

Highway 44 Platte-Winner Bridge Study Identifies Preferred Alternative

PIERRE, SD – The South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) is making progress in its study of the Highway 44 Platte-Winner Bridge over the Missouri River. Among SDDOT's major bridges, the Highway 44 Platte-Winner bridge has been determined to be a top priority for replacement, with construction of a new bridge currently scheduled for the mid-2020s timeframe. SDDOT is committed to maintaining traffic on this regionally-important bridge during construction. This commitment means the new bridge will be in a new location so that the existing bridge can remain open during construction of a replacement.

Through a series of public meetings held in 2017, SDDOT determined that replacement of the bridge would be made within a range of several hundred feet on either side of the existing bridge. Engineering and environmental studies of the new bridge, previous public input, and coordination with resource agencies in 2018 have been instrumental in allowing SDDOT to make a decision about the Preferred Alternative location for a new Platte-Winner Bridge. For the Preferred Alternative, SDDOT has chosen to shift the bridge alignment to a new location north of the existing bridge. One of the key advantages to this location is that the resulting new highway segment will avoid impacts to the State Park campground at the Snake Creek Recreation Area. SDDOT continues to work closely with South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks (SDGFP, owner and operator of the park) to determine appropriate measures to minimize and mitigate impacts to the park that will be caused by the project.

To document the range of potential impacts of the proposed project and document the decision-making process for a new bridge, SDDOT is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA). Continued coordination with other agencies, stakeholders, and the general public is required to complete the EA. SDDOT will continue coordinating with SDGFP, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as well as tribal and historic resource representatives during development the EA. Publication of the EA for public review and comment is anticipated to occur by Spring of 2019. Another set of public meetings will occur during the EA's public comment period.

Previous meeting information and studies of the Platte-Winner Bridge can be found on the project website, www.sd44bridge.com.