



US 93, WICKENBURG TO SANTA MARIA RIVER

PUBLIC HEARING

NOVEMBER 17, 2004

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are proposing improvements to US 93 from the State Route (SR) 89 junction north of Wickenburg to the Santa Maria River (Figure 1). The project limits extend from milepost (MP) 193.5 to 161.5.

Tonight, the Study Team will present the preferred improvement alternative for the project area. This hearing is the culmination of the public involvement program for this study and provides an opportunity for the public to comment on the preferred alternative.

The purpose of tonight's public hearing is to:

- ▶ Review the study results
- ▶ Present the preferred alternative
- ▶ Receive public comments

PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

US 93 is the primary highway route linking the metropolitan Phoenix area to northwest Arizona and beyond. The highway provides regional service to residents and commercial traffic between Wickenburg and Kingman, supports recreational traffic associated with the Colorado

River, and provides access to the gaming industries of Laughlin and Las Vegas, Nevada. Traffic volumes along the route have continually increased over the years due to growth in the region.

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve traffic operations on US 93 by providing adequate capacity for current and projected traffic volumes, improving passing opportunities, and reducing the frequency and severity of accidents.

Traffic studies were conducted to predict future traffic volumes, analyze traffic operations, determine accident frequencies, and recommend the improvements needed to increase the capacity and achieve improved traffic operations. These studies demonstrated the benefits of constructing a four-lane divided roadway within the project area.

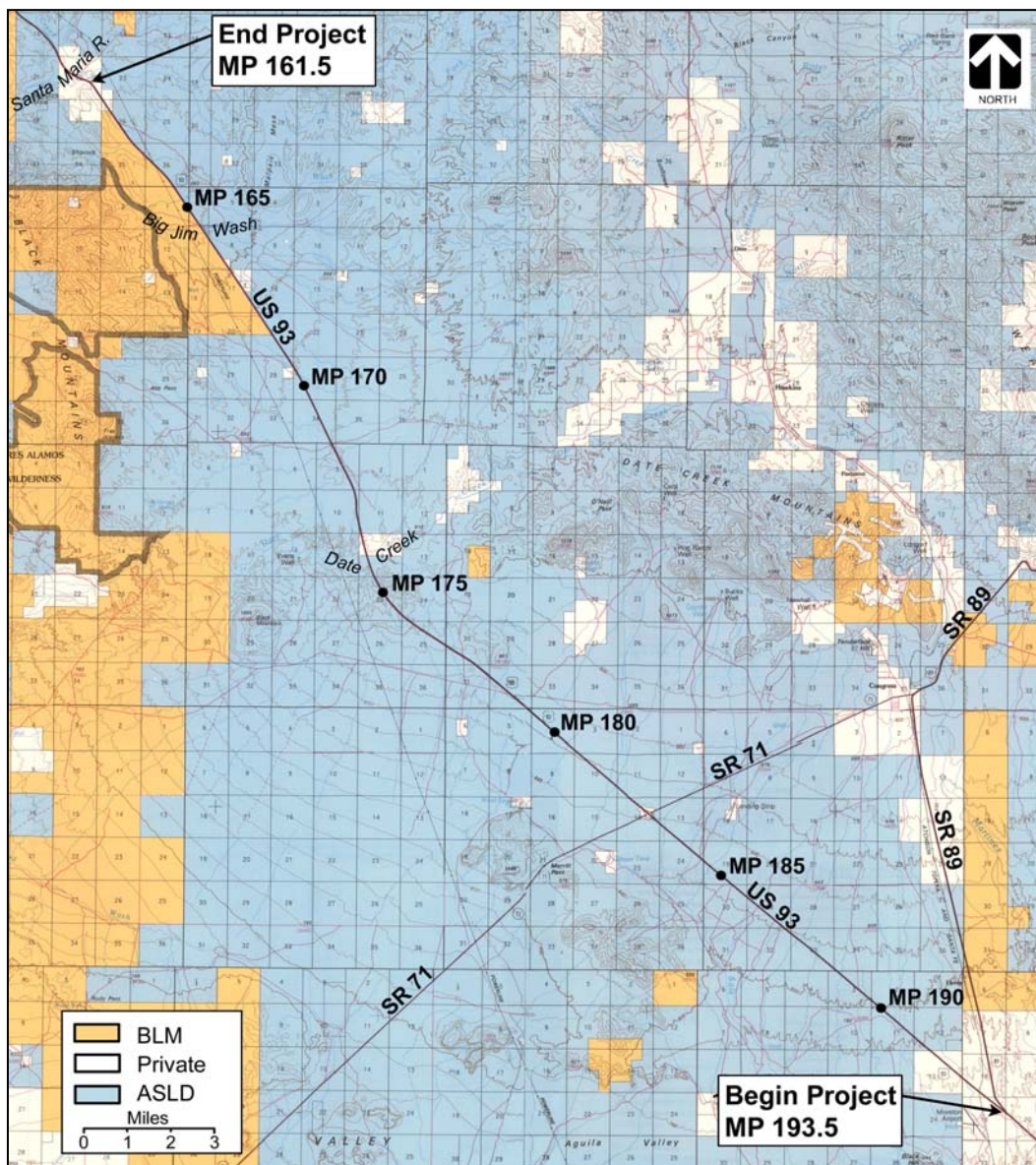


FIGURE 1 – PROJECT AREA

STUDY BACKGROUND

In 1999, ADOT initiated a study of the US 93 corridor from the US 60/SR 74 intersection south of Wickenburg to the Santa Maria River. This study was subsequently divided into three projects: improvements from the SR 89 junction to the Santa Maria River, a bypass around Wickenburg, and an interim improvement to relieve congestion in downtown Wickenburg. The proposed improvements from the SR 89 junction to the Santa Maria River are the subject of tonight's public hearing.

Public involvement for this study was conducted concurrently with the other US 93 studies in the Wickenburg area, beginning with a public scoping meeting held at the Wickenburg Community Center on June 3, 1999. The purpose of the meeting was to gather public input on issues, concerns, and opportunities in the study corridor. These comments, as well as comments received from federal, state, and local agencies, became the basis for the criteria used to evaluate potential highway improvement alternatives (inset, right).

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation criteria include design, environmental, and socioeconomic considerations that were developed during the agency and public involvement process. The following factors were identified by agency representatives, ADOT technical staff, and the public for evaluating potential improvement alternatives:

- Access control
- Constructability and traffic control
- Cost
- Cultural resources
- Drainage
- Impacts on improved properties
- Right-of-way requirements
- Roadway geometrics
- Traffic capacity
- Use of existing roadway
- Visual impacts
- Wildlife habitat

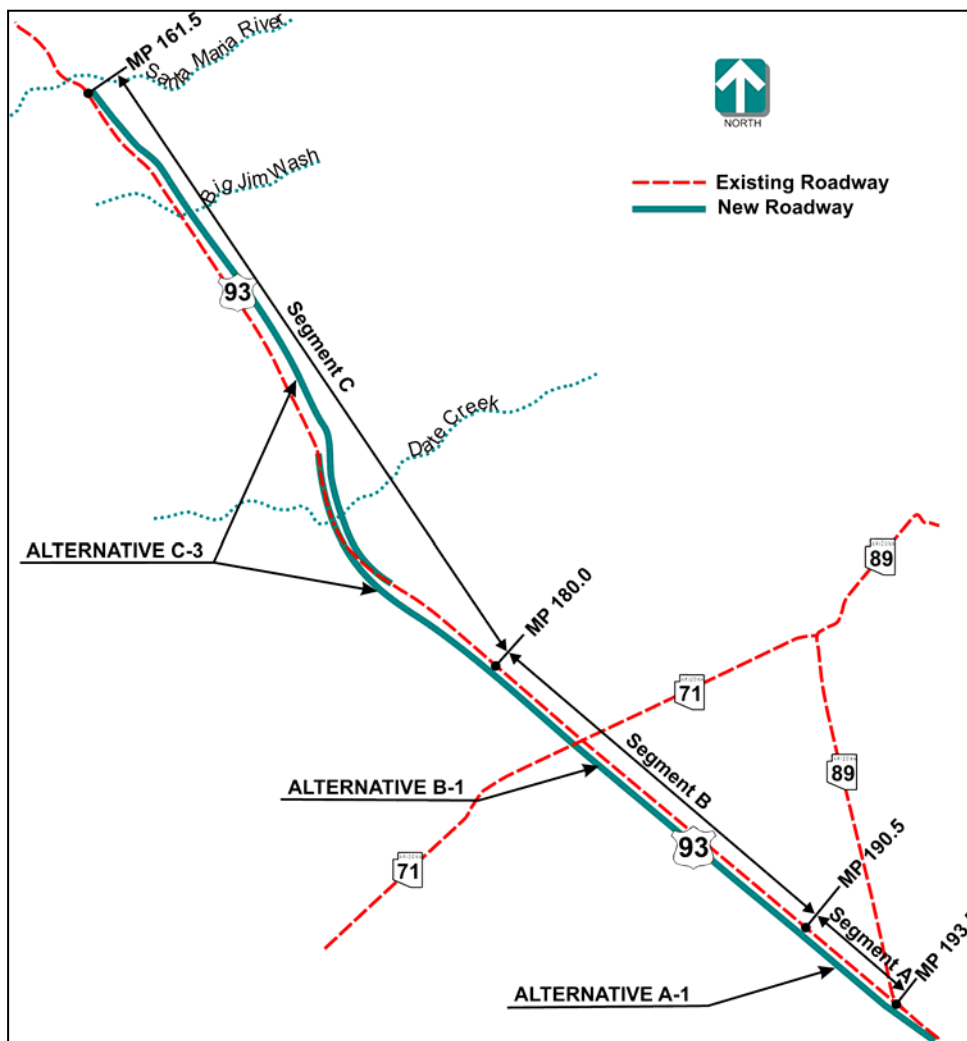


FIGURE 2 – PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The alternatives for improving US 93 from SR 89 to the Santa Maria River were presented at a public information meeting held at the Wickenburg Community Center on August 22, 2000. Since that time, ADOT has evaluated the improvement alternatives and identified a preferred alternative.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The project area was subdivided into study segments for analysis: Segment A (MP 193.5 to 190.5) consists of a low-density residential area; Segment B (MP 190.5 to 180.0) consists of mostly undeveloped areas with level terrain; and Segment C (MP 180.0 to 161.5) consists of mostly undeveloped areas within the designated limits of the Joshua Forest Scenic Road.

The preferred alternative (Figure 2) would provide a four-lane divided facility in all three segments to accommodate future traffic volumes. In Segments A

and B, the existing roadway would be used for northbound traffic, and a parallel two-lane roadway for southbound traffic would be constructed to the west of existing US 93 (Alternatives A-1 and B-1). In Segment C, the existing roadway would be used for one direction of travel and a two-lane roadway with variable-width median would be constructed for the opposite direction of travel. In Segment C, the location of the new lanes would vary to best fit the topography and retain aesthetic features (Alternative C-3).

The preferred alternative minimizes impacts on adjacent residential areas, minimizes new right-of-way requirements, and maximizes opportunities to retain natural vegetation and enhance scenic elements along the Joshua Forest Scenic Road.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The potential social, economic, and environmental impacts associated with the preferred alternative are evaluated in the Draft Environmental Assessment (September 2004). This document is available for review at the Wickenburg Town Hall, Wickenburg Public Library, and on the project web site.

PROJECT WEB SITE

www.wickenburg.civilnet.sverdrup.com

The following is a brief summary of the preferred alternative's anticipated impacts:

- *New R/W* – 588.2 acres of new right-of-way would be acquired, consisting of 495.4 acres of State Land and 92.8 acres of private land.
- *Grazing* – Four grazing allotments would be directly affected due to right-of-way acquisition.
- *Water Quality* – Installation of bridges and culverts would require minor fills within waters of the US and designated floodplains.
- *Wildlife* – Provisions to protect sensitive species in the project area include pre-construction surveys and special construction procedures.
- *Vegetation* – Native plants would be salvaged, and disturbed areas would be revegetated.
- *Visual Impacts* – The preferred alternative would affect the visual character of the project area because it would increase the visual dominance of the roadway and detract from the natural setting. Mitigation measures would be included in the design to reduce impacts and provide the level of visual quality required to retain the scenic road designation.

- *Air Quality* – After construction, carbon monoxide levels in the project area would remain well below limits established by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.
- *Noise* – Noise levels would increase slightly, but would not approach or exceed levels that would warrant noise barriers.
- *Cultural Resources* – Ten archaeological sites would be disturbed due to construction. A Programmatic Agreement among ADOT, FHWA, State Historic Preservation Office, Bureau of Land Management, Arizona State Land Department, and the appropriate tribes would address impacts to these sites.
- *Displacements* – One home near the SR 89 junction would be displaced, and two mobile homes near the SR 71 junction would need to be relocated.

HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?

Before and after tonight's presentation, Study Team representatives will be available to discuss the proposed project and answer your questions. In addition, a question-and-answer session will be held immediately following the presentation.

A court reporter is on duty to take oral comments tonight, or you may complete a comment sheet. You may leave it with us tonight, or send it to the address indicated on the sheet by December 1, 2004.

All comments received will be addressed in the Final Environmental Assessment, and the design recommendations will be documented in the Final Design Concept Report. Following review of these documents, the FHWA will issue a final decision.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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