

Public Hearing

The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) is seeking input regarding the conceptual design and Draft Environmental Assessment for the proposed **York – Columbus** project, which would expand U.S. Highway 81 (US-81) from a two-lane highway to a four-lane expressway along an approximately 41-mile segment in York, Polk and Butler Counties in Nebraska. The expressway would change to three lanes in urban areas, then return to four lanes through the rural segments.

PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed project would start at the end of the existing four-lane York bypass, near the north U.S. Highway 34 (US-34) and US-81 intersection. It would extend north for approximately 41 miles to just north of the junction of Nebraska Highway 64 (N-64) and US-81 intersection, where it would connect to the existing four-lane roadway.

PURPOSE & NEED

The purpose of this project is to:

- **Fulfill legislative intent** to continue the development of the expressway system identified in the *1988 Nebraska Highway Needs Study*.
- **Improve regional connectivity** for vehicles in east-central Nebraska, including commercial vehicles, by providing important expressway connections with US-34, Nebraska Highway 66 (N-66), Nebraska Highway 92 (N-92), Nebraska Highway 69 (N-69) and N-64, while maintaining convenient highway access for communities in the area.
- **Improve the condition** of the existing infrastructure.

The project is needed because there is a gap in the US-81 Expressway from the Kansas-Nebraska border to Norfolk, a lack of connectivity in east-central Nebraska and existing infrastructure deficiencies.

SCOPE OF WORK

The improvements of the preferred alternative would widen US-81 from the existing two-lane highway to a four-lane expressway using the 2+2 concept (see inside). The project would also adjust the expressway to three-lanes in urban areas then return to four-lanes through the rural segments of the project. The improvements to US-81 would consider the eight existing bridge structures that would need replacement, rehabilitation or repair. A second set of structures would be built adjacent to the existing structures to accommodate the new lanes.

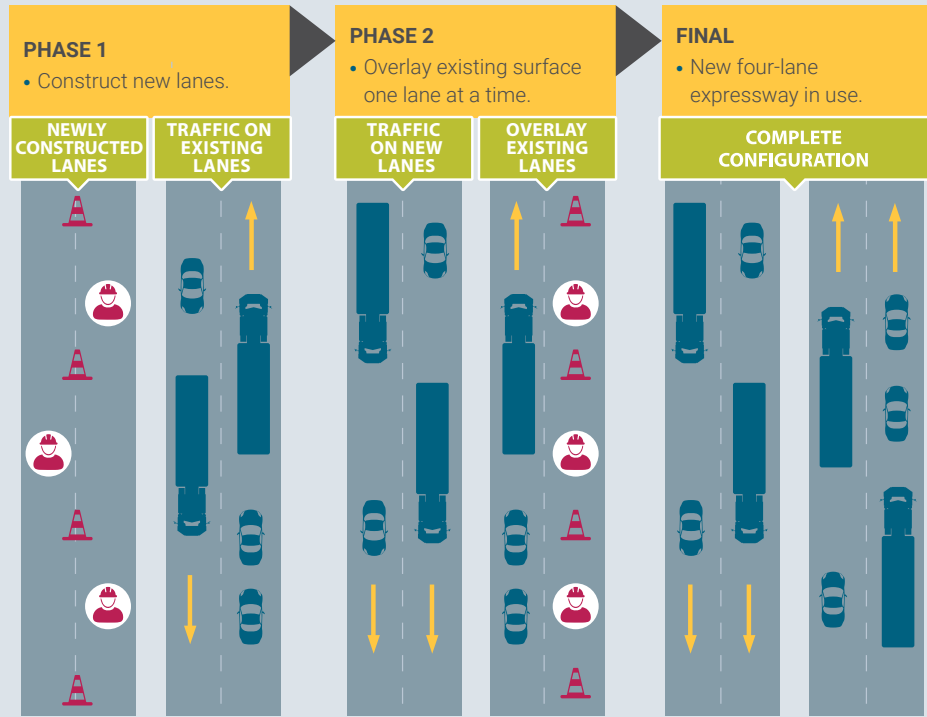
RIGHT OF WAY

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) temporary easements (TE), relocations and/or impacts to center pivot irrigation systems. If your property is impacted by this project, you would be contacted by an NDOT representative once the design footprint has been established. Access to adjacent properties would be maintained during construction but may be limited at times due to traffic phasing requirements.

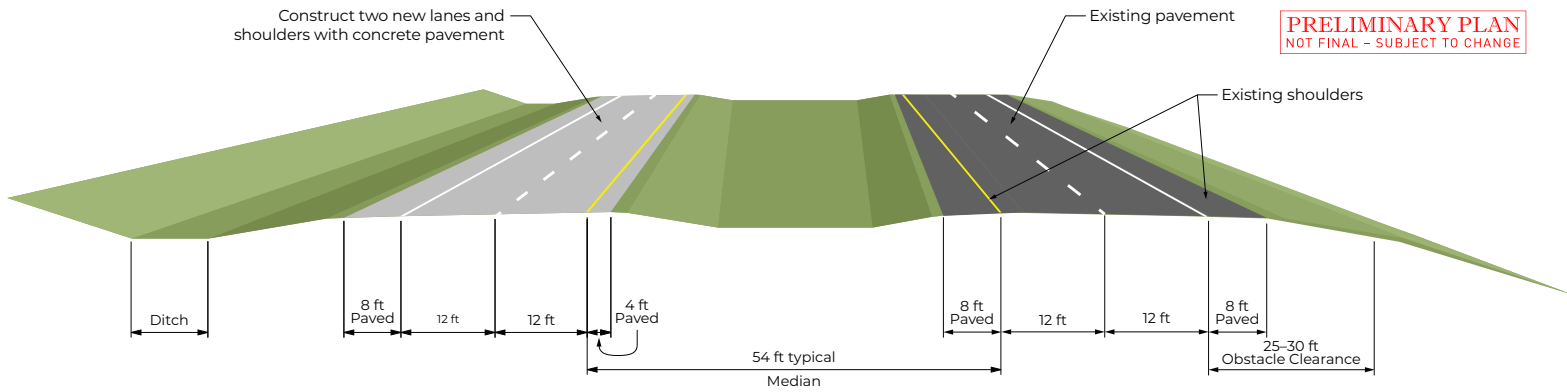
2+2 APPROACH

The 2+2 construction concept would construct two new lanes adjacent to the existing two lanes of US-81 to create a four-lane corridor. This approach would:

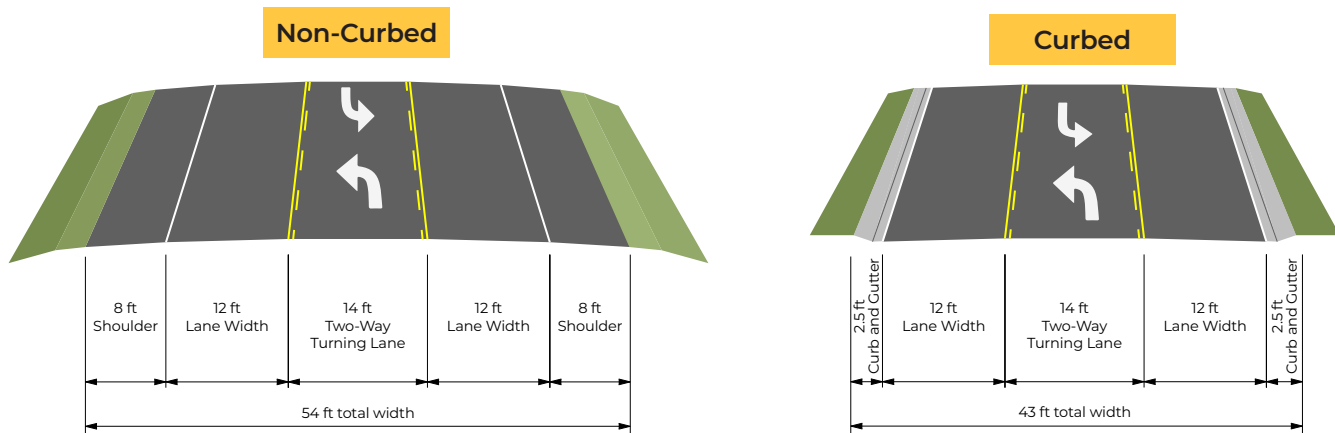
- Minimize traffic disruption.
- Maximize the use of existing roadway.



RURAL 4-LANE TYPICAL SECTION

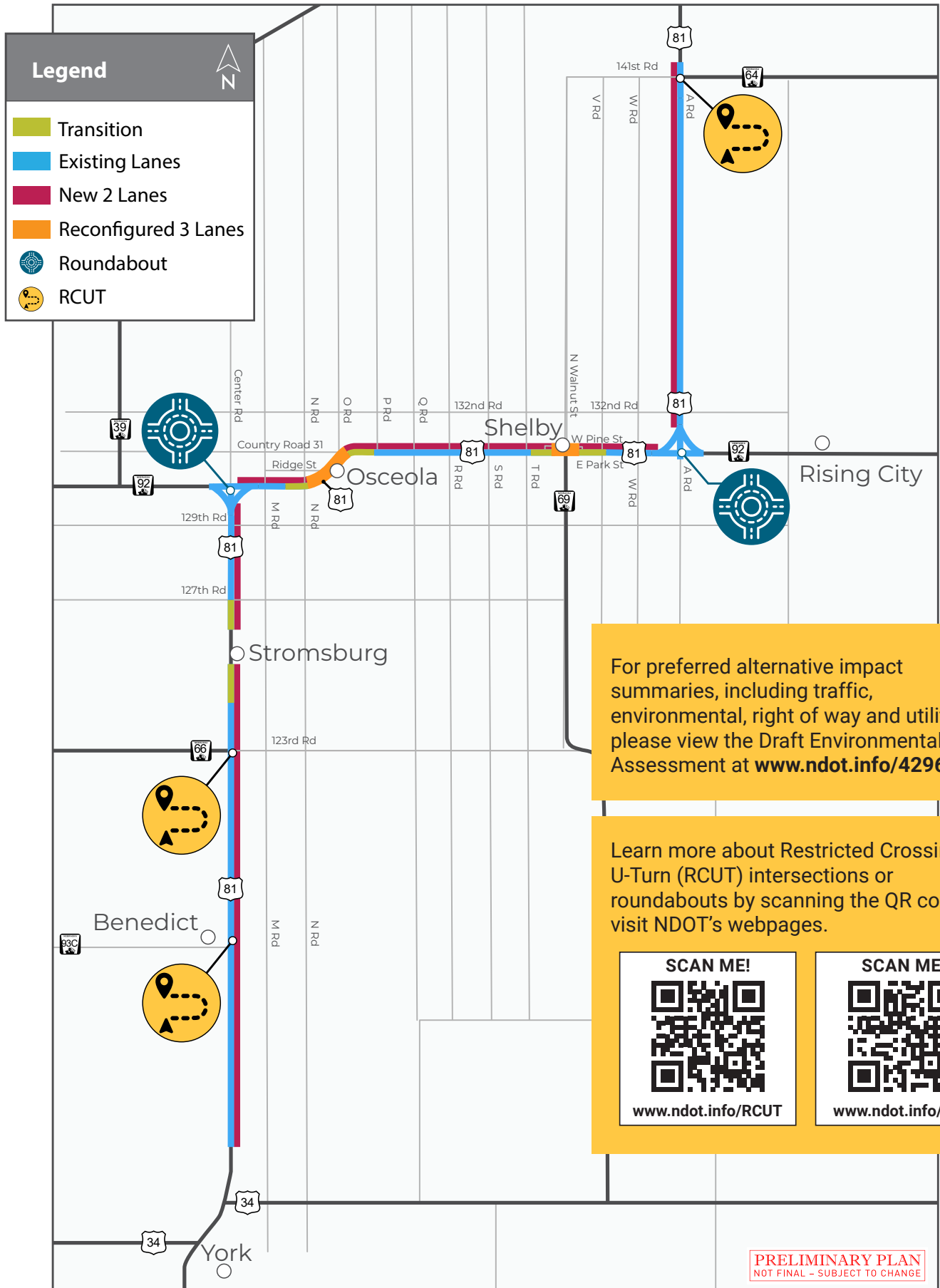


URBAN 3-LANE TYPICAL SECTIONS



**PRELIMINARY PLAN
NOT FINAL - SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

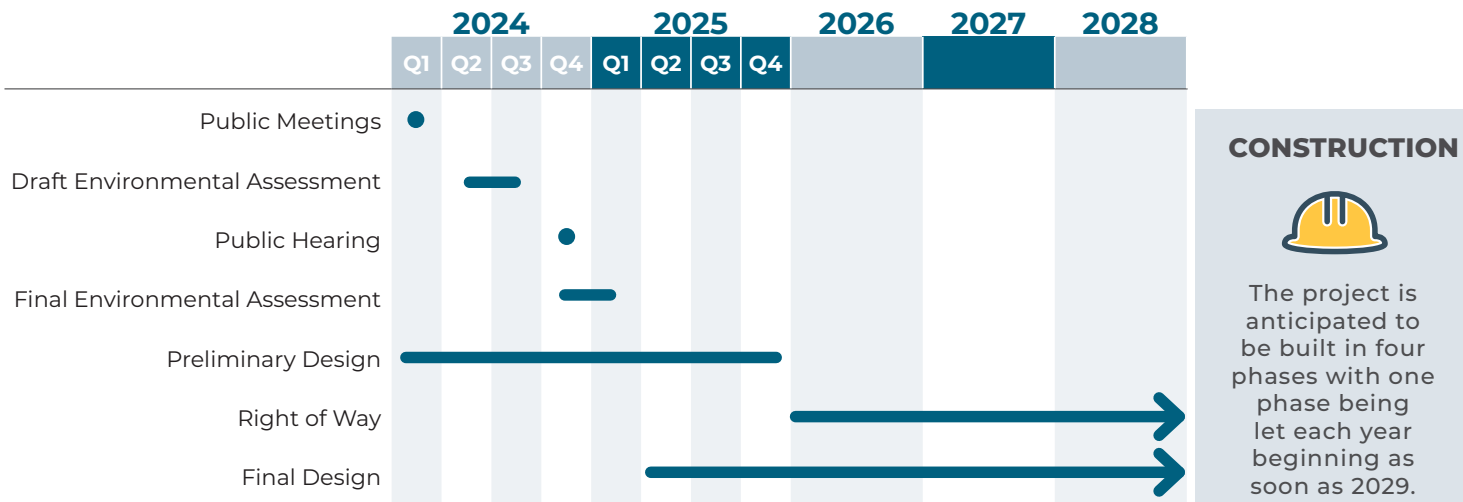
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE



Note: Map is not to scale

SCHEDULE & COST

The proposed project costs are estimated at approximately \$400 million to \$450 million and would come from federal and state sources. Construction timing is subject to funding availability.



POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Impacts to wetlands and streams are anticipated and would be mitigated as necessary. No adverse effects to historic properties are anticipated. Widening the roadway to the east would result in a full realignment from Buckley Park to the Nebraska Central Railroad Company (NCRC) rail line east of the widened roadway.

TRAFFIC ACCOMMODATIONS

The project would be constructed under traffic with lane closures controlled by appropriate traffic control devices and practices. Temporary surfacing may be required to accommodate phased construction. Access to community resources, area schools, police and fire services would not be affected. A highway detour would not be required. To the extent possible, adjacent roadways would not be closed at the same time.

FEEDBACK

Information regarding the proposed project will be available on the NDOT website at www.ndot.info/42967.

Comments will be collected through **Oct. 16, 2024** and should be submitted to:

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For those without internet access, information may be obtained at:

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 Lincoln, NE 68502, or by contacting:

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 wes.wahlgren@nebraska.gov
 (308) 385-6265

