

= Interstate 74 in Iowa =

Interstate 74 (I @-@ 74) is the central freeway through the Iowa Quad Cities . It roughly divides Davenport to the west and Bettendorf to the east . The Interstate Highway begins at an interchange with Interstate 80 (I @-@ 80) at the northeastern edge of Davenport and continues into Illinois at the Mississippi River by crossing the I @-@ 74 Bridge . The freeway was built in stages during the late 1960s and early 1970s .

The northern half of the interstate was built atop farmland in northeastern Davenport , while the southern half was built near the existing U.S. Route 6 (US 6) corridor through Bettendorf . After the approaches to the Iowa @-@ Illinois Memorial Bridge were rebuilt for interstate traffic , it was completed and opened to traffic on November 26 , 1974 .

The Iowa and Illinois departments of transportation are planning a major reconstruction project along I @-@ 74 . The 7 @-@ mile @-@ long (11 km) corridor will be widened from four lanes to six . A new river crossing will be built to replace the aging bridges . Eastbound motorists on I @-@ 80 wishing to use I @-@ 74 east of the Quad Cities are suggested to use I @-@ 80 east around town for this reason .

= = Route description = =

I @-@ 74 begins at a trumpet interchange with I @-@ 80 on the northern edge of Davenport where it heads to the south . From I @-@ 80 to the East 67th Street overpass , the freeway is surrounded by farmland on either side . South of the overpass , it passes a residential area to the east and a commercial area to the west . The East 53rd Street exit provides access to shopping centers on both sides of the interstate .

Continuing south between East 53rd Street and Spruce Hills Drive , I @-@ 74 goes through an area of sparse development . What businesses there are have frontages on either Elmore Avenue to the west or Utica Ridge Road to the east ; the backs of these businesses abut the freeway . At the Spruce Hills Drive exit , U.S. Route 6 (US 6) joins from the west . Nearly 1 ½ mile (0 @. @ 54 km) to the west , Spruce Hills Drive becomes Kimberly Road , which carries US 6 through Davenport until it intersects I @-@ 280 on the western edge of the Quad Cities .

South of Spruce Hills Drive , I @-@ 74 runs parallel to the eastern leg of Kimberly Road , which turned south at its intersection with Spruce Hills Drive . The freeway curves slightly to the southeast and enters Bettendorf . It crosses Duck Creek and meets Middle Road at a diamond interchange .

As I @-@ 74 and US 6 head down a hill towards the Mississippi River , a series of exit and entrance ramps connect the freeway to US 67 , which runs northbound along State Street and southbound along Grant Street . The interstate passes over US 67 and railroad tracks belonging to the Dakota , Minnesota and Eastern Railroad on an elevated highway , which serves as the approach to the Interstate 74 Bridge over the Mississippi River . Despite the singular name , the crossing is actually two twin bridges which each carry one direction of traffic to and from Moline , Illinois .

= = History = =

I @-@ 74 was part of the original plans for building Iowa 's interstate system . It would form the Iowa leg of a planned freeway from the Quad Cities to Cincinnati , Ohio . Its route through the Quad Cities closely resembles the path drawn up in the mid @-@ 1950s .

In the Iowa Quad Cities , I @-@ 74 opened in three segments beginning on August 30 , 1968 . On that day , the northernmost 3 miles (4 @. @ 8 km) , from I @-@ 80 to US 6 , opened to traffic . The new freeway was built atop farmland west of Utica Ridge Road in the northeastern part of Davenport . The next section was built adjacent to the north ? south portion of Kimberly Road , which then carried US 6 through Bettendorf . The segment ended where the interstate lined up with the older street . The eastbound exit and westbound entrance ramps at Kimberly Road now provide access to and from US 67 . The middle section opened in 1971 .

Another three years passed before the freeway was completed and opened to traffic . The twin spans of the I @-@ 74 Bridge had to be retrofitted to connect to the interstate . The Iowa @-@ bound bridge was built as a Works Progress Administration project in 1934 ? 35 and the Illinois @-@ bound bridge was 24 years later . Prior to interstate construction , the I @-@ 74 Bridge terminated at State Street , the northbound lanes of US 67 , in Bettendorf . To prevent traffic bottlenecks , traffic was prohibited from making left turns onto and off of the bridges . As a result , loop ramps diverted traffic onto Gilbert Street , one block south of State Street , which curved back to State Street at both ends thus allowing traffic to make the necessary left turns .

Construction of the interstate meant eliminating the at @-@ grade intersections with State and Grant streets . I @-@ 74 was built as elevated highway from the bridges to a new overpass at Kimberly Road . The connections were completed and opened to traffic on November 26 , 1974 .

= = Future = =

The Iowa and Illinois departments of transportation are in the planning stages to build a new bridge to replace the aging I @-@ 74 Bridge . The Iowa @-@ bound bridge opened in 1935 ; the Illinois bridge in 1958 . In addition to replacing the bridges , the scope of the bi @-@ state coalition 's plan includes updating 7 miles (11 km) of I @-@ 74 mainline and interchanges from 53rd Street in Davenport to the Avenue of the Cities in Moline .

In 2005 , the Iowa and Illinois DOTs identified the traffic needs of the corridor and found they would be satisfied by a true @-@ arch , tied @-@ arch , or cable @-@ stayed bridge . After public input and consideration of construction costs and aesthetics , the departments of transportation , in August 2006 , recommended building two twin , true arch , basket handle bridges . U.S. Senator Mark Kirk of Illinois has suggested charging a toll upon motorists who use the new bridges to help pay for their construction . However , a 1998 study , which researched all river crossing options to replace the bridges , deemed new tolls were not viable .

In addition to the new river crossing , the mainline of I @-@ 74 between 53rd Street in Davenport and the Avenue of the Cities in Moline will be widened from a four @-@ lane freeway to six lanes . Additional lanes will be picked up and dropped in selected locations . In downtown Bettendorf , the connection to US 67 will be simplified . US 67 traffic will be routed in both directions along Grant Street . State and Grant streets are currently a one @-@ way couplet through Bettendorf . A network of ramps and city streets form the interchange as it is now . A full @-@ access interchange will be built in its place at Grant Street .

Construction along the corridor has already been completed at the 53rd Street interchange . A partial cloverleaf interchange was being added in each direction to allow traffic to enter I @-@ 74 without making left turns at its intersection with 53rd Street . This phase of construction ended around December 2012 .

= = Exit list = =