

I-55 Improvements at Airport Road/Lockport Street and at IL 126

Public Hearing
September 25, 2024



Welcome to the public hearing for the study of I-55 at Airport Road/Lockport Street and at IL 126. We thank you in advance for taking the time to attend today's hearing and learning about the study.



The I-55 study is lead in a joint effort by the Illinois Department of Transportation, or IDOT, as well as the Villages of Romeoville, Bolingbrook, and Plainfield.



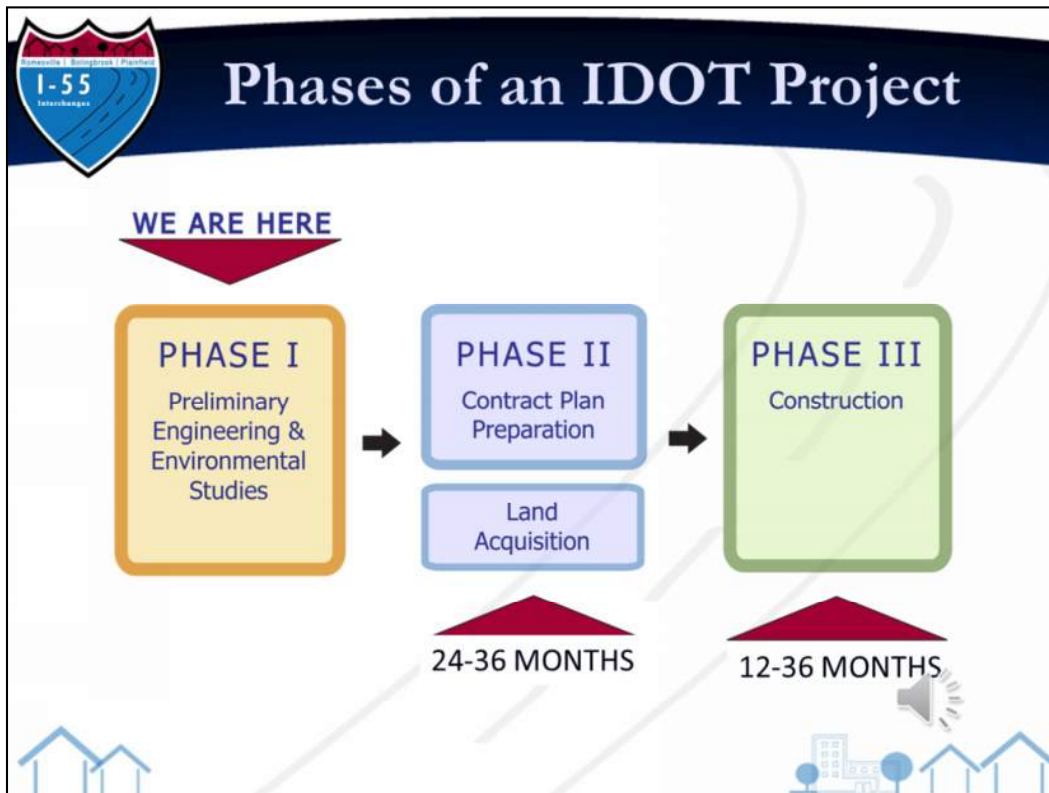
Public Hearing Goals

- Describe the project development process
- Present the preferred alternative
- Present Section 4(f) impacts to Four Seasons Park
- Present road closure of East Frontage Road at Airport Road
- Obtain public input



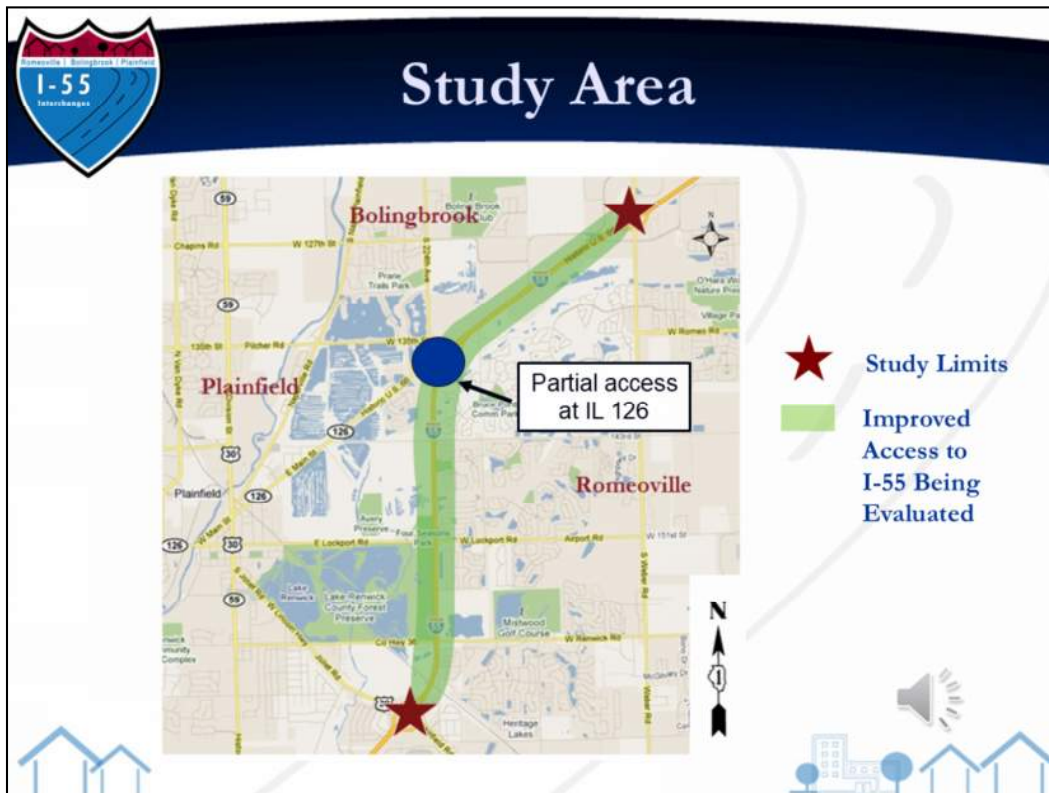
At today's hearing, 1. we will provide a recap of the project development process, 2. present the proposed improvement as well as the 3. impacts to Four Seasons Park and the 4. east frontage road closures.

5. Public input is an important component of the study process. Therefore, at the end of the presentation, we will identify ways for the public to comment on the proposed improvement.



Before we continue with more detailed discussions, let's review the typical process for a transportation project. IDOT projects are typically conducted in three phases:

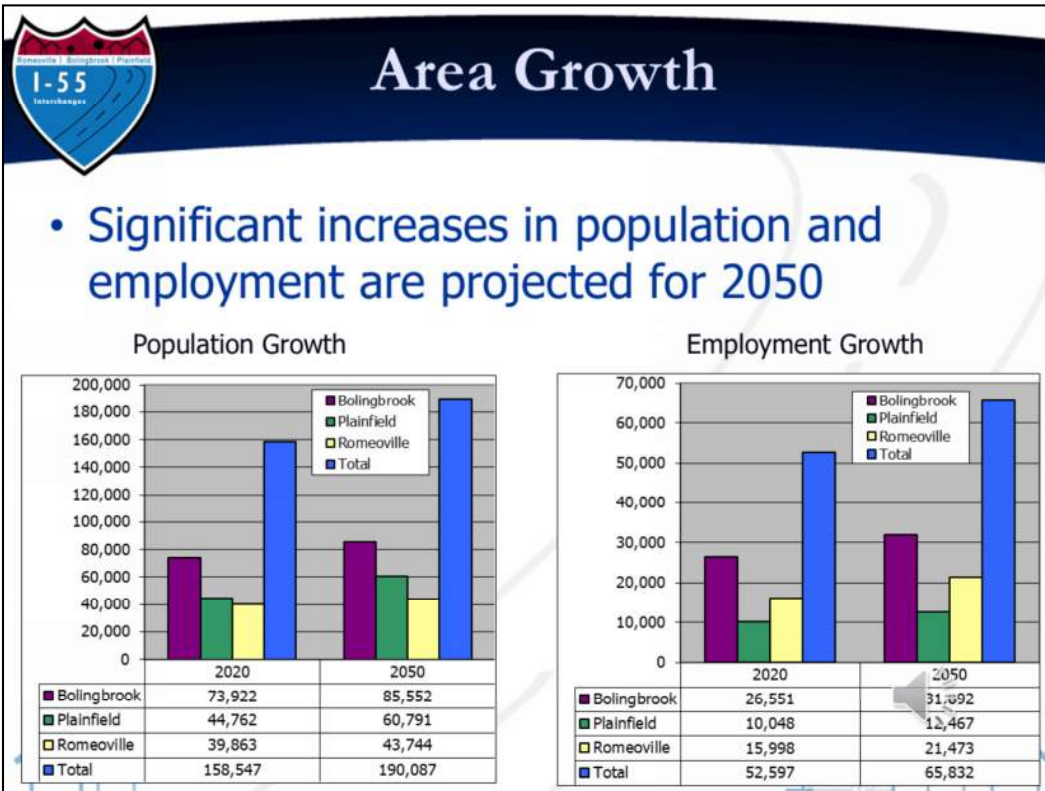
- In Phase I, also referred to as Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Studies, transportation needs are defined, alternatives are developed and evaluated, and a preferred alternative is selected.
- During Phase II, contract plans will be prepared and any land needed to build the proposed improvements will be acquired.
- Phase III is the actual construction of the project.



Now let's discuss the study area. The I-55 study area encompasses a six-mile section of I-55 between the US 30 interchange to the south and the Weber Road interchange to the north.

Within this section of I-55, *. the only existing access to the interstate is a partial interchange at IL 126.

This section of I-55 services the Villages of Plainfield, Romeoville, and Bolingbrook.







Projections in population and employment show significant growth in these three communities.

Based on a projected 2050 population growth of 20 percent, or 32,000 people, and employment growth of 25 percent, or nearly 14,000 jobs, as well as an evaluation of future traffic operations, it has been determined that there will not be an acceptable level of service for access to and from I-55 at both existing IL 126 and Weber Road interchanges.



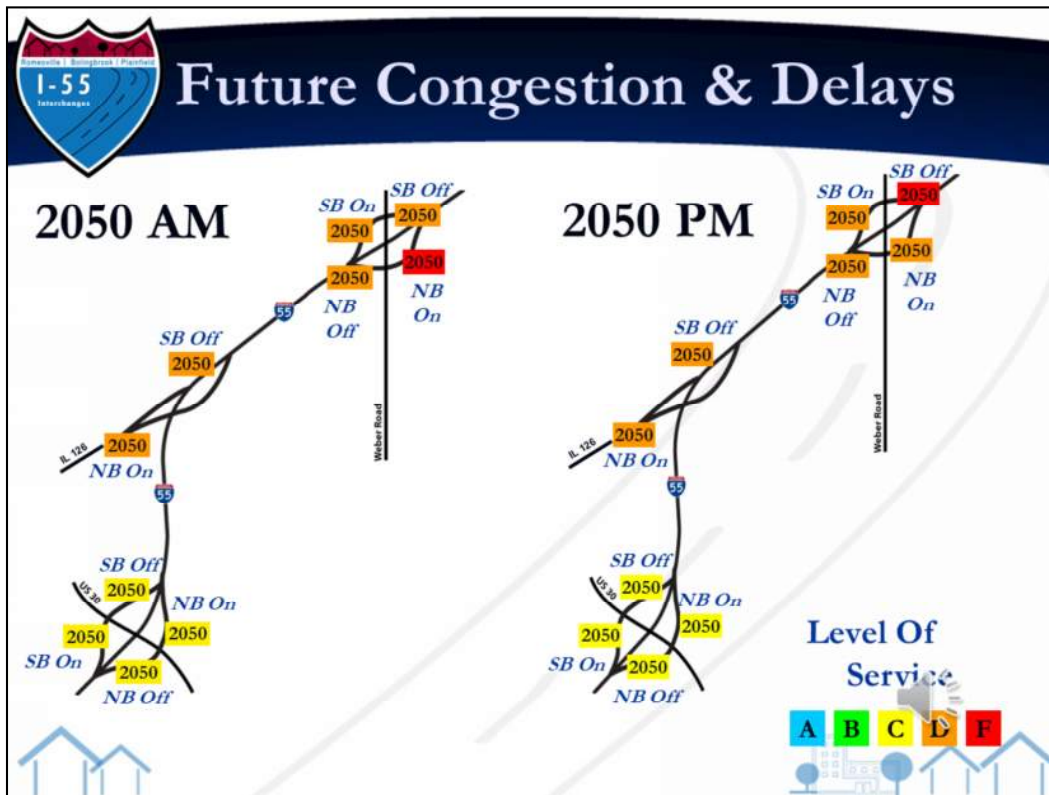
Level of Service Description

		<p><u>LOS A / B</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free flow / reasonably free flow • Ability to maneuver is only slightly restricted • Effects of minor incidents still easily absorbed
		<p><u>LOS C / D</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable flow / approaching unstable flow • Freedom to maneuver is restricted / limited • Queues may form behind any major blockage • Speeds decline slightly with increasing flows
		<p><u>LOS E / F</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unstable flow / forced or break down in flow • Near capacity / Over capacity • No usable gaps in flow • Any disruption causes queuing


It is important to note how the level of traffic is defined. The amount of traffic on a facility, or level of service, is rated on a scale from A to F. LOS A and B indicates at or near free flow traffic. LOS C and D begin to approach unstable flows

LOS E indicates at near capacity operations with traffic flow beginning to break down while LOS F is gridlock.




As previously noted, access is limited within the six-mile segment of I-55 between the US 30 and the Weber Road interchanges. There is no southbound entrance or northbound exit available for motorists.


If no improvements are made, the 2050 traffic projections and the evaluation of future traffic operations indicate that the existing interchanges at IL 126 and Weber Road will experience congestion and will not operate at an acceptable level of service impeding access to I-55.



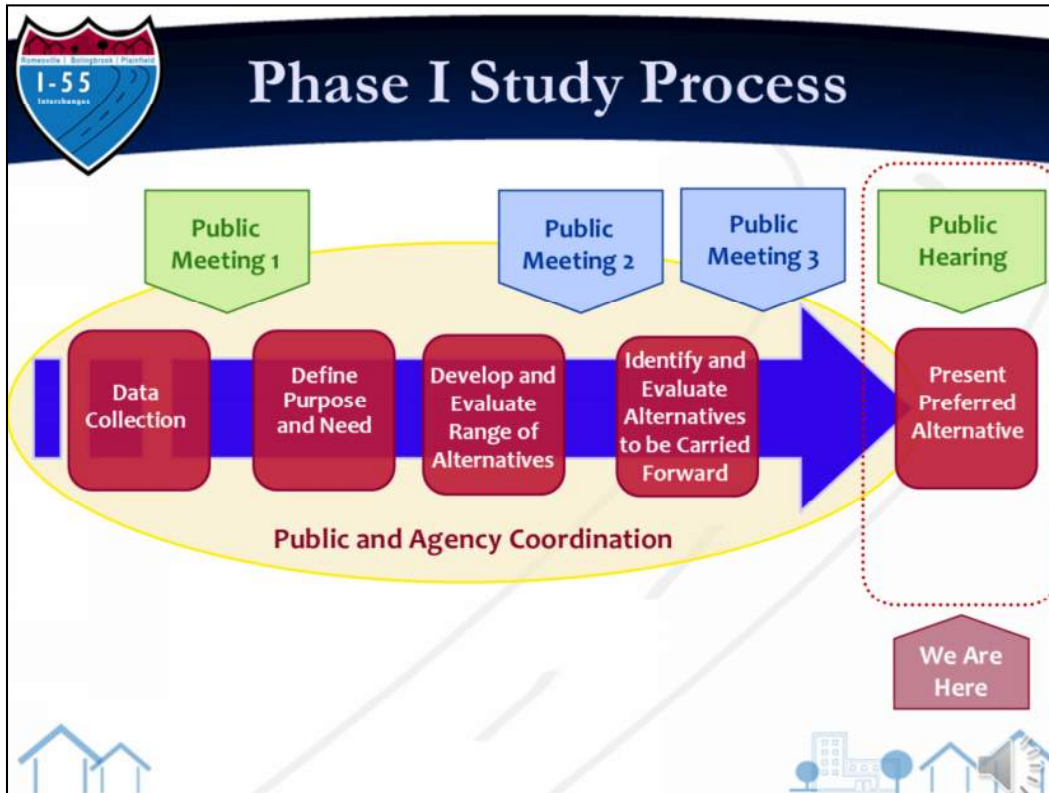
Purpose & Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to **provide improved access to I-55.**

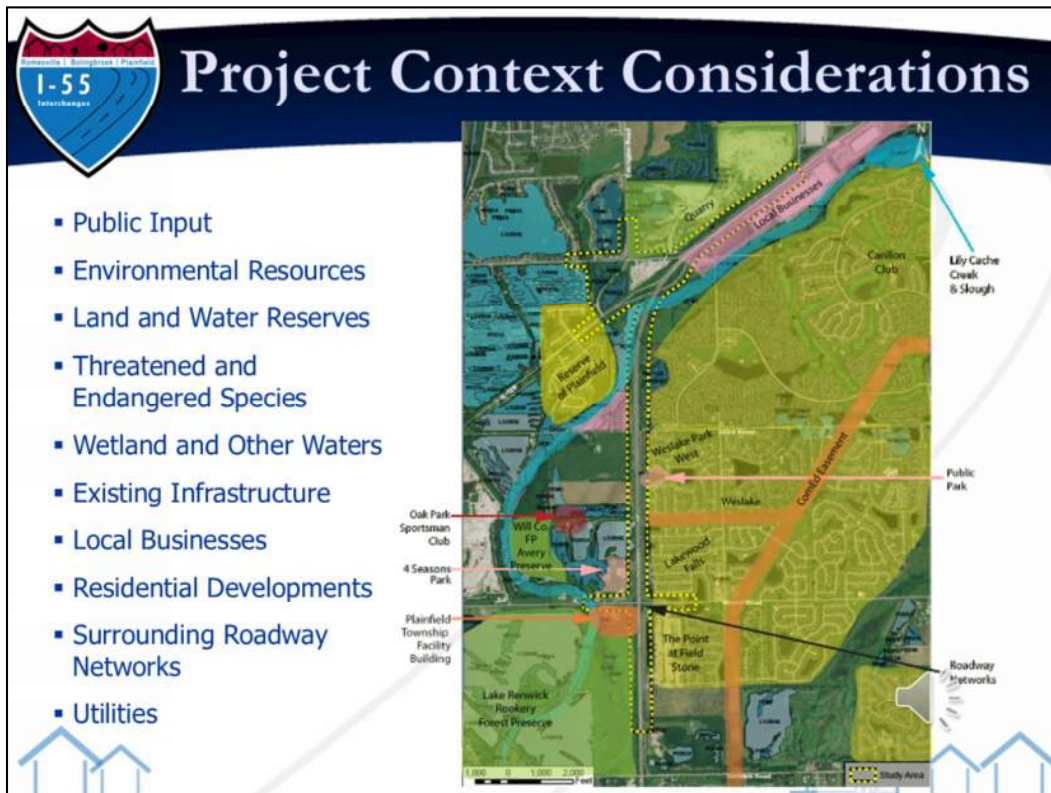
Please visit www.airportand126study.com for the  Full Purpose & Need report.



The purpose of the project is to provide improved access to I-55. Enhancement of regional and local connectivity between the three communities and throughout the northwest Will County area will be a secondary benefit of the project that will accommodate projected growth.



Throughout the course of the study, a number of alternatives were developed and evaluated. These alternatives and the analysis findings were presented to the stakeholders at public meeting 2 and 3. * Let's have a brief look at what that process looked like...



Many factors were considered throughout the study process that affected the interchange designs. Some of these factors included public input, environmental resources such as land and water reserves, threatened & endangered species, wetlands and other waters, as well as existing infrastructure like local businesses, residential developments, the surrounding roadway networks, and utilities



Approximately 30 alternatives were developed and underwent two rounds of screening. During these two rounds, the alternatives were screened for impacts to the Lake Renwick Land & Water Reserve, a federally protected land, followed by screening for impacts to natural resources, public lands, and potential for residential and business displacements. These screenings resulted in five alternatives to be carried forward for further evaluation and were presented to interested stakeholders at the third public meeting.



Alternatives to be Carried Forward

IL 126 Alternatives:

- Alt 16 – IL 126 Full Access
- Alt 28 – IL 126 Diamond
- Alt 29 – IL 126 Flyover

Airport Rd / Lockport St Alternatives:

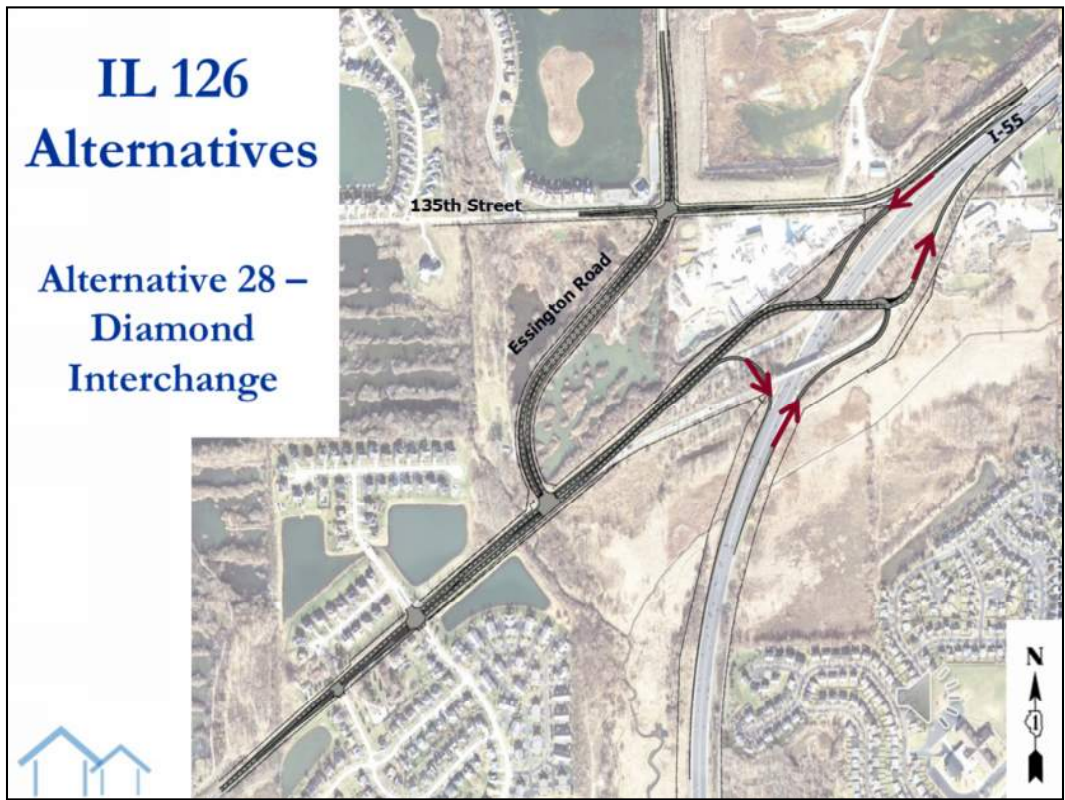
- Alt 5 – Airport Road Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI)
- Alt 30 – Airport Road Dog Bone



Of the five alternatives remaining under consideration, there are two possible locations for interchange improvements – IL 126 and Airport Road/Lockport Street. As shown, 1. three of these alternatives refer to improving the IL 126 interchange while 2. two alternatives refer to a new interchange at Airport Road/Lockport Street. Let's take a closer look



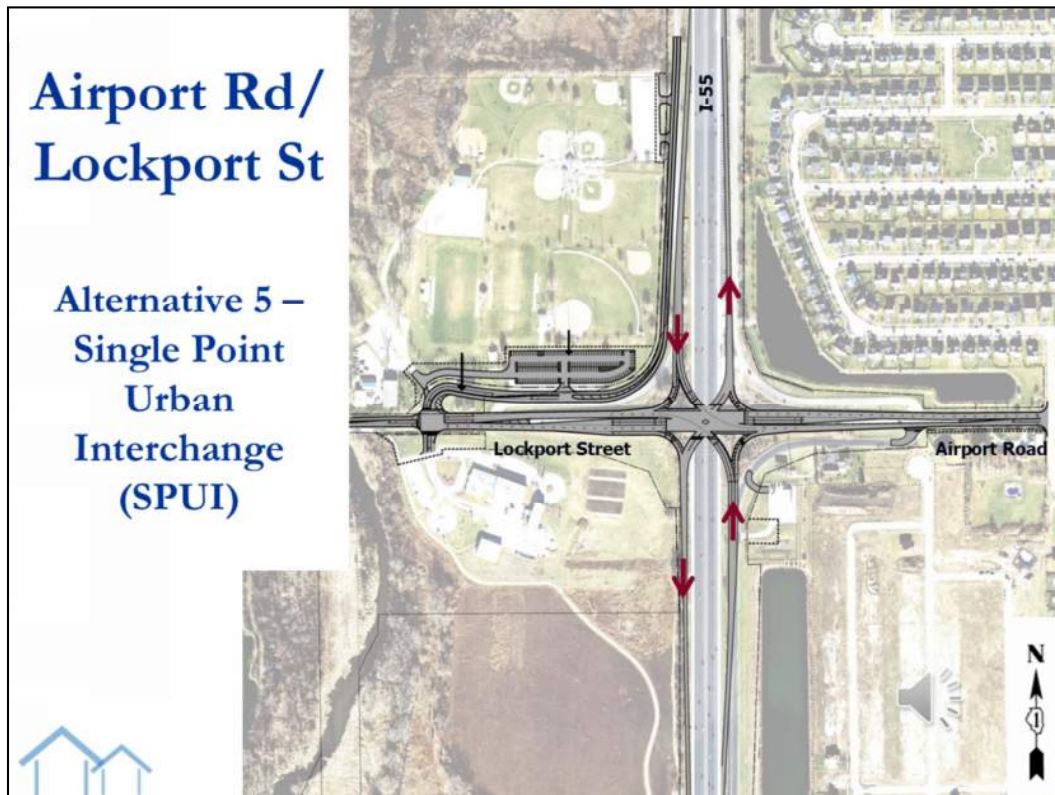
Starting at IL 126, Alternative 16 proposes a Full Access Interchange which would maintain existing ramp access to and from northbound I-55 and * would add new ramps providing access from the intersection of IL 126 and Essington Road to southbound I-55.



Alternative 28 proposes a Diamond Interchange at IL 126. * This alternative would realign ramps to and from northbound I-55 and would provide new ramp access to and from southbound I-55.



Alternative 29 proposes a flyover interchange at IL 126. * This alternative would realign ramps to and from northbound I-55 and would provide new ramp access to and from southbound I-55.



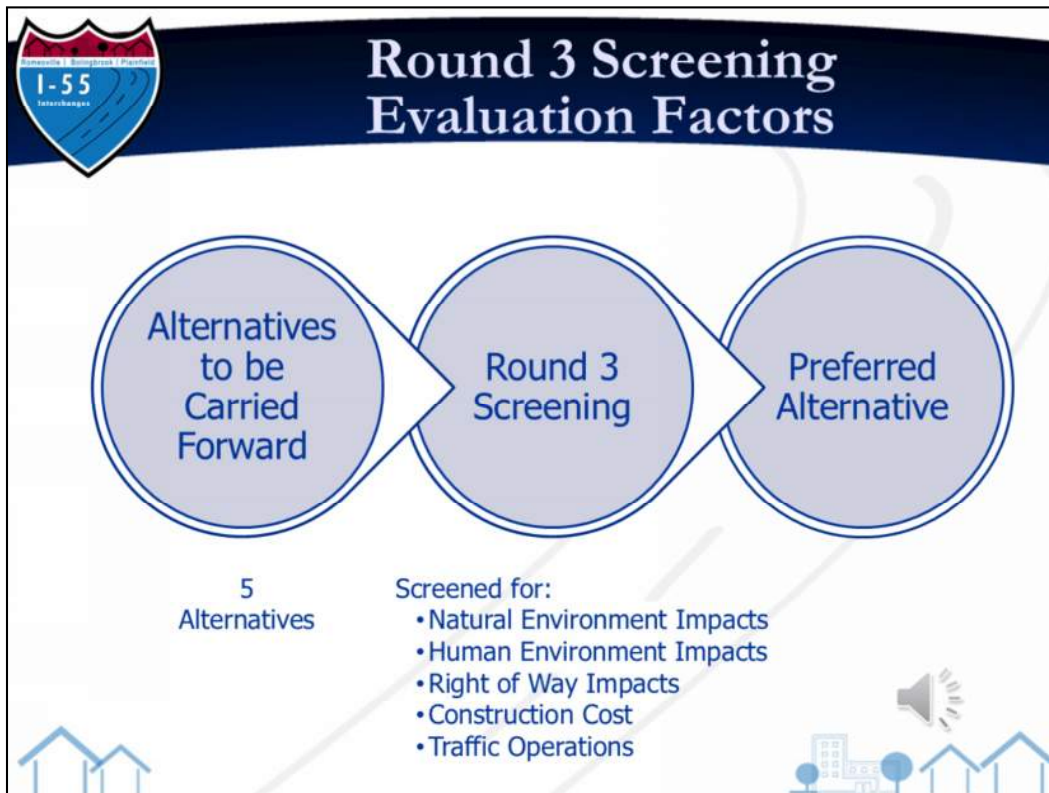
Airport Rd/ Lockport St

Alternative 5 –
Single Point
Urban
Interchange
(SPUI)

Moving to Airport Road/Lockport Street, Alternative 5 is a Single Point Urban Interchange, or a SPUI. * The SPUI would provide access to and from I-55 in the northbound and southbound directions with ramps that intersect Airport Road at a signalized intersection.



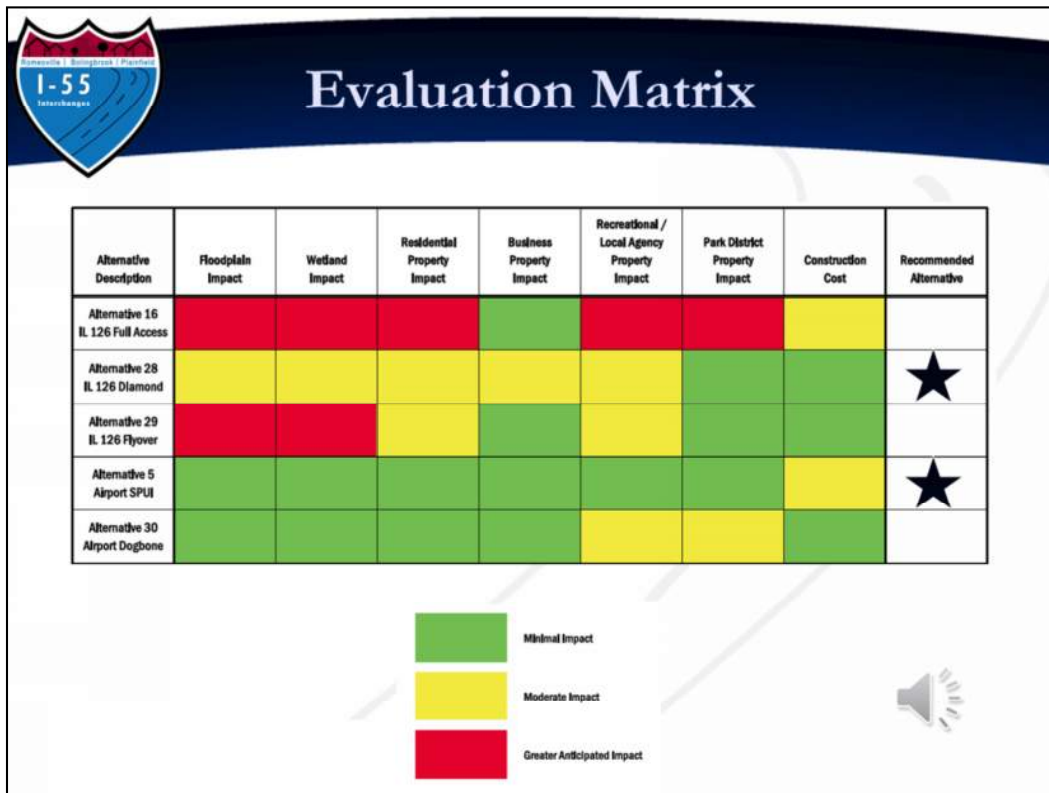
The second alternative located at Airport Road/Lockport Street is Alternative 30, the Dog Bone Interchange.* The dogbone alternative would provide access to and from I-55 in the northbound and southbound directions, however, instead of using traffic signals for traffic control, the interchange will operate with two roundabouts.



These five interchange alternatives were evaluated during the Round 3 screening process considering their effects on:

- The Natural Environment, including waters of the US, threatened and endangered species, and public parks
- The Human Environment, including residential and business impacts
- The Total Area of Land to be Acquired,
- The Estimated Construction Cost &
- Traffic Operations


The results of the Round 3 Screening determined the Preferred Alternative.



An evaluation matrix was developed to display the findings of the Round 3 screening process.


At IL 126, Alternative 16, the full access interchange, was eliminated due to major impacts to the wetlands and floodplain. Alternatives 28, the diamond interchange, and 29, the flyover interchange, have similar project costs and similar right of way requirements, but Alternative 29 has more impacts to floodplains and Waters of the U.S. Based on the screening and analysis, Alternative 28 was chosen as the preferred alternative at IL 126.

For the two alternatives considered at Airport Road/Lockport Street, Alternative 5, the single point urban interchange, had fewer impacts to the Four Seasons Park and required less right of way from the Plainfield Township property but had a higher construction cost than Alternative 30, the dogbone interchange. Alternative 5 also had slightly less impact to floodplains and wetlands as well less right of way needed within the streambank of Lily Cache Creek. Therefore, Alternative 5 was chosen as the preferred alternative at the Airport Road/Lockport Street location.



Evaluation of Traffic One vs. Two Interchanges

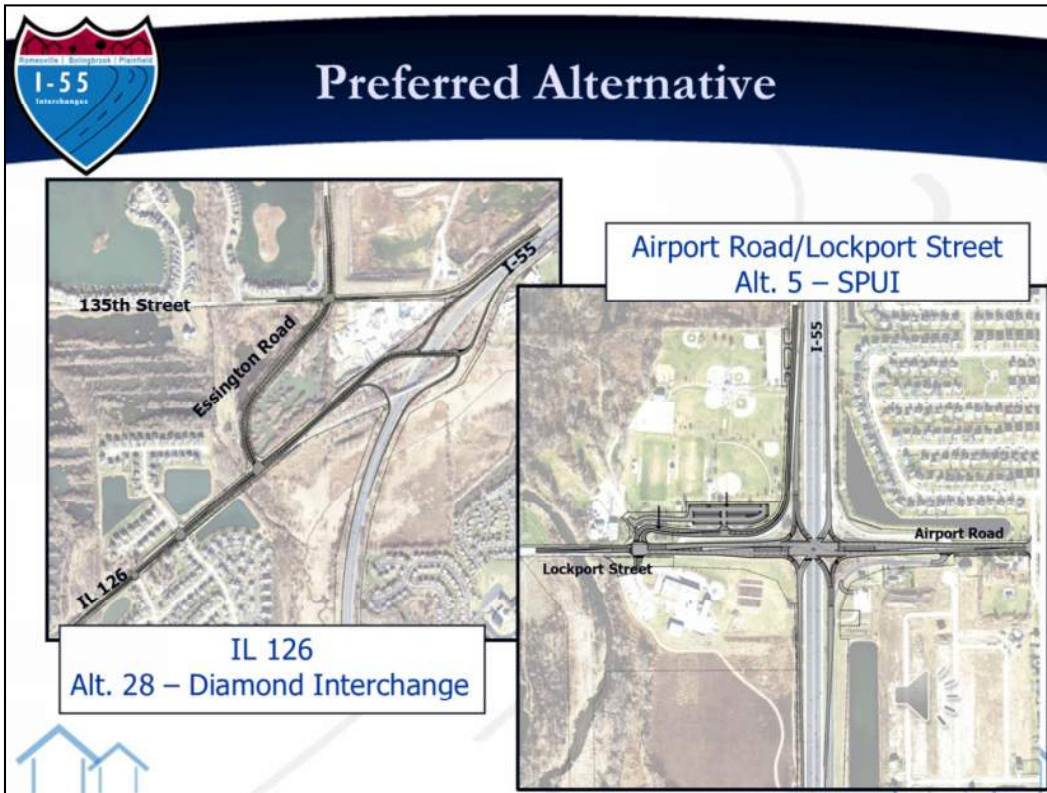
- One Interchange:
 - Access NOT Improved for ALL THREE Communities
- Two Interchanges:
 - Serve Higher Travel Demand
 - Better Serve Projected Regional Growth
 - Disperse I-55 Access for More Consistent Traffic Flow on Mainline



The final step of round 3 screening considered traffic operations and the adequacy of meeting travel demand for the local and regional area. This step also evaluated if one or two interchanges would meet these needs.

When considering a one or two interchange improvement...

- One interchange does not provide improved access for all three communities. An interchange at IL 126 does not improve access to and from the east side of I-55, while an interchange at Airport Road/Lockport Street does not improve access to and from the north side of IL 126.
- Based on future projections analyzed for the various interchange scenarios, two interchanges would serve a higher travel demand and better serve the projected regional growth
- Additionally, two interchanges increase the number of I-55 access points promoting more consistent traffic volumes on I-55 within the study area.



The selected preferred alternative proposes to construct both interchanges, Alternative 28 at IL 126 and Alternative 5 at Airport Road/Lockport Street.



Preferred Alternative

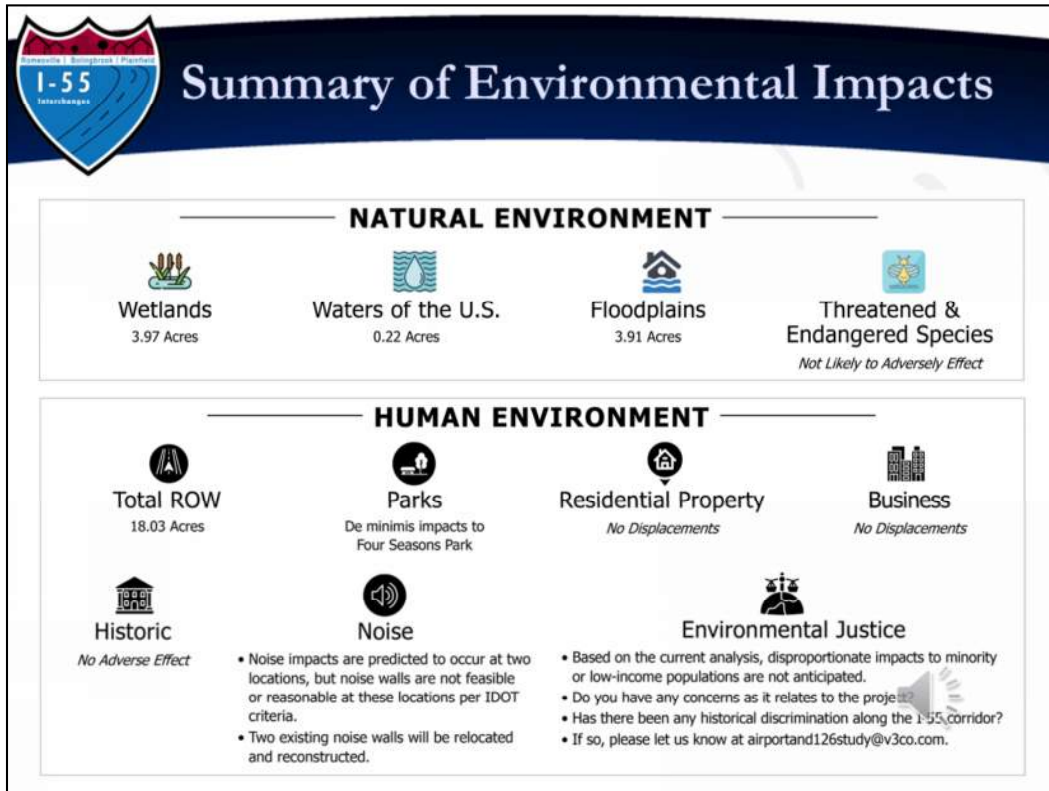
Alt. 28 – Diamond Interchange at IL 126
AND

Alt. 5 – SPUI at Airport Road/Lockport Street

- Least Impacts to **Four Seasons Park**
- Lesser **Wetland Impacts**
- Lesser Area of **Right-of-Way** to be Acquired
- Serves Projected **Traffic Demand** and **Regional Population/Employment Growth**



Based on the analyses conducted, this interchange combination will have the least impacts to Four Seasons Park, lesser wetland impacts, lesser Right of way to be acquired, and will also serve projected travel demand and regional growth



The proposed improvement will result in the following impacts to the natural environment:

3.97 acres of wetlands, 0.22 acres of Waters of the US, and 3.91 acres of floodplains

The improvement is NOT likely to adversely effect any threatened and endangered species.

Impacts to the human environment are as follows:

The total right of way required is approximately 18 acres.

There are only de minimis impacts to Four Seasons Park

There are no residential displacements or business displacements

And no adverse effects to historic properties.

Noise impacts are predicted to occur at two locations, but noise walls are not feasible or reasonable at these locations per IDOT criteria. However, Two existing noise walls near Airport Road will be relocated and reconstructed as they are in conflict with the proposed interchange ramps.

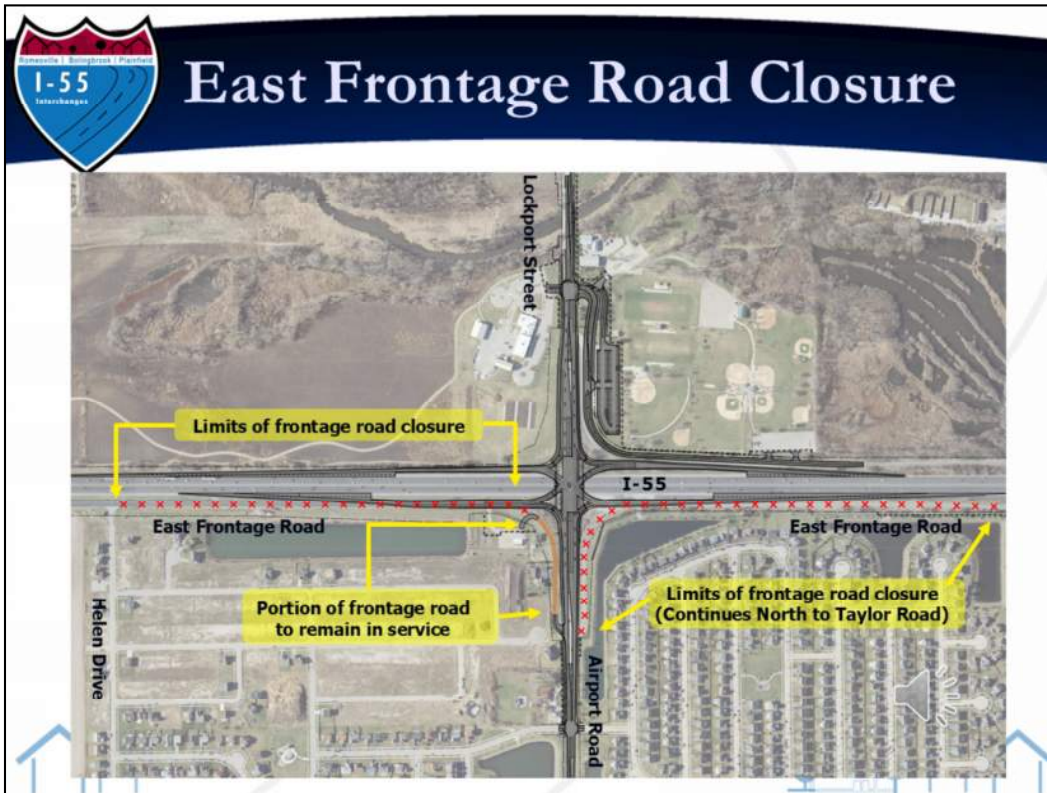
Lastly, Based on the current analysis, disproportionate impacts to minority or low-income populations are not anticipated.



Even though the preferred alternative was determined to have the least impacts overall, it is important to note its de minimis impacts to Four Seasons Park. A de minimis impact is one that doesn't negatively affect the property's features, activities, or attributes.

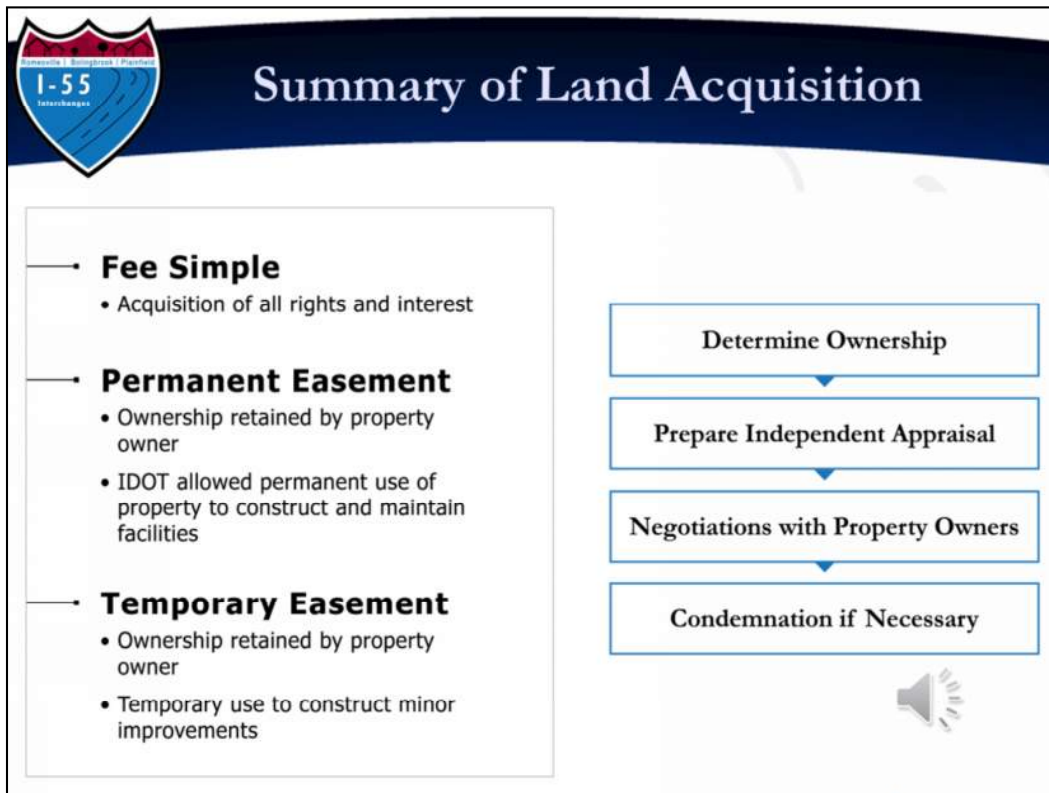
The realignment of the West Frontage Road near Lockport Street will require modifications at both the north and south parking lots for Four Seasons Park.

At the north parking lot, slight geometric adjustments to the entrances will be required, while at the south parking lot, the footprint of the lot will need to be shifted north and its entrance realigned. There would be no impacts to recreational uses or facilities in the park.



Additionally, the

- Preferred Alternative proposes the closing of the
- *East Frontage Road from approximately Helen Drive to Taylor Road. *The existing frontage road access to the north of Airport Road will be closed
- *while access to the south will be reconfigured to maintain access to two frontage road properties. Traffic utilizing Taylor Road and Helen Drive will still be able to access Airport Road via Budler Road, which has sufficient roadway capacity to accommodate Frontage Road traffic after its closure.



The Preferred Alternative will not be constructed completely within the existing right-of-way and therefore some land needs to be acquired. There are three main types of land acquisition – fee simple (or permanent acquisition), permanent easement and temporary easement.

Fee simple acquisition is defined as acquisition of all rights and interest in a piece of land. Most simply put, IDOT will purchase the land and transfer the title to the State.

Another type is a permanent easement. A permanent easement is when IDOT acquires use of the property to construct or maintain facilities such as underground drainage pipes, but ownership is retained by the original property owner

The last type is a temporary easement. With a temporary easement, IDOT acquires use of the property for a limited time to construct minor improvements, but ownership remains with the original property owner.



*At this time, this I-55 study is nearing the end of Phase I which is anticipated to conclude at the end of 2024.

*Upon its conclusion, the project will proceed to Phase II which is anticipated to take 24-36 months.

***Please note that all phases of this project, including Phase III - construction, are funded in IDOT's fiscal year 2025-2030 proposed highway improvement program.**

The graphic features a blue header with the text "Ways to Comment" in white. On the left is a shield-shaped logo with "1-55" and "Tasikmalaya" written on it. The main content is on a light blue background with a dotted border. It lists three ways to comment: submitting a form, talking to a court reporter, and visiting the website www.airportand126study.org or emailing airportand126study@v3co.com. An illustration of an envelope with a letter is shown to the right. At the bottom, it states that comments received by **October 16, 2024** will be part of the public hearing record, accompanied by a speaker icon.

We are looking for your input. Let us know what you think through any of the methods available.

*Included in the brochure is a form for submitting written comments.

The comment form can be submitted here today or mailed in at a later time.

*Verbal comments can be made to the court reporter stationed in the exhibit room.

*Comments can also be submitted electronically through the study website or by emailing us directly at the study email address.

Both the website and the email address are listed in the brochure.

*Any comments submitted by October 16, 2024 will become part of the official public hearing record.



Thank you for attending today's public hearing. Please proceed to the next room to view the displayed exhibits. Study team members are also available to discuss the project as well as answer any of your questions.

{Brief pause}

The presentation will begin again momentarily.