



Proposal to remove Cherokee ramp to SB I-55

What is the current situation?

The Missouri Department of Transportation has been looking at removing the ramp from Cherokee Street to southbound Interstate 55 in the city of St. Louis. The ramp is currently closed due to on-going bridge construction along I-55 that has shifted the southbound lanes of I-55 to share the northbound lanes. The ramp was also closed for an extended period of time during the past year, for safety, as it was difficult for traffic on the ramp to merge with southbound traffic during earlier bridge work.

Why is the department considering removing the ramp?

First of all, the ramp was originally constructed during a time when vehicle traffic did not move as quickly or aggressively as traffic moves along modern interstates. Additionally, Because of the terrain, traffic has to travel in a tight loop to gain access to the southbound interstate, which makes it more difficult to get up to highway speeds to safely merge with traffic on the interstate. Finally, there are two other ramps near the Cherokee ramp where traffic is merging onto the interstate and getting up to speed. There is not a lot of space between the three entrances to the interstate, so drivers coming on from those three ramps have to work their way vehicles with varying rates of speed to merge onto the interstate.

What would be the benefits of removing the ramp?

Traffic coming on from Arsenal and from President Street would have fewer slower vehicles to work their way around to safely merge onto the interstate. They would have fewer cars merging into traffic, especially slower traffic getting up to speed from the slower Cherokee ramp.

What are the impacts of removing the ramp?

From the engineering standpoint, the impacts of removing the ramp are relatively minimal. Both the Arsenal and President Street ramps have plenty of space to move cars onto the interstate, even when traffic is high during the rush periods. Both ramps are within a half-mile of the Cherokee ramp, and will not create a significant increase in the amount of time it takes drivers to access the interstate. However, there may be impacts to the community that the department is currently unaware of. That is why we are reaching out to the community to determine what those impacts are, how significant they are, and how those impacts might be reduced or eliminated.

What will happen to the property?

At this point, that is undecided. After determining what may be needed for drainage or other infrastructure needs, the department is willing to work with the city, or local property owners, who might be willing to purchase any excess land.

Is this a done deal?

Absolutely not. After hearing from the community about any potential impacts that removing the ramp may create, the department will evaluate those comments and make a recommendation to the Federal Highway Administration, who oversees the interstate systems. This project is being processed in accordance with federal rules and regulations. Plans will be subject to review by FHWA. If federal funds are used in construction, the percentage of federal funds used will be in accordance with current regulations.

What is the timeline?

Event	Time
Conceptual design	Spring 2023
Public Hearing	Spring 2023
Possible removal begins	Spring 2024
Construction complete	December 2025