



APPENDIX H. BISHOPVILLE TRUCK ROUTE PROJECT ABBREVIATED VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

**BISHOPVILLE TRUCK ROUTE
PROJECT
(S-69-08)
ABBREVIATED VISUAL
IMPACT ASSESSMENT**



Prepared by:

DRMP, Inc.

Prepared for:

Federal Highway Administration

&

South Carolina Department of Transportation

November 2021



Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Project Description.....	2
2.1 Project Build Alternatives.....	3
3. Visual Impact Assessment Scoping	4
4. Area of Visual Effect	4
5. Inventory of the Project Environments.....	4
6. Affected Population	7
7. Effects Analysis.....	8
8. Mitigation.....	11
9. References.....	11

Exhibits

Exhibit 1. Wisacky Highway (SC 341) Existing Conditions Looking Northeast	5
Exhibit 2. Main Street (US 15) Existing Conditions Looking South.....	5
Exhibit 3. St. Charles Road (SC 154) and SCRF Existing Conditions Looking Northeast	6
Exhibit 4. Academy Road Existing Conditions Looking Northeast	6
Exhibit 5. Sumter Highway (US 15) Existing Conditions Looking Southeast	7
Exhibit 6. Proposed Intersection with St. Charles Road (SC 154) and the SCRF Looking Northeast.....	9
Exhibit 7. Main Street (US 15) Looking South from Proposed Intersection.....	9
Exhibit 8. Wisacky Highway (SC 341) Looking Northeast from Proposed Intersection	10
Exhibit 9. Proposed Connection to Academy Road Looking Northeast.....	10
Exhibit 10. Sumter Highway (US 15) Looking Southeast from Proposed Intersection	11

Figures (follow report text)

Figure 1. Project Location	
Figure 2. Preferred Alternative	
Figure 3. Area of Visual Effect.....	

Appendices

Appendix A. Scoping Questionnaire	
Appendix B. Scoping Questionnaire Rationale	



1 Introduction

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is studying the potential effects associated with the proposed Bishopville Truck Route Project. This report provides documentation of the visual impact assessment (VIA) prepared in support of the *Bishopville Truck Route Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (2021)*.

SCDOT used the FHWA *Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects* in January 2015 as a roadmap for conducting the assessment. The guidelines suggest different levels of documentation based on the scope and complexity of various projects (FHWA, 2015). FHWA determined that an Abbreviated VIA is the appropriate level of analysis and documentation for the proposed project.

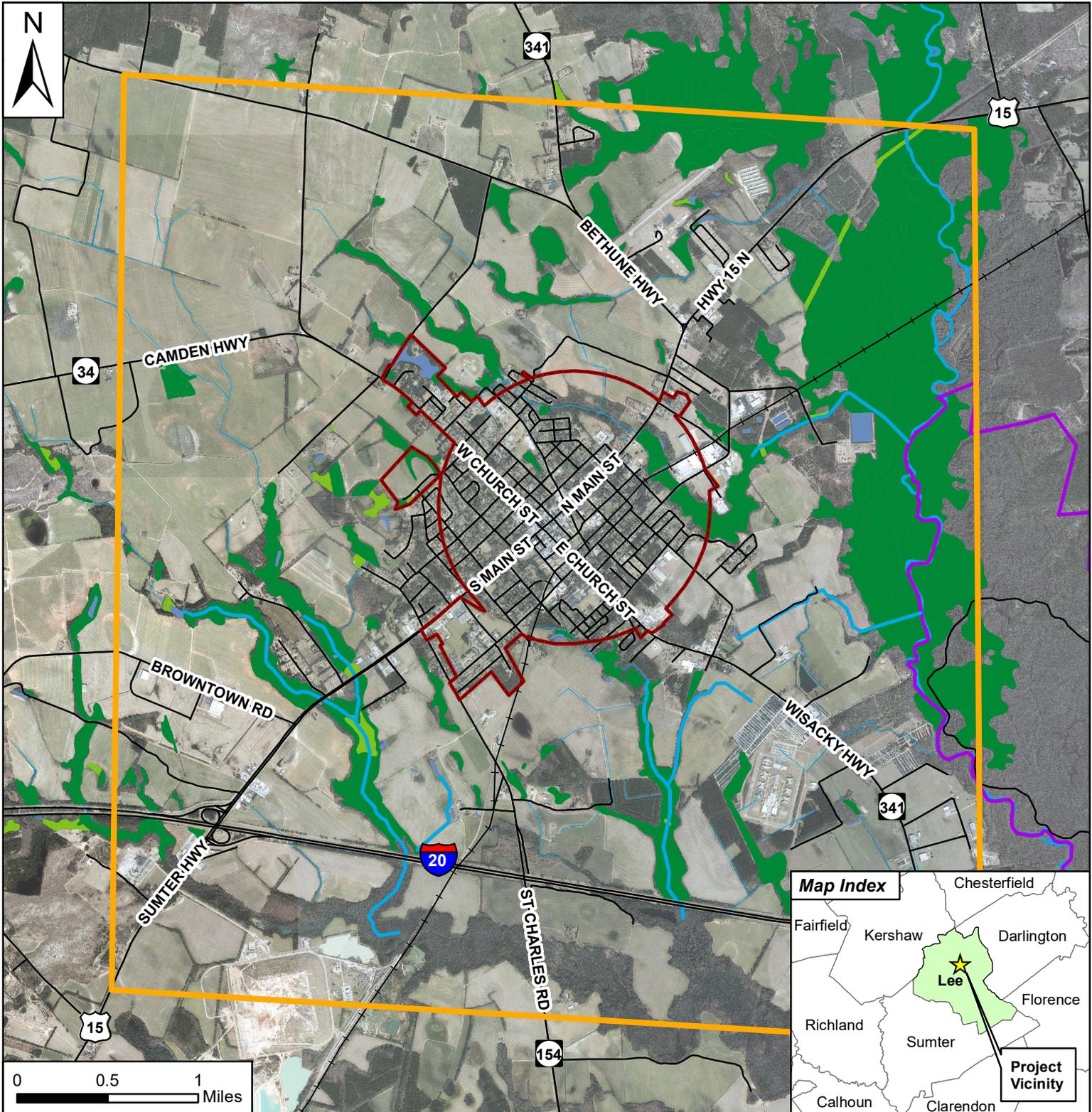
This VIA is written as an independent report and appended to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). This VIA is based on the scientific concept that visual quality perception is the product of the interaction between the viewer and the visual resources of the environment. There are four steps in the VIA process:

- **Establishment:** Defines the study area, viewsheds, and landscape constraints. A description of the potentially affected environment (or visual resources) is provided as a baseline for evaluating the significance of visual changes related to the construction and operation of the proposed project.
- **Inventory:** Identifies the affected environment's visual quality. The Area of Visual Effect (AVE) focuses on the views that are observable from and toward the project corridor.
- **Analysis:** Evaluates potential impacts of the project on the visual resources and identifies the adverse, beneficial, or neutral effects of the project. The potential visual impacts of the proposed project were determined by assessing the change in visual resources that would result from the project and by assessing the viewer's potential response to that change.
- **Mitigation:** Identifies and assesses mitigation strategies to avoid, minimize, or compensate for adverse visual impacts.

More information on potential community impacts beyond visual impacts can be found in the *Bishopville Truck Route Project Draft Community Impact Assessment (2021)*. More information on potential environmental justice impacts can be found in the *Bishopville Truck Route Project Draft Environmental Justice Assessment (2021)*.

1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

SCDOT, in cooperation with the FHWA, is undertaking project-development and preliminary engineering services for the preparation of a DEIS for the Bishopville Truck Route Project (project). The proposed project is located in Bishopville in Lee County, South Carolina (**Figure 1**). It is estimated that on average, over 1,900 large commercial trucks travel Main Street (US 15) through downtown Bishopville daily. The project would provide an alternate route for trucks and is considered necessary to reduce existing and future truck congestion downtown. The primary purpose of the Bishopville Truck Route Project is to address truck traffic traveling through downtown Bishopville. The secondary purpose is to enhance the economic development of the area.



- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Rivers and Streams | Freshwater Emergent Wetland | Lee State Park |
| Road | Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland | Municipal Boundary |
| SCRF Railroad | Freshwater Pond | Study Area |

**Bishopville Truck Route Project
Abbreviated Visual
Impact Assessment**

November 2021

Project Location	Figure 1
-------------------------	-----------------



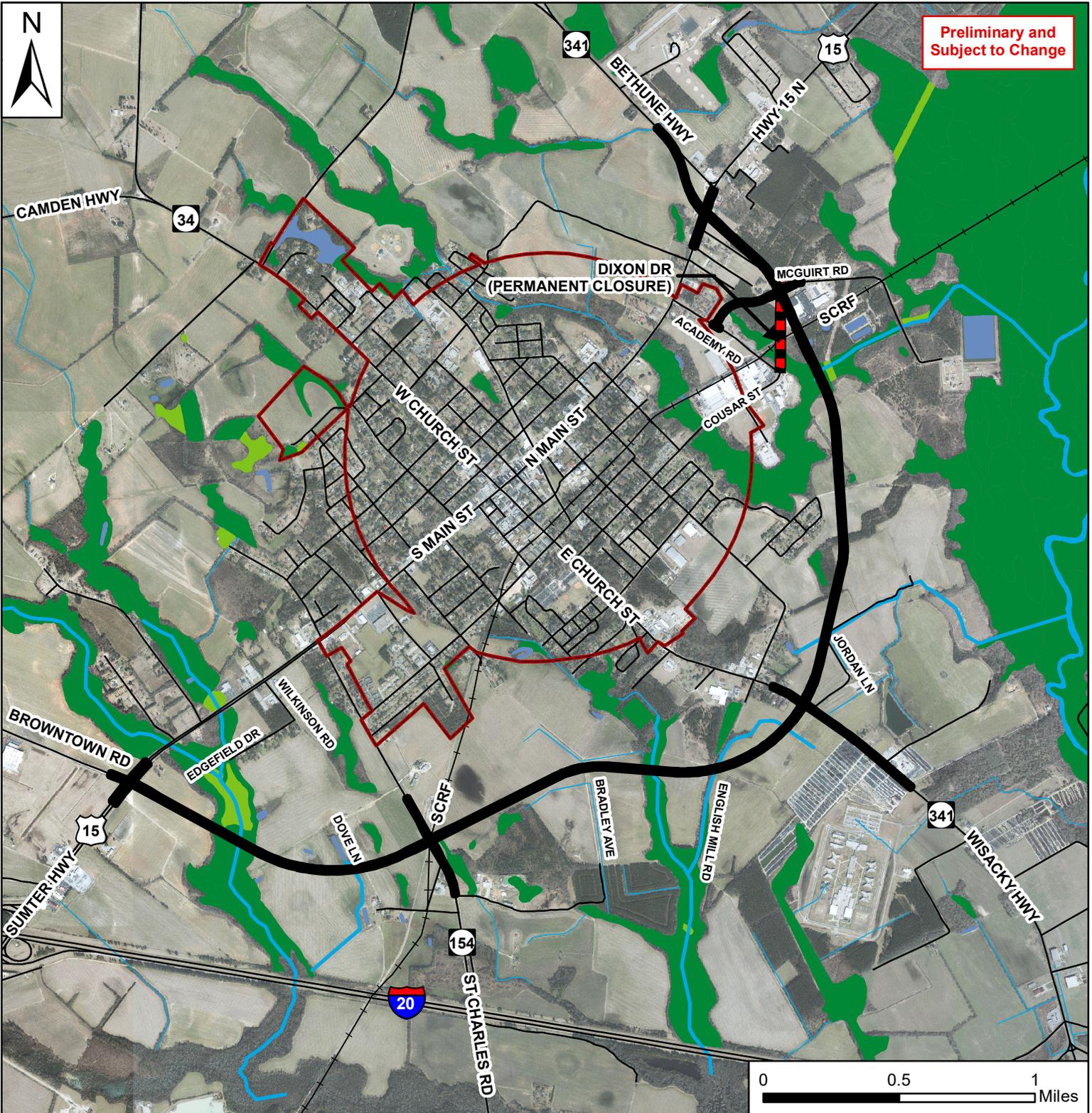
1.1.1 Project Build Alternatives

A wide range of alternatives were identified from the previously prepared Environmental Assessment (EA) that was approved in September 2012. The EA process analyzed local planning documents, comments received from resource agencies, stakeholder meetings, and public and agency comments. SCDOT used a tiered alternative-screening process to analyze and screen a range of potential build alternatives to identify a preferred alternative. At the November 2012 public hearing, a majority of those in attendance were not in favor of the project. Subsequently, the City of Bishopville and Lee County passed resolutions against the Preferred Alternative. Because of the resolutions opposing the Preferred Alternative and public controversy associated with the project, FHWA informed SCDOT that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would have to be prepared if the project was to move forward.

In the spring of 2015, FHWA and SCDOT determined that the appropriate next step was to prepare a DEIS. SCDOT is evaluating twelve build alternatives in detail in the DEIS. Based on the analyses presented in the DEIS, SCDOT is recommending Alternative 6 as the Preferred Alternative (**Figure 2**). However, an alternative will not be selected until after the conclusion of the DEIS comment period. The recommended Preferred Alternative would be approximately 5.2 miles in length, require about 78.1 acres of right-of-way, and cost an estimated \$22.6 million to construct.

Due to the rural/agricultural character of the project study area, visual impacts would vary minimally among the project alternatives. This VIA documents the potential visual impacts of the recommended Preferred Alternative. For more information on the Preferred Alternative, the 12 build alternatives, and the No-Build Alternative, see Chapter 3 of the DEIS.

As shown in **Figure 2**, the recommended Preferred Alternative (proposed project) is a three-lane roadway consisting of two 12-foot travel lanes and a 15-foot two-way left-turn lane. The proposed project is approximately 5.2 miles long and begins at the intersection of Sumter Highway (US 15) and Browntown Road. From there, it heads southeast for approximately nine-tenths of a mile and intersects Dove Lane, then heads northeast for approximately one-quarter of a mile where it intersects with the South Carolina Central Railroad (SCRF) and St. Charles Road (SC 154). This proposed railroad crossing would require modification of the existing at-grade crossing with St. Charles Road (SC 154). The proposed project then heads slightly northeast for approximately six-tenths of a mile where it intersects Bradley Avenue, then heads east for approximately one-half mile where it intersects English Mill Road. From there, it heads northeast approximately four-tenths of a mile and intersects Wisacky Highway (SC 341). The proposed project continues northeast for approximately three-tenths of a mile where it intersects Jordan Lane. It then heads slightly northwest for approximately one and one-quarter miles, crossing the SCRF a second time, to the intersection of McGuirt Road and Dixon Drive. This second railroad crossing is in a new location and would require the construction of a new crossing. From there, it heads northwest just north of Dixon Drive for approximately four-tenths of a mile before intersecting Main Street (US 15). It then heads northeast for approximately four-tenths of a mile and connects with Bethune Highway (SC 341). The proposed project provides a connection from the new roadway to Cousar Street/Academy Road and permanently closes the portion of Dixon Drive between Academy Road and McGuirt Road. The proposed project proposes six new stream crossings and replaces one stream crossing at Jordan Lane.



Preliminary and Subject to Change

 Permanent Road Closure	 Freshwater Emergent Wetland	Bishopville Truck Route Project Abbreviated Visual Impact Assessment	
 Rivers and Streams	 Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland		
 Road	 Freshwater Pond	November 2021	
 SCRF Railroad	 Municipal Boundary	Preferred Alternative	Figure
 Preferred Alternative	 Preferred Alternative		2



2 Visual Impact Assessment Scoping

The VIA scoping questionnaire was used to assist SCDOT to assess the potential visual impacts of the proposed project on the environment and to understand the degree and breadth of the potential visual impacts. The goal is to develop a documentation strategy that is thorough, concise, and defensible. The project team completed the VIA scoping questionnaire using knowledge of the area, available information, and professional judgment to determine the appropriate level of VIA documentation. Based on the scoring system on the questionnaire, an Abbreviated VIA is recommended for the DEIS. The scoping questionnaire is in **Appendix A** and the scoping questionnaire rationale is in **Appendix B**.

SCDOT decided to prepare an Abbreviated VIA because the level of permanent change to the existing environment is anticipated to be moderate, and the project is moderately compatible with the visual character of the community. Minimal concern has been expressed regarding the visual character of the proposed project and the project design will follow the landscape standards set forth by SCDOT.

3 Area of Visual Effect

The Area of Visual Effect (AVE) is the area in which views of the project would potentially be visible as influenced by the presence or absence of intervening topography, vegetation, and structures. The AVE (**Figure 3**) consists of a 1,000-foot buffer around the proposed project. As shown in **Exhibit 1**, **Exhibit 2**, **Exhibit 3**, **Exhibit 4**, and **Exhibit 5**, the main landscape unit in the AVE is agricultural/rural land.

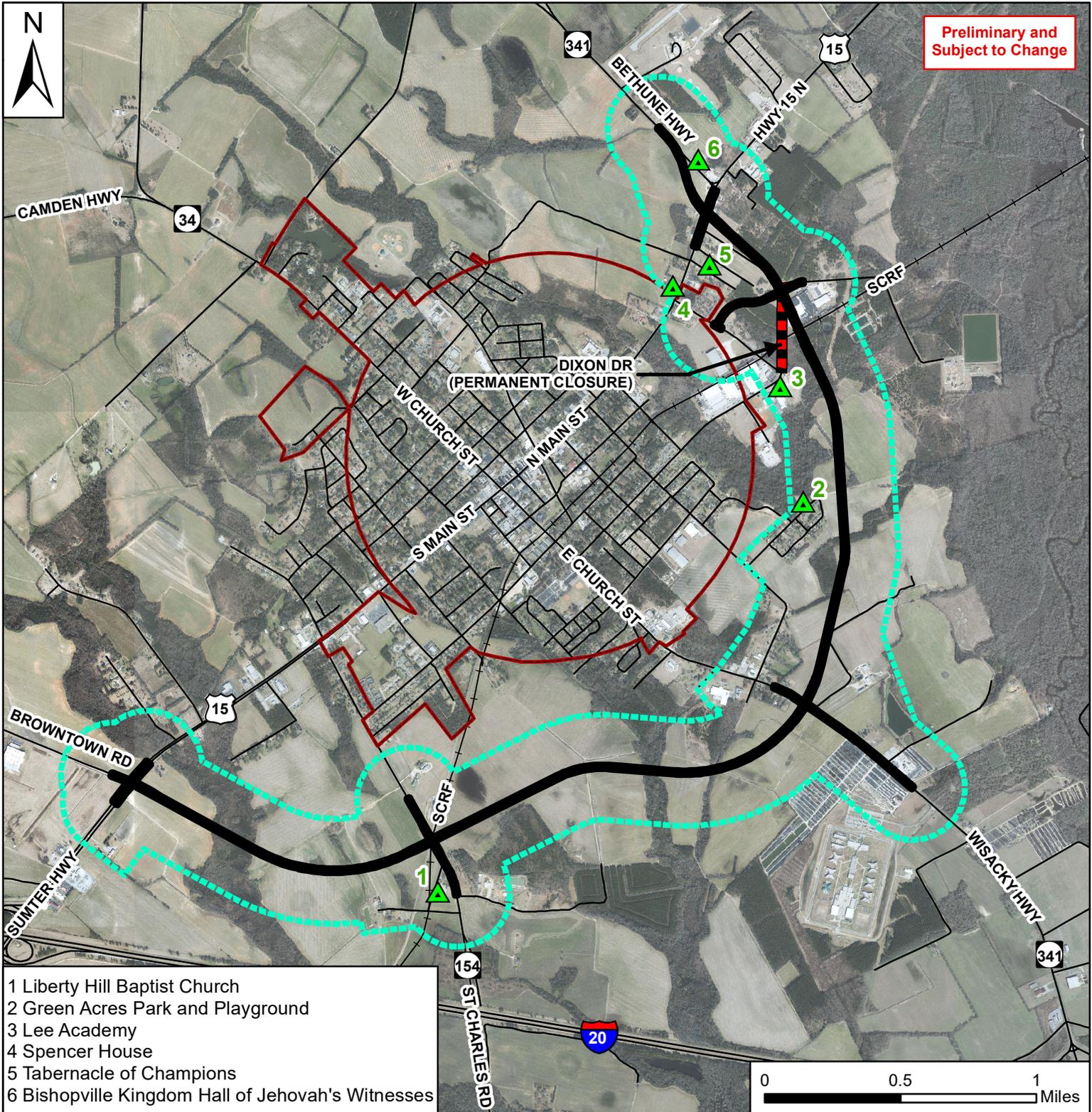
4 Inventory of the Project Environments

Bishopville has a commercial main street through the center of town, with residential uses outside of the core. Outside of the Bishopville municipal boundary, land use transitions to rural farmland. Although most of the study area is made up of agricultural/rural land (**Exhibit 1**, **Exhibit 3**, and **Exhibit 5**), there are other natural and cultural resources along the proposed alignment that define the visual quality of the area. Aesthetic and topographic features such as agricultural fields, forest-lined streams, and woodland areas are present in the AVE. Residential and commercial parcels (**Exhibit 2** and **Exhibit 4**) concentrated around proposed intersections in the portion of the alignment north of the Wisacky Highway (SC 341) are also present. More information on land use in the project study area (**Figure 1**) can be found in the DEIS.

Visual resources were identified through a review of planning documents and a combination of field observation and desktop review. Visual quality serves as the baseline for determining the degree of the visual impacts that the proposed project would have. Baseline visual quality is the value viewers place on the existing visual character of the affected environment based on their visual preferences. Visual resources related to the project environment include historic structures, government facilities, and other notable buildings. Project environment visual resources located in the AVE include:

- Liberty Hill Baptist Church;
- Green Acres Park and Playground;
- Lee Academy (formerly Robert E. Lee Academy);
- Spencer House;
- Tabernacle of Champions; and
- Bishopville Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.

All of the above-listed visual resources are located either partially or entirely in the AVE (**Figure 3**). More information on other visual resources in the project study area can be found in the *Bishopville Truck Route Project Draft Community Impact Assessment* (2021).



Visual Resource	SCRF Railroad	Bishopville Truck Route Project Abbreviated Visual Impact Assessment November 2021	
Permanent Road Closure	Area of Visual Effect		
Road	Municipal Boundary	Area of Visual Effect – Preferred Alternative	Figure 3
Preferred Alternative			

EXHIBIT 1. WISACKY HIGHWAY (SC 341) EXISTING CONDITIONS LOOKING NORTHEAST



EXHIBIT 2. MAIN STREET (US 15) EXISTING CONDITIONS LOOKING SOUTH



EXHIBIT 3. ST. CHARLES ROAD (SC 154) AND SCRF EXISTING CONDITIONS LOOKING NORTHEAST

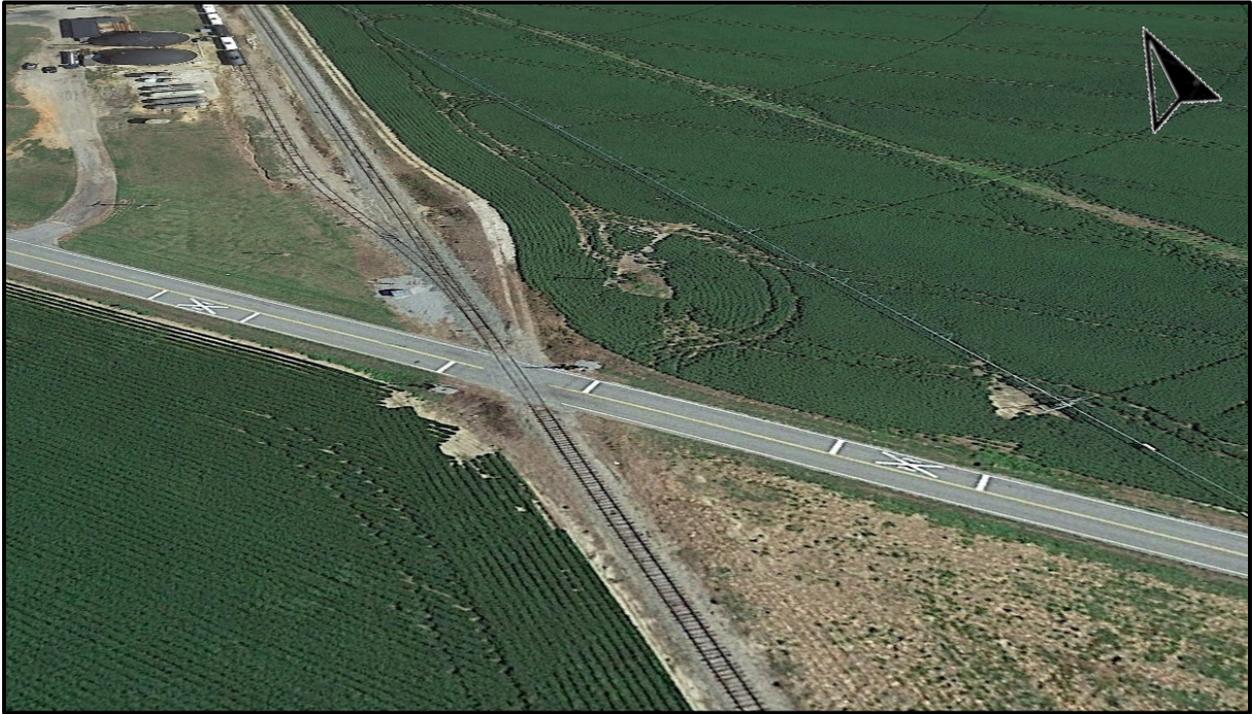


EXHIBIT 4. ACADEMY ROAD EXISTING CONDITIONS LOOKING NORTHEAST

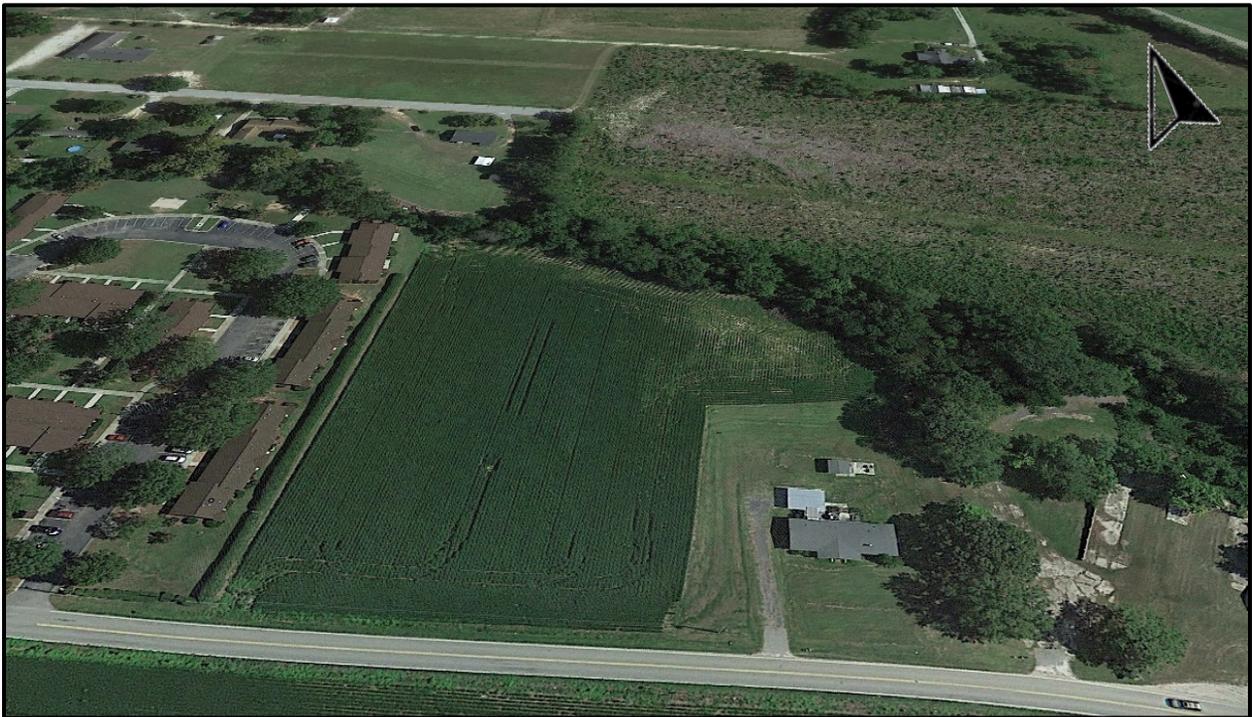


EXHIBIT 5. SUMTER HIGHWAY (US 15) EXISTING CONDITIONS LOOKING SOUTHEAST



5 Affected Population

The project study area encompasses about 15,000 acres of land, excluding roadways and bodies of water, and is predominately rural, with more than half the area zoned for agriculture. Vacant land is prevalent throughout the study area, primarily outside of the city center and following Lee State Park. The City of Bishopville has a commercial main street through the center of town, with residential uses outside of the core. Following agriculture, single-family residential has the second largest percentage of land use in the study area. Most single-family residential is located within the City of Bishopville. Generally, residents and travelers in the AVE would have a clear view of the proposed project, except for in areas with heavy tree cover.

Based on a review of the *City of Bishopville Comprehensive Plan (2011)* and the *Lee County Comprehensive Plan (2011)*, some of the visual goals of the City and County are:

- Encourage active protection of prime farmland, open space, and other natural resources;
- Conserve and preserve unique natural areas and historic sites;
- Preserve and protect the community's trees and initiate tree planning in agricultural areas; planned for future development;
- Discourage strip commercial development along major transportation routes; and Ensure compatible land use development for future uses.

6 Effects Analysis

Visual impacts from the proposed project were determined by assessing the change in visual resources caused by the proposed project and then by assessing the viewer's response to that change of visual resources. To assess the visual resource change, the visual compatibility and visual contrast of the project with the visual character of the existing landscape were examined. To assess viewer response, viewer exposure and viewer sensitivity were considered. Viewer exposure considers the physical limits of the views and the number of affected viewers. Viewer sensitivity considers viewer expectations based on the existing environment and the extent to which visual elements may be important to the viewer.

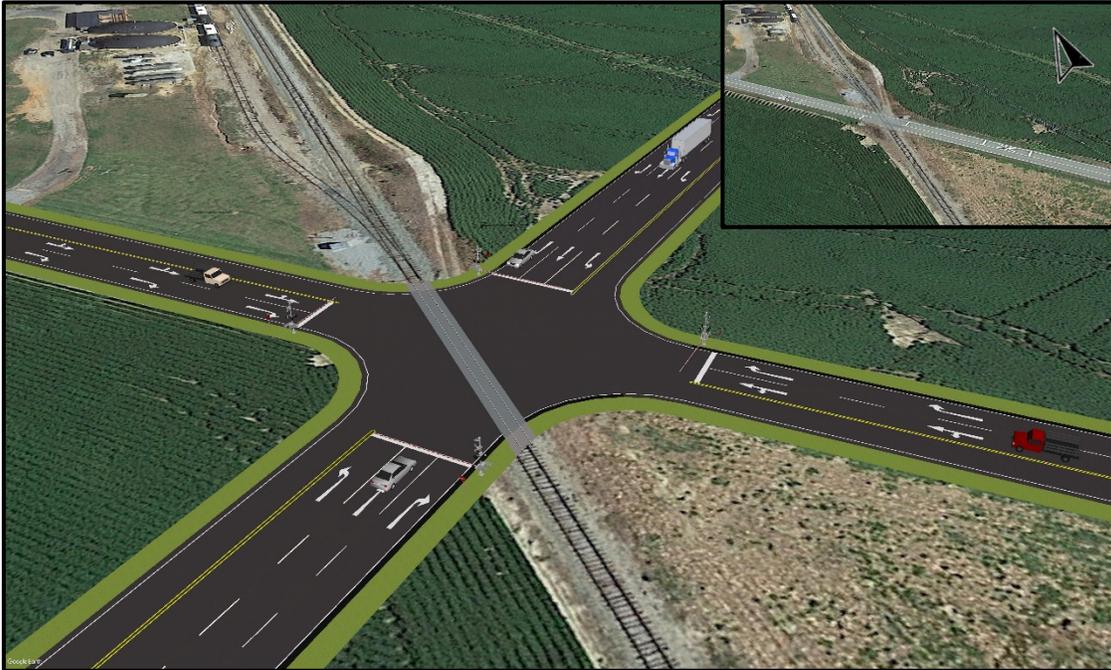
The proposed project would result in both short-term and long-term visual impacts. Short-term impacts include disruptions during construction while long-term impacts are the result of permanent alterations that change the way people commute in and around the area. Short-term construction impacts may include detours, localized congestion in and around the area, the presence of large equipment, construction staging areas, dust from construction, and disruption to surrounding residences and businesses. While construction activities would have a direct effect on visual resources in the project corridor, the duration of these impacts would be temporary.

Long-term impacts from the proposed project would include new intersections and modified existing intersections, new right-of-way, and changes to the surrounding landscape through the presence of new pavement, bridges, and culverts. The design of the highway will be curvilinear and will generally follow the existing grade, which primarily consists of low-lying, flat terrain. The renderings shown in **Exhibit 6, Exhibit 7, Exhibit 8, Exhibit 9, and Exhibit 10** were developed based on a 93-foot corridor, which consists of the proposed 43-foot typical section (two 12-foot travel lanes, a 15-foot two-way left-turn lane, and 4-foot paved shoulders) and a 25-foot buffer on each side. The illustrations are for visualization purposes only and are subject to change. The location, width, and lane configuration of the proposed roadway, intersections, and connections will be determined during the final design. The existing condition photos for the illustrations are in **Section 5**.

The proposed project has the potential to detract from existing visually pleasing views of rural and natural areas afforded to residents and users of property adjacent to the proposed project. There may be visual impacts to the businesses and residences located along Dixon Drive and at the proposed intersection with Main Street (US 15) due to the proximity of the proposed project (**Exhibit 7**). The proposed connection to Academy Road intersects a vacant field between the Lynches River Apartments and a single-family residence (**Exhibit 9**). Visual impacts in this area are expected to be minimal because the connection would not be used by all vehicular traffic. There is also an existing hedgerow adjacent to the Lynches River Apartments (approximately 125 feet from the proposed connection) that would mostly obstruct the view of the proposed roadway from the residences.

The project would directly alter daily viewer experiences (residential, business patrons, and other travelers) in the area. However, individual visual resources (listed in **Section 5**) and the overall rural visual character are not anticipated to be substantively altered as a result of the project. The proposed project is similar to existing roadways in the project study area and is expected to blend with the existing terrain. The existing conditions in the area are demonstrated in **Exhibit 1, Exhibit 2, Exhibit 3, Exhibit 4, and Exhibit 5**, which show the area's existing topography and surrounding land use. Furthermore, although downtown Bishopville is not located in the AVE, reducing truck traffic downtown is expected to improve the overall aesthetics of the downtown area.

EXHIBIT 6. PROPOSED INTERSECTION WITH ST. CHARLES ROAD (SC 154) AND SCRIF LOOKING NORTHEAST



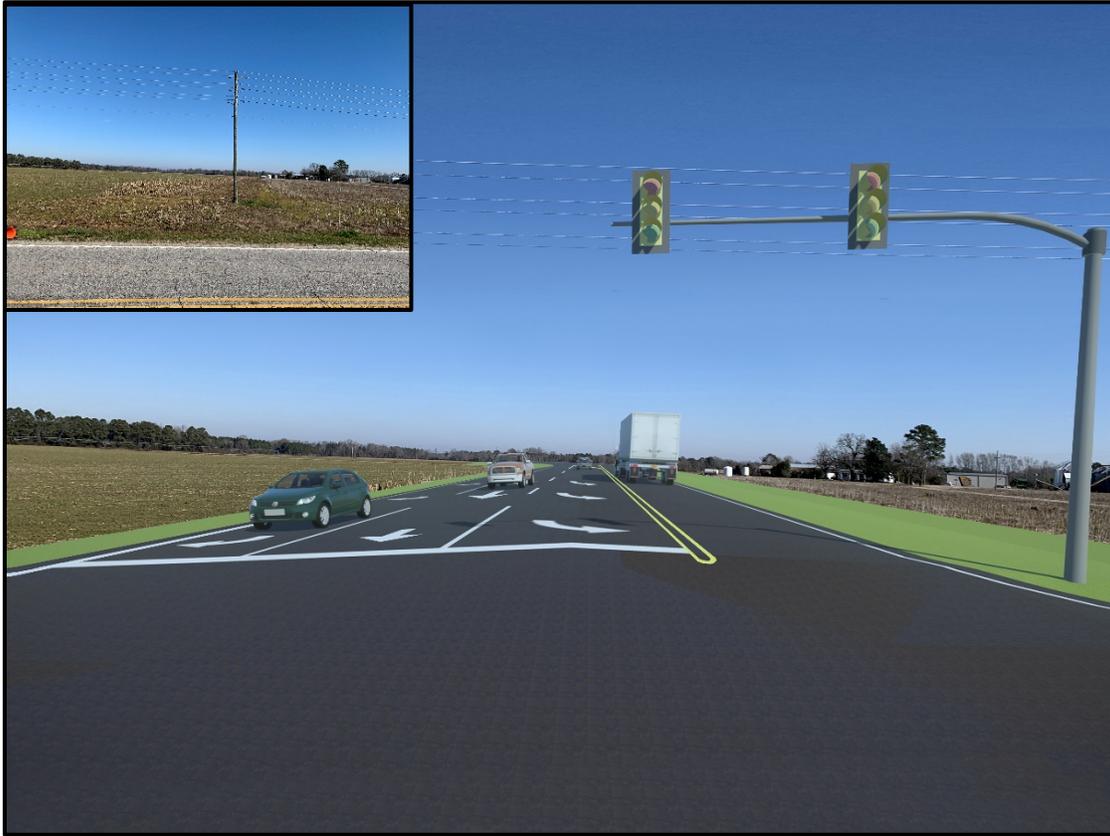
Note: Illustrations are for visualization purposes only and are subject to change.

EXHIBIT 7. MAIN STREET (US 15) LOOKING SOUTH FROM PROPOSED INTERSECTION



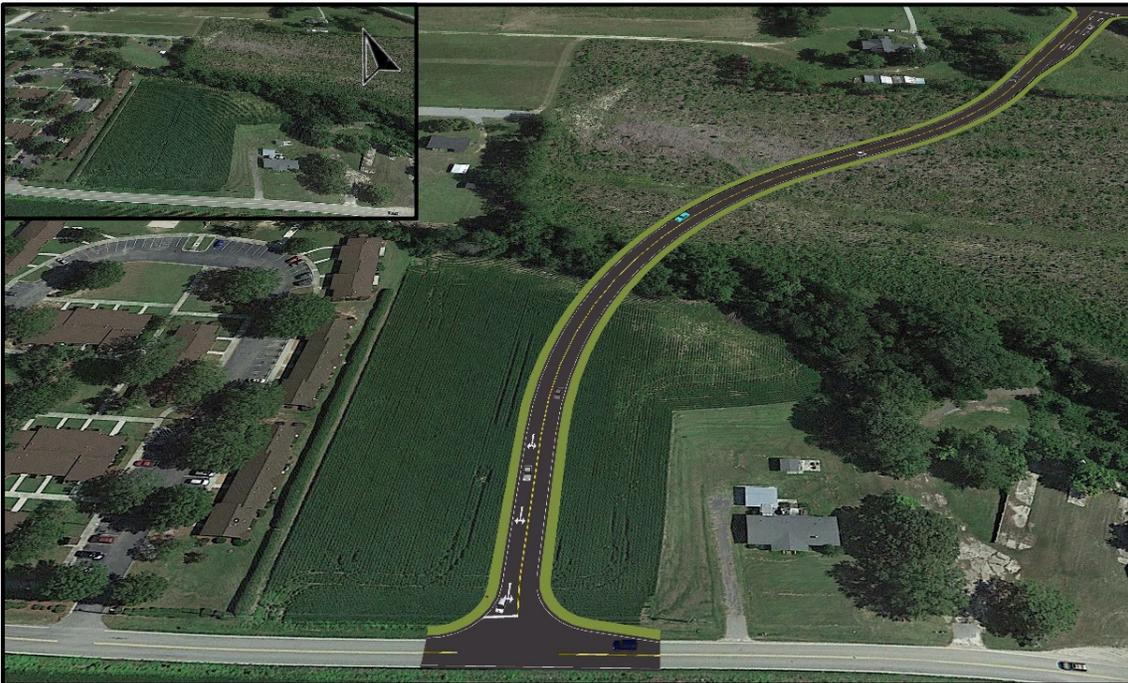
Note: Illustrations are for visualization purposes only and are subject to change.

EXHIBIT 8. WISACKY HIGHWAY (SC 341) LOOKING NORTHEAST FROM PROPOSED INTERSECTION



Note: Illustrations are for visualization purposes only and are subject to change.

EXHIBIT 9. PROPOSED CONNECTION TO ACADEMY ROAD LOOKING NORTHEAST



Note: Illustrations are for visualization purposes only and are subject to change.

EXHIBIT 10. SUMTER HIGHWAY (US 15) LOOKING SOUTHEAST FROM PROPOSED INTERSECTION



Note: Illustrations are for visualization purposes only and are subject to change.

7 Mitigation

No special mitigation is necessary because the project is not anticipated to have substantive adverse impacts on the visual resources in the AVE. The project design will follow landscape standards set forth by SCDOT, and although no special mitigation is necessary, the project team has identified mitigation measures to minimize minor visual impacts. These measures may include minimizing cut and fill; adhering to SCDOT standards for signing, signals, railings, and pavement markings; and designing the proposed roadway to follow existing ground wherever feasible. For more information on the Bishopville Truck Route Project, please refer to the DEIS.

8 References

FHWA. (2015, January). *Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects*. Retrieved from https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/env_topics/other_topics/VIA_Guidelines_for_Highway_Projects.pdf

SCDOT. (2021). *Bishopville Truck Route Project Draft Community Impact Assessment*.

SCDOT. (2021). *Bishopville Truck Route Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement*.

SCDOT. (2021). *Bishopville Truck Route Project Draft Environmental Justice Assessment*.

SLRCOG. (2011, November 1). *City of Bishopville Comprehensive Plan*.

SLRCOG. (2011, June 23). *Lee County Comprehensive Plan*.



APPENDIX A

SCOPING QUESTIONNAIRE

Visual Impact Assessment Scoping Questionnaire

Project Name: Bishopville Truck Route Project	Site Visit Date: Day, 00/00/0000
Location: Bishopville, Lee County, South Carolina	Time: 0:00 a.m. / p.m.
Special Conditions/Notes: VIA Assessment Level Determination Meeting Thursday, December 17, 2020	Conducted By: Shane Belcher, FHWA Sandra Saint-Surin, FHWA Henry Phillips, SCDOT Kim Bereis, DRMP Kristen Maines, DRMP

Environmental Compatibility

1. *Will the project result in a noticeable change in the physical characteristics of the existing environment? (Consider all project components and construction impacts - both permanent and temporary, including landform changes, structures, noise barriers, vegetation removal, railing, signage, and contractor activities.)*

- High level of permanent change (3) Moderate level of permanent change (2)
 Low level of permanent or temporary change (1) No Noticeable Change (0)

2. *Will the project complement or contrast with the visual character desired by the community? (Evaluate the scale and extent of the project features compared to the surrounding scale of the community. Is the project likely to give an urban appearance to an existing rural or suburban community? Do you anticipate that the change will be viewed by the public as positive or negative? Research planning documents, or talk with local planners and community representatives to understand the type of visual environment local residents envision for their community.)*

- Low Compatibility (3) Moderate Compatibility (2)
 High compatibility (1)

3. *What level of local concern is there for the types of project features (e.g., bridge structures, large excavations, sound barriers, or median planting removal) and construction impacts that are proposed? (Certain project improvements can be of special interest to local citizens, causing a heightened level of public concern, and requiring a more focused visual analysis.)*

- High concern (3) Moderate concern (2)
 Low concern (1) Negligible Project Features (0)

4. *Is it anticipated that to mitigate visual impacts, it may be necessary to develop extensive or novel mitigation strategies to avoid, minimize, or compensate for adverse impacts or will using conventional mitigation strategies, such as landscape or architectural treatment adequately mitigate adverse visual impacts?*

- Extensive Non-Conventional Mitigation Likely (3) Some non-conventional Mitigation Likely (2)
- Only Conventional Mitigation Likely (1) No Mitigation Likely (0)

5. Will this project, when seen collectively with other projects, result in an aggregate adverse change (cumulative impacts) in overall visual quality or character? (Identify any projects [both state and local] in the area that have been constructed in recent years and those currently planned for future construction. The window of time and the extent of area applicable to possible cumulative impacts should be based on a reasonable anticipation of the viewing public's perception.)

- Cumulative Impacts likely: 0-5 years (3) Cumulative Impacts likely: 6-10 years (2)
- Cumulative Impacts unlikely (1)

Viewer Sensitivity

1. *What is the potential that the project proposal may be controversial within the community, or opposed by any organized group? (This can be researched initially by talking with the state DOT and local agency management and staff familiar with the affected community's sentiments as evidenced by past projects and/or current information.)*

- High Potential (3) Moderate Potential (2)
- Low Potential (1) No Potential (0)

2. *How sensitive are potential viewer-groups likely to be regarding visible changes proposed by the project? (Consider among other factors the number of viewers within the group, probable viewer expectations, activities, viewing duration, and orientation. The expected viewer sensitivity level may be scoped by applying professional judgment, and by soliciting information from other DOT staff, local agencies and community representatives familiar with the affected community's sentiments and demonstrated concerns.)*

- High Sensitivity (3) Moderate Sensitivity (2)
- Low Sensitivity (1)

Determining the Level of Visual Impact Assessment

Total the scores of the answers to all ten questions on the Visual Impact Assessment Scoping Questionnaire. Use the total score from the questionnaire as an indicator of the appropriate level of VIA to perform for the project. Confirm that the level suggested by the checklist is consistent with the project teams' professional judgments. If there remains doubt about whether a VIA needs to be completed, it may be prudent to conduct an Abbreviated VIA. If there remains doubt about the level of the VIA, begin with the simpler VIA process. If visual impacts emerge as a more substantial concern than anticipated, the level of VIA documentation can always be increased.

The level of the VIA can initially be based on the following ranges of total scores:

Score 25-30

An *Expanded VIA* is probably necessary. It is recommended that it should be preceded by a formal visual scoping study prior to beginning the VIA to alert the project team to potential highly adverse impacts and to develop new project alternatives to avoid those impacts. These technical studies will likely receive state-wide, even national, public review. Extensive use of visual simulations and a comprehensive public involvement program would be typical.

Score 20-24

A *Standard VIA* is recommended. This technical study will likely receive extensive local, perhaps state-wide, public review. It would typically include several visual simulations. It would also include a thorough examination of public planning and policy documents supplemented with a direct public engagement processes to determine visual preferences.

Score 15-19 (SCORE = 15)

An *Abbreviated VIA* would briefly describe project features, impacts and mitigation requirements. Visual simulations would be optional. An Abbreviated VIA would receive little direct public interest beyond a summary of its findings in the project's environmental documents. Visual preferences would be based on observation and review of planning and policy documents by local jurisdictions.

Score 10-14

A *VIA Memorandum* addressing minor visual issues that indicates the nature of the limited impacts and any necessary mitigation strategies that should be implemented would likely be sufficient along with an explanation of why no formal analysis is required.

Score 6-9

No noticeable physical changes to the environment are proposed and no further analysis is required. Print out a copy of this completed questionnaire for your project file to document that there is no effect. A *VIA Memorandum* may be used to document that there is no effect and to explain the approach used for the determination.



APPENDIX B

SCOPING QUESTIONNAIRE RATIONALE



Environmental Compatibility

1. *Will the project result in a noticeable change in the physical characteristics of the existing environment? (Consider all project components and construction impacts - both permanent and temporary, including landform changes, structures, noise barriers, vegetation removal, railing, signage, and contractor activities.)*

Rationale: “Moderate level of permanent change” was selected as a response to this question because the project is a new alignment two-lane facility with a center turning lane and includes mild landform changes (minor roadway cut and fill), bridge and culvert stream crossings, and no noise barriers. Any removed vegetation not used for road construction will be replanted at the end of construction. Guardrails will be installed around any proposed bridge and culvert crossings. Contractor activities have potential temporary visual impacts at proposed intersections with existing roadways and in residential areas exposed to the proposed roadway. The majority of the land use adjacent to the proposed roadway is agricultural/rural with some residential properties and small commercial buildings located adjacent to or near proposed intersections.

2. *Will the project complement or contrast with the visual character desired by the community? (Evaluate the scale and extent of the project features compared to the surrounding scale of the community. Is the project likely to give an urban appearance to an existing rural or suburban community? Do you anticipate that the change will be viewed by the public as positive or negative? Research planning documents or talk with local planners and community representatives to understand the type of visual environment local residents envision for their community.)*

Rationale: “Moderate Compatibility” was selected as a response to this question because the project has had multiple public meetings with the comments received being split between support and opposition for the project. Concerns expressed regarded relocations, project cost, environmental concerns, and utilizing an existing road (like I-20) for the truck route instead. The overall project area is rural in appearance and will likely remain so after the proposed changes are made.

3. *What level of local concern is there for the types of project features (e.g., bridge structures, large excavations, sound barriers, or median planting removal) and construction impacts that are proposed? (Certain project improvements can be of special interest to local citizens, causing a heightened level of public concern, and requiring a more focused visual analysis.)*

Rationale: “Low concern” was selected as a response to this question because, from the public involvement to-date, there have not been specific concerns for the types of project features (bridge and culvert structures) and construction impacts.

4. *Is it anticipated that to mitigate visual impacts, it may be necessary to develop extensive or novel mitigation strategies to avoid, minimize, or compensate for adverse impacts, or will using conventional mitigation strategies, such as landscape or architectural treatment adequately mitigate adverse visual impacts?*

Rationale: “No Mitigation Likely” was selected as a response to this question because only vegetation replanting after construction will be needed.



5. Will this project, when seen collectively with other projects, result in an aggregate adverse change (cumulative impacts) in overall visual quality or character? (Identify any projects [both state and local] in the area that have been constructed in recent years and those currently planned for future construction. The window of time and the extent of area applicable to possible cumulative impacts should be based on a reasonable anticipation of the viewing public's perception.)

Rationale: "Cumulative Impacts unlikely" was selected as a response to this question because there are essentially no extensive past or future infrastructure projects in the vicinity that have the potential to appreciably influence development.

Viewer Sensitivity

1. What is the potential that the project proposal may be controversial within the community, or opposed by any organized group? (This can be researched initially by talking with the state DOT and local agency management and staff familiar with the affected community's sentiments as evidenced by past projects and/or current information.)

Rationale: "Moderate Potential" was selected as a response to this question because there has been some controversy over the project within the community and a high level of public involvement and coordination.

2. How sensitive are potential viewer-groups likely to be regarding visible changes proposed by the project? (Consider among other factors the number of viewers within the group, probable viewer expectations, activities, viewing duration, and orientation. The expected viewer sensitivity level may be scoped by applying professional judgment, and by soliciting information from other DOT staff, local agencies, and community representatives familiar with the affected community's sentiments and demonstrated concerns.)

Rationale: "Moderate Sensitivity" was selected as a response to this question because based on the input received during the public involvement process, viewer groups (homeowners, through-travelers, and business owners) are anticipated to be mixed about the planned improvements.

3. To what degree does the project's aesthetic approach appear to be consistent with applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, policies, or standards?

Rationale: "High Compatibility" was selected as a response to this question because the planned improvements are consistent with the City of Bishopville, Santee-Lynches Council of Regional Governments, and SCDOT standards and ordinances, including comprehensive and land use plans.

4. Are permits going to be required by outside regulatory agencies (i.e., Federal, State, or local)? (Permit requirements can have an unintended consequence on the visual environment. Anticipated permits, as well as specific permit requirements - which are defined by the permitter, may be determined by talking with the project environmental planner and project engineer. Note: coordinate with the state DOT representative responsible for obtaining the permit prior to communicating directly with any permitting agency. Permits that may benefit from additional analysis include permits that may result in visible built features, such as infiltration basins or devices under a stormwater permit or a retaining wall for wetland avoidance or permits for work in sensitive areas such as coastal development permits or on Federal lands, such as impacts to Wild and Scenic Rivers.)



Rationale: Permits from outside regulatory agencies may be required and will be obtained for various elements of the project.

5. Will the project sponsor or public benefit from a more detailed visual analysis in order to help reach consensus on a course of action to address potential visual impacts? (Consider the proposed project features, possible visual impacts, and probable mitigation recommendations.)

Rationale: Since the proposed project's visual impacts are subjective and there is mixed public opinion about the Bishopville Truck Route, a more detailed VIA may be helpful. The VIA will be conducted as part of the process for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).