

# **Appendix K:**

## Section 4(f) Evaluation





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John Bel Edwards, Governor  
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October 9, 2019

STATE PROJECT NO. H.001271  
FEDERAL-AID PROJECT NO. H001271  
CANE RIVER BRIDGE CHURCH STREET ROUTE LA 1-X  
ROUTE: LA 1-X  
PARISH: NATCHITOCHEs

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Mr. Wes Bolinger  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
5304 Flanders Drive, Suite A  
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

**SUBJECT: Programmatic Section 4(f) Net Benefit Evaluation Finding for the Proposed Cane River Bridge Church Street Route LA 1-X Environmental Assessment Project**

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD), in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), proposes to replace the Cane River Bridge on Church Street in the city of Natchitoches, Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana. Portions of the construction will impact the Rue Beauport Riverfront. The recreational facility has been identified as a Section 4(f) resource.

Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation Act requires LADOTD to make an effort to preserve public park and recreational lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites. It also prohibits the use of Section 4(f) resources if feasible and prudent alternatives are available. In accordance with the requirements of Section 4(f), LADOTD has issued the attached Programmatic Section 4(f) Net Benefit Evaluation Finding for the proposed improvements.

A Section 4(f) Evaluation and Approval of Transportation Projects that have a Net Benefit to a Section 4(f) Property is prepared for certain federally assisted transportation improvement projects that will use a Section 4(f) property, which in the view of the Administration and official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) property, the use of the Section 4(f) property will result in a net benefit to the Section 4(f) property.

A "net benefit" is achieved when the transportation use, the measures to minimize harm, and the mitigation incorporated into the project results in an overall enhancement of the Section 4(f) property. A project does not achieve a "net benefit" if it will result in a substantial diminishment of the function or value that made the property eligible for Section 4(f) protection.

It is the intent of LADOTD to make a determination that the impacts to Rue Beauport Riverfront will result in a net benefit to the overall facility. We respectfully request your concurrence that the project facts match those set forth in the Applicability, Alternatives, Findings, Mitigation and Measures to Minimize Harm, Coordination, and Public involvement sections of this programmatic evaluation and result in a clear net benefit to the Section 4(f) property.

**Should you approve of the determination, please respond in Section 1, pg. 2 of the checklist, and sign and date in Section 8, pg. 13 of the Section 4(f) Net Benefit Evaluation Finding.**

The Programmatic Section 4(f) Net Benefit finding will be released for public review at the same time as the EA for the proposed improvements, and copies of the finding will be provided to your office directly, as well as in the Final EA.

Please provide your response to the agreement by **November 8, 2019** to the below address. Additionally, if you have any additional questions or comments, please contact Ms. Robin Daigle at [robin.daigle@la.gov](mailto:robin.daigle@la.gov) or via phone at 225-242-4508.

Sincerely,



Noel Ardoin  
Environmental Engineer Administrator

Enclosures  
Programmatic Section 4(f) Net Benefit Evaluation  
Programmatic Section 4(f) Net Benefit Checklist

cc: FHWA

Lynn Heisler (via e-mail to [Lynn.Heisler@dot.gov](mailto:Lynn.Heisler@dot.gov) w/ attachments)  
Jacob Fusilier (via e-mail to [Jacob.Fusilier@la.gov](mailto:Jacob.Fusilier@la.gov) w/ attachments)

**Programmatic Section 4(f) Net Benefit Evaluation**

**Project: H.001271 Cane River Bridge Church Street Route LA 1-X Environmental Assessment**

**Location: Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana**

**S.P. No: H.001271**

**F.P. No: H001271**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The following Programmatic Section 4(f) Net Benefit Evaluation discusses the unavoidable impacts to the Rue Beauport Riverfront property in the City of Natchitoches, Louisiana as a result of proposed reconstruction of the Cane River Bridge. The proposed project is expected to provide an overall enhancement to the property when compared to the future No-Build Alternative (i.e. no reconstruction of the Cane River Bridge), Avoidance Alternatives, and the present condition of the Section 4(f) Property.

**Section 4(f) Legislation**

Section 4(f) refers to the section within the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 which provided for consideration of park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites during transportation project development. The law, now codified in 49 U.S.C. §303 and 23 U.S.C. §138, applies only to the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT), and is implemented by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration through the regulation 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 774.

A Section 4(f) Evaluation and Approval of Transportation Projects that have a Net Benefit to a Section 4(f) Property document is prepared for certain federally assisted transportation improvement projects on existing or new alignments that will use property of a Section 4(f) park, recreation area, wildlife or waterfowl refuge, or historic property, which in the view of the Administration and official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) property, believe that the use of this Section 4(f) property will result in a net benefit.

**Determination of Applicability**

A "net benefit" is achieved when measures to minimize harm are incorporated into the project that results in an overall enhancement of the Section 4(f) property when compared to existing conditions or providing for a No-Build Alternative. A project does not achieve a "net benefit" if it will result in a substantial diminishment of the function or value that made the property eligible for Section 4(f) protection.

The programmatic evaluation satisfies the requirements of Section 4(f) for projects meeting the applicability criteria listed below:

Yes	No	Criteria
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed transportation project uses a Section 4(f) park, recreation area, wildlife or waterfowl refuge, or historic site.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed project includes all appropriate measures to minimize harm and subsequent mitigation necessary to preserve and enhance those features and values of the property that originally qualified the property for Section 4(f) protection.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) property agree in writing with the assessment of the impacts; the proposed measures to minimize harm; and the mitigation necessary to preserve, rehabilitate and enhance those features and values of the Section 4(f) property; and that such measures will result in a net benefit to the Section 4(f) property.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Administration determines that the project facts match those set forth in the Applicability, Alternatives, Findings, Mitigation and Measures to Minimize Harm, Coordination, and Public Involvement sections of this programmatic evaluation.

## 2.0 PROPOSED ACTION

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD), in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), proposes to replace the Cane River Bridge on Church Street in the City of Natchitoches, Louisiana. The existing bridge is located within the Natchitoches Historic Landmark (NHL) District between Front Street and Williams Avenue. The bridge (Lat. 31.760718, Long. -93.084624) was constructed in 1936, and consists of a two-lane concrete deck girder bridge with two 12-foot bi-directional travel lanes and 4-foot-wide sidewalks on both sides (see Appendix 1 for the project map).

### Purpose and Need

The Cane River Bridge at Church Street provides a vital transportation connection to the historical commercial downtown areas of Natchitoches along the west bank of the Cane River Lake and to the historical residential areas along the east bank of the lake. This project is needed to maintain connectivity between the east and west bank of the Cane River Lake for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic, to provide a bridge that addresses bridge deficiencies related to the age and design of the existing bridge, and to improve traffic function between the bridge and adjacent intersections (functional deficiencies).

### Project Alternatives Considered

A line and grade study was prepared as part of the NEPA environmental assessment process in which the following four Build Alternatives were developed and presented in a public meeting held on November 1, 2018:

- **Alternative 1** – Replace the Cane River Bridge on a skewed alignment with a temporary bridge located at Touline Street;
- **Alternative 2** – Replace the Cane River Bridge on the same alignment with a temporary bridge located at Touline Street;
- **Alternative 3** – Remove and replace the existing Cane River Bridge on a skewed alignment, without utilizing staged construction nor a temporary bridge; and
- **Alternative 4** – Remove and replace the existing Cane River Bridge on the same alignment, without utilizing staged construction nor a temporary bridge.

Following the Public Meeting and after receiving a Finding of No Adverse Effect determination from the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), two of the four alternatives (Alternatives 1 and 3) were identified as build alternatives to further evaluate. This decision was based on the impact data obtained during desktop and field evaluations for each alternative. Additionally, the proposed skewed replacement bridge better meets the project’s purpose and need, by realigning the Church Street/St. Clair Avenue intersection, which may help to improve the intersection operations and safety. The FHWA and LADOTD concurred upon the following two Build Alternatives to carry into detailed evaluation:

- **Alternative 1** proposes to replace the existing Cane River Bridge at Church Street on a 6° skewed alignment, as well as the installation of a temporary detour bridge at Touline Street.

- **Alternative 3** proposes to replace the existing Cane River Bridge on a skewed alignment identical to Alternative 1, having no temporary detour bridge with traffic being temporarily rerouted to the existing Pine Street Bridge.

In addition, the following avoidance alternatives were considered throughout the NEPA process and in the Section 4(f) evaluation:

- **No-Build Alternative** proposes no action, in which the proposed replacement bridge would not be constructed, and any project-related impacts because of new construction would be avoided.
- **Improvement without Using Adjacent Section 4(f) Lands** proposes to improve the transportation facility in a manner that addresses the project’s purpose and need without use of the Section 4(f) property.
- **Alternative on New Location** proposes to build the transportation facility at a location that doesn’t require use of the Section 4(f) property.

Additional descriptions and findings of both the Build Alternatives and the Avoidance Alternatives is further discussed in Section 4.0. In addition, conceptual design elements of the project are found in the line and grade study plates for the Build Alternatives, provided for reference as Appendix 2.

### **3.0 DESCRIPTION OF 4(f) PROPERTY**

There is one recreational resource that exists along the project corridor—the Rue Beauport Riverfront Park. The following sections provide more detail of the Section 4(f) property. A visual photo log and location map with property boundaries and right-of-way (ROW) is included in this report as Appendix 3 and Appendix 4, respectively.

#### **Size and Location of Impact**

The Rue Beauport Riverfront Park is approximately 4.63 acres and is located adjacent to and underneath the existing Cane River Bridge on the west bank of the Cane River Lake. According to the Natchitoches Parish Assessor’s office, the limits of the park span from just north of Lafayette Street to just south of Toulaine Street.

#### **Ownership and Type of Property**

Rue Beauport Riverfront Park is publicly owned and operated by the City of Natchitoches. The riverfront primarily serves as an event park within the downtown Natchitoches area. The park is open to the public and visitation is essentially permitted at any time.

#### **Function of Activities**

The Rue Beauport Riverfront Park primary use includes hosting festivals, parades, live music, and other various activities. Most of the activities occur at the newly constructed amphitheater, which is located just north of the existing bridge; however, the events expand throughout the riverfront with vendors and other activities spread out along the entire riverbank of the downtown area. The riverfront was recently renovated with an unveiling ceremony held in November 2017. Recent renovations included a new festival stage with amphitheater seating, a new Santa Claus house with restroom facilities, handicapped accessible ramps and staircases leading down to the riverfront, and a brick promenade which is adjacent to Cane River Lake. The riverfront park also contains a walking path, parking spaces, park benches, trash receptacles, and restroom facilities. Photographs of the Rue Beauport Riverfront Park are provided in Appendix 3.

#### **Access and Usage**

Access to the park is currently available from Front Street. The entrance is located at the intersection of Front Street/Toulaine Street. Egress from the park is provided near the intersection of Front Street/Lafayette Street.

Parking spaces are available along the riverfront park as well as in the form of on-street parking along Front Street.

#### 4.0 Description of Alternatives and Findings

The intent of Section 4(f) policies is to avoid the use of significant public parks, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, historic sites, and recreational areas as part of a project, unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land. In order to demonstrate that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of Section 4(f) lands, the evaluation must address the No-Build Alternative, the improvement without using adjacent Section 4(f) lands alternative, and an alternative on a new location, which all avoid the property. In addition, the alternative selected must also address the purpose and need of the project.

#### Avoidance Alternatives and Findings

The below checklist demonstrates that a range of alternatives were fully evaluated and demonstrates that there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the use of Section 4(f) property.

##### 1. No-Build Alternative:

This alternative is not feasible and prudent because it would neither address nor correct the transportation need cited as the NEPA purpose and need, which necessitated the proposed project.  
True False

A **No-Build Alternative** is required by NEPA to be studied for purposes of comparison and for consideration in cases where adverse impacts to the environment may outweigh the benefits derived from addressing the purpose and need. For the No-Build Alternative, the proposed replacement bridge would not be constructed, and any project-related impacts because of new construction would be avoided. The No-Build Alternative would include recurring temporary improvements for keeping the bridge structurally acceptable to LADOTD and safe to the traveling public. This alternative would have recurring costs and cannot guarantee that if this bridge continues to degrade structurally that the LADOTD would not have to permanently close the bridge to all vehicular traffic. This alternative is not recommended.

##### 2. Improvement without Using Adjacent Section 4(f) Lands: It is not feasible and prudent to avoid Section 4(f) lands by roadway design or transportation system management. Implementing such measures would result in *(Indicate all that apply)*:

- Substantial adverse community impacts to adjacent homes, businesses or other improved properties
- Substantially increased roadway or structure cost
- Unique engineering, traffic, maintenance, or safety problems
- Substantial adverse social, economic, or environmental impacts
- A substantial missed opportunity to benefit a Section 4(f) property
- The project not meeting identified transportation needs
- Impacts, costs, or problems would be truly unusual or unique, or of extraordinary magnitude when compared with the proposed use of Section 4(f) lands.

It is not feasible to improve the existing bridge without using adjacent Section 4(f) Lands. The Cane River Bridge is currently over 80 years old and has exceeded its useful service life. Despite efforts to repair and rehabilitate the existing bridge, deterioration has progressed significantly making temporary repairs not practical long-term.

Traffic in the area has increased to the point where the current two-lane bridge having no turn lanes causes traffic congestion in the downtown area throughout the day. The bridge is currently posted with weight limits (10 tons for 2 axle trucks/15 tons for 3 axle trucks) due to the bridge's current structural status, thus limiting efficient delivery of goods and materials to downtown businesses. It is not feasible and prudent to avoid Section 4(f) lands; thus, this alternative is not recommended.

3. **Alternative on New Location:** It is not feasible and prudent to avoid Section 4(f) lands by constructing on new alignment because *(Indicate all that apply)*:

- The new location would not address or correct the problems cited as the NEPA purpose and need, which necessitated the proposed project.
- The new location would result in substantial adverse social, economic, or environmental impacts.
- The new location would substantially increase costs or engineering.
- Such problems, impacts, costs, or difficulties would be truly unusual or unique, or of extraordinary magnitude when compared with the proposed use of Section 4(f) lands.

Numerous configurations were evaluated including rebuilding the bridge in various locations along the Cane River Lake. These studied alignments were not feasible or prudent and would have substantial adverse community impacts to the existing residents, businesses, and motorists in the area. Relocating the bridge would be detrimental to the historic nature as well as the economic activities in Downtown Natchitoches. It is not feasible and prudent to avoid Section 4(f) lands; thus, these alternatives are not recommended.

#### **Build Alternatives and Findings**

Two alternatives and the No-Build Alternative are being carried forward into the final stages of an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the replacement of the bridge to meet the project's purpose and need.

**Alternative 1** consists of closing the bridge and constructing a new permanent bridge, having a temporary detour bridge in place to ensure two lanes of travel remains within the project vicinity throughout the entire duration of construction activities. The temporary detour bridge will be provided approximately 500-ft. south of the existing bridge for traffic during construction at Touline Street (Lat. 31.759367, Long. -93.086274). The temporary detour bridge would be removed after construction.

The proposed reconstruction of the Cane River Bridge would require the acquisition of approximately 0.11 acres and the temporary use of approximately 0.16 acres of the existing Rue Beauport Riverfront Park. A map of the required right-of-way and existing property boundaries is provided as Appendix 4. Although portions of the existing brick pathway, driveway, landscape and other features would be impacted, the project does not result in a substantial diminishment of the function or value of the park area. The proposed project would require the conversion of existing recreational land within the Rue Beauport Riverfront to transportation use. The portion near the existing Cane River Bridge, on the western bridge end, is where impacts to the park would occur. The proposed widening of the existing bridge is necessary to improve capacity and congestion along the Cane River Bridge. The widening of the bridge on a skewed alignment will result in a larger loss on the southern side of the existing bridge and minimal loss on the northern side. The amphitheater is located to the north of the existing bridge.

The temporary construction servitude necessary within the recreational facility is 0.16 acres, if the temporary bridge alternative is selected. The proposed project would require the temporary conversion of existing recreational land within the Rue Beauport Riverfront to temporary transportation use. The portion south of the

existing Cane River Bridge, on the western bridge end, is where the temporary impacts would occur. Construction associated with this project may require temporary closure of the western Rue Beauport Riverfront driveway access, having the eastern driveway utilized for both ingress and egress. This option would only be impacted during construction and will return to its original or improved state following construction.

**Alternative 3** consists of closing the bridge and constructing a new permanent bridge. Traffic would be routed to other state routes during construction. The proposed permanent new bridge, for both alternatives, will be built off of the existing alignment by skewing the east end of the new bridge, approximately 6° to meet at the existing intersection of Williams Avenue and St. Clair Avenue.

The proposed reconstruction of the Cane River Bridge would require the acquisition of approximately 0.11 acres. A map of the required right-of-way and existing property boundaries is provided as Appendix 4. Although portions of the existing brick pathway, driveway, landscape and other features would be impacted, the project does not result in a substantial diminishment of the function or value of the park area. The proposed project would require the conversion of existing recreational land within the Rue Beauport Riverfront to transportation use. The portion near the existing Cane River Bridge, on the western bridge end, is where impacts to the park would occur. The proposed widening of the existing bridge is necessary to improve capacity and congestion along the Cane River Bridge. The widening of the bridge on a skewed alignment will result in a larger loss on the southern side of the existing bridge and minimal loss on the northern side. The amphitheater is located to the north of the existing bridge.

## **5.0 Mitigation and Measures to Minimize Harm**

This programmatic evaluation and approval may be used only for projects where the Administration, in accordance with this evaluation, ensures that the proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm, includes appropriate mitigation measures, and that the official(s) with jurisdiction agree in writing. The below paragraphs demonstrate the minimization and mitigation efforts proposed for the project. The following checklist clearly demonstrates that the proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize and mitigate harm.

*Indicate all that apply, but a minimum of one must be selected.*

- The proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm
- The proposed action includes all possible mitigation measures

The below paragraphs detail the minimization and mitigation efforts proposed for this project for both alternatives. Renderings displaying the proposed facility is included as Appendix 5.

### **Alternative 1**

#### ***ROW and Temporary Servitude Acquisition***

- In order to accommodate the widened replacement bridge, which is necessary to provide adequate capacity for storing turning vehicles through the implementation of a shared center turning lane as well as to provide wider sidewalks to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists, approximately 0.11 acres of land will need to be acquired along the existing Cane River Bridge ROW within the Rue Beauport Riverfront. This represents the minimal acquisition necessary to accommodate these uses.

- In order to provide continual access during construction across the Cane River Lake within the project vicinity, a temporary construction servitude is required. Approximately 0.16 acres of land will need to serve as a temporary construction servitude during construction of the temporary and permanent bridges. This represents the minimal acquisition necessary to accommodate these uses.

#### ***Visual Resources***

- Aligning the proposed construction with its historic and cultural context is important, and each element should be considered during construction. The replacement Cane River Bridge decorative railings is recommended to match as reasonably possible to the existing railing design and must include a powder coated surface finish. Additionally, the street lights and landscape lights are to be such that they match the existing design as reasonably possible.
- The existing Cane River Bridge has three pile bents, each consisting of six concrete piles, located directly within the Rue Beauport Riverfront Park. The proposed replacement Cane River Bridge allows for a configuration of only one bent consisting of only four columns, located directly within the park. This proposed improvement will benefit in creating more unobstructed views of the riverfront and allow for a more open space for all users to traverse (Appendix 5).
- In addition, due to the longer bridge spans proposed for the replacement bridge, there will be less bridge bents and columns within the Cane River Lake, which benefits the overall view and accessibility of the lake.
- Cuts, fills, and other land modifications would be designed and constructed to minimize impact to scenic values.
- Overall, constructing a new bridge, while implementing similar historic features of the existing bridge, will benefit the visual resources of the area. The existing bridge is over 80 years old and has unappealing physical characteristics such as cracking, exposed aggregate, steel reinforcement, exposed electrical wiring, corrosion, and physical movement and rotation of the bridge's existing substructure (i.e. bridge bents and piles). A new bridge structure will be more visually appealing.

#### ***Park Features***

- Since there will be no bridge piles within the existing brick walkway of the park, the area that currently accommodates the existing bridge piles can be reconfigured to add a new park feature. As an example, additional park benches could be added underneath the proposed replacement bridge to provide shaded seating area along the walkway and bike racks can be strategically placed within the riverfront park (Appendix 5).
- Any park feature that is to be removed during construction shall be replaced, including for the construction of the temporary bridge. This includes, but is not limited to trash receptacles, landscaping, park benches, light posts, and any other feature.
- A landscape and planting plan shall be developed as a part of the construction documents. The plan should include details on any trees that will be removed/replaced, as well as any new landscaping. This plan should be consistent with the existing vegetation plan at the Rue Beauport Riverfront.

#### ***Access***

- The proposed project would provide improved bicycle and pedestrian access to the existing facility by reconstructing the sidewalks along the Cane River Bridge, which connect to sidewalks adjacent to Front Street, ultimately providing pedestrian access to Rue Beauport Riverfront.

- During the entire construction duration for the temporary bridge (Build Alternative 1), the southern access to Rue Beauport Riverfront will remain closed, as well as vehicular access spanning from the existing Cane River Bridge south to the southern driveway access. Vehicles are anticipated to be able to enter and exit the Rue Beauport Riverfront at the existing northern access location. Minimal pedestrian impacts are anticipated, as detour access is to be provided and signed during construction, allowing continual access to the restroom facilities, located south of the entrance. Once the temporary bridge is constructed, access to the restroom facilities and the Santa House is expected to resume normally or by use of pedestrian protected walkways.
- During construction of the replacement bridge, vehicles are anticipated to be able to enter and exit the Rue Beauport Riverfront at the existing northern access location. Parking will remain in place from the northern entrance to just north of the existing amphitheater which is where temporary dead-end signs should be placed. Temporary signage is to be placed near this area, due to the narrowing of the roadway, to not allow two-way traffic. The main purpose of the closure is to prohibit vehicles from passing underneath the bridge during the construction of the replacement bridge as well as to prohibit two-way traffic as there will only be one ingress/egress location.
- Temporary pedestrian access closures may be expected during major bridge construction within the Rue Beauport Riverfront such as pile and deck installation or during demolition. Pedestrians can be directed to use the existing steps leading to Front Street on the west to go around the construction to access the restroom facilities during these operations. Once deemed safe, pedestrian access can be provided during the construction of the replacement bridge in the form of pedestrian protected walkways.

***Historic Resources***

- Through consultation efforts, SHPO determined that the actions would constitute having no adverse effect on historic properties, including the NHL, if the following conditions were met:
  - Design plans for the new replacement bridge must be submitted to SHPO for review and comment. SHPO will respond with comments on the design within 30 days and must concur that the new bridge design will not adversely affect the Natchitoches National Register Historic District.
  - Landscape plans must be submitted to SHPO for review and comment. This includes details on any trees that will be removed/replaced, as well as any new landscaping. SHPO must concur that the landscape plan will not adversely affect the Natchitoches National Register Historic District.
  - The brick pavers along Front Street are also a contributing element to the district. In order to ensure that there is not an effect on this feature, the following stipulations must be met if any bricks are disturbed:
    - All bricks removed from the project area during construction must be carefully removed by hand to minimize breakage;
    - All recoverable, structurally sound bricks removed from the project area will be reused as paving material for the current project;
    - All recoverable, structurally sound bricks removed from the project area will be manually cleaned, handled, and stacked to minimize breakage;
    - New custom-made bricks must be used to replace any damaged bricks. These must be, to the extent possible, identical in size, shape, and color to the existing brick pavers; and

- The construction contractor will relay the new street surface to replicate the existing brick pattern, including the diamond shaped pattern at intersections where these patterns occur.

### **Alternative 3**

#### ***ROW and Temporary Servitude Acquisition***

- In order to accommodate the widened replacement bridge, which is necessary to provide adequate capacity for storing turning vehicles through the implementation of a shared center turning lane as well as to provide wider sidewalks to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists, approximately 0.11 acres of land will need to be acquired along the existing Cane River Bridge ROW within the Rue Beauport Riverfront. This represents the minimal acquisition necessary to accommodate these uses.
- No temporary construction servitude is required for Alternative 3, as no temporary detour bridge is proposed for this alternative.

#### ***Visual Resources***

- Aligning the proposed construction with its historic and cultural context is important, and each element should be considered during construction. The replacement Cane River Bridge decorative railings is recommended to match as reasonably possible to the existing railing design and must include a powder coated surface finish. Additionally, the street lights and landscape lights are to be such that they match the existing design as reasonably possible.
- The existing Cane River Bridge has three pile bents, each consisting of six concrete piles, located directly within the Rue Beauport Riverfront Park. The proposed replacement Cane River Bridge allows for a configuration of only one bent consisting of only four columns, located directly within the park. This proposed improvement will benefit in creating more unobstructed views of the riverfront and allow for a more open space for all users to traverse (Appendix 5).
- In addition, due to the longer bridge spans proposed for the replacement bridge, there will be less bridge bents and columns within the Cane River Lake, which benefits the overall view and accessibility of the lake.
- Cuts, fills, and other land modifications would be designed and constructed to minimize impact to scenic values.
- Overall, constructing a new bridge, while implementing similar historic features of the existing bridge, will benefit the visual resources of the area. The existing bridge is over 80 years old and has unappealing physical characteristics such as cracking, exposed aggregate, steel reinforcement, exposed electrical wiring, corrosion, and physical movement and rotation of the bridge's existing substructure (i.e. bridge bents and piles). A new bridge structure will be more visually appealing.

#### ***Park Features***

- Since there will be no bridge piles within the existing brick walkway of the park, the area that currently accommodates the existing bridge piles can be reconfigured to add a new park feature. As an example, additional park benches could be added underneath the proposed replacement bridge to provide shaded seating area along the walkway and bike racks can be strategically placed within the riverfront park (Appendix 5).

- Any park feature that is to be removed during construction shall be replaced. This includes, but is not limited to trash receptacles, landscaping, park benches, light posts, and any other feature.
- A landscape and planting plan shall be developed as a part of the construction documents. The plan should include details on any trees that will be removed/replaced, as well as any new landscaping. This plan should be consistent with the existing vegetation plan at the Rue Beauport Riverfront.

#### ***Access***

- The proposed project would provide improved bicycle and pedestrian access to the existing facility by reconstructing the sidewalks along the Cane River Bridge, which connect to sidewalks adjacent to Front Street, ultimately providing pedestrian access to Rue Beauport Riverfront.
- During construction of the replacement bridge, vehicles are anticipated to be able to enter and exit the Rue Beauport Riverfront at the existing northern access location. Parking will remain in place from the northern entrance to just north of the existing amphitheater which is where temporary dead-end signs should be placed. Temporary signage is to be placed near this area, due to the narrowing of the roadway, to not allow two-way traffic. The main purpose of the closure is to prohibit vehicles from passing underneath the bridge during the construction of the replacement bridge as well as to prohibit two-way traffic as there will only be one ingress/egress location.
- Temporary pedestrian access closures may be expected during major bridge construction within the Rue Beauport Riverfront such as pile and deck installation or during demolition. Pedestrians can be directed to use the existing steps leading to Front Street on the west to go around the construction to access the restroom facilities during these operations. Once deemed safe, pedestrian access can be provided during the construction of the replacement bridge in the form of pedestrian protected walkways.

#### ***Historic Resources***

- Through consultation efforts, SHPO determined that the actions would constitute having no adverse effect on historic properties, including the NHL, if the following conditions were met:
  - Design plans for the new replacement bridge must be submitted to SHPO for review and comment. SHPO will respond with comments on the design within 30 days and must concur that the new bridge design will not adversely affect the Natchitoches National Register Historic District.
  - Landscape plans must be submitted to SHPO for review and comment. This includes details on any trees that will be removed/replaced, as well as any new landscaping. SHPO must concur that the landscape plan will not adversely affect the Natchitoches National Register Historic District.
  - The brick pavers along Front Street are also a contributing element to the district. In order to ensure that there is not an effect on this feature, the following stipulations must be met if any bricks are disturbed:
    - All bricks removed from the project area during construction must be carefully removed by hand to minimize breakage;
    - All recoverable, structurally sound bricks removed from the project area will be reused as paving material for the current project;
    - All recoverable, structurally sound bricks removed from the project area will be manually cleaned, handled, and stacked to minimize breakage;

- New custom-made bricks must be used to replace any damaged bricks. These must be, to the extent possible, identical in size, shape, and color to the existing brick pavers; and
- The construction contractor will relay the new street surface to replicate the existing brick pattern, including the diamond shaped pattern at intersections where these patterns occur.

It is the intent to make a determination that the impacts to the Rue Beauport Riverfront Park to have a “Net Benefit to a Section 4(f) Property.” In order to do so, the City of Natchitoches has to agree, in writing, to the proposed minimization and mitigation measures stated above. It is the intent to provide this draft document in its entirety to the City of Natchitoches for review, and it is anticipated that subsequent concurrence or conditional concurrence will be received based upon previous coordination efforts that have occurred to date. Once an agreement has been made, this document will be finalized and provided to all necessary parties. Section 6.0 of this document details the coordination, proposed minimization and mitigation efforts, and any agreement details with the City of Natchitoches regarding the Rue Beauport Riverfront Park. Appendix 6 provides the coordination efforts with the City of Natchitoches.

## 6.0 Coordination

The following checklist demonstrates various coordination efforts that have been made.

- Verify that the proposed project has been coordinated with the Federal, State, and/or local official having jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) property.

Throughout the stages of project development, this project required coordination with the official with jurisdiction, The City of Natchitoches. The below list demonstrates these various efforts.

- June 6, 2017—The City of Natchitoches was mailed a Solicitation of Views (SOV) request for input into the project improvements;
- September 21, 2017—The City of Natchitoches was invited to attend the Agency Scoping Meeting;
- December 7, 2017—The City of Natchitoches was invited to attend the first Public Meeting;
- November 1, 2018—The City of Natchitoches was invited to attend the second Public Meeting; and
- November 2, 2018—The City of Natchitoches Representatives met at the project site to discuss impacts to the Rue Beauport Riverfront Park.

Numerous meetings and coordination occurred throughout the EA process with the various participating parties. Meetings with LADOTD, FHWA, SHPO, and City of Natchitoches representatives occurred throughout the process. Interagency coordination played an important role in the decision-making process.

On December 13-14, 2018, coordination efforts with the Cane River Waterway Commission Administrator, Betty Fuller, and the Natchitoches Director of Planning and Zoning, Juanita Fowler, were completed in an attempt to obtain documentation regarding management and maintenance for the Rue Beauport Riverfront Park. Numerous coordination efforts occurred with the Natchitoches Director of Recreation and Parks, Chris Laurence, and the Director of Community Development, Randy LaCaze, for the same reasons. On January 17, 2019, a phone interview was conducted with the Natchitoches Parish Floodplain Administrator, Juanita Fowler.

The City of Natchitoches approved a council resolution on May 13, 2019 officially stating their support for the project’s Build Alternative 1. The resolution stated “A resolution of the city council of the City of Natchitoches,

Louisiana stating its support for the alignment of the Church Street Bridge with St. Clair Avenue and for the placement of a temporary bridge at Touline Street to handle traffic during the construction of the new Church Street Bridge, and further authorizing and directing the mayor to communicate its support and preference to the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.”

The official(s) with jurisdiction agrees that: *(Check all that apply)*

- a. The use of the property does not result in a substantial diminishment of the function, value, or qualities that made the property eligible for Section 4(f) protection.
- b. The project includes all possible planning to minimize harm, including mitigation.
- c. The net result is an overall improvement and enhancement of the Section 4(f) property when compared to the future do-nothing alternative and the present condition of the Section 4(f) property.
- The official with jurisdiction has agreed to the proposed mitigation in writing.

A letter dated September 12, 2019 was sent to the City of Natchitoches outlining the proposed action, impacts to the Section 4(f) property, the description of alternatives and findings, and details on the mitigation and measures to minimize harm. Mayor Lee Posey, Mayor of the City of Natchitoches, was asked to respond by October 10, 2019. All coordination efforts with the officials with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) lands are included as Appendix 6. Upon final FHWA approval and concurrence with the conditions listed herein, from the City of Natchitoches, the Programmatic Section 4(f) Net Benefit Evaluation document will be provided directly to the City of Natchitoches and will also be released for public review at the same time as the Environmental Assessment.

## 7.0 Public Involvement

The below checklist demonstrates the public involvement activities that have occurred throughout the project process.

- Verify that public involvement activities, consistent with the specific requirements of 23 CFR 771.111, “early coordination, public involvement, and project development” have occurred.

The following activities for public involvements were taken and the dates of the occurrence is listed below.

- |                                     |                               |                  |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Mailed Right-of-Entry Letters | August 29, 2017  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Held Public Meeting           | December 7, 2017 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Held Second Public Meeting    | November 1, 2018 |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Hold Public Hearing           | TBD              |

Information on the preliminary proposed use of and mitigation of the Rue Beauport Riverfront property was presented and communicated in the two previous public meetings held, via large scale figure displays and handouts. Additional information, including the information contained herein, will be presented and communicated in the public hearing as well as in the Environmental Assessment.

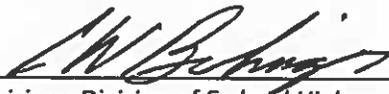
## 8.0 Summary and Approval

This programmatic evaluation approval applies only after the Administration has:

1. Determined that the project meets the applicability criteria set forth in Applicability section;
2. Determined that all of the alternatives set forth in the Findings section have been fully evaluated;
3. Determined that the findings in the programmatic evaluation (which conclude that the alternative recommended is the only feasible and prudent alternative) result in a clear net benefit to the Section 4(f) property;
4. Determined that the project complies with the Mitigation and Measures to Minimize Harm section of this document;
5. Determined that the coordination and public involvement efforts required by this programmatic evaluation have been successfully completed and necessary written agreements have been obtained; and
6. Documented the information that clearly identifies the basis for the above determinations and assurances.

The FHWA has determined that this project meets the applicability criteria, that all of the alternatives have been fully evaluated and that the recommended alternative is the only feasible and prudent one. The findings in this programmatic evaluation result in a clear net benefit to the Section 4(f) property. The FHWA has also determined that the project complies with the Minimization and Mitigation Plan and that the coordination and public involvement efforts have been successfully completed. In addition, written agreements have been obtained from the officials with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) lands.

Date: 10/15/2019

Approved by:   
Louisiana Division of Federal Highway Administration

**Appendices:**

**Appendix 1- Project Map**

**Appendix 2- Line and Grade Study Plates**

**Appendix 3- Rue Beauport Riverfront Photo Log**

**Appendix 4- Location Map with Property Boundaries and ROW**

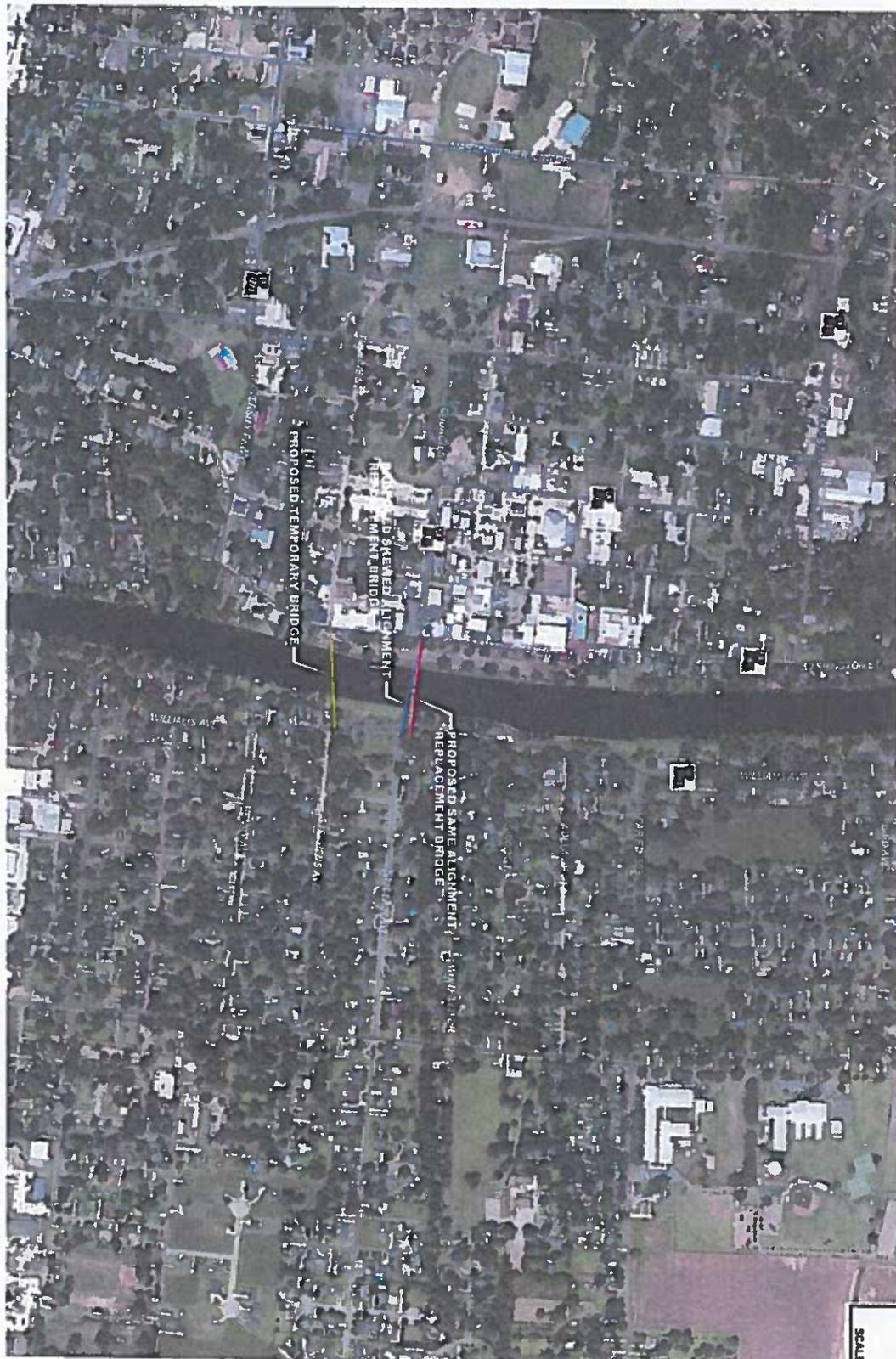
**Appendix 5- Proposed Rue Beauport Riverfront Renderings**

**Appendix 6- City of Natchitoches Coordination**

## Appendix 1- Project Map

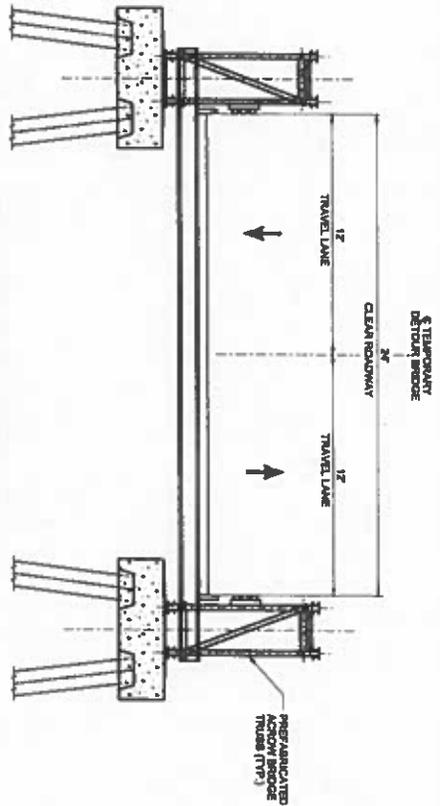


## Appendix 2- Line and Grade Study Plates

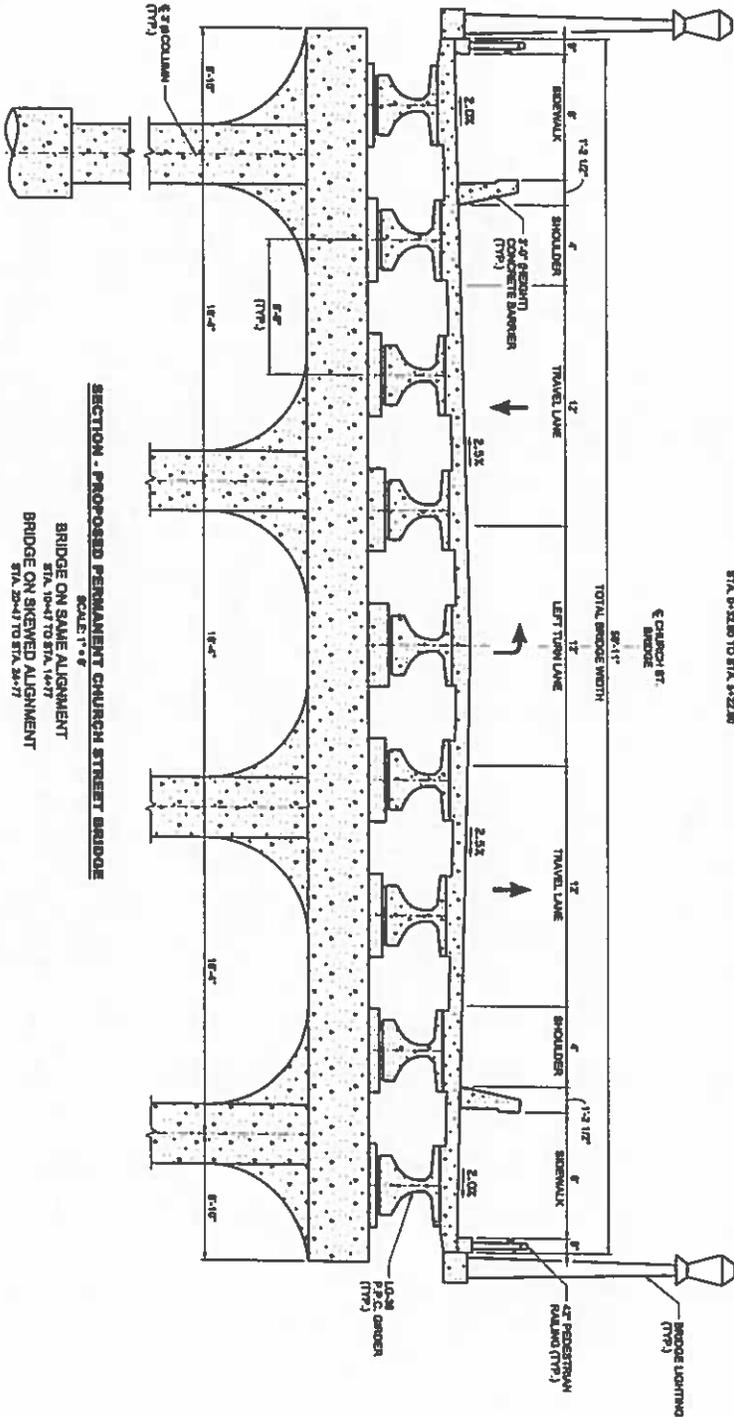


STATE PROJECT NO. H.001271  
CANE RIVER BRIDGE CHURCH STREET  
NATCHITOCHE PARISH

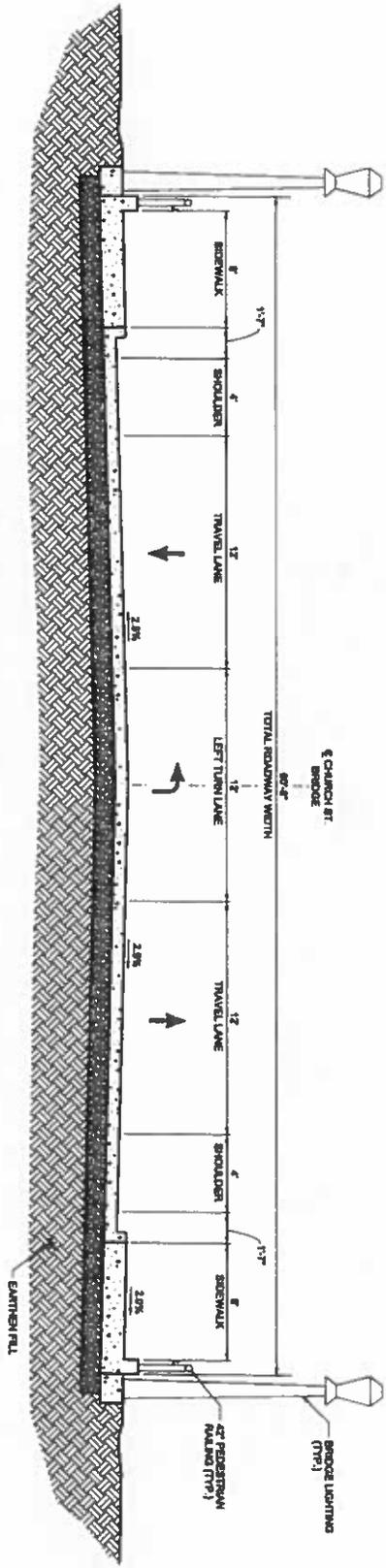
PLATE 1  
PROJECT ALTERNATIVES



**SECTION - TEMPORARY DETOUR BRIDGE**  
 SCALE: 1" = 8'  
 STA 0+22.00 TO STA 0+22.00



**SECTION - PROPOSED PERMANENT CHURCH STREET BRIDGE**  
 SCALE: 1" = 8'  
 BRIDGE ON SAME ALIGNMENT  
 BRIDGE ON SKEWED ALIGNMENT  
 STA 0+24.71 TO STA 0+29.71

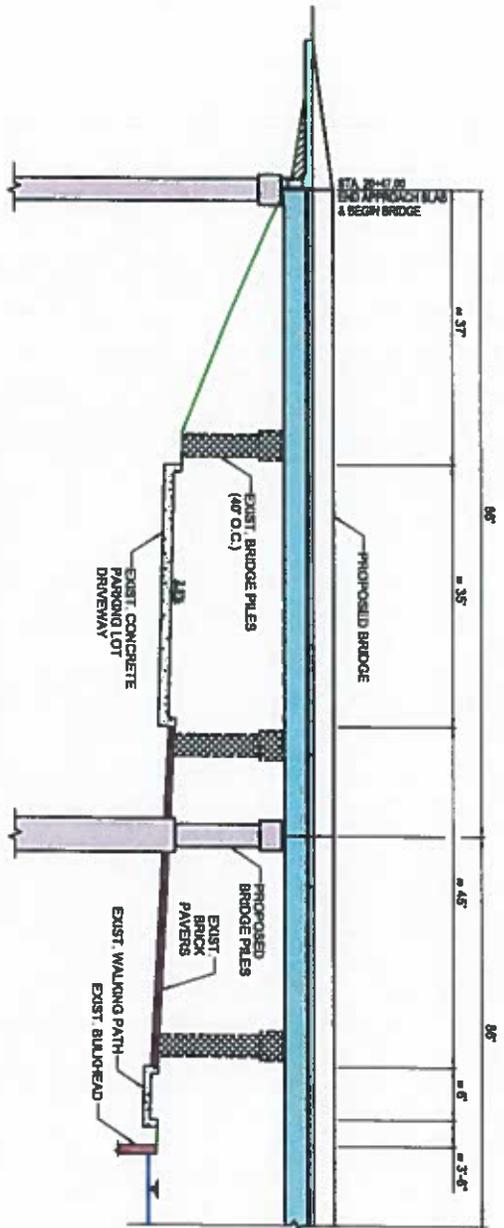


**SECTION - PROPOSED PERMANENT CHURCH STREET BRIDGE APPROACHES**

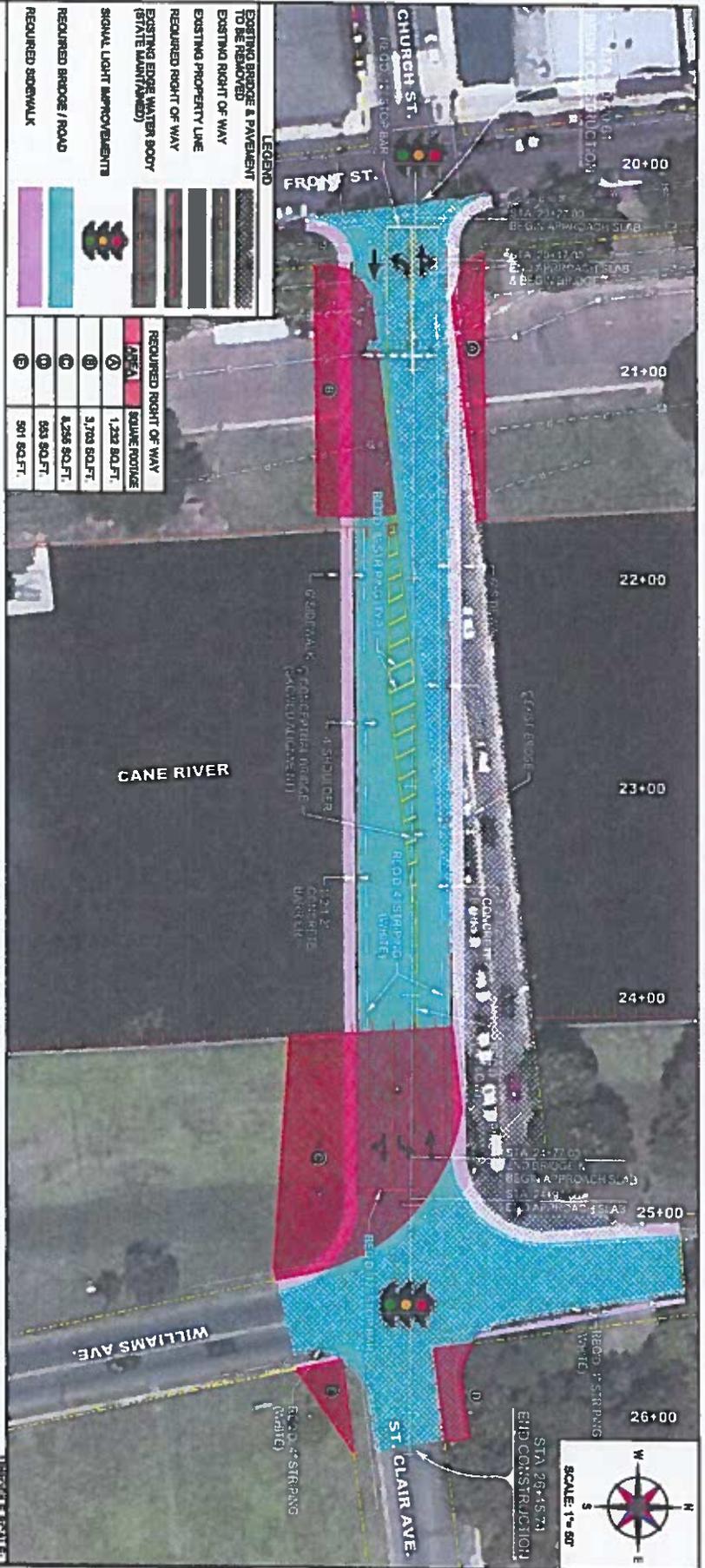
SCALE: 1" = 4'

BRIDGE ON SAME ALIGNMENT  
 STA. 14+77 TO STA. 14+87  
 BRIDGE ON SKewed ALIGNMENT  
 STA. 24+17 TO STA. 24+27

LEGEND	
	EXISTING BRIDGE PILES TO BE REMOVED
	EXISTING CONCRETE TO REMAIN
	EXISTING BRICK PAVERS TO REMAIN
	REQUIRED BRIDGE CAP & PILES
	REQUIRED BRIDGE



SECTION ALONG SHOWN ALIGNMENT  
 EXISTING & PROPOSED BRIDGE PILE LOCATIONS  
 SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

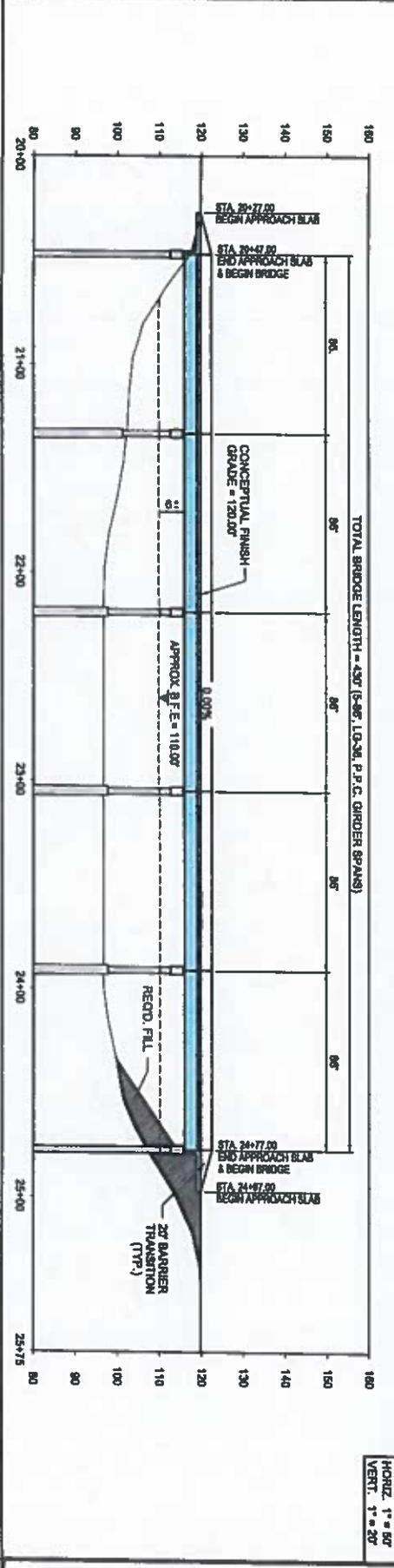


**LEGEND**

- EXISTING BRIDGE & PAVEMENT TO BE REMOVED
- EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
- EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
- REQUIRED RIGHT OF WAY
- EXISTING EDGE WATER BODY (STATE MAINTAINED)
- SIGNAL LIGHT IMPROVEMENTS
- REQUIRED BRIDGE / ROAD
- REQUIRED SIDEWALK

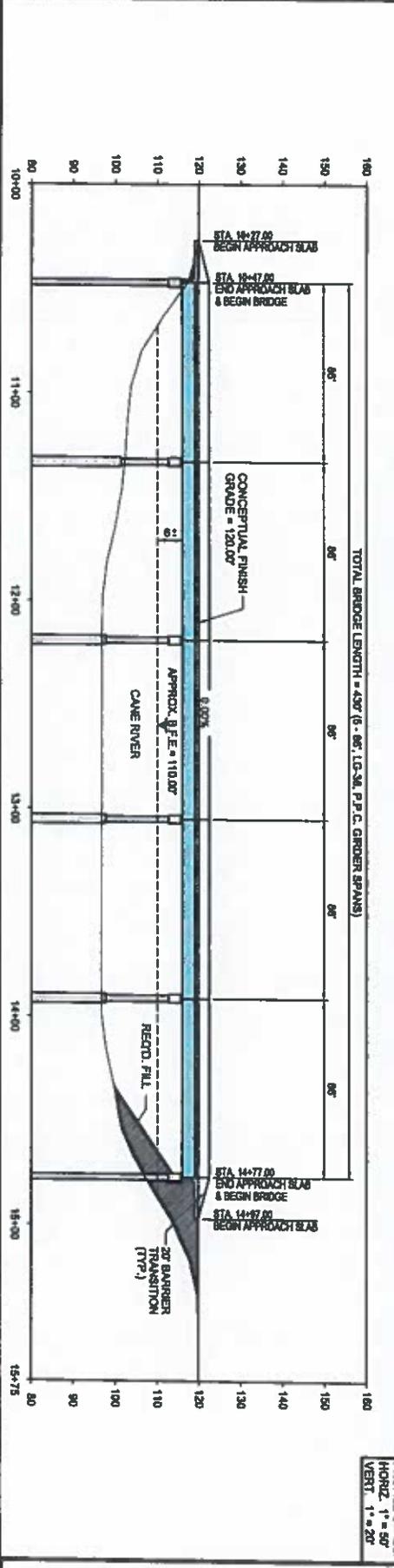
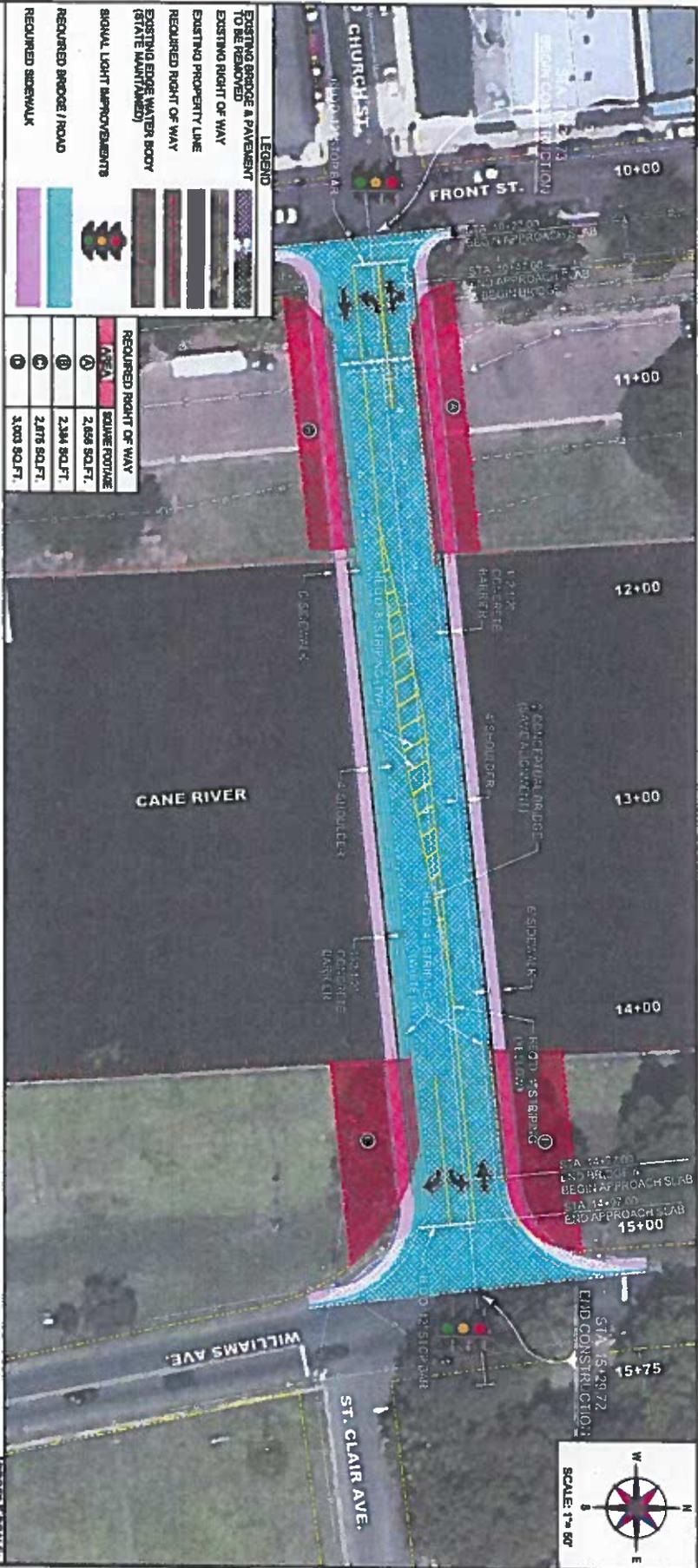
**REQUIRED RIGHT OF WAY**

AREA	SQUARE FOOTAGE
①	1,233 SQ.FT.
②	3,703 SQ.FT.
③	4,256 SQ.FT.
④	653 SQ.FT.
⑤	591 SQ.FT.



STATE PROJECT NO. H.001271  
 CANE RIVER BRIDGE CHURCH STREET  
 NATCHITOCHEES PARISH

**PLATE 5**  
 PERMANENT BRIDGE (SKEWED ALIGNMENT)



STATE PROJECT NO. H.001271  
 CANE RIVER BRIDGE CHURCH STREET  
 NATCHITOCHES PARISH

**PLATE 6**  
 PERMANENT BRIDGE (SAME ALIGNMENT)







## **Appendix 3- Rue Beauport Riverfront Photo Log**



Picture taken from east riverbank looking west, north of the bridge at the pavilion



Picture taken from the east riverbank looking west, south of the bridge



Pictures taken from the west river bank, looking north



Pictures taken from the west river bank, looking north



Pictures taken from the west river bank, looking north



Pictures taken from the west river bank, looking northeast



Pictures taken from west riverbank looking northeast



Picture taken from the west river bank, south of the bridge looking north, underneath bridge



Picture taken from the west river bank, north of the bridge looking north, towards the pavilion



Picture taken from the west river bank, north of the bridge looking north, towards the pavilion



Panoramic photo taken from west river bank, north of the bridge at the corner of the pavilion



Picture taken from west riverbank, north of the existing bridge, looking at the southern portion of the pavilion



Picture taken from west riverbank north of the existing bridge, looking south



Picture taken from west riverbank north of the existing bridge, looking south



Picture taken from west riverbank south of the existing bridge, looking south



Picture taken from west riverbank south of the existing bridge, looking southwest toward Front Street/Rue Beauport Entrance



Picture taken from west riverbank south of the existing bridge, looking southwest toward Front Street/Rue Beauport Entrance



Picture taken from west riverbank south of the existing bridge, looking south towards restrooms



Picture taken from west riverbank south of the existing bridge, looking south towards restrooms



Picture taken from west riverbank south of the existing bridge, looking east toward sewer lift station

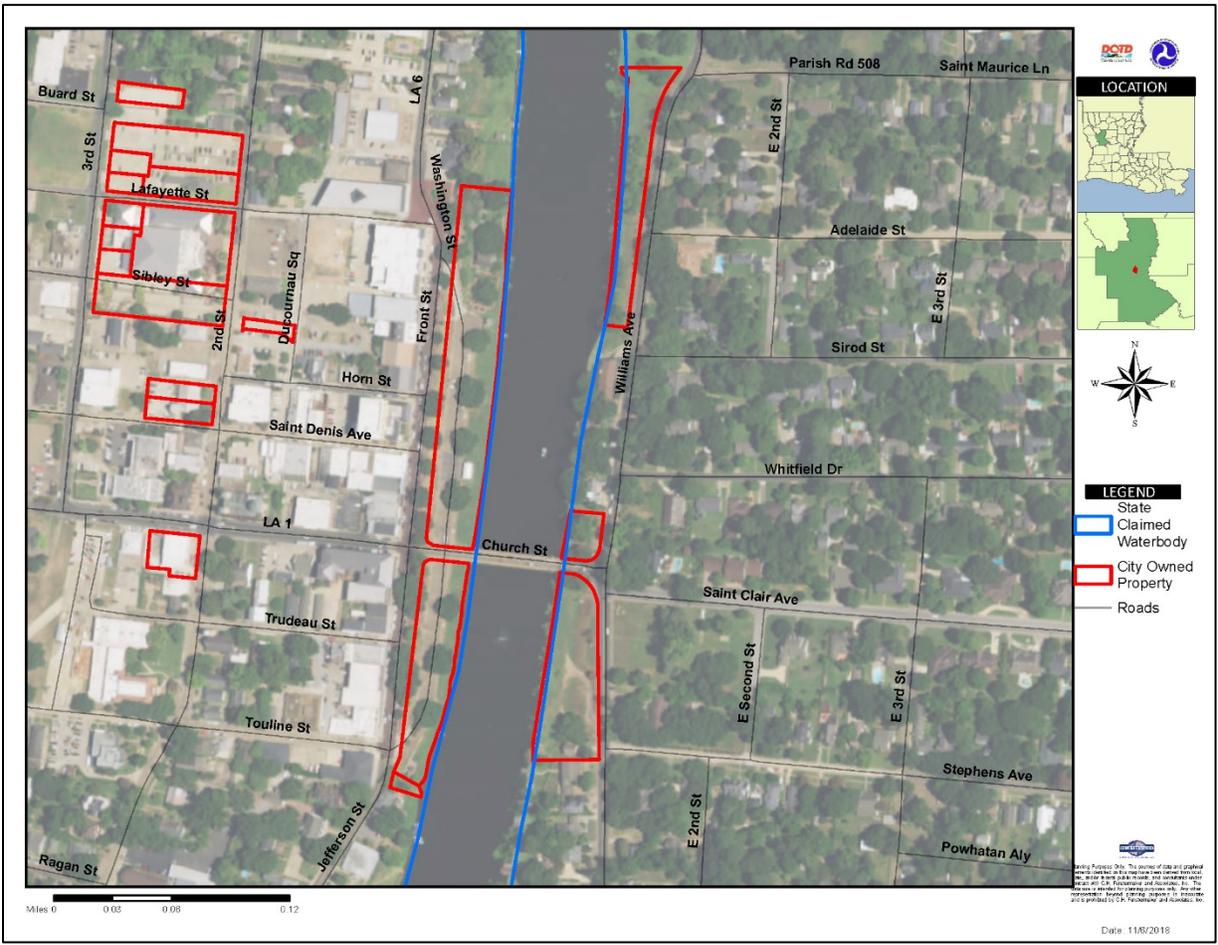
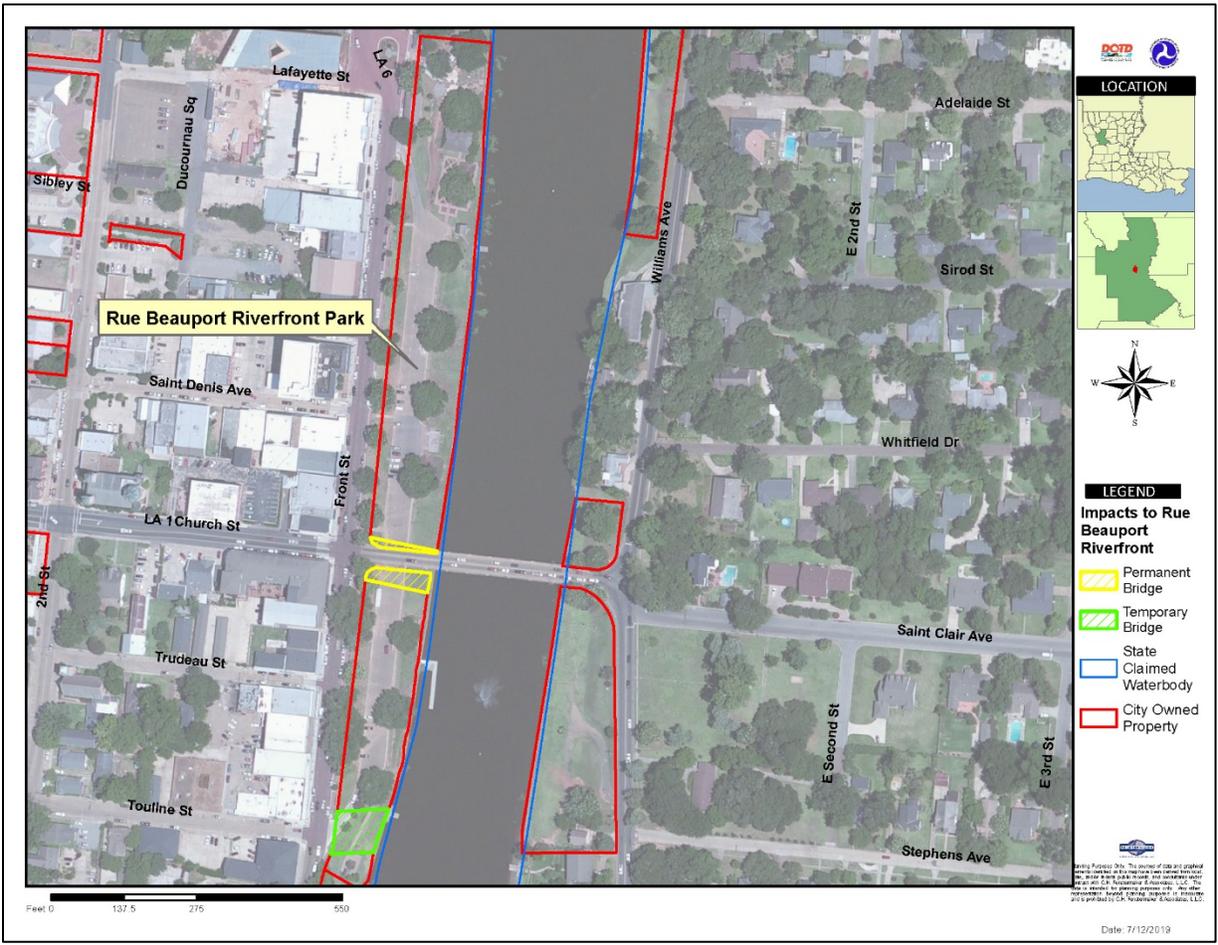


Picture taken from west riverbank south of the existing bridge, looking east toward sewer lift station and at the entrance of Rue Beauport from Front Street



Picture taken from west riverbank south of the existing bridge, looking north east at the entrance of Rue Beauport from Front Street

## **Appendix 4- Location Map with Property Boundaries and ROW**



## **Appendix 5- Proposed Rue Beauport Riverfront Renderings**



West riverbank of Cane River, south of bridge, looking northwest



West riverbank of Cane River, south of bridge, looking north



West riverbank of Cane River, north of bridge, looking northwest



West riverbank of Cane River, north of bridge, looking southwest

**Appendix 6- City of Natchitoches Coordination**



Office of Engineering  
Environmental Section  
PO Box 94245 | Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245  
ph: 225-242-4502 fx: 225-242-4500

John Bel Edwards, Governor  
Shawn D. Wilson, Ph.D., Secretary

**Programmatic Section 4(f) Net Benefit Evaluation Finding for the Proposed Cane River Bridge Church Street Route LA 1-X Environmental Assessment Project Checklist**

Mr. Lee Posey, the official with jurisdiction of the Rue Beauport Riverfront Park, agrees or disagrees with the following statements as presented in the attached *Programmatic Section 4(f) Net Benefit Evaluation Finding for the Proposed Cane River Bridge Church Street Route LA 1-X Environmental Assessment Project Evaluation*:

- | YES                                 | NO                       |   |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | a. The use of the property does not result in a substantial diminishment of the function, value, or qualities that made the property eligible for Section 4(f) protection.                          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | b. The project includes all possible planning to minimize harm, including mitigation.   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | c. The net result is an overall improvement and enhancement of the Section 4(f) property when compared to the future do-nothing alternative and the present condition of the Section 4(f) property. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The official with jurisdiction has agreed to the proposed mitigation in writing.  |

The Official with Jurisdiction, the City of Natchitoches, Mayor Lee Posey,

concurs:

Signature

*Lee Posey*

Date

*10/8/19*

conditionally concurs\*:

Signature

Date

\*Indicate conditions on the following page

denies:

Signature

Date

Regardless of the decision, please offer any comments and concerns you may have on the following page.

