

Environmental Assessment

I-20 Through Vicksburg

Warren County, Mississippi

Welcome

The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) welcome you to this public hearing. We are here to receive your input concerning the reconstruction of six miles of I-20, its interchanges and most of the frontage roads in the Vicksburg area between the Washington Street/Warrenton Road Exit 1A Interchange and the US 61 North/SR 27 Exit 5 Interchange.

MDOT and FHWA are conducting an Environmental Assessment (EA), or study, for this project. On July 10, 2012, a Preliminary EA was approved for presentation at this public hearing. The Preliminary EA addresses social, economic and environmental impacts of providing the reconstructed facility. Copies of the Preliminary EA are on display for viewing at today's public hearing and at locations in the Vicksburg area after the hearing.

A video being shown at periodic intervals in one of the public hearing rooms describes the proposed reconstruction and demonstrates the changes it would have in your driving patterns. Please take advantage of this video to become more familiar with the study.

For your review and comments, displays and educational materials about the study are provided in the other public hearing room. Exchanging opinions, information and ideas at this stage of the study helps ensure the best possible decisions are made. Your input is important for the successful completion of this study. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask one of the project team members in attendance at the hearing.

Purpose and Need

To improve safety and mobility for the traveling public and to prepare for future anticipated needs, MDOT is proposing a project to reconstruct the approximate six miles of I-20, its interchanges, and most of the frontage roads in the Vicksburg area between the eastern side of the Washington Street/Warrenton Road Exit 1A Interchange and the eastern side of the US 61 North/SR 27 Exit 5 Interchange.

The proposed project is needed to:

- Increase traffic capacity
- Improve sight distances
- Lengthen interchange entrance and exit ramps
- Increase vertical clearances at problem bridge crossings
- Address unsatisfactory traffic weaving sections



Open House Public Hearing

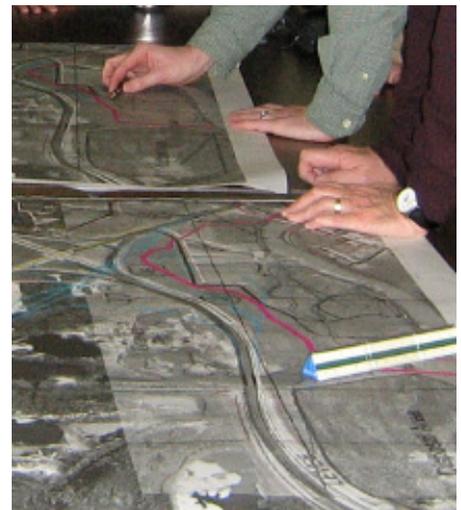
Thursday, August 23, 2012

4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Vicksburg Convention Center

1600 Mulberry Street

Vicksburg, MS



Your involvement in roadway planning is key in developing a product that meets the needs of all involved. Please take a moment to view the short video presentation available at this hearing and then let MDOT know your thoughts and ideas. The video provides graphic representation of the proposed I-20 improvements.

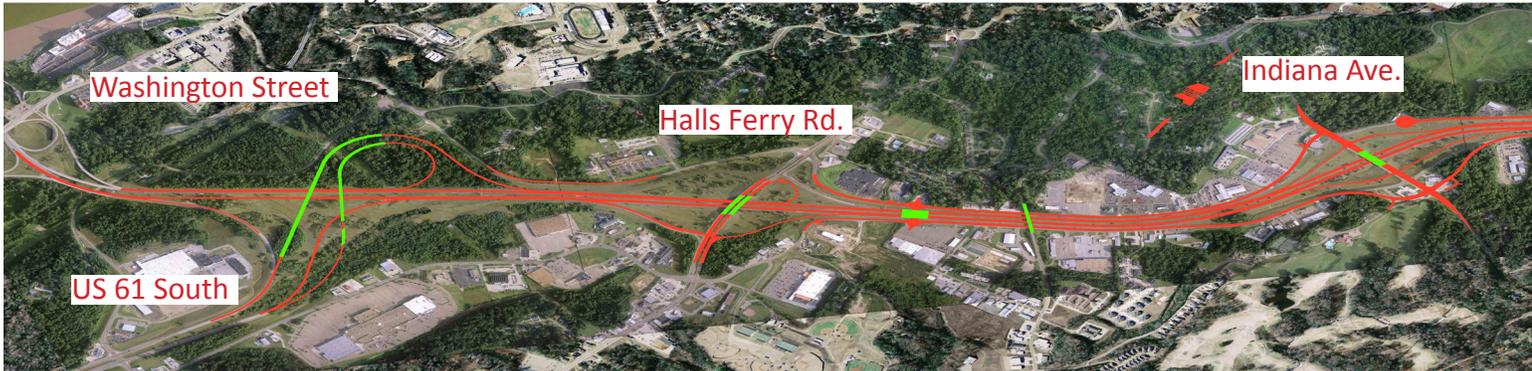


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Alternative B - One Way Ultimate Frontage Roads



Alternative C - Two Way Ultimate Frontage Roads



Project Background and Traffic

I-20 through Vicksburg was constructed by several projects between 1963 and 1973. A 50 mile per hour design speed and a projected average annual daily traffic volume of 18,080 vehicles in the Year 1989 were used for designing the projects between the Mississippi River Bridge and the Clay Street/US 80 Interchange.

Since these projects were completed, higher design standards have been adopted by the MDOT but major reconstruction to these standards has not occurred. A 60 mile per hour speed limit is currently posted on I-20 through Vicksburg. MDOT's average annual daily traffic for the Year 2011 varies from 24,000 vehicles at the River Bridge to 47,000 vehicles between the US 61 South Interchange and the US 61 North/SR 27 Interchange to 37,000 vehicles east of the US 61 North/SR 27 Interchange.

This section of I-20 has exceeded its design life. Major reconstruction is needed to meet current design standards and to accommodate the existing and the anticipated future traffic demand.

Proposed Alternatives

Three alternatives are being presented for your input at today's hearing. The alternatives are a No Build Alternative A, which would do nothing and does not meet the purpose and need of the study, and Build Alternatives B and C.

The build alternatives have similar concepts for reconstructing the mainline interstate, interchanges, and frontage roads. Both build alternatives require reconstructing the frontage roads and widening them to three lanes.

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Proposed Alternatives (Con't)

To reconstruct the interstate lanes for the build alternatives, one-way traffic operations would be implemented on the reconstructed and widened frontage roads and the interstate traffic would be temporarily detoured onto the frontage roads. Temporary traffic signals will be installed at the intersections where the detoured interstate traffic will be routed onto the frontage roads.

For Alternative B, frontage roads that functioned as the interstate detour will remain in one-way operation after the completed mainline interstate lanes are opened to traffic. For Alternative C, the frontage roads will be placed back in two-way operation.

Due to the complexity and costs of this reconstruction, MDOT recommends accomplishing the reconstruction in several phases or separate projects. To maintain the heavy traffic volumes, the projects are being planned in a sequence that will allow each project to function independently and maintain connectivity through the entire route.

Summary of Impacts for Build Alternatives B and C

The impacts of constructing the two build alternatives are summarized in a table that has been placed inside this handout.

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Frequently Asked Questions:

Q – How do I voice my opinion?

A- You can express your opinions in several ways. A designated area is available where you can verbally submit your opinions. If you would rather give your opinions in writing, complete a Comment Sheet and place it in the Comment Box. If you prefer, you can complete the Comment Sheet after the hearing and mail it to the address shown on the back of that form. You can also e-mail your comments to environmentalcomments@mdot.ms.gov.

Q – What happens to my comments?

A – Each comment is reviewed and carefully considered by the project development team. Your comments provide insight into the wants and needs of the community and are extremely valuable. All comments are made part of the official public hearing record.

Q – When will one alternative be selected and this environmental study completed?

A – After the comment period has elapsed and after all the comments received in response to the hearing are addressed, the hearing documentation will be compiled. It is anticipated that either Alternative B or Alternative C will then become the recommended Selected Alternative. The Preliminary EA will be updated to reflect the hearing documentation and follow-up actions. The updated Preliminary EA will then be processed to become an approved Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Selected Alternative. This would be accomplished by submitting the document to the Mississippi Transportation Commission with a recommendation that it be approved for processing to the Federal Highway Administration for final approval to complete the study.

Construction and Funding

Based on the Preliminary EA approved for presentation at this hearing, the estimated 2009 right of way and construction costs are \$221 Million for Alternative B and \$230 Million for Alternative C. In the Preliminary EA, a possible implementation plan is presented for accomplishing the ultimate completion of the Selected Alternative in eight separate construction contracts let between years 2014 and 2040.

Due to the current and projected foreseeable future economic conditions, it is difficult to predict when all of the proposed right of way will be acquired and when major construction will begin on the Selected Alternative. However, before using any Federal Funds for right of way activities or construction, an Environmental Assessment must be approved for the Selected Alternative. This approval is known as a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Since Federal Funds are obviously needed for the ultimate completion of a project of this magnitude, completing this study is very important.

The implementation plan presented in the preliminary EA at this hearing will be reevaluated, and possibly revised, for the selected alternative in the pending approval of this EA, also known as the FONSI. To update the implementation plan, MDOT will utilize the most currently available funding projections for interstate highway reconstruction and consider their priority for reconstructing this section of I-20 at Vicksburg when compared to other urban interstate segments in Mississippi. It is at that time when the best possible estimated dates for experiencing right of way and major construction impacts will be known by the citizens of the Vicksburg area.

Contacts:

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