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LAFAYETTE  
REGIONAL  
XPRESSWAY  
State Project No. H.004491  
F.A.P. No. H004491



**TIER 1 COMBINED  
FINAL  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPACT  
STATEMENT /  
RECORD OF  
DECISION**

DECEMBER 2022



**COOPERATING AGENCIES:**  
  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF  
ENGINEERS  
NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT  
  
U.S. COAST GUARD  
8<sup>TH</sup> COAST GUARD



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## Lafayette Regional Xpressway

Iberia, Lafayette, St. Martin, and Vermillion Parishes, Louisiana

### Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement / Record of Decision

Submitted pursuant to: 42 U.S.C. 4332 (2) (c) and 49 U.S.C. 303

by the

U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, Louisiana  
Department of Transportation and Development, and

Lafayette Metropolitan Expressway Commission

and

Cooperating Agencies:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District and U.S. Coast Guard, 8<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District

02/02/2023

Date of Approval

[Signature]

Federal Highway Administration

12/16/2022

Date of Approval

[Signature]

Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development

12/09/2022

Date of Approval

[Signature]

Lafayette Metropolitan Expressway Commission

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This is a Tier 1 Combined FEIS/ROD addressing corridor alternatives for a controlled access toll road on new location in the Lafayette, LA area. The proposed facility would initially be four lanes with the capability to expand to six lanes. The proposed Lafayette Regional Xpressway would connect U.S. 90 south; U.S. 167 (Johnston Street) southwest of Lafayette, I-10 west of Lafayette, and I-49 north of Lafayette. This document identifies the selected Corridor Alternative (LRX Corridor) and the basis for its choice.

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# Final Environmental Impact Statement

In 2003, the Louisiana Legislature authorized the creation of the Lafayette Metropolitan Expressway Commission (LMEC) for promoting, planning, financing, developing, constructing, controlling, regulating, operating, and maintaining limited access tollways or transit ways within its jurisdiction. The legislation declared that public revenue, including federal funds, had not kept pace with the area's growing transportation system needs. Therefore, the direction given the LMEC in the legislation was to pursue innovative and alternative funding sources that would be used to improve the transportation system by the development of an efficient, safe, and well-maintained limited access highway system.

To follow its mandate, LMEC commissioned a Feasibility Study for the Lafayette Metropolitan Expressway (LME), which was completed in July 2005. The Feasibility Study evaluated potential toll road corridors from US 90 south near Broussard and Youngsville westward around the City of Lafayette, across I-10 west of Lafayette, north around Carencro, across I-49 North and back to I-10 east of Lafayette. Following review of the study's results, the portion of the loop from I-49 Northeast to I-10 was eliminated due to environmental concerns and low feasibility.

With the feasibility established, LMEC advanced the project into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) phase to examine the evolving corridors and identify a preferred corridor. A Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was published by the FHWA in the Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 241, Friday, December 16, 2005. A NOI Amendment was issued in the Federal Register, Vol. 74, No. 194, Thursday, October 8, 2009. The original NOI was amended to change the name of the project from LME to the Lafayette Regional Xpressway (LRX) and to add the LADOTD as a Joint Lead Agency. The agencies followed the tiered process EIS as a vehicle for fact-based analyses that supports informed decision-making on corridor-length issues. The identification of a selected corridor through this process will allow for more detailed evaluation of environmental impacts in specific alignments within the corridor during the Tier 2 process.

The Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was published in January of 2019 and noticed in the Federal Register February 1, 2019. A Public Hearing was held on February 28, 2019, and the comment period remained open until March 18, 2019. The Tier 1 DEIS was approved on January 7, 2019.

The primary purpose of this combined Final Environmental Impact Statement/Record of Decision (FEIS/ROD) is to respond to substantive comments received during the comment period as they reflect and or change the decisions being made during the Tier 1 process. The documentation contains the corrections made to the LRX Tier 1 DEIS. The ROD states the decision, identifies the alternatives considered in reaching the decision and states the means to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts. A review of the Section 4(f) properties in the selected corridor alternatives identified two areas that can be avoided during the Tier 2 alignment development process.

## 1. FAST Act Provisions

On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed into law the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (Public Law 114-94). The law incorporates streamlining requirements, including the use of errata and the combined FEIS/ROD. Section 1304 of the FAST Act, Efficient Environmental Reviews for Project Decision Making, sets forth the changes to Title 23 U.S.C. Section 139. In particular, subsection (j), Accelerated Decision Making; Improving Transparency in Environmental Reviews, amends 23 U.S.C. Section 139 by adding subsection (n), Accelerated Decision Making in Environmental Reviews. 23 U.S.C. 139(n) provides for the preparation of an FEIS by attaching errata sheets to the DEIS if certain conditions are met. In addition, the Section 139(n)(2) requires, to the maximum extent

practicable, and unless certain conditions exist, that the lead USDOT agency expeditiously develop a single, combined FEIS/ROD.

### **1.1. Use of Errata**

When comments received on the DEIS are minor corrections or changes to the DEIS or explanations of why the comments do not warrant further response, the errata sheets will be made available to the public to the same extent as the DEIS and continued availability of the DEIS should be ensured.

A small number of comments required corrections and minor clarifications to the DEIS. No comments warranted further response in the form of additional alternatives.

The LRX Tier 1 DEIS is currently available to the public:

- on the project website ([www.lrxpressway.com](http://www.lrxpressway.com)),
- on the LADOTD Environmental website (<http://www.sp.dotd.la.gov>) and
- at the public libraries in the region.

The Tier 1 DEIS Errata are included in this combined Tier 1 FEIS/ROD and are also available with the Tier 1 DEIS at the locations noted above. The following information is provided in the FEIS/ROD and errata sheets:

- Corrections made to the DEIS (Section 4 DEIS Errata Sheets)
- Identification of the selected corridor alternative and the reasons why it was selected (Section 2 of the FEIS).
- Preliminary Section 4(f) determination and current status of the 4(f) analysis (Section 8.3 of the ROD).
- Section 106 evaluation of effects on historic properties (Section 8.2 of the ROD).
- List of commitments and mitigation measures for the NEPA selected corridor alternative (Section 5 of the ROD).
- Summary of comments received on the DEIS, public hearing responses and public and agency coordination activities that have taken place since the issuance of the DEIS (Appendix A-C).
- Identification of coordination activities since release of the DEIS (Section 3 of the FEIS).

It is not anticipated that a reevaluation or supplemental EIS would be triggered at the Tier 1 EIS level. The LRX Tier 1 EIS will be followed by a Tier 2 EIS that will focus on site-specific details of project impacts, costs, and mitigation measures.

### **1.2. Combined FEIS/ROD**

The FAST Act reiterates that to the maximum extent practicable, the lead agency should develop a single document that combines a FEIS and Record of Decision (ROD)(23USC 139(n)(2)), unless:

- The FEIS makes substantial changes to the proposed action that are relevant to environmental or safety concerns; or
- There is a significant new circumstance or information relevant to environmental concerns that bears on the proposed action or the impacts of the proposed action.

The FEIS does not make substantial changes and new circumstances and information has not been discovered. Therefore, the LRX Tier 1 EIS may be issued as a combined FEIS/ROD.

## **2. Identification of Selected Corridor Alternative**

This section identifies the selected corridor alternative as the NEPA Preferred Corridor Alternative identified in the Tier 1 DEIS. The section also demonstrates why the Preferred Corridor Alternative is the selected corridor alternative following the formal Tier 1 DEIS comment period.

The Notice of Availability was published in the Federal Register on February 2, 2019. The Public Hearing was held on February 28, 2019, and the formal comment period ran through March 18, 2019. Distribution of the Tier 1 DEIS to local, regional, state, federal agencies, interested and affected parties, as well as the public provided opportunity for review and comment.

No comments received on the Tier 1 DEIS resulted in changes to the NEPA Preferred Corridor Alternative. Additionally, no substantive comments raised new circumstances or new information relevant to environmental or safety concerns that would change the selection of the NEPA Preferred Corridor Alternative.

### **2.1. Purpose and Need**

As mentioned in Chapter 2 of the DEIS, the purpose and need for the project is defined as summarized below.

The consideration of a highway facility connecting areas north and south of the Lafayette metropolitan area has been on-going for decades. In 2003, legislation was established forming the LMEC and declaring that public revenue had not kept pace with the area's growing transportation system needs. The LMEC, under legislative direction, is pursuing innovative and alternative funding sources for transportation projects that would be used to improve the transportation system of the region.

The purpose of the proposed project is to enhance the regional and national transportation system by improving system linkage, increasing capacity and accommodating transportation demand, and responding to economic growth and development within the greater Lafayette area.

Increased roadway capacity and north-south mobility have been identified as needs to be addressed by the proposed project. Inadequate roadway capacity cannot accommodate existing and future traffic demand in the LRX Study Area (the City of Lafayette and the adjoining four-parish area). For years, the region's long-range transportation plan has included projects intended to improve north-south mobility. Population growth, commercial development, changes in land use patterns, and development trends have created increased demand on the existing north-south roadways, resulting in steadily worsening congestion and delays.

### **2.2. Comparison of Transportation and Environmental Consequences**

The LRX Selected Corridor Alternative has been identified based on evaluation of the estimated capital costs, north-south mobility improvement, potentially affected environmental resources, and public input. The project team acknowledges that some resources, such as community facilities and Section 4(f) resources, are typically avoided



during development of alternative alignments and have little or no influence on corridor alternative selection at this stage of project development. Consequently, while all resources were evaluated during the Tier 1 DEIS, those that weighed most on the selection of a corridor alternative for further study due to the variations among the corridor alternatives consisted of developed land, prime farmland soils, wetlands, and high-risk floodplains. Evaluations of the southern and northern corridor alternatives were conducted independently of each other. The results of the evaluations are presented in Table 1, as approved in the Tier 1 DEIS and described below and further in the Tier 1 DEIS document. The green highlighted rows in the table are those impacts which played more heavily in the selection of the corridor alternative.

While the overall construction costs of the LRX Selected Corridor Alternative are higher, the combination of Outer and Common 1 provides transportation alternatives to all residents in the study area, has been identified as preferred based on public and stakeholder input to-date, and satisfies the purpose and need developed for the Tier 1 EIS process. The public and stakeholder information in the table is a level of support received based on public comments and written comments received after review of the Tier 1 DEIS, the public meetings and the Public Hearing. The commentors provided feedback on which alternative they most supported and the corridor level of support was assigned low, medium and high in the table.

Prime farmland soils are homogenous across the area with all southern corridor alternatives having a high probability of impacting this resource. The probability of impacts to prime farmlands from the northern corridor alternatives are equally high. Therefore, this parameter did not influence identification of the selected corridor alternative.

Comparison among the three southern corridor alternatives shows that the Outer has the lowest probability to impact developed lands and wetlands, but the highest potential to impact high-risk floodplains. Comparison between the two northern corridor alternatives shows that Common 1 has the lowest probability to impact developed lands and wetlands, but the highest potential to impact high-risk floodplains.

Based on this analysis, the Outer Corridor Alternative and the Common Corridor 1 Alternative appear to present the least impacts overall. Therefore, these two alternatives were identified as selected based on the least potential impacts. Figure 1 illustrates that these two corridors in combination comprise the LRX Selected Corridor Alternative.

Based on public input received during the comment period and the Public Hearing, held on February 28, 2019, the Outer Corridor and Common 1 corridors remain preferred and are selected for future study under the Tier 2 EIS process.

Based on the simulations for the two scenarios for which traffic and revenue were forecasted, the results show that toll financing can support approximately 20 percent of the upfront capital costs of the project, a contribution to total development costs. Additional refinement and engineering will likely increase the financial feasibility and reduce the gap funding necessary. Chapter 3, sections F and G of the Tier 1 DEIS provides additional details regarding the potential for tolling this project.

**Table 1: LRX Corridor Alternatives - Evaluation Matrix**

Evaluation Parameter		Southern Corridor Alternatives			Northern Corridor	
		Inner	Middle	Outer	Common 1	Common 2
Estimated Capital Cost	Millions – 2017 \$	\$668 - \$768	\$659 - \$745	\$747 - \$783	\$469-\$690	\$481-\$700
North/South Mobility		High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium
<b>Land/Land Use</b>						
Total Acreage	# acres	7,849	9,357	14,033	12,273	6,441
Developed Land	% of total acreage	40.20%	20.00%	12.70%	17.60%	26.10%
Agricultural Land	% of total acreage	53.80%	76.90%	84.90%	78.70%	66.50%
Wetlands	% of total acreage	3.50%	1.70%	1.00%	1.80%	4.00%
Forested Land	% of total acreage	1.40%	6.00%	3.00%	3.00%	0.30%
Other Land	% of total acreage	0.70%	0.60%	1.00%	1.50%	2.80%
Water/Shore	% of total acreage	0.90%	0.60%	0.40%	0.40%	0.90%
<b>Soils</b>						
Prime Farmland Soils	% of total acreage	96.78%	93.72%	87.49%	98.52%	95.36%
<b>Socioeconomics</b>						
Population - Total	#	37,354	33,677	28,526	26,940	28,145
Population - Minority	%	13.69%	14.53%	22.06%	25.37%	29.41%
Pop. Below Poverty Level	%	9.65%	10.76%	15.42%	16.69%	15.15%
<b>Community Facilities</b>						
Cemeteries	#	1	2	1	1	2
Churches	#	7	3	2	5	4
Public Safety Buildings	#	1	0	2	2	2
Schools	#	4	2	4	3	2
Other Public Service Facilities	#	3	0	2	1	3
<b>Cultural Resources</b>						
National Register of Historic	#	0	0	1	1	1
Archaeological Sites	#	4	5	0	0	3
Historic Standing Structures	#	0	0	4	0	0
<b>Natural Resources</b>						
NWI Wetlands	% of total acreage	2.15%	1.12%	1.69%	0.90%	2.08%
Hydric Soils	% of total acreage	57.2%	61.9%	66.3%	59.8%	54.0%
Zone A Floodzone	% of total acreage	11.17%	11.95%	12.94%	14.42%	6.06%
Zone AE Floodzone	% of total acreage	19.10%	13.20%	4.61%	26.79%	19.32%
Zone X500 Floodzone	% of total acreage	4.13%	7.47%	4.00%	8.07%	2.38%
Zone X Floodzone	% of total acreage	65.54%	67.38%	78.44%	98.91%	42.98%
Stream Segments	#	21	26	60	21	18
Water Wells	#	463	457	387	502	298
<b>Waste Sites</b>						
Inactive & Abandoned	#	1	0	1	2	1
LUSTs	#	0	0	0	0	2
Landfills	#	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Mineral Resources</b>						
Producing/Productive Wells	#	2	4	1	7	5
Total Oil & Gas Wells	#	28	58	70	118	45
<b>Section 4(f) Resources</b>						
NRHP Properties	#	0	0	1	1	1
Parks	#	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Public &amp; Stakeholder</b>		<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Low</b>

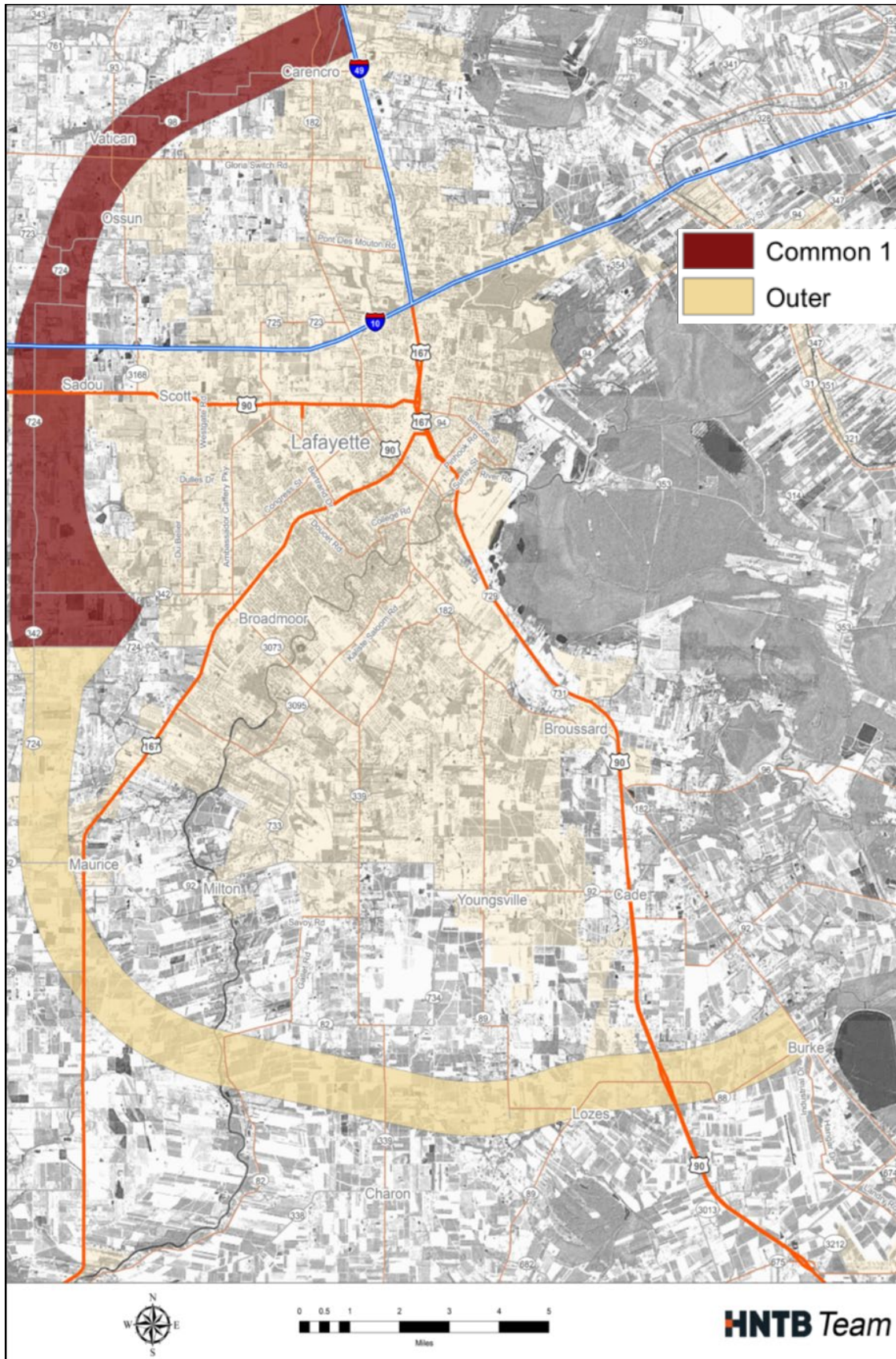


Figure 1: LRX Selected Corridor Alternatives

### **3. Public Outreach since Release of the DEIS**

#### **3.1. Notice of Availability**

A Notice of Availability (NOA) for the DEIS was published on February 1, 2019, in the Federal Register. The NOA informed interested parties that the Tier 1 DEIS for the LRX project was available for public review. This publication initiated a 45-day public comment period intended to encourage public participation. The NOA announced a public hearing and invited comments through March 18, 2019.

Following the publication of the NOA, the DEIS was made available in public libraries, at local agencies, and administrative offices as well as on the project website and LADOTD website. A summary of these locations and the list of agencies receiving the Tier 1 DEIS for review is listed in Chapter 11 of the Tier 1 DEIS.

#### **3.2. Continuous Engagement**

A public hearing was held February 28, 2019, following distribution of the LRX Tier 1 DEIS to agencies and the public. The public hearing was held at the South Regional Library on Johnston Street in Lafayette, LA. The requirements of the Public Involvement process during the NEPA process state that the agency should make the document available to the public at least 15 days in advance. The NOA was published on February 2, 2019, twenty-six (26) days in advance of the hearing.

The LRX Tier 1 DEIS distribution included hard copies hand-delivered to public libraries, agencies and local officials. The Executive Summary was mailed to the Louisiana Congressional Delegation. Copies were also distributed by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) to tribal representatives. The DEIS was submitted to others, including the Louisiana State Library, electronically. The distribution list can be found in Appendix D.

The public was invited to view exhibits and speak with the project team from 5:30-6:00 pm. Due to the large number of guests in attendance, two presentations were made (providing the same information), one at 5:45 pm and one at 7:20 pm. A break to allow another opportunity to view exhibits and speak with members of the project team was provided following both presentations. The public was invited to provide comments in a moderated and recorded forum from 6:45-7:30. The comment period was open until March 18, 2019. The purpose of the hearing was to obtain public comments regarding the LRX Tier 1 DEIS.

More than 100 members of the public, agencies and media attended the public hearing. Written comments were accepted during the public hearing and following the public hearing until March 18, 2019. In addition to the three verbal comments, 14 participants filled out the comment sheet at the hearing. Another 10 parties provided comments by email. The comments have been summarized and responses have been provided in Appendix A-C and are included in the Public Hearing Summary document.

The project website has provided citizens and interested parties the ability to access files and provide comments throughout the duration of the project.

### **4. DEIS Errata Sheets**

The LRX Tier 1 DEIS errata sheets document the revisions that have been made to the DEIS issued February 2, 2019, that are now reflected in the Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement/Record of Decision (FEIS/ROD).

1. Section 3.F.1 Modeling Methodology updated to reflect the correct TDM base year of 2014, not 2010 as originally stated.
2. Table 4-3: Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Older in Section 4.D (page 4-4 in Volume 1) has been revised as follows:

Table 4-3: Employment Status 2010

Parish	Population 16 Years and Over	In the Labor Force	In the Labor Force Employed	Unemployment Rate
Iberia	55,453	60.9%	56.1%	7.8%
Lafayette	168,019	68.3%	64.4%	5.5%
St. Martin	39,611	60.9%	56.3%	7.3%
Vermilion	43,676	59.1%	56.0%	5.2%
4.Totals	306,759	64.7%	60.7%	6.2%
Source: 2010 Census Table S2301 Employment Status				

3. Chapter 5, Section K, Air Quality Impacts is updated to include the following sentence.

LADOTD will address MSAT analysis for air quality impacts in accordance with the FHWA interim MSAT guidance issued in November 2016.

4. Chapter 5, Section BB, Synopsis is updated to identify the requirement for detailed study of indirect and cumulative impacts during the Tier 2 process.

This chapter of the DEIS provides an inventory of resources within each Corridor Alternative. This information can be considered as an order-of-magnitude quantification of potential impacts. At this inventory level of study, it should be regarded as guidance to compare the corridor alternatives, as no definite impact to the identified environmental resources can be determined. During the future Tier 2 phase of the project direct, cumulative, and indirect impacts will be analyzed in more detail and from a quantitative perspective.

5. Chapter 6, Section A, paragraph 2 is updated to reflect the correct numbering for the exhibits showing the NHRP-listed properties as follows:

Section 4(f) resources by type in the corridor alternatives are shown in Table 6.1 Volume 2: Exhibits 5-7 to Exhibit 5-10 show the locations of the Public Facilities and NHRP-listed properties.

6. Section 9.E Public Hearing (page 9-9 in Volume 1) has been updated to include a brief summary of the public hearing as noted below.

“A public hearing was held February 28, 2019, following distribution of the LRX Tier 1 DEIS to agencies and the public. The public hearing was held at the South Regional Library on Johnston Street in Lafayette, LA.

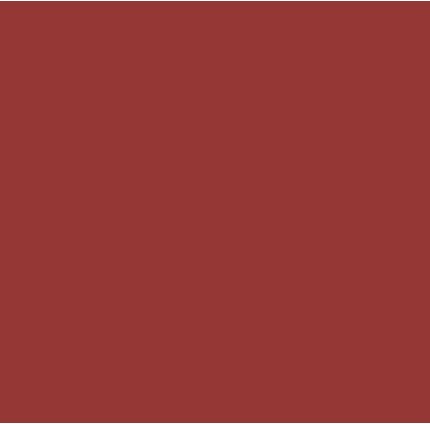
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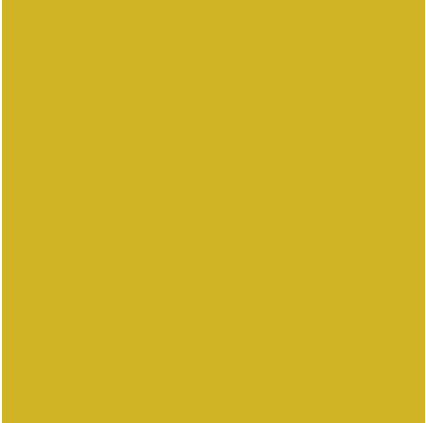
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Written comments were accepted during the public hearing and following the public hearing until March 18, 2019. In addition to the three verbal comments, 14 participants filled out the comment sheet at the hearing. Another 10 parties provided comments by email. The comments have been summarized and responses have been provided in Appendix A-C and are included in the Public Hearing Summary document.”



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**TIER 1  
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**DECEMBER 2022**



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## Lafayette Regional Xpressway Tier 1 Record of Decision

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) concurs with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) in the choice of the Selected Corridor Alternatives developed and analyzed as part of the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. The Preferred Corridors consist of the Outer corridor in the north and the Common 1 corridor in the south. As the project sponsor, the Lafayette Metropolitan Expressway Commission (LMEC) served as co-lead agency with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) and the FHWA. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and the U.S. Coast Guard served as NEPA cooperating agencies. This process produced the Lafayette Regional Xpressway (LRX) Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) dated December 2018, and this Combined Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)/Record of Decision (ROD) document.

This ROD summarizes the LRX project; the factors and process that led to its development; the alternatives considered; the various opportunities to comment on the project and project documents; the comments and responses thereto; the basis for FHWA's decision regarding compliance with relevant environmental requirements; and the mitigation measures the project requires. The ROD does not replace or negate any of the information or descriptions in the environmental review documents. Rather, the ROD and the environmental review documents (incorporated herein by reference) are part of the FHWA environmental record for the project.

The two preferred corridor alternatives, Outer Corridor (northern) and Common 1 Corridor (southern) have reasonable capital costs, support the project's purpose and need, have the least potential for overall environmental impacts and are supported by the public and stakeholders. The environmental impacts of these two corridors will continue to be explored in more detail as alignments are developed as part of the Tier 2 EIS but because they presented the greatest opportunity for avoidance and/or mitigation to protect all aspects of the environment, these corridors were chosen by FHWA as the Preferred Corridor Alternative for further analysis. Based on consideration of the social, economic and environmental impacts of the Lafayette Regional Xpressway project as evaluated in the Tier 1 process and defined in the project documentation, as well as on public comments and resource agency consultation, it is the decision of FHWA to approve the LRX Tier 1 Selected Corridor Alternative consisting of two Corridor Alternatives for this project:

- For the southern corridor: Outer
- For the northern corridor: Common 1

The LRX Selected Corridor Alternative defines the geographical boundaries within which specific roadway alignments for the LRX would be developed and evaluated for environmental consequences during the Tier 2 phase of the project development. This approval is conditioned on compliance with the commitments described in Chapter 8 of the DEIS document along with policies and guidelines.

02/02/2023

Date of Approval



Federal Highway Administration



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# Record of Decision

## 1. Introduction

The ROD applies to the Selected Corridor Alternative described, evaluated and recommended in the LRX Tier 1 DEIS (January 7, 2019), all technical reports and supporting documentation, incorporated by reference; identified as the selected alternative in the Tier 1 FEIS attached to this Combined Tier 1 FEIS/ROD document; with additional rationale for the Decision as contained in the remainder of this ROD.

## 2. Alternatives Considered

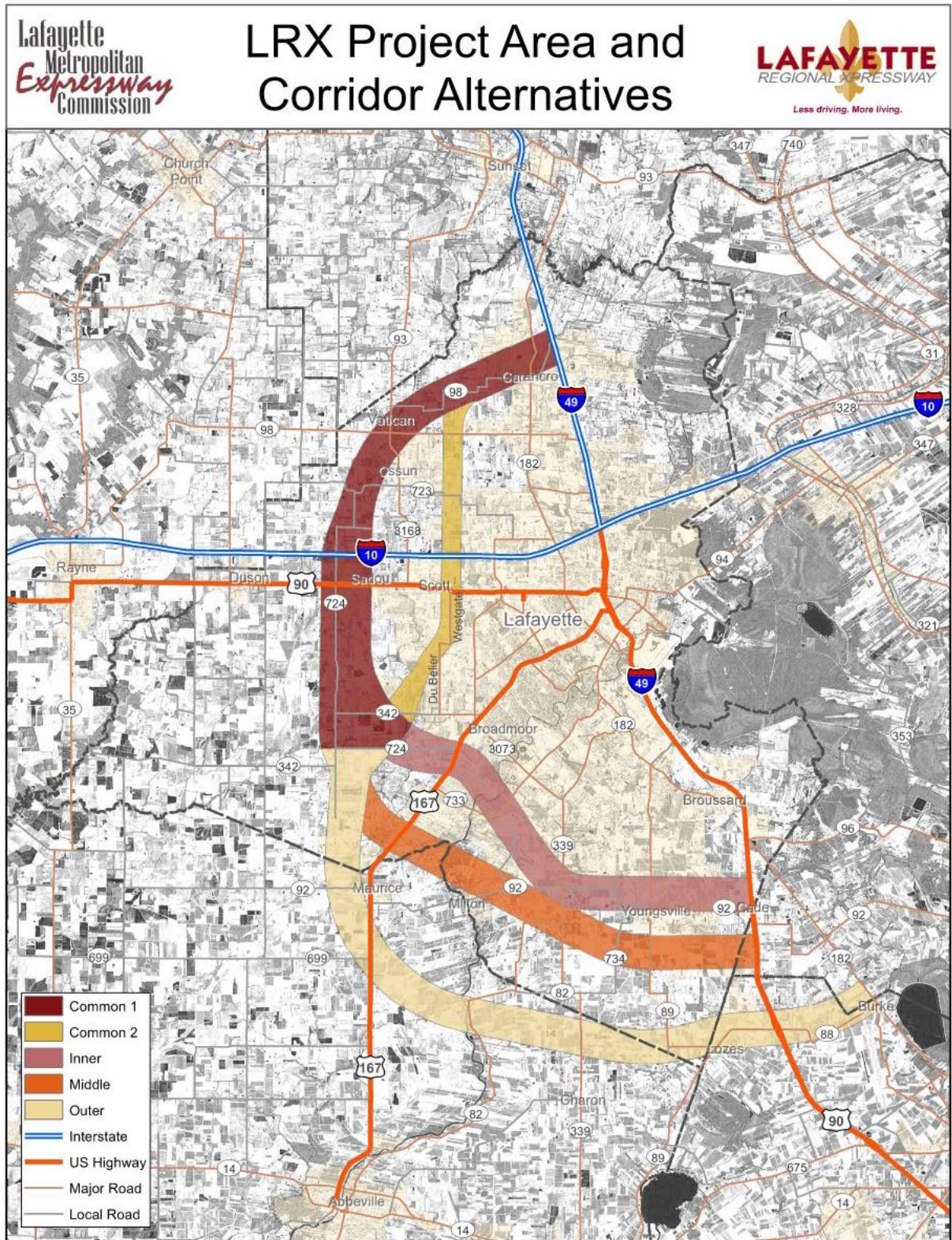
The following sections describe the alternatives considered in the Tier 1 DEIS, which ultimately led to the selection of the Select Corridor Alternative.

The No-Build Alternative is considered the transportation system as it currently exists in the LRX Study Area plus those transportation system enhancements included in the Lafayette Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Projects, the Financially Constrained Transportation Plan, and six projects from the Vision list (described in Table 2). This Tier 1 EIS assumes that the I-49 Lafayette Connector is built prior to opening year of the LRX, as it is currently under design development through the LA DOTD. Detail on the network and future improvements can be found in the LRX Level 1 Traffic and Revenue Study prepared for this project. In general, the transportation improvement projects in the TIP are smaller enhancement projects intended to provide localized traffic relief. These projects have minimal impact on regional traffic demand or capacity. The No-Build Alternative is carried into the document as a baseline but does not meet the purpose and need of the project as it does not provide the north-south capacity increase through the region.

Future Improvement Project	Build Year
I-49 Lafayette Connector	2030
E. Broussard Rd – widen to 4-lane boulevard Johnson St to Kaliste Saloom Rd	2040
Southcity Pkwy – New 4-lane blvd + bridge Robley Dr to Vincent Rd	2030
Youngsville Highway – widen to 4-lane blvd Ambassador Caffery Pkwy South Ext to Youngsville Pkwy	2040
Pinhook Road – widen to 3-lane blvd from Southpark Rd to S. Morgan	2040
Ambassador Caffery North – new 4-lane blvd Renaud to I-49	2040
N. University Ave – widen to 4-lane blvd Renaud to I-49	2040

**Table 2: Projects from Vision List included in No-Build Alternative**

The build alternatives include five corridor alternatives: three southern corridor alternatives (designated Inner, Middle and Outer) and two northern corridor alternatives (designated Common 1 and Common 2). The southern corridor alternatives extend across an area from US 90 south of Lafayette west/northwest to LA 724/Duhon Road. The northern corridor alternatives traverse an area from LA 724/Duhon Road north/northeast to I-49 at Carencro. Figure 2 in the provides an overview of the project area and the corridor alternatives. Descriptions of the alternatives considered are provided in Chapter 3 of the Tier 1 DEIS. As the mission of the LMEC is to develop funding options, the project corridor may be tolled. The DEIS traffic and revenue study looked at the potential funding that could be created by tolling the corridor and determined that the project or portions of the project could be supported by this funding mechanism.



This map was compiled by HNTB in February 2008 with data from various sources including, but not limited to: HNTB, ESRI, US Census, and LDEQ. This map is a conceptual tool for project development and is to be used for illustrative purposes only. This map is not self-executing or binding. No warranties as to its accuracy, reliability, utility or completeness are given or implied. HNTB shall not be held liable for improper or incorrect use of the information contained in this map.

**Figure 2: LRX Tier 1 Corridor Alternatives**

### **3. Basis for the Decision**

The documents considered in making this decision include: available MPO Transportation plans, the LRX Tier 1 DEIS and associated technical reports and supporting documents, the responses to comments received on the Tier 1 DEIS, this combined Tier 1 FEIS/ROD, as well as technical memoranda, correspondence and other documents in the project file.

#### **3.1. Planning and Project Development Process**

In 2003, the Louisiana Legislature authorized the creation of the Lafayette Metropolitan Expressway Commission (LMEC) for promoting, planning, financing, developing, constructing, controlling, regulating, operating, and maintaining limited access tollways or transit ways within its jurisdiction. The legislation declared that public revenue, including federal funds, had not kept pace with the area's growing transportation system needs. Therefore, the direction given the LMEC in the legislation was to pursue innovative and alternative funding sources that would be used to improve the transportation system by the development of an efficient, safe, and well-maintained limited access highway system.

To follow its mandate, LMEC commissioned a Feasibility Study for the Lafayette Metropolitan Expressway (LME), which was completed in July 2005. The Feasibility Study evaluated potential toll road corridors from US 90 south near Broussard and Youngsville westward around the City of Lafayette, across I-10 west of Lafayette, north around Carencro, across I-49 North and back to I-10 east of Lafayette. Following review of the study's results, the portion of the loop from I-49 Northeast to I-10 was eliminated from the project limits due to environmental concerns and low feasibility.

With the feasibility established, LMEC advanced the project into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) phase to examine the evolving corridors and identify a preferred corridor. A Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was published by the FHWA in the Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 241, Friday, December 16, 2005. A NOI Amendment was issued in the Federal Register, Vol. 74, No. 194, Thursday, October 8, 2009. The original NOI was amended to change the name of the project from LME to the Lafayette Regional Xpressway (LRX) and to add the LADOTD as a Joint Lead Agency.

The Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was published in January of 2019 and included in the Federal Register February 1, 2019. A Public Hearing was held on February 28, 2019 and the comment period remained open until March 18, 2019. The Tier 1 DEIS was approved on January 7, 2019.

#### **3.2. Purpose and Need**

As discussed in Chapter 2 of the Tier 1 DEIS, the purpose and need for the project is defined as summarized below.

The consideration of a highway facility connecting areas north and south of the Lafayette metropolitan area has been on-going for decades. In 2003, legislation was established forming the LMEC and declaring that public revenue had not kept pace with the area's growing transportation system needs. The LMEC, under legislative direction, is pursuing innovative and alternative funding sources for transportation projects that would be used to improve the transportation system of the region.

The purpose of the proposed project is to enhance the regional and national transportation system by improving system linkage, increasing capacity and accommodating transportation demand, and responding to economic growth and development within the greater Lafayette area.

Increased roadway capacity and north-south mobility have been identified as needs to be addressed by the proposed project. Inadequate roadway capacity cannot accommodate existing and future traffic demand in the LRX Study Area (the City of Lafayette and the adjoining four-parish area). For years, the region's long-range transportation plan has included projects intended to improve north-south mobility. Population growth, commercial development, changes in land use patterns, and development trends have created increased demand on the existing north-south roadways, resulting in steadily worsening congestion and delays.

### **3.3. NEPA selected corridor alternative project description**

The LMEC, with the FHWA as lead federal agency and the LADOTD as lead state agency, is proposing the development of the LRX toll facility. The LRX is proposed as a controlled access toll road on new location in the greater Lafayette, Louisiana area, including Iberia, Lafayette, St. Martin, and Vermilion Parishes.

The proposed LRX will connect US Highway (US) 90 south of Lafayette, Interstate Route 10 (I-10) west of Lafayette, and Interstate Route 49 (I-49) north of Lafayette. Interchanges are proposed at US 90, US 167/Johnston Street, I-10, and I-49, with consideration for interchanges at other cross streets. The proposed LRX facility will initially be constructed as a four-lane facility, two 12-foot lanes in each direction, with the capability to expand to six lanes utilizing the median when traffic demands warrant. The proposed project assumes that the I-49 Lafayette Connector is built prior to the opening of the LRX. The proposed typical roadway section will also provide space within the average 330-foot right of way (ROW) to add continuous frontage roads, if needed. A bridge over the Vermillion River is under consideration, which would add a third crossing within the region.

Only tolled alternatives are being considered for this project. The LMEC was formed in 2003 under Act 893, which recognizes that public revenue, including federal funding, has not kept up with the pace of the Lafayette region's growing transportation needs. Act 893 gives the LMEC specific authority to pursue nontraditional funding sources, including toll road alternatives, to promote economic growth. It is the mission of the LMEC to supplement public revenue sources for the construction, maintenance, and operation of a safe and efficient limited-access highway system in the Acadiana region. A non-toll alternative would not be economically feasible.

## **4. Findings**

Tier 1 EIS resource data collection and evaluation were performed on a desktop basis using existing published data and reports, internet site information, and geographic information system (GIS) data. No field studies or surveys were conducted. Table 1 of the FEIS provides a summary of the investigation of the alternative corridors. All the corridor alternatives have similar land uses and land types with almost all soils classified as prime farmland. Land use across all the corridor alternatives is predominantly agricultural with developed land the second largest type of land use. Population within the corridor alternatives is predominantly non-minority with personal incomes generally exceeding the poverty level.

From a natural resources perspective, all corridor alternatives exhibit similarities. Table 1 in the DEIS includes a comparison of all alternatives to each other when considering potential environmental impacts. As noted in that table, the largest impacts to natural resources in all corridor alternatives are to prime farmland soils and to floodplains classified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as Zone A - High-Risk Flood Zones. It is not known at this time whether a specific corridor alignment might impact threatened/endangered species, but avoidance of these species would be important to study in the Tier 2 EIS.

It is reasonable to anticipate that the LRX would have an adverse impact on various resources including prime farmland soils and agricultural land, floodplains, streams, wetlands, and developed land. Within each corridor alternative, alternative alignments will be developed and impacts on these resources will be evaluated as part of one or more future Tier 2 EISs.

The LRX will also have positive impacts on the motoring public by providing increased roadway capacity and enhancing north-south mobility, which will reduce delay and fuel consumption, and generally improve movement of goods and services. In addition, the project will generate positive economic impacts during construction as well as offering opportunities for improving access to undeveloped and under-developed areas of the region, supporting the long-term growth of the region.

As part of the work performed for the LRX Tier 1 EIS, preliminary cost estimates were prepared. The costs for a potential alignment within each corridor alternative is provided in Table S-3 of the DEIS. The range of costs for the Southern Corridor Alternatives is \$383M to \$496M and Northern Corridor Alternatives \$268 - \$435M both in 2017 dollars.

Level of service (LOS) analyses were conducted as part of the traffic modeling effort for the project and were presented in the *Level 1 Traffic and Revenue Study (2017)*. LOS describes the forecasted congestion of a roadway based on the project traffic and the physical characteristics of the roadway (lane widths, shoulders, intersections, etc.) Traffic projections indicated that the LRX would operate with an LOS of C or better through the study period of 2040. Between 2040 and 2050 average annual growth rate of traffic was estimated to be 1.5 percent. Beyond 2050, growth was estimated to be one percent for the period through 2060.

Preliminary financial models were created to determine the financial feasibility of the project and to begin to identify potential gap funding (funds outside of the toll revenue collections and equity investment to build the project) needed for the project. Based on the simulations for the two scenarios for which traffic and revenue were forecasted, the results show that toll financing can support approximately 20 percent of the upfront capital costs of the project, a contribution to total development costs. As the project matures through the development phase, value engineering will be used to reduce contingencies and capital costs and decrease the gap funding required. Additional traffic analyses will be required in the Tier 2 phase of the project and before any tolling agreements would be made, including Investment Grade Ridership studies.

## **5. Measures to minimize harm**

The EIS considered potential impacts to known Section 106 properties and Section 4(f) resources. There are no known parks within the selected corridor alternatives. During the Tier 2 EIS, the study team anticipates avoidance of the known resource areas noted below due to

the available width within the corridor and the proposed required footprints for the alignments :

- Common 1, within the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) boundary of Our Lady of Assumption School.
- Outer Corridor Alternative, within the NRHP boundary of the Dr. Joseph Angel Villien House.

Any potential impacts to properties newly identified during the Tier 2 EIS will be avoided or minimized.

The project will comply with FHWA Order 6640.23A, FHWA Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations. This directive establishes policies and procedures for the FHWA to use in complying with Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (EO 12898), dated February 11, 1994. It is FHWA's longstanding policy to actively ensure nondiscrimination in federally funded activities. Furthermore, it is FHWA's continuing policy to identify and prevent discriminatory effects by actively administering its programs, policies, and activities to ensure that social impacts to communities and people are recognized early and continually throughout the transportation decision-making process—from early planning through implementation. Should the potential for discrimination be discovered, action to eliminate the potential shall be taken. During the Tier 2 EIS, compliance with this order will be documented should the selected corridor alternative have effects on these populations. The project team will continue to ensure that social impacts to communities are recognized early and continually. Measures will be identified to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate any potential adverse effects.

At this phase of the project, specific LRX impacts cannot be identified or quantified. In general, resources will be avoided, or impacts minimized where practicable. However, when impacts cannot be avoided, mitigation measures will be established during the Tier 2 EIS and subsequent phases. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Traffic noise analysis will be completed during the Tier 2 EIS; abatement measures such as horizontal and/or vertical alignment adjustment, buffer zone acquisition, and noise barriers will be evaluated if impacts are identified.
- Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions guidance is evolving and additional consideration of GHG may be warranted in the Tier 2 analysis.
- Best management practices for erosion and sedimentation control in accordance with the project's permits and SWPPP will be implemented to protect surface and groundwater. Off-site disposal of construction materials, as appropriate, will be performed in accordance with state and federal regulations.
- Wetlands avoidance will be the first priority for the project. If wetlands can't be fully avoided, then the impact will be minimized then mitigated.. If necessary, compensatory mitigation will be developed in accordance with the current ACOE regulations.
- As corridor alignments are developed, the priority will be to avoid impacts to waterbody (stream/bayou/river) modifications/crossings, avoidance of riparian (riverbank) habitats. If avoidance is not feasible, the impacts to the features will be minimized through design measures like structure placement and sizing, pier placement, retaining walls, relocation, and erosion and sedimentation control.

- The design should first work to avoid floodplain impacts. If avoidance is not feasible, impact minimization strategies include structure placement and sizing, and pier placement.
- Visual resource mitigation strategies include Context Sensitive Design in appropriate locations and settings.
- Mitigation measures to offset the economic burden on low-income citizens that may be impacted by implementation of a toll facility will be considered. These include cash replenishment options for unbanked or underbanked populations (cash sales of toll tags through retail outlets), recycling tolling revenue through transit investment (bus routes on the toll road) and low-income assistance (toll credits), and carpooling services.

## 6. Monitoring and Enforcement

The FHWA and LADOTD are ultimately responsible for monitoring and enforcing mitigation measures. LADOTD, as well as the contractor, are responsible for compliance assurance of all related commitments developed as part of this Tier 1 process and the Tier 2 process. Regulatory permit conditions made or obtained for the LRX project will also be complied with during the Tier 2 and construction process.

During the Tier 2 EIS , the following activities and/or work will be performed in or for the Selected LRX Corridor Alternative:

Alternative alignment or alignments will be developed to a sufficient detail to allow the assessment and/or evaluation of environmental impacts and ROW requirements, as well as produce refined traffic and revenues studies and capital cost estimates.

Environmental, land use, and socioeconomic studies and fieldwork will be conducted to assess the impacts of the alternative alignments. These will include, but not be limited to the following:

- Land use – Analysis as appropriate.
- Farmlands/Prime Farmlands consultation with NRCS including completion and submission of form AD-1006, Farmland Conversion Impact Rating.
- Socioeconomic Analysis – Refinement of socioeconomic studies.
- Environmental Justice – Analysis as appropriate.
- Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan for residential and commercial displacements.
- Community facilities.
- Cultural resources: Phase I Archaeological Survey, Historic Structures Survey with National Register eligibility determination, Criteria of Effects evaluation as required.
- Air Quality analysis.
- Noise Assessment using LADOTD “Highway Traffic Noise Policy”.
- Wetland delineation and finding.
- Waterbody (stream/bayou).
- Floodplain and floodway.
- Wildlife, habitat, and ecosystems.



- Waste Sites.
- Visual/aesthetics.
- Mineral resources.
- CSS integration in alternative alignment development. CSS activities include stakeholder engagement, visualization, and CSD activities.

Development of the LRX alternative alignments during the Tier 2 EIS and subsequent design phases will use the following design criteria and standards:

- Current LADOTD Design Criteria.
- AASHTO A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets
- AASHTO Roadside Design Guide.
- AASHTO Policy on Design Standards Interstate System.

During the Tier 1 EIS, an interchange spacing study was developed. This study analyzed the proposed LRX interchange connections at:

- I-10
- I-49 north of I-10 and
- Future I-49 South of I-10.

The interchange spacing study considered criteria from American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

During the future LRX Tier 2 EIS, the project team will complete an Interchange Justification Report (IJR). The proposed alignment's interchanges with existing facilities will be considered during the IJR. Appropriate interchange spacing and MUTCD signage requirements will be considered during the IJR.

### Permitting

Specific permit requirements for the LRX cannot be identified at this point in the project process.

Generally, it is expected that authorization of the LRX will require the following permits:

Permits under the provision of the Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1972:

- Section 404 of the CWA, discharge of dredged and fill material into wetlands and other waters of the United States.
- Section 401 of the CWA, water quality certification – as a condition of the Section 404 permit.
- LPDES, discharge of pollutants from any point source into waters of the state of Louisiana, which meets the Section 402 permit requirements.

Authorization of the bridge across the Vermilion River will require permits subject to the General Bridge Act of 1946 and to the River and Harbors Act of 1890:

- Section 9, construction of a bridge over navigable waters of the United States.

- Section 10, work in navigable waters of the United States.

## **7. Public outreach and opportunities to comment**

Throughout the life of the Tier 1 LRX project, the public and agencies have been given opportunities to participate and provide comments. Civic advisory groups were created to pursue feedback from individuals representing stakeholders throughout the region. Stakeholder meetings were held with other specified groups or individuals. The LMEC held open Commission meetings in which the public could comment. All guidelines for public participation were implemented during the course of developing the project.

NEPA requires that a DEIS provide full disclosure of the environmental impacts associated with a proposed action. The agencies and the public must be given a reasonable opportunity to comment on that action. A list of all opportunities to participate in the process is included in Chapter 9 of the Tier 1 DEIS.

A public hearing was held February 28, 2019, following distribution of the LRX Tier 1 DEIS to agencies and the public. The public hearing was held at the South Regional Library on Johnston Street in Lafayette, LA.

The LRX Tier 1 DEIS distribution included hard copies hand-delivered to public libraries, agencies and local officials. The Executive Summary was mailed to the Louisiana Congressional Delegation. Copies were also distributed by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) to tribal representatives. The DEIS was submitted to others, including the Louisiana State Library, electronically. The distribution list can be found in Appendix D. The US EPA, US Department of the Interior and the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana responded. Their comments are captured in Appendix A-C.

The public was invited to view exhibits and speak with the project team from 5:30-6:00 pm. Due to the large number of guests in attendance, two presentations were made (providing the same information), one at 5:45 pm and one at 7:20 pm. A break to allow another opportunity to view exhibits and speak with members of the project team was provided following both presentations. The public was invited to provide comments in a moderated and recorded forum from 6:45-7:30. The comment period was open until March 18, 2019. The purpose of the hearing was to obtain public comments regarding the LRX Tier 1 DEIS which was recently published.

Written comments were accepted during the public hearing and following the public hearing until March 18, 2019. In addition to the three verbal comments, 14 participants filled out the comment sheet at the hearing. Another 10 parties provided comments by email. The comments have been summarized and responses have been appended to this ROD and are included in the Public Hearing Summary document prepared for the project. Appendix A provides details on the commentor, and the form of date and format of their comment. Appendix B is a listing of each comment, responses to questions posed on the comment card and a relevant response ID. Appendix C provides the response list. Each response is identified by an alphabetical and numerical code that is then cross-referenced in Appendix A.

## **8. Determinations and Findings regarding other laws**

### **8.1. Conformity with Air Quality Plans**

In response to the Clean Air Act of 1970, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established ambient air quality standards for six pollutants (designated criteria

pollutants) that were considered to have a significant effect on public health and welfare. National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) were established for carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide. The State of Louisiana adopted the NAAQS as set forth by EPA. Congress directed that the standards should be reviewed at least every five years by EPA to keep up with current science, and that proposals to revise them should be based solely on public health and welfare considerations, not economic impacts.

Based on modeling and monitoring data provided by LDEQ, EPA has determined that the five parishes comprising the LRX Study Area are in attainment of all NAAQS (US Environmental Protection Agency, Green Book. Available at <http://www3.epa.gov/airquality/greenbook/>). This means that these are areas with concentrations of criteria pollutants are below the levels established by the NAAQS.

## **8.2. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act**

Any federal agency whose project, funding or permit may affect a historic property, both those listed or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, must consider the effects on historic properties and “seek ways to avoid, minimize or mitigate” any adverse effects on historic properties.

A Phase 1A Cultural Resource Study was prepared for the LRX project as described in Chapter 5 of the Tier 1 DEIS. Most standing structures and archaeological sites identified in the Phase IA Study have not been evaluated for NRHP eligibility. As the project advances into the Tier 2 phase, additional cultural resource studies will be performed to identify resources and determine such eligibility to ensure the project stays in compliance with agency policies.

The National Register of Historic Places Dr. Joseph Angel Villien House, located in the Outer Corridor Alternative, and Our Lady of the Assumption School, located in the Common Corridor 1 alternative, will continue to be evaluated for avoidance or impact minimization.

At the current stage of the Project, it is not possible to determine if there will be a specific use of either of the known NRHP properties. However, based on the physical location of the known resources it is possible to address potential avoidance alternatives.

Our Lady of the Assumption School is located near the eastern terminus of the Common 1 corridor. Two potential avoidance alternatives for this resource will be: (1) narrowing the corridor alternative approximately 1,000 feet on the south side from LA 182 to the eastern terminus, or (2) avoid alignment development within the property boundaries of Our Lady of the Assumption School.

The Dr. Joseph Angel Villien House is located on the northern edge of the Outer Corridor Alternative outside the town of Maurice near US 167. Two potential avoidance alternatives for this resource will be: (1) narrowing the corridor alternative approximately 1,000 feet on the north side from Lafayette Street to James Street, or (2) avoid alternative alignment development within the boundaries of the Dr. Joseph Angel Villien House.

Narrowing the corridor alternatives, while feasible, is probably not a desirable alternative at this phase of the project. Project commitment to attempt to avoid development of alternative alignments in the manner described for the corridor alternatives is prudent and feasible at this phase of the project. As the LRX advances into the Tier 2 EIS, other

factors may come into play such as unknown or unidentified Section 106 resources or other significant environmental resources.

In addition to the NRHP-listed or eligible properties, the Phase 1A study identified:

- Four previously identified standing structures, two not assessed for NRHP eligibility and two with no data on file in the Outer Corridor, and
- No other identified cultural resources in the Common 1 Corridor.

### **8.3. Preliminary Section 4(f)**

Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Act of 1966 established a national policy for the USDOT to avoid the use of significant public parks, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges and historic sites as part of a project, unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land and the program includes all possible planning to minimize harm to any park, recreational area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site resulting from such use.

This FHWA 23 CFR 774.7(e) states:

A Section 4(f) approval may involve different levels of detail where the Section 4(f) involvement is addressed in a tiered EIS under Sec. 771.111(g) of this chapter.

(1) When the first-tier, broad-scale EIS is prepared, the detailed information necessary to complete the Section 4(f) approval may not be available at that stage in the development of the action. In such cases, the documentation should address the potential impacts that a proposed action will have on Section 4(f) property and whether those impacts could have a bearing on the decision to be made. A preliminary Section 4(f) approval may be made at this time as to whether the impacts resulting from the use of a Section 4(f) property are “de minimis” or whether there are feasible and prudent avoidance alternatives. This preliminary approval shall include all possible planning to minimize harm to the extent that the level of detail available at the first-tier EIS stage allows. It is recognized that such planning at this stage may be limited to ensuring that opportunities to minimize harm at subsequent stages in the development process have not been precluded by decisions made at the first-tier stage.

There are two Section 4(f) properties identified as noted below:

- Common 1, within the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) boundary of Our Lady of Assumption School.
- Outer Corridor Alternative, within the NRHP boundary of the Dr. Joseph Angel Villien House.

There are no parks/recreational facilities within the selected corridor alternatives. The selected corridor alternatives are wide, leaving the ability for an alignment to be identified within the width that would avoid these two Section 4(f) properties and therefore no Preliminary Section 4(f) evaluation is required. If new properties are identified during the Tier 2 process, the Section 4(f) evaluation will be completed.

### **8.4. Environmental Justice**

EO 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice (EJ) in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations recognized that some federal action could have or was having a disproportional adverse effect on certain designated population groups. The intent of EO 12898 is to review proposed actions for disproportionate effects

on minority populations and low-income populations. This is most readily accomplished by a review of the demographic baseline conditions within a project's area of effect and examination of social impacts to determine if a disproportionate impact is present.

Table 5-5 and Table 5-6 of the Tier 1 DEIS show the 2000 Census data by block group for the southern and northern corridor alternatives, respectively, as it relates to total population, minority populations, and populations with incomes below the poverty level. The percentages printed in italics in the tables indicate that the Census Block Group exceeds the parish percentage for minority and/or below poverty level populations. The Outer Corridor Alternative passes through 11 Census block groups. The total population within these block groups is 22,288, of which 20.6 percent are minority and 16.5 percent with income below the poverty level. The Common Corridor 1 Alternative traverses 17 Census block groups. The total population within these block groups is 25,673, of which 22.8 percent are minority, and 15.5 percent are considered below the poverty level.

#### Tolling Impacts on EJ Populations

All motorists traveling on the proposed toll roadway would experience economic impact. Should disproportionately high adverse effects to the EJ populations be identified during the Tier 2 process, mitigation measures will be taken to reduce or eliminate these effects. The mitigation measures could include toll discounts, carpooling services, additional access for toll tag purchases or consideration of bus routes on the toll road. As alignments are further refined with the selected corridor alternatives during the Tier 2 EIS, the team will further evaluate all impacts to the EJ populations. The alignment alternatives will be refined through the Tier 2 EIS to provide outreach to and implement appropriate mitigation for the EJ populations.

## **9. Conclusion**

The environmental record for this decision includes the following documents:

- Lafayette Regional Xpressway Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement, F.A.P. H004491, Volumes 1 and 2, January 7, 2019
- Lafayette Regional Xpressway Tier 1 DEIS Errata
- This document.

These documents incorporated here by reference, constitute the statements required by NEPA and Title 23 of the United States Code on:

- The environmental impacts of the project
- The adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided should the project be implemented
- Alternative corridors to the proposed project,

Having carefully considered the environmental record noted above, the mitigation measures and commitments as required, the comments and responses offered by the agencies and the public on this record, the LRX Selected Corridor Alternative has been determined to be the environmentally preferable option, as discussed herein. The LRX Selected Corridor Alternative provide the best opportunity for project alignments for the LRX. FHWA finds that mitigation of harm measures have been considered in development and selection of these alternative corridors. FHWA and LADOTD will ensure that the commitments and mitigation measures outlined herein will be implemented during the Tier 2 EIS process. The future

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components of the project will continue to identify additional commitments and mitigation measures to be implemented as part of the design and construction of the project.

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## **Appendix A - LRX Tier 1 DEIS and Public Hearing Commenter Listing**

Appendix A

No.	Last Name	First Name	City	State	Zip	Date Received	Comment Method (e.g. email, letter, etc.)
1	Rue	Karen	Lafayette	LA	70503	2/28/19	Comment Form
2	Melancon	Tammie	Scott	LA	70503	2/28/19	Comment Form
3	Fonseca	R.J.	Lafayette	LA	70508	2/28/19	Comment Form
4	Hester	Robert	Lafayette	LA	70503	2/28/19	Comment Form
5	Guillet	Mary	Duson	LA	70529	2/28/19	Comment Form
6	Minor	Jeff	Lafayette	LA	70508	2/28/19	Comment Form
7	Petitrean	June	Duson	LA	70529	2/28/19	Comment Form
8	Viltz	Leonard	Youngsville	LA	70592	2/28/19	Comment Form
9	Borill	Josh	Broussard	LA	70518	2/28/19	Comment Form
10	Espinoza-Gala	Lillian	Lafayette	LA	70501	2/28/19	Comment Form
11	Highlander	Katry	Lafayette	LA		2/28/19	Comment Form
12	Bernhardt	Katie	Lafayette	LA	70505	2/28/19	Comment Form
13	Francis	Marton	Lafayette	LA	70507	2/28/19	Comment Form
14	Francis	Eric	Lafayette	LA	70	2/28/19	Comment Form
15		Anonymous				2/28/19	Comment Form
16		Anonymous				2/28/19	Comment Form
17		Anonymous				2/28/19	Comment Form



Appendix A  
Public Hearing Comment Summary Table  
LMEC LRX Tier 1 DEIS Hearing Date February 28, 2019

No.	Last Name	First Name	City	State	Zip	Date Received	Comment Method (e.g. email, letter, etc.)
18	Burruss	Ann	Lafayette	LA	70503	3/18/19	Email
19	Brasseaux	Rickey				3/6/19	Website Contact Form

Appendix A  
Public Hearing Comment Summary Table  
LMEC LRX Tier 1 DEIS Hearing Date February 28, 2019

No.	Last Name	First Name	City	State	Zip	Date Received	Comment Method (e.g. email, letter, etc.)
20	Broussard	Patricia				3/13/19	Website Contact Form
21	David	Rhonda				3/11/19	Website Contact Form
22	DeLay	Grant				3/5/19	Website Contact Form

Appendix A  
**Public Hearing Comment Summary Table**  
 LMEC LRX Tier 1 DEIS Hearing Date February 28, 2019

No.	Last Name	First Name	City	State	Zip	Date Received	Comment Method (e.g. email, letter, etc.)
23	Gelobter	Ludwig				3/1/19	Website Contact Form
24	Goodell	Kim	Lafayette	LA		3/18/19	Email
25	Guidry	Bob				3/9/19	Website Contact Form
26	Broussard	Mark	Lafayette	LA	70508	3/11/19	Email

Appendix A  
**Public Hearing Comment Summary Table**  
 LMEC LRX Tier 1 DEIS Hearing Date February 28, 2019

No.	Last Name	First Name	City	State	Zip	Date Received	Comment Method (e.g. email, letter, etc.)
27	Melancon	Lessie				3/17/19	Email
28	Milazzo	Shane				3/3/19	Website Contact Form
29	Richard	Sharon				3/1/19	Website Contact Form
30	Smit	Malynda				3/4/19	Website Contact Form

Appendix A  
**Public Hearing Comment Summary Table**  
 LMEC LRX Tier 1 DEIS Hearing Date February 28, 2019

No.	Last Name	First Name	City	State	Zip	Date Received	Comment Method (e.g. email, letter, etc.)
31	LaBiche	Mark	Youngsville	LA	70592	3/15/19	Letter
32	Brewer	Molly	Lafayette	LA	70507	3/12/19	Letter
33	Young	Deborah				3/4/19	Website Contact Form
34	Waldon	Michael	Lafayette	LA		2/28/19	Moderated Speaker Forum
35	Sullivan	Dennis	Lafayette	LA		3/1/19	Moderated Speaker Forum
36	Songne	Joey	Abbeville	LA		3/2/19	Moderated Speaker Forum
37	Region 6	US EPA	Dallas	TX	75202	3/18/19	Published comment
38	Office of the Secretary	US Department of the Interior	Albuquerque	NM	87104	3/13/19	Published comment
39	Tribe Historic Preservation Officer	Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana				2/1/19	Email

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## **Appendix B - LRX Tier 1 DEIS and Public Hearing Comment Summary**

Appendix B  
Public Hearing Comment Summary Table  
LMEC LRX Tier 1 DEIS Hearing Date February 28, 2019

No.	Last Name	Comment Summary	Responses to Questions				Project Team Response ID
			Expressway Needed?	Willing to be tolled?	Preferred Corridor?	Further updates on project?	
1	Rue	<b>In response to is the expressway needed:</b> Yes; Too much traffic with much of it accessing Lafayette streets only to get through it. <b>Other comments:</b> Use preferred corridor as it has least impact on developed areas, ruining less peoples lives.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y1, PC1, PC2
2	Melancon	<b>In response to is the expressway needed:</b> Yes, the traffic is horrible always wrecks on the roads due to so much traffic. I believe the traffic will flow better. Less accidents. When need to evacuate the traffic will run smoother. I think the tolls is a great way to pay for the expressway. <b>Other comments:</b> I would like some dates of when this will start.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y2, Y3, F1
3	Fonseca	N/A	Y	Y		Y	N/A
4	Hester	Your initial publicly available sites used in promotions this meeting included reference to the I-10 to I-49 segment. It was not obvious that this last I have been told; option has been eliminated. I think if it isn't going to be used, it should not be shown.					CF1
5	Guillet	<b>In response to is the expressway needed:</b> No, because the state cannot or is not adequately maintaining existing roadways on all levels (Interstates, State Hwys, Parish roads). <b>Other comments:</b> While the expressway is a nice idea, the lack of funding and the liklihood that funds to maintain the LRX of a level of safe and efficient useage.	N	N		Y	N1, F2
6	Minor	<b>In response to is the expressway needed:</b> Yes, anything to help navigate traffic in/through the Lafayette metro area is welcomed. <b>Why is the preferred corridor not the best option?</b> : I would rather see the inner southern corridor due to length, expense and location. <b>Other comments:</b> As many access points as possible and/ or affordable.	Y	Y	N		CF2, PC3
7	Petitrean	<b>In response to is the expressway needed:</b> No, I believe we should keep the roads up that we have and widen some of them. <b>Why is the preferred corridor not the best option?:</b> No, I would rather the shorter route the Inner route. I love my home and I don't want to move. <b>Other comments:</b> We wouldn't be paid enough to pay what we owe still on the houde and the taxes from the money yall give us and loan another house. It will be a struggle.	N	N	N	Y	N2, PC4, R1
8	Viltz	<b>In response to is the expressway needed:</b> Yes, because all of the shortcuts on back roads are busy during prime time traffic hours and holidays. <b>Other comments:</b> I am all for the project and I hope everything goes well.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y3, GS1
9	Borill	<b>In response to is the expressway needed:</b> It would relieve traffic congestion within the city of Lafayette. Especially for folks working out of town that use I-10 for travel. <b>Other comments:</b> Please do not add any red lights to this project. We have enough red lights in the city.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y4, CF3
10	Espinoza-Gala	<b>In response to is the expressway needed:</b> Yes, Hurrricane Evacuation from Nola, Morgan City, Franklin, New Iberia, offshore workers coming in from Houma & Port Fourchon. 18 wheeler traffic off supplies from Texas & Oklahoma headed to MC or Port Fourchon. <b>Other Comments:</b> Prefer outer route. Believe it is imperative to reduce flooding. (What they do in Europe to reduce flooding). Both sides of toll road Oak Trees & trees that soak up water during heavy rainfall. Honor mother nature.	Y	Y	Y		Y6, CF4, PC5
11	Highlander	<b>In response to is the expressway needed:</b> To help with traffic congestion. <b>Other comments:</b> Last year, there was a meeting here at SS library to inform nearby residents of the bridge to be built from Kaliste Saloom to Robley. It affects Tucson road. Is that still the plan? Does this project compliment the above described plan? "Inner" alternative runs right over bridge plan.	Y		Y		Y7, CF5
12	Bernhardt	<b>In response to is the expressway needed:</b> Yes, it would allow for much needed access to our surrounding communities, it would encourage businesses to move here, better education routes & more systematic growth. <b>Other comments:</b> Please consider using local companies in the process of planning.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y8, O1
13	Francis	<b>In response to is the expressway needed:</b> Yes, due to the growth in the region modernized traffic alternatives are needed to help reduce congestion and provide means to continue to grow sustainability. This project is a positive step in that direction.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y9
14	Francis	<b>In response to is the expressway needed:</b> The expressway would help to reduce surface level traffic within the parish and interstate. It could be beneficial for evacuations and additionally help to raise funds for future developments.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y10, Y11, Y12
15		Larger venue. Crowds to large for library venue.					Noted.
16		It's about time, lets move on it and now. Lafayette and the area are not going to stop growing. Prepare for the future.	Y	Y	Y		Y17
17			Y	Y	Y		Noted.

Appendix B  
**Public Hearing Comment Summary Table**  
 LMEC LRX Tier 1 DEIS Hearing Date February 28, 2019

No.	Last Name	Comment Summary	Responses to Questions				Project Team Response ID
			Expressway Needed?	Willing to be tolled?	Preferred Corridor?	Further updates on project?	
18	Burruss	<p>I strongly support the LRX project to provide a western bypass expressway for Lafayette, connecting I-49 to Evangeline Thruway south of Broussard. I believe that suitable land exists for the LRX and that the project can help provide some flood risk mitigation. The primary reason I support the LRX project is that it makes an excellent substitute for the disastrous I-49 Connector project. Building an interstate highway through the center of a city must remain a relic of the past.</p> <p>What Lafayette regional transportation does needs is a loop. The LRX is an excellent start, and a second eastern segment through St. Martin Parish would be ideal.</p> <p>Please be aware that public support for the LRX is substantial, as opposed to the deeply negative public sentiment about the I-49 connector. Please complete cost-benefit models that assume that the I-49 Connector is never built.</p>					Y14, O6
19	Brasseaux	<p>Minority groups and lcg official's making illegal minority toll road recommendations proposals on public services and public funds Comments: illegal for minority lcg public official's are govt. appointed committees to hold public meetings formatted with no quraum , while govt. and minority govt. appointed committees refusing citizens independent legal review of public services public funds and public official's ,violating open public meetings law , u.s. constitution article one , Laf. home rule charter and individual rights . illegal for lcg to make minority recommendations proposals on toll road , public services are public funds on their own .with out having showing proof minority govt. recommendations proposals supported by majority public</p>					O4



Appendix B  
**Public Hearing Comment Summary Table**  
 LMEC LRX Tier 1 DEIS Hearing Date February 28, 2019

No.	Last Name	Comment Summary	Responses to Questions				Project Team Response ID
			Expressway Needed?	Willing to be tolled?	Preferred Corridor?	Further updates on project?	
20	Broussard	Not in favor of the Tier 1 LRX Access Toll Road (South Fieldspan Rd – Hwy 724). I am a property owner along this location and I am not sure if the proposed location is the right choice -shortest distance between two points is a straight line not a loop. Please keep me updated on this project. Thank you.				Y	N3
21	David	Please include me on the mailing list for the LRX project. Thank you.				Y	Included.
22	DeLay	<p>I live in a Subdivision near where the proposed Northern Corridor will go, and I am deeply troubled by this project. First of all, I am not in favor of this project. I do not have any intention of ever using the proposed corridor. I believe there are plenty of other projects which would alleviate traffic congestion around Lafayette Parish that should be considered/completed first, before the introduction of a “Loop” around the city. I think it will be underutilized by the populace at large. While it may have some benefit for those outside city limits, citizens that reside in the city are not nearly as likely to travel outward to the parish at large. Traffic will still be heavy in the inner portion of the city. Currently, it takes me around 30-35 minutes to get from Carencro to Milton. The largest trip I currently make. Under the estimated mileage of the Loop (and assumed speed limits), and the proposed tolls, if I used the Loop to make this trip, it'd take me around 15-20 minutes and cost me \$3. For a round trip, I'd save about 20 minutes and spend \$6. That is not worth it all to me, and many others I'd wager.</p> <p>As far as proposed possible economic developments, I have driven through several tolled expressways throughout the nation. I have seen some areas where economic prosperity was brought on by the tollway, but I have also seen plenty where the area remained barren, and in some cases, became blighted. I can believe some areas may see a bit of a bump due to the Loop, but I don't think it will be an economic engine at all. In fact, it might actually discourage business activity due to traffic to their location now having a cost associated with it. Also, within the report, it was mentioned it would cost an “average” resident of the Parish 1% of their annual salary (~\$500) to use the LRX. I find it very humorous that the Commission believes the public will be okay with this. This is the same public that voted against raising their taxes by 10s of dollars to have increased fire protection. Do you really believe a population that doesn't want to spend an extra 10s of dollars a year to make sure their house doesn't burn completely down, would willingly spend 100s of dollars a year to not sit in traffic for an extra 10-15 minutes a day? They will continue to use the “free” options and use the “paid” option incredibly sparingly. This is a complete disconnect from understanding the area and public for whom this project supposedly for. Under the proposed Northern Corridor 1, the tract will cut between (or through) 2 neighborhoods I live close to. These neighborhoods are located on Post Road in the Carencro area. If the tract is altered Northward to keep one neighborhood from being bulldozed, it will destroy the Carencro WWTP. If it goes further Northward to fix the problem, it will bulldoze another neighborhood, if it goes Northward still to fix THAT problem, it will bulldoze MY neighborhood. The trend continues ever Northward for a few more cycles. I don't understand why the Corridor was chosen to go through the upper section of Carencro, and possibly displacing several hundred people (depending on the final determinations of the Corridor) when further North, there is adequate empty land and sparse populations. This needs to be fixed!</p> <p>In closing, I don't believe this project is needed or will be used to its full advertised extend. I don't think 1.2-1.3 billion dollars in construction costs, the costs of forcing hundreds to possibly thousands of people out of their homes, in addition to the depressed living conditions of those who get to keep their homes but now have to live close to an Expressway, are worth it so that a collection of motorists can pay a few dollars to scrape a few minutes off of their morning commute.</p>					N4, N5, N6, N7, N8, F4, CF8

Appendix B  
**Public Hearing Comment Summary Table**  
LMEC LRX Tier 1 DEIS Hearing Date February 28, 2019

No.	Last Name	Comment Summary	Responses to Questions				Project Team Response ID
			Expressway Needed?	Willing to be tolled?	Preferred Corridor?	Further updates on project?	
23	Gelobter	Please advise where and when the next meeting will take place				Y	Included.
24	Goodell	<p>Reference is made to the LXR Project- a proposed 'loop facility' for Lafayette Parish with a point of beginning at I 49 north of I10 and extending on the western side of Lafayette parish and then easterly stopping at a point on Hwy 90 near the Acadiana regional airport. I did attend the February 28 public hearing meeting where materials were presented and a formal presentation was made. In concept I would support a highway as such (obviously pending the review of final environmental impact study). Per the materials presented, the proposed toll road would meet the purpose and need to increase capacity, accommodate increased traffic demand, and provide for additional evacuation routes. I feel allowing traffic coming off I 49 from a point north of I 10 ( yet into the city) will do much to eliminate congestion on Evangeline thruway. This proposed route could double as a truck route as well allowing freight and hazardous cargo to route around the city rather than through the densely populated heart ( and most historical area) of the city. Based on the presentation made, the route would not encounter known hazardous sites that threaten the city's drinking water supply (such as the UPRR site). A western loop as such, coupled with an upgrade to Evangeline thruway, and eastern access road off I 49 north of I 10 extending to BREAUX Bridge ( construction underway), widening I 10 (construction underway), Louisiana Avenue ( completed), resurrection of the St Antoine street extension ( that tax increments were already collected and dedicated for) and better use of the existing grid should complete a road plan to serve the people of the region as well as better serve and connect industrial areas throughout the region. For all of those reasons stated above and because the LXR footprint does not have near the environmental concerns as the I 49 Lafayette Connector, nor will there be near as many displacements I support expedited study of the LXR with ultimate approval to be anticipated.</p> <p>These written comments, submitted today March 18, 2019 (10:15 pm) are submitted in conjunction with the February 28, 2019 Public Meeting that I attended, and as such I request that they be included in the official record of same. Thank you for your service to our city.</p>					Y13, CF10
25	Guidry	Maintenance of expressway Comments: It was mentioned on radio KPEL that toll road left over monies would go into a General Fund, does this mean before or after Toll Road maintenance funds are earmarked as such. I travel over most of the US, most toll roads are maintained to the highest degree, but some are in a very deplorable condition beyond repair of which I believe toll monies are not being properly distributed for maintenance, repairs, etc for the Toll Road. Therefore I feel that no toll road fee monies should go to a General Fund unless a proper clause is set forth that all proper Toll Road maintenance funds are earmarked prior to any funds going into a General Fund. Also no Toll Road monies should be allocated to a General Fund until the total cost of toll road is totally paid off. Who will be the keeper of the General Fund, Toll Road Authority, some Municipality, and how will it be distributed.					F3
26	Broussard	I looked at the drawing for the proposed toll road. I have some concerns. The map is very ambiguous. It only shows three large swaths of proposed areas. Will this be going through existing subdivisions? If so, that should be a non-starter. Will it use existing roadways? If so, will these be converted into toll roads? We live just off Hwy 733 and that is our main road into Lafayette. If that were to be converted into a toll road, you would be penalizing the citizens in our area for a road that none of us wants. If this toll road is going to cross the Vermilion River, you should choose a path that would result in another bridge. Again, this should not penalize citizens that currently use the existing bridges.					CF6, CF7, O2, O3

Appendix B  
Public Hearing Comment Summary Table  
LMEC LRX Tier 1 DEIS Hearing Date February 28, 2019

No.	Last Name	Comment Summary	Responses to Questions				Project Team Response ID
			Expressway Needed?	Willing to be tolled?	Preferred Corridor?	Further updates on project?	
27	Melancon	<p>I am a property owner in the Ossun area who will likely be affected by the preferred northern corridor of the Lafayette Xpressway. Below you will find several questions and information requests that I would like to see addressed during the next phase of the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please provide a project timeline that includes projected dates of               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the finalization of the expressway route to include planned frontage roads, a list of all properties that will be subject to attempted acquisition, and the exact locations of all toll collection areas, on/off ramps, and overpasses.</li> <li>b) the start of property acquisition efforts</li> <li>c) the start of physical construction</li> <li>d) project end</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Please provide additional information related to the project's impact on drainage in the immediate area as well as regionally, including specific measures that will be taken to reduce these drainage issues. I would also like to see your current Floodplain Impact Assessment updated to reflect the most recent flood zone map, which went into effect February 2018, as the updated information will impact not only the environmental impact assessments, but also property values.</li> <li>• If a decision is made to acquire only part of a property and that acquisition renders the landowner's remaining property virtually "landlocked" by removing existing access via legal right-of-way, what measures, if any, will be taken to restore access to the property?</li> <li>• Many people located in the areas of the proposed corridors live in mobile homes, quite a few of which have been financed through the USDA's Rural Development loan program. All mobile homes financed through that program are required to be specially installed on permanent foundations. There is also a stipulation that if one of these mobile homes is moved, it is no longer compliant with the requirements of the Rural Development program, which not only makes the property less appealing to potential buyers, but also may put the homeowner in violation of his financing agreement with the USDA.</li> </ul> <p>With this in mind, will all owners of mobile homes be given the option to choose between moving their mobile home or accepting a full buyout, or will the option only be offered under particular circumstances? Also, if the full buyout option will only be given to mobile home owners with "special circumstances," will Rural Development loan recipients be included among those ranks?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will tolls be waived during all officially declared states of emergency? Additionally, will tolls be waived during any other type(s) of emergency situations, i.e. mandatory evacuation, extreme flooding?</li> </ul>					F5, CF9, S1, R2, R3
28	Milazzo	Is there a timeline for the Lafayette Regional Expressway? Our property is basically in the middle of the proposed project corridor.					S3
29	Richard	I was disappointed when I saw in the news that a meeting was held last night at the South Regional Library in Lafayette, LA about the the loop, because I wasn't aware that was happening. Have maps been left at any locations that I may view now. Are there monthly or regularly scheduled meetings by the commission that occur that the public may attend. My search on the internet has brought me to this site, but the name seems to have been changed. So, I would like to be directed in the right direction. Are maps available to be seen anywhere. Although, I'm interested in all the areas, I'm especially interested in where the loop will be in the western and southern part of Lafayette Parish.				Y	O5
30	Smit	Time frame for expressway Comments: Good Morning – What is the expected time frame to begin and finish construction on this expressway?					S2

Appendix B  
Public Hearing Comment Summary Table  
LMEC LRX Tier 1 DEIS Hearing Date February 28, 2019

No.	Last Name	Comment Summary	Responses to Questions				Project Team Response ID
			Expressway Needed?	Willing to be tolled?	Preferred Corridor?	Further updates on project?	
31	LaBiche	<p>This letter serves notice that my total opposition of the proposed Lafayette Regional Expressway. This "project" began in 2003 with maps used prior to that year. Since 2003, numerous new sub-divisions, businesses, churches, and other "improvements" have been made along the proposed "corridors" to this road. The maps used do not show the Ambassador Caffery Extension to Hwy. 90. Hence, as stated before, the proposed corridors do not show all the new subdivisions (some still being constructed), shopping centers, stores, churches, schools, and even cemeteries that will be impacted. This plan was hidden from the public for years and is just being let out of the box for public viewing!?</p> <p>When I built my house in 1995, I built in what was a quiet country atmosphere. Being outside, all I could hear was birds singing, and maybe the wind lightly blowing through the trees. Now all I hear is NOISE, NOISE, and more NOISE, 24/7/365! If I had known that a road (Ambassador Caffery) would be extended a few hundred feet from my property, I would have never built where I did. I cannot imagine another road near my house compounding the noise.</p> <p>As more people learn about this proposed "expressway" the opposition grows. Also, the fact that this will be a toll road increases the opposition. The average person would pay well over \$1,000.00 per year, which would lead people to avoid it. The insane amount of money that would be spent to build this road would be better spent to repair and improve existing roads. This is a far better plan than to pave a mile wide path of destruction through the rural parts of Lafayette Parish for the assumed benefit of the city of Lafayette.</p>					N9, F6
32	Brewer	<p>Highly opposed to North corridor 2. Negatively impact the value of my home or cause my family's relocation to make available my property for construction of this LRX. This is not just the case for my family but dozens of others in our neighborhood and hundreds of others in the surrounding areas such as Brock Pointe subdivision off Gloria Switch Road. Not only will it affect our home, but the corridor 2 will also run in close proximity to LPSS Schools like L Leo Justice Elementary and Scott Middle School along with private school St. Peter &amp; Paul. This will also affect the possibility of our child staying in the same school if we are unable to find housing in Lafayette Parish that is suitable for our family. This will take roads that are currently utilized by many daily with little traffic issues (Mills Rd.) and turn them into a route residents will have to PAY to use to go about their normal travels and cause for additional time and or expense; or re-routing our daily drive to one that might not incur an extra expense for tolls. These types of changes will likely negatively impact the wellbeing of our family and others like ours who have chosen to reside in the rural suburban country side of Lafayette Parish and force us into unwanted situations that can negatively impact the rest of our lives with financial situations, unnecessary relocation and our child's education. Please take this into consideration while making the final decisions on the LRX Corridor routes.</p>					CF11, CF6
33	Young	Please add me to the email listing.				Y	Included.
34	Waldon	The LRX is a visionary project and is a wonderful substitute for the I-49 Connector. The studies should have model runs including not having the I-49 Connector built because there is a strong probability that the projection of tolls and traffic will be very different. Please add all meeting materials for all public meetings to the website. The Commission should meet quarterly and post their agendas and minutes on the website.					Y15, O6
35	Sullivan	Excited about the idea of bypassing the city, I live downtown. Not crazy about tolls but whatever it takes to do it. Potential for PPP is a great idea. If you take land from landowners at least you are following proper rules and proper compensation.					Y16, F7, R4
36	Songne	Is there a start date yet for this? I just wish we would come up with a start date and stick to it and get it done.					S4
37	Region 6	EPA has reviewed the Tier 1 Draft EIS. Offers recommendations related to wetland analysis during Tier 2 and suggests that avoidance should be first priority followed by mitigation in accordance with regulations. Provides recommendations for strategies to avoid and mitigate wetland impacts.					O7
38	Office of the Secretary	The DEIS provides sufficient Tier 1 preliminary detail that addresses the requirements of the Section 4(f) and the LWCF Section 6(f) process. Specific roadway alignments and associated resource identification are deferred until the Tier 2 process and as a result, the Department will defer Section 4(f) and LWCF Section 6(f) concurrence until the completion of the Tier 1 and 2 analysis.					O8
39	Tribe Historic Preservation Officer	The EIS only discusses the Acadian History but doesn't mention federally recognized tribes in Louisiana. Since 1804, the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana has continued to play an active role in state history and welfare, including operating the largest land-based casino in the state. The EIS should include information about the Coushatta Tribe.					O9
			<b>Total "Yes" responses per questions</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>
			<b>Total "No" responses per questions</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

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## **Appendix C - LRX Tier 1 DEIS and Public Hearing Response Summary**

Appendix C  
Public Hearing Response Table  
LMEC LRX Tier 1 DEIS Public Hearing Date February 28, 2019

	Comment Topic and Comments	Responses	Commenter
	<b>Need for the expressway</b>		
	<b>Yes</b>		
Y1	Too much traffic, needs ways to navigate through it	Comment noted.	K. Rue
Y2	Always wrecks on the roads due to so much traffic.	Comment noted.	T. Melancon
Y3	When need to evacuate the traffic will run smoother.	Comment noted.	T. Melancon
Y4	All of the shortcuts on back roads are busy during prime time traffic hours and holidays.	Comment noted.	L. Viltz
Y5	It would relieve traffic congestion within the city of Lafayette, especially for commuters	Comment noted.	J. Borill
Y6	Hurricane Evacuation from Nola, Morgan City, Franklin, New Iberia, offshore workers coming in from Houma & Port Fourchon. 18 wheeler traffic off supplies from Texas & Oklahoma headed to MC or Port Fourchon.	Comment noted.	L. Espinoza-Gala
Y7	To help with traffic congestion	Comment noted.	K. Highlander
Y8	It would allow for much needed access to our surrounding communities, it would encourage businesses to move here, better education routes & more systematic growth.	Comment noted.	K. Bernhardt
Y9	Due to the growth in the region modernized traffic alternatives are needed to help reduce congestion and provide means to continue to grow sustainability. This project is a positive step in that direction.	Comment noted.	M. Francis
Y10	The expressway would help to reduce surface level traffic within the parish and interstate.	Comment noted.	E. Francis
Y11	It could be beneficial for evacuations	Comment noted.	E. Francis
Y12	It could help to raise funds for future developments.	Comment noted.	E. Francis
Y13	In concept I would support a highway as such (obviously pending the review of final environmental impact study).	Comment noted.	K. Goodell
Y14	I strongly support the LRX project to provide a western bypass expressway for Lafayette, connecting I-49 to Evangeline Thruway south of Broussard. I believe that suitable land exists for the LRX and that the project can help provide some flood risk mitigation. The primary reason I support the LRX project is that it makes an excellent substitute for the disastrous I-49 Connector project. Building an interstate highway through the center of a city must remain a relic of the past. What Lafayette regional transportation does needs is a loop. The LRX is an excellent start, and a second eastern segment through St. Martin Parish would be ideal. Please be aware that public support for the LRX is substantial, as opposed to the deeply negative public sentiment about the I-49 connector.	Comment noted.	A. Burruss
Y15	The LRX is a visionary project and is a wonderful substitute for the I-49 Connector. The studies should have model runs including not having the I-49 Connector built because there is a strong probability that the projection of tolls and traffic will be very different.	Comment noted.	M. Waldon
Y16	Excited about the idea of bypassing the city.	Comment noted.	D. Sullivan
Y17	It's about time, lets move on it and now. Lafayette nand the area are not going to stop growing. Prepare for the future.	Comment noted.	Anonymous
	<b>No</b>		
N1	The state cannot or is not adequately maintaining existing roadways on all levels (Interstates, State Hwys, Parish roads)	Comment noted.	M. Guillet
N2	I believe we should keep the roads up that we have and widen some of them.	Comment noted.	J. Petitrean
N3	Not in favor of the Tier 1 LRX Access Toll Road (South Fieldspan Rd – Hwy 724). I am a property owner along this location and I am not sure if the proposed location is the right choice -shortest distance between two points is a straight line not a loop.	Comment noted.	P. Broussard
N4	I do not have any intention of ever using the proposed corridor.	Comment noted.	G. DeLay
N5	I believe there are plenty of other projects which would alleviate traffic congestion around Lafayette Parish that should be considered/completed first, before the introduction of a "Loop" around the city.	Comment noted.	G. DeLay
N6	I think it will be underutilized by the populace at large. While it may have some benefit for those outside city limits, citizens that reside in the city are not nearly as likely to travel outward to the parish at large. Traffic will still be heavy in the inner portion of the city. For a round trip, I'd save about 20 minutes and spend \$6. That is not worth it all to me, and many others I'd wager.	Comment noted.	G. DeLay
N7	As far as proposed possible economic developments, I have driven through several tolled expressways throughout the nation. I have seen some areas where economic prosperity was brought on by the tollway, but I have also seen plenty where the area remained barren, and in some cases, became blighted. I can believe some areas may see a bit of a bump due to the Loop, but I don't think it will be an economic engine at all. In fact, it might actually discourage business activity due to traffic to their location now having a cost associated with it.	Comment noted.	G. DeLay
N8	In closing, I don't believe this project is needed or will be used to its full advertised extend. I don't think 1.2-1.3 billion dollars in construction costs, the costs of forcing hundreds to possibly thousands of people out of their homes, in addition to the depressed living conditions of those who get to keep their homes but now have to live close to an Expressway, are worth it so that a collection of motorists can pay a few dollars to scrape a few minutes off of their morning commute.	Comment noted.	G. DeLay
N9	Opposed to the LRX. Maps are outdated and the project has been hidden from the public. I built for the country atmosphere, and don't want another major road near my property.	Comment noted. All maps and data will continue to be updated as the project moves through the remaining phases of project	M. LaBiche

Appendix C  
Public Hearing Response Table  
LMEC LRX Tier 1 DEIS Public Hearing Date February 28, 2019

	Comment Topic and Comments	Responses	Commenter
	<b>Financing the project</b>		
F1	I think the tolls is a great way to pay for the expressway.	Comment noted.	T. Melancon
F2	While the expressway is a nice idea, the lack of funding and the liklihood that funds to maintain the LRX of a level of safe and efficient	Comment noted.	M. Guillet
F3	It was mentioned on radio KPEL that toll road left over monies would go into a General Fund, does this mean before or after Toll Road maintenance funds are earmarked as such. I travel over most of the US, most toll roads are maintained to the highest degree, but some are in a very deplorable condition beyond repair of which I believe toll monies are not being properly distributed for maintenance, repairs, etc for the Toll Road. Therefore I feel that no toll road fee monies should go to a General Fund unless a proper clause is set forth that all proper Toll Road maintenance funds are earmarked prior to any funds going into a General Fund. Also no Toll Road monies should be allocated to a General Fund until the total cost of toll road is totally paid off. Who will be the keeper of the General Fund, Toll Road Authority, some Municipality, and how will it be distributed.	At this time, the LMEC has not detailed or determined where toll funds will be utilized or distributed. This will be further defined in future phases and may depend on the type of financing that is utilized to continue through project through operations.	B. Guidry
F4	Also, within the report, it was mentioned it would cost an "average" resident of the Parish 1% of their annual salary (~\$500) to use the LRX. I find it very humorous that the Commission believes the public will be okay with this. This is the same public that voted against raising their taxes by 10s of dollars to have increased fire protection. Do you really believe a population that doesn't want to spend an extra 10s of dollars a year to make sure their house doesn't burn completely down, would willingly spend 100s of dollars a year to not sit in traffic for an extra 10-15 minutes a day? They will continue to use the "free" options and use the "paid" option incredibly sparingly. This is a complete disconnect from understanding the area and public for whom this project supposedly for.	The gas tax is different than a toll to use a road. While the both are user fees, the gas tax does not present an option to avoid paying it if you use your car. In the case of the toll road, a user may choose to either drive on the toll road and pay a fee to use it, or use a free route instead.	G. DeLay
F5	Will tolls be waived during all officially declared states of emergency? Additionally, will tolls be waived during any other type(s) of emergency situations, i.e. mandatory evacuation, extreme flooding?	The tolling structure will be defined by the rules put in to place for this project and by the Louisiana Tolling Authority. More detail will be defined as the project moves through future phases. Historically, the state has lifted tolling during declared	L. Melancon
F6	The fact that this is a toll road will increase opposition, the average person would pay well over \$1000 per year, which would lead people to avoid it. Money would be better spent to repair and improve exisiting roads. This is a better idea than paving a mile wide path of destruction through the rural parts of Lafayette.	In the case of the toll road, a user may choose to either drive on the toll road and pay a fee to use it, or use a free route instead. Depending on how the road is financed in the future, toll revenue may pay a portion of the road construction bonds and operations and maintenance. The toll road is proposed as a road utilizing 330 feet of right of way, rather than the 1-mile wide corridors that are being studied in this Tier 1 process. The Tier 2 process will examine exact alignments where that roadway may be least	M. LaBiche
F7	Not crazy about tolls but whatever it takes to do it. Potential for PPP is a great idea.	Comment noted.	D. Sullivan
	<b>Potential Project Corridors/Features</b>		
CF1	A meeting promotion showed a connection from I-10 to I-49. If still being considered it should be shown.	The northern corridors extended, at one point during the study, past I-49 east and back to I-10 on the east side of the interchange of the two intersections. That portion of the loop was found to add limited capacity and added more cost and it was eliminated from further study before the final recommended build alternatives were advanced to this stage. The article's author	R. Hester
CF2	As many access points as possible and/ or affordable.	A toll-road is considered limited access due to the requirement to have toll access points that can meaningfully assess the toll for each user based on the distance traveled. However, a large number of potential access points have been considered and would be further refined during the more detailed Tier 2 DEIS	J. Minor
CF3	Please do not add any red lights to this project. We have enough red lights in the city.	Red lights would only be required at intersections between the projects on/off ramps and side streets. In many cases, these are existing signals today. During the Tier 2 EIS process and future design work the location of signals will be further refined.	J. Borill
CF4	Believe it is imperative to reduce flooding, both sides of toll road Oak Trees & trees that soak up water during heavy rainfall.	Drainage will be considered during the future design stages of the	L. Espinoza-Gala

Appendix C  
Public Hearing Response Table  
LMEC LRX Tier 1 DEIS Public Hearing Date February 28, 2019

	Comment Topic and Comments	Responses	Commenter
CF5	Last year, there was a meeting here at SS library to inform nearby residents of the bridge to be built from Kaliste Saloom to Robley. It affects Tucson road. Is that still the plan? Does this project compliment the above described plan? "Inner" alternative runs right over bridge plan.	The bridge is not a component of this project, but the projects will be complimentary in the region. As the project progresses and potential roadway alignments are considered during the Tier 2 phase, infrastructure improvements, current and planned, will	K. Highlander
CF6	Will this be going through existing subdivisions? If so, that should be a non-starter. Will it use existing roadways? If so, will these be converted into toll roads?	The Tier 2 phase of the project will consider alternative alignments through the preferred corridor following a Record of Decision for Tier 1. The alternatives will be developed to minimize impacts to the human and natural environment, to include relocations. The alternatives may utilize existing roads, but could also utilize greenspace. If a roadway is widened to accommodate the new tolled facility, a free route will also be provided in the	M. Broussard
CF7	If this toll road is going to cross the Vermilion River, you should chose a path that would result in another bridge. Again, this should not penalize citizens that currently use the existing bridges	See reponse to comment CF6.	M. Broussard
CF8	Under the proposed Northern Corridor 1, the tract will cut between (or through) 2 neighborhoods I live close to. These neighborhoods are located on Post Road in the Carencro area. If the tract is altered Northward to keep one neighborhood from being bulldozed, it will destroy the Carencro WWTP. If it goes further Northward to fix the problem, it will bulldoze another neighborhood, if it goes Northward still to fix THAT problem, it will bulldoze MY neighborhood. The trend continues ever Northward for a few more cycles. I don't understand why the Corridor was chosen to go through the upper section of Carencro, and possibly displacing several hundred people (depending on the final determinations of the Corridor) when further North, there is adequate empty land and sparse populations. This needs to be fixed!	Alternative alignments, 330 feet wide will be identified through the mile wide corridors currently being studied during the Tier 1 phase of the project. The alternative alignments will be developed to minimize impacts to the human and natural environment, considering current and future land use and updated environmental information at the time of study.	G. DeLay
CF9	Provide additional information regarding project's impact on drainage and specific measures to reduce drainage issues. Update current Floodplain Impact Assessment to reflect most recent flood zone map (February 2018).	See response to CF4.	L. Melancon
CF10	I feel allowing traffic coming off I 49 from a point north of I 10 ( yet into the city) will do much to eliminate congestion on Evangeline thruway. This proposed route could double as a truck route as well allowing freight and hazardous cargo to route around the city rather than through the densely populated heart ( and most historical area) of the city. Based on the presentation made, the route would not encounter known hazardous sites that threaten the city's drinking water supply (such as the UPRR site). A western loop as such, coupled with an upgrade to Evangeline thruway, and eastern access road off I 49 north of I 10 extending to BREAUX Bridge ( construction underway), widening I 10 (construction underway), Louisiana Avenue ( completed), resurrection of the St Antoine street extension ( that tax increments were already collected and dedicated for) and better use of the existing grid should complete a road plan to serve the people of the region as well as better serve and connect industrial areas throughout the region. For all of those reasons stated above and because the LXR footprint does not have near the environmental concerns as the I 49 Lafayette Connector, nor will there be near as many displacements I support expedited study of the LXR with ultimate approval to be anticipated.	Comment noted.	K. Goodell
CF11	Opposed to North corridor 2 as it would impact personal home, others homes and schools. Negatively impact the wellbeing of family and others for the rest of our lives.	The current preferred alternative is Common 1 in the northern alternatives. While no exact alignments have been developed, the process will review alignment alternatives within the preferred corridor first and the project will be reconsidered should other corridors need to be reconsidered. See also, comment CF6.	M. Brewer
	<b>Preferred Corridor</b>		
PC1	Use preferred corridor as it has least impact on developed areas	Comment noted.	K. Rue
PC2	Impacts less people	Comment noted.	K. Rue
PC3	Would rather see the inner southern corridor due to length, expense and location.	Comment noted.	J. Minor
PC4	Would rather the shorter route the Inner route. I love my home and I don't want to move.	Comment noted.	J. Petitrean
PC5	Prefer outer route.	Comment noted.	L. Espinoza-Gala
	<b>Schedule</b>		
S1	Would like start dates	Following the Tier 1 process conclusion with a record of decision, additional funding will be needed to move the project forward. Pending identification of funds for future phases, a schedule will be developed for the completion of the environmental Tier 2 <u>process, design and construction</u> .	L. Melancon, T. Melancon
S2	What is the expected time frame to begin and finish construction on this expressway?	See response to comment S1.	M. Smit
S3	Timeline for the Lafayette Regional Expressway?	See response to comment S1.	S. Milazzo



Appendix C  
Public Hearing Response Table  
LMEC LRX Tier 1 DEIS Public Hearing Date February 28, 2019

	Comment Topic and Comments	Responses	Commenter
S4	Is there a start date yet for this? I just wish we would come up with a start date and stick to it and get it done.	See response to comment S1.	J. Songne
	<b>Relocation/Acquisition potential</b>		
R1	We wouldn't be paid enough to pay what we owe still on the house and the taxes from the money y'all give us and loan another house. It will be a struggle.	The right of way acquisition and relocation process is a well-developed and detailed process. The process will be followed with those impacted by the project. If there are additional questions, please contact the DOTD right of way relocation and	J. Petitrean
R2	If a decision is made to acquire only part of a property and that acquisition renders the landowner's remaining property virtually "landlocked" by removing existing access via legal right-of-way, what measures, if any, will be taken to restore access to the property?	See response to R1.	L. Melancon
R3	Many people located in the areas of the proposed corridors live in mobile homes, quite a few of which have been financed through the USDA's Rural Development loan program. All mobile homes financed through that program are required to be specially installed on permanent foundations. There is also a stipulation that if one of these mobile homes is moved, it is no longer compliant with the requirements of the Rural Development program, which not only makes the property less appealing to potential buyers, but also may put the homeowner in violation of his financing agreement with the USDA. With this in mind, will all owners of mobile homes be given the option to choose between moving their mobile home or accepting a full buyout, or will the option only be offered under particular circumstances? Also, if the full buyout option will only be given to mobile home owners with "special circumstances," will Rural Development loan recipients be included among those ranks?	See response to R1.	L. Melancon
R4	If you take land from landowners at least you are following proper rules and proper compensation.	Comment noted.	D. Sullivan
	<b>General Support for project</b>		
GS1	I am all for the project and I hope everything goes well.	Comment noted.	L. Viltz
	<b>Other</b>		
O1	Please consider using local companies in the process of planning.	Comment noted.	K. Bernhardt
O2	The map is very ambiguous. It only shows three large swaths of proposed areas.	An additional, interactive map has been added to the website. The link is provided on the main home page as well in the files for the public hearing. This interactive map allows interested parties to zoom in with greater details on properties of interest to see how it relates to the project corridor alternatives.	M. Broussard
O3	We live just off Hwy 733 and that is our main road into Lafayette. If that were to be converted into a toll road, you would be penalizing the citizens in our area for a road that none of us wants.	See response to comment CF6.	M. Broussard
O4	Illegal for minority lcg public official's are govt. appointed committees to hold public meetings formatted with no quram , while govt. and minority govt. appointed committees refusing citizens independent legal review of public services public funds and public official's, violating open public meetings law , u.s. constitution article one , Laf. home rule charter and individual rights . illegal for lcg to make minority recommendations proposals on toll road , public services are public funds on their own .with out having showing proof minority govt. recommendations proposals supported by majority public	Comment noted.	R. Brasseaux
O5	I wasn't aware that a meeting was happening. Have maps been left at any locations that I may view now? Are there monthly or regularly scheduled meetings by the commission that occur that the public may attend?	All project documents presented at the public hearing have been provided on the website for review. The Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement has also been provided to libraries within the region for review. The meetings for the LMEC have been noticed and are public. Public is welcome to attend	S. Richard
O6	Please complete cost-benefit models that assume that the I-49 Connector is never built.	Comment noted.	A. Burruss/M. Waldon
O7	Provides for recommendations to first avoid and then mitigate wetlands during the Tier 2 phase analysis.	Comment noted.	EPA
O8	Acknowledges that the Tier 1 Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) documentation is appropriate and will provide concurrence after Tier 2 analysis is complete.	Comment noted.	US DOI
O9	A discussion of the Coushatta Tribe should be included in the EIS due to the history within the state dating to 1804.	Comment noted and will be considered during the Tier 2 EIS process.	Coushatta

## **Appendix D – LRX Tier 1 DEIS Distribution List**

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