

WELCOME

**Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department
Open Forum Design Public Hearing – Job No. 050251
Hwy. 16 – Hwy. 67
White County**

September 24, 2013

HOW THIS HEARING WORKS:

1. Please register your attendance at the Registration table.
2. Gather information, view the displays, and ask questions *at your own pace and convenience*. Personnel are on hand to assist you by answering questions about the project and providing pertinent information.
3. If you wish to make an oral statement about the project, *you must* have your comments recorded on tape at the recording station set up at the hearing. An AHTD employee will be there to record your statement.
4. Written statements may also be submitted. Forms are available which may be filled out and left in the drop box at the hearing, OR your written comments will be accepted at the office of the AHTD Environmental Division, P.O. Box 2261, Little Rock, Arkansas, 72203 through 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, October 8, 2013.

• REMEMBER •

Your comments must be in writing or recorded on tape to be considered part of the official record of this public hearing.

*Thank You For Your Attendance and Participation
In This Public Hearing*

This packet has been prepared to provide general information about the project and its potential impacts. Information has been included pertaining to the proposed design, environmental impacts and right-of-way. Additional information on each of these topics is available at the hearing or by contacting the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD).

The Department holds public hearings to insure that highway locations and designs are consistent with the highest possible goals and objectives. One of the primary objectives of this hearing is to provide a medium of free and open discussion which hopefully will result in the resolution of any problems or controversial issues. In order to accomplish this goal, we must have your cooperation and participation. The AHTD hopes to make you familiar with the proposed design and give you an opportunity to express your opinions.

Over the years, state, federal, and local governments have worked closely together in the building of our highways and in the overall improvement of our transportation system. The federal government is concerned about providing a modern transportation system to serve the nation as a whole, and of course, your State Highway Commission is working to provide the best possible system of highways for all the citizens of Arkansas.

These interests have resulted in a closely coordinated effort between the Federal Highway Administration, the AHTD, and local governments. This joint involvement in projects is more than just a funding arrangement, however. The design to be proposed by the Department is subject to the approval of the Federal Highway Administration. All policies, procedures, and activities involved in the proposed project must comply with all federal and state laws and regulations.

Your comments, either written or verbal, are encouraged. Verbal comments will only be accepted at the hearing, but written statements may be submitted at the hearing or delivered to the AHTD Environmental Division office by 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, October 8, 2013.

The address is: Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department
 Environmental Division
 P. O. Box 2261
 Little Rock, Arkansas 72203
 Telephone: 501-569-2281

GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

Welcome to the Design Public Hearing for Job No. 050251. This public hearing is being held for the purpose of permitting all interested persons, agencies and organizations the opportunity to express their views regarding the proposed highway connector between Highways 16 and 67.

The proposed project is located in and around the City of Searcy. The typical cross-section for the urban design consist of two 14-foot travel lanes with 3-foot grass berm and two 5-foot sidewalks, while the rural design consist of two 12-foot travel lanes with 8-foot shoulders on each side.

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve east-west travel in White County especially in the Searcy area. This project will reduce congestion on two primary east-west routes, Highway 36 (Beebe-Capps Expressway) and Highways 16 and 67 Business (67B), also known as Race Avenue, while reducing congestion, and enhancing safety.

The proposed project will eventually connect to the Highway 13 Extension Project (AHTD Job 050185, Hwy. 267 - Hwy. 36). The Highway 13 Extension Project is a separate project that has been studied and approved by the Arkansas Highway Commission to extend Highway 13 from Highway 267 (southwest of Searcy) to Highway 36 (west of Searcy).



RIGHT-OF-WAY

ACQUISITION

The acquisition of right-of-way involves property owners who are contacted by different officials from the AHTD Right-of-Way Division. These officials include appraisers, negotiators, closing agents and possibly property managers.

The initial step in the acquisition process is property valuation. Once the valuation is prepared, reviewed and approved, a negotiator will contact the property owner by mail or in person to begin the negotiation process. If negotiations are successful, a *Contract to Sell* is executed and submitted for payment. Once the Department completes the title opinion and the deed is prepared, a closing agent will be in touch to get the deed signed and deliver the check. At this time, the state takes possession of the property.

For those cases where all efforts to negotiate are unsuccessful, the tract is submitted to the AHTD Legal Division to file condemnation. The appraisal amount is deposited in the court and the landowner may withdraw the funds placed on deposit without affecting their right to claim additional compensation.

No one will be required to surrender possession of their property or improvement until just compensation has been made. A detailed policy and procedures brochure is available at the Right-of-Way table at the public hearing, or through the AHTD Right-of-Way Division (501) 569-2311.



RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The relocation assistance program is intended to help offset expenses incurred by those who are displaced by federally aided highway projects. This program provides advisory assistance and payments to help offset those expenses.

No one can be required to move without at least ninety (90) days advance written notice, and comparable replacement housing will be made available to all residential displaces (built if necessary) before construction begins on the project. This housing must be fair housing and offered to all affected persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

Relocation assistance, which is separate from the compensation a person receives for real estate, comes in two basic forms — physical assistance and monetary assistance. In order to be eligible for relocation assistance and compensation, a person must be in occupancy at the initiation of negotiations for the property. The type of relocation payments one is eligible for depends on the type of displacee: i.e., owner, renter, etc.

Relocation assistance and payments will be provided until all displacees have been relocated from the project. If a person is not satisfied with the amounts that have been offered as relocation compensation, an appeal may be filed and the case heard promptly and carefully reviewed by an AHTD Appeals Officer.

Relocation assistance brochures which explain each payment and each eligibility requirement in detail are available at the Right-of-Way table at this hearing.



ENVIRONMENTAL

An Environmental Assessment was approved by the Federal Highway Administration in June 2012 that identified potential social, economic and environmental impacts and determined if any of the impacts are significant. Copies of this documentation are available for review at this hearing.

The analysis of the proposed project did not identify any significant impacts to the natural or social environment. The primary impacts to the natural environment will be conversion to right-of-way and restructuring of the physical landscape.



CONCLUSION

The information presented at this hearing is preliminary and is the best indication of what the Department is proposing at this time. The Department is sensitive to the concerns of the citizenry and final plans will be developed after the comments from this public hearing are received and an evaluation of all impacts of the project can be completed.

In order for the best design to be selected, the Department needs your input. Please take the time to look over the information being presented and give your opinion, either tape-recorded or in writing. Comments will be taken at this hearing, or they can be mailed to the address found on page two of this packet. All comments must be received by the Department by Tuesday, October 8, 2013, to be considered as part of the public hearing documentation.

Your attendance and participation in this hearing is greatly appreciated.

ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

**Open Forum Design Public Hearing – Job No. 050251
Hwy. 16 – Hwy. 67
White County**

September 24, 2013

Please Print

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Additional Comments:

(Use additional sheets if necessary)

**Written Comments should be left in the drop box at this hearing or received by
4:30 p.m., Tuesday, October 8, 2013 at the following address:**

Arkansas State Highway and Transportation, Department Environmental Division

P.O. Box 2261

Little Rock, Arkansas 72203

Telephone: 501-569-2281

Fax: 501-569-2009

Email: environmentalmeetings@ahtd.ar.gov

For additional information, please visit our website at www.arkansashighways.com