

Arkansas Department of Transportation

(A R DOT)

Citizen Comment Form

ARDOT Job Number 090506

Illinois River Str. & Apprs. (Hwy. 59)

Benton County

LOCATION:

Online "Live" Virtual Public Involvement Meeting

Thursday, November 12, 2020

5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Comments Deadline: 4:30 p.m. on Friday, November 27, 2020

Do you feel there is a need for the proposed bridge replacement on Hwy. 59 over the Illinois River?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comment

The current bridge is in need of repair or replacement. The current plans require significant alteration to the bridge location, in an extremely sensitive environmental, historical, and cultural area.

Removing and replacing the bridge in its exact location should strongly be considered as Alternate 3. This does not impact the sensitive areas as outlined in the alternates.

Alternate 2 or Alternate 3 would allow for ample space for a public access to be put in along the ARDOT right of way. This would allow the public to access the Illinois River for floats from the Siloam Springs Kayak Park and the highly anticipated WOKA whitewater park, both totaling over \$30 Million dollars for recreation along this river.

Which Alternate Alignment would you consider to be your preferred alternate for the proposed bridge replacement on Highway 59?

☐ Alternate 1
☒ Alternate 2
☐ NO BUILD Alternate

Comment

Alternate 2 or Alternate 3 (removing and replacing the bridge in its exact location).

Alternate 2 protects the historic, environmental, and cultural areas near the proposed bridge project.

Alternate 2 or Alternate 3 provides ample area for a public access to the Illinois River.

Do you feel that the proposed project will have any impacts:(economic, environmental, social, etc.)?

☐ Beneficial ☒ Adverse

Comment

Economic- Construction would impact the businesses providing recreational access to the Illinois River. The river and its protection are critical to the economic strength of this area. Gypsy Camp & Canoe actively educates floaters about protecting the river and encourages trash cleans ups and recycling.

Environmental- The Illinois River should be cleaned up during the project. There are significant amounts of construction debris in the Illinois River from previous bridge construction that has altered the course of the river. The stream bank should be restored to conditions better than before, and these efforts should be coordinated with strong local partnerships.

Social- Providing public access at this location would provide for social and economic benefits for all generations and demographics. This will establish NWA as a paddling destination and provide the public with river access to both kayak parks. We have two world class facilities that need better access along the riverway.

Do you have a suggestion that would make this proposed project better serve the needs of the community?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Comment

Alternate 2 should include a public access where the old bridge is removed. This would be an incredibly easy investment in public recreation for the rivers of Arkansas.

Alternate 3 should strongly be considered to remove and replace the bridge in its exact location. This protects the environmental, historical, and culturally sensitive areas, it protects the neighbors, and doesn't harm more land in our river ecosystem. And includes access.

Do you know of any historical sites, family cemeteries, or archaeological sites in the project area?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Comment

Gypsy Camp Historic District is located directly in the path of Alternate 1. The bluffs at Gypsy Camp are sensitive and incredible and must be preserved as there is evidence of Ozark Bluff Dwellers. There have been Native American artifacts found at this location. The seismic activity could destroy the historic district and structures that are currently being restored. The seismic activity could damage the sensitive bluff line or buildings.

The access to the Illinois River is critical to the public interest.

Do you know of any environmental constraints, such as endangered species, hazardous waste sites, existing or former landfills, or parks and public lands in the vicinity of the project?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Comment

The Illinois River stream banks would be greatly impacted by Alternate 1. The loss of trees would lead to more erosion and deterioration of the river bank that has already been negatively impacted by the current bridge.

Alternate 2 would provide opportunity for public access at the Illinois River.

The blasting of the bluff would greatly impact the wildlife in the area. The blasting could severely damage the historic structures and neighboring houses.

There are septic tanks that many neighbors have expressed concern due to possible hazardous waste near the river and the current bridge that should be thoroughly inspected prior to this construction.

Does your home or property offer any limitations to the project, such as septic systems, that the Department needs to consider in its design?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Comment

There are septic tanks that many neighbors have expressed concern due to possible hazardous waste near the river and the current bridge that should be thoroughly inspected prior to construction.

The historic districts protection should be strongly considered. The property is currently being restored, and will become a true treasure to Arkansas once again.

It is often necessary for the ARDOT to contact property owners along potential routes. If you are a property owner along or adjacent to the route under consideration, please provide information below. Thank you.

Name *

First NameLast Name