



Introduction

The existing IL 18 Bridge over the Illinois River at the city of Henry was constructed in 1934. Due to the age and condition of the bridge, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) District 4 is evaluating potential improvement options for the bridge. The project study limits extend from the intersection of IL 18 and 3rd Street in Henry on the west to the intersection of IL 18 and IL 26 on the east.

About the Study

The IL 18 River Bridge Project study will take a detailed look at potential improvements to IL 18 and the bridge over the Illinois River.

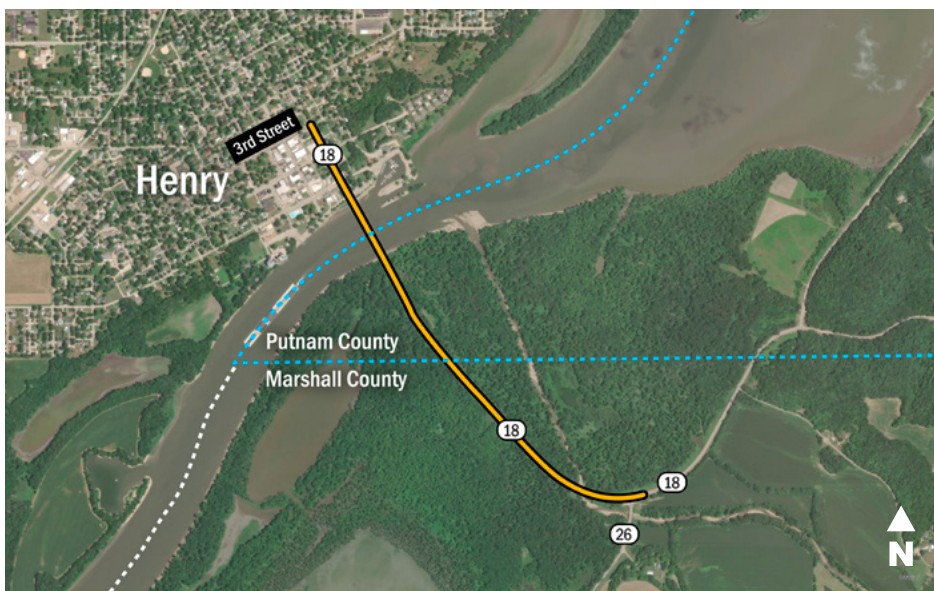
IDOT and its consultant team (i.e., the project study team) will inventory existing conditions of the IL 18 roadway and bridge, traffic and crash data, and environmental constraints as it moves forward in the process. The project study team, with input from the public, will also develop and refine improvement options (alternatives). The existing conditions, alternatives, potential impacts, and proposed mitigation will be detailed in the project's Environmental Document. The result of the study will be the selection of a preferred alternative for improvements through the project study area that addresses identified transportation issues and serves the area's future needs.



Public Meeting #1

August 25, 2021
5 – 7 p.m.

Henry United Methodist
Church Fellowship Hall

225 Lincoln Street
Henry, IL 61537



-  Project Study Limits
-  County Border

Project Development Process

IDOT develops and implements projects using a three-phase process. The IL 18 River Bridge Project is currently at the beginning of Phase I: Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Studies. During this phase, IDOT will study a range of potential improvements, conduct public involvement activities, and complete an environmental analysis. The first part of Phase I will be conducted under a process called Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL). This process is used for early collaboration to facilitate better planning and provide for expedited reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This Phase I Study will determine the alignment, bridge type, and right-of-way needs for the project. When the study is approved, the project will move forward with Phase II: Contract Plan Preparation and Land Acquisition. This phase includes developing detailed contract plans and purchasing land for the project, if needed. Once funding and permits are secured, the project moves into Phase III: Construction.



The NEPA Process

NEPA is a federal law that requires federally funded projects, such as the IL 18 River Bridge Project, to analyze alternatives and identify potential effects of those alternatives on the environment.

An Environmental Document will be developed for the IL 18 River Bridge Project. When it is complete, the Environmental Document will identify the solution that will best address the transportation issues and then detail how this solution was selected. The document will explain the potential impacts and benefits resulting from the project, and identify ways to avoid or lessen the negative impacts. These efforts help ensure that environmental resources and other factors are integrated into project decisions.

Alternatives will be evaluated for impacts on:

- ✓ Social and Economic Factors
- ✓ Agriculture
- ✓ Historic Properties
- ✓ Air quality
- ✓ Noise
- ✓ Energy
- ✓ Natural Resources – plants, water bodies, threatened and endangered species
- ✓ Special Lands – parks/recreation

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the project is to accommodate IL 18 traffic through the project area and across the Illinois River on a transportation system that is structurally sound, meets current design standards, provides a safe crossing for the public, reduces flooding over IL 18, supports regional connectivity needs, and meets the needs of river traffic.

Project Needs:

- Structural Integrity: Condition of the superstructure and substructure
- Design Standards: The narrow roadway deck does not meet current standards
- Safety Concerns: The narrow roadway increases the likelihood of crashes
- Regional Connectivity:
 - The bridge is an essential link connecting Marshall and Putnam counties and the surrounding region
 - Flooding over IL 18 often results in roadway and bridge closures resulting in adverse travel time

Bridge Condition

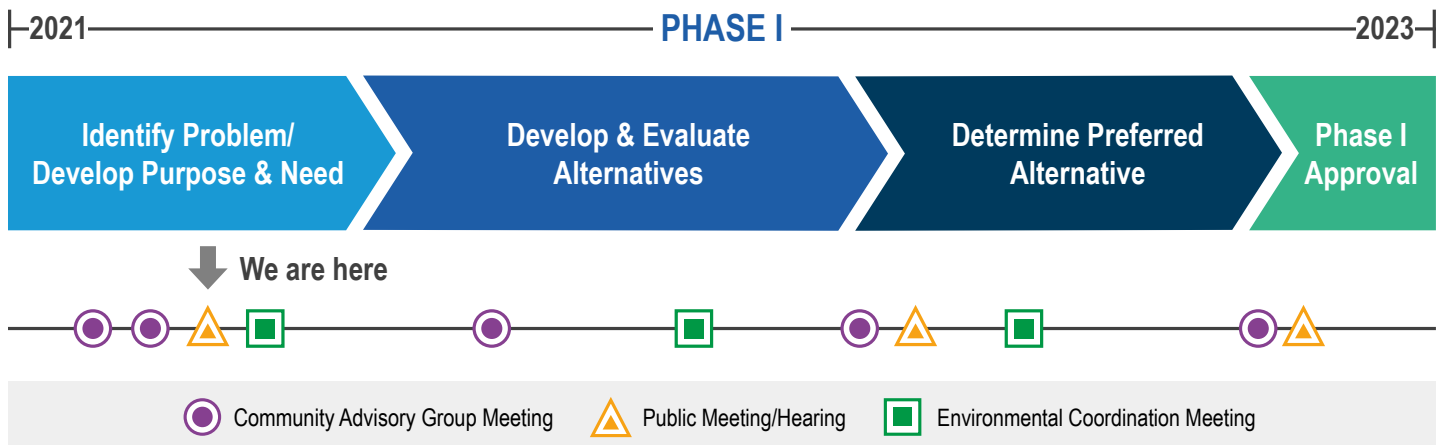
The bridge was constructed in 1934. In 1988, 54 years after its construction, IDOT performed a major rehabilitation project on the structure. The concrete bridge deck was completely replaced. Deteriorated and damaged steel members as well as concrete substructures were repaired. Since this last rehabilitation, vehicular use, weather, and salt usage have caused deterioration to the structural steel and concrete that form the piers and deck. Although the bridge has undergone extensive repairs, it is approaching the end of its repairable life.

IDOT inspects the bridge annually and will continue to repair the bridge as necessary until the project is complete.



Schedule

The project is currently in Phase I, which includes preliminary engineering and an environmental study. This phase should last approximately 24 months. In Phase I, proposed geometry, bridge type, environmental concerns, and right-of-way requirements are identified. Phase I will conclude with design approval by the Federal Highway Administration. Following this approval, IDOT can proceed into Phase II of the project which includes final design and right-of-way acquisition.



Public Involvement Activities

Public involvement is an important part of the Phase I study and includes many activities such as Stakeholder Interviews, Community Advisory Group Meetings, Public Meetings, project website, and a newsletter.

The **Stakeholder Interviews** were conducted to engage stakeholders, share information, and foster discussion by addressing specific project issues, allowing for more specialized discussions and input, and aiding the general public in developing a better understanding of the project goals and objectives. Although time does not permit every individual stakeholder to be interviewed, selections were made to gather input from all types of stakeholders such as local agencies and organizations, members of the business community, and affected property owners. During May and June of this year, the project study team conducted 17 stakeholder interviews with 72 stakeholders in the region.

A **Community Advisory Group (CAG)** was established that includes county and municipal officials, representatives of businesses, agricultural organizations, residents, and other members of the local community with an interest in the project. The meetings with the CAG are designed to encourage timely and meaningful opportunities for input and to encourage information sharing and collaboration. The first two CAG meetings for this project were held in June and July of 2021 to discuss the project's problem statement, purpose and need, and potential alignment alternatives. Three additional CAG meetings will be held in December 2021, April 2022, and December 2022.

Public Meetings and a public hearing will be large-scale meetings held to encourage public attendance and foster public awareness of project developments and alternatives under study. These meetings also will provide a forum for general public input, including concerns and comments regarding project alternatives. Three public events are anticipated to coincide with major project milestones:

- **Public Meeting #1** will be held on August 25, 2021, which is the project kickoff, providing information regarding the study process and objectives, additional outreach opportunities, the project purpose and need, and an opportunity for the public to share its perspectives and provide comments.
- **Public Meeting #2** will present the alternatives that were further evaluated and their evaluation results; alternatives that will be carried forward; and evaluation methods.
- The **Public Hearing** will present the Environmental Document and preferred alternative. The public hearing is part of a Federal requirement under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Stakeholders will have the opportunity to view and provide comments on the Environmental Document and preferred alternative.



We encourage and welcome **Public Comments** throughout the project. At Public Meeting #1, there will be comment sheets available for attendees to fill out or to mail back to the project study team. The public can also send comments to Contact@IL18RiverBridgeProject.com or fill out the online comment form at www.IL18RiverBridgeProject.com. When the environmental document is published, a formal public comment period will be held which will include the public hearing.