



Kentucky Transportation Cabinet • District 1

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Additional Public Input Sought on Plans for New U.S. 51 Ohio River “Cairo” Bridge

COVID119 restrictions move public participation process online

PADUCAH, Ky. (Sept. 25, 2020) — The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet and Illinois Department of Transportation are seeking another round of public input on plans to construct a replacement for the U.S. 51/U.S. 60/U.S. 62 Ohio River “Cairo” Bridge between Wickliffe, KY, and Cairo, IL.

Construction on a new bridge is expected to start in 5 to 10 years. The project team for the U.S. 51 Bridge Project is offering the public an opportunity to review updated information, then participate in an online survey to help guide the planning process.

Anyone with an interest in the project may go to <http://www.US51Bridge.com> from Oct. 16 to October 30, 2020, to review online displays and provide input via a survey. The information and survey are also available at the public libraries in Wickliffe and Cairo.

According to KYTC Project Manager Chris Kuntz, Covid-19 restrictions have limited the team’s ability to have in-person meetings.

“Public meetings like we’ve had in the past are simply not possible at this time. So we are moving the updated information we have to share online,” Kuntz said “We’ve developed displays similar to what we would share at a meeting and made them available through the project website. Interested citizens will have a 15-day window to

review the online displays, as well as offer input and comments through the survey at the end.”

Preliminary engineering, environmental analysis, and planning for a new bridge over the Ohio River continue. Opened in 1936, the existing 83-year-old bridge that connects Wickliffe in Ballard County, Kentucky, with Cairo in Alexander County, Illinois, is in fair condition with narrow lanes and shoulders. The purpose of the U.S. 51 Bridge Project is to improve cross-river mobility by addressing the addressing functional limitations of the existing bridge and approach spans.

Ensuring the public is aware of the phases of this proposed work, the various alternatives, and providing opportunities for the public to become informed, and involved, is critical as project planning progresses. It is also important for the project team and KYTC to acknowledge stakeholder input and feedback to gain an understanding of project impact on nearby communities and the region.

With continuing COVID-19 restrictions limiting public engagement, KYTC provides interested stakeholders with an opportunity to participate and share their feedback on the Project via the U.S. Highway 51 Bridge Replacement website which is accessible by computer or smart-phone.

The online public review will begin at 8:00 a.m. CDT on October 16 and continue through 5:00 p.m. CDT on October 30, 2020, on the Project website at <http://www.US51bridge.com>. Citizen input on the proposed Project will assist the Project Team in the decision-making process.

The website provides a short video that introduces a self-guided tour of the project story-map. The website provides current and updated information about the Project, including alternatives considered, the proposed preferred alternative, the current fact sheet, and a link to a brief survey. If you choose to take the survey, please complete it no later than 5 p.m. CDT on October 30, 2020.

Printed copies are also available at the Wickliffe, Ky, Public Library located at 257 N 4th St, and at the Cairo, IL, Public Library located at 1609 Washington Avenue. A copy of the printed materials is available to the public via mail by contacting Keith Todd at the KYTC District 1 office by calling (270) 898-2431 or by emailing a request to Keith.Todd@ky.gov.

“A final decision on the Project will be made in collaboration with the Federal Highway Administration, KYTC, and IDOT. Input from coordinating cooperating agencies, Section 106 consulting parties, the Citizens Advisory/Environmental Justice Group, and the general public will be part of that decision-making process,” Chris Kuntz said.

Responses from the public review survey will become a part of the official record for the Project. Once compiled, the meeting record is available for review and copying after an Open Records Request is submitted and approved. All Open Record Requests must be submitted to the Office of Legal Services, Transportation Cabinet Office Building, 200 Mero Street, Frankfort, KY 40622.

In accordance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA), if anyone has a disability and requires assistance, please notify Keith Todd no later than Wednesday, October 7, 2020. Printed materials are available upon request. Please call, mail, or email your request to the address listed below. Please address any questions regarding this meeting or Project to:

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The U.S. 51 Ohio River “Cairo” Bridge serves as a north-south connector for U.S. 51, as well as an east-west transportation corridor for U.S. 60 and U.S. 62.

The bridge carries about 7,000 vehicles per day between Kentucky and Illinois. About 35 percent of that is commercial trucks.

The bridge is currently undergoing deck and joint work that limits the bridge to one-lane traffic with an 8 ft., 6-inch maximum load width and alternating flow controlled by an automated signal. The work, expected to be completed around Oct 25, is aimed at getting the existing bridge in optimum condition while planning for the construction of a new bridge continues.

The U.S. 51 Ohio River Bridge connects Kentucky and Illinois about 5 miles north of Wickliffe at Kentucky mile point 7.372. Also known as the Cairo Bridge, it connects with the U.S. 60/U.S. 62 Mississippi River Bridge that carries traffic between Illinois and Missouri.

The U.S. 51 Ohio River “Cairo” Bridge opened to traffic on November 11, 1936. The Cairo-Wickliffe Bridge is at Ohio River navigation mile point 980.4 near the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers.

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Online Public Review, Updated Information, and Survey
October 16 through October 30, 2020
<http://www.US51Bridge.com>