



BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA – FEBRUARY 27, 2002

- Other high priority corridors should be included in this study.
- Maintenance of I-10 is an issue. I-10 is an aging system that requires continuous maintenance. The whole interstate system needs maintenance. There were no guidelines when the interstate system was built. Uniform national standards are in place now, but I-10 was built before those standards were put into place.
- The Millennium Port is a key link to I-10.
- The petrochemical industry is vitally important to the community.
- Consider the wealth and poverty of the state.
- The US 90 Bridge in Lake Charles was incorporated into I-10; it was not an original part of the I-10 design.
- There were numerous comments about I-10 in the Baton Rouge area. Local commuter traffic was cited as a major problem. I-10 has turned into a virtual parking lot in Baton Rouge. The narrowing of I-10 to one lane at the bridge is a major problem. Traffic weaves between Acadia and College, coming from LSU (Louisiana State University), are causing a bottleneck. Eastbound traffic is stopped at the bridge and upstream to Acadia and College exits. A lot of truck traffic originates or stops in the Baton Rouge area, as opposed to moving through. The number of intersections is also an issue.
- LA 76 & 190 are under construction at the same time, causing a congestion problem.
- Twice as many trucks take I-12 at the split than I-10.
- Highway 73 diverted hazardous cargo freight from I-10.
- Safety is a major issue, especially in terms of hurricane evacuation. I-10 is the only way in or out of southern Louisiana, and only three bridges cross the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans.
- There need to be alternative routes for freight traffic through major urban areas. Consider loops and bypasses around local areas that could be used as alternate truck routes, including Baton Rouge. Change tight loops at US 55/I-12 and at I-12/US 59. Additional lanes in certain areas are needed, including the foot of the bridge on I-10 eastbound in Baton Rouge. Single lane off-ramps and the location and design of the on/off ramps in the area are concerns.
- Consider increasing the length of the deceleration/acceleration lanes. “Jump ramps” and ramp metering (lights); and adding new frontage or service roads along I-10 in coordination with local communities
- Adding lanes may not be feasible because of environmental concerns, specifically the wetlands issues.

- Idling trucks at weigh-stations are a concern. There are issues of increasing the cost of goods and increased pollution.
- Change the construction policy to decrease congestion by including traffic management work zones.
- Increase the amount of freight moved by rail and barge. Efficiency of rail in the New Orleans area is an issue along with the need for an additional rail crossing between New Orleans and Mississippi.
- Consider the use of right-of-way for passenger vehicles.
- Problems have been discussed before. The question is how to solve them. There is a need to secure federal funding for I-10, with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) encouraged to take a more active role.
- Local companies and major users of the system should be added to the stakeholder group.
- The Chambers of Commerce, in various cities along the Gulf states, have formed a coalition to look at issues and support funding for needed projects. This group may be able to assist I-10 efforts.
- A number of questions were asked including:
 - Q:** Will I-49 south relieve I-10 traffic?
 - A:** *This study will consider alternate routes.*
 - Q:** Will I-12 be included in this study?
 - A:** *Again, alternate routes will be considered, but at a general level.*
 - Q:** Will economic impact be considered, including national economic impact, given the advantage of improving the network to the nation?
 - A:** *Yes, this will be considered in this study.*
 - Q:** Who is leading this study?
 - A:** *This is a pooled-fund study with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) acting as the contract administrator. A Steering Committee and a Technical Advisory Committee oversee this study.*
- A written comment stated that a new Mississippi River bridge/bypass is needed for the Baton Rouge area; and that I-12 needs to be included in this study since it handles I-10 traffic from Baton Rouge to Mississippi.

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- A study of Grammercy Bridge and a connection to I-10 has been completed. The estimated cost of the connection is \$50 million; and there are wetlands issues.
- The Ports and Waterways Commission in Washington D.C. is doing a study on the Port of New Orleans. Sealand is doing some movement of cargo on the GIWW from Baton Rouge to Houston.

- The Louisiana Airport Authority is studying the feasibility of a cargo area in southeast Louisiana. The site analysis is scheduled for completion by summer 2002 followed by the Master Plan.
- There is a large volume of truck traffic on I-10, increased congestion and a lack of interstate miles in Louisiana.
- Rail traffic in New Orleans is increasing and causing delays, as long as several days, at the Mississippi River Crossing. I-10 is the only way in and out of the New Orleans area.
- There is lost opportunity cost for not improving I-10, but there are land issues and constraints.
- Calcasieu River Bridge in Lake Charles is a concern.
- Flooding of evacuation routes is a concern in St. John Parish.
- Improvements to several interchanges and other strategic connectors to I-10 were suggested including: cloverleaf interchanges at I-12/I-55, I-12/I-59 and I-10/I-49; an interchange from I-10 to I-55; US 61 and other interstate connectors through residential areas; and upgrading of I-49 and I-12.
- Other suggested improvements included: an alternative expressway to New Orleans; a bypass around Baton Rouge, though it may not be feasible; and increasing I-10 to four lanes in Baton Rouge, south of the river. The desirability of implementing an incentive program, encouraging truckers to use alternate routes, and improving the behavior of all drivers were mentioned.
- Encouraging the use of other modes of transport, including rail and barge, was discussed. The need for double-track, to increase rail capacity, was noted as well as the potential for longer terminal hours at receiving facilities. The potential to use taxes to improve canal and rivers for marine transport with container barges, such as the ones used in Europe, was raised.
- There is a need for parking lots for commuter rail.
- Question asked:

Q: Is there a realistic chance for funding interstate rail travel for passengers?

A: *The study team said it did not know.*