

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

SHEFFIELD RAILROAD RELOCATION

FROM

West of Tuscumbia to East of US 43
COLBERT COUNTY, ALABAMA

PROJECT NUMBER RRS-8817(1)

Prepared By

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

And

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)

THIS ACTION COMPLIES WITH
EXECUTIVE ORDER 11988, FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT
And
EXECUTIVE ORDER 11990, PROTECTION OF WETLANDS

By
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
And
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

This document, including its appendices and incorporations by reference, represents an Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended; the Council of Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508); and, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) environmental impact procedures (23 CFR 771). This EA identifies the environmental consequences of a proposed action by the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) to relocate a portion of the Norfolk Southern Railroad on a new corridor outside of downtown Sheffield and the tri-cities area. The tri-cities area includes the towns of Sheffield, Tuscumbia and Muscle Shoals. This section of the Norfolk Southern Railroad is part of the mainline between Memphis and Birmingham. The project is located entirely within Colbert County, Alabama.

1.1 Description of the Proposed Project

Currently, there is an average of 16 to 18 trains per day passing through the town of Sheffield. For years, motorists in the Shoals area have experienced delays at the nine at-grade railroad crossings located in the downtown Shoals area. The proposed project will serve to eliminate several at-grade crossings in the towns of Sheffield, Tuscumbia and Muscle Shoals by relocating the tracks outside of town. The proposed action is intended to relieve traffic congestion in the Shoals area and increase safety at the at-grade railroad crossings. The proposed new alignment of the railroad will begin west of downtown Sheffield and reconnect to the existing mainline tracks east of US 43 for a distance of 11.4 kilometers (7.1 miles). In addition, a second track is to be constructed along the existing track on the east-side of Sheffield for a distance of 3.7 kilometers (2.3 miles). The project will also eliminate the railroad fueling and switching area located in downtown Sheffield. The proposed action will include grade-separated crossings at all public roads along the new alignment. Additional right-of-way will be required for the entire length of the project. The width of the right-of-way of the relocated section of track will vary from 45 meters (148 feet) to 76 meters (250 feet).

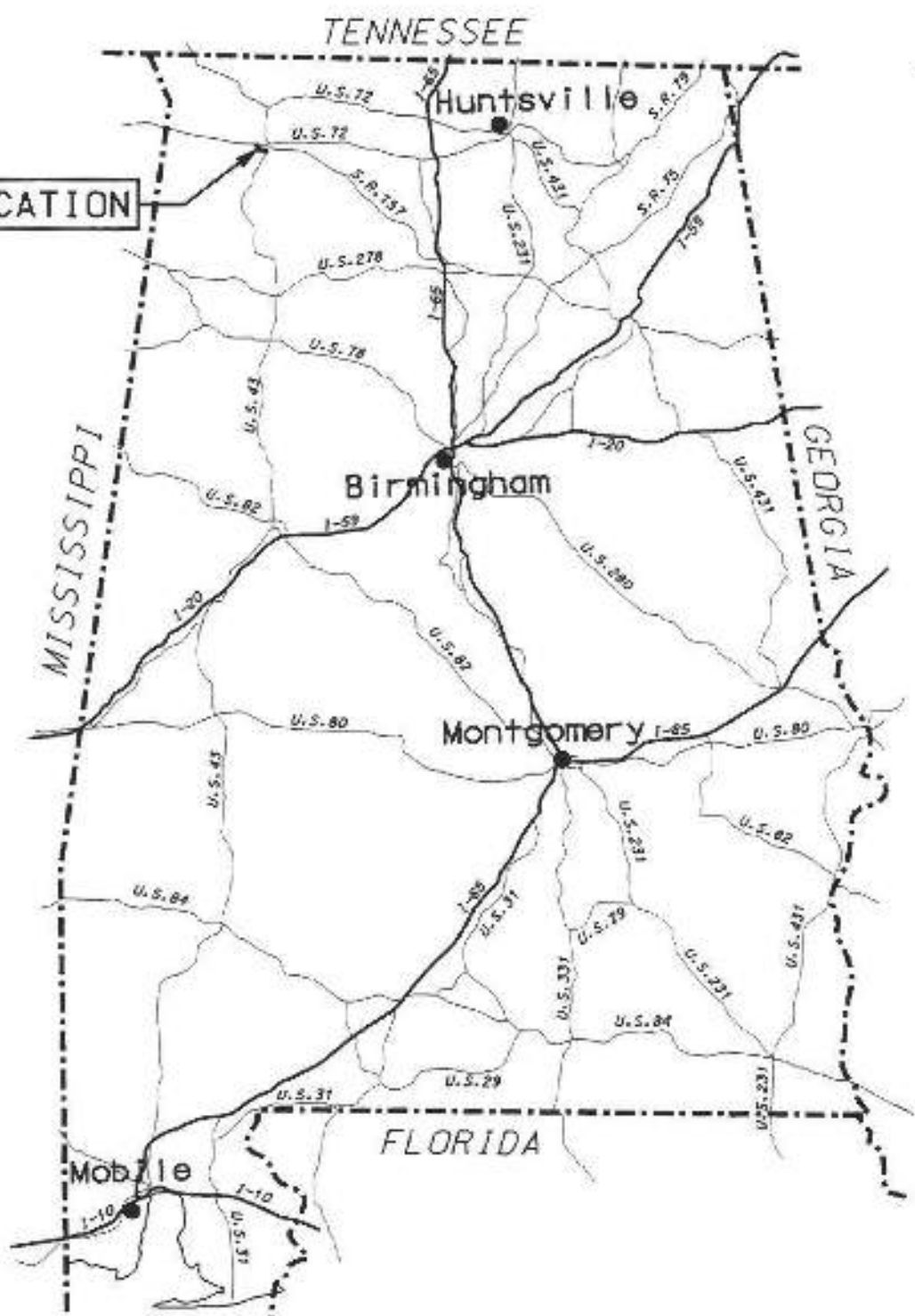
1.2 Description of the Project Area

The proposed action is located approximately 3.2 kilometers (2 miles) south of downtown Sheffield within the Colbert County, Alabama. Colbert County is located in the northwest portion of Alabama, bordering Mississippi and approximately 140 miles north of the city of Birmingham (see Figure 1-1).

As shown on the map of the project study area (see Figure 1-2), the realignment will depart from the existing railroad tracks west of Tuscumbia; then head southeast toward Frankfort Road; then running parallel an existing power line to a crossing of US 43/ Jackson Highway



PROJECT LOCATION



REGIONAL LOCATION MAP
SHEFFIELD RAILROAD RELOCATION
PROJECT RRS-8817(1)
COLBERT COUNTY, ALABAMA

Figure
1-1



FIGURE 1-2
 PROJECT STUDY AREA
 SHEFFIELD RAILROAD RELOCATION
 PROJECT NO. RRS-8817(1)
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 NOT TO SCALE

and reconnecting the existing Norfolk Southern tracks south of Muscle Shoals. The proposed new section of the tracks will be 11.4 kilometers (7.1 miles) in length. Included within the proposed project is a 2,745 meter (9,000 feet) double section of track between Frankfort Road and U.S. 43.

The existing tracks represent the mainline of the Norfolk Southern Railroad Corporation's rail line serving Iuka and Corinth, Mississippi and Memphis to Decatur/Huntsville and Birmingham, Alabama. The existing railroad tracks pass through the downtown portion of the tri-state area contributing to traffic congestion in at least nine at-grade crossings. The major at-grade crossings at Montgomery Ave. and Atlanta Avenue contribute significantly to traffic congestion in the tri-cities area.

With the exception of scattered residential developments, the proposed corridor for the relocation of the railroad tracks is primarily forest and farmland. Colbert County has approximately 213,000 acres of commercial forestland of which 90 percent is under private ownership.

In 1990, Colbert County had a population of 51,666. Within the tri-state area, the city of Muscle Shoals has had a growth of 56 percent between 1970 and 1990. Over the past ten years, the median household income for Colbert County has risen by over \$7,000.

1.3 Project Need

For many years, motorists in the tri-cities area, i.e., Tuscumbia, Sheffield, Muscle Shoals, have experienced significant delays at the major at-grade railroad crossings in downtown Sheffield. The rail line located in the downtown area serves as the mainline of the Norfolk Southern railroad from Memphis to Birmingham. Currently, there is an average of 16 trains per day passing through Sheffield area. There are a total of nine at-grade railroad crossings in the downtown area impacted by the project, including three major crossings at Atlanta Avenue, Montgomery Road and Avalon in the downtown area. Montgomery Avenue has the highest ADT of all the crossings with an average daily traffic (ADT) of 19,050 vehicles. The Atlanta Avenue crossing has an ADT of 9,050 vehicles. These crossings represent significant vehicular traffic flow between downtown Sheffield and Florence, Alabama. Railroad crossings blocked by train operations represent a significant delay to daily traffic and a safety problem for emergency vehicles in the area.

In addition to the daily through traffic, the Norfolk Southern provides rail service to local industry in the tri-cities area. There are currently seven rail freight customers in the Sheffield area. Although rail transportation is currently light within the Sheffield area the potential for

future customers is enhanced with the improvement of the vehicular rail traffic network.

The Norfolk Southern Railroad maintains a refueling facility with a one million-gallon fuel storage tank in the downtown area. There is an existing 2,130 meter (7,000 ft.) siding associated with the refueling facility. The facility is used to refuel long coal trains without bringing them into the Tuscumbia yard. According to officials from the Norfolk Southern Corporation, this facility is used to "top-off" fuel tanks as the trains pass through the Sheffield area.

Substantial traffic volumes coupled with train traffic and refueling operations have resulted in substantial delays at each of the major at-grade rail crossings in the downtown area. The relocation of the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks is intended to minimize conflicts between the railroad operations and vehicular traffic and improve the overall safety and efficiency of the roadway network for existing and future traffic demands in the tri-cities area.

1.3.1 Traffic Congestion

Traffic flow at the downtown rail crossings has become increasingly congested due to increased train operations and traffic growth in the tri-cities area. There are a total of nine at-grade crossings in the downtown area. In order to determine the potential impact to downtown traffic congestion, total delay time associated with the current train operations was analyzed at the Avalon Avenue crossing, one of the most heavily traveled railroad crossings.

The Avalon Avenue at-grade crossing is located near the boundary of Tuscumbia, Sheffield and Muscle Shoals. This at-grade crossing also affects north/southbound traffic on Cox Blvd and George Wallace Blvd. From approximately 6:30 am to 5:30 PM, twelve trains were observed at the Avalon Avenue at-grade crossing. Table 1-1 identifies the total vehicular delay associated with each train during the 12 hour sample period, as well as, the total vehicle delay, i.e., 35.80 hours, over the same 12 hour period.

**Table 1-1
Vehicle Delay Times
Avalon Avenue @ Norfolk Southern Railroad**

Time Gate Down	Time Gate Up	Total Vehicles Delayed	Total Seconds of Delay	Total Vehicle Seconds of Delay
6:31:00 am	6:35:00 am	5	240	1200
10:38:12 am	10:41:32 am	45	200	9000
11:11:15 am	11:14:58 am	87	223	19401
11:30:06 am	11:32:18 am	69	132	9108
12:27:35 PM	12:31:45 PM	79	250	19750
12:39:05 PM	12:41:35 PM	54	150	8100
12: 51:25 PM	12:53:31 PM	71	126	8946
4:32:15 PM	4:33:45 PM	41	90	3690
5:15:45 PM	5:18:05 PM	74	140	10360
5:26:50 PM	5:29:42 PM	56	172	9632
5:30:46 PM	5:34:15 PM	142	209	29678

Total (sec. of delay) 128865

Total (hrs. of delay) 35.80

Under the proposed project, it is estimated that as many as ten of the above-indicated trains will be diverted from the downtown area to the relocated track during this 12-hour period. One train will still use the Avalon Avenue crossing to serve downtown customers. As a result, the total vehicle delay time for the Avalon Avenue crossing will be reduced from 35.80 hours to an estimated 3.2 hours for the same 12-hour period. It is estimated that this reduction in delay will result in a 90 percent reduction in train-related congestion in the downtown area.

1.3.2 Highway/ Railroad Operating Characteristics

Most of the downtown traffic is concentrated on Montgomery and Atlanta Avenue, which run in a north/ south direction through Sheffield and Tuscumbia. In more recent years, traffic has been increasing along Avalon Avenue, the major east/ west route connecting Tuscumbia and Sheffield to the Muscle Shoals area. See the letter from Colbert County Commission, dated March 26, 2000 (Section 4.0 Comments and Coordination). All of these major traffic routes have at-grade crossings with the Norfolk Southern Railroad in the downtown area. In addition

to these crossings, the following is a list of the other at-grade rail crossings within the downtown area:

- Old Memphis Road
- 2nd Street (Tuscumbia)
- Douglas Street (Sheffield)
- 12th Street (Sheffield)
- 6th Street / Tuscumbia Road (Muscle Shoals)
- Mason Street (Muscle Shoals)

All of the above-indicated crossings are protected with signals and crossing gates. Because of the large number of at-grade crossings, trains move at a relatively slow speed, i.e., 25-mph, through the downtown area.

1.3.3 Traffic Safety and Accidents

Traffic accident data provided by Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) for the period January 1, 1971 through 1995 indicate a total of 41 accidents and five fatalities from train/vehicle conflicts have occurred in the downtown area. The highest numbers of accidents have occurred at the Atlanta Avenue and Avalon Avenue crossings in Sheffield. Both of these crossings are located within the section of railroad passing through the downtown area. Train traffic through these crossings, along with all of the downtown crossings will be reduced from the current 16-18 trains per day to two trains per day.

1.3.4 Comprehensive Plans

The Shoals Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) includes Florence in Lauderdale County and Sheffield, Tuscumbia and Muscle Shoals in Colbert County. The Shoals Area MPO has identified the Sheffield project on their current long-range plan (1997), as well as, the three-year Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for the area. The TIP addresses the funding priorities of planned projects for the near term period.

Although Colbert County does not have a comprehensive land use plan, the proposed project has been endorsed by the Shoals Chamber of Commerce and the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments as the alternative with the least amount of adverse impacts and the most beneficial to the economic development of the area (see the letters from the Chamber of

Commerce and the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments, Section 4.0 Comments and Coordination).

1.4 Project Purpose

The purpose of the proposed railroad realignment is to alleviate vehicular traffic congestion, improve vehicular and pedestrian access, and improve safety in the downtown area. In addition, the project will eliminate a major railroad refueling and train switching area located in downtown Sheffield. The proposed action will satisfy the project needs in the following ways:

- Reduce the number of through trains in the downtown area from 16 -18 trains per day to 2-3 per day;
- eliminate the railroad traffic associated with the refueling and railroad switching operations in the downtown area;
- improve access and general circulation in the downtown area through the removal of a portion of the existing railroad track west of the downtown area;
- improved access for emergency vehicles in the downtown area;
- reductions in traffic congestion at the existing at-grade crossings will result in decreases in air emissions and contribute to the overall improvement in air quality of the region;
- improve railroad/vehicular safety and access in the downtown area, through the removal of at least half of the at-grade crossings in the downtown area; and,
- eliminate as many as one-half the existing at-grade rail crossings in the downtown area;
- reducing railroad operating costs associated with accident liability and rail crossing;
- maintenance as a result of fewer at-grade crossings; and,
- reductions in air and noise pollution in the downtown area.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE ALTERNATIVES

This section of the environmental assessment describes the project alternatives, including the no-action alternative. The build alternative was examined in light of its ability to meet present and future transportation needs, as well as, comments and concerns received from agencies and at public involvement meetings. Agency responses and a summary of citizen comments have been included in Section 4.0 COMMENTS AND COORDINATION. The alternative described below has been selected as the build alternative.

2.1 No-action Alternative

Under the no-action alternative, the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) would not relocate the Norfolk Southern rail line outside of the downtown Sheffield area. The no-action alternative should not be interpreted, however, as a "do-nothing" alternative or the continuation of a status quo. As traffic congestion and rail/vehicle accidents increase, ALDOT and the cities of the Shoals area, along with the Norfolk Southern railroad will have to increase maintenance and repair activities in order to maintain the safety of the ten at-grade railroad crossings in the downtown area. Even with the increase in maintenance and repair work, the increases in traffic delays and accidents will continue under the no-action alternative. The following may occur under the no-action alternative:

- As vehicular traffic increases, the at-grade rail crossings will cause more congestion and potential for vehicle/railroad accidents;
- the potential for economic growth in the downtown area will decrease;
- increased automobile and truck traffic delays will discourage shoppers from using commercial establishments in the downtown areas;
- the level of service (LOS) at the ten downtown rail crossings will decrease, eventually leading to a deterioration in traffic operations in the downtown area and interaction among the cities within the Shoals area; and,
- maintenance of duplicate fire and police stations on either side of the tracks in the event a train is blocking the crossing

The no-action alternative will not require any additional right-of-way.

2.2 Mass Transit Alternative

One of the primary objectives of the project is the removal of as many of the at-grade rail crossings and through-trains in the downtown area in order to reduce congestion and increase safety. Due to the unique nature of the traffic problem, the mass transit alternative was not considered prudent or feasible for reducing traffic congestion caused by railroad traffic in the downtown area.

2.3 Transportation System Management Alternative (TSM)

Transportation System Management (TSM) alternatives are limited construction alternatives intended to enhance the efficiency of the existing highway. Under a TSM alternative, the scale of the project might be reduced to intersection improvements and left hand turn slots to increase the efficiency of the highway. In the case of the Sheffield Railroad Relocation project, TSM improvements would not improve the delay times at any of the congested rail crossings or remove train traffic from the downtown area.

2.4 Build Alternative

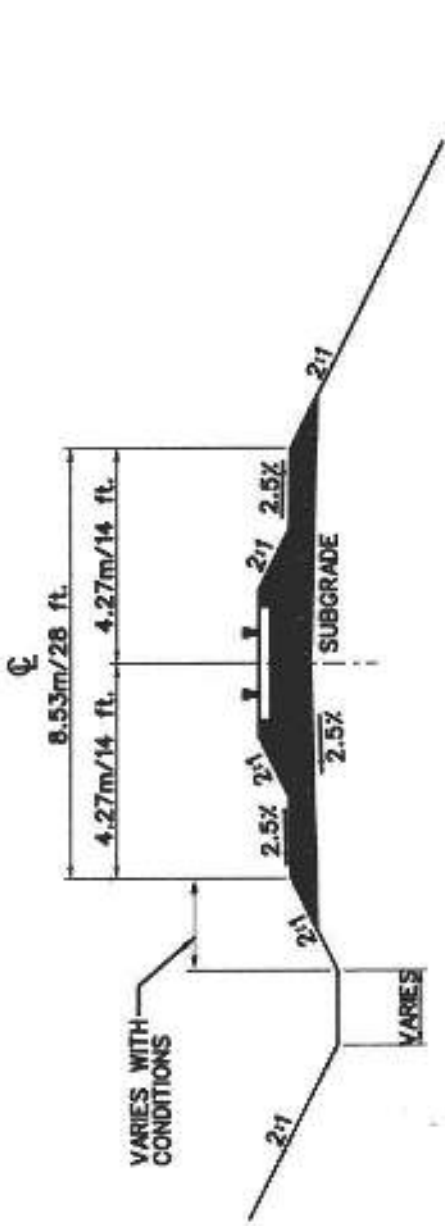
The build alternative represents a proposal to relocate a section of the Norfolk Southern mainline from downtown Sheffield to an area near Tuscumbia in Colbert County, Alabama.

As shown on Figure 2-1, the proposed realignment of the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks will depart from the existing railroad line west of Tuscumbia; turn southeast toward Frankfort Road; then east, paralleling an existing power transmission line to a point west of the Jackson Highway; then crossing the Jackson Highway; and converging with the existing Norfolk Southern line south of Muscle Shoals (see Figure 2-1). The relocated mainline track is 11.4 kilometers (7.1 miles) in length and will include both single and double track (see Figure 2-2). The proposed relocation alternative will include a double section of track between Frankfort Road and Old Jackson Highway for a distance of 2.7 kilometers (1.7 miles). This section of track will be used as a siding for slower moving trains. The width of the right-of-way (ROW) for the relocated mainline track will vary from 45 meters (148 feet) to 76 meters (250 feet). All new public road crossings will be grade-separated. A list of the preliminary design criteria, including Norfolk Southern's request for the double track section is included in Appendix A.

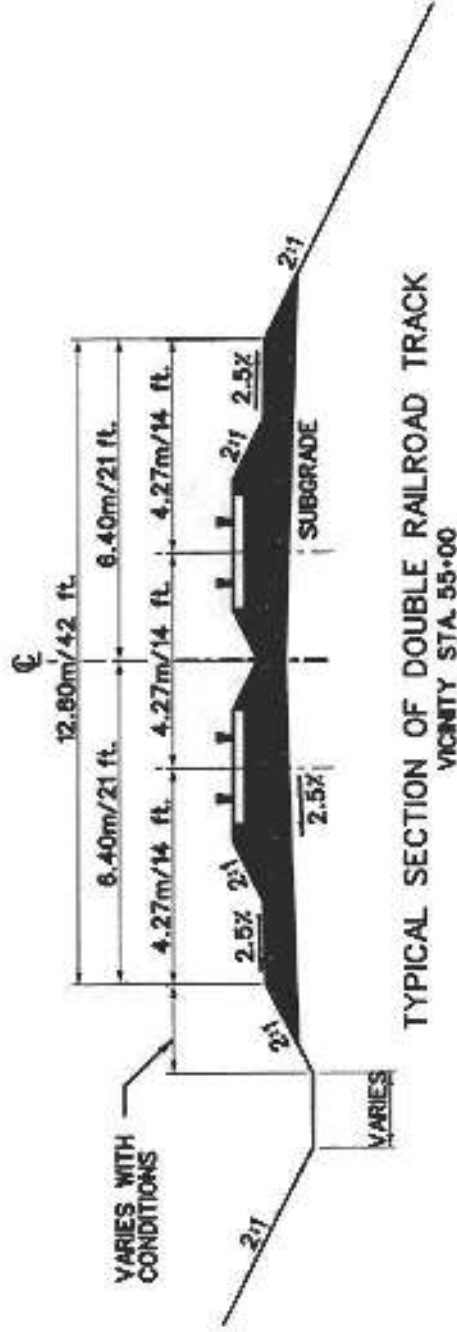
In addition to the above, the build alternative includes a proposal to construct a second set of tracks along the existing tracks leading north to downtown Sheffield. This parallel track will be 900 meters (2952 feet) in length beginning at the existing railroad crossing of the Spring Creek.



FIGURE 2-1
 SHEFFIELD RAILROAD RELOCATION
 PROJECT NO. RRS-8817(1)
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TYPICAL SECTION OF SINGLE RAILROAD TRACK
VICINITY STA. 28+00



TYPICAL SECTION OF DOUBLE RAILROAD TRACK
VICINITY STA. 55+00

NOT TO SCALE

and ending north of the current US 72 underpass. This second track will serve as a siding for downtown Sheffield train traffic. This siding is mandated by the proposed removal of the existing track approaching the downtown area from the west. No additional ROW will be required for this second set of tracks.

Although the refueling facility and the switching yard located in downtown Sheffield will be abandoned as part of the project, the final decision to abandon these facilities will be made by the Norfolk Southern Corporation sometime in the future. At this time, it is anticipated that the track on the West Side of Sheffield and Tuscumbia will be abandoned, along with the Sheffield switching yard and refueling facility. Additional sidings and "meeting" tracks along the relocated line may be required at some future time.

The preferred alternative will displace one business and one residential structure. No other structures or buildings will be displaced or relocated as a result of the proposed action. The total cost for this alternative will be \$ 28,613,000.

The Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments and the Shoals Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) supports proposed relocation alternative as the preferred alternative with the least adverse impacts to the surrounding community and responsive to the congestion and delay problems in the downtown area. According to the MPO and NWCLG, the proposed relocation corridor is located in an area essential to the future economic growth of Colbert County. The relocation corridor is also the site of proposed Memphis to Atlanta Freeway, a controlled access highway (see Figure 2-1).

2.5 Alternatives Considered but not Selected

The Sheffield project number RRS-8817 (1) initially began as a proposal to construct grade separated crossings at Montgomery Avenue and Atlanta Avenue over the existing Norfolk Southern railroad tracks in downtown Sheffield. These alternatives were advanced, along with the relocation alternative in a feasibility study completed in March of 1999. In addition, a number of public involvement meetings were conducted to receive public comments on the proposed alternatives (see Section 4.0 Comments and Coordination). After consideration the costs, environmental impacts, public comments and comments from the Norfolk Southern Corporation, the proposed relocation of the downtown railroad line to Tuscumbia was selected as the preferred alternative.

The proposed railroad relocation utilized the proposed Memphis to Atlanta Freeway corridor as the basis for much of the relocated rail line. The proposed highway corridor was determined to be compatible with this section of the Norfolk Southern mainline.

3.0 IMPACTS

The purpose of this section of the environmental assessment is to provide a description of the socioeconomic, physical, and biological impacts associated with the no-action alternative and an alternative to relocate the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks outside of downtown Sheffield, Alabama. The project study area is defined as the area that would be impacted by the proposed action, including the tri-cities area of Sheffield, Tuscumbia and Muscle Shoals. This section of the report identifies the probable beneficial and adverse impacts associated with the proposed action, as well as, any measures taken to mitigate or minimize the adverse impacts. Table 3-1 provides a summary of the impacts and costs associated with the proposed project.

**TABLE 3-1
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS**

RAILROAD RELOCATION ALTERNATIVE

Railroad Length	17.95 km/11.15 mi.
Railroad & Roadway Costs	\$24,618,000.00
Structural Costs	\$2,091,000.00
Utility Costs	\$373,000.00
Right-of-way Costs	\$2,700,000.00
Engineering Costs	\$1,904,000.00
Total Costs	\$31,686,000.00
Business Displacements	1
Residential Displacements	1
Historical Sites	0
Archaeological Sites	0
Hazardous Waste Sites	0
Churches	0
Cemeteries	0
Schools	0
Wetlands	0
Floodplains	0

3.1 Social Impacts

The project study area is located within Colbert County in the northwest portion of Alabama. The proposed relocation corridor is located approximately 5.8 kilometers (3.6 miles) south of downtown Sheffield. According to the US Census, Colbert County had a population of 51,666

in 1990. During this same period, the City of Sheffield had a population of 10,380. Both places have a similar racial composition. Colbert County is approximately 83 percent white and Sheffield is 75 percent white. The 1990 median family income of Colbert County and the city of Sheffield was \$22,378. and \$20,134., respectively.

The tri-cities area contains a number of community facilities within the downtown area, including fire and police stations on either side of the existing Norfolk Southern tracks. The recreational area near the Tuscumbia sports complex is currently served by an existing at-grade rail crossing.

3.1.1 No-action Alternative

By not improving the traffic flow at the existing railroad crossings in the city of Sheffield traffic congestion will continue to worsen and ultimately lead to a deterioration of the business and social interaction in the tri-cities area. In addition, train related congestion and blocked streets in the downtown area hinder response times by emergency vehicles and result in the need for a continuation of duplicate services on either side of the existing tracks. None of these deficiencies and conditions will be addressed by the no-action alternative.

3.1.2 Build Alternative

The proposed project will result in removal of an estimated 14 to 16 trains per day through the downtown area. The reduction in train traffic, along with the removal of a portion of the existing at-grade crossings in the downtown area, will improve traffic congestion and circulation in the downtown area. Travel paths within the downtown area will be safer and more efficient. As a result, it is expected that the project will enhance social and business interaction within the tri-cities area. The proposed relocation of the track will improve circulation at the Tuscumbia sports complex by eliminating an existing at-grade crossing at this location. In addition, response time by emergency vehicles will improve. The need for duplicate emergency vehicle services may be eliminated in areas where the existing track is to be vacated.

The proposed project will not impact traffic flows within the railroad relocation corridor, except for a short-term period during construction. The relocated rail line will utilize grade-separated crossings at all public roads in order to maintain existing traffic flow on the local highway network. Grade separated crossings will be provided at all public roads, including: 1) Old Lee highway; 2) Lee Highway; 3) Frankfort Road; 4) Old Jackson Highway; 5) Jackson Highway, and, US 72 (see Section 2.0, Figure 2-1 for local highway network).

The relocation corridor is primarily vacant and farmland with scattered residential development. An at-grade crossing will be provided for farm equipment in one active farming location. The

project will not alter the layout or character of any adjacent residential neighborhoods or farms. See the May 18, 2000 letter from the City of Tuscumbia (Section 4.0 Comments and Coordination).

3.2 Relocation Impacts

In order to minimize the unavoidable effects of right-of-way acquisition and the displacement of people, the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) will carry out a right-of-way and relocation program in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-646, as amended by Public Law 100-17). All relocation services are provided without regard to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. In the case of elderly residents, ALDOT will provide relocation assistance in a manner that minimizes stress to those who have lived in their homes for an extended period of time.

If local conditions result in an insufficient inventory of comparable housing not meeting relocation standards, or comparable housing not within the financial means of the displaced persons, then "housing of last resort" will be made available to the displaced persons. Housing of last resort involves the use of payments in excess of statutory maximums or the use of other unusual methods of providing comparable housing.

A right of way/ relocation analysis was performed by ALDOT for the project study area on October 24, 2000. A copy of the ALDOT ROW-RA-1 Relocation Study is included in Appendix B.

3.2.1 No-Action Alternative

No homes or businesses will be displaced by this alternative.

3.2.2 Build Alternative

The relocation study noted that one business and one single-family residential structure will be displaced by the relocation of the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks. The residential structure is located at the eastern end of the project between US 43 and the existing Norfolk and Southern railroad tracks.. The business is a sawmill located on US 72 near the western end of the project.

The displaced family is not low income, elderly, handicapped or belonging to a minority group. The income range of the displaced family appears to be upper middle class. According to the Relocation Study, there is an adequate supply of replacement housing of a similar type in the vicinity of the existing residential structure.

There is ample property available in the immediate area of the existing business and from appearances, the sawmill may have additional land suitable to continue their operation at their

present location. The acquisition and relocation process will not cause a major impact on the community.

3.3 Economic Impacts

The economic impacts of the project relate to the affects the project will have on local business and employment levels. It is anticipated that a portion of the existing tracks in the downtown area will be abandoned as a result of the railroad relocation, however, rail service will remain in order to serve existing industry in the downtown area. The following is a list of the current rail-freight users in the downtown Sheffield area:

**Table 3-2
Sheffield Rail-freight Users**

- Wise Alloys
501 West 20th Avenue
- McKinney Lumber Company
755 West 20th Avenue
- Tennessee Valley Recycling
700 West 20th Avenue
- Norfolk Southern Refueling Facility

Of the above-indicated businesses, Wise Alloys is the largest rail freight user requiring 500 rail cars a year. With the exception of the refueling facility, all of the businesses are located in close proximity to each other on West 20th Avenue in the downtown area.

In the past few years, the number of rail customers has declined from nine in 1998 to three in 2000.

3.3.1 No-action Alternative

The No-action alternative will result in the failure to provide adequate transportation support for local businesses, as well as, fail to provide for the travel and safety needs of the immediate business community. The No-action alternative will result in continued congestion at all rail crossings in the downtown area, contributing to the inaccessibility of the area by trucks and local employees. As a result, the no-action alternative will harm the economic potential development

of the area. This alternative will also have an adverse impact on the safety, driving comfort, convenience and economy of travel in the tri-cities area.

3.3.2 Build Alternative

The short-term impacts from the proposed action will be positive. Positive impacts will result from the purchase of construction materials, construction payrolls and related spending, or the "multiplier effects" of construction spending. Local businesses will benefit from the sales of products and services to those involved in the construction of the project. The revenues from these short-term impacts are not expected to be significant to the local or regional economy.

The proposed action will improve the long-term business and employment activity within the tri-cities area by improving level-of-service and traffic operation within the downtown area. The improvements in the downtown circulation patterns will also improve the competitiveness of the tri-city area in the larger regional markets. The Shoals Chamber of Commerce in their letter, dated April 27, 2000 (see Section 4.0 Comments and Coordination) supports the improvement in regional market conditions. The long-term impacts on the economy will be positive because of the improvement in downtown circulation and accessibility.

As previously indicated, the project will displace one business, a sawmill located near the western end of the project. There is, however, vacant land within a desirable range of the original structure to relocate the business.

Although a portion of the original tracks leading to the downtown area will be abandoned, rail service to existing businesses will be maintained via an existing rail spur located on the east side of the downtown area.

Construction of the proposed build alternative is estimated to cost \$31,686,000.

3.4 Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

According to the Shoals Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) there are no existing or planned pedestrian or bicycle paths in the vicinity of the proposed project study area or the downtown area (verbal communication in November of 2000 with Richard Holst, Associate Director of the Northwest Alabama Council of Governments).

3.4.1 No-action Alternative

Under the No-action alternative, the number of existing railroad crossings and the daily train traffic in the downtown area limit the opportunities for existing or new pedestrian/bicycle paths.

3.4.2 Build Alternative

The removal of approximately one-half of the existing at-grade railroad crossings in the downtown area, coupled with the removal of 14 to 16 trains per day on the remaining railroad crossings may promote increased use of bicycles and pedestrians in the downtown area.

Grade-separated crossings will be provided at all public roads along the relocation corridor. The grade-separated crossings will allow for the uninterrupted flow of traffic, including pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

3.5 Land Use Impacts

Land use impacts include the identification of project features that will cause a disruption of local circulation or land use patterns, or the potential disruption of planned or desirable community and regional growth.

The existing rail line is located entirely within the corporate limits of the cities of Sheffield, Tuscumbia and Muscle Shoals. The relocated railroad tracks are primarily located within Colbert County. At this time, the relocated tracks will function as mainline track with no new rail access facilities provided along the relocation route.

As indicated on Figure 3-1, land use within the project corridor is primarily farmland/forest with scattered residential development. More recent residential development has occurred on an isolated basis along Henderson Point Road and Old Jackson Highway.

3.5.1 No-action Alternative

As train-related traffic congestion worsens in the downtown area, shoppers will be discouraged from using the downtown business area. Existing businesses will become less accessible, diverting shoppers and workers to less congested areas, ultimately resulting in the deterioration of the downtown area. Current traffic congestion problems at the railroad crossings serve as a barrier to circulation patterns within the tri-cities area.



FIGURE 3-1
 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
 SHEFFIELD RAILROAD RELOCATION
 GENERAL LAND USE
 NOT TO SCALE

3.5.2 Build Alternative

The build alternative will convert 68 hectares (168 acres) of land from rural/farmland use to transportation use, i.e., right-of-way. This conversion is not expected to cause any change in the current land use patterns in the project study area. A farm equipment crossings are to be provided on an as needed basis for farm operations.

Although there are no formal land use plans for the area, officials from the tri-cities area have indicated that the project will not disrupt current or future growth patterns within the project corridor. See the letters from Tuscumbia and Muscle Mayors and the Northwest Alabama Regional Council of Government (see Section 4.0 COMMENTS AND COORDINATION).

The proposed project is expected to have a positive impact on the downtown area by stimulating economic growth, improving general circulation patterns and improving the response time by emergency vehicles in the downtown area

3.6 Prime Farmland Soils

In accordance with the requirements of the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA), a survey was conducted to determine the amount of prime farmland to be converted as a result of the project. In addition, consultations were held with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in Decatur, AL to determine the relative value of prime farmland within the study area. Based on the Farmland Conversion Impact Rating (AD 1006), the District Soil Scientist determined that some prime farmlands would be converted by the project. A completed AD-1006 form is included in Appendix C.

3.6.1 No-Action Alternative

No adverse impacts will occur as a result of this alternative.

3.6.2 Build Alternative

The Colbert County Soil Conservationist concluded that approximately 19.4 hectares (48 acres) of prime farmland would be converted to transportation use as a result of the project. This amount represents less than 0.04 percent of the total farmland in the county defined as prime or unique farm soils. As indicated on the completed AD-1006 form, the Sheffield project scored below the maximum point value of 260 points. Projects that exceed this score are required to consider alternative locations and designs. The project had a score of 120 points, and is therefore not expected to have any substantial impact on farming. No further action or coordination under the FPPA is required.

3.7 Floodplains

The project is subject to 23 CFR 650, Subpart A- Location and Hydraulic Design of Encroachments on Floodplains and ALDOT's Location Risk Assessment for the location of structures in floodplains. Spring Creek near US 43 is the largest drainage way in the study area. Floodplains for Spring Creek and its tributaries were delineated through the use of the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the area. Figure 3-2 identifies the approximate limits of the 100-year floodplain within the project study area. In addition to the major stream crossings, the relocated rail line will cross a number of minor and intermittent streams throughout the project corridor.

3.7.1 No-Action Alternative

No adverse impacts will occur under this alternative.

3.7.2 Build Alternative

Impacts to floodplains will result from the extension of existing culverts and the construction of new bridges. As indicated on Figure 3-2, the proposed project will cross four (4) designated floodplain areas. The following is a summary of the impacts, including an estimate of the encroachment on each of the affected areas based on preliminary design studies.

Floodplain # 1 – Milk Spring Hollow

The relocation alternative will require 107 meters (350 feet) of floodplain along the proposed alignment. This encroachment is the result of constructing a new bridge over Milk Spring Hollow and the Old Jackson Highway.

Floodplain # 2 – Unnamed Tributary of Spring Creek

The relocation alternative will involve the construction of a new culvert involving an encroachment of 30 meters (100 feet) of floodplain at this location.

Floodplain # 3 – Spring Creek

The relocation alternative will involve the construction of a new bridge over the Spring Creek resulting in an encroachment of 122 meters (400 feet) of floodplain.



FIGURE 3-2
 FLOODPLAINS
 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
 SHEFFIELD RAILROAD RELOCATION



100 YR. FLOODPLAIN

SOURCE: FIRM MAPS NOT TO SCALE

Floodplain # 4 – Unnamed Tributary of Spring Creek

The relocation alternative will require the extension of an existing culvert along the existing tracks at the eastern portion of the project study area. The extension will require an encroachment of 122 meters (400 feet) in the floodplain.

The new and/or modified drainage structures to be constructed with this project are not expected to cause any significant increases in flood heights and limits. Copies of the completed "Risk Assessment" forms are included in Appendix D. Minimal increases in flood heights and limits will not result in any significant changes in flood risks or damages, nor will the proposed project have any affect on flood evacuation routes. The proposed project, will not, therefore, have any adverse impacts on the natural and beneficial floodplain values.

The potential floodplain impacts caused by the relocation of the railroad will be minimized by providing hydraulic capacity sufficient to pass 50-year floodwater elevations at all new structures. All proposed structures will be constructed perpendicular to water courses in order to minimize the risk of flooding. Construction measures will include temporary and permanent slope protection and erosion around all structure during construction. All pipe and culvert extensions shall be of equal or larger diameter than the existing drainage structures. In addition to the major stream crossings, the proposed project will cross numerous minor and intermittent streams throughout the relocation corridor. Adverse impacts to floodplain areas from small stream crossings will be minimized through the use of standard ALDOT design practices. These measures are consistent with the policies set forth in Executive Order No. 11988 for floodplain management.

3.8 Water Quality

Water quality impacts from highway construction projects include impacts from surface water and floodplain crossings, storm water runoff, and soil erosion and sedimentation from construction activities. Particular consideration is given to areas where roadway runoff and short term construction impacts will impact sensitive water resources, including "sole source aquifers" U.S. EPA and other certain areas designated by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) as sensitive or high priority surface water use .

A review of ALDOT and the ADEM sources indicate that there are no sole source aquifers in the vicinity of the proposed action, therefore, no coordination is required with the U.S. EPA.

Coordination with the Water Division of the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) identified a number of water supply issues in the tri-cities area, including the Tuscumbia spring/recharge area, and numerous sinkholes located throughout the area. According to ADEM, the cities of Muscle Shoals and Sheffield use water directly from the

Tennessee River and will not be impacted by the project. The city of Tuscumbia uses a spring/water treatment plant located in downtown Tuscumbia. (see April 27, 2000 letter from ADEM, Section 4.0 COMMENTS AND COORDINATION). The approximate boundary of the recharge area for the spring is shown on Figure 3-3.

3.8.1 No-build Alternative

Under the No-build alternative, 16 to 18 trains per day will continue to pass through the downtown area, crossing the recharge area for the Tuscumbia spring. Figure 3-3 illustrates the relationship between the existing Norfolk Southern track and the recharge area for the Tuscumbia springs. The risk of pollutant discharges and spills from railroad operations within the recharge area will continue to exist under the No-build alternative.

3.8.2 Build Alternative

As indicated on Figure 3-3, the relocated portion of the mainline tracks will be located outside of recharge area for the Big Spring public well. Only a small limited section of the new tracks will encroach on the recharge area. This encroachment occurs east of US 43 along the existing tracks. As a result, the risks from accidental pollutant releases from railroad operations will be greatly reduced under the relocation alternative. In addition, it should be noted that 14 to 16 trains per day will no longer run through any portion the recharge area, further reducing the risk of hazardous material spills.

The project may result in short term impacts to surface waters from erosion and sedimentation associated with construction activities. In order to mitigate these short-term construction impacts, the project construction documents will incorporate "Best Management Practices" (BMPs) in order to minimize storm water erosion and sedimentation during construction. Standard BMPs for transportation projects which include the installation of silt fences and haybales along all drainage courses, installing check dams and or sediment traps across all drainage courses, and providing seeding and sodding of exposed surfaces, rip rap construction, or other specific BMPs depending on site and construction conditions.

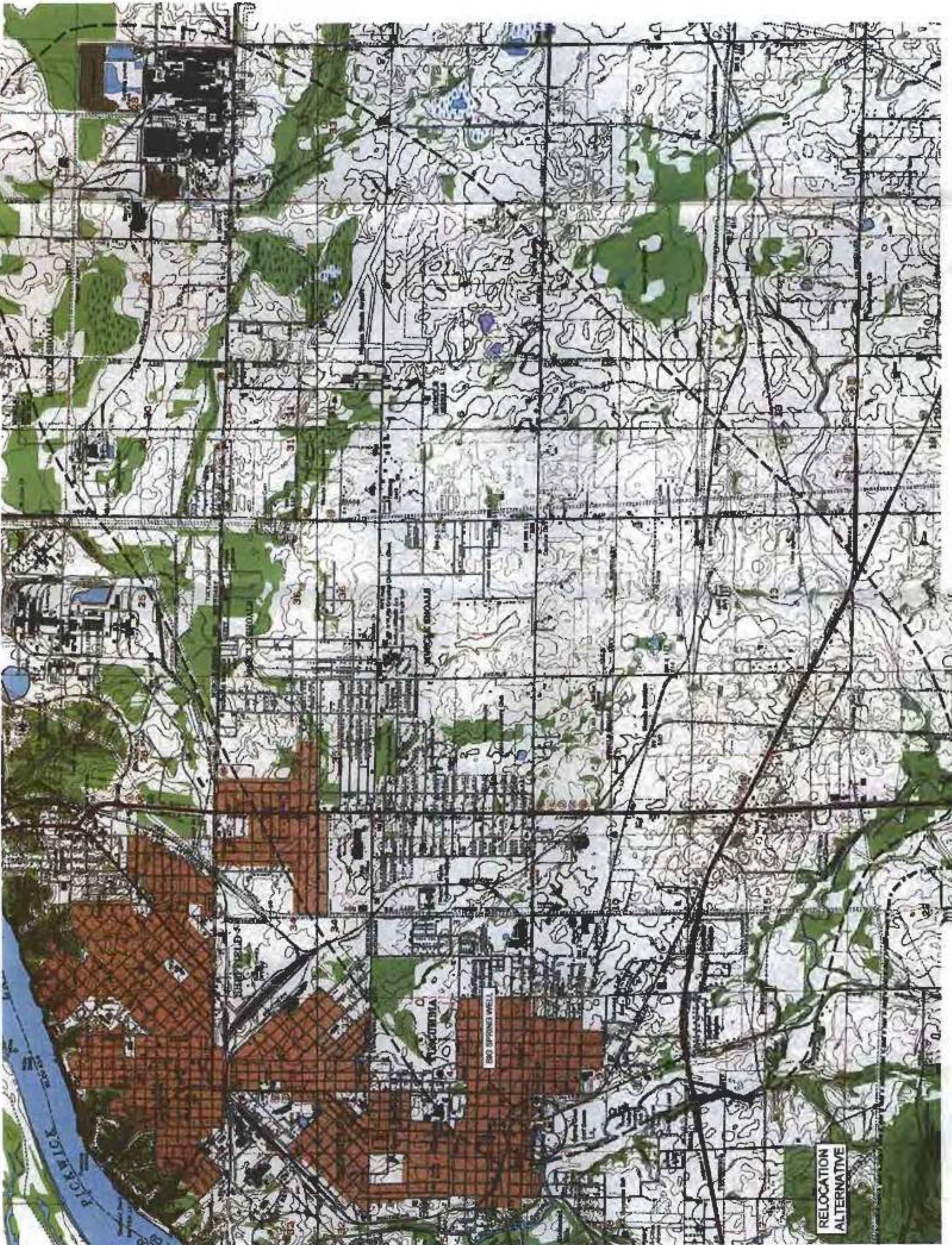
3.9 Stream Modifications and Wildlife Impacts

The project area was evaluated to determine the boundaries of all the waters of the United States regulated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Waters of the United States include rivers, streams, wetlands and their impoundments. The Spring Creek and the Throckmorton Branch and their tributaries were identified in the project study area as waters of the United States. None of these streams contained any associated wetland areas. There is no apparent use of these

**BIG SPRING WELL RECHARGE AREA
ALDOT #RRS-8817(1)
SHEFFIELD RAILROAD RELOCATION**

Figure 3-3

--- Recharge Area Boundary
- - - Relocation Alignment Alternative



RECHARGE AREA
RELOCATION ALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVE

streams for water supply or recreation within the study area. During dry periods, there is little or no surface water present. The streams and creeks provide only marginal habitat for fish and wildlife because of the lack of permanent water flow. Most of the land within the project study area is used for agriculture, including pasture and cotton crops.

3.9.1 No Action Alternative

No adverse impacts will occur under this alternative.

3.9.2 Build Alternative

With the exception of the Spring Creek, all of the streams in the project study area are intermittent. Under extreme dry weather conditions, i.e., summer of 2000, no flow was observed in the Spring Creek or its tributaries. No modification or use of the Spring Creek or the intermittent streams is anticipated under the build alternative. No adverse impacts will occur under this alternative.

3.10 Cultural Resources

In accordance with the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act, surveys were conducted to identify archaeological and historic resources that are on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in the project study area. The search area for field and literature surveys of standing structures and archaeological resources included a study area 100 meters (328 feet) wide along the route of the preferred alternative. This section of the EA provides a summary of the results of the surveys and the consultations with the Alabama Historical Commission/ State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) as required under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. A cultural resource report for the project is bound separately and incorporated into this report by reference.

A total of four archaeological sites and four architectural resources were identified within the project search area. All of these sites were previously identified and recorded in the Alabama State Site Files. Figure 3-4 identifies the location of each of these sites. With the exception of archaeological site 1Ct66, none of the previously recorded sites were considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Site 1Ct66 is located at the junction of Spring Creek and the existing Norfolk Southern railroad tracks. Shovel tests performed on site 1Ct66 identified scattered ceramic material suggesting possible prehistoric occupation of the site.

A field reconnaissance for architectural resources (standing structures) was conducted in July of 2000. Although four historic structures were identified within the view-shed of the proposed project, none of them were considered eligible for the NRHP. The proximity of each of these historic structures, i.e., Resource 1 through 4, to the proposed track alignment is shown on Figure 3-4.

In addition to the above, archival research indicated that there are no registered communities or properties within the vicinity of the project study area. Such being the case, this project will have no adverse effect on the view sheds of historic sites.

During the early coordination process, The Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation, based in Cherokee, North Carolina, requested additional information in order to review of the project. A copy of the Cultural Resource Survey and Report was sent to them in March of 2001.

3.10.1 No-action

No adverse impacts will occur under this alternative.

3.10.2 Build Alternative

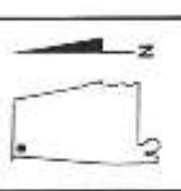
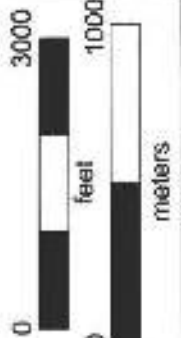
With the exception of the archeological sit 1Ct66, none of the cultural resources in the vicinity of the project study area were considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The proposed project will avoid archaeological site 1Ct66 by locating the proposed track on the west-side of the existing Norfolk Southern track. Figure 3-5 provides a sketch of the boundaries site 1Ct66 showing the proximity of the site to the existing and proposed railroad tracks. The Alabama Historical Commission (AHC) concurs with the finding, and has indicated that the proposed action will not have an effect an any known cultural resources listed on or eligible for the NRHP (see APPENDIX E for AHC correspondence).

3.11 Threatened and Endangered Species

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act requires coordination with the US Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to identify threatened and endangered species that could be present in the project study area. In their initial coordination letter, dated July 17, 2000, the USFWS determined that lyrate bladder-pod (*Lesquerella lyrata*) is a federally listed plant species which may occur in the project area (a copy of the USFWS letter is included in Section 4.0 COMMENTS AND COORDINATION). Accordingly, the USFWS requested that a survey be conducted to determine if the species occurs within the project area.



Base Map USGS
Tuscumbia, AL
Topographic Quadrangle
1983



Legend
 Memphis - Atlanta
 1C+374 Archeological Site
 Resource 1 Historic Site

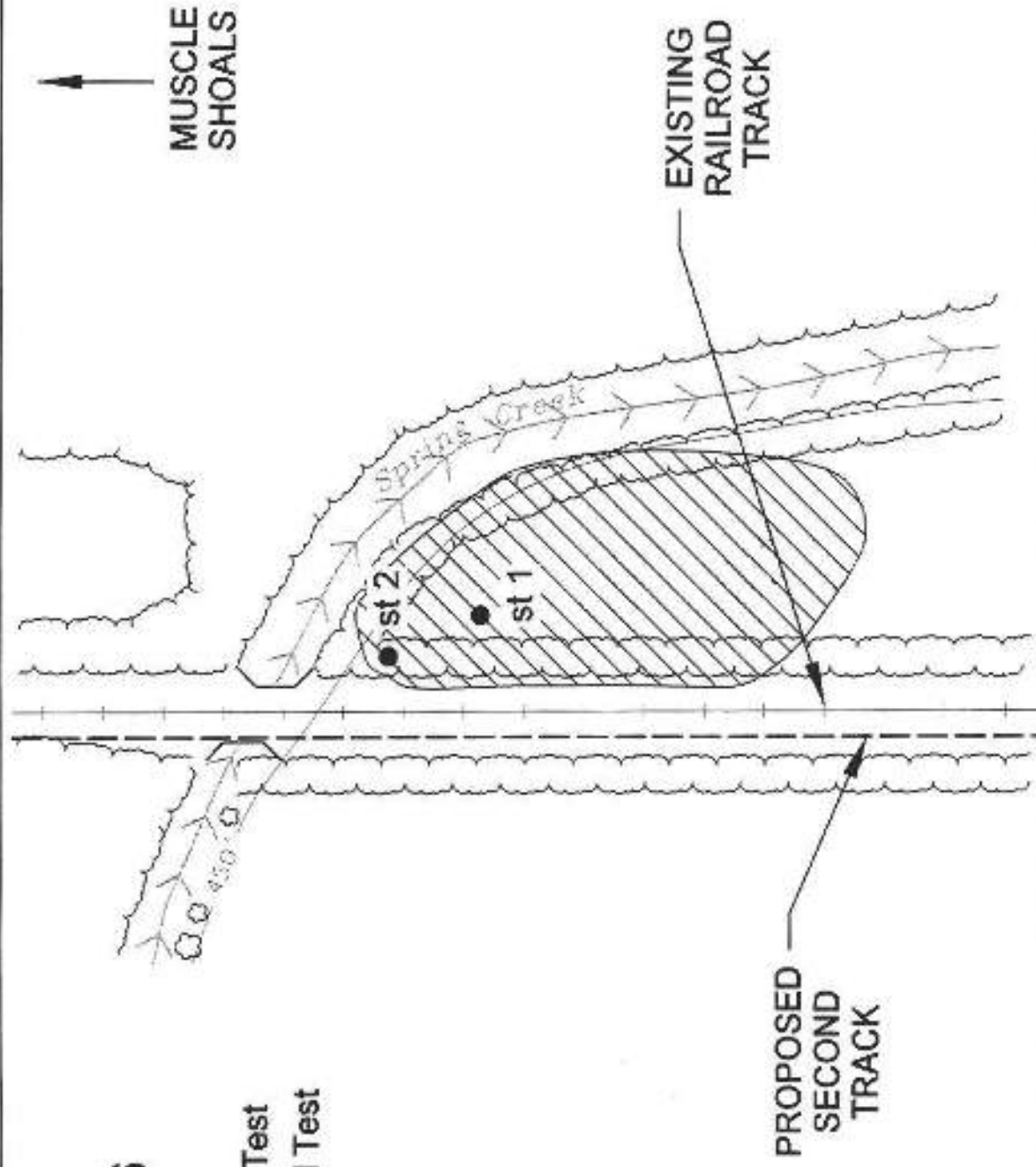
Figure 3-4

Cultural Resources Survey
Sheffield Railroad Relocation Project
ALDOT Project RRS-8817(1)

Site 1 Ct66

Not to Scale

- Positive Shovel Test
- Negative Shovel Test
- ┆ Creek
- ┆ Railroad
- ⊕ Tree
- ⌒ Bridge



3.11.1 No-Action Alternative

No adverse impacts will occur under this alternative.

3.11.2 Build Alternative

Dr. David Whetstone conducted a field survey of the project corridor on September 4, 2000. Dr. Whetstone is an expert on endangered plant species with significant experience in the northern Alabama area. Dr. Whetstone found no individuals of the species of concern in the project study area. A copy of the bladder-pod survey is included in Appendix F. It should be noted that Dr. Whetstone examined the same corridor for the bladder-pod during the spring growing season as part of the Memphis to Atlanta project. No individuals of concern were identified in either survey.

The USFWS concurred with the above-indicated findings in their letter, dated September 27, 2000 (a copy of letter is included in Section 4.0, Comments and Coordination). Therefore, no further consultation under the Endangered Species Act is necessary for this project unless new information on federally listed or proposed species becomes available, new species are proposed, critical habitat is designated under the Endangered Species Act, or the project is modified.

No impacts will occur under this alternative.

3.12 Wetlands

An evaluation of the project study area was conducted to determine the boundaries of all wetlands regulated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, according to the methods and procedures described in the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual (Technical Report Y-87-1, Waterways Experiment Station). Based on a field survey conducted by the project biologist on July 27-29, 2000, no wetlands were identified within the project corridor. There were six small tributaries identified within the project study area. These tributaries were intermittent or not flowing at the time of the field survey. There were no adjacent wetlands associated with any of these tributaries. The results of the wetlands survey are included in Appendix G.

3.12.1 No Action Alternative

No adverse impacts will occur under this alternative.

3.12.2 Build Alternative

No adverse impacts will occur under this alternative.

3.13 Wild and Scenic Rivers

According to a May 23, 2000 letter from the National Park Service (NPS) there are no streams or rivers within the project study area listed on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory (see letter from the NPS in Section 4.0 Comments and Coordination). No adverse impacts will occur under any of the project alternatives.

3.14 Hazardous Waste Sites

A search of federal and state environmental databases was undertaken to identify hazardous material and waste sites. The records search was supplemented with a field survey of the project area conducted on July 11, 2000. The focus of the field reconnaissance was the identification of physical evidence from leaks or spills from chemicals, petroleum products and storage tanks.

Hazardous waste sites are regulated by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). Hazardous materials or wastes are defined as substances, which are regulated as hazardous or toxic by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Most hazardous substances have one or more of the following characteristics: ignitability; reactivity; corrosiveness; or, toxic. Businesses that might use or produce these substances include service stations, auto repair shops, metal fabricators, junkyards, paint stores and other uses that routinely use or dispose of chemicals and solvents, including petrochemicals.

A review of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Information System (CERCLIS) revealed one site located in the project study area. The CERCLIS inventory is a list compiled by EPA of sites that have been investigated or are being investigated for release or threatened release of contaminated substances. CERCLIS sites may ultimately be placed on the National Priorities List (NPL). The NPL, also known as the Superfund List, is a listing of uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites.

Underground storage tanks (UST's) and sanitary landfills were included as hazardous waste sites in the survey of the project study area. The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) was contacted for UST and leaking UST information. A review of ADEM /UST records indicated that no UST sites have been registered, insured or closed in the project study area. A visual inspection of the project corridor did not reveal any evidence of UST sites. The Shoals Solid Waste Authority operates a permitted landfill adjacent to the

existing Norfolk Southern tracks within the project study area. No other active or abandoned landfill sites were identified in the project study area.

The results of the field survey of landfill and RCRA sites and USTs is documented in the completed "Hazardous Waste Notification Forms" included in Appendix H.

3.13.1 No Action Alternative

No hazardous waste sites will be impacted under the no action alternative.

3.13.2 Build Alternative

The CERCLIS site identified within the project is the Great Southern Wood Preserving of North Alabama located at 1703 Denton Road. Further research revealed that this site is classified as a Small Quantity Generator of hazardous material. The site is located adjacent to the existing NF tracks west of US 43. No additional right-of-way (ROW) is anticipated at this location.

The Shoals Solid Waste Authority landfill site is also located along the existing Norfolk Southern tracks in the vicinity of the Great Southern Wood Preserving site. No additional right-of-way is anticipated at this location. The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) investigated the right-of-way adjacent to the Great Southern Wood Preserving Company and Shoals Area Landfill sites for potential sources of contamination. ALDOT has determined that neither of these sites will have an impact on the project. Neither these sites will, therefore, have any remediation costs relative to a hazardous material clean up. A copy of the letter from ALDOT is included in Appendix H.

No adverse impacts will occur under the build alternative.

3.15 Noise

The noise assessment study for the project compared existing noise levels with projected noise levels under the no-build and build alternatives. Noise impacts occur when the noise abatement threshold is exceeded or when future noise levels exceed ALDOT's definition of a substantial noise increase, i.e., 15 dBA, over existing conditions. In addition, noise impacts occur when future noise levels exceed an absolute threshold or level of noise. The combination of vehicular and railroad noise required the development a unique noise threshold in order to account for both sources of noise. An analysis of the noise standards developed for transportation sources by the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Aviation Administration and the Department of Housing & Urban Development was used to identify the absolute noise threshold of 65 dBA (Ldn) for this study. Ldn refers to a day-night noise level with a weighted average of noise for the nighttime hours as compared to the daytime hours. (See the Noise Study in Appendix I).

Under federal regulations, noise sensitive receptors are characterized as category A, B and C receptors. Category A receptors include uses of land where quiet is of extraordinary importance and which serve a public need, and the preservation of this need is essential to the intended purpose of the use. Category B receptors include the broadest range of uses, including recreation areas, playgrounds, parks, sports areas, residences, motels, schools, churches, libraries and hospitals. Category C uses include developed areas not included in category A or B. A survey was conducted within the downtown area and new alignment corridor to identify category B sensitive receptors that could potentially be affected by traffic and railroad noise. None of the sensitive receptors were impacted in the downtown area, i.e. receptors exceeding the 65 dBA level.

The noise impact analysis for the Sheffield project considered two potential effects of the project. First, the analysis considered the effects of removing the majority of the train traffic from the downtown area and the resulting future noise impacts to the downtown residential areas. Secondly, the study considered the effect of the train traffic noise in a new location along the proposed relocation corridor. The assessment along the new location (build alternative) assumes that the proposed "Memphis to Atlanta" highway is in place. Existing highway noise from the "Atlanta to Memphis" highway was determined by computer modeling as defined in 23 CFR772 using STAMINA 2.0 (FHWA noise prediction model). In addition, existing noise levels were supplemented by field measurements taken along the new location as a point of reference. Railroad noise was modeled using the Railway Noise Model (RWNM v3.0) developed at the University of Central Florida.

The study utilized the decibel A scale (dBA) which is the sound pressure level measured in decibels (dB) by a sound level meter with an A frequency weighting, thus yielding A-weighted dB readings. The A weighting scale closely approximates the sensitivity of the human ear. The noise assessments in this project were made utilizing the dBA scale under Ldn (day-night noise levels) conditions. The Ldn condition measures the noise levels over a 24-hour period and is an appropriate means of describing noise from train operations. Train traffic noise is often an intermittent noise spread over a 24-hour period.

In summary, projected noise levels that equal or exceed 65 dBA, Ldn will be considered an impact. In addition, projected noise levels, which exceed existing noise levels by 15 dBA or more, will be considered an impact.

3.15.1 No Action Alternative

Existing noise in the downtown Sheffield area includes noise from local roads and train traffic. The downtown area is totally developed with sensitive noise receptors located at different distances from each of these noise sources. In order to determine the noise contributions from

each source on any particular sensitive receptor; Figure 3-6 was developed for the downtown area. Figure 3-6 indicates that train operations are the dominant source of existing noise in the downtown area. Although no sensitive receptors are currently impacted by the train noise, i.e., at or over 65 dBA, it is estimated that the residential areas closest to existing railroad tracks experience a noise level ranging from 63 to 64 dBA.

The current higher noise levels in the downtown area will continue under the no-action alternative.

3.15.2 Build Alternative

In accordance with the requirements of 23 CFR 771, future noise levels were compared to the a 65 dBA, (L_{dn}) criteria and ALDOT's "substantial increase" criteria, i.e. more than 15 dBA, in order to determine the extent of project related noise impacts. Under the build alternative, sound levels in the project corridor were determined through a combination of local traffic noise plus the traffic from the proposed "Memphis to Atlanta" highway and the noise from the proposed railroad. Figure 3-7 identifies the individual noise contributions from each of these sources. In order to identify the total noise level at any particular distance from the noise source shown on Figures 3-6 and 3-7, the following chart must be used to add decibels from each of the noise sources:

**Table 3-3
Decibel Addition**

Decibel Difference Between Noise Sources	Add Decibel to Higher Decibel Value
0 or 1 dB	3 dB
2 or 3 dB	2 dB
4 to 9 dB	1 dB
10 or more	0 dB

For example, using Figure 3-6 and Table 3-3, if a single family residence is located 100 feet from an existing road and 200 feet from an existing railroad, a noise level of 62 dB and 63 dB would be added to yield 66 dB.

Based on field reconnaissance and aerial photography of the corridor, only one single-family residence will be impacted by the project. This residence is located approximately 230 feet north of the proposed railroad track along Frankfort Road. According to Figure 3-7, the current noise level at this receptor site is 53 dBA, (49 dBA from Frankfort Road and 51 dBA from the Memphis to Atlanta highway). Future noise levels at this receptor site will be 65 dBA, due solely to train operations.

Figure 3-6 Noise-Distance Graph
Downtown Area

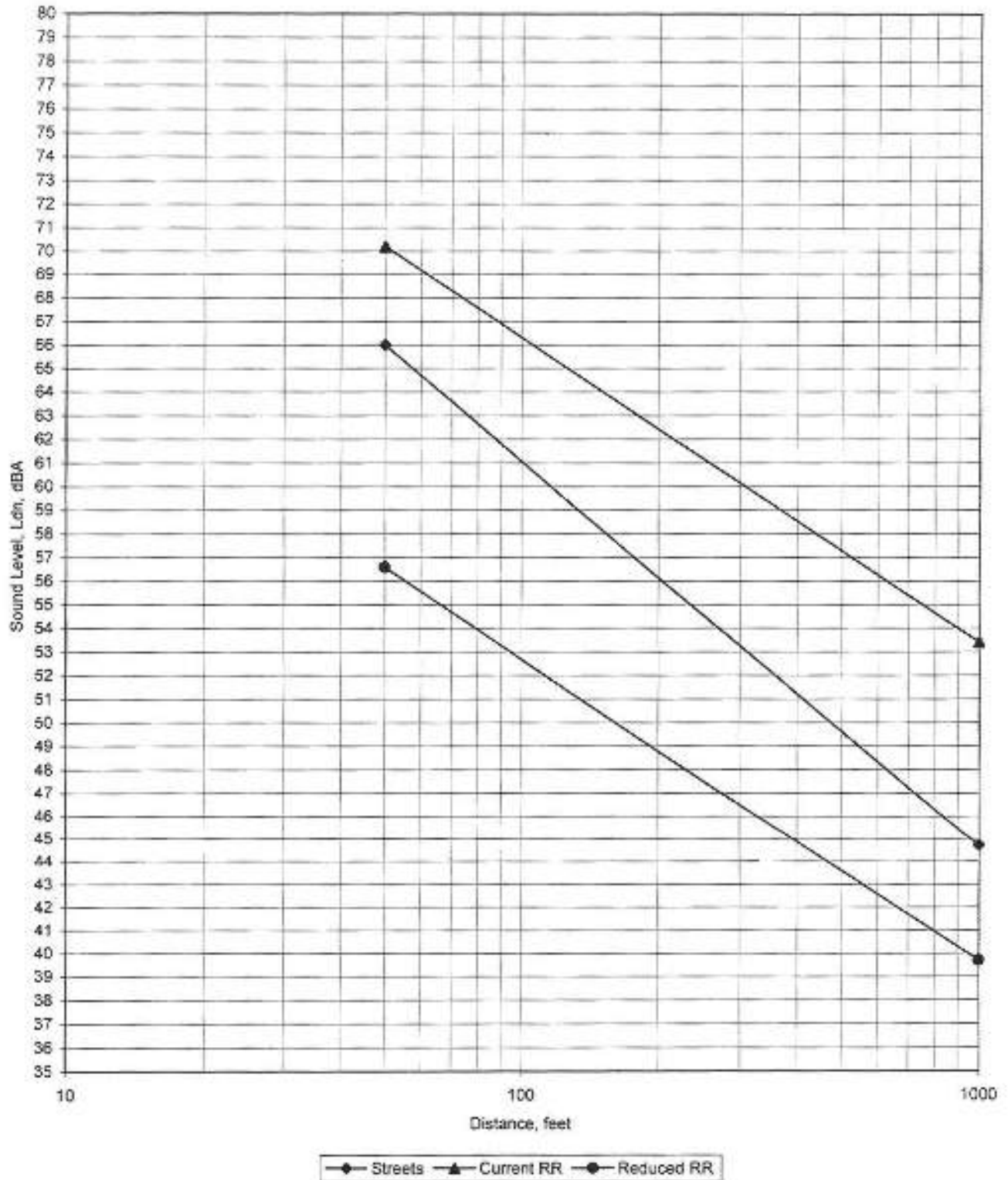
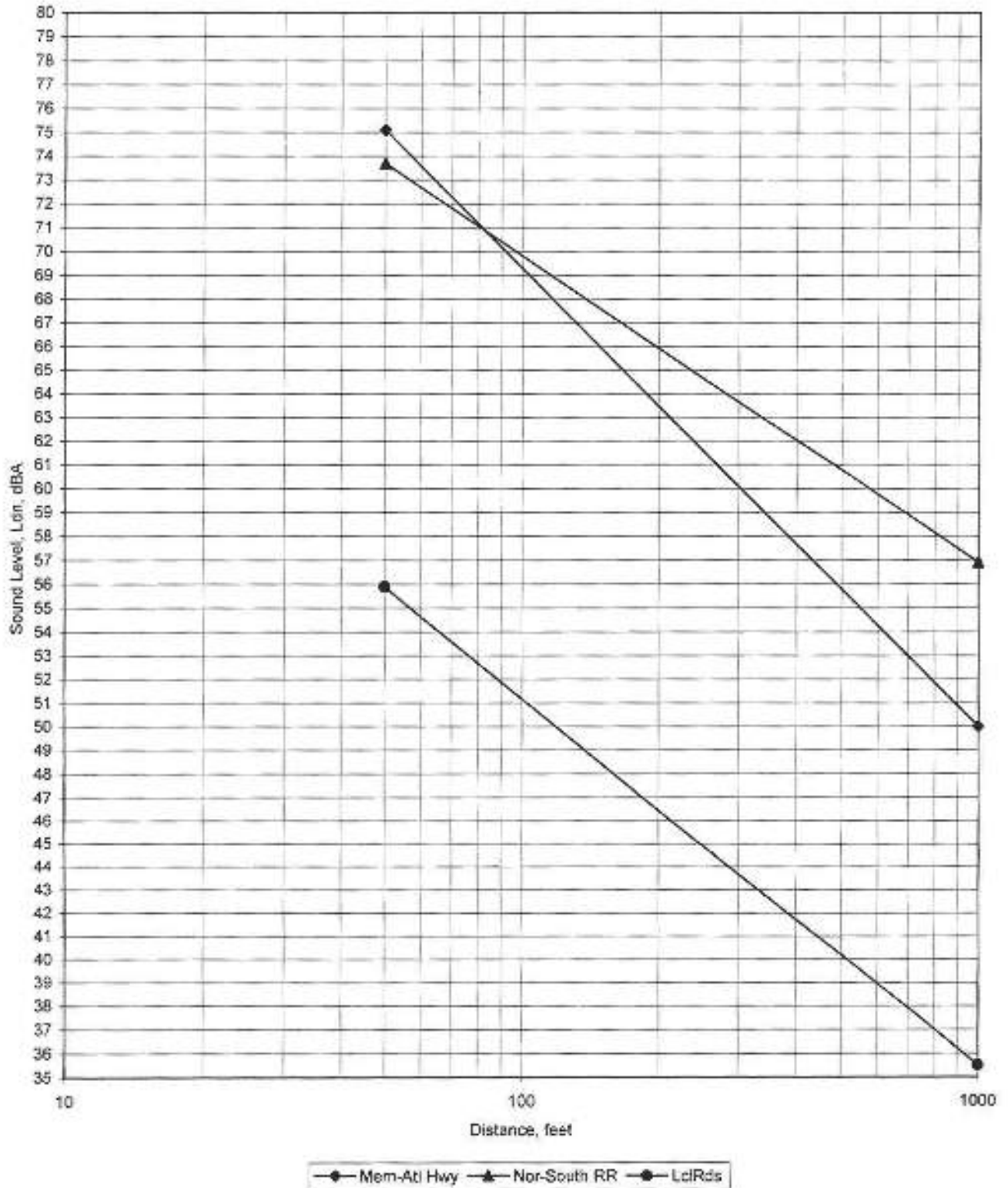


Figure 3-7 Noise-Distance Graph
New Location Area



In accordance with 23 CFR Part 772, noise abatement measures must be considered for all impacts. Under the build alternative, the abatement measures that could conceivably be incorporated into the project were evaluated for the above-indicated single family residence. The following noise abatement measures were considered:

The acquisition of property rights would provide property alongside the proposed facility on which to construct noise barriers or buffer zones in which no noise sensitive land use would be permitted. Acquisition of property to protect a single residence would not be cost effective and result in the relocation of the residence.

The alteration of alignments, including vertical and horizontal alignments to reduce noise impacts. Due to the restrictive design standards used in railroad construction, e.g., vertical grades of 1 percent or less, alignment changes are not feasible without resulting in major cost increases to the project.

Traffic management measures such as traffic control devices and signing for the prohibition of certain vehicle types and modified speed limits are intended for highway, not railroad projects. Trains already travel at comparatively low speeds, and time restrictions would seriously disrupt the 24-hour nature of train operations.

A noise barrier could be constructed along the railroad right-of-way to reduce noise levels at the effected residence. Using the results of the OPTIMA 2.0 barrier optimization model, it has been determined that a barrier would need to be 10 feet tall and in excess of 1,500 feet to adequately reduce noise at the effected residence (see Appendix I – Noise Study). At a cost of \$15 per square foot, such a barrier would cost approximately \$225,000. ALDOT noise policy states that the cost of a noise barrier must be equal to or less than \$20,000. per benefited receiver. A noise barrier is not therefore reasonable due to cost.

In addition to the above, ALDOT policy states that noise abatement generally will not be considered for isolated receptors due to the costs versus the benefits provided.

It should be noted that the build alternative would remove approximately 14 to 16 trains per day from the downtown area. The removal of these trains will have a beneficial impact on noise levels in the downtown area. Although the actual number of benefited sensitive receptors has not been counted, the project noise consultant estimated the number at approximately 250 receptors will benefit from this decrease in noise levels. This number includes the Northwest Shoals Community College, Avalone Park and the Buffington Recreational field. The estimated decreases in noise levels include an 18 dB reduction in the area west of the downtown where the existing track will be removed and a seven dB reduction in other downtown areas where train operations will be reduced.

3.16 Air Quality

The project is located within Colbert County, Alabama. The area is an attainment area for vehicle-related air emissions as defined by the Clean Air Act (40 CFR Parts 52 and 81). As an attainment area, there are no transportation control measures required under the State Implementation Plan (SIP). Therefore, the conformity procedures of 40 CFR 51 and 93 do not apply to this project. The project has been identified in the highway element of the conforming Shoals Area Transportation Study and the approved Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Shoals Area Metropolitan Planning Organization area.

3.16.1 No-action Alternative

If train operations continue in the downtown area at current levels, idling vehicles associated with traffic congestion at the nine existing at-grade railroad crossings will continue to emit greater concentrations of carbon monoxide (CO), hydrocarbons and other vehicle-related air pollutants. In addition, substantial emissions from the 16 to 18 diesel-powered trains per day, including idling trains being refueled at the downtown fuel facility, will continue under the no-build facility.

3.16.2 Build Alternative

The proposed project will not add any additional roadway capacity to the area, but will improve the traffic flow and reduce traffic congestion through the removal of approximately 16 trains per day in the downtown area. As a result, air can be expected to improve in the tri-cities area.

By a letter dated September 21, 1994, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) concluded that the proposed project is not expected to cause exceedances of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, therefore, it is consistent with the State Implementation Plan for air quality. A copy of the correspondence from ADEM is included in Section 4.0 COMMENTS AND COORDINATION.

3.17 Mineral Resources

Although the area is known to have Limestone formations, the only surface location of exploitable mineral resources is an active quarry located to the west of the proposed relocation route. Correspondence from the Geological Survey of Alabama confirms this finding along with the identification of Limestone in the project area. See a copy of a letter dated, April 3, 2000 from Alabama Geologic Survey in Section 4.0 COMMENTS AND COORDINATION.

The Karst conditions associated with limestone formations will be taken into consideration during the final design and construction process.

The project will not have an adverse affect on any valuable mineral resources in the area.

3.18 Construction Impacts

Construction impacts include impacts to air, water, noise, and traffic as a result of construction activities. Construction impacts are temporary and short term in nature.

3.18.1 No-action Alternative

No impacts will occur under this alternative.

3.18.2 Build Alternative

Impacts and mitigation measures resulting from construction activities have been identified under the appropriate resource categories throughout this document. The ALDOT requires all contractors to follow "Best Management Practices" for highway construction projects. The following represents a summary of the anticipated construction impacts and standard mitigation measures:

- Soil conditions will be affected by site preparation activities, including, clearing , grading, grubbing, and excavation. Usable soil will be reused to maintain the on-site earthwork balance. Final grading, soil preparation, fertilizing, seeding, mulching, and where appropriate sodding will follow construction as soon as practicable. All areas disturbed through construction activities will be used for railway purposes or landscaped.
- Temporary air quality impacts may occur within the immediate vicinity of the construction activities. Air pollutants such as carbon monoxide (CO) and particulate (PM-10) result from construction activities. CO is caused by equipment engine emissions and particulates are the result of fugitive dust emissions from various activities.

CO emissions will be reduced by the use of properly maintained equipment. Prompt restoration of work areas will minimize fugitive dust emissions from construction areas.

- Temporary noise impacts are expected to occur in the immediate vicinity of construction activity. The noise levels from construction cannot be predicted because the types of equipment and construction methods are unknown at this time. It is up to the contractor to develop a noise control plan to mitigate construction noise. The plan should include measures to limit certain activities or equipment during the evenings, weekends, and holidays; and locating staging areas away from noise sensitive uses.

- Solid wastes will be generated by the demolition of buildings that cannot be relocated. The wastes from these structures will be disposed of only at sites designated and permitted for this kind of waste. The overall impact to local waste disposal sites is expected to represent a small percentage of the total waste flow to local landfills. Railroad equipment, i.e., tracks and ties, will be recycled or sold for salvage.

3.19 Permits

A Section 404 permit will be required for discharges into the Waters of the United States for the construction of all new and existing bridges from the US Army Corps of Engineers. Depending on the exact nature of the construction details, an individual Section 404 permit may be required, or more likely a nationwide (general) permit. The Individual or Nationwide permits for stream crossings may also require a Section 401 permit from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management.

Other permit requirements have been noted within the appropriate resource category section in this EA document.

**4.0 COMMENTS AND
CORRESPONDENCE**

4.0 COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) initiated the comment and coordination process by providing written notification to federal, state and local agencies. An initial early coordination effort was conducted on September 13, 1994, with a subsequent effort conducted on February 29, 2000. The initial coordination effort focused on an evaluation of the alternatives for alleviating railroad and vehicular traffic problems in the downtown area. The more recent effort focused on the relocation of the railroad outside of the downtown area. In addition, additional meetings and correspondence took place between effected parties and agencies throughout the development of the project. Copies of all correspondence received, as a result of the early coordination process has been included in this section.

4.1 Early Coordination/Views and Comments

ALDOT sent early coordination letters to the following federal, state and local agencies. Correspondence was received from those agencies that are underlined.

Mayor Dean McCormack, City of Tuscumbia
 Councilmember Stacy Norwood, City of Tuscumbia
 Councilmember Brian Beck, City of Tuscumbia
 Councilmember Willie Buchanan, City of Tuscumbia
 Councilmember Jerry Wilbanks, City of Tuscumbia
Mayor Ian T. Sanford, City of Sheffield
 Councilmember Ronnie McLeary, City of Sheffield
 Councilmember Frank Stevens, City of Sheffield
 Councilmember Ray Wright, City of Sheffield
 Councilmember Daniel Brocato, City of Sheffield
 Councilmember David Dotson, City of Sheffield
 Mayor Charles R. Mitchell, City of Muscle Shoals
 Councilmember Steve Bradford, City of Muscle Shoals
 Councilmember James E. Holland, City of Muscle Shoals
 Councilmember Billy H. Hudson, City of Muscle Shoals
 Councilmember Leon Madden, City of Muscle Shoals
 Councilmember Allen Noles, City of Muscle Shoals
 County Commissioner Thomas Pennington
 County Commissioner James C. Bingham
 County Commissioner Charles E. Douthit
 County Commissioner Emmitt E. Jimmer
 County Commissioner James Roy Harrell
County Commissioner Charles L. Beard, Jr.
 Colbert County Engineer, Floyd Lawrence
 Colbert County Probate Judge, Honorable W. Thomas Crosslin

Colbert County, Sheriff Ronnie May
Senator Bobby Denton
Representative Nelson Starkey, District 1
Representative James Hamilton, District 2
Representative Marcel Black, District 3
Superintendent James B. Douglas EDD, City of Muscle Shoals
Superintendent Roger C. Tomberlin, City of Sheffield
Superintendent James R. Berry EDD, City of Tuscumbia
Superintendent Roger L'Don Moore, City of Tuscumbia
North West Alabama Council of Local Government
Shoals Chamber of Commerce
Nashville District, Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. EPA, Region IV, Environmental Assessment Branch, NEPA Review Staff
Alabama Dept. of Economic and Community Affairs, Recreation Program Director
U.S. Dept. of Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
U.S. Geological Survey, Water Resources Division
U.S. Geological Survey, Environmental Impact Assessment Program
Conservation & Natural Resources, Game and Fish Division, Environmental
Coordinator
ADECA, Chief of Traffic Safety
Alabama Power Company, Corporate Real Estate Dept.
Alabama State Council on the Arts and Humanities
USDA, Forest Service
Geological Survey of Alabama, State Oil and Gas Board
Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel, Director
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, Region IV
The Alabama Conservancy, Transportation Committee
Alabama Forestry Commission
Superintendent of Education, State of Alabama
Sierra Club, Alabama Chapter
Alabama Development Office, Director
Alabama Emergency Management Agency, Director
Federal Aviation Administration, Mr. Roderick Nicholson
Alabama Dept. of Industrial Relations, Director
Alabama Cattlemen's Association
Attorney General, State of Alabama
Department of Agriculture and Industries, Commissioner
Soil and Water Conservation Service
The Alabama Conservancy
Alabama Dept. of Transportation, Materials and Tests Engineer
Alabama Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

Alabama Department of Environmental Management, Water Quality Program
U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service
 Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States Office
 Cahaba River Society
 Seminole Tribe of Florida
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
 Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
 Coushatta Tribe
 Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town
 United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians
 Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
 Chickasaw Nation
 Galegee Tribal Town
 Coushatta Tribe of Texas
 Miccosukee Tribe
 Poarch Band of Creek Indians
 Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
 Caddo Indian Tribe of Oklahoma
 Creek Nation of Oklahoma
 Cherokee Nation
 Swawnee Executive Committee
 Thlopthlocco Tribal Town
 Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
 Tunica – Biloxi Office of Cultural and Historic Preservation

4.2 Summary of Public Involvement Meetings

In addition to notifying local, state and federal agencies, ALDOT held a number citizen involvement meetings during the development of the project alternatives. Meetings were held on March 15, 1994, October 20, 1994 and December 2, 1999. The following is a summary of each of the public involvement meetings held for the project. A copy of the advertisements, sign-in sheets and any written comments are included in Appendix J.

March 15, 1994 Public Involvement Meeting

This meeting was devoted to a railroad overpass in the downtown area. Approximately 92 people attended the meeting. Most people stated they would like to see the overpass built as soon as possible. One person objected to the project, preferring that the tracks be located outside of the downtown area. Twenty-five written comments were received. Sixteen of the comments

offered downtown alternatives to the project, including design considerations by the Sheffield Landmarks Committee and the Sheffield Beautiful Committee.

October 20, 1994 Public Involvement Meeting

This was the initial meeting devoted to a number of downtown overpass alternatives. Approximately 32 people attended the meeting. The attendees commented on several downtown overpass alternatives at the meeting. No alternative was favored over another. Fourteen comments were received subsequent to the meeting. Seven of the comments favored alternative 2A, with no particular favor shown to any of the other alternatives.

December 2, 1999 Public Involvement Meeting

This was the last public involvement meeting held to gain public comment on the relocation of the Norfolk Southern mainline tracks outside of the downtown area. The meeting was held at ALDOT Second Division Office in Tuscumbia, Alabama. There were approximately 191 people in attendance. ALDOT received over 500 written comments and one oral comment on the project. In the interest of brevity, the comments from the public are on file at the offices of the Second Division Engineer in Tuscumbia. The following is a breakdown of the comments:

- 78 percent were strongly in favor of relocating the railroad according to the preferred alternative. Reasons for their decision include vehicle delays at rail crossings, response time delays by emergency vehicles, declines in economic growth in the tri-city area as a result of frequent traffic delays;
- 15 percent expressed discontent over excessive waits/delays and the growing number of accidents at the rail crossings in the downtown area. These individuals supporting any alternative that would eliminate the train/vehicle conflicts in the downtown area;
- 4 percent of the comments were in favor of a new overpass in the downtown area. These individuals thought that a new overpass would be the least costly and require less right-of-way;
- 3 percent of the comments were opposed to the relocation of the rail line for reasons, such as, destruction of farmland and developing residential areas, potential impacts to water supplies, noise impacts and potential hazardous waste impacts from train accidents; and,
- The one oral comment was in favor of the railroad relocation.

In addition to the above, several city, county and state officials offered their support to either a downtown grade-separated solution or the relocation of the railroad outside of the downtown area.

In summary, the majority of the comments received were in favor of the railroad relocation alternative because it removed the worst of the train-related problems from the downtown area.



JIM FOLSON
GOVERNOR

ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-3050

COPY:
D. Moss
T. Ford

RTG. SYMBOL	<i>TMAC</i>
INITIALS / SIG.	<i>TMAC</i>
DATE	<i>9/22/94</i>
RTG. SYMBOL	
INITIALS / SIG.	
G. M. ROBERTS DIRECTOR	
DATE	
RTG. SYMBOL	
INITIALS / SIG.	
DATE	
JOB NO.	<i>17079-31</i>
FILE	

September 15, 1994

Barge, Waggoner, Sumner & Cannon
Post Office Box 279
Dothan, AL 35302

SUBJECT: Project RRS-8817(1)
R. R. Overpass, Montgomery Avenue in Sheffield
Colbert County

Dear Sir:

Attached is a copy of our early coordination efforts on the subject project. We will forward a copy of all responses to your office on a regular basis. These comments will be useful in your efforts to study and prepare the appropriate environmental document.

Should we be able to assist further with this matter, please contact Mr. Joe P. Bearrentine of our Environmental Technical Section at (205) 242-6149.

Sincerely,

Don T. Arkle, Chief
Design Bureau

By: *Bill G. Carwile* #102
Bill G. Carwile, Coordinator
Environmental Technical Section

JPB/cm

Attachment

cc: Mr. Robert Portera
Design File
ETS File



JIM FOLSON
GOVERNOR

ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-3050

G. M. ROBERTS
DIRECTOR

September 13, 1994

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dykes Rushing, Engineer
Office Engineer

FROM: Don T. Arkle, Chief,
Design Bureau

BY: Bill G. Carwile, Coordinator *BGC woz*
Environmental Technical Section

RE: Project: RRS-8817(1)
R. R. Overpass, Montgomery Avenue in Sheffield
Colbert County

Please find attached a letter requesting views and comments, a map of the project area, and a list of agencies contacted as a part of the early coordination procedures for the subject project.

JPB/cm

Attachment

cc: Mr. Ron Green
Mr. Bob Portera
Mr. Paul Bowlin
Mr. James Brown
Mr. Joe Holley
File (2)



JIM FOLSON
GOVERNOR

ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-3050

G. M. ROBERTS
DIRECTOR

September 13, 1994

Address!

RE: Project: RRS-6817(1)
R.R. Overpass, Montgomery Avenue in Sheffield
Colbert County

Dear Sir:

The Alabama Department of Transportation is studying a proposal to construct an overpass along Montgomery Avenue where it now intersects with the railroad tracks between 1st Street and Ashe Street. The project study area is indicated on the attached map. Additional rights-of-way will be required to implement the project.

The purpose of the project is to allow both train and vehicular traffic to flow at the same time. Police, fire and other emergency vehicles could better serve the area residents and traveling public with the proposed overpass.

The Alabama Department of Transportation is investigating all aspects of this proposal in order to determine its feasibility. We are very much interested in the views of public officials and agencies concerning this proposed highway facility. The early identification of effects a highway project may have on an area is needed to assure proper planning.

Also, we are interested in your review of this proposal so that we may satisfy the intent of certain Federal Statutes (Section 204 of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 and Section 401 of the Intergovernmental Review Act of 1968). Although Federal-Aid Highway Planning, Research, and Construction projects have not been selected for review under Alabama's "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs" (Executive Order 12372) process, we must still meet these other requirements. Therefore, your review is requested.

September 13, 1994
Page 2

It would be appreciated if you would inform us of any comments or useful information that you might have regarding the feasibility of this proposal and identify any social, economic or environmental effects relative to the proposal. The comments will be taken under consideration in the development of this project and the appropriate environmental document.

Sincerely,

Don T. Arkle, Chief
Design Bureau


By:

Bill G. Carwile, Coordinator
Environmental Technical Section

JPB/cm

cc: Design File
ETS File

PROJECT: RRS-8817(1)
RAILROAD OVERPASS
MONTGOMERY AVENUE IN SHEFFIELD
COLBERT COUNTY

PROJECT STUDY AREA: 

BOAT H

33

PICKWICK 34

LAKE

RIVER

REYNOLDS ALUMINUM COMPANY

Sheffield

35660

Tuscumbia

35674

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

PARK WEST FOREMAN

AVALON PARK

WADSWORTH

PICKWICK

MISSISSIPPI

MISSISSIPPI

MISSISSIPPI

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U S ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IV EPA
BRANCH NEPA REVIEW STAFF
345 COURTLAND ST N E
ATLANTA GA 30365

RECREATION PROGRAM COORD
ADECA
P O BOX 5690
MONTGOMERY AL 36103-5690

MR R W WAGNER P E
REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL OFF
DHES/ROPEC
101 MARIETTA TOWER SU 1503
ATLANTA GA 30323

REGIONAL DIRECTOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
U S DEPT INTERIOR
SOUTHEAST REGION
75 SPRING STREET S W
ATLANTA GA 30303

REGIONAL DIRECTOR, REGION 4
FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE
U S DEPT OF THE INTERIOR
75 SPRING STREET, S W
ATLANTA GA 30303

WATER RESOURCES DIVISION
U S GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
U S DEPT OF THE INTERIOR
P O BOX 210337
MONTGOMERY AL 36121 0337

CHIEF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
ASSESSMENT PROGRAM
U S GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
MS 760 US DEPT INTERIOR
RESTON VIRGINIA 22092

CHIEF
BUREAU OF MINES
INTERMOUNTAIN FIELD
OPERATIONS CENTER
BUILDING 20 DENVER FED CTR
DENVER CO 80225

DIRECTOR
U S DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING
BIRMINGHAM FIELD OFFICE
220 W VALLEY AVE 3RD FLOOR
HOMWOOD AL 35209

REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL OFF
SOUTHEAST REGION
U S DEPT OF INTERIOR
75 SPRING STREET S W
ATLANTA GA 30303

MR JON HORNSBY
ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATION
GAME AND FISH DIVISION
64 NORTH UNION STREET
MONTGOMERY AL 36130

CHIEF OF TRAFFIC SAFETY
ADECA
P O BOX 5690
MONTGOMERY AL 36103-569

CORPORATE REAL ESTATE DEPT
ALABAMA POWER COMPANY
P O BOX 2641
BIRMINGHAM AL 35291

ASSISTANT TO DIRECTOR
ALA STATE COUNCIL ON THE
ARTS AND HUMANITIES
ONE DEXTER AVENUE
MONTGOMERY AL 36130

FOREST SUPERVISOR
USDA FOREST SERVICE
1765 HIGHLAND AVE
MONTGOMERY AL 36107

DIRECTOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF ALA
STATE OIL & GAS BOARD
P O BOX 0
UNIVERSITY AL 35486

DIRECTOR
ALA TOURISM & TRAVEL
401 ADAMS AVENUE
MONTGOMERY AL 36103

STATE CONSERVATIONIST
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
U S DEPT OF AGRICULTURE
P O BOX 311
AUBURN AL 36830

U S DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
BIRMINGHAM OFFICE REGION IV
BEACON RIDGE TOWER SU 300
600 BEACON PARKWAY WEST
BIRMINGHAM AL 35209

CHAIRMAN
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
THE ALABAMA CONSERVANCY
1920 ROSALIE RIDGE
HUNTSVILLE AL 35811

ALABAMA FORESTRY COMM
513 MADISON AVENUE
MONTGOMERY AL 36130

SUPERINTENDENT OF ED
STATE OFFICE BUILDING
MONTGOMERY AL 36130

CHAIRMAN
CANABA GROUP SIERRA CLUB
872 BURNING TREE TRAIL
ALABASTER AL 35007

DIRECTOR
ALA DEV OFFICE
C/O STATE CAPITOL
MONTGOMERY AL 36130

DIRECTOR
ALA EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT AGENCY
PO DRAWER 2160
CLANTON AL 35045

MR. RODERICK NICHOLSON,
PROJECT MANAGER
FEDERAL AVIATION ADM
AIRPORTS DISTRICT OFFICE
120 NORTH HANGAR DR SU B
JACKSON MS 39208 2306

DIRECTOR
ALA DEPT OF
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
649 MONROE STREET
MONTGOMERY AL 36130

EXEC VICE PRESIDENT
ALA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOC
P O BOX 2499
MONTGOMERY AL 36102 2499

ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF ALABAMA
11 S. Union
MONTGOMERY AL 36130

COMMISSIONER
DEPT OF AGRICULTURE
& INDUSTRIES
RICHARD BEARD BUILDING
MONTGOMERY AL 36130

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION
COMMISSION
RICHARD BEARD BUILDING
MONTGOMERY AL 36130

THE ALABAMA CONSERVANCY
2717 7TH AVENUE SOUTH #201
BIRMINGHAM AL 35233 3405

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION
OFFICER
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMM
466 S PERRY STREET
MONTGOMERY AL 36130

ALABAMA DEPT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
STATE CAPITOL
MONTGOMERY AL 36130

CHIEF ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT BRANCH
DUVAL BUILDING
9450 KOGER BOULEVARD
ST PETERSBURG FL 33702

FIELD SUPERVISOR
U S FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE
P O BOX 1197
DAPHNE AL 36526

REGULATORY FUNCTIONS BRANCH
CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P O BOX 2288
MOBILE AL 36628
ATTENTION MR BILL MCNEIL

EASTERN STATES OFFICE
DIRECTOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
U S DEPT OF INTERIOR
411 BRIARWOOD DR SU 404
JACKSON MS 39206

CANABA RIVER SOCIETY
2717 7TH AVENUE SOUTH
SUITE 205
BIRMINGHAM AL 35233

Honorable J. W. Goodwin
310 Ford Road
Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

Honorable Bobby E. Denton
119 Trenton Dr.
Tuscumbia, AL 35674

Honorable Ray Cahoon, Mayor
City of Sheffield
Drawer Q
Sheffield, AL 35660

Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments
P. O. Box 2603 - 807 East Avalon
Muscle Shoals, AL 35660

Mr Roger Moore, Supt.
Colbert County Schools
P. O. Box 270
Tuscumbia, AL 35674

Dr. Robert W. Clemmons, Supt.
Tuscumbia City Schools
P. O. Box 149
Tuscumbia, AL 35674

Mr. Floyd Lawrence, Engineer
Rt. 4 Box 77-A
Tuscumbia, AL 35674

Honorable Thomas Pennington, Chairman
Colbert County Commission
201 North Main Street
Tuscumbia, AL 35674

Mrs. Earl E. Holder
Colbert County Historical
Landmarks Foundation
1004 East 3rd Street
Tuscumbia, AL 35674

Honorable Thomas Crowlin
Judge of Probate
P. O. Box 47
Tuscumbia, AL 35674



JIM FOLSON
GOVERNOR

ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-3050

MARY,
Please forward
Copies to David & Parish,
Don Hill

RTG SYMBOL	JMBC
INITIALS / SIG.	JMac
DATE	10/4/94
RTG SYMBOL	M ROBERTS
DIRECTOR	2 Mod 5
INITIALS / SIG.	
DATE	
RTG SYMBOL	P. STRICKLAND
INITIALS / SIG.	
DATE	
RTG NO.	17079-31
FILE	
	CORR.

September 26, 1994

Berge, Waggoner, Sumner & Cannon
P. O. Box 279
Dothan, AL 36302

Subject: Project RRS-8817(1)
R.R. Overpass, Montgomery Avenue in Sheffield
Colbert County

Dear Sir:

Attached are responses from our early coordination efforts of September 13, 1994. Additional comments will be forwarded to you on a weekly basis.

Sincerely,

Don T. Arkle, Chief
Design Bureau

By: Bill G. Carwile
Bill G. Carwile, Coordinator
Environmental Technical Section

JPB/cm

cc: Mr. Robert Portera
Design File
ETS File

City of Tuscumbia

P.O. Box 29, Tuscumbia, Alabama 35674 • Telephone (205) 383-5465



Mayor
Mrs.) Dean C. McCormack

City Clerk
Lora Harback, CMC

Council Members
Brian Beck
Willie Buchanan
Charles Willis
Stacy Norwood
Jerry Wilbanks

May 18, 2000

Mr. J. Dwight Goodman, DES. CEI
BWSC, INC.
162 3rd Avenue North
Nashville, TN 37201

Dear Mr. Goodman:

RE: ALDOT PROJ ARS-9817(1) PROPOSED RAILROAD RELOCATION

My apologies! This response is certainly overdue and I accept the responsibility. Hopefully I can clear this matter with the following assessment of your request.

The City of Tuscumbia has not formulated long-range plan for the area in question, i.e., the proposed route for relocation of the Norfolk-Southern railroad as detailed in your letter of March 31, 2000 (File 179079-31. N

Established local land use, as far as we can determine, has not changed in the specified area in the recorded history of this city. It is still mostly rural with farms and small area residential development only.

Relocating the rail lines will not likely disrupt any future development for the area and should not have a negative impact on this city and its residents.

May 18, 2000
Page 2
BWSL, Inc.

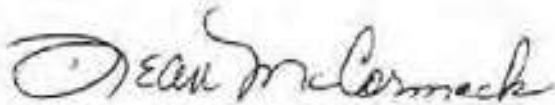
There are many factors which point to actual benefits to the city by having the rail lines relocated to that area. Moving the rail lines away from our more heavily populated areas will certainly improve the communities (subdivisions) the trains now pass through.

Safety concerns regarding rail crossings (one in particular divides our recreational area near our sports complex) will be alleviated in some cases once the rail lines are moved further from the busiest areas of the city.

We are not aware of any negative impacts the relocation of the rail lines would cause for the City of Tusculumbia.

In discussing this subject with our building/public works department officials, the consensus is that our city will be much better off for future growth and positive development when the tracks are rerouted through the area now proposed.

Sincerely,



Mayor Dean McCormack, CMO
City of Tusculumbia

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF ALABAMA

DONALD F. OLTZ
State Geologist



420 Hackberry Lane
P.O. Box 869999
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35486-6999
Phone (205) 349-2852
Fax (205) 349-2861
www.gsa.state.al.us

April 3, 2000

Mr. Dwight Goodman
Barge Waggoner Sumner & Cannon, Inc.
162 Third Ave. North
Nashville, TN 37201

Dear Mr. Goodman:

I am replying to your letter of March 31, 2000 to Dr. Donald F. Oltz, regarding mineral resources in the area of the proposed railroad relocation in Tuscumbia, Alabama. The geology and mineral resources of the proposed railroad alignment is shown on Alabama Geological Survey Quadrangle Series Map 6, "Geology and mineral resources of the Tuscumbia Quadrangle, Alabama," by M. W. Szabo, 1975. The only identified mineral resource in the area of your project is Tuscumbia Limestone which is suitable for crushed stone. An active quarry is located west of the proposed railroad alignment as shown on your figure 1.

Our new mailing address is P. O. Box 869999, Tuscaloosa, AL 35486-6999. If you desire additional information, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

ECONOMIC GEOLOGY DIVISION

Lewis S. Dean
Geologist

SHEFFIELD

Center
of
the
Shoals

5011

March 27, 2000

Alabama Department of Transportation
1409 Coliseum Blvd.
Montgomery, AL 36130-3050

BEVINS		
COLSON		✓
GLASS		
JILA		
LEWIS		
NIX		
OSTASESKI		
SIPPER		
SMILEY		
FILE		

RE: Project RRS - 8817(1)
Railroad Relocation Corridor Study
Colbert County, Alabama

RECEIVED
Berge, Wagoner, Sumner & Connor

MAY 02 2000

MGM OFFICE

600 N. Montgomery Ave.
Post Office Drawer Q
Sheffield, Alabama 35660
(205) 383-0250
Fax (205) 336-3602

Jan T. Sanford, Mayor

City Council

Denny Brantley
James David Denton
Ronnie McLeary
Frank Stevens
Ray Wright

Gentlemen:

This letter is in response to your inquiry dated February 29, 2000, in regard to the above referenced project.

On behalf of the citizens of Sheffield, I wish to express our strong support for the relocation of the existing Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks. We believe this to be a more viable option to the initial proposal of building an overpass in Sheffield.

This relocation will benefit not only Sheffield, but the cities of Tuscumbia and Muscle Shoals as well. However, as it pertains to Sheffield, it will undoubtedly have a most positive impact. First, it will free up all the crossings within our city, except for infrequent trains servicing our industrial customers. Secondly, it would certainly alleviate the chronic traffic congestion, which is a tremendous source of frustration for those caught by one of the approximately 16 daily trains, each with approximately 140 to 150 cars. Perhaps more importantly, Sheffield would benefit economically in part by bringing people into our downtown area. At present, many avoid traveling through downtown Sheffield, especially around lunch time, due to the probability of being held up by a train, thus cutting into their time. The City would also benefit financially due to the fact that we now have a second fire station and police substation on the south side of the tracks. These stations provide emergency service to those areas south of the tracks in the event a train is blocking the railway crossings. With the relocation, it would not be necessary to have and maintain these two buildings.

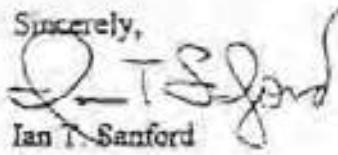
In my opinion, the proposed corridor site offers the best path of least disturbance and will have only a minimal impact to those along the



route. I am unaware of any environmental effects this project would have on the proposed corridor.

In closing, let me state that it is my belief that this relocation project is very doable and feasible. It, without question, will provide a boost in many ways to the cities affected. We encourage the Alabama Department of Transportation to move on with this project and give it your highest priority.

Sincerely,



Ian T. Sanford
Mayor

City of
SHEFFIELD
Center
of
the
Shoals

April 20, 2000

Mr. J. Dwight Goodman, CES, CEI
BWSC
162 Third Avenue North
Nashville, TN 37201

RE: ALDOT Project RRS-8817(1)

Dear Mr. Goodman:

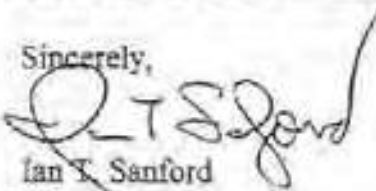
In response to your letter concerning the above mentioned project, there would be no adverse affects on any Sheffield properties in the event of a relocation of the railroad. The proposed pathway for the rail will not be within the city limits of Sheffield, therefore will not affect any of our land use plans.

I will note that the relocation can only be a positive for the City of Sheffield and its citizens in that it will increase traffic flow in our city and help our economic climate. At present, people will do anything to avoid the numerous crossings in Sheffield, thus the negative effect on our commercial areas.

The relocation of the railway may be one of the main keys to our city's future. We hope that this information is of benefit to your study.

If I can be of further assistance, please phone me at (256) 383-0250.

Sincerely,


Ian T. Sanford
Mayor

300 N. Montgomery Ave.
Post Office Drawer Q
Sheffield, Alabama 35660
(205) 383-0250
Fax (205) 386-5602

Ian T. Sanford, Mayor

City Council

Danny Beccato
James David Dutton
Ronnie McLeary
Frank Stevens
Ray Wright



Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments

P. O. Box 2603, Muscle Shoals, Alabama 35662

Sam Minor
Executive Director

(256) 389-0500
(256) 389-0599 - Fax

Mayor Charles R. Mitchell
Chairman

Judge Hal Kirby
Vice Chairman

April 26, 2000

~~Mr. Dwight Goodman~~
BWSC
162 Third Avenue North
Nashville, TN 37201

RE: Environmental Assessment
Proposed Railroad Relocation
ALDOT Project RRS-8817(1)
Colbert County, Alabama

Dear Mr. Goodman:

On behalf of the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments and the Shoals Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the above referenced project. The proposed project is an alternative to the proposed railroad overpass in downtown Sheffield.

The MPO supports the proposed improvements to the existing railroad crossing in the Urban Area. These improvements are needed to alleviate the congestion and traffic delays caused by the existing grade crossings. The railroad relocation alternative appears to address the congestion and delay issues at these particular crossings.

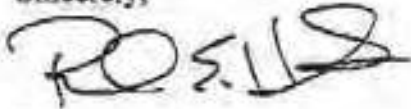
The MPO will support the preferred alternative with the least adverse impact to the surrounding community and to the urban area as a whole.

Colbert County does not have an adopted Land Use Plan that would address future growth areas in the county. The portion of the county that the proposed railroad relocation corridor and respective alignment are located, are in the urban boundary as identified by the MPO. The area is near the Colbert Industrial Park and located west of US 43 and south of US 72. This area is also in the proposed East - West Corridor Study for an interstate route from Memphis, TN to Atlanta, GA.

Population Growth is occurring south of the proposed project location. This area is expected to show a considerable increase in population following the 2000 census.

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding this information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. E. Holst", written in a cursive style.

Richard E. Holst
Associate Director



SHOALS CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

April 27, 2000

Mr. J. Dwight Goodman
Barge Waggoner Sumner & Cannon, Inc.
162 Third Avenue North
Nashville, TN 37201

Dear Mr. Goodman:

**Re: Environmental Assessment
Proposed Railroad Relocation
ALDOT Project RRS-8817(1)
Colbert County, Alabama**

The above referenced project is one that the Shoals Chamber of Commerce has actively pursued for at least the past five years.

Our five-year plan states a priority to "relocate the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks around Muscle Shoals, Sheffield and Tuscumbia so as to move traffic freely through these cities at all times."

The Shoals Chamber's 1999-2000 Public Policy Position Statement reads: "The Shoals Chamber of Commerce supports the relocation of Norfolk Southern's main rail lines around the central business districts of Muscle Shoals, Sheffield and Tuscumbia and requests your (Chamber members) support and leadership in searching for and securing funds to assist in accomplishing this objective."

Gentlemen, the Shoals Chamber of Commerce recognizes that having the current heavy railroad traffic through and near the downtown areas of Colbert County is a detriment to future economic growth of Colbert County. The relocation of the tracks would open up these entire areas for development and eliminate one of the major deterrents to future business growth.

512 S. Court Street
P.O. Box 1331
Florence, AL 35631-1331
(256) 764-4661
Fax (256) 766-9017

Fully Accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Mr. J. Dwight Goodman
April 27, 2000
Page 2

Additionally in January, 1999, the Chamber formed a "Railroad Relocation Committee" composed of county commissioners, city council persons and mayors, Chamber officers, representatives of the Alabama Department of Transportation, the Council of Local Governments and county engineers. This group is a standing committee to study and assist in programs to relocate the railroad. The purpose of this committee is to "determine the feasibility of Norfolk Southern Railroad relocating rail traffic around the towns of Sheffield, Muscle Shoals and Tuscumbia. The high volume of trains and the frequency of stops for switching along the tracks during the day create constant automobile and truck traffic delays within these cities. It has been determined that these delays have had a negative economic influence on Colbert County and its cities."

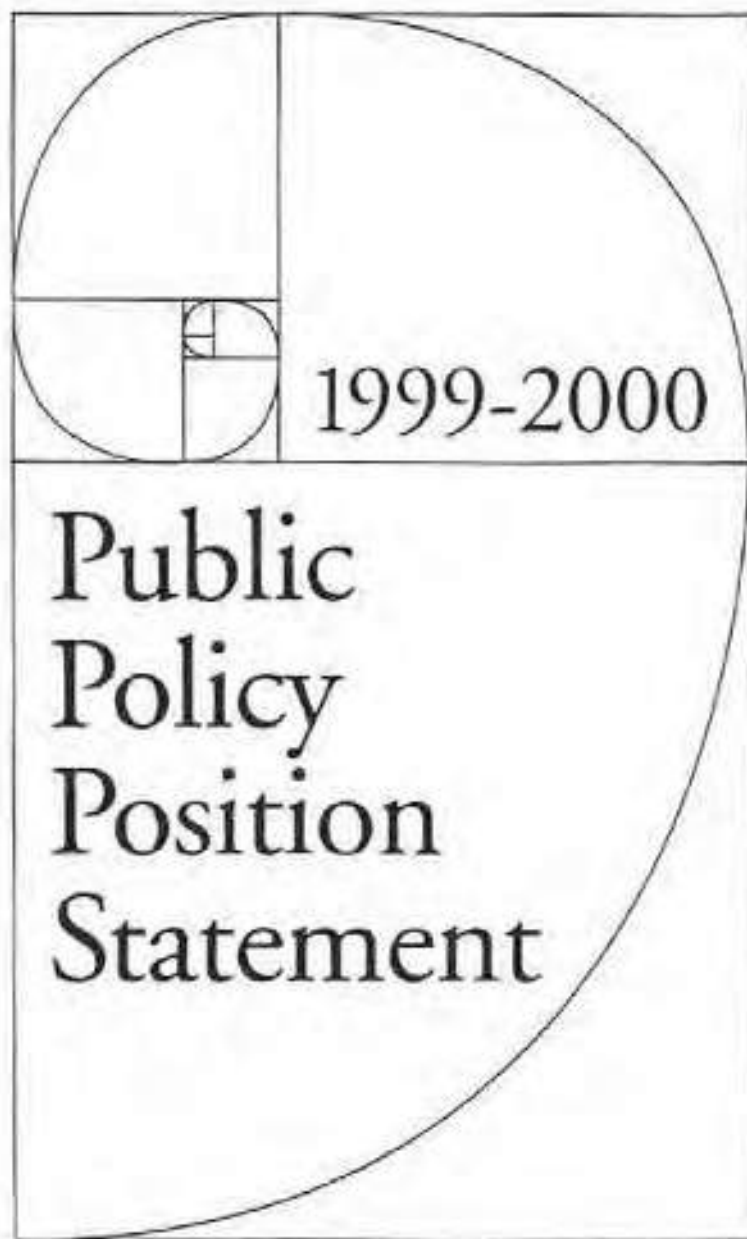
Mr. Goodman, the Chamber stands ready to assist with this relocation project in any way possible. If you need further information, please let us know.

Respectfully,



Stephen B. Holt
President

Enclosures



SHOALS
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

P.O. Box 1331 • Florence, AL 35631-1331 • 256-764-4661 • FAX 256-766-9017

It offers two paved and lighted runways, with the largest being 93' by 150'. Three instrument approaches are available: Runway 11: VOR/DME & GPS (500-10), Runway 29: ILS 1/2, VOR & GPS (500-1/2).

Commercial service is provided by Northwest Airlink to Memphis.

The Shoals Chamber of Commerce supports the Northwest Alabama Regional Airport and requests your support and leadership in securing any funding and assistance available through the Federal Aviation Administration or any other sources to develop and maintain this airport to the greatest extent possible for commercial and general aviation. The Chamber maintains specific interests in the most modern and accurate weather monitoring available. Our unique geographic location necessitates on-site weather observation and we believe a flight service center through the FAA is no less important for our airport than any other location in the country.

ISSUE: *Norfolk Southern Railway Line Relocation*

Norfolk Southern Railway has main rail lines that intersect the cities of Muscle Shoals, Sheffield and Tuscumbia. Norfolk Southern is a high traffic carrier with a massive rail switching yard located in Muscle Shoals.

Norfolk Southern is one of our larger employers, and we sincerely appreciate their investment here. Their purchase of ConRail and continued growth in rail traffic may substantially increase rail traffic through the Shoals. The high volume of trains and the frequency of stops for switching along their tracks during the day creates constant automobile and truck traffic delays within these cities.

The Shoals Chamber of Commerce supports the relocation of Norfolk Southern's main rail lines around the central business districts of Muscle Shoals, Sheffield and Tuscumbia and requests your support and leadership in searching for and securing funds to assist in accomplishing this objective.

ISSUE: *Norfolk Southern Intermodal Facility*

Norfolk Southern Railway operates one of the top three most technologically advanced rail switching yards in the country at Muscle Shoals. Twenty-five hundred rail cars are processed daily through the yard, seven days per week. Rail cars come into this yard in order to be built into a train for long hauls throughout the country.

Currently our local manufacturers that ship via Norfolk Southern's intermodal (piggy-back) service must deliver truck trailers to an intermodal facility in Huntsville. It is then brought back by rail to Muscle Shoals to be built into a train. An intermodal facility in the Shoals could save our businesses at least 24 hours, and perhaps as much as 48 hours in delivery time.

The Shoals Chamber of Commerce supports the development of an intermodal truck/rail facility in the Shoals and requests your support and leadership in searching for and securing funds to assist in accomplishing this objective.

ISSUE: *Higher Education*

Business standards, based upon global competition and technological advancements, mandate citizens of the 21st century continue their education beyond high school. The Shoals is home to two excellent institutions of higher learning: the University of North Alabama and Northwest-Shoals Community College. Together, they provide educational resources for lifelong learning, career growth, and skill development-enhancing opportunities for success in the Shoals.

The Shoals Chamber of Commerce supports funding for the University of North Alabama and Northwest-Shoals Community College at levels necessary to provide business and industry a work force capable of competing in the world economy and knowledgeable citizens equipped to successfully respond to the forces of change in society.

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT



Jim Folsom
Governor

James W. Warr, Director

September 21, 1994

Mailing Address:

17 BOX 301463
MONTGOMERY AL
36130-1463

Mr. Bill Carwile
State of Alabama
Department of Transportation
1409 Coliseum Boulevard
Montgomery, AL 36130

Physical Address:

51 Cong. W. L.
Dickinson Drive
Montgomery, AL
36105-2608

Dear Mr. Carwile:

(205) 271-7700
FAX 270-5612

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management has received proposals for improvement and modification to the county road system of Alabama. The projects are:

Project RRS-8817(1)
R.R. Overpass, Montgomery Avenue in Sheffield
Colbert County

Field Offices:

110 Vulcan Road
Birmingham, AL
35209-4702
(205) 342-6168
FAX 941-1603

The Department has made a review based on the information provided. Air and water quality impacts were not specifically addressed. We are assuming that "Best Management Practices" are used to prevent erosion and avoid siltation of streams during construction of the referenced project. "Best Management Practices" consist of the use of silt fences or hay bales across drainage courses and grassing or rip rap to prevent erosion. Large projects may require the use of settling basins with filter dikes to prevent excessive instream turbidity and stream siltation.

200 West Street
P.O. Box 853
Decatur, AL
35602-0953
(205) 353-1713
FAX 340-9359

The proposed project is not expected to cause exceedances of National Ambient Air Quality Standards; therefore, the proposals are consistent with our State Implementation Plan for air quality.

204 Perimeter Road
Mobile, AL
36615-1131
(205) 450-3400
FAX 479-2593

We hope this letter satisfies the intent of the Federal Statutes requiring intergovernmental review and coordination. If additional information is needed, please contact this office.

Sincerely,

James W. Warr
Director

Copy to:

- JWW/ME/em
- Div. Eng.
- Location
- Utilities
- ETS
- BWSC

SEP 23 1994
1 02 PM '94
STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT



STATE OF ALABAMA
 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
 GORDON PERSONS BUILDING

Bill G
Joe
 11-19-94

P.O. Box 302101
 Montgomery AL 36130-2101

WAYNE TEAGUE
 STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION
 "PROMOTING EXCELLENCE IN ALABAMA'S SCHOOLS"
 September 22, 1994

50 N. Ripley St.
 Montgomery AL 36104-3630

Mr. Bill G. Carwile, Coordinator
 Environmental Technical Section
 Alabama Department of Transportation
 1409 Coliseum Boulevard
 Montgomery, AL 36130-3050

Dear Mr. Carwile,

Re: Project RRS-8817(1)
 Colbert County

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of September 13, 1994, in regard to a proposal to construct an overpass along Montgomery Avenue where it now intersects with the railroad tracks between 1st Street and Ashe Street. The purpose of the project is to allow both train and vehicular traffic to flow at the same time.

Since final plans have not been made for the project, it is difficult, if not impossible, to make recommendations at this time other than to request that you work closely with the Superintendents and Boards of Education in Colbert County and Sheffield City.

We are all interested in developing a more safe and efficient transportation system for the State of Alabama. You and your staff are to be commended for the progress that has been made. At the same time, it is our duty and responsibility to work with officials of education in providing the best possible learning environment for the boys and girls of Alabama.

- Copy to:
- 240* Div. Eng.
 - Location
 - Utilities
 - ETS
 - BWSC*

Sincerely,

Wayne Teague
 Wayne Teague
 State Superintendent of Education

- cc: ~~Mr. Roger L'Don Moore, Superintendent, Colbert County~~
~~Dr. Roger C. Tomberlin, Superintendent, Sheffield City~~
 Mr. Charles W. Crews
 Mr. R. E. Higginbotham

REC
SEP 23 1994



Joey

Tusculumbia City Schools

Excelling Academically, Aesthetically, and Athletically

James R. Berry, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Foyce E. Massey, MBA
Asst. Superintendent

Sandra S. Carpenter, MBA, CMA
Business Manager

300 East Seventh Street
Tusculumbia, Alabama 35674

(205) 369-2900

Board of Education
C. Michael Cowley, D.D.S.

President

Euel Cushtat, Ph.D.

Vice-President

Vicki T. Estis

Annie P. Mullins

William T. Johnson, Jr.

September 19, 1994

Mr. Bill G. Carwile, Coordinator
Environmental Technical Section
Alabama Department of Transportation
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-3050

RE: Project: BRS-8817(1)
S.R. Overpass, Montgomery Avenue in Sheffield
Colbert County

Dear Mr. Carwile:

In response to your letter dated September 13, regarding the project listed above, this project shall have little or no affect on the Tusculumbia City Schools. However, I would like to add that an overpass along Montgomery Avenue in Sheffield will be an asset to the community as well as the entire Shoals area due to the amount of traffic.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to comment on the proposed overpass.

Sincerely,

James R. Berry
James R. Berry, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Copy to: 2nd Div. Eng.
 Location
 Utilities
 ETS
 BWSC

RECEIVED
SEP 19 1994
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MONTGOMERY, ALA



U. S. Department
of Transportation

Federal Aviation
Administration

12-11-94
See
Airports District Office

120 North Hangar Dr., Suite B
Jackson, Mississippi 39208-2306

Telephone: (601) 965-4628
FAX: (601) 965-4632

September 16, 1994

Mr. Don T. Arkle, Chief
Design Bureau
Alabama Department of Transportation
1409 Coliseum Boulevard
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-3050
Attention: Mr. Bill G. Carwile



Project RRS-8817(1)
Railroad Overpass, Montgomery Avenue in
Sheffield, Colbert County, AL

Dear Mr. Carwile:

We have reviewed your proposal to construct an overpass along Montgomery Avenue where it currently intersects the railroad tracks between 1st and Ashe Streets in the City of Sheffield, Colbert County, AL, submitted via letter from your office dated September 13, 1994. In conducting a search of our database, the following coordinates were assumed:

1. The centroid coordinates for this location were assumed to be latitude 34° 45' 37", and longitude 87° 39' 26".

Using these coordinates, a search of our database indicated the following airports:

Airport	City	ST	Latitude	Longitude
Muscle Shoals Reg Apt.	Muscle Shoals	AL	34-44-42.8	87-36-36.7
Humana Hosp Shoals	Muscle Shoals	AL	34-44-46.0	87-40-35.0
Eliza Coffee Mem. Heliport	Florence	AL	34-47-38.0	87-41-00.0
Humana Hospital	Florence	AL	34-49-43.0	87-39-41.0
Wilson Creek Airport	Florence	AL	34-51-00.0	87-37-57.0

However, it is our determination that this construction proposal should have no adverse impact upon aeronautical activities at these locations.

Copy to: *ZND* Div. Eng.

Location

Utilities

ETS

BWSC



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
MOBILE DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 2288
MOBILE, ALABAMA 36628 0001

10/12/94
Joe
A
SEP 1994
RECEIVED
DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION
MOBILE DISTRICT

September 16, 1994

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

Regulatory Branch
Operations Division

Mr. Bill G. Carwile, Coordinator
Environmental Technical Section
Alabama Department of Transportation
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-3050

Dear Mr. Carwile:

This is in reference to your letter dated September 13, 1994, project RRS-8817(1), R.R. Overpass, Montgomery Avenue in Sheffield, Colbert County, Alabama.

The Sheffield area is within the regulatory boundaries of the Nashville District, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. Your request has been forwarded to that District for action.

If we can be of further assistance, please advise.

Sincerely,

Davis L. Findley
Davis L. Findley
Acting Chief, Regulatory Branch
Operations Division

Copy Furnished:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Attention: ORNOR-F
Post Office Box 1070
Nashville, Tennessee 37202-1070

Copy to: ZWO Div. Eng.
 Location
 Utilities
 ETS
 BWSC

David Moss



JIM FOLSON
GOVERNOR

ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-3050

G. H. ROBERTS
DIRECTOR

December 7, 1994

Barge, Waggoner, Sumner & Cannon
Post Office Box 279
Dothan, AL 36302

Subject: Project RRS-8817(1)
Railroad Overpass at Montgomery Ave.
and the Southern Railroad in Sheffield
Colbert County

Dear Sir:

Attached are responses from our early coordination efforts of September 13, 1994. Additional comments will be forwarded to you on a weekly basis.

Sincerely,

Don T. Arkie, Chief
Design Bureau

By:

Bill G. Carwile
Bill G. Carwile, Coordinator
Environmental Technical Section

JPB/cm

cc: Mr. Robert Portera
Design File
ETS File



JIM FOLSOM
GOVERNOR

ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-3050

G. M. ROBERTS
DIRECTOR

June 17, 1994

Mr. Don T. Arkie
Chief, Design Bureau
OFFICE

Re: Project RRS-8817(1)
Railroad Overpass at Montgomery Ave.
And the Southern Railroad in Sheffield
Colbert County

Dear Sir:

Attached is a geohydrologic report describing the conditions along Project RRS-8817(1) in Colbert County.

In summary, no significant geologic problems related to highway construction or maintenance are apparent along the project. However, the sinkhole susceptibility map for Colbert County indicates that the project is located in an area that is susceptible to sinkhole development, although none are known to have developed in the immediate vicinity of the project. No hydrologic problems except those associated with flooding are apparent.

This report is for your use in evaluating the proposed project.

Sincerely yours,

William J. Hartzog
Materials and Tests Engineer

By: Stanley Armstrong
Stanley Armstrong
Assistant Materials and Tests Engineer

SA:WS
Attachment

cc: Mr. Bill Carwile ✓
Mr. Robert E. Portera
Mr. E. S. Shoemaker
Project File
File (2)

Copy to: RND Div. Eng.

Location

Utilities

ETS

BWSC



United States Department of the Interior

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Water Resources Division

P.O. Box 210447

Montgomery, Alabama 36121-0447

June 14, 1994

Refer to Project Nos:
Alabama Department of Transportation RRS-8817(1)
WRD AL-02, Colbert County

Mr. W.J. Hartzog
Materials and Tests Engineer
Alabama Department of Transportation
Montgomery, Alabama 36130

Dear Mr. Hartzog:

This report summarizes geologic and hydrologic conditions in the vicinity of Project RRS-8817(1) in Colbert County. The work planned for the project is a railroad overpass at Montgomery Avenue and the Southern Railroad in the city of Sheffield.

The project is in the Tennessee Valley district of the Highland Rim physiographic section (Sapp, C.D., and Emplainscourt, J., 1975, Physiographic regions of Alabama: Alabama Geological Survey Map 169). The Tennessee Valley district is a plateau of moderate relief with elevations ranging from 600 to 800 feet. The terrain along the project is hilly. The land surface in the vicinity of the project ranges from 450 to 550 feet above the National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929 (NGVD).

The project is underlain by the Tuscumbia Limestone of Mississippian age (see fig. 1). The Tuscumbia Limestone underlies almost all of Colbert County. It crops out over large areas in northern parts of the county. Exposures are common along the bluffs overlooking the Tennessee River and along the valleys of the larger tributaries. The Tuscumbia consists of light-gray to gray medium-bedded hard, dense finely crystalline limestone. It contains considerable quantities of chert as nodules and thick bands. The chert ranges from very light gray to black. Near Tuscumbia the formation contains a few very thin lenticular beds of greenish-gray shale. The maximum thickness of the Tuscumbia is probably about 200 feet in the southern part of the county. However, in most parts of the county the formation has been deeply weathered to clay, and less than 100 feet of limestone remains (Harris, M.E., Moore, G.K., and West, L.R., 1963, Geology and Ground-Water Resources of Colbert County, Alabama: Alabama Geological Survey County Report 10).

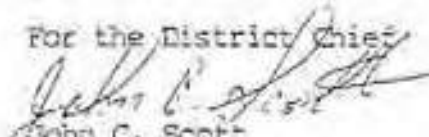
Records of wells and springs for Colbert County indicate that the water table in the vicinity of the project is from 10 to 70 feet below the land surface (Harris and others, 1963).

According to a sinkhole susceptibility map for Colbert County, prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey in cooperation with the Alabama Highway Department, the project is located in an area susceptible to the development of sinkholes or land subsidence. However, no sinkholes were observed in the immediate vicinity of the project.

Please advise if additional geologic or hydrologic information is needed for this project.

Sincerely Yours,

For the District Chief


John C. Scott
Hydrologist

Enclosure



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

1409 Coliseum Boulevard, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-3050



Don Siegelman
Governor

G. M. Roberts
Transportation Director

February 29, 2000

«Title»«FirstName»«LastName»
«JobTitle»
«Company»
«Address1»
«Address2»
«City» «State» «PostalCode»

RE: Project: RRS-8817(1)
Railroad Relocation Corridor Study
Colbert County, Alabama

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Alabama Department of Transportation is studying a proposal to relocate a section of railroad from the heavily urbanized areas of Tuscumbia, Sheffield, and Muscle Shoals, Alabama to an area south of Tuscumbia.

The purpose of this project is to alleviate vehicular traffic congestion, eliminate a major railroad fueling and switching area located in downtown Sheffield, and to improve vehicular and pedestrian access in Sheffield, Tuscumbia, and Muscle Shoals.

The Alabama Department of Transportation is investigating all aspects of this proposal in order to determine its feasibility. We are very much interested in the views of public officials and agencies concerning this proposed highway facility. The early identification of effects a highway project may have on an area is needed to assure proper planning.

Also, we are interested in your review of this proposal so that we may satisfy the intent of certain Federal Statute (Section 204 of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 and Section 401 of the Intergovernmental Review Act of 1968). Although Federal-Aid Highway Planning, Research, and Construction projects have not been selected for review under Alabama's "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs" (Executive Order 12372) process, we must still meet these other requirements. Therefore, your review is requested.

February 29, 2000
Page 2

It would be appreciated if you would inform us of any comments or useful information that you might have regarding the feasibility of this proposal and identify any social, economic or environmental effects relative to the proposal. The comments will be taken under consideration in the development of this project and the appropriate environmental document.

Sincerely,

Don T. Arkle, Chief
Design Bureau

By: 
Alfredo Acosta, Coordinator
Environmental Technical Section

JPB/AA/mbw

C: ETS File

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

RAILROAD RELOCATION CORRIDOR STUDY PROJECT RRS-8817(1) COLBERT COUNTY, ALABAMA

Project No. RRS-8817(1) includes a proposal to relocate a section of railroad from heavily urbanized areas of Tuscumbia, Sheffield, and Muscle Shoals, Alabama to an area south of Tuscumbia. The purpose of the project is to alleviate vehicular traffic congestion, improve vehicular and pedestrian access, and improve safety in Sheffield, Tuscumbia, and Muscle Shoals, Alabama. The project will also eliminate a major railroad fueling and switching area located in downtown Sheffield.

As shown on the attached diagrams, the proposed railroad alignment will depart the existing Norfolk-Southern Railroad line west of Tuscumbia; turn southeast toward Frankfort Road; then eastward, paralleling an electrical transmission line right-of-way to a point beyond Jackson Highway; then south-southeasterly, crossing the Lee/Jackson Highway; converging with the Norfolk-Southern Rail line south of Muscle Shoals. The new section of railroad will be approximately six miles (9.6 kilometers) in length. The width of the right-of-way to be acquired will vary from 100 feet (45.7 meters) to 200 feet (60.9 meters). All new public road crossings will be grade-separated.

This proposed alignment includes two alternatives. The first alternative is a single-track railroad for the entire length of the project. The second alternative is on the same alignment, but includes a 9,000 foot (2,743 meter) section of double-line track.

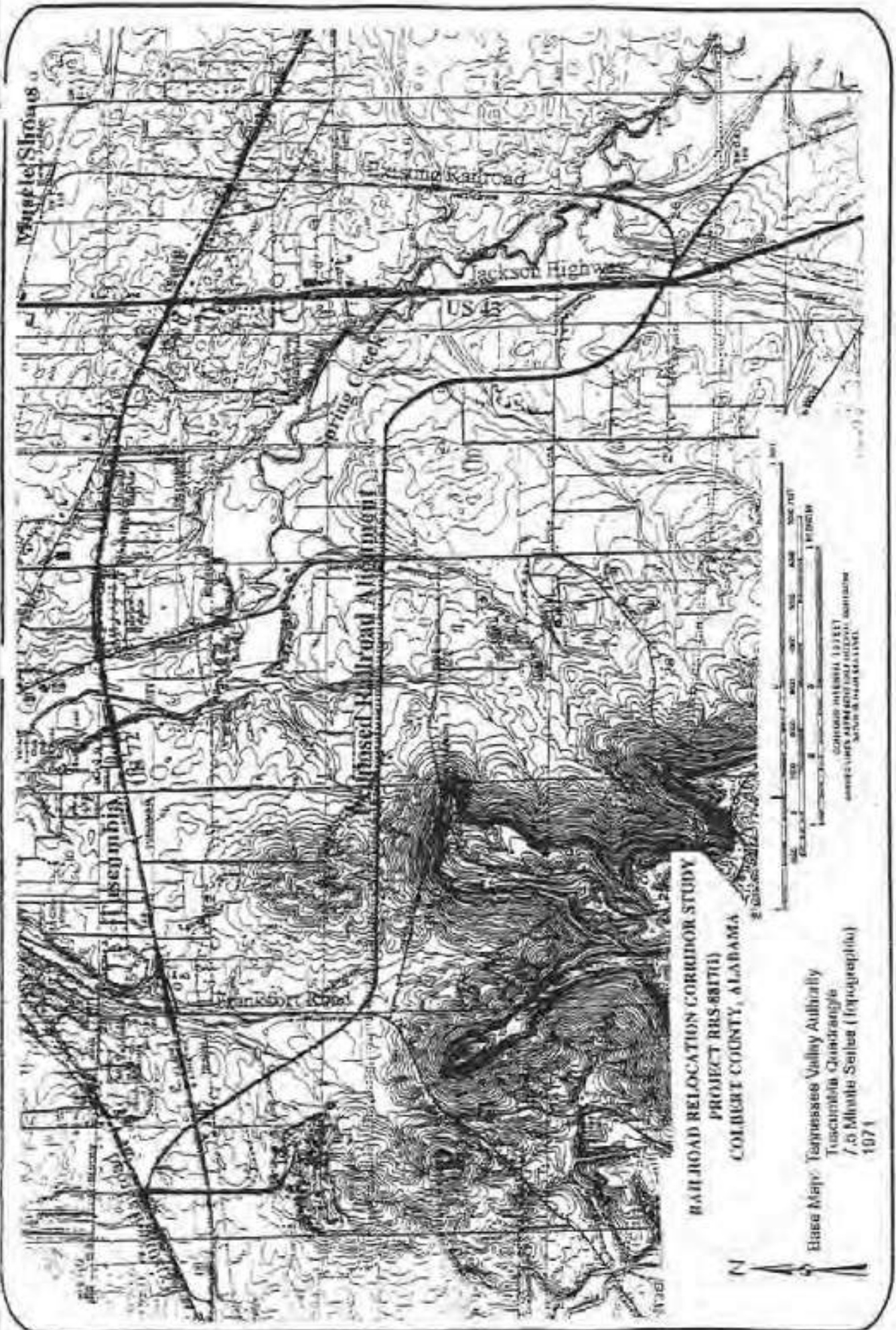


Figure 1

PROJECT SKETCH
Railroad Relocation Corridor Study
 Tusculumba, Alabama



GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF ALABAMA

DONALD F. OLTZ
State Geologist



420 Hackberry Lane
P.O. Box 869999
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35486-6999
Phone (205) 349-2852
Fax (205) 349-2861
www.gsa.state.al.us

April 3, 2000

Mr. Dwight Goodman
Barge Waggoner Sumner & Cannon, Inc.
162 Third Ave. North
Nashville, TN 37201

Dear Mr. Goodman:

I am replying to your letter of March 31, 2000 to Dr. Donald F. Oltz, regarding mineral resources in the area of the proposed railroad relocation in Tuscumbia, Alabama. The geology and mineral resources of the proposed railroad alignment is shown on Alabama Geological Survey Quadrangle Series Map 6, "Geology and mineral resources of the Tuscumbia Quadrangle, Alabama," by M. W. Szabo, 1975. The only identified mineral resource in the area of your project is Tuscumbia Limestone which is suitable for crushed stone. An active quarry is located west of the proposed railroad alignment as shown on your figure 1.

Our new mailing address is P. O. Box 869999, Tuscaloosa, AL 35486-6999. If you desire additional information, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

ECONOMIC GEOLOGY DIVISION

Lewis S. Dean
Geologist



STATE OF ALABAMA
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
468 SOUTH PERRY STREET
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-0900

Handwritten initials

LEE H. WARNER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TEL: 204-242-3184
FAX: 204-240-3477

March 30, 2000

Alfredo Acoff
Alabama DOT
1409 Coliseum Boulevard
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-3050



Re: AHC 00-0798
DOT RRS-8817(1)
Railroad Relocation Corridor Study
Colbert County, Alabama

Dear Ms. Acoff:

Upon review of the information forwarded by your office, the Alabama Historical Commission has determined that should this project be given favorable consideration, further consultation with our office will be required. The area around Tuscumbia is known to have several dozen archaeological sites and several historic properties so a cultural resource assessment would be necessary. Furthermore, as Tuscumbia is a Certified Local Government, we would request that the community be consulted regarding cultural resources.

We appreciate your efforts on this project. Should you have any questions or comments, please contact Stacey Hathorn or Greg Rhinehart of our office and include the AHC tracking number referenced above.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Thomas O. Maher

Thomas O. Maher, Ph.D
State Archaeologist

for: Elizabeth Ann Brown
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

EAB/TOM/SGH/JBS/GCR

Copy to: 2nd Div. Eng.
 Location
 Utilities
 BWSC
 ETS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

*See
for it*

Southeast Regional Office
9721 Executive Center Drive North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33702

March 14, 2000

Mr. Don T. Arkle, Chief
Design Bureau
Alabama Department of Transportation
1409 Coliseum Boulevard
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-3050

Dear Mr. Arkle:

SUBJECT: Project: RRS-8817(1)
Railroad Relocation Corridor Study
Colbert County
Dated: February 29, 2000



The National Marine Fisheries Service has reviewed the information contained in the above referenced subject. Based upon our review of the available information, we anticipate that any adverse impacts on marine and anadromous fishery resources, for which we are responsible, would be minimal.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Jennifer Robinson of our Panama City, Florida Office at 850/234-5061.

Sincerely,

W. Mark Thomas
Andrew Mager, Jr.
Assistant Regional Administrator
Habitat Conservation Division

Copy to: 2nd Div. Eng.
✓ Location
✓ Utilities
✓ BWSC
✓ ETS





COLBERT COUNTY COMMISSION
 COLBERT COUNTY, ALABAMA
 TUSCUMBIA, ALABAMA 35674
 PHONE (205) 386-8500
 FAX (205) 386-8510

MEMBERS
 CHARLES L. BEARD, JR. (Chuck), DIST. 1
 THOMAS PENNINGTON, DIST. 2
 CHARLES E. DOUTHET, DIST. 3
 EMMETT JINMAR, DIST. 4
 JAMES C. BINGHAM, DIST. 5
 JAMES R. HARRELL, DIST. 6

March 20, 2000



Copy to: 2nd Div. Eng.
 Location
 Utilities
 BWSC
 ETS

Mr. Don T. Arkle, Chief Design Bureau
 Alabama Department of Transportation
 1409 Coliseum Boulevard
 Montgomery, Alabama 36130-3050

RE: Project: RRS-8317(1)

Dear Mr. Arkle:

In response to your request for comments concerning the proposed relocation of the main railroad lines through Sheffield, Tuscumbia, and Muscle Shoals, Alabama, I feel very strongly that this project should be carried to completion.

As a life-long resident of the area I have been frustrated many times by having to wait on trains blocking the crossings. I am told that Norfolk Southern has some eighteen trains per day coming through these crossings, many of them containing one hundred fifty or more cars. With the pending CSX merger there could be even more trains each day.

Several years ago the City of Sheffield had to build a second fire station because of the problem. More than likely with the relocation they could close the smaller station, thus saving operating expenses.

Since Northwest Shoals Community has grown and closed its south campus, the congestion at the Avalon Avenue crossing has reached the point that it has created a real safety problem, to say nothing of the interruption of classes when the trains pass right next-door.

We have two hospitals within less than one mile of each other separated by the railroad. They must maintain separate ambulance services and emergency rooms. Relocation could make it possible for them to work together in both of these areas.

I believe that the group opposing the relocation is using exaggerated claims in presenting their reasons for wanting the project stopped. This is clearly a case where the needs of the overwhelming majority should be considered. The 30,000+ people of the three cities need relief. I urge you to continue this project to fruition.

Sincerely,

Charles L. Beard, Jr.

Charles L. Beard, Jr.,
 Commissioner District One





THE EASTERN BAND OF THE CHEROKEE NATION

Cultural Resources: Tribal Historic Preservation Office

P.O. Box 455

Cherokee, North Carolina 28719

(828) 497-2822 / FAX (828) 497-2952

Monday, March 13, 2000

Alfredo Acoff, Coordinator
Alabama DOT
1409 Coliseum Blvd.
Montgomery, AL 36130-3050



Re: letter dated 2/29/00

Project Location: Colbert County, AL

Proposed Project: RRS-8817(1), Railroad Relocation Corridor Study

We received your letter for the above project from the Alabama DOT and our comments are noted below.

Additional information is needed (maps, photographs, other).

Copy of archaeological survey with concerns.

No comment.

We have reviewed the request and have no comment.

Sincerely

James Bird

James Bird
Cultural Resource Mgr. & THPO

Copy to: 2nd Div. Eng.
 Location
 Utilities
 BWSC
 FTS

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

4511 US Hwy 319
Denair AL
36033

Phone:
1-256-353-6632

1-256-355-8285



March 14, 2000

Alfredo Acoff
Environmental Technical Section
Alabama Department of Transportation
1409 Coliseum Boulevard
Montgomery, AL 36130-3050

RE: Project: RSS-8817(1)
Colbert County, AL

Copy to:

<u>2nd</u>	Div. Eng.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Location
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Utilities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>BWSEC</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>E.T.S.</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Dear Sir:

Our main concerns on this project are the possible loss of wetlands, conversion of prime farmland, and possible presence of threatened or endangered species. Also, erosion and sediment control measures should be implemented and maintained during the construction phase to protect land, water, and related resources. Plans for construction should include sediment basins or traps and other erosion control practices, including coverage of bare soil as soon as possible by temporary and permanent vegetation and structures.

If we can be of further assistance on this project, please feel free to contact Kathy Gotcher District Conservationist in Tuscumbia, at 256-383-4323, extension 3, or me at 256-353-6146.

Sincerely,

Bobby Fox
Bobby Fox
Resource Soil Scientist

cc
Kathy Gotcher District Conservationist, Birmingham, AL
file

ADEM

To: A cft JCS



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Post Office Box 301463 • 1400 Coliseum Blvd. 36110-2163
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-1463
WWW.ADEM.STATE.AL.US
(334) 271-7700

JAMES W. WARR
Director

DON SIEGELMAN
Governor

April 4, 2000

DON ARKLE
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
1409 COLISEUM BOULEVARD
MONTGOMERY AL 36130-3050

RE: Project RRS-8817(1)
Railroad Relocation Corridor Study
Colbert Counties



Facsimile: (334)
Administration: 271-7300
Air: 279-2044
Land: 279-3260
Water: 279-3261
Groundwater: 279-5631
Field Operations: 272-8131
Laboratory: 277-6718

Dear Mr. Arkle:

We have received and evaluated the letter you sent regarding the above-referenced project. The following is a brief description of our construction stormwater regulations so that you may determine your compliance status regarding this project.

State law and Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) regulations require that appropriate, effective Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the control of pollutants in stormwater run-off be fully implemented and maintained for all construction and land disturbance activities regardless of permit status or size of the disturbance to prevent/minimize discharges of sediment and other pollutants to waters of the State of Alabama.

A "water of the state" is broadly defined as any water, surface (perennial or intermittent creek, lake, etc.) or underground, not entirely contained on one individual's property. This includes any waterway that crosses a property line. Discharges of pollutants resulting from failure to implement effective BMPs are considered unpermitted discharges to state waters.

Phase I of the federal stormwater regulations (40 CFR Parts 122, 123, & 124) effective October 1, 1992, require an operator to apply for and obtain a permit from ADEM for construction and land disturbance activities and associated areas that exceed five acres or that are part of a larger common plan of development or sale that may eventually exceed five acres. We realize that, according to your letter, the disturbed area will be greater than five acres. A permit application package is enclosed for your convenience.

Phase II of the federal stormwater regulations are currently under development and may require smaller construction and land disturbance sites to obtain a permit in the future.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact me at (334) 394-4325.

Sincerely,

Chris H. Jung
Permits/Compliance Unit
Mining & Nonpoint Source Section
Field Operations Division

*If this is a response or
or is it Charlie Fitch's
letter
JCS*

Copy to: 2nd Div. Eng.
 Location
 Mining
 BWSC
 ETS



**APPENDIX A
DESIGN CRITERIA**

PRELIMINARY DESIGN CRITERIA

Sheffield Railroad Relocation Project
West of Tuscumbia to the East of U.S. 43
Project # RRS-8817(1)

The preliminary design criteria for this project are based on discussions between the Alabama Department of Transportation and Norfolk Southern Railroad, and the "Norfolk Southern Guideline For Design of Grade Separation Structures"

The specific criteria selections are as follows:

<u>Minimum Tangent Between Reverse Curves</u>	220 feet
<u>Maximum Grade</u>	1%
<u>Allowable Rate of Change for Vertical Curves:</u>	$R_{sup} = 0.05$ $R_{crest} = 0.10$
<u>Maximum Speed</u>	50 MPH
<u>Maximum Superelevation</u>	4 inches
<u>Maximum Degree of Curve</u>	3° 30'
<u>Minimum Radius</u>	1,637.28 feet
<u>Spiral Length</u>	248 feet
<u>Right of Way Requirements</u>	20 feet outside the cut and fill slope



Norfolk Southern Corporation
7208 Old Rutledge Pike
Post Office Box 14820
Knoxville, Tennessee 37914-1820

Paul E. Gibson, Jr.
Superintendent
Tennessee Division
865/521-1400

September 27, 2000

Mr. Andrew Murr, P. E.
Barge Waggoner Sumner & Cannon
Two Perimeter Park South
Suite 230 East
Birmingham, AL 35243

Re: Alabama Department of Transportation
Rail Line Relocation
Sheffield, Alabama

Dear Mr. Murr:

Reference your letter dated July 20, 2000, file number 17079-31,
inquiring about requirements for a 9000-foot line tangent to the main line.

This letter is to advise you that Norfolk Southern does require an
additional sidetrack of approximately 9000-feet long adjacent to our main
line.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul E. Gibson, Jr." with a stylized, cursive script.

Paul E. Gibson, Jr.

Bjh

Cy
D. W. Carter

RECEIVED
BARGE, WAGGONER, SUMNER, CANNON

OCT 2 2000

USAM OFFICE

**APPENDIX B
RELOCATION STUDY**



BOB SIEGELMAN
GOVERNOR

ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

SECOND DIVISION
OFFICE OF DIVISION ENGINEER
285 HIGHWAY 20 EAST
P.O. BOX 495
TUSCUMBIA, ALABAMA 35674
Telephone: (256) 389-1400

G.M. ROBERTS
TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR

October 24, 2000

17079-31
file 7.05

RECEIVED
BARGE, WAGGONER, SUMNER, CANNON

OCT 26 2000

BYHAM OFFICE

Barge, Waggoner, Sumner & Cannon
2905 Westcorp Boulevard
Suite 220 Westcorp Center
Huntsville, Alabama 35805

Dear Mr. Holladay:

Re: Project No. RRS-8817(1)
Colbert County
Railroad Relocation Corridor Study

Attached is our Form ROW-RA-1 and relocation study on the subject project.

Yours very truly,

James D. Brown
James D. Brown
Division Engineer

JDB/RLS
Attachments
pc: File

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
PRELIMINARY PROJECT RELOCATION ANALYSIS

(To be prepared prior to Corridor Public Hearing)

Project No. RRS-8817(1) County: Colbert
Description Railroad Relocation Corridor Study Alternate No. N/A

DISPLACEMENT AND REPLACEMENT HOUSING INVENTORY ESTIMATE

Type of Displacees	ESTIMATED NUMBER DISPLACED			INCOME LEVEL					
	Owners	Tenants	Total	Minority		*0-15	15-30	30-50	Over 50
				Own.	Ten.				
Individuals and Families	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Businesses	1								
Farms									
Non-Profit Organizations									
Signs	3								

OWNERS DISPLACED DWELLINGS	VALUE OF DWELLING				
	*0-40	40-60	60-80	80-100	Over 100
1 - 3 BEDROOMS	0	0	0	0	0
4 - OVER BEDROOMS	0	0	0	0	1
AVAILABLE DWELLINGS					
1 - 3 BEDROOMS					
4 - OVER BEDROOMS					

TENANTS DISPLACED UNITS	MONTHLY RENTAL RATE				
	\$0-150	\$151-300	\$301-400	\$401-500	\$501 +
1 - 3 BEDROOMS					
4 - OVER BEDROOMS					
AVAILABLE UNITS					
1 - 3 BEDROOMS					
4 - OVER BEDROOMS					

*DSS dwellings currently available.
Items numbered 1 through 7 on the back of this form must be answered and explained. Number the corresponding responses and attach additional pages as needed.

I certify that the above is a realistic estimate.

Date: October 24, 2000

Signed: *Rickey L. Smith*

Title: Right of Way Specialist

Submit in duplicate to Bureau of Right of Way)

Attached: Narrative Explanations

*Denotes Thousands

*DSS dwellings currently available.

1. Our studies reveal one family will be displaced as a result of the project. There are no minorities being displaced. The income range of the displacee appears to be in the upper middle class. There are three signs that will require relocation.
2. Our studies indicate an abundant supply of 4 and 5 bedroom houses in the area valued in excess of the \$100,000 price range.
3. It is our opinion the project will have no major disruptive effect on the community.
4. There is an adequate supply of housing for the family being displaced by the project. Should last resort housing be necessary, our relocation personnel will work with local realtors and local and Federal agencies to find suitable comparable housing that the displacee can afford.
5. There is one business, a sawmill, being affected by the project. There is ample property available in the immediate area and from all appearances this business may have excess land suitable for continuing their operation in their present location.
6. Discussions with local officials, citizens and business leaders indicated a favorable reaction to the project and it is felt the project will have a positive impact on the community.
7. The acquisition and relocation program will be conducted in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Policies Act of 1970, as amended by the Surface Transportation & Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987, and (2) relocation resources are available to all residential and business relocates without discrimination.

APPENDIX C
FPPA AD 1006 FORM



17079-31
7.08

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

4511 US Hwy 315
Tuscul AL
36083



May 1, 2000

J. Dwight Goodman
Barge, Waggoner, Sumner & Cannon, Inc.
162 Third Avenue North
Nashville, TN 37201

RE: Proposed Railroad Relocation
ALDOT Project RRS-8817(1)
Colbert County, Alabama

Dear Mr. Goodman:

Enclosed in the completed AD-1006 on the above project:

Erosion and sediment control measures should be implemented and maintained during the construction phase to protect land, water, and related resources. Plans for construction should include sediment basins or traps and other erosion control practices, including coverage of bare soil as soon as possible by temporary and permanent vegetation and structures

If we can be of further assistance on this project, please feel free to contact, Kathy Gotcher, District Conservationist, 1700 Neil Morris Road, Tuscumbia, AL, 35674, phone 256-383-4323 extension 3, or me at 256-353-6146.

Sincerely,

Bobby Fox
Bobby Fox
Resource Soil Scientist

enclosure



FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING

PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency)		Date Of Land Evaluation Request 4/25/00			
Name Of Project Railroad Relocation - ALDOT Project RRS-6617(1)		Federal Agency Involved Alabama Department of Transportation ALDC			
Proposed Land Use Railroad		County And State Colbert, AL			
PART II (To be completed by NRCS)		Date Request Received By NRCS 4/26/00			
Does the site contain prime, unique, statewide or local important farmland? <i>(If no, the FPPA does not apply - do not complete additional parts of this form).</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Acres Irrigated	Average Farm Size
Major Crop(s) [Cotton], Soybeans, Corn		Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction Acres: 191,984 % 51		Amount Of Farmland As Defined In FPPA Acres: 106,156 % 57	
Name Of Land Evaluation System Used LESA		Name Of Local Site Assessment System N/A		Date Land Evaluation Returned By NRCS 5/2/00	
PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)		Alternative Site Rating			
		Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly		70.0			
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly					
C. Total Acres In Site		70.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information					
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland		48.0			
B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland		0.0			
C. Percentage Of Farmland In County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted		0.04			
D. Percentage Of Farmland In Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value		37.5			
PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Criterion Relative Value Of Farmland To Be Converted (Scale of 0 to 100 Points)		89	0	0	0
PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency) Site Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 656.5(b))		Maximum Points			
1. Area In Nonurban Use		7			
2. Perimeter In Nonurban Use		6			
3. Percent Of Site Being Farmed		12			
4. Protection Provided By State And Local Government		0			
5. Distance From Urban Builtup Area		5			
6. Distance To Urban Support Services		4			
7. Size Of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average		10			
8. Creation Of Nonfarmable Farmland		0			
9. Availability Of Farm Support Services		5			
10. On-Farm Investments		0			
11. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services		2			
12. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use		0			
TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS		160	51	0	0
PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)					
Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)		100	69	0	0
Total Site Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment)		160	51	0	0
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)		260	120	0	0
Site Selected:		Date Of Selection:		Was A Local Site Assessment Used? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Reason For Selection:					

LOCATION RISK ASSESSMENT RECORD
FOR
LOCATION OF FLOODPLAIN ENCROACHMENT

Date: January 29, 2001

PROJECT NO. RRS-8817(i)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Norfolk Southern Railroad Relocation

PREPARED BY: Barge Waggoner Sumner + Cannon, Inc.

NFIP PARTICIPATION
(Fill In)

ENCROACHMENT DETERMINATION:
(Date of Map)

County Colbert PARTICIPATING Yes
NON-PARTICIPATING _____
CITY _____ PARTICIPATING _____
NON-PARTICIPATING _____

FIRM _____ FIRM _____
FIRM 1981 HUD STUDY _____

OTHER SOURCES:

U.S.G.S. TOPO MAPPING FLOOD PRONE AREA MAP N/A

PLAN-PROFILE SHEET N/A

EXISTING STRUCTURE(S): (FILL IN)

LENGTH: _____
P.G.: _____
SKEW: _____
CENTERLINE ELEV.: _____

<u>PROJECT SITE EVALUATION</u>	<u>ALTERNATIVE NO.</u>	<u>YES OR NO</u>
LONGITUDINAL ENCROACHMENT?		<u>No</u>
SIGNIFICANT ENCROACHMENT?		<u>No</u>
ALTERNATIVES TO SIGNIFICANT ENCROACHMENT?		<u>N/A</u>
ONLY PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE (ONLY IF SIGNIFICANT ENCR.)?		<u>N/A</u>
SIGNIFICANT RISK?		<u>No</u>
MEASURES TO MINIMIZE FLOOD PLAIN IMPACTS?		<u>No</u>
DIRECT OR INDIRECT SUPPORT TO BASE FLOOD PLAIN DEVELOPMENT?		<u>No</u>
POTENTIAL FOR INTERRUPTION OF EVACUATION ROUTE?		<u>No</u>

IMPACT ON BENEFICIAL FLOOD PLAIN VALUES
IF YES EXPLAIN _____

YES OR NO

NO

MEASURES TO RESTORE AND PRESERVE BENEFICIAL VALUES?
IF YES EXPLAIN _____

NO

TYPE AND DEGREE OF DEVELOPMENT ON THE FLOOD PLAIN New Alignment of Railroad. This will require construction of a bridge over Milk Spring Hollow (and Old Jackson Highway).

PROPOSAL AFFECTING A REGULATORY FLOODWAY? _____

No

PROJECT COORDINATION WITH FEMA REQUIRED?
IF YES WHEN? _____

None Anticipated

OTHER COMMENTS _____

CONCLUSION:

Under the guidelines provided in the Alabama Highway Department's "Screening Process for the Design of Flood plains and Federal Aid Projects", this project qualifies for the level of analysis under Category 6.

The new alignment structure will result in an insignificant change in its capacity to carry flood water. This change will cause minimal increase in flood heights and flood limits. These minimal increases in flood heights and limits will not result in any significant adverse impacts on the natural and beneficial flood plain values; they will not result in any significant change in flood risks or damage; and they do not have significant potential for interruption or termination of emergency evacuation routes; therefore, it has been determined that this encroachment is not significant.

LOCATION RISK ASSESSMENT RECORD
FOR
LOCATION OF FLOODPLAIN ENCROACHMENT

Date: January 29, 2001

PROJECT NO. RRS-8817 (1)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Norfolk Southern Railroad Relocation

PREPARED BY: Berge Wegman Sumner + Cannon, Inc.

NFIP PARTICIPATION
(Fill In)

ENCROACHMENT DETERMINATION:
(Date of Map)

County Colbert PARTICIPATING yes
NON-PARTICIPATING _____
CITY _____ PARTICIPATING _____
NON-PARTICIPATING _____

FIRM _____ FIRM _____
FIRM 1981 HUD STUDY _____

OTHER SOURCES:

U.S.G.S. TOPO MAPPING FLOOD PRONE AREA MAP N/A

PLAN-PROFILE SHEET N/A

EXISTING STRUCTURE(S): (FILL IN)

LENGTH: _____
P.G.: _____
SKEW: _____
CENTERLINE ELEV.: _____

<u>PROJECT SITE EVALUATION</u>	<u>ALTERNATIVE NO.</u>	<u>YES OR NO</u>
LONGITUDINAL ENCROACHMENT?		<u>No</u>
SIGNIFICANT ENCROACHMENT?		<u>No</u>
ALTERNATIVES TO SIGNIFICANT ENCROACHMENT?		<u>N/A</u>
ONLY PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE (ONLY IF SIGNIFICANT ENCR.)?		<u>N/A</u>
SIGNIFICANT RISK?		<u>No</u>
MEASURES TO MINIMIZE FLOOD PLAIN IMPACTS?		<u>No</u>
DIRECT OR INDIRECT SUPPORT TO BASE FLOOD PLAIN DEVELOPMENT?		<u>No</u>
POTENTIAL FOR INTERRUPTION OF EVACUATION ROUTE?		<u>No</u>

IMPACT ON BENEFICIAL FLOOD PLAIN VALUES
IF YES EXPLAIN _____

YES OR NO

No

MEASURES TO RESTORE AND PRESERVE BENEFICIAL VALUES?
IF YES EXPLAIN _____

No

TYPE AND DEGREE OF DEVELOPMENT ON THE FLOOD PLAIN New Alignment of Railroad. This will require construction of a new culvert on an unnamed tributary of Spring Creek.

PROPOSAL AFFECTING A REGULATORY FLOODWAY? _____

No

PROJECT COORDINATION WITH FEMA REQUIRED?
IF YES WHEN? _____

None Anticipated

OTHER COMMENTS _____

CONCLUSION:

Under the guidelines provided in the Alabama Highway Department's "Screening Process for the Design of Flood plains and Federal Aid Projects", this project qualifies for the level of analysis under Category 6.

The proposed structure will be constructed on the outer limits of the 100 year flood plain. The structure has been designed to safely pass the 50 year flood. Therefore, the new structure included in this project will result in insignificant change in capacity to carry flood water. This change will cause minimal increase in flood heights and flood limits. These minimal increases in flood heights and limits will not result in any significant adverse impacts on the natural and beneficial flood plain values; they will not result in any significant change in flood risks or damage; and they do not have significant potential for interruption or termination of emergency, evacuation routes; therefore, it has been determined that this encroachment is not significant.

LOCATION RISK ASSESSMENT RECORD
FOR
LOCATION OF FLOODPLAIN ENCROACHMENT

Date: January 29, 2001PROJECT NO. RRS-8817(1)PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Norfolk Southern Railroad RelocationPREPARED BY: Barge Wiggmore Sumner + Cannon Inc

NFIP PARTICIPATION
(Fill In)

ENCROACHMENT DETERMINATION:
(Date of Map)

County Colbert PARTICIPATING Yes
NON-PARTICIPATING _____
CITY _____ PARTICIPATING _____
NON-PARTICIPATING _____

FIRM _____ FBFM _____
FIRM 1981 HUD STUDY _____

OTHER SOURCES:U.S.G.S. TOPO MAPPING FLOOD PRONE AREA MAP N/APLAN-PROFILE SHEET N/AEXISTING STRUCTURE(S): (FILL IN) BridgeLENGTH: 39.6 m (130ft)

P.G.: _____

SKEW: _____

CENTERLINE ELEV.: _____

<u>PROJECT SITE EVALUATION</u>	<u>ALTERNATIVE NO.</u>	<u>YES OR NO</u>
LONGITUDINAL ENCROACHMENT?		<u>No</u>
SIGNIFICANT ENCROACHMENT?		<u>No</u>
ALTERNATIVES TO SIGNIFICANT ENCROACHMENT?		<u>N/A</u>
ONLY PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE (ONLY IF SIGNIFICANT ENCR.)?		<u>N/A</u>
SIGNIFICANT RISK?		<u>No</u>
MEASURES TO MINIMIZE FLOOD PLAIN IMPACTS?		<u>No</u>
DIRECT OR INDIRECT SUPPORT TO BASE FLOOD PLAIN DEVELOPMENT?		<u>No</u>
POTENTIAL FOR INTERRUPTION OF EVACUATION ROUTE?		<u>No</u>

IMPACT ON BENEFICIAL FLOOD PLAIN VALUES
IF YES EXPLAIN

YES OR NO
NO

MEASURES TO RESTORE AND PRESERVE BENEFICIAL VALUES?
IF YES EXPLAIN

NO

TYPE AND DEGREE OF DEVELOPMENT ON THE FLOOD PLAIN Addition of second rail line next to existing track on existing location. This will require building a new bridge over Spring Creek.

PROPOSAL AFFECTING A REGULATORY FLOODWAY?

NO

PROJECT COORDINATION WITH FEMA REQUIRED?
IF YES WHEN?

None Anticipated

OTHER COMMENTS

CONCLUSION:

Under the guidelines provided in the Alabama Highway Department's "Screening Process for the Design of Flood plains and Federal Aid Projects", this project qualifies for the level of analysis under Category 4.

The structure will have an effective underway opening equal to or greater than the existing structure and backwater surface elevations will not be expected to increase. As a result, there will be no significant adverse impacts on natural and beneficial flood plain values; there will be no significant change in flood risks; and there will be no significant increase in potential for interruption or termination of emergency routes; therefore it has been determined that this encroachment is not significant.

LOCATION RISK ASSESSMENT RECORD
FOR
LOCATION OF FLOODPLAIN ENCROACHMENT

Date: January 29, 2001

PROJECT NO. RRS-8817 (1)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Norfolk Southern Railroad Relocation

PREPARED BY: Barry Waggoner Sumner + Cannon, Inc

NFIP PARTICIPATION
(Fill In)

ENCROACHMENT DETERMINATION:
(Date of Map)

County Colbert PARTICIPATING yes
NON-PARTICIPATING _____
CITY _____ PARTICIPATING _____
NON-PARTICIPATING _____

FIRM _____ FBFM _____
FIRM 1981 HUD STUDY _____

OTHER SOURCES:

U.S.G.S. TOPO MAPPING ✓ FLOOD PRONE AREA MAP N/A

PLAN-PROFILE SHEET N/A

EXISTING STRUCTURE(S): (FILL IN) Culvert

LENGTH: 13.7 (454)

P.G.: _____

SKEW: _____

CENTERLINE ELEV.: _____

<u>PROJECT SITE EVALUATION</u>	<u>ALTERNATIVE NO.</u>	<u>YES OR NO</u>
LONGITUDINAL ENCROACHMENT?		<u>No</u>
SIGNIFICANT ENCROACHMENT?		<u>No</u>
ALTERNATIVES TO SIGNIFICANT ENCROACHMENT?		<u>N/A</u>
ONLY PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE (ONLY IF SIGNIFICANT ENCR.)?		<u>N/A</u>
SIGNIFICANT RISK?		<u>No</u>
MEASURES TO MINIMIZE FLOOD PLAIN IMPACTS?		<u>No</u>
DIRECT OR INDIRECT SUPPORT TO BASE FLOOD PLAIN DEVELOPMENT?		<u>No</u>
POTENTIAL FOR INTERRUPTION OF EVACUATION ROUTE?		<u>No</u>

IMPACT ON BENEFICIAL FLOOD PLAIN VALUES
IF YES EXPLAIN _____

YES OR NO
No

MEASURES TO RESTORE AND PRESERVE BENEFICIAL VALUES?
IF YES EXPLAIN _____

No

TYPE AND DEGREE OF DEVELOPMENT ON THE FLOOD PLAIN Addition of second rail line next to existing track at existing location. This will require extending the existing culvert on an unnamed tributary of Spring Creek

PROPOSAL AFFECTING A REGULATORY FLOODWAY?

No

PROJECT COORDINATION WITH FEMA REQUIRED?
IF YES WHEN? _____

None Anticipated

OTHER COMMENTS _____

CONCLUSION:

Under the guidelines provided in the Alabama Highway Department's "Screening Process for the Design of Flood plains and Federal Aid Projects", this project qualifies for the level of analysis under Category 3.

The modifications to drainage structures included in this project will result in an insignificant change in their capacity to carry flood waters. This change will cause minimal increase in flood heights and flood limits. These minimal increases in flood heights and limits will not result in any significant adverse impacts on the natural and beneficial flood plain values; they will not result in any significant change in flood risks or damage; and they do not have significant potential for interruption or termination of emergency evacuation routes; therefore, it has been determined that this encroachment is not significant.

APPENDIX E
SHPO CORRESPONDENCE



STATE OF ALABAMA
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
468 SOUTH PERRY STREET
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-0900

LEE H. WARNER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TEL 334 242-3184
FAX 334 240-3477

April 11, 2001

Eugene Futato
Acting Director
Office of Archaeological Services
13075 Moundville Archaeological Park
Moundville, Alabama 35474

Re: AHC 00-2228
DOT RRS-8817(1)
Cultural Resource Assessment
Sheffield Railroad Relocation
Colbert County, Alabama

Dear ~~Mr. Futato~~ Eugene:

Upon review of the additional information forwarded by your office the Alabama Historical Commission has determined that the proposed activities will not have an effect on any known cultural resources listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Therefore, our office concurs with the proposed activities. However, should any archaeological cultural resources be encountered during project activities, work shall cease and our office shall be consulted immediately.

We appreciate your efforts on this issue. If we may be of further service or if you have any questions or comments, please contact Stacy Hathorn of our office and be sure to include the project number referenced above.

Yours truly,

Elizabeth Ann Brown
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

EAB/SGH/LAH/gcr

APPENDIX F
BLADDER - POD SURVEY



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
P O Drawer 1190
Daphne, Alabama 36526

INACTIVE REFERENCE

(10)-1626b

September 27, 2000

Mr. Thomas J. Shrope
BWSC, Inc.
Two Perimeter Park South
Suite 230 East
Birmingham, Alabama 35243

Dear Mr. Shrope:

We are responding to your letter, dated June 9, 2000, requesting information concerning threatened or endangered species that may occur on the proposed railroad re-location project, RRS-8817(1), located in Colbert County, Alabama. We have reviewed the information you enclosed and are providing the following comments in accordance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. et seq.) and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

We concur with the statements that no listed species do not occur in the project area. Therefore, no further endangered species consultation will be required for this portion of the project unless: 1) the identified action is subsequently modified in a manner that causes an effect on listed species or a designated Critical Habitat, 2) new information reveals the identified action may affect Federally protected species or designated Critical Habitat in a manner or to an extent not previously considered, or 3) a new species is listed or Critical Habitat is designated under the Endangered Species Act that may be affected by the identified action.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Mr. Bert W. Steen, of my staff, at (334) 441-5181, ext. 38.

Sincerely,

Larry E. Goldman
Field Supervisor

**SURVEY OF A PROPOSED NEW RAIL ROAD
CORRIDOR LOCATED IN
COLBERT COUNTY, ALABAMA
FOR FEDERALLY LISTED PLANT SPECIES**

BY WHETSTONE CONSULTING, INC.

7 ROBINWOOD LANE

ANNISTON, ALABAMA

256-236-9769

FOR BARGE, WAGGONER, SUMNER, AND CANNON, INC.

TWO PERIMETER PARK SOUTH

SUITE 230 EAST

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA 35243

205-298-6074

SEPTEMBER 2000

Summary

A careful survey of the proposed project was conducted during September, 2000, specifically seeking plant species listed by the USFWS. No individuals or populations were located along the proposed corridor.



Friday, September 08, 2000

David Whetstone, Ph.D.

Introduction

This proposed project is situated in Colbert County, Alabama. As envisioned, a new rail road corridor is to create an approximately 7.5 mile connector from a north-south line located just east of US-43 just south of Spring Creek to another existing line near the community of Valdosta. About 300 feet of proposed width was explored along the entire length of the corridor.

The property has a history of land use that has resulted in the removal of all original vegetation. Almost all of the land within the proposed corridor is currently being used for agriculture, particularly for pasturage and row crops. Most of the proposed corridor currently supports a cotton crop. A small portion of the acreage is woodlands which is suggestive that some original vegetation remains within the proposed corridor. The woodland areas along the area do not appear to be significantly disturbed. Original vegetation is thought to have composed of the western phase of the mixed mesophytic forest. No undisturbed forests are located along the proposed corridor.

Contemporary Vegetation

The study area is broken down into two main plant communities, *i.e.*, agricultural fields and hardwoods. Because most of the area has a land history as a working farm then this precludes most of the natural vegetation from persisting to the present. The hardwood community represents the least disturbed mosaic. Hardwoods mostly occupy the dry-mesic knolls and edges of terraces. Dominant canopy species found within the project corridor include pignut hickory (*Carya glabra*), eastern red-cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*), Virginia pine (*Pinus virginiana*), southern red oak (*Quercus falcata*), post oak (*Quercus stellata*), sweet-gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), bluff oak (*Quercus austrina*), and tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*). Common subcanopy trees include red maple (*Acer rubrum* var. *rubrum*), dogwood (*Cornus florida*), persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*), black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), and winged elm (*Ulmus alata*). Dominant species that make up the shrub layer include black-berry (*Rubus argutus*), highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium arboreum*), and lowbush blueberry (*Vaccinium pallidum*). Herbs that are

common in this plant community are curly grass (*Danthonia sericea*), fescue (*Festuca elatior*), wild lettuce (*Lactuca canadensis*), Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), and goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*). Lianas prevalent in this area are cat-brier (*Smilax bona-nox* and *S. rotundifolia*), muscadine (*Vitis rotundifolia*), and poison-ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*).

Agricultural fields comprise two types, those used for row crops and those used for pasturage (or hayfields). Row crop fields are intensively cultivated and are open. Chemicals have been applied in order to suppress weeds and insects. Most of the agricultural fields are planted with cotton while the other fields have been sown with forage grasses for hay production, along with pastures. Pastures usually have a wider range of invasive plants because of the overgrazing by the cattle which creates openings for invasives. Common canopy species that surround the agricultural fields include sweet-gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*), and post oak (*Quercus stellata*). Subcanopy species are silk tree (*Aibizzia julibrissin*) and privet (*Ligustrum sinense*). Black-berry (*Rubus argutus*) and smooth sumac (*Rhus glabra*) are the dominant shrubs found within this plant community. Herbs within the project area include hair grass (*Aira elegans*), field garlic (*Allium vineale*), meadow grass (*Bromus commutatus*), partridge-pea (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*), fescue (*Festuca elatior*), purple cudweed (*Gnaphalium purpureum*), bitter-weed (*Helianthemum amarum*), Nepal grass (*Microstegium vimineum*), and coffee weed (*Senna obtusifolia*). Dominant lianas are moon-seed (*Cocculus carolinus*), Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), and white cat-brier (*Smilax glauca*).

Objectives

The principal objective of this study is to carefully survey the proposed site for the occurrence of federally listed plant species. A letter from Mr. Larry Goldman, USFWS, Daphne, Alabama, (correspondence identified as "00-1626a) determined the potential occurrence of the lyrate bladder-pod (*Lesquerella lyrata*) on site. Also of particular interest is the leafy prairie-clover (*Dalea foliosa*). A second objective is to examine the site for areas that might support species of conservation concern.

Survey Methods

This survey was performed on September 4, 2000. The entire corridor was surveyed by two persons with have a great deal of field experience within northern Alabama. The agricultural fields and wooded areas were thoroughly examined to ensure that all areas were carefully observed. The author of this report thoroughly examined the entire east-west portion of the corridor at various times of the year in two years prior to the current survey. These explorations were conducted in relation to the proposed Corridor Y project.

Results and Discussion

All species encountered along the project area were identified. No individuals of either of the two targeted species were located along the proposed corridor. No other species that are listed by the USFWS were discovered along the proposed route. The phenology of the leafy bladder-pod (late winter to early spring) is such that it is most unlikely that any individuals, if they exist along the route, would be observed during late summer. Most of the route was traversed in preceding years in the appropriate season. A section along the eastern side, and a bit of the western portion (that deviates from corridor Y) were not observed during an appropriate time frame. Most of the western side are hay and cotton fields, and the eastern side is woodland, hay, and cotton fields. No limestone exposures were encountered along those segments of the corridor. The central portion (visited many times during several seasons by the author) passes through a gap with exposures of limestone. The corridor is south of the open exposures of limestone. None of the listed species have been encountered in the open exposures (off site) nor in the closed canopy communities on limestone (on site).

**APPENDIX G
WETLANDS SURVEY**

**WETLAND DELINEATION STUDY
FOR SHEFFIELD RAILROAD RELOCATION
COLBERT CO., ALABAMA
PROJECT NO. RRS-8817(1)**

Prepared for:

Alabama Department of Transportation
&
Barge, Waggoner, Sumner & Cannon, Inc.
Birmingham, Alabama

Prepared by:

Environmental Resource Analysts, Inc.
Auburn Technology Park
2975 Brown Court
Auburn, Alabama 36830


Joseph Freda, Ph.D.
Project Director

9/20/00
Date

DISCLAIMER

ERA prepares environmental assessments solely for the use of the client. Any use by others unless authorized by ERA and the client is at one's sole risk.

This wetland assessment does not include any assessment, or testing for hazardous chemicals, asbestos containing building materials, lead in paint, lead in water, PCB containing fluorescent light ballasts, radon, or threatened or endangered species.

Except as expressly provided for in our agreement with the client we are not responsible for any effect upon the legal rights, obligations, or liabilities of any party or for any effect on the finaceability, marketability, or value of the property investigated in the study or for the occurrence or non-occurrence of any transaction involving the property.

Wetland regulations are in a constant state of change due to legal challenges and changes in the interpretation of regulations. Therefore, before any filling is initiated in wetland areas or other "Waters of the US", the district office of the Army Corps of Engineers must be consulted.

ERA's opinions relating to the site condition are based upon information that existed at the time our conclusions were formulated. Site conditions can change rapidly; in some cases overnight. The observations contained in this report represent our professional opinions. These opinions were arrived at in accordance with currently accepted environmental practice at this time and location. Other than this no warranty is implied or intended.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Environmental Resource Analysts (ERA) was contracted by Barge, Waggoner, Sumner & Cannon to conduct a wetlands delineation study for a railroad relocation in Colbert Co., Alabama. The project area is illustrated Figure 1.

2.0 METHODS

Jurisdictional wetlands exhibit 3 characteristics: 1) Hydric Soil, 2) Hydrophytic Vegetation (> 50% OBL, FACW, or FAC), 3) Wetland Hydrology (ACE 1987). The wetlands delineation study was conducted according to the 1987 Army Corp of Engineers wetlands delineation manual (ACE 1987). The "on site", routine determination method for areas less than 5 acres was employed. Soil color was determined with the use of Munsell soil color charts (Munsell Color 1990). Plants were identified by ERA personnel according to Radford et al. (1968) and Brown and Kirkman (1990). The depth of the water table was determined by digging a standard soil pit. Wetlands were classified according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife classification system (USFWS 1979).

The majority of the length of the corridor was surveyed on foot. Colbert County soil survey maps (USDA 1994) were also consulted for the potential presence of hydric soil.

3.0 RESULTS

The study area was surveyed on July 27-29, 2000 by Joseph Freda. The majority of the study corridor passes through agricultural fields intersected by hedge rows and small woodlots. The only significant forested area is a centrally located hillside where the proposed Rail corridor parallels an existing power line right of way. The corridor crossed six small tributaries. These tributaries were intermittent and not flowing at the time of the survey. No wetlands were associated with these tributaries. Each tributary is discussed separately below (from west to east).

Tributary 1: This creek was an un-named tributary of Throckmorton Branch. It was contained within a narrow strip of trees surrounded by corn fields (Figure 3). The banks were very shallow and the forested area most likely floods frequently during wet weather periods. The water table was not observed at a depth of 16 inches. The period of inundation must however be relatively short because we were unable to identify the presence of hydric soil or wetland vegetation. The soil color was 10YR 3/3 and the vegetation was dominated by upland species such as buckeye, hickory, and white and red oak. The Colbert Co. Soil Survey (USDA 1994) illustrates Chenneby Silt Loam (CbA) for the flood plain of this tributary, which is not a listed hydric soil (Table 1).

Tributary 2: Throckmorton Branch was within a narrow strip of trees with pasture on each side (Figure 4). Water was not flowing at the time of the survey, but numerous isolated pools were present. The creek banks were approximately 2-3 feet high, and there was no evidence of flooding outside the

banks. In addition, the water table was not observed at a depth of 16 inches. The soils and vegetation on each side of the creek were not indicative of wetland conditions. The soil color was 10YR 5/4. The Colbert Co. Soil Survey (USDA 1994) illustrates the Tupelo-colbert complex (TuB) for the flood plain of this tributary, which is not a listed hydric soil (Table 1). The stream side vegetation was typical of riparian, non-wetland habitats and included hop hornbeam, cane, sycamore, and hackberry.

Tributary 3: Tributary 3 was a small intermittent un-named tributary of Spring Creek within a small patch of forest adjacent to a large corn field (Figure 5). The woodlot was a dense thicket of introduced species, briars, and vines, probably a result of the disturbance caused by the agricultural activity and the clearing for the powerline. The creek was contained within shallow banks (< 1 foot high), with no evidence of recent flooding. No hydric soil was observed (10 YR 5/3) and the water table was < 16 inches. The Colbert Co. Soil Survey (USDA 1994) illustrates Decatur Silty Clay Loam (DaC2) for the flood plain of this tributary, which is not a listed hydric soil (Table 1). The vegetation was an over story of sweetgum and oaks with an understory of privet, honey suckle, cane, and wild blackberry.

Tributary 4: Tributary 4 was a small intermittent un-named tributary of Spring Creek which paralleled Old Jackson Highway. This site was highly disturbed due to its proximity to the road. The creek was approximately 5 feet wide, with 6-12 inches of water, within 3 foot deep banks. There was no evidence of flooding and the water table was greater than 16 inches deep on the adjacent flood plain. No hydric soil was observed 10 YR 5/4. The Colbert Co. Soil Survey (USDA 1994) illustrates Decatur Silty Clay Loam (DaC2) for the flood plain of this tributary, which is not a listed hydric soil (Table 1). The majority of the vegetation occupying the flood plain was also not typical of wetland habitats, but are commonly found in stream side riparian habitats. The species observed included black locust, red bud, black willow, privet, red cedar, and sycamore.

Tributary 5: Tributary 5 was a small intermittent un-named tributary of Spring Creek in a highly disturbed agricultural ditch surrounded by a small boarder of trees (Figure 6). Cotton fields and pastures were the primary agricultural uses of this area. We observed 4 foot banks which may have resulted from channelization. Water was not flowing but isolated pools were present. The soil immediately adjacent to the creek had a color of 7.5 YR 4/6 which is not characteristic of hydric soils. The Colbert Co. Soil Survey (USDA 1994) illustrates Decatur Silt Loam (DaB) for the flood plain of this tributary, which is not a listed hydric soil (Table 1). The vegetation was primarily black willow which is wetland species. The willows are most likely present not because of wetland conditions, but rather the high degree of disturbance to this site.

Tributary 6: Tributary 6 (Thornton Branch) was a dry stream bed adjacent to Jackson highway (Figure 7). It was bordered on the east side by a cotton field and on the west side by forest. The banks were 3-4 feet deep and there was no evidence of flooding. The adjacent flood plain did not exhibit wetland hydrology, soils or vegetation. The soil color was 7.5 YR 5/6, and the water table was not observed at a depth of 16 inches. The Colbert Co. Soil Survey (USDA 1994) illustrates Chenneby Silt Loam (CbA) for the flood plain of this tributary, which is not a listed hydric soil (Table 1). The vegetation was dominated by oaks, hickories, slippery elm, and box elder.

4.0 LITERATURE CITED

- ACE. 1987. Corps of Engineers wetlands delineation manual. Dept. Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Washington, DC, 20314-1000.
- Brown, C.L. and L.K. Kirkman. 1990. Trees of Georgia and Adjacent States. Timber Press, Portland OR. 292 pp.
- Munsell Color. 1990. Munsell Soil Color Charts. Kollmorgen Corp. Baltimore, MD.
- Radford, A.E., H.E. Ahles, and C. R. Bell. 1968. Manual of Vascular Flora of the Carolinas. The University of North Carolina Press. Chapel Hill, NC. 1183 pp.
- USDA. 1991. Hydric Soil of the United States. Misc. Pub No. 1491
- USDA. 1994. Soil Survey of Colbert Co. 154 pp.
- USFWS. 1979. Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater habitats of the United States. FWS/OBS-79/31.

Table 1. Hydric Soils List for Colbert County.

USDA-ORCS
ALABAMA

COLBERT COUNTY, ALABAMA (033)

TUSCUMBIA FIELD OFFICE
TECHNICAL GUIDE
SECTION 11-A
NOVEMBER 1990

HYDRIC SOILS LIST 1/

MAP SYMBOL	SOIL NAME	SLOPE RANGE	LCS	COMP %	HYDRIC COMPONENT	HYDRIC 2/ CRITERIA
CEA	CHENNEBY	0-2	4v	1 100	All	P
GUA	GUTHRIE	0-2	5w	1 100	All	S

NON-HYDRIC SOILS
(WITH OR WITHOUT HYDRIC INCLUSIONS)

MAP SYMBOL	SOIL NAME	SLOPE RANGE	LCS	COMP %	HYDRIC INCLUSIONS	LOCATION	HYDRIC 2/ CRITERIA OF INCLUSIONS
BAE	BARFIELD	2-35	7s	1 50			
BAE	ROCK OUTCROP			2 20			
BEB	BEWLEYVILLE	2-6	2e	1 100	Chenneby (ponded)	Depressions	P
BEC	BEWLEYVILLE	6-10	3e	1 100	Lee	Drainageways	S
CAB	CAPSHAW	2-6	2e	1 100	Guthrie, Chenneby (pond)	Depressions	P,S
CBA	CHENNEBY	0-2	2v	1 100	Chenneby (ponded)	Depressions	P
CHD	CHISCA	6-15	6e	1 100	Kinston	Drainageways	S
CNF	CHISCA	10-45	7e	1 44	Kinston	Drainageways	S
CNF	NELLA	10-45	7e	2 23	Kinston	Drainageways	S
CNF	NECTAR	10-45	7e	3 15	Kinston	Drainageways	S
DAB	DECATUR	2-6	2e	1 100	Guthrie, Chenneby (pond)	Depressions	P,S
DAC2	DECATUR	6-10	4e	1 100	Lee	Drainageways	S
DEB	DECATUR			1 45	Guthrie, Chenneby (pond)	Depressions	P,S
DEB	URBAN LAND			2 40			
DED	DECATUR			1 45			
DED	URBAN LAND			2 40			
DKA	DICKSON	0-3	2w	1 100	Chenneby (ponded)	Depressions	P
DP	DUMPS			1 100			
EMA	EMORY	0-2	2w	1 100	Guthrie, Chenneby (pond)	Depressions	P,S
ENA	EMORY			1 45	Guthrie, Chenneby (pond)	Depressions	P,S
ENA	URBAN LAND			2 40			
ETB	ETOWAH	2-6	2e	1 100	Chenneby (ponded)	Depressions	P
FAB	FULLERTON	2-6	2e	1 100	Lee, Guthrie	Drainageways	S
FAD	FULLERTON	6-15	4e	1 100	Lee, Guthrie	Drainageways	S
FBF	FULLERTON	15-45	7e	1 45	Lee, Guthrie	Drainageways	S
FBF	BODINE	15-45	7s	2 35	Lee, Guthrie	Drainageways	S
NNC	NECTAR	6-10	3e	1 50	Kinston	Drainageways	S
NNC	NALYCO	6-10	3e	2 35	Kinston	Drainageways	S
NJA	NUGENT	0-2	3s	1 100	Chenneby (ponded)	Depressions	P
PT	PITS			1 100			
PJA	PRUITTON	0-2	2w	1 45	Chenneby (ponded)	Depressions	P
PJA	SULLIVAN	0-2	2w	2 40	Chenneby (ponded)	Depressions	P
SAF	SAFFELL	15-45	7e	1 52	Kinston	Drainageways	S
SAF	PIKEVILLE	15-45	7e	2 24	Kinston	Drainageways	S
SHB	SAVANNAH	1-5	2e	1 100	Guthrie	Depressions	S
SPD	SMITHDALE	6-15	4e	1 40	Kinston	Drainageways	S

Table 1. Continued.

2-1-76

COLBERT COUNTY, ALABAMA 10321

NON-HYDRIC SOILS
(WITH OR WITHOUT HYDRIC INCLUSIONS)

MAP SYMBOL	SOIL NAME	SLOPE RANGE	LCS	COMP %	HYDRIC INCLUSIONS	LOCATION	HYDRIC CRITERIA OF INCLUSIONS
SPD	PIKEVILLE	6-15	4e	2 35	Kinston	Drainageways	S
TND	TYPIC UDORTHENTS			1 70			
TND	NECTAR			2 20			
TUB	TUPELO	0-4	3w	1 55	Guthrie	Depressions	S
TUB	COLBERT	0-4	3e	2 35	Guthrie	Depressions	S
UB	URBAN LAND			1 100			
MNB	MYNIVILLE	2-6	2e	1 100	Guthrie	Depressions	S

1/ All hydric soils in this county support woody vegetation under natural conditions.

2/ Several criteria may be used to cause a soil to be classified as hydric. The criteria met by a particular soil mapping unit is indicated by the symbols E, P, or FF. These are defined as follows:

S -- soils are hydric due to a water table at or near the surface.

P -- soils are ponded for long duration during the growing season.

FF -- soils are frequently flooded for long duration during the growing season.

Figure 1. Location of the Sheffield Rail Road Relocation study corridor.

Figure 3. Tributary 1.



Figure 4. Tributary 2.



Figure 5. Tributary 3.



Figure 6. Tributary 5.



Figure 7: Tributary 6.



**APPENDIX H
HAZMAT CLEARANCE**



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

1409 Coliseum Boulevard, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-3050



Don Siegelman
Governor

January 31, 2001

G. M. Roberts
Transportation Director

Mr. James D. Brown
Second Division Engineer
Alabama Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 495
Tuscumbia, Al., 35674

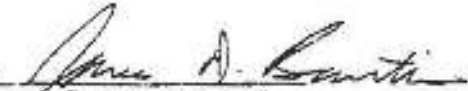
Re: Project RRS-8817(1)
Sheffield Railroad Relocation
Clearance Letter-Hazardous Material Sites
Colbert County, Alabama

Dear Mr. Brown:

Regarding the referenced project two potentially hazardous waste sites were identified along an existing section of Norfolk Southern tract where no additional right of way will be required. After a review of information in our files we have determined that neither of the sites will have an environmental impact on the project. Therefore, there are no remediation cost relative to hazardous material disposal associated with these sites.

Should you have any questions, please contact Roosevelt Bell at (334) 206-2287.

Yours very truly,

By: 
James D. Bearrentine, P. E.
Hazardous Materials Coordinator

JDB/RB:rb
Attachments

cc: Design Bureau
Ms. Alfredo Acoff
FHWA
file

17011-21
7.11

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS NOTIFICATION FORM

PROJECT # RRS-8817(1) STATION # 121+00

MUNICIPALITY OR COMMUNITY Tuscumbia COUNTY Colbert

FACILITY NAME Great Southern Wood Preserving of North Alabama

FACILITY ADDRESS 1703 Denton Road
Tuscumbia, AL 35674

OWNER'S NAME Same as above

OWNER'S ADDRESS Same as above

FACILITY PHONE # _____ OWNER'S PHONE NUMBER _____

ADEM REGISTRATION # AL 0002064723 (EPA Facility ID)

TYPE FACILITY (check applicable response(s)):

- Gas Station Scrap Metal Foundry Landfill
- Dry Cleaner Chemical Plant Manufacturing Facility
- Fertilizer Plant Wood Treating Plant Farmer's Cooperative
- Plating Plant Auto Parts w/ Engine Repair Shop
- Leather Tannery Other (Specify): _____

COMMENTS Small Quantity Generator; Handler ID: ALR000008326

INSPECTOR'S NAME Andrew Murr DATE INSPECTED 7/11/00

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE _____

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS NOTIFICATION FORM

PROJECT # RRS-8817(1) STATION # 124+40

MUNICIPALITY OR COMMUNITY Tuscumbia COUNTY Colbert

FACILITY NAME Shoals Solid Waste Industrial Landfill

FACILITY ADDRESS Mr. Howard Keaton, Solid Waste Supervisor

Post Office Box 408

Tuscumbia, AL 35674

OWNER'S NAME Shoals Solid Waste Authority

OWNER'S ADDRESS Honorable Frank Stevens, Chairman

201 North Main Street

Tuscumbia, AL 35674

FACILITY PHONE # (256) 381-9030 OWNER'S PHONE NUMBER (256) 386-8500

ADEM REGISTRATION # Permit No. 17-01

TYPE FACILITY (check applicable response(s)):

Gas Station Scrap Metal Foundry Landfill
 Dry Cleaner Chemical Plant Manufacturing Facility
 Fertilizer Plant Wood Treating Plant Farmer's Cooperative
 Plating Plant Auto Parts w/ Engine Repair Shop
 Leather Tannery Other (Specify): _____

COMMENTS Industrial Landfill permitted for 225 Tons per day.

INSPECTOR'S NAME Andrew Murr DATE INSPECTED 7/11/00

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE _____

**APPENDIX I
NOISE STUDY**

NOISE ANALYSIS

**NORFOLK-SOUTHERN RAILROAD RELOCATION
SHEFFIELD, ALABAMA**

ALDOT PROJECT NO. RRS-8817(1)

August 30, 2000

Revised March 23, 2001

The Technology Group
16810 Homestead Trace
Fisherville, KY 40023

NOISE ANALYSIS:
Railroad Relocation, Sheffield, AL
ALDOT Project No. RRS-8817(1)

Introduction

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is considering the relocation of a portion of the Norfolk Southern railroad that currently exists in downtown Sheffield, AL. This proposed project will consist of relocating the rail line so that congestion at multiple at-grade crossings will be relieved. All crossings on the new alignment will be grade-separated, thus avoiding future traffic congestion. The proposed alignment will parallel the proposed Memphis to Atlanta highway. A 9000 foot section of side track is also proposed which will be used as a siding for slower trains. The project will also close that portion of the existing track from the western terminus of the proposed new location to downtown Sheffield. A reduced number of trains will still utilize that portion of the existing track from downtown Sheffield to the eastern terminus of the new location track.

Land use along the existing track is a mixture of residential and commercial/industrial. The residential areas along the existing track are located generally east and west of the downtown area, with the commercial/industrial areas located primarily in the downtown area.

The proposed alignment is located in a rural area, with land use predominantly agricultural/forested. Noise sensitive receptors are widely scattered due to the rural nature of the area.

There are two effects of the proposed project that will be considered in this analysis. First, the removal of the existing trains and corresponding highway traffic

congestion in downtown Sheffield will be examined, as it relates to expected future sound levels and the associated effect on the residential areas.

Secondly, the introduction of train traffic along the proposed new location will be studied assuming the proposed Memphis to Atlanta highway is in place. Predicted sound levels from the proposed railroad will be compared to sound levels generated by the Memphis to Atlanta highway (existing levels) at the same location, as well as to applicable impact criteria.

This analysis will be accomplished in two phases: First, since this project deals primarily with the consideration of train traffic, an appropriate analysis procedure must be determined. No impact criteria exists for rail noise, so a literature review will be conducted in order to establish acceptable assessment guidelines. Second, the guidelines will be applied to this project to evaluate the effects of the proposed construction on the existing noise environment.

Development of Assessment Guidelines

There are currently no acceptability criteria at the federal, state, or local level that define the threshold of impact for rail traffic noise. Consequently, a literature review was conducted in order to determine an appropriate methodology for quantifying the expected effects of this proposed project on the existing noise environment.

Descriptor

The descriptor used to measure sound levels is very important. One descriptor commonly used in transportation noise analysis is the L_{eq} (hourly), or equivalent sound level. This descriptor is based on the average acoustic intensity over time, or more simply put, the equivalent noise energy of a steady, unvarying

tone, over the same time period. The L_{eq} is particularly useful in describing the noise effects of steady traffic streams, such as found on a busy interstate highway.

However, the characteristics of train traffic is different from highway traffic. Typically, trains are spread throughout the day and night, averaging less than one train per hour. In this case the hourly L_{eq} would be generally low, since the typical train is not present but a few minutes out of the hour of interest. The hourly L_{eq} then does not provide a good measure of how the train traffic affects noise sensitive land use.

Another common descriptor of environmental noise is the L_{dn} or DNL (day-night level). The L_{dn} is simply the hourly L_{eq} 's for 24 consecutive hours, logarithmically averaged, with a 10-dB penalty added from 10:00 pm to 7:00 am (defined as "nighttime" hours). Because of the intermittent nature of the train traffic, and because this traffic is spread out over a 24-hour period, the L_{dn} is an appropriate means of describing noise generated by trains.

Impact Threshold

Once the noise descriptor is defined, specific acceptability criteria must be determined. There are a number of federal agencies that have established guidelines for acceptable L_{dn} values for community noise. While none of these guidelines are directly applicable to noise levels generated by train traffic, they do provide valuable background and insight into when expected L_{dn} values should be considered a problem.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) developed site acceptability standards for noise in 1979. While these standards do not apply

directly to railroad traffic, they do recognize that much of the noise associated with urban environments come from transportation sources. These guidelines provide three categories of acceptability, based on the expected L_{dn} value:

Less than 65 dBA (L_{dn})	Acceptable
66 dBA to 75 dBA (L_{dn})	Normally Unacceptable
Above 75 dBA (L_{dn})	Unacceptable

Second, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has determined that noise sensitive land uses that lie outside the 65 L_{dn} contour generated by aircraft in the vicinity of an airport are not considered impacted by noise. While not developed for train generated noise, the L_{dn} value established by this regulation agrees with the threshold of acceptability set by HUD for residential development.

Third, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has established (through 23 CFR Part 772) an hourly L_{eq} value of 67 dBA (the Noise Abatement Criteria, or NAC) as the point at which noise mitigation must be considered for schools, libraries, residences, churches, playgrounds, and recreational areas. Any predicted sound level that "approaches or exceeds" this NAC is considered an impact. The ALDOT policy defines "approach" as one dBA below the NAC, or 66 dBA for residential structures.

This value is assumed to occur at the peak traffic volume hour. If traffic volumes are calculated over a 24-hour period for a typical highway, L_{eq} values can be calculated for each of those hours. As discussed previously, these 24 one-hour L_{eq} 's may be used to calculate an L_{dn} . If this were done for a traffic stream that generated a peak hour L_{eq} of 67, it can be demonstrated that the resulting L_{dn} would

be approximately 65. These guidelines again do not apply directly to noise generated by train traffic, but do serve to confirm the decision by HUD and FAA to set the impact threshold for noise sensitive land use at 65 L_{dn} .

Recommended Acceptability Criteria

Based on the guidelines established by the three federal agencies discussed in the preceding section, it is recommended that an L_{dn} of 65 be used as the impact threshold for noise sensitive land uses in the vicinity of the proposed project.

In addition to these absolute sound levels, the amount of increase over existing sound levels is an important measure of whether a proposed project will have a negative effect on the existing noise environment. ALDOT has set a 15 dBA increase in highway traffic generated noise as being the threshold of impact for a proposed project. Therefore, it is reasonable to set a 15 dBA increase over existing noise levels as the point at which impacts would occur as a result of implementation of this project.

Impact Determination

The identification of impacts that might result from the implementation of this project will therefore be assessed from two perspectives. First, the projected sound levels generated at sensitive receptors by the train traffic on the proposed relocation project will be compared to the impact threshold of 65 L_{dn} . Projected sound levels that equal or exceed 65 L_{dn} will be considered an impact. Sound levels below the 65 L_{dn} threshold will not be considered an impact.

Second, projected sound levels expected to be generated by the train traffic resulting from the implementation of this project will be compared to

existing sound levels to determine the amount of increase. Increases of 15 dBA or more will be considered an impact.

Analysis

Because this study assumes that the Memphis to Atlanta highway is in place, existing sound levels will be determined by computer modeling, as defined by 23CFR772. However, a field reconnaissance was conducted on August 1, 2000, and sound levels measurements were made as a point of reference on the new location portion of the project. A Larson-Davis Model 812 type 1 Sound Level Meter (SLM) was used for this purpose. The SLM was field calibrated in accordance with FHWA-PD-96-046 to insure accuracy of the measurement data. Meteorological conditions (wind speed, wind direction, and temperature) were noted in order to insure that no bias was introduced into the study from these sources. These measurements indicate that the existing noise environment along the new location section of the project (without the Memphis to Atlanta highway) are very quiet, ranging from 44 to 46 dBA, L_{dn} . These measured values agree very closely with calculated levels of 46 dBA, L_{dn} at the same location.

No sound level measurements were made in the downtown Sheffield area because the existing L_{dn} values in the noise sensitive residential areas are dominated by current through train traffic (see Figure 1). Since no train traffic was observed during the site visit, it was determined that sound levels in this area could be best determined through computer modeling.

In order to determine existing and future sound levels for this analysis, the Memphis to Atlanta highway was modeled using STAMINA 2.0 (FHWA's noise

prediction software), along with existing highways, and streets. Railroads were modeled using the Railway Noise Model (RWNM, v3.0) developed at the University of Central Florida. Because all sensitive receptors are located at different distances from each sound source, modeled sound levels were then plotted on a log-normal graph, and used to determine the individual contributions of each source. These individual sources were then logarithmically added to determine the overall sound level at sensitive receptors. Figures 1 and 2 present the contribution of each of the modeled sources.

The slope of the lines in Figures 1 and 2 represent the drop-off rate assigned to the propagating sound waves from each source. Examination of these slopes indicate that the drop-off rate is slightly different for the two models, with the RWNM showing approximately 3.5 dB per doubling of distance, and STAMINA showing approximately 4.5 dB per doubling of distance. The lines for the railroad and Memphis to Atlanta Highway actually cross in Figure 2. This is not considered a problem for the purposes of the analysis contained in this report. It simply demonstrates that the models use slightly different drop-off rates (unlike STAMINA, RWNM uses a default drop-off rate for soft ground cover).

Because of the different character of the land use and the anticipated effects of the railroad re-location, the results of the analysis will be presented separately for the downtown Sheffield portion and the new location portion of the project.

Downtown Sheffield Area

Based on a 1994 Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) report, projected traffic volumes on the street system in downtown Sheffield range from approximately 2300 to 10700 vehicles per day. In order to simplify the analysis,

the maximum volume of 10700 vpd was used to represent a "worst-case" composite street. For the purpose of this analysis, it will be assumed that existing traffic will not be significantly different from the projected volumes. This assumption can be made because land use along the existing system is heavily developed, and the existing street system consists of many at-grade intersections, which will limit the amount of increase over existing volumes. Because of the logarithmic nature of sound, a 50 percent increase in traffic volumes would result in less than a 2 dB increase in sound levels, which would not be significant in the downtown area of the study area.

The resulting sound level at any distance from a given source may be determined from the noise-distance graph presented in Figure 1. To determine the overall sound level at any location, the individual contributions from Figure 1 would be determined by the appropriate distance from a given source. The overall sound level would then be determined by logarithmically adding (or subtracting) the sound level contribution of each source. For example, if a single family residence is located 100 ft. from an existing road and 200 ft. from the existing railroad, the sound levels of 62 and 63 (from Figure 1) would be added to yield 66 L_{dn} .

The closest residential area to the existing railroad is located just west of Broadway Avenue and just south of Avalon Avenue (east of the downtown area). Homes in this area are generally 150 feet from the railroad and the northernmost portion of the neighborhood is about 500 feet from Avalon Avenue. Using Figure 1, existing sound levels at those residences would be approximately 64 L_{dn} (63

from existing train plus 57 from existing street system). Under the future condition, with the reduced train traffic from the re-located railroad, these sound levels would be reduced to approximately 58 L_{dn} (51 from future train traffic and 57 from future street system), a minimum seven dB reduction.

On the west side of the downtown Sheffield area, the closest residential area is located along Warren Avenue, approximately 200 feet east of the existing railroad, and 1000 feet west of Old Lee Highway. Again using Figure 1, existing sound levels in this neighborhood would be 63 L_{dn} (63 from existing train traffic and 45 from the existing street system). Under the future condition, with the train traffic eliminated in this area, these sound levels would be reduced to approximately 45 L_{dn} (0 from future train traffic and 45 from future street system), a minimum 18 dB reduction.

As can be seen from the preceding discussion, the re-location of the existing railroad from downtown Sheffield will reduce current sound levels in all existing residential areas located in the vicinity of the railroad. These benefits will be greatest on the western side of downtown Sheffield, where the railroad will be eliminated. Lesser, but still noticeable reductions in sound levels will occur on the eastern side of Sheffield, where through train traffic will be replaced by fewer trains that will only service businesses in the downtown area. Although the actual number of residences experiencing significant sound level reductions has not been quantified (none were impacted), a conservative estimate would place the number at approximately 250. This number would include the Northwest

Shoals Community College, Avalon Park, and the Buffington Field recreation area.

New Location Area

Existing sound levels on the new location portion of this project will be determined by the combination of traffic on the existing roadway system (traffic from level of service analysis) plus the traffic from the proposed Memphis to Atlanta Highway (traffic from a previously completed corridor study). This assumption is made because that project is further along in the planning process and will be a significant contributor to the overall sound levels in the vicinity of the proposed railroad. Figure 2 presents the individual contributions of traffic on the existing roadways, the Memphis to Atlanta Highway, and the proposed railroad.

Based on computer models of the proposed roadway/railroad geometry, field reconnaissance on August 1, 2000, and current aerial photography, only one single family residence (mobile home) will be impacted from the implementation of this project. This residence is located left of station 38+00 of the proposed railroad. This receptor is located approximately 130 feet east of the existing Frankfort Road, 230 feet north of the proposed railroad, and 800 feet north of the Memphis to Atlanta Highway. Examination of Figure 2 will show that existing sound levels would be 53 L_{dn} (49 from existing Frankfort Road traffic and 51 from the Memphis to Atlanta Highway). Future sound levels from trains on the proposed railroad would 65 L_{dn} , for an overall L_{dn} at this receiver of 65, due solely from the train operation.

Conclusions

As can be seen from the preceding discussion, there will be no noise impacts on that portion of the project located in the downtown Sheffield area. In fact, sound levels will decrease significantly as a result of re-locating the existing railroad away from the western area of the city (18 dB reduction), and eliminating through train traffic in the eastern area (seven dB reduction). This is a very noticeable reduction in sound levels and should be considered a positive benefit to the existing noise environment for numerous residences located along the existing railroad.

In the new location corridor, only one single family residence is identified as being impacted by this proposed project. This residence is impacted because it meets the maximum level suggested earlier in this report as being the threshold of impact from rail noise sources. Although there are numerous other single family residences located in the project corridor, none will reach the 65 L_{dn} threshold for impact nor will any experience a 15 dB increase over existing levels.

23 CFR Part 772 Section 11(c) requires that the applicable noise abatement measures listed in Section 13(c) of the same document be presented and discussed. Those abatement measures that could conceivably be incorporated into this project were thus evaluated for the single impact noted above. Among the types of abatement considered were the following:

- a. Acquisition of Rights-of-Way: This measure would serve to provide property alongside the proposed facility on which to construct noise barriers or to provide a buffer zone in which no noise sensitive land use would be permitted. Acquisition of additional right-of-way for this single

residence would not be cost effective and would result in the disruptive relocation of that residence.

- b. Traffic management: Measures such as traffic control devices and signing for prohibition of certain types of vehicles, time-use restrictions for certain vehicle types, and modified speed limits are intended for highway, not railroad construction projects. The trains are already traveling at slow speeds, and because of the 24-hour nature of train traffic, time-use restrictions would seriously disrupt operation.
- c. Alteration of Horizontal and Vertical Alignment: Due to the restrictive geometric design standards for railroads (e.g., vertical grades of 1% or less), alignment modifications as a means of noise abatement are not feasible.
- d. Noise Barriers: A barrier along the railroad right-of-way would be required to reduce sound levels at this residence. Such a barrier would need to be approximately 10 feet tall and in excess of 1500 feet long to adequately reduce sound levels at this location. At a cost of \$15 per square foot, this barrier would cost approximately \$225,000. ALDOT policy regarding noise abatement states that a maximum of cost of \$20,000 per residence is allowed for barrier construction (Section VII.(D).2.). Section VII.(D).8. of the policy states that noise abatement generally will not be considered for isolated receptors. Therefore, because abatement cost exceeds the stated maximum, and the impact is an isolated residence, mitigation is not considered reasonable for this single impact.

Figure 1: Noise-Distance Graph
Downtown Area

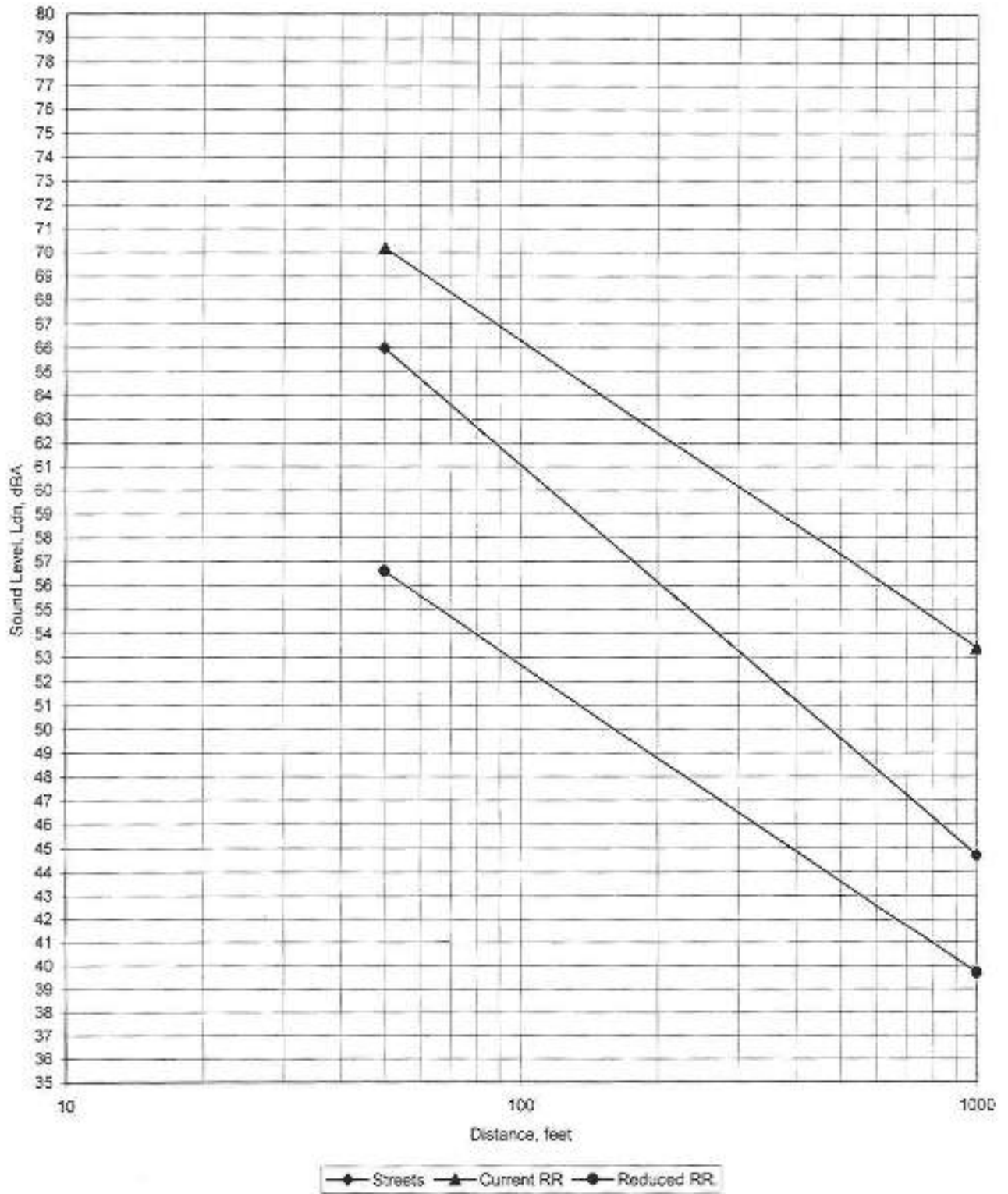
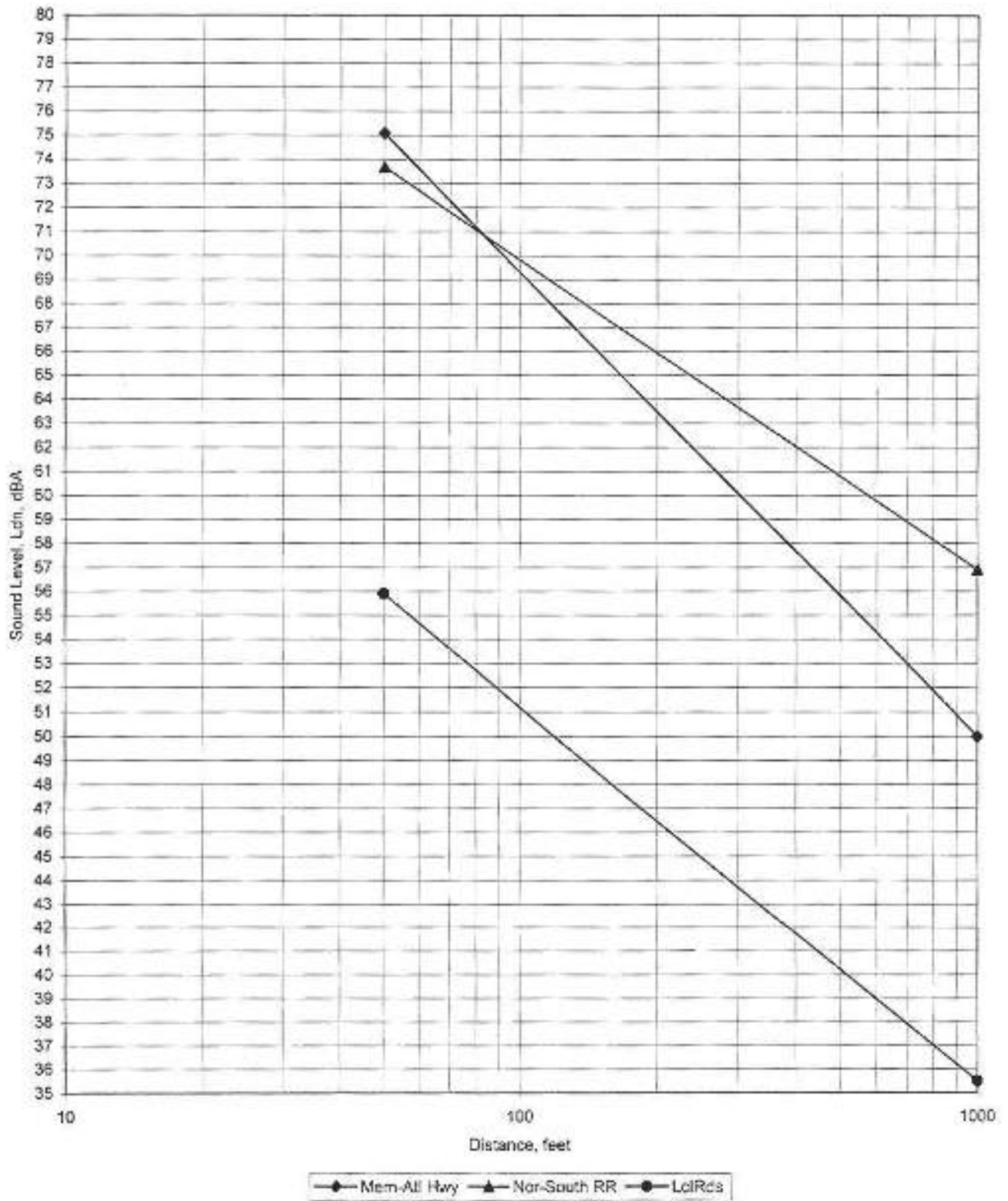


Figure 2: Noise-Distance Graph
New Location Area



**APPENDIX J
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETINGS**



DON SIEGELMAN
GOVERNOR

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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G. M. ROBERTS
TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM

TO: File

FROM: Mr. Rickey L. Smith ^{RLS}
Right of Way Section

RE: Project Number RRS-8817(1)
Grade Separation over Norfolk Southern Railroad
or Rail Line Relocation Alternate
Colbert County, Alabama

DATE: December 29, 1999

A Public Involvement Meeting was held on December 2, 1999, concerning the subject project. Representatives from the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) conducted this meeting at the ALDOT Second Division Office from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. There were approximately 191 people present.

All attendees were free to inspect display maps, which showed the alignment and general design features of each alternate under consideration. In addition to the display maps, handouts describing each alternate and outlining the history of the project were distributed to each person in attendance. The attendees openly discussed various aspects of the project with ALDOT personnel.

There were over 500 written comments received by this office and one (1) oral comment taken the date of the meeting. A breakdown of the comments received is as follows:

- 78 percent were strongly in favor of relocating the existing Norfolk Southern Rail Line to the proposed alignment displayed at the meeting. Reasons supporting their selection ranged from the delays motorists experience from roughly 16 trains a day passing through the Shoals area, the impedance and delay in response time of medical, police, and fire assistance due to the increasing frequency of passing trains and their length, and the stagnant or declining economical growth of Sheffield and Tuscumbia, as a result of people going elsewhere for business or trade avoiding the frequent traffic delays.
- 15 percent expressed discontent for often having to wait for lengthy periods, as trains pass, at the numerous at grade crossings within the Tri-Cities area. These individuals only ask that the Department pursue some project that would alleviate

the train and vehicular conflicts. In addition to these individuals expressing their personal discontent, they shared their concerns about the growing number of accidents occurring at some of the crossings and the inability or hindrance of emergency response, when trains block crossings.

- 4 percent were clearly in favor of an overpass in the downtown Sheffield area. These individuals supported their decision by stating that the overpass alternates were the least costly, would help revitalize the declining economy of Sheffield by providing safe and quick passage over into the downtown area, increase the response time of medical, police, and fire assistance, and wouldn't require near the amount of property to be purchased, as compared to the rail line relocation proposal.
- 3 percent were adamantly opposed to the rail line relocation alternates for reasons such as; the proposed route would disturb and destroy prime invaluable farm land, pass through newly developed residential areas devastating its' value, bombard a quiet and serene area with tremendous noise levels, and possibly affect the water supply of many, if a derailment transporting hazardous chemicals were to occur. These individuals didn't offer any other suggestions that may remedy the train/vehicular conflicts nor support the overpass alternates.
- The one (1) oral comment taken was in favor of the rail line relocation alternates.

Several elected city, county, and state officials were present and offered their support and assistance as the Department proceeds forward with the proposed grade separation over Norfolk Southern Railroad or as an alternative the rail line relocation project.

In summary, the vast majority of citizens present at the meeting and comments received were in favor of the rail line relocation alternates mainly because these alternates would eliminate most of the train traffic, which at times cause substantial delays for citizens and motorists of Tuscumbia, Sheffield and Muscle Shoals.

RLS/hpg

Attachment

CC: Mr. Ray Bass, Chief Engineer

Mr. Don Arkle, Design Bureau

Ms. Alfredo Acoff, Environmental Tech. Section

Mr. Wm. Carey Kelley, Consultant Mgt.

File



Fob James Jr.
GOVERNOR

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February 2, 1995

INITIALS / SIG.	<i>JMac</i>
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MEMORANDUM

TO: File

FROM: Jim Hitt *Jim Hitt*

RE: PROJECT NO. STPRH-8817(1)
RAILROAD OVERPASS IN SHEFFIELD
COLBERT COUNTY

A Public Involvement Meeting was held October 20, 1994, on the above-referenced project. Approximately 32 people attended the meeting. Those attending the meeting were shown several alternates. They were told that this meeting was to obtain their views and comments on these alternates as well as other alternate schemes they would like the Department to consider. Several stated that some of the alternates would move the traffic from the business district thus causing an economic hardship.

The attendees offered their approval or disapproval of each alternate presented. No alternate was favored over another. The attendees stated the project was needed to relieve the congestion the crossing was causing.

Prior to the meeting one business owner reviewed the alternates at this office. He stated that his business and property would be impacted by almost all of the alternates. He stated that two of the alternates would adversely affect his business by reducing the access. Subsequent to the meeting he wrote that he would investigate these proposal more closely and provide a more definite position and/or alternate.

Subsequent to the meeting 14 comments were received stating their preferred alternate or suggesting other alternates and additions to those shown. Of those comments, 7 preferred Alternate 2A; 3 preferred Alternate 5; 1 preferred Alternate 2A or 5; 1 preferred Alternate 4; 1 preferred Alternate 6 and 1 stated the information presented was insufficient to provide an understanding of the impact.

Memo to File
February 10, 1995
Page 2

A local businessman wrote that he reiterated his previous comment that the information was insufficient. He stated he was not in favor of any of the proposals as presented. He proposed a four-lane overpass crossing off First Street halfway between Montgomery Avenue and Atlanta Avenue crossing his retail store. He also stated that he would have to relocate his store but this would impact his properties less.

cjh

pc: Mr. Don Arkle
Mr. Bill Carwile
Mr. Jimmy Deas
Barge, Waggoner, Sumner and Cannon ✓



JIM FOLSOM
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March 31, 1994

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DATE	T. MAC
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JOB NO.	17079-30
FILE	CORR.

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: File

FROM: Mr. Jim Hitt *Jim Hitt*

RE: PROJECT NO. STPRH-8817(1)
RAILROAD OVERPASS IN SHEFFIELD
COLBERT COUNTY

A public involvement meeting was held March 15, 1994, at the Sheffield City Hall on the above-referenced project. Representing the Department of Transportation were Mr. Joe Bearrentine, Environmental Technical Section, Montgomery; Mr. B. S. Shoemaker, Mr. Larry Black, Mr. Allen Teague, Mr. Jim Hitt and Ms. Jane Harbin, Second Division. Representing Barge, Waggoner, Sumner and Cannon Consulting Engineers were Mr. David Moss and Mr. Terry Macaluso. Approximately 92 people attended the meeting.

Those in attendance were given a brief description of the proposed project. They were then shown aerial photographs of the Sheffield area being affected by the project. Several asked why there were no alternates on the photographs. They were told the Department is holding a series of meetings with this being the first. They were asked where they would like the overpass constructed, and were told that the comments from this meeting would help determine where alternates would be considered. Several stated their preference and stated they would mail in their comment sheets they received at the meeting.

There was only one objection to the project. He preferred moving the track out of town. Most stated they would like to see the overpass built as soon as possible. Several stated they would like to see the downtown business remain as is because of the historical significance.

Subsequent to the meeting twenty-five comments have been received. Nine offered no specific alternate. Four showed connecting First Street with Montgomery Avenue. Five showed connecting Second Street with Montgomery Avenue. Four offered an alternate from Raleigh Avenue to Montgomery Avenue. One showed an alternate west of Montgomery Avenue. One included location and design considerations by the Sheffield Endangered Landmarks Committee and Sheffield Beautiful Committee. One endorsed the guidelines submitted by these committees.

cjh
pc: Mr. Bill Carwile
Barge, Waggoner, Sumner and Cannon ✓
File

