

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

MAY 13, 2025; 5:30 – 7:30 PM (MDT)
PRAIRIE WINDS COMMUNITY CENTER
428 MAIN STREET
BRIDGEPORT, NE 69336

The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) will give a formal presentation starting at 6:00 PM, with an open house to follow until 7:30 PM.

RRZ-TMT-26-1(161) BNSF, Bridgeport; C.N. 51299

The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) will hold a public hearing regarding the preliminary design and draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the construction of a viaduct near Bridgeport, Nebraska. The public hearing will be held at the Prairie Winds Community Center on Tuesday, May 13, 2025, from 5:30-7:30 pm (MDT). A formal presentation will begin at 6:00 pm, with an open house to follow.

Identified as **BNSF, Bridgeport**, the proposed project involves constructing a viaduct where U.S. Highway 26 (US-26)/Nebraska Highway 92 (N-92) crosses the BNSF Railway's (BNSF) railroad tracks west of the city of Bridgeport in Morrill County, Nebraska. The existing at-grade crossing is located west of the intersection of Recreation Road and US-26/N-92 (W 5th Street) in the city of Bridgeport. The proposed project would close the existing at-grade BNSF railroad crossing at approximately mile marker (MM) 60.92. US-26/N-92 would diverge from the existing highway alignment at about J Street, pass to the south of the two electrical substations west of the railroad tracks, and reconnect to the existing US-26/N-92 approximately 0.40 miles west of the existing US-26/N-92 at-grade crossing.

The proposed project would include two 12-foot-wide driving lanes, 8-foot-wide shoulders and a 5-foot-wide sidewalk on the north side of US-26/N-92. The proposed viaduct would include two 12-foot-wide driving lanes, 10-foot-wide shoulders and a 7-foot-wide sidewalk on the north side of US-26/N-92. In addition, connecting roads at each end of the viaduct would be reconstructed to provide access to nearby residences and businesses. Improvements would include new paving, a bridge, retaining walls, culvert and storm sewer work, detention ponds, pavement striping, lighting and pedestrian accommodations.

Once construction is complete, the old US-26/N-92 pavement west of the railroad tracks would be left in place to provide access to the businesses and electrical substations and would be connected to the new US-26/N-92 alignment via a new drive. W Railroad Avenue would be paved from W 7th Street to Recreation Road and connect to G Street, H Street and W 5th Street. Connections to the newly constructed US-26/N-92 would be maintained from both I Street and J Street. The existing segments of old US-26/N-92 east and west of the existing railroad crossing that would remain in place would be relinquished to the City of Bridgeport.

The purpose of the proposed project is to:

- Eliminate conflicts between trains and vehicles at the existing at-grade BNSF railroad crossing

- Reduce vehicular delays at the US-26/N-92 crossing of the BNSF railroad tracks
- Reduce crash costs associated with US-26/N-92 crossing of the BNSF railroad tracks

US-26/N-92 is the most direct route from Bridgeport to Gering and Scottsbluff; as such, it is an important link in the Nebraska highway system.

NDOT identifies the need for railroad grade separation structures by considering the exposure factor, traffic delays and crash costs. The highway-railroad crossing of US-26/N-92 meets NDOT's thresholds for considering a grade separation.

The proposed project would require the acquisition of additional property rights, which could include new right-of-way (ROW), control of access (CA), permanent easements (PE), and/or temporary easements (TE). The displacement of commercial businesses may also be necessary. If your property is impacted by this project, you would be contacted by a representative once the design footprint has been established.

The project would be constructed under traffic with lane closures controlled by appropriate traffic control devices and practices. Temporary pavement may be required to accommodate phased construction. Access to adjacent properties would be maintained during construction but may be limited at times due to traffic phasing requirements. Access to Bridgeport State Recreation Area would be maintained during construction.

No impacts to parks, trails, historic properties, wetlands or threatened and endangered species are anticipated.

Construction is anticipated to begin as early as 2028 and be completed in 2029.

A draft EA has been prepared for this project and is available for public review at the following locations:

- NDOT District 5 Headquarters (140375 Rundell Rd, Gering, NE)
- NDOT Headquarters (1500 Nebraska Parkway, Lincoln, NE)
- FHWA Nebraska Division (100 Centennial Mall N, Ste 200, Lincoln, NE)
- City of Bridgeport - City Clerk (809 Main Street, Bridgeport, NE)
- Bridgeport Public Library (722 Main Street, Bridgeport, NE)

An electronic version of the draft EA is available for review on the project website at: ndot.info/51299.

The public hearing is being held in compliance with the environmental review process under the National Environmental Policy Act, to provide information regarding the project and to receive the public's input. All interested persons are invited to attend, provide comments, and ask questions. Project information will be displayed, and personnel from NDOT will be present to answer questions and receive comments. Comments can be provided verbally at the hearing, submitted in writing as a statement, or by filling out a comment form available at the hearing. Comments for the draft EA can also be submitted by emailing, calling, or mailing to the contact listed below by the end of the comment period on May 29, 2025. Design plans and the EA document will be further developed after public input is received following the public hearing and comment period.

NDOT will make every reasonable accommodation to provide an accessible meeting facility for all persons. Appropriate provisions for the hearing and visually challenged or persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) will be made if NDOT is notified by May 6, 2025.

Si usted necesita interpretación o traducción de los materiales del proyecto, comuníquese con la División de Comunicación de NDOT por teléfono al 402-479-4512.

Information regarding the proposed project will be available on the day of the hearing at ndot.info/51299. For those without internet access, information may be obtained at NDOT Headquarters: 1500 Nebraska Parkway, Lincoln, NE 68502, or by contacting: Doug Hoevet, NDOT District 5 Engineer, at doug.hoevet@nebraska.gov or (308) 436-6587.

Comments will be collected through May 29, 2025, and should be submitted to:

Sarah Fisher

NDOT Public Involvement

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