a public meeting in August 2003. Only the "Construction Alternative" would be able to meet all of the identified needs for the Interstate System. As a result, the "Construction Alternative" was carried forward for additional study and comparison to the "No-Build Alternative." The alternatives carried forward are described below:



No-Build Alternative

The "No-Build Alternative" represents the base conditions for the study area and includes all roadway projects planned for the interstate, highways or the local street system, but does not include full reconstruction of the interstate. By 2030, segments of I-80 in Council Bluffs are expected to experience additional congestion.



Construction Alternative

The "Construction Alternative" is made up of multiple design options for capacity expansion, modernization and full reconstruction of the interstate. Design options within the "Construction Alternative" include: additional travel lanes; changes to interchange locations; and changes to interchange layouts. In general, these design options provide similar benefits, meet design criteria, can be constructed, and meet the project's purpose and need.

The Construction Alternative has been identified as the preferred alternative in the Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The potential impacts of the "Construction Alternative" are discussed in the Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

What are the Next Steps for the Project?

The completion of the Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CBIS Improvements Project is the first step toward constructing improvements and improving traffic flow on the Interstate System in Council Bluffs. After the public hearing, the next steps for the project include:



Final Environmental Impact Statement - Respond to public and agency comments on the Tier 1 Draft EIS and incorporate them into the Tier 1 Final EIS.

Formalize Segmentation - The CBIS Improvements Project has been divided into manageable segments. The roadway improvements for each of these segments will be studied in greater detail during Tier 2.

Tier 2 Projects - Based on available funding, Tier 2 will focus further development on additional engineering and environmental analysis of the individual segments within the study corridor. Following Tier 2 and available construction funding, each segment will be packaged into construction projects for final design, acquisition of right-of-way and ultimate construction.



Environmental Field Studies - The first step of Tier 2 is to conduct additional field work. This may include, but is not limited to, identifying wetlands, significant historical/architectural properties and archaeological sites within the limits of the Tier 2 projects.

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