

**LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**  
**Wells County Bridge #106 Rehabilitation**  
**County Road 100 North over Rock Creek**

**The Wells County Highway Department will host a public hearing on Monday, December 20, 2021 at the Wells County Public Library – Large Meeting Room, 200 W Washington St., Bluffton, IN 46714; the formal hearing will begin at 5:30 p.m. The project team will be available before and after the hearing for an informal question and answer session.** The purpose of the public hearing is to offer all interested persons an opportunity to comment on current preliminary design plans, the environmental document, and the Section 106 document for the project to rehabilitate Bridge #106, carrying County Road 100 N over Rock Creek in Wells County. The purpose of the project is to improve the condition of the historic arch bridge, raise the condition rating to good condition (7 or greater out of 9), provide an upgraded bridge rail, and extend the life of the bridge for at least another 25 years.

The primary need for improvement is based on the deteriorated condition of the existing structure. Conditions observed during routine inspections include cracking and spalling of the concrete, leaching, exposed reinforcement, and section loss of the reinforcement within the arch barrel and bridge rail. The bridge currently has a 16 ton load rating (H Inventory). The existing bridge rail does not meet current INDOT standards.

The existing bridge, Wells County Bridge #106, a reinforced concrete arch under fill, built in 1920 and reconstructed in 1983, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. As part of the Indiana Historic Bridge Inventory study, this bridge was determined to be “Select.” The study defines Select Bridges as “historic bridges that are most suitable for preservation and are excellent examples of a given type of historic bridge.” Select Bridges must be preserved when using funds from FHWA and the project must follow the conditions set forth in the Historic Bridges Programmatic Agreement. The historic character defining features for Bridge #106 are the unsymmetrical concrete arches, pier pilasters, and scored concrete railing.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties. The proposed project does not involve any properties eligible for or listed in the National Register aside from the subject bridge. Per the terms of the Historic Bridge PA, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will satisfy its Section 106 responsibilities involving “Select” and “Non-Select” bridges through the Project Development Process (PDP) of the Historic Bridge PA (Stipulation III). INDOT, acting on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), issued “no historic properties affected” finding under Section 106. In accordance with NHPA, the views of the public are being sought regarding the effect of the proposed project on the historic elements as per 36 CFR 800.2(d), 800.3(e) and 800.6(a)(4). Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.6(a)(4), the documentation specified in 36 CFR 800.11(d) is available for inspection in the locations listed below.

The public hearing serves as the opportunity for the public to comment on both the Categorical Exclusion (CE) environmental document and the 800.11(d) documentation for Section 106. All comments collected before, during, and after the hearing through 1/4/2022 will be taken into consideration. The public hearing will be the last opportunity for public to comment on the proposed project.

As proposed, the project involves the following:

- Removal of the existing asphalt pavement and arch fill; replacement of existing fill with clean fill and construction of a reinforced concrete deck,

- Replacement of bridge rail, curb, spandrel walls, and outer portions for the arch barrels,
- Installation of approach guardrail,
- Removal and reconstruction of deteriorated portions of the arch rings and pier,
- Cleaning and patching of deteriorated portions of concrete in the arch ring,
- Installation of a waterproofing membrane to the top of the arch ring to minimize the infiltration of water and salts into the concrete arch,
- Installation of embedded galvanic anodes in conjunction with arch, spandrel wall and pier patching to protect and slow the rate of corrosion of the existing steel reinforcement, and
- Development of a new drainage system to provide positive drainage of the bridge deck and earth fill.

These improvements will raise the condition rating of the bridge (and all individual components, such as spandrel walls, arch barrels, pier, foundations and bridge rail) to “good” (7). The preliminary cost of rehabilitation is estimated to be approximately \$1,566,000.

The Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) plan for the project involves N County Road 500 W, W County Road 100 N, SR 124, and N County Road 400 W. MOT details will be presented during the public hearing. Access to all properties will be maintained during construction. Wells County will coordinate with emergency services, local school corporation officials, and project stakeholders to ensure potential disruptions and impacts are minimized. The project will require approximately 0.13 acre of permanent new right-of-way and no temporary right-of-way. There are no proposed displacements.

Federal and state funds are proposed to be used for construction of this project. INDOT and the Federal Highway Administration have agreed that this project poses minimal impact to natural environment. A Categorical Exclusion Level 4 (CE-4) environmental document has been prepared for the project. The environmental documentation, Section 106 documentation, and preliminary design information is available to view prior at the following locations:

- 1) Wells County Public Library (200 W Washington St., Bluffton, IN 46714, 260-824-1612)
- 2) USI Consultants, Inc. Office (8415 E 56<sup>th</sup> St., Indianapolis, IN 46216, 317-544-4996)
- 3) USI Consultants, Inc. Webpage (<https://www.usiconsultants.com/indot-contract-b-41155/>)

An INDOT project webpage will be created prior to the public hearing to ensure project information is available online: <https://www.in.gov/indot/about-indot/central-office/welcome-to-the-fort-wayne-district/rehabilitation-of-wells-county-bridge-no.-106/>.

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: John Handke, USI Consultants, Inc., 8415 E 56th St, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46216. Email: [jhandke@usiconsultants.com](mailto:jhandke@usiconsultants.com). **Wells County respectfully requests comments be submitted by Tuesday, January 4, 2022.**

If you would like additional information regarding this hearing, please feel free to contact John Handke, USI Consultants, Inc., at [jhandke@usiconsultants.com](mailto:jhandke@usiconsultants.com) or (317) 544-4996.

With advance notice, Wells County will provide accommodations for persons with disabilities with regard 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, Wells County 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 Nate Rumschlag, Wells County Highway Department, 260-824-6430, [chengineer@wellscounty.org](mailto:chengineer@wellscounty.org).

This notice is published in compliance with:

- 1) Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Section 771 (CFR 771.111(h)(1)), which states: "Each State must have procedures approved by the FHWA to carry out a public involvement/public hearing program."
- 2) 23 CFR 450.212(a)(7), which 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."
- 3) *INDOT Public Involvement Policies and Procedures* approved by the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation on August 16, 2012.

NOTE: The use of Wells County Public Library's meeting facility does not constitute the library's endorsement and sponsorship of the program or the organizer's policies and beliefs.