

U.S. BRIDGES

Environmental Impact Statement

OVER THE MISSOURI RIVER

OCTOBER 2012

The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) in cooperation with the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is conducting an environmental study for the US 69 Bridges over the Missouri River commonly known as the Fairfax Bridge and the Platte Purchase Bridge. These bridges provide a bi-state connection between the Fairfax Industrial District and downtown Kansas City on the Kansas side and Platte County and the city of Riverside on the Missouri side.

Why is MoDOT doing the study now?

Both the Fairfax Bridge, constructed in 1935, and the Platte Purchase Bridge, constructed in 1957, are nearing the end of their useful service lives. An environmental study is being conducted to determine the future improvements to address the deteriorating bridge conditions. The age and condition of both bridges creates an on-going need for costly and extensive maintenance.

What is the project timeline?

Developing transportation improvements involves four phases:

- planning
- environmental
- design
- construction

This project is currently in the environmental study phase which began in September 2012. The environmental study will last about 18 months, concluding in early 2014. Opportunities for public input into the environmental process will be conducted through fall 2013. In early 2014, the study will be finalized and submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for review. The environmental process will conclude with the issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD) by FHWA in spring of 2014. The ROD identifies the selected alternative, explaining the reason for the decision, and includes information on the best way to minimize impacts on the environment.

Design and construction of the project could begin 2015, depending on funding availability.

What is the study area?

The study area is approximately 4,000 feet long and begins near the interchange of US 69 and I-635 in Platte County, Missouri on the north and ends near the intersection of US 69/7th Street and Kindleberger Road in Wyandotte County, Kansas on the south.



What is the purpose of this study?

The study will determine the future improvements of the two existing bridges over the Missouri River and assess the environmental impacts and overall feasibility of replacement/rehabilitation of these two bridge structures.

This study will identify the transportation needs and define more specific potential improvements and their impacts on the environment. Input from the public, stakeholders, and various resource agencies will be considered throughout the study process. Examples of these improvements include the number of lanes to be provided on the bridge, the number and location of bicycle/pedestrian facilities on and connecting to the bridge, vertical clearance required to maintain river and rail traffic under the bridge, and local roadway intersection improvements north and south of the bridge, if needed.

Will the study lead to construction projects?

There is currently no funding identified for bridge construction.

What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?

The environmental study will result in completion of a document called an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on social, cultural, economic, and natural resources. The FHWA is responsible for ensuring that all highway improvement projects using federal funds comply with NEPA.

Developing the EIS is an objective process that helps determine what actions, if any, would best serve area transportation needs. This EIS will look at the effects associated with various alternatives such as constructing a replacement bridge, rehabilitating an existing bridge, or doing nothing. Stakeholders are encouraged to voice their opinions about the problems and solutions identified during the EIS process.

Why should I participate in the EIS process?

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will propose improvements that will take into account the needs of neighboring communities, businesses, commuters, and residents. In addition, the EIS will consider the impacts the proposed improvements will have on the social, cultural, economic, and natural resources in the study area.

The project team recognizes the important role transportation has in this community. MoDOT and KDOT value the input the public provides on transportation improvements. Public involvement allows the agencies to gather real, valid input on transportation needs and to work with customers to refine solutions that meet those needs.

Who is responsible for this project?

Since the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is expected to provide funding for this project, FHWA serves as the lead federal agency. MoDOT, as the direct recipient of the federal funds, is the co-lead agency. Because the existing bridges extend across the Missouri River, connecting the states of Missouri and Kansas, the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) will participate in the shared funding of any improvements and will serve as a co-lead agency in the environmental process.



How can I provide input?

A prelocation public meeting will be held on November 13, 2012 to describe the general nature of the proposed project to the public and to obtain comments concerning the project's purpose and need and the initial range of alternatives to be reviewed as the study moves forward. Primary information sought will concern community values, goals and objectives, and other areas of special interest of which the local citizens may be aware including history, access, natural resources, and public lands in the study area.

As the study progresses, opportunities to provide input will be made available through additional public meetings.

Input can also be provided to the project manager, Allan Zafft at 816-607-2258 or allan.zafft@modot.mo.gov.

