APPENDIX E

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE

Jury convicts man of lewd acts on child he later married

By GILLIAN FLACCUS
Associated Press


Garcia

FULLERTON, Calif. — It was a case that made headlines: A woman who disappeared a decade earlier at age 15 resurfaced and said her current husband had actually abducted her, raped her and forced her to marry him.

But in a trial that played out in an Orange County courtroom, the husband's attorney claimed the truth was far more nuanced — and much less damning.

Isidro Garcia's attorney showed photos of his client, now 42, and the woman at their wedding and smiling with their young daughter, who was conceived using fertility treatments.

On Friday, a jury deadlocked on the most serious charge of rape and acquitted Garcia of kidnapping. They convicted him of lewd acts with a minor after his attorney acknowledged he had an inappropriate sexual relationship with the girl when she was a teen.

Garcia at first rested his head on the table as the verdict was read and later fell to his knees and repeatedly said, "Gracias!" while raising his hands to the ceiling.

The prosecution offered him a deal just minutes before the verdict was read Friday, but Garcia rejected it.

"I'm really happy with the way in which the jury pushed back against the overreach by the district attorney's office," said Garcia's attorney, Seth Bank. "It gave me a lot of faith in our criminal justice system."

Outside court, several jurors said they were deeply divided and troubled by the difference between the alleged victim's account and Garcia's account. At least two jurors said they were haunted by the deadlock on the rape charge, while the jury forewoman said she and others felt the alleged victim lied on the witness stand.

Garcia faces a maximum of four years and four months, but could receive only probation at sentencing next month with credit for two years of time served. The rape count was dismissed Friday.

"I'm disappointed. I knew that this was a difficult case when I filed it, but I really did believe (the alleged victim), and I felt I could prove it," prosecutor Whitney Bokosky said.

DEBATE FROM 12A

bate, Rubio was the most assertive. The tone was set early when he criticized the fact that Trump's clothing line is manufactured in Mexico.

"This little guy has lied so much — " Trump started to say.

"Here we go," Rubio interrupted.

" — about my record," Trump finished.

"Here we go; it's personal," Rubio interrupted again.

"He has lied so much about my record," Trump said.

The two talked over each other, prompting questioner and Fox News host Chris Wallace to implore: "Sen. Rubio, why don't you let him finish?"

Cruz treated Trump like an errant child — ironically, after calling Trump and Rubio "bickering schoolchildren."

"Donald, please, I know it's hard not to interrupt. But try," Cruz said. "Breathe. Breathe. Breathe."

"Lyin' Ted," Trump replied.

"You can do it. You can breathe. I know it's hard. I know it's hard," Cruz countered.

If Trump gave as good as he got in those exchanges, he faltered during the debate's calmer sections.

All three Fox questioners confronted Trump with facts that contradict some of his common promises. They asked how he would pay for a tax cut that could cost $10 trillion over 10 years, and pointed out that his proposed cuts came nowhere near that amount.

"Your numbers don't add up, sir," Wallace said after Trump tried to explain himself.

Fox News anchor Megyn Kelly aired video clips of Trump contradicting himself on support for the Afghan war, acceptance of Syrian refugees and his assertion weeks ago that President George W. Bush lied about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Trump variously claimed that he had misunderstood or had changed his mind after he studied the issues.

Questioner Bret Baier asked Trump about his vow in an earlier debate to sanction waterboarding and worse against Islamic terrorists, and to target their families as well.

"So what would you do, as commander in chief, if the U.S. military refused to carry out those orders?" Baier said.

"They won't refuse. They're not going to refuse me. Believe me," Trump replied.

"But they're illegal," Baier said of the tactics.

Rubio scalded Trump anew on his loose grasp of foreign policy, which Trump has often suggested he would handle with a tag team of strength and deal-making. (Trump gave him new ammunition by suggesting Thursday that "wouldn't it be nice if actually we could get along with Russia, we could get along with foreign countries, instead of spending trillions and trillions of dollars?" His mild assessment of Russia runs counter to the views of most Republicans.)

"As we've seen throughout this campaign, Donald has not shown a seriousness about the issues of foreign policy," Rubio said. "He just simply hasn't."

Trump didn't defend himself, other than to declare, again, that Rubio "is not a leader. Believe me."

The exchanges illustrated the hope of the other candidates that the normal rules might apply to Trump, that he would suffer both for his refusal to drill down on policy specifics and his reliance on bullying. At one point, Cruz opined that "the American people understand that yelling and cursing at people doesn't make you a tough guy."

In the Republican primaries so far, however, Trump has prevailed by doing just that. However he was targeted on Thursday night, it seemed a stretch to think that more than eight months into Trump's ascent, his supporters might suddenly want something different.

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OPEN FORUM PUBLIC MEETING

POPP'S FERRY ROAD EXTENSION
PASS ROAD TO BEACH BOULEVARD (US HWY 90)
CITY OF BILOXI, HARRISON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI
DHP-9376-00(009) LPA/106253-801000

The City of Biloxi has scheduled an open forum public hearing to discuss the proposed extension of Popp's Ferry Road from its present southern terminus at Pass Road to a new point of intersection with Beach Boulevard (U.S. Highway a90) within the city limits of Biloxi in Harrison County.

The hearing will be held Tuesday, March 22, 2016 from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. at the Donal Snyder Community Center, 2520 Pass Road, in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Citizens are invited to come and go as they please during the hours of the hearing to view exhibits and other project-related materials and to discuss with representatives of the city roadway design, right-of-way acquisition and environmental issues.

Although there will be no provisions made for formal presentations by individuals or groups, citizens are invited and encouraged to make written and/or recorded statements that will become part of the hearing's permanent record. Individuals may also submit written materials and/or other exhibits for consideration in addition to or in lieu of oral or recorded comments provided at the Public Hearing.

The *Preliminary Environmental Assessment* will be available for public inspection at the following locations: Community Development Department, 676 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, Biloxi, Mississippi 39530; Biloxi City Hall, 140 Lameuse Street, Biloxi, Mississippi 39530; Margaret S. Sherry Memorial Library, 2141 Popps Ferry Road, Biloxi, Mississippi 39532; MDOT Environmental Division, 401 North West Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39201; and Federal Highway Administration, 100 West Capitol Street, Suite 1062, Jackson, Mississippi 39269.

Any individual who needs auxiliary aids or special accommodations to attend the hearing should contact the City of Biloxi Public Works Department at (228) 435-6265 in order to make their needs known in advance of the meeting.

Andrew "FoFo" Gilich, Mayor, City of Biloxi

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PRELIMINARY
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR PRESENTATION AT PUBLIC HEARING

POPP'S FERRY ROAD EXTENSION
PASS ROAD TO BEACH BOULEVARD (US HIGHWAY 90)

CITY OF BILOXI
HARRISON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI
PROJECT NO. DHP-9376-00(009)LPA/106253-801000

JANUARY 2016

SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO THE
NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT
(42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C))

BY
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
AND
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Preliminary Environmental Assessment

POPP'S FERRY ROAD EXTENSION: PASS ROAD TO BEACH BOULEVARD (US 90)

Project No. DHP-9376-00(009)LPA/106253-801000

City of Biloxi, Harrison County, Mississippi

Submitted to
U. S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

FOR PRESENTATION AT A PUBLIC HEARING

Submitted by
Mississippi Department of Transportation

January 28, 2016
Date of Approval

E C B
For Federal Highway Administration

The following persons may be contacted for additional information concerning this document:

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Mississippi Department of Transportation
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(601) 359-7920

PRELIMINARY
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR PRESENTATION AT PUBLIC HEARING

POPP'S FERRY ROAD EXTENSION:
PASS ROAD TO BEACH BOULEVARD (US HIGHWAY 90)

CITY OF BILOXI
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PROJECT NO. DHP-9376-00(009)LPA/106253-801000

JANUARY 2016

SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO THE
NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C))

BY
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

AND
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MDOT Commitments to Environmental Excellence

Project No: DHP-9376-00(009)LPA/106253-801000 **Hwy/Route:** Popp's Ferry Road **Date:** August 18, 2015

County: Harrison **Page 1 of** 1

***Value Engineering Study Recommended** ☐ **Yes** ☒ **No**

Commitments/Requirements	Source of Commitment	Responsible Office	Place on Plans	Requires A Special Provision	Status of Commitment/Requirement
Restrict access to work site during construction to protect public health and safety	Pages 3-23, 3-82	MDOT	Yes	No	To be done during design and construction
Maintain equipment and limit use during construction to minimize air pollution emissions	Pages 3-33, 3-81, 3-89	MDOT	Yes	N o	To be done during construction
Implement runoff control measures to limit runoff pollution during and after construction	Pages 3-44, 3-88	MDOT	Yes	No	To be done during design and construction
Mitigate wetlands impacts in accordance with USACE requirements	Pages 3-47, 3-90, 3-91	MDOT	Yes	No	To be done during design and construction
Mitigate unavoidable noise and vibration impacts during construction	Pages 3-81, 3-89	MDOT	Yes	No	To be done during design and colnstruction
All practical and standard procedures and measures, including Best Management practices will be implemented to avoid or minimize impacts.					

These commitments should be carried throughout each phase of the project development including Design, Right of Way, Construction, and Maintenance.

*Value Engineering (VE) Studies are recommended for projects on the NHS System with an estimated project costs approaching $50 Million, for bridge projects on the NHS System with an estimated project costs approaching $40 Million, and/or for all Major Projects approaching $500 Million.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The City of Biloxi, in cooperation with the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed extension of Popp's Ferry Road from its present southern terminus at Pass Road to a point of connection with Beach Boulevard (U. S. Highway 90) in the vicinity of the Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center. The document complies with all requirements of the *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969* as amended (NEPA) and regulations promulgated by the U. S. Department of Transportation (USDOT).

Affected Area

The study area is generally bounded by Pass Road on the north, Beauvoir Road on the east and Beach Boulevard on the south. The western limit runs along Briarfield Avenue from Beach Boulevard to the CSX railroad, continuing in a generally northward direction from there to the intersection of Pass Road and Rich Avenue. The study area is bisected by the CSX railroad running east and west midway between Pass Road and Highway 90.

Proposed Improvement

The new section of Popp's Ferry Road will be constructed as a four-lane urban arterial, connecting with the existing street at Pass Road. The extension of Popp's Ferry will provide a continuous north-south travel path from U. S. Highway 90 (US 90) to Cedar Lake Road one-third of a mile south of the Cedar Lake interchange with Interstate 10 (I-10). The new intersection at US 90 will be signalized and the signal presently located at the entrance to the Coliseum removed. The Coliseum access road will be channelized at its intersection with US 90 to prohibit left turns, allowing only right-in and right-out movements. The direct connection to US 90 will eliminate the need for motorists traveling north or south on Popp's Ferry Road to drive east or west on Pass Road in order to reach a street providing access to or from Highway 90.

Purpose and Need

The extension of Popp's Ferry Road from Pass Road to US 90 was included in the *Mississippi Gulf Coast Area Transportation Study – 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan* (Gulf Regional Planning Commission 2015) as a committed project. It is also listed in the *Mississippi Department of Transportation Statewide Transportation Improvement Program: Fiscal Year 2015-2019* (MDOT 2014). The purpose of the project and corresponding need for its implementation may be summarized in terms of the following categories of anticipated benefits: Improved system continuity; reduced traffic congestion; enhanced accessibility of public facilities; increased accessibility of developable land; and enhanced sustainability and livability of the community.

Alternatives

The alternatives considered in the course of this environmental study include a "no-action" option (Alternative A) which would leave the existing roadway network unchanged; two principal build

alternatives (B and C) that would extend Popp's Ferry Road from Pass Road to Beach Boulevard along divergent routes; and two variants on the principal build alternatives (B-1 and C-1) that would include elevated sections spanning the CSX railroad.

Alternatives B and B-1 would proceed southward from Pass Road, curve to the southwest, then return to a north-south alignment and cross the CSX railroad immediately west of the Convention Center parking garage. South of the railroad the route would pass immediately east of the Maison d'Orleans Apartments, utilizing property that is presently vacant. Approaching the southern end of Oakmont Place, the road would curve to the southeast in order to pass on the east side of the Quality Inn and connect to Beach Boulevard at a 90-degree angle. This would require the acquisition and removal of as many as six residences on the west side of Oakmont Place and two on the east side.

Alternatives C and C-1 would begin at the same point as Alternative B, initially heading south, then curving somewhat further to the southwest, crossing the CSX rail line approximately 300 feet west of the Convention Center parking garage. Proceeding due south, the road would pass immediately west of the Maison d'Orleans Apartments, taking all of the residences on the east side of Beachview Avenue. This would require the acquisition and demolition of 14 single-family homes. The new route would intersect Beach Boulevard immediately west of the large vacant parcel adjacent to the Quality Inn on the west side of the motel.

Roadway Design

The new facility will be a four-lane limited-access arterial with a raised median 16 feet wide; four-foot paved shoulders and pavement markings providing for safe bicycle travel; and parallel sidewalks five feet wide on either side to accommodate pedestrians. It is intended to be harmonious with both the residential neighborhoods and large-scale public facilities that coexist south of the CSX railroad tracks. The build alternatives were developed in conformance with design criteria and geometric standards promulgated in the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) *Roadway Design Manual*.

Intersection Design

Each of these four alternatives would require a signalized intersection at Beach Boulevard to control the flow of traffic to and from the new facility and along the existing east-west highway. The proximity of the new intersection to the signalized Mississippi Coast Coliseum entrance will necessitate traffic operational improvements designed to maintain an acceptable flow rate on US 90 while ensuring continued safe access to the Coliseum site. The new intersection would be located only 500 feet (for Alternative B/B-1) to 1,300 feet (for Alternative C/C-1) west of the entrance to the Coliseum. There is also a traffic signal on Beach Boulevard at Beauvoir Road, only 700 feet east of the Coliseum entrance. The solution envisioned for all build alternatives is to remove the signal at the Coliseum entrance, reconstructing the intersection so as to allow only right turns for both inbound and outbound traffic.

Access

All four alternatives assume a four-lane typical section with a continuous grassy median dividing the roadway in all at-grade portions of the facility. Median cuts would allow access to commercial drives in

the northern portion of the study area. South of the railroad, an intersection would be constructed on Coliseum property to allow direct access to the Convention Center parking garage and internal circulation system. For both B alternatives, a connection would be made to Oakmont Place where the route swings across that street before intersecting with Beach Boulevard. For both C alternatives, an intersection located at the southwest corner of the Maison d'Orleans Apartments would allow direct access to that complex, as well as Beachview Avenue and Pine Grove Avenue to the west.

Traffic Analysis

The traffic analysis revealed very little difference between build alternatives B and C. Based on output from the regional travel demand forecasting model, the extension of Popp's Ferry Road, under both route alternatives, would result in increased traffic. Generally speaking, Alternative C would attract more traffic than Alternative B; however, this differential would dissipate over time. Both build alternatives would reduce traffic on Pass Road, both east and west of the Popp's Ferry Road intersection, in both the short term and long term. Both build alternatives would improve traffic circulation in the area and reduce congestion and delay. The capacity analysis indicated that in no case (i.e., with or without the improvement) would utilization equal or exceed theoretical capacity (V/C = 1.00). However, in the absence of the proposed improvement, the amount of traffic on both Pass Road and Beach Boulevard would approach theoretical capacity during the peak travel periods.

Evaluation of Alternatives

The four build alternatives were evaluated initially with regard to the following five areas of concern identified as having the potential to exert a decisive influence on the selection process: Wetlands and Biological Resources; Right-of-Way and Relocations; Order-of-Magnitude Cost; Neighborhood Cohesion; Land Use and Development.

Wetlands – Impacts on wetlands and biological resources associated with either of the alternative routes under consideration are likely to be very limited. A preliminary wetland determination, performed by BMI Environmental Services, LLC (BMIES), determined that approximately 1.46 acres of wetland would be affected by construction of Alternative B, and about 1.95 acres would be affected by construction of Alternative C. In either case, the impact, although small, would have to be mitigated.

Right-of-Way and Relocations – There is very little difference in length between the corridor alternatives: Alternative B (B-1) is approximately 4,255 feet in length, Alternative C (C-1) roughly 4,540 feet. Assuming a 120-foot-wide right-of-way from one end of the project to the other, the minimum right-of-way requirement would be 510,600 square feet, or 11.72 acres, for Alternative B (B-1) and 544,800 square feet, or 12.51 acres, for Alternative C (C-1). Ignoring any additional land acquisition that would be necessary to compensate property owners who would otherwise be left with *uneconomic remnants*, the B alternatives would require 34,200 square feet, or .79 acre, less right-of-way than the C alternatives. The actual acreage that would have to be acquired would depend in part on the amount of useable public right-of-way already available. Alternative B would require significantly fewer residential relocations than Alternative C. Curving to the southeast at the southern end of the large (2.76-acre) vacant parcel immediately east of the Maison d'Orleans Apartments, in order to avoid the Quality Inn at

2416 Beach Boulevard, Alternative B would require the removal of as many as six homes on the west side of Oakmont Place and two on the east side. Alternative C would displace all 14 homes on the east side of Beachview Avenue.

Order-of-Magnitude Cost – Preliminary order-of-magnitude cost estimates were developed for each route alternative, taking into consideration the amount required for the acquisition of right-of-way; for purchasing and moving or demolishing existing structures and relocating displaced residents; and for roadway construction, including underground utilities and sidewalks. The cost of residential property acquisition and household relocation represented a significant source of difference between the B and C alternatives. But the cost of crossing the CSX railroad figured even more prominently in the differences between alternatives B and B-1 and between alternatives C and C-1. Alternative B was estimated to be the least costly option at approximately $8.37 million, $193,000 less than Alternative C ($8.56 million). The construction of an elevated section spanning the CSX railroad would increase the overall cost of building on the B route by more than $18.5 million. An elevated railroad crossing on the C route would increase the overall cost by nearly $19.5 million. The resulting totals for alternatives B-1 and C-1 exceed $26.9 million and $28.0 million respectively.

Neighborhood Cohesion – Alternatives B and B-1 would truncate the Oakmont Subdivision, eliminating eight residences at the southern end of Oakmont Place. That represents more than one-fourth of the houses in the subdivision, but the rest of the neighborhood would remain intact with access unaffected. Alternatives C and C-1, on the other hand, would eliminate half of the Briarfield II Subdivision, taking the whole east side of Beachview Avenue. The effect of either alternative on the self-contained Maison d'Orleans multifamily development, located between the two potential routes, would be largely indirect. Alternative B (B-1) would replace vacant land on the east side of the apartment complex; Alternative C (C-1) would replace single-family residences on the west side of the complex.

Land Use and Development – Alternative B (or B-1) would have less impact on existing land use than Alternative C (or C-1), because it would maximize the use of property which is currently undeveloped. Both routes would traverse largely undeveloped land north of the CSX railroad, providing access to vacant property which could be converted for residential or commercial use in the future. South of the rail line, however, much of Alternative B would be located on a single vacant parcel, while Alternative C would displace more than a dozen existing households. In terms of land use and development, the Alternative B/B-1 route had the clear advantage of being less disruptive for existing residential uses and more conducive to future development of public and commercial land uses than the C/C-1 route.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety

The safety of pedestrians and bicycle riders was given due consideration with regard to all alternatives. It goes without saying that No-Action Alternative A would do nothing to enhance the safety of those walking or riding bicycles to and from or within the project area. All of the build alternatives would provide some degree of enhancement by accommodating alternative transportation modes in the design of the facility. Alternative B would also provide direct access to the Coliseum and Convention Center, but the elevated crossing of the CSXT railroad would make walking and cycling more strenuous and possibly less attractive as modal choices. It would be necessary to design and equip the overpass to

provide dedicated safe space for walkers and bicycle riders, adding to the cost of constructing the new road. Alternative C would provide less direct access to the Coliseum area and thus would make less of a contribution to the walkability of the district. Alternative C-1 would have the relative disadvantages associated with both horizontal separation and vertical elevation and would thus be the least desirable alternative from the standpoint of bicycle and pedestrian utilization of the facility.

Public Transit

The Coast Transit Authority (CTA) *2035 Transit Development Plan* calls for implementation of a Mississippi Gulf Coast Coliseum District Circulator that would provide bus service between the Coliseum and Convention Center site and downtown transit terminals in Gulfport and Biloxi. The extension of Popp's Ferry Road from Pass Road to a signalized intersection with Beach Boulevard will facilitate access to the site by the Coliseum Circulator, operating initially as an extension of the Beachcomber line. Direct access from the north will also allow the planned Popp's Ferry route to originate at a new Coliseum District hub instead of having to travel from Edgewater Mall to Popp's Ferry Road via Pass Road.

Freight Transportation

Popp's Ferry Road is not a truck route, but its extension from Pass Road to Beach Boulevard will facilitate immediate access to the Coliseum and Convention Center site for large trucks approaching on U. S. Highway 90 from Highway 605 to the west or from Interstate 110 to the east. Moreover, the connection to Pass Road will enhance the ability of smaller delivery vehicles to move quickly and safely between that commercial corridor and the large public facilities located in the proposed Coliseum District. The new route, by providing an additional path in and out of the area, will create opportunities for redirecting the flow of traffic through the site in order to improve the movement of goods to and from the Coliseum or Convention Center for the many special events that are held at those facilities.

Railroad Crossing

A key consideration in the evaluation of alternatives was the necessity of getting across the CSX railroad corridor. Both alternatives B and C would require the construction of a new at-grade highway crossing of the rail line. Alternatives B-1 and C-1 would avoid building a new crossing at grade by constructing an overpass spanning the railroad. This would be a highly expensive undertaking. In fact, once the funding requirement for an elevated crossing was estimated for each corridor, it was decided that the cost of building a grade-separated facility was prohibitively high; and alternatives B-1 and C-1 were eliminated from further consideration. A more affordable crossing at grade would require authorization by the owner of the railroad, CSX Transportation (CSXT). CSXT policy requires the closure of three existing at-grade crossings by a city seeking to open a new one. This policy was adopted in furtherance of the nationwide effort to reduce highway-railroad conflicts by eliminating non-grade-separated crossings wherever possible. There are 30 highway-railroad grade crossings in Biloxi. The city has given written assurances to CSXT that it will close the existing crossings at Iroquois Street, Nixon Street and Holley Street in order to extend Popp's Ferry Road across the rail line. The CSXT project manager for public projects, Jacob Smith, indicated in a communication dated May 5, 2015 that the company will allow construction of the new crossing in return for those closures.

Environmental Consequences

Except where otherwise noted, No-Action Alternative A would have little or no effect, either beneficial or adverse. Disregarding cost, environmental consequences attributable to Alternative B-1 would be the same as those for Alternative B; and impacts associated with Alternative C-1 would be essentially identical with those identified for Alternative C.

Land Use – Alternative B would reduce the amount of single-family residential housing in the area slightly and would likely lead to a small increase in multi-family housing. Two-thirds of currently undeveloped land would likely be converted over time to accommodate new hotels or motels, additional retail outlets, service facilities and public space. The analysis indicated Alternative C would likely reduce the amount of single-family residential housing a little more than Alternative B. Increases in multi-family housing, accommodations, retail outlets, service facilities and public space would probably be comparable.

Soils – Both Alternative B and Alternative C would involve standard construction activities required to level and grade the roadbed and install associated infrastructure. As a result of clearing, grading, and paving, the soils within the project area proper would be removed from future biological and agricultural production. All construction activities (i.e., clearing, grading, and digging) would be limited to the project area, and adjacent property would be left in its existing state. The addition of new pavement associated with construction of Alternative B would result in approximately 12.08 acres of soils being removed from future biological and agricultural production. The corresponding figure for Alternative C is 12.77 acres of soils removed.

Prime, Unique or Other Farmlands – Neither build alternative would have any effect, either beneficial or adverse, on prime or unique farmlands; as there are no such farmlands in the study area.

Social and Economic Impacts – Construction of either Alternative B or Alternative C would reinforce the present trend toward denser residential and commercial development, and the continued improvement of public space, in both the northern and southern sections of the study area. Looked at from a social perspective, the project would support future development that would increase the attractiveness of the area for all Biloxians, strengthening the diversity of population in the area. Moreover, the likely development of higher-end rental housing, along with new hotels and retail outlets, would serve to increase the economic diversity of the area.

Community Facilities and Public Buildings – Alternative B would significantly enhance access to the Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center site, allowing drivers to approach these major community facilities from either the north or south. The new route would help ensure the long-term viability of these facilities and create opportunities for expansion, the enhanced utilization of available space and improved integration with the surrounding area. Alternative C would not provide direct access to the Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center site but would contribute to the long-term viability of these community facilities by making it easier for southbound motorists to reach Highway 90.

Parks and Other Protected Properties **-** As there are no parks or other protected properties located in the project vicinity, neither build alternative would have any effect, either beneficial or adverse, on such properties.

Community and Neighborhood Impacts – No-Action Alternative A would have no effect, either beneficial or adverse, on any neighborhood or community, beyond the increase in traffic congestion that would result from a decision not to make the proposed improvement. Alternative B would truncate the southern end of the Oakmont neighborhood but leave the remaining portion intact and largely unaffected. A connecting link between Oakmont and the Popp's Ferry Road Extension would enable residents to travel either north to Pass Road and beyond or south to Beach Boulevard. Alternative C would eliminate the eastern half of the Briarfield 2 Subdivision, altering the essential character of the remaining portion of the neighborhood. Instead of facing the homes of their neighbors across the street, the occupants of surviving homes on the west side of Beachview would find themselves facing a major new road and a very large apartment complex on the other side of it.

Transportation and Utilities – Both build alternatives would provide a significant new link in the surface transportation network, filling a major gap in the existing system and making it possible to travel on Popp's Ferry Road from the Back Bay of Biloxi to the beach. The new thoroughfare would support the city's efforts to establish a mixed-use-development regional activity center, with multimodal accommodations for non-motorized bicycle and pedestrian travel, in the vicinity of the Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center. The proposed new route would significantly enhance access to the area for pedestrians and bicyclists. It would also establish a north-south axis from which local elements of the bicycle-and-pedestrian network envisioned in the city's comprehensive plan would radiate. Construction of the new road in the Alternative B corridor would provide more direct access to the area than would Alternative C. Neither alternative would have a significant impact on existing utilities, but Alternative B would have the advantage of being built mostly on new right-of-way, occupying land that is currently vacant.

Health and Safety of Children and Others – Neither build alternative would be expected to have any adverse environmental health effects which could disproportionately affect children; nor would either be expected to give rise to any safety hazards that would disproportionately endanger children. Either build alternative would provide a safer route, less susceptible to potential environmental hazards, than is presently available for travel either by vehicle or by a non-motorized mode.

Environmental Justice – There is no reason to believe that environmental costs and benefits associated with either Alternative B or Alternative C would be inequitably distributed with respect to race, ethnicity or economic status. The project would not disproportionately impose adverse environmental impacts on minority-group members or low-income individuals and families; nor would it deny an equitable share of anticipated benefits to minority-group members and low-income individuals and families. Moreover, in the public information and citizen involvement process, every effort was made to facilitate the full participation of all individuals who live or have an interest in the study area, without regard to race, color, nationality or economic status.

Relocations – Alternative B would require the demolition of eight single-family residences and the relocation of their occupants. Replacement housing is available within the City of Biloxi. This includes

both homes for sale and apartments for rent. The estimated median value of single-family replacement housing with three or more bedrooms and two or more baths is approximately $80,600. That is somewhat higher than the average assessed value of residences to be removed for construction of Alternative B ($69,000). However, assessed values are typically at least 10 percent below the prevailing market rate, in some cases much more. In any event, there are sufficient replacement housing options, both purchase and rental, to ensure that any householders displaced by construction of Alternative B can be relocated to affordable comparable housing in Biloxi. Alternative C would require the demolition of 14 single-family residences and the relocation of their occupants. The average assessed value of residences that would have to be removed for the construction of Alternative C is $52,500.

Businesses or Non-Profit Organizations – Right-of-way required for construction of either Alternative B or Alternative C would reduce the availability of parking at Walgreen's on Pass Road and adjacent to the Convention Center Parking Garage immediately south of the CSX railroad, but no businesses or non-profit organizations would be displaced or otherwise affected.

Air Quality – Air pollutant emissions would result from construction activities for either Alternative B or Alternative C. Pollutants that would be emitted from construction equipment include nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and particulate matter. The amount of this additional pollution due to construction would be relatively small and last only as long as it took to build the road. All practical means to minimize the emission of pollutants by construction equipment, including proper maintenance of machinery and avoidance of unnecessary vehicle use and engine idling (especially on *ozone action days*) would be employed. The lasting impact of traffic on the new facility would likely be negligible.

Noise – No-Action Alternative A would have a very limited effect on the level of noise in the project area. Traffic noise is projected to increase by less than 2.0 dBA in the absence of any improvements to existing transportation facilities. Noise impacts (i.e., levels approaching, equal to or in excess of the *noise abatement criteria* (NAC) or projected increases exceeding 15 dBA) are not expected to occur if the new road is not built. Alternative B would increase the level of noise in the project vicinity by amounts ranging from less than 1 dBA to nearly 20 dBA. Noise analysis modeling indicated only one receiver on Oakmont Place, where the proposed new road would swing across the existing street, is projected to approach the NAC by the year 2035. No projected noise levels would equal or exceed the applicable criteria. However, 11 other locations, including six single-family residences and five multi-family residential structures, would experience substantial increases in noise (exceeding 15 dBA) due to construction of the proposed new road. Alternative C would increase the level of noise in the project vicinity by amounts ranging from less than 1 dBA to slightly more than 16 dBA. Modeling indicated that one residence on Beachview Avenue would incur a substantial increase in noise amounting to 16.1 dBA by the year 2035. However, this would be the only noise impact associated with Alternative C; and no projected noise levels would approach, equal or exceed the NAC.

Water Quality – Impacts to water quality are possible during construction of a new road, and erosion both during and after construction can contribute sediment and silt to runoff waters, resulting in deteriorated water quality. However, neither Alternative B nor Alternative C traverses surface waters currently identified by MDEQ in the Section 305(b) Water Quality Assessment Report or the Section

303(d) List of Impaired Waterbodies. Special measures should still be taken by the city during construction in order to minimize the potential for impairing local water bodies. Runoff control measures can be installed to reduce runoff pollution both during and after construction. Such measures can effectively limit the entry of pollutants into surface waters in order to protect water quality, aquatic habitat and public health.

Wetlands and U. S. Jurisdictional Waters – Alternative B would have a direct impact on approximately 1.46 acres of forested bayhead wetlands located in the undeveloped area north of the CSX railroad. Alternative C would have a direct impact on approximately 1.95 acres of forested bayhead wetlands located in the same area. The actual acreage will not be determined until the final wetlands delineation is performed in compliance with the Section 404 permit process administered by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The filling of wetlands prior to construction of the proposed road would require compensatory mitigation in compliance with regulations issued by the USACE (33 CFR Parts 325, 332) and USEPA (40 CFR Part 230).

Water Resources – No surface water features would be traversed either by Alternative B or Alternative C other than unnamed intermittent and ephemeral drains. No impacts to surface waters would result from construction of either build alternative.

Groundwater - Proposed construction activities for either build alternative would have no direct adverse impacts on the groundwater supply in the project area. Accidental spills of fluids used in construction equipment could potentially affect groundwater quality. Safe handling of hazardous construction materials, in accordance with all local, state, and federal regulations, and maintaining construction equipment in good working order would minimize the potential for leaks and spills of hazardous materials and consequent water contamination. Neither corridor overlies a sole-source aquifer designated as such by the USEPA; therefore, no impacts to such features are anticipated.

Floodplains and Floodways – Alternative B would pass through the area of potential shallow flooding (Zone AH) between Pass Road and the CSX railroad. The last 125 feet or so, at the southern end of the proposed new road, would traverse the base floodplain (Zone AE) and flood-prone area subject to the additional hazard of wave action generated by storms (VE). The total length of floodplain traversed would be approximately 1,165 feet. The total area affected would be about 3.20 acres. Alternative C also would pass through the area of potential shallow flooding (Zone AH) between Pass Road and the CSX railroad. In addition, the last 380 feet or so, at the southern end of the proposed new road, would traverse the base floodplain (Zone AE) and flood-prone area subject to the additional hazard of wave action generated by storms (VE). The total length of floodplain traversed would be approximately 1,325 feet, and the total area affected would be about 3.65 acres.

Wild and Scenic Streams – Because there are no designated scenic streams within or immediately adjacent to the study area, no impacts are anticipated as a result of either Alternative B or Alternative C.

Coastal Zone and Coastal Barrier – Neither Alternative B nor Alternative C would have a direct impact on coastal waters or the barrier islands. While the project area is located within the coastal zone as defined in the CZMA, the preferred route of the proposed Popp's Ferry Road Extension ends at U. S. Highway 90, north of the Mississippi Sound and adjacent beaches. The proposed road would actually

help to reduce the pressure for development along the shoreline by improving access to developable property on higher ground located further inland.

Natural Environmental Resources - Clearing within the Alternative B corridor would result in direct impacts to vegetative communities, including removal and permanent loss of existing vegetation. Portions of the project area already disturbed (e.g., previously paved streets and driveways) do not contain naturally occurring vegetation. Alternative B would disturb approximately 5.25 acres of vegetative communities as a result of construction of the roadway. Alternative C would disturb approximately 4.24 acres of vegetative communities. However, impacts to vegetation are not considered significant based on the presence of similar plant life adjacent to the project corridor. Moreover, no unique or sensitive vegetative communities are present within the project area.

Faunal Communities – Construction of the road in either the Alternative B corridor or the Alternative C corridor would further fragment habitat in the project area. Certain wildlife species prefer dense forest interiors and are adversely affected by activities that fragment habitat while other species prefer open forests and are benefited by activities that create habitat edges. Because much of the study area has already been fragmented by development, the additional impact on species requiring large, contiguous blocks of habitat is not expected to be significant. Construction of the road would also result in increased animal mortality (roadkill). Implementation of Alternative B would involve the direct loss of a little more than five acres of habitat, including pine flatwood forest uplands, hardwood forest uplands and forested bayhead wetlands. Implementation of Alternative C would mean the loss of a little more than four acres. Habitat loss and disturbance would be minor because of the linear nature of the project corridor and proximity of similar habitat adjacent to the project corridor.

Unique and Sensitive Areas – As there are no unique or sensitive areas in proximity to the route alternatives under consideration, implementation of either Alternative B or Alternative C would not have a significant effect, either beneficial or adverse, on any such areas.

Threatened and Endangered Species – Alternative B would have no effect, either beneficial or adverse, on protected species or critical habitat; nor would Alternative C.

Archaeological and Historical Resources – Although remnants of a recorded site (22HR537) were located during the cultural resources survey, the site is ineligible for listing on the NRHP; and no impact on cultural resources would be expected to result from the construction of the proposed Popp's Ferry Road in either the Alternative B corridor or the Alternative C corridor.

Hazardous Materials – The Modified Phase I ESA identified 15 hazardous materials sites that either presently exist or formerly existed within one-quarter-mile of the Alternative B and Alternative C corridors. All are considered to pose a low (or no) potential environmental risk and do not require further assessment or removal activities. Based on the findings of the ESA, it is not anticipated that there will be any environmental impacts associated with these sites.

Visual and Aesthetic Impacts – Alternative B would have little effect on the visual character of the project vicinity north of the CSX rail line as experienced by current occupants of the area. South of the rail line the road would serve to better integrate the viewscape for residents of the Maison d'Orleans Apartments and Oakmont Place, and for hotel occupants and visitors to the Coliseum or Convention

Center. Alternative C would likewise have little or no effect on the visual character of the project vicinity north of the CSX rail line. However, south of the railroad the new facility would eliminate all existing homes on the east side of Beachview Avenue, leaving occupants of homes on the west side of the street with a very different view from their front yards. Similarly, the view to the west afforded residents of the Maison d'Orleans Apartments would be substantially altered. Regardless of the route selected, the bicycle and pedestrian elements of the project will afford new opportunities for residents and visitors alike to appreciate the aesthetic and visual qualities of the area.

Energy Impacts – There are sufficient energy resources available for the construction of either Alternative B or Alternative C; and the road itself would contribute to a future reduction in the demand for fuel, resulting from improved traffic conditions and reduced vehicular delay. Electrical power would be readily available for lighting the new road. Both alternatives would require the relocation of utility poles and overhead wires which are currently on the west side of the access road extending southward from the intersection of Popp's Ferry and Pass Road to the facilities occupied by FEMA and MEMA. Alternative B would require the relocation of overhead wires and a buried gas line in the middle of Oakmont Place at the southern end of the street. Alternative C might require the relocation of overhead wires on the east side of Beachview Avenue at the extreme southern end of the street. Any relocation of utilities that might be necessary could be accomplished safely without unduly inconveniencing customers for any length of time. The bicycle and pedestrian elements of the project will also serve to encourage the use of non-motorized modes that require only human energy.

Construction Impacts – The construction of either Alternative B or Alternative C would cause a temporary increase in air pollution in the vicinity of the project due to dust and emissions. Emissions would be minimized to the extent possible by the use of properly maintained equipment, and tarps would be used to cover construction materials and waste products on trucks. Water pollution related to construction would be largely obviated by the absence of continuously flowing streams in the vicinity of the project. Construction activities would also result in temporary increases in noise and vibration generated by heavy equipment. A construction noise and vibration plan would be developed to mitigate unavoidable impacts. Details regarding the necessary relocation of utilities would be specified in the final design plans. In the event of archaeological materials being uncovered, construction would be suspended and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History contacted to initiate examination and evaluation of the materials. In the same way, if any unknown hazardous materials sites were unearthed, construction would cease until a determination could be made regarding a possible threat to the safety and well-being of workers and others in the area. Appropriate safety precautions would be implemented in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements, and a construction management plan would be developed and fully implemented in order to ensure public safety and the maintenance of access to all properties in the vicinity of the project.

Secondary and Cumulative Impacts – The principal indirect effects likely to follow from the direct impacts of this project are accelerated new commercial development in the project area, the expansion of public facilities associated with the Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center and the addition of hotel and motel rooms in the vicinity of the proposed regional activity center. Residential construction spurred by new or improved access to undeveloped property will probably involve

primarily multi-family housing. Commercial development resulting from improved access and increased traffic will likely include both retail and non-retail economic uses in the northern portion of the corridor (i.e., between Pass Road and the CSX railroad). This *induced development* would not take place if not for the proposed action, or it would take place at a different location, a later time or on a smaller scale.

Relationship Between Local Short-Term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity

The existing situation represents the *local short-term uses* of environmental resources to which reference is made in the FHWA "Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(F) Documents" (USDOT - FHWA 1987: 37). Current conditions suggest a transitional phase between the sporadic development of the past and the more densely developed regional activity center envisioned by the *City of Biloxi Comprehensive* Plan. This process is part of what the FHWA guidance refers to as "the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity." The long-term viability of the urbanized area is dependent on its ability to convert undeveloped land to productive uses. Public infrastructure makes the conversion process possible by meeting the need for access and mobility.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

The project will require the commitment of both natural and human resources. Notable among the former are the 14 acres of additional land, including an acre-and-a-half of wetlands that must be converted from other uses in order to provide the right-of-way needed for construction of either alternative. This is essentially an *irreversible* commitment of land, since the assumption is that the use of the property for transportation will continue without interruption for the foreseeable future. Land currently inhabited by humans, animals and plants will be irreversibly committed to another use for the life of the road to be built on it. The intention behind the project is to make an irreversible commitment of an irretrievable resource in order to put that land to a higher economic use. However, the assumption is that the land is not irreplaceable, i.e., that the humans, animals and plants that currently inhabit the land to be used can find habitation elsewhere.

Mitigation and Permits

Soil erosion can be greatly reduced with the use of *best management practices* (BMPs), including such actions as placing buffers around water bodies to reduce the risk of siltation and revegetating bare areas to forestall or ameliorate soil erosion. Proper maintenance of construction equipment, watering dirt surfaces, avoiding unnecessary idling of equipment motors and similar BMPs can serve to reduce the emission of air pollutants. Disturbed areas not covered by the roadway should be revegetated to discourage the establishment and spread of invasive species. Proper maintenance of equipment can help prevent unnecessary engine noise. Appropriate BMPs should be implemented in order to minimize erosion and sedimentation during construction, since these can adversely affect water quality. Because the project area encompasses more than five acres, a Mississippi Stormwater Construction General Permit will be required. The placement of fill within any delineated wetland areas will require a permit from the USACE under Section 404 of the *Clean Water Act* of 1977. To offset the loss of wetlands, mitigation credits would be purchased from USACE-approved mitigation banks.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
ADT	Average Daily Traffic
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials
APE	Area of Potential Effect
BMP	Best Management Practice
CAA	*Clean Air Act*
CBRA	*Coastal Barrier Resources Act*
CERCLA	*Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act*
CERCLIS	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Information System
CESQG	Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generator
CFM	Certified Floodplain Manager
CFR	*Code of Federal Regulations*
CO	Carbon Monoxide
CORRACTS	Corrective Action Reports
CWA	*Clean Water Act*
CZMA	*Coastal Zone Management Act*
CZMP	Coastal Zone Management Plan
dB	Decibel(s)
dBA	A-Weighted Decibel(s)
DEBRIS	Debris Site Locations
DHV	Design Hour Volume
E+C	Existing-plus-Committed
EA	Environmental Assessment
ENG	Engineering
EPA	Electric Power Association
ERNS	Emergency Response Notification System
ESA	*Endangered Species Act*
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FPPA	*Farmland Protection Policy Act*
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GRPC	Gulf Regional Planning Commission
HUD	[U. S. Department of] Housing and Urban Development
I-10	Interstate 10

I-110	Interstate 110
INST	Institutional
L_{eq}	Equivalent Continuous Sound Level
LOS	Level of Service
LQG	Large Quantity Generator
LUST	Leaking Underground Storage Tank
MARIS	Mississippi Automated Resource Information System
MDEQ	Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
MDMR	Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
MDOT	Mississippi Department of Transportation
MDWFP	Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks
MEMA	Mississippi Emergency Management Agency
MNHP	Mississippi Natural Heritage Program
MPH	Miles per Hour
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MSL	Mean Sea Level
NAC	Noise Abatement Criteria
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	*National Environmental Policy Act*
NFRAP	No Further Remedial Action Planned
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NO_2	Nitrogen Dioxide
NOx	Oxides of Nitrogen
NPL	National Priority List
NPS	National Park Service
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	*National Register of Historic Places*
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
O_3	Ozone
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PL	Public Law
PPM	Parts per Million
RCRA	*Resource Conservation and Recovery Act*
ROW	Right-of-Way
SHWS	State Hazardous Waste Site
SIP	State Implementation Plan

SO_2	Sulfur Dioxide
SQG	Small Quantity Generator
STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
STP	Surface Transportation Program
SWF/LF	Solid Waste Facility/Landfill
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
TSDF	Treatment, Storage and Disposal Facility
TSM	Transportation Systems Management
USACE	U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
US 90	U. S. Highway 90
USC	U. S. Code
USDA	U. S. Department of Agriculture
USDOT	U. S. Department of Transportation
USEPA	U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
USFS	U. S. Forest Service
USFWS	U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U. S. Geological Survey
UST	Underground Storage Tank
UZA	Urbanized Area
V/C	Volume/Capacity
VCP	Voluntary Cleanup Program
VHD	Vehicle Hours of Delay
VOC	Volatile Organic Compounds
VPD	Vehicles per Day
WMA	Wildlife Management Area

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR
Project STPD-9376-00(004) 104384
Popp's Ferry Road and Bridge, Gulfport, Harrison County, Mississippi

A project to provide for improvements to Popp's Ferry Road and Bridge between Pass Road and Riverview Drive in Gulfport, MS, a distance of approximately 2.4-miles.

The Federal Highway Administration has determined that this project's Proposed Action and selected Alternative "E", as described in the project's *Environmental Assessment*, will have no significant impact on the human or natural environment. *This Finding of No Significant Impact* is based on the attached *Environmental Assessment*, which has been independently evaluated by the Federal Highway Administration and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the needs, environmental issues, and impacts of the proposed project and mitigation measures. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The Federal Highway Administration takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the attached Environmental Assessment and its attachments.

July 30, 2010
Date

for Andrew H. Hughes, Division Administrator, FHWA

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Popps Ferry Road, Riverview to Pass Road, Biloxi, Harrison County, Mississippi

DRAFT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project No.: STPD-9376-00(004)/104384-811000

Submitted Pursuant to
42 U.S.C. 4332 (2) (c)
and 49 U.S.C. 303 (if applicable)

by the

USDOT
FHWA
MDOT
and
Brown and Mitchell, Inc.
Neel-Schaffer, Inc.
Pickering, Inc.

_____ Date of _____ for State Approval

_____ Date of _____ for FWHA Approval

The following persons may be contacted for additional information concerning this document:

_____
name, address, phone for HA contact

_____
name, address, phone for FWHA contact

Comments on this DRAFT EA are due by _____, and

should be sent to Jill High, Brown and Mitchell,
796 Vieux Marche – 2nd Floor, Biloxi, MS 39530

Chapter 1

Purpose and Need

1.1 Description of Proposed Action

The City of Biloxi ("City") and the Mississippi Department of Transportation ("MDOT") are proposing to widen and upgrade an existing 2.4 mile section of Popps Ferry Road, including the existing causeway and bridge. The upgrades will allow for a 5-lane boulevard section with turning bays, vegetated medians, curb and gutter, and sidewalks consistent with federal roadway standards. The preferred alignment will improve traffic congestion and increase safety.

1.2 Study Area Description

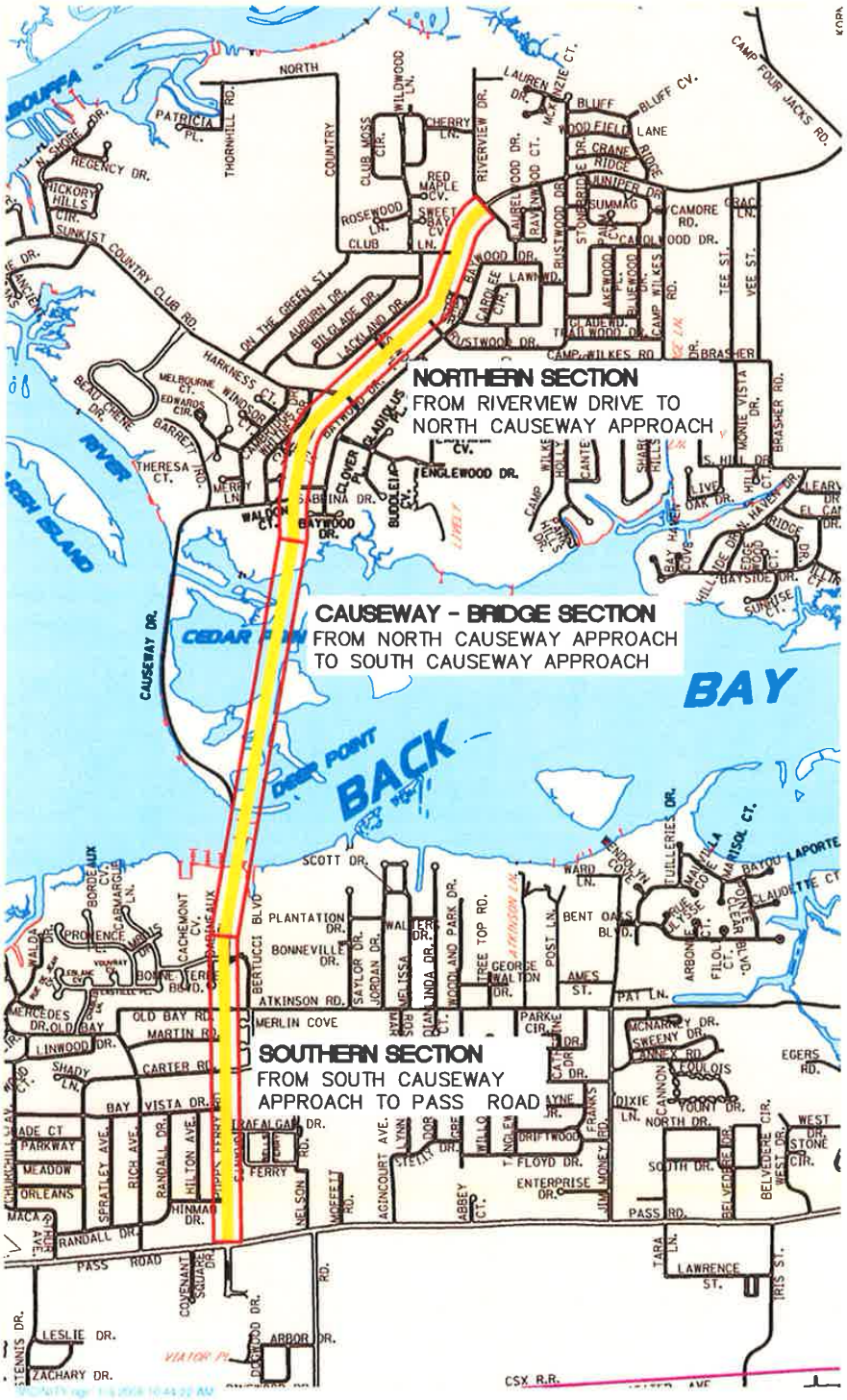
1.2.1 Location and Section Definitions

Popps Ferry Road is located in Harrison County, Mississippi within the city limits of Biloxi. The portion of Popps Ferry Road proposed for widening is located north and south of the Popps Ferry Causeway, specifically from Riverview Drive south to Pass Road.

The study area has been divided into three sections for ease of discussion and evaluation (Figure 1.1, Table 1), and is described here as if traveling in a north-to-south direction.

Figure 1.1

STUDY AREA
AND
SECTION DIVISIONS



POPPS FERRY ROAD AND BRIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
Study Area

BASE MAP CREATED
BY NEEL-SCHAFFER, INC.

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OCTOBER 2008

Table 1: Definitions of Sections within Study Area

Northern Section	The segment of Popps Ferry Road between the north terminus of the project at the signalized intersection at Popps Ferry Road/Riverview Drive, and the north causeway abutment.
Causeway-Bridge Section	The mid-section of the study area, including the approaches, the causeway, and the bascule bridge (commonly known as a drawbridge).
Southern Section	The segment of Popps Ferry Road between the south bridge abutment, continuing to the south terminus of the project at the Popps Ferry/Pass Road intersection.

1.2.2 Topography

As defined by the Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks *Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies Plan*, the study area is located in the East Gulf Coastal Plain EcoRegion. (Mississippi Museum of Natural Science. 2005).

Most of the City of Biloxi is situated on a peninsula surrounded by the Mississippi Sound to the south, Biloxi Bay to the east, and the Back Bay of Biloxi to the north. The project area extends approximately 1 mile north of the Back Bay of Biloxi. Some changes in topography are found in this area, which ranges from 5 to 25 ft. above sea level (Figure 1.2).

1.2.3 Land Use

The Northern Section is an urbanized residential area. The Margaret Sherry Library and a Biloxi Fire Station are located in the study area at Riverview Drive.

The Causeway-Bridge section spans a natural marsh habitat which is commingled with tidal waters and a navigable waterway. A public park is located west of and beneath the causeway, and is generally used for sight-seeing from a boardwalk over the marsh beds. Within the recreational portion of the park, a two-lane road provides access to a two-ramp boat launch, and a defunct bridge is used for fishing. Directly under the Popps Ferry drawbridge is a navigable waterway channel controlled by the U.S. Coast Guard, and used primarily by commercial barges and personal watercraft.

Popps Ferry Bridge has a 32-foot clearance bridge and carries an average of 20,000 vehicles each day. During mandatory evacuations for storms or other emergencies, Popps Ferry Bridge becomes an intersection of citizens seeking to travel north, and maritime vessels seeking the shelter of the Back Bay. The current bridge height requires that during these emergency events, the bridge must remain open frequently and for

extended periods. Popps Ferry Road serves as the primary evacuation route for Biloxi residents west of Keesler Air Force Base during hurricane or other storm events. These conditions not only limit Popps Ferry Road's effectiveness as an evacuation route, but also adds to the congestion of other evacuation routes, particularly Interstate 110 and MS 605.

Additionally, Popps Ferry Bridge is one of only 2 bridges in Biloxi which crosses the Back Bay. An estimated 51,000 people currently live in Biloxi, many north of the Back Bay. In addition, Biloxi's vibrant tourism industry brings tens of thousands of tourists to the City each year, as well as workers to support that industry. Popps Ferry Bridge is a vital link for this trade. As Biloxi grows, more residents will live north of the Back Bay and commute to the City centers of tourism and other commercial activity.

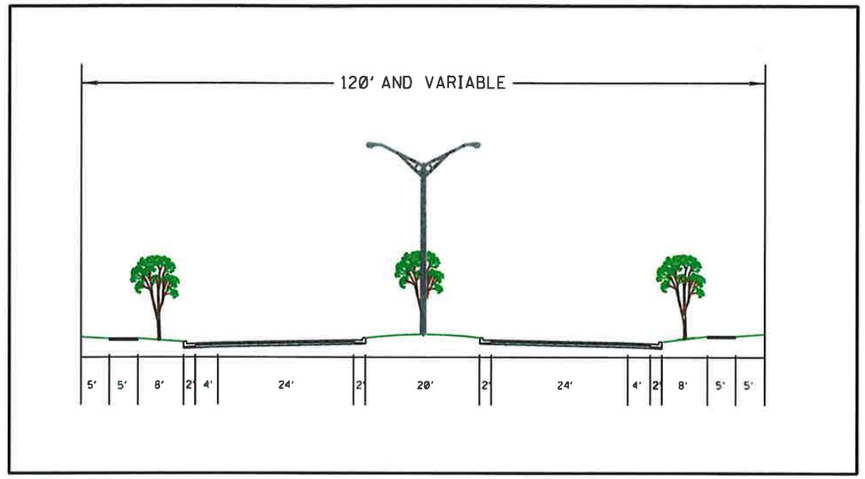
Maritime traffic passing through the navigational channel at Popps Ferry Bridge deliver items necessary to support many industries in the region, such as Mississippi Power, Northrup Grumman, Trinity Yachts. These and others depend on barge deliveries as the primary carrier for their supply.

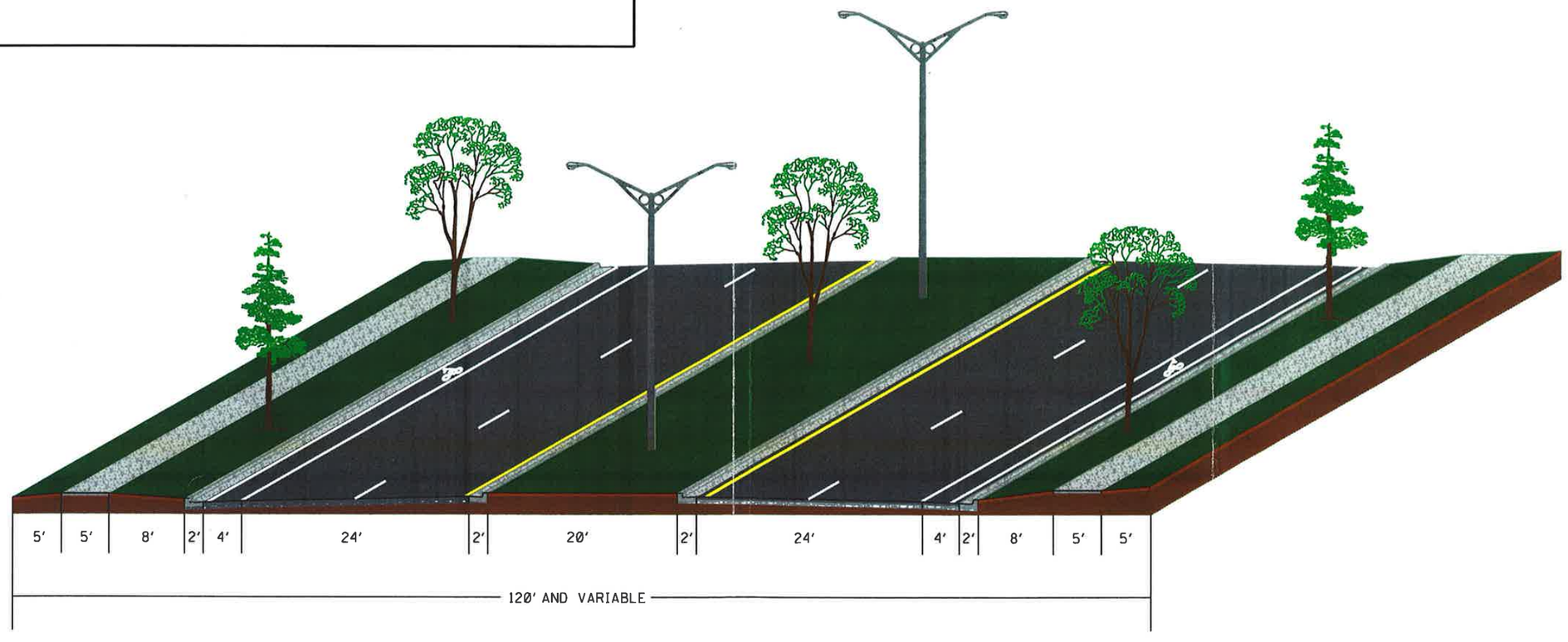
The Southern Section is an urbanized residential community, including a sidewalk within the right-of-way. A church and an eye clinic are also located in the Southern Section. South of Hinman Drive, continuing to the termini at Pass Road, commercial properties dominate.

Figure 2.1

TYPICAL SECTIONS
OF ROADWAY & BRIDGE

"BIRDS-EYE-VIEW" OF PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE





NEEL-SCHAFFER Solutions you can build upon	POPPS FERRY ROAD ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT	TYPICAL ROAD SECTION	FIGURE 2.1

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FILENAME:	6825.ROW6.dgn
SCALE:	N.T.S.
SURVEYED BY:	
DSGN:	DATE:
DRWN: DLS	DATE: 08/2008
CHKD:	DATE:
QA/QC:	DATE:

Popp's Ferry Road
Environmental Assessment

City of Biloxi
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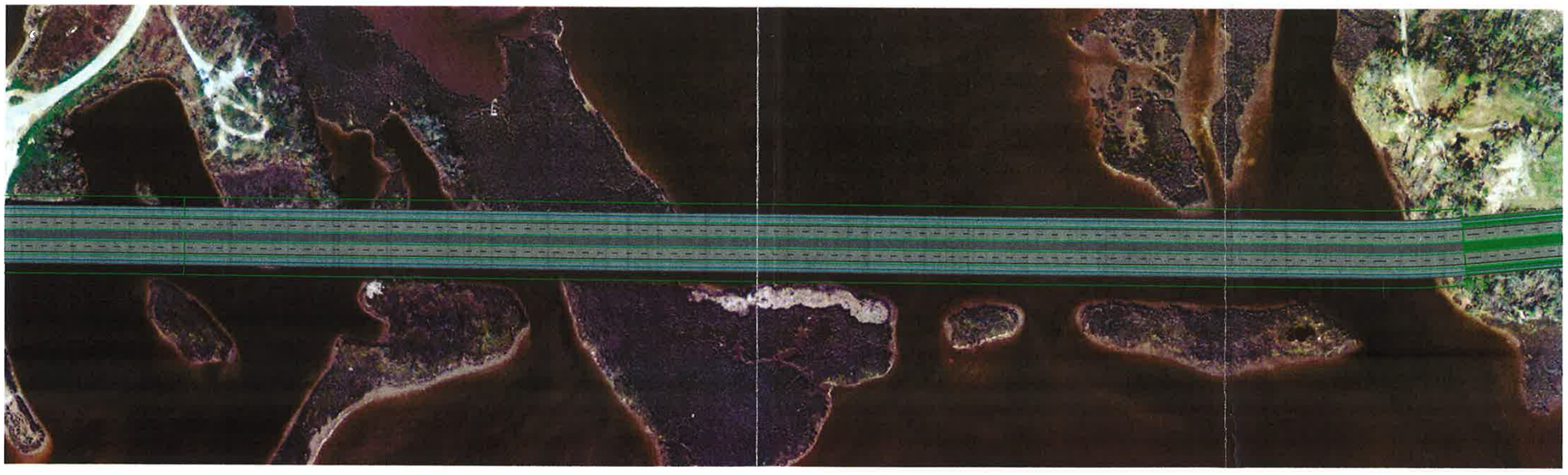
ALTERNATE E (PREFERRED)
NORTHERN SECTION

Figure 2.1



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				DRWN: DLS	DATE: 08/2008
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ALTERNATE E (PREFERRED)
BRIDGE-CAUSEWAY SECTION

Figure 2.1

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ALTERNATE E (PREFERRED)
SOUTHERN SECTION

Figure 2.1

2.2 "No Build" Alternative

Alternative A, the "No Build" Alternative, leaves the roadway and bridge in its existing condition. There would be no increase in traffic capacity, and the existing lane and bridge configuration would be maintained. Although it is necessary to include this alternative for consideration, it does not address the need to add lanes for increased traffic volume, or the need to improve access control at intersecting streets and driveways. The "No Build" Alternative would not satisfy the purpose and need of the proposed project.

2.3 Build Alternatives

The proposed study area is comprised of 3 sections for ease of discussion and evaluation; Northern Section, Bridge-Causeway, and Southern Section (described in Chapter 1.2.1, Figure 1.1).

The alternatives all share the same general existing right-of-way (ROW) corridor, but they differ in the amount of area that will be required to the east and west of the Popps Ferry Road and Bridge centerline in which to provide the widened reconstructed section.

Each "Build" Alternative can be independent of one another as if they can be mixed-and-matched. However, the Preferred Alternative (named Alternative E throughout the corridor) is the suggested "mix" of Alternatives with all aspects considered (Figures 2.1, 2.2).