

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**FOR**

**SULLIVAN ROAD WIDENING  
(WAX ROAD - HOOPER ROAD)**  
**ROUTE LA 3034**  
**EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH**  
**STATE PROJECT NO. H.002320**  
**FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO. H002320**

**March 2015**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION**

**AND**

**LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND  
DEVELOPMENT**



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## Table of Contents

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<b>ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>SUMMARY OF PERMITS, MITIGATION, AND COMMITMENTS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1 What is an Environmental Assessment?	13
1.2 Where is the Proposed Project in the Development Process?	13
<b>2. Project Purpose and Need</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 What is the Purpose of the Project?	13
2.2 Why is the Project Needed?	13
2.2.1 Capacity	14
2.2.2 System Linkage	14
2.2.3 Social Demands or Economic Development	14
<b>3. Proposed Alternatives</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1 Which Build Alternative is Proposed?	15
3.2 Preferred Build Alternative	15
3.2.1 Access Management	16
3.2.2 Complete Streets Policy	16
3.2.3 No-Build Alternative	16
<b>4. Environmental Resources, Impacts, and Mitigation</b>	<b>17</b>
4.1 Environmental Conditions and Potential Effects	17
4.1.1 Land Use and Community Character	17
4.1.2 Economic Activities	18
4.1.3 Relocations of Residences and Businesses	18
4.1.4 Environmental Justice and Demographics	19
4.1.5 Cultural Resources	21
4.1.6 Section 4(f) Resources	22
4.1.7 Section 6(f) Resources	22
4.1.8 Community Facilities, Services, and Social Resources	22
4.1.9 Wildlife and Protected Species	23
4.1.10 Wetlands and Other Waters	23
4.1.11 Floodplains	24
4.1.12 Coastal Resources and Essential Fish Habitat	24
4.1.13 Subsurface Water	24
4.1.14 Wild, Scenic, and Natural Rivers	25
4.1.15 Navigable Waterways	25
4.1.16 Farmland	25
4.1.17 Noise	25
4.1.18 Air Quality	27
4.1.19 Potential Hazardous Waste Sites	28

---

## Table of Contents

---

4.1.20	Travel Patterns	29
4.2	Constructability	29
4.3	Indirect Effects	29
4.4	Cumulative Impacts	29
4.5	Summary of Impacts	30
4.6	Estimate Cost of Build Alternative	31
<b>5.</b>	<b>Public Comments and Agency Coordination</b>	<b>31</b>
5.1	Solicitation of Views	31
5.2	Open House Public Meeting	31

### TABLES

<b>Table 4.1</b>	<b>Race and Ethnicity by Census Block</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Table 4.2</b>	<b>Household Income and Poverty Levels by Census Tract</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Table 4.3</b>	<b>Number of Impacted Receivers</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Table 4.4</b>	<b>Peak Traffic Volumes for Perkins Road and Sullivan Road</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Table 4.5</b>	<b>Comparison of Impacts by Alternative</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Table 4.6</b>	<b>Estimated Costs of Build Alternative</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Table 5.1</b>	<b>Public Meeting Comments and Responses</b>	<b>32</b>

### FIGURE

<b>1</b>	<b>Project Location</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Typical Section with Raised Median</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Typical Section with Turn Lane</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Schematic Plan View of RCUT</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Sullivan Road Noise Receivers</b>	<b>26</b>

### APPENDICES

<b>A</b>	<b>Plates</b>	
<b>B</b>	<b>Noise Study</b>	
<b>C</b>	<b>Wetland Analysis</b>	
<b>D</b>	<b>Solicitation of Views Correspondence</b>	
<b>E</b>	<b>106 Coordination</b>	
<b>F</b>	<b>Letter from City of Central Regarding Bike Paths</b>	
<b>G</b>	<b>FHWA Correspondence</b>	

## Table of Contents

---

ACOE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
ACS	American Community Survey
ADT	Average Daily Traffic
APE	Area of Potential Effect
BFE	Base Flood Elevation
CHILP	Citizens for Highways and Infrastructure in Livingston Parish
CRS	Cultural Resources Survey
CSRP	Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan
CSS	Context Sensitive Solutions
dBA	A-weighted Decibels
DOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
HREC	Historical Recognized Environmental Condition
I-12	Interstate 12
LDEQ	Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
LADOTD	Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
LDWF	Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
LNHP	LDWF Natural Heritage Program
LOS	Level of Service
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MUTCD	Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
NAC	Noise Abatement Criteria
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
RCB	Reinforced Concrete Box culvert
RCUT	Restricted Crossing U-Turn
REC	Recognized Environmental Condition
ROW	Right-of-Way
UA	Urban Arterial
USC	United States Code
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
UST	Underground Storage Tank

**ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST**

**WBS NO. H.002320**  
**FEDERAL AID NO. H002320**  
**SULLIVAN RD (WAX - HOOPER)**  
**LA 3034**  
**EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH**

**1. General Information**

- Conceptual Layout                       Line and Grade                       Preliminary Plans  
 Survey                                       Plan-in-Hand                       Advance Check Prints

**2. Class of Action**

- Environmental Impact Statement (E.I.S.)                       State Funded Only (EE/EF/ER)  
 Environmental Assessment (E.A.)  
 Categorical Exclusion (C.E.)  
 Programmatic C.E. (as defined in FHWA letter of agreement dated 03/15/95)

**3. Project Description**

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) proposes to make improvements on Sullivan Road (LA 3034), within the city limits of Central, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana. The work will consist of widening the existing roadway from Wax Road to Hooper Road (LA 408). Currently the roadway consists of two (2) 10-foot wide lanes with shoulders, open ditches, and no median. The new roadway would be constructed east and west of the centerline of the roadway and consist of four (4) 12-foot travel lanes, 6-foot sidewalks, a 12-foot wide raised median and restricted crossing U-turns (RCUTs). The roadway would be constructed with concrete curbs, gutter drains, and a subsurface drainage system (gravity drainage collection system). Intersection improvements are also proposed at Hooper Rd (LA 408) approximately 738-feet west of Sullivan Road which includes widening to accommodate turn lanes. The project requires additional right-of-way and relocations.

**4. Public Involvement**

- Views were solicited on January 7, 2013 and November 7, 2013.  
 Views were not solicited.  
 Public Involvement events held. (List events and dates in Section 11.)  
 A public hearing/opportunity for requesting a public hearing required. (List dates in Section 11.)  
 A public hearing/opportunity for requesting a public hearing not required.

**5. Real Estate**

	NO	YES	N/A
a. Will additional <b>right-of-way</b> be required? .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Is right of way required from a <b>burial/cemetery</b> site? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is right-of-way required from a Wetland Reserve Program ( <b>WRP</b> ) property?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is required right-of-way prime <b>farmland</b> ? (Use form AD 1006, if needed) ...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Will any <b>relocation</b> of residences or businesses occur? .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
c. Are construction or drainage <b>servitudes</b> required? .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1

**6. Section 4(f) and Section 6(f)**

	NO	YES	N/A
a. Will historic sites or publicly owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife or waterfowl refuges ( <b>Section 4f</b> ) be affected? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION CHECKLIST

b. Are properties acquired or improved with **L&WC** funds affected? .....

**7. Cultural Section 106**

	NO	YES	N/A
a. Are any <b>known historic properties</b> adjacent or impacted by the project? (If so, list below).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
b. Are any <b>known archaeological sites</b> adjacent or impacted by the project? (If so, list site # below) .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Would the project affect property owned by or held in trust for a federally recognized <b>tribal government</b> ? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**8. Natural & Physical Environment**

	NO	YES	N/A
a. Are <b>wetlands</b> affected? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
b. Are <b>other waters</b> of the U.S. affected? .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
c. Are <b>Endangered/Threatened Species/Habitat</b> affected? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Is project within 100 Year <b>Floodplain</b> ? .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
e. Is project in <b>Coastal Zone</b> Management Area? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Is project in a <b>Coastal Barrier Resources</b> area? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Is project on a <b>Sole Source Aquifer</b> ? .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
h. Is project impacting a <b>navigable waterway</b> ? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Are any State or Federal <b>Scenic Rivers/Streams</b> impacted? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Is a <b>noise</b> analysis warranted (Type I project) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
k. Is an <b>air</b> quality study warranted? .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
l. Is project in a <b>non-attainment</b> area? .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
m. Is project in an approved Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)?....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Are <b>construction</b> air, noise, & water impacts major? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Will the project affect or be affected by a <b>hazardous waste site</b> , leaking under- ground storage tank, oil/gas well, or other potentially contaminated site?....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 9

**9. Social Impacts**

	NO	YES	N/A
a. Will project change <b>land use</b> in the area? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Are any <b>churches and schools</b> impacted by or adjacent to the project? (If so, list below).....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Has <b>Title VI</b> been considered? .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Will any <b>specific groups</b> be adversely affected? (i.e., <i>minorities, low-income, elderly, disabled, etc.</i> ) .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Are any <b>hospitals, medical facilities, fire police</b> facilities impacted by or adjacent to the project? (If so, list below).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 10
f. Will <b>Transportation patterns</b> change? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Is <b>Community cohesion</b> affected by the project? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Are <b>short-term social/economic</b> impacts due to construction considered major? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Do conditions warrant <b>special construction times</b> ? (i.e., <i>school in session, congestion, tourist season, harvest</i> ) .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Were <b>Context Sensitive Solutions</b> considered? (If so explain below).....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Were <b>bike and pedestrian</b> accommodations considered? (explain below).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 11
l. Will the <b>roadway/bridge be closed</b> ? (If yes, answer questions below).....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will a <b>detour bridge</b> be provided? .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will a <b>detour road</b> be provided? .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will a <b>detour route</b> be signed? .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**10. Permits (Check all permits that may be required)**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corps Nationwide | <input type="checkbox"/> CUP/Consistency Determination | <input type="checkbox"/> LA Scenic Stream            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corps Section 404/10        | <input type="checkbox"/> USCG Bridge                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DEQ WQC          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Levee                       | <input type="checkbox"/> USCG Navigational Lights      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LPDES Stormwater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain below)       |  |  |

**11. Other (Use this space to explain or expand answers to questions above.)**

**1: Section 5 (a,b, & c):** The proposed project will require additional right-of-way (6.37 acres), construction servitude (0.21 acre) and the relocation of one residence.

**2: Section 7(a):** Two historic properties, the Old Central Middle School Gymnasium and the Old Central Middle School main Building were identified during the field survey. Both structures are adjacent to Sullivan Road. However, the structures will not be impacted by the proposed undertaking (see Appendix E for SHPO correspondence).

**3: Section 8 (a,b):** The proposed project will impact approximately 0.40 acre of jurisdictional Other Waters of the United States. The project is anticipated to qualify for a Nationwide Permit (see attached wetlands finding report).

**4: Section 8 (d):** FEMA records (FIRM Panel ID 22033C0195F) that the project area partially within a designated AE Flood Zone with a 1% chance of annual flood hazard. However, the proposed project will not impact the flood zone.

**5: Section 8 (g):** The project area is located on the Southern Hills Sole Source Aquifer in an area with low recharge potential. However, the proposed work will have no impact on the quantity or quality of the water available to the aquifer.

**6: Section 8 (J):** A traffic noise and abatement study was conducted as part of the Environmental Assessment. There are commercial and residential receivers located adjacent to the project area that will be impacted by noise due to the project. Barrier analysis was not performed as part of this noise study. Since there are numerous driveways along the corridor, the gaps in the barrier would make it ineffective. Therefore, a noise wall will not be built as part of this project. Construction noise generated as a result of the proposed project will cause temporary impacts to sensitive receivers. The construction contractor will minimize noise impacts by adhering to the abatement measures stated in Section 107.14 (Environmental Protection) of the Louisiana Standard Specification for Roads and Bridges, 2006 edition.

**7: Section 8 (h):** The project will add capacity therefore a comparative Air Quality Study was conducted (see EA section 4.1.19)

**8: Section 8 (I):** The project is located within a non-attainment zone. The project will increase capacity and therefore have an impact on particulate matter, Ozone, Carbon Monoxide, Nitrogen Dioxide, Lead, or Sulfur Dioxide pollutant levels (see EA section 4.1.19).

**9: Section 8 (o):** A review of the LDEQ Interactive Online Map indicated no leaking underground storage tanks (UST) within the project area. There are two identified UST adjacent to the project area: Central Automotive at southwest corner of the intersection of Hooper and Sullivan Rd. and Circle K which is located on Hooper Rd just west of the Hooper and Sullivan Rd intersection. However, the proposed project will have no impact on these facilities.

**10: Section 9 (e):** The Ochsner Health Center is located at 11424-2 Sullivan Rd. However, the proposed project will not impact this facility. Fire Station 31 is located at 11646 Sullivan Rd, just north of the project limits. However, the proposed project will not impact this facility.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION CHECKLIST

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**11: Section 9 (K):** Sidewalks are part of the proposed improvements. Bicycle lanes were not part of the proposed project since there are no connecting adjacent bicycle paths or lanes.

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Preparer: Stacie Palmer  
Title: Environmental Impact Specialist  
LADOTD Environmental Section  
Date: March 9, 2015

**Attachments**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S.O.V. and Responses  | <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits and/or Maps         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wetlands Finding      | <input type="checkbox"/> 4(f) Evaluation              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Project Description Sheet        | <input type="checkbox"/> Form AD 1006 (Farmlands)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 106 Documentation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise Analysis        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Analysis                     |   |

## SUMMARY OF PERMITS, MITIGATION, AND COMMITMENTS

### Standard Mitigation

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) will implement the following measures to mitigate the environmental effects associated with the proposed project:

- In addition to abiding by all applicable federal, state, and local laws, ordinances and regulations, the construction contractor will adhere to applicable measures detailed in *Louisiana Standard Specifications for Roads and Bridges*, 2006 ed., particularly Section 107, "Legal Relations and Responsibility to Public," and Section 204, "Temporary Erosion Control", both of which include construction techniques to be implemented regarding potential impacts to wetlands/Other Waters of the U.S.; air, water, and noise pollution; archaeological encounters; and erosion control.
- A small portion of the project area is located within the 100-year flood AE zone, which is a high-risk flood hazard area. During construction, especially during excavation, the contractor must allow for the adequate flow of water, and ensure that there will be no back up of water and no instance of the creation of flooding where there was no flooding prior to construction. Construction practices will be implemented to maintain the surrounding area clear of debris and other obstacles that would cause the accumulation and/or prevent the flow of water in floodplain areas.

### Permits

It is anticipated that the following permits will be required prior to commencement of construction activities:

ACOE Nationwide Permit: 0.40 acre of Jurisdictional Other Waters of the United States will be impacted.

LDEQ Water Quality Certificate

LPDES Storm Water Permit

### Commitments

Per their request, a copy of the Cultural Resource Survey Report will be forwarded to the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, in their letter dated February 12, 2013, requested a copy of the cultural resources survey report and official finding, based on background research.

LADOTD's Complete Streets Policy is proposed to be implemented through the construction of a sidewalks on each side of the roadway. Maintenance and liability for sidewalks outside the limits of the curb or shoulder would be the responsibility of the local jurisdiction. An agreement between the City or Parish and State for maintenance and liability of sidewalks will be required.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Environmental Assessment (EA) document summarizes the anticipated impacts resulting from the proposed Sullivan Road (Wax - Hooper) Widening in East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, a distance of 1.16 miles. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approved the logical termini for the proposed project study area are the intersections of Sullivan Road at Hooper Road (LA 408) and at Wax Road. The proposed construction begins on Hooper Road approximately 738 feet (to the southwest) and 131 feet (to the northwest) of the intersection with Sullivan Road and ends at the intersection of Sullivan Road and Wax Road (see Figure 1).

The existing roadway is a two lane roadway with 10-foot wide travel lanes. This section of Sullivan Road is considered an Urban Arterial 2 roadway and serves as an important commuter link for East Baton Rouge Parish residents. The Level of Service (LOS) on Sullivan Road (LA 3034) between Hooper Road (LA 408) and Wax Road is currently classified as LOS F. The LOS is rated between A and F. LOS A represents a free flowing traffic and F represents operational failure.

The proposed project was originally state funded only. In letter (see Appendix G), dated April 29, 2013, from Chad Winchester, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) to Charles "Wes" Bolinger of FHWA, LADOTD proposed and requested approval to use state funds only to purchase right-of-way (ROW). The purchase of ROW would be concurrent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. LADOTD also stated that the NEPA process would not be biased by the purchase of ROW and that all property would be purchased amicably. In a letter (see Appendix G), dated June 5, 2013 from Carl Highsmith of FHWA to Sherri LeBas of LADOTD FHWA approved the request to allow ROW and NEPA processes to occur concurrently without jeopardizing the use of federal funds. FHWA further stated that the approval is allowed under MAP 21, section 1302 (d) 3 (A) and (B).

One Build Alternative is being proposed to move forward for further consideration. Sullivan Road would be widened from the existing two lane roadway to four lanes with a raised median from Wax Road to Hooper Road. Included in the work is the widening of Hooper Road at the intersection of Sullivan to accommodate turn lanes. Six-foot sidewalks are proposed on both sides of roadway. The intersection improvements at Hooper and Sullivan Road which include dedicated southbound turn lanes onto southbound Sullivan Road from eastbound Hooper Road and northbound turn lane from eastbound Hooper Road onto northbound Sullivan. Other proposed work includes pavement marking and curb and gutter with subsurface drainage installed along Sullivan Road.

The preferred Build Alternative was evaluated for its impacts upon the environment.

- The Wetland Report indicates that no jurisdictional wetlands and approximately 0.40 acre of Jurisdictional Other Waters of the U.S. would be impacted.
- The Traffic Noise Study indicated that the future Build scenario will result in 71 impacted receivers; however, noise barriers were not considered feasible.
- A total of approximately 6.37 acres of additional right-of-way (ROW) and 0.21 acre of construction servitude would be required for the proposed project. The relocation of 1 residence is anticipated.

- No previously recorded archaeological sites, historic structures, historic districts, or standing structures were identified within or adjacent to the project area. Two historic properties were identified during the cultural resources survey (the Old Central School Gymnasium and the Old Central School Main Buildings). These properties are outside of the required ROW. There will be no visual or physical impacts to these structures, therefore no historic properties will be adversely affected by the proposed undertaking.
- No disproportionately high or adverse impacts to minority and/or low-income populations would occur.
- No threatened or endangered species would be impacted.
- No violations of the CO thresholds for air quality would be expected with the proposed project.
- The Phase I Site Assessment, recognized environmental conditions were found in the vicinity of the subject area in the form of existing and former underground storage tanks (USTs) containing gasoline and diesel fuel. Prior releases of tank contents were identified; however, those releases were remediated and the incidents were closed with no further action (NFA) required by Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ). Two active gas station and five historical recognized environmental conditions were identified. NFA determinations were issued by LDEQ for each of the former UST sites at the time of tank removal. No business environmental risk to the subject property was found at any properties along the right-of-way, and no further investigations or analysis are necessary.



Figure 1: Project Location.

The project corridor does not contain any known wetland reserve properties or scenic streams within the project limits. The proposed project would not have an adverse effect on the quality of ground water underlying the site. There no anticipated negative impacts to the flood plain as a result of the proposed preferred Build Alternative. Encroachments upon the floodplain would not increase the base flood elevation (BFE) to a level that would violate applicable floodplain regulations. No prime farmland or agricultural use would be impacted by the proposed project.

The estimated project cost for the preferred Build Alternative is approximately \$16,800,000. The proposed project is being funded with state bond and federal funds.

As required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the No-Build Alternative was also evaluated. Under the No-Build Alternative, the widening of Sullivan Road through the project area would not occur. The roadway would remain as is with open ditches and two 10-foot wide travel lanes. Future capacity concerns would not be addressed. Sullivan Road would remain without sidewalks. No residential or business relocations would be required and no potential impacts to wetlands or other waters would occur. No utility relocations would be required. The short-term adverse impacts associated with the proposed project would be avoided. The No-Build Alternative is anticipated to result in continued degradation of the level of service, which is currently at and overall LOS F.

## **1. Introduction**

The existing roadway consists of two 10-foot wide lanes with shoulders, open ditches, and no median. The proposed widening project would be constructed to the east and west of the existing center line of the roadway. The new roadway would have four 12-foot travel lanes; a 12-foot wide (maximum) raised median (see figure 2) with restricted crossing U-turns (RCUTs) (see figures 3 and 4); and 6-foot sidewalks on either side of the road. The new roadway would be constructed with concrete curbs, gutter drains, and a subsurface drainage system (gravity drainage collection system) (see Figure 2 and 3). Intersection improvements to LA 408 (Hooper Road) are also proposed to approximately 738 feet west of the Sullivan Road intersection, which includes widening to accommodate turn lanes. In addition to the subsurface drainage system, a gravity sanitary sewer and wastewater pump station, is planned. All sewer work is to be funded by the city.

The logical termini of the proposed project study area are LA 3034 (Sullivan Road) at Wax Road and LA 3034 (Sullivan Road) at LA 408 (Hooper Road). The newly proposed project calls for the replacement of the existing roadway with a new roadway that meets current design criteria, which includes LADOTD's Access Management Policy and Complete Streets Policy.

LADOTD's Complete Streets Policy is proposed to be implemented through the construction of six foot sidewalks on both sides of the roadway.

LADOTD has adopted an Access Management Policy for the construction of new roadways. Access Management is the control of access connections on a roadway to promote safe and efficient use of roadways. Access connections can include driveways, streets, and other means of connecting to a roadway. The policy is implemented through the use of a raised median and right-in/right-out only turns (i.e. no left-out turns) from connecting streets, business driveways, and personal driveways onto Sullivan Road. Drivers wishing to turn left onto Sullivan Road would be required to first turn right, then travel to the next RCUT.

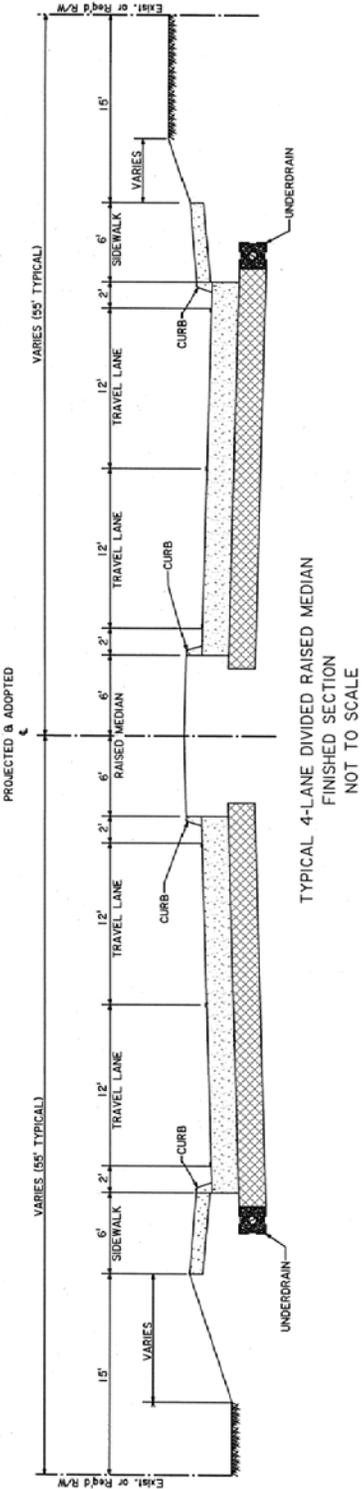


Figure 2: Typical Section with Raised Median.



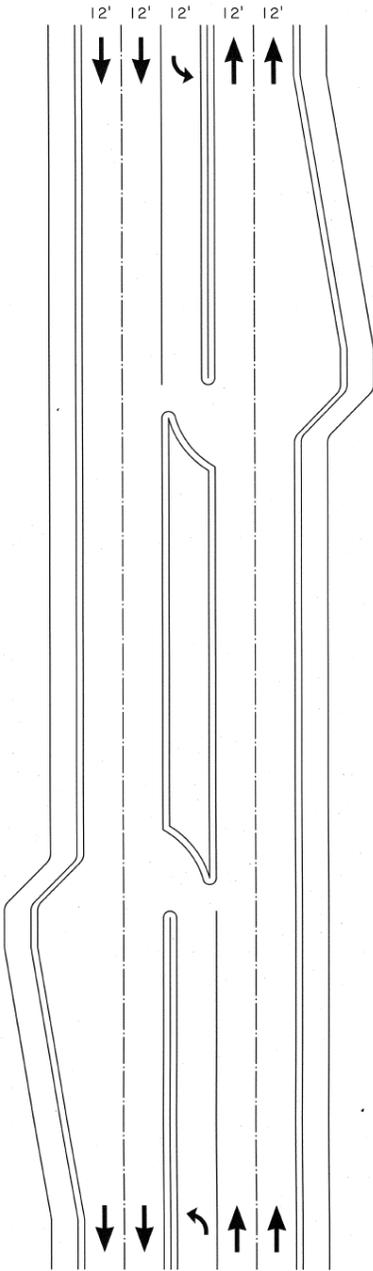


Figure 4: Schematic Plan View of RCUT

## **1.1 What is an Environmental Assessment?**

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) directs federal agencies to conduct environmental reviews to consider the potential impacts from proposed federal undertakings. The NEPA process requires coordination with local, state, and federal agencies throughout planning and project development decision-making. When considering approval of proposed transportation projects, FHWA and LADOTD are committed to the examination and minimization of potential impacts to the human and natural environment. NEPA requires the consideration of project alternatives that would satisfy the project's stated purpose while balancing the potential effects the project may have on the human and natural environment. To ensure transparency, the NEPA process must be clearly documented. Potentially affected communities and other stakeholders are provided the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments about proposals, alternatives, and potential environmental impacts.

When the significance of impacts from a proposed transportation project is uncertain, an EA is prepared. Unlike an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that is prepared when significant impacts are known, an EA is a concise public document that presents sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether the impacts from the proposed action warrant further analysis in an EIS, or whether a Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is appropriate.

## **1.2 Where is the Proposed Project in the Development Process?**

The project was part of the City of Baton Rouge and the Parish of East Baton Rouge Department of Public Works "Green Light Plan." The proposed transportation and street improvement program Hooper - Sullivan Intersection Improvements project (City-Parish Project No. 08-ETL-HC-0034) Design Study Final Report was completed in May 2010. The project has since become part of LADOTD's programmed projects.

## **2. Project Purpose and Need**

### **2.1 What is the Purpose of the Project?**

The purpose of the project is to connect the four lane section developed by the City/Parish Central Throughway Project along Sullivan Road (LA 3034) from Wax Road to Hooper Road (LA 408) with additional lane capacity.

### **2.2 Why is the Project Needed?**

The need for the project is to continue the development of a network of roadways to reduce existing traffic congestion. Central and other cities east of the City of Baton Rouge have experienced, and continue to experience, substantial commercial and residential growth with accompanying traffic congestion. This portion of Sullivan Road over the past several years has seen a substantial increase in traffic congestion in the morning and afternoon peak traffic volumes and in the amount of daily traffic volumes.

Based on the LADOTD highway functional systems, Sullivan Road is classified as an Urban Arterial 2 roadway. It has varying right-of-way widths, overhead and underground utilities, telephone cable crossings, and gas and water utilities within the rights-of-way. Currently, from Wax Road to Hooper Road (LA 408), the existing roadway consists of two 10-foot wide travel lanes with minimal shoulders, open ditches, and no median.

### **2.2.1 Capacity**

Traffic volume data was analyzed in May of 2009; the analyses were conducted based on 2008 existing conditions and for 2030 build and no build conditions. Traffic counts measured existing average daily traffic (ADT), and a 2.0% annual growth rate was used to project future ADT. Year 2008 and 2030 ADT were calculated at 23,970 and 37,060 respectively. The posted speed limit on this portion of Sullivan Road is 45 miles per hour.

Within the project limits, there is currently two signalized intersection located at Hooper Road (LA 408) and Wax Road, which operate as fully-actuated.

Level of Service (LOS) is a qualitative measure describing operational conditions within a traffic stream. This measure is based on factors such as speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort, and convenience. Depending on these operational conditions, the roadway is assigned a grade of A through F. An "A" represents free flow traffic and an "F" represents operational failure, with ease of traffic movement becoming increasingly difficult as the volume of traffic increases. According to the LADOTD Highway Needs File, the current level of service for this segment of Sullivan Road is LOS F. The future level of service for Sullivan Road was calculated using the traffic projections prepared by Urban Systems, Inc. for the design year 2030. The proposed roadway improvements would increase the level of service of Sullivan Road from its current LOS F to LOS D.

### **2.2.2 System Linkage**

This portion of Sullivan Road, within the City of Central is a commuter link for residents of East Baton Rouge Parish traveling west to Baton Rouge; east to New Orleans; and south to Ascension Parish and numerous industrial plants along the Mississippi River. The Sullivan Road Widening from Wax Road to Hooper Road is a section of independent utility. However, if the proposed project is built, it may increase the trend of development and improve connectivity to other areas.

Other road projects on the horizon for East Baton Rouge Parish that link to the Sullivan Road (Wax - Hooper) widening project include the Hooper Road Extension project (H.005403), Hooper Road Widening (H.009300), Hooper Road (Joor Road - Sullivan Road) Widening (H.002317), Hooper Road (Black Water Road - Joor Road) Widening (H.002316) and Sullivan Road (Central Thruway - Wax Road) (C.P. No. 03 - CS - C10020).

### **2.2.3 Social Demands or Economic Development**

Land use along this portion of Sullivan Road is being converted from residential to commercial, and Planned Urban Developments and residential subdivisions are being established in the area. Some of the land around Sullivan Road has been subdivided into small lots suitable for residential and commercial development; however, there remain some large tracts of land that are used for agriculture. It is anticipated that growth along Sullivan Road will increase the demand for additional highway capacity. Improvements to the corridor, linking with the newly constructed Central Thruway would improve the ability of tourist, recreational, and commercial vehicles to move along the corridor more efficiently. Such efficiency is often an important economic factor for local industries.

### 3. Proposed Alternatives

NEPA requires that reasonable alternatives which could address the identified purpose and need be considered, including a No-Build Alternative. Two alternatives, build and no build, were identified and examined against the established need for the project.

#### 3.1 Which Build Alternative is Proposed?

The build alternative, widening to a four lane divided highway with raised median for a distance of 1.16 miles is proposed. Limited configurations were evaluated. Because it is the policy of LADOTD that all multi-lane roadways, independent of their roadway classification, be designed with a median, the roadway configuration of four lanes with a continuous center median was discarded. The build alternative utilized the same highway alignment, which was considered generally acceptable and met the purpose and need for the project.

Any configuration of widening the roadway to four lanes would require additional ROW. The build alternative was determined to be reasonable and included a version of a four-lane divided, or raised-median, roadway with differing horizontal clearances, which is the distance from the outside edge of the roadway to the back of the ROW.

This alternative follows along the existing alignment. LADOTD's Access Management Policy is proposed to be implemented through the use of raised medians; right-in/right-out only from residential and business driveways as well as adjacent roadways; and restricted crossing U-turn (RCUT) openings allowing U-turns and left turns. Six-foot sidewalks are included on both sides of roadway. Roadside ditches are to be replaced with subsurface drainage.

Using existing alignment established as the preferred Build Alternative because it requires minimal amount of ROW and minimizes potential impacts to the greatest extent possible. The preferred Build Alternative also minimizes the number of residential and business relocations as much as practicable while still achieving the purpose and need of the proposed project and meeting the requirements of LADOTD design criteria.

#### 3.2 Preferred Build Alternative

The preferred Build Alternative incorporates the Complete Streets Policy and the Access Management Policy, both of which have been adopted by LADOTD for the construction of new roadways. The existing Sullivan Road is classified as an Urban Minor Arterial roadway. The proposed design criteria for the road is Urban Arterial 2 (UA-2). Typical features of a UA-2 include:

- Design speed of 45 mph
- Travel lane width: 11 – 12 feet
- Minimum horizontal clearance, from edge of travel lane: 6 – 22 feet from back of curb

The alignment of Sullivan Road would remain essentially the same for the preferred Build Alternative. The preferred Build Alternative would result in an improved roadway designed in accordance with current criteria. Traffic flow and traffic capacity would be increased. Typical cross sections of the proposed roadway are shown in Figures 2 and 3.

### **3.2.1 Access Management**

LADOTD has adopted its current Access Management Policy for the construction of new roadways in December of 2013. It is the policy of LADOTD that all multi-lane roadways, independent of their roadway classification, shall be designed with a median. Access management is careful planning of access connections to roadways and highways. Access connections can include driveways, streets, and other means of connecting to a roadway. The policy would be implemented through the use of a raised median and right-in/right-out only turns (i.e. no left-out turns) from connecting streets, business driveways, and personal driveways onto Sullivan Road.

Drivers wishing to turn left onto Sullivan Road would be required to first turn right, then travel to the next RCUT.

### **3.2.2 Complete Streets Policy**

In July 2010, LADOTD adopted a Complete Streets Policy for the State of Louisiana as mandated by the State Legislature. The Complete Streets Policy seeks to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected transportation network that balances access, mobility, health, and safety needs of motorists, transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians for all ages and abilities, which includes users of wheelchairs and mobility aids. The benefits of adopting the Complete Streets Policy include safety improvement, mobility and safety for children, mobility for people with disabilities, mobility for older people, promotion of active living, support of environmental policies aimed at reducing emissions, support for economic development, and lower household transportation costs. According to the provisions of the Complete Streets Policy, on all new and reconstruction roadway projects, LADOTD will plan, fund, and design sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities determined by the context of the roadway and LADOTD will provide bicycle accommodations appropriate to the context of the roadway.

LADOTD's Complete Streets Policy is proposed to be implemented through the construction of a sidewalks on either side of the roadway. Maintenance and liability for sidewalks outside the limits of the curb or shoulder will be the responsibility of the local jurisdiction. An agreement between LADOTD and either the City of Central or East Baton Rouge Parish will be required for the construction and maintenance of the sidewalks.

The City of Central has informed LADOTD (see Appendix F) that they have been working with BREC to develop off-road bicycle trails and paths through the community. One such off-road bicycle path would connect near the Hooper Sullivan intersection and travel south towards Wax Rd to near Central High School and nearby BREC parks. As a result, the City of Central feels that this new proposed off-road path would provide a more scenic and safer path than a bicycle lane along the heavily traveled Sullivan Rd and would serve the needs of the community greater.

Currently there are no public transportation routes within the City of Central, therefore transit users are not accommodated by the proposed project. However, should public transportation become available the proposed project would accommodate public bus routes.

### **3.2.3 No-Build Alternative**

In addition to the preferred Build Alternative, the alternative of taking no action is also evaluated. A No-Build Alternative is studied for purposes of comparison and for consideration in cases where adverse impacts to the environment might outweigh the benefits derived from the proposed project. The environmental effects associated with the "no action" alternative will be compared with the effects resulting from the proposed action. Where a choice of "no action" by the agency would result in predictable actions by others, these actions are considered to

be consequences of the No-Build Alternative and are included in the analysis. Other planned and programmed activities, such as road maintenance, ROW maintenance, and other regional improvements, would still be performed as scheduled under the No-Build Alternative.

Under the No-Build Alternative, the proposed widening of Sullivan Road within the project limits would not occur. The roadway would remain as is with open ditches, non-existent to 2 -3 -feet wide unpaved shoulders, and two 10-foot wide travel lanes. Future capacity concerns would not be addressed. Sullivan Road would remain without sidewalks. No residential or business relocations would be required, and no potential impacts to wetlands would occur. No utility relocations would be needed. The short-term adverse impacts due to construction activity would be avoided. The No-Build Alternative is anticipated to result in continued degradation of the level of service, which is currently at LOS F.

## **4. Environmental Resources, Impacts, and Mitigation**

This section presents a discussion of environmental resources that have the potential to be affected by the activities related to the preferred Build Alternative. How these resources could be affected by the proposed action is the foundation of the NEPA decision-making process. In cases where adverse effects cannot be avoided, consideration must be given to minimizing and mitigating them.

### **4.1 Environmental Conditions and Potential Effects**

#### **4.1.1 Land Use and Community Character**

The proposed project area lies within the City of Central. The northern terminus of the project corridor is located at Hooper Road (LA 408) and encompasses a number of local businesses, such as a gas station/convenience store, D& B Associates, a hair salon, Ochsner facility, and Tiger Plumbing Company. The southern terminus of the project corridor is located at the intersection of Wax Road is a commercial area with businesses such and Walmart, Raising Cane's, and CVS.

Surrounding the clusters of commercial development, the character of the corridor is rural residential. The land surrounding the corridor that is currently primarily used as residential property is split fairly evenly between residential areas and natural areas. Houses are generally visible from the roadway, located on tracts of land that were once undeveloped natural land. All of the Census blocks that contain the corridor were designated as residential in the 2010 Census. In that year, the population in the City of Central averaged 431.6 persons per square mile compared to 2,983 in the city of Baton Rouge and 985 in the Town of Walker.

Commercial development along Sullivan Road would be expected to expand along this portion of the corridor and a number of properties could lose a portion of their right-of-way along Sullivan Road. The intersections of Sullivan Road/Hooper Road and Sullivan Road/Wax Road would be expected to continue as commercial centers, with the potential for an increase in the number of retail locations and housing units than are currently located at these intersections. Along the project corridor between Wax Road and Hooper Road there would be a raised median and RCUTs. This would impact the residential context by creating a more urban look and feel. The Sullivan Road Widening from Wax Road to Hooper Road is a section of independent utility. However, if the proposed project is built, it may increase the trend of development and improve connectivity to other areas. The proposed widening project may further enhance future business development in the area.

Other surrounding roadway projects in adjacent and linking with this widening project are discussed in section 2.2.2 System Linkage.

The preferred Build Alternative is not expected to limit accessibility to community activities, induce substantial changes in neighborhood character, or result in a major disruption of neighborhood cohesion. There are no long-term negative social impacts on the area attributed to the preferred Build Alternative.

The No-Build Alternative is anticipated to result in on-going deterioration of the level of service. Although no residential or business relocations would be required under the No-Build Alternative, the proposed design improvements would not be made and traffic congestion would be projected to increase.

#### **4.1.2 Economic Activities**

There are approximately 11 businesses in the corridor, including some home-based businesses and occupations. Some of these businesses include a gas station, plumbing business, a two fast food chains, a hair salon, an apartment complex, and a medical complex. Most of the businesses within the project corridor are located along Sullivan Road. Acquisition of the required ROW would affect businesses by reducing the amount of their roadway frontage. It is anticipated that no business relocations will occur.

The proposed project would affect access patterns. Left turns would be routed through RCUTS, which would change the way some businesses are accessed. The addition of two lanes would improve traffic flow and would be expected to offset any impacts from the left turn limitations. It is expected that the proposed construction project would produce short-term adverse impacts during the construction phase as is typical during most highway construction projects. Persons who use the roadway would be temporarily inconvenienced during the construction phase due to construction activity.

#### **4.1.3 Relocations of Residences and Businesses**

The ROW required for the proposed project would impact 31 ownerships/properties (48 parcels) by taking a portion of their frontage in order to construct the new travel lanes and sidewalks. The acquisition of ROW constitutes one relocation impact of a mobile home.

The width of the corridor currently owned by LADOTD along this portion of Sullivan Road varies from approximately 60 to 177 feet. Many structures are set back from the roadway by a sufficient distance to put them outside the limits of the ROW required for the proposed project. However, one (1) residence within the proposed ROW on east side of the existing roadway is to be relocated. Determination of the exact displacement will be dependent upon the final roadway design.

The availability of replacement housing and land for the residential displacement was examined. It was determined that at the time of report preparation, replacement housing is adequate in the areas of displacement. Based on past experience, it is likely that the owner-occupant being displaced will relocate. It is not anticipated that there will be any unusual problems in securing replacement housing under normal procedures. There is adequate replacement housing in the general area for the tenants. There should be no impact on the neighborhood or housing where relocation is likely to take place.

The proposed project was originally state funded only. In letter (see Appendix G), dated April 29, 2013, from Chad Winchester, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) to Charles "Wes"

Bolinger of FHWA, LADOTD proposed and requested approval to use state funds only to purchase right-of-way (ROW). The purchase of ROW would be concurrent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. LADOTD also stated that the NEPA process would not be biased by the purchase of ROW and that all property would be purchased amicably. In a letter (see Appendix G), dated June 5, 2013 from Carl Highsmith of FHWA to Sherri LeBas of LADOTD FHWA approved the request to allow ROW and NEPA processes to occur concurrently without jeopardizing the use of federal funds. FHWA further stated that the approval is allowed under MAP 21, section 1302 (d) 3 (A) and (B).

Acquisition of ROW and relocation activities are governed by the federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Relocation Act). Relocation programs available through LADOTD to displaced residents can include relocation assistance, moving payments, and replacement housing payments, as well as rent supplements. Acquisition of ROW and relocations will be handled in accordance with LADOTD's Acquisition of Right-of-Way and Relocation Assistance Program. During ROW acquisition, each property with a taken structure will be assigned a relocation officer from LADOTD. The relocation officer will be the point of contact for the residents and businesses during transition from existing to new properties. No person or family will be displaced until comparable replacement housing has been offered or provided to the displaced resident within a reasonable time prior to displacement.

To date all acquisition of ROW has been amicable and has not biased the NEPA process. Remaining parcels will be acquired after the NEPA process is completed.

#### **4.1.4 Environmental Justice and Demographics**

Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, educational level, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws. Environmental justice seeks to ensure that minority and low-income communities have access to public information relating to human health and environmental planning, regulations, and enforcement. Environmental justice ensures that no population, especially the elderly and children, are forced to shoulder a disproportionate burden of the negative human health and environmental impacts of pollution or other environmental hazards.

FHWA ORDER 6640.23A establishes policies and procedures for use in complying with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (42 United States Code [USC] 2000) and Executive Order 12898 which require Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations. An Environmental Justice review, entails a thorough evaluation of project effects to persons belonging to the low-income populations and the following minority groups at a minimum:

- Black;
- Asian;
- American Indian and Alaskan Native;
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; and
- Hispanic (of any race.)

From 2000 to 2010, East Baton Rouge Parish experienced an increase in population of approximately 6.6 percent, growing from 412,852 to 440,171 persons (U.S. Census Bureau [USCB] 2015a). The population in the City of Central grew from 26,864 to 27,743 persons, an approximately 3.3 percent increase from 2010 to 2013 (USCB 2015b). By comparison, the State of Louisiana exhibited a growth rate of 2.1 percent, during the same period (USCB 2015a).

According to the 2010 Census, the proposed project area is contained within two Census tracts, Tract 44.01 and 44.02. There were 3,770 persons living within the 2 census block groups which border the project (East Baton Rouge Parish Office of the Planning Commission [EBR Planning] 2010a and EBR Planning 2010b). However, these census block geographies are large and bound by more than one roadway; therefore, it can be deduced that not all of the individuals counted in the blocks in 2010 lived along the project corridor. Utilizing aerial photography, it is possible to estimate that there are approximately 55 households/residences within or adjacent to the project corridor. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, estimates for the average number of persons per household in the City of Central from 2009-2013 was 2.69. Therefore, a reasonable estimate of the number of persons that would be directly affected by the proposed project is 148.

A review of the race and ethnicity data for the census block groups adjacent to the project was conducted to determine if any minority group(s) would be disproportionately affected by impacts associated with the proposed project. The results of this review are provided in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Race and Ethnicity by Census Block**

Census Geography		Total Population	Black		American Indian and Alaskan Native		Asian		Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander		Some other Race	
			Pop	%	Pop	%	Pop	%	Pop	%	Pop	%
Tract 44.01	Block Group 1	1,457	54	3.7	0	0.0	7	0.5	0	0.0	8	0.5
Tract 44.02	Block Group 3	2,313	403	17.4	4	0.17	13	0.56	0	0.0	15	0.65
All Blocks		3,770	457	12.1	4	0.17	20	0.53	0	0.0	23	0.61
East Baton Rouge (2010)		440,171	202,478	46.0	132	0.3	1,408	3.2		0.0	9,243	2.1
Louisiana (2010)		4,533,372	1,452,396	32.8	30,579	0.67	70,132	1.5	1,963	0.04	69,227	1.5

Source: USCB 2015a, USCB 2015c, EBR Planning 2010a, EBR Planning 2010b

According to the 2010 Census, most residents within the project area were not members of any minority. As detailed in Table 4.1, approximately 13.41 percent of the population in the Census Block Groups adjacent to Sullivan Road was non-White. The non-White percentage of the population in East Baton Rouge Parish and the State was 51.6 and 36.51 percent, respectively. The non-White percentage of the population in the project area is lower than that of both the State and Parish.

In addition to identifying whether a proposed action affects minority populations, the Environmental Justice discussion must include a review of whether any low-income population would be disproportionately affected. A low income population is a population whose median household income is at or below the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines. Because income data is not available on a census block level, the Census Tract economic data was utilized for this review. The income data for the aforementioned Census Tracts 44.01 and 44.02 are identified in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2 Household Income and Poverty Levels by Census Tract**

<b>Census Geography</b>	<b>Median Family Income</b>	<b>Families with Income below the Poverty Level</b>	<b>Families with Income below \$10,000</b>
Census Tract 44.01	\$75,423	2.7%	21 (1.1%)
Census Tract 44.02	\$54,591	11.7%	141 (6.4%)
Louisiana	\$54,059	14.3%	165,883 (9.8%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2008-2013a, U.S. Census Bureau 2008-2013b

The median family income in both Census tracts are higher than the State median income. Conversely, the percent of families with income below the poverty level for the project area tracts are below that of the State. The small percentage of minorities and low-income persons within the census tract indicates that the proposed project would not disproportionately affect an identified minority or low-income population.

The project would not affect any known unique social groups. There is no information to suggest that any person's civil rights will be violated, as set forth in the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations relating to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. There are no known disproportionately high or adverse effects borne by minority and/or low-income populations.

#### **4.1.5 Cultural Resources**

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) establishes policies for protecting historic properties. Under Section 106 of the NHPA, federal agencies are required to evaluate the effect federal actions (including funding of actions) have on historic properties. The NHPA established the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and state historic preservation programs administered by a State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). Historic properties and archaeological sites are physical resources that also represent cultural values and human history. Special consideration must be given to the effects of the proposed project upon any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as required by Section 106 of Public Law 89-665; 80 Stat. 915; 16 USC 470 as amended, also known as the National Historic Preservation Act. These properties are also afforded protection under Section 4(f) of the United States Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (see Section 4.1.6.)

In order to meet the requirements of these acts, a Cultural Resources investigation was completed in September 2013. The investigation was performed in accordance with guidelines provided by the Louisiana Division of Archaeology and the Louisiana Office of Historic Preservation within an Area of Potential Effects (APE). Staff from the LADOTD Environmental Section searched the Louisiana Divisions of Historic Preservation and Archaeology GIS databases to identify existing archaeological sites, standing structures, and districts listed or deemed eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) within or adjacent to the project area.

Staff from LADOTD conducted a Phase I Cultural Resources Survey (CRS) of the APE to determine whether there were standing structures or archaeological deposits of National Register eligibility in the project area. Approximately 6.60 acres of additional ROW and servitude will be required for the proposed project. A visual inspection for standing structures greater than 50 years of age and located within or adjacent to the APE (indirect

APE) was also conducted. Where applicable systematic shovel testing was performed to detect possible archaeological deposits. No previously recorded archaeological sites, historic structures, or historic districts were identified within the APE of the project area; the detailed results of the Phase I CRS will be presented in a separate technical report.

Two standing structures, the Old Central Middle School Gymnasium (Louisiana Historic Resource ID # 17-01761) and the Old Central Middle School Mail Building (Louisiana Historic Resource ID # 17-01762) adjacent to the project area have been determined eligible for inclusion in the NRHP. Coordination was carried out with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). SHPO concurred with the determination of eligibility and the finding of No Adverse Effect in their letter dated March 10, 2015 (see Appendix E).

The federally recognized Jena Band of Choctaw Indians responded to the Solicitation of Views. Per their request, a copy of the cultural resources survey report will be provided to their office.

The federally recognized Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, in their letter dated February 12, 2013, requested a copy of the cultural resources survey report and official finding, based on background research.

#### **4.1.6 Section 4(f) Resources**

Section 4(f) of the DOT Act requires that the FHWA and other DOT agencies consider the publicly owned parks, recreational areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, or public and private historic sites affected by their respective undertakings. Under the provisions of the Act, a federally-assisted highway project cannot use a designated 4(f) property unless it can be shown that there is no prudent and feasible alternative to doing so. Section 4(f) applies when there is an actual taking of land from, or constructive use of, a 4(f) property. No state or federal parks, wildlife refuges, scenic streams, or wildlife management areas are known within the project corridor.

No 4(f) properties are located within the proposed project area.

#### **4.1.7 Section 6(f) Resources**

State and local governments often obtain grants through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act to acquire or make improvements to parks and recreational areas. Section 6(f) of the Act prohibits the conversion of property acquired or developed with these grants to a non-recreational purpose without the approval of the Department of the Interior's (DOI) National Park Service (NPS.) Section 6(f) directs the DOI to assure that replacement lands of equal value, location, and usefulness are provided as conditions to such conversions. Consequently, where conversions of Section 6(f) lands are proposed for highway projects, replacements will be necessary.

The proposed project would not result in the conversion of a designated 6(f) resource.

#### **4.1.8 Community Facilities, Services, and Social Resources**

There are no essential services or community facilities within the project corridor, but there are a few adjacent to the project area. Public schools in the vicinity of the project corridor include the Central Intermediate School just north of the project area on Sullivan Road. There are no venues within the corridor that provide space for community activities.

Ochsner Health Center is located at 11424-2 Sullivan Road. There are no church facilities or cemeteries located within the limits of construction or adjacent to the project.

The properties directly adjacent to Sullivan Road are predominantly residential with commercial properties at the intersections of Hooper Road and Wax Road. The proposed improvements to the roadway are expected to enhance community access and utilization of these commercial resources. Due to the widening of Sullivan Road, right-of-way will be required from the properties along Sullivan Road. None of the required parcels necessitate relocation of commercial properties.

#### **4.1.9 Wildlife and Protected Species**

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 requires federal actions (e.g., project approvals, funding, other actions) to be implemented so that neither the existence of species listed as protected nor their critical habitat is jeopardized. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is charged with implementing the ESA and with maintaining a list of protected plants and animals and their protection status. The Louisiana Natural Heritage Program (LNHP) maintains sighting records of federally protected species and species of state concern.

According to the USFWS, the proposed project has been reviewed for effects to Federal trust resources under their jurisdiction and currently protected by the ESA and they have determined that the project, as proposed, will have no effect on those resources.

According to the LDWF, Habitat Section of the Coastal & Nongame Resources Division, no impacts to rare, threatened, or endangered species or critical habitats are anticipated for the proposed project. Wetland Reserve Program

The project corridor does not contain any known property in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Wetland Reserve Program.

#### **4.1.10 Wetlands and Other Waters**

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act requires anyone depositing dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands, to receive authorization for such activities. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) has been assigned responsibility for administering the Section 404 permitting process and makes the determination of whether or not wetlands fall under their jurisdiction.

Field studies were conducted on December 5, 2008 and April 2, 2013 to determine the presence of wetlands and other waters of the U.S. within the project limits. All wetlands located in the survey were delineated using the three parameters (dominant vegetation, soil characteristics, and hydrology) and methods described within the *1987 Corps of Engineers' Wetlands Delineation Manual and 2010 Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plain Region, Version 2.0*.

The project limits are located within the Hurricane Creek, Comite River Watershed (HUC 080702020608). Drainage appears to be by sheet flow in conformance with slight changes in elevation throughout the Site. All five unnamed drainage features throughout the Site are vegetated and range from approximately 5 feet to 50 feet in width. Roadside ditches (approximately 5 feet in width and 3 feet in depth) parallel Hooper Road to the north and south and Sullivan Road to the east and west and act as a confluence for sheet flow to drainage features. None of the drainages features are characterized by herbaceous wetland fringes but may potentially be considered

Other Waters of the U.S. subject to the Corps jurisdiction. Wetland hydrology was absent within the proposed ROW.

It is the conclusion of staff biologists of the LADOTD Environmental Section that the proposed widening of Sullivan Road would not impact jurisdictional wetlands. However, 0.40 acre of potentially jurisdictional other waters of the U.S. may be impacted.

#### **4.1.11 Floodplains**

The 100-year floodplain is defined as the area that would be inundated by a precipitation event that has a 1-in-100 chance of occurring every year. Floodplains are protected by Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management; 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 650, *Location and Hydraulic Design of Encroachments on Floodplains*; and DOT 5650.2, *Floodplain Management and Protection*. These regulations require that encroachments within the 100-year floodplain are minimized and that land development inconsistent with floodplain values is avoided.

The existing Sullivan Road generally follow the higher elevations in the area. Through the project area, Sullivan Road lies between the 62-foot and 64-foot (above mean sea level) contour. However, the proposed roadway does traverse a small area that is considered to be within the 100-year flood plain. The proposed project limits are located within a Zone AE floodplain designation. Even though the proposed project will be constructed with required ROW, it would not impact natural or beneficial floodplain values.

No significant encroachment of the floodplain would result from the construction of the proposed widening project. No flood hazard would result from development of the proposed project.

LADOTD Floodplain Management commented that during and after construction, consideration must be given for the occurrence of a base flood inundation. Also, consideration must be given to the responsibility for cleaning debris and keeping the surrounding area clear so as not to interfere with its function.

#### **4.1.12 Coastal Resources and Essential Fish Habitat**

The project corridor is outside the Louisiana Coastal Zone and does not encompass any marine or estuarine habitats. No Coastal Use Permit is required.

#### **4.1.13 Subsurface Water**

The EPA defines a sole source aquifer as an underground water source that supplies at least 50 percent of the drinking water consumed in the area overlying the aquifer. These areas have no alternative drinking water source(s) that could physically, legally, and economically supply all those who depend upon the aquifer for drinking water.

The proposed project corridor is located on the Southern Hills aquifer system, which has been designated a sole source aquifer by the EPA. The EPA has determined that the project, as proposed, should not have an adverse effect on the quality of the ground water underlying the project site.

#### **4.1.14 Wild, Scenic, and Natural Rivers**

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System was created by Congress in 1968 to preserve rivers possessing outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values. The system safeguards characteristics while recognizing the potential for their appropriate use and development. In 1970, the Louisiana Legislature created the Louisiana Natural and Scenic Rivers System. The System was developed for the purpose of preserving, protecting, developing, reclaiming, and enhancing the wilderness qualities, scenic beauties, and ecological regimes of selected free-flowing streams in Louisiana.

No streams in the project corridor are designated as scenic by the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System or the Louisiana Natural and Scenic Rivers System.

#### **4.1.15 Navigable Waterways**

The proposed project does not cross a navigable waterway.

#### **4.1.16 Farmland**

Farmland is a natural resource that is a major factor in rural economics. NEPA and the provisions of the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) require that before taking or approving any federal action that would result in conversion of farmland, the federal agency must examine the effects of the action using the criteria set forth in the Act. If adverse effects to farmland are identified, the project proponent must consider alternatives to lessen them. Neither NEPA nor FPPA requires a project to be modified solely to avoid or minimize the effects of conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses.

The NRCS has determined that the proposed construction will not impact prime farmland and therefore is exempt from the rules and regulations of the FPPA.

#### **4.1.17 Noise**

The proposed project uses federal funds to add capacity to the roadway; therefore, a noise analysis is required using LADOTD's noise policy. As part of the proposed project to widen Sullivan Road, a noise study was conducted to determine impacts to adjacent noise receivers. The majority of Sullivan Road is residential with a few commercial properties. The detailed results of this study are in a separate technical report; however, an exhibit showing noise receivers is provided below (see Figure 4) and summary in Appendix B.

Aerial photos and topographic maps were used to digitize the roadway and receivers in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5. Detailed traffic data from the LADOTD Planning Section was also collected and entered into the computer model. A field visit was conducted to collect field measurements to validate the accuracy of the model. The model was validated and then used to predict the noise levels for three scenarios: the current noise levels (2014), the future No-Build noise levels (2034), and the future Build noise levels (2034).

This report analyzes noise impacts due to the implementation of the captioned project as well as the projected normal traffic growth.



Figure 4: Sullivan Road Noise Receivers.

Traffic noise impacts are defined by LADOTD as noise impacts, which occur when the predicted traffic noise levels equal or exceed the LADOTD Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC), or when the predicted traffic noise levels exceed the existing noise levels by 10 dBA. For project specific NAC see table 1 of Appendix B. If it is determined that there are noise impacts in the project area, then noise abatement methods are analyzed for reasonability and feasibility. The results are presented below:

**Table 4.3 Number of Impacted Receivers**

	<b>Current</b>	<b>2034 No Build</b>	<b>2034 Build</b>
<b>Number of Impacted Receivers</b>	65	71	71

Source: LADOTD Highway Traffic Noise Impact and Abatement Study November 2014

There are commercial and residential receivers located adjacent to the project area that will be impacted by noise due to this project. Noise Barriers do not meet criteria for feasibility and reasonableness as gaps required for driveway access to Sullivan Road make a noise barrier unfeasible. Therefore, a noise wall will not be built as part of this project.

Construction noise generated as a result of the proposed project will cause temporary impacts to the sensitive receivers. The construction contractor will minimize noise impacts by adhering to the abatement measures stated in Section 107.14 (Environmental Protection) of the Louisiana Standard Specification for Roads and Bridges, 2006 edition.

**4.1.18 Air Quality**

The EPA established criteria for evaluating air quality in accordance with the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. The standards set by the EPA are known as the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The EPA and LDEQ regulate air quality in Louisiana. Air sheds that do not meet the NAAQS are known as non-attainment areas and require special consideration.

East Baton Rouge Parish is designated as a non-attainment parish for 8-hour ozone. Due to the parish’s status as an air quality non-attainment area, a comparative study was done with the Perkins Road widening project (SP No. 700-17-0159) in East Baton Rouge Parish. Use of past carbon monoxide (CO) analyses as a historical database may be used in lieu of modeling to determine possible impacts to air quality. This was authorized in the March 30, 2004 memorandum from FHWA to LDOTD.

The 1999 Perkins Road widening project in East Baton Rouge Parish is one of the most recent projects for which a CO analysis was performed. This project widened Perkins Road (LA 427) from two lanes to four lanes with an undivided center turn lane. It was widened between Essen Lane and Siegen Lane, approximately 2.8 miles. The Sullivan Road widening project will widen Sullivan Road from two lanes to four lanes with a raised median and RCUTs. The proposed project will start at Hooper Road (LA 408) and end at Wax Road. Existing Peak Volumes for Sullivan are counts from October 2008. The Future Peak Volume was calculated at a 2% annual growth rate for 2028. The existing and future peak traffic volume for Sullivan Road is less than the existing and future peak volume for Perkins Road.

As Table 4.4 shows, the existing and predicted peak traffic volume for Perkins Road is greater than Sullivan Road. The modeled carbon monoxide concentrations for the preferred Build Alternative are less than the No-Build

Alternative and are significantly less than the NAAQS. Since no violations of the CO thresholds were modeled for the Perkins Road project, which had greater projected traffic volumes than the proposed project, no violations of the thresholds would be expected with the proposed project.

Air quality impacts due to construction operations for the proposed highway improvement project are expected to be short-term, minor, and localized. These impacts are anticipated to be minimized by following the LADOTD Standard Specifications. The proposed project is in the current conforming Metropolitan Transportation Plan and in the Transportation Improvement Program for the Baton Rouge Metropolitan Planning Area

**Table 4.4 Peak Traffic Volumes for Perkins Road and Sullivan Road and Modeled Carbon Monoxide Concentrations for Perkins Road**

Location	Existing Peak Volume (veh/hr)	Future Peak Volume (veh/hr)	Modeled Worst-Case CO Conc. (ppm)					
			Existing		2020 No-Build		2020 Build	
			1-hour	8-hour	1-hour	8-hour	1-hour	8-hour
Perkins Rd: Essen-Hyacinth	2,745	4,630	4.8	4.7	6.7	6.7	5.8	6.0
Perkins Rd: Hyacinth to Bluebonnet	2,115	3,265	3.6	3.8	5.7	6.0	4.1	4.9
Perkins Rd: Bluebonnet to Siegen	1,990	3,410	3.8	4.0	5.3	5.7	3.1	5.3
			<b>NAAQS</b>					
Sullivan Rd: Hooper - Wax	1,332	1,979	<b>1-hour</b>	<b>8-hour</b>				
			35.0	9.0				

**4.1.19 Potential Hazardous Waste Sites**

A separate Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was conducted for the proposed project ROW build Alternative. A potential “recognized environmental condition” (REC) is defined by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) as follows:

“The presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products on a property under conditions that indicate an existing release, a past release, or a material threat of a release of any hazardous substances or petroleum products into structures, on the property or into the ground, groundwater, or surface water of the property. The term includes hazardous substances or petroleum products even under conditions in compliance with laws. The term is not intended to include *de minimis* conditions that generally do not present a material risk of harm to public health or the environment and that generally would not be the subject of an enforcement action if brought to the attention of appropriate governmental agencies. Conditions determined to be *de minimis* are not recognized environmental conditions (ASTM E1527-05).”

Based on this definition, properties that currently contain underground storage tanks (USTs), or contained them in the past, are considered to be potential RECs. During the Phase I Site Assessment, two active gas stations with USTs are adjacent to the subject property. Although both gas stations had tank releases in the past, the releases were remediated to state standards, and no business risk is present at those sites. Five historical recognized environmental conditions were identified adjacent to the subject property corridor due to former USTs that were removed with no evidence of a release of tank contents and prior releases of tank contents at existing UST sites that were remediated with NFA required by LDEQ.

#### **4.1.20 Travel Patterns**

The proposed project would add an additional travel lane in each direction to the existing roadway facility. In addition, the proposed additional travel lanes would improve mobility and would ease predicted congestion within the project area.

Travel patterns along Sullivan Road would not be expected to change for through traffic, such as commuter flow; however, travel for residents, customers, and employees destined for homes and businesses on the proposed project corridor would be affected by the restriction on left-turns imposed by the median. Drivers wishing to turn left onto Sullivan Road would be required to first turn right, then travel to the next RCUT.

#### **4.2 Constructability**

The preferred Build Alternative, which is a roadway widening project, was analyzed to determine the most appropriate sequencing of construction to minimize impacts to traffic on Sullivan Road. The existing lanes would be maintained and the section of Sullivan Road from Wax Road to Hooper Road would be constructed in phases. Minimal traffic management at the intersections and tie-in points would be necessary.

It is anticipated that the new outside lanes and roadside ditches would be constructed along Sullivan Road from the beginning of the project to the Hooper Road intersection while maintaining traffic on the existing Sullivan Road roadway. All left turn movements would be routed through RCUTS. The inside lanes and medians would be constructed. It is anticipated that the Sullivan Road construction would be completed through widening of the existing roadway, then finished with a mill and overlay of the existing surface. Traffic control would be necessary to complete this task while maintaining traffic.

#### **4.3 Indirect Effects**

The purpose of the project is to upgrade the capacity of Sullivan Road to relieve traffic congestion and provide connectivity to surrounding roadway widening projects as well as the constructed Central Thruway. As an indirect effect, construction of the proposed project may enhance economic development, improve access for tourists, and improve access to recreational facilities. New development would eventually cause environmental impacts from the loss of open space and natural habitat.

#### **4.4 Cumulative Impacts**

Cumulative impacts are those resulting from the incremental impacts of the proposed project as well as those of past, present, and foreseeable future actions. If the proposed project is built, it may increase the trend of development in the vicinity. The primarily residential corridor may adopt a more business character over time.

The proposed widening project may further enhance future business development in the area south of the Sullivan Road / Wax Road intersection. The project will link with the Hooper Road Extension project (H.005403), Hooper Road Widening (H.009300), Hooper Road (Joor Road - Sullivan Road) Widening (H.002317), Hooper Road (Black Water Road - Joor Road) Widening (H.002316) and Sullivan Road (Central Thruway - Wax Road) (C.P. No. 03 - CS - C10020).

**4.5 Summary of Impacts**

A comparison of quantifiable project impacts provided in Table 6.1 offers a basis for discussion and selection of the preferred Build Alternative.

**Table 4.5 Comparison of Impacts by Alternative**

Evaluation Measure	Units	No-Build	Build
<b>Relocation Impacts</b>			
Residential Relocations	Each	0	1
Commercial Relocations	Each	0	0
Community Relocations	Each	0	0
Vacant/Unused Structures	Each	0	0
Other Relocations	Each	0	0
<b>Frontage Impacts</b>			
Residential Properties	Each	0	31
Commercial Properties	Each	0	21
Community Properties	Each	0	0
<b>Potential Environmental Risk Sites</b>			
Underground Storage Tanks with Known Owner	Each	2	2
HREC with Known Owner	Each	5	5
Inactive without Known Owner	Each	0	0
Oil and Gas Wells	Each	0	0
<b>Natural Environment</b>			
Wetlands	Acres	0	0
Other Waters of the U.S.	Acres	0	0.40
Scenic Streams	Each	0	0
Stream Crossings	Each	0	0
Sole Source Aquifer Impacts	Acres	0	0
Protected Species	Each	0	0
Prime and Unique Farmland	Acres	0	0
Coastal Resources and Essential Fish Habitat	Each	N/A	N/A
<b>Cultural Resources</b>			
Properties Eligible for or Listed on NRHP	Each	0	2
Properties Not Eligible for NRHP	Each	0	24
Section 6(f) Properties	Each	0	0

Evaluation Measure		Units	No-Build	Build
Noise				
Receptors Impacted in 2034		Each	71	71
HREC	Historical Recognized Environmental Condition	NRHP	National Register of Historic Places	
NA	Not Applicable	TBD	To Be Determined	

**4.6 Estimate Cost of Build Alternative**

An opinion of estimated costs was compiled for the preferred Build Alternative and the values are detailed in Table 4.6. The estimates include construction costs, ROW acquisition and relocation costs, and utility relocation costs. The proposed project is being funded with state and federal safety dollars.

**Table 4.6 Estimated Costs of Build Alternative**

Cost	Preferred Build Alternative
Construction	\$12.31 million
Right-of-Way and Relocation	\$3 million
Utility Relocation	\$1.5 million
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$16.81 million</b>

**5. Public Comments and Agency Coordination**

**5.1 Solicitation of Views**

Solicitation of Views (SOV) data were sent to all appropriate federal, state, and local agencies and officials in order to identify possible adverse social, economic, or environmental effects of the proposed highway location and/or design. Copies of the SOV letters, description, map, mailing list, and all responses are included in Appendix D. No negative responses were received.

Views were solicited twice, once on January 7, 2013 when the project was state funded only and on November 7, 2013 when federal funds were added to the project funding.

**5.2 Open House Public Meeting**

An Open House Public Meeting for the project was held on August 19, 2014 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Central Intermediate School, in Central Louisiana. On August 5, 2014, notices of the Open House Public Meeting were distributed to all appropriate federal, state, and local agencies and officials. In addition, the meeting notice was published in the *Central Speaks and Daily Advocate* on August 7th and 14th and August 8th and 13th respectively. The notice was also posted on the LADOTD website and provided to local television/radio broadcast outlets.

The Open House Public Meeting provided an opportunity to view the proposed project information, ask questions of the project team, and provide written and verbal comments for consideration. Staff set up informational stations in the school’s multipurpose room, while a multi-media PowerPoint presentation was set up in the adjoining cafeteria. A tape recorder was available during the course of the meeting to record any verbal comments. During

this time, 35 members of the public attended the Public Meeting. All attendees had the opportunity to review the handout, view the PowerPoint presentation, and ask questions of LADOTD staff pertaining to the proposed project. No verbal comments were recorded and four written comments were received. These comments and the LADOTD responses are summarized in Table 5.1. Five elected officials (or their representatives) and sixteen representatives of other public agencies attended. In addition, one representatives of the media attended.

The handout and PowerPoint presentation specified that written comments would be accepted until September 2, 2014. The transcript, detailing the materials presented and available during the Public Meeting, was distributed to local and state elected officials, state and local public libraries, and LADOTD District office.

**Table 5.1 Public Meeting Comments and Responses**

Comment	Response
<p>1. definitely curb, gutter &amp; sidewalks                      2. Extend the Wax Rd extension to tie into East martin (back of Huntley s (d) so that Huntley Place residents have another way out.</p>	<p>This is not within the scope of this State Highway project.</p>
<p>From a safety standpoint it would be best to connect the back of Huntley Place subdivision with Wax Road. This needs to be completed whether done with State, Parish or City dollars</p>	<p>Same as above.</p>
<p>I have two businesses (D-B Associates located at 11237 Sullivan Road and Tiger Plumbing located at 11247 Sullivan Road) sharing the same parking entrance on Sullivan Road. I have two concerns regarding the inability to make left turns.</p> <p>1. D-B Associates is an accounting and tax preparation business. The number of vehicles entering my business during the period from January thru May of each year probably exceeds one thousand. After May traffic drops to maybe eight per day</p> <p>In addition to this traffic, Tiger Plumbing adds another 10-122 vehicles entering and leaving each day. That brings the total vehicles entering this driveway to over 20 per day.</p> <p>By moving the turn lanes less than 100 feet toward Hooper Road these people could turn directly into my driveway and eliminate over half the U-turns they would have to make.</p> <p>2. My other concern is how emergency vehicles make U-turns when the only lane past my drive is Wax Road. This could pose a problem in a life and death situation.</p> <p>My request is that you consider moving the turn lane so my clients and personnel can save the time and fuel costs caused by making additional U-turns.</p> <p>You may contact me at (225) 268-2289 or jddevall@bellsouth.net if you have any questions regarding this matter.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. DOTD’s EDSM IV.2.1.4 does not allow full access median openings at driveways, and therefore we do not allow median openings directly in line with driveways.</li> <li>2. There is an “R-cut” within 1500 from this drive right after the Bon Dickey Drive and before the Wax Road intersection.</li> </ol>

Comment	Response
<p>In regards to the above referenced project, I am asking DOTD to consider allowing enough pavement width to include bicycle lanes within the scope of this project. The City of Central's Master Transportation Plan calls for bicycle lanes along Sullivan Road and along Hooper Road. Whether this can be accomplished through additional pavement width or by adjusting striping positions, the addition of bicycle lanes would help comply with DOTD's Complete Streets Policy and the City of Central's Transportation Plan.</p>	<p>The City of Central has informed DOTD (see Appendix F) that they have been working with BREC to develop off-road bicycle trails and paths through the community. One such off-road bicycle path would connect near the Hooper Sullivan intersection and travel south towards Wax Rd to near Central High School and nearby BREC parks. As a result, the City of Central feels that this new proposed off-road path would provide a more scenic and safer path than a bicycle lane along the heavily traveled Sullivan Rd and would serve the needs of the community greater.</p>