



# CHAIN OF ROCKS BRIDGE NEWSLETTER

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | REGION FIVE | DISTRICT 8



Jeffrey Keirn,  
Region Five Engineer

I have a lot of great news to announce regarding the I-270 over the Mississippi River bridge replacement project. The first phase of this project, which included the preliminary engineering and environmental study, has been completed and approval has been received from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to move onto the next phase of the study. The next phase of this project is the development of construction plans and land acquisition which began in August. Funding for the bridge construction itself will be shared equally between the states of Illinois and Missouri. Illinois' share of funding for construction has been identified in the Department's Fiscal Year 2019-2024 Proposed Highway Improvement Program. In addition, the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), who is our partner in this project, has begun engineering for the I-270 Riverview Dr. Interchange replacement, which will be reconstructed in conjunction with the bridge replacement. I would like to thank all of those who made the first phase of this project a success. I look forward to continuing to work with you and the surrounding communities during this next phase of the project. I encourage you to visit the project website at [www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/i-270-over-the-mississippi-river](http://www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/i-270-over-the-mississippi-river) for updates as the project progresses.

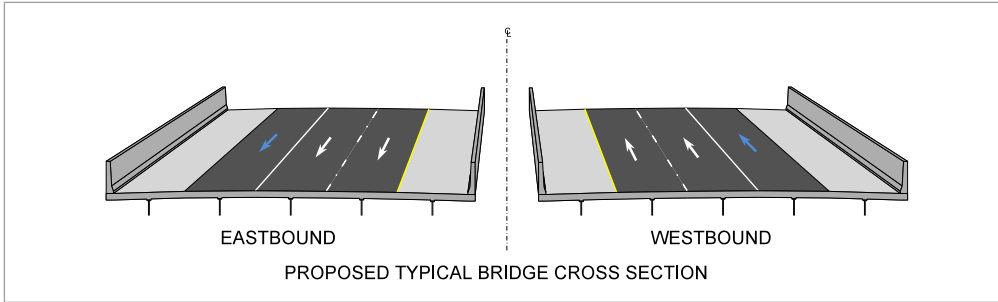
## IDOT COMPLETES PROJECT STUDY

IDOT has completed the preliminary engineering and environmental study for the I-270 over the Mississippi River Bridge replacement project which was approved on July 11, 2018. This is the first of three phases in completing an IDOT transportation project. The results of the study are documented in an IDOT Project Report. The Project Report includes information on the multiple analyses that were conducted to aid in the preferred alternative selection. These analyses included studying the crash history, existing and projected traffic, the existing bridge condition, and the area's environmental resources. The success of this phase of the project was due to continual coordination with MoDOT, FHWA, the environmental regulatory agencies, and the many stakeholders throughout the Metro-East and St. Louis regions. This coordination will continue through the next phases of the project. Approval of the Project Report allows for IDOT to move on to the next phase of designing the bridge and purchasing the necessary right-of-way and/or easements for the project. If you would like to view the Project Report, please visit the project website at [www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/i-270-over-the-mississippi-river](http://www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/i-270-over-the-mississippi-river) and click on the Resource tab.

### WHAT DID THE PROJECT STUDY ACCOMPLISH?

- Identified the preferred bridge replacement alternative
- Identified environmental concerns
- Identified the right-of-way requirements
- Provided the basis for IDOT to proceed to Phase II

## PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE



During the alternative development process, IDOT studied a range of replacement options for the bridge and the potential effect of those alternatives. Many factors were considered during this process and ultimately the preferred alternative was selected. Factors considered included but were not limited to: potential impacts to environmental resources, public comments, surrounding land use, river elevation, traffic statistics, crash history, engineering feasibility, long term maintenance, handling of traffic during construction and how the alternative fits in with the overall roadway infrastructure. An additional factor that played a key role in the selection of the preferred alternative was the Project Problem Statement. The Project Problem Statement was developed by the project’s Community Advisory Group (CAG) and identified the problems within the Chain of Rocks study area that need to be addressed. IDOT continually referred back to this statement to ensure the preferred alternative that was selected addressed these issues. IDOT has achieved this with the preferred alternative.

The preferred alternative consists of constructing new dual bridges, one on the same alignment as the existing Chain of Rocks bridge, and one directly south of the existing Chain of Rocks bridge. The new bridges will provide inside and outside shoulders that will be wide enough to accommodate a stalled vehicle or emergency responders responding to an incident. These will be much wider compared to the 1-foot wide shoulders that exist today. In addition, the bridges will be wide enough to accommodate a future expansion of I-270. While I-270 is currently four lanes, MoDOT has completed a study for I-270 in Missouri that proposed expanding I-270 to six lanes up to Riverview Drive. Similarly, IDOT has recently initiated a study to potentially provide additional travel lanes on I-270 from Missouri to IL Route 157. The Chain of Rocks bridge, as currently proposed, will be wide enough to fit the future six lanes when they are built by restriping the pavement.

### PROJECT PROBLEM STATEMENT

“The existing bridge carrying I-270 over the Mississippi River connecting Illinois and Missouri is aging and in need of continual repairs. There is a need to provide a sustainable, long-term solution that increases safety, accommodates future traffic growth, and provides for continued movement of regional and national goods and services while preserving the environmental, recreational and economic viability within the project area.”



#### 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.

## PROJECT SCHEDULE

**Phase I:** Preliminary engineering and identifying right-of-way needs was completed in early 2018, and “Design Approval” was achieved.

**Phase II:** The preparation of the contract plans and right-of-way acquisition occurs in this phase. Phase II began in 2018 and may take approximately 18-24 months to complete.

**Phase III:** Construction of the actual project will occur in Phase III and could take between 2-3 construction seasons to complete.

### THE PROJECT PROCESS



Funding for contract plan preparation and land acquisition (Phase II) and construction (Phase III) has been identified in the Department’s Fiscal Year 2019-2024 Proposed Highway Improvement Program.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT


The project’s second public meeting was held on January 17, 2018 at the SWIC campus in Granite City, Illinois. The meeting was an open house so visitors could come and go as they pleased. Staff from IDOT, MoDOT, and the project consultant team were available to answer questions and give detailed explanations of the displays. A total of 82 people signed in at the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to explain what alternatives were considered; present the preferred bridge replacement alternative; receive comments from the public; explain how IDOT addressed concerns on what is needed for the project; and inform the public of the overall project schedule. Attendees were able to provide written comments at the meeting, by mail, or through the project website. To view the exhibits and materials provided at the second public meeting, please visit the project website at [www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/i-270-over-the-mississippi-river](http://www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/i-270-over-the-mississippi-river) and click on the Get Involved tab. Public involvement activities will continue during Phase II with website updates, newsletters, and an anticipated public meeting.

### PUBLIC INPUT

A majority of the comments received:

- The plan to reconstruct the bridge is good.
- Would like the new bridge to be constructed as soon as possible.
- Keep the existing bridge open during construction.

## FIELD WORK

 In September the design team began the field work, including surveying and geotechnical investigations, necessary to prepare the construction plans. The geotechnical investigations included soil borings on land as well as in the river using barges. There will be additional field work and geotechnical investigations by the design team over the next year.



Opening of the chain of rocks bridge, September 2, 1966

How much will the project cost?

Currently, it is estimated the project construction could cost approximately \$223 million. The project cost includes engineering, land acquisition, utility relocations and construction.

How many lanes will the new bridge have?

The new bridge is proposed to accommodate six 12-foot lanes and include larger shoulders but will be striped for four lanes initially to match the existing I-270 to the east and west of the bridge. Currently, I-270 is four lanes in Illinois and Missouri adjacent to the bridge.

Is this project part of the current IDOT I-270 widening study?

No. IDOT has recently began a preliminary engineering study to address congestion and motorist safety along I-270 from IL 157 to the Chain of Rocks Bridge. The design of the I-270 roadway will be compatible with the proposed bridge replacement alignment. The preliminary engineering study is anticipated to be completed in the next 18-24 months. For additional information regarding that study please contact Tiffany Brase at 618-346-3175 or [Tiffany.Brase@illinois.gov](mailto:Tiffany.Brase@illinois.gov).

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

No. MoDOT has completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the widening of I-270 from the I-70 interchange to the Mississippi River. This I-270 bridge replacement project is not part of the MoDOT study. However, the proposed bridge has been preliminarily designed to be compatible with MoDOT's proposed design.

Will There Be Lane Closures During Construction?

While there may be occasional short term off peak lane closures, IDOT's goal is to keep four lanes of traffic open to the public during all stages of construction. The southern bridge will be constructed first. Traffic will be shifted to the southern bridge before removing the existing Chain of Rocks bridge. Once the bridge is demolished, the construction of the northern bridge will begin and be constructed in the same location as the current bridge. In addition, IDOT and MoDOT will be working closely together to ensure all stages of construction will be coordinated between the bridge replacement project and the I-270 Riverview Drive and the interchange replacement, which will be done at the same time.

## 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](http://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](http://www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/i-270-over-the-mississippi-river), or mail or email the following information to:

**I-270 PROJECT TEAM**

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



**CONTACT INFORMATION | Send comments or questions to:**

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