

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

AHTD JOB NUMBER 080389

FAP NUMBER STP-0058(34)

Hob Nob Rd. - Crow Mtn. Rd. (Russellville)

Pope County

Submitted Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)

by the

U.S. Department of Transportation

Federal Highway Administration

and the

Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION 1

PURPOSE OF PROPOSED PROJECT 1

 NEEDS ANALYSIS 1

 EXISTING CONDITIONS..... 4

 LEVEL OF SERVICE 4

 SAFETY ANALYSIS 4

ALTERNATIVES 6

 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND ELIMINATED 6

Alternative 1 6

Alternative 2 6

 ALTERNATIVES UNDER CONSIDERATION 9

No Action 9

Upgrade Existing Alternative 9

Alternative 3 9

Alternative 4 9

FINDINGS..... 10

IMPACT ASSESSMENT..... 11

 RELOCATIONS 11

 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IMPACTS AND TITLE VI COMPLIANCE 12

 SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT 12

 PUBLIC LANDS 13

 ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES 13

 PRIME FARMLAND..... 13

 HAZARDOUS MATERIAL..... 13

 ARCHEOLOGICAL/HISTORICAL 14

 NOISE 15

AIR QUALITY	17
WETLAND AND STREAM IMPACTS	17
<i>Wetlands</i>	18
<i>Streams</i>	22
FLOODPLAINS/FLOODWAYS.....	22
WATER QUALITY	24
PUBLIC/PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES	24
WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS.....	25
NATURAL AND VISUAL ENVIRONMENT	25
LAND USE	26
COMMENTS AND COORDINATION	28
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	28
COMMITMENTS	30

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Level of Service Descriptions
Appendix B	Public Involvement Synopsis
Appendix C	Conceptual Stage Relocation Study
Appendix D	Farmland Conversion Impact Rating
Appendix E	Noise Analysis
Appendix F	Coordination

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Page</u>
1	Project Area	2
2	Typical Cross Sections	3
3	Alternatives Eliminated	7
4	Alternatives Under Consideration	8
5	Wetland and Stream Impacts	19
6	Wetland A	20
7	Wetland B	20
8	Wetland C	21
9	Wetland D	21
10	Ephemeral Stream	23
11	Intermittent Stream	23

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
1	Crash Analysis Summary	5
2	Summary of Alternatives	10
3	Estimated Relocations	11
4	Noise Receptors	16
5	Wetland and Stream Impacts	18
6	Land Use/Land Cover Impacts	27
7	Alternatives Comparison	29

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD), in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is proposing to improve portions of Highways 326 and 124 between Hob Nob Road and Crow Mountain Road. Figure 1 illustrates the project area.

The existing roadway consists of two 11-foot travel lanes with four-foot wide shoulders. The existing right of way width averages 60 feet. Proposed improvements in the urban section would consist of four 11-foot wide travel lanes, a 12-foot wide turn lane, curb and gutter, and five-foot wide sidewalks (Figure 2). The rural section would consist of four 12-foot wide travel lanes, an 11-foot wide flush median, and 8-foot wide shoulders. New right of way widths would average between 130' - 165'.

PURPOSE OF PROPOSED PROJECT

The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and improve safety on Highways 326 and 124. Southbound travelers on Highway 326 to access I-40, Highway 64 or the commercial establishments and county facilities in the vicinity, have to make a left turn onto Highway 326. This creates delays for these travelers during peak traffic periods. Additionally, during peak traffic periods, vehicles turning left from Highway 326 onto Highway 124 can create long delays for northbound traffic.

Needs Analysis

In 2006, the Highway 326 (Weir Road) interchange with I-40 opened as Exit 83. Traffic south of I-40 on Highway 326 more than doubled, from 8,300 vehicles per day (vpd) in 2005 to an estimated 18,000 vpd in 2011. Traffic on Highway 124 that utilizes Highway 326 to access I-40, Highway 64 and other points south must make a left turn at the Highway 326/124 intersection to continue on to its destination. This is the predominant traffic movement at this intersection.

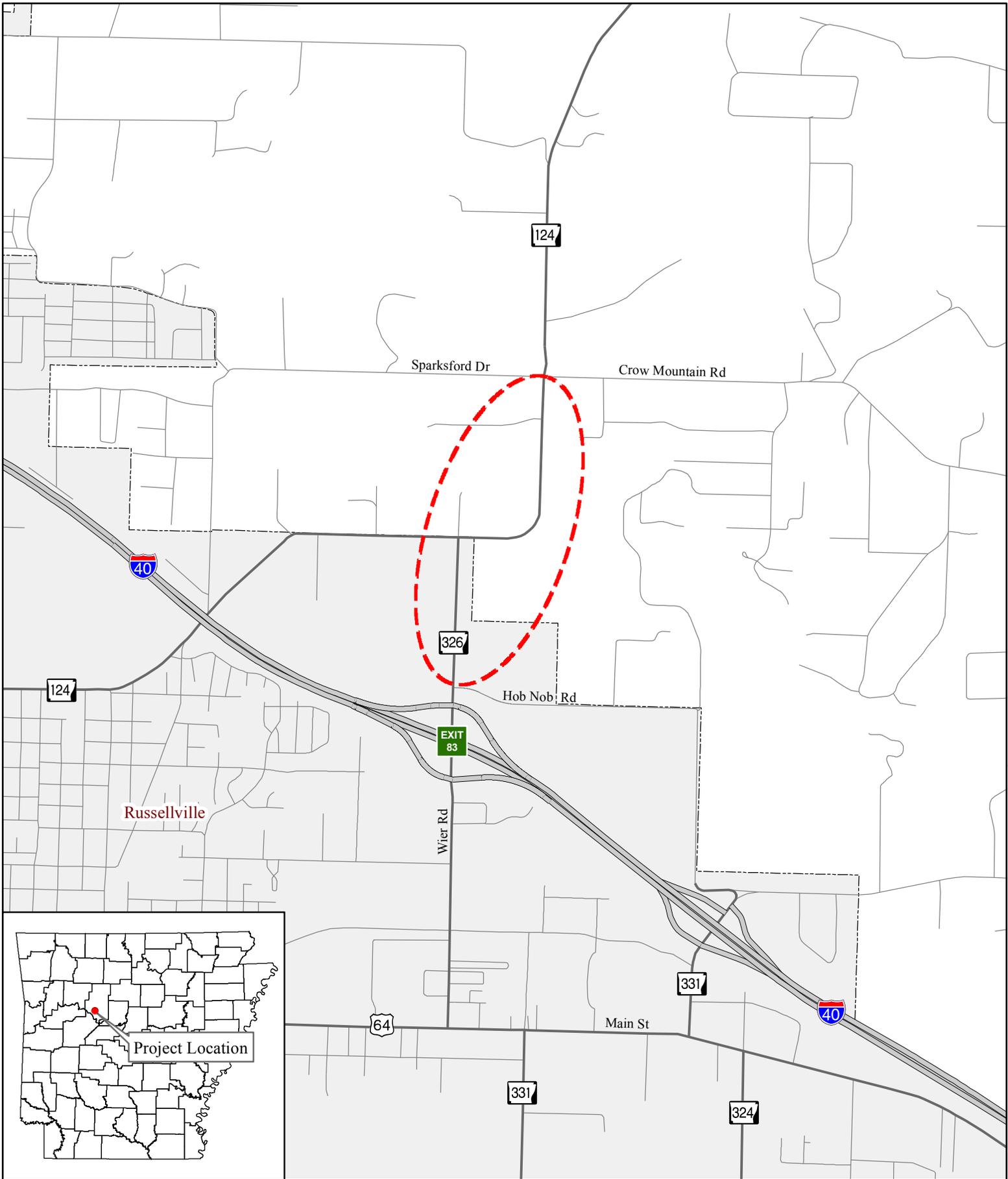
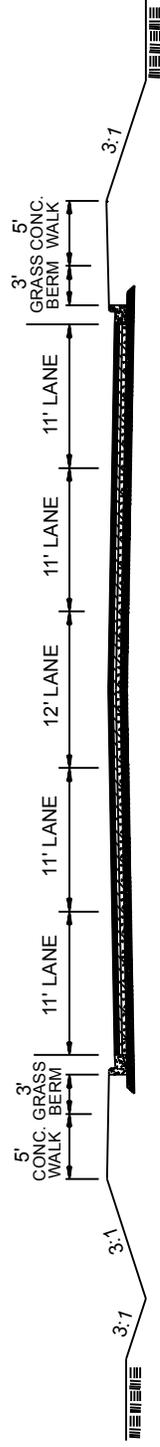
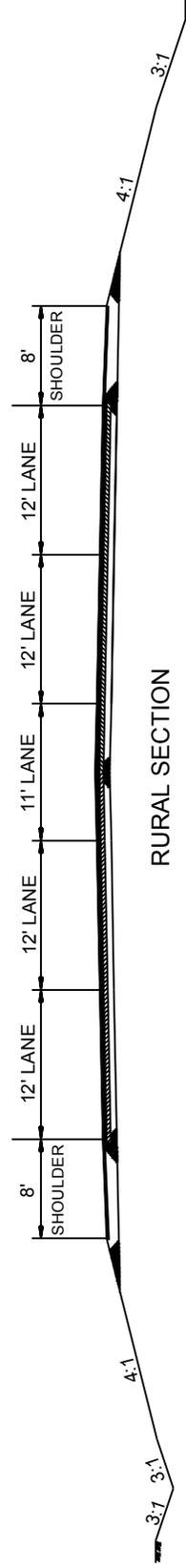


Figure 1
Project Area





URBAN SECTION



RURAL SECTION

Figure 2
Typical Cross Sections

Existing Conditions

The segment of Highway 326 under study connects Highway 64 in Russellville with I-40 and continues north to Highway 124. From Highway 64 to Hob Nob Road, Highway 326 consists of four travel lanes with a continuous, two-way left turn lane, curb and gutter, and sidewalks on both sides. Highways 326 and 124 between Hob Nob Road and Crow Mountain Road consists of two 11-foot wide travel lanes with four-foot wide shoulders.

Level of Service

Traffic on Highway 326 north of Hob Nob Road is currently operating at LOS D, which is unacceptable on a rural route, and will operate at LOS E by the end of the 20-year study period. Traffic on Highway 124 south of Crow Mountain Road is currently operating at LOS C and will operate at LOS D by the end of the 20-year study period. See Appendix A for a description of each level of service.

Safety Analysis

The relative safety of a route can be determined by comparing the crash rate (the number of crashes per million vehicle miles traveled) of the route to a statewide crash rate for similar routes. Crash data for 2008, 2009 and 2010 (the three most recent years for which data are available) were analyzed to determine crash rates for each of the three years on these portions of Highway 326 and on Highway 124. See Table 1 for crash rates. Crash rates were higher than the statewide average for each year for both routes. Eight of the 24 crashes (33%) on Highway 326 and nine of the 16 crashes (56%) on Highway 124 that occurred over the three-year analysis period occurred at the intersection of Highways 326 and 124. There is a high incidence of rear-end collisions (75% of all collisions) along this segment of Highway 326, most near or at the intersection with Highway 124.

**Table 1
Crash Analysis Summary**

Route	Segment	Type of Roadway (length)	Year	No. of Crashes	ADT	Crash Rates*	Statewide Avg. Crash Rates*
Highway 326	North of Hob Nob Road	Rural two-lane, undivided (0.44 mile)	2010	5	10,000	3.11	2.93
			2009	12	9,300	8.03	3.13
			2008	7	9,100	4.78	3.34
Highway 124	East and West of Highway 326	Rural two-lane, undivided (0.70 mile)	2010	3	4,600	2.55	2.93
			2009	6	5,100	4.60	3.13
			2008	7	4,900	5.58	3.34

*Per million vehicle miles (mvm), similar routes (two lane, two way undivided)

ALTERNATIVES

Four alternatives were initially reviewed for feasibility: No Action, Upgrade Existing, and two new location alternatives that consisted of improvements along the existing highway with some new alignment sections.

Alternatives Considered and Eliminated

Alternative 1

This new location alternative would widen Highway 326 from Hob Nob Road along the existing highway for approximately 0.2 mile before turning northeast on new alignment for approximately 0.5 mile (Figure 3). The alternative connects with existing Highway 124 and continues for approximately 0.3 mile to the intersection with Crow Mountain Road.

The public involvement session held in July 2011 indicated a lack of public support for this alternative because of the environmental impacts that would include an estimated 11 residential and four businesses relocations. See the public involvement synopsis in Appendix B. This alternative was modified to lessen the impacts, and created Alternative 3 (Figure 4).

Alternative 2

This alternative would widen Highway 326 from Hob Nob Road along the existing route for approximately 0.1 mile before turning northeast on new alignment for approximately 0.4 mile (Figure 3). The alternative connects to Highway 124 and follows along the existing highway for approximately 0.4 mile to the intersection with Crow Mountain Road.

The public involvement session held in July 2011 also indicated the lack of public support for this alternative due to environmental impacts that include five residential and two businesses relocations. See the public involvement synopsis in Appendix B. This alternative was modified to lessen the impacts, and created Alternative 4 (Figure 4).

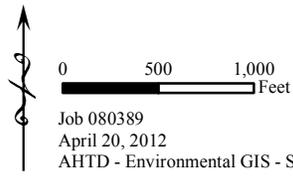


Figure 3
Alternatives Eliminated



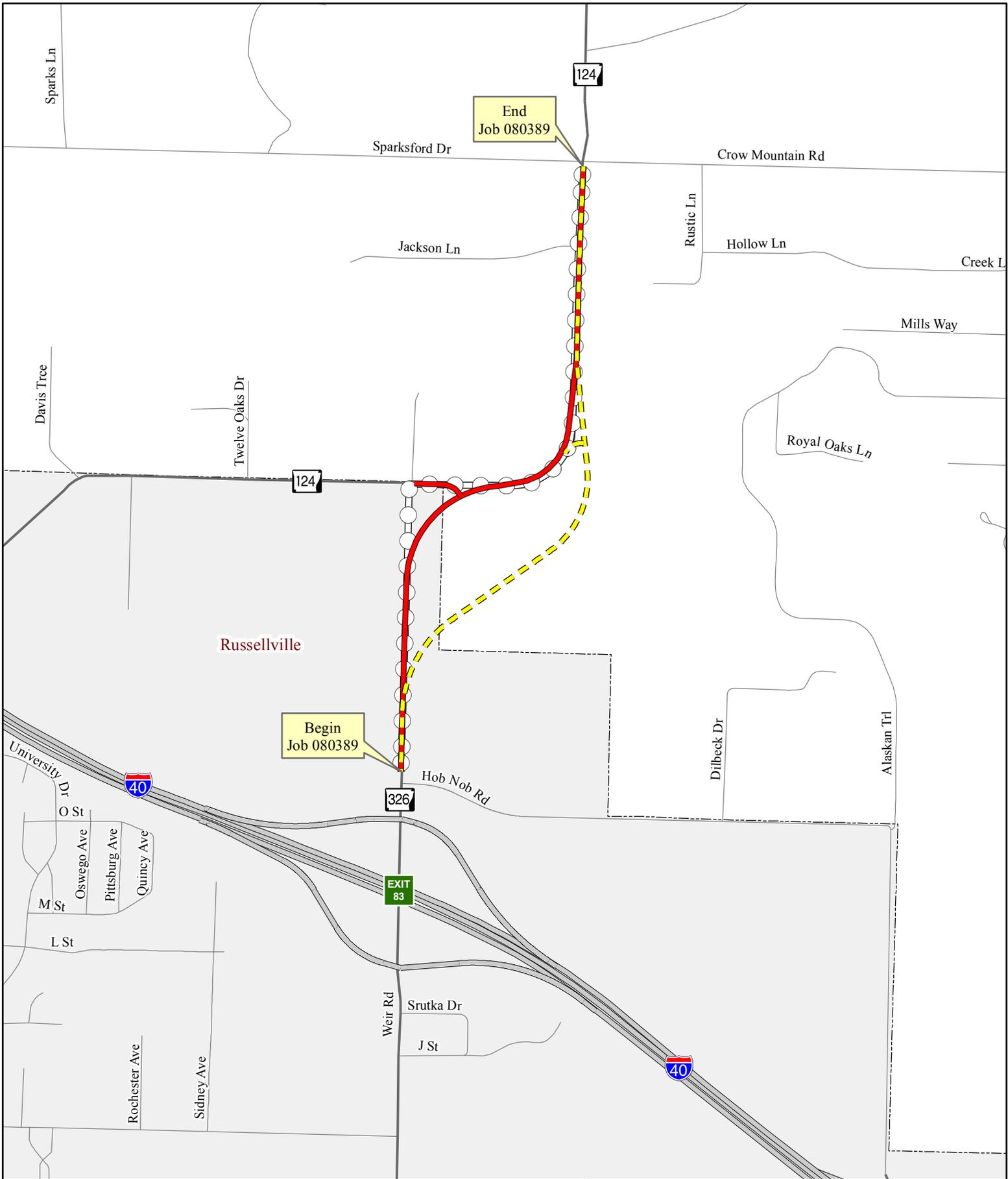


Figure 4
 Alternatives Under Consideration

- Alternative 3
- - - Alternative 4
- Upgrade Existing

Alternatives Under Consideration

No Action

The No Action Alternative would provide only routine maintenance for Highways 326 and 124. By taking no action other than routine maintenance, the No Action alternative would not address the safety issues or travel delays occurring at the intersection of Highways 326 and 124. Traffic is already operating at an unacceptable LOS and the LOS will further deteriorate with increases in traffic volumes over time.

Upgrade Existing Alternative

The Upgrade Existing Alternative would widen along existing Highways 326 and 124 from Hob Nob Road to Crow Mountain Road to the urban section (Figure 4). If this alternative is constructed, a traffic signal would be warranted at the Highway 326/124 intersection. The Upgrade Existing Alternative is 1.1 miles long and is estimated to cost \$10.2 million in 2011 dollars.

Alternative 3

This alternative would widen Highway 326 from Hob Nob Road along the existing highway for approximately 0.3 mile, before turning northeast on new alignment for approximately 0.2 mile and connecting with Highway 124 (Figure 4). It would follow existing Highway 124 for approximately 0.6 mile to the intersection with Crow Mountain Road. This alternative will consist of the urban section. Alternative 3 is 1.0 mile long and is estimated to cost \$9.2 million in 2011 dollars.

Alternative 4

This alternative would widen Highway 326 from Hob Nob Road along the existing highway for approximately 0.1 mile before turning northeast on new alignment for approximately 0.6 mile (Figure 4). This section will consist of the rural section. The alternative connects to Highway 124 and follows along the existing for approximately 0.3 mile to the intersection with Crow Mountain Road. This section will consist of the

urban section. Alternative 4 is 1.0 mile long and is estimated to cost \$8.4 million in 2011 dollars.

Findings

Improvements to Highways 326 and 124 between Hob Nob Road and Crow Mountain Road are necessary for the efficient and safe movement of the southbound traffic using those routes to access the Highway 326 interchange with I-40 and other commercial and retail activities south of I-40 and along Highway 64.

Widening along the existing highway alignment and/or constructing some improvements on new location would increase highway capacity, improve safety and reduce delays. These alternatives would improve the current LOS from D to A and would operate at LOS B by the end of the 20-year study period. A traffic signal on the Upgrade Existing Alternative has been evaluated at the Highway 326/124 intersection and found to be needed.

The proposed improvements are considered feasible. Table 2 is a summary of the alternatives.

Table 2 Summary of Alternatives						
Alternative	Length (miles)	Total millions (2011\$)	Volume (2012 vpd)	LOS (2012)	Volume (2032 vpd)	LOS (2032)
No Action	0	0	10,400	D	15,500	E
Upgrade Existing	1.1	\$10.2	10,400	A	15,500	B
3	1.0	\$9.2	10,400	A	15,500	B
4	1.0	\$8.4	10,400	A	15,500	B

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This section presents information related to the potential environmental consequences for each alternative and mitigation for potential impacts.

Relocations

Relocations occur when residential, business, or non-profit properties fall within the established right of way limits for a proposed project. Until a Preferred Alternative has been identified and the final design has been established, relocation quantities are estimates.

Estimated right of way widths were used in determining potential structures to be relocated. Cost estimates, a Conceptual Stage Relocation Study, and an available housing inventory are located in Appendix C. The Conceptual Stage Relocation Study provides a general listing of residences and businesses that would be affected by each alternative. Estimates are provided in Table 3.

Table 3			
Estimated Relocations			
Alternative	Residential Owners	Businesses	Total
No Action	0	0	0
Upgrade Existing	2	3	5
Alternative 3	7	2	9
Alternative 4	3	1	4

The No Action Alternative would not require any relocations. No elderly or low-income households would be impacted by the Upgrade Existing Alternative. Two of the

relocatees on Alternative 3 are elderly, and one is low-income. One of the relocatees on Alternative 4 is elderly. None of the alternatives would impact minority families.

All relocation activities are governed by the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policy Act of 1970, which ensures that decent, safe and sanitary housing is available and offered to displaced residents prior to the initiation of construction.

Environmental Justice Impacts and Title VI Compliance

This proposed project is in compliance with Title VI and Executive Order 12898. The AHTD public involvement process did not exclude any individuals due to income, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability. By using the 2000 U.S. Census Data, the Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines (Federal Register, January 2011), making field observations and conducting a public involvement meeting, the determination was made that the proposed project will not have any disproportionate or adverse impacts on minorities, low-income, elderly, or disabled populations.

Social Environment

The geographic area considered for analysis of existing social conditions and environmental consequences consists of an area east of the Russellville central business district. The project area consists mostly of rural, agricultural and residential properties. A small number of businesses are located along the project.

The No Action Alternative consists of no improvements being made to existing Highways 326 and 124. With this alternative, traffic numbers would continue to increase, congestion would become worse and traffic related noise impacts would increase. Although Alternatives 3 and 4 would have relocation impacts, social and community impacts are not anticipated because no impacts to the project area's population density or growth rate would occur.

Public Lands

There are no public parks, recreational lands or wildlife/waterfowl refuges impacted by this project.

Endangered and Threatened Species

A records check of the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission (ANHC) database of sensitive species indicated that no tracked species are known to occur within the project area. The ANHC tracks federally designated threatened or endangered species, as well as those that are considered sensitive species within Arkansas.

Prime Farmland

Prime Farmland is defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops. Impacts to Prime Farmland occur when it is converted to highway right of way.

The project would acquire approximately 5.7 acres of Prime Farmland on the Upgrade Existing Alternative, 4.3 acres of Prime Farmland on Alternative 3 and 11.1 acres on Alternative 4. Form NRCS-CPA-106, The Farmland Conversion Impact Rating, is located in Appendix D.

Hazardous Material

Field inspections and records research has determined that none of these alternatives should impact any known hazardous waste facilities, illegal dumps or areas of concern for hazardous materials.

If hazardous materials are identified, observed or accidentally uncovered by any AHTD personnel, contracting company(s) or state regulatory agency, it will be the AHTD's responsibility to determine the type, size and extent of contamination. The AHTD will identify the type of contaminant, develop a remediation plan and coordinate disposal methods to be employed for the particular type of contamination. All remediation work

will be conducted in conformance with Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations.

Archeological/Historical

A reconnaissance level cultural resources survey of the project area was conducted by an AHTD staff archeologist. The survey consisted of a review of all appropriate site records and a visual inspection of the alternative alignments. The survey was conducted in order to identify any obvious archeological sites or historic properties that might be affected by the project and to see if any of the alternatives were located within areas having a high probability for the occurrence of undiscovered cultural resources.

A variety of records were checked to determine if previously documented cultural resources were known in the project area. Several early maps were also reviewed to gather information regarding early historic settlement in the project area. All of the surrounding land is composed of similar terrain (broad, flat to rolling uplands intersected by seasonal drainages) that would likely support scattered Native American sites primarily in and along creeks and streams, and scattered historic sites and structures throughout the area. Coordination with historically affiliated tribes was conducted to ascertain if any sites of religious or cultural significance were present (Appendix F).

A review of the Arkansas Archeological Surveys and Arkansas Historic Preservation Program site files revealed no previously recorded archeological sites or historic structures within the project area. The review of the relevant historic maps showed no specific concerns other than scattered homesteads and roads nearby dating to the mid 1840s. The windshield survey identified several structures in and near the project that were believed to be potentially eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Two of these structures were determined eligible for inclusion to the NRHP, but they are both currently located well away from the proposed alternatives. One standing structure, although determined to be ineligible for inclusion to the NRHP, likely

contains intact archeological deposits that will require testing, possible data recovery and reporting. The Upgrade Existing Alternative and Alternative 3 minimize impacts to this archeological site to an extent that would be reasonably manageable. Alternative 4 would impact the entire site, require archeological testing, documentation and possible data recovery.

Once a Preferred Alternative has been identified, an intensive cultural resources survey will be conducted. If no cultural resources are identified, the project will be documented on an AHTD Project Identification Form and submitted to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) with a recommendation of no further work. If historic or Native American archeological sites are identified, a full report documenting the results of the Phase I cultural resources survey and stating the AHTD's recommendations will be prepared and submitted to the SHPO for review. Should any of the sites be determined eligible or potentially eligible for nomination to the NRHP and avoidance is not possible, then site specific data recovery plans will be prepared and data recovery will be carried at the earliest practicable time.

Noise

“Noise” is defined as an unwanted sound that interferes with an activity or disturbs the person hearing it. Sound is measured in a logarithmic unit called a decibel (dB). The human ear is more sensitive to middle and high frequency sounds, so this study uses sound levels weighted towards these frequencies, measured in A-weighted decibels (dBAs).

The number of noise receptors was estimated for this project utilizing the Federal Highway Administration’s Traffic Noise Model 2.5, existing and proposed roadway information, existing traffic information, and projected traffic levels for 2033. If the traffic noise level increases exceed 66 dBA as a result of the proposed project, the FHWA considers that receptor to be impacted. Sensitive noise receptors are residences or businesses that have a special sensitivity to noise, such as schools, churches, libraries,

and parks. A table listing the noise receptor categories can be found in the noise analysis in Appendix E.

The construction of Alternative 3 or 4 would divert traffic from the existing highways and result in lower noise levels along those routes. Noise levels would increase along the construction alternatives and surrounding areas. The distance the noise impacts extended from the centerline of the four alternatives was calculated and mapped, and the number of sensitive noise receptors was estimated for each alternative (Table 4). Noise receptor impacts are similar for each alternative.

Design year 2033 traffic volumes on Highways 326 and 124 are predicted to increase by 5,100 vehicles per day. This increase in traffic would increase sound levels at receptors along existing Highways 326 and 124. The receptors estimated to be impacted by the No Action Alternative may be currently impacted or will be as a result of this increased volume of vehicles on Highways 326 and 124.

Table 4 Noise Receptors	
Alternative	> 66 Leq dBA* (feet from center line)
No Action	5
Upgrade Existing	5
Alternative 3	5
Alternative 4	4

*Value that “approaches” the NAC level of 67 Leq dBA

Since the impacted receptors are in rural areas with a very low density of homes, standard noise mitigation, such as noise walls or berms, are not cost effective. Necessary breaks for driveways and other access points also cause barriers to be ineffective.

Construction noise on the Upgrade Existing Alternative and the new location alternatives would be temporary and relatively minor. The noise analysis which details the methods used and the results of the noise study can be found in Appendix E.

Air Quality

Utilizing the Mobile 5.0a Model (Mobile Source Emission Factor Model) and CALINE 3 dispersion model, air quality analyses have been conducted for carbon monoxide on previous projects of this type. These analyses incorporated information relating to traffic volumes, weather conditions, vehicle mix, and vehicle operating speeds to estimate carbon monoxide levels for the design year.

These computer analyses indicate that carbon monoxide concentrations of less than one part per million (ppm) will be generated in the mixing cell for a project of this type. This computer estimate, when combined with an estimated ambient level of 1.0 ppm, would be less than 2.0 ppm, and well below the national standards of 8.0 ppm for carbon monoxide.

This project is located in an area that is designated as in attainment for all transportation pollutants. Therefore, the conformity procedures of the Clean Air Act, as amended, do not apply.

Wetland and Stream Impacts

Each construction alternative would impact wetlands and streams. It is the responsibility of AHTD to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate impacts to wetlands and streams. Impacts to these resources are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5 Wetland and Stream Impacts			
Alternative	Wetlands (acres)	# of Stream Crossings	Stream Relocations (linear feet)
No Action	0	0	0
Upgrade Existing	0.2	2	0
3	0.2	1	638
4	0.5	1	0

Wetlands

There are four small areas located within the proposed project area that meet the definition of a wetland as defined in the *1987 Wetland Delineation Manual* by the Corp of Engineers. The locations of these wetlands are shown on Figure 5 and a view of each wetland is shown in Figures 6-9. Wetland A and C would be described as wetland pasture. Wetland C is a very small maintained pasture area that appears to stay wet during the winter and spring months. Wetland B is an herbaceous dominated area with a few scattered green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*). Wetland D is located across the highway from Wetland C. This wetland would be classified as a palustrine forested wetland.

Each construction alternative would impact 0.04 acre of Wetland A. Based on the current alignments there would be no impacts to Wetland B from any of the alternatives. Upgrade Existing Alternative and Alternative 3 would impact approximately 0.16 acre of Wetland C. Alternative 4 would impact 0.5 acre of Wetland D.

There are two dominate soil series mapped by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) within the project area: Leadvale silt loam, 1 to 3 percent slope and Linker fine



Figure 5
Wetland and Stream Impacts

- Stream Crossing
- Wetland
- Alt. 3 Proposed ROW
- Alt. 4 Proposed ROW
- Upgrade Existing

Photography Date: Winter 2006



Figure 6. Wetland A



Figure 7. Wetland B



Figure 8. Wetland C



Figure 9. Wetland D

sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slope. Neither of these two soil series is listed as hydric. A search of the NRCS's soil database revealed that while the Leadvale series is not a hydric soil, it can have up to 5 percent inclusions of Aquults and 5 percent of the Guthrie series, which are hydric. No data was available as to whether the Linker series can have wet inclusions. Wetlands A and B are both located within mapped areas of the Leadvale series, while Wetlands C and D are located within mapped areas of Linker. Regardless of the soils mapped at each area, soils at each of the four wetland sites would meet the F3 indicator as defined in the NRCS's *Field Indicators of Hydric Soils in the United States*.

Streams

There is one small intermittent stream and one ephemeral stream within the project area (Figure 5). Pictures of these streams are shown in Figures 10 and 11. The existing box culvert associated with the ephemeral stream would be retained and extended with the Upgrade Existing Alternative and Alternative 3. The Upgrade Existing Alternative would also have two crossings of the intermittent stream. Alternative 3 would impact the intermittent stream, resulting in 638 feet of stream relocation. Alternative 4 would cross the ephemeral stream channel once.

Stream and wetland crossings associated with all of the alternatives will require a Section 404 Permit. Wetland and stream mitigation, if required, will be determined through coordination with the USACE during the 404 permitting process.

Floodplains/Floodways

The alternative alignments were reviewed to identify any encroachments into areas of special flood hazard as shown on the communities Flood Insurance Rate Maps issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. No areas of special flood hazard were identified within the project area. Therefore, no direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to floodplains are expected as a result of this project.



Figure 10. Ephemeral Stream Channel



Figure 11. Intermittent Stream Channel

Water Quality

The project area lies within the Arkansas River Valley Ecoregion where the primary turbidity standard set by Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) for streams is 21 Nephelometric Turbidity Units (NTUs) and 25 NTUs for lakes and reservoirs (Regulation 2). Given the existing water quality within the region, additional sediments contributed during construction will likely result in localized, short-term adverse water quality impacts. Temporary exceedances of state water quality standards for turbidity may occur. Other potential sources of water quality impacts include petroleum products from construction equipment, highway pollutants from the operations of the facility, and toxic and hazardous material spills.

The AHTD will comply with all requirements of The Clean Water Act, as amended, for the construction of this project. This includes Section 401; Water Quality Certification, Section 402; National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Permit (NPDES), and Section 404; Permits for Dredged or Fill Material. The NPDES Permit requires the preparation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP will include all specifications and best management practices (BMPs) needed for control of erosion and sedimentation. This will be prepared when the roadway design work has been completed in order to best integrate the BMPs with the project design. No indirect or cumulative impacts to water quality are expected.

Public/Private Water Supplies

The project area is not within a public drinking water system's Wellhead Protection Area. No impacts to public drinking water supplies are anticipated due to this project.

If any permanent impacts to private drinking water sources occur due to this project, the AHTD will take appropriate action to mitigate these impacts. Impacts to private water sources due to the contractor neglect or misconduct are the responsibility of the contractor.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

There are no federal or state regulated water bodies impacted by this project that are designated wild or scenic rivers.

Natural and Visual Environment

The project is located within the Arkansas Valley Plains Ecoregion just south of the Arkansas Valley Hills Ecoregion. The landform is an undulating plain grading north into hills, valleys, and low flat-topped mountains. Elevations in the immediate project area vary from about 400 feet above mean sea level (msl) at the southern portions of the project to 500 feet msl at a hill toward the north terminus. The nearby Carrion Crow Mountain slopes up to 800 feet msl at its higher points.

Surface geology in the project area consists primarily of the upper part of the Atoka Formation (Middle Pennsylvanian). The Upper member is about 6,500 feet thick and is primarily a gray/black shale with minor silty to occasionally quartzose sandstones. The mountains consist of Hartshorne Sandstone, a medium-brown to light-gray, massive, frequently cross-bedded, medium-grained sandstone.

Soils in the project area are named as Leadville-Taft. These are moderately well drained and somewhat poorly drained, level to gently sloping, deep, loamy soils with fragipanes; on old stream terraces in broad valleys.

Water resources in the immediate project area include two headwater tributaries draining south to Prairie Creek. Water at the north end of the project drains north to Shiloh Creek. Both creeks drain west to Lake Dardanelle.

Historically, natural vegetation consisted of tall-grass prairie, oak-hickory forest, and stream valley woodland. All of the historic vegetation has been removed in the immediate project area for pasture or development. Pastures are mostly native grass pastures consisting largely of broomsedge grass. A few pastures and many residential yards have been planted in bermuda grass. Oak-hickory forest remains on steep slopes of

mountains. Common species include post oak, blackjack oak, white oak, black oak, black hickory, and mockernut hickory. Scattered trees in pastures and planted at residences include various oaks, eastern red cedar, and shortleaf pine. Some overgrown areas also have the potentially invasive species Chinese privet.

Manmade structures, primarily adjacent to the existing roadway, include several businesses, residences, and utility lines. Users of the road are largely local, commuter, and some commercial traffic. There are no officially designated sensitive or visual resources. The visual quality of the existing roadway varies from poor near the Russellville Four Wheel Drive sales and salvage operation, to good at the southern portion of the project area, due to the pastoral setting with a view of the forested slopes of Carrion Crow Mountain. Alternative 4 would sustain this view longer and avoid the Russellville Four Wheel Drive sales and salvage operation. The Upgrade Existing Alternative and Alternative 3 would have more viewers of the road experience unavoidable but temporary negative impacts during construction, due to the proximity of the viewers from the existing roadway.

No impacts to local biodiversity are expected due to the intensive human impacts already inflicted on the local environment, primarily the historical conversion of prairie and forest to cropland and later to modern pasture. Secondary impacts to the terrestrial environment may possibly include the spread of invasive plant species onto new roadside right of way.

Land Use

Land use is primarily pasture with residential and commercial use along the existing roadway. Direct impacts to land use would be the conversion to right of way. Existing land use was digitized using aerial imagery interpretation, and spatial analysis was used to estimate conversion by acre to roadway (Table 6). Secondary impacts for Alternative 4 would likely include new residential and commercial construction along the new roadway.

Table 6
Land Use/Land Cover Impacts
(acres)

Land Use	No Action Alternative	Upgrade Existing Alternative	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Residential	0	4	5	2
Commercial	0	1	1	1
Church	0	0	0	0
Pasture/Field	0	2	1	14
Woodlots and Overgrown lots	0	1	1	3
Existing Roadway	0	1	7	2
Total	0	9	15	22

COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

The AHTD provided the opportunity for early public input into the development of the proposed project on July 26, 2011. A public officials meeting and a public involvement meeting were held. Public officials and other attendees were given the opportunity to discuss the proposed project with AHTD staff and view aerial photographs showing the Alternatives. The overall response by the public was negative to Alternative 1 and Alternative 2. As a result of public input, Alternatives 3 and 4 were developed. A copy of the Public Involvement Summary is located in Appendix B. Coordination with historically affiliated tribes and comments from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service are located in Appendix F.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A preferred alternative has not been designated for this project. After the Environmental Assessment approved for public dissemination, a Location and Design Public Hearing will be held. After a review of comment received from citizens, public officials, and public agencies, the next step in the environmental process will be to identify a preferred alternative based on the information contained in the EA and the comments received.

The environmental analysis of the proposed project did not identify any significant impact to the natural and social environment. Table 7 contains a comparison of the alternatives.

Table 7

Alternatives Comparison

Alternative	Length (miles)	Total cost millions (2011\$)	Relocations	Wetlands (acres)	Stream Crossings	Stream Relocation (feet)	Prime Farmland (acres)	Noise Receptors	Cultural Resources
No Action	1.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
Upgrade Existing	1.1	10.2	2 Residential 3 Businesses	0.2	2	0	5.7	5	0
3	1.0	9.2	7 Residential 2 Businesses	0.2	1	638	4.3	5	0
4	1.0	8.4	3 Residential 1 Business	0.5	1	0	11.1	4	1

COMMITMENTS

The AHTD's standard commitments associated with relocation procedures, hazardous waste abatement, and control of water quality impacts have been made in association with this project. They are as follows:

- See Relocation procedures located in Appendix C.
- If hazardous materials, unknown illegal dumps or USTs are identified or accidentally uncovered by AHTD personnel or its contracting company(s), the AHTD will determine the type, size, and extent of the contamination according to the AHTD's response protocol. The AHTD in cooperation with the ADEQ will determine the type of contaminant, remediation method, and disposal methods to be employed for that particular type of contamination. The proposed project will be in compliance with local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
- An asbestos survey by a certified asbestos inspector will be conducted on each building slated for acquisition and demolition. If the survey detects the presence of any asbestos-containing materials, plans will be developed to accomplish the safe removal of these materials prior to demolition. All asbestos abatement work will be conducted in conformance with ADEQ, EPA and OSHA asbestos abatement regulations.
- Once a preferred alternative has been identified, an intensive cultural resources survey will be conducted. If sites are affected, a full report documenting the results of the survey and stating the AHTD's recommendations will be prepared and submitted to the SHPO for review. If prehistoric sites are impacted, consultation with the appropriate Native American Tribe will be initiated and the site(s) evaluated to determine if Phase II testing is necessary. Should any of the sites be found to be eligible or potentially eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places and avoidance is not possible, then site specific

treatment plans will be prepared and data recovery will be conducted at the earliest practicable time. All borrow pits, waste areas and work roads will be surveyed for cultural resources when locations become available.

- Wetland and stream mitigation, if required, will be determined through coordination with the USACE during the Section 404 permitting process.
- The AHTD will comply with all requirements of the Clean Water Act, as amended, for the construction of this project. This includes Section 401, Water Quality Certification; Section 402, NPDES; and Section 404, Permit for Dredged or Fill Material.
- If any permanent impacts to private drinking water sources occur due to this project, the AHTD will take appropriate action to mitigate these impacts.
- A wildflower seed mix will be included in the permanent seeding for the project.

APPENDIX A

Level of Service Descriptions

The concept of level of service is defined as a qualitative measure describing operational conditions within a traffic stream, and their perception by motorists and/or passengers. A level of service definition generally describes these conditions in terms of such factors as speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort and convenience, and safety. Six levels of service are defined for each type of facility for which analysis procedures are available. They are given letter designations, from A to F, with level of service F the worst.

In general, the various levels of service are defined as follows for uninterrupted flow facilities.

DESCRIPTIONS OF LEVEL OF SERVICE

Two-Lane Highway

LOS A - At LOS A, motorists experience high operating speeds and little difficulty in passing. A small amount of platooning would be expected. Drivers should be able to maintain operating speeds close or equal to the free-flow speed (FFS) of the facility.

LOS B - At LOS B, passing demand and passing capacity are balanced. Platooning becomes noticeable. It becomes difficult to maintain FFS operation, but the speed reduction is still relatively small.

LOS C - At LOS C, most vehicles are traveling in platoons. Speeds are noticeably reduced on all three classes of highway.

LOS D - At LOS D, platooning increases significantly. Passing demand is high but passing capacity approaches zero. A high percentage of vehicles are now traveling in platoons, and percent time-spent-following (PTSF) is quite noticeable. The fall-off from FFS is now significant.

LOS E - At LOS E, demand is approaching capacity. Passing is virtually impossible, and PTSF is more than 80%. Speeds are seriously reduced. Speed is less than two-thirds the FFS. The lower limit of this LOS represents capacity.

LOS F - LOS F exists whenever demand flow in one or both directions exceeds the capacity of the segment. Operating conditions are unstable, and heavy congestion exists on all two-lane highways.

DESCRIPTIONS OF LEVEL OF SERVICE

Multi-Lane Highway

LOS A - LOS A describes free-flow operations where FFS prevails and vehicles are almost completely unimpeded in their ability to maneuver within the traffic stream. The effects of incidents or point breakdowns are easily absorbed.

LOS B - LOS B represents reasonably free-flow operations where FFS is maintained. The ability to maneuver within the traffic stream is only slightly restricted, and the general level of physical psychological comfort provided to drivers is still high. The effects of minor incidents and point breakdowns are still easily absorbed.

LOS C - LOS C provides for flow with speeds near the FFS. Freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream is noticeably restricted, and lane changes require more care and vigilance on the part of the driver. Minor incidents may still be absorbed, but the local deterioration in service quality will be significant. Queues may be expected to form behind any significant blockages.

LOS D - LOS D is the level at which speeds begin to decline with increasing flows, with density increasing more quickly. Freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream is seriously limited and drivers experience reduced physical and psychological comfort levels. Even minor incidents can be expected to create queuing, because the traffic stream has little space to absorb disruptions.

LOS E - LOS E describes operation at capacity. Operations at this level are highly volatile because there are virtually no usable gaps within the traffic stream, leaving little room to maneuver within the traffic stream. Any disruption to the traffic stream can establish a disruption wave that propagates throughout the upstream traffic flow. At capacity, the traffic stream has no ability to dissipate even the most minor disruption, and any incident can be expected to produce a serious breakdown and substantial queuing. The physical and psychological comfort afforded to drivers is poor.

APPENDIX B

Public Involvement Synopsis

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SYNOPSIS

Job Number 080389

Hob Nob Rd.-Hwy. 124 (Hwy. 326)

Pope County

July 26, 2011

An open forum Public Involvement Meeting for the proposed Highway 326 Improvements project was held at the Calvary Temple of God (Fellowship Hall) in Russellville from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. on July 26, 2011. Efforts to involve minorities and the public in the meeting included the following:

- Display advertisement placed in the Courier on Sunday, July 17, 2011 and Sunday, July 24, 2011.
- Distribution of flyers in the project area.

The following information was available for inspection and comment.

- Displays including an aerial photograph at a scale of one inch equals 150 feet.
- Preliminary plans at a scale of one inch equals 100 feet.

Handouts for the public included a comment sheet and a small-scale map illustrating the project location, which was identical to the aerial photograph display. Copies of the handouts are attached.

Table 1 describes the results of the public participation at the meeting.

TABLE 1	
Public Participation	Totals
Attendance at meeting (including AHTD staff)	89
Comments received	37
Petitions received	1

AHTD staff reviewed all comments received and evaluated their contents. The summary of comments listed below reflects the personal perception or opinion of the person or organization making the statement. The sequencing of the comments is random and is not intended to reflect importance or numerical values. Some of the comments were combined and/or paraphrased to simplify the synopsis process.

An analysis of the responses received as a result of the public survey is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2	
Survey Results	Totals
Supports the need for improvements	35
Does not support the need for improvements	1
Alternative Preferred	
Improvements to Existing Highway	25
Alternative 1	5
Alternative 2	2
No-Action	0
None of the Alternatives presented	2
Preferred both Alternatives 1 & 2	2
Preferred Alternative 1 & Improvements to Existing Highway	1

The following is a listing of comments concerning issues associated with this project.

- 6 individuals wanted an alternative with the least amount of cost.
- 19 individuals wanted a turning lane and signal at Highway 124 and Weir Road.
- 583 individuals signed a petition wanting a turning lane and signal at Highway 124 and Weir Road.
- 7 individuals wanted the project extended north to Crow Mountain Road.
- 2 individuals did not like Alternative 2 because of the loss of jobs at the business.
- 1 individual wanted an alternative further east so it would not relocate anyone.
- 2 individuals were concerned about their property and homes.

Attachments:

- Blank comment form
- Small-scale project location handout

RJ *RJ*
DN *DN*

JB:sj

ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT (AHTD)

CITIZEN COMMENT FORM

**AHTD JOB NUMBER 080389
Hob Nob Rd. - Hwy. 124 (Hwy. 326)
POPE COUNTY**

**LOCATION:
CALVARY TEMPLE ASSEMBLY OF GOD
(FELLOWSHIP HALL)
3345 SR 124
RUSSELLVILLE, AR
4:00 – 7:00 P.M.
TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2011**

Make your comments on this form and leave it with AHTD personnel at the meeting or mail it within 15 days to: Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Environmental Division, Post Office Box 2261, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-2261.

Yes No

Do you feel there is a need for the proposed improvements of Highway 326 from Hob Nob Road extending to Hwy. 124? Comment (optional)_____

Do you know of any historical sites, family cemeteries, or archaeological sites in the project area? Please note and discuss with staff. _____

Do you know of any environmental constraints, such as UST's, asbestos, endangered species, hazardous waste sites, existing or former landfills, or parks and public lands in the vicinity of the project? Please note and discuss with AHTD staff. _____

Does your home or property offer any limitations to the project, such as septic systems, springs or wells that the Department needs to consider in its design? _____

(Continued on back)

Yes No

Do you have a suggestion that would make this proposed project better serve the needs of the community? _____

Do you feel that the proposed widening project will have any impacts (Beneficial or Adverse) on your property and/or community (economic, environmental, social, etc.)? Please explain. _____

Which Alternative Alignment would you consider to be your preferred alternative for the proposed improvements of Hwy. 326 in Russellville?

- Alternative 1 (Yellow)
- Alternative 2 (Red)
- Improvements on existing (White)

Why is that your preference? _____

It is often necessary for the AHTD to contact property owners along potential routes. If you are a property owner along or adjacent to the route under consideration, please provide information below. Thank you.

Name : _____ (Please Print)

Address: _____ Phone: (_____) _____ -- _____

E-mail: _____

Please make additional comments here. _____



Notes:


 0 225 450 Feet
 AHTD - Environmental GIS - Strawn
 Map Date: July 13, 2011
 Meeting Date: July 26, 2011
 Public Involvement Display



Job 080389
 Hob Nob Rd. - Hwy. 124
 (Hwy. 326)
 Pope County

Preliminary
 Subject to Revision

 Alternative 1
 Alternative 2
 Upgrade Existing

Photography Date: NAIP Summer 2010

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APPENDIX C

Conceptual Stage Relocation Study

ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

December 5, 2011

RECEIVED
AHTD

DEC - 7 2011

TO: Lynn Malbrough, Division Head, Environmental Division

ENVIRONMENTAL
DIVISION

FROM: Perry M. Johnston, Division Head, Right of Way Division



SUBJECT: Cost Estimate
Job 080389
Hob Nob Rd. – Hwy. 124 (Russellville) (S)
Pope County

Cost estimates for acquiring right of way and adjusting utilities for Alternatives 3 (Red) and 4 (Yellow) are summarized:

<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Property Acquisition</u>	<u>Relocation</u>	<u>Reimb. Utility Adjustments</u>	<u>Non-Reimb. Utility Adjustments</u>	<u>Total</u>
3 (Red)	\$2,360,000	\$348,000	\$624,300	\$87,500	\$3,419,800
4 (Yellow)	1,900,000	151,000	481,000	42,000	2,574,000

Copies of the cost estimates and a Conceptual Stage Relocation Analysis are attached. Please note the premises under which the estimates were provided.

If you need additional information, please contact Kay Crutchfield at 2311.

Attachments

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Kay Crutchfield, Assistant Division Head
Right of Way Division

FROM: E. P. Scruggs III, Reviewing Appraiser,
Appraisal Section, Right of Way Division

DATE: December 2, 2011

SUBJECT: Job Cost Estimate
Job #080389
Hob Nob Rd. – Hwy. 124 (Russellville)
Pope County

EP

Alternates 3 (Red) and Alternate 4 (Yellow) were inspected on November 30, 2011.

Estimates for the alternates are based on the following:

1. A limited exterior inspection of the improvements was made
2. The market information is preliminary and not verified
3. No right of way staking was in place
4. Areas were estimated from the aerial photograph as no right of way or construction maps were available.

Considering the above factors, the estimated right of way cost is:

Alternate 3 (Red)
\$2,360,000.00
Two Million Three Hundred Sixty Thousand Dollars

Alternate 4 (Yellow)
\$1,900,000.00
One Million Nine Hundred Thousand Dollars

ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
RIGHT OF WAY DIVISION RELOCATION SECTION

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Lynn P. Malbrough, Environmental Division Head
FROM: Perry M. Jolmston, Right of Way Division Head
DATE: December 5, 2011
SUBJECT: Job 080389
Hob Nob Rd.- Crow Mtn. Road (Russellville) (S)
Pope County
CONCEPTUAL STAGE RELOCATION STATEMENT

GENERAL STATEMENT OF RELOCATION PROCEDURE

Persons displaced as a direct result of acquisition for the subject project will be eligible for relocation assistance in accordance with Public Law 91-646, Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1970. The Relocation Program provides advisory assistance and payments to minimize the adverse impact and hardship of displacement upon such persons. No lawful occupant shall be required to move without receiving a minimum of 90 days advance written notice. All displaced persons: residential, business, farm, nonprofit organization, and personal property occupants are eligible for reimbursement for actual reasonable moving costs.

Construction of the project will not begin until decent, safe, and sanitary replacement housing is in place and offered to all residential occupants. It is the Department's Policy that adequate replacement housing will be made available, built if necessary, before any person is required to move from their dwelling. All replacement housing must be fair housing and offered to all affected persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

There are two basic types of residential relocation payments: (1) Replacement Housing Payments and (2) Moving Expense Payments. Replacement housing payments are made to qualified owners and tenants. An owner may receive a price differential payment of up to \$22,500.00 for the increased cost of a replacement dwelling. A tenant may receive a rental assistance payment of up to \$5,250.00 for the increased cost of a replacement dwelling. The eligible amount for a replacement housing payment is determined by a study of comparable replacement dwellings currently available on the market. Owners may also be eligible for payments to compensate them for the increased interest cost for a new mortgage and the incidental expenses incurred in connection with the purchase of a replacement dwelling. Tenants may elect to purchase a replacement dwelling and receive a down payment assistance payment up to the amount of their rental assistance eligibility. Replacement Housing Payments are made in addition to Moving Expense Payments.

Businesses, farms, and nonprofit organizations are eligible for Reestablishment Payments, not to exceed \$10,000.00. Reestablishment Expense Payments are made in addition to Moving Expense Payments. A business, farm, or nonprofit organization may be eligible for a fixed payment in lieu of the moving costs and reestablishment costs if relocation cannot be accomplished without a substantial loss of existing patronage. The fixed payment will be

computed in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations and cannot exceed \$20,000.00.

If the displaced person is not satisfied with the amounts offered as relocation payments, they will be provided a form to assist in filing a formal appeal. A hearing will be arranged at a time and place convenient for the displaced person, and the facts of the case will be promptly and carefully reviewed.

Relocation services will be provided until all persons are relocated or their relocation eligibility expires. The Relocation Office will have listings of available replacement housing and commercial properties. Information is also maintained concerning other Federal and State Programs offering assistance to displaced persons.

Based on an aerial photograph including the preliminary right of way for the two alternates and an on-site project review, it is estimated that the alternates for the subject project *could* cause the following displacements and costs:

Alternate 3, Red Line

7 Residential Owners	\$245,000
2 Businesses	40,000
1 Landlord Business	10,000
Services	53,000
TOTAL	\$348,000

Alternate 4, Yellow Line

3 Residential Owners	\$105,000
1 Business	20,000
1 Personal Property	3,000
Services	23,000
TOTAL	\$151,000

The general characteristics of the displaced persons are listed on the Conceptual Stage Inventory Record forms in the back of this report. The general characteristics have been determined by a visual inspection of the potential displacements by a Relocation Coordinator. The Relocation Coordinator utilized area demographic data, visual inspections, experience, and knowledge in making this determination.

An available housing inventory has been compiled and indicates there are at least thirty-two comparable replacement dwellings available for sale within ten miles of the project area. A commercial property inventory has also been completed and indicates there are at least seventeen properties available within ten miles of the project area. Six of the commercial properties are improved properties for sale, nine of the properties are vacant commercial sites for sale, and two of the properties are improved commercial properties for lease.

A breakdown of the available properties is as follows:

<u>Residential for Sale</u> <u>Listing Price</u>	<u>Number of Properties</u> <u>Single Family Residential</u>
\$ 75,000 - \$100,000	7
\$100,100 - \$125,000	6
\$125,100 - \$150,000	6
\$150,100 - \$175,000	6
\$175,100 - \$200,000	2
\$200,100 - \$225,000	2
\$225,100 - \$250,000	2
\$250,100 - \$275,000	<u>1</u>
Total	32

<u>Commercial Properties for Sale</u> <u>Listing Price</u>	<u>Number of Properties</u>
\$ 125,000 - \$150,000	1
\$ 150,100 - \$175,000	0
\$ 175,100 - \$200,000	1
\$ 200,100 - \$225,000	0
\$ 225,100 - \$250,000	2
\$ 250,100 - \$275,000	0
\$ 275,100 - \$300,000	1
\$ 300,100 - \$325,000	0
\$ 325,100 - \$350,000	0
\$ 350,100 - \$375,000	0
\$ 375,100 - \$400,000	<u>1</u>
Total	6

<u>Commercial Land for Sale</u> <u>Listing Price</u>	<u>Number of Properties</u>
\$ 75,000 - \$100,000	2
\$ 100,100 - \$125,000	2
\$ 125,100 - \$150,000	0
\$ 150,100 - \$175,000	0
\$ 175,100 - \$200,000	3
\$ 200,100 - \$225,000	1
\$ 225,100 - \$250,000	<u>1</u>
Total	9

<u>Commercial Properties for Rent</u> <u>Monthly Rent</u>	<u>Number of Properties</u>
\$ 6,000 - \$ 25,000	1
\$ 25,100 - \$ 50,000	0
\$ 50,100 - \$ 75,000	<u>1</u>
Total	2

This is a highway improvement and/or new location project for Hwy. 326/124 in Russellville, AR. The number of dwellings and properties currently available on the market are adequate and comparable to provide replacement housing for the families displaced from the subject project for each alternate. The real estate housing markets should not be detrimentally affected and there should be no problems with insufficient housing at this time. In the event replacement housing is not available at the time of displacement or Replacement Housing Payments exceed the monetary limits, Section 206 of Public Law 91-646 (Housing of Last Resort) will be utilized to its fullest and practical extent.

The replacement property inventory was compiled from data obtained from real estate companies, web sites, and local newspapers for the subject area. The dwellings contained in the inventory have been determined to be comparable and decent, safe, and sanitary. The locations of the comparable dwellings are not less desirable in regard to public utilities and public and commercial facilities, reasonably accessible to the displaced persons' places of employment, adequate to accommodate the displaced persons, and in neighborhoods which are not subject to unreasonable adverse environmental factors. It has also been determined that the available housing is within the financial means of the displaced persons and is fair housing open to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, or national origin consistent with the requirements of 49 CFR, Subpart A, Section 24.2 and Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that each displaced person is fully aware of their benefits, entitlements, and available courses of action.

All displaced persons will be offered relocation assistance under provisions in the applicable FHWA regulations. At the time of displacement another inventory of available housing in the subject area will be obtained and an analysis of the market made to ensure that there are dwellings adequate to meet the needs of all displaced residential occupants. Also, special relocation advisory services and assistance will be administered commensurate with displaced persons' needs, when necessary. Examples of these include, but are not limited to, Housing of Last Resort as previously mentioned and consultation with local officials, social and federal agencies and community groups.

There are no other identified unusual conditions involved with this project.

Alternate 3, Red Line ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
 CONCEPTUAL STAGE RELOCATION INVENTORY

Job No. 080389 Job Name Hob Nob Rd. - Hwy. 124 Relocation (I-40-West) Date of Inventory 11-30-2011

Type Relocation	Number	Residential Property Values or Rental Rates	Large Family Households	Disabled Person Households	Minority Households	Elderly Households	Low Income Households	Employees Affected (Range)
Residential Owners	7	\$50,000 - \$250,000	0	0	0	2	1	
Residential Tenants	0							
Businesses	2							5-8
Landlord Businesses	1							1
Nonprofit Organizations	0							
Personal Properties	0							
Totals	10	N/A	0	0	0	2	1	

Alternate 4, Yellow Line **ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT**
CONCEPTUAL STAGE RELOCATION INVENTORY

Job No. 080389 Job Name Hob Nob Rd. - Hwy. 124 Relocation (I-40-West) Date of Inventory 11-30-2011

Type Relocation	Number	Residential Property Values or Rental Rates	Large Family Households	Disabled Person Households	Minority Households	Elderly Households	Low Income Households	Employees Affected (Range)
Residential Owners	3	\$75,000 - \$150,000	0	0	0	1	0	
Residential Tenants	0							
Businesses	1							1-5
Landlord Businesses	0	N/A						
Nonprofit Organizations	0							
Personal Properties	1							
Totals	5	N/A	0	0	0	1	0	

**ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
RIGHT OF WAY DIVISION
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

April 26, 2012

TO: Lynn Malbrough, Division Head, Environmental Division

FROM: Perry M. Johnston, Division Head, Right of Way Division



SUBJECT: Job 080839
Hob Nob Rd. – Crow Mtn. Rd. (Russellville)
Pope County
ROW Information Request

Attached is the cost information requested for the alternative to upgrade the cross section to indicate curb and gutter for the entire length of the project.

RECEIVED
AHTD

APR 27 2012

ENVIRONMENTAL
DIVISION

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Kay Crutchfield, Assistant Division Head
Right of Way Division

FROM:  E. P. Scruggs III, Reviewing Appraiser,
Appraisal Section, Right of Way Division

DATE: April 23, 2012

SUBJECT: Job Cost Estimate
Job #080389
Hob Nob Rd. – Crow Mtn. Rd. (Russellville)
Hwy. 124-326
Pope County

Based on a personal inspection of the project area as well as information provided by the preliminary alignment – map and memo from Lynn P. Malbrough April 10, 2012, an estimate of right of way cost is provided.

This estimate is premised on the following:

Only a limited and cursory inspection of the improvements as well as the local market was conducted.

There was no staking available and the proposed Right of Way was estimated and inspected from the existing Right of Way.

No owner contact has been made.

Considering the above factors, the estimated right of way cost is:

\$2,550,000.00
Two Million Five Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars

**ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
RIGHT OF WAY DIVISION RELOCATION SECTION**

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Lynn P. Malbrough, Environmental Division Head
FROM: Perry M. Johnston, Right of Way Division Head
DATE: April 23, 2012
SUBJECT: Job 080389
Hob Nob Rd.- Crow Mtn. Road (Russellville) (S)
Pope County
CONCEPTUAL STAGE RELOCATION STATEMENT



GENERAL STATEMENT OF RELOCATION PROCEDURE

Persons displaced as a direct result of acquisition for the subject project will be eligible for relocation assistance in accordance with Public Law 91-646, Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1970. The Relocation Program provides advisory assistance and payments to minimize the adverse impact and hardship of displacement upon such persons. No lawful occupant shall be required to move without receiving a minimum of 90 days advance written notice. All displaced persons: residential, business, farm, nonprofit organization, and personal property occupants are eligible for reimbursement for actual reasonable moving costs.

Construction of the project will not begin until decent, safe, and sanitary replacement housing is in place and offered to all residential occupants. It is the Department's Policy that adequate replacement housing will be made available, built if necessary, before any person is required to move from their dwelling. All replacement housing must be fair housing and offered to all affected persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

There are two basic types of residential relocation payments: (1) Replacement Housing Payments and (2) Moving Expense Payments. Replacement housing payments are made to qualified owners and tenants. An owner may receive a price differential payment of up to \$22,500.00 for the increased cost of a replacement dwelling. A tenant may receive a rental assistance payment of up to \$5,250.00 for the increased cost of a replacement dwelling. The eligible amount for a replacement housing payment is determined by a study of comparable replacement dwellings currently available on the market. Owners may also be eligible for payments to compensate them for the increased interest cost for a new mortgage and the incidental expenses incurred in connection with the purchase of a replacement dwelling. Tenants may elect to purchase a replacement dwelling and receive a downpayment assistance payment up to the amount of their rental assistance eligibility. Replacement Housing Payments are made in addition to Moving Expense Payments.

Businesses, farms, and nonprofit organizations are eligible for Reestablishment Payments, not to exceed \$10,000.00. Reestablishment Expense Payments are made in addition to Moving Expense Payments. A business, farm, or nonprofit organization may be eligible for a fixed payment in lieu of the moving costs and reestablishment costs if relocation cannot be accomplished without a substantial loss of existing patronage. The fixed payment will be

computed in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations and cannot exceed \$20,000.00.

If the displaced person is not satisfied with the amounts offered as relocation payments, they will be provided a form to assist in filing a formal appeal. A hearing will be arranged at a time and place convenient for the displaced person, and the facts of the case will be promptly and carefully reviewed.

Relocation services will be provided until all persons are relocated or their relocation eligibility expires. The Relocation Office will have listings of available replacement housing and commercial properties. Information is also maintained concerning other Federal and State Programs offering assistance to displaced persons.

=====
Based on an aerial photograph including the preliminary right of way for the upgrade existing alternative and an on-site project review, it is estimated to upgrade the existing alternative for the subject project could cause the following displacements and costs:

Upgrade Existing Alternative
Curb and Gutter Design - Entire Project

2 Residential Owners	\$ 70,000
3 Businesses	50,000
2 Personal Property Owners	7,500
Services	<u>23,000</u>
TOTAL	\$150,500

The general characteristics of the displaced persons are listed on the Conceptual Stage Inventory Record forms in the back of this report. The general characteristics have been determined by a visual inspection of the potential displacements by a Relocation Coordinator. The Relocation Coordinator utilized area demographic data, visual inspections, experience, and knowledge in making this determination.

An available housing inventory has been compiled and indicates there are at least thirty-two comparable replacement dwellings available for sale within ten miles of the project area. A commercial property inventory has also been completed and indicates there are at least twenty properties available within ten miles of the project area. Eight of the commercial properties are improved properties for sale, ten of the properties are vacant commercial sites for sale, and two of the properties are improved commercial properties for lease.

A breakdown of the available properties is as follows:

<u>Residential for Sale</u> <u>Listing Price</u>	<u>Number of Properties</u> <u>Single Family Residential</u>
\$ 75,000 - \$100,000	7
\$100,100 - \$125,000	6
\$125,100 - \$150,000	6
\$150,100 - \$175,000	6
\$175,100 - \$200,000	2
\$200,100 - \$225,000	2
\$225,100 - \$250,000	2
\$250,100 - \$275,000	<u>1</u>
Total	32

<u>Commercial Properties for Sale</u> <u>Listing Price</u>	<u>Number of Properties</u>
\$ 125,000 - \$150,000	1
\$ 150,100 - \$175,000	1
\$ 175,100 - \$200,000	1
\$ 200,100 - \$225,000	1
\$ 225,100 - \$250,000	1
\$ 250,100 - \$275,000	1
\$ 275,100 - \$300,000	1
\$ 300,100 - \$325,000	0
\$ 325,100 - \$350,000	0
\$ 350,100 - \$375,000	0
\$ 375,100 - \$400,000	<u>1</u>
Total	8

<u>Commercial Land for Sale</u> <u>Listing Price</u>	<u>Number of Properties</u>
\$ 75,000 - \$100,000	0
\$ 100,100 - \$125,000	3
\$ 125,100 - \$150,000	2
\$ 150,100 - \$175,000	1
\$ 175,100 - \$200,000	1
\$ 200,100 - \$225,000	1
\$ 225,100 - \$250,000	<u>2</u>
Total	10

<u>Commercial Properties for Rent</u> <u>Monthly Rent</u>	<u>Number of Properties</u>
\$ 6,000 - \$ 25,000	1
\$ 25,100 - \$ 50,000	0
\$ 50,100 - \$ 75,000	<u>1</u>
Total	2

This is a highway improvement and/or new location project for Hwy. 326/124 in Russellville, AR. The number of dwellings and properties currently available on the market are adequate and comparable to provide replacement housing for the families displaced from the subject project for each alternate. The real estate housing market should not be detrimentally affected and there should be no problem with insufficient housing at this time. In the event replacement housing is not available at the time of displacement or Replacement Housing Payments exceed the monetary limits, Section 206 of Public Law 91-646 (Housing of Last Resort) will be utilized to its fullest and practical extent.

The replacement property inventory was compiled from data obtained from real estate companies, web sites, and local newspapers for the subject area. The dwellings contained in the inventory have been determined to be comparable and decent, safe, and sanitary. The locations of the comparable dwellings are not less desirable in regard to public utilities and public and commercial facilities, reasonably accessible to the displaced persons' places of employment, adequate to accommodate the displaced persons, and in neighborhoods which are not subject to unreasonable adverse environmental factors. It has also been determined that the available housing is within the financial means of the displaced persons and is fair housing open to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, or national origin consistent with the requirements of 49 CFR, Subpart A, Section 24.2 and Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that each displaced person is fully aware of their benefits, entitlements, and available courses of action.

All displaced persons will be offered relocation assistance under provisions in the applicable FHWA regulations. At the time of displacement another inventory of available housing in the subject area will be obtained and an analysis of the market made to ensure that there are dwellings adequate to meet the needs of all displaced residential occupants. Also, special relocation advisory services and assistance will be administered commensurate with displaced persons' needs, when necessary. Examples of these include, but are not limited to, Housing of Last Resort as previously mentioned and consultation with local officials, social and federal agencies and community groups.

There are no other identified unusual conditions involved with this project.

Upgrade Existing Alternative **ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT**
CONCEPTUAL STAGE RELOCATION INVENTORY

Job No. 080389 Job Name Hob Nob Rd. - Crow Mtn. Road (Russellville) (S) Date of Inventory 4-23-2012

Type Relocation	Number	Residential Property Values or Rental Rates	Large Family Households	Disabled Person Households	Minority Households	Elderly Households	Low Income Households	Employees Affected (Range)
Residential Owners	2	\$75,000 - \$150,000	0	0	0	0	0	
Residential Tenants	0							
Businesses	2							6 - 10
Landlord Businesses	1							1
Nonprofit Organizations	0							
Personal Properties	2							
Totals	7	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	7 - 11

INTER OFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 19, 2012

TO: Perry M. Johnston, Division Head, Right of Way Division

FROM: Gene Kuettel, Section Head, Utilities Section, Right of Way Division 

SUBJECT: Job 080389
Hob Nob Rd-Hwy 124 (Hwy.326)
Pope County
ROW Information Request

Per request of the Environmental Division a gross utility estimate for the above referenced project has been developed for the upgrading existing alternative. This estimate is based on field observation by Utilities Section and from information provided by utilities.

Upgrade Existing	Reimbursable	Non- Reimbursable	Total
Power	\$ 388,500.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 388,500.00
Gas	\$ 60,500.00	\$ 60,500.00	\$ 121,000.00
Power Transmission	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 200,000.00
Water	\$ 159,600.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 159,600.00
Cable	\$ 55,500.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 55,500.00
Telephone	\$ 74,000.00	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 129,000.00
Total	\$ 938,100.00	\$115,500.00	\$1,053,600.00

APPENDIX D

Farmland Conversion Impact Rating

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING
FOR CORRIDOR TYPE PROJECTS

PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency) 080389 3. Date of Land Evaluation Request: 3/17/12⁴ Sheet 1 of ___

1. Name of Project: Hobbs Rd. - Craw Mt. Rd. 5. Federal Agency Involved: FHWA

2. Type of Project: Hwy Widening 6. County and State: Pope Ar

PART II (To be completed by NRCS)

1. Date Request Received by NRCS: 2. Person Completing Form:

3. Does the corridor contain prime, unique statewide or local important farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply - Do not complete additional parts of this form). YES NO

4. Acres Irrigated: Average Farm Size:

5. Major Crop(s): 6. Farmable Land in Government Jurisdiction: Acres: % 7. Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA: Acres: %

8. Name Of Land Evaluation System Used: 9. Name of Local Site Assessment System: 10. Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS:

PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)

	Alternative Corridor For Segment			
	Existing	3	4	
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly				
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly, Or To Receive Services				
C. Total Acres In Corridor	0	0	0	0

PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information

A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland	5.7	4.3	11.1	
B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland				
C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted				
D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value				

PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information Criterion Relative value of Farmland to Be Serviced or Converted (Scale of 0 - 100 Points)

PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency) Corridor Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(c))

Assessment Criteria	Maximum Points	Existing	3	4	
1. Area in Nonurban Use	15	7	7	7	
2. Perimeter in Nonurban Use	10	5	5	5	
3. Percent Of Corridor Being Farmed	20	5	5	5	
4. Protection Provided By State And Local Government	20	0	0	0	
5. Size of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average	10	0	0	0	
6. Creation Of Nonfarmable Farmland	25	0	0	0	
7. Availability Of Farm Support Services	5	5	5	5	
8. On-Farm Investments	20	0	0	0	
9. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services	25	0	0	0	
10. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use	10	0	0	0	
TOTAL CORRIDOR ASSESSMENT POINTS	160	0 22	0 22	0 22	0

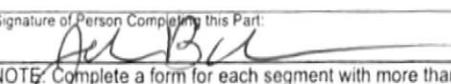
PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)

Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)	100	100	100		
Total Corridor Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment)	160	0 22	0 22	0 22	0
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)	260	0 122	0 122	0 122	0

1. Corridor Selected: 2. Total Acres of Farmlands to be Converted by Project: 3. Date Of Selection: 4. Was A Local Site Assessment Used?

None of this time See Part IV 3/17/12 YES NO

5. Reason For Selection:

Signature of Person Completing this Part:  DATE: 3/13/12

NOTE: Complete a form for each segment with more than one Alternate Corridor

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APPENDIX E

Noise Analysis

Fundamentals of Sound and Noise

“Noise” is defined as an unwanted sound. Sounds are described as noise if they interfere with an activity or disturb the person hearing them. Sound is measured in a logarithmic unit called a decibel (dB). The human ear is more sensitive to middle and high frequency sounds than it is to low frequency sounds, so sound levels are weighted to more closely reflect human perceptions. These “A-weighted” sounds are measured using the decibel unit dB(A). Because the dB(A) is based on a logarithmic scale, a 10 dB(A) increase in sound level is generally perceived as twice as loud while a 3 dB(A) increase is just barely perceptible to the human ear.

Sound levels fluctuate with time depending on the sources of the sound audible at a specific location. In addition, the degree of annoyance associated with certain sounds varies by time of day, depending on other ambient sounds affecting the listener and the activities of the listener. The time-varying fluctuations in sound levels at a fixed location can be quite complex, so they are typically reported using statistical or mathematical descriptors that are a function of sound intensity and time. A commonly used descriptor of the equivalent sound level is Leq , which represents the equivalent of a steady, unvarying level over a defined period of time containing the same level of sound energy as the time varying noise environment. $Leq(h)$ is a sound level averaged over one hour. For highway projects, the $Leq(h)$ is commonly used to describe traffic-generated sound levels at locations of outdoor human use and activity (such as residences).

Noise Impact Criteria

Traffic noise impacts take place when the predicted traffic noise levels approach or exceed the noise abatement standard, or when the predicted traffic noise levels exceed the existing noise level by ten dB(A) (decibels on the A-scale). The noise abatement standard of 67 dB(A) is used for sensitive noise receptors such as residences, schools, churches, and parks. The term “approach” is considered to be one dB(A) less than the noise abatement standard.

The number of noise receptors was estimated for this project utilizing the Federal Highway Administration’s Traffic Noise Model 2.5, existing and proposed roadway information, existing traffic information, and projected traffic levels for 2033.

Traffic noise analyses

Traffic noise analyses were performed for the Upgrade Existing alternative and for Alternative 3 using an urban cross-section. Alternative 4 was analyzed using both a rural cross-section and an urban cross-section. The rural cross-section consisted of 4

12-foot lanes, an 11-foot median, and 8-foot shoulders. The urban cross-section consisted of 4 11-foot lanes, a 12-foot median and curb and gutter.

Effects of Project

The traffic noise estimates resulted in the noise abatement distances for the Alternative 3 and 4 are shown in Table 1.

Table 1	
Noise Abatement Distance	
Alternative	> 66 Leq dBA¹ (feet from CL)
Upgrade Existing (Curb & Gutter)	112
Alternative 3 (Curb & Gutter)	112
Alternative 4 (Curb & Gutter)	112
Alternative 4 (Open shoulder)	160

¹ Value that “approaches” the NAC level of 67 Leq dBA

The estimated noise impact receptors are listed in Table 2.

Table 2	
Estimated Noise Receptors	
Alternative	> 66 Leq dBA¹ (feet from CL)
Upgrade Existing	5
Alternative 3	5
Alternative 4	1
Alternative 3/4	3

¹ Value that “approaches” the NAC level of 67 Leq dBA

Traffic Noise Abatement

Since noise impacts are predicted within 500 feet of the proposed project, the feasibility and reasonableness of potential noise abatement measures must be evaluated. Based upon AHTD's "Policy of Reasonableness and Feasibility for Type 1 – Noise Abatement Measures", any noise abatement effort using barrier walls or berms is not warranted for this project. This is due to the relatively low density of development and to the need to provide direct access to adjacent properties. In order to provide direct access to adjacent properties, breaks in the barrier walls or berms would be required. These necessary highway access breaks would render any noise barrier ineffective.

To avoid noise levels in excess of design levels, any future receptors should be located a minimum of 10 feet beyond the distance that the noise abatement standard is projected to occur. This distance should be used as a general guide and not a specific rule since the noise will vary depending upon the roadway grades and other noise contributions.

Any excessive project noise, due to construction operations, should be of short duration and have a minimum adverse effect on land uses or activities associated with this project area.

In compliance with Federal guidelines, a copy of this analysis will be transmitted to the West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District for possible use in present and future land use planning.

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APPENDIX F

Coordination



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Arkansas Division

August 30, 2011

700 West Capitol Ave
Suite 3130
Little Rock AR 72201
(501) 324-6423

In Reply Refer To:
AHTD Job Number 080389
Hob Nob Rd. – Hwy. 124
Pope County
HDA-AR

Mr. Robert Cast
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Caddo Nation
P.O. Box 487
Binger, OK 73009

Dear Mr. Cast:

This letter is written in order to initiate consultation between the Federal Highway Administration, Arkansas Division Office and the Caddo Nation regarding a federal-aid highway project that may potentially affect ancestral lands or properties that may be of religious or cultural significance to your Tribe.

The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) plans to widen and/or relocate about one-half mile of State Highway 326 in Pope County (see project location map). To date, a survey of existing records regarding previously recorded archeological sites has been conducted and no previously recorded sites have been documented in the area of potential effect. In an effort to identify any archeological sites within the proposed project area, the AHTD is planning to conduct a cultural resources survey of the project area.

Please review this information and notify us of any constraints or concerns that you may have regarding this undertaking. We would greatly appreciate your input regarding not only this project but also sites or properties in the immediate area that might be of cultural or religious significance to your Tribe. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (501) 324-6430.

Sincerely,

Randal Looney
Environmental Coordinator

Enclosure

cc: Brenda Shemayne Edwards



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Arkansas Division

August 30, 2011

700 West Capitol Ave
Suite 3130
Little Rock AR 72201
(501) 324-6423

In Reply Refer To:
AHTD Job Number 080389
Hob Nob Rd. – Hwy. 124
Pope County
HDA-AR

Ms. Jean Ann Lambert
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma (O-Gah-Pah)
P.O. Box 765
Quapaw, OK 74363-0765

Dear Ms. Lambert:

This letter is written in order to initiate consultation between the Federal Highway Administration, Arkansas Division Office and the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma regarding a federal-aid highway project that may potentially affect ancestral lands or properties that may be of religious or cultural significance to your Tribe.

The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) plans to widen and/or relocate about one-half mile of State Highway 326 in Pope County (see project location map). To date, a survey of existing records regarding previously recorded archeological sites has been conducted and no previously recorded sites have been documented in the area of potential effect. In an effort to identify any archeological sites within the proposed project area, the AHTD is planning to conduct a cultural resources survey of the project area.

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Sincerely,

Randal Looney
Environmental Coordinator

Enclosure

cc: John Berrey



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Highway
Administration

Arkansas Division

August 30, 2011

700 West Capitol Ave
Suite 3130
Little Rock AR 72201
(501) 324-6423

In Reply Refer To:
AHTD Job 080389
Hob Nob Rd. – Hwy. 129
Pope County
HDA-AR

Dr. Richard Allen
Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma
P.O. Box 948
Tahlequah, OK 74465

Dear Dr. Allen:

This letter is written in order to initiate consultation between the Federal Highway Administration, Arkansas Division Office and the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma regarding a federal-aid highway project that may potentially affect ancestral lands or properties that may be of religious or cultural significance to your Tribe.

The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) plans to widen and/or relocate about one-half mile of State Highway 326 in Pope County (see project location map). To date, a survey of existing records regarding previously recorded archeological sites has been conducted and no previously recorded sites have been documented in the area of potential effect. In an effort to identify any archeological sites within the proposed project area, the AHTD is planning to conduct a cultural resources survey of the project area.

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Sincerely,

Randal Looney
Environmental Coordinator

Enclosure



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Arkansas Division

August 30, 2011

700 West Capitol Ave
Suite 3130
Little Rock AR 72201
(501) 324-6423

In Reply Refer To:
AHTD Job Number 080389
Hob Nob Rd. – Hwy. 124
Pope County
HDA-AR

Mr. Terry Cole
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer & NAGPRA Program Coordinator
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
P.O. Box 1210
Durant, OK 74465

Dear Mr. Cole:

This letter is written in order to initiate consultation between the Federal Highway Administration, Arkansas Division Office and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma regarding a federal-aid highway project that may potentially affect ancestral lands or properties that may be of religious or cultural significance to your Tribe.

The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) plans to widen and/or relocate about one-half mile of State Highway 326 in Pope County (see project location map). To date, a survey of existing records regarding previously recorded archeological sites has been conducted and no previously recorded sites have been documented in the area of potential effect. In an effort to identify any archeological sites within the proposed project area, the AHTD is planning to conduct a cultural resources survey of the project area.

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Sincerely,

Randal Looney
Environmental Coordinator

Enclosure



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Highway
Administration

Arkansas Division

August 30, 2011

700 West Capitol Ave
Suite 3130
Little Rock AR 72201
(501) 324-6423

In Reply Refer To:
AHTD Job Number 080389
Hob Nob Rd. – Hwy. 124
Pope County
HDA-AR

Ms. Lisa Larue-Stopp
Historic Preservation Coordinator
United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians
P.O. Box 746
Talequah, OK 74465

Dear Ms. Larue-Stopp:

This letter is written in order to initiate consultation between the Federal Highway Administration, Arkansas Division Office and the United Keetwoah Band of Cherokee Indians regarding a federal-aid highway project that may potentially affect ancestral lands or properties that may be of religious or cultural significance to your Tribe.

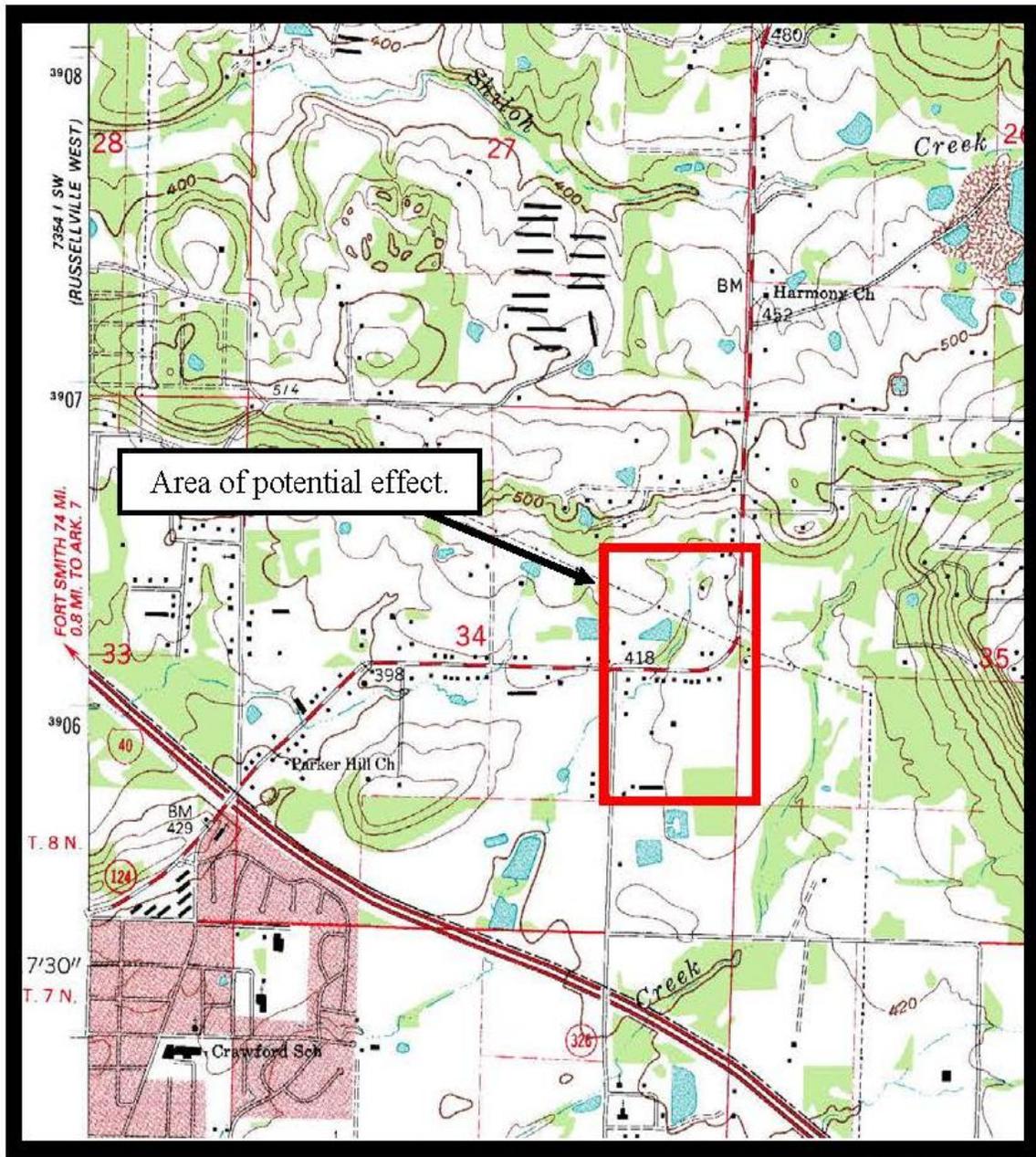
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Sincerely,

Randal Looney
Environmental Coordinator

Enclosure



7.5' Russellville, East.

AHTD Job 080389

Project location map.

From: [Baber, John E.](#)
To: [Couser, Felicia](#)
Subject: FW: Hob Nob Rd.- Crow Mtn. Rd. Russellville comments
Date: Tuesday, June 05, 2012 10:30:58 AM

From: Nichols, Don
Sent: Wednesday, April 25, 2012 3:39 PM
To: Baber, John E.
Subject: FW: Hob Nob Rd.- Crow Mtn. Rd. Russellville comments

From: [Mitch Wine@fws.gov](mailto:Mitch_Wine@fws.gov) [mailto:Mitch_Wine@fws.gov]
Sent: Thursday, April 19, 2012 3:57 PM
To: Nichols, Don
Cc: Price, Brenda; Fleming, John
Subject: Hob Nob Rd.- Crow Mtn. Rd. Russellville comments

All,

I had typed these up as official comments but will await the approved EA prior to official submission to avoid confusion now and in the future. There's nothing significantly substantive regarding the project and this is mostly standard language. Thanks.

According to the EA, the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD), proposes to widen portions (approximately 1.0 mile) of Highways 124 and 326 between Hob Nob Road and Crow Mountain Road in Russellville, Arkansas. The purpose of the project is to increase capacity and improve safety on the highways. The Service has determined that no threatened or endangered species are located within the project action area, as noted in the EA. All three alternative alignments will have relatively minor adverse effects on streams and wetlands. The Service does not anticipate significant adverse effects to the environment as a result of the proposed project.

Project plans should include context sensitive designs that minimize adverse effects to streams and wetlands from road and bridge/culvert construction, where feasible. Examples include maintaining hydrologic functions of streams through proper bridge and culvert sizing and placement. Longitudinal encroachment of the proposed roadway on stream riparian areas should be avoided to the extent practicable, allowing a minimum 100 ft. vegetated buffer where possible. Streams should be crossed at perpendicular angles whenever possible, and the use of bottomless culverts or placement of traditional culverts slightly below grade to prevent outlet drop scour and maintain a natural stream bottom is recommended. Unavoidable adverse effects to streams and wetlands should be mitigated appropriately at an approved mitigation bank. Borrow and waste areas should be located at commercially available sites or should be restricted from sensitive environmental areas such as floodplains, stream riparian corridors, and wetland buffer areas. Stormwater management during and post-construction should include best management practices, such as vegetated swales or other detention structures to ensure runoff is remediated prior to entering receiving waters.

Additionally, numerous species of migratory birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act are located in the

area and may be nesting on existing bridges, culverts, or other structures to be replaced or upgraded. Surveys should be conducted prior to initiation of project construction and special consideration given to the times and dates of construction to avoid impacts to these species which typically nest in Arkansas from March through September.

Mitch Wine
Fish & Wildlife Biologist

United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services
110 South Amity Road, Suite 300
Conway, AR 72032

(501) 513-4488 (voice)
(501) 513-4480 (fax)
(501) 350-7663 (cell)
email: mitch_wine@fws.gov
<http://www.fws.gov/arkansas-es/>