

APPENDIX F

COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

SDEIS LOCATION PUBLIC HEARING HANDOUT

WELCOME

Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD)
Open Forum Location Public Hearing • Job R60101
North Belt Freeway
Hwy. 67- I-40 West
Pulaski County
March 20 & 21 2007

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. An AHTD employee 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 will be accepted at the office of the AHTD Environmental Division, P.O. Box 2261, Little Rock, Arkansas, 72203 through 4:30 p.m., Thursday, April 12, 2007.

• 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

This packet has been prepared to provide general information about the project and its potential impacts. Information has been included pertaining to the proposed design, environmental impacts and right-of-way. Additional information on each of these topics is available at the hearing or by contacting the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department.

The Department holds public hearings to insure that highway locations and designs are consistent with the highest possible goals and objectives. One of the primary objectives of this hearing is to provide a medium of free and open discussion which hopefully will result in the resolution of any problems or controversial issues. In order to accomplish this goal, we must have your cooperation and participation. The Department hopes to make you familiar with the proposed location and design 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 and design to be proposed by the Department is subject to the approval of 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 hearing or delivered to the AHTD Environmental Division office by 4:30 p.m. Thursday, April 12, 2007.

The address is: Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department
Environmental Division
P.O. Box 2261
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203
Telephone: 501-569-2281

GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is proposing a highway project located in northern Pulaski County, Arkansas. This project, commonly known as the North Belt Freeway, will consist of a four-lane, divided highway constructed to Interstate standards and located between Highway 67 and the Interstate 40/430 Interchange. The completion of the eastern segment of the North Belt Freeway between Highway 67 and the Interstate 40/440 Interchange left this proposed freeway project as the only remaining segment of the urban area's circumferential freeway to be implemented. The project is between 12 and 15 miles in length and will be constructed on new location with an average estimated right of way width of 300 feet. Access will be fully controlled with interchanges and grade separations utilized at selected locations.

The proposed North Belt Freeway is included in the CARTS Metro 2030 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and has been part of the transportation planning efforts in northern Pulaski County since 1941. Since 1979, the Pulaski Area Transportation Study, now expanded to the CARTS, has shown the proposed North Belt Freeway essentially in the same general corridor as the Selected Alternative identified in the project's 1994 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

In 1997, the local metropolitan planning organization, Metroplan, did not include the North Belt Freeway project in the CARTS Transportation Improvement Program. This decision was made because a portion of the Selected Alternative was not compatible with the City of Sherwood's Master Street Plan. Since the AHTD was unable to proceed with activities on the North Belt Freeway within a 3-year period after the ROD, reassessment of the Selected Alternative became necessary.

In 2003, a Preliminary Evaluation was conducted by the AHTD in order to resolve issues necessary to proceed with a FEIS reassessment. Public comment from the expanding residential neighborhoods adjacent to the Selected Alignment and Sherwood's continuing opposition resulted in the necessity to produce this Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) as the means of conducting a project reassessment.

The SDEIS was completed and approved by FHWA for public release in January 2007. Development of alternatives and detailed environmental study of those alternatives was completed as part of the SDEIS process and resulted in the designation of a Preferred Alternative. Comments from the public, local officials, and state/federal resource agencies will be collected and a Preferred Alternative will be taken forward into a FEIS. Preparation of a new FEIS and new ROD that fully evaluates the Preferred Alternative and documents the Selected Alternative will complete the environmental process.



RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION

The acquisition of right-of-way involves the property owners being contacted by different individuals from the AHTD Right-of-Way Division. 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 AHTD completes the title opinion 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 state takes possession of the property.

For those cases where all efforts to negotiate are unsuccessful, the tract is submitted to the AHTD Legal Division 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 displacee: i.e., 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

After a full evaluation of the information contained within the SDEIS, and as a result of participation by resource agencies, the local officials, the public, and the response gained through these avenues, sufficient information was available to identify a Preferred Alternative for the proposed facility. The various alignment alternatives were compared and Alignment Alternative Bab was recommended for combination with the Common Alignment and designation as the Preferred Alternative.

This Alternative:

- 1) Meets the project purpose and need;
- 2) Minimizes overall impacts;
- 3) Best balances the benefits expected from the project with the overall impacts;
and
- 4) Provides good access to communities and other regional highway facilities.

The Preferred Alternative is 12.7 miles in length, with five interchanges and eight grade separations proposed. An interchange is not proposed at Oneida Street in order to minimize residential relocations, wetland impacts, and impacts to the surrounding subdivisions. Additionally, interchange constructability issues exist due to the proximity of Kellogg Creek and Fears Lake, and spacing with the Highway 67 Interchange would not be optimal for traffic operations. The Preferred Alternative avoids recreation areas and the Kellogg Mine area, while minimizing relocations, wetland, and noise impacts to the maximum extent possible.

The Preferred Alternative will undergo public, local officials, and state and federal resource agencies review during the public hearing(s) and comment period on the SDEIS. The comments will be assessed and, if necessary, the Preferred Alternative may be modified either through the choice of a different alignment alternative or through shifts or changes to the Preferred Alternative. After a complete evaluation of the comments received, an alternative will be chosen for documentation in the FEIS. The FEIS documentation will contain responses to the comments received on the SDEIS, and address comments and changes related to the Preferred Alternative.

CONCLUSION

The information being presented at this hearing is the best indication of what the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) has determined to date. The AHTD is sensitive to the concerns of the citizenry and a final alignment will be developed after the comments from this public hearing are received and an evaluation of all impacts of the project can be completed.

The AHTD 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 two of this packet. E-mail comments can be set to: northbelt@arkansashighways.com. All comments must be received by the AHTD by Thursday, April 12, 2007, to be considered as part of the public hearing documentation.

Your attendance and participation in this hearing is greatly appreciated.

SDEIS LOCATION PUBLIC HEARING SYNOPSIS

LOCATION PUBLIC HEARING SYNOPSIS

**Job Number R60101
Hwy. 67 – I-40 West
Pulaski County
March 20 and 21, 2007**

Open forum Location Public Hearings for the proposed North Belt Freeway were held in Sherwood at the Brockington Road Church of the Nazarene on March 20, 2007 and Cato Elementary on March 21 from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. Radio PSAs (Public Service Announcements), Hispanic community leaders, civic organizations, media news releases, flyers (Spanish and English) distributed in the project area, and notices mailed to the minority churches and public officials were utilized to inform the public and to involve minorities in the meeting.

The following information was available for inspection and comment. Small-scale copies of the displays are attached.

- Two displays of the entire project area on a street map illustrating the alignments.
- Two displays of the entire project area with the alignments on an aerial photograph at a scale of one inch equals 0.8 mile.
- Five displays of the alternatives area on a street map.
- Five displays of the alternatives area on an aerial photograph at a scale of one inch equals 701 feet.
- One display showing the estimated impact summary for the alignments.
One display outlining the project development process.

Handouts for the public included a comment sheet, a small-scale map, and an impact summary for the alignments. Copies of these are attached.

Table 1 describes the results of the public participation at the meeting.

Public Participation	Totals
Attendance at meetings	495
Comments received at meetings	37
Oral statements	0
Additional comments received after meetings	57
Total comments received	94
Petitions received	1

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AHTD staff reviewed all comments received and evaluated their contents. The summary of comments listed below reflects the personal perception or opinion of the person or organization making the statement. The sequencing of the comments is random and is not intended to reflect importance or numerical values. Some of the comments were combined and/or paraphrased to simplify the synopsis process.

An analysis of the responses received on the comment sheets is shown in Table 2.

Comment	Totals
In favor of the Preferred Alignment Bab	25
In favor of Alignment C	15
In favor of Alignment Ba	19
In favor of Alignment A	5
Against the Preferred Alignment Bab	2
Against Alignment C	1
North Belt not needed	1
Toll project to get it built	5
Do not toll project	19
Interchange needed at Oneida Street	11
No interchange needed at Oneida Street	1
Interchange needed at Kellogg Road	4
Noise impacts need to be considered	6
Potential impacts to wildlife need to be considered	4

A listing of general comments concerning the proposed project follows:

- The North Belt route should not go along Segment b because houses and infrastructure in an existing subdivision (North Lake) would have to be paid for by taxpayers' dollars. It would lower the value of the residents' property, increase the noise level, and be unsightly due to its proximity to the subdivision.
- Do not toll the North Belt. Adverse economic and congestion impacts to Highway 67 and surrounding regional arterials would result from tolling.
- Noise impacts to residents of Indianhead Lake Estates need to be considered in relation to the North Belt route.

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- Alignment Bab would divide the Kellogg/Oakdale Community and change its character.
- An interchange at Oneida Street would increase safety because it would provide for fire and police access.

A petition signed by 215 individuals was received that stated opposition to a North Belt route that would go through North Lake Subdivision, resulting in impacts to critical watersheds, wildlife habitat, and wilderness areas. A route through the North Lake Subdivision would also displace residents and ruin the current quality of tranquil life.

Attachments: Information packet and comment form

Small-scale impact summary table used for handout and as display

Small-scale street map of entire project area used for handout and as display

Small-scale aerial map of entire project area display

Small-scale street map of alternatives area display

Small-scale aerial map of alternatives area display

Small-scale project development process display

RJ
BP



Alignment Alternative Impact Summary†

The Preferred Alternative is highlighted in yellow.

Alignment Alternative	Length miles	Average	Total Cost million \$	Weighted Traffic Volume* (GVMT)	Existing Land Use Converted to Highway Right of Way				Cultural Resources-Direct Impacts				Noise Impacts*		Hazardous Materials Impacts		
					Commercial/Residential	Military Base	Undeveloped Agricultural	Prime Farmland	Recorded Archeological Sites	Historic Structures	Historic Bridges	Historic Roads	Estimated Receptors 2050 Traffic	Illegal Dumping	Landfills	Underground Storage Tanks	
Common	6.9	398	139	36,218	21	111	49	190	0	4	0.5	1	3	5-6**	0	2	2
A	3.3	208	136	36,218	17	0	61	238	0.39	1	0	0	0	31	0	0	0
Ab	3.4	318	131	36,218	31	0	38	229	1.11	2	0	0	0	71	0	0	0
B	3.7	313	146	34,978	19	0	47	249	0.8	1	2	0	0	13	1	0	0
Ba	3.4	318	146	34,978	14	0	83	260	0.9	2	0	0	0	3	2	0	0
Bb	3.7	326	141	34,978	15	0	52	241	1.10	2	2	0	0	13	1	0	0
Bc	3.6	330	141	34,978	28	0	30	232	1.14	3	0	0	0	7	1	0	0
C	7.6	444	203	12,313	24	0	34	164	1.08	1	1	0	0	17	1	1	0

Continued	Recreation				Floodplain Impacts				USACE Section 106 Impacts				Surface Water Quality Impact Ratings	
	Residential Owners	Residential Tenants	Business	Total	Special Flood Hazard Area	Floodway	Stream Crossings	Wetlands	Intermittent	Perennial	Stream Crossings	Wetlands		
Common	29	3	8	31	0	0	0	0	3.2	0	0	0	0	1.2
A	30	7	0	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	2.9
Ab	16	7	0	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	10	0	2.3
B	12	8	1	21	0	4	0	0	0	0	3	15	0	2.5
Ba	6	8	0	14	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	15	0	2.3
Bb	12	8	1	21	0	4	0	0	0	0	2	32	0	2.5
Bc	6	8	0	14	0	2	0	0	10	0	2	32	0	2.3
C	27	14	0	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	10	0	2.9

† For alignments A, Ab, B, Ba, Bb, and Bc, the traffic and impacts outlined in the table are with an interchange at Omega Street. With a grade separation at Omega Street, the traffic and impacts would vary slightly.

** Mitigation includes individual, environmental, roadway, utility right of ways, ponds, reservoirs, borrow areas, swing ponds, levees, ditches, and inlets.

†† IIR (IIR) level impacts and requests for approval for various alignment criteria (IIR, IIR).

** A range is indicated because the existing road changes based upon which alignment is combined with the Common Alignment.

† Traffic volumes are for the entire alignment alternative including the Common Alignment Section.



