INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP
PUBLIC MEETING

UPPER GASSAWAY BRIDGE PROJECT
BRAXTON COUNTY, WV

WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS

State Project S304-4-17.86 00
Federal Project STP-0004(054)D

Gassaway Community Building
416 Elk Street
Gassaway, WV
Thursday, September 6, 2018

gai consultants

INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP PUBLIC MEETING

PURPOSE

The purpose of this meeting is to provide information on the proposed Upper Gassaway Bridge Project and how to submit comments. The meeting is informal in order to facilitate interactions between the project team and citizens. Please examine the project's Environmental Assessment, maps, and displays and discuss the project information with members of the project team. If you have any comments, fill out the attached comment sheet (page 10) and submit as directed. This meeting complies with the public involvement requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

FORMAT

The WVDOH procedures for this meeting are established to ensure meaningful citizen input in the development for proposed projects in compliance with all applicable regulations and requirements. This meeting is from 4:00 to 7:00 PM, and there will no formal presentation.

If you have not done so already, please be sure to register before you leave. Extra copies of the handout, comment sheet, and Environmental Assessment are available at the registration table. The WVDOH welcomes your comments on the project, as you review the project information and discuss it with the team. Completed comment sheets can be delivered to the comment box during the meeting or mailed to the address listed on the comment sheet. Comments are due by October 9, 2018. Project and comment information are also available online at http://go.wv.gov/dotcomment.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The project proposes to replace the Upper Gassaway Bridge that crosses the Elk River in the Town of Gassaway. The existing bridge was built in 1935 by the State Road Commission, using the existing piers of the original 1916 bridge. The most recent traffic study (2015) shows the average daily traffic (ADT) as 4,913 vehicles with a 20-year projected ADT of 5,258. After a recent engineering review, the bridge was considered functionally obsolete based on bridge travel lane width (no safety shoulders) and the height of the portal strut and bracing (14-foot 5-inch vertical clearance) that limits some vehicles' use of the structure. It currently has restrictive weight limit use for trucks and buses. Three build alternatives, one renovation alternative, and a no build alternative were considered. Major factors taken into consideration for the identification of Preferred Alternative 3 are safety, cost, right-of-way acquisitions, constructability, and environmental, utility, and hydraulic impacts. Various studies were conducted during the project planning, such as economic and community impacts, cultural resources, environmental factors, etc. Public comments will be reviewed and considered during the planning, public involvement, and documentation phases of the project.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE*

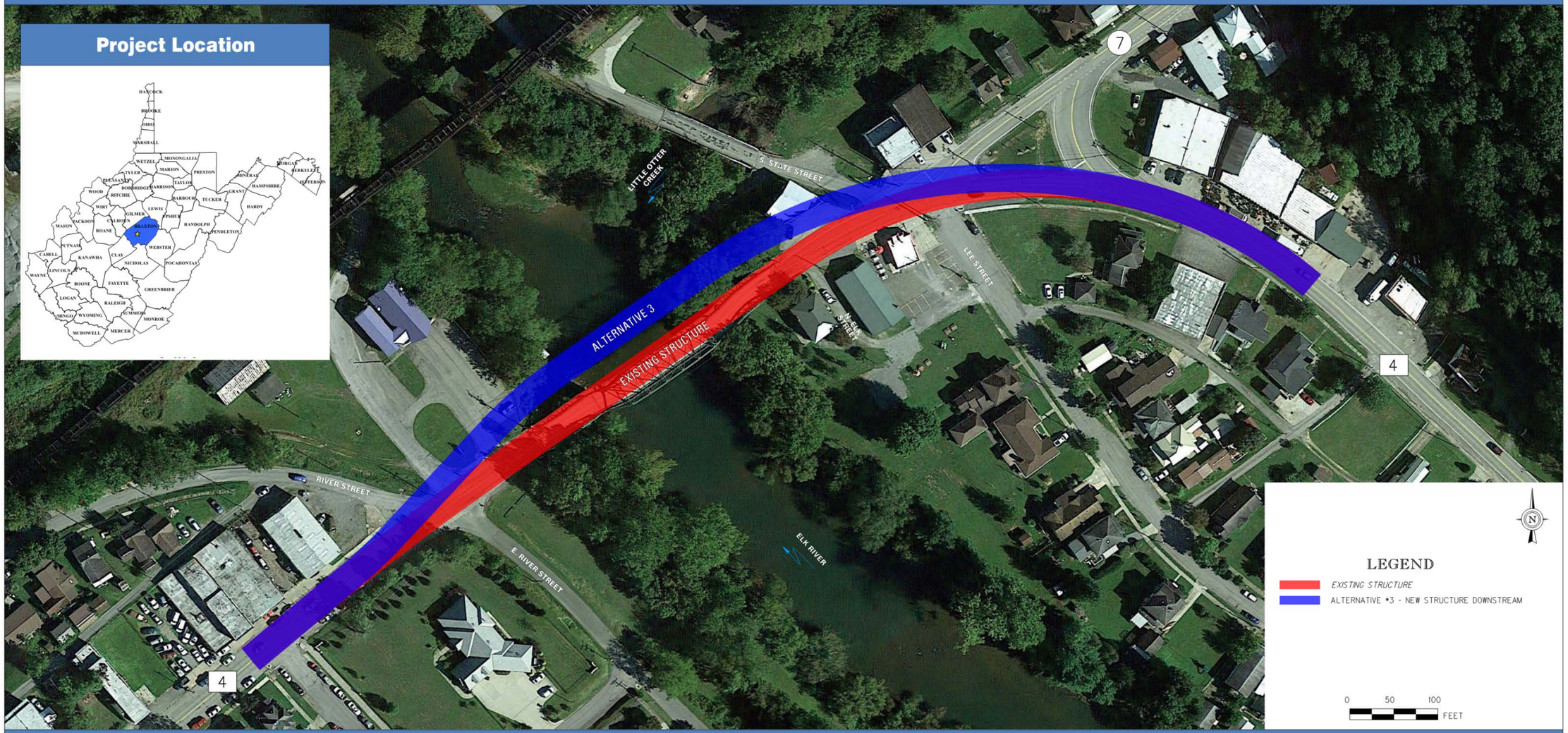
Informational Workshop Public Meeting	September 6, 2018
Comments Due	October 9, 2018
Environmental Clearance	December 2018
Expected Start of Right-of-Way Activities	May 2020
Construction Start	December 2020
Construction Duration Approximately 2 Years	

*Dates are subject to change

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Of the five alternatives considered, Alternative 3 is the preferred alternative and proposes to place a new structure approximately 15 feet downstream of the existing bridge while using the existing bridge to maintain traffic during construction. Minor environmental, social, and cultural resource impacts are anticipated, with estimated costs at $2,858,300. See Alternative 3 Map on page 4 and Plan Sheet on page 5.

PREFERRED
ALTERNATIVE 3



WVDOH DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS

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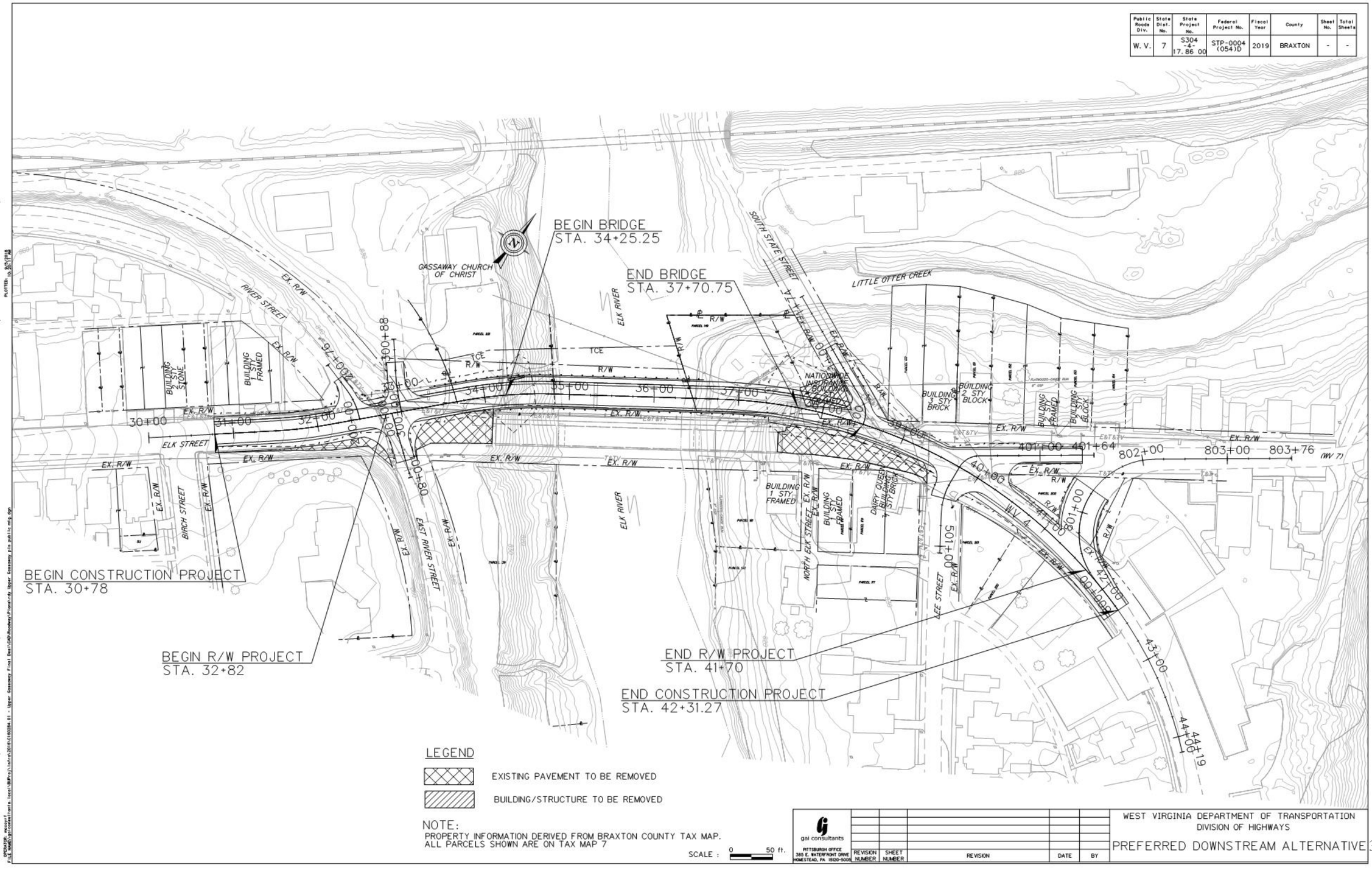
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Informational Workshop Public Meeting

September 6, 2018

Upper Gassaway Bridge

Public Roads Div.	State Dist. No.	State Project No.	Federal Project No.	Fiscal Year	County	Sheet No.	Total Sheets
W. V.	7	S304 -4- 17.86 00	STP-0004 (054)D	2019	BRAXTON	-	-



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Environmental, social, and cultural resources studies were conducted in the project area, and the findings are presented in the Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA is provided at the registration table.

The key factors for selection of the preferred alternative are impacts to the floodplain, properties, historic structures, and endangered species. Impacts that cannot be avoided in the project area will implement mitigation plans in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations. See EA Section 5.0.

A formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was performed, and the USFWS will provide a Biological Opinion for project clearance before construction. The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources granted authorization for the salvage and relocation of federally listed and non-listed mussels, to reduce impact during project construction.

The project will be authorized under the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 Permit from the U.S. Corps of Engineers, the CWA Section 401 Certification from the WV Department of Environmental Protection, and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (CWA Section 402) Permit from the WV Department of Environmental Protection. Agencies will be consulted as conditions change for the remainder of the project to ensure permit compliance.

Table 5.1
Environmental Impacts

Resource	Context	No Build Alternative	Preferred Alternative 3
Land Use	The project area follows WV-4 across the Elk River over the existing bridge, with commercial and residential properties within and surrounding the project area.	No direct impact, but will indirectly impact the roadway, when the bridge is closed in the future and the approaches are blocked from transportation use.	Direct impact to five properties within the project area. Improved access to residential and commercial properties by replacing the bridge, widening the roadway, and improving the nearby intersections.
Transportation Resources	The existing bridge consists of two traffic lanes within 24 feet, curb to curb, and a 5-foot sidewalk. Vertical clearance is 14 feet 5 inches, and the speed limit is 25 mph. The bridge's structural deficiency rating (poor condition) has initiated a weight limit restriction for trucks and buses to cross one at a time.	Direct impact of current weight limit restrictions for larger vehicles. Indirect impact to transportation, when the bridge closes in the future for safety reasons and traffic will utilize an estimated 23-mile detour, including emergency and school vehicles.	Traffic will be maintained through construction activities on the existing bridge. Improved transportation access and safety, after bridge replacement.

Table 5.1 Environmental Impacts			
Resource	**Context**	**No Build Alternative**	**Preferred Alternative 3**
Right-of-Way (ROW)	There are commercial and residential properties on both sides of the bridge approach that are within the project area.	No Impact.	ROW acquisitions and temporary easements will directly impact five landowners. Two commercial properties will be razed. Eight road intersections and one parking lot entrance will be reconstructed. The Gassaway Church of Christ will permanently lose approximately 2,000 square feet of parking lot.
Floodways and Floodplains	According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps, the project lies within the floodplain of the Elk River designated as Zone AE, which are areas with determined base flood elevations. Because of the potential for flooding in the project area, a preliminary hydraulic/hydrologic analysis was conducted.	No Impact.	No Impact. The river crossing is not anticipated to have increased flood elevation during or after project construction activities.
Water Quality	The project crosses the Elk River, which is a 172-mile tributary to the Kanawha River that drains an area of 565 square miles. The Elk River has a TMDL established for fecal coliform and iron.	No Impact.	Temporary impacts to sedimentation in the Elk River during construction and demolition activities. No substantial impacts anticipated.
Wetlands/Waters of the U.S.	A wetland and stream delineation was performed in the vicinity of the existing bridge. The Elk River is the only water resource within the proposed project area, with the confluence of Little Otter Creek adjacent to the project area. No wetlands were found in the area.	No Impact.	Temporary impacts to 10,500 square feet of waterway, and permanent impacts to 40 square feet of waterway, during construction and demolition for the proposed project.
Fish and Wildlife	The project area includes a short segment of the Elk River and existing utility and transportation ROW. The WVDNR and USFWS were consulted for a project area review, and the agencies responded with potential impacts to mussel species.	No direct impact but may indirectly impact the river habitat, such as fish breeding and mussel beds, when the bridge eventually falls into the river.	See Water Quality and Wetlands/Waters of the U.S.

Table 5.1 Environmental Impacts			
Resource	**Context**	**No Build Alternative**	**Preferred Alternative 3**
Threatened and Endangered Species	One federally listed endangered species, *Pleurobema clava*, was found in the project area, in addition to several other species. A biological assessment and coordination document were prepared by WVDOH for 11 mussel species. Formal consultation with the USFWS is ongoing and will be completed before final review of the project by FHWA.	No direct impact but may indirectly impact the river habitat for a federally endangered species, when the bridge deteriorates and eventually falls into the river.	See Water Quality, Fish and Wildlife, and Wetlands/Waters of the U.S.
Historic and Archaeological Resources	A Phase I Archaeological Survey Report and a Finding of Effect Report were submitted. SHPO determined that the existing bridge is not eligible as a historic structure and that the Gassaway Commercial Historic District will not be adversely affected by the proposed project. The Delaware and Catawba Nations requested to be updated on the project's progress and to be notified if Native American artifacts or if human remains were located during ground disturbance. See correspondence in Appendix D and the Section 4(f) information below.	No Impact.	No Impact.
Socioeconomics	The Braxton County Memorial Hospital, the Health Department, and the nearest interstate system are located to the east of the project area. Braxton County schools, police and fire departments, and US Postal Service offices are located to the east and west of the project area.	No direct impact but may indirectly impact the community, once the bridge is closed for safety reasons. Extended travel around the closed bridge may hinder social and economic activities and emergency services.	No Impact. Improved access to residential, commercial, and public-use properties within and near the proposed project area, after project completion.
Environmental Justice	Effects to the measured population in the project area are unlikely; however, there is a potential influence to the population adjacent to the project area with consideration to transportation and health services for low income or special needs individuals. WVDOH is providing multiple opportunities for public review and comment.	No direct impact but may indirectly impact the community, once the bridge is closed for safety reasons. Extended travel around the closed bridge may jeopardize health services and economic opportunities for low-income residents.	No Impact. Improved access to residential, commercial, and public-use properties within and near the proposed project area, after project completion.

Table 5.1 Environmental Impacts			
Resource	**Context**	**No Build Alternative**	**Preferred Alternative 3**
Parks and Recreational Resources	There are no designated parks in the project area. According to the WVDNR Fishing Map, there is an angler access site, including a concrete boat slide and amenities, approximately 180 feet upstream of the existing bridge, and the Elk River is labeled as a Water Trail.	No direct impact but may indirectly impact the river when the bridge deteriorates and eventually falls, creating a hazard to the recreational users of the river and the pedestrians that may use the bridge after closure.	Temporary impacts to river access during construction and demolition activities. Improved access to nearby public-use properties, after project completion.

NOTES:

COMMENTS

Mr. RJ Scites, P.E., Director, Engineering Division
West Virginia Division of Highways
1334 Smith Street
Charleston, WV 25301

DATE:	Thursday, September 6, 2018
LOCATION:	Gassaway Community Building/Town Hall
SUBJECT:	Informational Workshop Public Meeting
PROJECT:	Upper Gassaway Bridge Project
	State Project S304-4-17.86 00
	Federal Project STP-0004(054)D
	Braxton County

COMMENTS DUE BY OCTOBER 9, 2018

Please consider the following comments and concerns:

(Please PRINT)

NAME:

ADDRESS:

ORGANIZATION (if any):

How did you hear about the Informational Workshop Public Meeting?

Visit the WVDOH Website for online project information
http://go.wv.gov/dotcomment