

**PUBLIC INFORMATION MEEETING September 6, 2012
DES MOINES & LOUISA COUNTIES NHS-61-2(50)--19-29**

To view information related to this project please access the following website:

<http://www.iowadot.gov/pim>

Welcome to the Iowa Department of Transportation's Public Information Meeting for the proposed improvement of approximately 18 miles of U.S. 61 in Des Moines and Louisa Counties from Burlington north to Iowa 78. The purpose of this meeting is to update you regarding the potential U.S. 61 improvement alternatives in Des Moines and Louisa counties, to answer any questions that you may have, and to listen to your thoughts and ideas regarding the proposed purpose and need and range of alternatives.

PROJECT HISTORY

A Location Public Hearing was held September 25, 1996, to discuss the proposed improvement of U.S. 61 from north of Burlington to north of Iowa 78, including two bypass alternatives at Mediapolis. A Public Information Meeting was held July 30, 1997, to discuss a revised alignment from 245th Street north to the Louisa County line. The selected bypass alternative was approved by the Iowa Transportation Commission on November 25, 1997.

A Design Public Hearing was held September 27, 2001, to discuss the proposed four-lane construction of U.S. 61 from north of Burlington to 30th Street in Louisa County, including a west bypass of Mediapolis. In December 2001, the Iowa Transportation Commission removed the project from the Five Year Transportation Improvement Program.

The Iowa DOT re-initiated environmental and field studies for the U.S. 61 corridor in 2010. The purpose of these studies is to determine the social, economic and environmental effects of the proposed project on the surrounding area.

PURPOSE AND NEED

U.S. 61 is a primary north-south travel route through southeast Iowa. It is a two-lane road from north of Burlington to south of Muscatine. The section from Burlington north to the Louisa County line was originally paved 18 feet wide in 1927 while the section in Louisa County was paved 18 feet wide in 1933. The roadway throughout the project limits was widened to 24 feet in 1956 and resurfaced in 1957, 1958 and 1984. The section in Louisa County was reconstructed in 1997.

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve traffic operations and safety along this segment of U.S. 61. The need for the project is based on the following factors:

- Safety - The 2011 traffic volumes for U.S. 61 in this area ranges from 4,500 to 7,000 vehicles per day. Traffic is projected to increase to between 6,400 and 9,700 vehicles per day by 2036. From 2006 to 2010, 229 crashes occurred in the project study area resulting in one fatality, 9 major injuries and 66 minor injuries. This is a crash rate of 121 crashes per hundred million vehicle miles traveled, which is higher than the statewide average of 93 crashes/HMVMT for similar roadways.
- Operations - The existing U.S. 61 roadway is not to current geometric design standards. Since the existing two-lane facility was constructed in the late 1920's, there have been minimal

improvements to the roadway other than maintenance work; which includes lane widening and pavement overlays.

- Legislation - In 1988, the Iowa legislature directed the Transportation Commission to “identify within the primary road system a network of commercial and industrial highways to enhance opportunities for the development and diversification of the state’s economy.” Upgrading and modernizing this segment of U.S. 61 would help create a continuous four-lane highway as envisioned by the Iowa Legislature and the Transportation Commission when they designated U.S. 61 as an element of the CIN.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As presented at the 2001 Design Public Hearing, the proposed improvement provided for reconstructing the existing two-lane highway to provide a four-lane divided facility generally along the existing alignment. It was proposed to realign the roadway in certain areas due to more difficult terrain with several curves, high numbers of entrances, environmentally sensitive areas and to construct interchanges. These relocation areas included: from Flint Creek to 32nd Avenue, the avoidance of historic schools at Pfeiff Road and 160th Street, switching sides due to historic farm buildings, a bypass of Mediapolis and from Des Moines County Road H-28 north approximately two miles.

The current alternatives also propose to reconstruct the existing two-lane roadway to a four-lane divided facility generally along the existing alignment. From Memorial Park Road north to Mediapolis the alternatives are similar to the previously presented improvement. Two interchange configurations for a bypass at Mediapolis and a five-lane through-town alignment are being evaluated. The relocation of U.S. 61 from Des Moines County Road H-28 extending north two miles is being reconsidered to minimize environmental impacts. An interchange east of the junction of Iowa 78 is being considered which would require some realignment of U.S. 61.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

This project is not currently included in the 2013-2017 Transportation Improvement Program. However, it may be considered during the preparation of future transportation programs.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

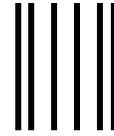
No one is more familiar with the study area than its residents. We are interested in hearing what you have to say with regard to the proposed improvements. You may share those ideas with us today or submit them in writing using the attached comment form (self-addressed and pre-paid for your convenience). A comment form is also available at the following website: <http://www.iowadot.gov/pim>.

Following today’s meeting, we will give careful consideration to all of the comments and information that you provide as we continue with project development. You will also have other opportunities throughout the project development to provide your input through future public meetings.

Thank you for participating in this meeting.

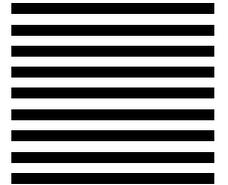
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