



# Online Public Meeting Summary

## Southwest Connector Planning and Environmental Linkages Study

**Date:** July 28, 2025 – August 18, 2025

**Report Date:** November 14, 2025





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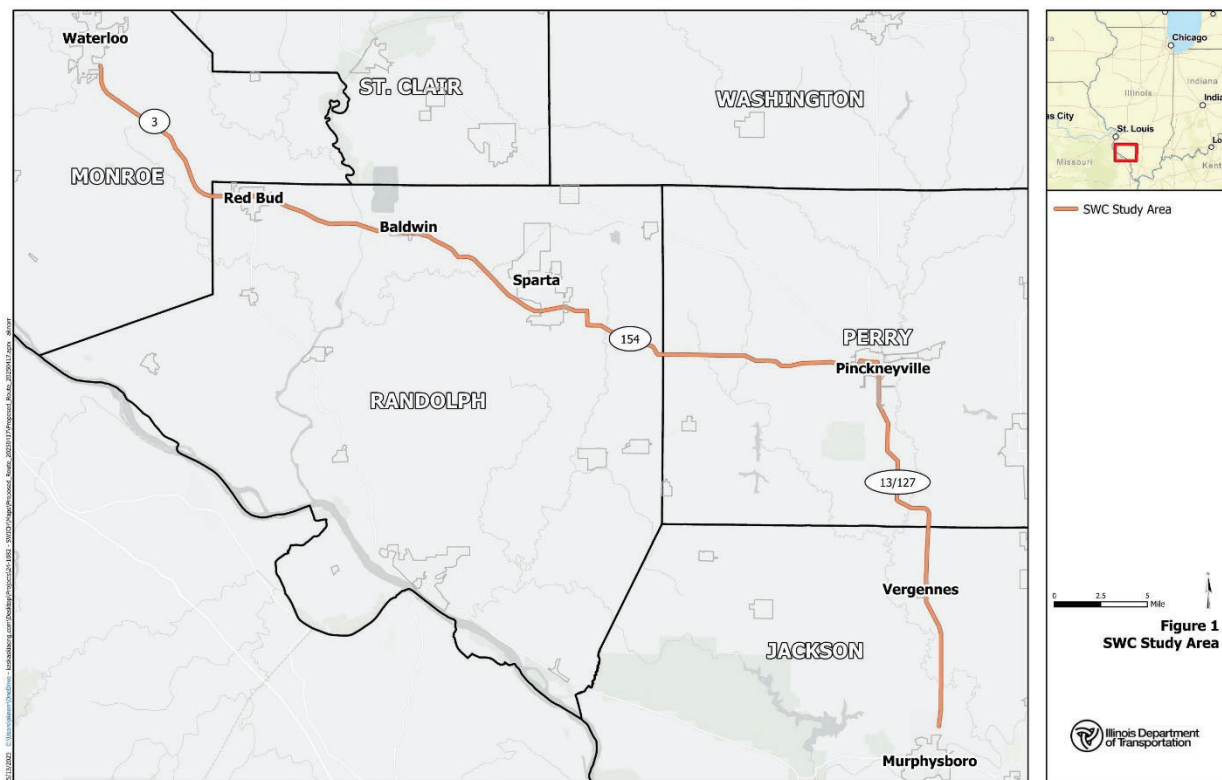
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## Introduction

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is leading the Southwest Connector Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study with the goals of identifying potential transportation improvements along Illinois 3, Illinois 154, and Illinois 13/127 from Waterloo to Murphysboro, to reduce travel times, improve safety, facilitate freight movement, and enhance connectivity between communities in Southwest Illinois and the St. Louis Metro Area. Public feedback helps determine the Purpose and Need, Alternatives, and Alternatives to be Carried Forward of the study.

**Figure 1: Study Area**



## Online Public Meeting

IDOT sponsored an Online Public Meeting to introduce the project, the study area's existing conditions, the draft Purpose and Need Statement, and the alternatives screening process. The meeting was open from July 28, 2025 to August 18, 2025, at southwestconnector.com. 3,386 users visited the online meeting while it was active, 3,076 of which were new to the site. There were 969 engaged sessions, where visitors either stayed on the page for at least 10 seconds, viewed two or more pages, or made an action like completing a form or signing up for emails. Most website traffic was obtained through organic social media referrals..

## Advertisement

A legal notice for the Online Public Meeting was posted in The Southern Illinoisan on July 19, 2025, and July 22, 2025; The Republic Times on July 16, 2025, and July 23, 2025; and the County Journal on July 17,

2025. IDOT sent out an email blast and social media post advertising the meeting to their distribution lists. The legal notice and email blast are provided in **Appendix A**.

## Comments

Attendees were encouraged to submit comments via the general comment form, online survey, or by email. The official public comment period ended on August 18, 2025. There were 52 contact form responses, 16 comment map responses, 10 email responses, and 398 survey submissions. Comments are shown in Appendix B. Summarized comments are included in Table 1.

**Table 1: Online Public Meeting Comment Summary**

Summary Comment
A new highway will destroy our rural/scenic/etc. way of life. It will bring crime and corporations that out-compete local businesses.
Fix the existing highways before building a new one.
Include Columbia/Murphysboro/I-55/Carbondale/etc. instead.
This route cuts through farmland and residential areas.
This is a needed improvement.
Designs should include crossings for nearby schools or bus stops and “green bridges” or other supports to help wildlife.



# Appendix A

## Online Public Meeting Materials

**Date:** July 28, 2025 – August 18, 2025



Official Certificate of Publication as Required by  
State Law and IPA By-Laws  
**CERTIFICATE OF THE PUBLISHER**

Willis Publishing, Inc. certifies that it is the publisher of the County Journal. County Journal is a secular newspaper, has been continuously published weekly for more than fifty (50) weeks prior to the first publication of the attached notice, is published in the Village of Percy, County of Randolph, Township of Percy, State of Illinois, is of general circulation throughout that county and surrounding area, and is a newspaper as defined by 715 ILCS 5/5.

A notice, a true copy of which is attached, was published 1 time(s) in the County Journal, namely one time per week for 1 successive week(s). The first publication of the notice was made in the newspaper, dated and published on the 17th day of July 2025 and the last publication of the notice was made in the newspaper dated and published on the 17th day of July, 2025. The notice was also placed on a statewide public notice website as required by 715 ILCS 5/2.1.

In witness, Willis Publishing has signed this certificate by Larry Willis, its publisher, at Percy, Illinois, on the 17th day of July, 2025.

By: *Leslie Froemling*

Printer's Fee:\$136

17" Legal  
Virtual Public Meeting  
IDOT Dist 9 Southwest Connector PEL



P.O. Box 369 | Percy, IL 62272 | 618.497.8272

#### Vehicles/Items List

Marissa CUSD #40 will accept sealed bids from Monday, July 14th through Friday, July 25th. Those interested in viewing any of the equipment may contact Lori Seiman, lseiman@marissacsd.org, 618-296-2313, ex. 300 or Jeff Strieker, jstrieke@marissacsd.org, 618-296-2313, ex. 301, and arrangements will be made.

- 1999 Ford F250, 1FTHF26H7JKB64260, 35cid. Will need towed
- 1997 Chevy 2600, van, 1GCF-G26R4V1007088, 35cid. will run, needs power steering box
- 2006 Chevy white bus, 1GBH3G31V66125454, 4.8L. will run
- 2011 Chevy white bus, 1GB0G2BA38 1127274, 4.8L. needs towed
- 2001 Chevy school bus, 1GBL7T-1C9YJ52309, 3126 Cat. Needs towed
- 2006 IC school bus, 4DRBUAF-P06B989374, VT066. Needs towed
- 2006 IC school bus, 4DRBUAF-P16B246003. VT366 will run, needs batteries
- 2007 IC school bus, 4DRBUAF-P47B452700, VT366 will run, needs batteries
- Unknown Year - 310 A John Deere Backhoe, approximately 40 years old, functioning
- Rockwell Wood Lathe - Year Unknown - Tools/Dye/p-phase, unknown working condition
- Semi-Tractor Trailer box. No axles/wheels (good for scrap metal)

Please send or deliver sealed bids to: Marissa CUSD #40, 1 East Marissa Street, Marissa, IL 62267, Monday July 14th through Friday, July 25th between the hours of 8 AM and 3 PM.

Minimum bid amounts have been established. The Board of Education reserves the right to approve any/all bids. Sealed bids will be opened on Monday, July 28th. All winners must remove equipment from District #40 property prior to attempting any work on purchased equipment.

#### IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 20TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT RANDOLPH COUNTY, ILLINOIS

In the Matter of the Estate of CLYDE A. HASEMEYER, Deceased No. 2025PR37

#### CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of CLYDE A. HASEMEYER 4881 Seymour Rd., Ellis Grove, IL 62241. Letters of Office were issued on July 7, 2025, to Michael A. Hasemeyer and Ronald L. Hasemeyer, as Administrators and whose attorney of record is R. Jeffrey Kerkhove of Fisher, Kerkhove, Coffey & Gremmels Law Office, 600 State Street, Chester, Illinois, 62233. Claims against the estate may be filed in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court at the Randolph County Court House, #1 Taylor Street, Chester, IL 62233, or with the representatives, or both, on or before January 22, 2026, or three months from the date of mailing or delivery of this Notice to creditors, whichever is later, and any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Within ten days after filing of the Claim with the Clerk, the claimant shall cause a copy of the Claim to be mailed or delivered to the representatives of the estate and to the representatives' attorney of record. Dated: July 11, 2025

Michael A. Hasemeyer and Ronald L. Hasemeyer Co-Administrators of the Estate of Clyde A. Hasemeyer

R. Jeffrey Kerkhove - Attorney  
R. Jeffrey Kerkhove - (618) 826-2288  
FISHER, KERKHOVE, COFFEY & GREMMELES LAW OFFICE  
Attorney for Estate  
600 State Street  
Chester, IL 62233  
Telephone: (618) 826-6021  
Fax: (618) 826-6024  
Email: attorneys@fkcgllaw.com

#### Virtual Public Meeting

Scheduled by Illinois Department of Transportation For Southwest Connector Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study and NEPA Re-Evaluation of Illinois 13/127 Murphysboro to Pinckneyville Environmental Assessment (EA) The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) announced today an on-demand, self-paced virtual public meeting will be available from July 28 through August 18, 2025 regarding the Southwest Connector PEL Study and NEPA Re-Evaluation of the Illinois 13/127 Murphysboro to Pinckneyville EA completed in 2007. The Southwest Connector PEL Study is identifying near-term and long-term improvement options for Illinois 3, Illinois 154 and Illinois 13/127 from south of the City of Waterloo to north of the City of Murphysboro through Monroe, Randolph, Perry, and Jackson counties. The NEPA Re-Evaluation is to determine whether the 2007 EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) decision for the Illinois 13/127 Murphysboro to Pinckneyville project remain valid for agency decision making. All persons interested in the PEL Study and NEPA Re-Evaluation are invited to view and participate in the virtual public meeting.

The virtual public meeting will use an on-demand, self-paced format and be accessible from the study website at www.southwestconnector.com. The virtual public meeting will include background information on the PEL study, including the study area and schedule, study area existing conditions, draft Purpose and Need Statement, and alternatives screening process. The virtual public meeting will also include information on the NEPA Re-Evaluation process.

The virtual public meeting will also serve to involve and obtain input from the public on the PEL study and NEPA Re-Evaluation through an online survey and comment form. Interested persons may also provide input by email at contact@southwestconnector.com or by mail at Illinois Department of Transportation, District 9, Attn: Southwest Connector PEL Study, 2801 Murphysboro Road, Carbondale, IL 62901. Comments received or postmarked between July 28 and August 18, 2025 will be made part of the public record

associated with the virtual public meeting. Persons with limited internet access and/or requiring special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) act should contact Carrie Neisen, Program Development Engineer by phone at 618-361-5280, by email at carrie.neisen@illinois.gov, or by mail at 2801 Murphysboro Road, Carbondale, IL 62901. Requests for special accommodations should be submitted by July 23, 2025.

#### ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Steeleville CUSD #140  
609 S Sparta Street  
Steeleville, IL 62288

Steeleville Community Unit School District 138 will receive sealed bids for adding roof mounted solar arrays to the Steeleville Grade School and Steeleville High School (609 and 701 S. Sparta Street). Work includes engineering and design of a solar array at each school, structural engineering evaluation of existing buildings, roof seam upgrades, acquisition of appropriate building permits, assistance with incentives procurement, installation of systems, and commissioning of same. All work must be fully functional with an Ameren Witness Test by December 20, 2026.

Bids will be received at the District Office, 609 S. Sparta Street, Steeleville, IL until 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 31, 2025, and then will be publicly opened and read aloud. A bid security is required.

A pre-bid conference will be held at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, July 24, 2025 at the District Office. Attendance at this meeting is mandatory for firms wishing to submit a bid proposal.

Project contract documents and proposal forms may be obtained from the district office at 618-866-3469 or smunhof@steeleville138.org. Bidders are asked to register with the district for addenda distribution.

Steeleville CUSD 138 reserves the right to waive irregularities and reject any or all bids. No bids shall be withdrawn for a period of 30 days after the opening of bids without the consent of Steeleville CUSD 138.

Chester Community Unit School District No. 139  
1940 Swanwick St  
Chester, IL 62233

#### 2025-2026 Public Announcement Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Approval

Chester Community School District is participating in federally funded National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs as approved Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school for the current school year (2025-2026). Under CEP, all students enrolled at this school may participate in the breakfast and lunch program at no charge. Household applications for free and reduced-meals will not be collected, but alternate income forms may be distributed by the school to collect household income data for other programs that require this information.

Studies have shown children who are not hungry perform better in school. By providing school meals to all children at no charge, we are hoping to create a better learning environment for our students.

The reimbursable school breakfasts and lunches offered to all enrolled students follow the U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines for healthy school meals. The school meals program cannot succeed without your support. Please encourage your children to participate in the school meal programs.

If your children attend the school listed below, breakfast and lunch will be available to them at no charge.

Chester Elementary School  
Chester High School

Civil Rights Statement  
In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audio tape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) of the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20260-8410; or
2. Fax: (833) 266-1666 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. Email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

#### PUBLIC NOTICE OF ORDINANCE NO. 26-0714

AN ORDINANCE TO LEVY AND ASSESS A TAX FOR MARISSE AREA PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT OF THE COUNTIES OF ST. CLAIR AND WASHINGTON, STATE OF ILLINOIS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2026 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2026 Be it ordained, that the Marissa Area Public Library District of the Counties of St. Clair and Washington, State of Illinois shall levy a tax of .02% of the value of all taxable property within said District, for building and maintenance purposes, subject to the right of the electors in said District to petition and require an election concerning the imposition of such tax, pursuant to 75 ILCS 16/35-5. Be it further ordained, that within fifteen (15) days from the date of adoption of the ordinance, it shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the Marissa Area Public Library District and it is effective immediately upon adoption.

In witness whereof, we have hereunder set our hands in Marissa, Illinois this 14th day of July, 2025.

Leclie Lehman  
Secretary of the Board of Trustees  
Marissa Area Public Library District  
212 N. Main St., Marissa, IL 62257

#### HELP WANTED

#### STEELEVILLE CUSD #138 is seeking applicants for the following positions: HIGH SCHOOL 2ND SHIFT CUSTODIAN

Self-Motivated, Multi-Tasking Person Who Will Be Responsible For General Cleaning And Other Evening Tasks As Directed. Experience In Custodial Service Is Preferred But Not Required. Monday-Friday 3:00pm - 11:30pm (slightly flexible), Summer Hours 6:00am-2:30pm (slightly flexible). Starting date: ASAP

Please send letters of interest/resume to: Mrs. Jennifer Haertling  
701 S. Sparta St., Steeleville, IL 62286 or email to jhaertling@steeleville138.org

#### Gilster Mary Lee is looking for CDL DRIVERS for our Local Fleet



Must be 19 of age and pass a physical. Work is locally between plants in MO and IL. STARTS AT \$18.25 AN HOUR with regular increases and overtime offered.

- Always hiring long haul and regional company drivers.
- Start at .58 cents for all Hub Miles, \$14.00 detention.
- The loads are round trips, so drivers are home every week.
- Specific days off when requested for those special family events.
- Medical & Life Insurance, Vacation and Christmas Bonus.
- Holiday Pay, Profit Sharing, 401K and Commissary Privileges.

Our group of Owner operators, with their own authority, also profit from consistent round trip freight.

#### Want to join that group?

Pay \$1.85 cpm, fuel card and passes.

Finally, if you are a retired CDL driver, you can benefit as a casual part time driver. Locations in Perryville MO, as well as Steeleville IL.

Earn great INCOME and still be HOME for a QUALITY FAMILY LIFE

Low turnover and flexible work schedule. Be a part of one of the most necessary work forces in America.

Gilster Mary Lee is a Private Label Grocery Manufacturer with a fleet of 200 commercial tractors and 900 dry vans. The dry grocery industry is essential and growing.

Get Applications By Calling GILSTER-MARY LEE CORPORATION  
618-826-2361  
MIKE WELKER X51701  
APPLICATIONS ALSO ONLINE AT: trkngr@gilstermarylee.com

**HELP WANTED**  
**LAWN CARE WORKER**  
1-3 Days Per Week, Excellent Opportunity For Retired Person Looking For Part-Time Work. Must Be Physically Able To Perform General Lawn Care Tasks, Shrub Trimming, Mulching, Debris/Leaf Removal  
**Chris' Mowing & More**  
CHRYSLER SPARTA  
270-217-5318

**HELP WANTED - HEAD START MANAGER STEELEVILLE**  
Steeleville Head Start Preschool Central Office, 40 Hours Per Week/8 Hours Daily 8:00am - 4:30pm Monday - Friday  
Full Year, August - July  
Must have a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education or a closely related field. Preference is supervisory of management experience in an early childhood setting. Preference in knowledge of Head Start Performance Standards, DCFS guidelines, early childhood curriculum, and child assessment tools. Beginning salary \$50,814 yearly plus benefits. Must meet requirements of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services licensing standards.  
Submit resume to Jennifer MacIaur, Executive Director by April 30, 2025 via email at jennifer.maclaur@veeco.org or mail to PO Box 7, Steeleville, IL 62288  
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

**PRE-K CLASSROOM AIDE**  
St. Mark's Lutheran School, Steeleville  
We are seeking a caring and dependable Pre-K Classroom Aide to join our early childhood education team. Our school is dedicated to nurturing children in both faith and academics. The position will assist the lead teacher in providing a loving, structured, and faith-filled environment where young children can grow spiritually, socially and academically. This role is ideal for someone who feels called to share the love of Christ in a classroom setting.  
Qualifications:  
• High school diploma or equivalent required; early childhood coursework or experience preferred.  
• Experience working with preschool-aged children is a plus.  
• Must pass background check and physical  
Schedule:  
• Mid August - Mid May, Three Days A Week, 7:50am-2:50pm  
**APPLY TODAY!**  
Please send resume to Dr. Janet Wicker  
jwicker@stmarkspanther.com

**Join Our Team!**  
**4TH/5TH GRADE TEACHER**  
St. Mark's Lutheran School, Steeleville  
We are seeking a passionate and dedicated educator to lead a classroom and help shape young minds in a faith-based learning environment.  
Qualifications:  
• Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education (preferred)  
• State teaching certification (preferred but not required)  
• Strong classroom management and communication skills  
• A heart for Christian education  
Compensation:  
• Salary is based on education and experience  
**APPLY TODAY!**  
Please send resume and three references to: Dr. Janet Wicker  
St. Mark's Lutheran School  
504 N. James St., Steeleville, IL 62288  
jwicker@stmarkspanther.com

**DISPATCHER**  
City Of Murphysboro, IL  
is accepting applications for a full-time Communications Officer (Dispatcher)  
This position is within the Murphysboro Police Department and requires excellent communication, organizational, and clerical skills, the ability to multi-task and work independently.  
Applicants must be at least 18 years of age, possess a high school diploma or equivalent and a valid Illinois driver's license.  
Probationary wage is \$20.58  
Post probationary wage is \$21.46  
Details regarding qualifications and benefits as well as employment application are available online at [www.murphysboro.com](http://www.murphysboro.com) or at the  
Daum Administrative Building, 1101 Walnut Street, Murphysboro or online at [www.murphysboro.com](http://www.murphysboro.com)  
Applications must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on Monday, July 21, 2025.

FOR SALE • HELP WANTED • FOR RENT • LOST PETS • WANTED  
**CLASSIFIEDS**  
COUNTY JOURNAL — 618.497.8272



AFFP

Virtual Public Meeting Schedule

## Affidavit of Publication

STATE OF IL }  
COUNTY OF JACKSON } SS

Johnny Blazina, being duly sworn, says:

That he is Sales Manager of the The Southern Illinoisan, a daily newspaper of general circulation, printed and published in Carbondale, Jackson County, IL; that the publication, a copy of which is attached hereto, was published in the said newspaper on the following dates:

July 19, 2025, July 22, 2025

That said newspaper was regularly issued and circulated on those dates.

SIGNED:

  
Sales Manager

Subscribed to and sworn to me this 22nd day of July 2025.

  
Shellie Lea Koontz, Notary Public, Jackson County, IL

My commission expires: February 06, 2029

70140976 71272330

Scott Manning  
HDR  
40401 N, Meridian Street  
Suite 125  
Indianapolis, IN 46290



Virtual Public Meeting Scheduled by Illinois Department of Transportation For Southwest Connector Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study and NEPA Re-Evaluation of Illinois 13/127 Murphysboro to Pinckneyville Environmental Assessment (EA)

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) announced today an on-demand, self-paced virtual public meeting will be available from July 28 through August 18, 2025 regarding the Southwest Connector PEL Study and NEPA Re-Evaluation of the Illinois 13/127 Murphysboro to Pinckneyville EA completed in 2007. The Southwest Connector PEL Study is identifying near-term and long-term improvement options for Illinois 3, Illinois 154 and Illinois 13/127 from south of the City of Waterloo to north of the City of Murphysboro through Monroe, Randolph, Perry, and Jackson counties. The NEPA Re-Evaluation is to determine whether the 2007 EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) decision for the Illinois 13/127 Murphysboro to Pinckneyville project remain valid for agency decision making. All persons interested in the PEL Study and NEPA Re-Evaluation are invited to view and participate in the virtual public meeting.

The virtual public meeting will use an on-demand, self-paced format and be accessible from the study website at [www.southwestconnector.com](http://www.southwestconnector.com). The virtual public meeting will include background information on the PEL study, including the study area and schedule, study area existing conditions, draft Purpose and Need Statement, and alternatives screening process. The virtual public meeting will also include information on the NEPA Re-Evaluation process.

The virtual public meeting will also serve to involve and obtain input from the public on the PEL study and NEPA Re-Evaluation through an online survey and comment form. Interested persons may also provide input by email at [contact@southwestconnector.com](mailto:contact@southwestconnector.com) or by mail at Illinois Department of Transportation, District 9, Attn: Southwest Connector PEL Study, 2801 Murphysboro Road, Carbondale, IL 62901. Comments received between July 28 and August 18, 2025 will be made part of the public record associated with the virtual public meeting.

Persons with limited internet access and/or requiring special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) act should contact Carrie Nelsen, Program Development Engineer by phone at 618-351-5280, by email at [carrie.nelsen@illinois.gov](mailto:carrie.nelsen@illinois.gov), or by mail at 2801 Murphysboro Road, Carbondale, IL 62901.

Requests for special accommodations should be submitted by July 23, 2025.



Official Certificate of Publication as Required by State Law and IPA By-Laws

Certificate of the Publisher

Republic-Times LLC certifies that it is the publisher of the Republic-Times. Republic-Times is a secular newspaper, has been continuously published weekly for more than fifty (50) weeks prior to the first publication of the attached notice, is published in the City of Waterloo, County of Monroe, State of Illinois, is of general circulation throughout that county and surrounding area, and is a newspaper as defined by 715 ILCS 5/5.

A notice, a true copy of which is attached, was published 2 times in the Republic-Times, namely one time per week for 2 successive weeks. The first publication of the notice was made in the newspaper, dated and published on 7/16/2025, and the last publication of the notice was made in the newspaper dated and published on 7/23/2025. The notice was also placed on a statewide public notice website as required by 715 ILCS 5/2.1.

In witness, the Republic-Times has signed this certificate by Kermit Constantine, its publisher, at Waterloo, Illinois, on 7/14/2025.

Republic-Times LLC

By:

Corey Saathoff/cmn  
Publisher

(Note: Unless otherwise ordered, notarization of this document is **not** required.)

Publication Price – \$196.88



**Virtual Public Meeting  
Scheduled by  
Illinois Department of  
Transportation**

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(7/23)



State of Illinois  
JB Pritzker, Governor



Illinois Department of Transportation  
Gia Biagi, Secretary

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

July 23, 2025

**CONTACT:**

Dawn Johnson

618.301.6050

## Virtual public meeting for Southwest Connector July 28

*Website seeks input on proposed Waterloo-to-Murphysboro improvements*

**SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS** – The Illinois Department of Transportation is inviting the public to learn more about the Southwest Connector Planning and Environmental Linkages study and provide feedback on the corridor between Waterloo and Murphysboro. Instead of hosting an in-person meeting, IDOT will present project information and encourage public input from July 28 through Aug. 18 via a new website: [southwestconnector.com](https://southwestconnector.com).

The study is evaluating potential improvements along Illinois 3, Illinois 154 and Illinois 13/127 to reduce travel times, enhance safety, improve freight movement and strengthen connections between communities in southwest Illinois and the St. Louis metro area. It also includes a re-evaluation of proposed improvements to Illinois 13/127 between Murphysboro and Pinckneyville.

The public is encouraged to submit comments to help the project team develop transportation solutions that reflect community needs, reduce environmental impacts, and improve regional connectivity and future developments.

The website, [southwestconnector.com](https://southwestconnector.com), includes an overview of the study objectives, existing conditions data, and a draft of the study's Purpose and Need document. Visitors can review materials, complete a [survey](#), and sign up for email updates.

All comments received by Aug. 18 will be included in the official public meeting record. Comments can be submitted by email through Aug. 18 to [contact@southwestconnector.com](mailto:contact@southwestconnector.com) or by mail (postmarked by Aug. 18) to:

**Illinois Department of Transportation  
2801 W. Murphysboro Road  
Carbondale, IL 62901  
Attn: Carrie Nelsen, Southwest Connector PEL Study**

Those without internet access can contact Carrie Nelsen, IDOT District 9 program development engineer, at 618-549-2171, ext. 280, for more information.





## **VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING JULY 28–AUGUST 18, 2025**



The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is hosting a virtual public meeting for the Southwest Connector Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study. The study is identifying potential transportation improvements along Illinois 3, Illinois 154, and Illinois 13/127 from Waterloo to Murphysboro to reduce travel times, improve safety, facilitate the movement of freight, and enhance connectivity between communities in Southwest Illinois and the St. Louis Metro Area – providing greater access to jobs, education, healthcare, recreation, and more. The study also includes a re-evaluation of the proposed Illinois 13/127 improvements between Murphysboro and Pinckneyville initially developed in 2007.

As a stakeholder in the study, we need your input and feedback to inform the study and help our team develop potential transportation solutions that best address the needs, opportunities, and challenges in the study area, minimize or avoid environmental impacts, and complement current and future community goals and development.

Please participate in the virtual public meeting by visiting the study website at [southwestconnector.com](https://southwestconnector.com). The virtual meeting will include information on the study process, existing conditions data for the study area, background on alternatives development and screening and opportunity to review and provide input on the study's draft Purpose and Need document. While on the site, make sure to complete our survey and sign up for email updates.

**The virtual public meeting will be available July 28 – August 18, 2025. Comments received by August 18, 2025 will be included in the official public record for the study.**

Comments may be submitted on study website, by email to [contact@southwestconnector.com](mailto:contact@southwestconnector.com), or by mail to Illinois Department of Transportation, District 9, Attn: Southwest Connector PEL Study, 2801 Murphysboro Road, Carbondale, IL 62901.

**HEAD TO [SOUTHWESTCONNECTOR.COM](https://southwestconnector.com)   
TO PROVIDE YOUR INPUT BY AUGUST 18, 2025**





## **WELCOME TO THE ONLINE MEETING FOR THE SOUTHWEST CONNECTOR!**

We are excited to share this project with you and look forward to your feedback. Please, enter this self guided online meeting and work your way through the different pages.

At the end of this online meeting you will find a space to leave your feedback.

[Enter the online meeting](#)

- About the Southwest Connector PEL Study
- What is a PEL Study?
- PEL Study Transition to NEPA
- Existing Conditions
- Purpose and Need
- Alternatives Screening Process
- Alternatives Toolbox
- Next Steps
- Your Feedback

# ABOUT THE SOUTHWEST CONNECTOR PEL STUDY

The following timeline highlights key milestones in the ongoing effort to improve highway infrastructure between Carbondale and the St. Louis metropolitan area through the development of the Southwest Connector corridor.

## BACKGROUND

Discussion began in the 1960's about the need for improved highway infrastructure between Carbondale and the St. Louis metropolitan area to improve safety and support economic development resulting in the 1967 Southern Illinois Corridor Study.

## STUDY AREA MAP



[Click to Enlarge](#)

- In 2007, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) completed a preliminary engineering study for expanding Illinois 13/127 to four lanes from Murphysboro to Pinckneyville in Jackson and Perry counties.
- In 2019, the Southwest Connector Task Force issued a 125-page report highlighting the safety and economic development needs and national security concerns that would be addressed by improving the highway infrastructure in the region.
- In 2023, Illinois U.S. Senator Dick Durbin secures \$3 million in federal funding to support development of the Southwest Connector.
- In 2025, IDOT launches a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study to identify potential projects in the Southwest Connector corridor and complete a re-evaluation of the 2007 preliminary engineering study of Illinois 13/127 between Murphysboro and Pinckneyville.

## PEL STUDY TIMELINE

2025			
SPRING	SUMMER		FALL
Project Kickoff	Community Advisory Group (CAG) #1		(CAG) #2
Data Collection	Data Collection		
	Public Meeting #1		
2026			
WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL
(CAG) #3	Public Meeting #2	IDOT / FHWA Merger Meeting #1	(CAG) #4
2027			
WINTER	SPRING	FALL	
(CAG) #5	Public Meeting #3	IDOT/FHWA Merger Meeting #2	
		Submit PEL Report to IDOT/FHWA	
		Request to IDOT/FHWA	



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## WHAT IS A PEL STUDY?

PEL is a collaborative approach to transportation decision-making that considers the benefits and impacts of proposed transportation system improvements to the environment, community, and economy during the early transportation planning process. The primary goal of a PEL Study is to gather information early in planning to inform the environmental review process and meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). IDOT intends to adopt planning products and recommendations made as part of the PEL Study into future projects.



Integrative approach  
considers  
environment,  
community, and  
economy



Gathers input early to  
inform transportation  
project development



Uses collaborative  
environment approach  
to transportation  
decision-making

## BACKGROUND



Helps identify future  
project selections



Accelerates project  
development and  
successful delivery



Supports economic  
and community  
development



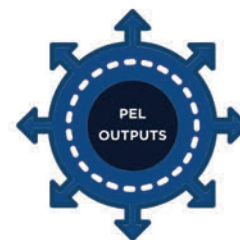
Finds opportunities to  
avoid or minimize  
environmental impacts



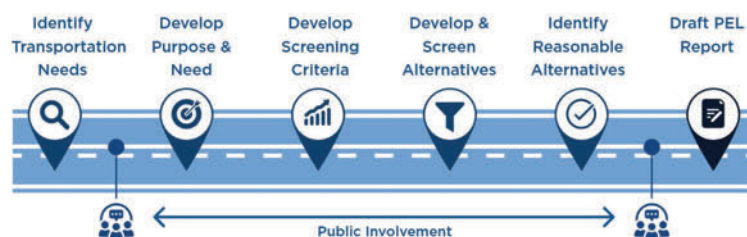
Encourages early,  
meaningful community  
and stakeholder  
engagement to listen,  
understand issues, and  
reduce risk and  
concerns

## OUTCOMES OF A PEL STUDY

- Purpose and Need
- Reasonable Alternatives
- Preliminary impacts assessment
- Engagement with public, stakeholders, and resource agencies
- FHWA and IDOT concurrence
- Near-term and long-term projects



## STEPS IN THE PEL PROCESS





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## PEL STUDY TRANSITION TO NEPA

A PEL study can be transitioned into a NEPA review process, allowing for a more efficient and streamlined project development. By integrating environmental considerations early in the planning phase through PEL, IDOT can leverage the work done in the PEL study to inform and potentially shorten the subsequent NEPA process.

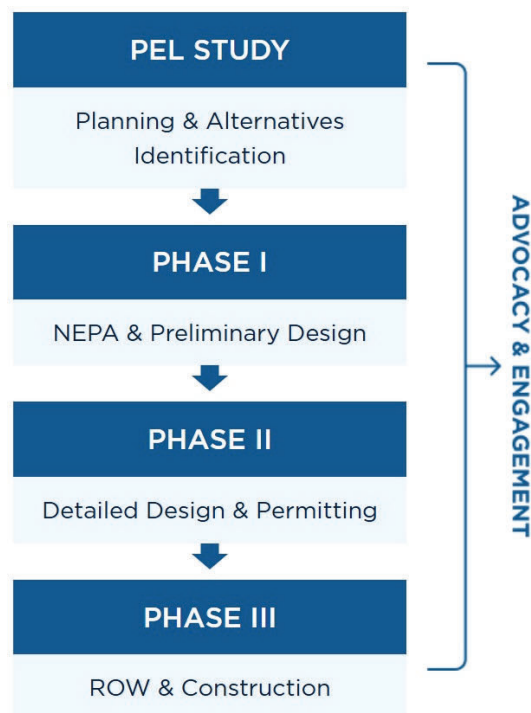
### A PEL STUDY CAN BE USED TO STREAMLINE THE NEPA PROCESS BY:

**Providing a foundation for NEPA:** The information gathered and decisions made during the PEL study, such as the purpose and need, range of alternatives, and preliminary environmental analysis, can be carried over into the NEPA documentation.

**Reducing duplication of effort:** By addressing environmental considerations early in the planning phase, IDOT and partner agencies can avoid revisiting the same issues during the NEPA process, saving time and resources.

**Facilitating informed decision-making:** The data and analysis from the PEL study can be used to develop a more robust purpose and need statement, evaluate alternatives, and identify potential mitigation measures for the NEPA review.

**Ensuring public involvement:** The PEL study involves extensive public engagement, which can be leveraged during the NEPA process to build consensus and address community concerns.



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## EXISTING CONDITIONS

The study's existing conditions phase assesses current transportation, environmental, and community conditions to inform future project development. It involves gathering data on existing infrastructure, transportation patterns, environmental resources, and potential impacts, as well as engaging with the public and stakeholders to understand needs and concerns. This phase helps define the study's purpose and need and lays the groundwork for developing and evaluating potential solutions.

⊕ REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

⊕ STUDY CORRIDOR CHARACTERISTICS

⊕ ROAD AND BRIDGE CONDITIONS

⊕ SAFETY

⊕ ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

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## PURPOSE AND NEED

The Purpose and Need (P&N) statement explains why IDOT is undertaking the study and what its objectives are. The “Purpose” is a broad statement of the primary intended transportation result (e.g., improve mobility, improve safety) and other related objectives to be achieved by a proposed transportation improvement. The “Need” identifies transportation deficiencies or problems (e.g., congestion, safety, deteriorating physical condition of pavement or bridges, etc.) that need to be addressed.



Supports decision-  
making process for  
future Improvements



Informs the  
environmental review  
process



Used in the alternative  
development and  
screening process

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the project is to address existing deficiencies along IL 3, IL 154, and IL 13/127 to improve safety, mobility, travel time reliability, and access to essential services; expand modal interrelationships; and support economic development initiatives in the 70-mile corridor connecting Southern Illinois communities.

### NEED

The project is needed to address the following issues:

- Increased number of crashes in 2017-2024 compared to 2012-2019;
- Roadway deficiencies, including sharp curves, narrow lanes, and areas without shoulders, turn lanes, and passing lanes;
- Traffic bottlenecks related to truck traffic, farm equipment, and school buses;
- Congestion and operational inefficiencies at intersections and through towns;
- Poor travel time and reliability between regional destinations, including healthcare, jobs, education, recreation areas, and services;
- Gaps in the regional transportation system;
- Limited pedestrian and bicycle facilities and transit opportunities; and
- Lack of infrastructure that promotes regional growth, including business development, freight travel, tourism, and housing.





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## ALTERNATIVES SCREENING PROCESS

The Alternatives Screening Process within a PEL study is a structured approach to evaluate a broad range of potential solutions to a transportation problem. The goal of this process is to identify a reasonable set of alternatives that meet the study's purpose and need while avoiding or minimizing environmental and community impacts.

SCREENING PHASES	DEFINITIONS
Full Range of Alternatives ↓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>All possible solutions to the transportation problems in the PEL study area</li></ul>
Purpose and Need & Feasibility ↓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Alternatives that do not meet the Purpose and Need or have excessive impacts and/or costs are eliminated</li></ul>
Traffic and Safety ↓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Remaining alternatives are evaluated for traffic mobility and safety performance</li><li>Alternatives with no or low improvement to traffic mobility and safety are set aside</li></ul>
Impacts ↓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Remaining alternatives are evaluated for impacts to adjacent land and natural, historic, and cultural resources, technical feasibility, and construction cost</li></ul>
Multimodal ↓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Remaining alternatives are evaluated for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit mobility and safety</li></ul>
Recommended Near-Term and Long-Term Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>IDOT will use the PEL Study recommendations to develop, prioritize, and identify funding for future near-term and long-term projects.</li></ul>

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## ALTERNATIVES TOOLBOX

The alternatives toolbox includes transportation concepts and design elements that may be considered when developing alternatives to address the transportation problems in the study area which will then be evaluated during the alternatives screening process.



### Potential Roadway Improvements

- Four-lane roadway;
- Limited access bypass;
- Wider shoulders; and/or
- Passing lanes



### Safety Improvements

- Divided highway with median;
- Median barrier;
- Reconstructing vertical and horizontal curves;
- Redesigning select intersections;
- Constructing dedicated turn lanes at key intersections; and/or
- Center and shoulder rumble strips



### Intersection Improvements

- Focus on enhancing safety and traffic flow
- Optimizing signal timing
- Improving sight distance
- Implementing advanced technologies to create smart intersections
- Reduced conflict intersections
- Realigning sideroads to improve intersection angles
- Widening radii for freight/farm equipment movements



### Bicycle and Pedestrian facilities or connections

- Sidewalks
- Shared-use paths
- Bike lanes
- Crosswalks and pedestrian signals
- Curb ramps
- Wayfinding and signage

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COMMENT

## NEXT STEPS

The next steps for the study in the remaining months of 2025 include developing initial alternatives and screening criteria, refining the Purpose and Need statement, and ongoing public and stake holder engagement. Near-term next steps are highlighted below.



Identify Reasonable  
Alternatives to present  
for public and  
stakeholder input



Complete re-  
evaluation of 2007  
preliminary  
engineering study for  
Illinois 13/127 from  
Murphysboro to  
Pinckneyville



[Click here for more  
information on the  
Illinois 13/127  
Murphysboro to  
Pinckneyville  
improvements.](#)



## YOUR FEEDBACK

The virtual public meeting also launches the first public comment period for the PEL Study from July 28 through August 18, 2025. Share your feedback by taking our online survey, filling out the comment form, sending us an email, or reaching out by mail. After the public comment period, the PEL Study materials will remain on the website for the duration of the study. IDOT invites the public and all stakeholders to continue to share input throughout the study.

### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! - TAKE OUR SURVEY

1. Please tell us your home zip code:

Input text here

2. What is your destination when traveling through the corridor? Select all that apply.

- ☐ East/West through the corridor ☐ Veterans  
☐ North/South through the corridor ☐ Red Bank  
☐ St. Louis Metro Area ☐ Ballwin  
☐ St. Louis Lambert International Airport ☐ Ryeola  
☐ Mid-America St. Louis Airport ☐ Fitchessville  
☐ Interstate 64 ☐ Vengemey  
☐ Murphysboro  
☐ Carbondale  
☐ Swamp Shopping and Recreation Complex  
☐ Pyramont State Recreation Area  
☐ Other

3. Why do you use the corridor?

- ☐ Work ☐ Dining  
☐ School ☐ Retail shopping  
☐ Live near the corridor ☐ Access to airports  
☐ Entertainment / Recreation ☐ Access to health care  
☐ Commute to other destinations  
☐ Travel through, I do not stop in the corridor  
☐ Other

4. How often do you travel the corridor?

- ☐ Daily ☐ Weekly  
☐ Monthly ☐ Less often  
☐ Monthly

5. What times do you typically travel in the area? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Early morning (Before 6 a.m.) ☐ Evening (7 p.m. to 10 p.m.)  
☐ Morning commute (6 a.m. to 9 a.m.) ☐ Late night (After 10 p.m.)  
☐ Mid-day (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.) ☐ All the time because I live here  
☐ Afternoon commute (4 p.m. to 7 p.m.)

6. How do you normally travel through the corridor?

- ☐ Personal vehicle ☐ Taxi/Uber  
☐ Bike ☐ Farm equipment  
☐ Walk ☐ E-scooter  
☐ Bus ☐ Wheelchair  
☐ Taxi/Uber/Lyft  
☐ Ride-share organized by an entity  
☐ Carpool organized by individuals without an entity  
☐ Other

7. Which modes would you want to use if they worked better for you?

- ☐ Personal vehicle ☐ E-scooter  
☐ Bike ☐ Wheelchair  
☐ Walk ☐ All-terrain vehicle (four-wheeled)  
☐ Bus ☐ Farm equipment  
☐ Taxi/Uber/Lyft  
☐ Ride-share organized by an entity  
☐ Carpool organized by individuals without an entity  
☐ Other

8. Rank the most important issues in the area when you are driving with 1 being the most important. (Drag and drop or use the arrow buttons)

• Drag and drop or use the arrow buttons

• Items with asterisks(\*) have follow-up questions below

1. Slowing or stopping down in areas when traveling through the corridor to access destinations	2. Lack of safe opportunities for access
3. Limited or no emergency vehicle access	4. Other people driving behavior
5. Roadwork in the area (e.g., potholes, poor signage, lack of access)	6. Travel times too long/inconvenient
7. Difficulty accessing destinations	8. Traffic traffic in the area
9. Inadequate space for local truck turning movements	10. Safety issues causing blind entrances or side roads
11. Dangerous curves	12. School bus traffic, drop-off and pick-up locations
13. Parking issues	14. I do not drive
15. Other*	

Where are the locations of fully formed causing blind entrances or side roads?

Input text here

Where are the locations of parking issues?

Input text here

Where are the locations of dangerous curves?

Input text here

What are the other issues?

Input text here

9. Rank the most important issues about traveling in the area when you are not driving with 1 being the most important.

• Drag and drop or use the arrow buttons

• Items with asterisks(\*) have follow-up questions below

1. I feel confident to travel by personal vehicle only	2. Too slow to take or walk
3. Unpleasant experience walking or cycling	4. Feeling unsafe walking or cycling
5. Lack of accessible bike and pedestrian paths	6. Not easy to get around for people with disabilities (curb cuts, audible signals, etc.)
7. Lack of bike lanes or paths makes the route uncomfortable to walk or bike	8. Difficult to access destinations
9. Concerns about highway noise	10. Other*

What are the other issues?

Input text here

10. What could make getting around in the future better?

- ☐ Bicycle/Pedestrian facilities like trails or sidewalks  
☐ Added travel lanes  
☐ Access control (parking or limiting driveways, adding interchanges or overpasses)  
☐ Adding traffic signals  
☐ Removing traffic signals  
☐ Better signage  
☐ More lighting  
☐ Spaces around community or multiple communities  
☐ Roadways that allow for higher traffic speeds  
☐ Safety improvement at location(s)  
☐ More zoning opportunities  
☐ Frontage road at location(s)  
☐ Other

11. Do you have input to share specific to the NEPA Re-evaluation of the 2007 Environmental Assessment for the Illinois 15/127 Murphysboro to Fitchessville project?

- ☐ No ☐ Yes

12. How did you learn about this survey?

- ☐ Social media ☐ TV  
☐ Website ☐ Paper  
☐ Newspaper ☐ Word of mouth  
☐ Radio

Submit Survey

## MAIL US

Illinois Department of  
Transportation, District 9  
Attn: Southwest Connector PEL  
Study  
2801 Murphysboro Road  
Carbondale, IL 62901



# Appendix B

## Online Public Meeting Comments

**Date:** July 28, 2025 – August 18, 2025

Submission Date	Would you like to join the mailing list?	Comment or Question
08/19/25	Yes	<p>Why not make Route 3 a four lane highway? Which is very much needed. Instead you're wasting money on all of these "studies". Money that could be put toward Route 3 expansion.</p>
08/18/25	No	<p>As a resident, tax payer, and business owner that lives and works in Southern Illinois, I am against this project.</p> <p>We do not want to spend anymore tax money on these type of projects. Our taxes are the highest in the country. Please focus on balancing the budget, paying peoples pensions that were promised, repair and manage our current roadways and infrastructure that is deteriorating. Lastly no one wants anymore bike trails in this area, so Just stop it.</p>
08/18/25	Yes	<p>I dont want farmland to be destroyed, why can't you connect carbondale to interstate 55 ? it already has 4 lanes , prob cheaper then adding new 4 lane to current 2 lane highway, also if you build this and it goes around red bud , im afraid they will loose business like gas stations and restaurants, why push this ? Who's family members will be making money on this project ? Look into politicians and anyone else pushing this and connect dots on who's benefiting from it the farmers won't get what land is worth and people that recently built homes to be in the country away from stuff like this values will go down also I've measured time it takes to get from carbondale to stl through waterloo now and it dont seem like it will cut much time building this , if people that live in carbondale need to get to stl faster move closer to it</p>
08/18/25	Yes	<p>This is an outdated idea from a time when St Louis and Carbondale were successful cities. Both are dying cities now. There is no good that will come from a project like this now. This will be nothing but an expensive, drug trafficking expressway. The increase in accidents is very likely due to distracted driving, especially cell phone use. We don't need more distracted drivers with higher speed limits running even more drugs through these small towns. Terrible idea.</p>
08/15/25	Yes	<p>"With all the expanding industries on the east end of Red Bud and out on 154 towards the Kaskaskia River, East Market Street in Red Bud and IL154 has become a high-traffic road for both passenger vehicles and large tractor trailers. With this growing traffic, I'd like to suggest bypassing Red Bud as being the first step of the plan. It would help make the road safer for both vehicles and pedestrians traveling that route."</p>

Submission Date	Would you like to join the mailing list?	Comment or Question
08/14/25	Yes	Why do you want to kill the small towns by bypassing them??? How many farm families will you put at risk of losing generational family farms. This is nothing but a money grab from big city ideas. Without the countryside and country roads, where will the wildlife be, the fields of corn clover beans. The pleasures of slowing down and admiring nature and God's country. This is criminal. It will not speed up the travel much, but it will just draw a lot of things. This whole idea needs to be re-examined.
08/14/25	Yes	I think this is a wonderful idea and will greatly increase commerce in the area
08/13/25	Yes	This whole thing is a complete waste of time and money. There is nothing in these areas that require a major highway project. What is really needed is to maintain the roads we currently have rather than this.

Submission Date	Would you like to join the mailing list?	Comment or Question
08/13/25	No	<p>Thank you to those taking the time to research and gather feedback on this important topic. I am both a small business owner and resident of Red Bud. I also travel on Route 3 from Red Bud to Missouri most days.</p> <p>I've read the documentation provided about the project, and I'm disappointed in the lack of supporting evidence provided for this project. Specifically, for a project of this size and cost, it is vital to provide the public with researched and evidence-based data on why a four-lane highway will benefit Southern Illinois communities economically.</p> <p>I'm particularly curious to see additional evidence on how this project will benefit economically the residents and business owners of Red Bud, given that the currently planned route would actually divert and encourage traffic around our city.</p> <p>As far as I can tell, there has been no study completed on the estimated economic impact of this road to cities like Red Bud. I researched the 2019 Task Force report, and while the report presented a few thoughts on how a road like this might impact a city like Red Bud economically, there was no actual data provided to support their arguments. That report was essentially a thesis paper without supporting evidence — or a “if we build it, they will come” approach. Unfortunately, for cities like Red Bud that rely on travelers to come through our town, an equal (an equally non-evidenced based) argument could be made that “if we build it, they will go around.”</p> <p>As a small business owner in Red Bud, with a business location in downtown Red Bud, a connector road that encourages travelers to bypass Red Bud could be economically devastating to my businesses and others like it. I have yet to see any evidence supporting the argument that there is unmet demand from tourists and travelers that want to visit places like Red Bud, but are unable (or unwilling) to do so because they must take a 2-lane road to get there.</p> <p>In addition, I live near where the road is currently planned - I see no data provided in your materials addressing the economic impacts of reduced farmland, increased noise and gas pollution if more people actually use the road (which again I don't see any data supporting this claim), and decreases in home values of residences near the planned route.</p>
08/12/25	Yes	<p>I don't think it's a good idea at all. Negatively affect too many people's property and farmland for possible good it would do. Why not make access from Murphysboro west to I 55 in MO for quicker , better access to St. Louis/</p>

Submission Date	Would you like to join the mailing list?	Comment or Question
08/12/25	No	If the current roads for example, I-255, route 3, can not be maintained now, how is a new road going to be maintained? The current roads need pot holes fixed along with maintaining the roads easements.
08/10/25	No	The primary interest/concern that I want to share is the need for you to construct landscape overpasses or green bridges for wildlife. There are numerous examples worldwide as well as studies that prove this kind of solution is appropriate for preserving the natural environment around complex traffic thoroughfares. I can send examples of images of these natural bridges if you give me an opportunity with a regular email address instead of this form, which apparently doesn't allow for images or attachments, just text. Thank you.
08/09/25	No	Why not passenger rail?
08/08/25	Yes	
08/08/25	No	This needs to run on 460 or should say Rt 13 from Belleville, Freeburg, New Athens to Pinkneyville!
08/08/25	Yes	Show from pinckneyville,to Sparta, 154 road way.
08/08/25	Yes	Take that money and build a train route.
08/08/25	Yes	I would like to see the route utilize IL 13 at New Athens with a bypass around Freeburg
08/07/25	Yes	Love the idea. Please consider expanding it all the way through Columbia to 255. Traffic in Columbia needs major relief, as there are a lot of accidents.
08/07/25	No	I do not support this expansion
08/07/25	No	There is no need for this. I grew up in Red Bud and now live in Campbell Hill. It is not a problem or take that long to get from Campbell to Red Bud or Waterloo. There is no reason to go around these small towns or disrupt and destroy country side and break apart or go through many family farms that have been around for generations. My family could be affected by this. There should be surveys of people who actually live in these areas to see if they are for this or against. It can't be about the almighty dollar and politicians and power. There also should be no reason that if someone does not want to sell their land that it can't just be forced from them. People have worked hard for their ground and continue to work hard to keep it. It's a shame some politicians seem to think this needs to be done. There are many other roads and highways in the state that need improvement.



Submission Date	Would you like to join the mailing list?	Comment or Question
08/07/25	No	This state wastes enough of taxpayers money. This project would just be another waste of resources. This connector is not needed nor wanted. There are plenty of ways to get from southern Illinois to the St. Louis area. Bringing extra traffic through this area would be detrimental in my opinion. Stop wasting our tax dollars on ridiculous things!
08/07/25	No	I am against this project, as is the majority of southern Illinois residents. We do not want our taxes to go up anymore. Please work on managing and maintaining the current roads and bridges that need upkeep. If this is not the correct place to post for or against this project please let me know. We don't want this.
08/07/25	No	This is unnecessary spending put it to better use like putting solar panels on government building and parking lots instead on ag and wildlife areas
08/07/25	No	This is a complete waste of money. There are already plenty of underutilized routes that can be taken, and the current system has outpaced the area.
08/07/25	Yes	I'm very interested to know the exact location of the bypass & how close it would be to my home & family farm land at 2261 State Route 154, Pinckneyville.
08/07/25	Yes	The state cannot maintain the roads we have now. Focus on that instead of wasting money studying this unneeded project. People live in the rural areas for a reason. This will have negative impacts for everyone who lives along the route. Bringing more crime to rural areas as criminals travel back and forth from St. Louis to Carbondale. If you don't believe that then you need to wake up and look what's going on in these places.



Submission Date	Would you like to join the mailing list?	Comment or Question
		<p>Are the red lines north and southbound lanes or the corridor outline?</p> <p>I do NOT approve of this plan for many reasons.</p> <p>First reason is because I believe we can make the current highways more sufficient. I believe, in the future, there should be a bypass south of Red Bud, especially for semi-truck drivers. Maybe around Ames Rd or closer to Red Bud heading south of town. I also think there should be 4 lanes of traffic on Rt. 3 by the Waterloo High School to Burksville turn off. There is still quite a bit of traffic through that area. I truly think there are lane improvements that can be made on the existing highways that are in this plan to make travel safer and a little quicker. For instance, Southern Missouri and Arkansas have shifting lanes on their state highways. That is where you have a stretch of 2 lane highway then, come to a stretch that on one side of the highway gains another lane for people to pass safer for a certain distance. Then back to 2 lanes. Then alternate to the other side of the highway having a passing lane for a certain distance. Then have it back to 2 lanes until the next section of easement of passing. I understand it may sound a little complicated but I truly think the cost would be significantly less and improve traffic flow and safety. Plus, it would be less invasive without having to worry so much about zoning and eminent domain of houses, farmland, and woodland.</p> <p>Second reason is because I do not see tons of traffic further south or east of Red Bud, IL. I drive these highways daily to weekly. I do not see a reason for an expressway all the way to Murphysboro, IL. I go that way quite a bit in a year.</p> <p>Third, I believe this will have easier criminal access throughout southern Illinois. Human and drug trafficking, stolen vehicles/high speed chases, less law enforcement on our other state and county roads as well as towns for crime to go up. The police department resources will be spread thinner than before.</p> <p>Fourth is taking away farmland and woodland. In Illinois, we do not have a ton of public recreational land that truly gets you out and away from the public. Not to mention, the wildlife</p>
08/07/25	Yes	
08/07/25	Yes	<p>This would be a wonderful, more direct option to update and connect by adding improved connection from the metro east to the Carbondale area.</p>

Submission Date	Would you like to join the mailing list?	Comment or Question
08/06/25	Yes	I live in between Waterloo and redbud and the whole reason I bought my property was for the seclusion because of the seclusion the first thing I noticed was the dramatic and beautiful wildlife a project of that scope not only will devalue the property I own by making it just like everywhere else It'll have a tremendous negative impact on the wildlife that are . I own a business in St. Louis and I sure would like to be able to get there faster but not like this.
08/03/25	Yes	This is a great idea to connect Southern Illinois to st louis. But the route is terrible. From red bud to chester and then continue to Murfreesboro. This route would help the new chester bridge connect to this route. Alot better way to get the most out of the money spent
08/02/25	Yes	A fast connector from Carbondale/Murphysboro to the St. Louis area is a must. This area has a lot to offer but can not reach its potential without adequate access to the Metro area. As a physician who has served the area for 20 years, I know that the lack of local entertainment opportunities and the difficult access to an airport is the main obstacle in talent recruitment and retention in my field. This project is long overdue.
08/02/25	No	<p>I have lived in Red Bud, Illinois, my entire life. I am 22 years old and cannot believe people are prioritizing convenience over people's homes and farmland. The proposed route is going down Ohlwine and Blackjack Road. I have lived on Ohlwine Road my entire life and my family farm resides on both roads. This route needs to be moved where there are no houses. SO MANY people live on Ohlwine and Blackjack road and many have lived here for generations. Our land is more than just a plot of land. It is our EVERYTHING and none of us can lose it. Our land connects us to past generations and future generations knowing it'll be passed along for many more to come.</p> <p>Please consider moving the route or canceling it all together. If people want convenience they should move closer to St. Louis or work closer to their home. Peoples lives should not suffer for others convenience.</p>
08/02/25	Yes	We don't need more roads for more cars. I can drive to STL just fine on Rt 127 and 64. Stop wasting money IDOT. I do not support any new road construction. Fix the roads we already have. Transform wasteful stoplights into smarter intersection configurations that eliminate the use of traffic lights. Make traffic keep moving instead of stopping it and stopping it and stopping it. Do not build new roads. Make the ones we have smarter.

Submission Date	Would you like to join the mailing list?	Comment or Question
08/02/25	Yes	Please keep your interstate away from the Red Bud area. We love our safe, small, rural town. We don't want to bring additional traffic through our area. We don't want the crime that comes with being an interstate community. We don't want to cross an interstate to drive to town for school and work. We don't want local homes and agriculture to be impacted. The path you are looking at between Red Bud and Carbondale isn't how we would travel to Carbondale anyway.
08/02/25		Repair the roads we have now they are pathetic
08/01/25	No	<p>What would this new Interstate be numbered?</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I-255S</li> <li>- I-44S</li> <li>- I-64S</li> <li>- I-55E</li> <li>- i-57W</li> <li>- I-62</li> <li>- I-60</li> <li>- I-58</li> <li>- I-24W</li> </ul>
08/01/25	No	There are smaller highways in central and southern Illinois that are in severe need of repair. Since we have a reduction in road repair, my suggestion would be to repair what we have and then work on making a new highway/interstate.
08/01/25	No	How are you going to put a 4 lane through Red bud without destroying most of the downtown area? Going around would involve destroying lots of farm land and houses. I think it would destroy a way of life for small communities.
08/01/25	No	There should be a moratorium on building more highways till we get the existing roads repaired!
08/01/25	No	This is not necessary, taking farms and homes that has been in families for generations. Take that money and improve what we have would be more feasible. How will it be paid for? More taxes? We are over taxed already.

Submission Date	Would you like to join the mailing list?	Comment or Question
07/31/25	No	This project is a waste of \$\$\$\$. I went to SIU Carbondale in 1971. I just visited this area from Fairview Heights last month and traveled the same roads I did in college. There is no need to add an interstate. The roads are not heavily traveled and Murphysboro has no major economic reason to need an interstate. Leave the beautiful countryside intact and don't destroy farms. It's what makes So IL so special. I love traveling the 2 lane roads. We can't keep up with the road projects we have.
07/31/25	Yes	Route three in between Columbia and Waterloo is already becoming a major bottleneck during peak travel times which are in the mornings and evenings. This is not even a sustainable solution for Monroe County. Gas is more expensive so people will fill up outside the area in Missouri so it will not bring additional money to Illinois from gas except to fill up in the Carbondale or further south areas which again does not benefit Monroe County. It makes the most sense for a faster and safer drive to Thai in to Carbondale from Highway 64. It would make the most sense because infrastructure is largely there already, and would incorporate many counties on that particular corridor leading into southern Illinois. It also would incorporate the airport near Scott Air Force Base that has been growing and offering more flights. It could create an expansion At that airport as well. This would seem to make the most logical sense and create a more direct path without multiple stop signs and a longer travel time to Carbondale or southern Illinois.
07/31/25	No	I think it's a good idea to improve the corridor or build a new one. I do think that the average member of the public may need help to understand the purpose of this project— so I would suggest a social media campaign that uses simple language and visuals to make the purpose and source of funding crystal clear. People think that this will take away funding from potholes getting fixed. Make it more clear that the funding was already secured, and you'll have more people on board! I have little doubt that people will skip straight through this “online meeting” template to leave disapproving comments.
07/31/25	No	Where is this planning on running south of Red Bud? I live in that area and you will catch hell if it runs near my house.
07/31/25	No	I personally think the newer turn lanes north of Murphysboro on 13/127 are a hazard. I don't see any safety purpose at all. Whoever designed this needs put away in a loony bin. That person clearly has never driven a semi or farm equipment.

Submission Date	Would you like to join the mailing list?	Comment or Question
07/30/25	Yes	I do NOT want the Southwest Connector anywhere near Sparta. People in our area move here to live in a rural area. They do not need or want to be in a metro area. If they did, there are several not too far and they can choose to live there. I feel the only ones who will benefit will be trucking and drug trafficking, neither one of which I want to see more of in my area. Please reconsider this project and keep it far away from Sparta and Southern Illinois.
07/30/25	Yes	I am curious about the exact route the road will take as I live in the area. I do hope that if individuals land is purchased for construction entire farms/fields are purchased and that small areas are not left for the landowner to deal with. I would also like to know how close the road will be constructed to existing homesteads before they are purchased.
07/30/25	Yes	Pickneyville corridor was talked about back in the early 1970. Great to see that it's finally coming to pass. DHS 07-30-2025
07/29/25	Yes	I would like to see that there's plenty of drainage and culvert size to protect against flooding Farmfield drainage and or flash flooding. As well as the residential areas sound deadening or sound barriers installed as well as walking and bicycle trails along the way and for safety reasons as well rest stops for cars, truckers and people, With facilities and amenities to accommodate, including EV chargers at the rest stops taking advantage of the beautiful sites and views of our great state of Illinois thank you
07/29/25	No	WE definitely need this. I would like to see bypass of all the towns and cities. 5 lanes preferable and entrance& exit ramps
07/23/25		

Submission Date	What category does your feedback pertain to?	Your feedback	Latitude	Longitude
08/18/25	Safety	By placing this new southwest connector in this area I feel it will hurt many people in many different ways. I believe this will take away the local small town businesses and greatly effect a lot of the agriculture in my community. We are currently struggling with the solar panel development that is taking away prime farmland that feeds the world and support our hard working people in this country. I feel there are other areas that can and should be considered for this project if you really think it is necessary. An example would be to use the current 4 lane route 15 that goes into Freeburg and continue this roadway through the many acres of old strip mines that have not been used for many years.	38.21176	-89.99233
08/17/25	Environmental considerations		38.17826	-89.973674
08/15/25	Economic development	This would be one of the greatest things to come to southern il in a long time. It would provide an easy access to the world shooting complex from the north. It would also draw more traffic to small towns along the interstate for restaurants and small businesses. I also believe it would benefit us in the end sending more traffic to the walkers bluff casino creating more tax dollars and more money for future maintenance on existing roads. Build it.	38.11538	-89.707046
08/12/25	Environmental considerations	The families in this area that rely on agriculture to support their day to day needs will be highly affected by this connected highway. So much farm ground is being taken over by solar panels, buildings and more highways. How can the people in our community make a living and continue to put food on tables when we keep destroying prime farm ground just for more conveniences. Why not use the 4 lane highways that we already have like highway 15 from STL through belleville to Freeburg. From Freeburg add lanes to the already existing highway 4. In the Sparta area utilize the strip mine areas/ roads to make the 4 lane. This way we are not tearing up prime farm ground. Let's use our resources wisely and efficiently by utilizing the main highways we already have.	38.19195	-89.97932

Submission Date	What category does your feedback pertain to?	Your feedback	Latitude	Longitude
08/12/25	Economic development	I believe when using this method, you bypass towns that have already been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Illinois tax burdens, gas tax burdens, and reduce access to the current businesses that have been attempting to thrive. Having been one who drives an hour to work and back, I can appreciate the sentiment to make it "easier" and more "convenient", I don't think that will benefit any of the towns along this corridor.	39.24023	-89.730718
08/03/25	Traffic (travel time, mobility, congestion)	I support this proposal, as a mom who travels frequently from murphysboro to the St. Louis area for doctor visits.	39.24023	-89.730718
08/03/25	Economic development	This road is full of family farms that have been passed down for generations and residential homes of families that have lives here for decades. Rt 154 isn't a busy enough to waste tax payer money and uproot families for a road way down Ohlwine and blackjack road. The existing roadways Rt 154 & Rt 3 should remain and add additional lanes in between towns should be added there if one is really needed.	38.16349	-89.921881
08/01/25	Traffic (travel time, mobility, congestion)	Love this idea! Thank you!	39.24023	-89.730718
07/30/25	This proposal has been around for 50 years. A waste of money traffic does not warrant. Look at it 50 from Lebanon to Carlyle purchased all that row and only partial construction.	A total waste. Fix the roads that already exist. There is no population change to these areas.	39.24023	-89.730718
07/29/25	This is a bad for southern Illinois. A lot of landowners and residents of the area do not want this to happen. Waste of money!!!!		38.18956	-89.71342
07/29/25	Traffic (travel time, mobility, congestion)	This new highway would help disperse the semi traffic.	37.72658	-89.143399

Submission Date	What category does your feedback pertain to?	Your feedback	Latitude	Longitude
07/29/25	My comment is general.	This is a waste of time. We have I-64 that we can't maintain. Take care of it instead of building another freeway. Get the construction done so it's safer.	37.89458	-89.501807
07/29/25	Traffic (travel time, mobility, congestion)	A major highway from Jackson County to St Louis would really boost So Illinois Economy. Thanks, Terry, West Frankfort, IL 62896	37.90032	-88.851812
07/29/25	Traffic (travel time, mobility, congestion)	We need this I would prefer route 13 through Freeburg, Marissa, Coulterville and Pinckneyville	38.40571	-89.901006
07/26/25	Economic development	New Economic Development site. This is the new economic development site in eastern Red Bud. There is a great deal of industrial traffic in this area already, and potentially going to be more as the new site develops.	38.21061	-89.97844
07/25/25	Safety	Are right turn lanes possible at this location?	37.86252	-89.32117



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## Additional Comments on My Previous Comment

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From [REDACTED]

Date Tue 8/5/2025 4:12 PM

To contact@southwestconnector.com <contact@southwestconnector.com>

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Hello,

I hope you are doing well. I was the comment that mentioned my experience in this area with the 2024 solar eclipse. In that comment, I mentioned how a 4-lane continuous expressway with interchanges would help for smooth, safer, and faster travel between the St. Louis metro and southern Illinois. Currently, the narrow 2 lanes, dangerous crossovers, limited passing opportunities, many turns, and 4 ways stops is what makes cross traveling in this area a pain. Out of transparency, I am not a resident of Southern Illinois, but instead I am a resident of the St. Louis metro. So my concern was, once I realized it, is that some bypasses of small towns could hurt the small towns' businesses as people may skip it altogether (e.g. think of the Disney *Cars* movie). Since this highway isn't a major interstate, perhaps a hybrid model would work: there can be a freeway-like structure in the rural areas with interchanges or limited access for fast/safe through travel, and then the highway can turn into the main streets for smaller towns. To make the main streets fun and safe to use for everyone, there needs to be reduced lanes, sidewalks, signage/lighting, a median for pedestrian refuge, traffic signals/roundabouts, and larger parking spots. Bigger towns I think can be bypassed without much economic impact. And as you may already know, hopefully the routing of this highway is beneficial and doesn't require much displacement or environmental impacts. I do think this project could help bring economic growth to this area; there are a lot of nice small towns in this area when I went here! Hopefully this project can help bring more visitors to these areas.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

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connector comments

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From [REDACTED]  
Date Wed 7/30/2025 6:52 PM  
To contact@southwestconnector.com <contact@southwestconnector.com>

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Hi,

I am opposed to the expressway project as I feel we have enough interstate transportation in the area. I believe it would ruin the rural charm and do nothing but urbanize the area. The state of Illinois is in financial crisis and does not need to waste money on a project that is not needed.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## Highway

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**From** [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 8/12/2025 4:24 PM  
**To** contact@southwestconnector.com <contact@southwestconnector.com>

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NO, NO, NO, quit wasting money on a highway we don't need or want and fix the highways that already exist in southern IL.

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## PEL Study Comments

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From [REDACTED]  
Date Wed 7/30/2025 2:50 PM  
To contact@southwestconnector.com <contact@southwestconnector.com>

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Hello,

I would like to submit a few comments regarding the Southwest Connector, however, I believe the 'survey' questions are intentionally skewed towards showing support for the connector and they only show concerns that would advocate for it – therefore I am choosing to send an email instead. I live in Red Bud and have so for most of my life. I also own a business here in town and work with other family members that run businesses here. On top of that I am a Captain on the Red Bud Fire Department – although, I am not speaking as a representative of the department or advocating a position on this issue on behalf of the fire department. However, due to my involvement in emergency response, I wish to speak partially on my experiences regarding the roads surrounding Red Bud as well as some other information that I have researched. From an overall standpoint, I am against this project for the following reasons:

### 1. Funding and Current Economic Outlooks

- a. In 2025 the state of Illinois diverted \$308 million from the road funds, so how could we possibly take care of maintenance on a project like this when we can't even take care of the road we currently have.
- b. The cost is expected to be \$1 Billion, and that is in today's dollars, this project likely wouldn't even begin for at least a decade, so at that point, we could be looking at double that estimate if not more. As we all know, government projects always go way over budget and schedule. With the massive debt and unfunded liabilities that Illinois currently carries, we do not have the money to complete something like this. Furthermore, the federal government also does not have the extra money to be handing out. We now have the highest property taxes in the country and people and businesses are fleeing at the highest rate ever. How does building a 'road to nowhere' fix the issue that no business wants to open up shop here when Missouri is right across the river.

### 2. Increases in Crime and Drug Trafficking

- a. Rural areas are becoming hotbeds for criminal activity due to the smaller police presence available for oversights. Red Bud and the surrounding areas have seen an uptick in larceny and thefts over the past couple of years. Giving criminals a greenlight to bypass all the small towns and their police forces with a straight shot to one of the most dangerous cities in the country will make our areas prime target locations for criminals to prey upon.
- b. Crime: Studies suggest highway expansions can increase crime by improving accessibility. A 2024 study on the U.S. Interstate Highway System (IHS) found an 8% rise in index crimes

(e.g., burglary, larceny) post-highway construction, particularly in counties with low police resources. A 2020 Irish study noted increased burglary due to better road access for stolen goods transport. In rural Illinois, new four-lane roads could similarly attract property crimes by linking towns to urban centers like St. Louis, a known hub for crime spillover.

- c. Drug Trafficking: The Midwest, including southern Illinois, faces significant drug issues, particularly methamphetamine and opioids. A 2016 study highlighted rural Midwest states like Illinois as hotspots for methamphetamine trafficking, with rural areas serving as production or transit points. The DEA's 2019 Manhattan, Kansas, case showed rural towns with highway access can be trafficking hubs. A four-lane SWIC could facilitate drug transport from St. Louis to these towns, especially given IL 3's proximity to the Mississippi River, a known smuggling corridor.

### **3. Residential Property Value Impacts**

- a. The proposed route around Red Bud happens to travel through some of the most sought-after Residential and Farmland in the area. Due to the ability to live out in the country but still be a couple minute drive to town, the route highlighted has become an area with larger homes and properties being furnished and thus would be a massive cost to potentially have to buy out those properties. On top of that, close proximity to the road itself would have an adverse impact on property values.

- i. Highway proximity typically reduces property values within 300–500 meters due to noise (55+ dB) and pollution. A Seoul study found a 1.3% price drop per 1% noise increase, and urban studies (e.g., Stockholm) report up to 30% declines near roads. Rural areas may see broader value increases from connectivity, but noise-adjacent properties suffer. The IHS study noted economic boosts from highways, potentially raising values farther out

- b. This would also potentially increase all of the property values in the surrounding areas, however, this is not necessarily a good thing. Increased property values means increased property taxes on people that are already struggling based on the demographics of the town. It could inadvertently force out long-time residents from their properties because they can't afford to pay the taxes any more. This will be especially hard-hit on low-income families as they will be forced to move further out into rural areas away from the jobs as wealthier individuals seek to purchase property in the area – further driving up the costs to purchase property and potentially forcing out long-time residents or low-income families.

### **3. Economic Equity Impacts and Disparities**

- a. Illinois is a bastion for trying to close the wealth gaps between the wealthy and the poor and these types of projects almost always benefit wealthier families/groups and external businesses as opposed to local residents. As stated above, property values could rise, forcing low-income families to leave. The median household income for Red Bud is \$61,310 (2021), while the median home price in Illinois is \$225,000 – a 10% increase in property values would increase the median home price to \$247,500. As well all know, wages do not rise near as fast. It is already almost impossible for young families starting out to purchase a home in Red Bud, this will exacerbate the issue
- b. You will see a widening of the wealth gap due to this project
- c. Agriculture is the main economy of our area and this route would drive right through some of the best farmland that we have.

### **4. Safety Impacts**

- a. One of the top points of contention in the project is the Red Bud 4-Way (meeting of IL-3, IL-159 and IL-154). There are claims of a dangerous intersection that is constantly

bottlenecked with traffic. This is vehemently false. While the large trucks turning is an annoyance and sometimes a pain if other vehicles do not give enough right of way to the turning trucks, there has never been a pedestrian struck or a severe accident caused by any of this. Yes, it is true there are times of the day when cars can back-up in all directions, however, that is due to all the factories in town letting employees leave at the same time and the school all starting at the same time. Building a by-pass will slightly reduce those bottlenecks because almost all of that traffic is local. Even in the heaviest of traffic conditions, you can get through the 4 way within a couple minutes – this is not worthy of spending \$1 billion + dollars. Most of the local residents know to look for a large truck signaling to turn and allow ample room by simply not pulling forward until after the truck has completed it's turn. Comically enough, the most hit object is a State of Illinois Road Sign that sticks out way too far into the parking lane.

- b. Our fire department is all volunteers and adding a 4 lane highway into our district will increase the number of calls, especially during the daytime when we may only have 5 or 6 firefighters show up to a call. It will add unique challenges that we currently do not have to deal with as vehicles are forced to travel at lower speeds than a highway. There is a real possibility that our ability to respond and provide life saving care could be hindered and would require us to purchase additional equipment to run highway based accident scenes – which also requires more training. It would put an incredible strain on first responders and could result in more fatalities along the roads.

- i. Rural four-lane roads have higher fatality rates (40% of U.S. traffic deaths) due to speed and design issues. The SWIC aims to address IL 3/154's 22 fatal crashes since 2012, but new risks may emerge.

- c. There are a few intersections in the area that do prove dangerous, however, they can be addressed without building a 4 lane highway. Common-sense changes to these intersections could be completed in a fraction of the time at a fraction of the cost.
- d. Red Bud school districts have a number of kids that would live on the other side of the expansion and therefore would be forced to cross those roads each day, twice a day at busiest times of the day for traffic. The buses would also have to cross these roads. This is especially dangerous for young drivers and could result in many losses of life to new drivers attempting to navigate a 4 lane road at highway speeds.

## **5. Social and Environmental Impacts**

- a. The area proposed around Red Bud drives right through the heart of the area. Not only would it drive people away from the road it would also make all the ground around it unusable for the most part so you are not only destroying the land where the road itself sits, you are destroying the land surrounding it. These areas are part of where our kids grow up and spend time, and they would lose access to all those areas permanently. We pride ourselves on being in the outdoors and being stewards of the land, however, passerby's do not hold the same values.
- b. This would also drive away local wildlife and potentially cause more of the wildlife to be struck on the roads and cause more injuries due to higher speeds.
- c. The reason that people live along this proposed corridor or in the towns that they do is because they don't want the high speed traffic and increased growth – that is literally the point of living here. We are close enough to STL that if we wanted those kinds of problems, we would move there. This would destroy the community cohesion, it would bring in people from outside that do not fit in with the values or morals that we choose to live by. It would destroy the quaintness and the small-town feel that is extremely unique

to this stretch of road. There are few places in the country that are within 30 minutes of a major metro area that have complete rural living still.

In summary, while I do understand the want to connect these two areas for economic benefits – the reality is, most of the economic benefits will go to those who are already wealthy and have the capital to create opportunities for themselves while the blue-collar family that has lived here for 5 generations is left behind and slowly squeezed out further into rural Illinois where they will have to commute to the jobs in the area. It will change the entire landscape for the wildlife population and will add unnecessary pollution to the environment. The people that live here now choose to live here because we like things the way they are. There is already a viable route to southern Illinois via other highways, this will simply destroy everything that makes this corner of the state a sought-after place to live. Red Bud has been able to handle the traffic and the large trucks for decades and have learned to operate around it with little to no real danger or issues. The upsides: the wealthy move in and make more money, the downsides: everyone else suffers in some way or another.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]



Experience more.™

[REDACTED]

NRA PC



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## Public comment submission

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From [REDACTED]@[REDACTED]  
Date Sat 8/16/2025 2:18 PM  
To contact@southwestconnector.com <contact@southwestconnector.com>

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In regards to the Southwest Illinois Connector Highway, I'd like to be part of the "public input," which I know is merely a formality that carries no weight of change.

I am not averse to making needed repairs using quality materials on existing routes, rather than creating more environmental damage with new and more pavement.

A useful addition to current roadways, I think, would be to establish what's known as "turnouts" in Europe. This is a roadside stop big enough for a couple of vehicles to safely park. Sometimes this is for a scenic view or something of historical interest. Others are in a flat area for a safety check of the vehicle, or to have a quick stretch. This makes for more alert drivers.

Making the corridor an interstate style will change the very reasons many folks choose that route currently. Notably, the pastoral or wooded views, and accessible small town attractions.

I feel the proposed Connector Highway would negatively affect every aspect of Southwest Illinoisans' existence. It would result in a significant increase in noise, air and light pollution. Locally-owned businesses will struggle or fold from competition from the look-alike chains that follow. Wildlife will be further imperiled and not given consideration anywhere but on paper.

A benefit of the proposed Connector Highway that has been touted in news stories, is "getting to St. Louis faster." Numerous statistics show that traffic deaths increase dramatically at higher speeds. I'm sure that must have been what one proponent meant when he remarked about a benefit being faster ambulance travel to St. Louis hospitals. In other words - faster travel results in more and worse accidents and ambulance rides. I'm sure he didn't mean to imply that St. Louis is the only place there is a hospital, totally excluding the several available in southwestern IL and southeastern MO.

I'm not the only driver who avoids interstate travel if I can find any way around it. I leave a little earlier to allow time to enjoy getting there. I do business at restaurants, service stations, and lodgings along the way, which helps support the local economy. When I return home, I have travel stories of neat places to visit. When forced to travel on interstates, I gas up before leaving home and make no leisurely stops until I get to my destination. And I cannot tell you where I've been or if there is anything of interest along the way, because all I've seen is a strip of highway and the back of a speeding transport truck.

Additionally, south of Murphysboro on highway 127 is Amish country. People already drive too fast through there. Can you imagine the problems with drivers coming off of a speed corridor, trying (or NOT) to accommodate a small area that can include horse and buggy traffic and cyclists?

"Brain Drain" has also been given as another reason to build a super highway. A highway won't prevent that. It will give them more lanes to leave town on. Has anyone bothered to ask the "Brains" what would keep them in this area? Promotional startup money for new businesses? A stronger job market? Better wages? Housing that is truly affordable (and not just jargon). I say, ask advice from those affected instead of exploiting them as an excuse to lay more concrete on our smothered earth.



Other impacts include: The elimination of bicycle trekkers that would have to find other routes. And let's not forget the people whose land would be taken from them by eminent domain. The so called "market value" seldom truly accounts for the real value of the land, or the disrupted lives of those affected.

I hope enough ideas from other, more powerful folks than myself will influence this project to work for betterment of what we have, instead of adding more unnecessary roadways that we have to maintain, and all of it ugly.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



Outlook

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## Public input

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From [REDACTED]

Date Sat 8/2/2025 2:54 PM

To contact@southwestconnector.com <contact@southwestconnector.com>

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED] . Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification> ]

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I'm a long time resident of Carbondale Illinois. I support this project regarding Southwest connector. It will help Carbondale Murphysbotro, and Carterville area a lot, Will improve economy and will facilitate the transport.

[REDACTED]  
Sent from my iPhone

---

## Route improvements Waterloo -Carbondale

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**From** [REDACTED]  
**Date** Wed 7/30/2025 5:51 AM  
**To** contact@southwestconnector.com <contact@southwestconnector.com>

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**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL]** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I drive to Southern Illinois from the STL-Metro East often. I have driven each of the proposed routes for fun.

Each of the routes handle the traffic on them well. (Except during the eclipse viewing) They do not need a 4 lane corridor.

Connect I-64 to US 50 around Lebanon and complete the 4 lane to Carlyle. ROW is there. The bridges are there. The overpasses are there. Only the road is missing. That road DOES have the traffic almost every day of the week - both commercial and tourist.

---

## Southwest connector project

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**From** [REDACTED]  
**Date** Mon 8/11/2025 5:42 PM  
**To** contact@southwestconnector.com <contact@southwestconnector.com>

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED] . Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification> ]

**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL]** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello my name [REDACTED] and I live on old state route 3 outside of red bud. I've lived here since 1998 and have a built a quiet, peaceful life for my family. This southwest connector project will cut directly in front of my property at best, if not subjected to eminent domain if this project moves forward. Not only do I think eminent domain is unconstitutional and unfair, I also believe that this project will serve no real purpose. It will stream line drug trafficking into southern Illinois, making the already horrible opioid crisis even worse. It will also bypass these small towns that rely on people coming through and stopping for dinner, gas and patronizing other already struggling small businesses. Furthermore the great state of Illinois struggles to afford and maintain the roads we have now. And to add insult to injury Illinois has the second highest gas tax in the country, second only to California. What do you think is going to happen to people's taxes if this goes through? The American people are already struggling, especially folks in Illinois, this would mean real estate taxes skyrocketing and the end result in that involves peoples mortgages going up which in turn pushes people like myself deeper into financial stress. Also invoking eminent domain on countless multi generation family run farms or hard working blue collar people like myself that work hard for everything they've got. It's simply doesn't make sense. Let's take that billion dollars and repair crumbling bridges, pot hole ridden highways, and dangerous intersections. At the end of the day I strongly oppose this monstrosity of federal and state waste of taxpayer money that, let's be honest, probably will never be finished even if started. I will be at every meeting strongly opposing this and along with me will be every family member and community member that I know. If this even gets read please feel free to contact me to further discuss this matter [REDACTED] . Thank you and god bless  
Sent from my iPhone

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## Southwest connector

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**From** [REDACTED]  
**Date** Mon 8/11/2025 8:24 PM  
**To** contact@southwestconnector.com <contact@southwestconnector.com>

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL]** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello there,

As a landowner/farmer in the Red Bud area located right along highway 154 I would highly encourage the powers that be to end this project. The lack of traffic from Red Bud east does not warrant a 4 lane road; especially at the expense of the tax payers. Also I graduated from SIUC in 2014 and I never noticed congestion along the roads whether I want all the way to pickneyville and then took 127 down or turned off on county line road and went though Campbell Hill/ Ava. Finally southern illinois is a beautiful part of the state and one of the reasons for that is it's lack of interstates/major roads. Polluting all the nature surrounding this route with tons of semi trucks, slot machine businesses, vape shops, and convenience stores would have a negative impact on the local communities.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

---

## Southwest Connector in Illinois

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**From** [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 7/29/2025 10:57 PM  
**To** contact@southwestconnector.com <contact@southwestconnector.com>

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED] . [Learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL]** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello:

I understand IDOT is looking for ways to improve efficiency with a southwest connector. As someone that regularly drives Route 3, this study should be expanded to include Columbia as well. Columbia had a bypass around its town to expedite travel and through economic development had seen more stoplights which are poorly timed and too numerous. For a bypass to remain effective, it needs to restrict intersections. Although even adjusting light timing for rush hour would dramatically improve traffic flow through Columbia so please start there. It would be great to bring back 65mph on the portion between Columbia and Waterloo as well.

Lastly, nearly all the traffic lights in Waterloo require a green arrow to make a left turn. This seems unnecessary as often times oncoming traffic can be seen from a 1/2 mile with zero oncoming traffic. Please allow for a left turn yield.

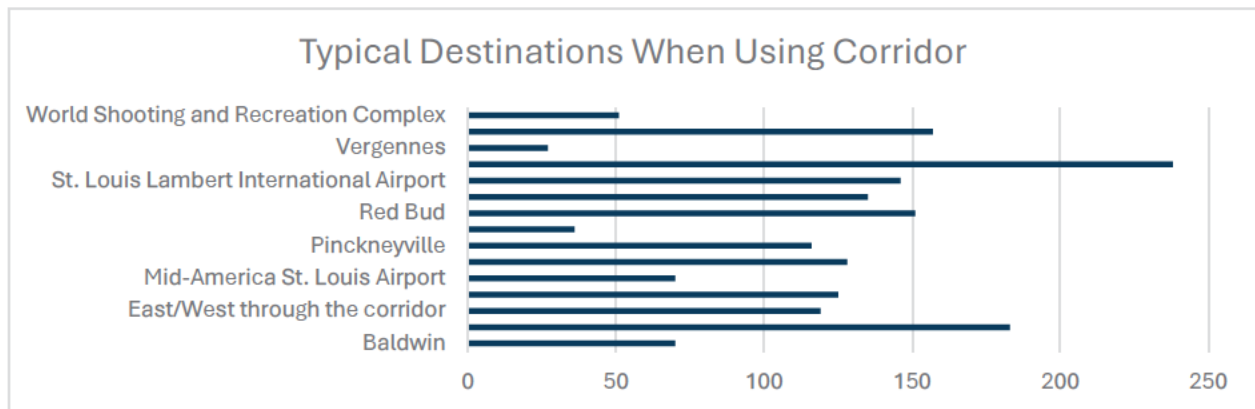
[REDACTED]

# Southwest Connector Survey Results

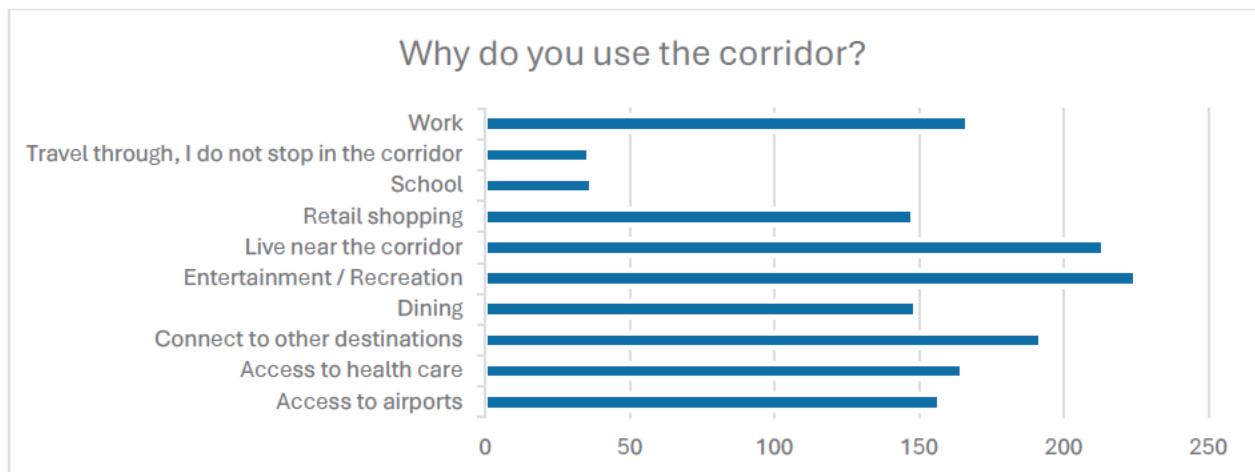
July 24, 2025 – August 19, 2025

## Summary of Multiple-Choice, Ranking, and Single-Answer Questions

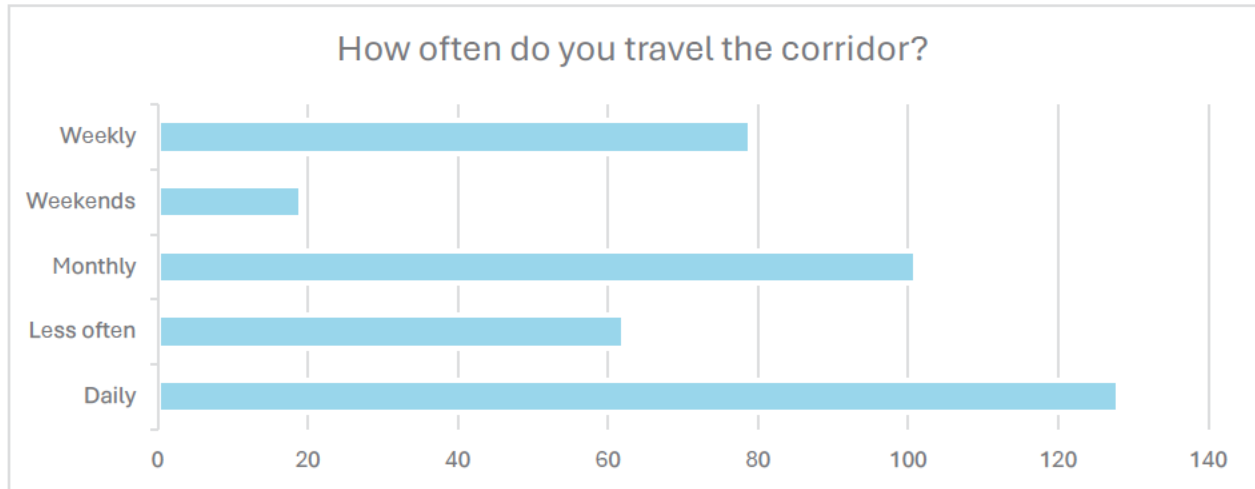
### Question 2



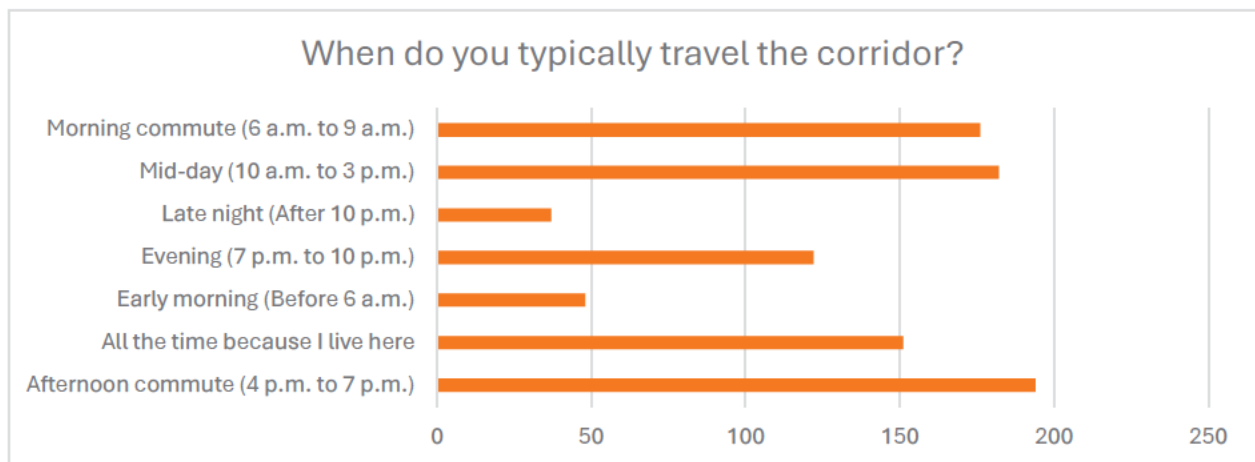
### Question 3



#### Question 4

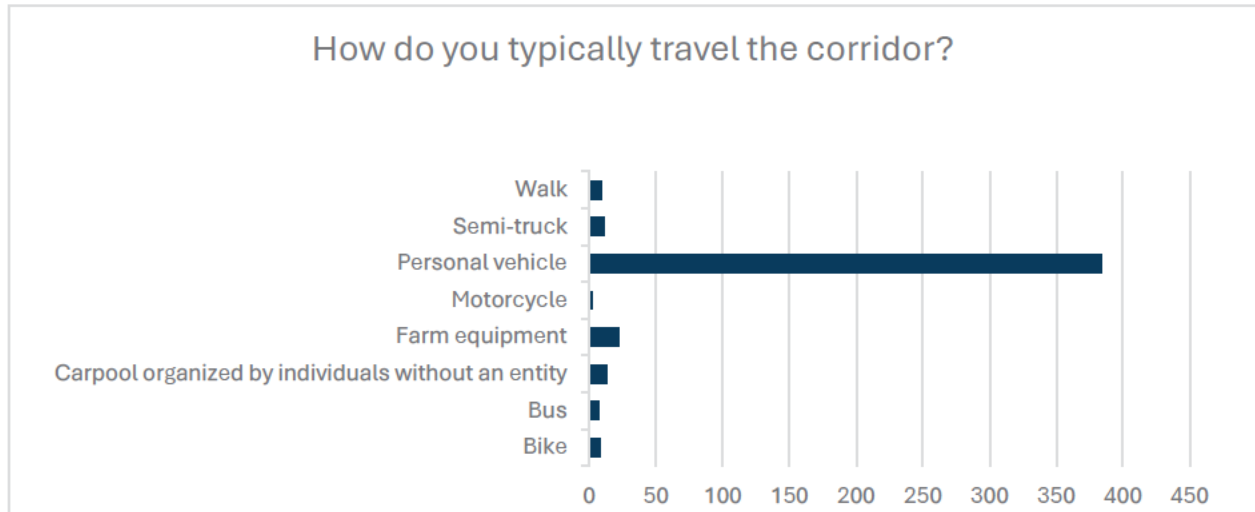


#### Question 5

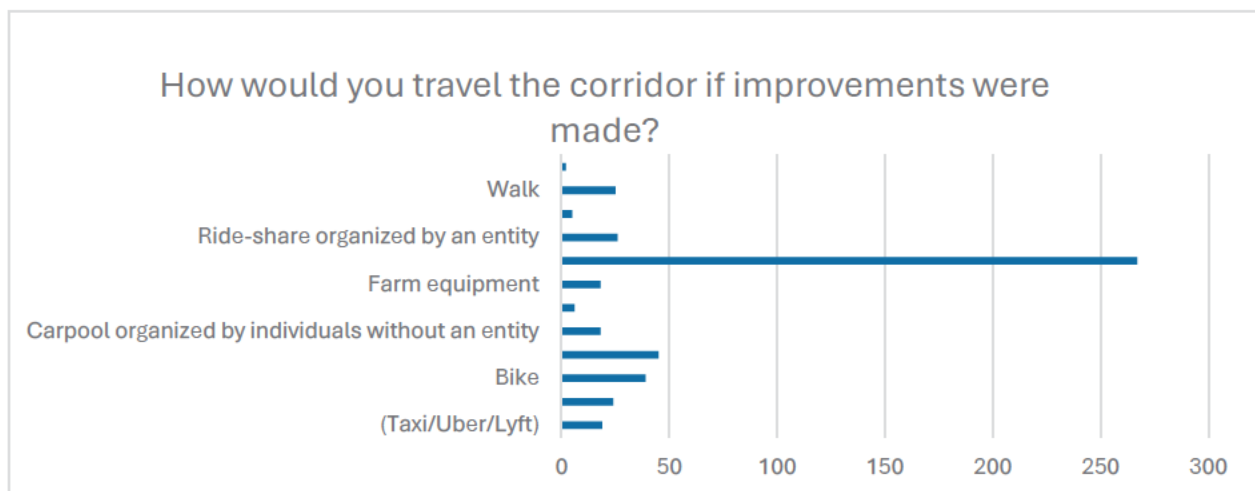





















### Question 6













### Question 7



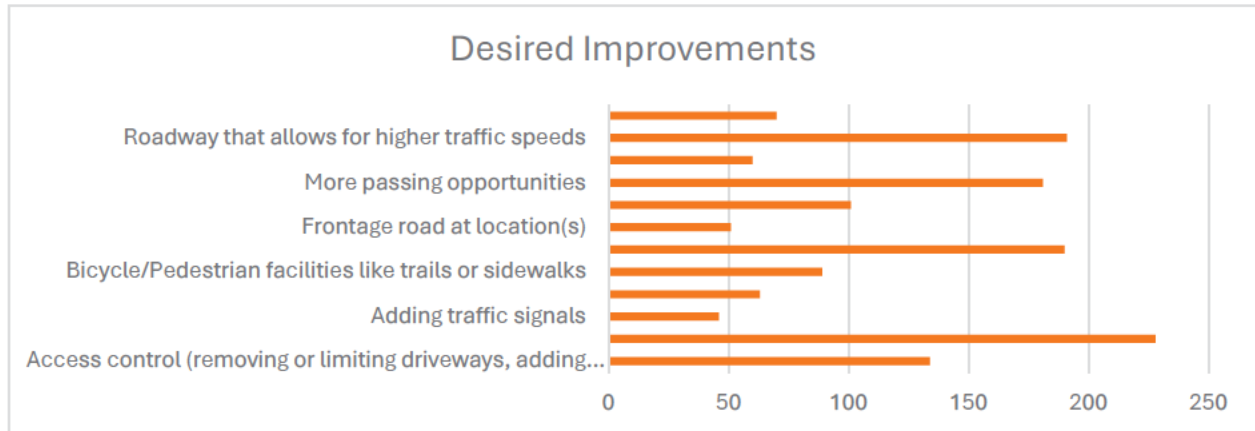
## Question 8

	Rank the most important issues in the area <u>when you are driving</u>	
Order Ranked	Issue/Topic	Percent of Answers
1	Stopping or slowing down in towns when traveling through the corridor to access destinations outside the study area	 49%
2	Lack of safe opportunities for passing	 41%
3	Turning or merging onto highway	 33%
4	Other peoples' driving behavior	 28%
5	Roadways in disrepair (e.g. potholes, poor signage, lack of striping)	 31%
6	Travel times too long	 34%
7	inconvenient	 34%
8	Difficulty accessing destinations	 39%
9	Truck traffic or farm equipment slowing auto traffic	 37%
10	Inadequate space for large truck turning movements	 45%
11	Hilly terrain causing blind entrances or side roads*	 49%
12	Dangerous curves*	 52%
13	School bus traffic, drop-off and pick-up locations	 62%
14	Parking issues*	 76%
15	I do not drive	 76%
16	Other*	 79%
17	(blank)	 97%

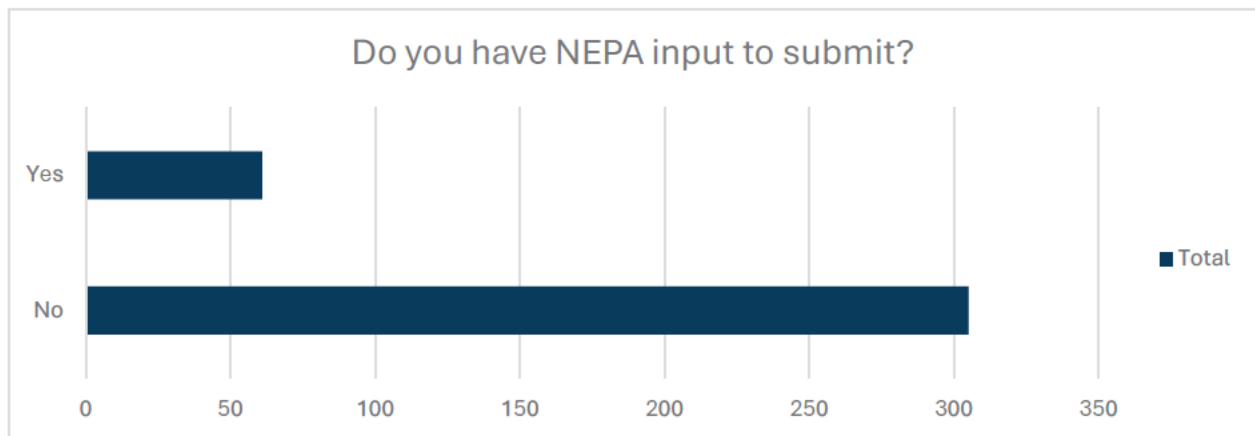
## Question 9

	Rank the most important issues about traveling in the area <u>when you are not driving</u>	
Order Ranked	Issue/Topic	Percent of Answers
1	Continue to travel by personal vehicle only	 80%
2	Too stressful to bike or walk	 51%
3	Uninviting experience walking or biking	 52%
4	Lack of accessible bike/pedestrian paths	 53%
5	Lack of accessible bike/pedestrian paths	 55%
6	Not easy to travel with a disability (curb cuts, audible signals, etc.)	 55%
7	Auto/truck traffic makes area too stressful/uncomfortable to walk/bike	 57%
8	Difficult to access destinations	 63%
9	Concerns about highway noise	 78%
10	Other	 87%

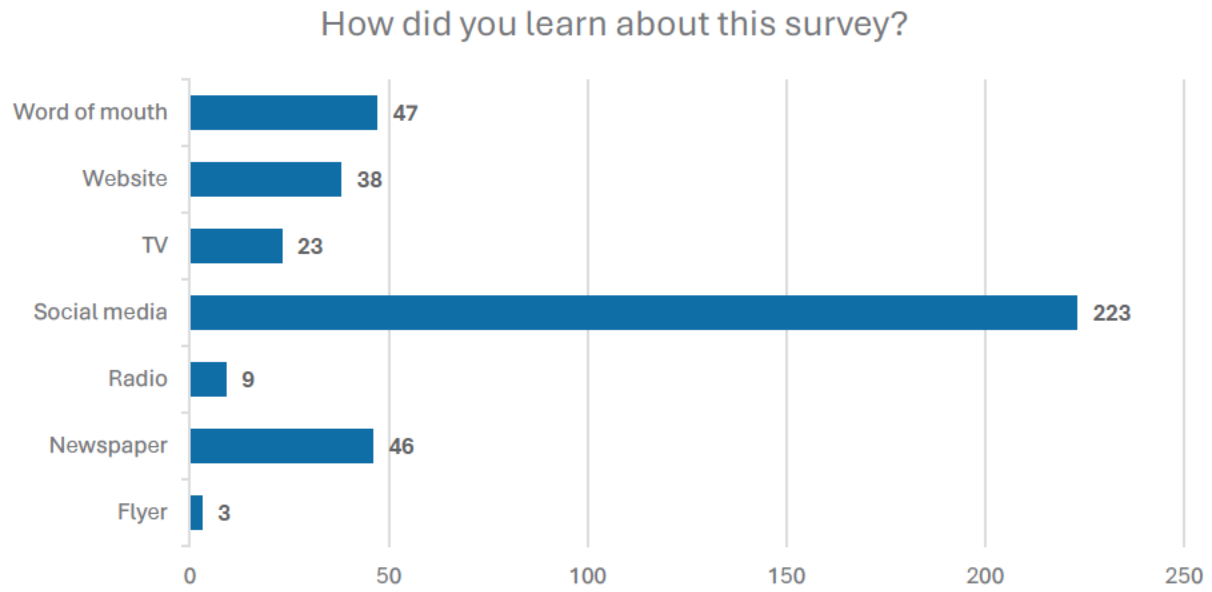
### Question 10



### Question 11



## Question 12



## Summary of Open-Ended Responses

### **“Where are the hilly locations?”**

- Route 3: Waterloo to Red Bud and Chester to Rockwood
- IL 154: Red Bud to Sparta, Eden Rd, and Conant Rd
- IL 127: Murphysboro to Pinckneyville, North of Pinckneyville, and near Vergennes

### **“Where are the parking issues?”**

- 51 of 99 responses (approx. 52%) say that there are none.
- When locations are mentioned, the most common responses are:
  - o Red Bud, especially downtown
  - o Route 3 from Rockwood to Chester

### **“Where are the dangerous curves?”**

- Most mentioned locations: Pinckneyville area, including the airport; Red Bud to Waterloo Corridor; Sparta area
- Most mentioned highways: Route 3, intersections Route 127 and 154
- Important note: nearly half of all responses were left blank or labeled “none” or “N/A”

### **“Are there other important issues while not driving?”**

- Protecting farmland, property, and the environment
- Many respondents felt that impacts to the community may be too great, and that a new highway could ruin the area’s “rural charm.”
- Opposition to the project (negative sentiment) included concerns about project financials and road maintenance
- Traffic and safety concerns (trucks, speed, passing)
- Pedestrian and bicyclist facilities

### **“Where would you like a bypass?”**

- Top priority towns: Red Bud, Pinckneyville, Sparta.
- Secondary towns: Vergennes, Baldwin, Waterloo, Columbia, Nashville.



- Broad preference: Many want bypasses for all towns to maintain speed and avoid downtown congestion.
- A smaller minority oppose bypasses or the project entirely.

### **“Where would you like safety improvements?”**

- Many respondents answered “None” or “N/A” (roughly half).
- Among those who provided locations or ideas, the most common themes relate to:
  - o Intersections and curves (especially Eden area, Pinckneyville airport curves, and major junctions)
  - o Route 3 and Route 154 corridors
  - o Route 127 corridor (Murphysboro ↔ Pinckneyville)
  - o General improvements everywhere (lighting, shoulders, signage, turn lanes)

### **“Where would you like frontage roads?”**

- Many respondents answered “None” or “N/A” (roughly half).
- Among those who provided input, the most common themes relate to:
  - o Near businesses and homes
  - o At or near towns and congested areas
    - Specific towns: Red Bud, Pinckneyville, Sparta, Waterloo, Columbia
  - o Along major corridors (Route 3, Route 154)
  - o General preference for frontage roads at bypassed communities or off exits

### **“What is your (NEPA) input?”**

- Strong opposition dominates responses, often citing cost, traffic volume, and community impact.
- Agricultural and environmental protection is a recurring concern.
- A small group of respondents support the project, either fully (4 lanes) or partially (shoulder widening, safety fixes).
- Several respondents propose alternative solutions like rail service, bridge connections, or interstate extensions.