

Notice of public hearing and environmental assessment availability

Proposed improvements of U.S. 61 and intent to acquire property in Louisa County to be discussed in Wapello on May 8, 2018

All interested persons are invited to attend a public hearing between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. May 8, 2018, at the Charles Briggs Civic Center, 317 N. Water Street, in Wapello. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the proposed improvements of U.S. 61 in Louisa County from 0.5 mile north of Iowa 78 to north of 130th Street and to gather public feedback on the environmental documentation, preferred alternative, and potential impacts to the planned highway improvements.

The public hearing will be conducted using a combined open forum and formal format. During the open forum, from 5:00 to 5:45 p.m., Iowa DOT staff will be present to informally discuss the project. After the open forum, a formal presentation will be displayed beginning at 5:45 p.m. and followed by a question-and-answer session.

Persons wishing to make a formal statement or ask questions will need to note that at the time of registration. There will be a three-minute limit per speaker during the question-and-answer session. Oral and written statements will be accepted during both the open forum and the formal session. Written statements and related exhibits, in place of or in addition to oral statements made at the meeting, will be accepted at the meeting or may be submitted to the Office of Location and Environment, Iowa DOT, 800 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa 50010 or via the public meetings website at www.iowadot.gov/pim or at <http://bit.ly/iowadot96381081>. All written comments received by June 8, 2018 will be included in the project transcript.

With this notice, the public is invited to review and comment on the impacts this project will have on the protected activities, features and attributes to the U.S. 61 boat access. The U.S. 61 boat access to the Iowa River, located north of the city of Wapello, is a Section 4(f) resource and due to reduced access during construction, the proposed project is expected to have a temporary impact on the resource. This facility is owned and operated by the Louisa County Conservation Board and consists of a small parking lot for access to fishing along the Iowa River.

The U.S. 61 boat access has been determined to be a Section 4(f) resource and the proposed project is expected to have a temporary impact on the resource due to reduced access during construction. Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 was enacted as a means of protecting publicly owned parks, recreation areas, and wildlife/waterfowl refuges, as well as historic sites of local, state, or national significance from conversion to transportation uses. This type of Section 4(f) impact needs to satisfy the following conditions: duration must be temporary, scope of work must be minor, will include no anticipated permanent adverse physical impacts, and the land being used must be fully restored.

The Iowa Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for this project. A copy of the EA will be available for inspection at the meeting, and can also be found on the Iowa DOT website, and at the Keck Memorial Library, 119 N. Second St., in Wapello. Copies may be obtained by contacting either of the following:

Tamara Nicholson, Director
Iowa DOT Office of Location and Environment
800 Lincoln Way, Ames, IA 50010
Telephone: 515-239-1798
Tamara.Nicholson@iowadot.us

Karen Bobo, Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
105 Sixth Street, Ames, IA 50010
Telephone: 515-233-7300
Karen.Bobo@dot.gov

NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNERS

When the Iowa DOT is proposing to acquire property under the power of eminent domain for a public improvement project it is required to give notice of a public hearing to all owners and contract purchasers of record of agricultural land which may be subject to condemnation.

Proposed improvements: Notice is hereby given that the Iowa DOT will consider approving the project described above.

Private property may be acquired by purchase or condemnation: If the Iowa DOT approves the project described above, the Iowa DOT will be required to acquire property for the proposed improvement(s). The Iowa DOT will attempt to purchase the required property by good faith negotiations; however, it may condemn those properties it is unable to purchase through eminent domain. The proposed location of the public improvement(s) described above is shown on preliminary plans for the project. Preliminary plans are available from the Office of Location and Environment, Iowa DOT, 800 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa 50010.

Process to decide to fund the design, select the route or site location, or acquire or condemn property interests: To acquire the necessary properties and property interests required for the project, the Iowa DOT is required to approve the project location. The Iowa DOT will hold a public hearing, to present the proposed improvement(s) and potential impact(s) as a result of the improvement(s). Persons, whose property may be affected by the project, as well as the general public, may comment on the project at the public hearing. Based in part on the information received at the hearing, the Iowa DOT will select the project location and determine whether to fund the site-specific design and to authorize by purchase or condemnation the acquisition of right of way for the project.

Iowa DOT contact: For general information regarding the proposed improvements or public hearing, contact Hector Torres-Cacho, transportation planner, Iowa DOT District 5 Office, 307 W. Briggs, P.O. Box 587, Fairfield, Iowa 52556, phone 641-472-4171 or 800-766-4368, email Hector.Torres-Cacho@iowadot.us

This notice is given by authority of the Iowa DOT and is **not** an offer to buy land nor is it an offer to provide relocation assistance. Affected property owners are not required to move from their residences or relocate their businesses at this time. Eligibility for relocation benefits will not occur until after an offer to purchase has been made to individual property owners.

More information will be posted as it becomes available at the Iowa DOT's website: www.iowadot.gov/pim.

Federal and state laws prohibit employment and/or public accommodation discrimination on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender identity, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran's status. If you believe you have been discriminated against, please contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission at 800-457-4416 or Iowa Department of Transportation's affirmative action officer. If you need accommodations because of a disability to access the Iowa Department of Transportation's services, contact the agency's affirmative action officer at 800-262-0003.