



## TIER 2 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Elwood to Braidwood Tier 2

Environmental Assessment (EA) is the next phase of the Chicago to St. Louis High Speed Rail (HSR) Program. The Tier 2 EA consists of a detailed environmental analysis to meet all state and federal requirements intended to integrate environmental values and public interaction into transportation improvements. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) evaluated overall environmental effects of constructing and operating the Project. This includes potential adverse or beneficial effects to air quality, wildlife, vegetation, water quality, wetlands, parks and recreation areas, visual quality, and cultural resources.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires incorporation of environmental standards in the decision-making process by considering the effects of proposed actions and reasonable alternatives to these actions. To assist in making sure that these requirements are fulfilled, public participation is a vital part of the process. The Elwood to Braidwood Tier 2 EA is currently available for public review and comment for a period of 30 days. All public and agency comments will be considered prior to the FRA's Record of Decision.

## Project Overview

The purpose of the Tier 2 EA is to evaluate the impacts from constructing a second mainline track between Elwood and Braidwood to support the HSR Program goals of reducing travel times, increasing service reliability and enhancing corridor safety. The Study Area is approximately 9.59 miles along Union Pacific Railroad mainline between Elwood and Braidwood.

**IN ADDITION TO CONSTRUCTING A SECOND MAINLINE TRACK, THE PROJECT INCLUDES:**

- > Construction of parallel railroad maintenance access facility
- > Improvements to grade crossings
- > Installation of fencing
- > Improvements to culverts, bridges, and signals



### The Project is anticipated to:

- > Improve deteriorating or functionally obsolete railroad components
- > Improve maintenance efficiency
- > Improve the Prairie Creek Bridge which is currently past its useful life
- > Enhance safety at grade crossings
- > Address drainage deficiencies along the project corridor

# Elwood to Braidwood

## SCHEDULE & COST

- 1 Preliminary Engineering and NEPA Completion - 2026
- 2 Final Design (Funding to be Determined) - 2027
- 3 Construction (Funding to be Determined) - 2028-2029

Elwood to Braidwood Track Construction Project is currently estimated to cost \$86 million.

## We want to hear from you!

We encourage you to submit any comments you may have about the Project by using the following options.



**Comment Form:** Can be filled out and submitted at the meeting or mailed to the address provided.

### Mailing Address:

Illinois Department of Transportation  
Office of Intermodal Project Implementation  
69 W. Washington St, Suite 2100  
Chicago, Illinois 60602

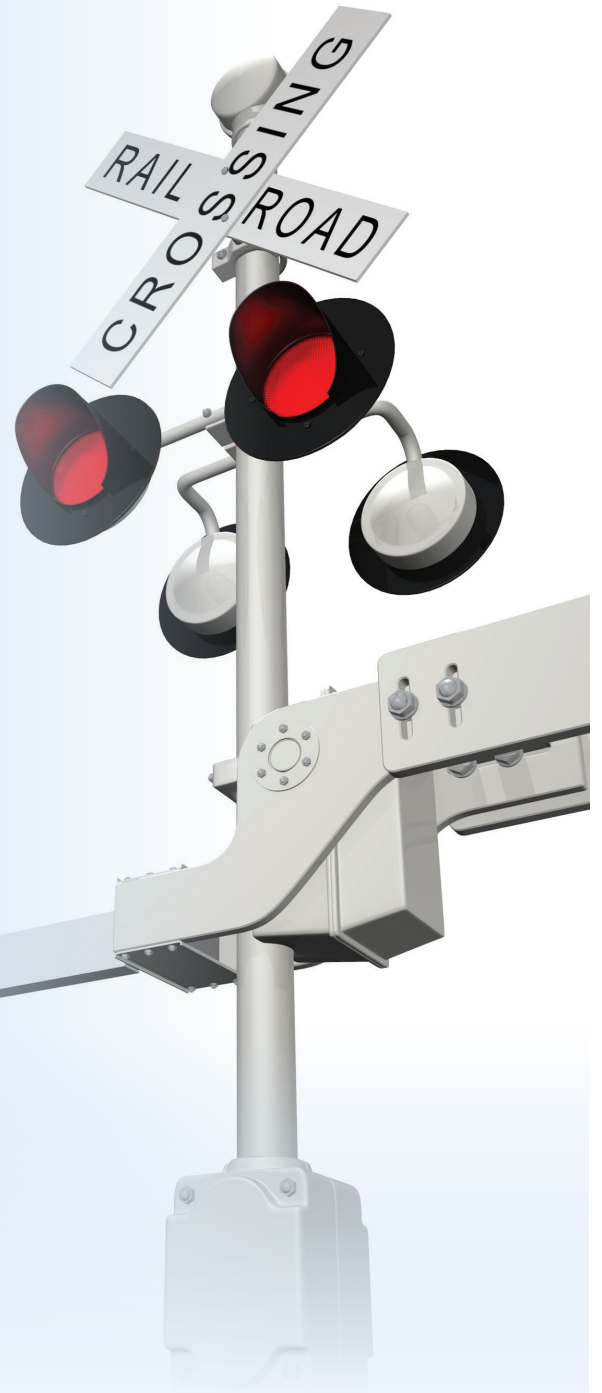


Scan the QR code to submit comments online



### Website:

<https://www.regulations.gov/document/FRA-2025-0052-0001>



EXPERIENCE IT YOURSELF.

### Press and media related questions contact:

#### IL Dept. of Transportation

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For additional information and business opportunities regarding the Illinois High-Speed Rail Program, please visit the official High-Speed Rail websites:

[www.idothsr.org](http://www.idothsr.org)

