



OVER THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER | Version 1, December 2016

CHAIN OF ROCKS BRIDGE NEWSLETTER

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | REGION FIVE | DISTRICT 8

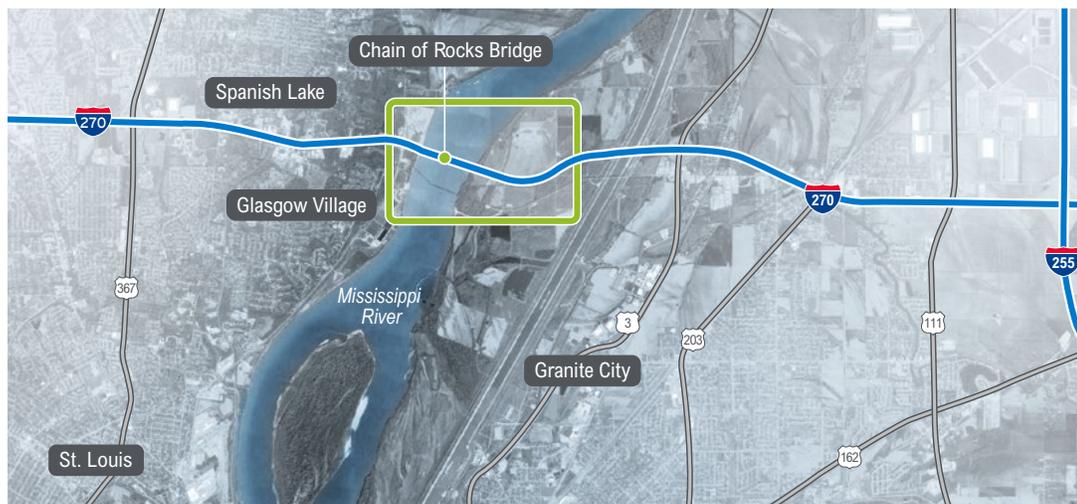


▲ Jeffrey Keirn,
Region 5 Engineer

Welcome to the first issue of the I-270 over the Chain of Rocks Bridge newsletter. I am pleased to announce that IDOT has begun this very important study to find the best option for the replacement of the Chain of Rocks Bridge. The Chain of Rocks Bridge is a vital link for our region as it carries I-270 over the Mississippi River. IDOT's goal for this project is to construct a new bridge that will accommodate the future needs of the over 50,000 drivers who utilize this bridge daily. The Department will also strive to efficiently manage traffic during construction to minimize inconvenience to the motoring public. I encourage you to join the mailing list, visit the project website for updates, and get involved in the study process.

IDOT BEGINS PROJECT STUDY

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has begun a Preliminary Engineering Study to analyze the replacement of the Chain of Rocks Bridge that carries I-270 over the Mississippi River connecting St. Louis, Missouri and Madison County, Illinois.



Study Area (outlined in green)

The study area is just west of the Riverview Drive interchange in St. Louis, MO and extends east to just west of the Chain of Rocks Canal Bridge in Madison County, IL.

The existing I-270 bridge over the Mississippi River, locally known as the Chain of Rocks Bridge, was constructed in 1966. The structure carries four lanes of traffic, two in each direction. There are several reasons why IDOT is studying the replacement of the existing bridge: rising maintenance costs due to the age of the structure, increasing traffic volumes, and safety issues associated with the narrow shoulders. As recently as 2011, IDOT spent \$7 million on maintenance repairs on the aging structure. This structure has seen a significant increase in traffic from an average daily traffic (ADT) of 19,800 vehicles per day in 1975, to over 51,000 vehicles per day today, with approximately 17 percent of these vehicles being truck traffic. The traffic is projected to increase to nearly 57,000 vehicles per day by 2030. Over the past 5 years, more than 400 crashes occurred on I-270 within the project limits. In addition, this location is in the top 5% of all locations in Illinois where a higher rate of crashes occur for the roadway with the same physical characteristics (number of lanes, shoulder width, etc.). IDOT has initiated this study because of the importance of this bridge in servicing the regional traffic.

ABOUT THE STUDY

The I-270 over the Mississippi River study will take a detailed look at the replacement of the existing structure carrying I-270 over the Mississippi River. It is likely the new bridge will be built next to the current bridge to allow for traffic to continue to use four lanes throughout construction. Depending on the design and alignment of the new structure, modification of the Riverview Drive interchange may be required. Coordination between IDOT and Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) will take place continually throughout this study.

IDOT and its engineering consultant team have inventoried existing conditions (such as traffic data and crash history), and will identify and document environmental constraints as it moves forward in the process. The project study team (IDOT and the consultant team), with input from the public, will also develop and refine improvement options (alternatives). The result of the study will be a preferred alternative for a new bridge that addresses identified transportation issues and serves the area's future needs.



WHAT IS CONTEXT SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS (CSS)?

An inclusive, responsive public involvement program is an essential part of the study. The public involvement program is being implemented using the principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS). CSS is a collaborative approach that involves many stakeholders to develop a transportation facility that fits into its surroundings and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources while maintaining safety and mobility.



More information on CSS and how to provide your input to the study can be found in the Get Involved section of the project website:

www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/i-270-over-the-mississippi-river

For more information on IDOT's CSS process, please visit the following website at:

www.idot.illinois.gov/transportation-system/transportation-management/context-sensitive-solutions/index

PUBLIC MEETING #1

As part of the CSS process, IDOT held its first public meetings for the Chain of Rocks Bridge replacement project on June 30, 2016 and July 13, 2016, in Illinois and Missouri, respectively.

A total of 58 people signed in at the meetings. The purpose of the meetings was to inform the general public of the planning process for the project, discuss their concerns regarding the current transportation challenges within the project area on I-270, introduce opportunities for the public to become involved, receive comments from the public, and to inform the public of the project schedule. Attendees were able to provide written comments at the meeting, by mail, or through the project website. The most common concerns were that the bridge is too narrow (not enough lanes for traffic, and not enough shoulder for emergency stopping) and the bridge needs to remain open during construction.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #1

One highlight of the public involvement program is the formation of a Community Advisory Group (CAG). The CAG is comprised of volunteers who represent a cross section of the community. These can be representatives from local governments (cities/ villages), economic development, industry, residents, businesses, tourism, commuters, and others with a stake in the study's outcome.

The purpose of the CAG is to provide input on various elements of the study, including developing a problem statement, identifying issues important to the public, and providing feedback on alternatives. This information is then considered by the project study team, in conjunction with the engineering and environmental analyses, in developing the design of the project.

The members of the CAG can function as liaisons between IDOT and the public as a whole, and will help generate interest in and knowledge about the study. This will help ensure opinions, values, and concerns of the public are shared with the project team.

The first CAG meeting for the project was held on October 18, 2016, at Southwestern Illinois College in Granite City, Illinois. The purpose of the first CAG meeting was to introduce the project, explain the IDOT planning and Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process, and listen to the CAG members concerns and interests.

Members of the CAG raised several important issues during the meeting:

- Maintaining the area for recreational purposes is important
- There is a need to address traffic congestion on and near the bridge, especially at Riverview Drive in Missouri
- The bridge is important regionally and nationally for the movement of goods and services
- Water quality should be considered when constructing the bridge
- Environmental sensitivity is important
- Consideration of the levees and flooding during the project planning, design, and construction

A summary of this meeting will be posted on the study website. The next CAG meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held mid-2017.



To view the public meeting displays, please visit the Get Involved section of the project website: www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/i-270-over-the-mississippi-river

THE PROJECT PROCESS

IDOT develops and implements projects using a three-phase process. The I-270 bridge over the Mississippi River is currently at the beginning of Phase I: Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Studies. During this phase, IDOT will study a range of replacement options for the bridge. IDOT will also conduct an environmental analysis to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA is a federal law that requires federally funded projects, such as this study, to analyze alternatives and identify potential effects of those alternatives on the environment. These efforts help ensure that environmental values and other factors are integrated into project decisions. This Phase I Study will determine the alignment and right-of-way needs for the new bridge. When the study is approved, the project will move forward with Phase II: Contract Plan Preparation and Land Acquisition. This phase includes developing detailed contract plans and purchasing land for the project, if needed. Once funding and permits are secured, the project moves into Phase III: Construction.



SCHEDULE

The project is currently in Phase I, which includes preliminary engineering and an environmental study. This phase should last approximately 36 months. In Phase I, proposed geometry, environmental concerns, and right-of-way requirements are identified. Phase I will conclude with design approval by the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) granting of a Federally Approved Categorical Exclusion. Following this approval, IDOT can proceed into Phase II of the project which includes Design and Right-Of-Way acquisition.



STAY INFORMED

There are multiple opportunities to stay informed:



- ✓ Visit the study website at: www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/i-270-over-the-mississippi-river
- ✓ Join the mailing list
- ✓ Submit comments
- ✓ Attend a public meeting

Would you like to be added to our mailing list to receive this newsletter and other notifications related to this study? If so, you can sign up on the project website at: www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/i-270-over-the-mississippi-river, or mail or email the following information to:

I-270 PROJECT TEAM
 c/o Horner & Shifrin, Inc.
 604 Pierce Blvd., Ste. 300
 O'Fallon, Illinois 62269
 Email: bljacquot@hornershifrin.com

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Email _____

Please check this box if you would like to receive mailings by email instead of standard mail.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How much will the bridge cost?

Currently, it is estimated construction could cost approximately \$170 million.

Is this part of MoDOT's I-270 Project?

MoDOT currently is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the widening of I-270 from the I-70 interchange to the western limits of the Chain of Rocks Bridge. This bridge replacement project is not part of the MoDOT study. However, the proposed bridge will be designed to be compatible with MoDOT's proposed design.

How many lanes will the new bridge have?

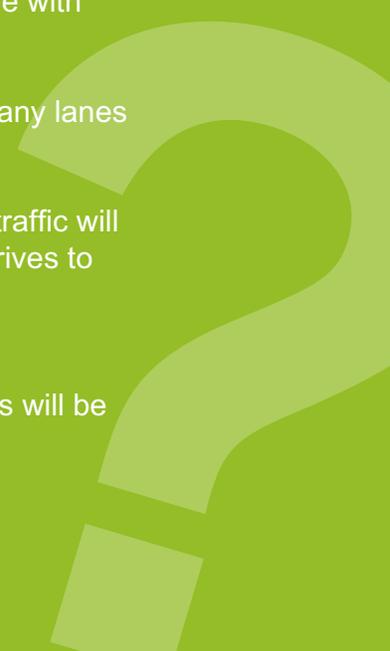
Part of the study process will be to determine how many lanes will be appropriate.

Will the bridge be closed during construction?

It is too early in the study process to determine how traffic will be managed during construction. The Department strives to minimize any inconvenience to the motoring public during construction.

Will the new bridge accommodate bicycles and pedestrians?

The need for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations will be evaluated as the project moves forward.





CONTACT INFORMATION

CONTACT INFORMATION | Send comments or questions to:

KAREN GELDERT, P.E.
Senior Project Studies Engineer
E: karen.geldert@illinois.gov

Illinois Department of Transportation
Region 5/District 8
1102 Eastport Plaza Drive
Collinsville, IL 62234