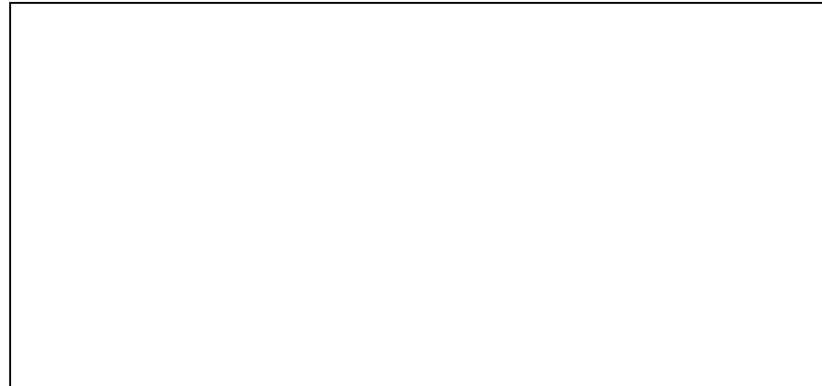


Polk County Public Works
5885 NE 14th Street
Des Moines, IA 50313

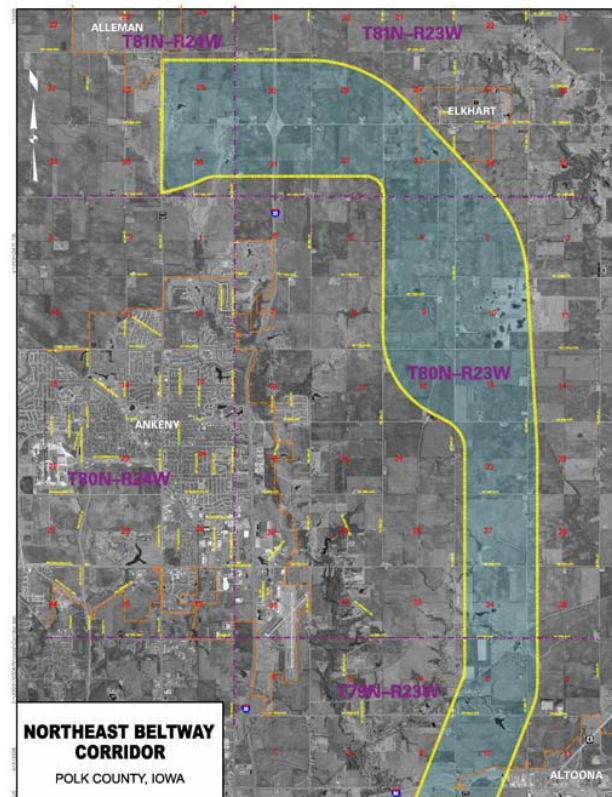
Mail to:



How You Can Participate

- Mail public comments to:

Polk County Public Works
5885 NE 14th Street
Des Moines, IA 50313
- Attend the Public Information Meeting on November 28, 2007 at the American Legion in Bondurant
- Review project documents on the project website
- Call Polk County Public Works with questions (515) 286-3705



<http://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/publicworks/Pages/neBeltway.aspx>

NORTHEAST BELTWAY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT PROJECT NEWSLETTER

Issue 1

Fall 2007

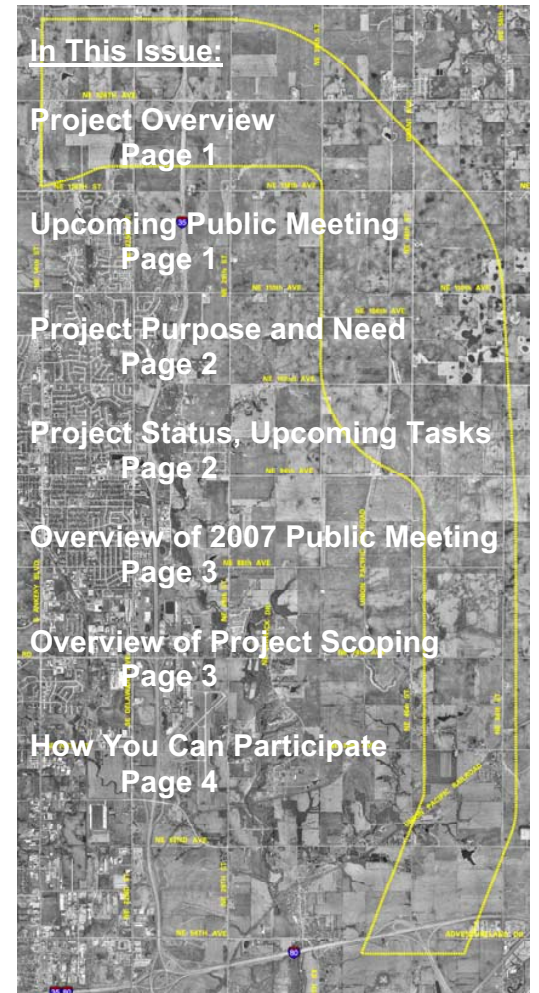
PROJECT OVERVIEW AND PROCESS

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Iowa Department of Transportation, and Polk County are joint lead agencies in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the East Segment of the Northeast Beltway.

The Northeast Beltway (East Segment) proposed action is a roadway beginning at the I-80/US 65 interchange in Altoona, extending to the north and west to terminate at US 69, north of Ankeny. The total length of the study corridor is approximately 12 miles.

Through the NEPA process, the EIS will determine any potential impacts from the proposed action, and propose mitigation or avoidance. The Northeast Beltway Environmental Impact Statement is in progress, with work officially beginning with the publication of the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register on March 8, 2006. Build and No Build Alternatives for the Northeast Beltway are currently being analyzed.

This newsletter is the first issued for the project, with additional newsletters to be released throughout the project planning process.



NOVEMBER PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

Wednesday, November 28, 2007, 5:30 – 7:30 PM
American Legion Post 396
Bondurant, Iowa

The meeting will be a forum for public review and comment on potential build and no build alternatives for the proposed Northeast Beltway. Please plan to attend this meeting to voice your opinions, and to help shape Polk County's future. If you are unable to attend, please visit the project website for meeting handouts and other project information.

Please visit the Northeast Beltway Project Website for more information:
<http://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/publicworks/Pages/neBeltway.aspx>

Draft Project Purpose and Need Statement

The purpose of the Northeast Beltway is to provide efficient future traffic volume accommodations around the northeast portion of the Des Moines metro area in support of current and planned metropolitan area growth by:

- **Providing traffic congestion relief to regional transportation facilities in the northeast metro area.**
 - Adding linkage to the US 65/IA 5 circumferential route
 - Reduce traffic volumes on key corridors within the study area
 - Provide incident management alternatives for the Des Moines metropolitan area
- **Balancing growth and land development patterns in the Des Moines metropolitan area.**
 - Support anticipated growth of surrounding communities
 - Support metro area balanced growth

For the complete draft purpose and need statement, please visit the project website: <http://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/publicworks/Pages/neBeltway.aspx>

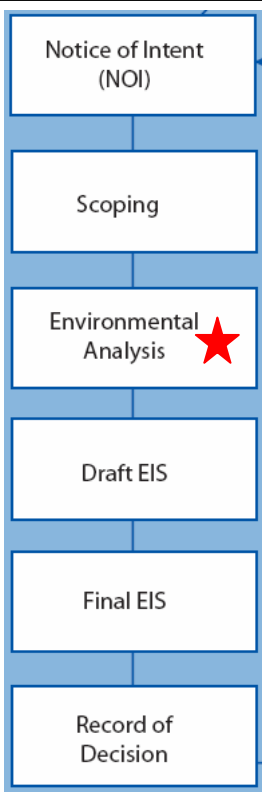
PROJECT STATUS

The Northeast Beltway EIS follows a work process established by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). A brief outline of major work tasks within the NEPA process is shown to the left.

PROJECT SCOPING: The Northeast Beltway EIS is in the scoping phase of the EIS process, as shown to the left. The scoping phase of the EIS process collects input regarding the proposed project from regulatory agencies, member governments, the community, and others.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS: The Northeast Beltway EIS work has progressed to early identification of potential impacts to biotic communities, threatened and endangered species, bicycles and pedestrians, socioeconomic factors, environmental justice, wetlands, and more.

WHAT'S NEXT: Build, no-build, and modified no-build alternatives have been identified for the Northeast Beltway area. The November Public Information Meeting will be vital for collecting public opinion regarding build and no build alternatives. The Build and No-Build alternatives will later progress into the identification of specific build alternatives. *Specific alternatives will be reviewed for potential impacts after the alternatives are presented for public review and comment, tentatively in early 2008.*



EIS Process Overview

INITIAL PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING SUMMARY: June 28, 2006

An initial public information meeting for this project was held June 28, 2006, with approximately 60 people in attendance. The meeting was a forum for initial public input, and disseminated the project purpose and need statement and study area to the public. A variety of public comments were elicited from the public meeting, as seen below.

Summary of Initial Public Information Meeting Comments

- The NE Beltway would spur economic development needed to balance the metro's western fringe growth.
- Some viewed Northeast Beltway as a "road to nowhere," saying that economic stimulation is not a need to build a road (completed East Segment of the NE Beltway will connect US 65 to IA 415)
- Residents state that existing roads in area are underused by local traffic (the project will benefit regional traffic flows from the Interstate system)
- Prime farmland should be protected.
- More extensive public input should be sought; area residents are not all in favor of the NE Beltway.
- Project should be constructed to accommodate projected increased traffic in the metro area.
- Expansion of multimodal transportation systems could be encouraged in lieu of new roads.
- Some citizens do not support the growing population concentration in the Des Moines metro area as compared to the state.
- The completed NE Beltway will benefit Polk City, which has grown 22% in the last five years and does not have an efficient transportation system.
- NE Beltway should utilize existing roads as much as possible.
- Project alternatives should avoid Paul Errington Marsh.

AGENCY SCOPING MEETING: September 26, 2007

An agency scoping meeting was held on September 26, 2007 at Snyder & Associates in Ankeny. The agency scoping meeting is a formal coordination process, determining the range of issues studied, and significant resources related to the proposed action.

The focus of the meeting is to gather agency concerns and information about project area resources. An overview of project methodologies was presented. The scoping meeting resulted in various agency comments, including:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) suggested that Polk County develop more detailed land use plans for the Northeast Beltway corridor before the corridor location is planned (the Northeast Beltway is currently a preserved corridor in the comprehensive plan).
- NRCS noted there are several privately owned wetlands in the study area that should be analyzed in the EIS.
- Iowa DNR requested that the Northeast Beltway be distanced from the Paul Errington Marsh to accommodate marsh burns for maintenance.
- USACE requested that impacts to Saylorville Lake with the west segment of the NE Beltway be discussed as cumulative impacts in the east segment EIS.
- USACE and FHWA discussed cumulative impacts as related to the West Segment and right-of-way acquisition needed to preserve the West Segment of the Northeast Beltway.