

## Chapter 4

# Summary of Findings

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This chapter summarizes the study findings, traffic impacts and benefits associated with the proposed North-South Expressway between Shreveport and the Arkansas State Line.

### Study Findings

The important findings of this traffic analysis are summarized as follows:

- Construction of the proposed North-South Expressway between Shreveport and Kansas City, Missouri will result in a continuous north-south freeway route through the central United States between the Gulf of Mexico and Canada;
- The proposed North-South Expressway is designated by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) as a "High Priority Corridor" on the National Highway System (NHS);
- The corridor study area, which is located in north Caddo Parish between Interstate 220 in Shreveport and the Arkansas State Line, is primarily rural and has a population of approximately 30,000 persons;
- Access to the study area is currently provided by U.S. 71, several state highways, and a limited number of city and parish streets. Interstate 220, which forms the southern boundary of the study area, is the only freeway in the study area. The north-south highways of U.S. 71, LA 1, and LA 3 are the only arterials, with the remaining study area roadways being collector streets;
- There are no north-south freeways located within or near the corridor study area. Interstate 35 in Texas and Interstate 55 in Mississippi are the closest north-south freeways in the west and east, respectively, and are separated by a distance of approximately 500 miles;
- Existing traffic volumes on area north-south arterials at the Arkansas State Line are approximately 2,500 vehicles per day (vpd) on LA 1; 3,000 vpd on U.S. 71; and, 2,500 vpd on LA 3. Traffic volumes increase on these highways as they continue to the south toward Shreveport, with U.S. 71/LA 1 experiencing 32,000 vpd and LA 3 experiencing 11,200 vpd north of Interstate 220;
- Most of the study area roadways currently operate at acceptable levels-of-service (LOS) A, B or C. LA 1 between LA 169 and LA 538 operates at LOS D, and U.S. 71/LA 1 between LA 3194 and Interstate 220 operates at unacceptable LOS E;
- Year 2005 (estimated project completion) traffic volumes on the proposed North-South Expressway are projected to range from approximately 5,800 vehicles per day (vpd) at the Arkansas State Line to 26,800 vpd north of Interstate 220 and 36,900 vpd south of Interstate 220.

- Year 2020 (design year) traffic volumes on the proposed North-South Expressway are projected to range from approximately 10,400 vehicles per day (vpd) at the Arkansas State Line to 37,600 vpd north of Interstate 220 and 56,400 vpd south of Interstate 220;
- Several area highways are projected to experience congestion and unacceptable levels-of-service (LOS) D, E, or F by Year 2020 without the proposed North-South Expressway. Such facilities include LA1, U.S.71, LA3, LA173, LA538, and LA2.
- The proposed North-South Expressway will eliminate or alleviate many of the projected future capacity deficiencies and result in improved traffic service on area highways; and,
- Compared to the "no-build" condition, the North-South Expressway will significantly improve levels-of-service, travel time and total vehicle delays on the area highway system.

### **Benefits of Proposed Highway**

The proposed North-South Expressway should result in significant benefits at the local, regional and national level. Construction of the North-South Expressway could create the following transportation and economic related benefits:

- Provide northwest Louisiana with a more efficient, higher speed and potentially safer transportation facility that would better serve existing and future travel demands than existing area highways;
- Improve traffic access to existing and future communities, employment centers, recreational and tourist areas, agricultural land uses and other developments in the area;
- Improve traffic flow on existing highways in the area (such as LA 1, U.S. 71 and LA 3) by diverting some heavy vehicles and though traffic to the proposed North-South Expressway;
- Complement and provide better access to the existing Interstate Highway System and eliminate the 500-mile gap between IH-35 in Texas and IH-55 in Mississippi;
- Serve as part of a trade corridor linking the United States with Mexico and Canada;
- Assist in serving increased truck traffic anticipated with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA);
- Strengthen the overall transportation system in the area and throughout the region by enhancing the movement and distribution of freight and goods, and improving access to existing rail service, airports, waterways and ports;
- Stimulate economic development in the region by reducing travel time and transportation costs and making the area more accessible;

- Attract longer distance multi-state travel by diverting traffic to the North-South Expressway and inducing additional travellers and tourists to the region; and,
- Result in increased property values and land development opportunities.

## **Conclusions**

This traffic analysis was conducted by Wilbur Smith Associates as part of the North-South Expressway Corridor Study, which was undertaken for the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LaDOTD) by the Consultant Team lead by Demopoulos and Ferguson. Following the completion of the North-South Expressway Corridor Study, LaDOTD will perform a detailed Line and Grade/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to determine the preferred highway alignment, specific design requirements, and environmental impacts of the proposed North-South Expressway. The findings of this traffic study should be considered in the future planning and design of this important transportation improvement in the northwest region of Louisiana.