

2. ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS ON ECONOMIC SECTORS

This chapter examines the City's economic base and identifies the ways in which I-73 alternatives would affect it. It builds upon more detailed analyses of the City's economy, tourism base and traffic changes which are provided in Appendices A, B and C. The analysis results in this chapter are then used as a basis for the findings which are presented in the next chapter.

❖ 2.1 Transportation Changes Affecting Business

The Research. The three alternative alignments were defined as illustrated in Chapter 1. Their economic impacts were analyzed by considering the city's economic trends (Appendix A), tourism patterns (Appendix B), forecast traffic changes associated with each of them (Appendix C) and experiences elsewhere (Appendix D). The economic impacts were estimated by considering how the alternative alignments would affect: (a) site accessibility to highways, (b) travel times to customer and supplier markets, (c) pass-by traffic volumes, (d) traffic congestion levels and (e) disruption of existing business activities.

Transportation Impacts Affecting the Economy. The I-73 alternatives would affect the City's economy and cause the following changes in condition:

(A) Site Accessibility and Development Potentials— The East Bypass and West Bypass alignments both open up new locations for businesses requiring highway access, as illustrated earlier in Figure 1-1 (Chapter 1).

The East Bypass Alignment provides the greatest potential for new development, with three new interchanges and generally open fields available along its route. Essentially all of that new development would be outside of the City limits. The new development could represent attractive alternatives for existing and future businesses that might otherwise locate within the city limits.

The West Bypass Alignment provides relatively limited opportunity for new development, since it would have just one new interchange southwest of the city and it has very hilly terrain along its path.

The Central Alignment provides very little opportunity for development of open space, but it does provide access and interchange improvements which could help to enhance opportunities for redevelopment of older commercial and industrial areas of the City. For that to occur, though, the City would have to have additional improvements made to local access streets, and programs initiated to more