Iowa City Gateway

Public Meeting 2 – July 13, 2011

The second Iowa City Gateway public meeting was held from 4:30 to 7 p.m., Wednesday, July 13, 2011, at the Parkview Church, 15 Foster Road, which is located just adjacent to the project study area in Iowa City. At the meeting, more than 100 attendees had an opportunity to learn about the project process, provide input regarding corridor needs, ask questions, sign up to receive project information, and see a short presentation about the project and its current status. A copy of the sign in sheets is included as Appendix A.

The meeting was conducted as an open house from 4:30 – 5:30 p.m., followed by a presentation (Appendix B), and a short question and answer session.

In addition to the in-person meeting, all meeting materials, exhibits and presentations were posted to the project web site, along with an online comment form. The online component was created to allow those who could not attend the meeting to see the information and provide their input.

The public meeting and the opportunity to view meeting materials online were publicized via:

- Postcards to nearly 2,000 addresses within and adjacent to the study area
- Email notifications to past meeting attendees who had provided valid e-mail addresses
- Paid advertising in six issues of the *Iowa City Press-Citizen* and via the paper's online edition
- Paid advertising in the *Daily Iowan*
- Press releases sent to the local media and posted on the city web site
- Presentation was recorded by Local Cable TV and is regularly aired. (or something like that!)

Along with the materials presented at the meeting and online, two handouts were also distributed. One discussed the project information and a second provided information on flooding along the corridor (Appendix C).

Stations/Exhibits (Appendix D) included:

- Welcome/Sign In
- Meeting Purpose
- Project Location
- Information on flooding in the corridor
- Project overview and schedule
- Project process
- Updated Purpose and Need

- Alternatives for improvements
- Reasonable alternatives
- Draft project screening criteria
- Bridge reasonable alternatives
- Draft bridge screening criteria
- Comment station

Common themes for comments and questions included:

- Questions and concerns related to project costs and funding.
- Questions about flood management and the need for the project.
- Concerns about coordinating the project with other flood control measures and their cumulative impacts.
- How the project would influence or be influenced by the proposed Taft Speedway Levee.
- Potential bridge types.
- Impacts to specific properties along the corridor.

Verbatim comments and feedback via both written and online comment forms follows. Note that the comments represent the opinions of those who participated in the meeting, either in person or via the online format. The results should not be construed to be statistically significant survey, but rather a measure of opinions of those who took time to participate in the community discussion.

Which alternative(s) do you think will best serve Iowa City travelers?

Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Raise Dubuque Street (DS) and Park Road Bridge (PR)	66.7%	12
Create new alternate routes (via Foster, Taft speedway or through City Park) across the river	16.7%	3
No build - Maintain the road and bridge as they are today; no additional flood protection. This includes significant repair due to age and code issues that is needed within the next five years.	11.1%	2
Improve Alternate routes - (i.e. 1st Ave. in Coralville; Dodge/Governor Streets)	11.1%	2
Change when, how and where people travel, called Transportation System Management/Transportation Demand Management (TSM/TDM)	11.1%	2
Other (please specify)		2

- Don't raise Dubuque St but raise Park Road Bridge
- I would support raising DS and new PR Bridge if there is adequate drainage (w/ regular maintenance) so DS doesn't act as a levee, costs are controlled, and the city doesn't use the project as an excuse to turn Taft Speedway into an unnecessary levee.

Please score the project criteria with 10 being the MOST important and 1 being LEAST important	**Total Score**
Flood Impacts - Does it avoid or reduce the impacts of flooding in the Iowa City Gateway Corridor and surrounding area?	163
Cost - How much does it cost?	159
Emergency Access - Does it maintain acceptable emergency access and response times along the corridor?	155
Constructability - How will traffic move through the corridor during construction? How hard or easy is it to build?	142
Gateway - Does it allow visual and physical improvements that highlight the corridor as the City's gateway?	110
Bicycles and Pedestrians - Does it support current and planned bike and pedestrian connections, including the Iowa River Corridor Trail?	102
Green Options - Does it promote the reuse of materials, conserve natural resources or otherwise support sustainability?	88
Park Road/Dubuque Street Intersection - Does it allow for additional turn lanes as warranted to reduce congestion?	88

Please score the bridge criteria with 11 being the MOST important and 1 being LEAST important:	**Total Score**
Cost/Complexity - How much does it cost? How complex is it to build?	163
River Impacts - How will construction impact the river?	147
Dubuque Street - How much does raising the bridge impact the Dubuque Street/Park Road intersection?	142
Construction Closures - Does it minimize necessary closures of Park Road and/or Dubuque Street?	141
Maintenance - How much will the bridge cost to maintain? Can it be easily expanded or rehabilitated?	134
Footprint - Can it fit within the existing site constraints?	120
Speed of Construction - How quickly can it be built?	116
Traffic Flow - How well does it allow the existing bridge to stay open during construction?	110

Viewshed - How well does it compliment the surrounding area?	98
Construction Location - Can it be assembled off site?	78
Vandalism - How well does it minimize opportunities for vandalism to the bridge?	61

What are your thoughts on the Dubuque Street elevation level?

Dubuque Street should be raised to 100+1 –hybrid to alleviate flash flooding; a culvert is needed at the bottom of Ridge Road to carry storm water runoff under Dubuque

In 2008, garages were flooded up to stone above doors; in 1993 1' of water was in the garage at 1818 N. Dubuque.

It seems like a lot of work to protect Mayflower and the homes on the river. I think we should assume that the floods will continue (and get worse every year), and take the lead from the Boat House to make Mayflower and Hancher (or whatever will be there) adaptable to floods, as well as the houses along the river. Then when it floods, we use alternative routes temporarily. If we raised the road, where will the water go when it runs off? I didn't see any options for prairie and tree restoration around the river to help reduce the impact of floods.

Is the cost worth the benefits? Where will all the funding come from? I hope this project does not cause a tax increase. It does not seem necessary to elevate Dubuque street.

What grade will Dubuque Street have from Church to Foster?

Raising the lowest parts of Dubuque Street just enough to avoid lane flooding in heavy rains makes sense. It does not make good sense to raise the street to the 2008 or even more ridiculous to the 500 year flood level to forestall at great cost an event that may not ever occur. It's a little like getting a heart transplant at age 40 because your great grandpa died of heart trouble when he was 105.

Should be elevated as much as reasonable. At the least, should alleviate the frequent flash flooding. At best, should be elevated to be above the 500 year level.

Without question the road and bridge elevations need to be addressed, but at the same time why not address the other issues on that "Gateway". Addressing zoning of adjacent land and visual appeal could make that an attractive area for future growth. In addition areas near the interstate such as Forest View Mobile Home Park could use attention and allowing commercial uses that would get people to exit the interstate in Iowa City might be beneficial.

The bridge and Dubuque St need to be elevated to allow traffic access to IC during flooding.

use 500 year level

2008 plus 1 foot

1 foot above 2008

At least the 500 year flood level. We anticipate more frequent severe flooding in future because of the progress of global climate change and the reduced capacity of Coralville reservoir.

I like it where it is. I am concerned about what happens to the City Park and Mosquito Flats neighborhood.

needs to be raised

Assuming Dubuque St. and the bridge are elevated, what will be the affect on other riverine areas being flooded - will the faster rate of river flow reduce the effect on the adjacent properties?

Hard to evaluate at this time without seeing impacts of alternatives on Dubuque St. Right-of way.

Iowa City hasn't seen a 500 year flood yet and no tool exists yet which can properly define it because there isn't enough historical data. Raising the street and bridge to an inadequate level defeats the purpose of rebuilding the bridge.

There should be sufficient money allocated to making sure the water drains properly and that all infrastructure is properly maintained over the years.

Parkview Church should be bought out and restored to a wetland to store water. (It could be bought out less expensively if there was no talk of a levee to protect it.)

There should be nothing in this gateway project that would result in Iowa City going forward with the proposed Taft Speedway levee. Otherwise, the gateway project shouldn't go ahead. The proposed Taft Speedway levee is very bad public policy because it rewards a city for building condos on flat ground by a river after former IC councils were repeatedly warned by numerous individuals not to develop Idyllwild, and a levee's presence could result in further development in an area that never should have been developed. Plus, taxpayers are going to have to pay for it, and it will put people on the wrong side of a levee.

One foot above the 2008 flood level seems adequate based on cost/benefit. Any flood event higher than this level should warrant closure of Dubuque St/Park Road as other routes can temporarily suffice as was case in 2008

The overall focus should be on reducing the risk of flooding. Neither the Gateway Project nor the Taft Speedway Levee project should begin until you are certain that the project will not increase the risk to Parkview Terrace and other residents and to Lower City Park and Terrell Mill Park. This probably means that you have to build the bridge before you raise Dubuque Street or build any levees. Unless you do so, there will be an increased risk of flooding and that is unacceptable, as well as being a violation of our property rights. What will the effect be on UI's new boathouse if Dubuque Street is raised and the Taft Speedway levee is built? Would it not be near the bottom of a de facto floodwater storage basin? Thanks for considering my concerns

The alternative I favor is to develop alternate routes for vehicles, including emergency vehicles. The Peninsula and Foster Road neighborhoods could be reached from the Coralville side of the river, if another bridge were built in the vicinity of the Iowa River Power Company restaurant and the general Iowa River Landing area around the new Marriott. Widening North Dodge from the Highway 1 Dodge Street exit on I-80 would give more drivers--including emergency vehicles from the new fire station--an efficient alternate route into Iowa City. ON the subject of the Park Road bridge, I expect that it is time to replace--and perhaps to raise--the Park Road bridge, but I am very sorry to hear about plans to widen it with more turn lanes. It's astonishing to me that planners concerned with flood control would propose pouring MORE concrete adjacent to the river. That point aside, I live at the bottom of Ridge Road and have a fine view of Iowa City's little 15-minute rush hours every morning before 8 and again before 9

a.m. I also travel (usually on foot) through the Park Road/Dubuque Street intersection at least twice a day. I have never seen a traffic situation on Dubuque Street that suggested a need for additional turn lanes. I also have a question: Are the 2008 (and 500-year!) flood levels still relevant benchmarks, now that other measures like the removal of houses to make more floodable wetlands along the river in Mosquito Flats, and the absence of the coffer dam have been taken? Wouldn¹t the very same amount of flood water make the river crest at a lower level now than it did in 2008.

Ms. Clow and Gateway project: I cannot be at tonight's meeting, but I would like to register strong opposition to dams, dikes, raised roads and walls. These structures only collect and concentrate water; this in turn increases the amount and the force of water. Thus, in turn, causes harsher damage to structures, adds more water for a longer time, and can retain water between flooded lands and the river. If river flow is hampered by flotsam accumulated under the bridge, a raised bridge or bridge undercarriage might help. Physically diverting floating objects could help. The Park St. Bridge could be raised without raising the entire Dubuque Street North. Raised No. Dubuque Street would exacerbate all the dam and dike problems I mentioned above. The folly, of course, was filling the river mudflats, sometime after the late 1920's, when my parents were here. Then, people began building there. Perhaps, condemning and buying up all houses build on the Floodplain and letting the flood waters run over the land would be the best and most cost-effective way of living with flood waters. I was one of the larger neighborhood that offered to buy the current Parkview/Idywild land when it was for sale. The buyer would have received the same amount of money! I wish you and us well in tackling this problem.

What are your thoughts on bridge types?

I think Peoria did some cool things making their bridge lights stand out. The bridge seems really boring, so anyway to make it something to be proud of, while minimizing cost of maintenance would be ideal. Maybe constructed out of recycled materials, with an old 1800's look, with nice walkways for people and bikes. I don't really have any preference, but nothing obnoxious.

Construction should allow maximum flow of water under it to prevent debris from getting caught under it.

Prefer look of girder style. Important to keep current bridge open until replacement bridge completed and allowed continual use of Dubuque St. to I-80 as well as access to Park Road.

Whichever design impedes water/debris the least is probably best, if costs and ease of construction are equitable.

Engineers are capable of picking the best type of bridge. It should fit the criteria of being visually appealing and minimally invasive on the river and environment around it.

While I Like the cable stayed style bridge (beautiful in Burlington), it may be too much for the lowa City location. The open Spandrel arch is also lovely. The girder is plain ... and boring. :)

I favor the suspension bridge - 1 thinner deck - 2 more water to blend with the new Hancher - 3 clear span river - no flood problem

Favor least expensive design.

The open spandrel seems the most elegant

cable stayed - graceful

Open space attractive but flood junk catcher

girder-most similar to other bridges

cable say bridge best

The cable stayed looks cheap and unsecure. The open Spandrel looks great but does not promote ease of debris flow. If done, the girder seems most practical and durable.

Whatever lets the water through the best. Cost

The open spandrel arch echoes the topography of eastern Iowa's tolling hills.

Depending on the design, the cable stayed bridge type might overwhelm the site.

Cable bridge is most attractive and seems best alternative to mitigate floodwater/debris flow. Aesthetically, would be bold on the Dubuque Street corridor and skyline of Iowa City/University. Also seems to be a good alternative to easily allow bike/pedestrian traffic underneath bridge instead of at-grade Park Rd. crossing.

What other comments or thoughts do you have?

The fraternity house south of Mayflower on Dubuque used to by the VFW – Hayek and Jacobson were involved.

I live on Dodge St, but I take the Dubuque St exit when coming from and going to Cedar Rapids. I would prefer to take the Dodge St exit, but it takes too long to get to the exit, so I feel like I'm backtracking too much and wasting time. Easier access to Dodge/Governor would help reduce traffic congestion.

In all of the discussion/materials, we have heard that the project managers are consulting with UI officials. However, nothing has been stated about what/how the Army Corps of Engineers manages the outflow of water. (I hope that in future meetings, there will at least be some mention of the Corps.)They are a big player in all of this and it seems that either no one is willing to confront them or if they have, they are not telling us what the Corps is saying. I know that the Corps cannot be sued, and appear to be untouchable and because of this they seem to think that they are not accountable to anyone and don't care about damage that can occur because their mission is flood control. I am glad to see that Gov Branstad is willing to take a stance and question the Corps long standing management of reservoirs because of the disaster on the Missouri River. I hope that staff working on this project will be paying attention to what happens when the governors of states impacted by the Missouri river flooding meet later in the year.

How will the bridge supports be handled? Does this require damming the river to “drain” enough to install supports? Where exactly will the money for construction come from? Please address the current depth of the reservoir. Can it be effectively dredged? How many feet of silt have built up over these decades? If silt removed, how much more water can the reservoir hold? Could that alleviate flooding downstream?

Are the 2008 (or even more ridiculous, the 500 year) flood levels still relevant benchmarks, now that other measures like the removal of houses to make more wetlands along the river in mosquito flats and

the absence of the coffer dam have been taken? Wouldn't the very same amount of water crest at a lower level now than it did in 2008?

Taft speedway must be elevated as much as possible to protect Idyllwild and Foster Road. I believe the city when they say residents on Taft Street were cautioned that they might be in the "wet" side of future flood protection efforts in their buyout offer letter (as if that wasn't obvious). Idyllwild owners did not have a buyout option. Likewise, Peninsula residents (development encouraged by the city) deserve to have the city protect their access. We understand that thoughtful analysis is required for a problem of this magnitude but there have been several meetings in the last 3 years without tangible progress. This is very frustrating and difficult to understand. If we experience flooding before anything happens, we hope buyouts are offered to Idyllwild at pre-2008 flood dollars. Without protection, our property values may never recover.

I am looking forward to the improvements that will be made on this gateway. I will be impacted by the re-direction of traffic on that road, so I hope that the progress is swift but not at the cost of quality.

Thanks for seeking public comment.

It would be terrific if the final project design can result in slowing down traffic on Dubuque Street. This is also the perfect opportunity to improve the currently poor pedestrian access along portions of Dubuque.

Can a berm be built in the middle of city park so that is then acts as a canal and doesn't constantly destroy the land and cause erosion?

Make sure it is carefully planned so that it doesn't make alternative routes for traffic inconvenient. When alternating routes stay within city limits. One idea is to extend the Interstate through Bjaysville Lane complex and somehow connect it with Kimball Rd.

Let's get this area fixed right so we don't have flooding and can get in and out of our city and homes.

Need to see how Dubuque St. corridor will work with alternatives.

I am concerned about coordinating the look of the bridge with the university's architectural firm and the future Hancher design. There have been some poor and expensive architectural decisions at the university.

Iowa City is supposed to be the home of Grant Wood and at some future point, City Park could get an overhaul. The newly created gateway and bridge should reflect some tradition and cost should be a consideration of the design. I wouldn't mind seeing some Prairie style elements of design used in the styling of the bridge, lighting, etc.

In addition to bikers and pedestrians, numerous people walk with children (in or out of strollers) and dogs across the Park Road bridge. Significant attention should be paid to making sure the railings exceed standards for safety and providing sufficient lighting at night.

Assuming they have good design sense, the lead engineer and construction manager should have at least as much power as the architect especially if it saves the taxpayer money.

The proposed Taft Speedway project should be abandoned. The Idyllwild condo owners and condo

board and church should buy flood insurance to protect their investments. A lot of the condos are owned by investors who rent them out. I don't want to pay to subsidize the condos or the church. The levee will be ugly. Its presence will likely suppress everyone's property values.

Alternative routes for Park Road Bridge would seem to negatively East/West traffic flow from downtown to Coralville. Would like to see alternative routes compared to current traffic model & MPO arterial street plan. Update of MPO long range transportation plan is currently underway and potential rerouting of Park Road should be considered.

Concerned about sanitary and water services in the area

Save our money. Scrap it.

I have only one request: A right turn lane from North Dubuque Street onto E. Park Road. Traffic, especially in the morning, is divided between cars going to the downtown IC area - and the East Campus - and cars wanting to turn right onto Park Road from Dubuque Street - heading to the West Campus. A single car in the current right lane - wanting to go straight ahead - blocks all the cars that would turn right on the red light from the right lane. We need a right turn only lane at this intersection. Currently, there is an empty "park bench" where I would like a turn lane. Make it happen, please.

I had to be in Montana on business at the time of the most recent meeting on the Gateway Project, so I was not able to receive materials disturbed at the meeting or provide input to the Gateway Project planners regarding concerns about maintaining pedestrian and vehicular access to my property, maintenance of the historically significant double, stone garages fronting N. Dubuque Street, impacts of raising the street, such as increased traffic noise, construction time/debris, and other concerns. Could you please provide me an update on where things stand, any relevant printed materials, and public comments. Also, I would like to know about the possibility of having some direct discussions with you and other of the Gateway Project planners about my specific concerns about the impacts of the Project on my property.

If I understand the plan? The construction phase will take almost 2 years. I live on Ronalds St near Dubuque and feel that a two year construction project in my front yard is unreasonable. The disruption is not worth the gain. Dust, disruption of traffic and pedestrian routes, heavy equipment and constant noise in order to make the streets safer for more cars is not my idea of a good way to spend 2 years. We don’t need this