



WELCOME

Location Public Hearing
Job No. 100682–Future Interstate 555 (US 63) Access Road Study
Poinsett County
April 19, 2012

HOW THIS HEARING WORKS:

1. Please register your attendance at the Registration table.
2. Gather information, view the displays, and ask questions *at your own pace and convenience*. Personnel are on hand to assist you by answering questions about the project and providing pertinent information.
3. If you wish to make an oral statement about the project, *you must* have your comments recorded on tape at the recording station set up at the hearing. A project team member will be there to record your statement.
4. Written statements may also be submitted. Forms are available which may be filled out and left in the drop box at the hearing, OR your written comments can be mailed or faxed to Future I-555 Access Road Study, Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc, 10816 Executive Center Drive, Suite 300 Little Rock, Arkansas 72211. Fax: 501-223-2470. Comments must be received by the end of the day on May 17, 2012.

REMEMBER

Your comments must be in writing or recorded on tape to be considered part of the official record of this public hearing.

*Thank You For Your Attendance And Participation In This
Public Hearing*

This packet has been prepared to provide general information about the project and its potential impacts. Information has been included pertaining to the proposed alternative locations, environmental impacts, and right-of-way. Additional information on each of these topics is available at the hearing.

The goal of the public hearing is to ensure that the roadway location and design is consistent with the highest possible goals and objectives. This location public hearing is being held for the purpose of permitting all interested persons, agencies and organizations the opportunity to express their views regarding the proposed alternative locations. In order to accomplish this goal, we must have your cooperation and participation. The project team hopes to make you familiar with the proposed alternative locations and give you an opportunity to express your opinions.

Over the years, the state, federal, and local governments have worked closely together in the building of our highways and in the overall improvement of our transportation system. The federal government is concerned about providing a modern transportation system to serve the nation as a whole, and of course, your State Highway Commission is working to provide the best possible system of highways for all the citizens of Arkansas.

These interests have resulted in a closely coordinated effort between the Federal Highway Administration, the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, and local governments. However, this joint involvement in projects is more than just a funding arrangement. The location to be proposed by the project team is subject to the approval of the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department and the Federal Highway Administration. All policies, procedures, and activities involved in the proposed project must comply with all federal and state laws and regulations.

Your comments, either written or verbal, are encouraged. Verbal comments will only be accepted at the hearing, but written statements may be submitted at the public hearing or mailed to Future I-555 Access Road Study, Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc, 10816 Executive Center Drive, Suite 300, Little Rock, AR 72211-4383. Comments must be received by the end of the day on May 17, 2012.



General Project Information

Welcome to the location public hearing for Job 100682. The proposed project will provide access for non-permitted traffic, such as large agricultural equipment, between Marked Tree and Payneway, across the St. Francis Sunken Lands (Sunken Lands) once Highway 63 is converted to interstate standards. The proposed project, located in Poinsett County, will include six bridges, which will span the St. Francis River and numerous waterbodies within the Sunken Lands. The roadway typical section consists of two ten-foot (3.0 meter) wide travel lanes, one in each direction, with four-foot (1.2 meter) wide outside shoulders. This is the same typical section as the frontage roads constructed in recent year on the north and south sides of Highway 63 in Marked Tree. The total length of the proposed project is approximately 4.7 miles (7.6 kilometers).

The graphic below shows the two general alternatives being considered. Alternative A/A1 on the south side of existing Highway 63 and alternative B/BC1 on the north side of existing Highway 63.





Right-of-Way Acquisition

The acquisition of right-of-way involves the property owners being contacted by different individuals. These may include appraisers, negotiators, closing agents, and possibly property managers.

The initial step in the acquisition process is the property valuation. Once the valuation is prepared, reviewed, and approved, a negotiator will contact the property owner by mail or in person to begin the negotiation process. If negotiations are successful, a Contract to Sell is executed and submitted for payment. Once the title opinion is completed and the deed is prepared, a closing agent will be in touch to get the deed signed and deliver the check. At this time, the property becomes part of the right-of-way needed to construct the project.

For those cases where all efforts to negotiate are unsuccessful, the tract is submitted to file condemnation. The appraisal amount is deposited in the court and the landowner may withdraw the funds placed on deposit without affecting their right to claim additional compensation.

No one will be required to surrender possession of their property or improvement until just compensation has been made. A detailed policy and procedures brochure is available at the Right-of-Way table at the public hearing, or through the AHTD Right-of-Way Division.

Relocation Assistance Program

The relocation assistance program is intended to help offset expenses incurred by those who are displaced by federally aided highway projects. This program provides advisory assistance and payments to help offset those expenses.

No one can be required to move without at least ninety (90) days advance written notice, and comparable replacement housing will be made available to all residential displacees (built if necessary) before construction begins on the project. This housing must be fair housing and offered to all affected persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.



Relocation assistance, which is separate from the compensation a person receives for real estate, comes in two basic forms – physical assistance and monetary assistance. In order to be eligible for relocation assistance and compensation, a person must be in occupancy at the initiation of negotiations for the property. The type of relocation payments one is eligible for depends on the type of displace (e.g., owner, renter, etc.).

Relocation assistance and payments will be provided until all displacees have been relocated from the project. If a person is not satisfied with the amounts that have been offered as relocation compensation, an appeal may be filed and the case heard promptly and carefully reviewed by an AHTD Appeals Officer.

Relocation assistance brochures which explain each payment and each eligibility requirement in detail are available at the Right-of-Way table at this hearing.



Environmental

Environmental documentation, an Environmental Assessment, which identifies potential social, economic and environmental impacts, has been prepared and was approved by the Federal Highway Administration in February 2012. Copies of this documentation are available for review at this hearing.

The primary impacts to the natural environment will be the need to acquire private property, including some residential units, farmland and existing floodplain converted to right-of-way and restructuring of the physical landscape. The build alternatives would potentially impact utilities, farmlands, floodplains, and wetlands and waters of the U.S. The level of impact to these resources varies with each build alternative.

There is one endangered species that could potentially be impacted by the project – the fat pocketbook mussel. A Biological Assessment, to determine impacts to this species, will be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Avoidance and minimization of impacts will be implemented during design of the selected alternative.

No impacts to public drinking water supplies are anticipated due to this project. The project will comply with all requirements of The Clean Water Act, as amended.



Conclusion

The proposed alternative alignments presented at this hearing are preliminary and are the best indication of what is proposed at this time. The project team is sensitive to the concerns of the citizenry and an alternative will be selected after the comments from this location public hearing are received.

In order for the best alternative to be selected, the project team needs your input. Please take the time to look over the information being presented and give your opinion, either tape-recorded or in writing. Comments will be taken at this hearing, or they can be mailed to the address found on Page 1 of this packet. **All comments must be received by 4:30 p.m., May 17, 2012**, to be considered as part of the public hearing documentation.

Your attendance and participation in this hearing is greatly appreciated.

Project Team Members

Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc,
10816 Executive Center Drive,
Suite 300
Little Rock, AR 72211
Telephone: 501-223-0515

AHTD
P.O. Box 2261
Little Rock, AR 72203 Telephone:
501-569-2281

Federal Highway Administration,
Arkansas Division
700 West Capitol Avenue, Suite 3130
Little Rock, AR 72201
Telephone: 501-324-5625



FUTURE INTERSTATE 555
ACCESS ROAD STUDY

Citizen Comment Form
Location Public Hearing

AHTD Job Number 100682
Future I-555 Access Road Study
Poinsett County

Location:

Arkansas State University Technical Training Center, Student Center
33500 Highway 63 East, Marked Tree, AR.
4:00-7:00 p.m.
Thursday, April 19, 2012

Please Print Name and Address

Address

Telephone (optional)

Which alternative alignment would you consider to be your preferred alternative?

Alternative A/A1

Alternative B/BC1

Please briefly describe reasons for this preference:

Written comments should be left in the comment box at this meeting or received by May 17 at the following address:

Future I-555 Access Road Study
Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc,
10816 Executive Center Drive, Suite 300
Little Rock, Arkansas 72211
Phone: 501-223-0515
Fax: 501-223-2470



FUTURE INTERSTATE 555

ACCESS ROAD STUDY

Yes

No

In your opinion, is alignment A1 or BC1 over the St. Francis River required for the proposed project to meet the needs of the community?

Please briefly describe reasons why or why not:

Yes

No

Do you have any specific concerns about the natural environment, cultural resources, or economic/social resources not addressed at this location public hearing?

Yes

No

Do you have a suggestion that would make these alternatives better serve the needs of the community or any other comments/concerns related to the proposed project?
