

APPENDIX E

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE

Biloxi
established 1699

FHWA-MS-FEIS-03-01-ROD

**EAST HARRISON COUNTY CONNECTOR
HARRISON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI
GAI-024-00(002)/94-0024-00-002-10/10478**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
RECORD OF DECISION
and
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL
POLICY ACT 42 U.S.C. 4332 (2)(c) BY THE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
AND
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**In cooperation with
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard,
and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

RECORD OF DECISION

Federal Highway Administration

*In Cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U. S. Coast Guard,
and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*

FHWA-MS-EIS-03-01-ROD

PROJECT GAI-024-(002)

THE EAST HARRISON COUNTY CONNECTOR

Harrison County, Mississippi.

May 28, 2003

Decision

The project is for the construction of a limited access expressway. Alternative H is the selected alternative. The East Harrison County Connector is a north/south route connecting the Woolmarket Interchange (exit 41) on Interstate 10 with U.S. Highway 90 just to the west of its intersection with Veterans Avenue. The length of the project is approximately four miles. The project will be a multi-lane divided, interstate-like roadway, located in Harrison County, City of Biloxi, Mississippi.

Alternatives Considered

Selection of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative H, was the result of an analysis of the No Build Alternative when compared to some twelve new alignment alternatives located throughout the project area. Analysis of these alternatives included studies of potential environmental and social consequences of each alternative=s development, the estimated costs of constructing each alternative, and the ways each alternative will affect the operational efficiency of the area=s roadway network. Alternative H was found to provide the best solutions to identified project needs while, in comparison to other buildable alternatives, avoiding and minimizing effects on the natural and human environment.

The geographic area studied was fairly constrained. The study was seeking a north/south route to relieve congestion and improve the traffic flow between Interstate 10 and U.S. Highway 90 at the Gulf of Mexico. Interstate 10 and U.S. Highway 90 are approximately four miles apart in the study area. The study area is bordered to the west by Cowan/Lorraine Road, a four and five lane north/south route under construction. On the east it is bordered by Interstate 110, a north/south interstate route. The width of the study area from east to west is approximately eight miles.

In the four mile by eight mile study area there are large numbers of cultural and natural impediments to the construction of a new highway. These include: important salt marshes; the Tchoutacabouffa River; the Back Bay of Biloxi; habitat for several endangered species; many historic sites; several parks; golf

courses; neighborhoods; churches; schools; Beauvoir, the Jefferson Davis Home; Keesler Air force Base; the Biloxi Coliseum; a large Veterans Administration Medical Center, part of which is on the National Register of Historic Places; a national military cemetery; and the public Harrison County Sand Beach. These constraints severely limited the choices for a highway location in the study area. The project development team looked for every feasible place they could find to construct a new highway. Alternative H, the selected alternative, is the only alternative that both satisfies the project's purpose and need and will not have an unavoidable and irreversible adverse effect on one or more of these important resources.

Because of the constraints in the study area, the only places the project development team could find to get from the south side of the Back Bay of Biloxi to U.S. Highway 90 were immediately to the east or to the west side of Hiller Park. These are the variants of the F and H alternatives. Alternatives H and H-1 compare favorably to each other, but Alternative H-1 would require the use of property from the Keesler Air Force Base abandoned landfill and sludge disposal site. This site is currently stable and should not be disturbed. In addition, Alternative H-1 would displace more businesses, cost more, and affect more wetlands than Alternative H. Alternative H-1 would take land from the public Harrison County Sand Beach which is protected under Section 4(f) (49 U.S.C. 303). While Alternative H displaces more housing than Alternative H-1, about forty percent of the housing displaced by Alternative H is Keesler Air Force Base Housing rather than privately owned housing. The project has been closely coordinated with Keesler Air Force Base and the EIS commits to replace the military housing to the satisfaction of Keesler Air Force Base. Keesler Air Force Base prefers Alternative H.

Another decision to be made was whether to connect the new highway to Interstate 10 at the existing Woolmarket Interchange or at the existing Cedar Lake Interchange. Alternative F connects with Cedar Lake. Alternative H connects with Woolmarket. The reason for selecting the Woolmarket Interchange instead of the Cedar Lake Interchange is probably best summarized in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's March 31, 2003, comment on the Final EIS:

"Alternative F was eliminated due to lack of connectivity northward to Highway 67 and adverse visual effects on the historic view shed of the Biloxi Veterans Affairs Medical Center (Section 4f resource). In addition, should the project extend north of I-110 [from Cedar Lake] in the future, there would be adverse environmental impacts on the portion of the Tchoutacabouffa River (TR) designated as a wild and scenic river and the immediate surrounding area which is relatively undeveloped and pristine. . . . Every effort should be made to avoid and or minimize future development in these critical environmental areas."

Alternative H was also the alternative receiving the most favorable comments from the citizens attending the public meetings and hearings. It has the endorsement, although not unanimous, of the Citizen's Corridor Committee. Alternative H has been endorsed by the City of Biloxi and is preferred by Keesler Air Force Base and the Veterans Administration Medical Center.

As a result of input from the public and from the Gulf Regional Planning Commission, one alternative outside the study area was considered. This was the Oak Street Connector. This connector would require a new interchange on Interstate 10 between the existing Interstate 110 interchange and the existing MS 609 interchange. From that new interchange the Oak Street Connector would carry traffic south to U.S. 90 along Oak Street to the Grand Casino Biloxi. This alternative has several major flaws. Among them are: there is not enough room between the existing Interstate 110 interchange and the existing MS 609 interchange for another interchange; the alternative would displace a large number of residences, two churches, a Buddhist temple, and potentially portions of the Grand Casino; the alternative would have a disproportionately negative effect on an ethnic Vietnamese neighborhood; the alternative would not adequately relieve future traffic congestion on Interstate 110; and the alternative would have extremely high construction costs. For these reasons, the Oak Street Connector was dismissed from further consideration.

Some of the public as well as some of the members of the project's Citizens Corridor Committee favored an alternative that would not be an interstate-like freeway. They preferred a ground level connector with fairly unlimited access to a fully controlled limited access freeway. This concept was studied in detail. The studies showed that without interstate-like access controls, such a highway would not have an acceptable level of service. In addition, over time it would lead to an unacceptable degradation of the level of service of existing Interstate 110. The concept was dismissed, because it did not meet the project's purpose and need.

From the alternatives considered, the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is required to identify the environmentally preferred alternative. The environmentally preferred alternative is the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment. While there is no requirement that the environmentally preferred alternative be selected, the reasons for not selecting it must be disclosed.

Alternative G-1 is the environmentally preferred alternative. Alternative G-1 would impact the smallest amount of wetlands and have the least affect on natural habitats. Alternative G-1 was not selected, because it would have a substantial impact on Keesler Air Force Base and would isolate the western portion of the main base complex from the remainder of the facility. This would have a negative impact on the mission of Keesler Air Force Base. Keesler Air Force Base opposes this alternative, and it could not be constructed without their active support. Alternative G-1 would also negatively impact the historical view

shed of the Veterans Administration Medical Center and use land from the public Harrison County Sand Beach. These facilities are both protected by Section 4(f) (49 U.S.C. 303). For programs and projects administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation, alternatives that would use land from properties protected by Section 4(f) (49 U.S.C. 303) cannot be selected when there is a feasible and prudent alternative that does not.

The FEIS contains an adequately detailed discussion of the following: purpose and need for the proposed action, probable impact of the proposed action, alternatives, unavoidable adverse environmental effects, short-term vs. long-term benefits, irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources, mitigation, and measures to minimize environmental harm. The proposal conforms with the State's air quality implementation plan and the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

Section 4(f)

No lands described in Section 4(f) (49 U.S.C. 303)--publicly owned parks, public recreational areas, significant historic sites, or wildlife refuges--will be required in order to construct this project on Alternative H. All other identified buildable alternatives would require the use of properties protected by Section 4(f) (49 U.S.C. 303). The provisions of 26 CFR 800 (Protection of Historic Properties) have been fulfilled.

Environmental Justice

This project will not have an adverse or disproportionate effect on minority or low income populations.

Agency and Public Coordination

The FEIS has been coordinated with appropriate local, state, and Federal agencies and also made available for public comments and at the public hearing. The U.S. Department of Defense, Department of the Air Force, Keesler Air Force Base; The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs; the U.S. Coast Guard; the National Marine Fisheries Service; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources; and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks were closely involved in the development of the EIS and played important roles in the decision making process. The U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs; the U.S. Coast Guard; and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are formal cooperating agencies. The comments received from agencies and from the public have been adequately addressed in the FEIS.

The development of this project was coordinated closely with the general public through a series of public meetings and a formal public hearing. When Alternative H is compared to the other alternatives studied, the proposal appears

to be well accepted, without significant opposition from the general public; and, therefore, is not considered controversial.

The City of Biloxi formed a Citizen's Corridor Committee to advise the City, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Mississippi Department of Transportation about the concerns of various constituents within the city about the proposed project. The project development team worked closely with the Citizen's Corridor Committee as the project was developed. In addition to the regular public meetings and the public hearing, the project development team met with the Citizen's Corridor Committee over a dozen times. They provided very useful information about the concerns of the citizens of Biloxi, and their work is greatly appreciated. In the end the committee voted to support Alternative H. There were dissenting opinions. Some members of the committee still prefer one or more low level boulevards with less restricted access. The project studies convinced the project development team and the majority of the Citizen's Corridor Committee that construction to less than interstate standards would result in a level of service that would not satisfy the project's purpose and needs.

Measures to Minimize Harm

All practicable measures to minimize environmental harm were incorporated in the planning of the proposed action. Measures to minimize harm are as follows.

- 1. Specific Environmental Commitments:** Specific environmental commitments are outlined at the beginning of the Final EIS on yellow sheets entitled *MDOT Commitments to Environmental Excellence*. These commitments are binding on the Mississippi Department of Transportation and on the Federal Highway Administration and are incorporated into this Record of Decision by reference. There are eight pages of these commitments.
- 2. Relocation Assistance:** The acquisition and relocation assistance program will be conducted in accordance with the *Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970*, as amended, and relocation resources will be available to all residential and business relocatees without discrimination.
- 3. Water Quality:** Water quality standards will be complied with by individual contractors. The Mississippi Department of Transportation, Office of Highway=s, *Standard Specifications* and plans contain provisions for preventing and abating the pollution of streams and water bodies. These provisions were identified as Best Management Practices by the Mississippi Bureau of Pollution Control in the development of its *Area Wide Waste Treatment Plan* required under Section 208 of the Federal Water Pollution Act.

Any additional requirements placed by the Bureau of Pollution Control will be included in the Plans and Specifications for the project. Compliance with the Best Management Practices, permits, and the requirements placed by the

Bureau of Pollution Control will insure that project activities do not contribute to a significant deterioration of water quality.

5. Wetlands

The FEIS commits to avoid wetland effects where practicable and to minimize wetland effects in all locations.

Mitigation of Wetland Effects

Wetlands mitigation will be coordinated with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Wetland mitigation is anticipated either to be out of the Mississippi Department of Transportation's coastal wetlands banks or on site.

6. Wildlife Habitat: No adverse effect on any threatened or endangered species is anticipated. Surveys for such species will be conducted again prior to construction and coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

7. Visual and Aesthetic Consequences:

In order to lessen visual effects, attempts will be made to blend the proposed project into the surrounding area in a pleasing and compatible way. Aesthetics will be a consideration in project design. One of the project commitments is to allow public input into the aesthetics of the bridge design and to implement context sensitive solutions to potential impacts on the view shed of the Back Bay of Biloxi

8. Effects related to Construction: The contractor will be required to control erosion on all projects to the fullest extent practicable. The contractor will be required to submit a project erosion control plan for approval prior to beginning work. Waste, loose soil, or other materials removed from the roadway or other areas will not be deposited into wetlands. The contractor will not be allowed to obstruct or pollute streams.

Disposal of land clearing waste, construction debris, excavation materials, and residue from permitted controlled burning of solid waste will be disposed of in accordance with MDOT Standard Specifications and state and local solid waste regulations.

During construction, there is potential for noise impacts to be greater than those resulting from normal traffic operations. Contractors will be required to comply with all state, federal, and local laws and regulations controlling noise and other pollution of the environment.

Monitoring of Enforcement Program

A determination of the extent of a formal monitoring program for wetlands mitigation will be made during the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permitting phase. Normal coordination during design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction will ensure that environmental commitments are fulfilled. The contract will contain all specifications and contract provisions needed to meet the environmental commitments in the FEIS.

The Mississippi Department of Transportation will have an internal monitoring and enforcement program to assure that environmental commitments found on the yellow sheets labeled MDOT Commitments to Environmental Excellence are carried out. The Federal Highway Administration will assist the Mississippi Department of Transportation in this effort.

Conclusion

The Final EIS is in conformance with the applicable provisions of 23 CFR 771, *Environmental Impact and Related Procedures*, and it satisfactorily covers the anticipated environmental impacts, including hypsographic and cultural effects.

COMMENTS ON FEIS

Comments on the FEIS were received from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The reason the FEIS received so few comments from agencies is that it received comments expressing concerns from several Federal and State Agencies at the draft stage. The project development team worked with the commenting agencies between the Draft EIS and the FEIS and largely resolved these concerns to their satisfaction. How this was done is outlined in the FEIS and its Appendices.

The comments on the FEIS by the Department of Housing and Urban Development were not substantial. They noted that the preferred alternative, Alternative H, would not require the acquisition of public housing and asked to be notified if that situation changed.

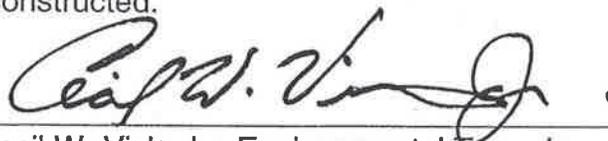
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency withdrew most of its concerns about the Draft EIS. Their March 31, 2003, comments on the FEIS concluded:

“Overall, the majority of EPA’s previous comments were adequately addressed in the FEIS. The FEIS was well organized with MDOT’s environmental commitments placed in the beginning of the document. We also commend the effort made to provide adequate disclosure of the environmental and social impacts associated with the proposed project.”

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency still has some concerns about the project’s noise impacts. The project design team is committed to attempt to

satisfactorily address these concerns during the final design process. They intend to involve the public in decisions about final design in order that design solutions be sensitive to the context of the human and natural environments in which the project will be constructed.

May 28, 2003



Cecil W. Vick, Jr., Environmental Team Leader
Federal Highway Administration, Mississippi Division

MDOT Commitments to Environmental Excellence

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Project No: GAI-024-00(002)/ Highway: East Harrison County Connector
94-0024-00-002-10/10478 County: Harrison

Commitments/Requirements	Source of Commitment	Responsible Office	Place on Plans	Requires A Special Provision	Status of Commitment/Requirement
Prepare NRHP Nomination for the Veterans Affairs Medical Center	EIS Page S-11, 4-74 and Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)	Environmental	No	No	Complete – VMAC listed on the NRHP on February 14, 2002.
Design and implement the project to address the following concerns of the VAMC: 1. Coordinate the water drainage serving the adjacent VA National Cemetery;	EIS Pages S-11, 4-74, 5-11 and MOA	Roadway Design	Yes	No	Performed during the various project stages (i.e., design, right-of-way acquisition, construction).
2. Design and construct project in a way to minimize noise, dust, etc., for Patient's environment;	EIS Pages S-11, 4-74, 5-11 and MOA	Roadway Design Bridge Construction Maintenance	Yes	Yes	Performed during the various project stages (i.e., design, right-of-way acquisition, construction).
3. Design and construct project to minimize accessing the VA property from the bridge structure;	EIS Pages S-12, 4-74, 5-11 and MOA	Roadway Design Bridge	Yes	Yes	Performed during the various project stages (i.e., design, right-of-way acquisition, construction).

All practical and standard procedures and measures, including Best Management practices will be implemented to avoid or minimize impacts.

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Commitments/Requirements	Source of Commitment	Responsible Office	Place on Plans	Requires A Special Provision	Status of Commitment/Requirement
4. Look for ways to deter motorists from littering from the bridge onto the VA property;	EIS Pages S-12, 4-74, 5-11 and MOA	Roadway Design Bridge Maintenance	Yes	No	Performed during the various project stages (i.e., design, right-of-way acquisition, construction).
5. Provide appropriate noise reduction and lighting for the bridge structure;	EIS Pages S-12, 4-74, 5-11 and MOA	Roadway Design Bridge Construction	Yes	No	Performed during the various project stages (i.e., design, right-of-way acquisition, construction).
6. Design and construct project in a way not to interfere with the proposed VA National Cemetery expansion or take any land from the portion of the VAMC that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places;	EIS Pages S-12, 4-74, 5-11 and MOA	Roadway Design Right of Way Construction	Yes	No	Performed during the various project stages (i.e., design, right-of-way acquisition, construction).
7. Address changes in vehicular traffic patterns, including the location and timing of traffic signal lights, the movement of	EIS Pages S-12, 4-74, 5-11 and MOA	Planning Traffic Engineering Roadway Design Maintenance	Yes	No	Performed during the various project stages (i.e., design, right-of-way acquisition, construction).

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Commitments/Requirements	Source of Commitment	Responsible Office	Place on Plans	Requires A Special Provision	Status of Commitment/Requirement
vehicles on Pass Road and the entrance to the VAMC, and the routing of traffic under the new bridge structure from Hiller Park and the adjacent neighborhood;					
8. Establish multiple use right of way agreements required for MDOT's construction of the bridge structure and for the Department of Veterans Affairs for MDOT permitted activities of the lands under the bridge structure;	EIS Pages S-12, 4-74, 5-11 and MOA	Right of Way Bridge Construction Maintenance	Yes	Yes	Performed during the various project stages (i.e., design, right-of-way acquisition, construction).
9. The construction of public-owned buildings/structures to replace those that would be demolished by the project.	EIS Pages S-12, 4-74, 5-11 and MOA	Roadway Design Right of Way Construction	Yes	No	Performed during the various project stages (i.e., design, right-of-way acquisition, construction).

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Commitments/Requirements	Source of Commitment	Responsible Office	Place on Plans	Requires A Special Provision	Status of Commitment/Requirement
Design and construct bridges over Back Bay of Biloxi and Tchoutacaboutta River to minimize impacts.	EIS Pages S-10, 2-10, and 4-55, 6-3, 6-17, and 6-30	Bridge Construction	Yes	Yes	To be incorporated into design plans and implemented during construction.
Use of special construction techniques such as top down or barges to minimize impacts on the ecosystem	EIS Pages S-10, 2-10, and 4-55, 6-17, 6-29, 6-30, and 6-32	Bridge Construction	Yes	Yes	To be incorporated into design plans and implemented during construction.
Implement bridge storm water run off containment system	EIS Pages S-10, 2-10, 4-55, and 6-17	Roadway Design Bridge	Yes	Yes	To be incorporated into project plans during the design phase.
Continue to work closely with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources throughout construction.	EIS Pages S-10, 2-10, 4-55, and 6-31,	Environmental Roadway Design	No	No	Ongoing and continuous
Maintain 15.24 meter (50 ft.) work buffers in tidal marsh	EIS Pages S-10, 2-10,	Roadway Design Bridge Construction	Yes	Yes	Elevations to be determined during design phase and 50-foot buffer to

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MDOT Commitments to Environmental Excellence

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Commitments/Requirements	Source of Commitment	Responsible Office	Place on Plans	Requires A Special Provision	Status of Commitment/Requirement
areas and maintain as much elevation as practical over these areas.	4-55, 6-17, 6-29, and 6-32	Maintenance			be implemented during construction phase.
Use low mast lighting to minimize impacts to migrating birds and Keesler Air Force Base air operations.	EIS Pages S-10, 4-55, 6-17, and 6-27	Roadway Design Bridge	Yes	Yes	To be incorporated into project plans during the design phase.
Allow public input into bridge aesthetics design and implement context sensitive solutions because of the impacts on Back Bay of Biloxi.	EIS Pages S-10 and 2-10	Environmental Bridge Roadway Design Public Affairs	Yes	No	Public input ongoing and continuous throughout duration of project.
Construct all bridges with collision tolerant piles and fenders.	EIS Pages S-10 and 2-10	Roadway Design Bridge Construction	Yes	Yes	To be incorporated into project plans and implemented during construction.
Satisfy replacement-housing needs of Keesler Air Force Base.	EIS Pages S-10, 4-21, and 6-15	Right-of-Way Roadway Design Construction	No	No	Coordination with Keesler Air Force Base is continuous and ongoing. MDOT will work closely with Keesler to ensure that all housing needs and requirements are

All practical and standard procedures and measures, including Best Management practices will be implemented to avoid or minimize impacts.

MDOT Commitments to Environmental Excellence

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Commitments/Requirements	Source of Commitment	Responsible Office	Place on Plans	Requires A Special Provision	Status of Commitment/Requirement
Consideration will be given to higher than normal bridge railings in the area of Hiller Park and VAMC to reduce noise impacts.	EIS Pages S-11 and 4-27	Roadway Design Bridge	Yes	Yes	met. To be incorporated into project plans during the design phase.
All motorized equipment meet manufacturers specifications for noise source reduction and analyze use of "hush houses".	EIS Pages S-11, 4-27, and 6-21	Construction Maintenance District	No	Yes	To be implemented during and throughout construction phase of project.
Obtain Coast Guard permit	EIS Pages S-11, 4-28, and 6-2	Bridge	Yes	Yes	To be obtained during design phase of project.
Provide wetland mitigation for the adverse effects that would result from project implementation - Compensation by creation or restoration of in-kind wetlands. If on-site mitigation is not	EIS Pages S-11, 4-53, 6-18, and 6-28	Environmental Roadway Design	No	No	Wetland mitigation will be developed and finalized during design phase. All appropriate permits required by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act will be obtained prior to construction. MDOT will work closely with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to

All practical and standard procedures and measures, including Best Management practices will be implemented to avoid or minimize impacts.

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Commitments/Requirements	Source of Commitment	Responsible Office	Place on Plans	Requires A Special Provision	Status of Commitment/Requirement
available, the Old Fort Bayou and Deaton Tracts in Jackson County will be offered as compensation.					provide the appropriate wetland mitigation.
Work closely with the National Marine Fisheries to minimize shading impacts.	EIS Pages S-11, 4-55, and 6-17	Environmental Roadway Design Bridge	No	No	Coordination with National Marine Fisheries will be continuous and ongoing through the design phase of the project.
Conduct additional surveys for threatened and endangered species during appropriate nesting, spawning, or flowering seasons.	EIS Pages S-11, 4-73, 6-27, and 6-32	Environmental	No	No	Additional surveys will be conducted prior to construction. Ongoing coordination with USFWS, NMFS, and Mississippi Department of Marine Resources will continue throughout all phases of the project.
Conduct underwater archaeological investigation/clearance of the Back Bay where construction, excavation, or placement of bridge piling take place.	EIS Pages S-11, and 4-73	Environmental Bridge	No	No	Additional surveys will be conducted prior to construction.

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Commitments/Requirements	Source of Commitment	Responsible Office	Place on Plans	Requires A Special Provision	Status of Commitment/Requirement
Design and construct project in a way not to take any land from Hiller Park.	EIS Pages S-11 and 5-6	Roadway Design Bridge Right of Way Construction	Yes	No	To be incorporated into project plans and implemented during construction.
Design and construct project in a way not to take any land from the public beach.	EIS Pages S-11 and 5-12	Roadway Design Bridge Right of Way Construction	Yes	No	To be incorporated into project plans and implemented during construction.

All practical and standard procedures and measures, including Best Management practices will be implemented to avoid or minimize impacts.

SUMMARY

S.1 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) Project GAI-024-00 (002)/94-0024-00-002-10/10478 is a proposal to build a north-south, controlled-access roadway in Harrison County, Mississippi (see Figure S.1) from I-10 to U.S. 90, a distance of approximately 6.4 kilometers (4.0 miles). Figure S.2 shows the project study area. The proposed project will be a multi-lane, limited-access facility. The proposed minimum right-of-way width is 49 meters (162 feet); however, greater area will be required at interchange locations.

The purpose of the project is to increase north-south regional mobility between the major commercial areas of Biloxi and the residential areas to the north, to provide increased access for the heavy influx of tourists to the area, to lessen traffic congestion on the existing local highway network, and to provide an additional evacuation route during hurricane emergencies.

S.2 OTHER MAJOR GOVERNMENT ACTIONS

The Transportation Improvement Program for the Biloxi-Gulfport Urbanized Area has identified seven future roadway improvements in the project area. These projects are as follows:

- I-10-six lanes through the entire length of Mississippi,
- Popps Ferry Road-widening to 5 lanes from Cedar Lake Road to Riverview Road and 3 lanes from Riverview to Causeway Drive,
- Cedar Lake Drive –widen to 5 lanes from I-10 Popps Ferry Road,
- Cowan-Lorraine Road – widen to 4 lanes from I-10 to U.S. 90,
- Cowan-Lorraine Road – 4 lanes on new alignment from I-10 to new MS 67,
- Signal Improvements at I-10 ramps at Cowan-Lorraine Road, and
- Relocation of MS 67 from MS 15 to U.S. 49.
- Canal Road from U.S. 90 to I-10, approximately 8 miles west of the East Harrison County Connector.



**Harrison
County**

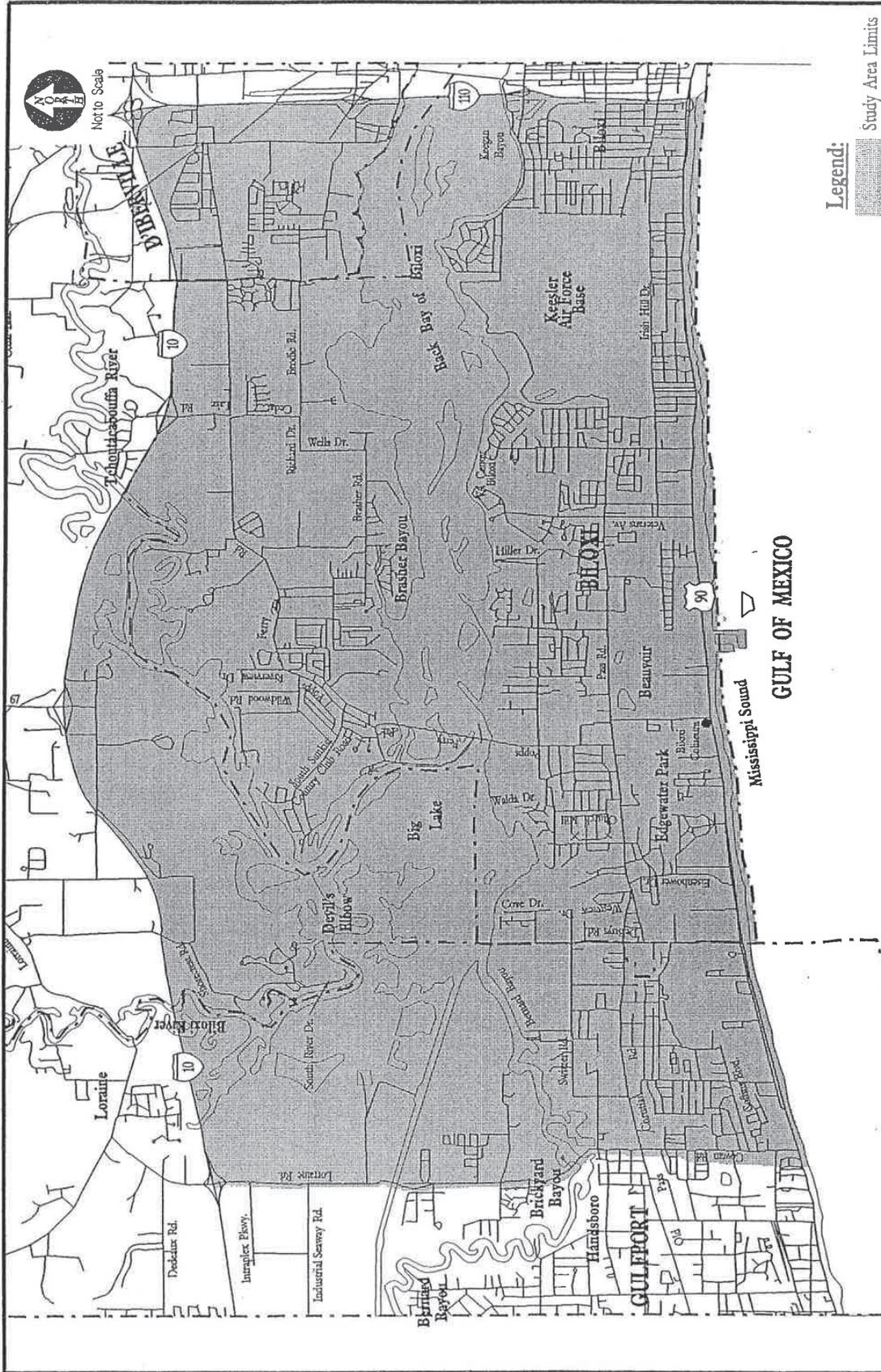
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East Harrison County Connector

Project Location

Figure S.1

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Project Study Area

Figure S.2

East Harrison County Connector

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