

Project Phases



FUNDING

FY 2025-2030 Proposed Highway Improvement Program Includes \$149,500,000 for improvements to I-55 at Lorenzo Road & at IL 129.

Leave a comment!

Project team members will be present to discuss the project and answer questions. A court reporter will be available for those wishing to make a verbal statement at the hearing. Written comments can also be submitted at the hearing or after via email or mail. Comments received by September 16, 2024, will become part of the official public hearing record. **See below for ways to submit your feedback:**

➔ **Submit your comment on the website at:**
i55lorenzoil129outreach.org

➔ **Email your comment to:**
lorenzoil129study@gmail.com

➔ **Send your thoughts by mail to:**

Illinois Department of Transportation
Bureau of Programming
Attention: Anna Kutryn, P.E.
201 West Center Court
Schaumburg, IL 60196

[I55LORENZOIL129OUTREACH.ORG](https://i55lorenzoil129outreach.org)

Public Hearing | August 15, 2024



I-55 STUDY
LORENZO ROAD + IL 129



Changes Ahead for I-55 Interchanges

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is enhancing the interchanges at Lorenzo Road and at IL 129 along I-55 in Will County, near Wilmington, Illinois. This initiative follows several years of evaluation and a virtual public outreach event aimed at gathering community feedback.

In 2018, IDOT initiated preliminary engineering and environmental studies to evaluate and address improvements needed for I-55 from Lorenzo Road to IL 113 (Coal City Road) in Will County. This study, conducted under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), seeks to identify solutions that address the area's transportation needs while minimizing environmental impact.

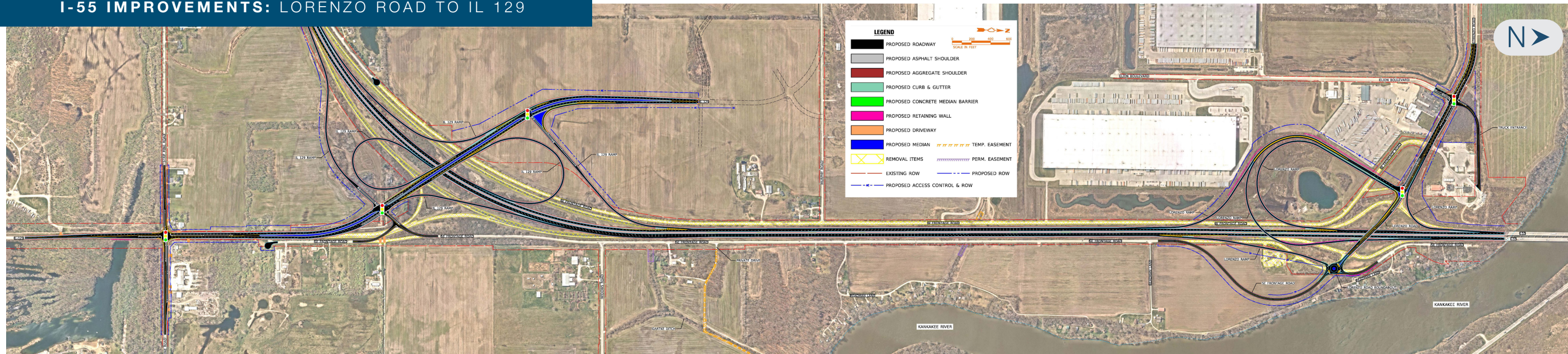
The study area, located in Wilmington Township, stretches approximately 4.8 miles and includes the interchanges at Lorenzo Road and IL 129. Notably, the study area is just south of where I-55 crosses the Kankakee River, with the municipalities of Braidwood, Diamond, and Wilmington nearby.

PURPOSE & NEED

The project aims to improve safety, facility condition, and interchange operations on I-55 between Lorenzo Road and IL 113. The key **needs** to be addressed include **improving:**

- ➔ Safety for all users
- ➔ Facility condition and design
- ➔ Regional & local travel and access

All public hearing materials are available for viewing on the study website.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Currently, the Lorenzo Road interchange has some design shortcomings. The northbound entrance ramp does not meet current speed design criteria, and the minimum length of ramps without auxiliary lanes is insufficient

for both the northbound entrance and southbound exit ramps.

The IL 129 interchange also has its limitations. It lacks access to the west side of I-55 and does not provide an entrance or exit ramp for southbound I-55. Southbound traffic must exit eastbound at IL 113 to reach IL 129.

Environmental Impacts

We evaluated how the proposed improvement might affect the environment and were mindful of these important resources:

- ➔ Wetlands
- ➔ Floodplains
- ➔ Potential Threatened and Endangered Species
- ➔ Residential & Commercial Displacements
- ➔ Noise



PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The proposed design was carefully chosen from the initial options and refined through detailed geometric analysis. This plan includes enhancements aimed at improving traffic capacity and operational efficiency.

Based on traffic projections provided by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), both interchanges will be over capacity by 2050, resulting in safety and operational deficiencies, and the ramps will fail to provide acceptable traffic flow. These projections informed the need for refining the previously proposed improvements.

The IL 129 interchange design was reverted to a partial clover leaf and enhanced with loop ramps in the northwest and southeast quadrants. These adjustments were designed to facilitate smoother

westbound to southbound and eastbound to northbound movements, which are projected to experience heavy truck movement. This modification was chosen for its operational performance compared to previous configurations.

Additionally, the intersection of the east ramps at Lorenzo Road were redesigned to incorporate a roundabout with the east frontage road, further optimizing traffic flow at this critical junction. These refinements ensure that the proposed improvements effectively meet the project's objectives while enhancing overall traffic operations.



Did you know?

Roundabouts are considerably safer for drivers and pedestrians and cause much less congestion than traffic lights.

I-55 at Lorenzo Road and at IL 129 Frequently Asked Questions



I-55 STUDY

LORENZO ROAD + IL 129

→ What is this project?

The Illinois Department of Transportation (Department) is developing a plan to improve the interchanges at Lorenzo Road and at IL 129 along I-55 in Will County.

→ Why is this project needed?

The interchanges at Lorenzo Road and at IL 129 are congested today. If no improvements are made, these interchanges would experience extreme congestion by 2050. This would result in slower speeds on I-55 as traffic merges onto the ramps, and could potentially result in an increase of crashes if ramp traffic backs up onto I-55.

→ What is the schedule for completing this project?

The Department uses a three-phase process to complete projects. This project is currently in Phase I, or Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Studies. This Phase should be complete by the end of 2024. Phase II, or Contract Plan Preparation and Land Acquisition, is anticipated to take 24-36 months to complete. Phase III, Construction, is anticipated to begin in 2027.

→ Is funding available to complete this project?

Yes, the Department has included \$149,500,000 in the FY 2025 – 2030 Multi-Year Program to complete the current work, and future Phases including construction.

→ Will the bridge over the Des Plaines River be expanded to allow for a future third traffic lane?

The I-55 bridge over the Des Plaines River is outside the study

limits and is not included in the proposed improvements.

→ Will I-55 be widened to 3 lanes in each direction?

At this time the Department does not plan to widen I-55 to 3-lanes in each direction within the study limits or immediately beyond. As part of this improvement an auxiliary lane will be constructed between the Lorenzo Road and IL 129 interchange to improve operations and safety at these interchanges.

→ Why is a roundabout proposed? They are too narrow, hard for trucks to navigate, and slow traffic down.

The Department follows State and Federal Highway Administration standards and guidance in the design of any improvement. In the case of roundabouts, this includes circulatory lanes that are large enough for trucks to navigate. Roundabouts promote the continuous movement of traffic unlike signalized intersections where traffic can back up and cause disruptions at other points downstream. Roundabouts slow the speed of traffic moving through it but keep traffic moving continuously therefore not causing delays greater than a traffic signal. Roundabouts are safer and experience less crashes with less severe injuries than signalized intersections.

→ Are these improvements going to increase truck traffic and divert trucks to local roads?

The proposed improvements are designed to accommodate future traffic based on data provided by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency

for Planning (CMAP), the regional metropolitan planning organization for the northeast Chicagoland area. Growth in this area of Will County is in large part attributed to development and expansion of logistics centers, which result in increased truck traffic. The proposed improvements provide trucks with a more direct route to the interstate which should ease truck congestion on the local system.

→ Will parking be prohibited on the ramps to reduce truck noise and trash disposal near our home?

Parking will not be allowed along any ramps within the project area.

→ How will construction address existing pipeline and power lines?

Potential conflicts with known utilities have been evaluated. Utilities requiring relocation and those able to remain in place and protected during the construction have been identified. During contract plan preparation (Phase II), the Department will work with the owners of these utilities on necessary steps to address these conflicts and relocations.

→ What is being done to improve truck merging and exiting conditions at Lorenzo Road?

The ramp merge and diverge areas north of Lorenzo Road and south of IL 129 have been designed to current standards and auxiliary lanes will be provided on I-55 between the two interchanges. These improvements will facilitate the safe entrance and exit of vehicles along I-55.

More **FAQs** on reverse →



➔ **Will improvements consider and accommodate anticipated increased traffic?**

The proposed improvements accommodate future growth in population and traffic (including trucks). The design is based on future traffic projected to the design year of 2050 and was coordinated with CMAP.

➔ **Will local access be maintained during construction?**

The Traffic Management Plan will be determined by the end of this Phase of the project. All efforts will be made to limit disruptions to traffic during construction. There may be times when a ramp is closed, and detours would be put in place. Proper signage will be provided to direct vehicles through and around the construction zones.

➔ **Once constructed will improvements to the interchanges result in road closures and force local traffic to reroute with added travel times?**

The proposed interchange designs will provide local traffic access to and from I-55 in all directions, restoring the previously removed access to IL 129 from southbound I-55. However, the proposed design does close the west frontage road between Lorenzo Road and south of Murphy Road.

➔ **How will the interchange improvements help traffic once it gets to the two-lane bridge to cross**

the Kankakee River?

This improvement is specific to I-55 and its interchanges at Lorenzo Road and at IL 129 and addressing access to and from the interstate. The bridge carrying I-55 over the Kankakee River (which currently accommodates two lanes in each direction) is not part of this improvement and may be addressed by the Department as part of future multi-year highway improvement programs. However, the reconfiguration of the southbound exit and the northbound entrance ramps at Lorenzo Road will eliminate the back-ups on I-55 that happen today.

➔ **Will this improvement require land acquisition?**

The improvements have been designed to minimize the amount of property acquisition to the extent possible.

However, fee simple acquisition will be required from farmland and open land areas and will also include complete takes of one business and one residential property. Fee simple is the acquisition of all rights and interests of real property.

Additionally, these improvements will require temporary or permanent easements. With easements, ownership is retained by the property owner. Permanent easements allow the Department permanent access to the property during and after construction for maintenance. Temporary easements allow temporary access during construction. The Department will work with each property owner individually during the subsequent contract plan preparation and land acquisition phase of the project

where easements are needed.

➔ **Will noise walls be constructed?**

A noise study was performed for the study area which evaluated possible increases in noise levels caused by the proposed improvement and to determine if noise abatement walls were needed. The proposed improvements will result in a moderate increase in traffic noise, however, noise abatement walls were evaluated and found not to be feasible and/or reasonable within the study area and therefore will not be constructed as part of the project.

➔ **How will you protect the environment and wildlife?**

Detailed environmental analysis has been completed as part of this study. Coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service has taken place with respect to threatened and endangered species present in the project area and improvements have been designed to minimize environmental impacts.

➔ **How will changes at Lorenzo Road prevent oil/fuel drainage into the river? Will there be accommodations for storm runoff?**

Water quality was a major concern during this study and best management practices have been incorporated into the proposed design. Stormwater runoff from the area roadways will be conveyed through detention ponds, stilling basins, and vegetated ditches to filter out pollutants before the stormwater enters the Kankakee River.