



I-70 BRIDGES Public Meeting

State Project Number
S335-70-0.01 00

Federal Project Number
NFA-2317(008)



DRIVE
FORWARD
WV
INVESTING IN WEST VIRGINIA'S FUTURE

WELCOME!

Thank you for participating in the
I-70 Corridor public meeting.

4:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Wednesday, February 27, 2019

Independence Hall in
Wheeling, WV



The public meeting intends to maximize the interaction between the citizens and the project team. **NO FORMAL PRESENTATION WILL BE MADE.** We invite you to browse the displays and encourage discussions with the project team.

Project Background

The I-70 corridor through West Virginia includes the Wheeling Tunnel and multiple bridges including the Fort Henry Bridge and Back Channel Bridge both crossing the Ohio River. Of those structures many are now categorized as structurally deficient based on the deterioration that has occurred. The I-70 Bridges Project involves the rehabilitation of 23 bridges in West Virginia, the rehabilitation of the BEL-70 Bridge in Ohio and the replacement of the 2 Fulton Bridges. The bridge repairs include a combination of new decks or new deck overlays, concrete substructure repairs, steel repairs of areas with section loss or cracking, elimination of deck joints, new coating systems, and other miscellaneous maintenance repair items.

These repairs will enhance and preserve the life of the structures along this vital corridor. Due to the traffic volume and limited roadway width for maintenance of traffic during construction along the I-70 corridor, careful planning and coordination of traffic is critical to minimize the disruption to the travelling public. To further complicate the phasing of traffic during construction, the steel superstructure design of the existing Fulton Bridge requires I-70 to be completely detoured in one direction while the respective EB and WB bridge is being replaced. The I-70 Bridges Project is expected to begin in the summer of 2019 and be completed in approximately 3 years.

Purpose & Need

The purpose of the I-70 Bridges (State Project No. S335-70-0.01 00, Federal Project No. NFA-2317(008) project is to rehabilitate or replace 26 bridges along I-70 in West Virginia and Ohio to provide structurally safe bridges and connections that accommodate current local and interstate travel needs. The bridges to be rehabilitated/replaced include the following, listed from west to east along the I-70 Corridor:

- » The ODOT Bridge BEL-070-26.84,
 - » Back Channel Bridge
 - » Fort Henry Bridge
 - » Main Street Bridge
 - » Market Street Ramp A
 - › Ramp E
 - › Ramp G
 - › Ramp J
 - › Ramp K
- » 1st Bridge East of Tunnel WB and EB,
- » Fulton Bridge WB and EB
- » Elby's Bridge WB and EB
- » Mt. DeChantal Bridge WB and EB
- » Greenwood Cemetery Bridge WB and EB
- » National Road Overpass WB and EB
- » Elm Grove Interchange WB and EB
- » Middle Creek WB and EB

The need for the proposed action is as follow:



Structural Deficiencies:

Previous inspections and rehabilitation studies indicate that the I-70 bridges were rated from fair to poor, with the bridges showing major areas of heavy rust pack, corrosion, section loss, spalling, cracking and significant deterioration within the structures.



Substandard Pedestrian Facilities:

Sidewalks and railings are in poor to fair condition at those bridges that provide pedestrian access and present a safety concern.

Based on the poor to fair condition of the bridges and pedestrian facilities, ODOT and WVDOH has determined that the I-70 bridges are structurally deficient and need to be repaired or replaced.

Why is a reevaluation being completed?

In 2017, it was determined that the proposed actions associated with the I-70 bridge replacement/rehabilitation project fell under the WVDOH Programmatic Categorical Exclusion. The Categorical Exclusion Evaluation determined that the proposed actions would not result in significant impacts from the project. Since that time, the project scope has been revised. These revised actions must now be re-evaluated to ensure that the proposed project maintains its NEPA compliant status.

Key Environmental Features

The Wheeling Heritage Trails run on the former Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) Railroad right of way and are known locally as two trails that connect in downtown Wheeling - the Ohio River Trail and the Wheeling Creek Trail. The Wheeling Heritage Trails are a shared-use path with more than 18 miles of paved trails that run along the Ohio River and throughout the City of Wheeling. The Wheeling Creek Water Trail is a water trail on Wheeling Creek that extends from the mouth of Wheeling Creek at the Ohio River east towards the Pennsylvania state line. The water trail offers tubing, canoeing and kayaking along its length with ample put-in and take-out locations as Wheeling Creek nears the City of Wheeling.

During project construction, portions of the Wheeling Heritage Trails and the Wheeling Creek Water Trail will be temporarily affected by the proposed project. During rehabilitation of the Fort Henry Bridge, the Ohio River Trail at the Fort Henry Bridge will be maintained; however, trail traffic may be temporarily disrupted for short periods of time during overhead construction activities to ensure the safety of any trail users. Construction activities associated with the Fulton Bridge Replacement will also result in the temporary closure of the Wheeling Creek Trail at Fulton Bridge east of the Hempfield No. 1 railroad tunnel. Construction activities associated with the 1st Bridges East of the Tunnel and ramps E and K, the Fulton Bridges, Elby's Bridges, and Greenwood Cemetery Bridges will result in the temporary closure of portions of the Wheeling Creek Trail. All closures will be temporary in nature and will occur over identified periods of time and/or during limited time windows. The

public will be notified of any closures prior to construction activities via flyers, signs posted along the trails, and/or newspaper advertisements.

Constructed during a period of feverish railroad growth in the mid-eighteenth century, the Hempfield Railroad Tunnel No. 1 dates from 1856 and was built to connect Wheeling to Greensburg, Pennsylvania. However, financial and legal problems limited the line's eastern limit to Washington, Pennsylvania. Construction of the Hempfield Railroad sparked a feud between supporters of the railroad in Wheeling, Philadelphia, and Ohio and business rivals in Pittsburgh, who challenged the legality of the railroad and encourage construction of competing lines. Never on a firm financial footing, the tunnel entered into bankruptcy in 1861, and the B&O Railroad acquired it in 1871, merging it with other lines to connect to Pittsburgh. The line remained active until the Chessie System abandoned it in the late 1970s. Acquired by the City of Wheeling, the line became part of the city's recreational trail system in the 1980s. The tunnel reflects Wheeling's important role in the historic development of transportation networks that connected Ohio and the Great West with markets on the eastern seaboard. Due to its historic significance the Hempfield Tunnel No. 1 is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Construction Phasing

To help minimize the duration of driver impacts in the Wheeling area, the West Virginia Department of Transportation has determined the most efficient way to construct 26 bridges is to perform the work as one construction project. The investment in the I-70 corridor is nearly \$5 Million through the Governor's Drive Forward WV program.

Construction of this project will have impacts to drivers on I-70 and the proposed detour routes. Our goal is to minimize the inconvenience to the traveling public. We have worked closely with local Stakeholders and our partners at Ohio Department of Transportation and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to identify concerns that impact the daily commuters and travelers driving through the area.

At this time, construction is planned to occur on one side of I-70 at a time, including I-70 closures

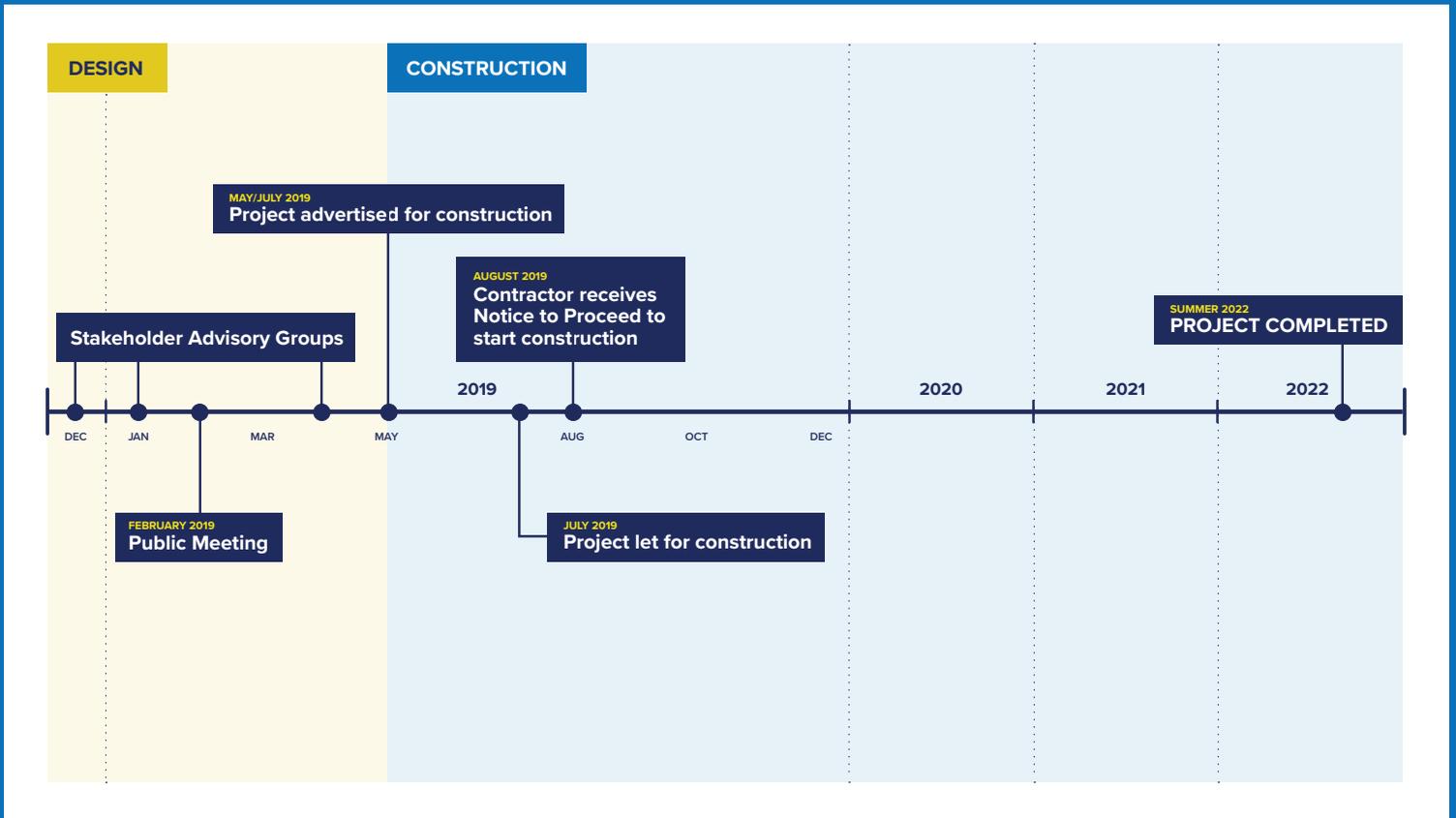


at the Fulton Bridges, just east of the Wheeling Tunnel. This was in response to local concerns about maintaining one direction of travel at all times. Due to the type of construction and need to keep both the traveling public and workers safe, there may be some overnight closures and some full closures (with 120 day closure restrictions) on the ramps near the tunnel. These closures will be announced and signed detours will be provided during these times.

We are developing strategies to “get the word out” about the project and minimize driver frustration and inconvenience.

- A through traffic detour will be established using I-470. We will encourage drivers passing through the area to avoid I-70 and use the detour route. Through the WV 511 system and DOT partners, we will “get the word” out using the large message signs.
- Similar to the recent tunnel construction, local detours will be used when each Fulton Bridge is closed. We are looking at impacts along this route and the need for minor improvements such as adjusting signal timings or modifying lane configurations to help keep traffic flowing.
- There will not be any I-70 closures during the Oglebay Festival of Lights.
- WVDOT will be conducting Traffic Incident Management (TIM) training for first responders in the area. This training is proven to help reduce the time it takes to clear crashes.

Project Timeline



Why should you be involved in the project?

Comments on this project and its potential impacts are requested from the public to assist in the study and design of this project. The comments and suggestions you provide are important so the agencies involved can hear the concerns of the people who live and work in the area. Your input will be used to guide the project team as the project moves forward.

Comments are due March 27, 2019 and should be sent to the following:

Mr. R.J. Scites, P.E., Director

Engineering Division
West Virginia Division of Highways
1334 Smith Street
Charleston, West Virginia 25301

Or electronically at:
<http://go.wv.gov/dotcomment>

Each comment and suggestion provided will help the involved agencies hear directly from the people who live and work in the area.



Your input is important and will be used to guide the team as the project moves forward.