



# Iowa City Gateway

Preliminary Alternatives Public Input – November – December 2011

Prior to the public meeting for the Environmental Assessment and comment period scheduled for the spring/summer of 2012, the City of Iowa City added an additional opportunity for the community to see and provide input into draft alternatives.

The Community was offered the opportunity to see draft alternatives for improvements to the Iowa City Gateway Corridor from November 25 through December 30, 2011. Draft alternatives and an online comment form were available at [www.iowacitygateway.org](http://www.iowacitygateway.org).

Additionally, a drop-in center was hosted for the public to see the draft alternatives in person or talk one-on-one with a member of the study team. That drop-in center was held from 3:30 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, December 8, 2011 at the Robert A. Lee Community Recreation Center, 220 South Gilbert Street in Iowa City. Approximately 30 residents participated in the drop-in center.

The alternatives shown as a part of this program were preliminary, and presented with information that they will likely be refined and updated over the next several months. In addition, efforts were made to stress to residents that any impacts to property or structures along the corridor may be lessened or eliminated as detailed design work is completed. Residents were also informed that the recommended alternative could be a combination of the three draft alternatives.

## Key notes and responses to comments:

- The formal Purpose and Need for the Iowa City Gateway effort is:  
**Purpose of the Proposed Action:** *Provide a reliable multimodal transportation corridor that reduces the impact of flooding on the local transportation system and the Iowa River corridor.*  
**Need for the Proposed Action:** *(1) Maximize the reliability of Dubuque Street; (2) Maximize the reliability of Park Road Bridge; (3) Minimize backwater created by Park Road Bridge; and (4) Address roadway deficiencies on Dubuque Street and Park Road.*
- An important project goal is to minimize negative impacts to properties, historic sites, natural sites and parklands.
- The alternatives shown during this period are preliminary. During the detailed evaluation process, they will likely be refined.
- Additional, detailed information about the evaluation of alternatives, their impacts and costs will be provided as part of the Environmental Assessment's public meeting and formal comment process.
- The findings and evaluations will be made public prior to the public meeting.
- Input on locations beyond the Iowa City Gateway study area cannot be addressed in the evaluation or recommendations for the Iowa City Gateway project.
- The goal is to raise the bridge, Dubuque Street and Park Road to the 500+1 flood elevation. However, those needs may need to be balanced against project costs.

- To read more about the decision-making process, go to the “resources” page of [www.iowacitygateway.org](http://www.iowacitygateway.org) and click on “What is NEPA?”

## Comments by Location

### Foster Road



- Alt C - I'm assuming that this plan accommodates the eventual raising of Foster Road which is good.

*Note: The only potential improvements are at the intersection of Foster Road and Dubuque Street to ensure that the intersection functions safely with the proposed improvements to Dubuque Street.*

### Ridge Road/Taft/Dubuque Street Intersection



- Alt A - Do not like that Ridge Road entry/exit is moved over to Taft Speedway. Still concerned that it would be a steep decline onto Dubuque from this point even after Dubuque Street is raised.
- Alt A - It is not clear how the connection to Ridge Road would be made. The short stub shown on the drawing is not possible due to the grade change on Ridge Road.
- Alt B - I like this plan best as it keeps the entry/exit of Ridge Road in the same place with improved room to make a turn right onto Dubuque.
- Alt B - This alternative has the best connection for Ridge Road (better than Alternative A or C).
- Alt C - Do not like that Ridge Road entry/exit is moved over to Taft Speedway. Concerned this may be a steep decline onto Dubuque from this point even after Dubuque Street is raised.
- Alt C - Once again, the proposed Ridge Road connection shown in this alternative would not be possible due to grade change, unless Dubuque Street is going to be raised a lot (10 feet +).
- How many dollars and city staff time would be saved by not putting an intersection at Taft Speedway and Dubuque Street?
- Alt A - Don't raise Taft Speedway. Dead end Taft Speedway.
- Proposal A appears to be a compromise between B and C.
- We prefer Proposal B, if one must be chosen, because it retains the current entrance to Ridge Road. It also appears to include the least changes to other streets and sites.
- Proposal C suggests that Taft Speedway and Ridge Road connect. This plan is detrimental to the entire neighborhood along Ridge Road and Whiting Avenue and surrounding areas. It would encourage traffic to use Ridge Road even more than currently happens as a connection from east to west or vice versa.

- Taft Speedway should not be raised to meet a raised Dubuque Street. Taft Speedway should be a dead end. I signed a petition about this and so did almost 300 other people. The petition was supposed to be included in the project's public comments on the website—what happened to this petition? In my opinion, it looks like the city is censoring citizen input in violation of the NEPA process. Raising Taft Speedway is very expensive and shouldn't be done!
- City staff has already said it will put an intersection at Dubuque St. and Taft Speedway even though a lot of people don't want one. City staff included this intersection in every alternative. This intersection should be deleted.
- The Taft Speedway levee project is a completely unnecessary government boondoggle that will unnecessarily cost taxpayers money and should go away. The size and sight of it will likely harm property values around it.

*Note: Decisions regarding the levee on or near Taft Speedway are being conducted through a separate process; the only portions of Taft Speedway that are included in the Iowa City Gateway process are at the intersection of Taft and Dubuque. Any changes to the west of that intersection as a part of the Iowa City Gateway project would only be made to ensure the safety and functionality of that intersection, including appropriate changes to elevation. The Iowa City Gateway team is coordinating closely with the Taft Speedway team.*

#### Terrell Mill Park



- The city would be foolish to raise Taft Speedway to create a divide between Terrell Mill Park and the Parkview Church area. It should all be one park. Iowa City could put a great welcome center where Parkview Church is and perhaps capture more traffic going west on I-80 than the First Avenue Coralville exit will. The welcome center could be used to steer people to downtown and other Iowa City areas.
- Historical WPA Site - Do not disturb.

#### Cliff Apartments



- As one of the owners of the Cliff apartments I believe that there may be a problem with Alternatives A and C in that they do not appear to continue our access to Dubuque Street from our south parking lot.

### Mayflower Residence Hall



- Alt A - Appreciate that Dubuque Street is moved over (west) to allow bus drop off/pickup at Mayflower and allows for space between traffic and students.
- Alt B - I like that it distances Dubuque Street (moved west) away from the Mayflower to allow for bus pick-up/drop-off and more space between traffic and students.
- B seems to be the best alternative to me. I like the extra space between the road and Mayflower.
- Alt C - Do not like that it keeps Dubuque Street so close to Mayflower dorm and buses dropping off/picking up students.
- Keep parking south of Mayflower at private road (hill too steep to drive up during winter)

### Kimball & Dubuque



- No left turn.

### Park Road Bridge



- Alt A - The new Park Road bridge alignment is straightforward, but is it too close to existing bridge to allow new construction while existing bridge is maintained. How do you propose to transition from four lanes on bridge to two lanes west of Park Road?
- Alt B - The proposed bridge alignment is better than Alternative A as it is more of a right angle.
- I think "B" is the best option of the three plans. Moving the Park Road Bridge and widening it. More trees saved along Park Road.
- Alt C - Straight Bridge and road by City Park, but no improvement for pedestrians (lack of trails from road etc....)
- Alt C - The bridge angles too far south.
- Alt C - The proposed bridge alignment on this alternative is probably the closest to a right angle of any alternative, which is good for maintaining flood flows through the bridge. Has any hydraulic modeling been performed for alternatives to see which would have the least impact on river flow?
- C's proximity to the bridge east end to the fraternity turnoff dooms those tenants!