



Department of Transportation

State of Georgia

#2 Capitol Square, S.W.

Atlanta, Georgia 30334-1002

HAROLD E. LINNENKOHL
COMMISSIONER
(404) 656-5206

DAVID E. STUDSTILL, JR., P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER
(404) 656-5277

BUDDY GRATTON, P.E.
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
(404) 656-5212

EARL L. MAHFUZ
TREASURER
(404) 656-5224

February 22, 2007

Thank you for attending the public hearing open house for EDS-545 (29) (30) (31) (32); P.I. Numbers 222120, 222150, 222160, and 222170 the proposed US 1/SR 4 widening beginning at the Wadley Bypass and ending at SR 88 in Wrens in Jefferson County, Georgia. In this handout package you will find a need and purpose statement, project descriptions, summary of environmental studies, a location map, a right-of-way acquisition statement, and a comment card.

As you enter the room, you will notice displays of the proposed projects. Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) representatives can be identified by their name tags and are available to discuss the project and answer your questions. Please take this opportunity to discuss the project with a Georgia DOT representative. There will be no formal presentation.

A court reporter will be available for those persons who would like to make a verbal statement about the project. You may also complete the comment card provided and deposit it into the box made available here or you can mail in your comments about the project until March 8, 2007. Written comments should be sent to Mr. Harvey D. Keeper, State Environmental/Location Engineer, Georgia Department of Transportation, 3993 Aviation Circle, Atlanta, Georgia 30336-1593. Comments can also be made via the web at www.dot.state.ga.us. Click on **Public Outreach** from the list of Featured Links. All comments will be made a part of the project record. We hope you will take advantage of one of these opportunities to let Georgia DOT know your view of the proposed projects.

The displays and plans will be available for review for ten days after the public information open house at the Georgia DOT District Two Office located at 801 Highway 15 South, Tennille, Georgia and the Georgia DOT Area Three Office located at 2971 US Highway 1 North, Louisville, Georgia. A copy of all comments received will be available for public review at the Georgia DOT Office of Environment/Location, 3993 Aviation Circle, Atlanta, Georgia 30336-1593 as soon as compilation is completed.

If you have any questions regarding the project after this hearing, please contact Michael Haithcock at (404) 657-9758. Again, thank you for attending this public hearing open house and for giving us your comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Babs Abubakari".

Babs Abubakari, P.E.
State Consultant Design Engineer

Attachments

**Widening and Reconstruction of State Route 4/US 1
from the Wadley Bypass to State Route 88
Jefferson County, Georgia**

NEED AND PURPOSE

Projects EDS-545(29), EDS-545(30), EDS-545(31), and EDS-545(32) [P.I Numbers 222120, 222150, 222160, 222170] would widen and reconstruct State Route (SR) 4/US 1 beginning at the Wadley Bypass and ending at SR 88 in Wrens. The proposed projects are located in Jefferson County, Georgia and are included in the Governor's Road Improvement Program (GRIP). The GRIP was initiated in 1989 by a resolution of the state legislature and the Governor to address the importance of stimulating economic growth by improving Georgia's transportation network. State Route 4/US 1 is the major north-south corridor in mid-east Georgia making it a prime candidate for the GRIP program. In addition to making the area viable in terms of economic development, the widening and reconstruction of SR 4/US 1 would enhance traffic flow and increase traffic capacity while improving operational characteristics and safety.

Economic Benefits of the Proposed Project

The GRIP was initiated in the 1980's in order to address the importance of stimulating economic growth via an improved transportation network. The system would place 98 percent of the state's population within 20 miles of a multi-lane highway. Many advantages of such a system exist. Areas lagging in growth would be provided greater opportunities to attract industry, business, and jobs; commodity and raw materials movements would be enhanced; and tourism and industries would benefit from the accessibility created by such a network. Based on the experiences of the Georgia Department of Industry and Trade, if two cities are competing for an industry, the city closest to a four lane roadway will attract the industry in most instances.

The University of Georgia's Terry College of Business' Selig Center for Economic Growth has published a white paper entitled *The Economic Benefits of the Governor's Road Improvement Program*. The purpose of their study was to determine whether or not location on a major multi-lane highway fosters economic growth. The study indicated reasonable evidence that GRIP facilitates economic development, particularly employment growth. Evidence of employment growth would indicate that new businesses would be formed and old ones expanded as a result of the proposed project.

Safety and Operational Benefits of the Proposed Project

As part of the proposed project, raised medians would be constructed along SR 4/US 1 between the Wadley Bypass and SR 88 in Wrens. Medians allow for better traffic flow and channel left turn movements to safer locations. Other benefits of raised medians include reduction in crash rates by up to 55 percent; reduced congestion; improved traffic flow; provides for landscaping and aesthetic opportunities; provides refuge for pedestrian crossings; improves community safety and pride; and provides a safe place for directional signage.

Accident data indicates that in two of the past three years the injury and fatality rates for US 1/SR 4 in Jefferson County have been higher than the statewide average for roadways of the same nature. In 2002 and 2003, the injury rate for US 1/SR 4 in Jefferson County was higher than the statewide average, and in 2003 and 2004 the fatality rate for US 1/SR 4 in Jefferson County was higher than the statewide average. According to the accident data the majority of the accidents involved vehicles turning right or left, making a u-turn, or entering/leaving a driveway. The widening and reconstruction of SR 4/US 1 would aid in reducing accidents by providing a passing lane for motorists wishing to go around right- and left-turning vehicles. Furthermore, the implementation of the median would provide a barrier from on-coming traffic; as well as channel left-turn and u-turn movements to safer locations.

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Project EDS-545(29), P.I. No. 222120 proposes to widen and reconstruct SR 4/US 1 from SR 4 Business north of Wadley to SR 4 Business south of Louisville, a distance of approximately 6.6 miles. From the beginning of the project north of Wadley at County Road (CR) 183 to CR 248/Mole Road, the roadway would be widened from two to four lanes with an approximately 44-foot grassed median. Within this section of the project, widening would occur along the west side of the roadway. At CR 248/Mole Road, widening would occur along the east side of the roadway, and the median would taper to 32 feet in order to minimize impacts to wetlands. Widening would continue along the east side of SR 4/US 1 until approximately 0.5 mile north of CR 326/Nimrod Road. At this point, an approximately 14-foot flush median would be utilized to the end of the project at SR 4 Business south of Louisville.

Existing right-of-way along SR 4/US 1 varies between approximately 130 feet and approximately 200 feet. Proposed right-of-way would vary between approximately 224 feet and approximately 250 feet for the length of the project. The design speed varies from 45 miles per hour (mph) to 65 mph. Access would be by permit only.

Project EDS-545(30), P.I. No. 222150 Project EDS-545(30) proposes to widen and reconstruct the Louisville Bypass/SR 4/US 1 from SR 4 Business (south of Louisville) to CR 325/Old US 1, a distance of approximately 2.8 miles. From the beginning of the project, the roadway would be widened to four travel lanes with an approximately 14-foot flush median, curb and gutter, and sidewalk. The widening would occur along the east side of the roadway for the entire length of the project.

Existing right-of-way width along the project varies between approximately 130 feet and approximately 200 feet. Proposed right-of-way would vary from approximately 130 feet to approximately 238 feet for the length of the project. The design speed would be 45 mph. Access would be by permit only.

Project EDS-545(31), P.I. No. 222160 proposes to widen and reconstruct SR 4/US 1 from CR 325/Old US 1 to CR 138/Mennonite Church Road, a distance of approximately 5.9 miles. From the beginning of the project, improvements would include the widening of the roadway to four lanes with an approximately 14-foot flush median to CR 325. Widening would occur along the east side of the roadway. At CR 325, the median width would increase, making the typical section four lanes with an approximately 44-foot grassed median. The proposed widening would occur along the west side of the

roadway in order to avoid a historic resource. At CR 142/Bridges Road, widening would shift back to the east in order to avoid another historic resource. Just north of CR 142/Bridges Road, widening would shift back to the west and proceed north to just south of SR 296. At SR 296, widening would occur along the east side of the roadway until approximately 0.5 mile north of CR 136/Mae Lamb Farm Road. At CR 136/Mae Lamb Road, widening of the roadway would shift back to the west for approximately 0.7 mile. From this point, widening would then shift back to the east side of the roadway and continue along the east side of the roadway until the project's end at CR 138/Mennonite Church Road.

Existing right-of-way along SR 4/US 1 is 130 feet. Proposed right-of-way would vary from approximately 130 feet to approximately 250 feet for the length of the project. The design speed would vary from 45 mph to 65 mph. Access would be by permit only.

Project EDS-545(32), P.I. No. 222170 proposes to widen and reconstruct SR 4/US 1 from CR 138/Mennonite Church Road to SR 88, a distance of approximately 6.5 miles. From the beginning of the project, the roadway would be widened to the east side and would consist of four lanes with an approximately 44-foot median. Approximately 800 feet north of CR 138/Mennonite Church Road, the proposed project would proceed north on new location west of existing SR 4/US 1 to avoid two NRHP-eligible resources and a cemetery. The new alignment portion of the project would intersect CR 126/Mac Watty Road approximately 700 feet west of its intersection with existing SR 4/US 1 intersection. The proposed new alignment would intersect with existing SR 4/US 1 just north of CR 127/Turner Brown Road with the widening continuing along the east side of the roadway. Widening to the east would continue until just north of Big Creek, where it would then shift to the west to just south of CR329/Stellaville Matthews Road. At this point, widening would shift back to the east. At approximately 0.2 mile south of the southern intersection of SR 4/US 1 and CR 129/V.G. Russell Road, the proposed median would taper to a 14-foot flush median in order to minimize displacements. Widening would continue along the east side of the roadway to approximately 0.3 mile north of the southern intersection of SR 4/US 1 and CR 129/V.G. Russell Road. At this point, widening would transition to a symmetrical widening. Symmetrical widening would continue north to the northern intersection of CR 129/V.G. Russell Road, where curb and gutter would be utilized for approximately 0.2 mile north to the project end at SR 88 in Wrens.

Project BRST-043-1(58), P.I. No. 232265 is located within the limits of project EDS-545(32). This project would replace the existing bridge over Big Creek. Although the sufficiency rating of the existing bridge is 72.41, the bridge would be replaced in order to accommodate for the north and southbound lanes and a taper for the median opening at CR 116/Sand Valley Road.

Existing right-of-way along SR 4/US 1 varies from approximately 130 feet to approximately 200 feet. Proposed right-of-way would vary between approximately 130 feet and approximately 250 feet for the length of the project. The design speed would vary from 45 mph to 65 mph. Access would be by permit only.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

In compliance with the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act, the Georgia Department of Transportation has conducted an assessment of the social, economic and environmental effects for the proposed widening and reconstruction of SR 4/US 1 from the Wadley Bypass to SR 88. The following information gives a summary of the environmental document:

Approximately 17 residential units and four commercial businesses would be displaced by the proposed project. In addition, one non-profit institution may be displaced. Based on visual observations, nine of the approximately 35 persons required to relocate may be minority. The number of employees that would be displaced at the affected businesses is unknown. There appears to be no handicapped persons affected by the proposed projects.

In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the project has been surveyed for existing and eligible National Register properties. No archaeological sites were found to be located within the project's area of potential effect. A total of 17 historic resources were found to be located within the project's area of potential effect. A finding of No Adverse Effect has been established for all 17 resources. The State Historic Preservation Office concurs with this finding.

A Georgia Department of Natural Resources operated boat ramp is located along the eastern side of US 1/SR 4 at its crossing of the Ogeechee River. Improvements in this area include the widening of US 1/SR 4 from two to four lanes. This widening would occur along the eastern side of the roadway and would relocate the boat ramp. The boat ramp would be reconstructed which would benefit its users as it would be improved from its current condition.

The project would not have an adverse effect on water quality within the project corridor.

In accordance with Executive Order 11990, the proposed project was surveyed for wetland and waters of the U.S. involvement. Fourteen wetlands, 11 streams and three ponds were identified in the project area. A total of approximately 16.2 acres of impacts would occur to wetlands as a result of project construction. A total of approximately 1331 linear feet of stream would be impacted as a result of project construction.

In accordance with Executive Order 11988, the proposed project was surveyed for floodplain involvement. Based on observations during this field survey, floodplains within the project corridor likely occur at Comfort Creek, Big Creek, and the Ogeechee River; however, the project would be designed in such a way as to have no significant encroachment on these floodplains.

The project would involve the acquisition of right-of-way from a small amount of farmland. In accordance with 7 CFR, Part 658, criteria have been applied to determine the proposed projects' impacts to farmland and the projects' compatibility with the provisions of the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA). Based on the regulations set forth by the FPPA, no significant impact to farmland would occur.

No evidence of individual state or federally listed threatened or endangered species was observed during the surveys, although habitat is present for six of the eight state/federal species listed. Though habitat is present for six species, those habitats are common to the area; therefore, impacts to state- or federally-listed protected species are not anticipated.

The construction of this project would result in a 2 to 5 decibel increase in traffic generated noise by the design year, and 39 residences, three churches, and one business would approach or exceed the noise abatement criteria. No impacts would occur due to a substantial increase. Abatement measures for reducing or eliminating noise impacts were investigated for the project corridor; however, none were found to be feasible.

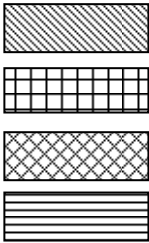
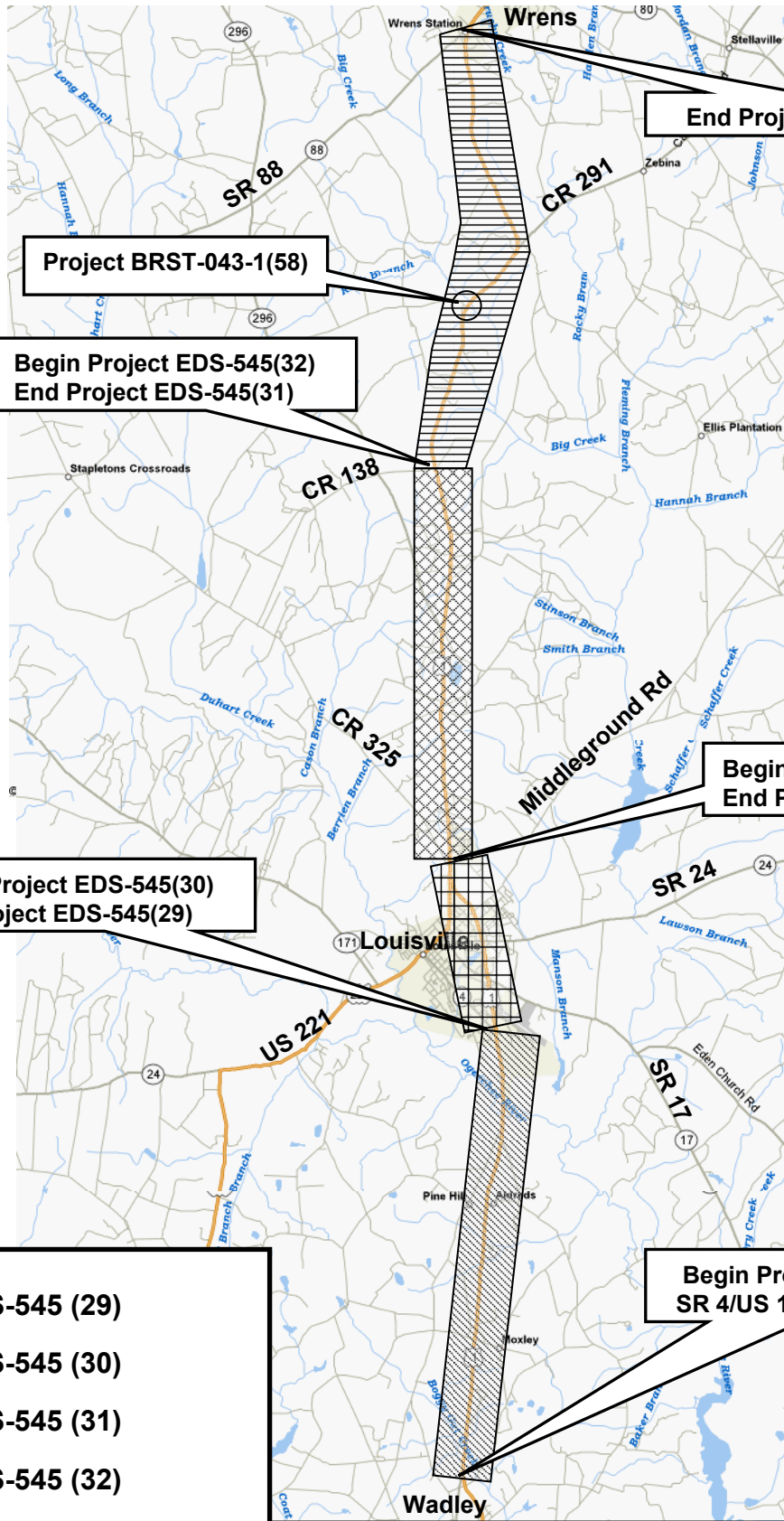
The proposed project would not exceed state and federal air quality standards, and it is consistent with the State Implementation Plan for the attainment of clean air quality in the state.

The proposed project has been surveyed for potential sites where contaminated soil and/or water from leaking underground storage tanks (UST) may exist. Twenty-three sites which may contain underground storage tanks (UST's) were identified. Possible soil contamination from above ground storage tanks with underground piping was encountered at one location. Twelve sites were identified for possible contamination from hazardous waste constituents.

A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 Individual Permit would be required for this project.



Map not to scale



- EDS-545 (29)
- EDS-545 (30)
- EDS-545 (31)
- EDS-545 (32)

GDOT Projects Location Map

Widening and Reconstruction of State Route 4/US 1
from the Wadley Bypass to State Route 88
Jefferson County, Georgia

Right-Of-Way Acquisition Projects EDS-545(29) (30) (31) (32), Jefferson County

The Georgia Department of Transportation has the responsibility once a project is approved, of appraising, purchasing property and, if required, assisting individuals, families or businesses in relocating. When purchasing property, we desire to pay full market value for the necessary property. This value will be established by using qualified real estate appraisers who will prepare, for the Department's use, written appraisals using actual sales data in the surrounding community.

In making an appraisal, the appraiser will contact each property owner and arrange a convenient time to make an on-site inspection of the property with him or her. After completion of the appraisal, our right-of-way appraisal staff will review and field check the findings for accuracy to ensure that all things relating to value have been considered in establishing the amount to be offered. When only a part of the property is needed, we will purchase that part plus pay for loss of value, if any, to the remaining property. In all cases, when the Department purchases property, we will make additional payments to property owners for the cost of transferring ownership to the Georgia Department of Transportation. These costs generally include transfer taxes, deed-recording fees, mortgage pre-payment penalties and the pro-rata share of city or county taxes.

The Department is aware of the problems experienced by individuals, families, businesses, and nonprofit organizations when they are required to move. It is our commitment that no family or individual will be required to relocate until comparable decent, safe and sanitary housing is available or is provided for those occupants.

Additionally, the Department will provide assistance to businesses and nonprofit organizations in relocating to other sites and will encourage them to remain in the community.

The information pamphlet "What Happens When Your Property is Needed for a Transportation Facility" is available at the entrance, and this booklet outlines the services offered and any payments for which you may be eligible, such as moving expenses and replacement housing benefits for owners and tenants. The brochure also outlines the eligibility requirements for receiving these payments.

Results of the field inspection by Department of Transportation Personnel have revealed that there will be 11 residences and 6 businesses that will be required to relocate. One non-profit institution may also be relocated.

It is important to remember that the Department is committed to the fact that no one will be required to relocate until housing is available, or, if there is no housing available, until provisions have been made by the Department to provide housing. It is also important to remember that all displacees will be given sufficient advance notice of the Department's intention to purchase any property in order to allow sufficient time in which to relocate.

The Department of Transportation District office, located in Tennille, Georgia, telephone (478) 552 - 4601 will be in charge of acquiring the necessary right-of-way for this project.

Georgia Department of Transportation

Widening and Reconstruction of State Route 4/US 1 from the Wadley Bypass to State Route 88 *Jefferson County, Georgia*

Project Numbers EDS-545(29), (30), (31), and (32)
P.I. Numbers 222120, 222150, 222160, and 222170

Please print responses.

Name _____

Address _____

Do you support the project? *For* *Against* *Conditional* *Uncommitted*

Comments

How did you hear about this meeting? *Radio* *Newspaper* *Sign* *Word of Mouth*

Was the location of the meeting convenient for you to attend? *Yes* *No*

If no, please suggest a general location that is more convenient to your community.

Was the time of the meeting convenient for you to attend? *Yes* *No*

If no, please suggest a time frame that is more convenient for you. _____

Were your questions answered by the DOT personnel? *Yes* *No*

Do you understand the project after attending this meeting? *Yes* *No*

Please share your suggestions on improving the way Georgia DOT conducts public meetings?

Mail To:

*Mr. Harvey D. Keepler, State Environmental/Location Engineer
Georgia Department of Transportation
3993 Aviation Circle
Atlanta, GA 30336-1593*