



## **I-80 Mississippi River Bridge**

*Public Meeting Summary / November 15, 2023*

The fourth Public Meeting for the I-80 Mississippi River Bridge study was held at 4 p.m. on November 15, 2023, to provide study information to date, present the Preferred Alternative, and receive public feedback. More than 500 participants joined the online meeting, which included a video presentation, review of study exhibits and discussion with representatives of the Illinois and Iowa departments of transportation, and the project consultant team.

### BY THE NUMBERS:

- **1,017** Registrations
- **521** Participants
- **2** hours, **30** minutes: total meeting time
- **150** questions and comments submitted

### STATE/FEDERAL ELECTED OFFICIALS (or representatives):

- Representatives for:
  - U.S. Senator Charles Grassley
  - Congressman Eric Sorensen
  - Iowa State Rep. Tom Determann
  - Illinois State Rep. Tony McCombie

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTED OFFICIALS & STAFF:

- Scott County, IA
- Rock Island County, IL
- LeClaire
- Rapids City
- Moline
- Bettendorf
- East Moline
- Muscatine
- Eldridge

### MEDIA PARTICIPANTS:

- WHBF (CBS/FOX)
- WQAD (ABC)
- QC Times/Dispatch-Argus
- WVIK
- QC Business Journal
- River Cities Reader

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION PARTICIPANTS

### INCLUDED:

- Bi-State Regional Commission
- Visit Quad Cities
- Quad Cities Chamber
- Living Land & Waters
- Bison Bridge Foundation
- Prairie Rivers Network
- Illinois Audubon Society
- Iowa Stormwater Education Partnership
- SAL Community Services

## QUESTION/CONCERN/COMMENTS TOPICS

### INCLUDED:

- Bicycle & Pedestrian accommodations
- Construction traffic impacts
- Reuse of the Existing Bridge
- Construction timeline and staging
- Noise mitigation possibilities and process
- Potential relocation notification and process
- River navigation channel
- Demolition of existing bridge
- Comparison of alternatives and criteria
- Construction of additional lanes
- Construction and demolition costs
- Consideration of Bison Bridge and economic opportunity
- Type of bridge planned
- New bridge height and dimensions
- Interchange alternative comparisons
- Preferred Alternative process
- Condition of existing bridge
- Rapids City sewer lift station
- Construction footprint
- Impacts to LeClaire
- Property impacts
- Impacts to Sycamore Creek and Mississippi Rapids Rest Area

#### QUESTION & ANSWER PANEL:

The submissions received during the public meeting were grouped into 68 questions that were asked during the Question & Answer session, which lasted for approximately 1 hour and 42 minutes.

- Similar topics and questions were grouped to address all subject matters.
- Comments submitted with no questions were acknowledged during Q&A, with confirmation they would be included in the public record.
- Follow-up communications were sent to all who submitted comments or questions during the meeting, confirming receipt of the submittal and providing direction to the project website for more information and to submit additional comments.
- Any questions and comments received outside of the meeting but during the official comment period received an acknowledgment or response as appropriate.

The following is a report of questions posed to the panel and their responses. **Responses have been edited for clarity:**

#### **Panelists:**

**Steve Robery**, Illinois Department of Transportation

**Mike Kuehn**, Illinois Department of Transportation

**Phil Mescher**, Iowa Department of Transportation

**Tony Pakeltis**, Parsons

**Mark Peterson**, Parsons

**Todd Ude**, Parsons

**Brad Hahn**, Moderator, Images, Inc.

**QUESTION:** *Why combine the two projects, the bridge replacement and the I-88 interchange, into one project? Why not two separate projects, particularly since they are separated by several miles and are two totally different types of projects with different complexities and impacts?*

#### **MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

The reason that we have the limits that we do is because it was based on logical termini.

When this was first discussed and considered for this project, we looked at where the existing I-80 project that Iowa DOT already had in initial phases, which ended at 35<sup>th</sup> Street SW.

So, we used 35<sup>th</sup> Street SW as the western terminus for our project in Iowa. picked up the west terminus on the Iowa side. On the Illinois side, we included everything through the I-80 Mississippi River Bridge to the I-80 and the I-88 interchange. We initially included the I-88 interchange because we thought that we would be meeting six lane warrants in this area. As we analyzed this further, and looked at projections, we determined we did not have warrants for the six lanes. We still have the interchange in this project, but as we move forward and we go into Phase II and potential construction, will we split these out into a separate project? That is yet to be determined, but that is most definitely a possibility.

#### **TONY PAKELTIS, PARSONS:**

I would just reiterate that piece about the potential widening. When we started the project, we weren't sure if this was going to also include adding an additional lane in each direction, and if you were to do that, that added lane would certainly have to run all the way from the Mississippi River Bridge down to



the next interchange at I-88. And so that led to the interchange being included as part of this Phase I project.

***STEVE ROBERY, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:***

I'd also like to add that the option of separating these projects still exists, and that's something we'll explore. They will be part of the same Phase I documentation, the preliminary engineering and environmental documentation, but we can decide to split them off as separate contracts, or build them at separate times, if we so choose to in the future.

***QUESTION: Why wasn't the bison bridge reviewed?***

***STEVE ROBERY, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:***

Well, Tony mentioned this in the presentation a little bit, but I'll reiterate. We have been aware of the interest in using the existing structure.

The only interest we've heard up to date is the Bison Bridge concept, and we've known about that since early in the engineering environmental study. As we've indicated at previous meetings, our study is conducted in accordance with NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act, which requires that the Preferred Alternative be selected based on the Purpose and Need of the project, and with the objective of minimizing impacts to the natural and human environment.

So, Bison are not an existing environmental resource in this area, and because of that, we can't use the concept to mitigate impacts to other resources that actually do exist. This would include things like natural resources, such as wetlands, streams, forests, floodplains, threatened and endangered species, as well as impacts to the human environment, including impacts to residences, whether they are relocations or just partial impacts, or a commercial property.

Other impacts to communities and farmland are other examples.

I just want to clarify something as well. That is, the question was asked, why wasn't the Bison Bridge option reviewed? And I should clarify that there really is no "Bison Bridge option".

The Bison Bridge is a concept. It's a separate concept, and really, the way we've been looking at this from the beginning, there are alternatives that could potentially allow the existing bridge to remain in place, and there are alternatives that would not allow that. With these four alternatives that we've been evaluating for over a year here, two alternatives could potentially allow the existing bridge to remain in place and two that would not.

But the concept of a Bison Bridge can't be used as a criterion for selecting the Preferred Alternative, because it's not an existing resource.

We chose the preferred alternative based on impacts to the existing environment and human environment.

The idea of a Bison Bridge, the concept of a Bison Bridge, really only comes into play if the Preferred Alternative allowed the existing bridge to remain in place.

And as it turns out, upon reviewing these alternatives, the alternatives that would have allowed the existing bridge to remain in place did not result in the fewest impacts.

**QUESTION:** *How will this affect the Mississippi Rapids Rest Area on the Illinois side of the river?*

**MARK PETERSON, PARSONS:**

Under the Preferred Alternative, as shown on the slide, retaining walls will be used to limit the encroachment into the rest area. That's something that we're still going to work on as far as the Preferred Alternative is concerned to determine if that impact to the rest area can be minimized. The widened interchange at the base is pushing into that steep slope that has the rest area at the top.

So, traveling up that slope with the additional roadway encroachment does travel a long way up into the rest area. We've been working to figure out a way to perhaps move the ramp intersection a little bit to the east, so we won't have that encroachment into the rest area. It's a big issue for us. As roadway designers, we don't want to impact that environmentally, so we are spending a fair bit of time trying to figure out how we can reduce the encroachment on the rest area. The use of a retaining wall was our first pass at it, but there are constructability issues with that solution. At this point in time, that's where we are. However, we do believe further refinements can be made. We want to leave the overlook in good shape because it's something within the corridor that a lot of people enjoy.

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

We do want to note, however, the alternative that has been chosen was chosen to push toward the overlook, versus going to the east. The reason that we did that was because it would have impacted additional homes on the east side of I-80. Our prime concern is to minimize both the impacts to natural resources existing out there, as well as to try and minimize impact to adjacent homes and businesses. This alternative was able to do that, and it has less impacts than alternative three, which got into more people's backyards on the Iowa side and would have far more impact to the overlook.

**QUESTION:** *Why not construct the three-lane section at this time from the bridge west to the project terminus?*

**PHIL MESCHER, IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

We're trying to balance a lot of construction projects on the interstate across the entire state, and we're really trying to focus on constructing the right projects at the right time. We are just wrapping up our own PEL study that basically stretched from west of the I-280 interchange to the 35th Street Southwest overpass.

Based on the findings from that, at this point in time, we don't have any plans to program a large capacity expansion project through the Quad Cities on the Iowa side. And rather, we did identify some areas that are going to need to be addressed. And so we're going to be looking at more spot improvements around the 61 interchange and more likely between the 61 interchange and the I-74 interchange on the main line.

We may see some additional lanes through that area in the future, but at this point in time, we don't have anything in our five-year program, or short-term plans to expand capacity on a large scale.

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

We did look at the warrants, to expand out to six lanes, as I noted earlier, with the logical termini. We just did not see the warrants for six lanes at this time. Now, one thing that we are looking at and we want to do on this project, is to build the sub structures for the bridges to accommodate for an eventual six lanes out there. So, when it does come time to have to widen it out, we already have those sub structures ready to go, and we can either extend out the deck or replace the deck to a wider footprint.



**QUESTION:** *What sort of pedestrian or cyclist options will be provided for safe crossings?*

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

One thing that we've talked about in the last couple of meetings is that we typically do not have pedestrian or bicycle facilities on an interstate project, but we have gotten that question quite often in the previous three meetings. What we've said in the past, and what we're going to continue to do, is investigate the possibility of adding pedestrian and bicycle facilities on the Mississippi River Bridge, in order to connect the Grand Illinois Trail on the Illinois side and a future trail system on the Iowa side.

We are looking to meet with the Bi-State Metropolitan Planning Organization in LeClaire and Rapids City in the coming weeks to try and determine the maintenance abilities to implement a pedestrian/bike path. Typically, both Iowa and Illinois would have the facilities if we're going to do that, but we do need maintenance of them once they are built to go to the local entities.

That's typically how we do that on the Illinois side, and I believe that's how the Iowa side does as well. Is that accurate?

**PHIL MESCHER, IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

Yes, sir, that's very similar. You're correct.

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

We are looking at that possibility. We have run some preliminary designs to see if this is something that we could do, and that it would meet both bicycle and Americans with Disabilities Act policies. It's a work in progress. Now that we've come up with a Preferred Alternative, we can really delve into that more deeply and get into the nitty gritty, and further coordinate with the local communities and Bi-State.

**QUESTION:** *The programmed amount for the new bridge is \$288 million. What's the current estimated bridge cost for Preferred Alternative Five?*

**STEVE ROBERY, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

That \$288 million is the correct program amount. That is the total both Iowa and Illinois have for this project within our respective multi-year programs.

It's likely that \$288 number, the programmed amount, is going to move around a little bit – most likely up – as this project is further developed. Everybody on this call has seen cost and credit increases, and we see that when we build roadway projects, too. I guess the answer to that question is we have looked at costs for the purpose of comparing the alternatives and aiding us to selection of the Preferred Alternative. But bear in mind, and I believe we talked about this in previous meetings, that we must do everything in the right order. First and foremost is addressing Purpose and Need and eliminating impacts. The cost concern does come into play.

And we have evaluated that. To an extent we've looked at costs. and Mark presented that in the presentation. Alternate 2 has the baseline lowest cost. Alternate 5 is roughly now, general ballpark numbers, 9% higher, Alternate 3 is 14% higher – so they're all within 15% of each other now. Cost estimates will be further refined as we go along.



**QUESTION:** *Going back to the existing bridge, is there still time to consider preserving the current bridge for pedestrian or wildlife use? That seems like a huge potential tourist draw.*

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

As Steve noted earlier, we are controlled by the NEPA process, we must focus on addressing the Purpose and Need of a transportation project.

The re-use of the existing bridge is not part of that Purpose and Need. What is part of the Purpose and Need and the NEPA process is for us to minimize impacts to the adjacent properties and to the existing natural resources.

Alternate 5, the Preferred Alternative, does that; it minimizes impact to the existing natural resources.

If you look at the chart between Alternatives 3 and 5, there are less impacts on those different aspects of it.

In addition, we're getting into people's backyards less with Alternative 5 than we do in Alternative 3.

It would cause less impacts to remove the existing structure and utilize that valuable existing corridor to place the new bridge in versus having to purchase, impact, and relocate other properties by expanding it out and leaving the existing bridge there. It really is a situation where the further off we get from the existing alignment, the more we're going to be impacting the adjacent properties.

If you go 20 feet, it's going to impact it a little. You go 50 feet, it's going to be impacting more. We considered Alternatives 6 and 7 earlier in the study, and we eliminated them at Public Meeting Three. Those were much farther off the existing bridge alignment, and they were impacting dozens of homes and businesses.

Our goal is to try and minimize impacts and also address our purpose and need, keeping the new bridges as close to the existing alignment as possible minimizes impacts while still addressing the purpose and need.

**STEVE ROBERY, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

I just want to add that according to the NEPA process, tourism is an economic development hope, and the NEPA process doesn't allow us to consider potential economic development. It's not a component of this analysis, as we've said before, the analysis is based on human and environmental impacts. So, it can't be a determination of the process by NEPA. What you're doing there is asking us to throw in another condition, saying, "can you make sure that the bridge stays in place so that we can do that", and the NEPA process doesn't allow us to add criteria that would restrict our selection or the alternatives that we can pick from.

And in adding that criteria, and saying, "well, you know, yeah, we understand you need to reduce impacts, and you need to meet the purpose and need", we cannot add into there, "and also make sure the existing bridge stays in place." NEPA does not allow us to do that.

And the alternatives that allow that, did not result in the lowest impacts, so that is why they were not selected.



**QUESTION:** *Will the project design include improvements to safety for vehicles merging onto the I-80 Bridge from the last interchange in Illinois and Iowa?*

**MARK PETERSON, PARSONS:**

I think that Todd had a little bit on that in his last few slides. If you want to take that out again, or I'd be happy to answer.

**TODD UDE, PARSONS:**

Imagine coming on the ramps from either interchange coming up on I-80. Right now, you've got a very short distance to try to get in to the two through lanes across the bridge.

In the future, imagine traveling from Illinois 84 to US 67, you'd spin up on the ramp under the bridge, and there is a full width lane for the full length of the bridge, that then peels off on the ramps on US 67 on the other side. You've got two lanes of I-80 through traffic traveling next to you, and you've got your own lane to just travel from interchange to interchange.

That's an unusual case, and most people are going to have the 3,500-foot length of the bridge to move over and get into the I-80 traffic. So, I would say it is safer.

**MARK PETERSON, PARSONS:**

When we've been doing the development of this, we had a couple of different scenarios where we had tapers from the entrance ramp and then tapers from the exit ramp and they were almost overlapping, or back-to-back. So, the auxiliary lane is just a great solution.

The associated bridge costs are worth the improvement because we can have the vehicles slowing down and accelerating on the interchange over the time at the exit ramp, they would be going slower and there would just be more room for vehicles to weave in between.

It's a good investment for the bridge to have that element added to it, and that's in both directions of course.

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

This is like what you see on the I-74 bridge that was replaced, where you have the two through lanes and the auxiliary between Iowa and Illinois. It's going to be very similar from that standpoint.

**MARK PETERSON, PARSONS:**

With the additional width, that auxiliary lane increases flexibility. That's the thing that permits us to carry two lanes each way during construction, because the bridge is that wide out all the way.

And then, in future inspections, when there's gear up on the bridge, traffic has to be pushed over, and it's just that much more room to do that safely for everybody.

**QUESTION:** *What about sound barriers or noise control along Sycamore Creek?*

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

One thing we noted in our last meeting last year was that once we had the Preferred Alternative, we would look at the noise wall, any noise control, along Sycamore Creek and along the corridor in general. So now that we have chosen a Preferred Alternative, that will be the next step, to complete the noise study and determine any potential walls that would be needed along this corridor.





**QUESTION:** *Will the I-88 interchange and the I-80 construction be simultaneous or staggered?*

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

When we initially set up this study, we had it all together as part of the overall corridor. Now that we are further along, and once we get into Phase II, we will determine whether we include the I-88 Interchange at the same time or if we pull them apart. Regardless of what happens at the I-88 Interchange, we would still do the interchanges at US 67 and IL 84, and then anything that would involve the weigh station or the overlook. Those are all combined into the Mississippi River Bridge alternative. Once we're getting off the bridge, we're trying to match into existing, we'd be getting into all those locations, so those have to stay together. With respect to the I88 Interchange, that's the one area that we could potentially break out separately if we want to. That is yet to be determined.

Obviously, if we're going to be doing it all at the same time, we're going to want to stage it in such a way that traffic is going to be flowing in a reasonable manner and we are not creating a nightmare for the traveling public.

We want to make sure that we are going to be maintaining the two lanes in each direction the entire time, and that we are going to be keeping access on IL 84 and US 67. We want to try and keep the ramps open as much as possible. There might be short periods of time where we may have to close a ramp to get staging flipped and things like that, but the goal is to minimize the impacts to the traveling public. The communities, both Rapids City and LeClaire, when we had our meetings with them, had both noted that that traffic was a major concern.

They noted when we had the alternative to just close I-80 (while the new bridge was constructed), that would be seriously detrimental to both communities.

That is why we eliminated that alternative in in our last meeting. We understand there is concern with traffic control. We want to try and maintain the traffic control as close to normal as we can and still build this in a timely manner. So, as we're further developing that, that is going to be a prime goal as we move into Phase II: to maintain traffic, maintain accessibility, and maintain safety.

**QUESTION:** *Is there a projected timeline for completion for the Preferred Alternative?*

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

Right now, what we are looking to do with the project is have one more meeting in early to mid-2024 with our final refinements to the Preferred Alternative and show the final impacts. We do want to try and tighten things up more, if possible, to further reduce any impacts to the businesses and homes. In the next meeting, we will show what we have modified and how we further reduced impacts. Soon after that, we would finish up the project report. Once we finish up the project report and Phase I, then we can start purchasing right of way, start meeting with the property owners and say, "we do need some easement; we do need some right of way".

We're hoping not to be impacting any more homes than need be, but if there is a home that we have to purchase or relocate, that would be the time that we would start meeting with the property owners and discussing that.

Typically, whenever we have something like this, it does take time to complete land acquisition. Typically, we're in the two-year range on something like that. While we're doing that, we will also be developing the plan, getting the details of the bridge design finished, the interchange design finished, and getting the traffic control finished. All that will take probably 2-to-3 years.



So we are talking 2024, at least, before we're done with Phase I, and then another 2-to-3 years after that to finish Phase II before we really start breaking ground and start construction out here.

**QUESTION:** *In regard to the I-88 cloverleaf: Will it allow cars to travel greater than 25 miles an hour like they do now?*

**MARK PETERSON, PARSONS:**

Yes, the new policy standards that we would employ there would allow a higher speed around the loop ramps. I think what is also significant is the current standards, are the requirements for stepping down the initial curve. When vehicles are coming off of mainline Interstate 88 or 80, it will be a gradual reduction as the curves get tighter. Cars will be able to travel faster than 25 miles per hour.

Plus, with the outer direct ramp, the one that you're coming down the hill on I-80 there, I think that the first curve surprises people, they might be entering the ramp with too much speed in the case of trucks. So with that loop ramp being gone, and the outer direct ramp, that will be a higher speed roadway. They won't have those tighter radii of the loop ramps. In general, the overall travel speed will increase on the interchange.

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

The one thing I would note, as Mark said, is that the I-80 eastbound to I-88 eastbound loop ramp has been a major issue. When you look at the crash display that we had in the presentation, there have been a lot of crashes that have resulted in injury along that loop. That's why we concentrated on that, to get the flyover for that movement. The other ones were not nearly as bad, but they do need to be increased in size to better facilitate what is out there right now. The loop ramp has been a major concern of ours and that is why we chose Alternative B; it is a safety issue. That ramp is an issue and having that flyover would best facilitate solving that issue.

**QUESTION:** *Will the current river navigation channel be widened for safer navigation, as requested by the Coast Guard?*

**TODD UDE, PARSONS:**

It will, the Coast Guard has permitting authority over a project like this, so we pretty much have to do what they say. And the initial clearance determination that they've made, looking at the performance of the existing bridge and communicating with the commercial navigation industry, you're looking for about a 70-foot increase in navigation clearance horizontally.

**QUESTION:** *What would the retaining walls be used for?*

**MARK PETERSON, PARSONS:**

The retaining walls help us not encroach so far into the areas that we're trying to avoid.

In particular, the overlook is one of these areas because it is a significant feature, and there is already a steep cut slope that we have talked about to the IDOT maintenance staff. There may be some issues already with some drainage items and a little bit of sloughing of the slope.

Under Alternative Five, and with potential for a wider interchange at IL 84, the existing ramp is going to push further to the west, and there really isn't much room at all until you get into that steep slope. That retaining wall would be used in combination with some grading at a 3 to 1 (perhaps a 2.5 to 1 slope). We would have to use that retaining wall, so we wouldn't get further back into the overlook area. If we just let the slope extend up the hill, the impacts would be more significant than what we showed on the exhibit. The wall will help us maintain more overlook area.

**QUESTION:** *How long will it take to build Alternative 5?*

**TONY PAKELTIS, PARSONS:**

Any discussion on schedule duration is preliminary. At this point, we are developing a preliminary construction schedule during Phase I. This is going to be advanced in greater detail in Phase II and final design. The contractor and the DOTs will finalize that construction schedule at Phase III. At this point, we're roughly estimating the construction duration for Alternative Five at about four years.

As the project moves forward, IDOT will evaluate the costs and benefits associated with accelerating the construction schedule to see if that makes sense to try to reduce the schedule further.

**QUESTION:** *How safe is the current bridge structure?*

**TODD UDE, PARSONS:**

The current bridge is safe, meets all the requirements that we expect of any bridge carrying traffic. It is kind of an aged structure type, and it is an aging structure. So, it's expensive to keep it safe. It requires a lot of inspection and more frequent interventions, which can be disruptive to traffic. Overall, it is safe to travel on.

**QUESTION:** *Do studies show that new bridges are quieter for residential property, versus the existing girder bridge?*

**TONY PAKELTIS, PARSONS:**

I would say generally, if there is a difference, it is negligible. Different pavement types can produce different sound levels and the wear and tear on the bridge could affect the sound levels. But, overall, those types of differences really don't factor into the analysis we will conduct as part of the noise study.

**TODD UDE, PARSONS:**

That is accurate, a lot has changed in bridges in the last hundred years, but the noise on the concrete pavement is not one of them.

**QUESTION:** *Can you go into more depth regarding residential parcels? There are eight residential parcels impacted in Alternative Five, although not relocated, can you please share more detail?*

**TONY PAKELTIS, PARSONS:**

Slide 16 is the relocation exhibit we showed. This was the slide we used to talk about relocations for the project. We noted two residential displacements here which are the two homes just west of the existing bridge along the Iowa riverbank. We also have one business relocation, but then you will also see some of this green shading on additional parcels.

As you move northwest from the river here in this residential development to the west of I-80, you will see some of the proposed impacts shift to the west as we shift that alignment to the west. This accounts for the proposed slopes and the ditches that would have to be modified as the roadway is shifted. We start to encroach a little into those properties, but we do not think that we are currently impacting the home or see this as a full parcel take.

We do see some impact there with a couple of parcels in Iowa. And then if you look at the Illinois exhibit as well, there is the one parcel, just west of the eastbound Illinois 84 ramps, where we also are showing some encroachment into that parcel as well.

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

I do want to note as well, this is what we have at this point for impacts. We do want to continue to look at what options we can advance to further minimize those impacts. It should also be noted that when



you look between Alternatives 3 and 5, the impact that we have with Alternative 3, we were getting a lot further into a lot of those back yards than we were with this Alternative 5. It goes back to the statement I made earlier: the further we get off alignment, the more impacts we are going to be making to the adjacent properties.

The reason why we chose this alternative was to try and minimize those impacts and reduce the amount that we would be impacting those adjacent properties. Even getting into the backyard area a little bit, we want to do as little as humanly possible. This alternative gave us the best chance at doing that.

**QUESTION:** *Did you consider a combination of 4 and 5 with the companion bridges on each side of the existing bridge, Keeping the existing bridge in place? Wouldn't that save costs by not demolishing the existing bridge?*

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

I don't know how that would work. Having an existing bridge structure in the middle of two other bridges? Yes, the offset would be a little bit on each side – but then you're still having that existing facility in the middle.

There's still upkeep with that existing structure. You're still going to be impacting both the east and west sides of the of the I-80 corridor. We'll be impacting the properties on both sides. That would probably result in a higher number of homes being impacted than just shifting it to the one side.

If you look at Alternatives 4 and 5, with Alternative 4 we had impacts on the Illinois side of several homes because those ramps got pushed out. We are impacting on the Iowa side the same way. You're probably getting the worst of both conditions by doing that, because you would be having to relocate that many more homes.

At least by keeping it to the one side, we can keep it as close to the existing corridor as we can. We're going to be impacting less homes, less relocation of properties. The point of this is to try and minimize impacts. Doing Alternatives 4 and 5 and putting them on the outside, you're hitting both sides more. You'd be impacting more homes, more businesses, and more natural resources. So, that would not be a viable option.

**QUESTION:** *Is there any opportunity or scenario where the Preferred Alternative might change?*

**STEVE ROBERY, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

We've done our detailed study. We feel that we've selected the correct alternative, and again, based on minimizing environmental and human impacts. And we will plan to proceed with that.

As we continue and finish up Phase I, we do understand that there are people out there who are not happy with this selection. There was another question about, "did we select this alternative to kill the Bison Bridge?", and I'll answer that as well.

No, there was no specific intent. Our decision was made to reduce impacts to the human and natural environment and meet the Purpose and Need. I encourage people, if you disagree with what we have done, to send us comments, that's what this meeting is for, whether it's during the meeting or after the meeting, and all those comments will be addressed.

But we plan to move forward with Alternative Five B.

**QUESTION:** *Will native plantings be used instead of cool season introduced species?*

**TONY PAKELTIS, PARSONS:**

My initial response is that kind of detail is going to be ironed out later on in the project, during Phase II. I believe IDOT has some different standard mixes that they use along interstate facilities, but the details of that aren't going to be anything that we're really diving into here in Phase I.

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

If the person that had that question, if they want to follow up and have something specific they're looking at, we can certainly review that. We have native mixes that we look to use on the Illinois side. Phil, I assume on the Iowa side, you have some different prairie mixes that you look to use as well.

**PHIL MESCHER, IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

Yes, I'm assuming that we are planning on that as well.

**MARK PETERSON, PARSONS:**

With the Forest Preserve being right there, too, we have been in contact with them as well. And I know they have a lot of work to do on their site, improving it to where they want it to be in the future, and I think they were doing some planting in kind there as well. So, the other potential resource for folks that are on site, it is right at the northwest quadrant of the I-88 interchange.

**QUESTION:** *Is more property needed for the construction phase versus the final bridge footprint?*

**MARK PETERSON, PARSONS:**

Often, there can be the need for temporary easement at the bottom of some of these fill slopes, there would be an area for the contractor to work back and forth. Sometimes, it's only about 10 feet. And typically, some of that would be returned to the property owner once it is graded or seeded. It could be a bigger question related to construction of the bridge, as well.

I know some of it is probably contractor means and methods of where they are going to lay down equipment. You know, there are large infield areas in the interchange which seem like they would be right for some kind of use like that.

**TODD UDE, PARSONS:**

I understood the question to be regarding the blue shaded areas that we're showing, "is that it," "is that the impact area, is that impact for construction?" And the answer to that, I think, is yes. Right on the screen, on that slide 16, we see that heavy black line, which is an estimate of the actual slope, but to show those blue shaded regions we inflated that up, an amount that we believe is appropriate to accommodate construction.

And in the river, the contractor will be on barges. He needs access to the riverbank, that will have to be worked out from one location. He will make adequate use of the infields, obviously, for a variety of reasons, you see that on interstate construction all the time.

But the impact areas that you see in blue in the exhibits here, and that will be posted on the website, those are intended to accommodate construction, but obviously, it's all at a very small scale, and you can't quite scale off and see if we clipped or didn't clip a corner of a property. But in that blue area, we don't have that level of precision yet.

**QUESTION:** *With the shift west and expected increase to traffic, has consideration been given to add noise reduction barriers along the corridor to reduce the noise impact to residences along Sycamore drive in Iowa?*

**TONY PAKELTIS, PARSONS:**

We are in the process of conducting a noise analysis for the Preferred Alternative. That is going to include looking at existing and predicted future noise levels to determine where there are noise impacts, and then to evaluate mitigation, which is typically a noise barrier. Where there are noise impacts, we will look at the potential for a barrier. We are in the process of that analysis, and we will have those results available at the next public meeting. We are not far enough along to know whether there will be noise barriers, but that will be evaluated.

**QUESTION:** *Will the new lanes need to be temporarily closed while tearing down the old bridge? If so, how long will it be closed?*

**TODD UDE, PARSONS:**

No, they will not be. That is referring to when traffic is moved to the eastbound bridge, and you're pulling down the existing bridge. That space will be adequate. The existing can be pulled out of there without impacting traffic.

**QUESTION:** *Regarding the design, will there be six lanes on each side of the bridge?*

**TODD UDE, PARSONS:**

I read that to mean each side of the river. We've said that the bridge itself will carry three lanes each way between the interchanges. It's six lanes from interchange to interchange across the river. Then those auxiliary lanes drop at the interchange, going back to a two-lane configuration, west of US 67, and a two-lane configuration east of Illinois 84.

**PHIL MESCHER, IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

From Iowa's perspective, I think I covered this before, but we're currently not looking to add capacity on the mainline west of the bridge. It is not in our five-year program, and probably not in our short-term program.

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

Same with the Illinois side. The warrants for six lanes are not expected to be met in the coming years. We are looking to build the substructure of the bridge to allow for an eventual expansion for an additional lane on the bridge itself. If we were to add lanes in Illinois, we would do it toward the median. We would figure for that, but we are not going to be adding a through travel lane as part of this project.

**QUESTION:** *Going back to property owners and impacts, what's the timeline and process for contacting landowners impacted by the preferred alternatives?*

**STEVE ROBERY, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

For the timeline, the property acquisition, land acquisition phase – and this applies to, whether it's a relocation, or a partial acquisition right-of-way, or temporary easement – that runs concurrently with the Phase II design. We'll do that after we finish Phase I. We're currently estimating that to be mid-2024, when Phase I will end and Phase II will start.

It's difficult to say when the acquisition process will start from the landowner's perspective, because there are things that need to take place before we start talking to landowners. Specifically, that is the development of right of way, an easement assessment, and appraisals for the properties that are impacted. So, it's difficult to define that at this point in time. The overall process, I think, Mike indicated



would be two years for that, so that runs concurrently with Phase II, which is at least between 2 and 3 years.

However, the good news is property owners will know more information about that before we finish Phase I. At our next meeting, we plan to present the refined impacts. We showed construction limits on those slides that you have seen, we will refine those, and we will set the right-of-way. That will be presented during our next public meeting. Certainly, at that point in time, if people have questions for us, they can ask them. We do not have to wait for the land acquisition phase. That is typically part of our processes. We can try to help people out and get them to visualize what kind of right-of-way needs we have before our Land Acquisition Unit contacts you. We will start that process as we get closer to the next public meeting.

**QUESTION:** *Has the bridge type already been selected, or will that occur during the next phase, and was that part of the cost estimate?*

**TODD UDE, PARSONS:**

The bridge type has been selected. It is anticipated to be a steel girder type bridge, and that is the basis upon which cost estimates so far have been made. In this phase, it will be brought to a preliminary level of design.

**QUESTION:** *In regard to lanes, it's set up for two lanes with an alternate lane, there's talk about building three lanes from Iowa City to the river, will the bridge be able to handle the three lanes with an alternate lane if the three lanes continue onto the 88 interchange in the future?*

**PHIL MESCHER, IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

If we're looking at the timeframe for when that might occur, we would most definitely need to look at the traffic levels at that time. The bridge is set up to have a six-lane capacity, so that it can handle the weaving traffic between the interchanges. If we are going to build an expansion to six lanes through the Quad Cities, we will have to take a really hard look at the levels of traffic and how that operates and do some analysis on that to determine what the outcome should be.

**QUESTION:** *Will all ramps be open during construction?*

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

There will be points in time when we are reconstructing both Illinois 67 and Illinois 84 where it would be very likely that we are going to have to do limited closures, likely one ramp at a time. The intent would be to minimize the duration on that, and if we do have to temporarily close a ramp, obviously, we want to make sure that we are impacting Rapids City and LeClaire as little as possible. We will be developing that more in depth as we get into Phase II. We want to minimize those times, but there will be points in time where we will probably have to do a short-term closure on the ramps. We would stagger them to minimize impacts, but there will be some impacts that would occur at some point during construction.

**QUESTION:** *Will there be any impact on commercial river traffic during construction?*

**TODD UDE, PARSONS:**

Minimal. You cannot say no impact, but the Coast Guard is serious about keeping commercial traffic flowing during construction. You can imagine hanging new girders over the navigation opening, there are closures of hours to a day. Or when bringing the existing bridge down, closures of hours to a day. But that is part of the intent, with requiring the navigation opening a little larger than existing, so that a lot of the day-to-day work of getting the new piers in the river can be constructed outside the navigation channel, while commercial navigation continues unimpeded.



**QUESTION:** *Are there plans for future I-80 widening outside of the bridge?*

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

At this point, no, not on the Illinois side. We have looked at the traffic volumes, and frankly the highest volumes we have on the Illinois side are between the Mississippi River and I-88. Once we hit I-88, traffic drops on I-80, so I-80 does not require an expansion to six lanes. We have higher traffic in this section, and this section is not requiring additional lanes for quite a few years in Illinois.

**PHIL MESCHER, IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

Yes, Mike you are correct. And that is where, with our studies, we have looked at the traffic current levels and the projected volumes. There are some spot locations around the US 61 interchange and on the mainline, between US 61 and I-74 where we might need some spot improvements like some auxiliary lanes or improvements to some of the ramps. But as far as a wholesale expansion to six lanes to the Iowa side of the corridor, that is not in our five-year program at this point, and most likely, not in our short-term plans, either.

**QUESTION:** *When will the materials be on the website?*

**BRAD HAHN, IMAGES, INC:**

At the conclusion of the meeting, all the materials will be posted except for the meeting recording. The full recording of this meeting will go up on the website, but there'll be a slight delay there. So that might be tomorrow morning. However, the rest of the materials will be available after the conclusion of this meeting.

**QUESTION:** *How may the public file an objection to the recommendation of the findings expressed today?*

**STEVE ROBERY, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

We talked about the comment period. We accept comments on our projects throughout the Phase I process. If you want your comment to be a part of this public meeting record, specifically, we have an end date of November 29<sup>th</sup>. We understand that people have different opinions on what they would like to see here, and part of the process is to take your comments.

**QUESTION:** *What is the planned width of the center span for navigation?*

**TODD UDE, PARSONS:**

The US Coast Guard has been consulted, and they are requiring a main span that provides 420' horizontal clearance for navigation.

**QUESTION:** *The I-80 hard surface has been doubled, between 88 and the bridge since it was originally built. Has any plan been made for excess runoff rainwater, especially if third lanes are added?*

**MARK PETERSON, PARSONS:**

We do, as part of the Phase I study, have a location drainage study that looks at the water that will run off the existing or the proposed impervious area. So that is one component of it. We are looking at the hydraulics of the existing culverts that pass under the interstate as well. It is a two-pronged approach. So, because rainfall has changed in the past, at least what is recognized in the DOT standards, we want to make sure that the existing culverts are adequate for current and future hydraulic requirements, including the passage of Sycamore Creek from one side of the interstate to the other. And then the location drainage study, that is taking care of the impervious area increases, those will also be looked at.

As part of this, the combined study will cover all those drainage questions. We will not be creating any problems with the impervious area. Based on the number of questions we had about drainage, it is always good if we have as much information as possible, if someone knows of some flooding areas along Sycamore Creek, the DOTs do a really good job of understanding where the drainage problems are, on the pavement themselves, if there is an individual homeowner or something that has a problem with culvert overflowing, or something backing up in their yard, it would be good to have that kind of knowledge as well, so that we can address that while we are doing the overall ditch drainage and culvert drainage. Any additional information would be welcomed, but the planned location drainage study and the hydraulics covers all that additional impervious area that we would have both now and set ourselves up for any future widening as well.

**QUESTION:** *Is Sycamore Creek being changed?*

**MARK PETERSON, PARSONS:**

With Alternative Five, we did have a couple of those dark blue areas where we show we are going to have some impact, with the embankment encroaching into the creek. First, we want to try to avoid that as much as possible, which may include a short retaining wall or something that we can employ. We want to make sure that we have, not only the creek itself at normal flow, but also any flooding that we can consider as well. We will have areas that if we must mitigate for some of the slopes being placed in the creek or right adjacent to it, then we will make those accommodations too, so we do not increase the flood flow or the width of the floodplain upstream. So, we will account for that.

**QUESTION:** *Are there lessons learned from the I-74 Bridge Replacement Project that can be applied to this project?*

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

There are lessons learned on every project. I-74 is a little different situation than I-80 is. For one, that was a specialty bridge. We are looking at a plate girder bridge here. That area (on I-74) was very urbanized. And while we have communities on both sides of the river here, we can avoid them a little bit easier than what they had in being in the downtown area. Obviously, we have great concern with scheduling on this, as they were with 74. We will certainly be trying to make sure we are minimizing impacts on the duration, as we are going through. But yes, they are a little different, but at the same time, as we are going through, we will be looking for ways to catch anything that we missed.

**STEVE ROBERY, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

The first thing that came to mind was the construction scheduling, and how do we minimize impacts during construction.

**PHIL MESCHER, IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

I was not really involved with I-74, but I will say that the schedule is important. And one of the decisions we made here is that the building timeframe is going to be a little bit longer because we must demolish the old bridge, and then build a new one in place.

And it seems like a little bit of a sacrifice there, we are going to have a little bit longer short-term impacts to travel, but I think long-term, it is going to be much more beneficial. So, this might seem like a little bit of a headache during the construction process, as it was for I-74, but in the end, it is going to work out to be the better solution.

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

The one thing we are looking to do with these proposed structures is have enough room to maintain two lanes in each direction during construction. That will be very beneficial. I-74 had local traffic where you could go through too. The wonderful thing about the Quad Cities area, which is way different than like in Rockford, where our Illinois Department Transportation District 2 also works, down here in the Quad Cities, we have some alternatives if we have to direct some traffic and pull some traffic off to minimize the traffic loading on I-80. We have 280, we have 74, if we have to distribute traffic. Up in Rockford, we do have that benefit, and it makes it a lot harder. This is nice here in the Quad Cities having 280 available and having 74.

**QUESTION:** *Regarding staging areas, what kind of staging area will be needed for the bridge build? Where will that be?*

**TODD UDE, PARSONS:**

Not only is that not a Phase I NEPA question, it is also really not a Phase II design question. That is a contractor means and methods question that will be worked out in Phase III when it goes to construction. Phase II will provide a detailed design and contractors will bid it. The winning contractor will have an idea of how he is going to get his materials to the riverbank, and out onto the river.

With respect to US Coast Guard requirements for navigation, US Army Corps, and requirements for impacts to wetlands and riverbanks, Illinois DNR or Iowa DNR, depending on what bank he is coming off and impacts to wetlands and species, all of that is subject to permit review and approval as the contractor is getting started.

**QUESTION:** *Isn't the overlooked rest area the least used rest area in Illinois?*

**STEVE ROBERY, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

I don't know off the top of my head if it is the least used rest area in Illinois. It is still something that we will try to preserve and minimize impacts to. It is an open space, and we will want to try to preserve that.

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

We did get comments in the first few meetings, with great concern, about impacts to that area as well, regardless of what the traffic volume is. I do not have the exact numbers on how many people use it compared to every other rest area in the state. We did have people that had concerns about that location. So, there are parties out there that would like to see that maintained. Obviously, it's a beautiful scenic overlook to the Mississippi. We would not want to lose it wholesale either.

**QUESTION:** *The submission recognizes the cost with alternative D, but then asks, wouldn't potential for future growth in the area justify a project at that level being completed now so that we don't have to come back and do it later?*

**TONY PAKELTIS, PARSONS:**

That is already folded into our analysis. As part of our project, we look out to 2050 with our traffic. The forecast has been provided to us by the Bi-State Regional Commission, and 2050 is what we consider the horizon year. That is typically how these projects are looked at, looking out to that horizon year. So based on what we are seeing with those forecasts, that level of improvement that you see with alternative D is not going to be warranted at that location. As you noted in the question, specifically when you are looking at cost up to four times, we have identified with the preferred alternative.

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

We are not seeing a capacity issue necessarily here. The big thing we are seeing is that loop ramp eastbound 80 to eastbound 88 seems to have the biggest issue, and it is more of a safety issue versus a capacity issue. Getting that movement in that flyover would help facilitate that and reduce those crashes. The other loop ramps see far less crashes on there. We are going to upgrade those as well to meet current policies, per the federal government, but capacity wise, it is not a capacity issue. It is a curve issue, a deficient curve.

**QUESTION:** *Won't the new ramps on the Illinois side by the river, impact the ground and hills between the ramps where much environmental restoration is already been done?*

**MARK PETERSON, PARSONS:**

With Alternative 5, the east side of the Illinois 84 Interchange is relatively intact. That means the proposed ramp is basically following the existing ramp alignment. So that east area that is forested, that looks like it could remain pretty much intact. On the west side, where we have that encroachment into the overlook area, pushing that ramp over to the west, there is some impact there.

We are looking at that Illinois 84 intersection with the eastbound ramps. We are looking to tighten that up a little bit. In a perfect world, we are right on top of the existing ramp configuration. I cannot say that is going to happen right on that side. But it looks like we will be touching probably less than 50 percent of the forested area in that infield area. So as much as possible, we will try to stay out of that area. With our partial shift to the west and maintaining the existing Illinois 84 intersection with westbound ramps, at least, that area is entirely intact.

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

This is a situation where we are trying to balance two conflicting things. We are trying to minimize impacts to the adjacent properties. We are also trying to meet the policies that we must meet for safety set by the Federal Highway Administration for those loop ramps. So, it is kind of a balancing act. We are looking to try and minimize on the outside, as much as humanly possible. The interior of those existing partial cloverleaves have been disturbed in the past. Yes, there has been some regeneration, there has been some cleanup in there, but those have already been disturbed. They are not pristine by any means. When the interchange was originally built, there were impacts to that area as well. If it is a matter of hitting the inside of the loop ramps versus hitting the outside, the outside is probably going to be far more pristine on the environmental side than the interior.

We are going to try and minimize everywhere we can, and at the same time, try and meet the policies with the Federal Highway Administration and our policies both on the Iowa and Illinois side for safe roadway design.

**QUESTION:** *Just a very specific question to clarify, the pedestrian path would require a commitment from LeClaire and Rapids City to ensure all removal and maintenance?*

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

That would be a requirement if we were to include pedestrian and bicycle facilities. On the Illinois side, for complete streets we typically pay for the upfront cost for any bicycle/pedestrian facility, but we do require the maintenance to be held by the local municipality, county park district, or some local entity. And Phil, I believe, when you and I talked earlier, Iowa has that same policy, correct?

**PHIL MESCHER, IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

That is correct. And it is probably the same in Illinois, we are talking about day-to-day maintenance for the facility. If there happened to be a need for some significant structural type of maintenance, that would probably fall back to one of the states.

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

Just to be clear, structural maintenance on the bridge itself, that would be on the state. Being in Illinois, the lead on this bridge would fall on us.

**QUESTION:** *Going back to the impact on the rest area. Will there be a new road to the overlook or rest stop?*

**MARK PETERSON, PARSONS:**

With Alternative 5, we are back towards the existing, so we do not have that complete shift with both bridges west of the existing. We just have the more minor shift. By the time we get to that rest area access road, there will be less impact. So, where we eliminated the wall, there will probably be some cut slopes, but they are not going to undermine the access road. I think we did look at the access road profile, it could potentially be improved, as well, if that was something that we needed to do in conjunction with interstate shift. I think right now, it looks like we will not really have an impact on that access road at all.

**QUESTION:** *Does the footprint of the options presented include the footprint of temporary impacts during construction?*

**MARK PETERSON, PARSONS:**

I think this does circle back on a comment that we had previously. I think Todd talked about it. He talked about the shading that included both what was needed for the proposed in the permanent condition, and then also with some additional area in the shading for potential construction needs too. The footprint was increased a little bit to account for construction needs. We will want to revisit these things, we want to tighten up wherever we can, regardless of whether we can reduce impacts, but that is where we stand right now. Yes, we did consider construction needs in those impact areas.

**QUESTION:** *How far west will the new pilings be from the existing ones?*

**TODD UDE, PARSONS:**

They will be at least 20 to 25 feet west from the existing, but not more than 100 feet. And that is approximately the corridor for the piers we are specifically talking about, drilled in foundations and piers that you see poking above the water. Constructed within no closer than 25 to existing and then pull out the existing and put the new ones up in their place and shifting west by an average of 50 feet or so.

**QUESTION:** *A question regarding LeClaire. Will LeClaire be allowed to maintain their speed cameras on the new right of way?*

**PHIL MESCHER, IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

Yes, they will. The only impact that I would see is potentially some downtime during construction, but once the new bridge is back up, they will certainly be able to have that in place.

**QUESTION:** *An environmental impact question, some of the new area that will be identified as new right of way is currently forested, is right of way inherently grassed and thus trees removed?*

**MARK PETERSON, PARSONS:**

It will depend on what areas we are talking about. IDOT is always looking for areas to plant trees, but there are areas where you do not want trees, potentially down a slope or where a vehicle could hit them. There are areas, typically side slopes from interstates, that are maintained and mowed where you would not want trees. A vehicle could potentially go down there and hit a tree.

Those are the areas where you do not normally see trees. If there are any obstructions, there is typically grass. But like I said, there are areas out here where I think trees would be a possibility, I think the DOT probably has their landscape maintenance folks that would have an opinion on where those places would be acceptable for tree planting. This is more of a Phase II item. But we will be trying to mitigate tree removal.

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

The big concern would be, as Mark noted, the clear zones, making sure that someone going off the road would not hit a tree. And then also making sure that that people can see as they are trying to look down the road or at the interchange termini themselves, that they can see down the road enough to see what is coming. If it is outside of that, there are certainly opportunities.

**QUESTION:** *A design question. Is it fair to assume the actual structure will be higher to minimize tractor trailer braking as they approach the Iowa side off ramp?*

**TODD UDE, PARSONS:**

The proposed structure will be a little higher over the navigation channel most likely. I would not say that changes in the roadway grades are being made on account of truck braking, and I am not sure if the question is talking about approaching from the bridge or from the Iowa land side. We do not expect the grades of the road to change too much on the Iowa approach to the interchange area. We do not expect the bridge to be steeper or different coming down into the interchange. We do expect that all the grades and curves of the ramps in the future interchange will be more compliant to modern, current geometric design policies.

**QUESTION:** *A specific question regarding Rapids City. What will the impact be to the sewer lift station located in the yellow shaded section?*

**TONY PAKELTIS, PARSONS:**

Based on what we have shown here tonight, that lift station would be impacted, and it would have to be replaced. But that, along with other areas in the corridor, are areas that we are looking at to refine the Preferred Alternative design to minimize impacts.

Ultimately, we may be able to avoid that lift station, but based on what we have presented here tonight, that lift station will be impacted and have to be replaced, and there are other utility adjustments that would have to be done within the corridor as well. Those details will certainly start to be fleshed out as we move through the Phase I process, and then the details will be ironed out in Phase II.

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

We spoke to LeClaire, and they have their limitation on the other side as well. So regardless of which direction we went, there was a lift station we were going to be impacting. The big thing is that we will be working with whichever local entity. In this case, it will be Rapids City.



**QUESTION:** *On the Iowa side, will the city of LeClaire be able to utilize and or acquire, any excess Right of Way right under the bridge?*

**PHIL MESCHER, IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

I am assuming that is talking about right of way, and that is a question I do not have an immediate answer for. I would think that working with our property acquisition folks, that could be a potential. I could see some uses for that—maybe a park and ride, or long-term parking, or something like that. But we would have to follow up on that.

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

We have something similar on our side, as well. If we find at the end of the project that we have excess right-of-way, we will work with the local communities to provide that. I think we have that going on right now with I-74 on both sides of the river. I know on our side with Moline, we are working with them on finishing up with some beautification. I believe they are even looking at a skate park underneath the bridge structure.

**PHIL MESCHER, IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

OK, great, good to know. Thank you. So, it looks like it is possible.

**QUESTION:** *A larger question about NEPA. It's been pointed out in this discussion that NEPA doesn't allow for consideration of economic development or tourism. If it restricts factors and considerations, then doesn't it show a flaw in the process?*

**TONY PAKELTIS, PARSONS:**

Just to follow up on what Steve had mentioned earlier, as part of NEPA, we evaluate the project's potential economic impacts, whether they are positive or negative, on the built environment that is out there. And now for our project, economic development was just not identified as part of our Purpose and Need. Our Purpose and Need, as I think we went over, in our initial public meeting in 2020, and summarized in the subsequent public meetings in 2022, is focused on the condition of the bridge and safety concerns that were identified in the corridor related to geometric deficiencies. And so, because of that being the Purpose and Need, our alternatives need to focus on addressing that Purpose and Need.

**QUESTION:** *The current bridge has expansion joints, which are quite noisy. Will the new bridge have those?*

**TODD UDE, PARSONS:**

We should expect the new bridge will have them, fewer of them, but they will have them, and at the abutments, where there is a transition between bridge and roadway.

**QUESTION:** *What will be the bridge height above Route 67, and Highway 84?*

**TODD UDE, PARSONS:**

My understanding is the policy minimum is 16.5 feet, over 67 in Iowa, and 16.9 over 84 in Illinois, so, 16.5 to 17 feet. We try not to reduce existing clearances, and it is possible that by the time we marry up the clearance over the navigation channel and tie down onto the approach roadways in the interchanges, we may even be providing some excess clearance – but working out that number down to the last 3 or 6 inches is a Phase II detail. We are not there yet in our Phase I analysis of the final geometry.



**QUESTION:** *Going back to sound barriers tied to safety. I've never seen sound barriers erected on a bridge. Will there be higher side walls to reduce noise, and also help prevent vehicles from going over the side, as has happened at the existing bridge?*

**TONY PAKELTIS, PARSONS:**

I saw that question coming up. I have seen sound barriers on bridges, but I would probably agree that I have not seen barriers on a bridge of this length. We are going to evaluate the noise, as we mentioned earlier, as part of the project, and we have to let that process conclude. But I find it highly doubtful that we would find a noise barrier being warranted along the bridge. Primarily because most of the bridge is not very close to the existing residential development or other sensitive receptors.

Typically, when we're looking at noise analysis, we're looking 500 feet from the roadway to where a noise barrier would be effective at reducing sound.

Maybe sometimes up to 800 feet, so not likely that a noise barrier would be warranted on the bridge anyway. Maybe Todd could talk about the height of those parapet walls that are along the bridge. I don't know the dimensions off the top of my head, but he probably knows those dimensions better than I do.

**TODD UDE, PARSONS:**

The bridge parapets a 3.5-to-4-foot dimension. They're not there for noise, they are there for traffic safety.

**MIKE KUEHN, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:**

My guess, Tony, would probably be the residences right along the river, would probably be the most impacted. Wouldn't you agree? Beyond that, most of the subdivisions are a little farther out.

**TONY PAKELTIS, PARSONS:**

Sure, in terms of noise impact. Like I said, typically, we're looking 500 feet out. You are not seeing noise impact beyond that. A noise impact is different than just hearing something. Noise must reach a certain level to where it is considered an impact. So, usually that is within 500 feet. On facilities where you might see higher traffic volumes, maybe you would extend that analysis.

**QUESTION:** *What is the relationship between potential sound barriers in the right-of-way zone? Is the sound barrier at the outer edge of the Right of Way, or is that dependent on final design?*

**TONY PAKELTIS, PARSONS:**

It depends on the final design. It depends on the terrain in the area. Situations vary and you must look at them on a case-by-case basis.

Typically, I would say that if you find a noise barrier is warranted and recommended, it would be at the shoulder edge, if the shoulder edge is higher than the land at the right-of-way edge. And then the opposite would be true if the base elevation at the right-of-way line is higher than the roadway, because ultimately, you are looking at trying to find the optimal situation to reduce the noise. Whenever that barrier starts at a higher elevation, you are going to reduce noise levels more with the same height wall.

**BRAD HAHN, IMAGES, INC:**

That will wrap up our panel. Thank you all very much for hanging on and for participating in today's meeting. Again, if you missed any part of this meeting, or want to take a closer look at something in particular, a recording of the full discussion, along with all the materials presented, will be available at [www.I80MississippiBridge.com](http://www.I80MississippiBridge.com).



Please also follow us on our social channels. Your feedback and comments are welcome anytime. If you have additional questions, please submit them through the website. Those received by Wednesday, November 29th, will become part of the public meeting record. Steve, I'll now turn it over to you for some closing remarks.

***STEVE ROBERY, ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:***

Thanks, Brad, and I just would like to reiterate that we received almost 100 questions tonight. There was a lot of redundancy in the questions, so we tried to sift through those and tried not to repeat ourselves too much. The intent was to cover all the question topics. Post meeting, we will go back and review all the questions submitted to see if there was anything we missed. And we will respond to the person who asked the question outside the meeting if we missed their question. If you feel like your question was maybe similar to somebody else's and not answered, we would encourage you to go on the website and ask the question. I just wanted to clarify that.

And I also wanted to say thank you to everybody who attended. We all appreciate you taking time out of your schedules to attend this fourth public meeting on the I-80 Mississippi River Bridge. We appreciate your input and your questions, and we look forward to continuing to coordinate as the project moves forward. Thank you again.

***BRAD HAHN, IMAGES, INC:***

That concludes our public meeting. Thank you all for attending and have a good night.

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