

Environmental Impact Statements (EIS)

NEPA requires that Federal agencies prepare Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for major Federal actions that significantly affect the quality of the human environment. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) prepares EISs for transportation proposals funded under its authority when it has been determined that the proposal will have a significant effect on the human environment. EISs are required for less than 5 percent of all FHWA projects, but require the most effort, time and money to complete. The EIS process is carried out in two separate phases which result in the preparation of a draft EIS and a final EIS. Both are full disclosure documents that provide a full description of the proposed project, the existing environment, and analysis of the anticipated beneficial and adverse environmental effects of all reasonable alternatives. (FHWA 2003)

Ongoing EIS Projects

R60101	Hwy 67 – I-40 West (Northbelt)
009969	Bella Vista – Pineville, MO (Hwy 71 Relocation)
001747	DeQueen – I-40 (Hwy 71 Relocation)
30108	Texarkana – DeQueen (Hwy 71 Relocation)
R30079	LA Line – Texarkana (Hwy 71 Relocation)
001966	Springdale Northern Bypass
020133	Great River Bridge
020316	I-69 (Hwy 65 – Mississippi Route 1)
001873	I-69 (El Dorado – McGehee)
070212	I-69 (El Dorado – Shreveport)
001851	Southeast Arkansas I-69 Connector Study

Environmental Assessments (EA)

When it is uncertain whether there will be significant impacts resulting from a transportation project, an environmental assessment (EA) is often prepared to help answer that question and to document the analysis of the project and its effects.

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) suggests that EAs should be only 10 to 15 pages in length. It is often not possible to stay within these page limits, especially if information related to a permit is included. It is, however, instructive to understand CEQ's philosophy on the brevity of the EA: the document should only provide detailed information on issues for which there is potential for a significant impact.

Neither the CEQ regulations nor the FHWA Technical Advisory 6640.8A require a standard format to be used for an EA, although the Technical advisory outlines the format typically used for FHWA projects. Briefly, the subject areas addressed are: project description, need, alternatives considered, impacts, and comments and coordination.

The EA is subject to FHWA approval before it is made available to the public as an FHWA document. It need not be circulated for comment, but must be made available for public inspection. A notice of availability must be sent to State and area wide clearinghouses and be placed in local newspapers. Depending on FHWA-approved State procedures, a public hearing may or may not be required. The availability period for an EA is usually 30 days but may be less under rare circumstances. (FHWA 2003)

Environmental Assessment's Approved by FHWA since January 1, 2003

040151	Nob Hill – Madison County Line (Hwy 412) Washington County
R90094	Mountain Home – Hwy 101 (Hwy 62) Baxter County
100496	Hwy 141 – Paragould (Hwy 412) Greene County

For further assistance or information please contact:

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