



Kentucky Transportation Cabinet • District 1

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U.S. 51 Ohio River ‘Cairo’ Bridge Replacement Project Public Meeting Scheduled for July 11

Project team to share bridge design information at Cairo, Ill., meeting

PADUCAH, Ky. (June 25, 2024) — The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) has scheduled a public meeting on the U.S. 51 Ohio River ‘Cairo’ Bridge Replacement Project for Thursday, July 11, 2024, in Cairo, Ill., to update the public on the new river crossing that will provide safer, improved highway connectivity in western Kentucky and southern Illinois.

“This meeting is a significant step forward as we will share renderings of the selected bridge type,” said Kyle Poat, Kentucky Department of Highways District 1 chief engineer. “It will be the first chance for everyone to get a view of the basic design. The project team will also have a right-of-way display for affected property owners near the site of the new structure.”

The project, which is still in the preliminary design phase, calls for the new river crossing to be constructed approximately 1,000 ft. upstream from the existing U.S. 51 Ohio River Bridge.

The public meeting will be held July 11 from 5 to 8 p.m., CDT, at Cairo High School in an open house format. A formal presentation is scheduled for 6 p.m. Staff from KYTC and project team members will be available to answer questions.

Displays will be available for review at the meeting. Handouts containing information about the project and comment sheets will be available for those who want to provide feedback to help with the planning process.

Preliminary plans for the new bridge feature a roundabout for U.S. 51/U.S. 60/U.S. 62 at the Illinois end of the structure. The roadway for the new bridge will tie to existing U.S. 51 near the Minor Slough Bridge in Kentucky.

Before and after the 6 p.m. presentation, the public can review displays and provide comments.

Written and oral comments will be accepted during the meeting. After the meeting, materials and displays will be available on the project website at www.US51bridge.com.

In the coming weeks, the project team will begin a new round of geotechnical exploration and analysis to determine soil density under the river to aid with pier design and future construction for the new bridge. Depending on funding, construction of the new bridge is tentatively scheduled to start in 2028 and is expected to take four to five years to complete.

The existing U.S. 51 Ohio River “Cairo” Bridge between Wickliffe, Ky., and Cairo, Ill., 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 and Illinois mile point 0.0. Also known as The Cairo Bridge, it is the longest bridge in Kentucky and the westernmost bridge over the Ohio River.

The existing U.S. 51 Ohio River Bridge opened to traffic on Nov 11, 1936. Kentucky and Illinois highway departments took over maintenance of the structure in November 1948 when tolls were removed.

The U.S. 51 Ohio River 'Cairo' Bridge is a north-south connector for U.S. 51 and an east-west transportation corridor for U.S. 60 and U.S. 62. The bridge carries about 6,600 vehicles per day between Kentucky and Illinois. About 40 percent of the traffic is commercial trucks.

The existing Wickliffe-Cairo Bridge crosses the Ohio River at navigation mile point 980.4.

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

Item # 1-100.00 & 1-1140.00

U.S. 51 Ohio River 'Cairo' Bridge Replacement Project

Public Meeting July 11

from 5 to 8 p.m.

Cairo High School

4201 Sycamore Street • Cairo, IL

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