

Understanding NorthPoint's Proposed Bridge Over Route 53

NorthPoint's proposed 2,900+ acre industrial warehousing project, Compass Business Park, relies on the construction of a private bridge over Route 53 that would connect the park to Centerpoint intermodal in Elwood. The following information is necessary in understanding why approval of this bridge would *not* benefit the general public.

- **PROXIMITY TO NATIONAL TREASURES:** The bridge would be *less than ½ mile* from the entrances to Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery and Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. Concerns include increased traffic on Route 53 interrupting funeral processions, noise pollution that could impact cemetery services, lost trucks in the cemetery damaging cemetery property, as well as environmental impacts.
- **SAFETY CONCERNS:** The bridge would require the opening of Walter Strawn Drive, a road that has an at-grade RxR crossing for the UP Rail that runs parallel to Route 53. In 2017, the Illinois Commerce Commission *permanently closed the road as a result of safety concerns* stemming from the number of trucks that hit the crossing gates. Though the bridge would go over this crossing, opening this once-close road would allow trucks from Centerpoint to flow freely outside of the intermodal.
- **NO REDUCTION IN TRAFFIC:** Because this bridge would not be built without Compass Business Park, this bridge would not reduce current traffic congestion. On the contrary, it not only adds more trucks from the CBP project (one study projected 16,000/day), but it would allow all of the trucks from Centerpoint free-flowing access to local roads. Infrastructure needs in this area already exceed current local, county, and state allocated funding. Additional traffic would further compromise infrastructure making it unsafe.
- **BRIDGE OFFERS NO BENEFIT WITHOUT PARK:** If Compass Business Park is not built, the location of the bridge on the east side of Route 53 would lead to rural roads (some of which are single-lane tar and chip), farm fields, and some residential homesteads. Little to no truck traffic is produced east of Route 53 currently.
- **NO PUBLIC BENEFIT:** The necessity of the bridge is driven by profitability at too high of a risk to public safety. It gives NorthPoint's warehouses direct access to the rail, which cuts down on drayage time (to and from the intermodal where goods are received and to and from distribution warehouses) as it directly connects them to Centerpoint intermodal. This allows them to move goods more efficiently — and more profitably — but it does not aid the public. Furthermore, current proposed agreements indicate condemnation of roads and eminent domain as viable options for acquiring the property and rights of the bridge.
- **NOT RIGHT FOR THE COMMUNITY:** The project was rejected by the Village of Elwood and a later application to Will County was left to languish after Will County Board Speaker Jim Moustis urged NorthPoint to withdraw. Formal resolutions against the project have been issued by taxing bodies, among many other individuals, organizations, and groups, all of which can be found on our website.