

# **PROJECT STATEMENT**

**FOR THE PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING  
THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR  
THE PROPOSED FOUR-LANE RECONSTRUCTION  
OF U.S. 61 IN LOUISA COUNTY FROM TWO  
MILES SOUTH OF IOWA 92 NORTH TO THE  
MUSCATINE COUNTY LINE**

**PROJECT NUMBER: LOUISA COUNTY  
NHS-61-3(48)--19-58**

**HEARING LOCATION:  
GYMNASIUM  
LOUISA-MUSCATINE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
14506 170TH STREET  
LETTS, IOWA**

**DECEMBER 8, 2011**

**Prepared by  
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
HIGHWAY DIVISION**

## DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

LOUISA COUNTY  
NHS-61-3(48)--19-58

DATE OF HEARING: DECEMBER 8, 2011  
JIM ROST  
OFFICE OF LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENT  
HIGHWAY DIVISION  
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
800 LINCOLN WAY, AMES, IOWA, 50010  
515-239-1225

To view additional information concerning this project please access the following  
website: <http://www.iowadot.gov/pim>

### INTRODUCTION

The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) is conducting this Public Hearing to acquaint the people of Grandview, Letts and vicinity with the proposed four-lane reconstruction of U.S. 61 in Louisa County from two miles south of Iowa 92 north to the Muscatine County line. This public hearing offers mutual benefits. It gives the Iowa DOT an opportunity to explain the design of the proposed project and allows the public to express their opinions regarding the proposed improvement. Consideration will be given to all suggestions.

This is your opportunity to express views either as an individual or a group representative. The Iowa DOT encourages oral and written statements pertinent to the project. Oral statements will be accepted at this hearing. Written statements and exhibits will also be accepted at the hearing or may be submitted to Jim Rost, Office of Location and Environment, at the above address, or via the public meetings website at [www.iowadot.gov/pim](http://www.iowadot.gov/pim). Deadline for receipt of statements or exhibits for inclusion in the printed transcript is December 23, 2011; however, all correspondence received after this date will be included in the project files and reviewed as the project is developed. Information regarding the proposed project is available for inspection.

This hearing satisfies the public involvement required by federal and state regulations and helps assure that social, economic and environmental effects are identified. In addition, this project, as are all Iowa DOT projects, will be constructed in compliance with Title 6 of the Civil Rights act of 1964.

This public hearing is used to present factual information about the proposed project and to receive comments from the public. This information is then correlated into a highway improvement that will best serve the public.

### **PUBLIC HEARING FORMAT**

This public hearing will be conducted utilizing a combined open forum and formal format. The hearing will begin with an open forum session during which interested individuals are encouraged to express their views and ask questions in an informal setting. A formal presentation, followed by a question and answer session, will follow the open forum session. Oral and written statements will be accepted during both the open forum and the formal sessions.

We encourage you to express your views concerning the proposal in one or more of these ways:

1. Individual discussion with Iowa DOT staff;
2. Presentation of oral and written statements at the hearing. Written statements should be presented to the staff person near the entry;
3. Submission of written statements following the hearing. Those received by December 23, 2011, will become a part of the public hearing transcript.

Hearing transcripts are provided to Iowa DOT staff, the Transportation Commissioners and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for review before project plans are completed. A copy will be forwarded to you if you send a written request to Office of Location and Environment, Iowa DOT, 800 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa, 50010.

## **PROJECT BACKGROUND**

Pre-location studies were conducted for the U.S. 61 corridor from the Iowa/Missouri State line north to the Muscatine County line in 1987 and 1989. The Iowa DOT initiated a Planning Study in 1994 for U.S. 61 from IA 92 north to the Muscatine County line. The purpose of these studies was to identify deficiencies, consider needs, and explore potential improvements to the U.S. 61 corridor.

A Public Information Meeting was held October 15, 2009, to discuss initiation of environmental and field studies for the U.S. 61 corridor in Louisa County from north of Iowa 78 north to the existing four-lane roadway south of the Muscatine County line. A second Public Information Meeting was held July 15, 2010, to present nine build alternatives for four-lane reconstruction of U.S. 61 from 130th Street north to the existing four-lane roadway.

## **PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED**

The purpose of the proposed project is to upgrade and modernize the existing two-lane section of U.S. 61 between 130th Street and the current four-lane section at the Muscatine/Louisa County border.

The need for the proposed action is based on a combination of factors:

- Safety - Existing U.S. 61 has limited safe passing opportunities and a higher-than-statewide average number of crashes at the U.S. 61/Iowa 92 intersection.
- Lane continuity - Of the 196 miles of U.S. 61 in the state, only 38 miles exist as a two-lane highway, six miles of which are in the proposed project area. Upgrading and modernizing this section of U.S. 61 would help in creating a continuous four-lane highway.
- Economic Development - Travel on U.S. 61 needs to be more convenient, safe, and efficient in order to better connect Iowa with regional, national, and international markets.

## **PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION**

The project begins two miles south of the U.S. 61/Iowa 92 intersection and continues north to the existing four-lane roadway just south of the Muscatine/Louisa County line. Two alternatives are being studied, The Build Alternative and The No-Build Alternative. The Build Alternative would provide for construction of a four-lane access controlled facility with interchanges at Iowa 92 and 170th Street. Reconstructed U.S. 61 would go over Iowa 92 and 170th Street at the interchanges. From 130th Street north to 160th Street four new lanes would be constructed approximately 650 to 700 feet west of the existing highway. Between 160th and 170th Streets the new roadway would be relocated east of existing U.S. 61. From 170th Street to the end of the project two new lanes would be constructed along the west side of existing U.S. 61.

The No-Build Alternative would be the continuation of the highway system as it exists. It would not address the safety needs, increasing traffic volumes and outdated geometrics of the roadway within the project corridor. This alternative would not satisfy the Project Purpose and Need requirements. However, it is carried forward to serve as a baseline for comparison with the Build Alternative.

Traffic on existing U.S. 61 would be maintained during construction. Access rights would be acquired as part of this project. From the Iowa 92 interchange to the 170th Street interchange access would be provided by interchange only. Access in the remainder of the corridor would not be restricted.

## **PRESENT FACILITY**

U.S. 61 throughout the project limits was constructed 18 feet wide in 1932 and widened to 21 feet in 1955. The roadway was widened to 24 feet and resurfaced in 1958. The U.S. 61/ Iowa 92 intersection was reconstructed in 1994.

## TRAFFIC VOLUMES

The 2010 annual average daily traffic (AADT) using U.S. 61 in this area was 5,700 vehicles per day (VPD) and is anticipated to increase to 7,600 VPD by 2036.

## SUFFICIENCY RATINGS

Sufficiency ratings in Iowa are composed of five major categories, which measure the roadway's structural adequacy, motorist safety, and capability to accommodate traffic with a minimum of conflict. A rating of 90 – 100 is classified as excellent; 80 – 89 is good; 65 – 79 is fair; 50 – 64 is tolerable; and 0 – 49 is poor. The 2011 sufficiency ratings for this segment of existing U. S. 61 range from 49 (poor) to 57 (tolerable).

## PROJECT SCHEDULE AND COSTS

The 2012 – 2016 Transportation Improvement Program shows the following schedule and costs for the improvement of U.S. 61 in Louisa County from Iowa 92 to the Muscatine County line:

ACTIVITY	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Right of Way			3,000,000		
Wetland Mitigation			300,000	300,000	
Grade					15,153,000
Total Programmed: \$18,753,000					

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

An Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed improvement was approved for public availability on October 19, 2011. This EA concludes that the proposed project is necessary for safe and efficient travel within the project corridor. The project will have no significant social, economic or environmental impacts of a level that would warrant an environmental impact statement. Final alternative selection will occur following completion of a public review period and Public Hearing. A review deadline of December 23, 2011, has been established for receipt of comments on this document. Comments on the EA should be submitted to Jim Rost, Director, Office of Location and Environment, Iowa Department of Transportation, 800 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa 50010. Unless significant impacts are identified as a result of public review or at the Public Hearing, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be prepared.

The Build Alternative would convert land from the historic Dodder Farm (located west of U.S. 61 across from the Grandview Drive-In Theatre), which is considered to be a Section 4(f) resource and is subject to protection, to roadway use. The proposed project is being designed to ensure that construction activities do not impact the historic structures on the farm. Consequently, the structures that qualify the property for protection under Section 4(f) would not be affected. Since the impacts to the Dodder Farm would be minimal and would not adversely impact the features that qualify the property for protection under Section 4(f), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) proposes to make a *de minimis* determination for the impacts to the Dodder Farm. This is your opportunity to review and comment on the proposed *de minimis* effect of the proposed project.

This project will continue to be monitored by the Iowa DOT and FHWA throughout all development stages and construction to ensure that all possible environmental effects are identified.

## **RIGHT OF WAY**

The Iowa DOT's policy provides for appraisal of property and/or property rights needed for each project. These appraisals use professional techniques and methods to determine "just compensation" in accordance with Federal and State constitutions, laws and regulations. The appraisals are prepared to assure fair treatment for both the property owner and the public.

After the appraisals are completed, each owner is contacted by a right of way agent for the purpose of explaining the plans and appraisals and for contracting the required right of way. In instances where an agreement cannot be reached through negotiations, the property may be acquired by the laws of eminent domain.

## **RELOCATION ASSISTANCE**

The State of Iowa's acquisition and relocation program will be conducted in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-646), as amended by the Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987 and provides relocation resources to all residential and business relocatees without discrimination.

If you are required to move as a result of a highway project, whether an owner or tenant, you will be eligible for relocation assistance advisory services. You may be eligible for moving assistance, supplemental replacement housing payments, and reimbursement for certain expenses incurred in purchasing replacement housing.

It is the intent of the State of Iowa to ensure that displaced individuals receive fair and equitable treatment and do not suffer disproportionately from highway programs designed for the whole public. Any person, family, business, or farm displaced by a highway project shall be offered relocation assistance services for locating suitable replacement property. Relocation payments and advisory assistance are offered in addition to the State's purchase of your property.

Personnel from the Office of Right of Way, Relocation Assistance Section, have studied the proposed project presented at this hearing and anticipate that 2 residences would be displaced as a result of this improvement.

Questions or problems concerning relocation assistance should be directed to the Office of Right of Way, Relocation Assistance Section, Iowa DOT, 800 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa, 50010.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

If you have any comments on the proposed project or questions about its development, please make your comments known at this hearing or forward them on the attached self addressed Citizen Comment form. A comment form is also available at the following website: <http://www.iowadot.gov/pim>.

Thank you for your participation in this hearing.

Federal and state laws prohibit employment and/or public accommodation discrimination on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender identity, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or veteran's status. If you believe you have been discriminated against, please contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission at 800-457-4416 or Iowa Department of Transportation's affirmative action officer. If you need accommodations because of a disability to access the Iowa Department of Transportation's services, contact the agency's affirmative action officer at 800-262-0003.



**PRELIMINARY PLAN**  
NOT FINAL - SUBJECT TO CHANGE

**LEGEND**

	PROPOSED PAVEMENT		PROPOSED GRANULAR SURFACE
	PROPOSED BRIDGE		

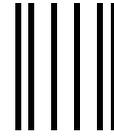
Iowa Department of Transportation  
**PUBLIC HEARING**  
 December 8, 2011  
 Louisa County US 61 Corridor - Preferred Alternative  
 2008 Aerial Photo





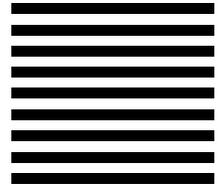
Fold first.

(TAPE--Do NOT Staple.)



(TAPE--Do NOT Staple.)

NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES



**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 651 AMES, IA.

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SECTION  
OFFICE OF LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENT  
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
800 LINCOLN WAY  
AMES IA 50010-9902



Fold last