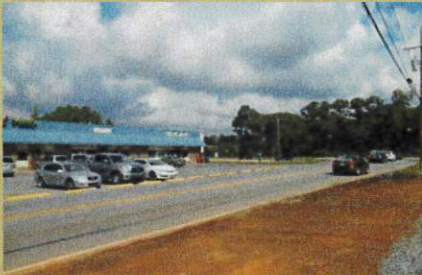




Mississippi Gulf Coast  
Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Gulf Regional Planning Commission



**BKI**

# Beachview Drive Traffic Study

*Old Spanish Trail to Lake Mars Avenue*

Project No. 106821-101000

**Prepared For**  
*MS Department of Transportation,  
Gulf Regional Planning Commission  
and Jackson County, MS*



October 31, 2015



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## Project Description and Purpose

BKI, as assigned by the Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC) in partnership with Jackson County, MS, has conducted a study of traffic operations along Beachview Drive, a collector, located within the Gulf Park Estates area of unincorporated Jackson County (See Figure 1). The corridor, which is approximately 2.0 miles long, is located approximately 5.0 miles east of downtown Ocean Springs.



*Beachview Dr, looking south toward Palmetto St*

Beachview Drive is 2-lanes, with no shoulders along its length. The posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour for the length of the corridor. There are no sidewalks, although side-paths appear at intermittent locations in the grassy areas along the corridor between the edge of the current road surface and open ditch drainage. The area has no traffic controls (all-way stops or traffic signals) except at the ends of the corridor. A traffic signal is at the northern intersection with Old Spanish Trail and a stop sign at the southern end of the corridor at Neptune Drive.

Pedestrians and cyclists are in evidence along the corridor, as observed during field visits to the corridor. As there are no facilities to accommodate these user groups, their options for using the corridor included sharing space in the travel lanes with passing traffic or using off road areas between the edge of pavement and the adjacent drainage ditches.

An initial project start meeting was held with the community on September 18, 2014 (See Summary of *Community Comments/Input*) identified several needs for the area which should be considerations in looking at improvements along Beachview Drive:

- Cycling traffic – several residents indicated that they regularly cycle along the corridor to access nearby businesses and community facilities. During the field review, several cyclists traveled along the western edge of Beachview Drive, using a combination of existing pavement and off-road areas. *Future improvements will need to support area travel patterns, as well as offer opportunities to connect to Old Spanish Trail.*
- Pedestrian patterns – several residents indicated that they regularly walk the neighborhood for exercise, with the majority of these movements occurring on the streets surrounding Beachview Drive. *Future improvements will need to support creation of a safer walking environment in the area.*
- School bus pickups/drop-offs – buses transporting students to the nearby Ocean Springs School District facilities (Oak Park Elementary, Ocean Springs Middle School and Ocean Springs High School) regularly circulate the area. Students meet these buses at designated stop locations which are interspersed around the neighborhood. *Future improvements will need to incorporate these locations in the planning for improvements to the pedestrian infrastructure in the area.*
- Speed of traffic - residents reported that vehicles traveling along Beachview Drive appear to be moving at higher rate of speed than the posted limit. Compounding their concerns about this condition are the road's width, lack of shoulders and lighting and the area's topography which creates rises and falls in the corridor between its start and end. *Future*





*Beachview Dr, looking north over Simmons Bayou bridge*

*improvements will need to offer flexibility in order to address calming of traffic speeds, should further investigation indicate a problem.*

- Lack of street lighting – residents reported that the lack of lighting along Beachview Drive (and within the surrounding neighborhood) creates pockets of darkness that make walking or cycling not a safe choice during early morning or evening hours. *Future improvements will work within existing county policies and practices in order to outline a method to improve lighting in the general area.*

A final public information meeting (August 27, 2015) and 21-day public review and comment period for the plan (ending on September 21, 2015) provided additional comments and suggestions for potential refinements to the recommended improvement alternatives from the community.

## **Project Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to recommend a series of funded improvements for Beachview Drive and the surrounding area implemented through the GRPC's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process. Projects considered for funding through this process must meet with the established criteria for project development outlined in the GRPC's Transportation Improvement Program handbook as well as the region's overall goals for system development, outlined in the call-out box to the right.

In addition, the definition of project alternatives occurred in such a manner as to be consistent with the MDOT Local Public Agencies (LPA) process. This includes a general screening of the area of the project using several environmental indicators as means to identify early items which require additional coordination or consideration as part of the future design and project development process.

### **MPO Project Goals**

The goals identified by the MPO incorporates the input of residents from the Gulf Coast and its jurisdictions. The MPO's transportation program requires all planning and proposed projects achieve the following overall goals as part of its objective.

- Goal 1.0** Enhance Transportation System Mobility, Accessibility and Quality for All Roadway Users and Modes
- Goal 2.0** Enhance Regional Connectivity and Economic Viability
- Goal 3.0** Enhance Public Safety and Security
- Goal 4.0** Preserve and Protect Environmental Quality
- Goal 5.0** Support Regional Sustainability and Local Values
- Goal 6.0** Preserve Existing Community Resources

- From the Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation Improvement Program Handbook, GRPC, June 2011