

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AVAILABILITY  
FOR THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT OF U.S. 61 IN LOUISA COUNTY FROM TWO  
MILES SOUTH OF IOWA 92 NORTH TO THE MUSCATINE COUNTY LINE  
AND NOTICE TO ACQUIRE PRIVATE PROPERTY FOR SAID PROJECT**

IN RE: Proposed reconstruction of U. S. 61 in Louisa County

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Notice is hereby given to all interested persons that a public hearing will be held on December 8, 2011, between 4:30 and 6:30 p.m., at the Louisa-Muscatine Elementary School Gymnasium, 14506 170th Street, Letts, Iowa, to discuss the proposed four-lane reconstruction of U.S. 61 in Louisa County from two miles south of Iowa 92 north to the Muscatine County line. The purpose of this hearing is to update the public on the progress of the project; present the completed Environmental Assessment (EA) for the study area, the alternatives carried forward in the EA and the impacts of these alternatives; and gather feedback from the public about the project and EA.

The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration has prepared an EA for this project. Copies may be obtained by contacting either of the following:

Jim Rost, Director  
Office of Location and Environment  
Iowa Department of Transportation  
800 Lincoln Way  
Ames, Iowa 50010  
Telephone: 515-239-1798

Lubin Quinones, Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
Iowa Division Office  
105 Sixth Street  
Ames, Iowa 50010  
Telephone: 515-233-7300

A copy of the EA will be available for inspection at the hearing and is also available for viewing at the Louisa-Muscatine School Library, 14506 170th Street, Letts, Iowa, and at the Keck Memorial Library, 119 North Second Street, Wapello, Iowa.

A review deadline of December 23, 2011, has been established for receipt of comments on this document. All comments received on the EA by that date will be considered by the Iowa Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration in their evaluation of the environmental impacts of the project. Comments on the EA should be submitted to the Director, Office of Location and Environment, at the above address.

The Environmental Assessment evaluates the Build Alternative and the No Build Alternative for the study area. Potential impacts of the alternatives to wetlands, water resources, historic buildings, homes, businesses, parks, and public facilities and services have been evaluated and are included in the EA. Information regarding the Build Alternative will be available at the public hearing. The No-Build Alternative would be the continuation of the highway system as it exists. It would not address the safety needs, increasing traffic volumes and outdated geometrics of the roadway within the project corridor. This alternative would not satisfy the Project Purpose and Need requirements. However, it is carried forward to serve as a baseline for comparison with the Build Alternative.

The purpose of the proposed project is to upgrade and modernize the existing two-lane section of

U.S. 61 between 130th Street and the current four-lane section at the Muscatine/Louisa County border; and to improve safety, provide a continuous four-lane highway and promote economic development in the region. The Build Alternative would provide for construction of a four-lane access controlled facility with interchanges at Iowa 92 and 170th Street. Reconstructed U.S. 61 would go over Iowa 92 and 170th Street at the interchanges. From 130th Street north to 160th Street four new lanes would be constructed approximately 650 to 700 feet west of the existing highway. Between 160th and 170th Streets the new roadway would be relocated east of existing U.S. 61. From 170th Street to the end of the project two new lanes would be constructed along the west side of existing U.S. 61.

The Build Alternative would convert land from the historic Dodder Farm (located west of U.S. 61 across from the Grandview Drive-In Theatre), which is considered to be a Section 4(f) resource and is subject to protection, to roadway use. The proposed project is being designed to ensure that construction activities do not impact the historic structures on the farm. Consequently, the structures that qualify the property for protection under Section 4(f) would not be affected. Since the impacts to the Dodder Farm would be minimal and would not adversely impact the features that qualify the property for protection under Section 4(f), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) proposes to make a *de minimis* determination for the impacts to the Dodder Farm. This is your opportunity to review and comment on the proposed *de minimis* effect of the proposed project.

This public hearing will be conducted utilizing a combined open forum and formal format. Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) staff members will be present with plans, displays and related information to discuss the project informally between 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. Interested individuals are encouraged to attend the hearing anytime during the informal session to express their views and ask questions about the proposed improvement.

A formal presentation will begin at 5:30 p.m. followed by a question and answer session. There will be a three (3) minute limit per speaker during the question and answer session. Persons wishing to make a formal presentation will need to so designate at the time of registration. Oral and written statements will be accepted during both the open forum and the formal sessions.

Written statements and related exhibits, in place of or in addition to oral statements made at the public hearing, will be accepted at the hearing 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](http://www.iowadot.gov/pim). All written material received by December 23, 2011, will be included in the project transcript.

For general information regarding the proposed improvement or the public hearing, contact Jim Armstrong, District Engineer, District 5 Office, Iowa Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 587, 307 W Briggs, Fairfield, Iowa 52556-0587, telephone 641-472-4171 or 800-766-4368, e-mail: [james.armstrong@dot.iowa.gov](mailto:james.armstrong@dot.iowa.gov)

All persons interested in the project are invited to attend this hearing. The meeting room is accessible for persons with disabilities. If you require special accommodations at the hearing, please notify Mr. Armstrong by December 1, 2011, so arrangements can be made.

## **NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNERS**

A governmental body which proposes to acquire property under the power of eminent domain for a public improvement project is required to give notice of a public hearing to all owners and contract purchasers of record of agricultural land that may be the subject of condemnation.

### **1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT.**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) will consider approving the following described project:

Proposed reconstruction of U.S. 61 in Louisa County from two miles south of Iowa 92 north to the Muscatine County line.

### **2. PRIVATE PROPERTY MAY BE ACQUIRED BY PURCHASE OR CONDEMNATION.**

If the Iowa DOT approves the above-described project, the DOT will be required to acquire property for the proposed improvements. The DOT will attempt to purchase the required property by good faith negotiations; however, it may condemn those properties it is unable to purchase. The proposed location of the above-described public improvement is shown on preliminary plans for the project. Preliminary plans are available from the Office of Location and Environment, Iowa Department of Transportation, 800 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa 50010.

### **3. IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PROCESS TO DECIDE TO FUND THE DESIGN, TO SELECT THE ROUTE OR SITE LOCATION, OR TO ACQUIRE OR CONDEMN PROPERTY INTERESTS.**

In order to acquire the necessary properties and property interests required for the project, the Iowa Department of Transportation is required to approve the location of the project. The DOT will hold a public hearing to present to the public the proposed improvement and the anticipated impacts of the improvement.

Persons whose property may be affected by the project, as well as the general public, may comment on the project at the hearing. The comments will be presented to Iowa DOT staff. Based in part on the information received at the hearing, the Iowa DOT will select the location for the project and decide whether to fund the site-specific design and to authorize by purchase or condemnation the acquisition of right of way for the project.

### **4. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC INPUT.**

As previously stated in this notice, a public hearing will be held on December 8, 2011, between 4:30 and 6:30 p.m., at the Louisa-Muscatine Elementary School Gymnasium, 14506 170th Street, Letts, Iowa, to discuss the proposed reconstruction of U.S. 61 in Louisa County from two miles south of Iowa 92 north to the Muscatine County line. Comments received from the public at the hearing will be included in the project transcript. Written statements can be submitted to the DOT at the hearing, or sent to the Office of Location and Environment, Iowa DOT, 800 Lincoln Way, Ames, IA 50010 or via the public meetings website at

[www.iowadot.gov/pim](http://www.iowadot.gov/pim). All written material received by December 23, 2011, will be included in the project transcript.

5. IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CONTACT.

For information regarding the proposed improvement contact:

Jim Armstrong, District Engineer  
District 5 Office  
Iowa Department of Transportation  
P.O. Box 587, 307 W Briggs  
Fairfield, IA 52556-0587  
Telephone 641-472-4171 or 800-766-4368  
E-mail: [james.armstrong@dot.iowa.gov](mailto:james.armstrong@dot.iowa.gov)

This notice is given by authority of the Iowa Department of Transportation.

This notice 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.

Additional information concerning this project will be posted as it becomes available at the Iowa DOT's website: <http://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.