

Bishopville Project 2030

Lee County and the City of Bishopville are working together to actively seek ways to improve economic opportunity and vitality within their borders. Lee County has two certified industrial parks that provide large-scale business opportunity to the area, containing site-ready pads and a 50,000 square foot spec building awaiting business location. These are respectively located beside the interchanges of I-20 on both US-341 and US-15, and as such they both sit on major freight corridors for the state of South Carolina as a whole. These parks produce a large volume of freight traffic which utilizes these routes daily.

A study carried out by SCDOT has shown that in part due to these locations and the strategic routing advantages of US-15 and SC-341, which meet in the center of the City of Bishopville, on average 700 freight-carrying vehicles move through the City's downtown area daily. This is an incredibly high volume for a less than 1.7-mile stretch of road, especially through a vital economic area such as downtown Bishopville.

As such, Lee County, the City of Bishopville, The LINK, Santee-lynches Regional Council of Governments (SLCOG), and the SCDOT have partnered together to find ways to improve the movability of freight goods within the City and County and at the same time make the area safer for motorists and rejuvenate and revitalize economic opportunity for both jurisdictions. Together these efforts are referred to as Bishopville Project 2030 which seeks to better position the community for future job growth and economic development.

The initial efforts to this process are a result of three separate federal bills passed between 2003 and 2005 that set aside earmark funding totaling \$5.6 million for freight transportation improvements in Lee County near the City of Bishopville and a partnership with Santee-Lynches Council of Governments which has committed a further \$14 million to these improvements.

This includes establishing an alternative route for freight carrying vehicles near the City. This new route will allow for the safe and more reliable movement of goods in and through the City and County which will ultimately improve opportunity at the local industrial parks by demonstrating reliability in moving goods which in return results in less time spent traveling and reduced travel costs. The strategic location of these industrial parks near I-20 already makes them attractive but having a new and reliable way to transfer goods locally will only highlight and improve the transportation opportunities businesses have.

This step will also greatly reduce the congestion in downtown Bishopville which will make the area safer for both motorists and pedestrians alike. These improvements will benefit the County and the City by allowing concerted efforts to make downtown a more walkable and user-friendly space for those who wish the visit for retail purposes. Studies repeatedly have shown that a safer and more walkable downtown attracts more visitors, which in turn increases opportunities for new business clientele. With more individuals visiting and enjoying the downtown area, economic opportunities for the City of Bishopville and Lee County will vastly improve as businesses look to locate there to tap into the new found potential patrons enjoying a revitalized Bishopville



Project Status Update

The South Carolina Department of Transportation has reviewed 24 potential routing alternatives for this project. Out of those reviewed, they have selected 3 preliminary options that represent the most economically efficient, least environmentally impacting, and most socially conscious options of all potential routes. SCDOT is in the process of completing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for these alternatives which will help to further understand the environmental impacts of the project, and help to dictate the final route for the proposed project.

A decision on the final best alternative route is expected by the end of Summer 2021 with construction set to start in 2022.

