

OFFICE OF STATE AID ROAD CONSTRUCTION			S.O.P. NO. SA II-2-17
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Subject: S.O.P. HIGHWAY LOCATION/DESIGN COMMITTEE			Distribution A, B, C, D, E
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PURPOSE: To Establish Committees to Recommend Alternative Location and Conceptual Designs For Additional Analysis During the Project Development/Environmental Documentation Evaluation Process.

1. **GENERAL:** A Location/Design Committee is appointed by the State Aid Engineer for each State Aid Engineer's District. The Committees are composed of the State Aid District Engineer, the County Engineer, and, if the project involves a bridge or similar structure, the State Aid Bridge Engineer (if required). The Location/Design Committee may request participation by the State Aid Staff, the Divisions of the Mississippi Department Of Transportation (MDOT), or involved State or Federal Agencies if needed.
 - A. The Committees review and evaluate alternative locations and design concepts for proposed transportation projects and recommend alternative locations and designs for further study during the environmental process.
 - B. The State Aid Engineer will be responsible for implementing the functions of this Committee for projects on Locally Maintained Roads.
 - C. The Committees are also responsible for re-evaluating the Environmental Document for the project, as a part of final preparation of the P .S. & E. Assembly. (Ref. S.O.P. NO. SA II-2-13)

2. **COMMITTEE PROCEDURES:** The County Engineer will be responsible for scheduling Committee Meetings. The committee will make field reviews and identify potential alternatives on all projects.
 - A. For such meetings the County Engineer (or Consultant specializing in environmental evaluation) will prepare a strip map which depicts the corridor, the existing route, and obvious alternatives. The strip map will be prepared from U.S.G.S. Quadrangle Sheets, if available. The District Engineer will determine whether the existing aerial photography is acceptable or if new photography should be obtained. Amount and detail of maps will vary with the complexity of the project.
 - B. For those projects anticipated to be categorically excluded (CE), the County Engineer may discuss the project and obtain concurrence in the initial scope of the environmental review from the District Engineer either by telephone, memorandum, or e-mail without the formal committee meeting.
 - C. Once the project development process is ready to begin and the preliminary arrangements have been made, the District Engineer will request the County Engineer to schedule a meeting of the committee. The committee will thoroughly review and inspect all reasonable alternatives. An alternative may be eliminated by unanimous consent of the committee; however, the reasons must be fully documented. Without a unanimous decision, the alternative must be included in the Committee Report. All evaluations and decisions of the Committee will be recorded in the Committee Report.

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- D. For categorically excluded (CE) projects the District Engineer and the County Engineer (with the assistance of the Bridge Engineer if a member of the Committee) will complete Form SA DS-1 and submit it along with Form SA-ENV-160. The form is to be signed by both the County Engineer and the District Engineer.
- E. For projects requiring an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) the County Engineer/Consultant will prepare, and submit to the State Aid Engineer, the appropriate environmental document. The document should have any Committee memoranda attached. The document will include a strip map which accurately depicts the alignment of all alternatives considered, including those eliminated. A Project Design Data Sheet (SA DS-1) will be prepared for each alternative to be included in the report.

The following will be furnished in the data sheets or on a separate sheet attached thereto:

1. The general location, length, and type facility.
2. The number of lanes and design of the lanes.
3. Major design features required such as separation structures, at-grade intersections, and stream crossings.
4. Principal roads and highways intersected by each alternative.
5. Access or lack of access to cities, recreational areas, game refuges, schools, churches, historical sites, industrial sites, airfields and other public buildings and facilities.
6. Any anticipated impact whether beneficial or detrimental to any type facilities or areas mentioned above.
7. General description of the type terrain and land use through which the alternative traverses.
8. Cost estimate when required for comparisons.
9. A discussion of anticipated traffic service.

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The following will be described concerning the existing facility and deficiencies associated with the “No Build” discussed in the data sheets or on a separate sheet attached thereto:

1. Pavement; width, type, structure, and condition.
 2. Shoulders; width, type, and structure.
 3. Access; type control, number and length of each section which is considered urban or rural.
 4. Right of Way; prevailing right of way width and the number and location of all county roads, streets, or highways intersecting the existing route.
 5. Bridges; number, width, type and condition of bridges.
 6. Alignment; a general description of the horizontal and vertical alignment.
 7. Railroads; the location, number of tracks, frequency of train usage and type crossing.
 8. Utilities; the general location and type utilities paralleling or crossing the facility.
 9. Recreational: location of recreational areas, game refuges, and forest lands, etc.
 10. Public Facilities; location of airfields and flight paths, schools, churches, historical sites, industrial sites, and other public buildings or facilities.
- F. The Location/Design Committee may be reconvened at the discretion of the State Aid Engineer at any time during the process prior to FHWA approval of the environmental document.
- G. The “Finding Of No Significant Impact” (FONSI) or “Record of Decision” (ROD) by the FHWA will be the approval date of the Location/Design of the project. On the “Categorical Exclusion” (CE) projects, the date of FHWA’s concurrence will be the date of approval.