ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

AHTD JOB NUMBER 080397

FAP NUMBER STP-STPU-9095(27)

Highway 25 Relocation (I-40 - North)

Faulkner 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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Date of Approval

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) is proposing to relocate Highway 25 to connect to Interstate 40 at the Highway 64 Spur interchange (Exit 124). This interchange was recently constructed for improved access to Highway 64.

The project is located in the City of Conway and consists of four alternatives, which include the No Action Alternative and three construction alternatives. The project study area is shown in Figure 1.

PURPOSE AND NEED

Purpose of Proposed Project

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve north-south travel on Highway 25 by providing a more direct access to Interstate 40. Highway 25 continues northward from Highway 64 on the north side of Conway to Wooster in northern Faulkner County. By providing access from Highway 25 to Interstate 40 at Exit 124, motorists would travel a shorter distance for access, and vehicles would be diverted from the congested Highway 65/Interstate 40 interchange at Exit 125.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Existing Conditions

Highway 25 is the most direct route to get from Conway to Wooster and the growing areas west of Greenbrier. Currently, the cross-section on Highway 25 from Highway 64 to Grandview Heights Drive consists of three southbound lanes and one northbound lane that are 12-foot wide with curb and gutter. From that point northward to the intersection with Blaney Hill Road, it generally has two 12-foot wide lanes with two-foot wide gravel shoulders. At Blaney Hill road, the only left-turn bay north of Highway 64 is present for northbound vehicles. At that point, Highway 25 transitions into two 10-foot wide

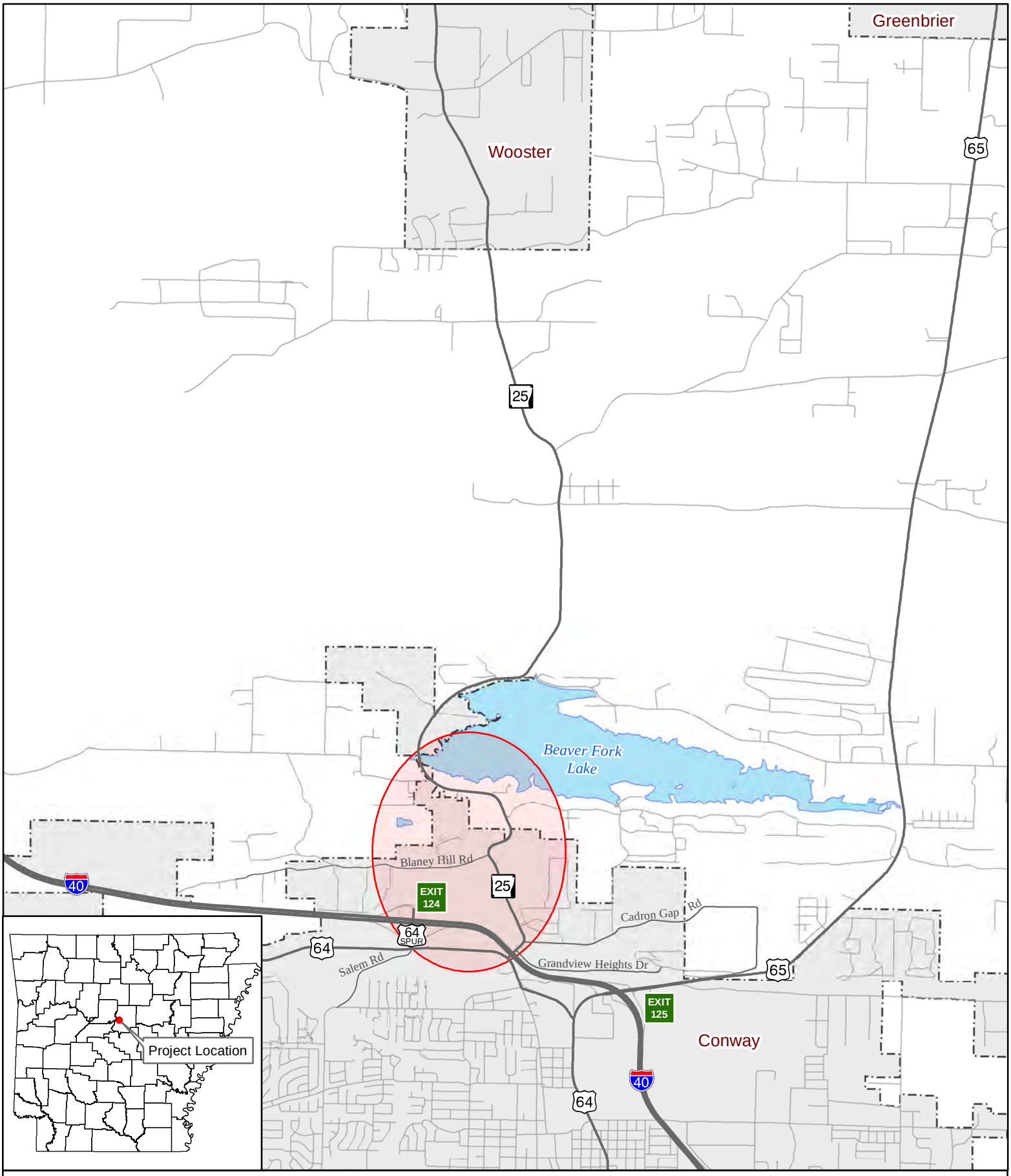

Figure 1
Project Study Area

lanes with four-foot wide gravel shoulders. There are eight intersections along the two-mile section of Highway 25 between the intersection of Highway 25 with Highway 64 and the west end of Beaver Fork Lake. The highway passes through rolling terrain with several horizontal and vertical curves that limit sight distance. Passing is prohibited throughout the section.

Before Exit 124 was recently constructed, southbound drivers on Highway 25 passed under Interstate 40, turned east onto Highway 64, and drove 1.0 mile through two major signalized intersections requiring left-turns to reach Exit 125 on Highway 65. Although this route is more direct than using the interchange at Exit 124 for commuters headed eastbound toward Little Rock, it is along congested highways with daily traffic volumes around 25,000 vehicles per day. Instead, most southbound drivers from Highway 25 choose to access the Highway 64 Spur interchange at Exit 124 by passing under Interstate 40 and backtracking to the west. Taking this route to avoid the congested Highway 65 interchange at Exit 125 adds approximately 1.4 miles of additional travel distance.

An additional benefit of connecting Highway 25 to the Highway 64 Spur interchange would be a more direct route into the center of Conway via Salem Road.

Existing and Forecast Traffic

Average daily traffic (ADT) on Highway 25 is estimated to vary between 10,000 vehicles per day (vpd) in 2012 near the intersection with Highway 64 to 6,200 vpd just south of Beaver Fork Lake. Future (2032) ADT on Highway 25 is estimated to range from around 15,800 vpd near Highway 64 to 9,900 vpd at the project's northern limit. With these projected volumes, widening of the highway would become needed. Widening existing Highway 25 would require the replacement of the existing Interstate 40 overpass.

Safety Analysis

The most recent four years of vehicular crash data available (2007-2010) were analyzed to determine crash rates on Highway 25 north of Conway. 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. Comparison of crash rates on this section of Highway 25 to statewide rates is not as direct as in many cases. The section under study is at the edge of Conway and has been annexed into the city for most of its length. Therefore, crash statistics for this section are included in urban statewide statistics. However, most of the corridor is undeveloped and is more rural in nature. Table 1 shows the crash history and compares crash rates to both the urban and rural crash rates for the State of Arkansas. The corridor has rates almost double that of the rural statewide rates for two-lane highways but well below the urban statewide rate.

Of the 43 crashes that occurred during the four-year period on Highway 25, there was one fatality, two crashes with incapacitating injuries, seven crashes with non-incapacitating injuries, and four where possible injuries were reported. As would be expected on a corridor with numerous curves, 26 of the 43 crashes (60%) occurred in or at a curve. However, no particular location has a concentration of crashes indicative of a localized problem. Although nine of the 13 injury crashes occurred in or at curves, the crash with an incapacitating injury and the fatal crash occurred on a straight section. About half of the 26 crashes that occurred on curves were single vehicle crashes and six were sideswipes of vehicles in the opposite direction. These types of crashes can often be attributed to motorists driving too fast for conditions and/or in excess of advisory speed limits at curves.

Table 1

Crash Analysis Summary
Highway 25: Highway 64 – Beaver Fork Lake

Route	Segment	Type of Roadway (length)	Year	# Crashes	Crash Rate (per mvm*)	Statewide Avg. Crash Rate Rural/Urban (per mvm)	Number of Crashes		Total # Injured
							With Fatalities	With Injury	
Highway 25	Highway 64 to Beaver Fork Lake	Urban two-lane, undivided (2.06 miles)	2007	11	2.20	1.15/3.43	0	3	5
			2008	13	2.53	1.12/3.34	0	6	7
			2009	12	2.32	0.80/3.13	0	3	6
			2010	7	1.33	1.02/2.93	1	1	2

* *Per million vehicle miles (mvm), similar routes (two-lane, two-way, undivided, no control of access)*

ALTERNATIVES

Four alternatives, including the No Action Alternative, were considered for this project. Details are given in the following sections, and the locations of the alternatives are shown on Figure 2.

Alternatives Considered and Eliminated

Non-traditional highway improvement alternatives (public transit, pedestrian facilities, bike lanes, etc.) were not evaluated as they would not meet the purpose and need for this project and do not adequately address the identified traffic congestion in this setting.

Blue Alternative

The Blue Alternative was developed to add a new location route north from the Interstate 40/Highway 64 Spur interchange to Highway 25 at the western end of Beaver Fork Lake. The Blue Alternative would be approximately 1.1 miles in length and was estimated to cost $5.5 million.

As a result of comments received at the Public Involvement Meeting held in September 2011 (Appendix C), it was determined that the location of this alternative would impact Beaverfork Heights Road, resulting in an additional residential relocation due to access issues. The Blue Alternative was shifted to the east and re-named the Red Alternative to avoid impacts to Beaverfork Heights Road and a large pond. The Blue Alternative was not carried forward for further impact analysis.

Upgrade Existing Alternative

An Upgrade Existing Alternative was not evaluated because it would not satisfy the purpose and need of the project to provide a direct connection between Highway 25 and the Interstate 40/Highway 64 Spur interchange at Exit 124.

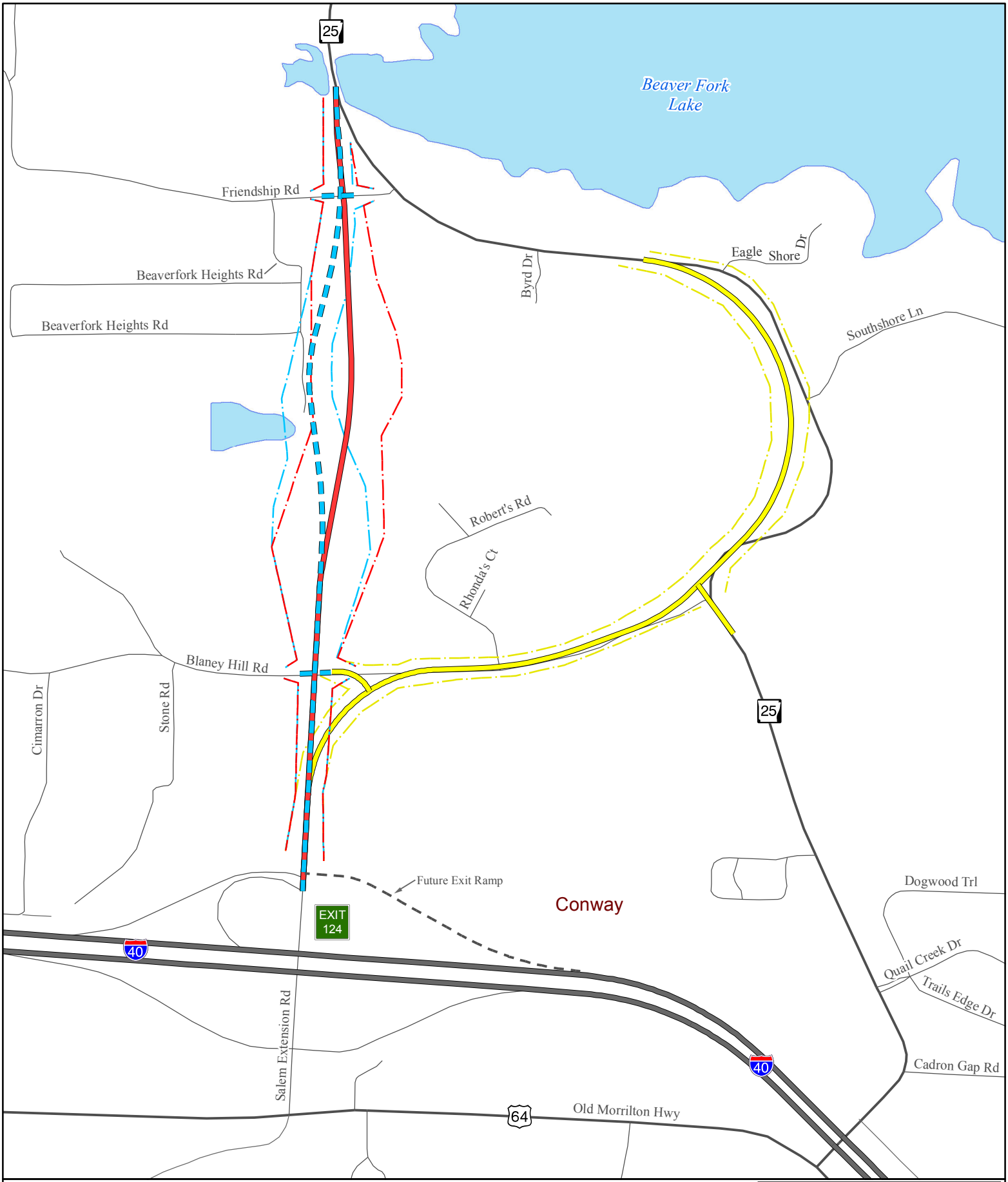

Figure 2
Alternatives

Alternatives Under Consideration

No Action Alternative

With the No Action Alternative, only routine maintenance would be made to the existing route. This alternative would not provide changes to the existing roadway network and would not provide a direct connection between Highway 25 and Interstate 40. Thousands of miles of additional vehicular travel with increased vehicular emissions would occur due to the absence of a direct route to Interstate 40. Increased congestion near the Highway 25/Highway 64 intersection would lead to widening the highway under Interstate 40 and replacing the Interstate 40 overpass.

Construction Alternatives

The construction alternatives under consideration are proposed to have a typical section of two 12-foot wide lanes with eight-foot wide shoulders, as shown in Figure 3. All cost estimates for the construction alternatives are in 2011 dollars and include preliminary engineering, right of way acquisition, utility relocation, construction and construction engineering.

Red Alternative

The Red Alternative would construct a roadway north on new location from the Interstate 40/Highway 64 Spur interchange to Highway 25 at the western end of Beaver Fork Lake. The Red Alternative would be approximately 1.1 miles in length and is estimated to cost $5.5 million.

Yellow Alternative

The Yellow Alternative would construct a new roadway north from the Interstate 40/Highway 64 Spur interchange and then curve to the east to generally follow the current alignment of Blaney Hill Road to existing Highway 25.

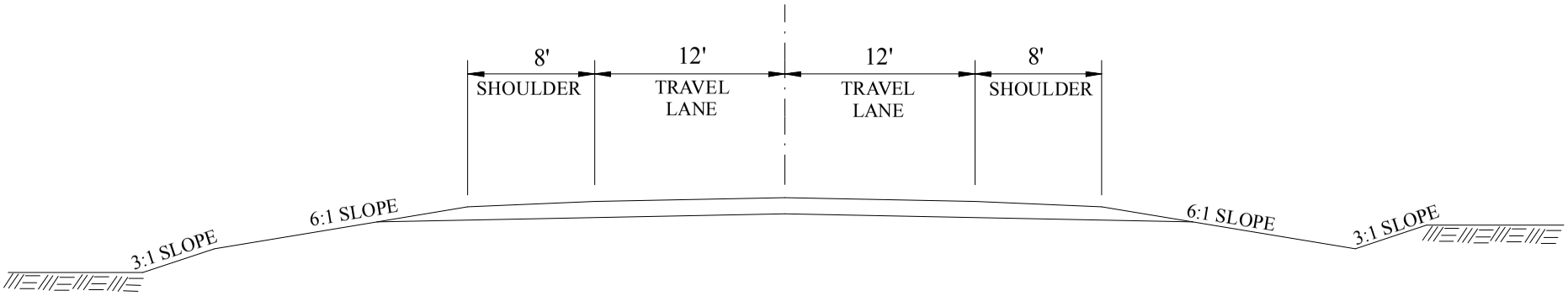

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Figure 3
Typical Section

The alternative would generally follow the alignment of Highway 25 while lessening the curves to improve safety, and end approximately 400 feet west of the intersection with Eagle Shore Drive. An alignment that would more closely follow the existing route in this area would result in several relocations and was not developed. The Yellow Alternative is approximately 1.3 miles in length and is estimated to cost $6.5 million. If the Yellow Alternative northern terminus was extended 0.6 miles to the Red Alternative northern terminus, the additional construction cost for this 1.9 mile Yellow Alternative would be $1.6 million.

Operational Analysis

The key aspect of the proposed project is the direct connection of Highway 25 to the Interstate 40/Highway 64 Spur interchange at Exit 124. Table 2 shows the distances for each alternative from the northern end of the project area (western end of Beaver Fork Lake) to the Interstate 40 eastbound entrance ramp junction with Highway 64 Spur. Compared to the existing distance of 2.8 miles for Highway 25, the Red Alternative reduces the distance by 1.5 miles, and the Yellow Alternative would shorten the distance by 0.7 mile.

Table 2
Alternative Travel Distance Comparison
Northern End of Project to I-40 Eastbound On-Ramp at Highway 64 Spur

Alternative	Distance (miles)
No Action Alternative (Existing Highway 25)	2.8
Red Alternative	1.3
Yellow Alternative	2.1

Table 3 and Figure 4 show the forecast traffic volumes for the Red and Yellow Alternatives. Both alternatives would relieve some traffic on existing Highway 25 south of Blaney Hill Road and attract drivers that live between the Highway 25 and Highway 65 corridors by providing better access to Interstate 40. However, construction of the Yellow Alternative would leave traffic on Highway 25 north of Blaney Hill Road on basically the same, although improved, alignment and would mix the local vehicles with the through traffic.

The direct connection provided by the Red Alternative would attract more traffic than the Yellow Alternative, not only from Highway 25 but also from Highway 65. It is forecast that the Red Alternative would divert approximately 2,800 vpd from each of the eastward oriented Highway 65 interchange ramps by 2032, thereby removing approximately 5,600 vpd from the congested interchange area. In contrast, the Yellow Alternative is forecast to divert a total of approximately 1,500 vpd.

Related Highway Project

The Exit 124 interchange currently utilizes a modified diamond design (Figure 2). The westbound exit is a loop ramp located in the northwest quadrant of the interchange. Environmental clearance and right of way were obtained for a traditional westbound exit ramp as part of AHTD Job # 080223. Construction of the traditional westbound exit ramp could occur with the project construction.

Findings

The No Action Alternative consists of no improvements being made to existing Highway 25 near Beaver Fork Lake in Conway. No improvements would be made to address the Purpose and Need of the project, resulting in continued congestion at the Highway 65 interchange ramps as well as along existing Highway 25.

Both construction alternatives under consideration would improve traffic and travel distances in the Highway 25 corridor. However, the Red Alternative attracts more traffic by providing the more direct route to the Interstate 40/Highway 64 Spur interchange.

Table 3
2012/2032 Alternative Forecast Average Daily Traffic

Location	No Action	Red Alternative		Yellow Alternative	
		New Location	Highway 25	New Location	Highway 25
North of Blaney Hill	6,200/9,900	7,100/16,100	900/1,300	-	6,500/12,200
South of Blaney Hill	8,200/13,800	9,400/14,500	1,900/6,400	8,400/12,800	1,900/6,400
Highway 64S north of Highway 64	10,400/14,500	12,900/15,400	-	13,600/16,700	-
Highway 25 north of Highway 64	10,000/15,800	-	3,800/11,100	-	4,000/14,700

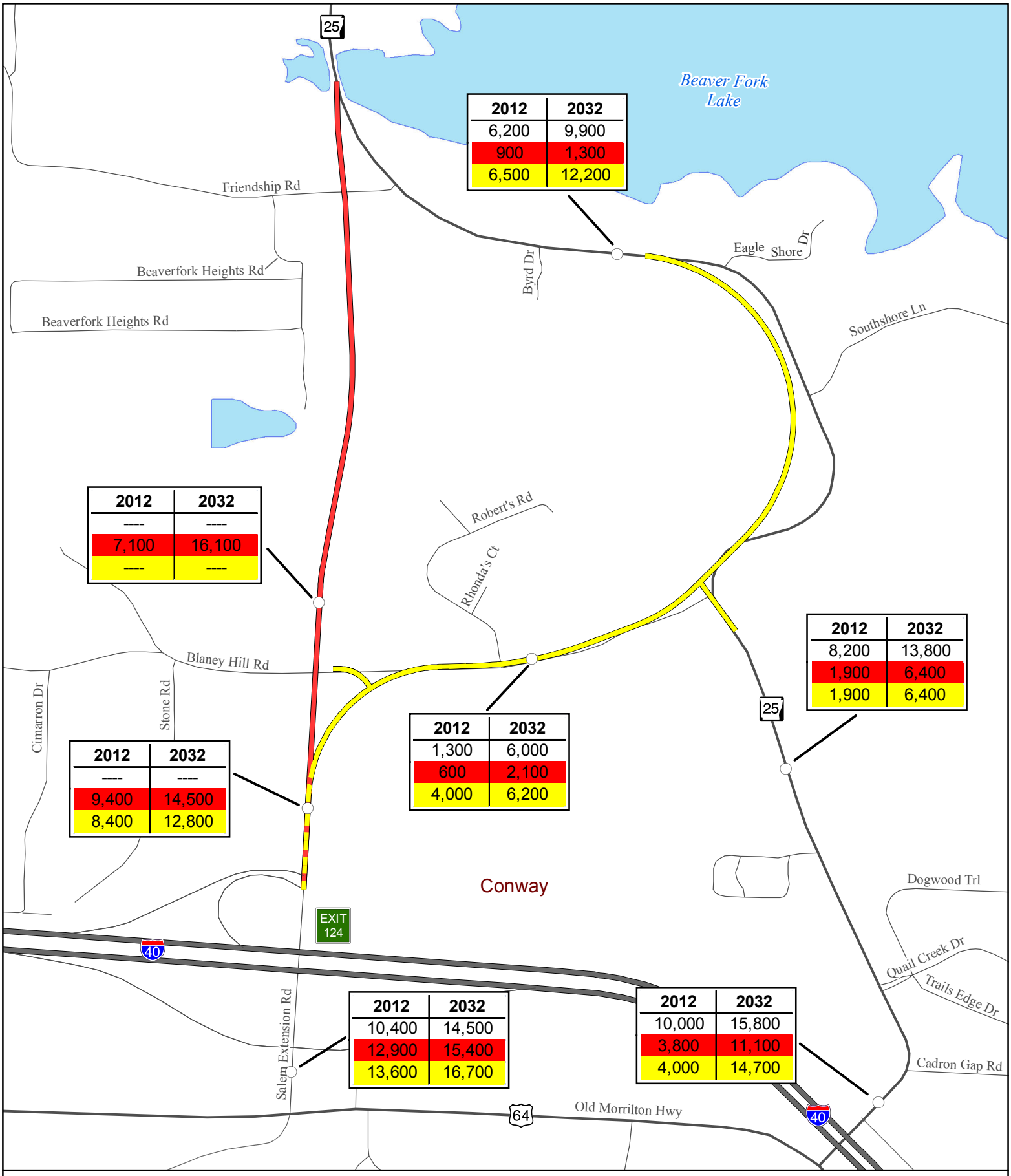

Figure 4
Average Daily Traffic (ADT)

It is also estimated to be the least expensive because it is shorter. In addition, the Red Alternative would have positive greater impact on the Interstate 40 interchange at Highway 65 by diverting approximately 5,600 vpd from that congested interchange area. The Yellow Alternative is estimated to divert 1,500 vpd.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

Relocations

Relocations occur when residential, business, or non-profit properties occur 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 impacts 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 A. Results of the conceptual stage relocation study are provided in Table 4.

The No Action Alternative would not require the relocation of any residences, tenants, or businesses.

There is one household that has been identified as low-income and a landlord business with one employee along the Yellow Alternative that would be relocated as a result of this project. There is one elderly relocatee expected as a result of roadway improvements along the Red Alternative. There is a minority community, known as the Friendship community, near the project area. Impacts to this community have been avoided and no minority families will be relocated as a result of this project. All relocation activities are governed by the *Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition*

Table 4 Relocations				
Alternative	Residential Owners	Residential Tenants	Landlord Businesses	Total
No Action	0	0	0	0
Red	3	0	0	3
Yellow	4	2	1	7

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, making field observations and conducting a public involvement meeting, the determination was made that the proposed project would 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 potential impacts is north of the Conway central business district in Faulkner County. The project study area consists of non-commercial forestland and residential properties with one business located within the project area.

The proposed project would not sever any subdivisions or urban neighborhoods. The Red and Yellow Alternatives would create benefits for the community and travelers alike by enhancing connectivity from Highway 25 to Interstate 40.

Public Land

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

Wetland, Lake, Stream and Floodplain Impacts

Wetlands

No wetlands would be impacted by the No Action, Red, or Yellow Alternatives.

Lakes

Beaver Fork Lake is located to the north and east of the proposed project. It will not be impacted by either of the No Action, Red, or Yellow Alternatives.

Streams

Streams are bodies of water that flow confined within a bed or a stream bank. They may be either perennial (flowing continuously all year), intermittent (ceases to flow periodically) or ephemeral (flowing only during and immediately after precipitation). The locations of stream impacts for each construction alternative are shown on Figure 5 and typical views of intermittent and ephemeral streams in the project area are provided in Figures 6 and 7. Results of the impact analyses are shown in Table 5.

Table 5
Stream Impacts

Alternative	# of Stream Crossings	Stream Relocation (linear feet)
No Action	0	0
Red	4	1,955
Yellow	4	1,406

The No Action Alternative would not impact any streams.

The Red Alternative would impact four waters of the United States streams. One perennial stream (Cypress Creek) located on the south end of the proposed alternative

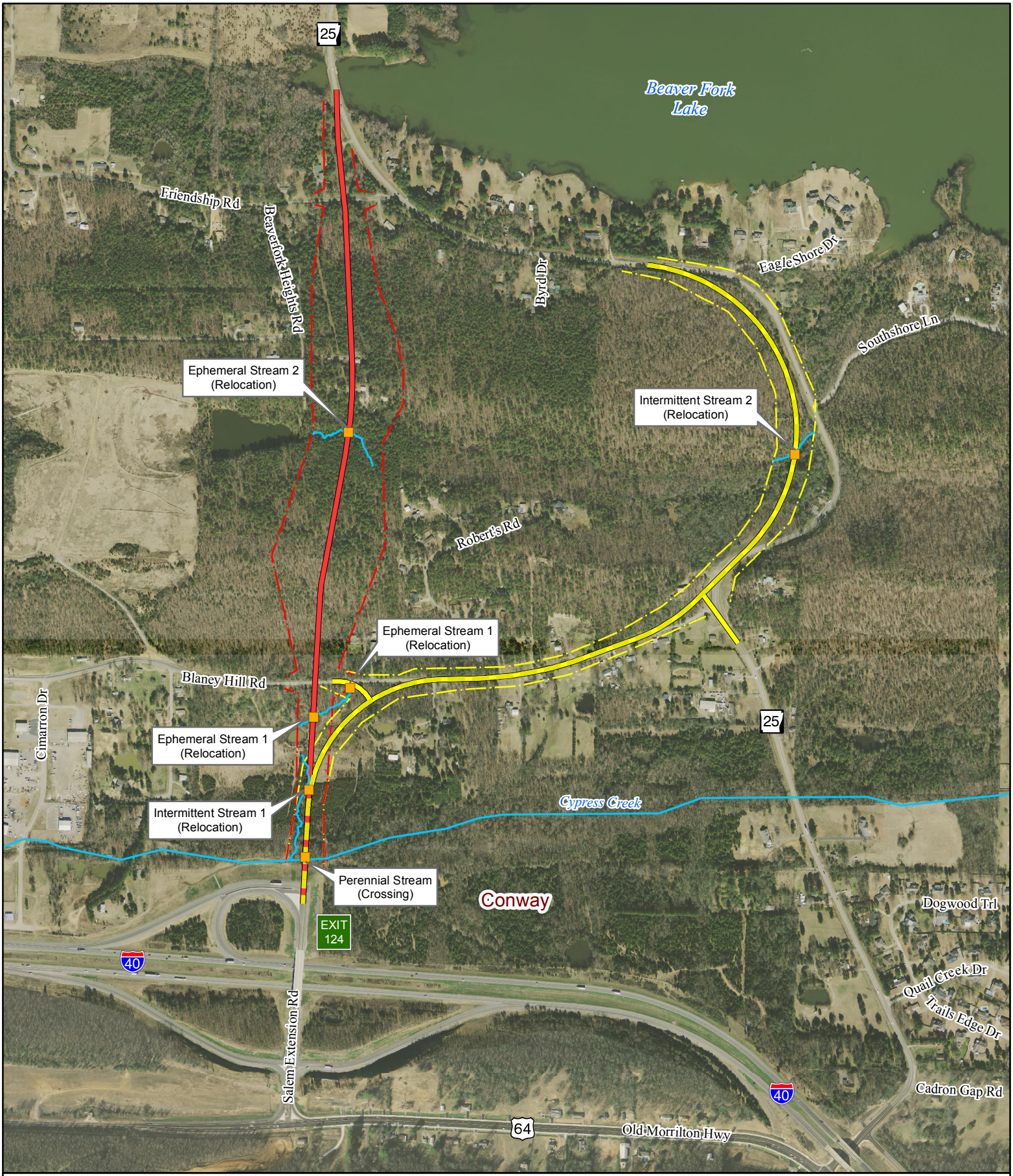

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Figure 5
Stream Impacts

Stream Impact
Red Alternative
Estimated Construction Limits
Yellow Alternative
Estimated Construction Limits

Photography Date: Faulkner County 2009

Figure 6 - Typical view of an intermittent stream in the project area

Figure 7 - Typical view of an ephemeral stream in the project area

would be crossed. The Red Alternative would cause approximately 826 linear feet of stream relocation to Intermittent Stream 1, an unnamed tributary to Cypress Creek. Two ephemeral streams would be impacted by construction of this alternative. Ephemeral Stream 1 is located north of Intermittent Stream 1 and would require approximately 498 linear feet of stream relocation. Ephemeral Stream 2 is located on the northern end of the alternative and would require approximately 631 linear feet of stream relocation. The Red Alternative would require a total of approximately 1,955 linear feet of stream relocation.

The Yellow Alternative would impact four waters of the United States streams. One perennial stream (Cypress Creek) located on the south end of the proposed alternative would be crossed. Two unnamed intermittent streams would be impacted by construction of this alternative. The Yellow Alternative would cause approximately 826 linear feet of stream relocation to Intermittent Stream 1, an unnamed tributary to Cypress Creek. Intermittent Stream 2 is a tributary to Beaver Fork Lake. Construction of this alternative would require approximately 480 linear feet of stream relocation to Intermittent Stream 2. Ephemeral Stream 1 is located north of Intermittent Stream 1. Construction of this alternative would require approximately 100 linear feet of stream relocation to Ephemeral Stream 1. The Yellow Alternative would require a total of approximately 1,406 linear feet of stream relocation.

Construction of the Red or Yellow Alternative would require an Individual Section 404 permit due to the amount of stream impacts. Stream mitigation credits will be purchased or mitigated at a Little Rock District of the Corps of Engineers approved mitigation bank site.

Floodplains

A floodplain is flat or nearly flat land adjacent to a stream or river that experiences occasional or periodic flooding. It includes the floodway, which consists of the stream channel, and adjacent areas that carry flood flows.

The alternatives were reviewed to identify any encroachments into Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA) as shown on the communities Flood Insurance Rate Maps issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. No SFHA crossings were identified for any of the alternatives.

The design measures to minimize floodplain impacts include (1) avoiding longitudinal encroachments, (2) sufficient bridging and/or drainage structures to minimize adverse effects from backwater, (3) sufficient bridging and/or drainage structures to minimize increases in water velocity, (4) minimizing channel alterations, (5) adequate and timely erosion control to minimize erosion and sedimentation, and (6) utilizing standard specifications for controlling work in and around streams to minimize adverse water quality impacts.

Bridges and/or drainage structures will be sized sufficiently to minimize impacts on natural and beneficial floodplain values. These values include, but are not limited to fish, wildlife, plants, open space, natural beauty, scientific study, outdoor recreation, agriculture, aquiculture, forestry, natural moderation of floods, water quality, maintenance, and groundwater recharge.

The final project design will be reviewed to confirm that the design is adequate and that the potential risk to life and property are minimized. The project will not support incompatible use or development of the floodplain. Adjacent properties should not be impacted nor have a greater flood risk than existed before construction of the project.

Threatened and Endangered Species

A threatened species is one that is likely to become endangered in the near future. An endangered species is one that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has reviewed the project alternatives and determined that no federally listed threatened or endangered species are known to occur within the project area (Appendix F).

The Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission (ANHC) tracks federally designated threatened or endangered species, as well as those that are considered sensitive species within Arkansas. A records check of the ANHC database of sensitive species indicated only one tracked species, *Pilularia americana,* within the project area.

Pilularia americana, pillwort, is listed as having a G5S2 conservation status meaning that it is secure globally but imperiled within Arkansas. Because the plant resembles a grass, it may be overlooked and be more common than the records indicate (Flora of North America Ed. Committee 1993). Pillwort is an aquatic plant occurring underwater or on mudflats. These habitats are often classified as wetlands or waters of the United States and are protected by Section 404 of the *Clean Water Act*. Therefore, impacts to this species habitat would be subject to the US Army Corps of Engineers permitting process and may require compensatory mitigation.

Pillwort has been identified along the shoreline of Beaver Fork Lake and may be impacted near the northern terminus of the Red Alternative. No impacts to sensitive species are expected for the Yellow Alternative.

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 Stormwater 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 Supply

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 is 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

Hazardous Materials

A survey was performed to assess the potential of impacting hazardous materials along the proposed alternatives. This survey was pursuant to the *Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act* and the *Resource Conservation and Recovery Act*. The scope of the preliminary investigation consisted of a review of available federal and state environmental databases and a site visit to confirm information from the databases and for additional field observations.

Database searches provided the latest information from the Environmental Protection Agency, ADEQ and FEMA. The database search identified 15 sites within a one-mile search radius from each alternative, but only one site (Blaney Hill Landfill) was located

within the project study area (Figure 8). No hazardous waste impacts are anticipated as a result of this landfill.

From the database searches and field investigations, it was determined that the Red Alternative and the No Action Alternative would not have any impacts on hazardous materials.

Field investigations along the Yellow Alternative revealed an area of concern known as the Old City of Conway Dump. The dump consists of household waste in the form of small and large cans, mattress frames and springs, glass bottles, jars and other metal debris. Evidence of the age of the dump is present in the form of vines and trees growing through the dump and no plastic. This dates the dump in usage during the 1940's thru the mid 1950's. The old dump was never permitted or regulated, according to ADEQ records.

Impacting an unpermitted landfill of this size introduces issues that could result in unknown amounts of project cost increases due to engineering challenges and construction delays and increased liability related to the potential for hazardous materials discovery. An alignment that more closely followed the existing highway in this area could potentially avoid the landfill, but it would result in several residential relocations.

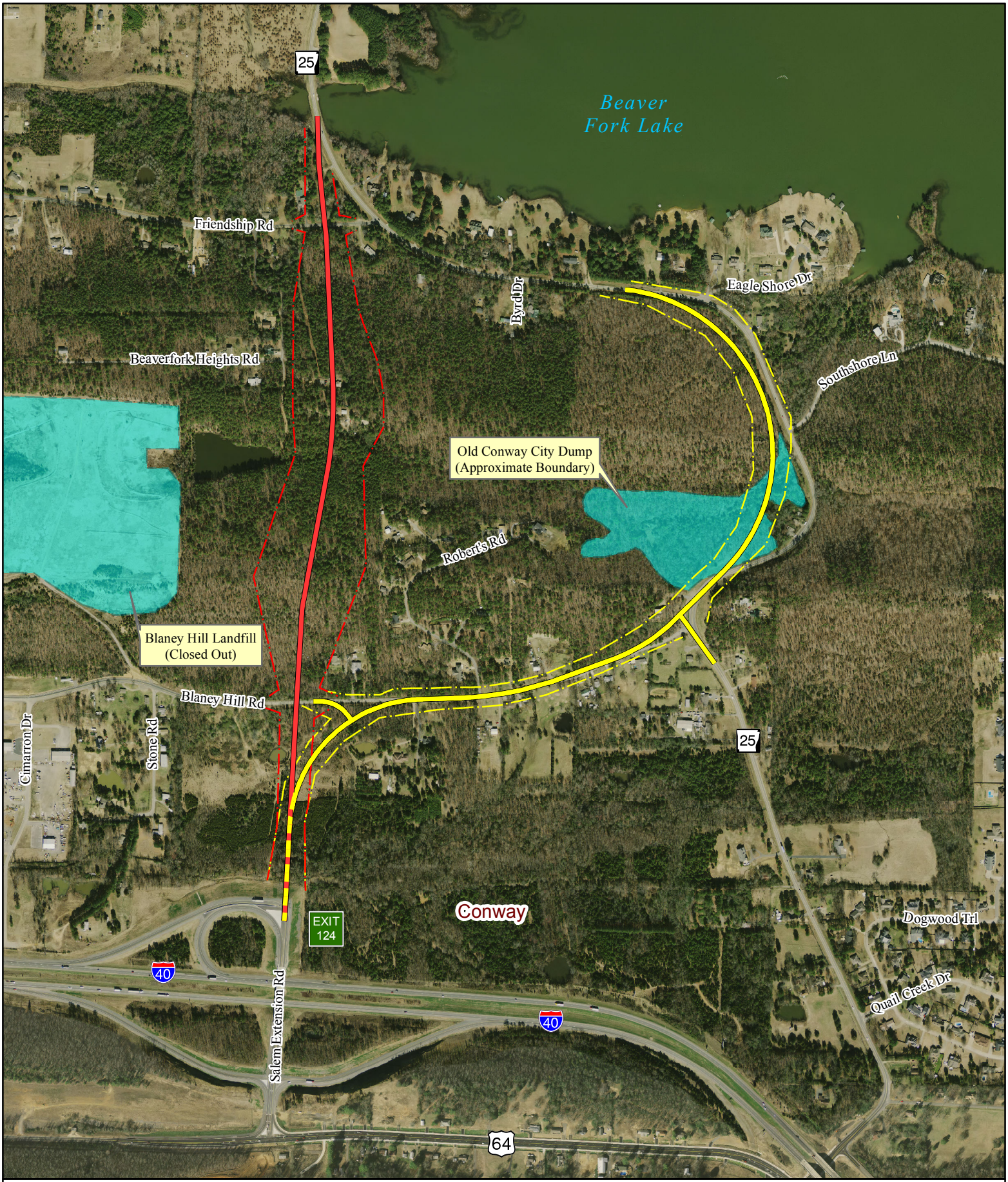

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Figure 8
Hazardous Materials

Red Alternative
Estimated Construction Limits
Yellow Alternative
Estimated Construction Limits

Photography Date: Faulkner County 2009

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. There is no agricultural activity in the project area, however prime farmland is present.

Form NRCS-CPA-106, The Farmland Conversion Impact Rating, can be found in Appendix B. The amount of prime farmland estimated to be converted to highway right of way is shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Prime Farmland Impacts

Alternative	Prime Farmland (acres)
No Action	0
Red	2.5
Yellow	1

Cultural Resources

Cultural resources include elements of the built environment (buildings, structures, or objects) or evidence of past human activity (archeological sites). Those that are listed, or eligible for inclusion, in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) are defined as historic properties (36 CFR Part 800.16(l)). Impacts to historic properties are avoided, minimized, or mitigated through a variety of methods that vary depending on the nature of the property. Those that are not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP do not require protection. Coordination with historically affiliated tribes was conducted to ascertain if any sites of religious or cultural significance are present, see Appendix E.

From records checks and field observations, it has been determined that none of the alternatives impact known historic properties. A structures survey was completed and no

structures eligible for inclusion in the NRHP were found. Adverse effects are not anticipated; however an intensive survey for cultural resources has not been completed. Additional information about the cultural resources investigations conducted thus far can be found in Appendix E.

An analysis of the Conway and Greenbrier quadrangles shows that the Red Alternative crosses ridge and valley terrain. The Yellow Alternative crosses similar terrain on the southern end but the northern end is more level. The Red Alternative has a higher probability for encountering historic properties. The Yellow Alternative has less probability since Beaver Fork Lake was constructed in 1955 and the highway was moved to the west to accommodate it. Both alternatives cross Cypress Creek which increases the chances of finding unknown Native American sites around the creek or on terraces above it. Outside of this area, the probability of finding unrecorded Native American sites is relatively low.

Once a Preferred Alternative has been approved, 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 SHPO with a recommendation of no further work. If sites are identified, 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 identified, consultation with the appropriate Native American Tribe will be initiated and the site or sites should be 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 NRHP and avoidance is not possible, site-specific data recovery plans will be prepared and data recovery will be carried at the earliest practicable time.

Air Quality

Utilizing the Mobile Source Emission Factor Model 5.0a and CALINE 3 dispersion model, air quality analysis was conducted on previous projects for carbon monoxide. These analyses incorporated information relating to traffic volumes, weather conditions,

vehicle mix, and any 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 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.

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).

Existing ambient noise levels throughout the project study area were measured and vary from 43-57 dBA (Figure 9). If the proposed project results in traffic noise increases exceeding 66 dBA, or results in a change of over 10 dBA for a sensitive noise receptor, the FHWA considers that receptor to be impacted. Sensitive noise receptors are residences or businesses that have a special sensitivity to noise, such a schools, churches, libraries, and parks. A table listing the noise receptor categories can be found in the Noise Analysis in Appendix D.

The construction of the Red Alternative would divert traffic from Highway 25, resulting in lower noise levels along the existing highway. Noise levels would increase along the Red Alternative and its surrounding areas. The Red Alternative and Yellow Alternatives are located within predominantly rural areas with low ambient noise levels. Both alternatives are projected to have an increase in traffic noise levels of over 10dBA.

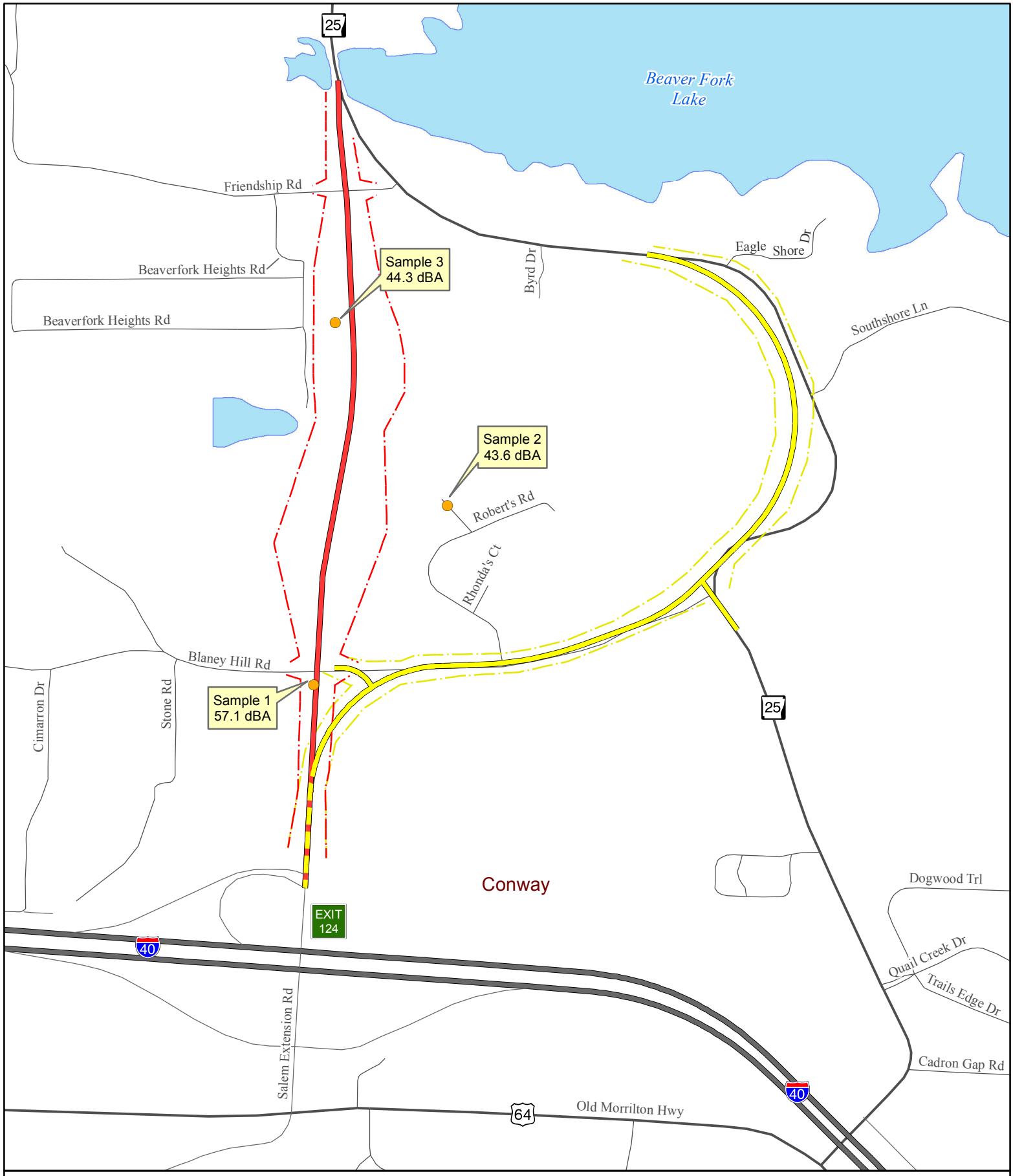

Figure 9
Ambient Noise Readings

The distance the noise impacts extended from the centerline of the three alternatives was calculated and mapped, and the number of sensitive noise receptors was estimated for each alternative (Table 7).

Table 7
Future Noise Receptor Impacts

Alternative	> 66 Leq dBA	10 Leq dBA Increase Over Existing Noise Levels
No Action	11	-
Red	-	4
Yellow	-	1

Design year 2032 traffic volumes on Highway 25 are predicted to increase by 3,700 to 5,800 vehicles per day. This increase in traffic would increase sound levels at receptors along existing Highway 25. 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 Highway 62.

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 two new location alternatives would be temporary and relatively minor. The noise analysis detailing the methods used and the results of the noise study can be found in Appendix D.

Natural and Visual Environment

The project is located within the Scattered High Ridges and Mountains Ecoregion, a division of the Arkansas Valley Ecoregion. Elevations in the project area vary from 350 feet above mean sea level (msl) at the southern terminus of the proposed project to 520 feet msl on top of Blaney Hill.

Surface geology in the project area consists primarily of the middle part of the Atoka Formation (Middle Pennsylvanian). The Atoka Formation is a sequence of marine, mostly tan to gray silty sandstones and grayish-black shales. Soils in the project area are largely mapped into the Linker-Mountainburg soil complex. These are well drained, nearly level to steep, loamy, gravelly, and stony soils on benches, ridges, hilltops, and mountains. Soils in the area of Beaver Fork Lake are mapped into the Leadville-Taft soil complex. These are moderately well drained and somewhat poorly drained, nearly level to gently sloping, loamy soils with frangipanes, on stream terraces, benches, and in depressions.

Water resources in the project area include Beaver Fork Lake near the northern terminus of the proposed project, and Cypress Creek at the southern terminus. Beaver Fork Lake was created by damming the Beaver Fork of the eastern fork of Cadron Creek, which drains west towards Cadron Creek, which in turn drains south to the Arkansas River southwest of Conway. Cypress Creek on the south side of Blaney Hill also drains west to Cadron Creek.

Natural vegetation consists of oak-hickory forest and mixed pine-oak forest. The most common species are shortleaf pine and post oak. Other common species include blackjack oak, white oak, black hickory, and mockernut hickory. Most of the project area is still in forest. Areas once cleared for pasture land in the immediate project area have been abandoned. Some small areas have been planted with loblolly pine. No impacts to local biodiversity are expected. Secondary impacts to the terrestrial environment may possibly include the spread of invasive plant species onto new roadside right of way. No known invasive species were noted in the project area.

Users of the road include local, commuter, and recreational traffic. Destinations for local and commuter traffic are generally to and from Conway or Interstate 40. Beaver Fork Lake is the site of Conway's largest city park and offers numerous recreational opportunities, a swimming area, picnic area, volleyball courts, softball field, and a boat launch ramp.

The visual quality of the existing roadway is very good, due to the rolling terrain and forested slopes (Figures 10 and 11). The construction alternatives would increase the visual scale of the roadway, the Red Alternative considerably so, by creating larger cut slopes. The Yellow Alternative would retain the curvilinear aspect of the roadway. There would be unavoidable but temporary negative visual impacts during construction on the Yellow Alternative to users of the existing road.

Land Use/Land Cover

Land cover is primarily woodland and the principal land use is residential. 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 to estimate conversion by acre to new roadway (Table 8).

No secondary impacts to land use are expected. The cut slopes of the Red Alternative would likely be too steep to provide access to new residential areas. The Yellow Alternative would provide essentially the same access as the existing highway.

Table 8
Land Use/Land Cover Impacts

	Red Alternative (acres)	Yellow Alternative (acres)
Woodland	33	16
Residential	12	2
Field	2	2
Existing Roadway	1	8
Total Impacts	48	28

Figure 10 - View to the north of Blaney Hill from the southern terminus of the project (I-40/Hwy. 64 Spur interchange)

Figure 11 - View to the south from the northern terminus of the project (Highway 25 at Beaver Fork Lake)

COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

The AHTD provided the opportunity for early public input into the development of the proposed project on September 11, 2011 at the Conway Parks and Recreation Center. Proposed corridors were available for review, and visitors were given the opportunity to discuss the proposed project with AHTD staff. Approximately 101 citizens attended the meeting. A copy of the Public Involvement Synopsis is located in Appendix C.

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 A.

- If hazardous materials, unknown illegal dumps or underground storage tanks are identified or accidentally uncovered by AHTD personnel or its contractors, 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 remediation 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 will be conducted by a certified asbestos inspector 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 approved, 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 led by FHWA with the appropriate Native American Tribe will be conducted 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 NHRP 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.

- Stream crossings along the Preferred Alternative will be designed so as not to cause an increase in flooding depth on the buildings within and close to the Special Flood Hazard Area.

- 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The environmental analysis of the proposed project did not identify any significant impact to the natural and social environment. Table 9 shows a comparison of the alternative information, impacts, and costs.

Table 9
Alternatives Comparison

Alternative	Length (miles)	2032 ADT (N. of Exit 124)	Total Cost (millions 2011$)	Relocations	Noise Receptors	Stream Crossings	Stream Crossings (linear feet)	Hazardous Waste	Prime Farmland (acres)
No Action	2.8	9,900	-	-	11	-	-	-	0
Red	1.1	13,200	5.5	3	4	4	1,955	None	2.5
Yellow	1.3*	11,500	6.5*	7	1	4	1,406	Old Conway City Dump	1

* If the Yellow Alternative were extended to the same northern terminus as the Red Alternative, it would be 1.9 miles in length and would increase the construction cost by $1.6 million.

After consideration of the information presented in this EA, the Red Alternative has been identified as the Preferred Alternative for the following reasons:

- More direct route than the Yellow Alternative through the project area to Interstate 40
- Attracts more traffic than the Yellow Alternative from both Highways 25 and 64
- Project cost is $1.0 million less than the 1.3 mile Yellow Alternative and $2.6 million less than the 1.9 mile Yellow Alternative
- Fewer relocations (4) than the Yellow Alternative
- Would not cross the old Conway City Dump

REFERENCES

Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality. Arkansas Hazardous Waste Generators Facility Access 2000 Database Summary, RCRA_V2_web.mdb, (February 10, 2012).

Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality. Regulated Storage Tanks (RST) Data Files, ftp.adeq.state.ar.us, (February 10, 2012).

Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality. Solid Waste–Illegal Dumps Data Files, http://www.adeq.state.ar.us/solwaste/branch_enforcement/illegal_dumps.asp, (February 10, 2012).

Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality. Solid Waste-Permitted Facilities Data Files, http://www.adeq.state.ar.us/solwaste/branch_technical/permitted_facils/permit_list.asp (Febraury 10, 2012).

Flora of North America Editorial Committee. 1993. Flora of North America: North of Mexico Volume 2: Pteridophytes and Gymnosperms. Oxford University Press. New York. 475pp.

Wageningen University. University for Life Sciences, Department of Agro Technology and Food Sciences. Processing of Agricultural Raw Materials for Non-Food Products. P050-217. Plastics History http://www.ftns.wau.nl/agridata/apme/plastics.htm 27oct01

APPENDIX A

Conceptual Stage Relocation Study

ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

RECEIVED
AHTD
JAN 12 2012
ENVIRONMENTAL
DIVISION

January 12, 2012

TO: Lynn Malbrough, Division Head, Environmental Division

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

SUBJECT: Cost Estimate
Job 080397
Hwy. 25 Relocation (I-40-North)
Faulkner County

Per your request, cost estimates for acquiring right of way and adjusting utilities for the identified alternatives for this project are summarized:

Alternate	Property Acquisition	Relocation	Reimb. Utility Adjustments	Non-Reimb. Utility Adjustments	Total
Blue	$1,200,000	$124,000	$423,000	$0	$1,747,000
Yellow	1,000,000	200,000	1,057,000	0	2,257,000
Red	1,300,000	124,000	378,000	0	1,802,000

A Conceptual Stage Relocation Statement and copies of the cost estimates 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: G.L. Davis, Staff Appraiser, Appraisal Section,
Right of Way Division

DATE: January 5, 2012

SUBJECT: Job: 080397
Hwy 25 Relocation (I-40 – North)
Faulkner County
Additional Red Alternative

Three conceptual stage alternatives were assessed from a acquisition cost standpoint. The alternatives were noted on the map as Blue, Yellow & Red Alternative. It appears that each alternative would have the same cross section profile. The Red & Blue Alternatives are mostly all relocated section with the least number of ownerships affected whereas the Yellow Alternative utilizes the existing right of way of Hwy. 25 with some relocated sections and has a higher density of ownerships affected. A cursory inspection of the real estate market was made as well as a drive by inspection of each of the properties affected for each alternative. No owner contact was made. This estimate assumes that Beaverfork Heights Rd. will be accessible from the new facility (Blue Alternative) and not cut off. A third alternative and noted in red and totally avoids the Beaverfork Heights Rd and is on a relocated section with what appears to be a little wider right of way limits. The following is the estimated cost for land and improvements affected by each alternative:

Alternative	*Estimated Cost*
Blue	**$1,200,000.00**
Yellow	**$1,000,000.00**
Red	**$1,300,000.00**

R:/appr/work/080397/Cost Estimate2
gld

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

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Lynn P. Malbrough, Division Head, Environmental Division
FROM: Perry M. Johnston, Division Head, Right of Way Division
DATE: January 10, 2012
SUBJECT: Job 080397
Hwy. 25 Relocation (I-40-North)
Faulkner 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 three alternatives and the corresponding estimated construction limits and an on-site project review, it is estimated that the alternatives for the subject project could cause the following displacements and costs:

Yellow Alternative

4 Residential Owners	$140,000
2 Tenants	20,000
1 Landlord business	10,000
Services	30,000
TOTAL	**$200,000**

Blue Alternative

3 Residential Owners	$105,000
Services	19,000
TOTAL	**$124,000**

Red Alternative

3 Residential Owners	$105,000
Services	19,000
TOTAL	**$124,000**

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.

A residential income property inventory has been compiled and indicates there are at least eight multi-family properties available for sale within fifteen miles of the subject project. An available housing inventory has been compiled and indicates there are at least twenty-two comparable replacement dwellings available for sale within fifteen miles of the project. At least six comparable replacement dwellings are currently available for rent within eleven miles of the project. A breakdown of the available properties is as follows:

Residential for Sale Listing Price	Number of Properties Single Family Residential
$ 75,000 - $100,000	1
$100,100 - $125,000	9
$125,100 - $150,000	6
$150,100 - $175,000	4
$175,100 - $200,000	2
Total	**22**

Residential for Sale Monthly Rent	Number of Properties Single Family Residential
$400 - $500	1
$500 - $600	2
$600 - $700	3
Total	**6**

Income Properties for Sale Listing Price	Number of Properties Multi-Family
$50,000 - $75,000	1
$75,100 - $100,000	3
$100,100 - $125,000	1
$125,100 - $150,000	1
$150,100 - $175,000	0
$175,100 - $200,000	2
Total	**8**

This is a highway improvement and/or new location project for Hwy. 25 in Conway, 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 alternative. 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.

Yellow Alternative

ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
CONCEPTUAL STAGE RELOCATION INVENTORY
Job No. 080397 Job Name Hwy. 25 Relocation (I-40- North) Date of Inventory 12-29-2011

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	4	$80,000 - $200,000	0	0	0	1	1	
Residential Tenants	2	$550 -$650						
Businesses	0							
Landlord Businesses	1	$140,000 - $160,000						1
Nonprofit Organizations	0							
Personal Properties								
Totals	7	N/A	0	0	0	1	1	1

Red Alternative

ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
CONCEPTUAL STAGE RELOCATION INVENTORY
Job No. 080397 Job Name Hwy. 25 Relocation (I-40-North) Date of Inventory 12-29-2011

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	$100,000 - $200,000	0	0	0	1	0	
Residential Tenants	0							
Businesses	0							
Landlord Businesses	0							
Nonprofit Organizations	0							
Personal Properties	0							
Totals	3	N/A	0	0	0	1	0	

INTER OFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 9, 2012

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

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

SUBJECT: Job 080397
Hwy. 25 Relocation (I-40 - North)
Faulkner County
Utility Cost Estimate

Per the Environmental Division's request for a utility cost estimate and locations of major utilities for the Alternate Blue, Alternate Yellow and Alternate Red.

Conway Corporation Water and Sewer has an 8 inch water main that parallels the left side of Hwy. 25 and Blaney Hill Rd.

Beaverfork Water has a 6 inch water main that parallels the left side and an 8 inch water main that parallels the right side of Hwy. 25. An 8 inch water main parallels the right side of Friendship Rd.

Alternate Blue

Utility	**Reimbursable**
Phone	$ 53,000
Power	$ 200,000
Cable	$ 5,000
Gas	$ 65,000
Water	$ 100,000
Total	**$ 423,000**

Alternate Yellow

Utility	**Reimbursable**
Phone	$ 72,000
Power	$ 330,000
Cable	$ 20,000
Gas	$ 275,000
Water	$ 360,000
Total	**$1,057,000**

Alternate Red Utility	Reimbursable
Phone	$ 53,000
Power	$ 200,000
Cable	$ 5,000
Gas	$ 40,000
Water	$ 80,000
Total	**$ 378,000**

APPENDIX B

Farmland Conversion Impact Rating

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Natural Resources Conservation Service

NRCS-CPA-106
(Rev. 1-91)

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING FOR CORRIDOR TYPE PROJECTS

PART I *(To be completed by Federal Agency)* 080397 | 3. Date of Land Evaluation Request 2/17/98 | Sheet 1 of ____

1. Name of Project: Hwy 25 Relocation (I-40 North)
5. Federal Agency Involved: FHWA
2. Type of Project: Highway Improvement New location
6. County and State: Faulkner 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? YES ☐ NO ☐
(If no, the FPPA does not apply - Do not complete additional parts of this form).
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			
	Blue	Red	Yellow	
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	2	2.5	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))* — Maximum Points				
1. Area in Nonurban Use — 15	10	10	10	
2. Perimeter in Nonurban Use — 10	5	5	5	
3. Percent Of Corridor Being Farmed — 20	0	0	0	
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 20	0 20	0 20	0
PART VII *(To be completed by Federal Agency)*				
Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V) — 100	100	100	100	
Total Corridor Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment) — 160	0 20	0 20	0 20	0
TOTAL POINTS *(Total of above 2 lines)* — 260	0 120	0 120	0 120	0

1. Corridor Selected: None At This time
2. Total Acres of Farmlands to be Converted by Project: Blue 2, Red 2.5, Yellow 1 acres
3. Date Of Selection:
4. Was A Local Site Assessment Used? YES ☐ NO ☐
5. Reason For Selection:

Signature of Person Completing this Part: [signature] DATE 2/17/98

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

APPENDIX C

Public Involvement Synopsis

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETING SYNOPSIS

Job Number 080397
Hwy. 25 Relocation
(I-40-North) (Conway)
Faulkner County
September 13, 2011

An open forum Public Involvement Meeting was held for the proposed project at the Conway Parks and Recreation Center from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. on September 13, 2011. Efforts to inform the public and involve minorities in the meeting included:

- Display advertisement in Log Cabin Democrat on Sunday, September 4, 2011 and Sunday, September 11, 2011.
- Public Service Announcements on Power 92.3 FM and KTUV La Pantera 1440 AM, Thursday, September 10, 2011 through Tuesday, September 13, 2011.
- Flyer distribution in project area.
- Outreach to Minority Ministers letter.

Three copies of an aerial photograph display at a scale of one inch equals 200 feet were available for inspection and comment.

Handouts for the public included a comment sheet and a small-scale map that was identical to the aerial photograph display. Copies of these 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)	101
Comments received	107

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.

Analyses of the responses received as a result of the public survey are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2	
Survey Results	**Totals**
Believes a need exists to relocate Highway 25	71
Does not believe a need exists to relocate Highway 25	26
No response	10
Prefers the Blue Alternative	53
Prefers the Yellow Alternative	47
Prefers the No Build Alternative	6
Prefers either the Yellow Alternative or the No-Build Alternative	1

Comments received about the proposed alternatives were as follows:

Blue Alternative

- Landfill near Blaney Hill Road.
- Impact to the Friendship community.
- Friendship Church cemetery in the area.
- Will decrease property values, increase noise and traffic, and bring crime to the area.
- A direct route that will relieve traffic on Hwy. 25 and Blaney Hill.
- Will be a better winter route.
- Septic systems in the area.
- Will land lock 17 Beaverfort Heights Road.
- Rethink to reduce ridge cut.

Yellow Alternative

- Avoids Friendship Community.
- No displacements.
- Will segment property in sections too small to support septic systems.
- Will increase runoff into Beaver Lake.
- Former dump at Yellow route and Blaney Hill.

No-Build Alternative

- Would not impact people's property.
- Not enough traffic to warrant project.

General comments and suggestions included:

- Use excess material to tie-in Muscogee Ave. as a service road and access to Cimarron Park.
- Make four lanes,
- Maximum speed of 45 mph.
- Place roundabout at Friendship Road.
- Place roundabout at Highway 64 and Highway 65.
- Will be safer with curves and elevation changes eliminated.
- Work with city planners and property owners to develop the northeast side of the interchange.
- Provide adequate space for cyclists.
- Provide access to Quail Creek Area north of I-40.
- Limit access to prevent commercial development.
- Keep the area green.
- All highway and interstate improvements in the Conway area should not only reflect the standards set in the Conway 2025 plan, but should also be consistent the wishes of the locals.
- No need to change Highway 25.
- Cost effective and will avoid impacting many trees.
- Project offers a small return considering the impacts it will bring.
- Current Highway 25 is not safe.
- Project necessary due to increased truck traffic due to natural gas industry.
- Repair the existing highway and reallocate the remaining funds.
- Septic systems in the area.
- All property owners were not notified of the public meeting.
- Do not impact Friendship Road.
- City dump south of Evan's property.

Attachments: Blank comment form
Small-scale project location handout

RJ
DN

BRS: sj

ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT (AHTD)

CITIZEN COMMENT FORM

AHTD JOB NUMBER 080397
Hwy. 25 Relocation (North I-40) (Conway) (Hwy. 25)
FAULKNER COUNTY

LOCATION:
CONWAY PARKS & RECREATION CENTER
10 LOWER RIDGE ROAD
CONWAY, AR
4:00 – 7:00 P.M.
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 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 relocation of Highway 25 located north of I-40 in Conway? 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 relocation to Highway 25 will have any impacts (☐ Beneficial or ☐ Adverse) on your property and/or community (economic, environmental, social, etc.)? Please explain. _____

_____

_____

Which alignment would you consider to be your preferred alternative for the proposed Highway 25 relocation in Conway?

☐ Yellow Alternative

☐ Blue Alternative

☐ NO BUILD

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: _____

0 300 600 Feet

AHTD - Environmental GIS - Strawn
Map Date: September 9, 2011
Meeting Date: September 13, 2011
Public Involvement Handout

Job 080397
Hwy. 25 Relocation
(I-40 North)
Faulkner County

Preliminary
Subject to Revision

Yellow Alternative
Blue Alternative

Photography Date: Faulkner County 2009

APPENDIX D

Noise Analysis

080397 - Highway 25 Relocation Analysis

A noise assessment has been conducted for this project utilizing the following: FHWA's Traffic Noise Model 2.5 (TNM), existing and proposed roadway cross sections, existing traffic data, and projected traffic data for the design year of 2032.

Fundamentals of 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 dBA. Because the dBA is based on a logarithmic scale, a 10 dBA increase in sound level is generally perceived as twice as loud while a 3 dBA 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. Noise levels for this study are reported in hourly equivalent sound levels or Leq. Leq is defined as the equivalent steady-state sound level which in a stated period of time contains the same acoustic energy as a time-varying sound level during the same time period. Leq is expressed in units of dBA, which are decibels on the A-weighted scale.

Noise Impact Criteria

Noise levels were compared to FHWA's Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC), which include seven different Activity Categories based on land use (Table 1). According to

Table 1
Noise Abatement Criteria

Activity Category	Activity Critieria[1] Leq dBA	Evaluation Location	Activity Description
A	57	Exterior	Lands on which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need where the preservation of those qualities is essential if the area is to continue to serve its intended purpose.
B[2]	67	Exterior	Residential
C[2]	67	Exterior	Active sport areas, amphitheaters, auditoriums, campgrounds, cemeteries, day care centers, hospitals, libraries, medical facilities, parks, picnic areas, places of worship, playgrounds, public meeting rooms, public or nonprofit institutional structures, radio stations, recording studios, recreation areas, Section 4(f) sites[4], schools, television studios, trails, and trail crossings.
D	52	Interior	Auditoriums, day care centers, hospitals, libraries, medical facilities, places of worship, public meeting rooms, public or nonprofit institutional structures, radio studios, recording studios, schools, and television studios.
E[2]	72	Exterior	Hotels, motels, offices, restaurants/bars, and other developed lands, properties or activities not included in A-D, or F.
F	–––	–––	Agriculture, airports, bus yards, emergency services, industrial, logging, maintenance facilities, manufacturing, mining, rail yards, retail facilities, shipyards, utilities, (water resources, water treatment, electrical), and warehousing.
G[3]	–––	–––	Undeveloped lands that are not "permitted".

[1] The Leq dBA Activity Criteria values are for impact determination only, and are not design standards for noise Abatement.

[2] Includes undeveloped lands that have been permitted for this Activity Category.

[3] Indicates no building permits on or before the date of public knowledge.

[4] Section 4(f) property means publicly owned land of a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, state, or local significance, or land of a historic site of national, state, or local significance, as initially defined in Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 and addressed in 23 CFR 774, Parks, Recreation Areas, Wildlife and Waterfowl Refuges, and Historic Sites.

AHTD's "Policy on Highway Traffic Noise Abatement", a noise receptor is considered impacted under the following scenarios: (1) if predicted noise levels approach, equal, or exceed the NAC Activity Criteria Leq dBA (Table 1), or (2) if future predicted noise levels exceed existing noise levels greater than 10 dBA. The term "approach" is considered to be 1 Leq dBA less than the NAC Leq dBA (i.e., 66 Leq dBA for residential structures).

Existing Conditions

The Red and Yellow Alternatives pass through rural areas dominated by undeveloped land with few residential structures. Existing noise levels were measured at three representative locations near rural as well as more developed areas (Figure C-1). The sites were selected to be generally representative of noise-sensitive, ground-level, outdoor human use or activity areas in proximity to the Construction Alternatives. The existing noise measurements were collected between 1015 and 1240 hours on February 24, 2012. The temperature ranged from 57 to 62 ^{o}F and winds were light and variable, having little effect on sound propagation over moderate distances. The noise measurements were collected using a Larson-Davis 812 sound level meter in 15 minute intervals. The noise measurement locations and ambient noise levels are listed in Table 2. Areas near of Interstate 40 exhibited higher noise values than areas west of Hwy 25.

Table 2
Ambient Noise Readings[1]

Sample No.	Location Description	Leq dBA
1	Between I-40 and Blaney Hill Road	57.1
2	Roberts Road	43.6
8	South of Friendship Road	44.3

[1] Noise readings taken on February 24, 2012 from 1015 to 1240 hours.

Traffic Noise Model 2.5 Setup

FHWA's Traffic Noise Model 2.5 (TNM) was used to predict traffic noise levels for the future No Action and three Build Alternatives. Traffic noise analyses were performed for each of the Construction Alternatives utilizing a roadway cross-section of two 12-foot wide paved travel lanes with 8-foot wide paved shoulders. Traffic noise analysis for the No Action Alternative was modeled using the current Highway 25 cross-section of two 12-foot wide travel lanes. Current and future traffic data used in the TNM 2.5 model are listed in Table 3.

Table 3
Current and Future Average Daily Traffic (ADT)

Design Year	No Action	Construction Alternatives		Directional Distribution	Percent Truck	Design Speed (mph)
		Red	Yellow			
2012	6,500	7,600	6,500	65/35	4%	55
2032	11,500	13,200	11,500	65/35	4%	55

Traffic Noise Analysis

The noise measurement data collected at the three sample locations were used to create an average Leq dBA for the Red Alternative. This average Leq dBA value was then used to determine the distance from the centerline noise levels increased by 10 Leq dBA for the Red Alternative (Table 4). The existing roadway and the Yellow Alternative were evaluated using 66 Leq dBA. This is the level that "approaches" the NAC Activity Criteria level for residential properties (Table 1).

Table 4 Leq dBA used in Analysis	
Alternative	Leq dBA Applied
No Action	66
Red	55
Yellow	66

Effects of Project Alternatives

The traffic noise estimates result in noise abatement distances for each Construction Alternative, as shown in Table 5. These distances are measured from the centerline of each Build Alternative.

Table 5 Noise Abatement Standard Distance For 2031		
Alternative	> 66 Leq dBA[1] (feet from CL)	> 10 Leq dBA Increase over Existing Noise Levels (feet from CL)
No Action	70	-
Red	-	248
Yellow	70	-

[1] **Value that "approaches" the NAC level of 67 Leq dBA**

The estimated impacted noise receptor counts for the No Action and the two Construction Alternatives are listed in Table 6. The No Action Alternative impacts the greatest number of receptors. This is due to the high volume of residential structures located along Highway 25. The Red Alternative is estimated to impact four receptors and the Yellow Alternative is estimated to impact one receptor.

Table 6 Estimated Noise Receptors Impacted		
Alternative	> 66 Leq dBA[1] (feet from CL)	> 10 Leq dBA Increase over Existing Noise Levels (feet from CL)
No Action	11	-
Red	-	4
Yellow	-	1

[1] **Value that "approaches" the NAC level of 67 Leq dBA**

Traffic Noise Abatement

Noise impacts are predicted to occur within 500 feet of the proposed Construction Alternatives. Therefore, the feasibility and reasonableness of potential noise abatement measures must be evaluated. Based upon AHTD's "Policy on Highway Traffic Noise Abatement", any noise abatement effort using barrier walls or berms is not warranted for any of the proposed Construction Alternatives. In order to provide direct access to the highway from adjacent properties, breaks in the barrier walls or berms would be required. These necessary breaks for highway access would render any noise barrier ineffective.

To avoid noise levels that approach or exceed the design year NAC, future receptors should be located a minimum of 10 feet beyond the distance that the noise abatement standard is projected to occur (Table 5). These distances are measured from the centerline of each Construction Alternative. 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.

Noise from construction is expected to be localized and temporal. 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 the 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.

APPENDIX E

Cultural Resources

A preliminary survey of cultural resources was conducted to identify archeological sites or historic properties that might be affected by the project. The survey also served to determine if the proposed alternatives fall within areas of high probability for cultural resources.

The cultural resources survey consisted of a review of appropriate records and a visual and pedestrian survey of the proposed alternatives by an AHTD staff archeologist in January 2012. 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. These include the archeological site files kept by the Arkansas Archeological Survey (AAS) in Fayetteville and the historic structure database kept by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (AHPP) in Little Rock. Several early maps were also reviewed to gather information regarding early historic settlement in the project area. The windshield survey consisted of driving to as many public access points as about the same location with the exception of the curve around Beaver Fork Lake. The lake did not exist in 1936 and the highway went straight north. A few structures are shown on the map on the southern end of Section 26 and a few throughout Section 25, some of which might be underwater now.possible along each alternative to determine if any unrecorded historic structures were present.

A review of the AAS and AHPP site files revealed no previously recorded archeological sites or historic structures within or near the project area. A Request for Technical Assistance was submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on existing structures that appeared to be fifty years old or older. SHPO found that none of the structures submitted are eligible for inclusion on the NRHP. No new cultural resources were identified during the windshield survey. The 1819 Government Land Office map

road map showed the current Highway 25 labeled as Highway 65. The highway is in about the same location with the exception of the curve around Beaver Fork Lake. The lake did not exist in 1936 and the highway went straight north. A few structures are shown on the map on the southern end of Section 26 and a few throughout Section 25, some of which might be underwater now.

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Arkansas Division

700 West Capitol Ave
Suite 3130
Little Rock AR 72201
(501) 324-6430

May 4, 2012

In Reply Refer To:
AHTD Job No. 080397
Hwy. 25 Relocation
Faulkner County, Arkansas

Dr. Andrea A. Hunter
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
The Osage Nation
Post Office Box 779
Pawhuska, Oklahoma 74056

Dear Dr. Hunter:

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

The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) plans to relocate Hwy. 25 in Conway in Faulkner County (see project location map). To date, a survey of existing records regarding previously recorded archeological sites has been conducted and no recorded sites are listed near the project. In an effort to determine the existence of 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

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Arkansas Division

700 West Capitol Ave
Suite 3130
Little Rock AR 72201
(501) 324-6430

May 4, 2012

In Reply Refer To:
AHTD Job No. 080397
Hwy. 25 Relocation
Faulkner County, Arkansas

Ms. Lisa Larue-Baker
Historic Preservation Officer
United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians
Post Office Box 746
Tahlequah, Oklahoma 74465

Dear Ms. Larue-Baker:

This letter is written in order to initiate consultation between the Federal Highway Administration, Arkansas Division Office and the United Keetoowah 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 the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians.

The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) plans to relocate Hwy. 25 in Conway in Faulkner County (see project location map). To date, a survey of existing records regarding previously recorded archeological sites has been conducted and no recorded sites are listed near the project. In an effort to determine the existence of 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

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Arkansas Division

700 West Capitol Ave
Suite 3130
Little Rock AR 72201
(501) 324-6430

May 4, 2012

In Reply Refer To:
AHTD Job No. 080397
Hwy. 25 Relocation
Faulkner County, Arkansas

Mr. Earl J. Barbry, Jr.
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana, Inc.
Post Office Box 1589
Marksville, Louisiana 71351

Dear Mr. Barbry:

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

The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) plans to relocate Hwy. 25 in Conway in Faulkner County (see project location map). To date, a survey of existing records regarding previously recorded archeological sites has been conducted and no recorded sites are listed near the project. In an effort to determine the existence of 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

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Arkansas Division

700 West Capitol Ave
Suite 3130
Little Rock AR 72201
(501) 324-6430

May 4, 2012

In Reply Refer To:
AHTD Job No. 080397
Hwy. 25 Relocation
Faulkner County, Arkansas

Ms. Jean Ann Lambert
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma
Post Office Box 765
Quapaw, Oklahoma 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 the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma.

The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) plans to relocate Hwy. 25 in Conway in Faulkner County (see project location map). To date, a survey of existing records regarding previously recorded archeological sites has been conducted and no recorded sites are listed near the project. In an effort to determine the existence of 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

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Arkansas Division

700 West Capitol Ave
Suite 3130
Little Rock AR 72201
(501) 324-6430

May 4, 2012

In Reply Refer To:
AHTD Job No. 080397
Hwy. 25 Relocation
Faulkner County, Arkansas

Dr. Richard Allen
Policy Analyst & NAGPRA/Section 106 Review Contact
Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma
Post Office Box 948
Tahlequah, Oklahoma 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 the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma.

The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) plans to relocate Hwy. 25 in Conway in Faulkner County (see project location map). To date, a survey of existing records regarding previously recorded archeological sites has been conducted and no recorded sites are listed near the project. In an effort to determine the existence of 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

U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Arkansas Division

700 West Capitol Ave
Suite 3130
Little Rock AR 72201
(501) 324-6430

May 4, 2012

In Reply Refer To:
AHTD Job No. 080397
Hwy. 25 Relocation
Faulkner County, Arkansas

Dr. Ian Thompson
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer &
NAGPRA Program Coordinator
The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Post Office Box 1210
Durant, Oklahoma 74702-1210

Dear Dr. Thompson:

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 relocate Hwy. 25 in Conway in Faulkner County (see project location map). To date, a survey of existing records regarding previously recorded archeological sites has been conducted and no recorded sites are listed near the project. In an effort to determine the existence of 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

0 500 1,000
Feet

April 12, 2012
AHTD Envirnonmental GIS - Strawn

Job 080397
Hwy. 25 Relocation
(I-40 North)
Faulkner County

Red Alternative
Yellow Alternative

Conway 1994 and Greenbriar 1994
USGS Topographic Maps

APPENDIX F

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coordination

IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
110 S. Amity Road, Suite 300
Conway, Arkansas 72032
Tel.: 501/513-4470 Fax: 501/513-4480

April 18, 2012

Mr. Lynn P. Malbrough
Environmental Division Head
Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department
P.O. Box 2261
Little Rock, AR 72203-2261

Re: Environmental Assessment, AHTD Job Number 080397, Hwy. 25 Relocation (I-40 North), Faulkner County, Arkansas

Dear Mr. Malbrough,

This letter provides U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) comments concerning the above referenced Environmental Assessment (EA) transmitted to our office on April 6, 2012. Our comments are submitted in accordance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661-667e) and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

According to the EA, the Federal Highway Administration, in cooperation with the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD), proposes to relocate Highway 25 to connect to Interstate 40 at the Highway 64 Spur interchange (Exit 124) in Faulkner County. This interchange was recently constructed to the west of the existing Highway 25 alignment. The purpose of the project is to improve north-south travel on Highway 25 by reducing the indirection required for drivers traveling the route to reach Interstate 40.

The Service has determined that no threatened or endangered species are located within the project action area, as noted in the EA. The preferred alternative (Red Alternative) is approximately 1.1 miles long constructed on new location that would affect one perennial, one intermittent, and two ephemeral streams (1,955 ft. of stream relocation) with no wetlands affected. The Yellow Alternative is approximately 1.3 miles in length and follows the existing highway for much of the proposed design and would also have adverse stream effects (1,406 ft. of stream relocation). The Service requests that AHTD exhaust all possible efforts to modify the Yellow Alternative to avoid stream relocations where possible and use more of the existing roadway in the design to avoid the historic landfill depicted in the EA. Such efforts could reduce the cost and environmental impacts of the project while avoiding extensive cuts and fills associated with the preferred alternative, which creates an additional transportation facility.

Project plans should include context sensitive designs that minimize adverse effects to streams 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 should be mitigated appropriately at an approved mitigation bank, as suggested in the EA. 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 the existing bridge or other structures to be replaced. 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.

Thank you for allowing our agency the opportunity to comment on the proposed project. For future correspondence on this matter, please contact Mitch Wine of this office at (501) 513-4488.

Sincerely,

Melvin Tobin
Deputy Project Leader

cc:
Randal Looney, Federal Highway Administration
Brenda Price, Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department
John Fleming, Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department
Sherry LeBlanc, Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department
Cindy Osborne, Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission
Steve Filipek, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
Raul Gutierrez, United States Environmental Protection Agency

C:\Documents and Settings\MSW\My Documents\Transportation\Transportation_FY2012\Highway 25 Relocation Faulkner County