



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT – SCOPING NOTICE

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is developing a project to replace the Sun River Bridge in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), U.S. Bureau of Land Management (USBLM), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and Greenfields Irrigation District (GID). FHWA will serve as the lead agency in preparing the Sun River Bridge Replacement Environmental Assessment (EA). As an initial step, FHWA is conducting a scoping process to identify potential issues and concerns that could affect project evaluation or decision making.

Project Location: The project is located 73 miles west of Great Falls, 19 miles west of Augusta, and 0.75 mile downstream from the GID Diversion Dam near Gibson Reservoir in Montana. The bridge crosses the Sun River and spans the boundaries of Lewis and Clark County and Teton County.

Lead Agency and File Number: FHWA, file number MT FLAP BOR 2980(1)

Purpose of the EA: The EA will be part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, which considers the beneficial and adverse effects of federal, federally funded, and/or federally permitted projects on the quality of the human environment. The EA will evaluate a No Build Alternative that would result in no improvements and a Preferred Alternative that would provide a new crossing over the Sun River.

Project Description: FHWA, in cooperation with partner agencies, proposes to replace the existing single-lane structurally deficient bridge with a new bridge meeting current design and safety standards. The project would provide service continuity for a variety of federal, state, and local agencies, as well as residents, outfitters, law enforcement, and emergency responders. The existing Sun River Bridge is structurally deficient and functionally obsolete. Its poor condition and outdated design pose safety hazards and limitations to users. A new bridge is needed to provide a crossing over the Sun River that safely and reliably accommodates all users.

Public Scoping Meeting: FHWA will host an open house meeting on **Tuesday, May 16, 2023, from 3:30 to 5:30 PM** at the **Augusta Community Center**, 132 Main Street, Augusta, MT, 59410. Attendees will have an opportunity to review project exhibits, speak with project representatives, and provide comments on potential issues and concerns within the project area. No presentation will be provided. All public comments will be considered during the EA development process.

Comment Submission: Please send comments or questions to Jennifer Chariarse, Environmental Specialist at FHWA, at jennifer.chariarse@dot.gov or (360) 619-7700.