



INFORMATION RELEASE

Office of the Director

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NR11-012

January 31, 2011

AHTD IDENTIFIES PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR HIGHWAY 13 EXTENSION IN SEARCY

LITTLE ROCK (1-31) The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD), in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration, has reevaluated the three alternatives previously analyzed in an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed extension of Highway 13 between Highway 267 and Highway 36 in White County. This updated information was presented at a Public Involvement Session in Searcy on November 16, 2010.

The reevaluation supported the information displayed at this project's Location Public Hearing held in June 2009. After consideration of the reevaluated information and the comments received at the recent public meeting, the AHTD has identified Alternative 2 as the Preferred Alternative (see map).

Alternative 2 extends north from the intersection of Highways 13 and 267 and then turns northeast, eventually following Honey Hill Road north to Highway 36. This alternative would consist of two different cross-sections, including rural and urban designs. The rural design would have two 12-foot wide travel lanes with eight-foot wide shoulders, extending from Highway 267 to the intersection of Booth Road and Honey Hill Road. The urban design would have two 14-foot wide travel lanes with curb and gutter and a sidewalk on the eastern side of the roadway, extending from the intersection of Booth Road and Honey Hill Road to Highway 36.

Alternative 2 meets the primary purpose and need of the project by improving the flow of traffic through the study area, and will successfully carry the corridor's projected traffic volumes for the next twenty years. Alternative 2 would carry the most traffic, would have the fewest relocatees, the least wetland and floodplain impacts, would have

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the shortest length and the lowest cost. Alternative 2 would also provide a better, more efficient connection to the proposed North Searcy Connector, ultimately providing a continuous highway corridor around the west and north sides of Searcy.

After further design and survey work is completed, a Design Public Hearing will be held in Searcy to receive additional public comment on the design of this Preferred Alternative.

In addition, at its meeting on January 6, 2011, the Highway Commission authorized the Department to proceed with finalizing the development of the North Searcy Connector, including construction of the Connector in phases as needed to facilitate the completion of the overall project using funds available in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for Fiscal Years 2010 through 2013. This action brings the total funds available in the STIP for the North Searcy Connector to approximately \$30 million, which includes a partnering contribution of \$6 million from the local community. Construction on the North Searcy Connector is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2013.

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