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# INTERSTATE 55 RECONSTRUCTION

## DESIGN STUDY & ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

# NEWSLETTER

Issue #3 Spring 2023

## Improvement Alternatives for I-55/I-72 Corridor Required Years of Study

After several years of studying nearly 30 alternatives for upgrading mainline I-55 and I-72 around Springfield, including studying alternatives for five interchanges, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and its consulting team have narrowed down the options and now have an identified preferred alternative to present to the public. “Because of the size of this more than 15-mile corridor, how heavily it is used and its importance to motorists traveling the Springfield area, we took the time to carefully study the possible alternatives and to narrow them down to one preferred alternative,” says Jay Wavering, Studies and Plans Engineer for the I-55 Reconstruction and Design Project. “Also, during the study, we decided to add the I-72 portion. This added another couple of years to the project.”

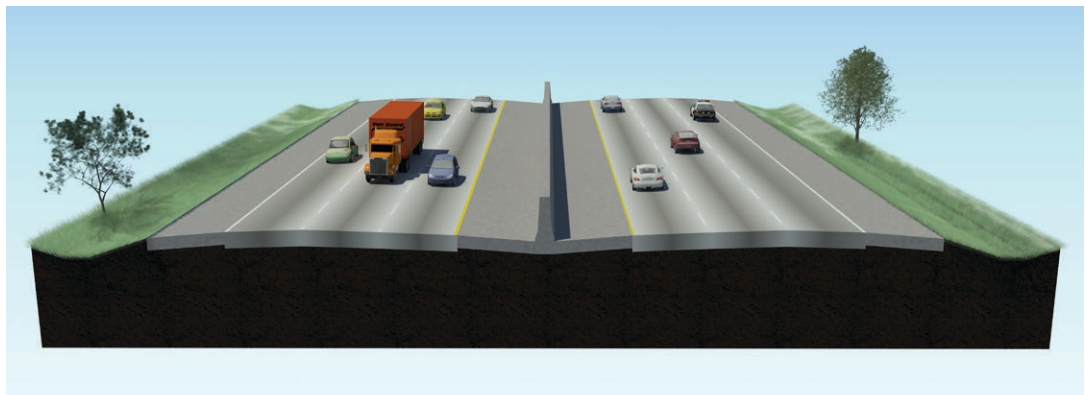
Improvements to the I-55/I-72 corridor are needed to meet future traffic volumes. Each alternative was studied based on providing safer, more efficient and more reliable travel for motorists.

During the past few years, the study team analyzed alternatives, prepared five interchange design studies, studied traffic and crash data, conducted a drainage study and noise study, and prepared engineering reports, including structure reports to determine whether structures can continue to be used, replaced, lengthened or widened. The team also examined the environmental impacts each alternative would have on the area. All of this information combined with your comments from the last public meeting helped determine the preferred alternative.

## Recommended Preferred Alternative

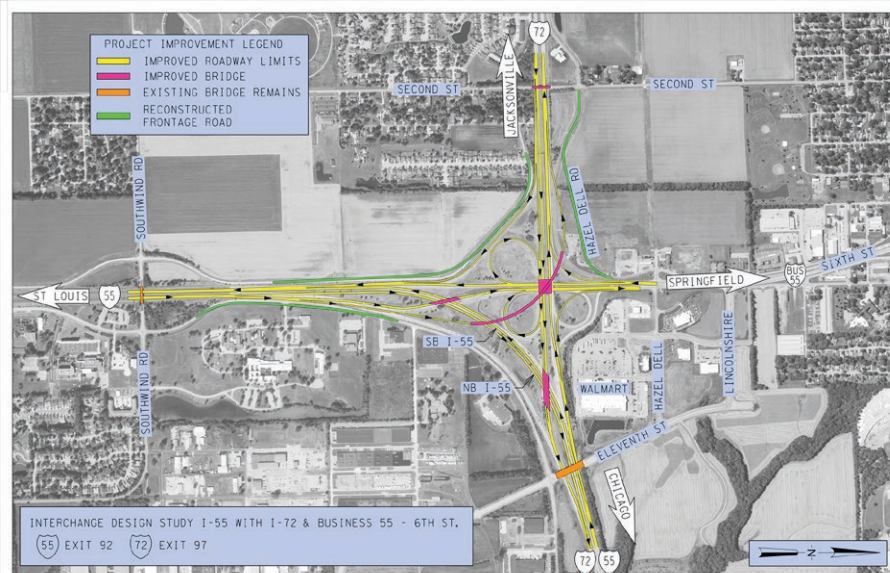
### MAINLINE I-55

The study team recommends increasing lanes on the mainline from two lanes in each direction to three lanes in each direction. The mainline recommendation suggests replacing the current depressed grassy median with a raised concrete barrier median with wider shoulders.



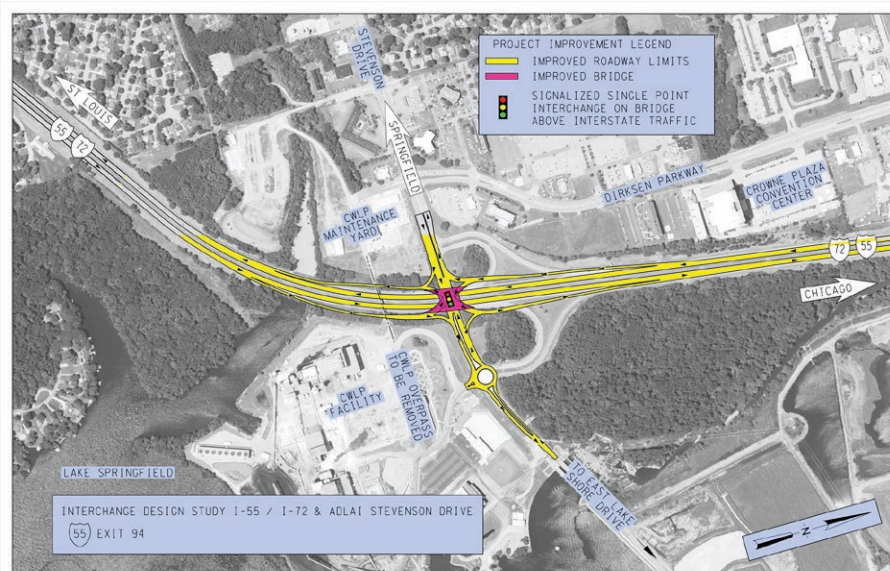
## SIXTH STREET INTERCHANGE-

At this interchange, the study team suggests replacing the I-55 Northbound to I-72 Westbound Loop ramp with a directional ramp, which will allow for a higher posted speed, and moving exiting and entering I-72 Eastbound traffic to a collector-distributor road (see definition below) through the Sixth Street interchange.



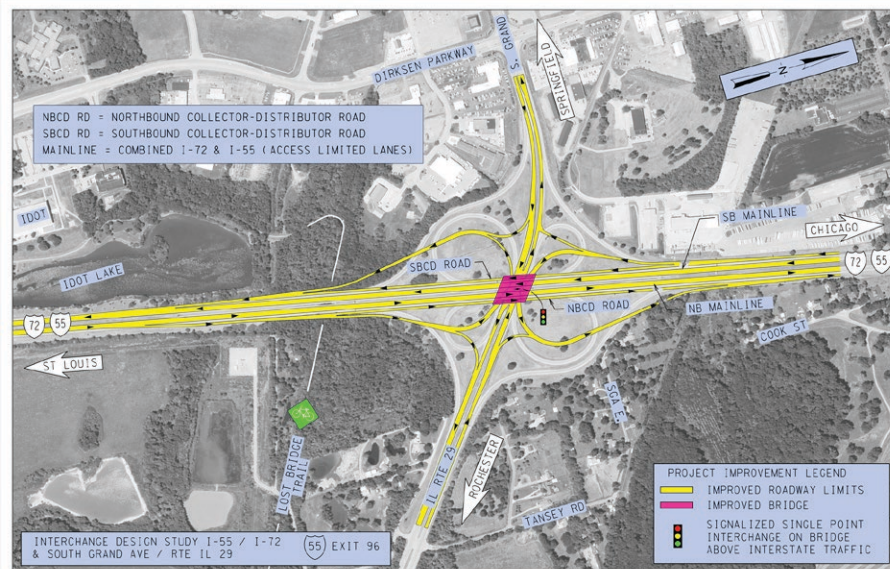
## STEVENSON DRIVE INTERCHANGE-

At this interchange, where I-55/I-72 travels underneath Stevenson Drive, the study team recommends a single point diamond interchange (see definition below). This will eliminate deficient loop ramps, improve capacity and safety, and allow for a roundabout intersection to be used at the City, Water, Light & Power entrance off of Stevenson Drive.



## SOUTH GRAND INTERCHANGE-

A single point diamond interchange is also being recommended here, which will eliminate the current loop ramps and will increase the distance three-fold between the west ramp terminal intersection and the Dirksen Parkway intersection. Between South Grand Avenue and Clear Lake Avenue, collector-distributor roads will be constructed since the interchanges are so close to each other.



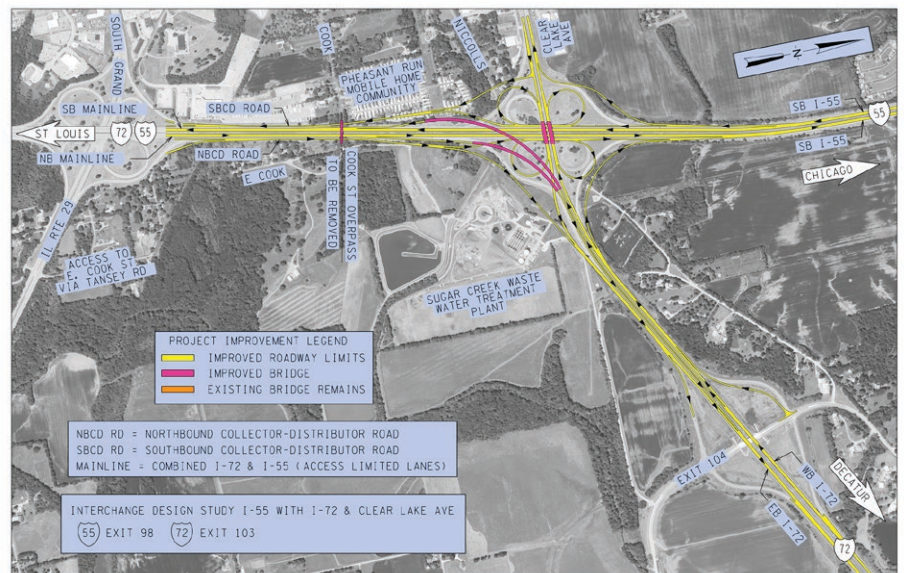
### Glossary

A collector-distributor road separates through traffic from traffic that is exiting and entering.

A single point diamond interchange is a diamond interchange with the ramps pulled in tight and is used in areas where right-of-way is restricted. The distinguishing feature of a single point interchange is the convergence of all through and left-turning movements into a single, large signalized intersection area.

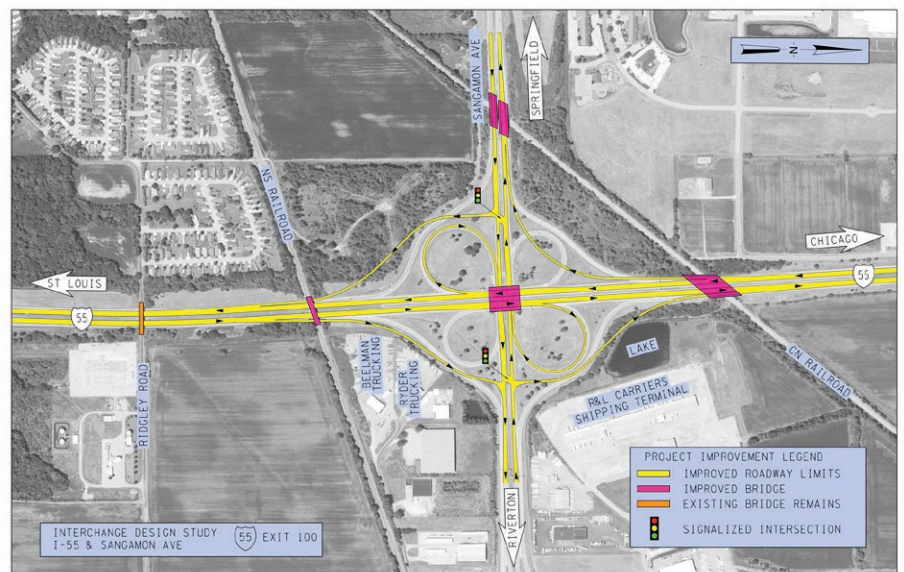
## CLEAR LAKE AVENUE INTERCHANGE-

The recommendation here is to retain the existing clover leaf interchange and to add new directional ramps for I-72 Westbound to I-55 Southbound traffic and I-55 Northbound to I-72 Eastbound traffic. All of the loop ramp weaving movements will take place on the lower speed collector-distributor roads or on Clear Lake Avenue.



## SANGAMON AVENUE INTERCHANGE-

The study team recommends a partial cloverleaf interchange. Two loop ramps would remain in the northeast and southwest quadrants eliminating the left turns and the loop ramp weaves.



## STUDY AREA VIDEO

To help better explain the preferred alternative, the study team has created an aerial video that showcases the current study area and walks through the proposed changes and upgrades. To view the video along with other project documents, past meeting summaries, the study timeline, and to stay up-to-date on future project developments, visit

[www.i-55springfield.com](http://www.i-55springfield.com)



## NEXT STEPS

A portion of the next phase of this project has already received engineering and construction funding. The funded portion includes widening the northernmost section of mainline I-55 from north of Sangamon Avenue to north of the Sherman interchange. Currently there is no funding for design or construction of the rest of the project area, nevertheless, the I-55/I-72 Reconstruction Study is the next step toward upgrading the corridor and making it safer and more reliable for motorists.

## LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

We welcome your feedback and questions on the identified preferred alternative or any other aspects of the I-55/I-72 Reconstruction Study. You may call IDOT Studies and Plans Engineer, Jay Wavering at (217) 785-9046 or submit your comments or questions via email at [contact@i-55springfield.com](mailto:contact@i-55springfield.com).



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FOR MORE INFORMATION



**RECONSTRUCTION**  
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CALL: IDOT – Jay Wavering, Studies and Plans Engineer at (217) 785-9046

## Public Hearing to Show Preferred Alternative

The Illinois Department of Transportation will hold an open house public hearing from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm on June 13, 2023 at the Northfield Inn, Suites and Conference Center 3280 Northfield Drive, Springfield, Illinois, to provide the public an opportunity to review and comment on the preferred alternative.

Exhibits, maps, and aerial photography of the preferred alternative, as well as the Environmental Assessment, will be available for viewing during the Open House Public Hearing. Representatives of IDOT will be available to answer individual questions and receive comments about the study. Comment forms will be available for attendees who wish to provide written comments. Comments received at this hearing or at the District Six Office by June 30, 2023, will be included in the official project record. The hearing will be conducted on an informal basis; no formal presentation is planned.

