



IDOT District 4

# Public Involvement | Project Information



Illinois Department of Transportation

Fall 2021

## Public Hearing

### November 17, 2021

Thank you for your interest in the U.S. Route 34 project, from near Gulf Port to T.R. 111 (western end of the Biggsville Bypass). IDOT is holding a virtual public hearing on November 17, 2021 to bring you up to date on the project and give you an opportunity to provide your formal comment on the preferred alternative.

Comments received will be considered by IDOT and the Federal Highway Administration in making their final decision. The Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) is available for review at the Biggesville Library, Monmouth Library and online at <https://idot.illinois.gov/projects/US-34-Expansion-Gulfport-to-Biggsville.html>. The comment period for the SDEIS ends November 29, 2021.

The public hearing will explain the activities that have taken place on the project since the October 4, 2016 public meeting. The public hearing will also present the three alignment options, or alternatives, that IDOT carried forward for more detailed evaluation and the Preferred

Alternative alignment that was selected. Maps and figures available on the website show the overall study area, alignment options no longer under consideration, environmental issues and other information that has been gathered and evaluated to help IDOT determine the future improvements to U.S. Route 34.

The virtual public hearing will include a formal presentation by IDOT. In addition, you are welcome to review the graphics and information available online at your own pace at website. IDOT representatives and consultant team members will be available at the virtual public hearing to discuss the project with you and answer your questions.

Your comments and input on this project are important to IDOT. Please fill out a comment form online before you leave the virtual public hearing, or email or mail it to the addresses shown on the website. Comments received by November 29, 2021, will be considered by IDOT and will become part of the public hearing record.



## Public Meeting Follow-Up

IDOT held public meetings on November 18, 2015 and October 4, 2016 to provide an overview of the project; present six preliminary alternatives and three alternatives carried forward for detailed evaluation; and give an opportunity for the public to discuss the project with IDOT and submit comments.

The first meeting was attended by 88 people and 14 comment forms were received, and the second meeting was attended by 97 people and 30 comment forms were received. Most comments expressed either a preference or dislike for specific alternatives based on proximity or potential impacts to their property. Some comments also addressed safety, access, roadway flooding and other concerns.

Since the last public meeting, IDOT and the consultant team have:

- Refined and performed detailed evaluation of the alternatives carried forward (2, 5 and 6).
- Identified a Preferred Alternative (explained on page 2).
- Completed the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS).
- Completed preliminary roadway design.



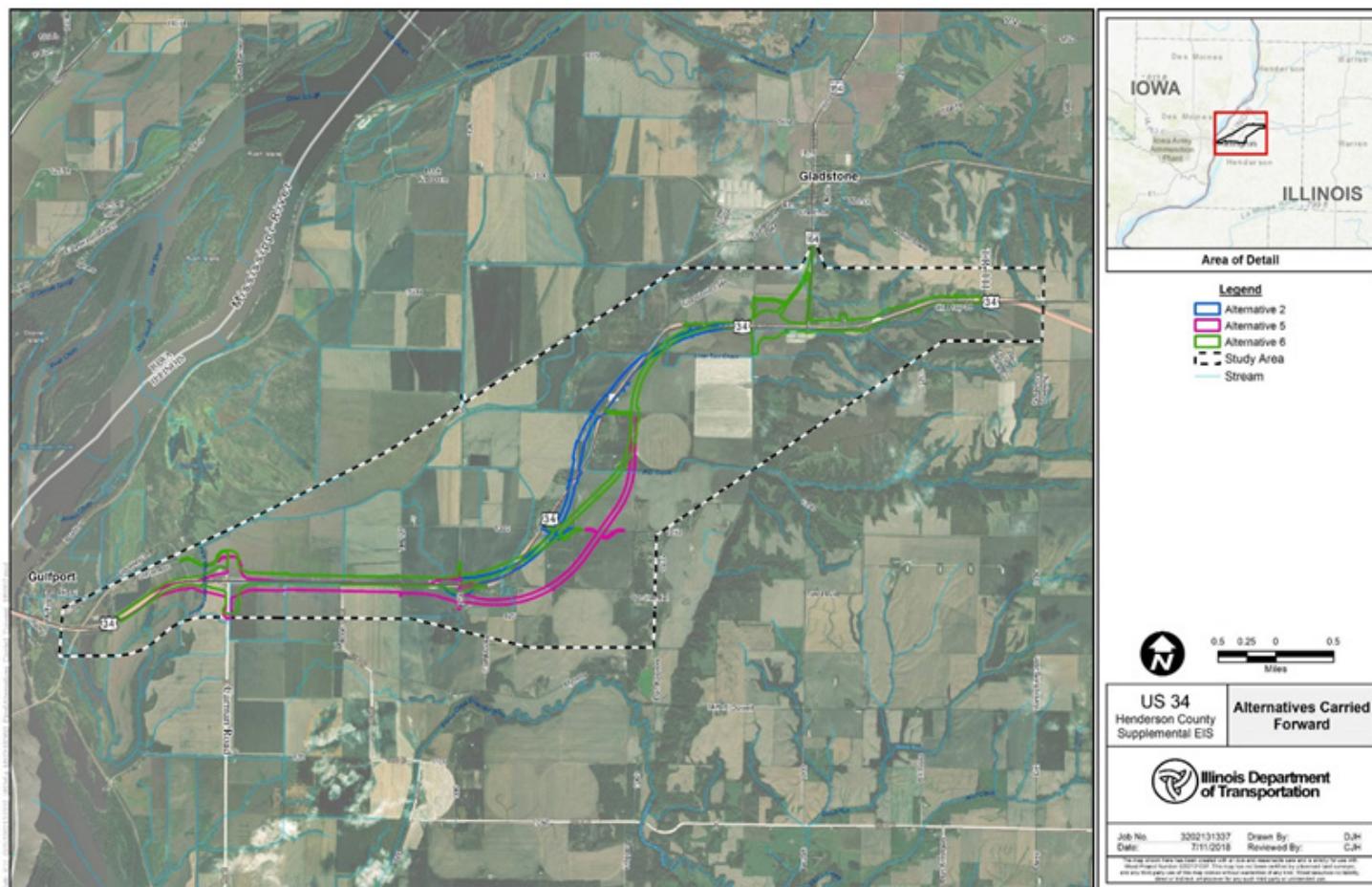
## Alternatives Evaluation and Preferred Alternative

Six preliminary alternatives, as well as a No-Build option, were evaluated after receiving concurrence from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in February 2016. This process considered how each alternative met the project's Purpose and Need (see adjacent inset box) and assessed them against a detailed set of criteria. Comments received at the public meetings were reviewed and considered as part of the evaluation. As a result of the assessment, three alternatives – 2, 5 and 6 – were carried forward for refinement and a more detailed assessment. Alternatives 1, 3 and 4 were eliminated from further consideration.

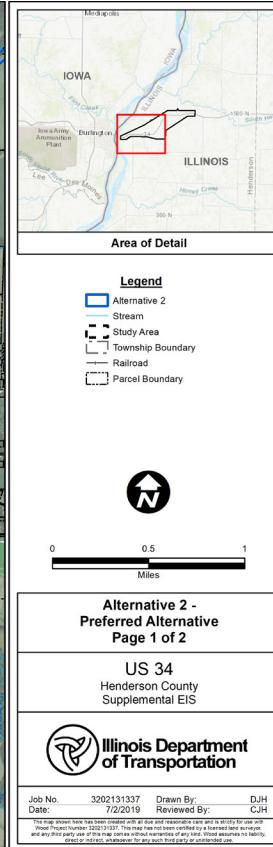
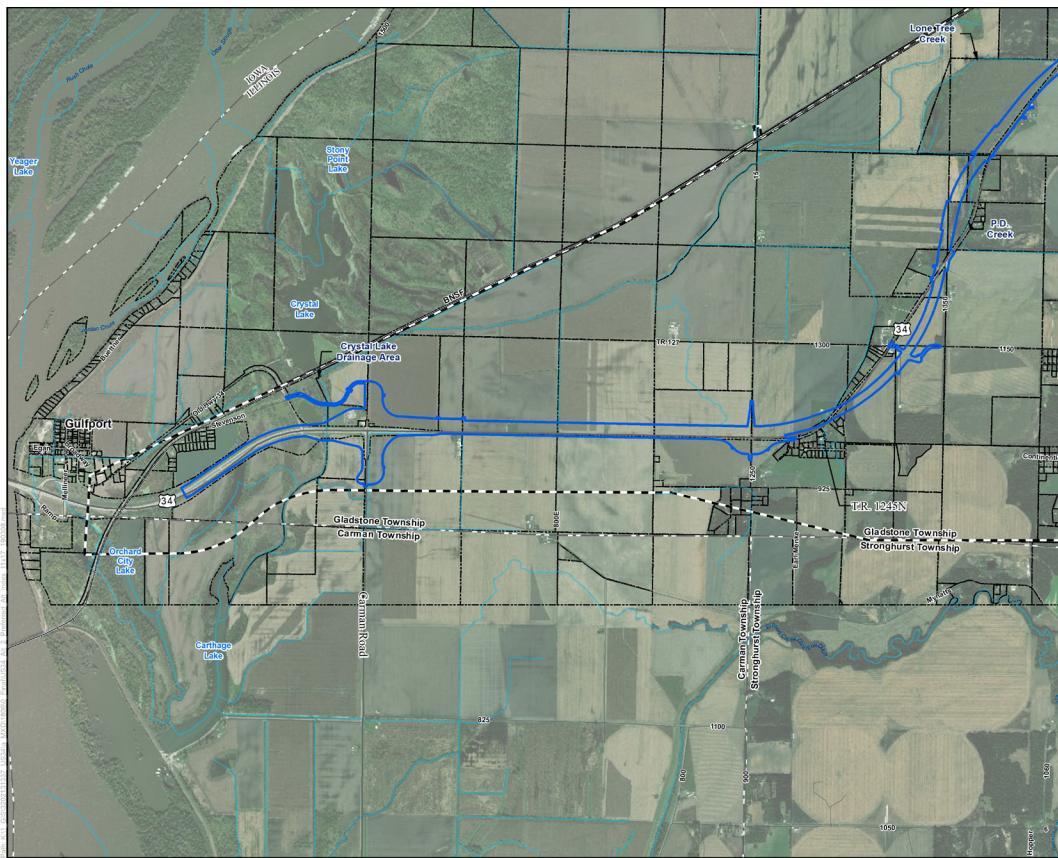
The next phase of the study involved more refinement and detailed analysis of the three remaining alternatives. Ultimately, the study team concluded that Alternative 2 provides the most feasible and prudent alternative for an improvement to U.S. 34 in the study area, and was therefore, identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 2 is an 8.7-mile, four-lane expressway with two lanes in each direction divided by a 50-foot grass median. It extends from west of Carman Road to east of Illinois 164. An interchange is included at Carman Road with ramp access for all directions. The initial build will include an intersection at Illinois 164 but accommodate an interchange as future traffic requires. This roadway would be elevated between 10 and 17 feet above the 500-year flood elevation in the Mississippi River floodplain for approximately 4.7 miles where the existing US 34 roadway will be utilized as a frontage road. (see typical section figure on insert)

Alternative 2 was selected as the Preferred Alternative because compared to Alternatives 5 and 6:

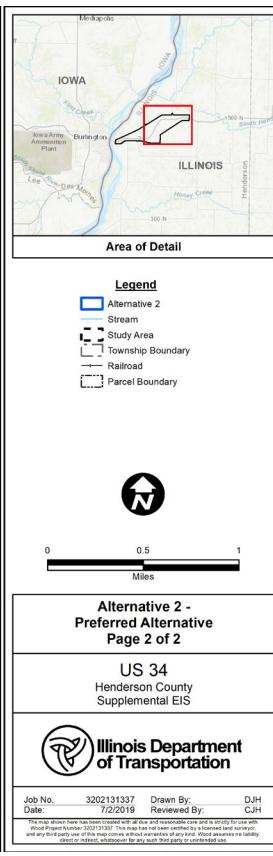
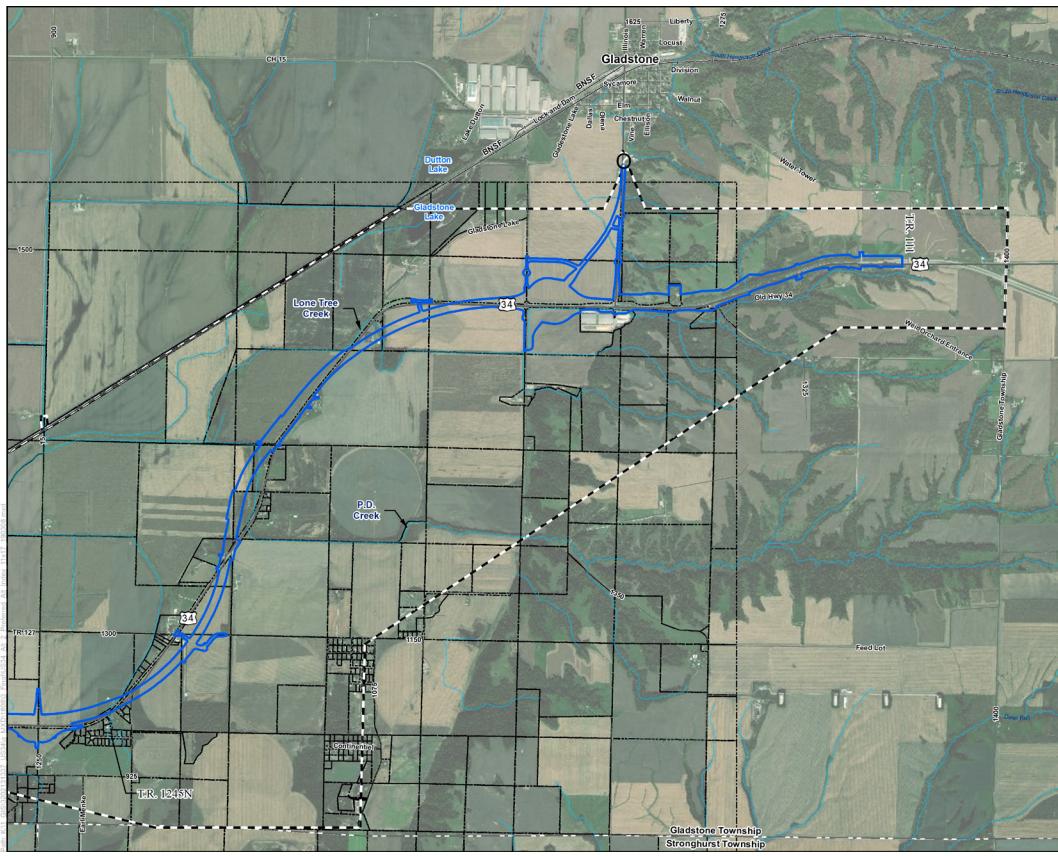
- It has the lowest impact to productive cropland; prime and important farmland; farm severances; and irrigated (center pivot irrigation) land.
- It requires the smallest amount of new right-of-way, and it has the highest utilization of the existing U.S. 34 right-of-way, improving traffic flow and safety on the new expressway when the existing highway is used as a frontage road.
- It is favored by the general public.



US 34 Alternatives Carried Forward For Detailed Evaluation



**Alternative 2 – Preferred Alternative (Western Section)**



**Alternative 2 – Preferred Alternative (Eastern Section)**

## Summary of Environmental Impacts

Construction of the Preferred Alternative would result in impacts to several resources – socioeconomic, land use, agriculture, natural resources, streams, wetlands, floodplains, and visual. A summary of impacts for the preferred alternative are shown in the table below.

The construction of the Preferred Alternative would result in the displacement of five residences and one commercial business. Relocation assistance services would be available. Community services and facilities would not be impacted; however minor impacts to the Henderson County tax base would occur as a result of property acquisition. The direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts of the project in the form of jobs and income is expected to offset public sector losses.

A total of 25 farm parcels would be affected by the Preferred Alternative. Of these, six farm operations would be severed, and eight center pivot irrigation operations would be impacted. The clearing of forests, crops, and undeveloped land would result in long-term adverse impacts to vegetation.

### Summary of Environmental Impacts of the No-Build and New Right-of-Way for the Preferred Alternative:

Criterion	No-Build	Preferred Alternative
<b>Socioeconomic/Land Use/ Natural Resources</b>		
Number of residential displacements	0	5
Number of commercial displacements	0	1
Number of impacted noise receptors	0	0
Visual impacts	None	Minor
Impacts to forested area (acres)	0	8.8
Number of state-listed wild blue larkspur plants affected	0	259
Impacts to prairie (acres)	0	0.8
Impacts to degraded sand savanna/sand woodland (acres)	0	0
<b>Water Resources</b>		
Area of wetlands impacted (acres)	0	4.3
Number of perennial streams crossed	0	1
Number of intermittent streams crossed	0	9
Acres of 100-year floodplain crossed	0	261.5
Acres of 500-year floodplain crossed	0	263.2
<b>Cultural Resources</b>		
Number of NRHP listed, NRHP eligible, or potentially NRHP eligible properties affected	0	0
Number of archeological sites affected	0	34
Number of mound groups affected	0	2
<b>Agriculture</b>		
Acres of productive cropland/pasture impacted	0	165.3
Acres of prime farmland/important farmland impacted	0	309.8
Number of owners affected	0	17
<b>Farm operations</b>		
Number of severed farm operations (by tract)	0	6
Number of skewed severances	0	6
Number of uneconomical remnants	0	10
Acreage of uneconomical remnants	0	10.3
Number of center pivot irrigation impacts	0	8
Acreage of center pivot irrigation impacts	0	44.9
Number of farm buildings displaced	0	9
Number of otherwise affected farm operations (by tract)	0	25



## What Happens Next?

- Continuation of public comment period through November 29, 2021
- Review feedback from this public hearing and consider substantive comments from the Public and Resource agencies
- Respond to Public and Resource Agency Comments in the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS)
- Complete and publish the Final SEIS and Record of Decision (ROD)
- Funding and construction to be determined

## Project Purpose and Need

*The proposed action is to provide an improved transportation facility for local and through traffic in Henderson and Warren Counties to address the needs of system capacity, system continuity, and travel safety.*

## Contact Us

*If you have questions or need additional information, please contact:*

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