

Meeting Summary



September 2, 2003

PROJECT MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Agency Meeting – Corridor Evaluation
EIS for Section of Independent Utility No. 14
State Project No. 736-99-1032
Federal Aid Project No. CBI-9901(516)
Junction I-20 near Haughton, LA to US 82 Near El Dorado, AR
Route I-69
Bossier, Claiborne and Webster Parishes, Louisiana
Columbia and Union Counties, Arkansas
URS Project No. 1000100x.xxxx

DATE: August 21, 2003, 1:30PM

PLACE: Junction City, Louisiana Senior Citizens Center

ATTENDEES: See Attendees List

Due to the poor quality of the agency meeting recording, this summary of the meeting summary is provided. Mr. Dussom, URS, began the meeting by requesting introductions and explaining that the purpose of the meeting was to present the Corridor Evaluation process that was undertaken the provide details on the five remaining corridors under consideration.

After introductions, a brief video was presented to the attendees. (See transcript of Corridor Selection video for content and video script. A copy of this video is available for viewing at the Homer Program Office.) The video was followed by a more thorough explanation of Purpose and Need for the project, Tribal coordination status; alternatives development, and the five final 2-mile-wide corridors under consideration.

David Griffin, URS, presented information on the purpose and need for the project, explaining that the project has a national need as an integral component of the National I-69 corridor; and a local need to provide improved mobility, safety, and economic development to the project Study Area. Derick Hamilton of the US Fish and Wildlife Service inquired about the process to document concurrence on the project purpose and need. It was decided that the URS project team would submit a letter formally requesting concurrence to the cooperating agencies on the project within the next few weeks. It was noted that US Fish and Wildlife Service would need approximately 2 weeks to coordinate a response letter. He later noted that he needed no additional data and was appreciative of the content of the materials provided to date.

Tim Klinger, HPA Associates, then explained the coordination efforts undertaken to date with the American Indian tribes identified by the Arkansas and Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officers as potentially affected by this project. Mr. Klinger displayed a set of materials, illustrating what each tribe had been provided.



Scott Hoffeld, URS, then began an explanation of the alternatives development process undertaken for the project. He explained that after the Study Area was identified, the primary considerations were mapped. These primary considerations guided the placement of alternatives, and included estimated wetland limits, state and federal lands, limits of the north Louisiana Rural Renewal Community, and urban boundaries. The study team independently developed 31 corridors between Haughton, Louisiana and El Dorado, Arkansas. By overlaying all team members' corridors, 10 unique corridors were identified and considered representative of the original 31 corridors. Secondary considerations then were used to evaluate the relative potential of each of the ten 2-mile-wide corridors to result in adverse effects. Secondary considerations included both area and point data such as locations of churches, archaeological sites, historic standing structures, and other.

A matrix of considerations that included both primary and secondary considerations was developed. This matrix categorized considerations into purpose and need considerations; environmental considerations; cost considerations; and other considerations. Using statistical and graphic tools, the project team visually compared the results of the GIS queries to determine which alternatives were better and worse for each criterion. Actual query values were also considered. Results of this quantitative evaluation were then used in a final qualitative review to determine which among the 10 preliminary corridors should be retained for further consideration.


Mr. Hoffeld explained that Alternatives 1a and 1b were omitted because of their potential to impact lignite deposits and wetland areas, and they were the longest routes under consideration. Alternative 2c was omitted because it required two scenic stream crossings, had the greatest potential adverse effects to National Forest Lands, and was also relatively long. Alternatives 3a and 3b were omitted because of their relatively low transportation utility, requirement of two scenic stream crossings; and their potential recreation impacts.

Alternatives 1c, 1d, 1e, 2a, and 2b were retained for presentation to the public and agencies for further consideration as the single 2-mile-wide corridor within which 300-foot-wide alignments would ultimately be designed and evaluated in the EIS.

ACTION ITEMS

- URS will provide cooperating agencies a letter requesting concurrence on the Purpose and Need Statement to which cooperating agencies will provide a written response.
- Agencies will provide comments on the Corridor Selection Process by September 5th, 2003
- URS will arrange a concurrence meeting or conference call within the next month to obtain concurrence on the single 2-mile-wide corridor to graduate to the EIS.
- URS will provide a digital color-infrared graphic of the Study Area and a copy of the introductory video to those attendees who requested these materials.

Prepared by:


Scott Hoffeld

Distribution: Attendees
LDOTD
AHTD
FHWA
URS Team