

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP (CAG) MEETING #2

Decatur Bridge

STP-51-7(109); CN 32395

APRIL 25, 2024, 1:00 – 4:00 P.M.

Thank you, CAG representatives!

Role of the CAG

- Provide insights and feedback
- Share information with your networks, friends, neighbors

Selection of CAG Members

- Cross-section of local interests in both Nebraska and Iowa

Responsibility of CAG Members

- Actively participate in meetings
- Be respectful of opposing views and allow all participants a chance to speak

Public Access to CAG Meetings

- Meeting materials and summaries posted to project website: ndot.info/32395

Today's Meeting Goals

- Review what we heard from CAG#1
- Review key findings of community survey (Feb. 1 – Mar. 15)
- Inform the project Need
- Inform the project Purpose
- Explain the screening process
- Inform the development of performance areas
- Next steps and schedule

Agenda

1:00 – 1:10 PM

1:10 – 1:30 PM

1:30 – 2:00 PM

2:00 – 2:15 PM

2:15 – 2:45 PM

2:45 – 3:15 PM

3:15 – 3:45 PM

3:45 – 4:00 PM

CAG #2 Meeting

Welcome & Introductions

Summary of CAG# 1 / Community Survey Findings

DRAFT Purpose & Need

15-minute Break

Screening Process

Typical Sections and Initial Alignments

Break

Next Steps

RECAP CAG#1



CAG #1 KEY THEMES

NEED FOR A BRIDGE

- Provides **vital connectivity** and **quality-of-life benefits** to both communities
- Access to **healthcare** was top of mind for nearly all participants
- Both states support each other with **emergency services** and mutual aid
- Several Decatur **essential needs** and **economic opportunities** exist in Onawa/IA

EXISTING BRIDGE DEFICIENCIES

- The existing bridge is considered **too narrow** for semi-trucks and farm equipment
- Existing bridge **load requirements** are lower than current standards
- The **open-grate decking** can be unnerving for some

CAG #1 KEY THEMES, CONT.

BRIDGE LOCATION

- A new bridge should be as close as possible to the **existing location**
- Preference for a new bridge being located on the **north side** (upstream)
- Desire to continue to carry travelers through **Decatur downtown**

BRIDGE CLOSURES AND DETOURS

- A bridge closure, especially for an extended period, would be **damaging to both Decatur and Onawa communities**
- A **short-term closure** could be acceptable, but there is a strong need to keep access open through construction for as long as possible
- Prefer a closure to occur during the **winter months**, when the campground is closed

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

Community Survey by the Numbers

- Total completed 'simple' surveys: **1,092**
 - Online: **973**
 - Hard-copies: **119**
- Map pin drops: **87**
- Unique visitors to the webpage: **3,500+**
- Email sign ups: **164**

Most respondents (58%) learned about the survey through social media; 20% indicated word of mouth. A few noted radio and television.

DECATUR BRIDGE

How do you travel and why?

1. How often do you travel across the Decatur Bridge?

- ☐ Less than 6 times a year
- ☐ 6 to 12 times a year
- ☐ 1 to 4 times a month
- ☐ 4 or more times per week

2. What is the primary purpose of your trip? Select only the top 3.

- ☐ Work
- ☐ School/Education/Daycare
- ☐ Healthcare
- ☐ Personal errands (groceries, salon/barber, veterinary care)
- ☐ Entertainment (dining, shopping, etc.)
- ☐ Family/friends
- ☐ Other (describe)

3. How do you typically travel across the bridge? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Personal vehicle
- ☐ Carpool/Rideshare/Casino van
- ☐ Public transit/On-demand
- ☐ Large truck or semi
- ☐ Farm equipment
- ☐ Other (describe)

Decatur Bridge Short Survey – Return by March 15, 2024

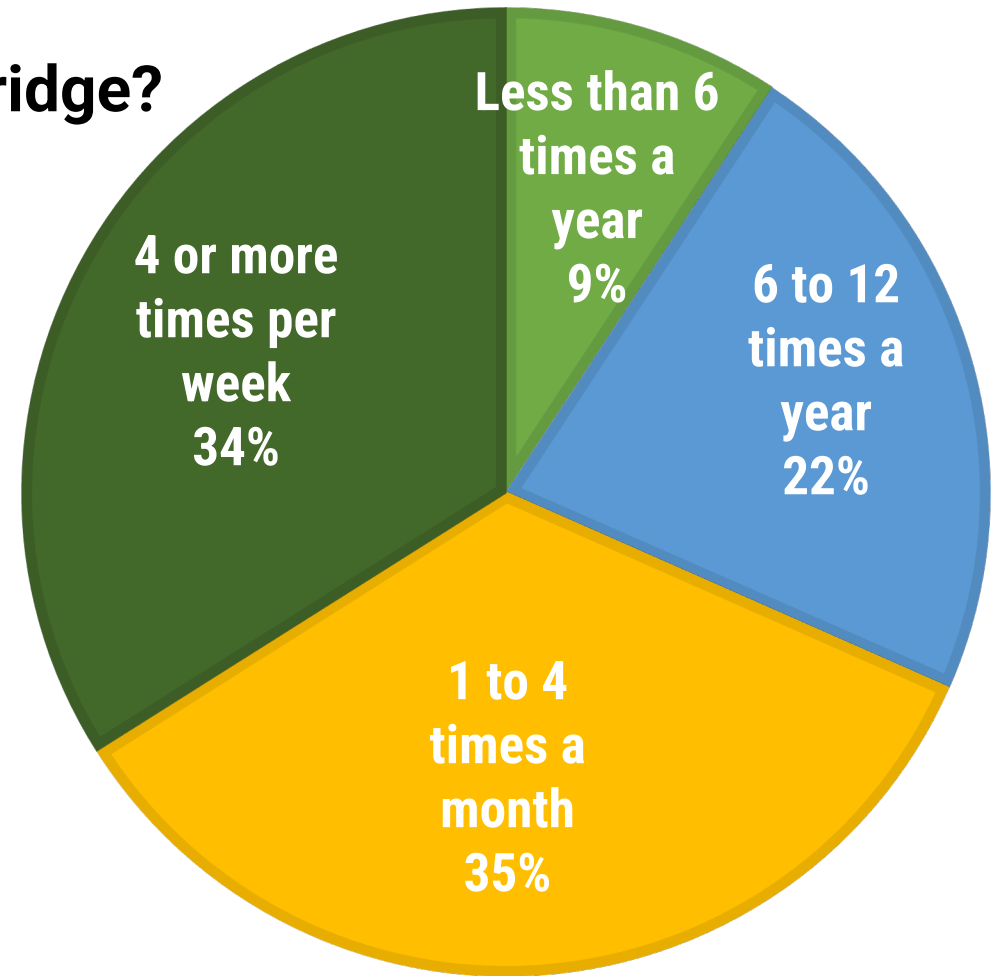
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Survey: Key Takeaways

How often do you travel across the Decatur Bridge?

*Every respondent indicated they travel via personal vehicle.
Additional modes are listed below.*

Travel Mode	Responses
Personal vehicle	1055
Carpool/Rideshare/Casino van	47
Public transit/On-demand	8
Large truck or semi	100
Farm equipment	72
Other: motorcycle, camper/RV, work vehicle	36

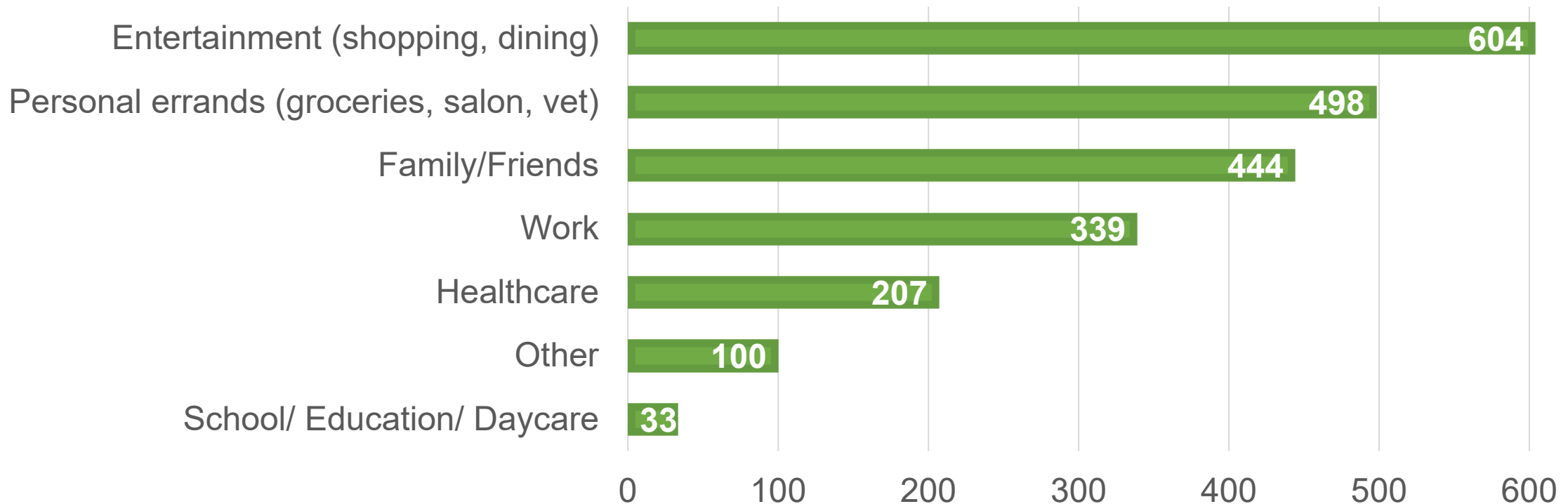


Survey: Key Takeaways

What is the primary purpose of your trip?

Participants were asked to select their top three.

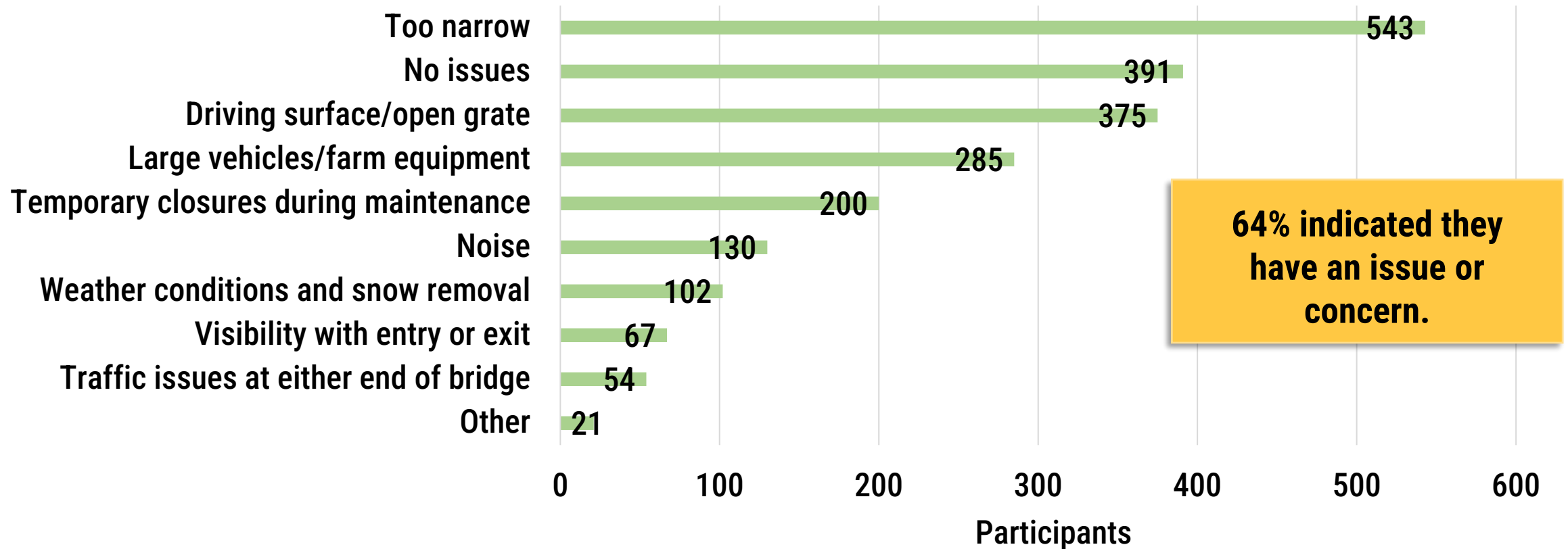
- Top “other” responses included:
- Recreation (camping, fishing, etc.)
 - Accessing Property
 - Church
 - Joyriding/Cruising



Survey: Key Takeaways

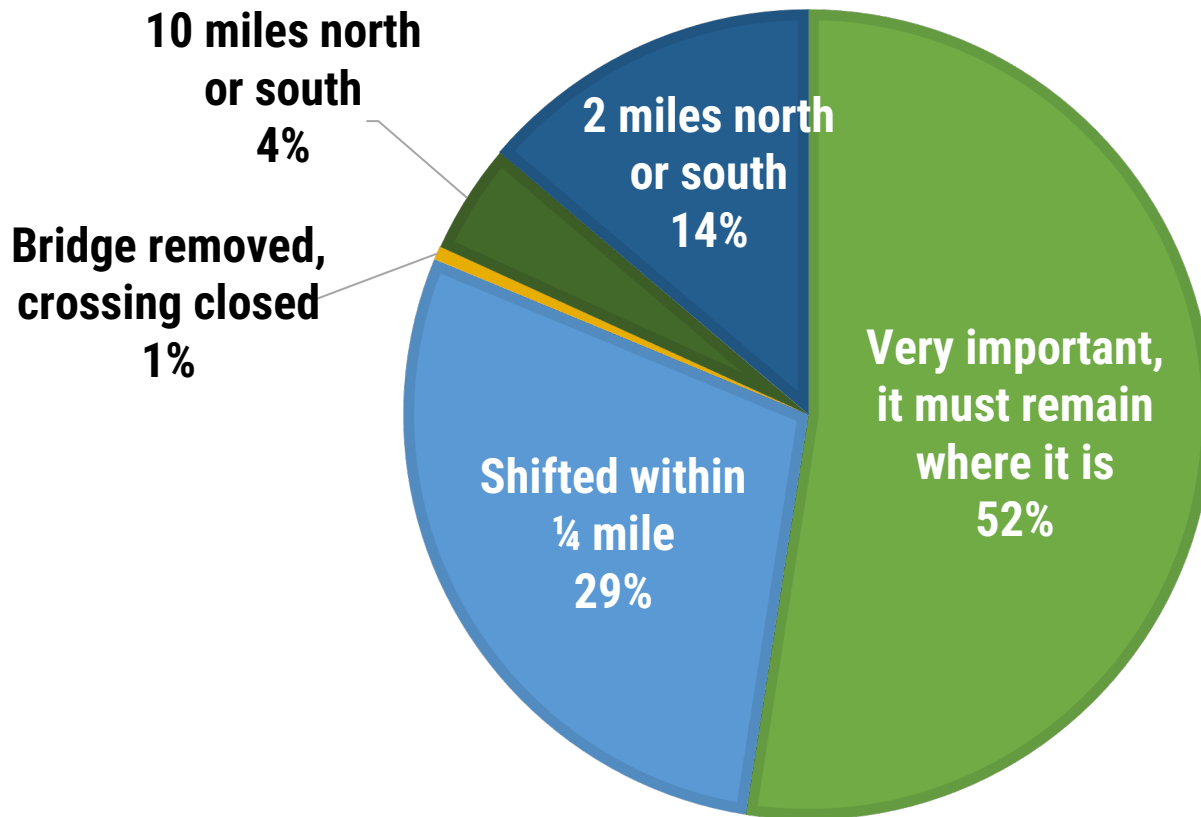
Do you have any of the following issues or concerns using the existing bridge?

Participants were asked to select all that apply.



Survey: Key Takeaways

How important is it the bridge be located at its existing location?



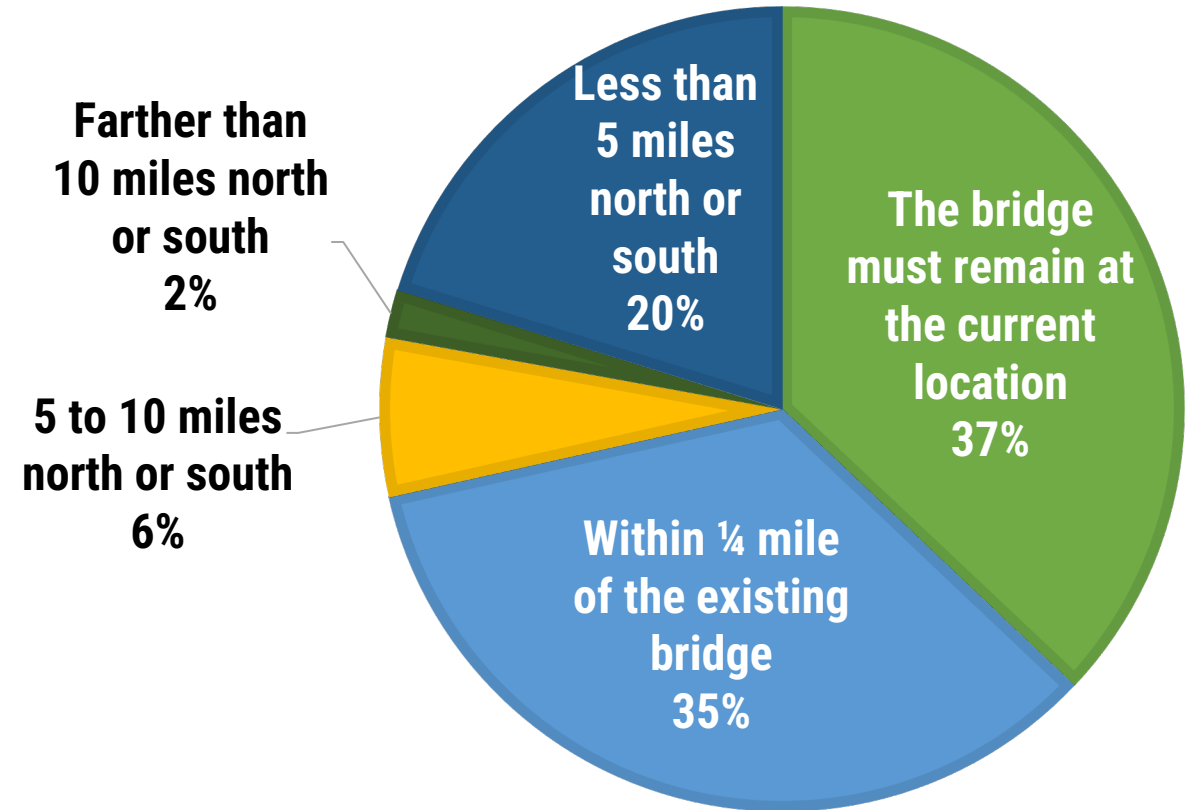
Any area developments planned or potential opportunities that may impact bridge location or design?



Survey: Key Takeaways

How far would you be willing to travel from the existing bridge to cross the river?

72% of respondents are willing to travel a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile or less to cross the river.

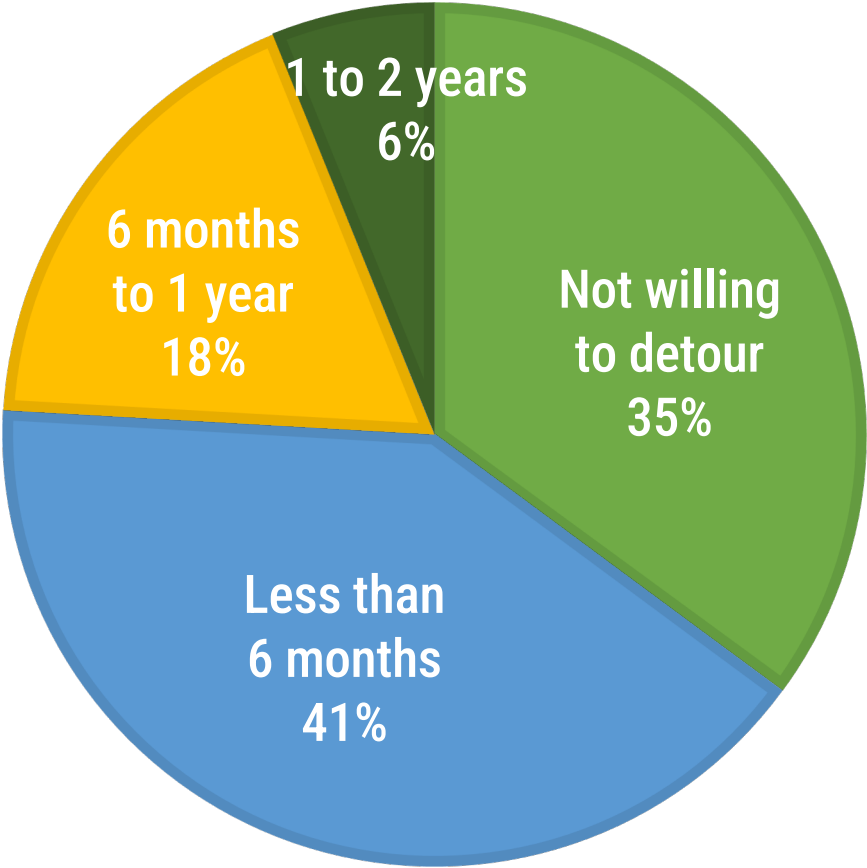
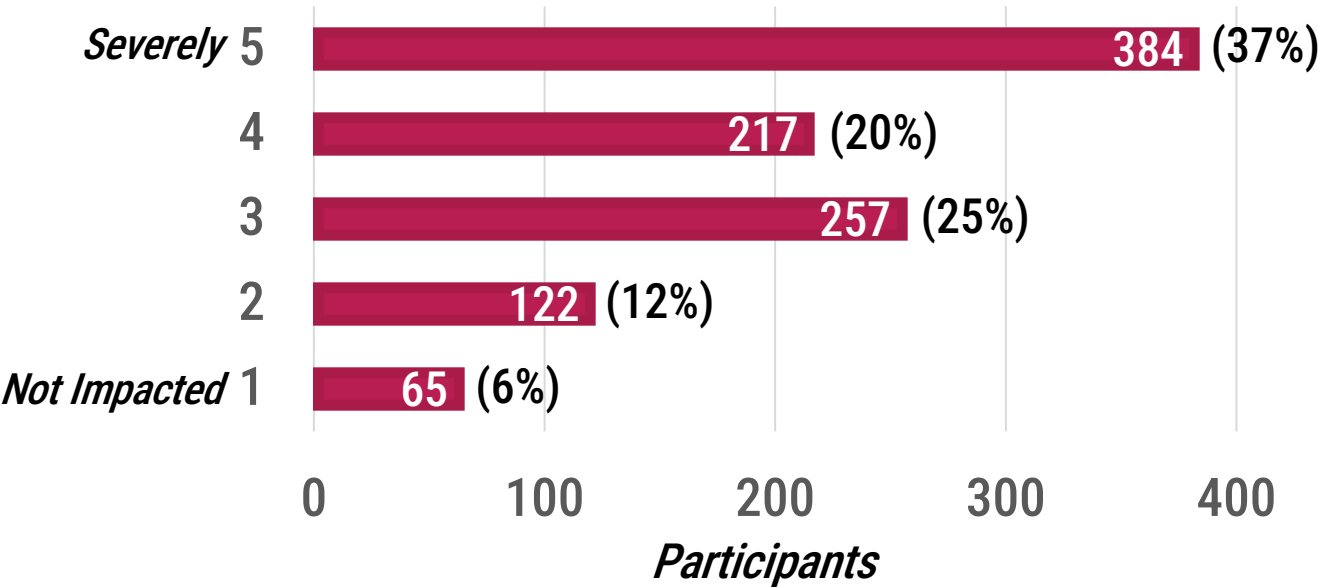


Survey: Key Takeaways

For how long would you be willing to detour if the bridge was *temporarily* closed?

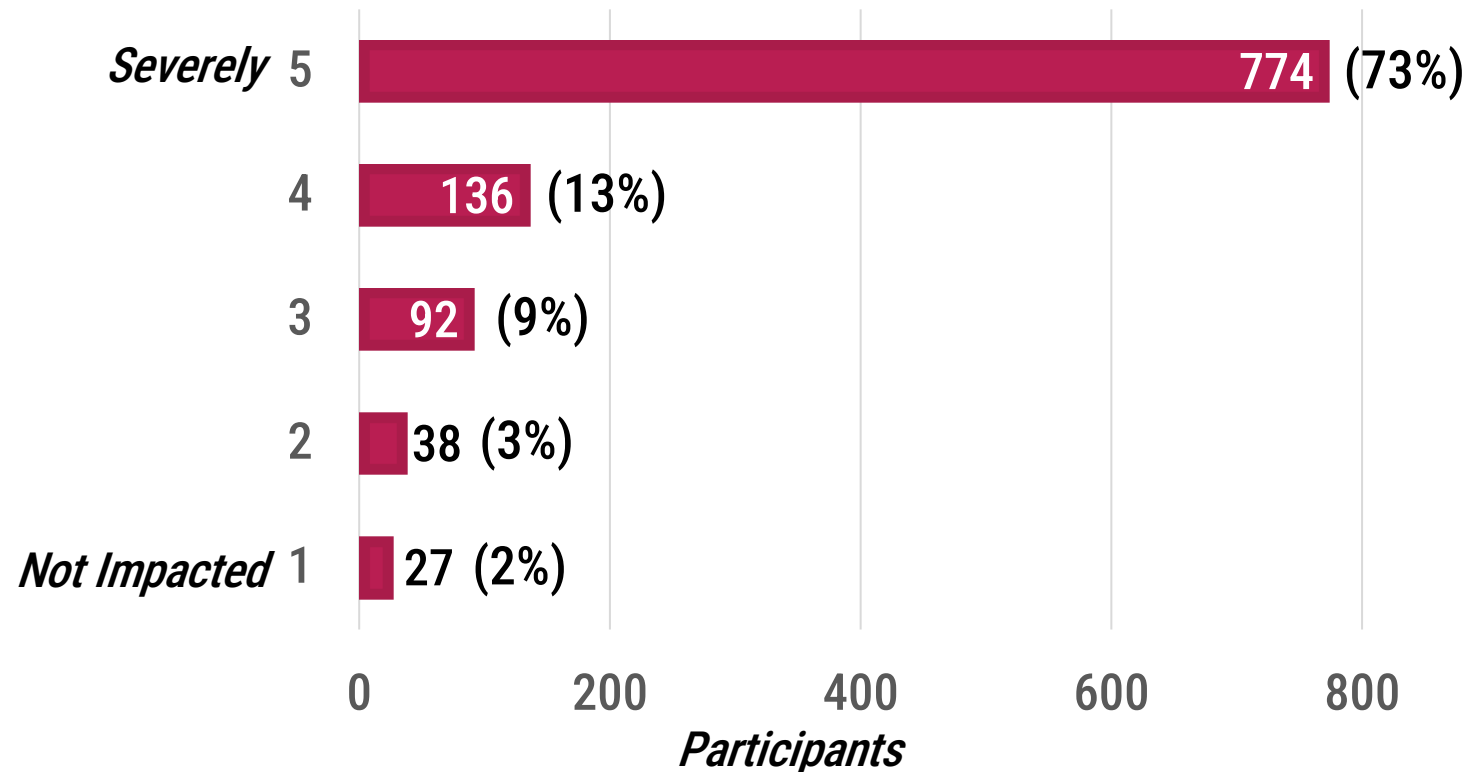
How severely would you be affected?

The average rating came in at 3.7 for all respondents.



Survey: Key Takeaways

If the bridge was permanently closed, how severely would you be affected?



Survey: Key Takeaways

Please share any hardships you would experience if the current bridge was closed or significantly moved. *This question received 511 responses.*

- Loss of employment due to additional time, money required to detour (36%)
 - Concerns of how a lengthy detour would affect employment.
- Access to healthcare would be reduced (26%)
 - Increased distance to doctor appointments, ambulance response times.
 - Including respondent's own health as well as family members under their care.

Survey: Key Takeaways

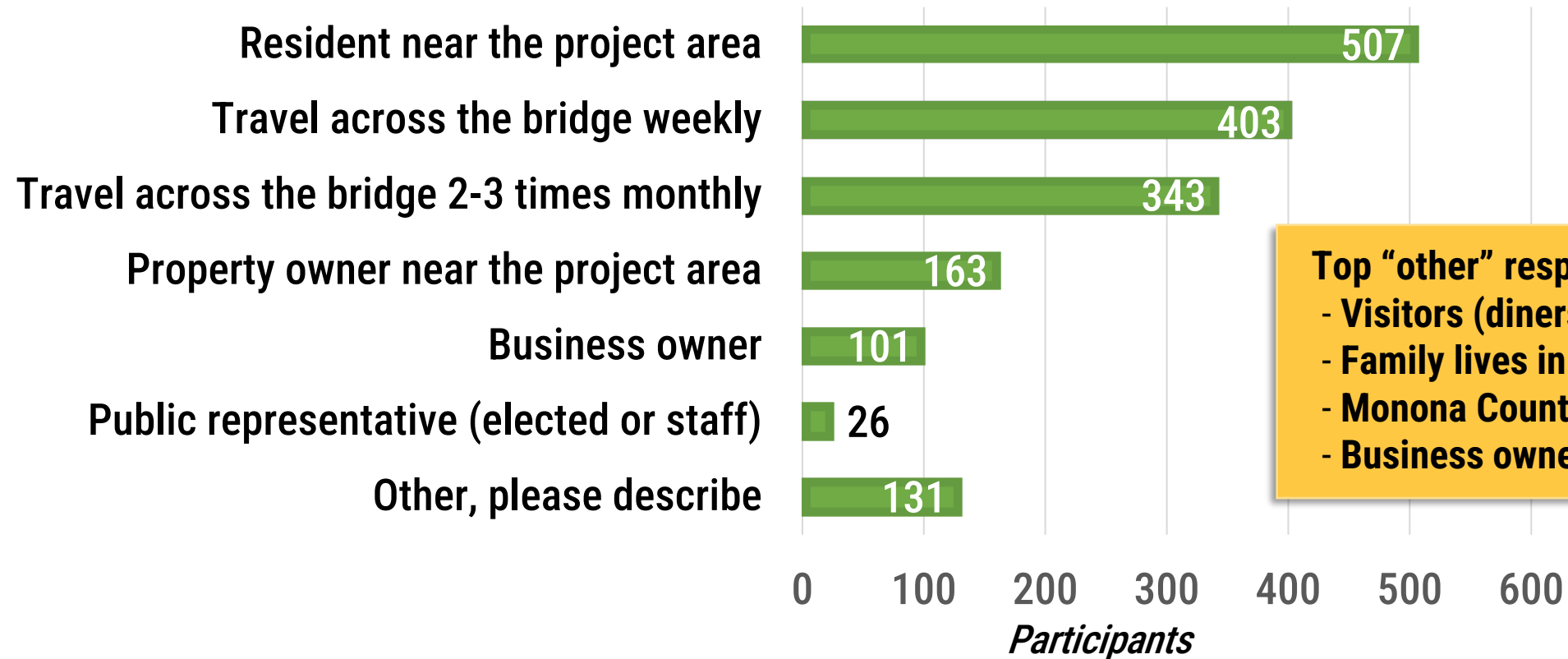
Please share any hardships you would experience if the current bridge was closed or significantly moved. *This question received 511 responses.*

- **Impact to families (26%)**
 - Concerns surrounding family relationships and support.
- **Additional detour costs would burden lower income community members**
 - Several respondents noted, again citing concerns of increased fuel costs.

Survey: Participant Overview

What is your interest in the Decatur Bridge project?

Participants were asked to select all that apply.



Top “other” responses included:

- Visitors (diners)
- Family lives in the area
- Monona County in support of Decatur
- Business owners

What is NEPA?

National Environmental Policy Act

NEPA requires Federal agencies, when planning projects or issuing permits, to conduct environmental reviews to **consider the potential impacts** of proposed actions **on human** and **natural environments**.

NEPA Decision-Making Process

PUBLIC AND AGENCY INPUT

Purpose
and
Need

Alternatives

Impacts

Preferred
Alternative

Mitigation

PURPOSE & NEED

The statement of the project Purpose and Need is the **core component** of the NEPA document.

It serves as **the benchmark against which project alternatives are evaluated.**

Identified Needs - DRAFT

**Need to Maintain
Connectivity**

**Need to Improve
Infrastructure Condition**

**Need to Improve
Resiliency Against Flooding**

Identified Needs - DRAFT

Need to Maintain Connectivity

- Existing crossing connects Decatur and Onawa area residents with services (employment, education, health care, emergency, recreation) on both sides of the river.
- Past long-term crossing closures negatively affected access to jobs and the overall regional economy.
- Crossing closures (short-term or long-term) require more than 80 miles of adverse, out-of-direction travel, adding excessive travel time to and from Decatur.
- Maintain agricultural producer access to regional markets to support commerce and the area's economic development goals

Identified Needs - DRAFT

Need to Improve Infrastructure Condition

- **Existing Bridge Condition**

- 73-years-old with age-related structural deterioration that needs to be addressed
- Nine (9) major structural repair projects (not including maintenance repairs), most recent major repair completed in 2017; new deterioration issues have developed since 2017 that require attention; ongoing and annual maintenance required

- **Existing Bridge Deficiencies**

- Lacks shoulders, has narrow travel lanes (less than current design standards)
- Designed in 1949 for vehicular loads below modern requirements
- Narrow deck and load posting both limit the use of the bridge by larger/heavier vehicles with partial closure of the bridge required to conduct repairs and maintenance

Identified Needs - DRAFT

Need to Improve Resiliency Against Flooding

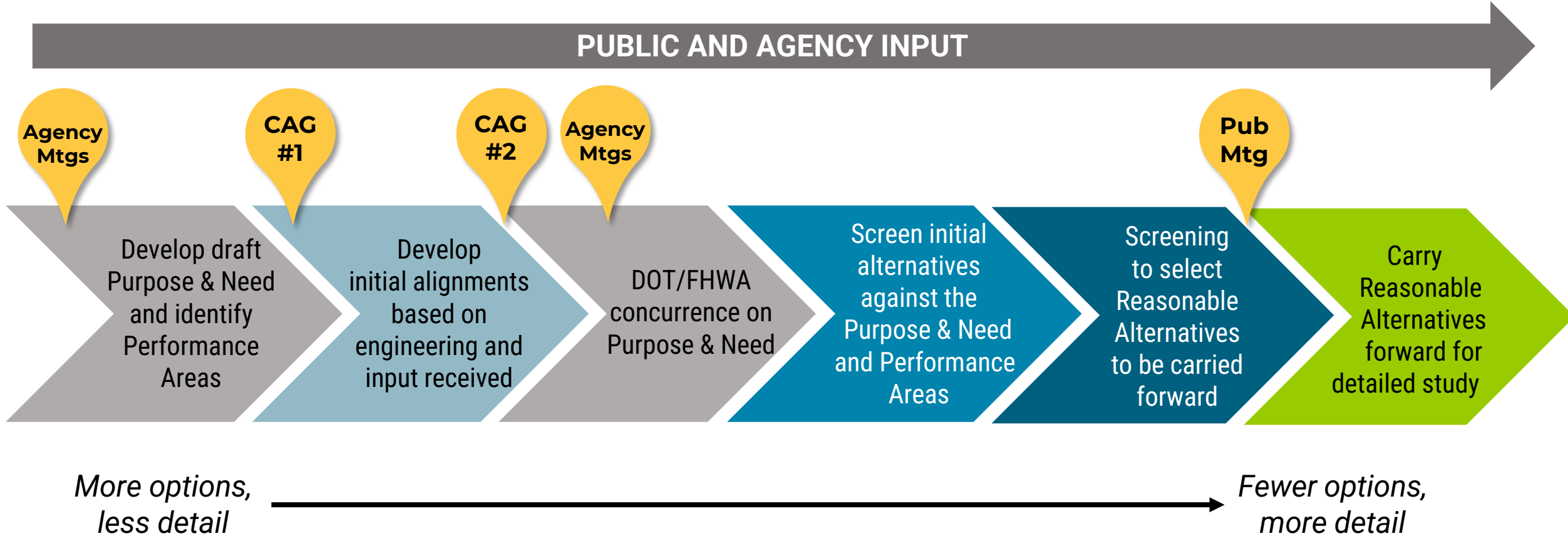
- **Forecasted Flood Frequency and Intensity** – Recent trends on the lower Missouri River show an increase in the frequency and magnitude of major flood events at the project location. A USACE 2023 study predicts the 50-, 100-, and 500-year floods to be 30% to 60% larger than previous estimates (2003), due to changing conditions within the upper Missouri River basin.
- **Infrastructure Stability** - Crossing was closed for 5 months in 2011 due to foundation scour caused by a major flood event. Crossing remains susceptible to scour issues from future flood events of similar or greater magnitude.
- **System Reliability** – Approach roadway (Iowa side) is susceptible to overtopping by updated 100-year and 500-year flood volumes. Overtopping would result in a closure of the crossing and require more than 80 miles of out-of-distance travel to use the next river crossing.

Purpose - DRAFT

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide a resilient river crossing connecting Decatur, Nebraska/N-51, and Onawa, Iowa/IA-175 that maintains access to regional employment, education, health care centers and recreational facilities; maintains accessibility for emergency services; and provides the infrastructure to support current and future travel demand.

BREAK

Alignments/Alternatives Screening Process



Alignments/ Alternatives Screening Process

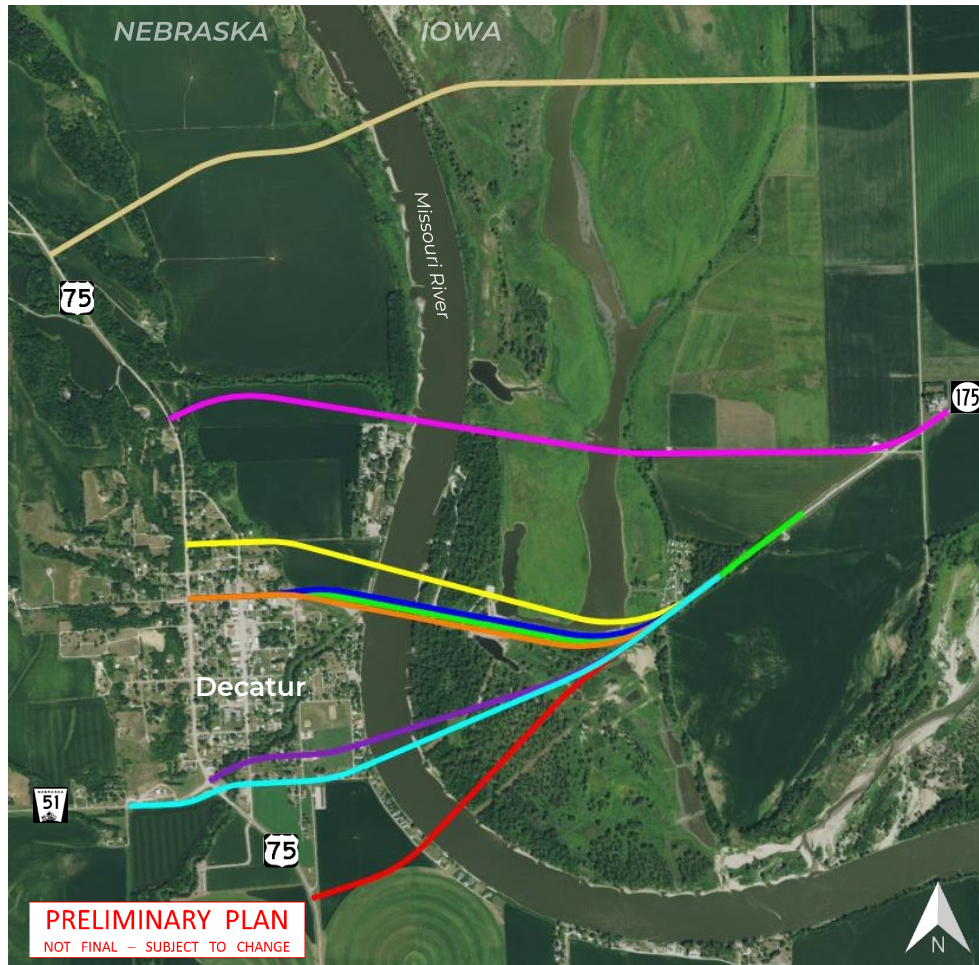
*More options,
less detail*



*Fewer options,
more detail*



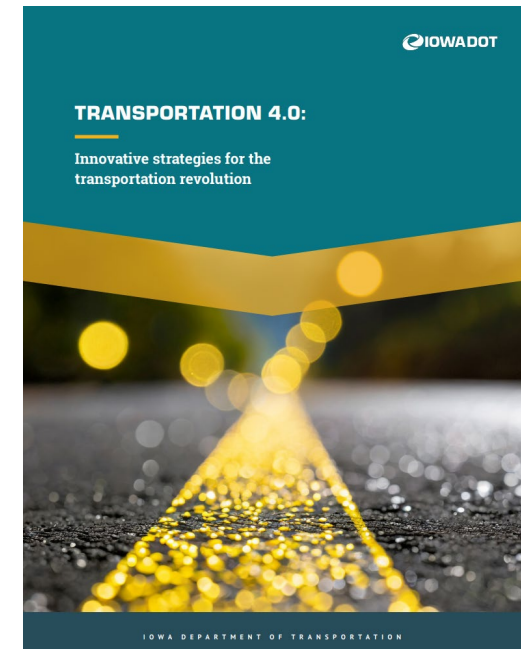
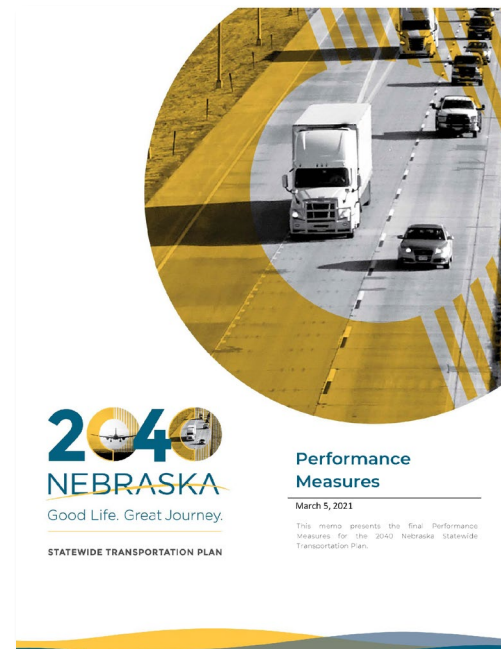
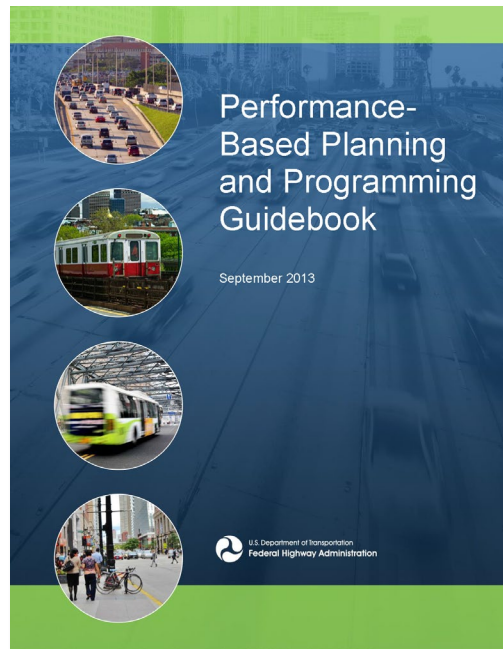
Initial Alignments



BROWN	New crossing approximately 1.35 miles north of existing crossing.
PINK	New crossing approximately 0.5 miles north of existing crossing.
YELLOW	New crossing approximately 500 feet north of existing crossing. (5 th Street)
BLUE	New crossing approximately 80 feet north of the existing crossing.
GREEN	Crossing on the existing alignment.
ORANGE	New crossing approximately 80 feet south of the existing crossing.
PURPLE	New crossing approximately 0.36 miles south of existing crossing. (13 th Street)
LIGHT BLUE	New crossing approximately 0.4 miles south of existing crossing. (14 th Street)
RED	New crossing approximately 0.64 miles south of existing crossing.

Performance Areas

Performance-based decision-making, MAP-21 (*Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century* [2012]) established an approach for highway investment, where states and MPOs shall work to measure, manage, and improve upon the conditions and performance of transportation assets.



Performance Areas - DRAFT

Infrastructure

Accessibility

Safety

Resiliency

Environment

Constructability

Public Input

Performance Areas - DRAFT

Infrastructure

- Provide desired bridge lifespan (>75 years)
- Provide typical-section to support current and future travel demand
- Minimize long-term maintenance costs

Performance Areas - DRAFT

Accessibility

- Maintain or improve local and regional connectivity
- Maintain or increase route length and travel times
- Facilitate river navigation – commercial and recreational

Performance Areas - DRAFT

Safety

- Provide travel lane widths and shoulders to support a variety of vehicle types and minimize conflicts w/disabled vehicles; supports maintenance and emergency vehicle accessibility under traffic (most cases).
- Minimize travel distance for emergency response vehicles.

Performance Areas - DRAFT

Resiliency

- Provide opportunity to implement scour risk reduction measures in design (e.g. longer bridge, relief structure, etc.)
- Provide opportunity for increase in approach roadway elevation to reduce risk of overtopping.

Performance Areas - DRAFT

Environment

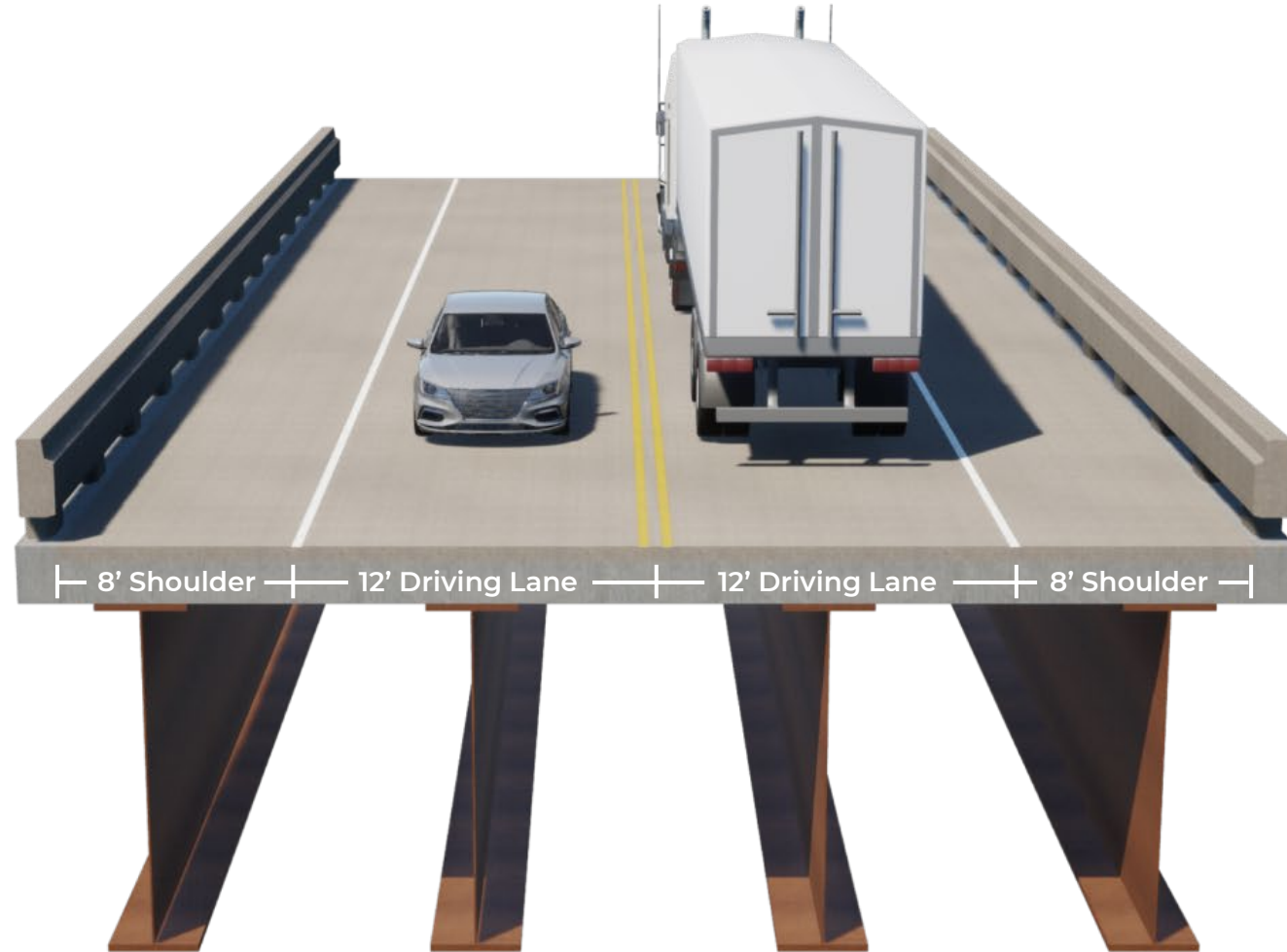
- Minimize new right-of-way impacts
- Minimize potential displacements and impacts to adjacent property owners
- Minimize impacts to public lands, conservation/management areas, historic/cultural resources
- Minimize impacts to wetland resources
- Minimize impacts to wooded habitats
- Minimize the volume of fill material placed in the floodplain/floodway

Performance Areas - DRAFT

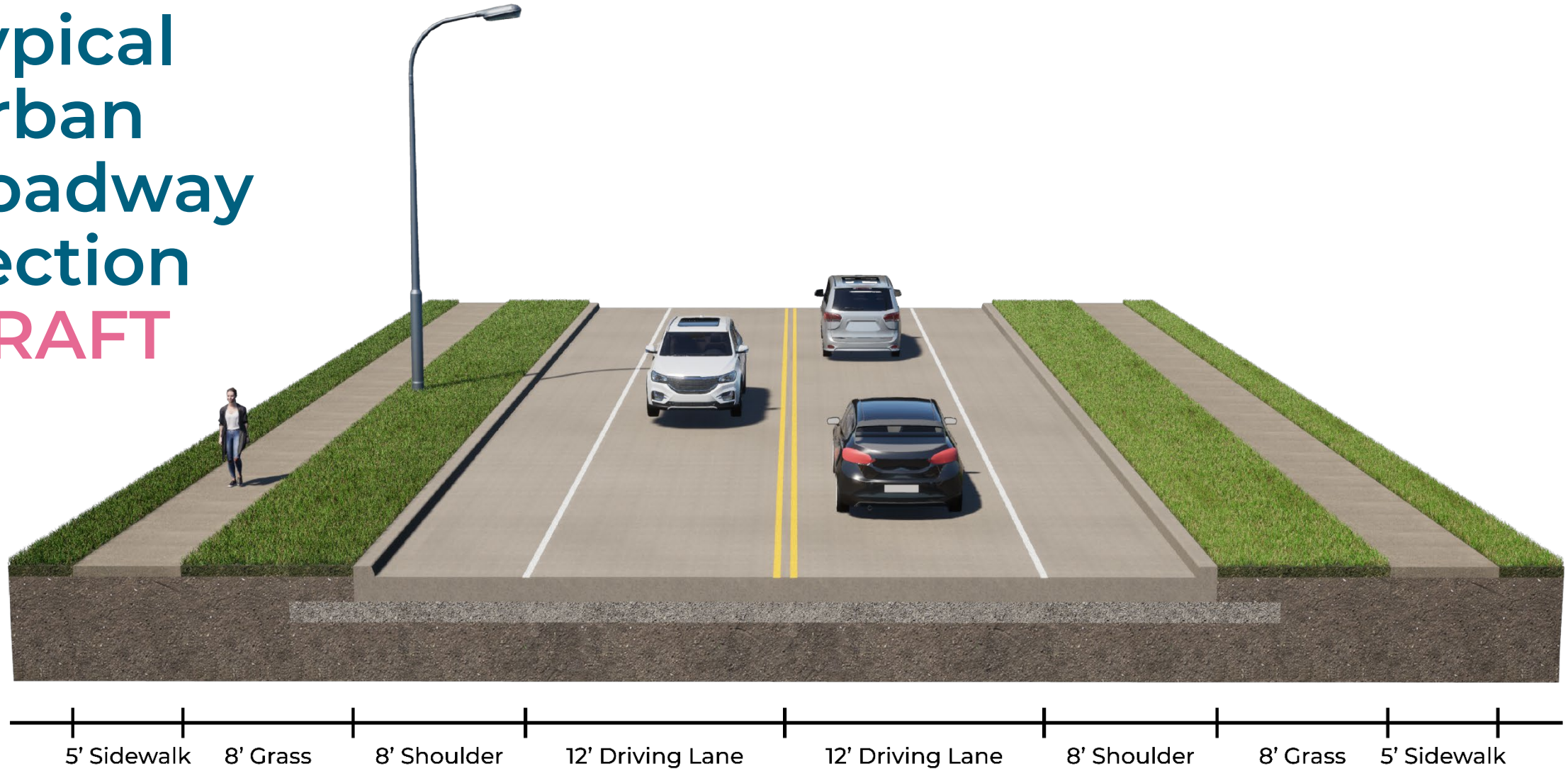
Constructability

- Minimize impacts to or relocation of major utilities
- Minimize closure of N-51/IA-175 during construction

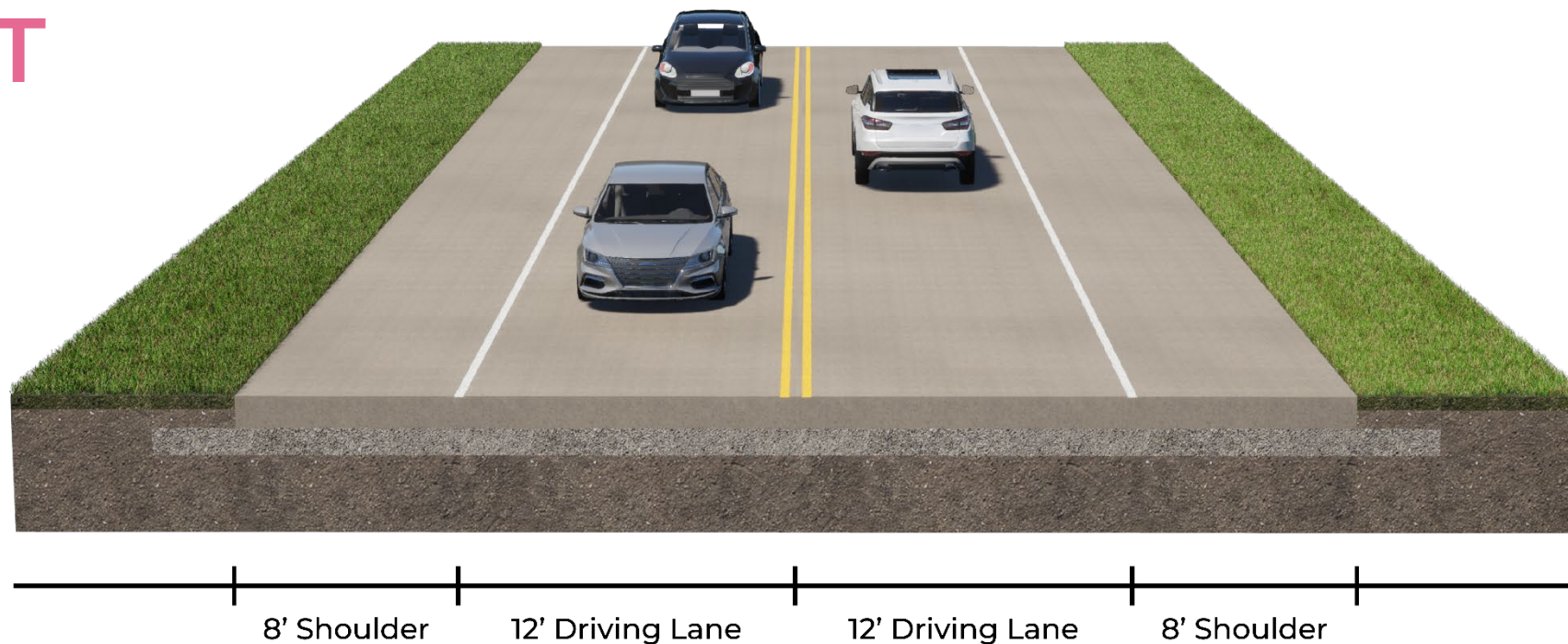
Typical Bridge Section DRAFT



Typical Urban Roadway Section DRAFT



Typical Rural Roadway Section DRAFT

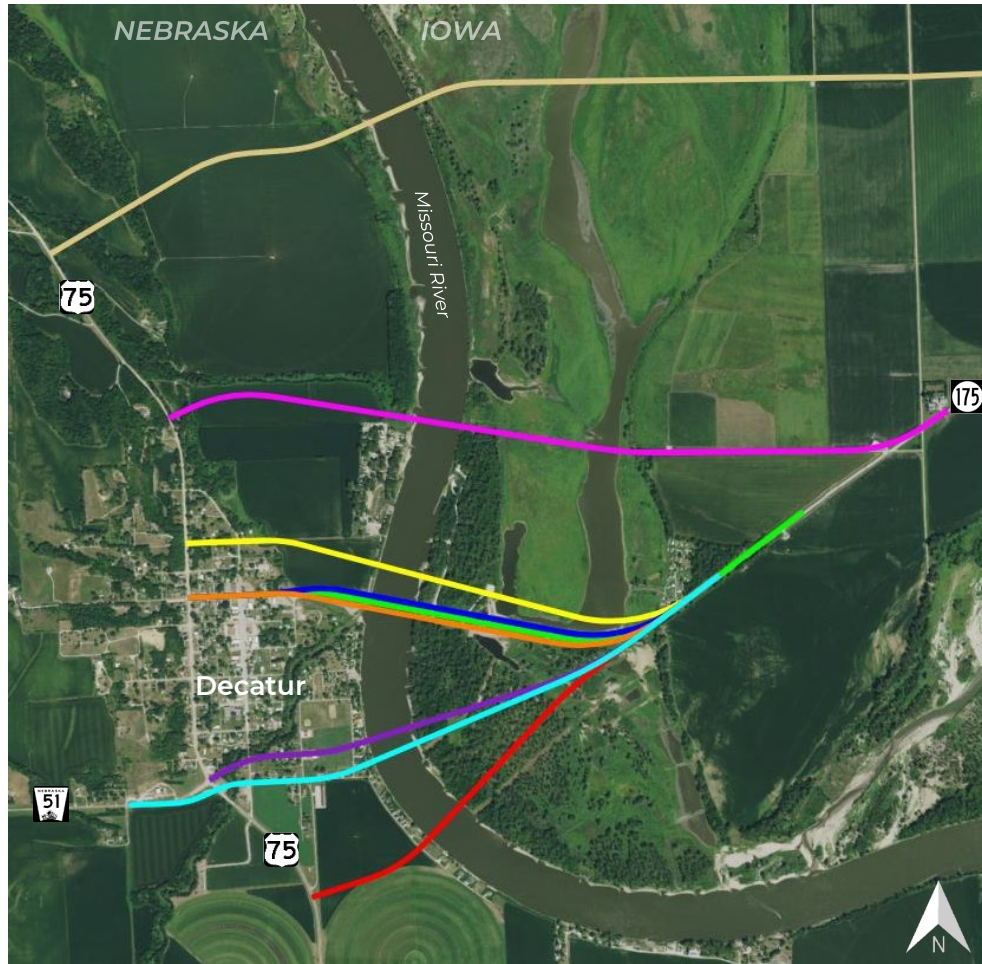


U.S. Department of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

NEBRASKA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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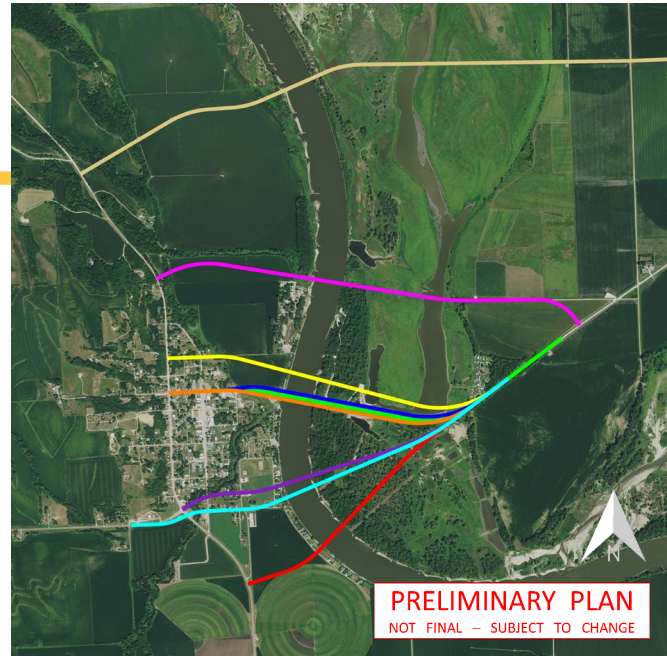
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BREAK

Complete worksheet



Next Steps

- Collect your input today
- Finalize Purpose & Need
- Screen initial alignments
- Public meetings – June 2024

Project Phases

