



OVER THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER | Issue 4, June 2021

# CHAIN OF ROCKS BRIDGE NEWSLETTER

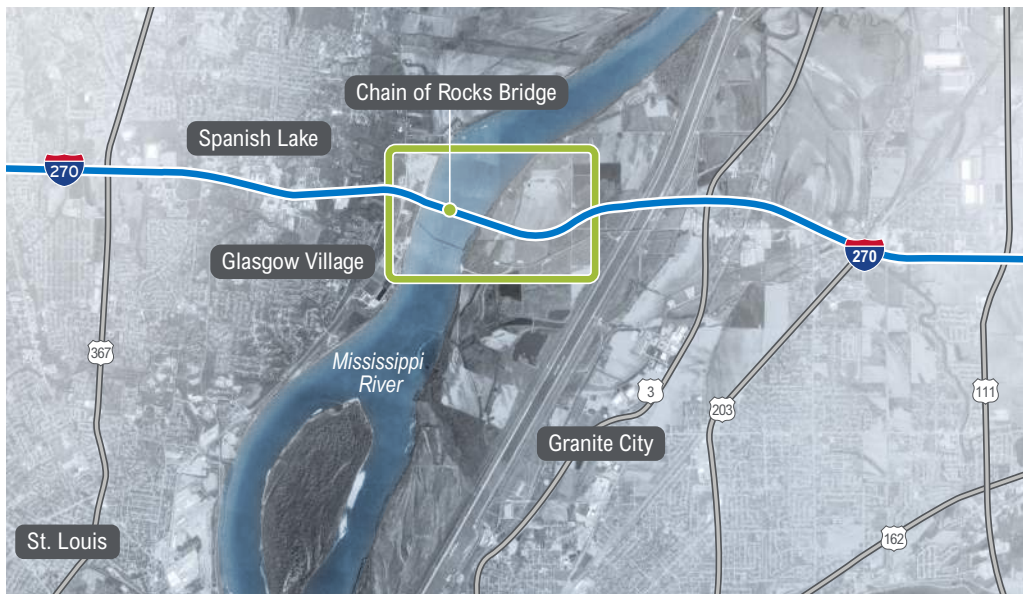
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | REGION FIVE | DISTRICT 8



Keith Roberts,  
Region Five Engineer  
(Acting)

I am pleased to announce that the I-270 over the Mississippi River bridge replacement project, locally known as the Chain of Rocks Bridge, is currently advancing through Phase II which involves the development of construction plans and land acquisition. The first phase of this project, which included the preliminary engineering and environmental study, received approval from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in July 2018. Funding for construction has been identified in the Governor’s Fiscal Year 2021-2026 Proposed Highway Improvement Program. In addition, the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), our partner in this project, has begun engineering for the I-270 Riverview Drive Interchange modification which will be reconstructed in conjunction with the bridge replacement. We will continue to work with you and the surrounding communities during this phase of the project. 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) for updates as the project progresses.

## PROJECT LOCATION



The Chain of Rocks Bridge spans the Mississippi River between Madison County, Illinois and St. Louis County, Missouri. It carries traffic along I-270 between Illinois and Missouri.

## IDOT PROJECT PHASES AND PROJECT SCHEDULE

Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) projects consist of three main phases. IDOT has completed Phase I identified a preferred alternative for the replacement of the existing bridge and a preferred modification of the interchange at I-270 and Riverview Drive in St. Louis, Missouri. Phase II of the project, which consists of preparing construction plans and land acquisition, is underway and should be completed by Summer 2022. The third and final phase of the project will be construction, which could begin in late 2022/early 2023.

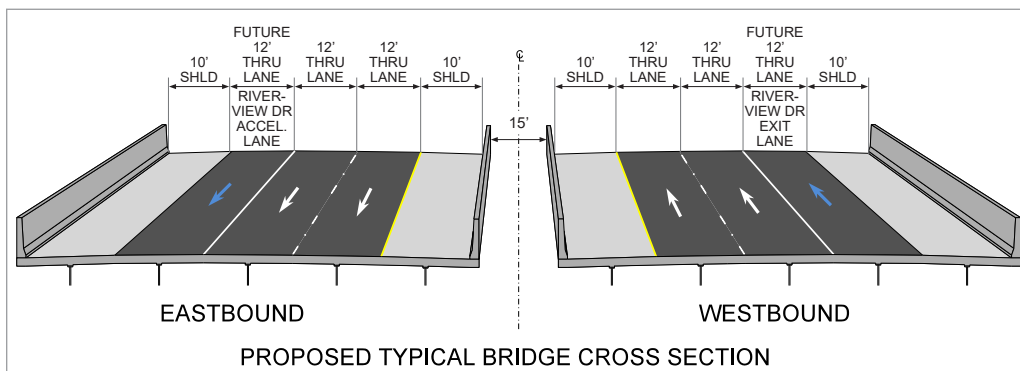
### THE PROJECT PROCESS



If you would like to view the **Phase I Preliminary Engineering & Environmental Study Project Report** and a recent updated to the study, 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.

## PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The selected alternative consists of constructing new twin 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 10-foot inside and outside shoulders that will be wide enough to accommodate a stalled vehicle or emergency responders responding to an incident. In addition, the bridges will be designed to accommodate six lanes to coincide with the future expansion of I-270. Currently, I-270 approaching the Chain of Rocks Bridge is four lanes. MoDOT has completed a study for I-270 in Missouri that proposes expanding I-270 to six lanes up to Riverview Drive in Missouri. Similarly, IDOT has an on-going study to expand I-270 to six lanes from the Mississippi River to Illinois Route 157. The typical section of the proposed bridge is illustrated below.



### FACTORS CONSIDERED WHEN SELECTING A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

- Environmental resources
- Public comments
- Surrounding land use
- River elevation
- Traffic statistics
- Crash history
- Engineering feasibility
- Long term maintenance
- Maintaining traffic during construction
- How the alternative fits in with the overall roadway infrastructure

## WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?

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**DESIGN:** The project team is currently preparing the plans for the new bridges, which will include the following: plan and profile of the bridges; illustrations showing the type of superstructure and foundation; shoulders; and horizontal and vertical clearances.

**HYDRAULIC STUDY:** A hydraulic study was required for the proposed project. This study involved the hydraulic analysis to determine the necessary dimensions of the waterway opening. The waterway opening must be of sufficient size to satisfy regulatory flood plain requirements so that flooding is not created either upstream or downstream of the proposed bridge location.

**MAINTENANCE OF TRAFFIC (MOT):** While there may be occasional short-term off-peak lane closures, IDOT's goal is to maintain four lanes of traffic open to the public during all stages of construction. Additional details can be found on the project website.

## PARTNERING WITH MoDOT

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IDOT and MoDOT continue to work closely on the I-270 bridge replacement as this bridge not only connects our two states but also serves as a vital link for many freight carriers and commuters. In addition, MoDOT is currently designing the modification of the I-270 and Riverview Drive interchange. Due to the proximity of the Riverview Drive interchange, IDOT and MoDOT have worked consistently together to ensure the proposed bridge design is compatible with MoDOT's Riverview Drive interchange design. IDOT and MoDOT are also continuing to collaborate on public outreach regarding both projects.



## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

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As part of the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process, several methods of public involvement were used during the previous phase of this project. During Phase I, IDOT held public meetings, with the first meetings held in June and July of 2016. The purpose of the meetings was to inform the public of the planning process and discuss general concerns and project schedule.

A second public meeting was held in early 2018 to show the public the potential preferred alternative. The purpose of the meeting was to explain the alternatives considered and receive public input. The consensus was that the public would like to see the bridge replaced as soon as possible and keeping the bridge open for traffic during construction was desired.

A project website was developed and updated throughout the Phase I study. Please refer to the website for previous newsletters and additional project details: [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 with additional stakeholder, CAG, and public meetings. The public meetings may be held virtually. Project updates will continue to be posted to the project website.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How much will the project cost?

Currently, it is estimated the project construction could cost approximately \$246 million. The project cost includes engineering, land acquisition, utility relocations and construction.

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

No. IDOT is conducting a Phase I 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 by Summer 2021. 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.

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

c/o Horner & Shifrin Inc.  
604 Pierce Blvd., Suite 300  
O'Fallon, IL 62269  
Email: [bljacquot@hornershifrin.com](mailto: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.

## 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



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

**BILLIE OWEN, P.E.**  
Studies and Plans Project Engineer

E: [Billie.Owen@illinois.gov](mailto:Billie.Owen@illinois.gov)

Illinois Department of Transportation  
Region Five/District 8

1102 Eastport Plaza Drive  
Collinsville, IL 62234