**DES. # 2002077**

**LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

**PROPOSED BRIDGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IN TIPPECANOE COUNTY**

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) will host a public hearing for the State Road (SR) 225 over Wabash River Bridge Improvement project on March 4, 2024 at the Battle Ground Elementary School (303 Main Street, Battle Ground, IN 47920) beginning at 6:00 p.m. The doors will be open at 5:30 p.m. in order to view displays and talk to the representatives prior to the start of the hearing.

The purpose of the public hearing is to offer all interested persons an opportunity to comment on the draft environmental document and preliminary design plans for the proposed bridge project involving Bridge No. 225-79-04016 on SR 225 over the Wabash River (Des. 2002077), approximately 0.60 mile north of Old SR 25 in West Lafayette, Tippecanoe and Washington Townships, Tippecanoe County, Indiana.

The project consists of rehabilitating the existing Select Bridge for continued vehicular use, meeting the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. Bridge No. 225-79-04016 (National Bridge Inventory (NBI): 029150), also known as the Jewettsport Ford Bridge and State Highway Bridge No. 4016, is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion C. As part of the Indiana Historic Bridge Inventory, the bridge was determined to be “Select.” Per the terms of the “Programmatic Agreement Regarding Management and Preservation of Indiana’s Historic Bridges” (Historic Bridges PA, or HBPA), the Federal Highway Administration- Indiana Division (FHWA) will satisfy its responsibilities involving “Select” and “Non-Select” bridges through the Project Development Process (PDP) of the HBPA (Stipulation III.B) to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966.

This historic bridge is subject to the conditions of the Historic Bridge Programmatic Agreement (HBPA). As such, a Historic Bridge Alternative Analysis (HBAA) was completed that describes the project’s purpose and need, as well as an evaluation of alternatives to meet the purpose and need. The existing structure carrying SR 225 over the Wabash River is a four-span, steel, Pratt truss, approximately 646 feet long, with a clear roadway width of approximately 14.4 feet (single-lane) and an out-to-out deck width of approximately 15.9 feet. The bridge was constructed in 1912 and underwent multiple repairs between 1954 and 2014.

The proposed alternative includes rehabilitating the existing bridge to current INDOT and FHWA criteria for structural capacity and safety features. Although the existing bridge is one-lane, which is considered sub-standard, it is acceptable to allow it to remain a one-lane bridge since SR 225 experiences low-to-moderate traffic volumes. The existing traffic signals will remain in place to control traffic at each end of the bridge. In addition, it is not feasible to widen the existing historic bridge, and it has acceptable performance in its current configuration.

Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) for the project will require a full road closure with a detour utilizing Old SR 25, I-65, and North River Road/SR 43. This detour adds four miles for motorists and is already in place since the May 2022 bridge closure to thru traffic. The project is anticipated to be completed in Fall 2026.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties. This project will require approximately 0.23 acre of temporary right-of-way (ROW) for construction access to the sides of the bridge. Approximately 0.11 acre will be needed from a residential parcel in the northeast and 0.03 acre from a wooded parcel southwest of the bridge. In addition, approximately 0.09 acre of temporary ROW will be obtained from a wooded parcel in the northwest that is publicly owned by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Division of State Parks. This parcel is not used for public recreation. Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.4(d)(2), the documentation specified in 36 CFR 800.11(e) can be viewed electronically by accessing INDOT’s Section 106 document posting website IN SCOPE at [http://erms.indot.in.gov/Section106 Documents](http://erms.indot.in.gov/Section106%20Documents). This documentation serves as the basis for the “No Historic Properties Affected” finding.

The environmental document for this project was released for public involvement on February 2, 2024. The public hearing serves as the opportunity for the public to comment on both the Categorical Exclusion (CE) environmental document and the 800.11(e) documentation for Section 106. All comments collected before, during and after the hearing through March 19, 2024 will be taken into consideration.

The agenda will afford the opportunity for the public to make formal statements to be recorded as part of the official hearing transcript. Tentative timetables for right-of-way acquisition and construction will be discussed during the formal presentation. Representatives from INDOT and Egis (formerly known as Beam, Longest and Neff) will be available to address specific questions during the initial session, and after the formal hearing process. Please be aware general conversations are not considered part of the official record. All verbal statements recorded during the public hearing and all written comments collected before, during, and for a period of two (2) weeks after the hearing date, will be evaluated and addressed in the final environmental document.

Federal and local funds are proposed to be used for the construction of this project. INDOT and the FHWA have agreed that this project poses minimal impact on the natural environment. A Categorical Exclusion (CE) Level 4 environmental document has been prepared for the project. All interested parties are hereby notified of the availability of the environmental document and preliminary design plans for review at the following locations:

1. INDOT Crawfordsville District Office, 41 W 300 N, Crawfordsville, IN 47933

2. Egis, 8320 Craig Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46250

3. Tippecanoe County Public Library Downtown, 627 South St, Lafayette, IN 47901

4. Website: <https://www.in.gov/indot/about-indot/central-office/welcome-to-the-crawfordsville-district/>

Persons with limited internet access may request project information be mailed to them. Please contact Raquel Walker by mail at 8320 Craig Street, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46250, by email at raquel.walker@egis-group.com, or by phone at 317-558-7546 for information.

Public statements for the record will be taken as part of the public hearing procedure. All verbal statements recorded during the public hearing and all written comments submitted prior to, during, and for a period of two (2) weeks following the hearing date, will be evaluated, considered, and addressed in subsequent environmental documentation. Written comments may be submitted prior to the public hearing and within the comment period to Raquel Walker, Egis, 8320 Craig Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46250 or raquel.walker@egis-group.com or 317-558-7546. Egis respectfully requests comments be submitted by March 19, 2024.

In accordance with the "Americans with Disabilities Act", with advance notice, INDOT can provide accommodation for persons with disabilities with regards to participation and access to project information as part of the hearings process including arranging auxiliary aids, interpretation services for the hearing impaired, services for the sight impaired and other services as needed. In addition, INDOT will provide accommodations for persons of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) requiring auxiliary aids including language interpretation services and document conversion. Should accommodation be required, please contact Arshad Ahmed at 765-361-5258 or arahmed@indot.in.gov or Raquel Walker at 317-558-7546 or raquel.walker@egis-group.com for information.

Weather Notice: If the public hearing is postponed due to inclement weather, it will be rescheduled to Wednesday March 6, 2024, and the public comment period will be extended to March 21, 2024. Please contact Arshad Ahmed at 765-361-5258 or arahmed@indot.in.gov or Raquel Walker at 317-558-7546 or raquel.walker@egis-group.com in the event of inclement weather.

This notice is published in compliance with Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Section 771 (CFR771.111 (h)(1) states: “Each State must have procedures approved by the FHWA to carry out a public involvement/ public hearing program.” 23 CFR 450.212(a)(7) states: “Public involvement procedures shall provide for periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that the process provides full and open access to all and revision of the process as necessary.” approved by the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation on July 7, 2021.