

Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Public Hearing for the Illinois Department of Transportation's (Department) preliminary engineering and environmental studies for **US 52 from River Road to Houbolt Road** on October 10, 2024. The public hearing materials continue to be available through the project website. Comments are always welcome; however, those received prior to November 12, 2024, were included as part of the hearing's official public record.

As many of the comments received had similar concerns, this newsletter has been prepared to address those concerns and provide an overview of other topics. We encourage you to visit the project website at www.i55atI59accessproject.org, click on "Get Involved," and then click "Public Information Meetings" to find meeting materials from the public hearing.



Public Comment Summary

The Department received a total of 24 comments for the public record. Comment subjects are below, with response information available on the following pages:

- Project study limits
- Future mobility/traffic congestion
- Land acquisition
- Access control and safety
- Mobility: right-turn lanes
- Proposed improvements
- Multimodal transportation
- Truck access
- Traffic projections
- Interim construction improvements: I-55 and US 52 Interchange
- Noise
- Trees

Project Study Limits

Several comments were received that suggested improvements along US 52 west of River Road. The Department, in partnership with the City of Joliet, initiated the I-55 Access Study in 2017. The study limits were centered along Interstate 55 but considered an extended study area, which included both regional and local roadway networks that work together to meet transportation needs. The I-55 Access Study Area was bordered on the south by I-80, on the east by Houbolt Road, on the north by US 52, and on the west by River Road.

The I-55 Access Study resulted in a preferred alternative that included four independent projects, including US 52 from River Road to Houbolt Road. The US 52 project west terminus is River Road and is based on the original I-55 Access Study limits as well as meeting existing improvements at River Road and a decrease in traffic volumes west of River Road. Please see the US 52 study limits map on the front cover of this newsletter for more information.

Future Mobility / Traffic Congestion

Future developments along state routes require a qualified engineering company to complete a traffic impact study, which is then reviewed by the Department's traffic permit section. This is required to obtain a highway permit to initiate construction. The traffic impact study for a development recommends mitigation strategies to maintain or improve existing operational conditions and ensure that safe and efficient access is provided to and from the state highway system. Mitigation strategies vary and depend on the amount of traffic generated by the proposed development. Typically for a two-lane highway, dedicated left-turn and/or right-turn lanes are proposed to reduce delays to through traffic and improve safety for turning vehicles.

Land Acquisition

The Department always strives to minimize the need to acquire property. When land acquisition is necessary, three basic types are employed:

- **Fee simple acquisition:** acquisition of all rights and interests of real property.
- **Permanent easement:** ownership of the property is retained by the property owner, but access is granted in perpetuity for maintenance activities such as cleaning drainage facilities or retaining wall maintenance.
- **Temporary easement:** access to the property is required only during construction, generally for grading work or other improvements, such as driveway reconstruction.

The preferred alternative exhibits for US 52 from River Road to Houbolt Road can be found on the project website and depict the type and extent of land acquisition anticipated for the proposed improvements. These exhibits are based on the best information available and are subject to change. A Department representative will contact the property owner regarding land acquisition during the subsequent project phase, contract plan preparation, and land acquisition (Phase II).

Land Acquisition Process

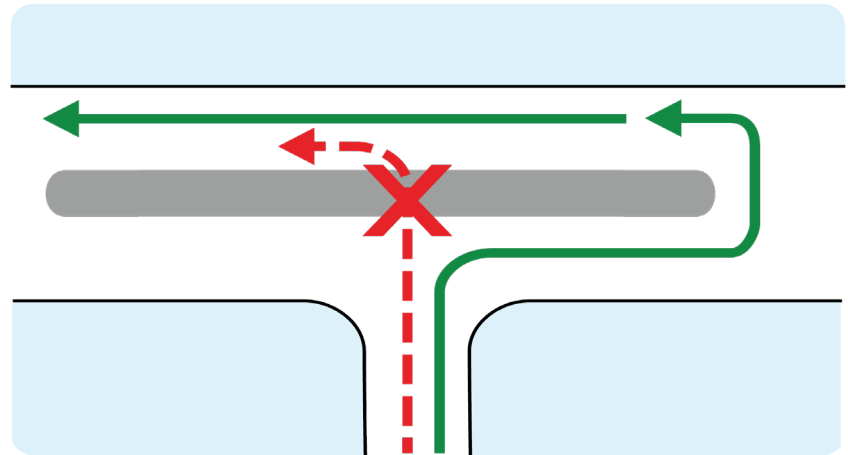
OWNERSHIP
DETERMINATION

APPRAISAL

NEGOTIATION

IF NECESSARY,
COURT PROCEEDINGS

Access Control and Safety



Proposed Driveway Exit onto US 52 via U-Turn Movement
Instead of Left Turn

Since the beginning of this study, stakeholders have identified US 52 congestion as a major local traffic issue that should be addressed. The traffic and crash analysis performed on the existing facility validates these concerns.

The crash history along US 52, especially near the IL 59 intersection, shows above-average crash rates for similar type roadway segments and signalized intersections in Illinois. Many of the crashes are turning crashes caused by left-turning vehicles entering and exiting the roadway. This crash type tends to result in the most severe injuries. To improve safety, curbed medians are being implemented with the proposed improvements to limit left turns

along the corridor. Raised, curbed medians have been proven to improve mobility and safety. These measures are expected to reduce crashes by 40 percent based on studies completed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The proposed improvements will restrict most driveways and some cross-streets to right-in, right-out access. U-turns for typical passenger vehicles up to 22 feet in length will be accommodated at signalized intersections and some unsignalized locations so that access for businesses is maintained with minimal adverse travel. Some redundant, existing driveways may be closed permanently to improve safety where they are located too close to higher-capacity intersections.

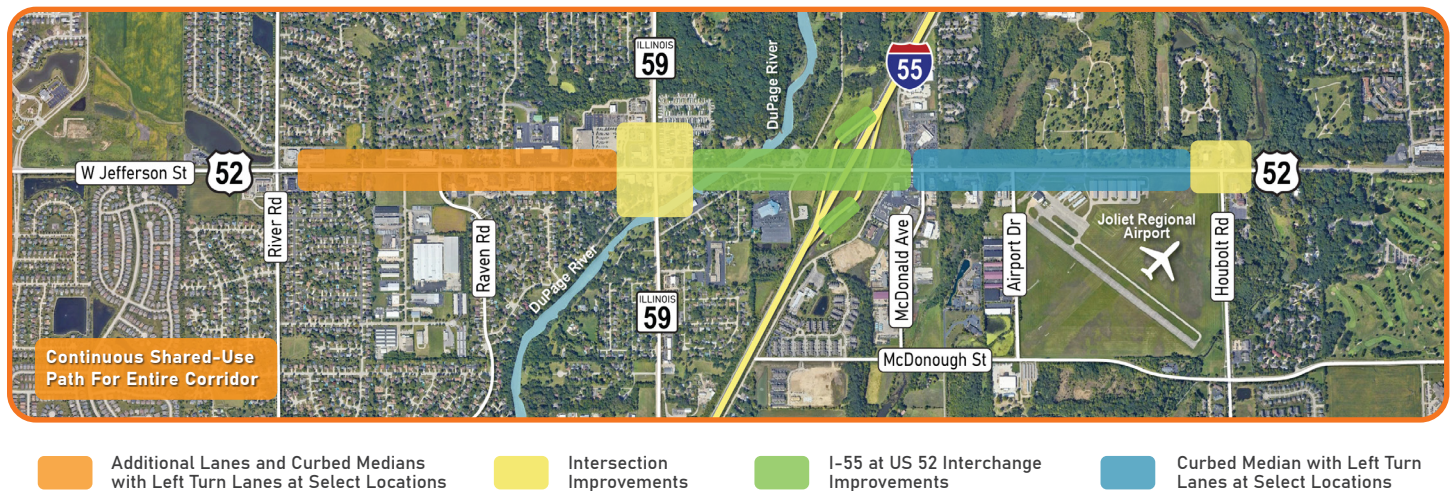


Mobility: Right-Turn Lanes

The traffic capacity analysis performed for the US 52 study for future traffic volumes was completed to determine right-turn lane warrants at signalized and unsignalized intersections throughout the corridor. Right-turn lanes are proposed at locations where traffic analysis indicated they are warranted.

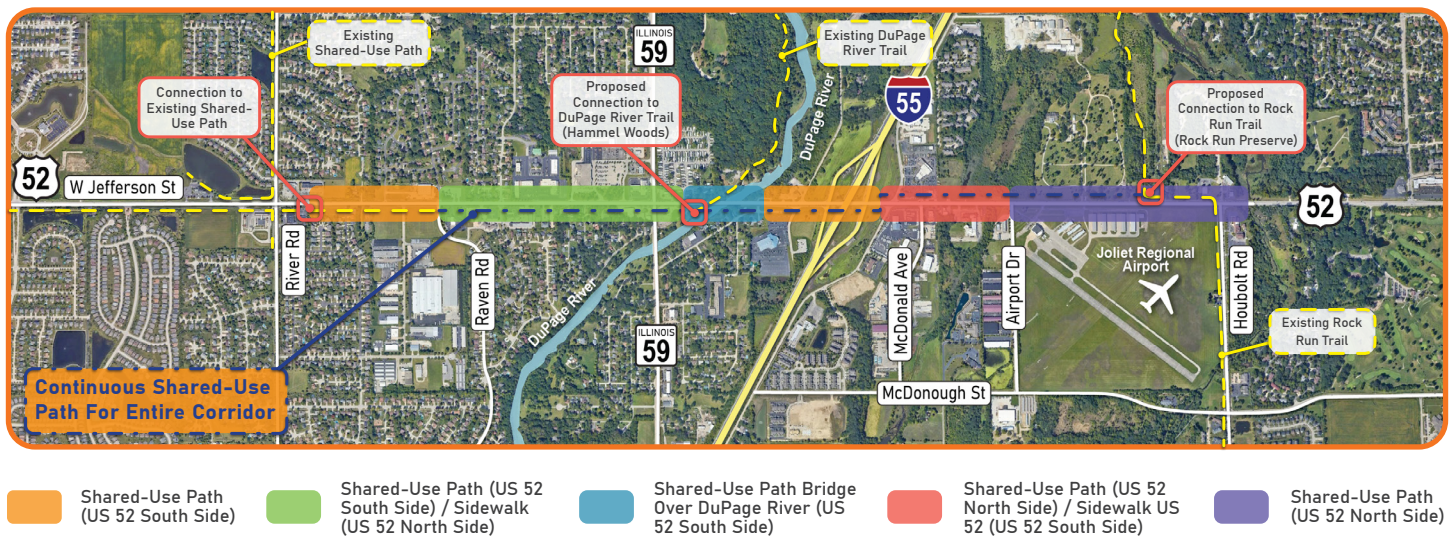
Proposed Improvements

US 52 is classified as a Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA) in the project area. An SRA is a major route that is intended to move high volumes of traffic over longer distances. The installation of a curbed median on such a route improves safety by limiting the number of access points, therefore reducing the number of traffic conflicts and the potential for crashes. Left turns and U-turns will be permitted at select locations and major intersections.



Multimodal Transportation

The Illinois Complete Streets Law (Illinois Highway Code; Sec. 4-220) states: "Bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be given full consideration in the planning and development of transportation facilities, including the incorporation of such ways into State plans and programs. In or within one mile of a municipality with a population of over 1,000 people...the Department shall establish and solely fund bicycle and pedestrian ways in conjunction with the construction, reconstruction, or other change of any State transportation facility." The proposed improvements for US 52 accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists and are designed to include all roadway users.





Truck Access

Major intersections within the project study limits were designed to ensure that large, multi-unit trucks will be accommodated within their turn lanes. The project has been designed so that all trucks commonly observed on the corridor will be able to make turns at major intersections without encroaching on the lane next to them and at minor intersections with some encroachment.



Traffic Projections

The proposed improvements have been designed to accommodate traffic volumes anticipated in the year 2050. Future traffic projections are based on Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAQ's) "On To 2050" future population and employment growth and their travel demand model for northeast Illinois.

Interim Construction Improvements: I-55 and US 52 Interchange

Intersection improvements were recently completed at US 52 and I-55 Ramps and East Frontage Road intersection. This improvement was funded through a federal grant from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) that preceded the US 52 from River Road to Houbolt Road study. The CMAQ program provides grants to state and local governments to fund transportation projects that improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion. The improvements proposed as part of the US 52 from River Road to Houbolt Road project will meet these requirements and further enhance the mobility of the US 52 and East Frontage Road by proposing a westbound auxiliary lane and a dedicated right turn lane on the southbound approach.



Noise

When evaluating traffic noise, traffic noise impacts, and traffic noise abatement, the Department follows Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations, policies, and procedures. The Department performed a Highway Traffic Noise study as a part of the US 52 from River Road to Houbolt Road Study. The FHWA Traffic Noise Model is used to determine current and future traffic noise levels. For a location to warrant consideration of noise abatement measures, the following criteria must be met:

- Noise barriers shall be feasible, meaning they can be built and achieve the traffic noise reduction feasibility criterion of at least 5 decibels (dB) for at least two impacted receptors.
- Noise barriers shall be deemed desired by the benefited receptors.
- Noise barriers shall achieve the noise reduction design goal of at least 8 dB for at least one benefited receptor. (A benefited receptor is a property owner or tenant that would achieve a benefit from a wall.)
- Noise barriers may not exceed allowable noise abatement cost per benefited receptor, as set by Department policy.

Noise - Continued

The noise study has been completed and can be found on the project website. Two noise barriers were found to be reasonable and feasible as defined above.

Benefited receptors had an opportunity to vote on whether or not the noise walls should be installed.

Voting results for the noise wall located on the north side of US 52 west of Brookshore Drive show that the wall is supported and will be implemented as part of the proposed improvements. The Department has not received enough votes to make a determination regarding the implementation of the other potential noise wall along the east side of IL 59 north of US 52.

The approximate locations of the walls are included with the public hearing exhibits and available on the project website. Noise walls are typically constructed concurrently as part of the adjacent roadway project. The actual construction stage varies per contract and is defined in the Phase II design.

Potential Noise Wall
on IL 59 - Benefited
Receptors



Confirmed Noise Wall on US 52
Near Brookshore Drive
- Benefited Receptors





Trees

Protection and care will be provided for all existing trees and shrubs to remain within the project limits. The Department's policy states that all trees removed for construction will be replaced on a 1:1 basis at a minimum wherever feasible and appropriate. Forested areas or dense strands of trees and shrubs may be replaced with seedling trees on a 3:1 basis where appropriate. Wildflower plantings will be considered for inclusion where appropriate. The Department **only** removes trees impacted by the proposed improvements or within the public right-of-way when they pose a safety concern.

Next Steps

Phase I is anticipated to be complete prior to the end of 2025 at which point Phase II, land acquisition and construction document preparation, may begin. Phase III, construction, may begin after Phase II is complete. Phase II and Phase III each typically require 2 to 3 years to complete. The project is included in the later years of the Department's 2025 – 2030 Multi-year Improvement Program. Project implementation will be dependent on land acquisition, plan readiness, and future annual appropriations.

Project Phases

PHASE I

Preliminary Engineering and
Environmental Study

Anticipated Completion
End of 2025

PHASE II

Contract Plan Preparation and
Land Acquisition

2-3 Years

PHASE III

Construction

2-3 Years



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Project Website

Scan the QR code or visit:
I55atIL59accessproject.org