

Appendix M

Supplemental Information on the Advertised Public Meeting

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**I-20 AT VICKSBURG BETWEEN THE
LOUISIANA STATE LINE AND US 61 NORTH
WARREN COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI**

**FEDERAL-AID PROJECT NUMBER
IMD-0020-01(181) / 100367 002000**

FIRST PUBLIC MEETING

**4:00 – 7:00 P.M., TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2009
VICKSBURG CONVENTION CENTER
VICKSBURG, MS**

MEETING SUMMARY

The Open House Public Meeting was conducted in two rooms of the Vicksburg Convention Center. The purpose of the meeting was to receive input from the public on two alternatives for reconstructing the subject section of I-20. Both alternatives have similar concepts for reconstructing the mainline interstate and the interchanges. However, one alternative has one-way frontage roads in its completed state and the other alternative has two-way frontage roads.

The public was invited to the meeting through an MDOT Press Release and by the placement of newspaper advertisements in the *Vicksburg Post*. Attached are copies of the Press Release and the newspaper advertisement.

At the registration table, the attendees received the attached handout. The handout provided the following:

- a welcome;
- an overview of the Purpose and Need;
- a map of the study area;
- contact information for the MDOT and the Neel-Schaffer consultant team;
- examples of frequently asked questions;
- project background and traffic data;
- an overview of the proposed alternatives;
- a summary of how the study has progressed and could advance;

- a quick fact sheet that addressed some of the items previously mentioned and the proposed schedule for the study;
- a comparison of the one-way and two-way frontage road options; and,
- a comment sheet.

After registering their attendance, the attendees received a copy of the handout and were asked to view the project video. The video was approximately 20 minutes in length and shown in one of the two meeting rooms at random times throughout the meeting. The video supplemented and reinforced the handout. One of the major goals of the video was to better prepare the attendees for discussing their questions and comments with the project development team in the other convention center meeting room. The video addressed the proposed concept for reconstructing the mainline interstate and interchanges. Traffic movement changes at the reconstructed interchanges were also depicted in the video. The proposed reconstruction would improve and widen the frontage roads to three lanes. During the proposed reconstruction of the I-20 east bound lanes and west bound lanes, the adjacent improved and widened frontage roads would be placed in one-way operation and serve as interstate detours. After completion of the reconstruction for the I-20 east bound and west bound lanes, the frontage roads would no longer function as interstate detours. At that time, the frontage roads would remain in one-way operation or return to two-way operation. Due to time constraints, only the one-way ultimate frontage road alternative was described in the video.

The second room at the convention center contained maps of the alternatives on an aerial photography background. Members of the project development team were available throughout the room to address the public's questions and to receive the public's input. The following describes how the second room was used for the meeting.

- There were two sound boards on one of the walls and two on another wall. The sound boards were approximately four feet high by eight feet long and covered in a fabric that allowed attaching displays to them with push pins.
- An approximate eight feet long by two feet high map of the preliminary alternative on an aerial photography background with one-way ultimate frontage roads was attached to the upper portion of one of the sound boards. The map covered the entire study area from the Mississippi

River Bridge through the US 61 North/SR 27 Interchange. The map depicted the proposed alternative as well as existing conditions on an aerial photography background. Interchange ramps or loops that would be removed were marked with an “X” on the map. Underneath the one-way ultimate frontage road display, a similar map of the two-way ultimate frontage road alternative was attached to the sound board.

- An approximate eight feet long by two feet high map of the preliminary alternative with one-way ultimate frontage roads was attached to the upper portion of one of the sound boards. The map covered the entire study area from the Mississippi River Bridge through the US 61 North/SR 27 Interchange. The map depicted the proposed completed alternative on an aerial photography background. The existing interchange ramps and loop that would be removed were not shown on the map. Underneath the one-way ultimate frontage road display, a similar display of the two-way alternative was attached to the sound board.
- An approximate eight feet long by two feet high map of the preliminary alternative with one-way ultimate frontage roads was attached to the upper portion of one of the sound boards. The map covered the area where the one-way and two-way ultimate frontage roads differ from the east side of the Halls Ferry Road Interchange to the west side of the US 80/Clay Street Interchange. The map depicted the proposed alternative as well as existing conditions on an aerial photography background. For example, interchange ramps or loops that would be removed were marked with an “X” on the map. Underneath the one-way ultimate frontage road display, a similar map of the two-way ultimate frontage road alternative was attached to the sound board.
- An approximate eight feet long by two feet high map of the preliminary alternative with one-way ultimate frontage roads was attached to the upper portion of one of the sound boards. The map covered the area where the one-way and two-way ultimate frontage roads differ from the east side of the Halls Ferry Road Interchange to the west side of the US 80/Clay Street Interchange. The map depicted the proposed completed alternative on an aerial photography background. The existing interchange ramps and loops that would be removed were not shown on

the map. Underneath the one-way ultimate frontage road display, a similar display of the two-way alternative was attached to the sound board.

- Two table display areas were provided in the middle portion of the room. One of the areas provided detail displays of the one-way ultimate frontage road alternative and the other area provided detail displays of the two-way ultimate frontage road alternative.
- An easel display depicting the 2007 and the 2040 Design Year traffic volumes at random locations throughout the study area.
- An easel display depicting some known human and natural environmental features throughout the study area.
- An area was provided in one corner of the room for addressing the public's right of way issues with MDOT Right of Way Division personnel.
- An area was provided along one of the walls for the public to provide their written comments.

Of the 98 people who registered their attendance at the meeting, 72 are considered public representatives and 26 are considered representatives of the project development team. The MDOT provided sixteen project development team representatives, the FHWA two representatives and the consultant team of Neel-Schaffer, Inc. provided eight representatives.

The questions and discussions between the public and the project development team primarily concerned: opinions and comparisons of the one-way and two-way ultimate frontage road alternatives; and, potential right of way impacts associated with the loss of private property for future highway right of way or loss of private property due to the proposed changes in access control.

There were twelve written comments submitted in response to the meeting. Seven of these comments were submitted at the meeting and five were submitted to the MDOT after the meeting. The following summarizes the content of those twelve comments.

- Six comments primarily supported the two-way ultimate frontage road alternative. The support was based on the convenience of access and the belief that the one-way ultimate frontage road alternative would create

an economic hardship on the frontage road businesses. One of the six comments expressed a willingness to support the one-way ultimate frontage road alternative if that is what the majority wants.

- Two comments supported the one-way ultimate frontage road alternative and expressed their desire for advancing the study as quickly as possible.
- One comment supported either alternative because both provided good access to the Vicksburg Factory Outlets.
- One comment supported doing nothing, stated making frontage roads one-way is not economically feasible and advised under current economic conditions the money should be spent on more critical projects.
- One comment expressed a desire for the signs and markings used on project to take into account the visibility needs of the older drivers. The comment expressed an interest in knowing if Federal and State visibility signing and pavement marking standards for the older drivers have been adopted. If so, the person making the comment wanted to know if the adopted standards will apply for this project.
- One comment expressed concern about the impact the project could have on his wife's sleeping. They live near the highway. She sleeps days and this will affect her sleep in the daytime. She also is on call at night and has a limited amount of time to report to the hospital for emergency surgeries.

The attached spreadsheets provide detailed information on the discussions that occurred at the meeting between the public and the project development team members. Written comments that the public submitted in response to the meeting are also shown on the spreadsheet. To protect the public's privacy, their complete names are not shown on the spreadsheets. Any needed follow-up actions in response to discussions at the meeting or written comments submitted by the public are also shown on the spreadsheet.

This concludes the meeting summary.

Jimmy Shirley

From: Robert Walker [robert.walker@neel-schaffer.com]
Sent: Friday, November 13, 2009 4:04 PM
To: 'Jimmy Shirley'
Subject: FW: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE...MDOT Schedules Public Meeting for Input on Proposal Interstate 20 Reconstruction in Warren County

From: Adams, Carrie [mailto:cadams@mdot.state.ms.us]
Sent: Friday, November 13, 2009 2:55 PM
To: rwalker@neel-schaffer.com
Cc: Thurman, Kim
Subject: FW: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE...MDOT Schedules Public Meeting for Input on Proposal Interstate 20 Reconstruction in Warren County

For your information.

From: Adams, Carrie
Sent: Friday, November 13, 2009 2:51 PM
To: Administration; Public Affairs Division; 'jkme@ap.org'; Environmental Division; 'newsreleases@vicksburgpost.com'
Cc: Magee, Kevin; Hall, Dick; Arnemann, Michael B.; Wells, Teresa; Langley, Lori; Reeves, Ann; Pickens, Jimmie; Hurst, Lucy; Crawford, John
Subject: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE...MDOT Schedules Public Meeting for Input on Proposal Interstate 20 Reconstruction in Warren County

For Immediate Release

Contact: Sedrick Durr, MDOT Environmental Division (601) 359-7920
Carrie Adams, MDOT Public Affairs Division (601) 359-7656

MDOT Schedules Public Meeting For Input on Proposed Interstate 20 Reconstruction in Warren County

VICKSBURG, MISS., November 13, 2009--The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) has scheduled a public meeting to discuss the proposed reconstruction of Interstate 20 in Vicksburg. The meeting will take place from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, November 17, 2009 at the Vicksburg Convention Center, 1600 Mulberry Street, Vicksburg, Miss.

Citizens are invited to come and go as they please during the hours of the meeting to view the department's alternatives and obtain information concerning design, right-of-way acquisition, and environmental issues. Although there will be no provisions made for formal presentations, representatives of the department will be available to discuss issues surrounding the proposed project.

According to MDOT Third District Engineer Kevin Magee, an Environmental Assessment will be conducted to evaluate the impacts of reconstructing six miles of I-20 and its interchanges from the

Washington/Warrenton Interchange to the US Highway 61 North/State Route 27 Interchange. Information received during the meeting will be included as part of the assessment.

“We are encouraging everyone to participate in this environmental process,” MDOT Third District Engineer Kevin Magee said. “Exchanging ideas and opinions is imperative to the development of this project.”

Interstate 20 through Vicksburg was originally constructed between 1963 and 1973. No major reconstruction has occurred since that time.

Any individual who needs auxiliary aids or special accommodations to attend the meeting should call the MDOT Environmental Division at (601) 359-7920.

-30-

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Open Forum

PUBLIC MEETING



Interstate Highway 20 (I-20)

Vicksburg - Warren County - MS

The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) has scheduled an open forum public meeting to discuss proposed reconstruction of a section of I-20 and its interchanges in Warren County. The project limits begin at the eastern side of the Washington Street/Warrenton Road Interchange at Exit 1A in Vicksburg and continue eastward for approximately six miles through the US 61 North/State Route 27 Interchange at Exit 5.

The meeting will be held Tuesday, November 17, 2009, from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. at the Vicksburg Convention Center, 1600 Mulberry Street, Vicksburg, MS.

Citizens are invited to come and go during the hours of the meeting. Everyone will be given the opportunity to review MDOT's proposed alternatives and speak with representatives concerning design, right-of-way acquisition, and environmental issues. Although there will be no formal presentations, citizens are encouraged to provide comments that will be reviewed and included as a part of the Environmental Assessment (EA) associated with this project.

THE PUBLIC IS ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND

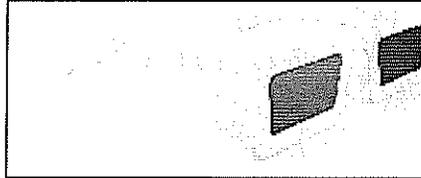
Tuesday, November 17, 2009, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Vicksburg Convention Center

1600 Mulberry Street

Vicksburg, MS

Any individual who needs auxiliary aids or special accommodations to attend the meeting should advise MDOT by calling the Environmental Division at (601) 359-7920.



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Highway, frontage road changes will be topic of Tuesday

By Danny Barrett Jr.

Published:

Monday, November 16, 2009 11:39 AM CST

Plans to add lanes to Interstate 20 in Vicksburg, rebuild interchanges and consider making traffic along the frontage roads one-way will be presented Tuesday — the first step in a process sure to affect businesses and neighborhoods near the highway.

In the talking phase for years, major reconstruction along the highway's 17 miles between the Mississippi and Big Black rivers is now centered on a 6-mile stretch between the Washington Street/Warrenton Road exit and the U.S. 61 North/Mississippi 27 interchange near the city limits.



Click image to enlarge

George Carr stands in front of his South Frontage Road to talk about changes for traffic. (Meredith Spe Vicksburg Post)

If you go

The public meeting on design plans to reconstruct Interstate 20 through Vicksburg will be from 4 until 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Vicksburg Convention Center, upstairs meeting rooms 1 and 2.

Public comments will be factored into an ongoing environmental study conducted by Jackson-based Neel-Schaffer Inc. for the Mississippi Department of Transportation. State highway construction and environmental personnel will be joined by Federal Highway Administration officials at the session at the Vicksburg Convention Center.

"This is the very beginning of a long process," Central District Commissioner Dick Hall said, adding the agency two options. Each would widen the highway to six lanes, three in each direction, and rebuild overpasses at H: Indiana Avenue, Clay Street and Wisconsin Avenue.

Hall said both frontage roads would be widened to three lanes at the project's outset, then used as detours a interstate highway as they are widened. One design would keep traffic westbound exclusively on North Fronti

shift back to two lanes in each direction beyond the study area. Environmental assessments are expected to start another year before a second session before the public is announced. Funding for the study has exceeded \$5 million. Construction costs from federal allocations likely to cost in the tens of millions. Previously advanced plans to reconstruct Frontage Road across rail tracks to the Outlets at Vicksburg will be rolled into the overall reconstruction plan,

"It'll all have to mesh," Hall said. "It's all part of it."

Acquiring rights of way from businesses that line the interstate on both sides is a strong possibility. A Tuesday session that will dispense with formal presentations in favor of small group-type conversations with engineers and environmental specialists. A short video will be shown to demonstrate likely driving patterns. Hall said.

Remodeled exits to replace the short, stubby ramps from Clay Street and tricky, lefthanded exits onto both highways are relics of design methods common when the highway opened in the 1960s — weigh heaviest with those who value driving conditions.

"Six-laning would be fantastic," said J.E. "Brother" Blackburn, second-generation owner of car dealerships bearing names that have grown into new digs on North Frontage Road in 2006.

While Blackburn admits a one-way frontage road system to mimic Interstate 55 in north Jackson would affect the dealership — and every bank, gas station and hotel on the frontage roads — the prospect of smoother traffic would serve a greater good, Blackburn said.

"I've thought a lot about this, on what is more critical," Blackburn said. "Public safety has priority over individual

Whether enough traffic rolls through Vicksburg on a daily basis remains a prime point of contention for other drivers. Traffic to move in both directions.

"I just think it would be a huge inconvenience for Vicksburgers to get from point A to point B," said George Carr, General Motors dealership on South Frontage Road is bounded by a mix of undeveloped brush and residential property. "Even the car dealerships in Jackson will tell you they wished traffic went both ways."

Carr, who said about half of his business comes from outside Vicksburg, said the prospect of longer drives to places on the frontage roads doesn't jibe with efforts by the government and other consumer advocates to encourage driving.

"We just had Cash for Clunkers where the government spent \$3 billion trying to get us to drive less," Carr said where we have the traffic congestion."

Average daily traffic along Interstate 20 through Vicksburg is busiest between Indiana Avenue and Clay Street, with 10,000 vehicles daily, according to the most recent calculations by MDOT in 2007.

Maps for Hinds County traffic counts show up to 139,000 vehicles travel Interstate 55 daily in northeast Jackson where MDOT tracked traffic totals west of the Washington Street exit and through Clay Street exit averaged about 2,000 cars over a two-year span.

"It would have a horrible effect," said Emmett Atwood, vice president of Atwood Chevrolet. "There's no telling of business we'd lose."

"It's hard enough to get to us now," said Jim Geary, general manager of Vicksburg Honda on North Frontage Road. Customers coming from points west would be hard-pressed to reach him without passing it first, then driving the made-over frontage road. "You can say I'd be against it."

Work completed on the interstate in the past five years has included resurfacing, new light fixtures and a cable barrier from the river to Clay Street to prevent vehicles from crossing the median.

Contact Danny Barrett Jr. at dbarrett@vicksburgpost.com

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michaelhorsley wrote on Nov 16, 2009 4:43 PM:

" The intention is to add a third lane to both North and South frontage roads, and use those while construction takes place on the inte
After the interstate is finished, these third lanes will still be there. I say keep the traffic 2-way, and use the center lanes as turn lanes. "

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emailrobert wrote on Nov 16, 2009 5:54 PM:

" It's good to see Mr. Blackburn put the betterment of the city over his personal interests. My respect level for him just increased 100%

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n2offkey wrote on Nov 17, 2009 11:25 AM:

" Always wondered why the frontage road was two way, doesn't make any sense.

Love the quotes from the car dealerships, they will look for anything to blame for lost business.

Hey, I'm about to make a \$10,000 to \$40,000 purchase, but I'm not going to buy from that dealership because I have to drive a quarte way. Give me a break.

Focus on selling cars.... "

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Though six-laning I-20 has been discussed for many years, the presentation Tuesday did not signal that a tir has been established.

The six-mile stretch of the interstate between the Washington Street/Warrenton Road exit and the U.S. 61 North exit is the focus of reconstruction because few if any of the existing on- and off-ramps or overpasses meet to safety standards.

Maps presented show a sectioned process over an undetermined period of years that would widen the highway three in each direction, and rebuild overpasses at Halls Ferry Road, Indiana Avenue, Clay Street and Wisconsin.

An environmental study by Jackson-based Neel-Schaffer Inc. should be in draft form by June 2010, with a report to follow. A final environmental report is expected to be done by October 2010. Traffic would be detoured onto roads in a single direction during mainline interstate work. Time frames for each section marked for widening by federal funding.

"This will be over a billion dollars when it's all finished," MDOT Central District Commissioner Dick Hall said.

A flyover ramp will replace a left-handed exit to U.S. 61 South from Halls Ferry Road, while expanded lanes and a similarly tricky exit to U.S. 61 North — both doing away with outdated design and garnering little opposition in submitted by those in attendance Tuesday.

What happens to the frontage roads once lanes are widened remained the key source of dissent. MDOT will carry two-way traffic in one design, but, in another, traffic would remain westbound on North Frontage Road and eastbound on Frontage Road. Underpasses would be built just east of Halls Ferry, in front of Big Lots and Cowboy Maloney's near Porters Chapel Road to link the two roads for the first time. South Frontage Road would be extended over the Outlets at Vicksburg, with new portions of the roadway to be maintained by the city. Access to eastbound Street and U.S. 80 would be improved via a wider interchange and an extra lane.

In addition to businesses along the frontage roads that date to 1973, residents of subdivisions said their neighbors often make convenient detours, an effect sure to worsen if the state's reconstruction plans progress as drawn.

"They come through us to get to Halls Ferry," said Talitha Mosley, referring to John Allen Street, which runs between Halls Ferry and Wisconsin.

Daily traffic counts along the interstate in Vicksburg in 2007, the most recent year available, show about 52,000 vehicles at the highway's busiest point, between Indiana Avenue and Clay Street. By 2040, MDOT predicts traffic there to swell to a count similar to I-55 north of Jackson.

"By far, this is the toughest one yet in nearly 50 years with MDOT and Neel-Schaffer," said Aubrey Kopf of Neel-Schaffer Inc., in charge of the project's ongoing study. Vicksburg's hilly terrain dictated an original design with a speed limit only at 50 miles per hour, Kopf said, with the challenge being raising the design standard closer to 60 miles per hour.

"We're designing this from the outside-in," Kopf said, referring to the frontage road situation.

Work completed on the interstate in the past five years has included resurfacing, new light fixtures and a canal from the river to Clay Street to prevent vehicles from crossing the median.

Contact Danny Barrett Jr. at dbarrett@vicksburgpost.com

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I-20 at Vicksburg Environmental Assessment

Comparison of One-Way, Two-Way Frontage Road Options

November 16, 2009

Over recent years, MDOT representatives have discussed the reconstruction of I-20 through Vicksburg with local officials, citizens and business owners. During these discussions, most of these local stakeholders recognized that the frontage road system must be placed in one-way operation and used for an interstate detour while the mainline interstate is being reconstructed between Halls Ferry Road and Clay Street/US 80. However, some of the stakeholders have questioned why the frontage road system should not be converted back to two-way operation when the mainline interstate reconstruction is completed.

Based on the current geometric alternative concepts, the following provides a comparison of a completed three-lane, one-way frontage road system with a completed three-lane, two-way frontage road system with the center lane being used exclusively for left turning traffic.

General Advantages of the One-Way Frontage Road System over the Two-Way System

- Three through lanes provide more traffic capacity than the one through lane under the two-way option
- Better addresses long-term traffic demand
- Eliminates the future cost associated with acquiring additional right of way and performing major reconstruction to provide improved traffic operations on the two-way frontage roads
- Has less traffic conflicts for traffic entering the frontage roads from intersecting drives and streets
- Has less traffic conflicts for traffic exiting the frontage roads to intersecting drives and streets
- Provides more efficient operation at signalized intersections
- Does not require converting the traffic operations (pavement markings, traffic signs and signals) back to two-way after the mainline interstate construction is completed and the interstate traffic is removed from the frontage roads
- Local traffic will become accustomed to the change from two-way to one-way operation while the frontage roads are functioning as detours during the reconstruction of the mainline interstate. Converting the frontage roads back to

two-way operation after the mainline interstate reconstruction is completed could cause unnecessary driver confusion and safety concerns.

Advantages of the One-Way Frontage Road System over the Two-Way System at Specific Locations

- Between the Hall's Ferry Road Interchange and the Indiana Avenue Interchange and between the Indiana Avenue Interchange and the Clay Street/US 80 Interchange, new bridges on the interstate lanes will allow connections, or circulation loops, between the one-way North Frontage Road and the one-way South Frontage Road beneath the interstate. These connections are not feasible with two-way traffic on the frontage roads due to unacceptable traffic operations that could occur. The one-way frontage road circulation loops would reduce the traffic volumes on Halls Ferry Road, Indiana Avenue, Old SR 27 and Clay Street/US 80 by providing alternate locations for frontage road traffic to change directions.
- At the Indiana Avenue Interchange, the bridge on Indiana Avenue will have to be widened one-lane on the east side. For the two-way operation, the bridge will have to be widened one-lane to the east and one-lane to the west.
- At the Indiana Avenue Interchange, access to Indiana Avenue from the east approach on the North Frontage Road will be maintained. For the two-way frontage road option, relocating the frontage road in the northeast quadrant of the Indiana Avenue interchange to obtain the required spacing between the interchange ramp intersections with Indiana Avenue and the frontage road intersections with Indiana Avenue cannot be accomplished without impacting 4(f) Vicksburg National Military Park property. Therefore, the North Frontage Road would have to be closed east of Indiana Avenue. Closing the frontage road would require providing a place for west bound traffic on a two-way North Frontage Road to turn around east of Indiana Avenue and create out of direction travel.
- At the Indiana Avenue Interchange, maintains Vicksburg Country Club direct access to Indiana Avenue. Under the two-way frontage road option the Vicksburg Country Club access would be provided from the relocated South Frontage Road
- At the Clay Street/US 80 Interchange, having access to the I-20 east bound exit ramp provides the east bound traffic on the South Frontage Road better access to Clay Street, US 61 North, and I-20 East and equal, if not better, access to US 80 and SR 27. Under the two-way option, all through east bound traffic on the

South Frontage Road must access US 80 east of the Clay Street/US 80 Interchange via Berryman Road.

- At the Clay Street/US 80 Interchange, having access to the I-20 east bound exit ramp provides the westbound traffic on the City of Vicksburg maintained frontage road access to Clay Street/US 80, US 61 North/SR 27, and I-20. Under the two-way option, no access is allowed from the South Frontage Road to the I-20 east bound exit ramp.

General Advantages of Two-Way Frontage Road System over the One-Way System

- For the I-20 motorist exiting to a destination that can be accessed from an interchange or adjacent interchanges, minimal planning is required to avoid out of direction travel because traffic is allowed to travel in both directions on the frontage roads. The one-way system requires more planning to minimize out of direction travel.
- Does not create out of direction travel for motorists entering the frontage road from driveways and minor streets with a frontage road destination to the left of their entry point.
- Lower overall traffic speeds would be expected because all the through traffic would be in one lane.

Specific Location Advantages of a Two-Way Frontage Road System over the One-Way System

- At the Indiana Avenue Interchange, the access control requirements impact less property. For the one-way option, additional access control is required along the frontage road because the interchange ramps are routed over the frontage roads.

This completes the comparison report of the one-way and two-way frontage road systems for the preliminary alternative.

Environmental Assessment

I-20 Through Vicksburg

Warren County, Mississippi

Quick Facts



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) is conducting an Environmental Assessment (EA), or study, of six miles of I-20 (including interchanges) in Warren County. The study area begins at the Washington Street/Warrenton Road Interchange in Vicksburg and continues through the US 61 North/State Route 27 Interchange.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose is to determine the possible effects that reconstructing this segment of I-20 might have on the human, natural and economic environments. Reconstruction is necessary since this segment of I-20 has exceeded its design life and no longer meets the current or anticipated travel demands. Specifically, reconstruction would:

- Increase traffic capacity
- Improve sight distances
- Lengthen interchange entrance and exit ramps
- Increase vertical clearances at bridge crossings
- Improve the ability of traffic to merge.

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES

The two alternatives being studied have similar concepts for reconstructing the mainline interstate and interchanges. Both alternatives would require that the frontage roads be reconstructed and widened to three lanes. To allow reconstruction of the interstate lanes, it will be necessary for interstate traffic to be temporarily detoured onto the frontage roads and for one-way traffic operations to be implemented on the frontage roads during the construction phase. Temporary traffic signals will be installed at the intersections where the interstate traffic will be routed onto the frontage roads. The major difference between the two alternatives is that for one alternative the frontage roads that functioned as the interstate detour will remain in one-way operation after the completed interstate lanes are opened to traffic. For the second alternative, the frontage roads will be placed back in two-way operations.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Public Involvement Program is outlined below and is subject to review and modification as the project develops:

- Stakeholder Interviews – Interviews of several people to get feedback on the proposed adequacy of the public involvement process have been completed.
- Database – An address database of stakeholders for public meeting mailings and other outreach activities has been developed. Please contact us to be included on the database list.
- Outreach Activities – Meetings are held, as necessary, with various community groups to facilitate public participation in the project. Please contact us to schedule a meeting with your organization.
- Agency Coordination – Meetings with state, federal and local governmental officials have been held. The federally recognized American Indian tribes have been contacted. Additional meetings will be scheduled as needed.
- Public Meetings and Hearing – Open house format meetings where attendees may review exhibits, discuss issues with project personnel, and provide written and verbal comments are scheduled.

Proposed Schedule

Project Phase	Estimated Completion
Corridor Review and Development	In Process
Public Meeting	November 2009
Refinement of Alignments	January 2010
Draft EA Report	June 2010
Public Hearing	August 2010
Final EA Report	October 2010

PROJECT CONTACTS

Kim Thurman, MDOT Environmental Division Director,
(601) 359-7920; environmentalcomments@mdot.state.ms.us

Robert Walker, Project Manager, Neel-Schaffer, Inc.,
(601) 948-3071; robert.walker@neel-schaffer.com

Frequently Asked Questions:

• **How do I voice my opinion?**

Your ideas may be expressed in several different ways during this meeting. You may verbally submit your opinions, or make them in writing by completing a Comment Sheet and placing it in the Comment Box. Meeting representatives are available to help locate both. You are also welcome to take the Comment Sheet home with you and mail it to the address shown on the back of that form. If you prefer, you may e-mail your comments to robert.walker@neel-schaffer.com.

• **What happens to my comments?**

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 meeting record.

• **I would like for someone to contact me after this meeting. Is that possible?**

Yes! A member of the project team will be glad to talk with you or other family members, neighbors, or friends about this project after this meeting. As you are completing a comment sheet, please make your needs known. If you like, you may request that your name be placed on a list to receive information about this study as it becomes available. Also, you may e-mail MDOT at environmentalcomments@mdot.state.ms.us.

Project Background and Traffic

The construction of I-20 through Vicksburg was completed between 1963 and 1973. A 50-mile-per-hour design speed and an average annual daily traffic volume of 18,080 vehicles projected for the year 1989 were used for designing the existing interstate between the Mississippi River Bridge and the Clay Street/US 80 Interchange. Since 1973, higher design standards have been adopted by MDOT, but major reconstruction of this section of I-20 has not occurred.

Today, a 60-mile-per-hour speed limit is currently posted on I-20 through Vicksburg. According to MDOT, the average annual daily traffic is currently 25,000 vehicles at the River Bridge and 52,000 vehicles between the US 61 South Interchange and the US 61 North/State Route 27 Interchange. The traffic at these same locations is projected to increase to 53,000 vehicles and 95,000 vehicles, respectively, by the year 2040. This section of I-20 no longer meets the needs of the motoring public. Major reconstruction is needed to meet current design standards and to accommodate the existing and anticipated traffic demand.

Proposed Alternatives

The two alternatives being presented at this meeting have similar concepts for reconstructing the mainline interstate and interchanges. Both alternatives would require that the frontage roads be reconstructed and widened to three lanes. To allow reconstruction of the interstate lanes, it will be necessary for interstate traffic to be temporarily detoured onto the frontage roads and that one-way traffic operations be implemented on the frontage roads during the construction phase. Temporary traffic signals will be installed at the intersections where the interstate traffic will be routed onto the frontage roads.

The major difference between the two alternatives is that for one alternative the frontage roads that functioned as the interstate detour will remain in one-way operation after the completed interstate lanes are opened to traffic. For the second alternative, the frontage roads will be placed back in two-way operations.

Study Advancement

Due to the complexity and anticipated cost of the proposed improvements, as well as the heavy traffic volumes in the area, MDOT recommends accomplishing the work in several phases. The phases could then be broken into separate projects and executed in a sequence that would allow each project to be constructed independently while maintaining connectivity throughout the entire route.

Since funding to advance the bulk of this project beyond the current study has not been programmed, a time line for beginning construction is not yet known. Cost estimates will be available once this study advances to the public hearing, which is anticipated to be held in late summer of 2010.

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 meeting. We are here to receive your input concerning the reconstruction of six miles of I-20 and its interchanges from the Washington Street/Warrenton Road Interchange in Vicksburg through the US 61 North/SR 27 Interchange.

We are conducting an Environmental Assessment, or study, to determine the possible effects this reconstruction work could have on the human, natural and economic environments. Displays and educational materials about the study are located throughout the room for your convenience. A short video is being shown at periodic intervals throughout today's meeting in the adjacent room. It describes the proposed reconstruction and demonstrates the likely changes in driving patterns. Please take time to view this video. It will help you become more familiar with the study.

Your input is important to the successful development of this project. Exchanging opinions, information and ideas before developing a final plan helps ensure that the best possible decisions are made. Please feel free to ask questions of the project team members as you move about the room and view the displayed materials.

Purpose and Need

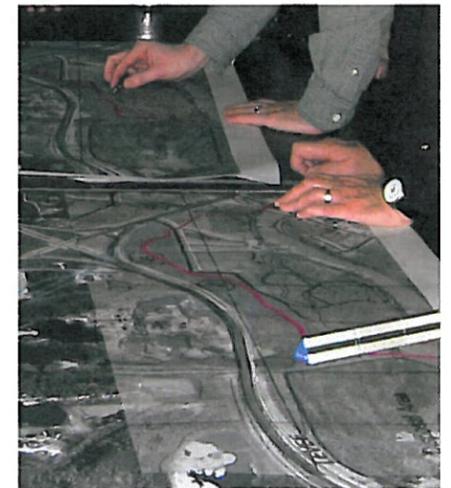
MDOT is proposing this project to improve safety and mobility and to prepare for future transportation needs. Specifically, the proposed project is needed to:

- Increase traffic capacity
- Improve sight distances
- Lengthen interchange entrance and exit ramps
- Increase vertical clearances at various bridge crossings
- Improve the ability of traffic to merge

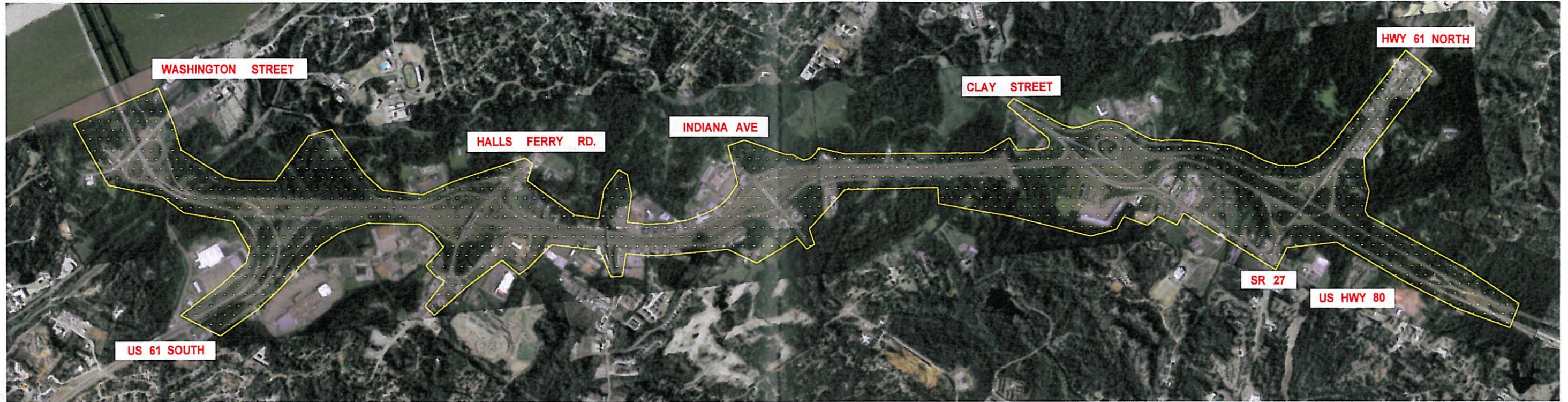


Open House Public Meeting

Tuesday, November 17, 2009
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 meeting and then let MDOT know your thoughts and ideas. The video provides graphic representation of the proposed I-20 improvements.



I-20 at Vicksburg Map

The map above indicates the six-mile study area for the Environmental Assessment of I-20 and its interchanges through Vicksburg in Warren County. The yellow lines show the limits of the study. A larger version of this map may be viewed at this meeting, along with a video that explains the proposed alternatives being studied.

Members of the project team are standing by to assist you with any questions and to take your comments concerning this study. Your comments are important and will be carefully evaluated.

Contacts:

Mississippi Department of Transportation

Kim Thurman, Director
Environmental Division
P. O. Box 1850
Jackson, MS 39215-1850
(601) 359-7920
environmentalcomments@mdot.state.ms.us

Neel-Schaffer, Inc.

Robert Walker, Project Manager
P. O. Box 22625
Jackson, MS 39225-2625
(601) 948-3071
robert.walker@neel-schaffer.com

Notes:



Public Meeting COMMENT SHEET

November 17, 2009 Vicksburg, MS

PROJECT BEING CONSIDERED
Interstate 20 (Vicksburg)
Environmental Division FAX Number: 601-359-7355 E-mail: environmentalcomments@mdot.state.ms.us www.goMDOT.com

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Which best describes your primary interest?

<input type="checkbox"/> Affected	<input type="checkbox"/> Resident
<input type="checkbox"/> Concerned	<input type="checkbox"/> Business
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Landowner
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

What are the major issues?

<input type="checkbox"/> Relocations	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise
<input type="checkbox"/> Wetlands	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety
<input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/> Social
<input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Volume	<input type="checkbox"/> Economics
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	

MDOT is interested in your comments about the proposed project. Please indicate:

The preliminary alternative you like best and why: _____

Issues and/or concerns about the project: _____

Recommendations for the project: _____

PLEASE SUBMIT AT THE MEETING OR MAIL TO ADDRESS ON REVERSE SIDE WITHIN 10 DAYS OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

Visit us on the web at www.goMDOT.com, or e-mail environmentalcomments@mdot.state.ms.us

MDOT is interested in your comments about the proposed project. On the reverse side, please indicate:

- The alternative you like best and why.
- Issues and concerns about the project.
- Recommendations for the project.

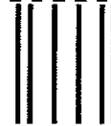
Comment Sheet



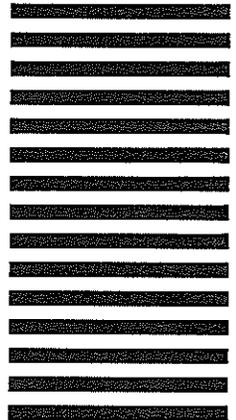
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Mississippi Department of Transportation
 Environmental Division (87-01)
 P. O. Box 1850
 Jackson, MS 39215-1850



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Name of Person(s), If Necessary	Issue/Request Discussed at Meeting	Formal Comment Received	Outcome of Discussion	Follow-up Action Needed (If Required)	Misc.
Unknown Concerned Citizen	The citizen supports the ultimate two-way frontage rd. alternative. He believes the ultimate one-way frontage road alternative will cause many of the frontage road businesses to close and be too severe of an economic hardship.		The project team representative referred the citizen to the comparison sheet of the two frontage road concepts contained in the handout. The project team representative reminded the citizen that both the two-way and one-way ultimate frontage road concepts are being considered at this time. During their discussion, the project team representative attempted to point out some of the advantages of the one-way ultimate frontage road concept. However, the citizen remained steadfast in his belief that the potential negative economic impacts to frontage road businesses alone was enough justification for not changing the frontage roads to one-way operation.	None Needed	
Unknown Property Owner	The proposal to not allow any access in the northeast quadrant of the Indiana Avenue Interchange between the North Frontage Road and Bugle Ridge Drive was discussed with the impacted property owner. His property is located at the corner of Indiana Avenue and the North Frontage Road and currently only has access to Indiana Avenue.		The project team representatives advised the property owner of the procedures that would be used for acquiring the access. The property owner wanted to know what he could do to have the proposed plan changed so that he could retain his allowed access to Indiana Avenue. The project team representatives advised the property owner to submit his request in writing as a comment to the meeting and that the MDOT would provide a formal response to his written comments.	After receiving the written comments from the impacted property owner, the MDOT will need to provide a response.	
Unknown Concerned Citizen	The cost of implementing the proposed project does not justify the expenditure.		The project team representative discussed the purpose and need, the 2040 design year traffic projections and the video being played in the other room with the concerned citizen. The concerned citizen remained steadfast in his opinion and refused to watch the video.	None Needed	
Unknown Concerned Citizen	The concerned citizen does not want one-way ultimate frontage roads.		The project team representative referred the lady to the comparison sheet of the two frontage road concepts contained in the handout. The project team representative reminded the lady that both the two-way and one-way ultimate frontage road concepts are being considered at this time. During their discussion, the project team representative attempted to point out some of the advantages of the one-way ultimate frontage road concept. However, the lady remained steadfast in her belief that the one-way ultimate frontage roads were unacceptable.	None Needed	
Concerned Citizen	The concerned citizen expressed his support of the project and one-way ultimate frontage roads. The citizen also identified another potential advantage of the one-way ultimate frontage road alternative over the two-way ultimate frontage road alternative.		The project team representative and the concerned citizen discussed the advantages of the one-way ultimate frontage road alternative. The concerned citizen pointed out another potential advantage of the one-way frontage road system. That advantage is the possibility of the frontage road/C-D road system being used for a detour when the mainline interstate has to be closed for a substantial length of time due to a traffic accident between the Halls Ferry Road and the US 61 North/SR 27 Interchanges. The project team representative advised the citizen the possibility of using the frontage road/C-D road system as a detour under the conditions he described had merit, especially during off-peak traffic times since the police would only need to direct traffic at the detoured interstate traffic crossings of Halls Ferry Road and Indiana Avenue.	Revise the comparison sheet of the one-way and two-way ultimate frontage roads to reflect this additional advantage of the one-way concept.	
Concerned Citizen	The concerned citizen wants improved access from the interstate to Wisconsin Avenue and improved access to the North and South Frontage Roads from Indiana Avenue.		The project team rep advised the citizen that the spacing between the Halls Ferry Rd and the Indiana Ave interchanges would not allow providing an interchange only for Wisconsin Ave. The project team rep. reminded her that access to the South Frontage Rd is currently provided through the shopping center parking lot and that the City of Vicksburg recently received the results of a completed study on providing access to the North Frontage Road. Since the Wisconsin Ave access to the existing two-way frontage rds is primarily a local issue, she was advised to contact the City for help.	Consider options and impacts of providing Wis. Ave access to the North and South Frontage Road for both the one-way and two-way frontage road options. For the one-way frontage road option, the frontage road circulation bridge just east of Halls Ferry Road might could be eliminated if the Wisconsin Ave access option to the North and South Frontage Rds is used.	

Name of Person(s), If Necessary	Issue/Request Discussed at Meeting	Formal Comment Received	Outcome of Discussion	Follow-up Action Needed (If Required)	Misc.
Be	Mr. Be is the co-owner of a potentially impacted business. His business is located on the I-20 South Frontage Rd between Indiana Avenue and Old SR 27. The preliminary proposed right of way indicates additional right of way will be needed to the east of his business and along the frontage of his business. The additional preliminary right of way impacts the front of his building that is closest to the frontage road and the area that is currently being used for parking in front of the building. Mr. Be wanted to know the accuracy of the current proposed impacts on his business and the procedure that would be used for acquiring his property as right of way for this proposed project.		The project team representatives explained to Mr. Be that the proposed additional right of way being shown at this meeting is preliminary and that more accurate information would be available at the public hearing. The MDOT Right of Way Division representatives discussed with Mr. Be the MDOT appraisal, acquisition and relocation assistance policies and procedures. They advised him how the policies and procedures would be used when the right of way plans, which would be developed after this study is completed, determine the property and/or improvements that need to be acquired from the business as right of way for the project. They also made Mr. Be aware of his rights if property and/or improvements are needed from the business for the project's future right of way.	None Required	
Unknown	Consider changing the proposed access control at the Indiana Avenue Interchange to allow the bank on the west side of Indiana Avenue south of I-20, the convenience store on the east side of Indiana Avenue south of Indiana Avenue, the convenience store on the west side of Indiana Avenue north of I-20, and the residence on the east side of Indiana Ave north of I-20 to keep driveway access to Indiana Avenue.		The project team representatives agreed to pursue analyzing an option that would move the common off-ramp/frontage road intersection closer to the interstate using the minimum 250 feet distance from the ramp to the first allowable access point.	Neel-Schaffer will develop the concept, analyze the concept and present the findings to the MDOT	
H_Sm After Meeting First MDOT Submittal		He likes the two-way frontage road alternative the best because he believes it is much easier to access any local business, especially for guests of the city. His issues and/or concerns about the project are that one-way frontage roads make it much more difficult to access any location; they require more land purchase; and, expensive turn arounds. Under recommendations for the project, he stated that he does not understand the reason for recommending one-way frontage road, and that he will adapt to which ever way is decided by the majority.		None Required	
R_Bu After Meeting First MDOT Submittal		He likes the two-way frontage road option better because: it is less threatening to business owners and their employees; and, it would be more seeker friendly for travelers looking for motorist services. His issue and/or concern about the project is the economy as it relates to the unknown aspect and influence a one-way frontage road system would have on already struggling business owners. Under recommendations for the project, he requested taking an overall view of the proposals and blend what's good for safety and the economy into the final results. He stated that he is convinced the two-way frontage road option will be the answer to what's good for safety and the economy.		None Required	
R_Ea After Meeting First MDOT Submittal		He likes the one-way frontage road option better. His issue/or concern about the project is that it is time to start up. He does not have a recommendation for the project. He expressed his appreciation for the information.		None Required	
T_Dw After Meeting Second MDOT Submittal		He recognized an alternative that widens I-20 is needed because it is a heavy traffic corridor. His issues/concerns about the project are noise; and one-way frontage rds will negatively affect his business and may have to relocate. His recommendation is to keep frontage roads two-way permanently.		None Required	
R_Le After Meeting Second MDOT Submittal		The alternative she likes best is one that will widen the interstate lanes, add a turn lane on the north and south frontage roads, and keep two-way traffic on the frontage roads. Her issues/concerns about the project are: making one-way traffic on the frontage roads on a permanent basis would severely impact her business; it will be an inconvenience to have one-way traffic; and, she is opposed to it as a business owner. Her recommendations are: to widen I-20; and keep frontage roads and all exits as they currently are.		None Required	

Name of Person(s), If Necessary	Issue/Request Discussed at Meeting	Formal Comment Received	Outcome of Discussion	Follow-up Action Needed (If Required)	Misc.
B	He was in favor of the one way frontage road concept. He thought this alternative was a safer one while at the same time provided good functionality.			Suggested that the circulation bridges be highlighted better on our displays to make them more visible. A number of people who were originally opposed to the one way concept, found it acceptable after they were pointed out.	
Wa	This husband and wife couple operate a nursery in the area of the proposed "south frontage road/ outlet mall" project. They are in the process of retiring and would like for MDOT to go ahead and purchase their business since it will be effected. They really didn't express an opinion on the subject project.		The current status of the south frontage road project was discussed and it was explained to them that the project was not yet in the ROW phase, therefore ROW could not be purchased at this time.		
Unknown/Public	This area resident is an over the road truck driver. He thought that the project was too expensive and favored a "no build" stating that the money should be spent elsewhere. Specifically, he thought that US 61 should be 4-laned from Vicksburg to Leland.		MDOT team member explained that this project was to alleviate future traffic problems, not just today's. It was also explained that the 4-laning of US 61 was in the Vision 21 program and that projects were prioritized on a V/C analysis basis and that the V/C ratio was low on US 61.		
W	Mr. W owns a business at the Indiana Avenue Interchange. Under the one way proposal, his access is severely limited. Under the two way option, his property will be purchased.		Mr. W was concerned that under either plan, very valuable real estate at this intersection will be rendered unusable for commerce. He would like to see if any exceptions can be made to allow access at this intersection.	N-S is looking into the possibility of design exceptions and concepts to allow for access at this intersection.	
B	Mr. B operates a business on the south frontage road near the Indiana Ave. interchange and is concerned that either plan will eliminate his business.		Mr. B's concerns were very similar to Mr. W's and he wants the same type of remedy.		
Unknown	Access to business on north side of I-20 off the North Frontage Road. The business is located to the west of the frontage road circulation bridge proposed slightly east of Halls Ferry Road. A one-way North Frontage Road makes it more indirect to access the business for both east and west bound I-20 traffic.		Signing now advises east bound drivers to exit at Halls Ferry Road and travel north to the North Frontage Road. Under a one-way North Frontage Road, signing will have to direct the business traffic to the North Frontage Rd via the South Frontage Road and the Circulation Bridge. Probably add new signage for west bound traffic so the business traffic would exit at Indiana Avenue and proceed west on the North Frontage Rd. Otherwise, traffic exiting for the business at Halls Ferry Road would have to proceed south on Halls Ferry Road to the South Frontage Road, east on the South Frontage Road to the Circulation Bridge, north under the Circulation Bridge to the North Frontage Road and west on the North Frontage Road to the business.	None Required	
Property Owner	The property owner asked what changes would be made in the northwest quadrant of the US 61 North Interchange that would affect the property she owns adjacent to the existing right of way. She was advised a minimum amount of right of way would be required at that location and relatively little would be changed from existing conditions. Her property currently has no direct access except by way of US 61 North.		The property owner was satisfied with matter as discussed.	None Required	
Property Owner and attorney	The property owned is in the southwest quadrant of the Indiana Avenue Interchange. The owner was aware of the proposed no access limits and realized he would be compensated for the loss of access.		The property owner understood the matter as discussed.	None Required	The property owner discussed the matter with other project team members.
Casino Managers	These individuals were concerned with the timeline of the project. They were anxious for roadway improvements to be completed because of an opinion that customers from the Jackson area where		They were advised the timeline for the project was dependent upon available funding and that currently funding was not available.	None Required	