

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Thursday, September 8, 2022; 5:00 – 7:00 PM (MT)

Public Information Open House Meeting

Minatare High School Gymnasium

1107 7th Street, Minatare, NE 69356

NH-26-1(172) Minatare - US-385; C.N. 51521

The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) will hold a public information open house meeting regarding the preliminary concept designs for a four-lane expressway along US Highway 26 (US-26) and Nebraska Link 62A (L-62A) in Scotts Bluff and Morrill counties. The meeting will be held in the Minatare High School Gymnasium at 1107 7th Street in Minatare, Nebraska, on Thursday, September 8, 5:00 – 7:00 P.M (MT). A map of two proposed construction options will be available for viewing at the public meeting. No formal presentations are planned for this meeting. The option to view materials will be available on the NDOT website at ndot.info/51521.

Identified as Minatare - US-385, the proposed project would expand the existing two-lane highway to a four-lane expressway, separated by a depressed median. This project would be 18.19 miles in length, starting just west of Minatare's Main Street, at approximately mile marker (MM) 32.55 and extending east to the junction of US-26 and L-62A at MM 41.92. The project would continue east on L-62A from the junction with US-26 at MM 0.00 to the junction of US-385 and L-62A at MM 9.19. The typical section would be more urban in nature through Minatare (likely a 5-lane section). The intersections would be improved throughout the project and expressway access would be controlled from right in/right out properties.

The proposed purpose of the project is to provide an improved highway on this National Highway System (NHS) High Priority Corridor and to fulfill the legislative intent of constructing a four-lane highway along the Heartland Expressway Corridor.

The proposed need is based on the high traffic volumes, including a high percentage of heavy truck traffic, local travelers and agricultural vehicles. The project would also complete the last remaining gap in the four-lane highway system between Scottsbluff/Gering and Alliance, as well as strengthening the economic and social connections of the greater economic region of western Nebraska.

Because federal funding would be provided by the Federal Highway Administration, an environmental assessment will be prepared to investigate the social, environmental, and economic effects of the proposed project. Environmental resources to be evaluated include wetlands, threatened and endangered species, historic properties and cultural resources, parks and recreation areas, social and economic impacts, farmlands and agriculture, hazardous materials, minority and low-income populations, noise impacts, aesthetics and any required property acquisitions. The public will be afforded an opportunity to comment on the Draft EA prior to a decision document by FHWA and NDOT.

Proposed project alternatives would require the acquisition of additional property rights, which could include new right-of-way (ROW), control of access (CA), permanent easements (PE), and/or temporary easements (TE). Residential and commercial structures are anticipated to be impacted by the project. Relocation assistance will be provided to eligible displacees requiring relocation. If your property is impacted by this project, you would be contacted by a representative from NDOT's Right of Way Division once the design footprint has been established. Access to adjacent properties would be maintained during construction but may be limited at times due to phasing requirements.

As of this date, construction would be projected to start in 2025. A construction letting date would be scheduled based on the results of the environmental assessment, funding availability and priority.

This public information open house meeting is being held to provide information regarding the project, currently in the preliminary design phase, and to receive the public's input on proposed alternatives. All interested persons are invited to attend and present relevant comments and questions. Design information will be displayed and personnel from NDOT will be present to answer questions and receive comments. The information open house format allows the public to come at any time during the advertised

hours, gather pertinent information about the project, speak one-on-one with project personnel, and leave as they wish. A formal presentation will not be included as part of this public information open house meeting.

NDOT will make every reasonable accommodation to provide an accessible meeting facility for all persons. Appropriate provisions for the hearing and visually challenged or persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) will be made if the Department is notified by September 1, 2022. The public is being encouraged to make suggestions or express concerns regarding this proposed project. Comments will be collected through September 23, 2022. Written comments or requests should be submitted to: Lucas Nelsen, NDOT Public Involvement, P.O. Box 94759, Lincoln, NE 68509-4759, lucas.nelsen@nebraska.gov, voice telephone (402) 479-3890; fax (402) 479-3989.

Information regarding the proposed project will be made available on the NDOT website at ndot.info/51521. For those without internet access, information may be obtained through the contact above or at NDOT Headquarters, 1500 Hwy 2, Lincoln, NE 68509. For further information, contact: Doug Hoebet, NDOT District 5 Engineer, doug.hoebet@nebraska.gov; voice telephone 308-436-6587.