

The public was invited to review and submit comments on a proposed amendment to the FFY 2017 Annual Element (AE) of the Central Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (CARTS) FY 2016-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The purpose of the amendment is to **modify the description of the work** proposed for the 30 Crossing project (ArDOT Job No. CA0602):

*From:* Operational improvements & reconstruction

*To:* Capacity improvements & reconstruction

If approved, this amendment will also **remove the following footnotes** 1 and 2 from the project description:

- 1) Specific type of work will be determined through the NEPA process. Following the selection of a single alternative from NEPA and at the request of AHTD, the Metroplan Board will consider a LRMTP and TIP amendment to reflect the final project. Approval of the amendment by the Metroplan Board will be required.*
- 2) Total cost includes all phases to allow the project to be delivered by the Design-Build-Finance method.*

The amendment also proposes to **add the project to the TIP's annual Agreed Upon List of Projects (AULP)** for FFY 2018.

The public comment period extended from Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> through the close of business day (5:00 PM) on Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup>.

A total of 168 people submitted comments. Of those, 127 were opposed to the proposed amendment; 27 were in support. Another 14 made no mention of the amendment or project, except to assert their support for the split diamond interchange. These were all identical one-sentence statements originating from the same company. Staff considers that their intent was to support the amendment and so were included with that group, bringing the total number of people in support of the amendment to 41.

About half of the comments included information regarding residency and workplace. That information was left intact, but emails and street addresses were redacted to protect individuals' privacy. Not unexpectedly, many comments in support of the project originated from larger businesses – including some located in or near downtown – while smaller, “mom and pop” businesses (also concentrated in the downtown area), as well as downtown residents, were opposed.

Many people included their reasons for supporting the proposed amendment, and therefore the 30 Crossing project. With only a few exceptions, almost everyone who wrote in support of the amendment mentioned the split diamond interchange, and their comments centered on the advantages of a 17-acre park. Several suggested that the Little Rock-North Little Rock downtowns will see continued strong development as a result of increasing freeway capacity. Safety considerations were also mentioned as a desirable outcome of the project. Interestingly, very few cited decreased travel time as a reason for their support of the amendment – including three self-identified out-of-town commuters. One individual wrote in support of the project but stipulated that it deserved “art” to enhance the public appeal in downtown. This is the only time that the project's aesthetics has specifically mentioned.

Comments from the opposition side were more varied. Several were self-identified downtown dwellers, who expressed worry about their continued quality of life and property values. The most frequently cited objections concerned detrimental impacts to the economy and degradation of an urban quality of life. While no one suggested repairs and improvements are unnecessary (in fact, most noted that they do recognize those needs), many questioned the need for a project of the proposed magnitude.

Comments in favor of the TIP amendment may be download at [metroplan.citrixdata.com/f](https://metroplan.citrixdata.com/f)

Comments opposed to the TIP amendment may be download at [metroplan.citrixdata.com/a](https://metroplan.citrixdata.com/a)