



Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, District 1

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Public meetings scheduled on U.S. 51 Ohio River Bridge replacement project *Meetings set for Wickliffe on September 9 and Cairo on September 10*

PADUCAH, Ky. (Sept. 3, 2019) — The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) and Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) have started preliminary engineering and environmental analysis work for the eventual replacement of the U.S. 51 Ohio River “Cairo” Bridge between Wickliffe, Ky. and Cairo, Il.

The project team has scheduled two public meetings to update the public on progress, and gather public comments to assist with decision-making as the project moves forward. The first meeting will be Monday, Sept. 9 at the Fort Jefferson Welcome Center in Wickliffe. The second meeting will be Tuesday, Sept. 10 at Cairo High School in Cairo. Each meeting will be held from 5-7 p.m. CDT in an open house format.

KYTC District 1 Chief Engineer Kyle Poat urged anyone with an interest in the project to plan to attend one of the meetings.

“We are asking area residents, those who cross the U.S. 51 Ohio River Bridge, businesses that depend on commerce created by bridge traffic, and shippers who have trucks hauling materials across the bridge to attend one of these meetings,” Poat said. “We’ll share some displays and provide an update on progress to this point. We’ll also seek public input to help keep the project moving forward.”

Anyone who is unable to attend one of the two meetings may view displays at the KYTC Paducah office with the public comment period remaining open for about two weeks.

The U.S. 51 Ohio River Bridge, located at Ohio River navigation mile point 980.4, carries U.S. 51, U.S. 60, and U.S. 62 traffic across the Ohio River at U.S. 51 Kentucky mile point 7.372.

Also known as The Cairo Bridge, it carries approximately 5,500 vehicles across the Ohio River each day between Wickliffe, Ky. and Cairo, Il. Trucks account for about 35 percent of that cross-river traffic.

The bridge was constructed by the Cairo Bridge Commission as a toll facility and opened to traffic in 1937. Tolls were removed from the crossing in 1948 when the highway departments of Kentucky and Illinois took over maintenance of the structure.

It immediately connects with the U.S. 60/U.S. 62 Mississippi River Bridge to Bird's Point, Missouri at the southern tip of Illinois, creating a major transportation link connecting Kentucky, Illinois, and Missouri.

Handouts containing information about this project, comment sheets, and displays will be available at the meeting. The meetings will be held in an open house format with no formal presentation. Representatives of KYTC, IDOT, and consultants on the project team will be available to answer questions and gather public comments and input.

In 2014, a planning study commissioned by KYTC recommended a preferred corridor for a new bridge immediately upstream of the existing U.S. 51 crossing. Information about the project is available online at www.US51Bridge.com.

Individuals or organizations who wish to submit comments outside of the public meetings may contact Chris Kuntz, PE, at the KYTC District 1 Office at 5501 Kentucky Dam Road, Paducah, Ky., 42003 or by calling 270-898-2431.

Kentucky meeting: Monday, Sept. 9
5-7 p.m. CDT
Fort Jefferson Welcome Center
587 Fort Jefferson Hill Road
Wickliffe, Ky.

Illinois meeting: Tuesday, Sept. 10
5-7 p.m. CDT
Cairo High School
401 Sycamore St.
Cairo, Ill.