

Study Goals

The study goals are to:

- Determine what future transportation improvements, if any, in the vicinity of Tower Terrace Road and I-380 are needed.
- Evaluate the proposed improvements for environmental impacts, including natural resource, social, and economic impacts.
- Coordinate any proposed improvements with local, regional, and state long-range plans.



Purpose and Need

The purpose of the project is to accommodate increased travel demands generated by existing and future planned development in the vicinity of I-380 and Tower Terrace Road. In order to meet increased travel demands, the project is expected to meet the following needs:

- Alleviate forecasted future traffic congestion at the Boyson Road and County Home Road interchanges;
- Accommodate anticipated future traffic growth in the vicinity of the project area;
- Support planned economic development and land uses.



Study Area



Past studies

Yes, three recent studies have looked at improvements in this area:

I-380 Urban Corridor Feasibility Study – this study is ongoing and is addressing the feasibility of improvements to I-380 throughout the Cedar Rapids urban area.

Tower Terrace Road Corridor Management Plan (2010) – this study suggested corridor preservation and an upgrade of Tower Terrace Road to a 5-lane arterial with a speed limit of 35 or 40 mph in the vicinity of I-380.

I-380 – Tower Terrace Road and Boyson Road Interchange Justification Report (2006) – this study approved improvements to the Boyson Road interchange, but determined a new interchange at Tower Terrace and I-380 was not warranted at this time.



Why is a new study needed?

If improvements at Tower Terrace and I-380 were not approved in 2006, why study it again?

- Conditions in the study area have changed since 2006 and improvements may now be warranted.
- The cities of Hiawatha and Cedar Rapids have made improvements to the local road system, which is a necessary piece of justifying a new interchange.

Since conditions in the study area have changed, Iowa DOT has initiated two separate, but concurrent and complementary studies – an Interchange Justification Report (IJR) and an Environmental Assessment (EA).



Why is an Environmental Assessment needed?

In all projects that use federal funds or need federal permits, it is necessary to follow the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). NEPA requires the completion of an environmental study to help communities identify the best way to meet future needs and avoid or minimize impacts to both natural and man-made environments. For the proposed improvements at Tower Terrace and I-380, an EA will be developed and will likely take 12-16 months to complete.



What is an Environmental Assessment?

An EA is one kind of environmental study. It helps agencies and the public make well-informed decisions about investments in their communities. The EA documents the decision-making process and answers the following questions:

- What is the purpose and need for the improvement?
- How would the proposed improvement function?
- How might improvements impact the natural and man-made environment?
- Which alternative best meets the purpose and need while minimizing or avoiding impacts?

The Federal Highway Administration is responsible for overseeing the EA and issuing a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) approving the selected alternative. This approval is necessary for the project to move forward into design, right of way acquisition and construction.



What will be analyzed?

In the EA, the study team will evaluate a number of issues and constraints:

Natural environment

- Air quality
- Water quality
- Water resources
- Wetlands
- Floodways
- Threatened and endangered species
- Hazardous waste



Social/economic

- Cultural and historic resources
- Property acquisitions
- Homes, neighborhoods, and businesses
- Parks and public facilities
- Noise
- Environmental justice
- Land use
- Farmland
- Safety of pedestrians and motorists



Interchange Justification Report

IJR's are required to justify the construction of new or revised access points (interchanges) to the federal Interstate system. An IJR requires that a proposed interchange meet 8 policy requirements. Those requirements are:

- The existing interchanges and local roads and streets cannot accommodate the future traffic demands;
- Transportation system management improvements (ramp metering, mass transit, HOV facilities) have been assessed and provided for if justified;
- The proposed interchange does not have a significant adverse impact on the safety and operation of the Interstate;
- The proposed interchange connects to a public road only and will provide for all traffic movements;
- The proposed interchange is consistent with local and regional land use plans;
- The proposed interchange is supported by a comprehensive Interstate network study;
- The request for the new interchange demonstrates coordination between planned development and other required transportation improvements; and
- The request for the new interchange contains information related to the planning requirement and status of the environmental process.



Project development process



Schedule and next steps

The schedule shows major tasks to complete the Environmental Assessment and IJR documents. Design of initial improvement could begin in summer of 2013. Once these steps are complete, when funding is identified right-of-way acquisition and construction can begin.

Task Name	2011		2012			
	Quarter 3 June - September	Quarter 4 October - December	Quarter 1 January - March	Quarter 2 April - June	Quarter 3 July - September	Quarter 4 October - December
Collect Data						
Develop Purpose and Need Statement						
Conduct Traffic and Safety Analysis						
Develop Initial Alternatives						
Conduct Environmental Analysis						
Conduct Public Involvement Events						
Select Preferred Alternative						
Prepare EA						
Respond to Public Comments on EA						
FONSI Approval/NEPA Complete						
Prepare IJR Document						
Submit IJR for Approval						
FHWA Review and Approval						

