

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

FOR

**ESSEN LANE WIDENING
(PERKINS ROAD TO I-10)
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH
STATE PROJECT NO. H.010560**

MAY 2014

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

AND

**LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND
DEVELOPMENT**



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FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

FOR

STATE PROJECT NO.: H.010560
FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO.: H010560
ESSEN LANE WIDENING
LA 3064
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH

The FHWA has determined that this project will not have any significant impact on the human and natural environment. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is based on the Environmental Assessment which has been independently evaluated by the FHWA and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the environmental issues and impacts of the proposed project. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an environmental impact statement is not required.

APPROVED

CARL M. HOCHSMITH
PROJECT DELIVERY TEAM LEADER
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
DATE 5-23-14

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION CHECKLIST

SUMMARY OF PERMITS, MITIGATION, AND COMMITMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
	1.1 What is An Environmental Assessment?	1
	1.2 Project Description	1
	1.3 Where is the Project in the Development Process?	2
2.	PURPOSE AND NEED	2
	2.1 What is the Purpose of the Project?	2
	2.2 Why is the Project Needed?	2
3.	ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED	6
	3.1 Build Alternatives	6
	3.2 No Build Alternative	8
	3.3 Preferred Alternative	11
4.	ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES, IMPACTS AND MITIGATION	11
	4.1 Environmental Conditions and Potential Effects	11
	4.1.1 Land Use and Community Character	11
	4.1.2 Economic Activities	12
	4.1.3 Relocations of Homes and Businesses	12
	4.1.4 Demographics and Environmental Justice	12
	4.1.5 Cultural Resources	17
	4.1.6 Section 4(f) Resources	18
	4.1.7 Section 6(f) Resources	19
	4.1.8 Community Facilities, Services, and Resources	19
	4.1.9 Wildlife and Protected Species	20
	4.1.10 Wetland Reserve Program	20
	4.1.11 Wetlands and Other Waters	21

4.1.12 Floodplains	21
4.1.13 Coastal Resources and Essential Fish Habitat	22
4.1.14 Subsurface Water	22
4.1.15 Wild, Scenic, and Natural Rivers	22
4.1.16 Navigable Waterways	23
4.1.17 Farmlands	23
4.1.18 Noise	23
4.1.19 Air Quality	25
4.1.20 Hazardous Materials	27
4.1.21 Travel Patterns	28
4.2 Constructability	28
4.3 Indirect Impacts	33
4.4 Cumulative Impacts	33
4.5 What Will be Done to Mitigate Adverse Impacts?	38
5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND AGENCY COORDINATION	40
5.1 How was the Public Involved in the Environmental Process	40
5.2 Open House Public Meeting	42
5.3 Public Hearing	44
6. COMPARISON OF THE BUILD AND NO BUILD ALTERNATIVES	49

TABLES

Table 2.1 Existing and Future Lane Configuration, Level of Service and Flow Rate	6
Table 4.1 Race and Ethnicity by Census Block	14
Table 4.2 Family Income and Poverty Levels by Census Tract	17
Table 4.3 Number of Impact Receivers	24
Table 4.4 Noise Countours for Future Planning	25
Table 4.5 Flow Rate Comparison	25
Table 4.6 Air Quality Comparative Study Summary	26
Table 4.7 Non-Motorized Options Considered for Complete Streets	33
Table 4.8 Past, Present, and Foreseeable Future Project	37
Table 5.1 Summary of Responses to the Solicitation of Views	40

Table 5.2	Summary of Follow-Up Coordination	41
Table 5.3	Public Meeting Comments and Responses	43
Table 5.4	Public Hearing Comments and Responses	45
Table 6.1	Comparison of Impacts by Alternative	49
Table 6.2	Estimated Cost of the Build Alternatives	50

FIGURES

1	Project Location	3
2	Typical Sections	9
3	Census Tracts	15
4	Past, Present, and Foreseeable Future Projects Location Map	35

APPENDICES

A	Alternatives Layouts
B	Solicitation of Views and Responses
C	Follow-Up Coordination (Section 106 & Navigable Waterways)
D	Wetland Finding
E	Highway Traffic Noise Impact and Abatement Study (without appendices)
F	Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (without appendices)
G	Analysis and Recommendations in Accordance with LADOTD Complete Streets Policies\
H	Layout City/Parish Project: Essen Lane/I-10

Acronyms

ADT	Average Daily Traffic
APE	Area of Potential Effect
AMSTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
BFE	Base Flood Elevations
CE	Categorical Exclusion
dBA	A-weighted Decibels
DOI	U.S. Department of the Interior
DOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
I-10	Interstate 10
I-12	Interstate 12
LDEQ	Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
LDOTD	Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
LDWF	Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
LNHP	LDWF Natural Heritage Program
LOS	Level of Service
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAC	Noise Abatement Criteria
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NPS	National Park Service
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
REC	Recognized Environmental Condition
ROW	Right-of-Way
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
STAA	Surface Transportation Authorization Act
TMP	Transportation Management Plan
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USC	United States Code
USCG	U.S. Coast Guard
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
UST	Underground Storage Tank
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

WBS No. H.010560

Name: Essen Lane Widening (Perkins Road to I-10)

Route: LA 3064

Parish: East Baton Rouge

1. General Information

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conceptual Layout | <input type="checkbox"/> Line and Grade | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preliminary Plans |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Plan-in-Hand | <input type="checkbox"/> Advance Check Prints |

2. Class of Action

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Impact Statement (E.I.S.) | <input type="checkbox"/> State Funded Only (EE/EF/ER) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Assessment (E.A.) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Categorical Exclusion (C.E.) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Programmatic C.E. (as defined in FHWA letter of agreement dated 03/15/95) | |

3. Project Description

Please refer to the project description provided on Page 6.

4. Public Involvement

- Views were solicited. (November 7, 2012)
- Views were not solicited.
- Public Involvement events held. (Public Meeting, March 26, 2013.)
- A public hearing/opportunity for requesting a public hearing required. (December 17, 2013)
- A public hearing/opportunity for requesting a public hearing not required.

5. Real Estate

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

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

- | | NO | YES | N/A |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Will historic sites or publicly owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife or waterfowl refuges (Section 4f) be affected? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Are properties acquired or improved with L&WC funds affected? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

7. Cultural Section 106

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

8. Natural & Physical Environment

	NO	YES	N/A
a. Are wetlands affected?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ²
b. Are other waters of the U.S. affected?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ²
c. Are Endangered/Threatened Species/Habitat affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Is project within 100 Year Floodplain ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ³
e. Is project in Coastal Zone Management Area?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Is project in a Coastal Barrier Resources area?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Is project on a Sole Source Aquifer ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
h. Is project impacting a navigable waterway ?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Are any State or Federal Scenic Rivers/Streams impacted?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Is a noise analysis warranted (Type I project)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁵
k. Is an air quality study warranted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁶
l. Is project in a non-attainment area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁶
m. Is project in an approved Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Are construction air, noise, & water impacts major?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Will the project affect or be affected by a hazardous waste site , leaking underground storage tank, oil/gas well, or other potentially contaminated site?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁷

9. Social Impacts

	NO	YES	N/A
a. Will project change land use in the area?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Are any churches and schools impacted by or adjacent to the project? (If so, list below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁸
c. Has Title VI been considered?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁹
d. Will any specific groups be adversely affected? (i.e., <i>minorities, low-income, elderly, disabled, etc.</i>)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Are any hospitals, medical facilities, fire police facilities impacted by or adjacent to the project? (If so, list below).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁸
f. Will Transportation patterns change?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Is Community cohesion affected by the project?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Are short-term social/economic impacts due to construction considered major?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Do conditions warrant special construction times ? (i.e., <i>school in session, congestion, tourist season, harvest</i>)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Were Context Sensitive Solutions considered? (If so explain below).....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Were bike and pedestrian accommodations considered? (explain below).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹⁰

		NO	YES	N/A
I.	Will the roadway/bridge be closed? (If yes, answer questions below).....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Will a detour bridge be provided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Will a detour road be provided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Will a detour route be signed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

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

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

1. Please refer to Section 3.1 (Build Alternatives)
2. Please refer to Section 4.1.11 (Wetlands and Other Waters)
3. Please refer to Section 4.1.12 (Floodplains)
4. Please refer to Section 4.1.14 (Subsurface Water)
5. Please refer to Section 4.1.18 (Noise)
6. Please refer to Section 4.1.19 (Air Quality)
7. Please refer to Section 4.1.20 (Hazardous Materials)
8. Please refer to Section 4.1.8 (Community Facilities, Services, and Social Resources)
9. Please refer to Section 4.1.4 (Demographics and Environmental Justice)
10. Please refer to Section 4.2 (Constructability)

Preparer: Carl Winter
Title: Environmental Impact Manager
Date: May 5, 2014

Attachments

- S.O.V. and Responses (Appendix B)
- Wetlands Finding (Appendix D)
- Project Description Sheet
- Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan
- Noise Analysis (Appendix E)
- Air Analysis
- Exhibits and/or Maps (Appendix A)
- 4(f) Evaluation
- Form AD 1006 (Farmlands)
- 106 Documentation (Appendix C)
- Other: Phase I ESA (Appendix F)
Complete Streets Analysis (Appendix G)

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SUMMARY OF PERMITS, MITIGATION, AND COMMITMENTS

Permits

A permit will be required from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District. Approximately 0.07 acres of jurisdictional wetlands and 0.09 acres of Other Waters of the US will be potentially impacted (see Appendix C) within the proposed project limits. This recommendation will be provided to the US Army Corps of Engineers, which has the ultimate responsibility as to whether or not it is jurisdictional. Through the issuance of a permit, the proposed project may be subject to additional measures identified by the USACE.

Mitigation

To mitigate potential impacts water quality impacts to surface waters, the proposed project will adhere to standard LDOTD best management practices (BMPs) and applicable LDEQ permit provisions to prevent erosion and nonpoint source pollution that may result from construction-related activities.

Required drainage structures shall be designed, installed, and maintained to ensure an appropriate flow of water through the project area and to ensure no adverse impact to the function local floodplains.

The Noise Impact and Abatement Study, identifying future contours for noise levels in excess of current standards, will be provided to local planning and building officials. As desired, these officials may review project-related noise contour data during their consideration of future land use decisions.

Short-term construction impacts (e.g., noise, air quality) will be mitigated through adherence to applicable local, State, and federal regulations, including (but not limited to) Section 107.14 (Environmental Protection) of the Louisiana Specifications for Roads and Bridges, as well as appropriate LDEQ Air Quality Regulations governing fugitive emissions of particulate matter during road construction activities (LAC 33:III.1305).

Commitments

The project designer shall consider the future BREC multi-use path along Wards Creek during the project design. This includes the location of drainage outfall into Wards Creek, the relocation of utilities crossing Wards Creek, and the widening of the Wards Creek bridge, as well as the potential for connections from the path to the Essen Lane corridor.

Lane closures will only be allowed one at a time in any one direction, which leaves four lanes operational at any one time during construction. The closures will be limited to the weekends, and between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. on weekdays.

The crossing locations will be designed to accommodate persons with limited mobility and the crossing functions will be activated by pedestrians as needed. As reasonably appropriate and feasible, LDOTD may consider the incorporation of features that can extend the crossing interval.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Environmental Assessment (EA) document summarizes the anticipated impacts resulting from the proposed Essen Lane Widening project from Perkins Rd. (LA 427) to One Calais Avenue, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The FHWA-approved logical termini for the study area of the proposed project extend from Perkins Rd. to the I-10 eastbound on- and off-ramps. The overall length of construction is approximately 0.87 mile.

Through the project limits, the existing roadway is a six-lane roadway, consisting of three southbound lanes, two northbound lanes, and a continuous two-way center turn lane. Currently, Essen Lane is without sidewalks, save for a short segment near Hennessy Boulevard. This section of Essen Lane is home to numerous medical facilities and medical support services, anchored by Our Lady of the Lake Regional (LOL) Medical Center at the corner of Essen Lane and Hennessy Boulevard.

Two Build Alternatives are currently being considered, both of which would add an additional northbound lane and sidewalks to both sides of the street. Additional pedestrian crossings would also be provided. The final lane configuration of Alternative 1 would consist of three southbound lanes, three northbound lanes, and a continuous two-way turn lane. The final lane configuration of Alternative 2 would consist of three southbound lanes, three northbound lanes, and center raised medians with intermittent openings. In addition to widening Essen Lane, both Build Alternatives include the widening of Summa Avenue at its intersection with Essen Lane. The existing movements from Summa Avenue consist of one right turn lane and one combination through and left turn lane. The proposed widening would allow for separate through and left turn lanes, in addition to the right turn lane. Both Build Alternatives would also include the widening of the bridge over Wards Creek.

The Build Alternatives were evaluated for its impacts upon the environment. The Wetland Report indicates that approximately 0.07 acres of jurisdictional wetlands and 0.09 acre of Other Waters of the US would be impacted. The Traffic Noise Impact Study identified noise impacts to 13 local receptors resulting from development of the Build Alternatives; however, noise abatement measures were not found to be reasonable or feasible.

It is anticipated that approximately 0.673 acres of additional right-of-way would be required. Because both Build Alternatives would widen Essen Lane to accommodate an additional northbound lane, the right-of-way requirements would be the same for both Alternatives. The relocation of persons, residential structures, and/or businesses will not be required. Impacts to minority and/or low-income populations would not be disproportionately high or adverse. No threatened or endangered species would be impacted. No violations of the CO thresholds for air quality would be expected with the proposed project. The Phase I Environmental Site Assessment revealed no evidence of recognized environmental conditions in connection with the required right-of-way, with the exception of one parcel. One underground storage tank in the project area had a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment on record, but did not have a "No Further Action" status on record. Lab analysis of the samples indicated results were below RECAP standards, so routine construction at the site may continue as scheduled.

The project corridor does not contain any known wetland reserves or scenic streams within the project limits. Though located above the Southern Hills Aquifer, the Environmental Protection Agency has confirmed that the project would not have an adverse effect on the quality of ground water underlying the site. There are not anticipated to be any negative impacts to the flood plain as a result of the proposed Build

Alternatives. Because the project will be constructed with minimal required right-of-way within a developed commercial area, it would not impact natural or beneficial floodplain values. No Prime farmland or agricultural use would be impacted by the proposed project.

The estimated project cost for Alternative 1 is approximately \$13,800,000, while Alternative 2 would cost approximately \$14,150,000.

As required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the No-Build Alternative was also evaluated. Under the No Build Alternative, the widening of Essen Lane through the project area would not occur. In the absence of the widening project, Essen Lane would remain without sidewalks. The short-term adverse impacts associated with the proposed project would be avoided under the No Build Alternative. While the wetland impacts associated with widening of the Wards Creek bridge would not occur under the No Build Alternative, traffic noise would result in impacts to 13 receptors.

The No Build Alternative would result in continuation of existing traffic conditions and pedestrian access through the project area.

1.0 Introduction

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LDOTD) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are proposing to widen Essen Lane (LA 3064) from Perkins Road (LA 427) to just south of the I-10 Eastbound ramps. Two build alternatives are currently being considered. Both build alternatives would add an additional northbound travel lane, and would incorporate sidewalks along both sides of Essen Lane within the construction limits. Furthermore, both build alternatives would require widening of the bridge over Wards Creek. In addition to widening Essen Lane, both alternatives include the widening of Summa Avenue at its intersection with Essen Lane. The total length of the project is approximately 0.87 miles. The location and limits of the proposed project are identified in Figure 1.

This document is an Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared to evaluate the effects the proposed project would have on the natural and human environment.

1.1 What is an Environmental Assessment?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) directs federal agencies to conduct environmental reviews to consider the impacts that may result from proposed federal undertakings. The NEPA process requires coordination with local, state, and federal agencies throughout planning and project development decision-making.

When considering approval of proposed transportation projects, FHWA and LDOTD are committed to the examination and minimization of potential impacts to the human and natural environment. NEPA requires the consideration of project alternatives that would satisfy the project's stated purpose while balancing the potential effects the project may have on the human and natural environment.

To ensure transparency, the NEPA process must be clearly documented. Potentially affected communities, effected parties, and other stakeholders are provided the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments about proposals, alternatives, and potentially environmental effects. Public input, responses to public concerns, and choices made about the project are fully documented in the EA.

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

1.2 Project Description

The proposed project consists of the widening of Essen Lane Widening project from Perkins Road (LA 427) to One Calais Avenue. Two Build Alternatives are currently being considered, both of which would add an additional northbound lane and sidewalks to both sides of the street. The final lane configuration of Alternative 1 would consist of three southbound lanes, three northbound lanes, and a continuous two-way turn lane. The final lane configuration of Alternative 2 would consist of three southbound lanes, three northbound lanes, and

center raised medians with intermittent openings. In addition to widening Essen Lane, both Build Alternatives include the widening of Summa Avenue at its intersection with Essen Lane. The existing movements from Summa Avenue consist of one right turn lane and one combination through and left turn lane. The proposed widening would allow for separate through and left turn lanes, in addition to the right turn lane. Both Build Alternatives would also include the widening of the bridge over Wards Creek.

1.3 Where is the Proposed Project in the Development Process?

FHWA approved the logical termini (the end points of the project study area) as Perkins Road to the south and the I-10/Essen Lane interchange on/off ramps to the north. The limits of construction, i.e., the segment of roadway where widening is proposed, extend from Perkins Road to One Calais Avenue, a construction length of approximately 0.87 miles.

The purpose and need for the project has been documented and two reasonable, feasible alternatives have been developed to address the need. This EA document will evaluate the effects of the Build Alternatives on the natural and human environment.

Prior to commencement of the EA, LDOTD provided preliminary project information to federal, State, and local agencies; elected officials, local stakeholders, and other interested parties, requesting their views regarding the project. An Open House Public Meeting was held on March 26, 2013 to inform interested parties on the relevant project components, the proposed alternatives, and the environmental clearance process. Transcripts of the Open House Public Meeting were distributed to State and local officials, and public State and local libraries.

Upon approval by FHWA, and to solicit public comment on the project, the EA was distributed to State and federal regulatory agencies, affected communities, libraries in the project area, and other interested parties. A Public Hearing was held after the EA was approved by FHWA for public distribution.

2.0 Project Purpose and Need

Based on the LDOTD highway functional systems, Essen Lane is classified as an Urban Principal Arterial – State Highway. Through the project limits, the current roadway consists of three southbound lanes, two northbound lanes, and a continuous center turn lane.

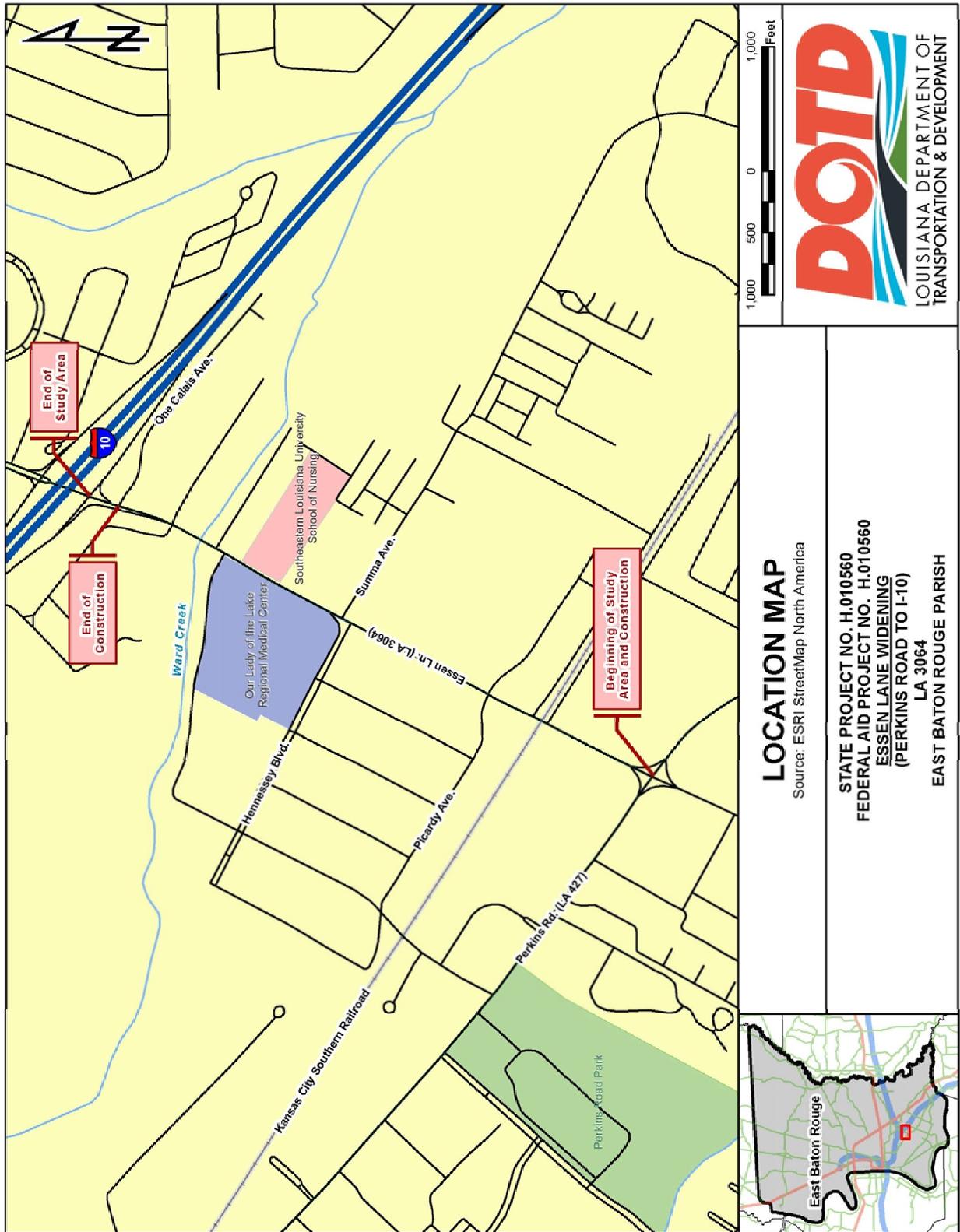
2.1 What is the Purpose of the Project?

The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity and decrease congestion along Essen Lane between I-10 and Perkins Road.

2.2 Why is the Project Needed?

This section of Essen Lane is home to numerous medical facilities, anchored by Our Lady of the Lake (OLOL) Regional Medical Center at the corner of Essen Lane and Hennessy Boulevard. This section of Essen Lane currently experiences considerable daily congestion, which is expected to worsen with the anticipated future increases in traffic volume.

Figure 1



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Capacity

Capacity is the maximum amount of traffic capable of being handled by a given highway section. Capacity is determined by a number of factors: the traffic control conditions, the number and width of lanes and shoulders; merge areas at interchanges; and roadway alignment (grades and curves). When certain physical and traffic control aspects of the highway are at capacity, they create traffic "bottlenecks"¹.

With implementation of either alternative, one northbound lane will be added to Essen Lane. Under either Build Alternative, the addition of a third northbound lane on Essen Lane will increase the capacity of the roadway to accommodate anticipated increase in traffic volumes.

Congestion

Congestion, is caused when traffic demand approaches or exceeds the available capacity of the highway system. Congestion can vary significantly from day to day because traffic demand and available highway capacity are constantly changing. Traffic demands vary significantly by time of day, day of the week, and season of the year, and are also subject to significant fluctuations due to recreational travel, special events, and emergencies (e.g. evacuations). The definition of highway congestion also varies significantly from time to time and place to place based on user expectations. An intersection that may seem very congested in a rural community may not even register as an annoyance in a large metropolitan area. A level of congestion that users expect during peak commute periods may be unacceptable if experienced on Sunday morning. Because of this, congestion is difficult to define precisely in a mathematical sense – it actually represents the difference between the highway system performance that users expect and how the system actually performs²

Congestion can be measured in a number of ways – level of service; speed, travel time, and delay are commonly used measures. Level of Service (LOS) is a qualitative measure describing operational conditions within a traffic stream. This measure is based on factors such as speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort, and convenience. Depending on these operational conditions, the roadway is assigned a grade of A through F. An "A" represents free flow traffic and an "F" represents operational failure, with ease of traffic movement becoming increasingly difficult as the volume of traffic increases.

Existing and future (with project) LOS conditions were derived from 2011 data utilized an annual growth rate of 0.43 percent supplied by the Capital Region Planning Commission. The existing and future LOS morning and evening peak-hour conditions within the project limits in each direction are identified in Table 2.1.

¹ <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/congestion/toolbox/capacity.htm>, site accessed February 18, 2014,

² http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/congestion/describing_problem.htm, site accessed February 18, 2014.

Table 2.1: Existing and Future LOS Conditions

	Volume	Existing (3 SB + 2 NB + TWLTL)		Alternative 1 (3 SB + 3 NB + TWLTL)		Alternative 2 (3 SB + 3 NB + median)	
		LOS	Density ¹	LOS	Density	LOS	Density
Build Year							
2016 SB AM	2803	C	20.4	C	20.4	C	20.4
2016 NB AM	1513	B	16.5	A	11.0	A	11.0
2016 SB PM	2126	B	15.5	B	15.5	B	15.5
2016 NB PM	2817	B	16.5	C	20.5	C	20.5
Design Year							
2036 SB AM	3036	C	22.1	C	22.1	C	22.1
2036 NB AM	1648	B	18.0	B	12.0	B	12.0
2036 SB PM	2308	D	34.2	C	22.3	C	22.4
2036 NB PM	3058	B	16.8	B	16.8	B	16.8

Source: LDOTD Highway Capacity Software Analysis: Essen Lane Widening (March 6, 2014)

Density: passenger cars/mile/lane

Table 2.1 provides a segment level of service analysis, which is not influenced by pedestrian movements. The signal timings that were provided as part of the 60% final plan submittal accommodate the pedestrian movements that are being provided along the corridor.

3.0 Alternatives Considered

NEPA requires that reasonable alternatives that could address the identified needs and purposes be considered, including a No Build Alternative. Two Build Alternatives are currently being considered, both of which would add an additional northbound lane and sidewalks.

3.1 Build Alternatives

Alternative 1

The final lane configuration of Alternative 1 would consist of three southbound lanes, three northbound lanes, and a continuous two-way turn lane. A typical section of this build alternative is provided in Figure 2.

Alternative 2

The final lane configuration of Alternative 2 would consist of three southbound lanes, three northbound lanes, and center raised medians with intermittent openings. A typical section of this build alternative is provided in Figure 2.

In addition to widening Essen Lane, both Build Alternatives include the widening of Summa Avenue at its intersection with Essen Lane. The existing movements from Summa Avenue consist of one right turn lane and one combination through and left turn lane. The proposed widening would allow for separate through and left turn lanes, in addition to the right turn lane.

Both Build Alternatives include the widening of the bridge over Wards Creek. Dijon Drive provides perimeter access to parking areas associated with Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center. As appropriate, left turns from Dijon Drive may be restricted by construction of a 'pork-chop' island or other feature at this location.

It is anticipated that approximately 0.673 acres of additional right-of-way would be required. Because both build alternatives would widen Essen Lane to accommodate an additional northbound lane, the right-of-way requirements would be the same for both alternatives. Preliminary plan layouts of both Build Alternatives can be found in Appendix A.

The proposed project (both Alternatives 1 and 2) includes the following features:

Sidewalks

Currently, pedestrian access through the project area is achieved through intermittent sidewalks (at OLOL, Essen Centre, and Ward's Creek Bridge), landscaped areas directly adjacent to travel lanes, and privately-owned parking areas fronting Essen Lane. One marked crossing of Essen Lane is located at the intersection of Essen Lane/Hennessey Avenue. Up to twenty-two separate utility lines exist within the project limits.

Both alternatives include the installation of six-foot wide public sidewalks on either side of Essen Lane through the length of the project area. Per the plans under either alternative, there is 8 foot wide space between the back of proposed curb and the existing ROW. This allows just enough width for the proposed sidewalk with two feet remaining for the installation/relocation of utility features. The majority of adjacent properties have installed improvements (parking lots, business signs, etc.) directly adjacent to the ROW. Within the project limits, there is limited available ROW to tie in slopes, etc. without affecting the adjacent property improvements. The LDOTD Roadway Design Manual and LDOTD standard plans (PED-01) illustrate that a six-foot wide sidewalk immediately behind the curb (as currently presented in both Alternative 1 and 2) is an acceptable option to promote pedestrian access.

Narrowing the width of travel lanes or acquiring additional ROW to provide wider sidewalks is not realistic. While provision of a four-foot wide sidewalk and a two-foot vegetated buffer is allowable by LDOTD policies, due to maintenance considerations, this also is not a sensible option.

Pedestrian Crossings

Under either alternative, pedestrian crossings of Essen Lane at Picardy Avenue, Hennessey Boulevard, Margaret Ann Avenue and Essen Park Avenue will be controlled by traffic signals. Pedestrian "count down" signal heads and marked crosswalks are proposed at these crossings signalized intersections. The LDOTD Traffic Signal Design Manual and the MUTCD recommend that the calculation of all pedestrian crossing times be based on a walking speed of no more than 3.5 ft/sec. The signal timings that were provided as

part of the 60% final plan submittal accommodate this crossing speed and will adequately serve the primary pedestrian movement anticipated along the corridor.

Design Exceptions

A design exception was issued for construction of a continuous Two-Way Left-Turn lane (Alternative 1.) Essen Lane through the project area is a highly traveled urban arterial with connections to both I-10 and I-12 to the north. The surrounding properties are highly developed. Currently, a two-way left-turn lane on the existing five-thru lane section of Essen Lane allows direct ingress/egress to and from adjacent properties. With this design exception, Alternative 1 would allow the continuation of this this direct access and provide traffic turning left from Essen Lane a safe deceleration and storage location removed from thru travel lanes. This Design exception was approved by the LDOTD Chief Engineer on April 24, 2013.

The existing Ward Creek bridge is below the 100-year flood elevation. There is no record of this bridge ever being overtopped during a flood event. Widening this bridge will further reduce the bridge's elevation by approximately 1.68 inches. To alleviate this condition, the entire bridge would have to be replaced and raised by 1.10 feet. This replacement would also necessitate reconstruction of roadway approaches on either side of the bridge. The demolition and replacement of the bridge would significantly reduce the number of travel lanes available during construction. Due to the proximity of the bridge site to regional medical facilities, lane closures resulting from demolition and replacement of the bridge could affect emergency access. The approximately cost to replace and raise the bridge and approaches is approximately \$3.642 million. This exception would allow the widening of bridge at the existing grade. The LDOTD Chief Engineer approved this design exception on May 17, 2013.

3.2 No Build Alternative

In addition to the Build Alternative, the alternative of taking no action is also evaluated. A No Build Alternative is studied for purposes of comparison and for consideration in cases where adverse impacts to the environment might outweigh the benefits derived from proposed project. The environmental effects associated with the "no action" alternative will be compared with the effects resulting from the proposed action. Where a choice of "no action" by the agency would result in predictable actions by others, these actions are considered to be consequences of the No Build Alternative and are included in the analysis. Other planned and programmed activities, such as other maintenance and regional improvements would be performed as scheduled under the No Build Alternative. Under the No Build Alternative, the proposed widening of Essen Lane through the project limits would not occur. Essen Lane would remain as a six-lane (three southbound, two northbound, one continuous two-way center turn) facility. The future improvements in LOS and flow rate within the project area would not be realized. In the absence of the widening project, the widening of Summa Avenue and the Wards Creek Bridge would not occur.

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3.3 Preferred Alternative

The final stage of the alternatives development process is the selection of a preferred alternative by FHWA and LDOTD. The selection of a preferred alternative takes into consideration the environmental effects of each alternative, cost, public opinion, safety, and other factors. As detailed in Section 4.0 and summarized in Table 6.1, Alternative 2 could result in a reduction of 28.1 to 32.5% vehicular crashes and a reduction of 15% to 42.8 % vehicle-pedestrian crashes as compared to Alternative 1. Furthermore, an analysis of similar local roadways within the Baton Rouge regional highway network indicates the design associated with Alternative 1 could result in over five times the vehicle crash rate as compared to the road design associated with Alternative 2.

However, as a result of public input and comments received during the Public Meeting/Public Hearing, and in consideration of the surrounding development, environmental factors, access, and cost factors, Alternative 1 has been selected as the preferred project alternative. Potential changes to business access that may result from the introduction of a raised median (Alternative 2) was the predominant concern expressed during the March 26, 2013 Public Meeting and the December 17, 2013 Public Hearing; and Alternative 1 would not change current patterns of business access along Essen Lane. Furthermore, Alternative 1 would fully satisfy the proposed project's stated purpose (to increase capacity and decrease congestion) along Essen Lane between Perkins Road and I-10.

4.0 Environmental Resources, Impacts, and Mitigation

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

4.1 Environmental Conditions and Potential Effects

4.1.1 Land Use and Community Character

The project area extends approximately 0.87 miles through the highly commercialized Essen Lane corridor. As discussed in detail in Section 4.1.8, this section of Essen Lane is home to numerous medical facilities, anchored by OLOL Regional Medical Center at the corner of Essen Lane and Hennessy Boulevard. The land directly adjacent to Essen Lane, from which right-of-way will be acquired, consists of grassy property frontages frequently interrupted by concrete drives. As a result of this project, portions of those grassy frontages and drives would be permanently incorporated into the right-of-way to accommodate a widened Essen Lane and the concrete sidewalks that will run the length of the project. Currently, no sidewalks exist on Essen Lane outside a 230 ft. section at the corner of Essen and Hennessy Boulevard at OLOL Regional Medical Center.

While both Build Alternatives would incorporate new land into this transportation facility, the proposed sidewalks would provide safer pedestrian access to existing businesses and community facilities on Essen Lane. The Capital Area Transit System (CATS), which is the regional transit authority for the Baton Rouge Metropolitan region, has a bus route that services Essen Lane and Bluebonnet Boulevard. However, the route does not run along Essen Lane. Riders wishing to access Essen Lane must disembark at OLOL, as the route crosses Essen Lane on Hennessy Boulevard/Summa Avenue. The proposed sidewalks on Essen Lane would tie into those currently in use on Hennessy Boulevard.

Both Build Alternatives would provide increased pedestrian accessibility to businesses and facilities, and would not limit that access to vehicular traffic. No adverse community impacts would result from the proposed Interstate widening project.

4.1.2 Economic Activities

The proposed widening of Essen Lane will require minimal amounts of right-of-way from either side of the roadway. As such, relocation of some utilities will be required. However, due to the nature of the takings, no businesses would be relocated. The required right-of-way would take landscaping and some parking spaces, but not to a point where businesses would have insufficient parking.

The medians included under Alternative 2 would require that vehicles exiting properties on Essen Lane turn right, then U-Turn at the next available median opening. These median openings are in addition to the traffic lights currently present at Perkins Road, Picardy Avenue, Hennessy Boulevard/Summa Avenue, Margaret Ann Avenue, and Essen Park Avenue. The medians presented in Alternative 2 would not allow left turns directly into some properties and could be perceived as affecting business access. While the manner businesses are accessed is altered, it should be noted that the number and location of existing driveway access to the businesses along Essen Lane would be unchanged. The alignment of Alternative 1, with its continuous two-way left turn lane, would allow turning movements similar to the existing conditions. Because the number and location of driveway access is unchanged, access is sufficiently maintained. No significant impact to existing business in the project area would occur.

As with many widening projects that have occurred or are ongoing within the Baton Rouge area, persons who travel along Essen lane may be temporarily inconvenienced during the construction phase of the project. Because Essen Lane will remain open during construction, and due to the temporary nature of construction activities, no project-related adverse effects are anticipated.

4.1.3 Relocations of Homes and Businesses

Due to the proximity of businesses and residences to Essen Lane, minimal amounts of right-of-way will be purchased from both sides of the roadway under both build alternatives to limit encroachment on the adjacent businesses and residences. The proposed project will not require the relocation of any business or residential properties.

4.1.4 Demographics and Environmental Justice

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

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (42 United States Code [USC] 2000) and Executive Order 12898 - Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (1994),

require an environmental justice review, which entails a thorough evaluation of project effects to persons belonging to the low-income populations and the following minority groups at a minimum:

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

The 2010 Census identifies four Census Tracts within the project area. Essen Lane (predominantly aligned NE to SW) and the Kansas City Southern Railroad (predominantly aligned NW to SE) form the boundaries of a quadrant of tracts: Census Tract 38.01 in the northern quadrant, 40.05 in the southern quadrant, 26.02 in the western quadrant, and 38.04 in the eastern quadrant. The project area is predominantly bounded by Census Tracts 38.01 and 30.04, with Census Tracts 26.02 and 40.05 encompassing the relatively short section of Essen Lane southwest of the railroad. Census tracts in the project area are detailed in Figure 3.

From 2000 to 2010, East Baton Rouge Parish experienced an increase in population of approximately 6.6 percent, growing from 412,852 to 440,171 persons. The City of Baton Rouge experienced a significantly reduced rate of growth during the same period. The population in Baton Rouge grew from 227,818 to 229,493 persons, an approximately 0.7 percent increase. By comparison, the State of Louisiana exhibited growth rate of 1.4 percent (from 4,468,976 to 4,533,372 persons) during the same period.

In order to gather a more accurate depiction of the population adjacent to Essen Lane, data from Census Blocks within a 2,000 foot buffer of the project limits were collected. Sixty-four Census Blocks are located within the buffer. According to the 2010 Census, 38 of those blocks reported no population. Per the Census information, 4,892 persons live within the remaining 26 Census Blocks.

A review of the race and ethnicity data for the census blocks within the 2,000 foot buffer of the project limits was conducted to determine if any minority group(s) would be disproportionately affected by impacts associated with the proposed project. The results of this review are provided in Table 4.1.

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

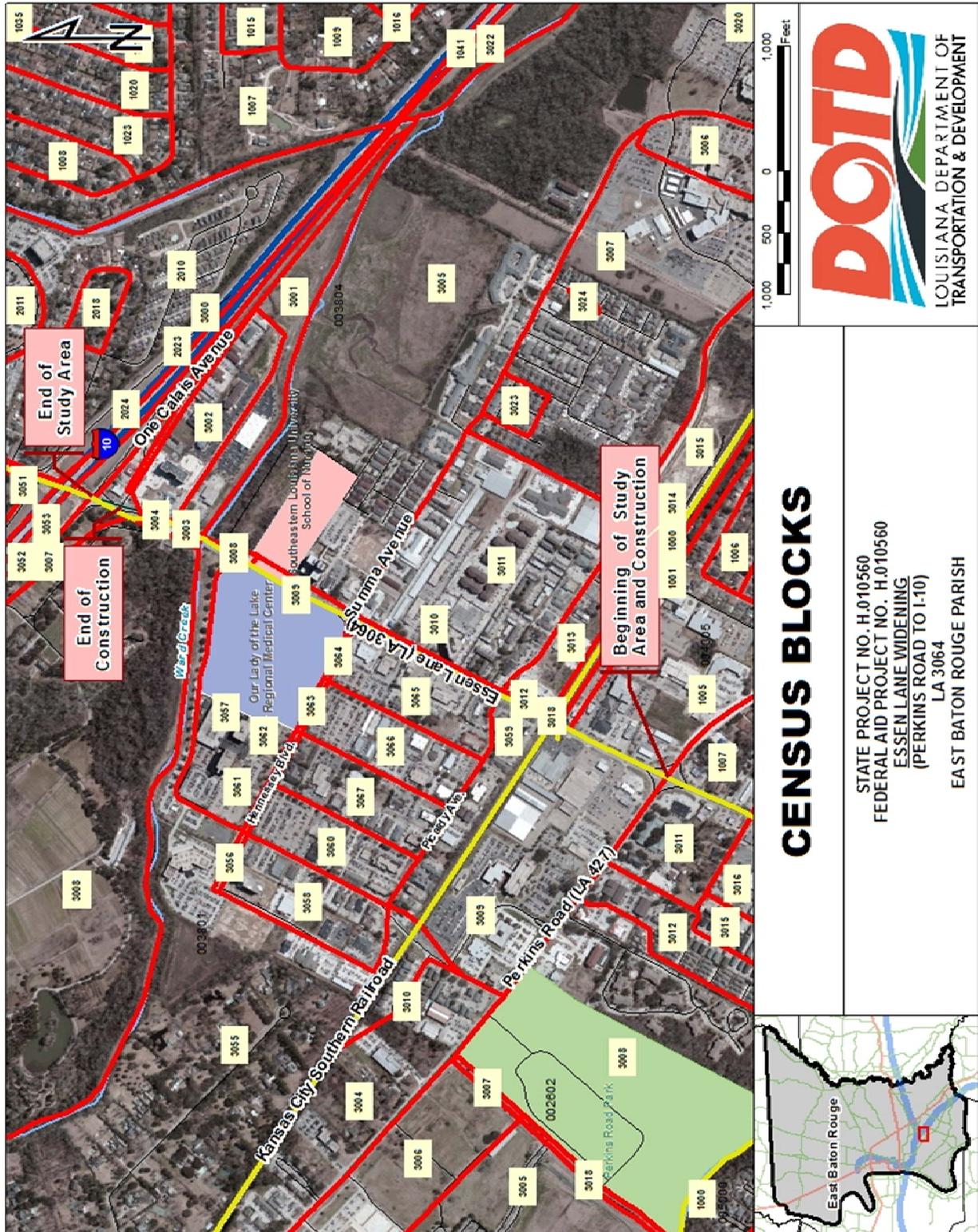
As detailed in Table 4.1, approximately 40.8 percent of the population in the Census Blocks adjacent to Essen Lane was non-White. The non-white percentage of the population in East Baton Rouge Parish and the State was 51.9 and 37.9 percent, respectively. The non-white percentage of population in the project area is lower than that of the parish, and more aligned with that of the State. African-Americans comprised the largest non-White populations in the project area (33.5 percent).

Table 4.1 Race and Ethnicity by Census Block

Census Geography		Total Population	Black		American Indian and Alaskan Native		Asian		Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander		Some other Race	
			Pop	%	Pop	%	Pop	%	Pop	%	Pop	%
Tract 26.02	Block 3008	392	56	14.3	0	0.0	39	9.9	0	0.0	5	1.3
	Block 3010	54	12	22.2	0	0.0	1	1.9	0	0.0	1	1.9
	Block 3012	191	132	69.1	1	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Block 3013	402	330	82.1	5	1.2	6	1.2	0	0.0	18	4.5
	Block 3015	127	120	94.5	4	3.1	1	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Block 3017	66	66	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Tract 38.01	Block 3048	276	24	8.7	2	0.7	6	2.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Block 3055	133	3	2.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Block 3057	14	12	85.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Block 3067	1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Tract 38.04	Block 2010	380	55	14.5	2	0.5	6	1.6	0	0.0	2	0.5
	Block 2011	475	176	37.1	4	0.8	61	12.8	0	0.0	5	1.1
	Block 2018	28	2	7.1	1	3.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Block 3005	346	40	11.6	0	0.0	13	3.8	0	0.0	2	0.6
	Block 3007	464	52	11.2	2	0.4	4	0.9	0	0.0	2	0.4
	Block 3011	706	213	30.2	9	1.3	50	7.1	0	0.0	19	2.7
	Block 3013	12	6	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0
	Block 3023	54	8	14.8	0	0.0	5	9.3	0	0.0	2	3.7
Tract 40.05	Block 1000	1	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Block 1005	87	24	27.6	2	2.3	4	4.6	0	0.0	3	3.4
	Block 1006	77	12	15.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Block 1007	149	67	45.0	1	0.7	17	11.4	0	0.0	11	7.4
	Block 1008	206	147	71.4	2	1.0	10	4.9	1	0.5	4	1.9
	Block 1009	84	42	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Block 1010	62	16	25.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Block 1011	105	22	21.0	0	0.0	10	9.5	0	0.0	15	14.3
All Blocks		4892	1637	33.5	35	0.7	233	4.8	1	0.0	89	1.8
East Baton Rouge (2010)		440,171	202,534	46.3	2,722	0.6	13,894	3.2	326	0.1	7,582	1.7
Louisiana (2010)		4,533,372	1,452,396	32.8	55,079	1.2	84,335	1.9	4,879	0.1	85,725	1.9
Source: United States Census, American Fact Finder QT-P5 Race Alone or in Combination : 2010 Census Summary Fact File												

In addition to identifying whether a proposed action affects minority populations, the environmental justice discussion must include a review of whether any low-income population would be disproportionately affected. Because income data is not available on a census block level, the Census Tract economic data was utilized for this review. The income data from for the aforementioned Census Tracts is identified in Table 4.2.

Figure 3



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Table 4.2 Family Income and Poverty Levels by Census Tract

Census Geography	Median Family Income (\$)	Families with Income below the Poverty Level (%)	Families with Income below \$10,000
Tract 26.02	97,024	5.7	53 (5.1%)
Tract 38.01	86,166	2.0	0 (0.0%)
Tract 38.04	78,480	6.5	27 (2.9%)
Tract 40.05	96,080	8.7	77 (5.8%)
East Baton Rouge Parish	61,490	12.3	5,327 (5.1%)
Louisiana	55,144	14.1	70,999 (6.3%)
Source: United States Census, American Fact Finder DP03 Selected Economic Characteristics 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates			

The median family income in all four Census Tracts is higher than that of both the parish and State. Conversely, the percent of families with income below the poverty level for all tracts is below that of both the parish and State. While the percent of families below a \$10,000 income in Tracts 26.02 and 40.05 is at or above that of the parish, those tracts encompass the portions of Essen Lane south of the Kansas City Railroad, which accounts for only 0.19 mile of the total 0.87-mile total project length. The majority of these tracts lay south of Perkins Road. The small percentage of minorities and low-income persons within the adjacent census tracts ensures that the proposed project would not disproportionately affect an identified minority or low-income population.

4.1.5 Cultural Resources

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

Staff from the LDOTD Environmental Section searched the Louisiana Divisions of Historic Preservation and Archaeology GIS databases to identify existing archaeological sites, standing structures and districts listed or deemed eligible for inclusion on the NRHP within or adjacent to the project area. No archaeological sites or districts were identified adjacent to the project area.

In October 2012, staff from LDOTD conducted a pedestrian survey within the direct Area of Potential Effect (APE), designated as required right-of-way. Shovel testing was not conducted due to the minimum amount of required right-of-way and the disturbance and utilities in the area. A visual inspection for standing structures

greater than 50 years of age and located within or adjacent to the project area was also conducted. Two standing structures were identified. Structure number 17-01595 (4912 Essen Lane) is a single story residence built approximately in the mid to late 1960s. Structure number 17-01596 (4898 Essen Lane) is the pump room for East Baton Rouge Parish Department of Public Works Sanitary Sewer Pump Station No. 58, which was built in 1961. Neither structure is considered eligible for inclusion on the NRHP. No further work is recommended for this project. The SHPO concurred with this determination on January 24, 2013. Concurrence correspondence with the SHPO is included in Appendix C.

Two federally recognized Native America Tribes responded to the Solicitation of Views: the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

The Jena Band of Choctaw Indians determined that the project activities would have “No Effect” on any Historic properties. They are also unaware of any known sacred and/or ceremonial sites located within the immediate area. Therefore, they concur with the proposed project activities. However, should any artifacts or archaeological feature be encountered during the scope of said projects activities, work shall cease and their office shall be consulted immediately.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma indicated that East Baton Rouge Parish is located within the historic area of interest for the Tribe. A copy of the survey reports and SHPO comments concerning this project were requested before the Tribe could comment on the likelihood of this project affecting Choctaw historic or sacred sites. Upon review of the finding letter with SHPO concurrence, the Tribe stated that they are unaware of any Choctaw cultural or sacred sites located within the immediate project area. The Tribe concurred that there are no known historic properties that will be affected and that work should proceed as planned. However, as the project is located in an area that is of general historic interest to the Tribe, they request that work be stopped and their office contacted immediately if any Native American cultural materials are encountered. This stipulation will be placed on the construction plans to insure contractors are aware of it.

4.1.6 Section 4(f) Resources

Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act requires that the FHWA and other DOT agencies consider the publicly owned parks, recreational areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, or public and private historic sites affected by their respective undertakings. Under the provisions of the Act, a federally assisted highway project cannot adversely take a designated 4(f) property unless it can be shown that there is no prudent and feasible alternative to doing so. Section 4(f), as specifically related to cultural resources, applies when there is an actual taking of land from, or constructive use of, a historic property. Section 4(f) evaluation requires documentation of completion of the Section 106 process.

As stated in Section 4.1.6 (Cultural Resources) there are no historic properties or features located within or adjacent to the project limits.

Located at the northern terminus of the project limits is the Burden Center, a 440-acre publically-owned horticultural and agronomic research center operated by the Louisiana State University (LSU) Agricultural Center. Within the property limits of the Burden Center is the Rural Life Museum, an outdoor museum maintained by LSU containing the largest collection of material culture of 19th century Louisiana. Both the Burden Center and the Rural Life Museum are open to the public, but only the Rural Life Museum charges an admission fee. Due to the location of the Rural Life Museum at the center of the Burden Center property, the

property directing abutting Essen Lane is that of the Burden Center. While the Burden Center is publically-owned, the property is managed for scientific research; therefore, it is not considered a Section 4(f) resource. (Furthermore, the proposed project would not be purchasing right-of-way from this property.)

4.1.7 Section 6(f) Resources

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

The project site is located within a highly commercialized corridor. The LDWF has identified no State or federal park, wildlife refuge, scenic stream, or wildlife management area within the project limits³; nor is any local or community park located within or adjacent to the project limits. The proposed project would not result in the conversion of a designated 6(f) resource.

4.1.8 Community Facilities, Services, and Social Resources

Essen Lane is located in the heart of the South Medical District, a key neighborhood and district identified by FUTUREBR, the comprehensive plan for East Baton Rouge Parish adopted in September 21, 2011. The South Medical District is a regional hub for health services, with OLOL Regional Medical Center soon becoming the teaching hospital for LSU's Medical College and the Baton Rouge General Medical Center campus (located on Picardy Avenue between Essen Lane and Bluebonnet Boulevard) continuing to expand.⁴ OLOL is located at the corner of Essen Lane and Hennessy Boulevard, at the northern end of the project limits. The area west of Essen Lane between Hennessy Boulevard and Picardy Avenue is dominated by medical support offices and facilities due to the proximity to OLOL. In addition to this hospital, Essen Lane is home to two medical teaching facilities: OLOL College and Southeastern Louisiana University School of Nursing, Baton Rouge Center. The properties that directly front Essen Lane are predominantly commercial, including restaurants, automotive services, convenience stores, and retail uses. Due to the widening of Essen Lane, small portions of right-of-way will be required from some properties along Essen Lane. However, none of the required parcels would necessitate relocation of a community facility or service.

Both Build Alternatives propose sidewalks along both sides of Essen Lane, providing safer pedestrian access to the existing businesses and community facilities. Currently, no sidewalks exist on Essen Lane outside a 230 ft. section at the corner of Essen Lane and Hennessy Boulevard at OLOL Regional Medical Center. The Capital Area Transit System (CATS), which is the regional transit authority of the Baton Rouge Metropolitan region, has a bus route that services Essen Lane and Bluebonnet Boulevard. However, the route does not

³ Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, SOV Response, dated November 13, 2012.

⁴ FUTUREBR: A Plan for East Baton Rouge Parish, City of Baton Rouge/Parish of East Baton Rouge Office of the Planning Commission, September 2011.

run along Essen Lane. Riders wishing to access Essen Lane must disembark at OLOL, as the route crosses Essen Lane on Hennessy Boulevard/Summa Avenue. The proposed sidewalks on Essen Lane would tie into those currently in use on Hennessy Boulevard.

The medians in Alternative 2 would require that vehicles turning left onto Essen Lane first make a right turn, then U-Turn at the next available median opening. These median openings are in addition to the traffic lights currently present at Perkins Road, Picardy Avenue, Hennessy Boulevard/Summa Avenue, Margaret Ann Avenue, and Essen Park Avenue. While the medians presented in Alternative 2 would alter the way the adjacent properties and side streets are accessed by vehicular traffic, access points to the existing community facility or community services would not be altered. The alignment of Alternative 1, with its continuous two-way left turn lane, would allow turning movements similar to the existing conditions on Essen Lane. Both Build Alternatives would provide increased access to existing community facilities and services in the project area.

4.1.9 Wildlife and Protected Species

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 requires federal actions (e.g., project approvals, funding, other actions) to be implemented in a manner that protected species or their habitat is not jeopardized. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is charged with implementing the ESA and maintains a list of protected plants and animals and their protection status. The Louisiana Natural Heritage Program (LNHP) maintains sighting records of federally protected species and species of state concern.

According to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF)⁵, East Baton Rouge Parish provides habitat for the federally endangered pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*) and manatee (*Trichechus manatus*). Another species, the inflated heelsplitter (*Potamilus inflatus*), is federally designated as threatened. The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), formerly endangered, has been delisted. The USFWS has reviewed the proposed project for potential effects to resources under its jurisdiction and has determined the proposed project would have no effect on those resources⁶.

According to the LNHP, “no impacts to rare, threatened, or endangered species or critical habitat are anticipated.”⁷ No state or federal parks, wildlife refuges, scenic streams, or wildlife management areas are known” at the specified project site.

4.1.10 Wetland Reserve Program

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

⁵ http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/wildlife/species-parish-list?tid=223&type_1=All, site accessed April 16, 2013.

⁶ United States Fish and Wildlife Service, SOV Response, dated November 20, 2012.

⁷ Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, SOV Response, dated November 13, 2012.

4.1.11 Wetlands and Other Waters

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

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

The project limits are located with the Bayou Manchac-Amite River Watershed. Included within the project limits is one bridge over Wards Creek. Wards Creek is a tributary of Bayou Manchac, which itself drains to the Amite River.

The project limits was evaluated to determine the presence of "jurisdictional wetlands" defined under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. A field investigation was conducted on November 1, 2012 to determine the amount of jurisdictional wetlands and other waters of the U.S. within the project limits.

The survey identified the southern bank of Wards Creek as the only location within the project limits that exhibit characteristics indicative of a wetland. Both Build Alternatives require the widening of the bridge over Wards Creek. The bridge widening can be accomplished within the existing right-of-way at that location; therefore, both build alternatives would impact the same amount of wetland and other waters of the U.S. It is the conclusion of the staff biologists of the LDOTD Environmental Section that the proposed widening of Essen Lane, and subsequent widening of the bridge over Wards Creek, would impact approximately 0.07 acres of potentially jurisdictional wetlands and 0.09 acres of potentially jurisdictional other waters of the U.S. (Wards Creek).⁸

The USACE will make the final determination as to whether these areas are to be considered jurisdictional wetlands. Mitigation requirements for wetland loss may require creation of acreage off-site in an approved wetland mitigation area. The final mitigation requirements will be determined based upon the functions and values of the impacted wetlands. The Wetland Finding is provided as Appendix D to this Environmental Assessment.

4.1.12 Floodplains

Floodplains are areas flooded during storm events. The 100-year floodplain is defined as the area that would be inundated by a precipitation event that has a 1-in-100 chance of occurring every year. Floodplains are protected by Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management; 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 650, *Location and Hydraulic Design of Encroachments on Floodplains*; and DOT 5650.2, *Floodplain Management*

⁸ *Wetland Finding, State Project No. H.010560, Essen Lane Widening, LDOTD, April 16, 2013.*

and Protection. These regulations require that encroachments within the 100-year floodplain are minimized and that land development inconsistent with floodplain values is avoided.

Essen Lane through the project area lies between the 30 and 31-foot (above mean sea level) contour. The northern half of the project limits is located within Zone AE, the base floodplain.

The proposed widening would not interrupt or terminate an emergency access or evacuation route. Because the project will be constructed with minimal required right-of-way within a developed commercial area, it would not impact natural or beneficial floodplain values. No significant encroachment of the floodplain would result from the construction of the proposed widening project. No flood hazard would result from development of the proposed project.

4.1.13 Coastal Resources and Essential Fish Habitat

The proposed project limits is located outside the Louisiana coastal zone and does not encompass any marine or estuarine habitats. No Coastal Use Permit is required.

4.1.14 Subsurface Water

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

The proposed project limits is located above the Southern Hills Aquifer, which has been designated a sole source aquifer by the EPA. The EPA has determined that the project, as proposed, would not have an adverse effect on the quality of ground water underlying the site⁹.

4.1.15 Wild, Scenic, and Natural Rivers

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

Wards Creek is not designated as a scenic river by the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System or the Louisiana Natural and Scenic Rivers System¹⁰.

⁹ United States Environmental Protection Agency, SOV Response, dated November 16, 2012.

¹⁰ Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, SOV Response, dated November 13, 2012.

4.1.16 Navigable Waterways

The United States Coast Guard (USCG), 8th Coast Guard District, indicated that construction of any proposed bridge replacements or modifications may necessitate the Coast Guard's involvement in the permitting process. Under 23 CFR §650.805, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has the responsibility under the Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) of 1978 to determine whether or not a USCG permit is required.¹¹

The USCG accepted the FHWA determination that the existing bridge over Wards Creek meets the STAA criteria to be exempt for U.S. Coast Guard Bridge Administration purposes. A Coast Guard bridge permit is not required.¹² Plans for the proposed bridge construction project should provide for navigational clearances to accommodate any recreational boating that may exist at high water and should be at an appropriate elevation to pass floodwaters. The USCG stated, however, that the bridge is not exempt from the statute requiring the establishment, maintenance, and operation of Coast Guard required lights and signals on fixed structures, including bridges. In order to be relieved of these requirements, the LDOTD is required to request an exemption to this statute. Copies of the FHWA determination and USCG concurrence letters are provided in Appendix C.

4.1.17 Farmland

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

No agricultural activity takes place within the project limits; therefore, no conversion of farmland to a non-agricultural use would occur.

4.1.18 Noise

The proposed project may use federal funds to add capacity to the roadway; therefore a noise analysis is required using the LDOTD noise policy. As part of this project to widen Essen Lane, a noise study was conducted to determine impacts to adjacent property owners. The majority of Essen Lane is commercial development- the exception to this is the Rural Life Museum, Cobble Stone Apartments, and a house. The detailed results of this study are in a separate technical report found in Appendix E; however, a summary has been provided below.

Aerial photos and topographic maps were used to digitize the roadway and receivers in the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) version 2.5. Detailed traffic data from the LDOTD Planning section was also collected and entered into the computer model. A field visit was conducted to collect field measurements to validate the

¹¹ United States Coast Guard, SOV Response, dated November 27, 2012.

¹² United States Coast Guard, STAA Concurrence, dated April 1, 2013

accuracy of the model. The model was validated and then used to predict the noise levels for three scenarios: the current noise levels (2013), the future no build noise levels (2033), and the future build noise levels (2033).

TNM predicts that there are currently seven (7) impacted receivers (representing 30 dwelling units). The impacted receivers include three of the apartment buildings (26 dwelling units), a house (1 dwelling unit) and some businesses (3 dwelling units).

The future no build noise level simulation predicts future noise levels resulting from the increased traffic volume. TNM predicts that this future no build scenario would impact thirteen (13) receivers (representing 36 dwelling units) consisting the apartment

buildings, a house, and businesses. The future build simulation predicts the future noise levels caused from both the increase in traffic volume and the highway improvements. TNM predicts this future build scenario would impact thirteen (13) receivers (representing 36 dwelling units) consisting of the apartment buildings, a house, and businesses. A business is determined impacted if the dBA is 71 or higher, while a residential property is determined impacted if the dBA is 66 or higher. A receiver can also be impacted if the future noise level exceeds the existing noise level by 10 dBA. The affected receivers in this project were impacted due to the noise levels exceeding the 66 or 71 dBA thresholds. None of the receivers were impacted based on the 10 dBA criteria.

Table 4.3: Number of Impacted Receivers

	2013 Existing Conditions	2033 Design Year No Build Alternative	2033 Design Year Build Alternatives
Total Number of Receivers	55		
Total Impacted Receivers	7	13	13
(Dwelling Units)	(30)	(36)	(36)
Source: Highway Traffic Noise Impact and Abatement Study SP# H.010560.2, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, April 2013.			

Most of the impacted receivers adjacent to Essen Lane have driveways that directly tie into Essen. To preserve access to the highway would require that the noise barrier have gaps at each driveway. The gaps would render the barrier ineffective at reducing the sound levels for the receivers. Discontinuous noise barriers generally cannot achieve an eight-decibel insertion loss required by the LDOTD noise policy; therefore, a detailed analysis of a noise barrier was not performed.

The approximate locations of the 71 dBA contour and the 66 dBA contour are given in order to help the local communities with planning. As shown in Table 4.4, the future noise contours would be reduced with the implementation of the proposed Build Alternatives. The distances given are from the centerline of the roadway.

Table 4.4: Noise Contours for Future Planning

Noise Threshold (in A-weighted decibels)	2013 Existing Conditions	2033 Design Year No Build Alternative	2033 Design Year Build Alternatives
	(distance from centerline, in feet)		
66 dBA	175	180	170
71 dBA	105	122	120

Source: Highway Traffic Noise Impact and Abatement Study SP# H.010560.2, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, April 2013.

Flow rate is the equivalent hourly rate at which vehicles pass over a given point or section on a lane or roadway on which the volume is collected over a time interval, usually 15 minutes. As detailed in Table 4.5, compared to the future (No Build) flow rate, the flow rate associated with the Build alternatives is reduced.

Table 4.5: Flow Rate Comparison

	2013 Existing Conditions	2033 Design Year No Build Alternative	2033 Design Year Build Alternatives
	2 NB lanes/3 SB lanes	2 NB lanes/3 SB lanes	3 NB lanes/3 SB lanes
Northbound (per lane)	2,038	3,028	2,018
Southbound (per lane)	2,038	2,018	2,018

Source: LDOTD Highway Capacity Software Analysis: Essen Lane Widening (April 25, 2013).
Flow rate is expressed in passenger cars/time/lane.

With the proposed improvements, the segment of Essen Lane between Hennessy Boulevard and I-10, the future northbound flow rate (2033) would be one percent less than the existing (2013) flow rate. The reduction in flow rate is achieved through the addition of one northbound lane. Spreading the increased northbound traffic flow across three lanes (rather than two) will generally reduce the amount and/or frequency of noise associated with vehicle operation (e.g., engine start/stops, idling, brakes); therefore, the reduced flow rates associated with the Build Alternatives contribute to a slight decrease in 2033 noise contours (as detailed in Table 4.4.)

4.1.19 Air Quality

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

East Baton Rouge Parish is designated as a moderate nonattainment parish for 8-hour ozone. Due to the parish's status as an air quality nonattainment area, a comparative study was done using the East-West Corridor Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in St. Bernard, St. Tammany, Plaquemines, Jefferson, and

Orleans Parishes. As part of this EIS, the Airline Drive (US 61) and Clearview Parkway (LA 3152) intersection was modeled using the projected 2025 traffic levels and with only Transportation System Management measures implemented (no capacity was added to either road). The data for this model can be found in the project's Air Quality Analysis Technical Document. Use of past carbon monoxide (CO) analyses as a historical database may be used in lieu of modeling to determine possible impacts to air quality. This was authorized in the March 30, 2004 memorandum from FHWA to LDOTD.

The 2006 East-West Corridor EIS project is one of the most recent project (with comparable traffic numbers) for which a CO analysis was performed. While the preferred alternative for this EIS is to widen Airline Drive, the air study modeled the Airline Drive and Clearview Parkway intersection. The peak traffic volumes to traverse this intersection were projected to be 30,151 vehicles per hour (vph). The intersection of Essen Lane (LA 3064) and Perkins Road (LA 427) is projected to be the intersection within the project area to handle the highest traffic volumes. This intersection is projected to handle 15,972 vph at peak hours.

Table 4.6 Air Quality Comparative Study Summary

Location	Future Peak Volume (vph)	Modeled Worst-Case CO Conc. (ppm)		NAAQS (ppm)	
		2025		1-hour	8-hour
		1-hour	8-hour		
Airline at Clearview with TSM measures	30,151	8.9	6.1	35.0	9.0
Essen Lane at Perkins (2033)	15,972				

As detailed in Table 4.6, the peak traffic volume for the intersection of Airline Drive and Clearview Parkway is predicted to be significantly greater than the projected peak traffic volume for the intersection of Essen Lane and Perkins Road. The modeled carbon monoxide concentrations for the Airline/Clearview intersection are significantly less than the NAAQS. Since no violations of the CO thresholds were modeled for the Airline/Clearview intersection, which had greater projected traffic volumes than the proposed project, no violations of the thresholds would be expected with the proposed project.

Air quality impacts due to construction operations for the proposed highway improvement project are expected to be short-term, minor, and localized. These impacts are anticipated to be minimized by following the procedures outlined in the LDEQ Air Quality Regulations governing fugitive emissions of particulate matter during road construction activities (LAC 33:III.1305).

All regionally significant projects must be included in the MPO's conformity analysis. The proposed widening of Essen Lane is included in the list of projects detailed in the conformity document for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2037 which was approved (July 17, 2013) by FHWA. .

4.1.20 Hazardous Materials

The purpose of a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment is to identify *recognized environmental conditions* in connection with the subject project in accordance with the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) Standard Practice E-1527-05. The term *recognized environmental condition* may be defined as the presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products in the project area under conditions that indicate an existing release, past release, or a material threat of a release of any hazardous substance or petroleum products into structures on the property or in the soil, groundwater, or surface water of the subject property. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment is intended to reflect a commercially prudent and reasonable inquiry in order to satisfy one of the requirements to qualify for the *innocent landowner defense* under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).

LDOTD staff made a site visit and interviewed various businesses along the corridor. Close examination of the apparent required right of way revealed no signs of leaking transformers.

The Phase I Environmental Site Assessment identified underground storage tanks. For the most part, no evidence of past or present releases was found to be associated with these tanks. There were no signs of non-compliance with current environmental regulations associated with these tanks. Addresses for these USTs were used in the records research, and the sites mentioned in the Records Review section were found.

The majority of the corridor utilized subsurface drainage, the exception being near the railroad crossing and the bridge over the bayou. The only vegetation that appeared stressed or dead was vegetation growing near road signs, crossing gates for the railroad, or other areas where it was evident that it was caused by herbicide used for maintenance purposes. The other vegetation on the banks of the bayou and in the drainage canals parallel to the railroad tracks appeared healthy. The grass in the medians between the roadway and business parking lots also appeared healthy and well maintained.

Poor housekeeping (solid waste accumulation, minor staining, etc.) was noted at some businesses and near the railroad crossing. The sites that appeared to be within the required right of way are deemed *de minimis* situations.

A phone interview with the LDEQ Underground Storage Tank Division confirmed that no active remediation sites were within the project corridor.

The assessment has revealed no evidence of recognized environmental conditions in connection with the required right-of-way, with the exception of one parcel. One underground storage tank in the project area had a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment on record, but did not have a "No Further Action" status on record. This site (Circle K Store #7656, 5857 Essen Lane) includes three (3) underground storage tanks (USTs) outside of the required taking area. LDOTD's Environmental Evaluation Unit (EEU) conducted an investigation for possible hazardous contaminated materials for the proposed project. The EEU sampled along the required ROW proximal to the area where the underground storage tank system was located. Lab analysis of the samples indicated results were below RECAP standards, so routine construction at the site may continue as scheduled. The Phase I Environmental Site Assessment and the results of the follow-up testing are included in Appendix F. Due to the size of the report; its appendices were omitted from Appendix F, and can be obtained from the LDOTD Environmental Section.

4.1.21 Travel Patterns

The proposed project would add an additional travel lane to the existing roadway facility. In addition, the modifications to the intersection at Summa Avenue would add a dedicated turn lane onto Essen Lane. The proposed additional northbound lane would improve mobility and ease predicted congestion in the project area. The medians presented in Alternative 2 would alter the way properties and side streets are accessed; however, the current access points to properties would be maintained. No significant change in existing travel patterns is anticipated.

4.2 Constructability

Both Build Alternatives were analyzed to determine the most appropriate sequencing of construction to minimize impacts to traffic on Essen Lane. The proposed sequence of construction is as follows:

Phase 1

Stage 1

1. Install advance warning signs on Essen Lane and side roads.
2. Begin installation of new traffic signals. Traffic shall be maintained during installation.
3. Construct the required pavement patching using full depth concrete pavement patches along Essen Lane and Summa Avenue, and clean out and reseal the existing concrete joints. The contractor may only close one lane at a time, in one direction, as approved by the Project Engineer between the hours of 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. Monday through Friday, and on the weekends 7 p.m. Friday to 6 a.m. Monday. No lane closures will be allowed outside the above stated times.

Stage 2

1. Install construction signs, barricade, and channelizing devices.
2. Construct the northbound and southbound Essen Lane and Wards Creek bridge widening sections.
3. Construct pavement widening on Hennessey Boulevard and Summa Avenue.
4. Complete the traffic signal installations.

Phase 2

1. Maintain the Essen Lane and side road advanced construction signs installed in Phase 1. Open the roadway to the new alignment using temporary striping.
2. **(ALTERNATIVE 2 ONLY)** Construct the raised median.
3. Construct asphaltic overlay and saw and seal the longitudinal and transverse joints in the asphalt overlay. The contractor may only close one lane at a time, in one direction, as approved by the Project Engineer between the hours of 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. Monday through Friday, and on the weekends 7 p.m. Friday to 6 a.m. Monday. No lane closures will be allowed outside the above stated times.
4. Install permanent striping using moving operations and open to traffic.

The construction of the sidewalks would occur after the road widening and curb installation. As stated in the discussion of Phase 1 (Stage 2) and Phase 2 above, lane closures will only be allowed one at a time in any one direction, which leaves five lanes (including the center turn lane) operational at any one time during construction. The closures will be limited to the weekends, and between 7:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. on weekdays. During patching and overlay of the center turn lane, it too will be closed during allowable closure

periods. Turning movements in these closed areas will not be allowed. It is anticipated that the proposed construction activities should last approximately 12 to 15 months.

Complete Streets Policy

The East Baton Rouge City/Parish Planning Commission (Planning Commission) provided comment that the LDOTD consider 'Complete Street' policies during development of the proposed project. These comments recognized the mixed-use nature of the Essen Lane corridor and, where the opportunities exist, cited the need for enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The City-Parish FUTUREBR Transportation Element suggests that up to 200 feet of Right-of-way (ROW) is needed to fully implement desirable aspects of a Complete Streets corridor. The existing roadway right-of-way (ROW) width is relatively narrow (typically 100 feet) through most of the project corridor. The project area consists predominantly of commercial, service, and medical service uses, with parking lots and other improvements located just beyond the existing ROW. Due to the constrained nature of the project corridor, increasing the ROW to fully accommodate the features identified by the Planning Commission would result in impacts to existing parking, circulation, signage, and in some cases would require building and/or business relocations.

As required by the State Legislature, LDOTD adopted a Complete Streets Policy for the State of Louisiana in July 2010. This policy seeks to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected transportation network that balances access, mobility, health, and safety needs of motorists, transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians for all ages and abilities, which includes users of wheelchairs and mobility aids. The Complete Streets Work Group Final Report stated that projects consider the impacts that improvements will have on safety for all uses and make all reasonable attempts to mitigate negative impacts on non-motorized modes. The Final Report recognizes that Complete Streets are not "one size fits all" or "All Modes, All Roads" solutions, but a goal of providing a balanced transportation system. The components of a Complete Street will vary based on the context of the roadway. The LDOTD Complete Streets Policy states, in part:

- On all new and reconstruction roadway projects that serve adjacent areas with existing or reasonably foreseeable future development or transit service, DOTD will plan, fund, and design sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities. The appropriate facility type will be determined by the context of the roadway.
- On all new and reconstruction roadway projects, DOTD will provide bicycle accommodations appropriate to the context of the roadway – in urban and suburban areas, bicycle lanes are the preferred bikeway facility type on arterials and collectors. The provision of a paved shoulder of sufficient width, a shared use trail, or marked shared lanes may also suffice, depending on context.

The Complete Streets Policy encourages the incorporation of an "appropriate" facility type that is determined by the context of the roadway. A report titled "Analysis and Recommendations in Accordance with LDOTD Complete Streets Policies" was completed for this project. This report discusses the concepts and warrants for incorporating non-motorized modes of transportation into the Essen Lane widening project in accordance with the Complete Streets Policy and LDOTD EDSM Nos. II.2.1.10 and II.2.1.14, and considers guidance from local and national publications. A copy of the report can be found in Appendix G.

Concurrence from the Capital Regional Planning Commission (CRPC), the MPO for the Baton Rouge metropolitan area, on the project's approach to satisfying the Complete Streets Policy was requested on

November 4, 2013. No objection on this approach was received during the public review of the Draft EA or during the public hearing conducted for the proposed project. At this time (May 5, 2014), concurrence from the CRPA has not yet been received.

Taking into account such factors as the surrounding development, local plans for alternate modes of transportation in the area, potential property impacts, cost of construction and ROW acquisition, scope of the project, and other factors, the report found it reasonable and feasible to include six-foot wide sidewalks, located immediately behind the curb, along the entire project limits on both sides of the roadway. In conjunction with sidewalks, other related features, such as pedestrian signal heads, marked crosswalks, and ADA-compliant curb ramps, are recommended at appropriate locations throughout the project area. In conjunction with sidewalks, under either Alternative, other features --- such as pedestrian signal heads, marked crosswalks, and ADA-compliant curb ramps would be placed at appropriate locations throughout the project to make the corridor more pedestrian-friendly. Additionally, the project designer shall consider the future BREC multi-use path along Wards Creek during the project design. This includes the location of drainage outfall into Wards Creek, the relocation of utilities crossing Wards Creek, and the widening of the Wards Creek bridge, as well as the potential for connections from the path to the Essen Lane corridor.

The report further concludes that it is reasonable and feasible for bicycle users to share the road with vehicular traffic. Consideration shall be given during final plan development for such supplemental features as roadside "Share the Road" signage to facilitate this mixing of motorized and non-motorized modes of travel. Separate bike lanes or other offset bike paths along the project are not feasible due to anticipated additional costs and right-of-way impacts. Table 4.7 below summarizes the non-motorized transportation modes considered and discussed in this report.

Commercial development and medical uses along and in the area of Essen Lane attract many people to the area. These visitors predominantly access the area through the use of private vehicles and public transit. No sidewalks or pedestrian signal heads at major intersections exist along the corridor. While there is ample parking in the area, patrons and employees in the area do not currently enjoy the option to move along and across Essen Lane by foot. A sidewalk along Essen would fit well with existing sidewalks along streets that intersect with Essen Lane and would provide options for pedestrians and would satisfy the need identified by the Planning Commission. The LDOTD Roadway Design Manual and LDOTD standard plans (PED-01) illustrate that a six-foot wide sidewalk immediately behind the curb, as is currently provided in both Alternative 1 and 2, is an acceptable option to promote pedestrian access. The provision of ped-heads and marked crosswalks at signalized intersections and calibrating signal timing to allow adequate passage through intersections will better accommodate pedestrian traffic through the project area. None of these pedestrian facilities currently exist throughout the current six-lane section on Essen Lane; therefore, the incorporation of these features through the entirety of the project area is consistent with the intent of the Complete Streets Policy.

Utility features, road signage, and other pedestrian obstructions are currently located between Essen Lane and adjacent parking areas. Per project plans, the proposed sidewalk areas will be constructed, "free of obstruction." These facilities will be designed and constructed in accordance with current applicable laws and regulations, using best practices and guidance from the following, but not limited to: LDOTD guidelines and manuals, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) publications, the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and the Public Rights-of-Ways Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG.)

Safety

Pedestrian refuge islands are protected areas where people may safely pause or wait while crossing a street. Pedestrian refuge islands are particularly helpful as resting areas for seniors, persons with disabilities, children, and others who may be less able to cross the street in one stage. At signalized intersections, they allow slow moving pedestrians to cross in two phases.

According to “Before-and-after safety study of roadways where new medians have been added” a 28.1% to 32.5% reduction in crashes was reported with the installation of a raised median (Alternative 2) replacing a two-way left turn lane (Alternative 1). The Crash Modification Factor (CMF) of 0.697 (CMF ID 5044) with a standard error of 0.022 was published in the CMF Clearinghouse, a national database for safety research. In addition to the reduction in motor vehicle crashes, the installation of a raised median replacing a two-way left turn lane would provide a 15% to 42.8% reduction in vehicle-pedestrian crashes. The CMF of 0.711 (CMF ID 5076) with a standard error of 0.139 was published in the CMF Clearinghouse.

Typical roadway sections similar to those proposed in each alternative were reviewed. For Alternative 1, LA 3246 (Siegen Lane) from I-10 to Airline Highway was reviewed because of its similar typical section as a 6-lane section with a two-way left turn lane. From 2010 through 2012, the segment crash rate was 34.3 crashes per million vehicle miles travelled. For Alternative 2, US 61 (Airline Highway) from I-12 to Florida Boulevard was reviewed because of its similar typical section as a 6-lane section with a raised median. From 2010 through 2012, the segment crash rate was 6.28 crashes per million vehicle miles travelled.

The median, under either alternative, is not sufficiently wide to accommodate an AASHTO suggested six-foot wide median pedestrian refuge and left-turn movements. In order to obtain a minimum six-foot wide pedestrian refuge island between opposing directions of travel at cross walks, additional roadway widening would be required (approximately two feet or more) for approximately the length of the adjacent left turn lanes. This would require the acquisition of additional right-of-way, and impact improvements to adjacent private properties. Unless the added width required for pedestrian islands is carried throughout the project, lane geometry would also be affected to accommodate the lane shifts required at the approaches to each intersection.

Under either alternative, pedestrian crossings of Essen Lane at Picardy Avenue, Hennessey Boulevard, Margaret Ann Avenue and Essen Park Avenue will be controlled by traffic signals. Pedestrian “count down” signal heads and marked crosswalks are proposed at these signalized intersections. The existing intersections will be used by a variety of pedestrians including some individuals who walk slowly and others who walk quickly. While significant medical facilities are located along Essen Lane, observations of the project area have not identified a significant amount of handicapped use of current crossings. The LDOTD Traffic Signal Design Manual and the MUTCD recommend that the calculation of all pedestrian crossing times be based on a walking speed of no more than 3.5 ft/sec. The signal timings that were provided as part of the 60% final plan submittal accommodate this crossing speed and will adequately serve the primary pedestrian movement anticipated along the corridor. The crossing locations will be designed to accommodate persons with limited mobility and the crossing functions will be appropriately controlled to allow safe passage through

the intersections. As reasonably appropriate and feasible, LDOTD may consider the incorporation of features that can extend the crossing interval.¹³

In 2010, 4,280 pedestrians were killed and an estimated 70,000 were injured in traffic crashes in the United States. Pedestrians killed while "walking along the roadway" account for almost 8 percent (360) of these deaths. Providing walkways separated from the travel lanes could help to prevent up to 88 percent of these "walking along roadway crashes." Walkways can be created either by providing stabilized or paved surfaces separated from the roadway, or by widening paved shoulders. These treatments can not only improve the safety of pedestrians, but also make pedestrian trips more viable. Sidewalks separated from the roadway are the preferred accommodation for pedestrians. Sidewalks provide many benefits including safety, mobility, and healthier communities. In addition to reducing walking along roadway crashes, sidewalks reduce other pedestrian crashes. Roadways without sidewalks are more than twice as likely to have pedestrian crashes as sites with sidewalks on both sides of the street.¹⁴ It is much safer to walk on a sidewalk.¹⁵

Due to the current absence of sidewalks, a pedestrian wishing to travel along Essen Lane must walk along the road or through privately-owned parking lots. While there is little recent information available on safety conditions in off-road areas and private property such as parking lots, past studies have determined that up to eight percent of non-roadway vehicle-pedestrian crashes are in parking lots¹⁶. Considering this, the provision of sidewalks along Essen Lane may allow pedestrians to avoid parking areas; thereby reducing the potential for vehicle-pedestrian crashes in these areas.

By providing a clearly defined pedestrian route along Essen Lane, reducing the potential for pedestrian-vehicular conflict points in privately-owned parking areas, and installing properly marked and timed pedestrian crossings, the pedestrian features constructed under either Build Alternative will provide a higher level of pedestrian safety than what is currently provided through the project area.

Under either alternative, the proposed project incorporates features that will improve the movement of pedestrians along and across Essen Lane. Given the context that Essen Lane is a heavily traveled roadway that is highly constrained by existing development and utility features, and balancing the needs of pedestrians, motorists, and adjacent property owners; the incorporation of sidewalks along the length of the project and the provision of clearly marked and properly timed signal crossings appropriately satisfies the goals and objectives established in the LDOTD's Complete Streets Policy.

¹³ Features may include, technology that detects pedestrians in the crosswalk or pushbutton technology that operates the crosswalk normally with one press, while granting an extended walk time if the pushbutton is held down for a longer period of time, The necessity for this technology, frequency of use City-wide, cost of maintenance and impact on traffic operations are factors that may determine the feasibility of such features.

¹⁴ http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/tools_solve/walkways_trifold/, site accessed March 24, 2014.

¹⁵ <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811625.pdf>, site accessed March 25, 2014.

¹⁶ <http://rns.trb.org/dproject.asp?n=29214>, site accessed March 24, 2014.

Access Management Policy

LDOTD has adopted an Access Management Policy for the construction of new roadways. Access management is the systematic control of the location, spacing, design, and operation of driveways, median openings, and street connections of roadways in order to improve safety. Alternative 2, as proposed, would institute Access Management through the use of center raised medians with intermittent openings.

Table 4.7 Non-Motorized Options Considered for Complete Streets

Option	Recommendation	Justification
Offset sidewalks, bike paths, or joint-use facilities	Not Feasible	High cost of ROW acquisition; property impacts
On-street bike lanes separated from vehicle travel lanes	Not Feasible	High cost of ROW acquisition; property impacts
Narrow travel lanes and TWLTL/median to allow for non-motorized modes in existing ROW	Not Feasible	Would reduce capacity and not allow future conversion of TWLTL to raised median w/left turn lanes
6' Sidewalks Each Direction, Located at Back of Roadway Curb	Feasible	Potential for pedestrians due to surrounding commercial development; low relative cost of implementation
Bicyclists share-the-road with vehicular traffic	Feasible	Low existing bicycle volume and low expectation for increase of bicycle traffic; allowed by state laws/regulations

4.3 Indirect Effects

The purpose of the project is to increase the capacity of Essen Lane and decrease congestion along the route. This would be accomplished by adding one northbound lane to the existing six lane (three southbound lanes, two northbound lanes, and a continuous two-way left turn lane) facility. This section of Essen Lane is a highly commercialized medical corridor, anchored by OLOL Regional Medical Center at the corner of Essen Lane and Hennessy Boulevard. The potential for increased urbanization and land use changes as a result of this project is limited due to the current high level of development along the corridor. Furthermore, the limited undeveloped space along the corridor belongs to the Burden Center and LSU Rural Life Museum, which for the foreseeable future will continue to be managed as a horticultural and agricultural research station and a cultural museum, respectively.

4.4 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are those resulting from the incremental impacts of the proposed project as well as those of past, present, and foreseeable future actions. As detailed in Table 4.8, there have been numerous

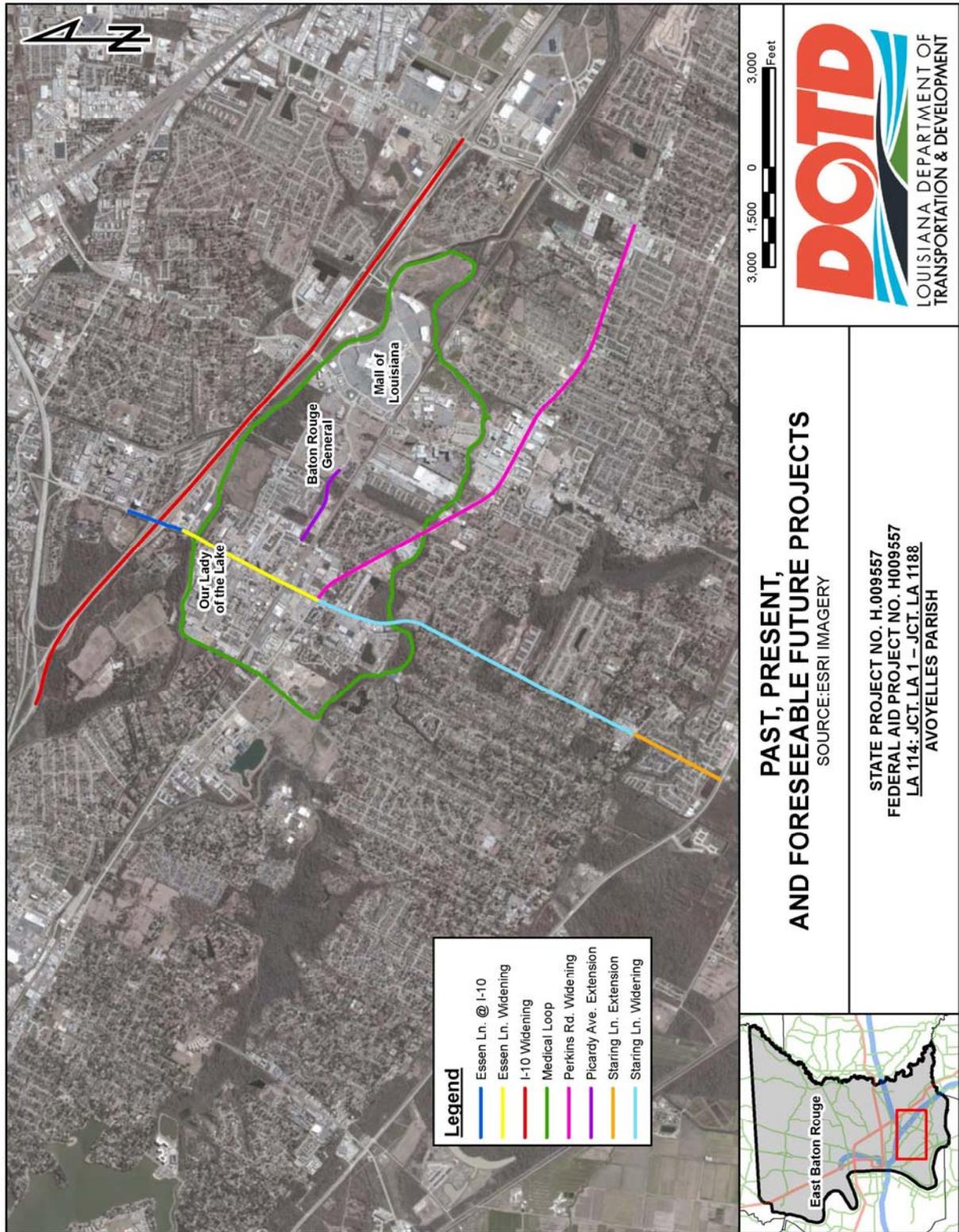
transportation projects within the vicinity of the Essen Lane widening project. Two projects address interconnectivity between existing facilities, while three other projects increase capacity on nearby roadways. The locations of these projects are depicted in Figure 4.

Completed in 2009, the extension of Picardy Avenue provides an additional east-west linkage between Essen Lane and Bluebonnet Boulevard. This extension provides for a link between two of the region's major medical facilities – OLOL Regional Medical Center and Baton Rouge General Medical Center. To the south of Essen Lane, as part of the Green Light Plan, the City of Baton Rouge/Parish of East Baton Rouge constructed the extension of Staring Lane from Highland Road to Burbank Drive. With the completion of the extension, drivers in south Baton Rouge were given an additional north-south corridor with which to access both I-10 and I-12. Essen/Staring Lane is now one of only two roadways in Baton Rouge with direct access to both interstates, the second being Siegen Lane/Sherwood Forest Boulevard. The proposed widening of Essen Lane will aid in facilitating the additional traffic utilizing these two extension projects.

Beginning in 2009, three widening projects have been planned/completed that tie directly into this section of Essen Lane. The first was the widening of Perkins Road from Essen Lane to Siegen Lane. The project widened Perkins Road from one lane in each direction to two, and included the construction of a two-way center left turn lane. The second and largest project was the widening of I-10 from the I-10/12 split to Siegen Lane. This effort widened the interstate from two lanes to three lanes in each direction. Finally, the third project is the widening of Staring Lane from Highland Road to Perkins Road. The existing configuration of Staring Lane, not including the new extension, is one lane in each direction. This Green Light project would provide for a four lane section with sidewalks and raised median. As a result of these projects, the capacity of roadways to the north, south, and east of Essen Lane have been/will be increased. The proposed widening of Essen Lane is keeping in line with these efforts by providing more capacity on a vital artery in the area. Furthermore, the sidewalks that are proposed in the widening of Essen Lane would tie into those present on Perkins Road, as well as the planned sidewalks on the widened Staring Lane. The increased connectivity of sidewalk facilities will provide improved access to the commercial and medical resources on Essen Lane for pedestrians within the immediate vicinity and beyond.

As part of the Capital Area Pathways Project (CAPP), the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC) is proposing to construct the Medical Loop multi-use path. The Medical Loop would travel along Wards Creek from east of the Mall of Louisiana, passing beneath both Bluebonnet Boulevard and Essen Lane. After passing Essen Lane and OLOL, the Loop would turn south, cross Perkins Road and travel along Kenilworth Boulevard to Perkins Road Community Park, where it would meet Dawson Creek. From there, the Loop would follow Dawson Creek east until it's point of origin east of the Mall of Louisiana. The Medical Loop would also tie into the Wards Creek Trail, the first phase of CAPP that runs along Wards Creek from Bluebonnet Boulevard to east of Siegen Lane. When complete, CAPP will become a 7.4-mile loop for walking, running and bicycle riding which will connect to Essen Lane, the Perkins Road Park, Pennington Biomedical Research Center, the LSU Rural Life Museum and Perkins Rowe. The Medical Loop is still in the planning stages, while the Wards Creek Trail is currently under construction. The proposed sidewalk facilities on Essen Lane would provide those who use the Medical Loop with pedestrian access to the commercial and medical resources on Essen Lane.

Figure 4



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Table 4.8 Past, Present, and Foreseeable Future Projects

Project	Status	Scope
The Green Light Plan, City of Baton Rouge/Parish of East Baton Rouge		
Picardy Avenue City Parish Project No. 02-CS-HC-0005	Completed 2009	Provide a two lane concrete roadway that will connect the existing Picardy Avenue that ends at Mancuso Lane to the existing portion of Picardy Avenue that is behind Baton Rouge General Medical Center; provide 4 foot sidewalks on both sides of the roadway and roadway lighting
Staring Lane Extension City Parish Project No. 06-CS-HC-0030	Completed 2011	Provide a link from Essen/Staring Lane directly to Burbank Drive by adding a southern extension to Staring Lane
Staring Lane Widening City Parish Project No. 06-CS-HC-0024	Under Construction	Widen Staring Lane to a four lane section with sidewalks and raised median from Highland Road to Perkins Road
Essen Lane at I-10 City Parish Project no. 06-CS-HC-0033	Proposed to be let after completion of LDOTD I-10 Widening project	Add two additional turn lanes to provide dual left turns for southbound and northbound Essen Lane; shift existing two through lanes to the east; add one additional lane to the I-10 eastbound on-ramp, and one additional lane to the westbound on- and off-ramps
LDOTD		
Perkins Road Widening (Essen Lane – Siegen Lane) LDOTD Project No. 258-01-0041	Completed 2009	Widen Perkins Road from two lanes to 5 lanes (two lanes in each direction with a two-way center left turn lane)
I-10 Widening LDOTD Project No. 450-10-0108	Under Construction (open to traffic)	Widen mainline I-10 (I-10/12 Split - Siegen Lane) from 4 lanes to 6 lanes
BREC, the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge		
Capitol Area Pathways Project (CAPP) Medical Loop/Wards Creek Trail	Planning/Under Construction	CAPP will become a 7.4-mile loop for walking, running and bicycle riding which will connect to Essen Lane, the Perkins Road Park, Pennington Biomedical Research Center, the LSU Rural Life Museum and Perkins Rowe.

The Green Light Program (GLP) is a comprehensive transportation program to improve roadway infrastructure and citizen safety throughout East Baton Rouge Parish. This program is supported by an extension of the current one-half of one percent sales and use tax for local street and roadway improvements. As part of the GLP, the City of Baton Rouge/Parish of East Baton Rouge is planning improvements to Essen Lane below the I-10 overpass. Final plans for the City's I-10/Essen Lane project, which would add one additional turn lane each onto the I-10 eastbound and westbound on-ramps have been completed. To accommodate these additional lanes, the two existing through lanes will be shifted to the east beneath the overpass. In addition to the work on Essen Lane, the project would also add an additional lane to the I-10 westbound on- and off-ramps, as well as the I-10 eastbound on-ramp. Subsurface utility engineering and 100% final plans have been completed.¹⁷ At this time, required utility relocations for this \$4.22 million City-Parish project are underway. No lane construction on this City-Parish project has yet occurred.

In order to mesh with this City-Parish project, the Essen Lane widening project is being designed so that the new northbound lanes will transition directly into the realigned through lanes beneath the I-10 overpass. Just as the proposed widening will reduce congestion on Essen Lane, the City-Parish project will help to alleviate congestion for vehicles wanting to access I-10 from Essen Lane. Both projects are designed to improve the flow of traffic along the Essen Lane corridor. The LDOTD's Essen Lane widening project is scheduled to let no earlier than early 2015. If construction of the two projects overlap, LDOTD standard specifications require the appropriate maintenance of traffic, cooperation between contractors, and project area maintenance during construction.¹⁸ The approved layout of the City-Parish is provided in Appendix H.

Overall, these projects, in conjunction with the proposed Essen Lane widening, will serve the surrounding areas by better facilitating traffic through the corridor. As stated in Section 2.2, Essen Lane is expected to see a significant increase in the future. The cumulative impacts of these projects are anticipated to be beneficial to the motoring public. The enhanced north-south corridor will allow for more efficient travel to and from both I-10 and I-12. The increased interconnectivity between Essen Lane and Bluebonnet Boulevard will provide better access to the major medical facilities on both roadways, as well as the myriad of medical support services in the area.

4.5 What Will be Done to Mitigate Adverse Impacts?

Due to the location of the project within the highly developed Essen Lane corridor, the proposed project would have a relatively limited effect on the environment. For those impacts that cannot be avoided, mitigation measures, as described below, would be implemented.

¹⁷ <http://greenlight.csrsonline.com/PROJECTS/Details.aspx?ProjectId=1036> , site accessed October 28, 2013.

¹⁸ Louisiana Standard Specifications for Roads and Bridges, 2006 Edition (Sections. 104.03, 105.07 and 105.15.)

Wetland and Other Waters

To ensure no net loss of wetlands, the unavoidable wetlands impacts through along the corridor would be compensated according to an approved mitigation plan developed during the permit process.

To mitigate potential impacts water quality impacts to surface waters, the proposed project will adhere to standard LDOTD best management practices (BMPs) and applicable LDEQ permit provisions to prevent erosion and nonpoint source pollution that may result from construction-related activities.

Floodplains

Required drainage structures will be designed, installed, and maintained to ensure an appropriate flow of water through the project area and to ensure no adverse impact to the function local floodplains.

Noise

The *LDOTD Highway Traffic Noise Policy* (2011) requires that if a noise impact is identified, abatement measures must be considered. Only noise abatement measures deemed reasonable and feasible will be proposed for the project. When noise abatement measures are being considered, every effort will be made to obtain a noise reduction of at least 8 dBA. At least one receptor must receive an 8 dBA reduction for the abatement measure to be feasible. The impacted receivers for both Build Alternatives were evaluated for the feasibility of noise barriers. The impacted residential and commercial sites have individual driveways connecting them to Essen Lane. To maintain access, the noise barrier would have to incorporate openings, which would prevent it from achieving an 8-dBA reduction in noise. Therefore, it was determined that noise barriers would not be feasible for any receptors within the project corridor.

Because the project is relatively land-locked, non-barrier measures such as alterations to the horizontal and/or vertical alignments, and acquiring property rights of the land adjacent to the project area would not be viable options for abatement of noise for the proposed project.

One of the most effective noise abatement measures are land use decisions implemented by local planning and building officials. Noise contours for the current and future (under the Build and No Build condition) are identified in Table 4.4. Any Category A or B receptor located inside the ≥ 66 dBA contour would be affected by noise in the year 2033, while a Category E receptor built inside the ≥ 71 dBA contour would be affected in the future (2033). These contours can be used by local officials and property owners to make appropriate land use decisions that would avoid or reduce noise impacts to future development.

Pedestrian Crossings

The signal timings that were provided as part of the 60% final plan submittal accommodate this crossing speed and will adequately serve the primary pedestrian movement anticipated along the corridor. The crossing locations will be designed to accommodate persons with limited mobility and the crossing functions will be appropriately controlled to allow safe passage of pedestrians through the intersections. As reasonably appropriate and feasible, LDOTD may consider the incorporation of features that can extend the crossing interval.

Construction Impacts

Short-term construction impacts (e.g., noise, air quality) will be mitigated through adherence to applicable local, State, and federal regulations, including (but limited to) Section 107.14 (Environmental Protection) of the Louisiana Specifications for Roads and Bridges and appropriate LDEQ Air Quality Regulations governing fugitive emissions of particulate matter during road construction activities (LAC 33:III.1305). Standard specification 107.27 (Archaeological and Historical Findings) dictates procedures necessary in the event archeological or historical material is discovered during the course of construction-related activities.

5.0 Public Comments and Agency Coordination

5.1 How Was the Public Involved in the Environmental Assessment Process?

Information on the proposed project was sent to federal, state, and local agencies and officials on November 7, 2012. The Solicitation of Views information and the associated responses are included in Appendix B of this EA. A list of agencies consulted and a summary of their comments are provided in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Summary of Responses to the Solicitation of Views

Date of Comment	Agency/Tribe	Comment Format	Comment Summary
November 12, 2012	Natural Resources Conservation Service	Letter	No impact to prime farmland
November 13, 2012	East Baton Rouge Parish Public Schools	Letter	In favor of Alternative 2
November 13, 2012	Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries	Letter	No impacts to rare, endangered, threatened, species or critical habitats; no state or federal parks, wildlife refuges, scenic streams, or wildlife management areas within the project limits
November 15, 2012	City of Baton Rouge Police Department	Letter	Stated opinion that flow of traffic greatly relieved by Alternative 1
November 15, 2012	City of Baton Rouge/Parish of East Baton Rouge Department of Public Works	Letter	No adverse impact on existing flood plain or environment provided the improvements and all associated drainage structures are properly engineered
November 16, 2012	United States Environmental Protection Agency	Letter	No adverse effect on the Southern Hills aquifer
November 16, 2012	Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer	Letter	Unable to complete Section 106 review due to insufficient documentation by Section 106 regulations
November 20, 2012	United States Fish and Wildlife Service	Letter	No effect on federal trust resources

Date of Comment	Agency/Tribe	Comment Format	Comment Summary
November 26, 2012	Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services	Letter	No adverse impact to operations of agency of delivery of services to customers who reside in affected area
November 27, 2012	United States Coast Guard	Letter	Deferred to FHWA for STAA determination
November 30, 2012	Capital Area Ground Water Conservation District	Letter	No detrimental effects on groundwater resources
December 6, 2012	City of Baton Rouge/Parish of East Baton Rouge Office of the Planning Commission	Letter	Responsible for implementing FUTUREBR Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan; support of Complete Streets Policy; recommended actions to implement Complete Streets; recommended Alternative 2 (See Section 4.2)
December 11, 2012	Louisiana Department of Natural Resources – Department of Conservation	Letter	No active oil, gas, or injection wells in the project area; possibility of registered/unregistered water wells in the project vicinity
December 13, 2012	United States Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers	Letter	No adverse impacts to Corps projects; indicated the possibility of jurisdictional waters and wetlands
December 17, 2012	Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality	Email	Project is subject to State’s transportation conformity regulations; if project is regionally significant, it must be included in a conforming metropolitan transportation plan
December 17, 2012	Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals	Letter	No objection to project; comply with all applicable Sanitary Code regulations
December 18, 2012	Jena Band of Choctaw Indians	Letter	“No Effect” on any historic properties; unaware of any known sacred and/or ceremonial sites within immediate area; concur with project
December 31, 2012	Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma	Letter	East Baton Rouge Parish is within historic area of interest; requested survey reports and SHPO concurrence
January 3, 2013	Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development – Floodplain Management	Letter	Northern half of project within Flood Zone AE; contact local floodplain administrators

Table 5.2 Summary of Follow-Up Coordination (See Appendix C)

Date of Comment	Agency/Tribe	Comment Format	Comment Summary
January 24, 2013	State Historic Preservation Officer	Letter	Notification of concurrence: No historic properties affected by the proposed project.

Date of Comment	Agency/Tribe	Comment Format	Comment Summary
February 3, 2013	Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma	Letter	Tribe concurs with SHPO determination; requested notification in the event cultural resources are identified during construction activities.
April 1, 2013	United States Coast Guard	Letter	Accepts FHWA STAA determination; bridge not exempt from Coast guard lighting requirements

5.2 Open House Public Meeting

An Open House Public Meeting for the project was held on March 26, 2013 at the Bluebonnet Regional Branch Library in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The meeting notice was published in *The Advocate* on March 12 and March 19, 2013. On March 11, 2013, notices of the Open House Public Meeting were distributed to the parties previously contacted (per the SOV contact list) and local elected and public safety officials. This notice was posted on the LADOTD website on March 6, 2013 and provided to local television/radio broadcast outlets on March 11, 2013.

The Open House Public Meeting provided an opportunity to view the proposed project information, ask questions of the project team, and provide written and verbal comments for consideration. This meeting was opened at 4:30 pm. LDOTD and Stantec staff set up informational stations in the library's Meeting Room 1, while a multi-media PowerPoint presentation was set up in the adjoining Meeting Room 2. Signs were posted at the entrance to the library to direct likely attendees to the meeting. A tape recorder was available during the course of the meeting to record any verbal comments. LDOTD staff remained at the Public Meeting until 7:30 pm. During this time, seven members of the public participated in the Public Meeting. All seven attended reviewed the handout, viewed the PowerPoint presentation, and asked questions of LDOTD and Stantec staff pertaining to the proposed alternatives. In addition, those in attendance recorded four verbal comments and left two written comments. These comments and the LDOTD responses are summarized in Table 5.3. One representative of the media attended. A cameraman for a local television outlet reviewed the material and photographed the various exhibits.

The handout and PowerPoint presentation specified that written comments would be accepted until April 5, 2013. Two written comments on the project were received at the end of the stated comment period. The transcript, detailing the materials presented and available during the Open House Public Meeting, was distributed to local and State elected officials, state and local public libraries, and LDOTD District offices in Baton Rouge. Material available at the meeting (PowerPoint presentation and exhibits) was posted to the LDOTD website on March 28, 2013.

Table 5.3 Public Meeting Comments and Responses

Comment	Type	Response
Opposed to Alternative 2; proposes two left turn lanes from Essen to Perkins	Verbal	The project will include signal timing adjustments to balance vehicular movements/queues at the Essen/Perkins intersection. Traffic analysis does not indicate an added SB Essen to EB Perkins left turn lane (to create double lefts) is needed.
Opposed to Alternative 2	Verbal	Comment taken into consideration.
Opposed to Alternative 2	Verbal	Comment taken into consideration.
Proposes a change the median opening in Alternative 2 that would allow northbound traffic on Essen Lane to turn into Albertson's supermarket; proposes that the median opening be flipped to allow southbound traffic on Essen Lane to turn left into Essen Crossing/Exxon	Verbal	Agree that the NB turn lane and opening shown between Perkins and the railroad crossing can be swapped for a SB U-turn lane and opening. However, due to the SB left turn lane storage requirements to EB Perkins, the U-turn cannot be located as far south as the Exxon driveway.
Proposes add an additional turn lane on Picardy Avenue, so that the intersection would have a left turn lane, a through lane, and a right turn lane; also proposes a dedicated left turn signal at intersection	Written	The scope of the project is to add an additional northbound thru lane to increase capacity. In addition, the project will include signal timing adjustments to balance vehicular movements/queues on Essen and Picardy, as well as to allow adequate phases and timing for pedestrian movements across the intersection. Widening along Picardy is not in the scope of this project, but could be considered in future City or State projects.
Opposed to Alternative 2	Written	Comment taken into consideration.
Opposes Alternative 2; proposes only adding 3 rd northbound lane north of railroad or Picardy Avenue, and shifting lanes to 2 southbound and 3 northbound south of Picardy Avenue	Written	Swapping the existing lanes on the segment south of Picardy would decrease capacity on the southbound segment, and would therefore not meet the purpose of the project (increasing capacity on the corridor).
Opposed to Alternative 1 and the continuous left turn lane; suggests	Written	Alternate modes of transportation, including sidewalks for pedestrians, are being considered.

Comment	Type	Response
using business interconnectivity in conjunction with medians as access control; suggests adding sidewalks and bus shelters		The project will include those that are reasonable and feasible. Currently, Essen is not on a CATS bus route, although some of the intersecting streets are. As such, bus shelters would be better served at the designated bus stops on these cross street routes, and will not be included in this project.

5.2 Public Hearing

The Open House Public Hearing for the captioned project was noticed by publication in *The Advocate* on November 14 and December 10, 2013. Notices were also mailed to the parties identified on the Solicitation of Views distribution list, elected officials, and local media outlets. Additionally, the Open House Public Hearing was noticed on the LADOTD website at: <http://www.dotd.state.la.us/pressreleases/Release.aspx?key=2509>.

The Public Hearing was opened at 4:00 pm, December 17, 2013 at the Bluebonnet Public Library (9200 Bluebonnet Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.) LADOTD and consultant staff set up informational stations in the meeting room, while a multi-media PowerPoint presentation (with voice over) was set up in the adjacent room. Signs were posted at the library entrance to direct likely attendees to the Public Hearing. Sign-in sheets identifying persons in attendance are included on the following pages. LADOTD staff remained at the Public Meeting until 7:00 pm. During this time Agency staff, a representative of an elected official, members of the General Public, and media representatives attended. The Open House Public Hearing provided an opportunity to view the proposed project information, review the preferred alternative, ask questions of the project team, and provide written and verbal comments for consideration.

The Public Notice and meeting materials specified that written comments would be accepted until January 3, 2014. Three written comments were received by the end of the comment period. Five persons elected to submit verbal comments during the Public Hearing. The comments received during the comment period are summarized in Table 5.4. Neither the comments nor the responses to the comments required reassessment of the analysis contained in the Draft EA.

Table 5.4 Public Hearing Comments/Responses

Commenter	Comment Type	Comment Number	Comment	Response
Charles Major	written	1	To immediately relieve congestion during peak demand periods all Essen traffic lights should be sequenced green at least 90%, including the Essen and Jefferson intersection.	Traffic signals within the project area are operated by the City. This comment will be included in the Final EA, and will be provided to the City for consideration.
	written	2	Once the widening project is completed the Essen traffic lights should have automated and remote access for the DOT to be able to relieve congestion once peak demand is reached by allowing all green lights up to 100% of the peak demand periods	Please refer to the Response to Comment 1
	written	3	The option for a center lane is the best option to allow left and right turns from center lane and for first responder vehicles to pass by congestion. Raised Pavement markers on both sides of the center lane should be placed to provide visual and textile warning to drivers that they are migrating into the center turn lane.	Comment noted. The placement of pavement markers will adhere to applicable standards identified in Louisiana Standard Specifications for Roads and Bridges and/or the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
	written	4	Signage warning that texting is not allowed should be placed periodically along Essen as a reminder not to text or face a fine.	The placement of signage within the project limits will adhere to applicable standards established by LADOTD and/or the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
	written	5	All secondary feeder roads, businesses and parking lots leading off of Essen should have right turn lanes.	The addition of right turn lanes along Essen is outside the scope and budget for this project. However, existing right turn lanes will be replaced in kind.
	written	6	The prime power poles should be eliminated and utilizes placed underground; this would eliminate single point failure if a pole is damaged by a traffic accident or inclement weather events. Replace all traffic control devices supports with metal and concrete poles with integrated lighting and lighted street signage to reduce road side distractions.	The proposed project requires the relocation of utility features when in conflict with construction The relocation of utility features will adhere to applicable standards and requirements identified by affected utility providers.

	written	7	Eliminate the traffic red light camera	The City determines the placement and operation of traffic red-light cameras. This comment will be provided to the City for consideration.
	written	8	Traffic interrupting construction should be only accomplished on night shifts and on weekends	The project plans identify a sequence of construction limiting lane closures to one lane closure at a time. Such closure must be approved by the project engineer and will be permitted only between 7:00PM-6:00AM (Monday-Friday) or on weekends 7:00 PM Friday to 6:00AM Monday.
	written	9	All traffic control signage and road surface paint should be renovated to the MUTCD standards	Traffic control signage and road pavement markings will be provided per applicable standards identified in Louisiana Standard Specifications for Roads and Bridges and/or the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
	written	10	The I-10 on ramp exit should have 2 (two) right lanes leading off of Essen to the south I-10	The interchange of I-10 and Essen Lane is not located with the limits of the proposed project. As stated in Section 4.4 (page 34) of the Draft EA, the City/Parish has developed plans that will add additional lanes to I-10 ramps.
	written	11	From Perkins road entrance to Essen create double lanes for entrance and exit to Essen	Comment noted. This would require improvements (widening, adjustments to lane configurations, etc.) along Perkins Road, which is outside the scope of the current state project.
	written	12	Smooth out rail-crossing roadway	The roadway at the rail-crossing will be constructed to satisfy all applicable standards identified in Louisiana Standard Specifications for Roads and Bridges and per railroad requirements. The crossing surface will be replaced with a wider crossing in conjunction with this project.
	written	13	Correct roadway surface of all of Essen to MUTCD standards	The roadway surface will be constructed to satisfy all applicable standards identified in Louisiana Standard Specifications for Roads and Bridges.
	written	14	The LSU Rural Life Museum requires a brown signage in accordance with the (MUTCD) of the United States Department of Transportation for Recreational and Cultural Interest area signage for both directions of travel on Essen.	The placement of signage within the project limits will adhere to applicable standards established by LADOTD and or the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
	written	15	The LSU Burden Center entrance leading from the interstate exit requires a right turn lane to allow traffic exiting from the interstate I-10 to flow unimpeded westward while allowing traffic exiting to the Burden center to slow down to make the turn onto the Burden center entrance road.	Please refer to the Response to Comment 5
Geordy Waters	written	16	A major problem in this area is the foot traffic walking across Hennessy Blvd from the OLOL entrance to the free parking across the street. Not only is it dangerous to the pedestrians, it causes huge backup onto Essen Lane	Hennessy Boulevard is not a State-controlled roadway. The LADOTD cannot impose the construction of the requested pedestrian facility on a private entity. This comment will be included in the Final EA, and will be provided to the City for further consideration.

			southbound and delays the traffic flow exiting Hennessy onto Essen. The only way to avoid this is to require OLOL to install a pedestrian walkway over Hennessy. They have multiplied their volume and this is an ever-increasing problem.	
	written	17	I included with my comments a rendering of a previously proposed development on Summa Avenue. This lot, which is currently vacant, can accommodate a development with at least 400 additional vehicles. I do request you take this into consideration when finalizing the Summa design. I would suggest addressing the servitude of access to Essen via the Jacobs Building or restricting ingress or egress from one of the entrances. I am no expert, but hope this can be addressed prior to any new development on this lot.	The project design is in accordance with current traffic and typical growth rates. Proposed new developments affecting State highways are required to prepare and submit a Traffic Impact Study for review and approval prior to permitting, in accordance with LADOTD and City/Parish UDC requirements. Prior to occupancy, the developer is responsible for mitigating any traffic impacts that are identified.
	written	18	The triple exits on Summa will be a great improvement but this should also be addressed on Picardy. Picardy is a quicker cut-through for many but generally unused because it is almost impossible to turn left onto Essen. Sometimes, not one vehicle will make the left turn during a light cycle. Most vehicles exiting Picardy from the west are going straight preventing westbound traffic turning south onto Essen. A triple exist on both sides of Picardy plus light control would alleviate some Essen traffic that currently travels Summa (instead of Picardy.)	Comment noted. Picardy Avenue is not a State-controlled roadway. Improvements at the intersection of Summa/Essex will allow a dedicated right-turn, through, and left-turn lane. It is anticipated that the additional northbound lane on Essen Lane, in conjunction with improvements at the intersection of Summa/Essex will improve LOS and increase traffic flow through the project area. The timing/operation of traffic signals in the project area is controlled by the City/Parish of East Baton Rouge. This comment will be included in the Final EA, and will be provided to the City/Parish for further consideration.
	written	19	A right turn arrow onto Summa rather than (a) the existing No Turn on Red sign is highly advisable.	Comment noted. This will be considered during design/plan development as the project progresses.
Justin Alford	written	20	100% against any median on Essen Lane. Would destroy businesses.	Comment noted.
Beverly Rodriguez	verbal	21	...in favor of number one without the medians with the turn lanes.	Comment noted.
Justin Alford	verbal	22	...100% opposed to any kind of median on Essen Lane.	Comment noted

		23	The major problems everyone sees is getting on/off the interstate and getting through Hennessey and Essen. Those are the two big bottlenecks that we see every day. Does this project fix those two areas?	The interchange of I-10 and Essen Lane is not located with the limits of the proposed project. As stated in Section 4.4 (page 34) of the Draft EA, the City/Parish has developed plans that will add additional lanes to 1-10 ramps. It is anticipated that an additional northbound lane, in conjunction with improvement to the Summa/Essen intersection will improve Level of Service (LOS) and increase traffic through the project area.
Jerry Hix	verbal	24	Getting through the intersection of Essen and Summa/Hennessey is the problem. Restriping and an abbreviated widening may work as well.	Comment noted. Please refer to the Response to Comment 23...
Laura McNeese	verbal	25	Does not support the widening between Perkins Road and the (OLOL) hospital.	Comment noted
		26	People can turn easily onto Anselmo crossing across two lanes of traffic. The third one [northbound lane]...would increase the number of accidents	Comment noted. As part of the RR permit requirements, the existing raised island will be reconstructed and extended to prohibit left turns from southbound Essen to Anselmo.
		27	What we have works well south of Summa...they may stick a third little lane in right at Summa, but I don't think you need to spend the money south of that.	Comment noted
Charles Major	verbal	28	Until they widen the road, they need to reengineer the traffic signals during rush hour to that most of them are green through rush hour periods.	Please refer to the Response to Comment 1
		29	Agrees with the no median option	Comment noted
		30	There should be right turns to go into feeder roads instead of having to make a right hand turn.	Please refer to the Response to Comment 5
		31	Construction should take place. During rush hour all construction should stop that impedes traffic.	Please refer to the Response to Comment 8
		32	Once the project is complete, traffic lights should start green on Essen and stop on the feeder roads.	Please refer to the Response to Comment 1
		33	Provide signs that promote no texting	Please refer to the Response to Comment 4
		34	Power/telephone lines should be buried through the project limits.	Please refer to the Response to Comment 6

6.0 Comparison of the Build and No Build Alternative

A comparison of quantifiable project impacts is provided in Table 6.1, offering a basis for discussion of the build alternatives.

Table 6.1 Comparison of Impacts by Alternative

Evaluation Measure	Units	No Build	Alt. 1	Alt. 2
Relocation Impacts				
Residential Relocations	Each	0	0	0
Commercial Relocations	Each	0	0	0
Community Relocations	Each	0	0	0
Vacant/Unused Structures	Each	0	0	0
Other Relocations	Each	0	0	0
Natural Environment				
Wetlands	Acres	0	0.07	0.07
Other Waters of the US	Acres	0	0.09	0.09
Scenic Streams	Each	0	0	0
Stream Crossings	Each	1	1	1
Sole Source Aquifer Impacts	Acres	0	0	0
Protected Species	Each	0	0	0
Prime and Unique Farmland	Acres	0	0	0
Coastal Resources and Essential Fish Habitat	Each	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cultural Resources				
Properties Eligible for or Listed on NRHP	Each	0	0	0
Properties Not Eligible for NRHP	Each	2	2	2
Section 4(f) and 6(f) Properties	Each	0	0	0
Noise				
Impacted receivers	Each	13	13	13
Safety				
Reduction in Vehicular Crashes	Percent	---	---	28.1-32.5*
Reduction in Vehicle-Pedestrian Crashes	Percent	---	---	15.0-42.8*
Pedestrian Access				
Provides Dedicated Pedestrian Access along Essen Lane	--	NO	YES	YES
Provides Additional Signalized Crossings of	---	NO	YES	YES

Evaluation Measure	Units	No Build	Alt. 1	Alt. 2
Essen Lane				
Provides Median Pedestrian Refuge per AASHTO	---	NO	NO	NO
Signals Timed to Allow Pedestrian Crossing at at 3.5 ft/sec.	---	NO	YES	YES

* According to "Before-and-after safety study of roadways where new medians have been added."

At this time, proposed funding for LADOTD's Essen Lane Widening project consists of State General Obligation Bonds. It is not known at this time if federal funds will be utilized. The proposed project is scheduled to let in early 2015. The proposed Essen Lane widening project has been designed so that the northbound lanes will transition directly into the realigned through lanes beneath the I-10 overpass. Estimated costs were compiled for both Build Alternatives are detailed in Table 6.2. The estimates include construction costs, right-of-way acquisition costs, and utility relocation costs.

Table 6.2 Estimated Costs of the Build Alternatives

Cost	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Construction	\$5,300,000	\$5,650,000
Right-of-Way Acquisition	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000
Utility Relocation	\$6,000,000	\$6,000,000
Total	\$13,800,000	\$14,150,000

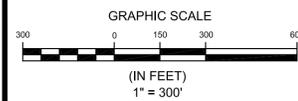
Appendix A

Alternatives Layouts



LEGEND

- PROPOSED SP H.010560
(ESSEN LANE WIDENING)
- PROPOSED CITY-PARISH
PROJECT 06-CS-HC-0033
(STATE PROJECT NO. 258-32-0022)
- CURRENT CITY-PARISH
PROJECT 06-CS-HC-0024 (STARING
LANE; HIGHLAND TO PERKINS)
(UNDER CONSTRUCTION)

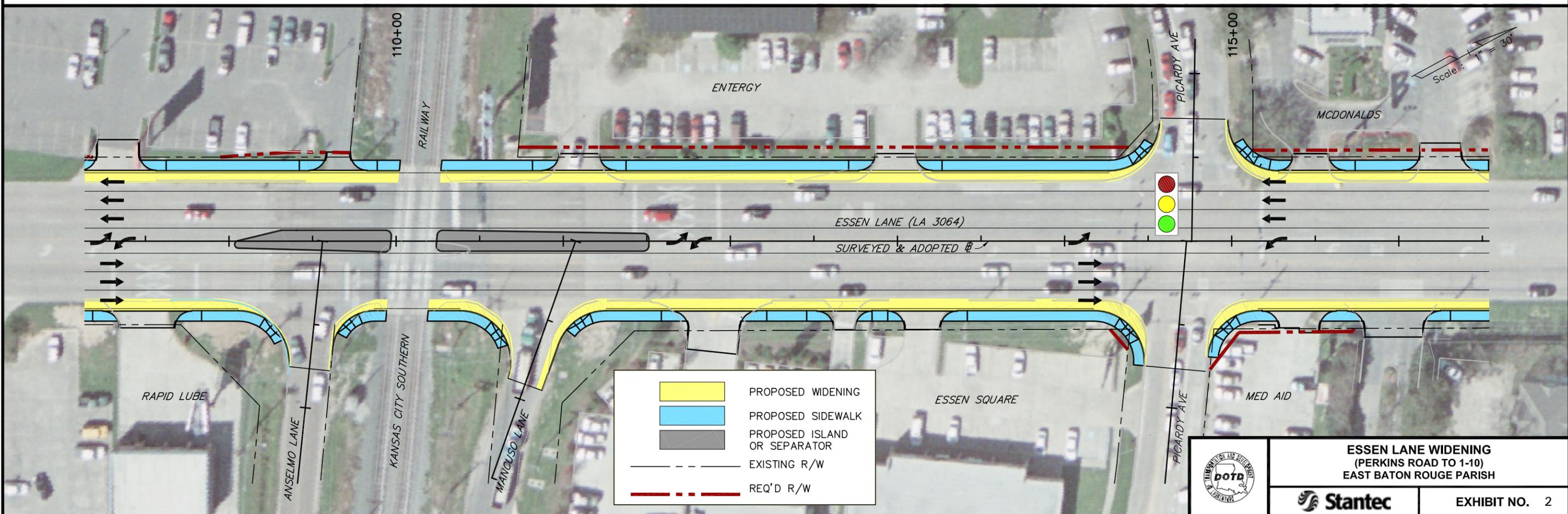
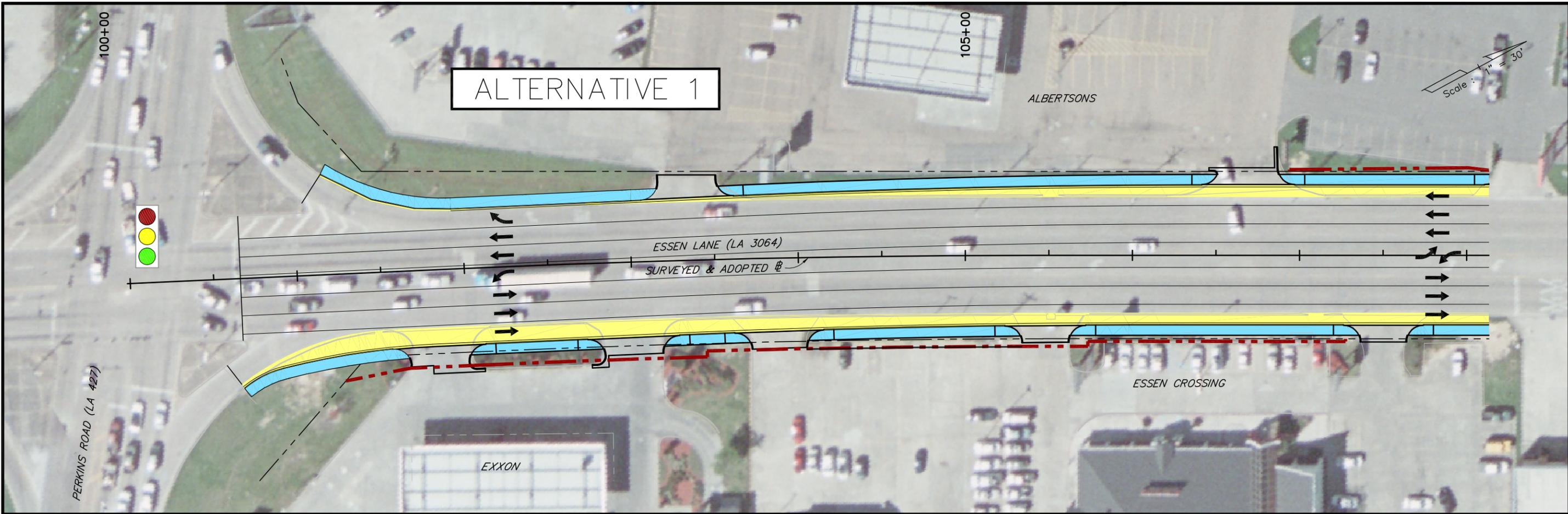


**ESSEN LANE WIDENING
(PERKINS ROAD TO I-10)
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH**

EXHIBIT NO. 1

ALTERNATIVE 1

Scale: 1" = 30'



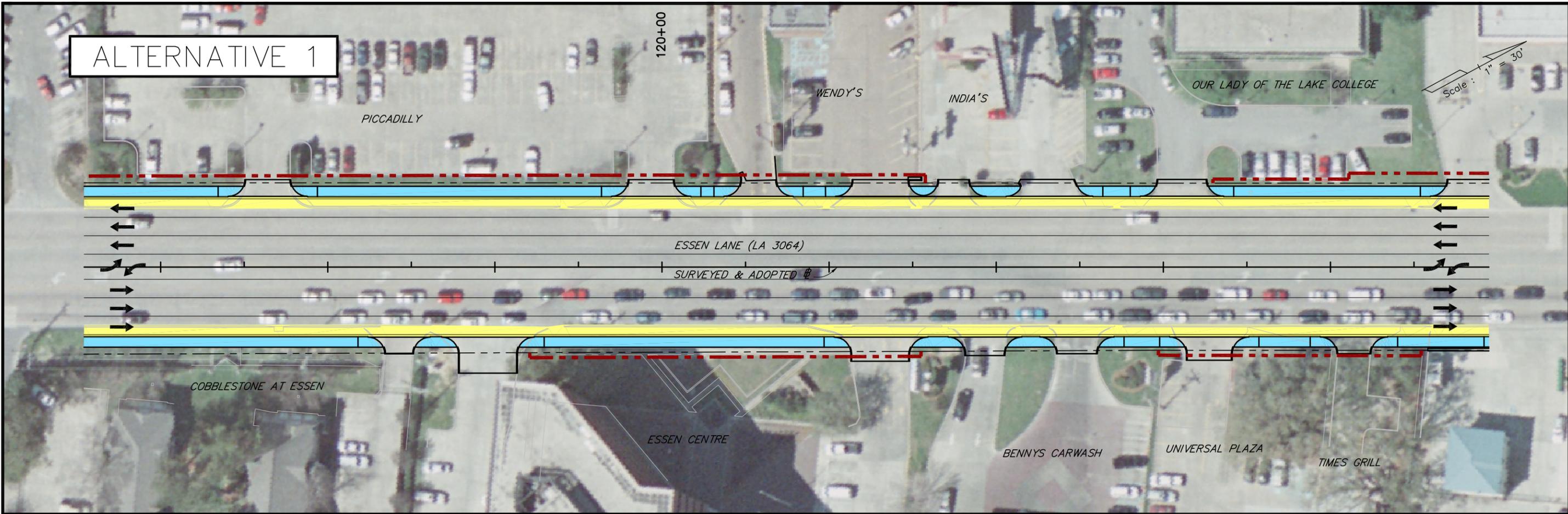
	PROPOSED WIDENING
	PROPOSED SIDEWALK
	PROPOSED ISLAND OR SEPARATOR
	EXISTING R/W
	REQ'D R/W

	ESSEN LANE WIDENING (PERKINS ROAD TO 1-10) EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH	
		EXHIBIT NO. 2

ALTERNATIVE 1

120+00

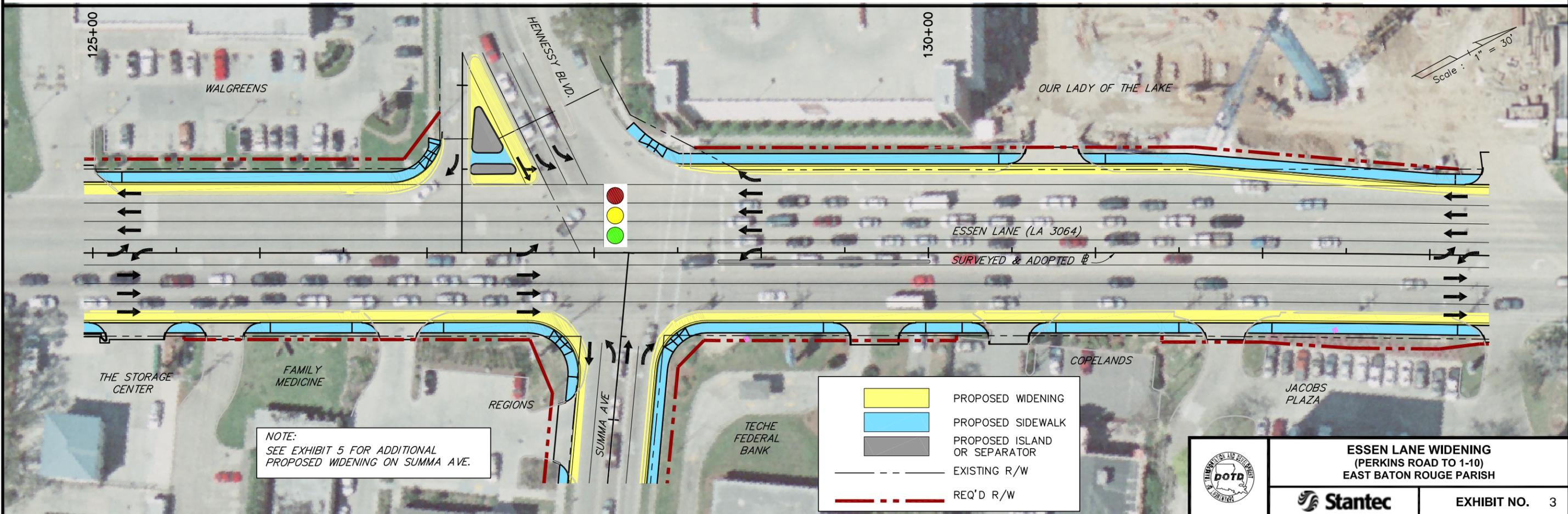
Scale : 1" = 30'



125+00

130+00

Scale : 1" = 30'



NOTE:
SEE EXHIBIT 5 FOR ADDITIONAL
PROPOSED WIDENING ON SUMMA AVE.

	PROPOSED WIDENING
	PROPOSED SIDEWALK
	PROPOSED ISLAND OR SEPARATOR
	EXISTING R/W
	REQ'D R/W

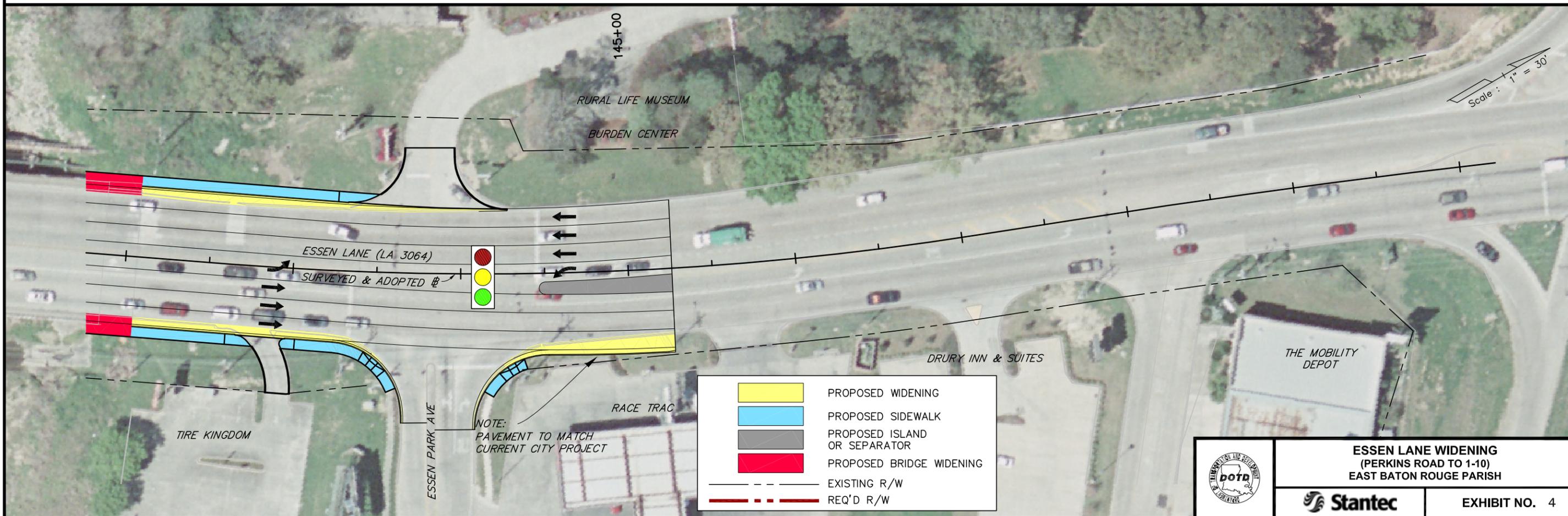
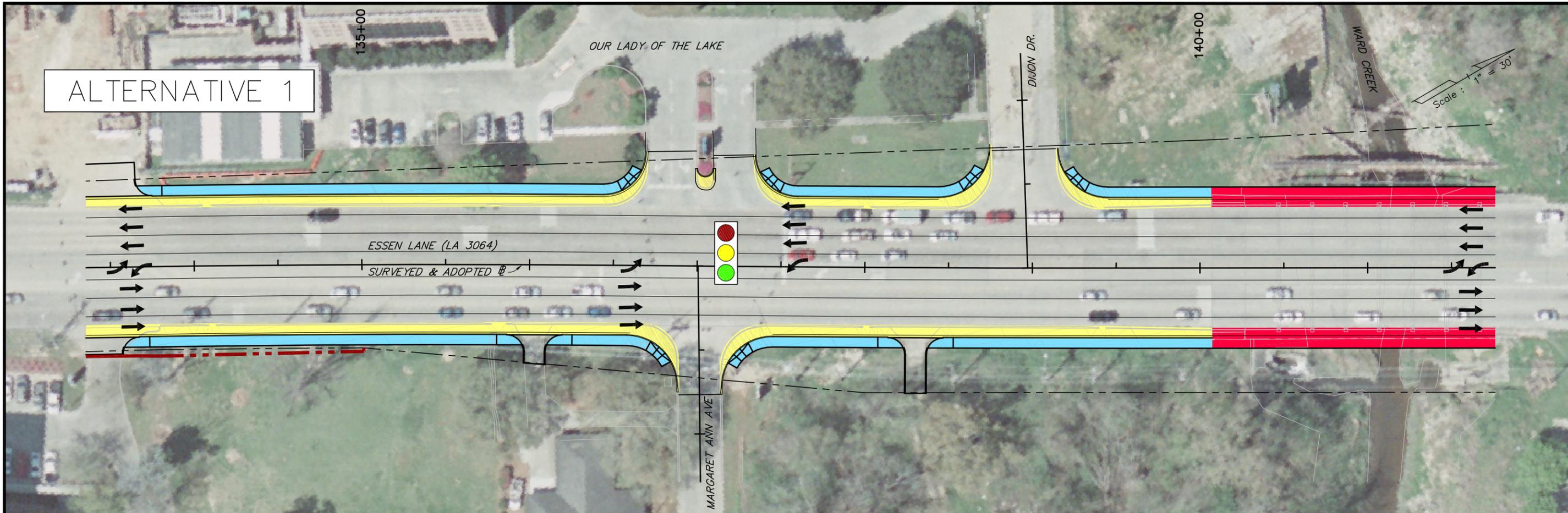


**ESSEN LANE WIDENING
(PERKINS ROAD TO 1-10)
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH**

Stantec

EXHIBIT NO. 3

ALTERNATIVE 1



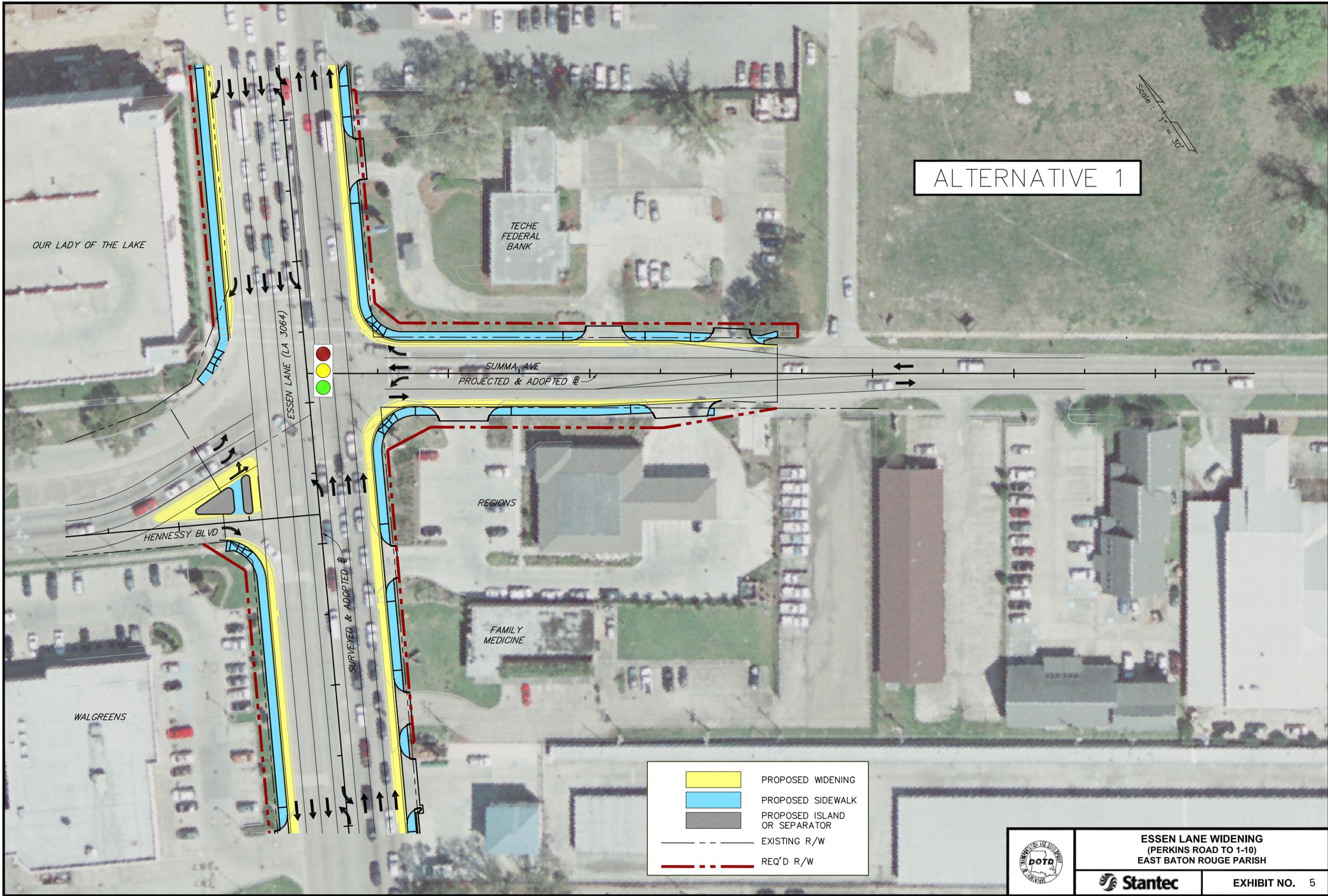
**ESSEN LANE WIDENING
(PERKINS ROAD TO 1-10)
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH**

Stantec

EXHIBIT NO. 4

Scale: 1" = 30'

ALTERNATIVE 1

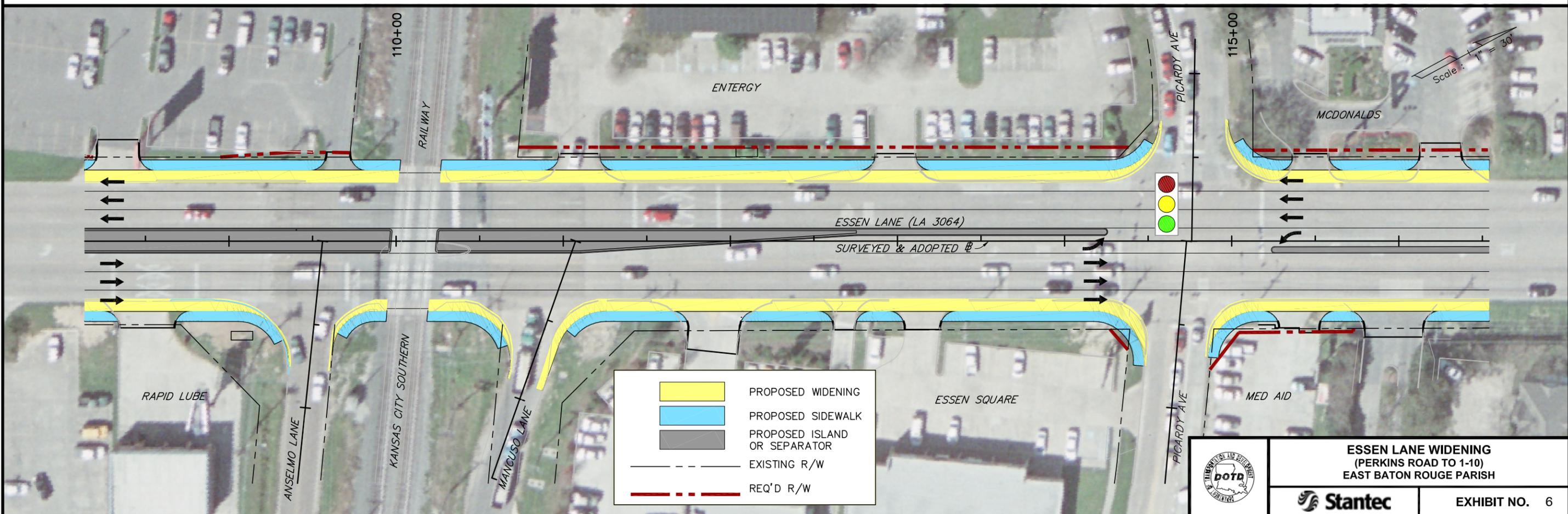
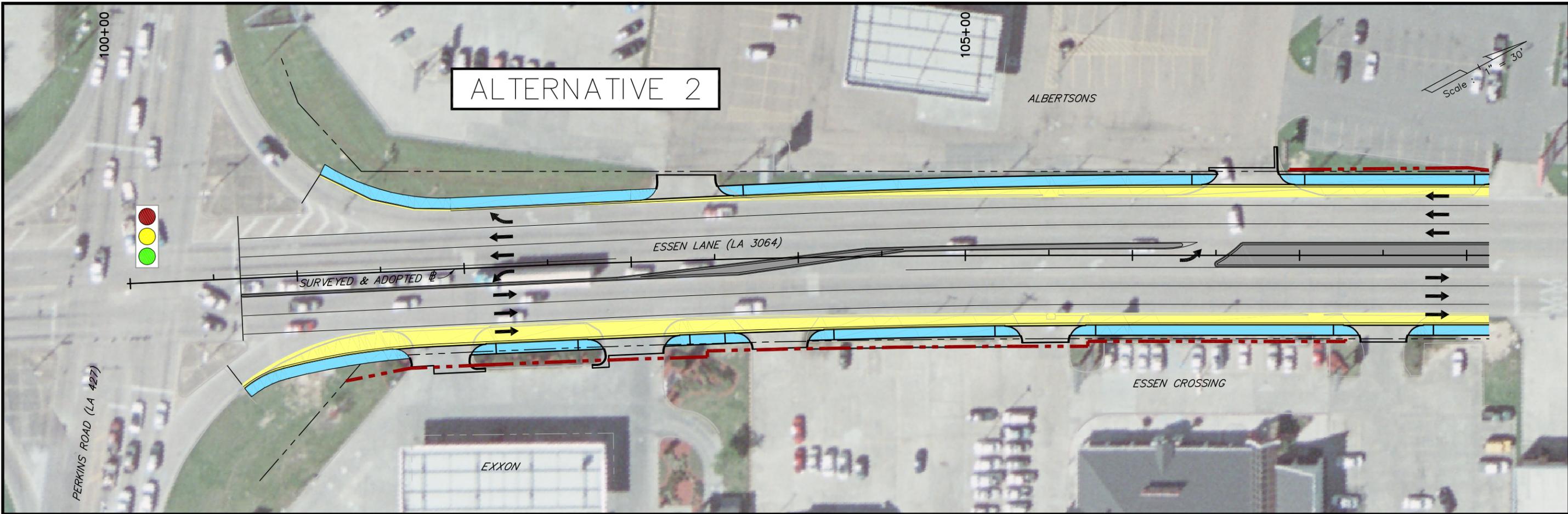


- PROPOSED WIDENING
- PROPOSED SIDEWALK
- PROPOSED ISLAND OR SEPARATOR
- EXISTING R/W
- REQ'D R/W



ALTERNATIVE 2

Scale: 1" = 30'



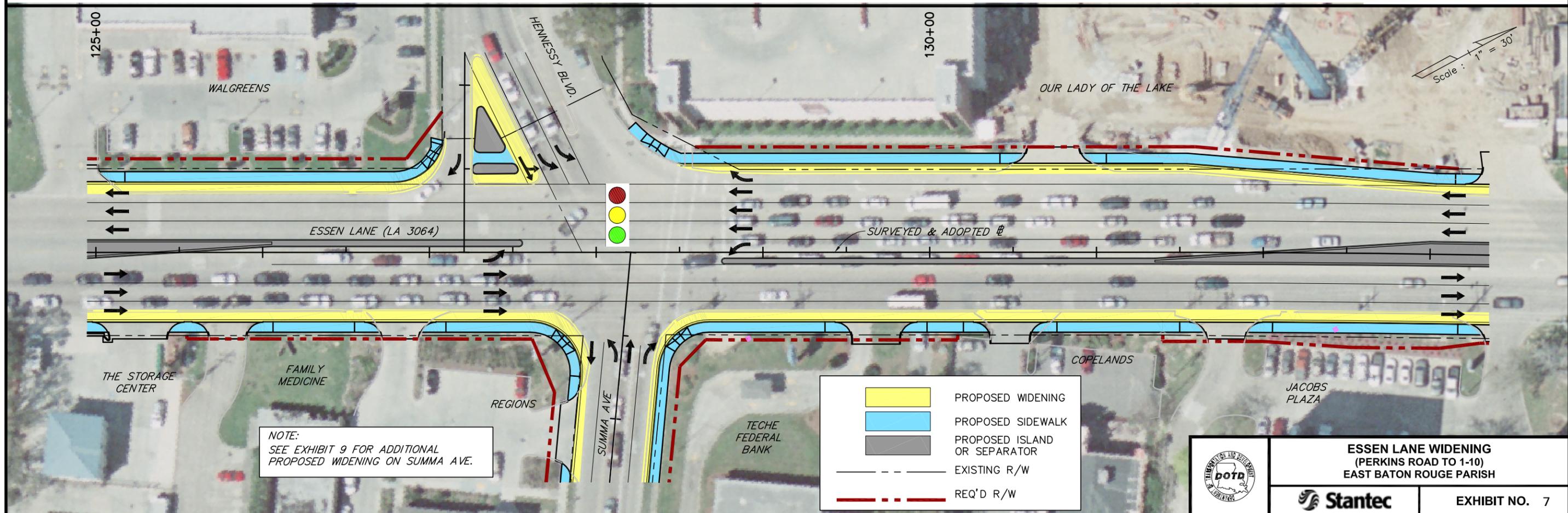
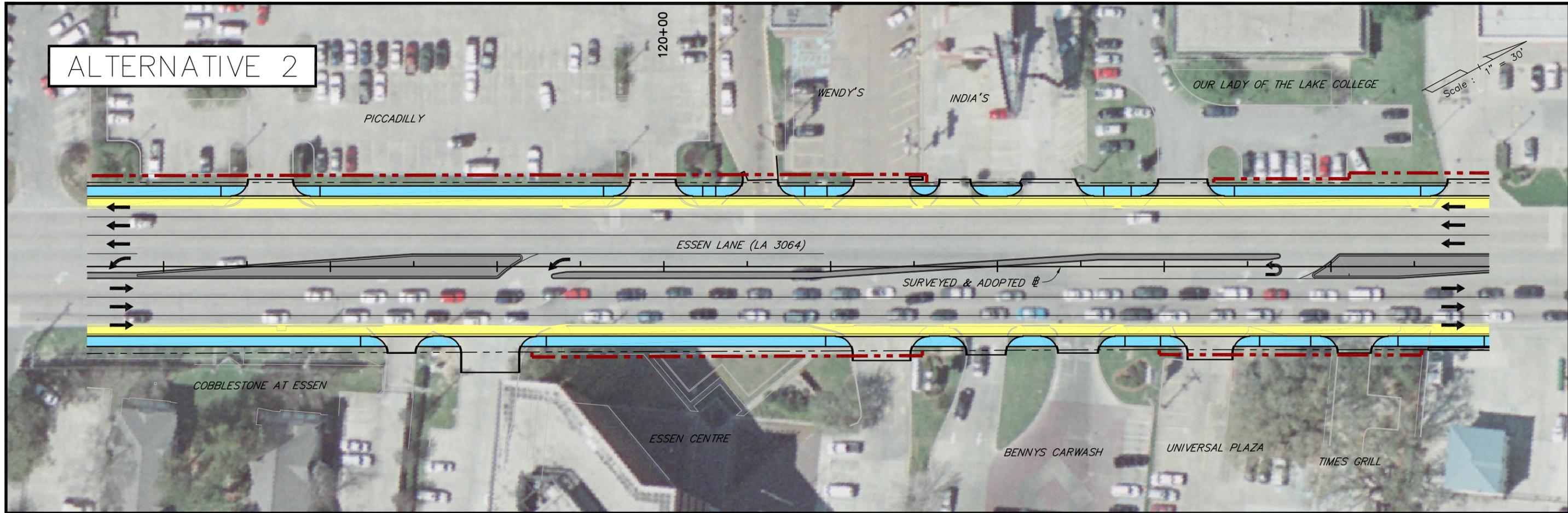
	PROPOSED WIDENING
	PROPOSED SIDEWALK
	PROPOSED ISLAND OR SEPARATOR
	EXISTING R/W
	REQ'D R/W

**ESSEN LANE WIDENING
(PERKINS ROAD TO 1-10)
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH**

Stantec

EXHIBIT NO. 6

ALTERNATIVE 2



NOTE:
SEE EXHIBIT 9 FOR ADDITIONAL
PROPOSED WIDENING ON SUMMA AVE.

	PROPOSED WIDENING
	PROPOSED SIDEWALK
	PROPOSED ISLAND OR SEPARATOR
	EXISTING R/W
	REQ'D R/W

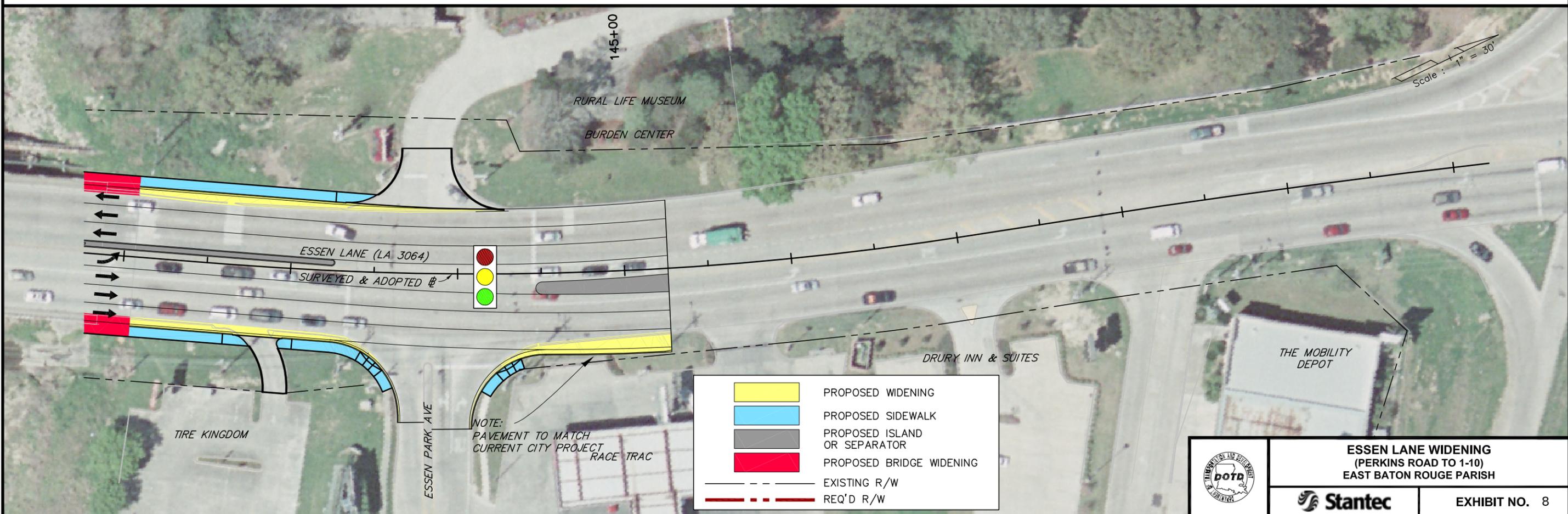
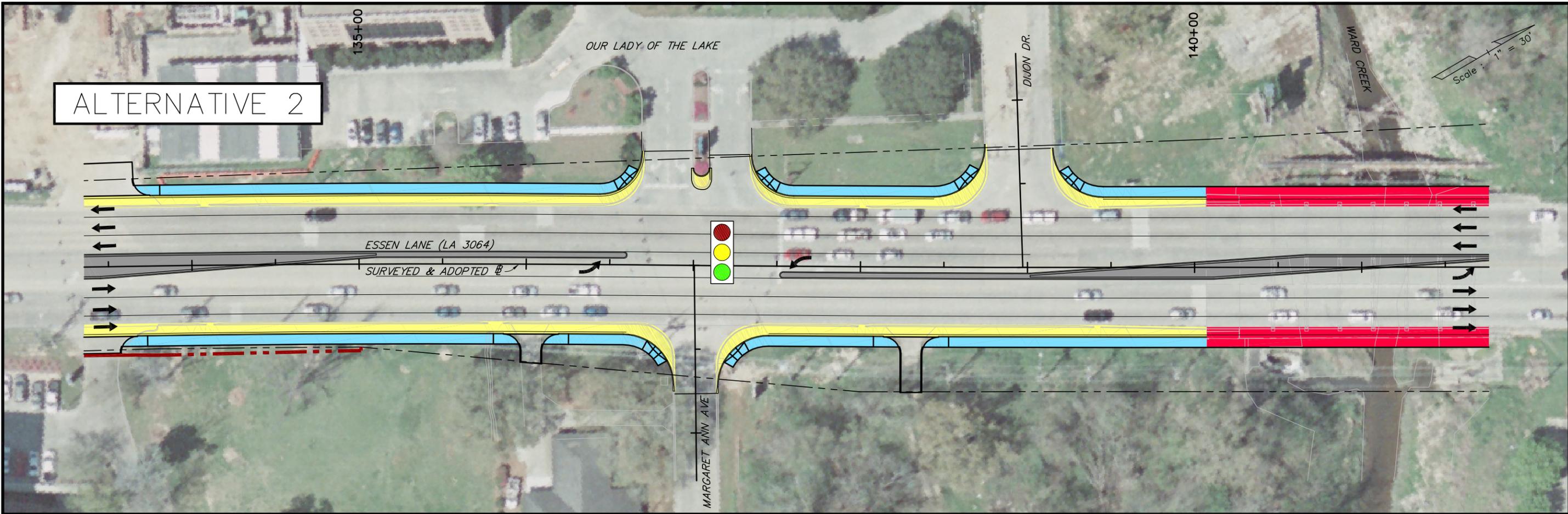


**ESSEN LANE WIDENING
(PERKINS ROAD TO 1-10)
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH**

Stantec

EXHIBIT NO. 7

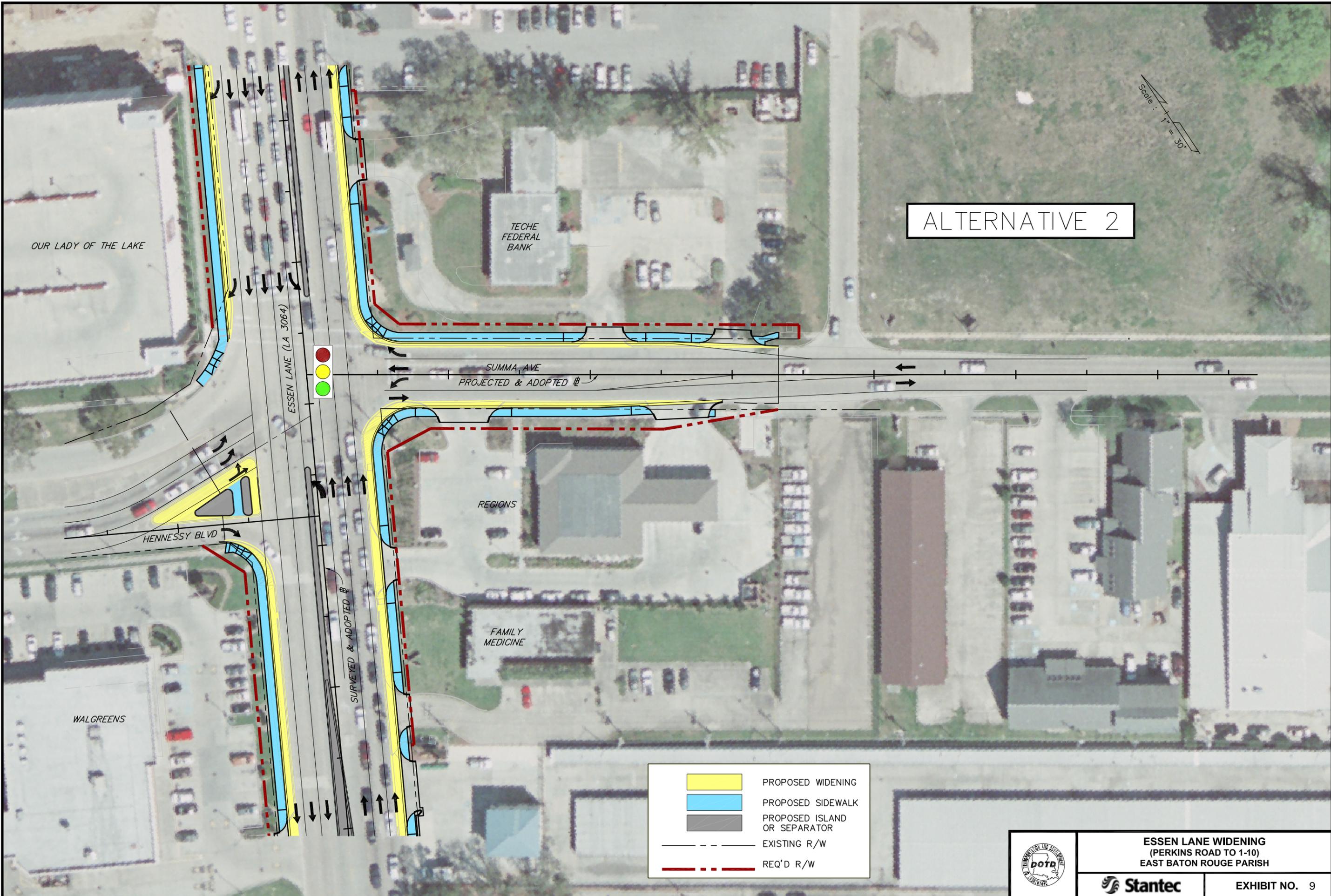
ALTERNATIVE 2



	ESSEN LANE WIDENING (PERKINS ROAD TO 1-10) EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH	
		EXHIBIT NO. 8

Scale: 1" = 30'

ALTERNATIVE 2



	PROPOSED WIDENING
	PROPOSED SIDEWALK
	PROPOSED ISLAND OR SEPARATOR
	EXISTING R/W
	REQ'D R/W



ESSEN LANE WIDENING (PERKINS ROAD TO 1-10) EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH	
	EXHIBIT NO. 9

Appendix B

Solicitation of Views and Responses



BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9245
www.dotd.la.gov



SHERRI LEBAS
SECRETARY

(225) 242-4502
November 7, 2012

STATE PROJECT NO.: H.010560.2
FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO.: H.010560
NAME: ESSEN LANE WIDENING: PERKINS TO I-10
ROUTE: LA 3064
PARISH: EAST BATON ROUGE

SUBJECT: SOLICITATION OF VIEWS

Early in the planning stages of a transportation facility, views from federal, state, and local agencies, organizations, and individuals are solicited. The special expertise of these groups can assist DOTD with the early identification of possible adverse economic, social, or environmental effects or concerns. Your assistance in this regard will be appreciated.

Due to the earliness of this request for your views, very limited data concerning the proposed project exists. We have, however, attached a sketch map showing the general location of the proposed project, along with a preliminary project description.

It is requested that you review the attached information and furnish us with your views and comments by **December 7, 2012**. Replies should be addressed to LA DOTD; Environmental Engineer Administrator; P.O. Box 94245; Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9245. Please reference the State Project Number in your reply.

Sincerely,

for Noel A. Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator

Attachments

EO. NA/RL/sl

cc: Mr. Roy Schmidt, District 61 Engineer Administrator

PRELIMINARY DESCRIPTION

**STATE PROJECT NO.: H.010560.2
FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO.: H010560
NAME: ESSEN LANE WIDENING
ROUTE: LA 3064
PARISH: EAST BATON ROUGE**

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development proposes to widen Essen Lane (LA 3064) from Perkins Road to the Interstate 10 Eastbound on and off ramps. The project area is located in Baton Rouge, approximately 1.5 miles southeast of the intersection of I-10 and I-12. The approximate GPS Coordinates for the project are 30° 24' 6.36" N, 91° 6' 19.58" W. The Average Daily Traffic for the roadway is approximately 42,853 vehicles per day.

Currently, the roadway has three 11-foot travel lanes southbound, two 11-foot travel lanes northbound, and a 14-foot, two-way central turn lane. The roadway has no shoulders and subsurface drainage. Three alternatives are being proposed:

Alternative 1 will add a northbound travel lane from Perkins Road to Interstate 10. The final road will have seven total lanes (three northbound, three southbound, and 1 two way center turn lane) and no center median.

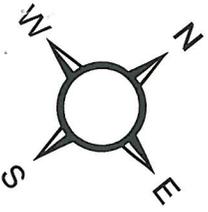
Alternative 2 will add a northbound travel lane from Perkins Road to Interstate 10. The final road will have six total lanes (three northbound, three southbound) and a raised center median.

Alternative 3 is the No Build alternative which will leave the roadway as it is.

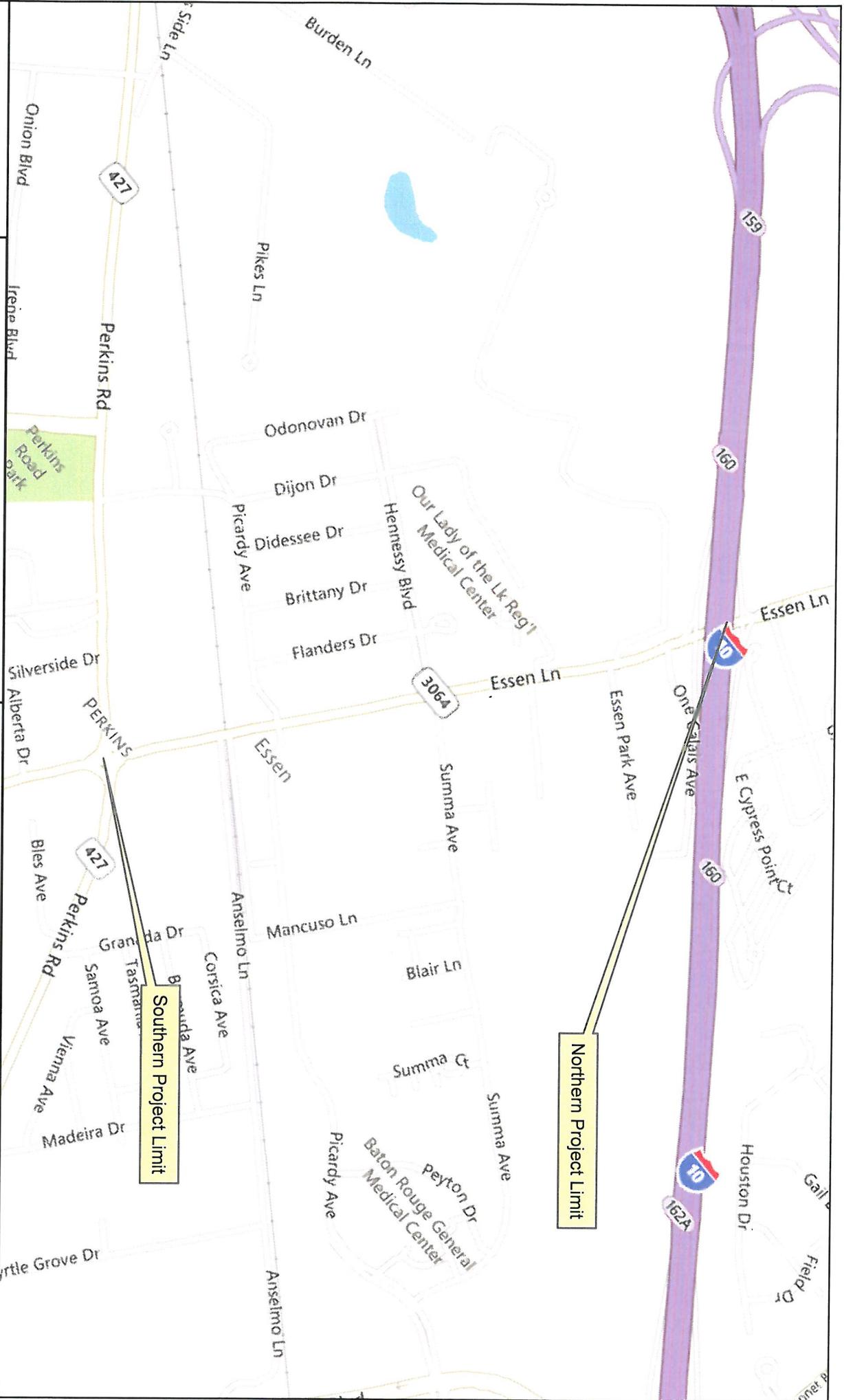
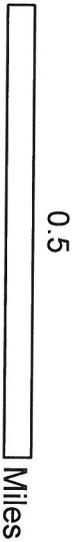
Both of the build alternatives will have subsurface drainage and will require Right of Way and may require servitudes. Both build alternatives will require widening of the bridge over Ward Creek. The structure number for the bridge is 61172583200771 and it was built in 1972.

Drainage work will also be done as part of this project. It is not known if any relocations will be required as part of this project.

It is anticipated that this project will be processed as an Environmental Assessment.



SP No: H.010560.2
FAP No: H.010560
Essen Lane Widening
Route: LA 3064
Parish: East Baton Rouge



STATE MAILING LIST
UPDATED July 30, 2012

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
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NPS/ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
ATLANTA GA 30303

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BATON ROUGE LA 70821-2827

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STATE LAND OFFICE
P O BOX 44124
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OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL
POLICY & COMPLIANCE
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ALBUQUERQUE NM 87104

DEPT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
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BATON ROUGE, LA 70804-9095

SENATOR MARY LANDRIEU
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UNITED STATES SENATE
707 FLORIDA BLVD
BATON ROUGE LA 70801

..
US FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE
646 CAJUNDOME BLVD, SUITE 400
LAFAYETTE, LA 70506

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FEMA REGION VI
800 NORTH LOOP 288
DENTON, TX 76201

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UNITED STATES SENATE
2800 VETERANS MEMORIAL BLVD
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METAIRIE, LA 70002

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8TH COAST GUARD DISTRICT
HALE BOGGS FEDERAL BUILDING
500 POYDRAS
NEW ORLEANS, LA 70130

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DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
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STEVEN PEYRONNIN, EXECUTIVE DIR.
COALITION TO RESTORE COASTAL LA
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LA DEPT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
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3247 EMILY DRIVE
PORT ALLEN LA 70767

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ROOM: 8A36
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COUSHATTA TRIBE OF LOUISIANA
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ELTON, LA 70532

JENA BAND OF CHOCTAW INDIANS
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JENA, LA 71342

MS BAND OF CHOCTAW INDIANS
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CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA
P.O DRAWER 1210
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ROOM: 402A

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UPDATED September 20, 2012

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BATON ROUGE, LA 70802**

**HON SHARON WESTON BROOME
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(DISTRICT 15)
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HONORABLE PATRICIA HAYNES SMITH
LA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
(DISTRICT 67)
525 FLORIDA ST, 3RD FLOOR 300G
BATON ROUGE, LA 70802

HON MACK A "BODI" WHITE, JR.
LA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
(DISTRICT 64)
35055 LA HWY 16, SUITE 2A
DENHAM SPRINGS LA 70706

HONORABLE THOMAS M MCVEA
LA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
(DISTRICT 62)
PO BOX 217
JACKSON, LA 70748

HONORABLE "JODY" AMEDEE
THE STATE SENATE
(DISTRICT 18)
2109 S. BURNSIDE AVE SUITE A
GONZALES LA 70737

AMITE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION
3535 SOUTH SHERWOOD FOREST BLVD
SUITE 135
BATON ROUGE 70816

EBR PARISH CITY GOVERNMENT
P O BOX 1471
BATON ROUGE LA 70821

BATON ROUGE BICYCLE CLUB
P O BOX 253
BATON ROUGE LA 70821

**BATON ROUGE GREEN ASSOCIATION
448 N 11TH STREET
BATON ROUGE, LA 70802-4607**

**CHITIMACHA TRIBE
155 CHITIMACHA LOOP ROAD
CHARENTON, LA 70523**

**ALABAMA COUSHATTA TRIBE OF TX
571 STATE PARK ST. 65
LIVINGSTON, TX 77351**

**CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA
IAN THOMPSON PHD, RPA
P.O. BOX 1210
DURANT, OK 74702-1210**

**ALAN EMARTHLE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER
SEMINOLE NATION OF OKLAHOMA
P.O. BOX 1498
WEWOKA, OK 74884**

**PAUL BACKHOUSE, THPO
30290 JOSIE BILLIE HWY
SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA
PMB 1004
CLEWISTON, FL 33440**

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
3737 Government Street
Alexandria, LA 71302

(318) 473-7751
Fax: (318) 473-7626

November 12, 2012

Noel Ardoin
DOTD
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, La 70804-9245

RE: Essen Lane Widening: Perkins to I-10 – State Project No.: H.010560.2

Dear Noel:

I have reviewed the above referenced project for potential requirements of the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) and potential impact to Natural Resource Conservation Service projects in the immediate vicinity.

Projects are subject to FPPA requirements if they may irreversibly convert farmland (directly or indirectly) to nonagricultural use and are completed by a federal agency or with assistance from a federal agency. For the purpose of FPPA, farmland includes prime farmland, unique farmland, and land of statewide or local importance. Farmland subject to FPPA requirements can be forest land, pastureland, cropland, or other land, but not water or urban built-up land.

The project map submitted with your request indicates that the proposed construction areas will not impact prime farmland and therefore is exempt from the rules and regulations of the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA)—Subtitle I of Title XV, Section 1539-1549. Furthermore, we do not predict impacts to NRCS work in the vicinity.

For specific information about the soils found in the project area, please visit our Web Soil Survey at the following location:

<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/>

Please direct all future correspondence to me at the address shown above.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin D. Norton".

Kevin D. Norton
State Conservationist

ACTING FOR

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

November 13, 2012

LA DOTD
Environment Engineer Administrator
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245

Re: State Project No.: H.010560.2
Name: Essen Lane Widening: Perkins to I-10
Route: LA 3064
Parish: East Baton Rouge

LA DOTD:

After reviewing your November 7, 2012 correspondence on the Essen Lane Widening: Perkins to I-10, East Baton Rouge Parish School System is in favor of your Alternative # 2, to add a northbound travel lane from Perkins Road to Interstate 10.

Cordially,



Catherine Fletcher
Chief Business Operations Officer

CAF/jcb



BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES
OFFICE OF WILDLIFE

ROBERT J. BARHAM
SECRETARY
JIMMY L. ANTHONY
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Date November 13, 2012

Name Noel Ardoin
Company LA DOTD
Street Address P.O. Box 94245
City, State, Zip Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245

Project State Project No. H.010560.2
Essen Lane Widening: Perkins to I-10

Project ID 3822012

Invoice Number 12111310

Personnel of the Habitat Section of the Coastal & Nongame Resources Division have reviewed the preliminary data for the captioned project. After careful review of our database, no impacts to rare, threatened, or endangered species or critical habitats are anticipated for the proposed project. No state or federal parks, wildlife refuges, scenic streams, or wildlife management areas are known at the specified site within Louisiana's boundaries.

The Louisiana Natural Heritage Program (LNHP) has compiled data on rare, endangered, or otherwise significant plant and animal species, plant communities, and other natural features throughout the state of Louisiana. Heritage reports summarize the existing information known at the time of the request regarding the location in question. The quantity and quality of data collected by the LNHP are dependent on the research and observations of many individuals. In most cases, this information is not the result of comprehensive or site-specific field surveys; many natural areas in Louisiana have not been surveyed. This report does not address the occurrence of wetlands at the site in question. Heritage reports should not be considered final statements on the biological elements or areas being considered, nor should they be substituted for on-site surveys required for environmental assessments. LNHP requires that this office be acknowledged in all reports as the source of all data provided here. If at any time Heritage tracked species are encountered within the project area, please contact the LNHP Data Manager at 225-765-2643. If you have any questions, or need additional information, please call 225-765-2357.

Sincerely,


Amity Bass, Coordinator
Natural Heritage Program



Police Department

City of Baton Rouge

704 Mayflower Street
Post Office Box 2406
Baton Rouge, Louisiana
70821

225/389-3800

Dewayne White
Chief of Police

November 15, 2012

Mr. Noel Ardoin
LA DOTD
Environmental Engineer Administrator
P. O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245

Re: **STATE PROJECT NO.: H.010560.2**

Dear Mr. Ardoin:

After reviewing the preliminary description, it is my opinion that the flow of traffic for the Essen Lane area would be greatly relieved by Alternative 1.

Should you require additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Lieutenant Carl Dabadie
Chief of Staff



Department of Public Works

City of Baton Rouge
Parish of East Baton Rouge

Post Office Box 1471
Baton Rouge, Louisiana
70821

November 15, 2012

La DOTD
Environmental Engineer Administrator
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, La 70804-9245

Attention: Noel A. Ardoin

Re: State Project Application number: H.010560.2
Federal Aid Project No.: H.010560
Name: Essen Lane Widening: Perkins to I-10
Route: La 3064
Parish: East Baton Rouge

Dear, Ms. Ardoin

Reference is made to your letter of November 7, 2012 concerning solicitation of views for the above referenced project. Considering the nature and location of the project, it is our opinion that the proposed construction work, as described in the preliminary project description, will not have an adverse impact on the existing flood plain or environment provided the improvements, and all associated drainage structures are properly engineered.

Yours truly,

Mrs. Lynette Richardson, C.F.M.
Flood Office Manager



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6
1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200
DALLAS, TX 75203-2733
November 16, 2012

Ms. Noel A. Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator
LA DOTD
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245

Dear Ms. Ardoin:

We have received your November 7, 2012, letter requesting our evaluation of the potential environmental impacts which might result from the following project:

**Widen Essen Lane
LA 3064: Perkins to I-10
STP No. H.010560.2
FAP No. H010560
E. Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana**

The project, proposed for financial assistance through the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development is located on the Southern Hills aquifer system which has been designated a sole source aquifer by the EPA. Based on the information provided for the project, we have determined that the project, as proposed, should not have an adverse effect on the quality of the ground water underlying the project site.

This approval of the proposed project does not relieve the applicant from adhering to other State and Federal requirements, which may apply. This approval is based solely upon the potential impact to the quality of ground water as it relates to the EPA's authority pursuant to Section 1424(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act.

If you did not include the Parish/County; a legal description; project location and the latitude and longitude if available, please do so in future Sole Source Aquifer correspondence.

If you have any questions on this letter or the sole source aquifer program please contact me at (214) 665-7133.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Bechdol".

Michael Bechdol, Coordinator
Sole Source Aquifer Program
Ground Water/UIC Section

cc: Jesse Means, LDEQ



JAY DARDENNE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM
OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

CHARLES R. DAVIS
DEPUTY SECRETARY

PAM BREAU
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

November 16, 2012

Noel Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator
LDOTD
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245

*full info sent
11/27/12
see attached*

Re: Section 106 Review
Requested Additional Information
Proposed Essen Lane Widening:
Perkins Road to I-10
East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

Dear Ms. Ardoin:

Thank you for your email of November 7, 2012, concerning the above-referenced undertaking. We are unable to complete the Section 106 review at this time due to the submittal of insufficient documentation as required by the Section 106 Regulations (36 CFR 800). We will need the following information to complete our review for the aforementioned project:

- Name of federal agency, agency involvement (Funding, license/permit, etc. and description of the undertaking (Detailed description of project).
- Applicant contact information (Name, address, phone number and email address).
- Agency contact information (Name, address, phone number and email address).
- Description of the Area of Potential Effects (APE). The APE can be direct or indirect. It is defined as "the geographic area or areas within which an undertaking may cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist." (Include the latitude/longitude of the undertaking location and APE)
- Description of all historic properties within and adjacent to the APE. The historic standing structure is any structure fifty years of age and older. Under Section 106, it is the responsibility of the federal agency or its designee to identify all structures listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places

Noel Ardoin
November 16, 2012
Page 2

- Detailed project scope of work including design plans.
- Map and site plan showing APE and exact location of project undertaking.

- Photographs of the entire APE and project location. Photographs of all historic structures (fifty years of age and older) within the APE. Buildings should be documented showing diagonal views of front and side and rear and opposite side of the building. All photos should be keyed to a site map and project plans if applicable.

If you have any questions, please contact Mike Varnado in the Division of Historic Preservation at (225) 219-4596 or mvarnado@crt.la.gov.

Sincerely,



Pam Breaux
State Historic Preservation Officer

PB:MV:s



BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT

P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9245
www.dotd.la.gov



SHERRI LERAS
SECRETARY

RECEIVED
13 2012

(225) 242-4502
November 7, 2012

STATE PROJECT NO.: H.010560.2
FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO.: H.010560
NAME: ESSEN LANE WIDENING: PERKINS TO I-10
ROUTE: LA 3064
PARISH: EAST BATON ROUGE
SUBJECT: SOLICITATION OF VIEWS

Early in the planning stages of a transportation facility, views from federal, state, and local agencies, organizations, and individuals are solicited. The special expertise of these groups can assist DOTD with the early identification of possible adverse economic, social, or environmental effects or concerns. Your assistance in this regard will be appreciated.

Due to the earliness of this request for your views, very limited data concerning the proposed project exists. We have, however, attached a sketch map showing the general location of the proposed project, along with a preliminary project description.

It is requested that you review the attached information and furnish us with your views and comments by **December 7, 2012**. Replies should be addressed to LA DOTD; Environmental Engineer Administrator; P.O. Box 94245; Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9245. Please reference the State Project Number in your reply.

This project has been reviewed for effects to Federal trust resources under our jurisdiction and currently protected by the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act). The project, as proposed,
 Will have no effect on those resources
 Is not likely to adversely affect those resources.
This finding fulfills the requirements under Section 7(a)(2) of the Act

Sincerely,

Noel A. Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator

11/20/12
Date

Acting Supervisor
Louisiana Field Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Attachments

cc: NA/RL/sl

cc: Mr. Roy Schmidt, District 61 Engineer Administrator



Undersecretary
Division of Management
and Finance
627 North 4th Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

(O) 225.342.0805
(F) 225.342.8636
www.dcfsl.a.gov

Bobby Jindal, Governor
Suzy Sonnier, Secretary

November 26, 2012

Mr. Noel Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator
Department of Transportation & Development
Post Office Box 94245
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9245

Re: Solicitation of Views
State Project # H010560.2
Essen Lane Widening: Perkins to I-10
LA 3064
East Baton Rouge Parish

Dear Mr. Ardoin:

The Department of Children and Family Services has reviewed the proposed project information supplied in the parish of East Baton Rouge Solicitation of Views. We have determined that the project will not adversely impact the operations of our agency or the delivery of services to our consumers who reside in the affected area.

We offer no objection to this undertaking and look forward to its successfully completion.

Sincerely,

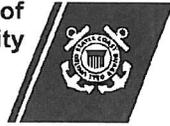
Richard Howze
Undersecretary

RH: sg



U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



Commander
United States Coast Guard
Hale Federal Building

500 Poydras Street, Room 1313
New Orleans, LA 70130-3310
Staff Symbol: dpb
Phone: (504) 671-2128
Fax: (504) 671-2133
D8DPBALL@uscg.mil

16591A
November 27, 2012

Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
Attn: Ms. Noel Ardoin
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245

State Project: H.010560.2
F.A.P.: H.010560
Essen Lane Widening: Perkins to I-10, LA 3064
East Baton Rouge Parish

Dear Ms. Ardoin:

We received your Solicitation of Views dated November 7, 2012, the proposed widening of Essen Lane (LA 3064) which will require the widening of the bridge crossing Ward Creek in East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana. Construction of any proposed bridge, bridge replacement or bridge modification may necessitate the Coast Guard's involvement in the permitting process. However, prior to the Coast Guard's involvement on this project, under 23 CFR §650.805, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has the responsibility under the Surface Transportation Assistance (STA) Act of 1978 to determine whether or not a USCG permit is required for this bridge construction.

Section 144(c) of Title 23 U.S. Code was enacted in 1978 to reduce paperwork and related costs in the execution of the Coast Guard's bridge permit programs. This section has been amended by the Act of April 2, 1987 (Public Law 100-17), to further reduce paperwork and related costs in the permitting of bridges funded by this Act. By reason of this provision, certain bridges --which are constructed, reconstructed, rehabilitated, or replaced with federal assistance imposed under Title 23 U.S. Code -- are no longer subject to the permitting requirements imposed under 33 U.S.C. 401 and 525(b). The bridges that fall into this excluded category are those that cross waterways:

- (1) which are not used and are not susceptible to use in their natural condition or by reasonable improvement as a means to transport interstate or foreign commerce; and
- (2) which are nontidal, or if tidal, used by vessels less than 21 feet in length.

Since FHWA has the responsibility for the STA Act, the Coast Guard will accept a determination by the FHWA Administrator that this bridge project receiving federal assistance under Title 23 U.S. Code meets the stated criteria and is exempted for Coast Guard Bridge Administration purposes. This letter does not imply that this project meets the criteria above and does not constitute concurrence as meeting the criteria. Coordination between FHWA and the Coast Guard is required prior to FHWA reaching a determination that the bridge or bridges are eligible under the applicable statutes.

It must be noted that the subject Act which amended Title 23 U.S. Code to include 23 U.S.C. 144(c), did not exclude that category of bridges from the application of 14 U.S.C.85. The later statute requires the establishment, maintenance, and operation of

16591A
November 27, 2012

Coast Guard required lights and signals on fixed structures, including bridges. Approval of lights and other signals required under the provisions of 33 CFR 118 should be obtained, prior to the commencement of construction, from this office. Approval of lights and other signals required under the provisions of 33 CFR 118 should be obtained, prior to the commencement of construction, from this office. If it is determined that federal funds will not be utilized, additional information may be required to determine whether a Coast Guard permit will be required.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact this office.

Sincerely,

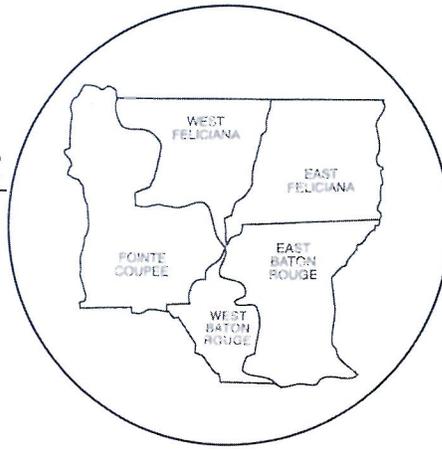
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David M. Frank".

DAVID M. FRANK
Chief Bridge Administration Branch
U.S. Coast Guard
By direction

Copy: Ms. Traci Johnson, LDOTD

CAPITAL AREA GROUND WATER

ANTHONY J. DUPLECHIN
DIRECTOR



CONSERVATION DISTRICT

3535 S. Sherwood Forest Blvd., Suite 137
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70816-2255
Telephone (225) 293-7370

November 30, 2012

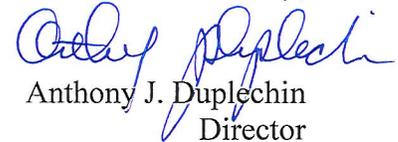
LA DOTD
Environmental Engineer Administrator
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245

Re: State Project No. H.010560.2
Federal Aid Project No. H.010560
Name: Essen Lane Widening: Perkins to I-10
Route: LA 3064
Parish: East Baton Rouge Parish

Dear Sir:

Concerning the referenced project, we anticipate no detrimental effects on the groundwater resources resulting from the project.

Sincerely,


Anthony J. Duplechin
Director



Office of the Planning Commission

City of Baton Rouge and Parish of East Baton Rouge
Post Office Box 1471, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821

or
1100 Laurel Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Phone (225) 389-3144 Fax (225) 389-5342

Troy L. Bunch, FASLA
Planning Director

December 6, 2012

Mr. Noel A. Ardoin, Environmental Engineer Administrator
State of Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245

Dear Mr. Ardoin:

This letter is in response to the request for a Solicitation of Views (State Project Number H010560) for the Essen Lane Widening project.

The City of Baton Rouge-Parish of East Baton Rouge Planning Commission is responsible for implementing the FUTUREBR Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan. FUTUREBR consists of nine elements that outline Goals, Objectives, and Action Items for implementation. There are several Goals and Action Items that relate to transportation and roadway improvements within the City-Parish.

It is our understanding that the Department of Transportation and Development adopted a Complete Streets policy. The City-Parish supports the DOTD's strategy to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected transportation network. It is important to note that the site of the proposed project is one of the targeted corridors identified in FUTUREBR to implement a "Great Streets" program.

The Essen Lane widening project is located in an area designated as a Mixed-Use Corridor in FUTUREBR. Because the location of the proposed project is adjacent to a highway and a railroad corridors, this section of Essen Lane has enormous potential for future development. By 2030, passenger rail service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans could enhance the economy of the entire region and more particularly urban areas where service is proposed. As outlined in the FUTUREBR Vision, the area will also be served by street car and Bus Rapid Transit.

Furthermore, projections indicate that road widening efforts will not be adequate to ease congestion problems in the Baton Rouge area. A fundamental change in how the City-Parish plans and invests in the transportation system is necessary. As such, widening the lanes cannot be done without incorporating Complete Streets characteristics. To successfully solve traffic, mobility, and transportation equity issues, several strategies must be employed. Among them, the following recommended actions relate to the proposed project:

Transportation Goal 3: Implement complete streets policies and design concepts

Action Item TR3.1.1 Adopt Complete Streets cross section standards. This will ensure the future integration of transportation facilities for future transportation improvements and will improve biking and walking opportunities.

Action Item TR3.1.3. Promote complete street cross section revisions whenever corridor reconstruction or reconfiguration occurs.

Transportation Goal 5: Enhance the bicycle and pedestrian network throughout the Parish

Action Item TR5.2.1 Ensure that continued development of sidewalk improvements occurs with other improvements on major arterial corridors where opportunities to enhance the pedestrian environment exist.

Below are implementation ideas that the City-Parish recommends, which are in the Comprehensive Plan known as FUTUREBR:

<http://brgov.com/dept/planning/pdf/FBRTransportationE.pdf>

- Sidewalks should be wide enough to simultaneously accommodate pedestrian movement, seating, trees, bus shelters, and other appropriate amenities that support pedestrian and transit riders social activities. The ultimate goal is to organize buildings and the spaces between them to cultivate street life. The streets and street network should be designed to make walking, sitting, chatting, and meeting a pleasure.
- Add streetscaping and buffering devices to attract pedestrians and make pedestrian and bicycle use more pleasant.
- Create priority lanes for transit vehicles to improve transit efficiency
- Redesign intersections and modify signalization to improve public transit efficiency and safe movement of passenger vehicles, transit, bicyclists, and pedestrian through the intersection.

Two Transportation Building Block types have been identified on the Essen Lane section between Perkins Road and Interstate 10:

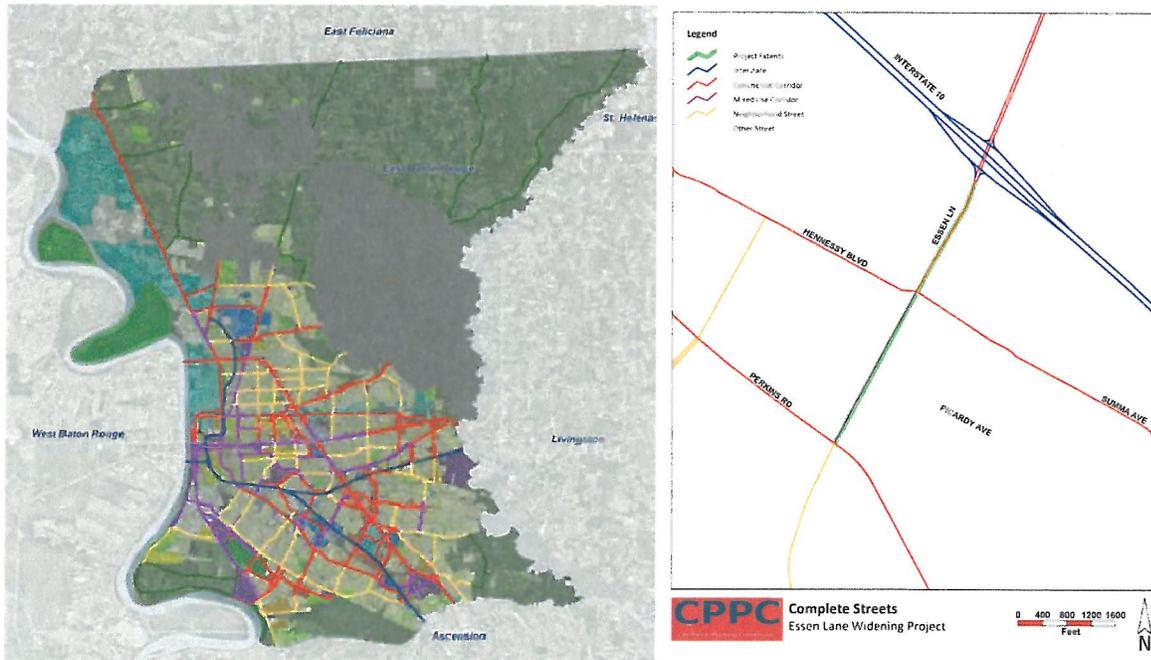
- From Perkins Road to Summa Avenue: Mixed Use corridor (in purple on the map)

The City-Parish recommends wide sidewalks with transit access, dedicated transit lanes, bicycles lanes, bicycle facilities, on-street parking, curb extensions, shared parking, medians and planting strips. These changes will serve as a fulcrum for further work to facilitate the transformation of the street into a community-supporting place. Commercial areas would be strengthened by the installation of a four-foot “mini-median” between the right of way and the sidewalk, which will allow some tree-planting and pedestrian refuge.

- From Summa Avenue to Interstate 10: Commercial corridor (in red on the map)

To serve faster moving traffic, City-Parish Planning Commission staff recommends wider travel lanes, medians, transit accommodations, protected turn lanes, wide pedestrian buffers.

Figure 13: Complete Street Locations



Out of the three alternatives proposed by DOTD, the City-Parish Planning Staff recommends Alternative 2. A center median should incorporate a center turn lane at strategic spots along the corridor, and should accommodate safe pedestrian crossing by inserting central pedestrian crossing islands. Trees should be planted along the sidewalks and in the central median. Furthermore, high medians are not encouraged, rather, below-grade medians with hydric vegetation would serve as low impact stormwater treatment facilities. The installation of curb cuts would allow runoff to collect and infiltrate in the median.

Please contact our office if you have questions regarding this subject.

Sincerely,

Troy L. Bunch, FASLA
Planning Director

TLB/SLM/omh

- c: Ellen A. Miller, Assistant Planning Director
- Ryan Holcomb, Planning Project Coordinator
- C. Lael Holton, Manager, Advance Planning and Research



BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
OFFICE OF CONSERVATION

STEPHEN CHUSTZ
INTERIM SECRETARY
JAMES H. WELSH
COMMISSIONER OF CONSERVATION

December 11, 2012

TO: Ms. Noel Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator
LADOTD
P. O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9245

RE: Solicitation of Views
State Project No.: H.010560.2
Federal Aid Project No.: H.010560
Name: Essen Lane Widening: Perkins to I-10
Route: LA 3064
Parish: East Baton Rouge

Dear Ms. Ardoin:

In response to your letter dated November 7, 2012, concerning the referenced matter, please be advised that the Office of Conservation collects and maintains many types of information regarding oil and gas exploration, production, distribution, and other data relative to the petroleum industry as well as related and non-related injection well information, surface mining and ground water information and other natural resource related data. Most information concerning oil, gas and injection wells for any given area of the state, including the subject area of your letter can be obtained through records search via the SONRIS data access application available at:

<http://www.dnr.louisiana.gov>

A review of our computer records for the referenced project area indicates no oil, gas or injection wells located in the project area. The DNR water well database indicates the possibility that there are registered water wells in the vicinity of the project area. Furthermore, unregistered water wells may be located in the area.

The Office of Conservation maintains records of all activities within its jurisdiction in paper, microfilm or electronic format. These records may be accessed during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, except on State holidays or emergencies that require the Office to be closed. Please call 225-342-5540 for specific contact information or for directions to the Office of Conservation, located in the LaSalle Building, 617 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. For pipelines and other underground hazards, please contact Louisiana One Call at 1-800-272-3020 prior to commencing operations. Should you need to direct your inquiry to any of our Divisions, you may use the following contact information:

<u>Division</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Phone No.</u>	<u>E-mail Address</u>
Engineering	Jeff Wells	225-342-5638	jeff.wells@la.gov
Pipeline	Steven Giambrone	225-342-2989	steven.giambrone@la.gov
Injection & Mining	Laurence Bland	225-342-5515	laurence.bland@la.gov
Geological	Mike Kline	225-342-3335	mike.kline@la.gov
Environmental	Gary Snellgrove	225-342-7222	gary.snellgrove@la.gov

If you have difficulty in accessing the data via the referenced website because of computer related issues, you may obtain assistance from our technical support section by selecting Help on the SONRIS tool bar and submitting an email describing your problems and including a telephone number where you may be reached.

Sincerely,



James H. Welsh

Commissioner of Conservation

JHW:MBK



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 60267
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70160-0267

DEC 13 2012

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Operations Division
Operations Manager,
Completed Works

Mr. Noel Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator
LA DOTD
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9245

Dear Mr. Ardoin:

This is in response to your Solicitation of Views request dated November 7, 2012, concerning the Essen Lane widening in East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana (State Project No. H.010560.2).

We have reviewed your request for potential Department of the Army regulatory requirements and impacts on any Department of the Army projects.

We do not anticipate any adverse impacts to any Corps of Engineers projects.

Information and signatures obtained from recent maps, aerial photography, and local soil surveys concerning this site are indicative of the occurrence of jurisdictional waters and wetlands. Department of the Army (DA) permits are required prior to the deposition or redistribution of dredged or fill material into waters and wetlands that are waters of the United States.

This preliminary determination is advisory in nature. If an approved delineation is needed, please furnish us with the detailed field data concerning vegetation, soils, and hydrology that we require for all jurisdictional decisions. The fact that a field wetland delineation/determination has not been completed does not alleviate your responsibility to obtain the proper DA permits prior to working in wetlands or waters occurring on this property.

Off-site locations of activities such as borrow, disposals, haul-and detour-roads and work mobilization site developments may be subject to Department of the Army regulatory requirements and may have an impact on a Department of the Army project.

You should apply for said permit well in advance of the work to be performed. The application should include sufficiently detailed maps, drawings, photographs, and descriptive text for accurate evaluation of the proposal.

Please contact Mr. Robert Heffner, of our Regulatory Branch by telephone at (504) 862-1288, or by e-mail at Robert.A.Heffner@usace.army.mil for questions concerning wetlands determinations or need for on-site evaluations. Questions concerning regulatory permit requirements may be addressed to Mr. Martin Mayer by telephone at (504) 862-2276 or by e-mail at Martin.S.Mayer@usace.army.mil.

Future correspondence concerning this matter should reference our account number MVN-2012-02764-SZ. This will allow us to more easily locate records of previous correspondence, and thus provide a quicker response.

We apologize for missing the target date of December 7, 2012 listed in your request. Thank you for your patience in this matter.

Sincerely,



Karen L. Clement
Solicitation of Views Manager

From: [Noel Ardoin](#)
To: [Joyce Barkley](#)
Subject: FW: DEQ SOV 121113/2075 Essen Lane Widening -Perkins to I-10
Date: Monday, December 17, 2012 11:33:02 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

From: Beth Altazan-Dixon
Sent: Monday, December 17, 2012 11:27 AM
To: Noel Ardoin
Subject: DEQ SOV 121113/2075 Essen Lane Widening-Perkins to I-10

December 17, 2012

Noel A. Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
P. O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245

RE: State Project No. H.010560.2 - DEQ SOV 121113/2075
FAP No. H.010560
LA 3064, Essen Lane Widening: Perkins to I-10
East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana

Dear Ms. Ardoin:

The Assessment Division of the Office of Environmental Compliance has reviewed the information provided in your letter of November 7, 2012, regarding the referenced project in East Baton Rouge Parish. Effective July 20, 2012, East Baton Rouge Parish was designated by EPA as an ozone nonattainment parish under the 8-hour standard (77 FR 30088, May 21, 2012). Since this federal action is proposed for construction in a nonattainment area, this highway project is subject to the State's transportation conformity regulations as promulgated under *LAC 33:III.Chapter 14, Subchapter B*.

If this project is deemed regionally significant it must be included in a conforming metropolitan transportation plan, i.e., included in a comprehensive regional emissions analysis which demonstrates conformity to the State Implementation Plan for control of ozone.

Should you have any questions regarding state rules and regulations pertaining to transportation conformity, please contact me at (225) 219-3719. Thank you for affording us the opportunity to comment on this transportation project.

Sincerely,

Yasoob Zia

Environmental Scientist Manager
Assessment Division

lhw
121113/2075



Beth Altazan-Dixon, EPS III
Performance Management
LDEQ/Office of the Secretary
Business and Community Outreach and Incentives Division
P.O. Box 4301 (602 N. 5th Street)
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4301
Phone: 225-219-3958
Fax: 225-325-8148
Email: beth.dixon@la.gov



State of Louisiana
Department of Health and Hospitals
Office of Public Health

LA DOTD
Environmental Engineer Administrator
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245

December 17, 2012

Re: State Project No. H.010560.2: Essen Lane widening Perkins to I-10; LA 3064; East Baton Rouge Parish.

This office is in receipt of a Solicitation of View regarding the above referenced project(s).

Based upon the information received from your office we have no objection to the referenced project(s) at this time. The applicant shall be aware of and comply with any and all applicable Louisiana State Sanitary Code regulations (LAC 51, as applicable). Furthermore, should additional project data become available to this office that in any way amend the information upon which this office's response has been based, we reserve the right of additional comment on the referenced project(s).

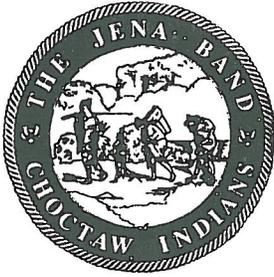
In the event of any future discovery of evidence of non-compliance with the Louisiana Administrative Code Title 51 (Public Health-Sanitary Code) and the Title 48 (Public Health-General) regulations or any applicable public health laws or statutes which may have escaped our awareness during the course of this cursory review, please be advised that this office's preliminary determination on this Solicitation of View of the project(s) shall not be construed as absolving the applicant of responsibility, if any, with respect to compliance with the Louisiana Administrative Code Title 51 (Public Health-Sanitary Code) and the Title 48 (Public Health-General) regulations or any other applicable public health laws or statutes.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Johan Forsman", written over a large, faint, stylized watermark or background graphic.

Johan Forsman
Environmental Health Scientist Manager
Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Public Health
Engineering Services
Telephone: (225) 342-7309
Electronic mail: johan.forsman@la.gov

L.S. Joel



Jena Band of Choctaw Indians

P. O. Box 14 • Jena, Louisiana 71342-0014 • Phone: 318-992-2717 • Fax: 318-992-8244

STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
P.O. BOX 94245
BATON ROUGE, LA 70804

December 18, 2012

STATE PROJECT NO: H. 010560.2
FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO: H.010560
NAME: ESSEN LANE WIDENING: PERKINS TO I-10
ROUTE: LA 3064
PARISH: EAST BATON ROUGE

Mr. Ardoin,

Upon review of the above referenced project, we have determined that the project activities will have "No Effect" on any Historic Properties. We are also unaware of any known sacred and/ or ceremonial sites located within the immediate area. Therefore, we concur with the proposed project activities.

However, should any artifacts or archaeological features be encountered during the scope of said projects activities, work shall cease and our office shall be consulted immediately.

We appreciate your efforts on this project. Should you have any questions, please contact Dana Masters, THPO officer, or Candess Chapman, THPO Secretary, at 318-992-1205 or by E-mail: jbc.thpo106@aol.com.

Sincerely,

Dana Masters
THPO
318-992-1205
Fax- 318-992-8244



Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

P.O. Box 1210 • Durant, OK 74702-1210 • (580) 924-8280

Gregory E. Pyle
Chief

Gary Batton
Assistant Chief

December 31, 2012

Noel Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator
Louisiana Dept of Transportation
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245

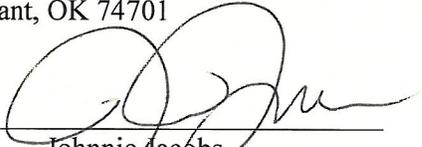
RE: State Project No. H.010560.2, Essen Lane Widening Perkins to I-10 Route 3064, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA

Dear Mr. Ardoin,

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the above referenced project. East Baton Rouge Parish is located within the historic area of interest for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Before we can comment on the likelihood of this project affecting Choctaw historic or sacred sites, we request a copy of the survey reports for all alternatives and SHPO comments concerning this project. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ian Thompson
Director, Historic Preservation Department
Tribal Archaeologist, NAGPRA Specialist, THPO
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
PO Drawer 1210
Durant, OK 74701

By: 

Johnnie Jacobs
Section 106 Coordinator
jjacobs@choctawnation.com

Choctaws... growing with pride, hope and success!



BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT

P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9245

www.dotd.la.gov
225-379-3005

January 3, 2013



SHERRI H. LEBAS, P.E.
SECRETARY

STATE PROJECT NO.: H.010560.2.
F.A.P.: H.010560
NAME: ESSEN LANE WIDENING: PERKINS TO I-10
ROUTE: LA 3064
PARISH: EAST BATON ROUGE

Ms. Noel Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator
LADOTD
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245

Subject: Solicitation of Views

Dear Ms. Ardoin:

Enclosed is a copy of the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for East Baton Rouge Parish indicating the proposed project.

During and after the project, consideration must be given for the occurrence of a base flood inundation. At this time, consideration should also be given to the responsibility for clearing debris and keeping the area cleared so as not to interfere with its function.

In order to assure compliance with the City of Baton Rouge for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), and so that appropriate permits are obtained, please contact the following floodplain administrator: Jim Ferguson, P.O. Box 1471, Baton Rouge, LA 70821 and telephone no. 225-389-3186.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. If you need additional information, please contact our office, (225) 379-3005.

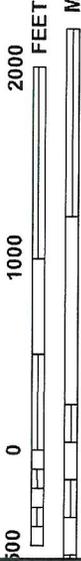
Sincerely,

Susan Veillon, CFM
Floodplain Management Program Coordinator

pc: Jim Ferguson, P.E.



MAP SCALE 1" = 1000'



NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM

PANEL 0265F

FIRM
FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP

EAST BATON ROUGE
PARISH,
LOUISIANA
AND INCORPORATED AREAS
PANEL 265 OF 360
(SEE MAP INDEX FOR FIRM PANEL LAYOUT)

CONTAINS:
COMMUNITY NUMBER PANEL SUFFIX
BATON ROUGE CITY OF 220058 0265 F
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH 220058 0265 F

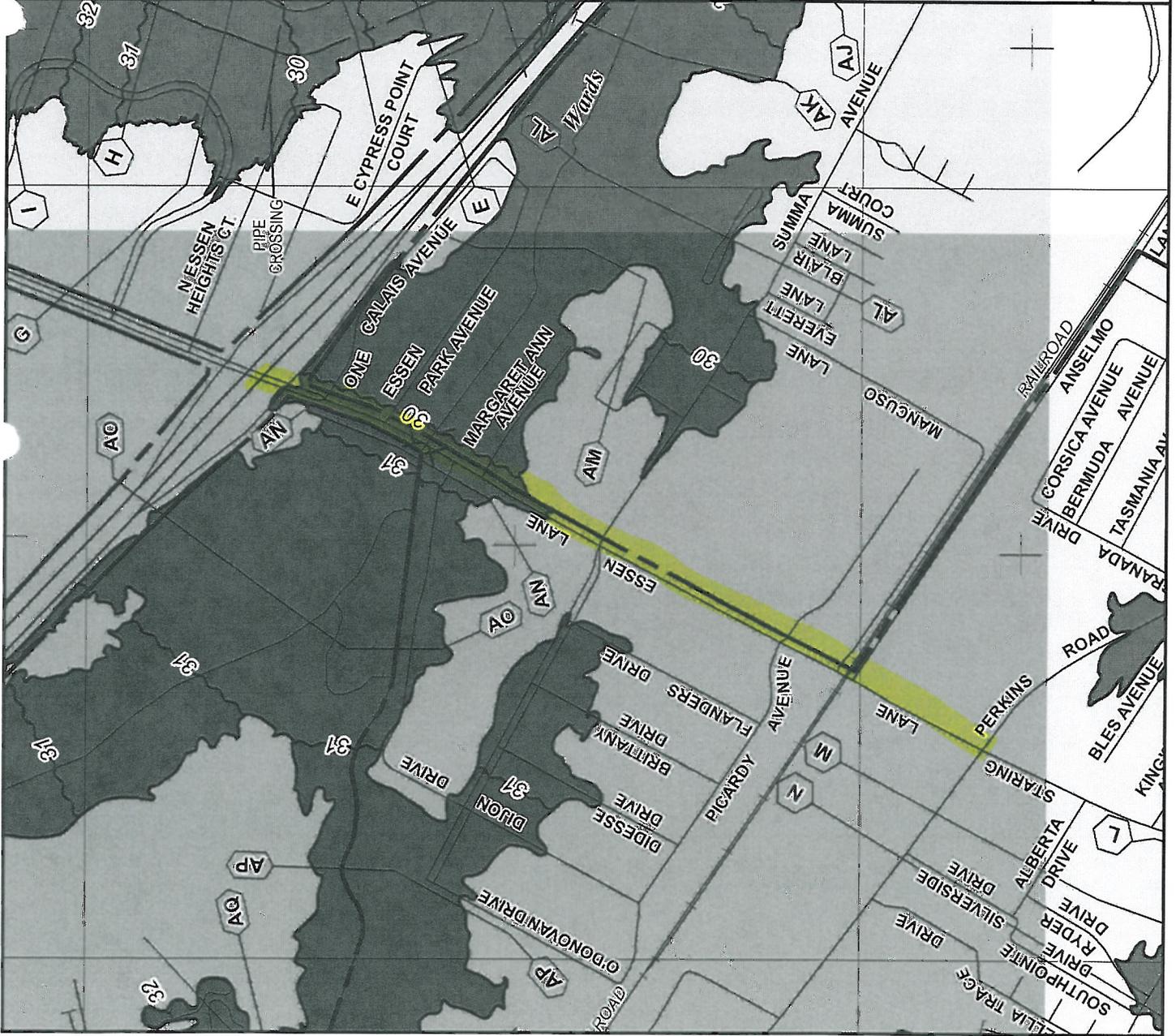
Notice to User: The Map Number shown below should be used when placing map orders; the Community Number shown above should be used on insurance applications for the subject community.



MAP NUMBER
22033C0265F
MAP REVISED
JUNE 19, 2012

Federal Emergency Management Agency

This is an official copy of a portion of the above referenced flood map. It was extracted using F-MIT On-Line. This map does not reflect changes or amendments which may have been made subsequent to the date on the title block. For the latest product information about National Flood Insurance Program flood maps check the FEMA Flood Map Store at www.msc.fema.gov



Appendix C

Follow-Up Coordination
(Section 106 & Navigable Waterways)



BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT

P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9245

www.dotd.la.gov
(225) 242-4502



SHERRI H. LEBAS, P.E.
SECRETARY

November 27, 2012

STATE PROJECT NO. H.010560
F.A.P. NO. H010560
NAME: ESSEN LANE WIDENING
ROUTE: LA 3064
PARISH: EAST BATON ROUGE

Ms. Pam Breaux
State Historic Preservation Officer
Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
Office of Cultural Development
P.O. Box 44247, Capitol Station
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

No known historic properties will be affected by this undertaking. This effect determination could change should new information come to our attention.

Pam Breaux 1-24-13
Pam Breaux Date
State Historic Preservation Officer

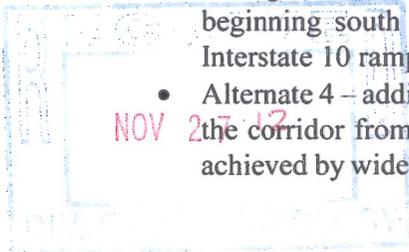
SUBJECT: No Historic Properties Affected

Dear Ms. Breaux:

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) proposes to widen Essen Lane (LA 3064) from Perkins Road (LA 427) to I-10 in Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish (see Figure 1). The existing highway is a six-lane urban arterial roadway (three south bound lanes, and two northbound lanes, and continuous center turn lane) with integral curb and gutter. Four alternatives were developed for improvements to Essen Lane. For the purpose of this finding letter, we are using the maximum amount of required right-of-way (ROW) between all 4 alternatives as the Area of Potential Effects (APE) (see Figure 2). Picardy Avenue improvements are also proposed in order to help with the flow of traffic at the intersection with Essen Lane and are included in the APE. Overall project length would be approximately 0.893 miles. The total acreage of the project area is approximately 15.399 acres (6.232 ha), while the Area of Potential Effects (APE) is the maximum limits of the required right-of-way, approximately 0.949 acres (0.384 ha).

Essen Lane alternate concepts include:

- Alternate 1 – adding a sixth lane as an additional north bound from Perkins road to the Interstate 10 ramps.
- Alternate 2 – adding a 6-lane section with a 16' curb & gutter median to help provide access management to the corridor. The addition of the sixth lane for alternate 2 is achieved by equal widening to both sides of Essen Lane to provide 3-11' lanes south bound and 3-11' lanes north bound from Perkins Road to the Interstate 10 ramps.
- Alternate 3 – adding a 6-lane section with a 16' curb & gutter median to help provide access management to the corridor. The additional lane for alternate 3 is achieved by equal widening beginning south of Hennessy Boulevard intersection and ending approximately 300' south of Interstate 10 ramps.
- Alternate 4 – adding a 6-lane section with a 16' curb & gutter to help provide access management to the corridor from the railroad tracks to Interstate 10. The additional north bound through lane is achieved by widening to both sides of Essen starting on the north side of the existing railroad tracks



STATE PROJECT NO. H.010560
F.A.P. NO. H010560
NAME: ESSEN LANE WIDENING
ROUTE: LA 3064
PARISH: EAST BATON ROUGE

and continuing approximately 300' south of Interstate 10 ramps.

Picardy Avenue Improvements consists of improving Picardy Avenue from a 2-lane section to a 4-lane section with median to provide dual left turns north bound onto Essen Lane and provide access management for any additional future improvements.

Staff from DOTD's Environmental Section searched the Louisiana Divisions of Historic Preservation and Archaeology GIS databases to identify existing archaeological sites, standing structures and districts listed or deemed eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) within or adjacent to the project area. No archaeological sites or districts were identified adjacent to the project area.

In October 2012, staff from DOTD conducted a pedestrian survey within the direct (APE) designated as required right-of-way. Shovel testing was not conducted due to the minimum amount of required right-of-way and the disturbance and utilities in the area (see Figures 3-9). A visual inspection for standing structures greater than 50 years of age located within or adjacent to the project area was also conducted. Two standing structures were identified (see Figures 10-12 and structure forms). Structure number 17-01595 (4912 Essen Lane) is a single story residence built approximately in the mid to late 1960s. Structure number 17-01596 (4898 Essen Lane) is the pump room for East Baton Rouge Parish Department of Public Works Sanitary Sewer Pump Station No. 58, which was built in 1961. Neither structure is considered eligible for the National Register. No further work is recommended for this project.

In conjunction with FHWA, we believe no historic properties will be affected by the proposed project. We request your concurrence.

If you have any questions or comments, please call Robin Daigle at (225) 242-4505.

Sincerely,



Digitally signed by Carey Cox2
DN: cn=Carey Cox2, o=LADOTD,
ou=Section 28,
email=carey.coxe@la.gov, c=US
Date: 2012.11.27 09:20:33 -0600

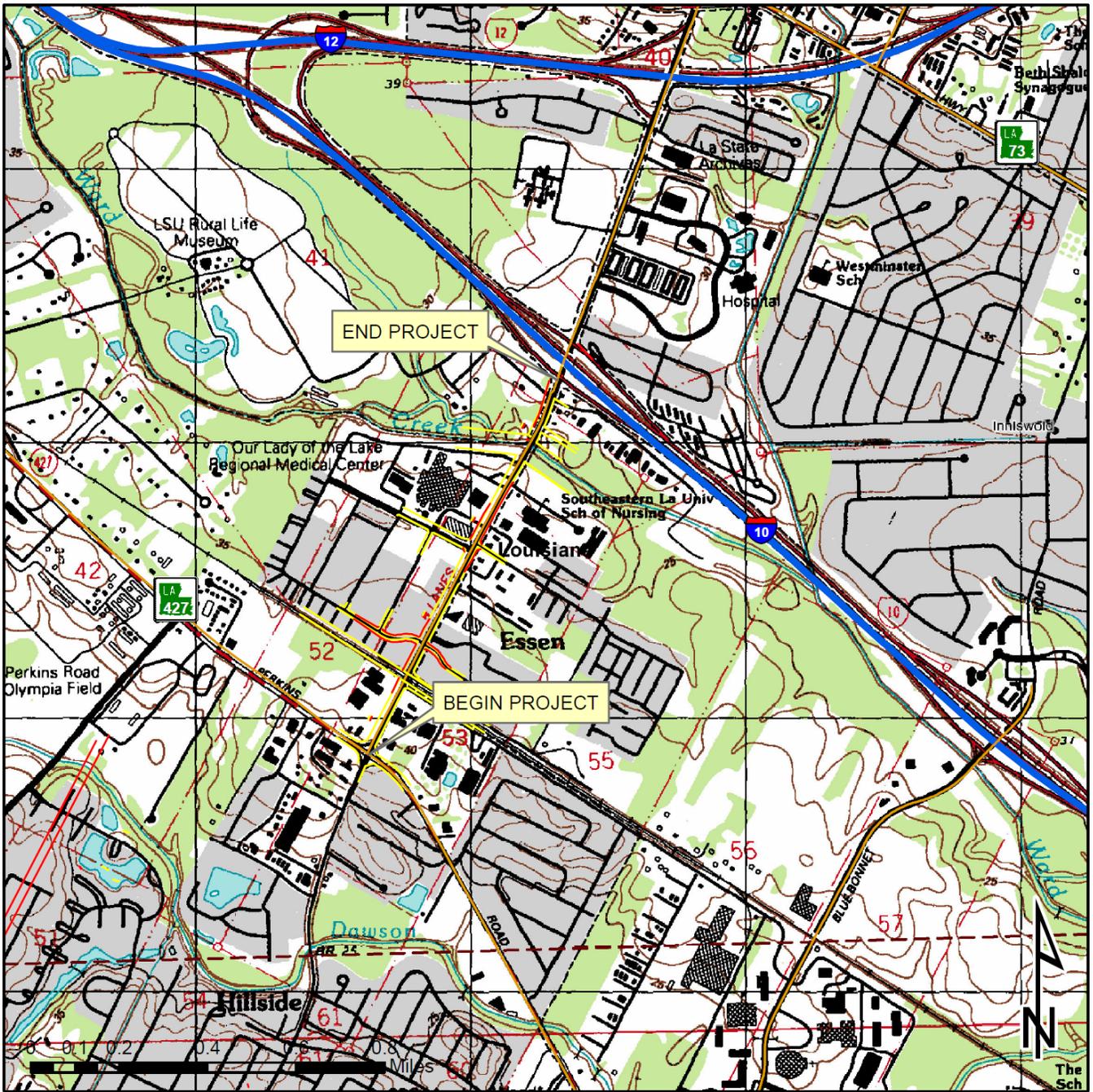
Noel Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator

Attachments

NA/rls

cc: FHWA

Joyce Barkley



STATE PROJECT NO. H.010560
 FAP NO. H010560
 ESSEN LANE WIDENING
 ESSEN LANE
 EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH
 7.5" USGS QUAD EAST BATON ROUGE

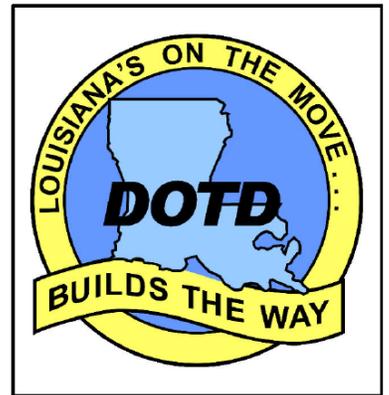


Figure 1. Essen Lane Widening project area 7.5' USGS Quad Map.

STATE PROJECT NO. H.010560
F.A.P. NO. H010560
NAME: ESSEN LANE WIDENING
ROUTE: LA 3064
PARISH: EAST BATON ROUGE

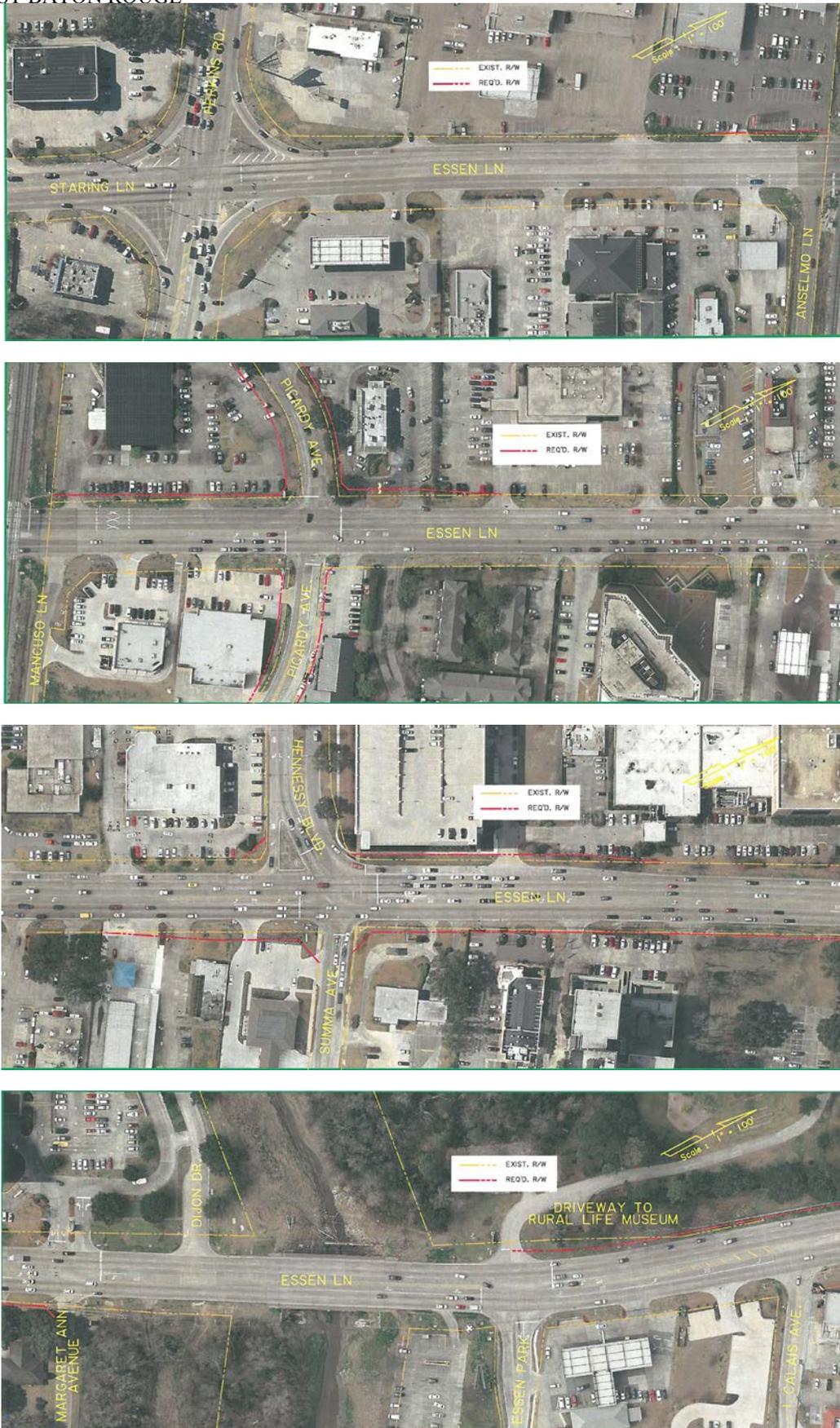


Figure 2. Maximum Required ROW

STATE PROJECT NO. H.010560
F.A.P. NO. H010560
NAME: ESSEN LANE WIDENING
ROUTE: LA 3064
PARISH: EAST BATON ROUGE



Figure 3. View of Essen Lane facing north.



Figure 4. View of Picardy Ave. facing east on the side of McDonald's.

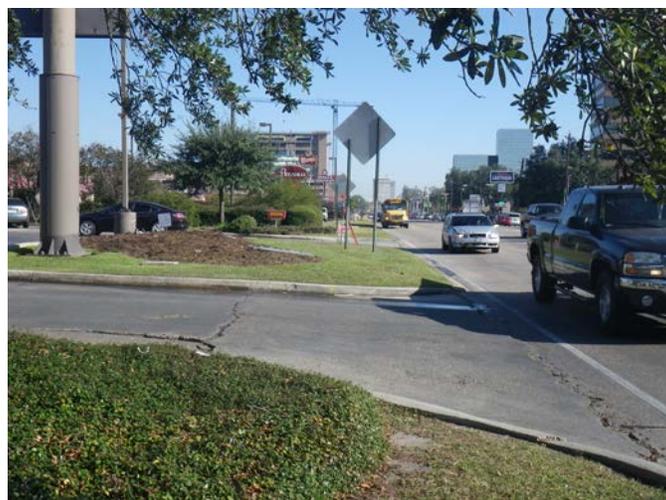


Figure 5. View of Essen Lane facing north in front of McDonald's.

STATE PROJECT NO. H.010560
F.A.P. NO. H010560
NAME: ESSEN LANE WIDENING
ROUTE: LA 3064
PARISH: EAST BATON ROUGE



Figure 6. View of Picardy Ave. facing west.



Figure 7. View of Essen facing south at Picardy Ave.



Figure 8. View of Essen facing north at Summa Ave.

STATE PROJECT NO. H.010560
F.A.P. NO. H010560
NAME: ESSEN LANE WIDENING
ROUTE: LA 3064
PARISH: EAST BATON ROUGE



Figure 9. View of Essen Lane facing south at Margaret Ann Ave.



Figure 10. Aerial of Standing Structure #'s 17-01595 (4912 Essen Lane) and 17-01596 (4898 Essen Lane).

STATE PROJECT NO. H.010560
F.A.P. NO. H010560
NAME: ESSEN LANE WIDENING
ROUTE: LA 3064
PARISH: EAST BATON ROUGE



Figure 11. View of 4912 Essen Lane (Structure # 17-01595) facing east at Margaret Ann Ave.



Figure 12. View of 4898 Essen Lane, Pump Station 58 (Structure # 17-01596).



BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9245
www.dotd.la.gov



SHERRI H. LEBAS, P.E.
SECRETARY

February 1, 2013

Dr. Ian Thompson
Director, Historic Preservation Dept.
Tribal Archaeologist
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
PO Drawer 1210
Durant, OK 74701

RE: State Project No. H.010560 Essen Lane Widening, Solicitation of Views Request

Dear Dr. Thompson,

At your request, I am sending you a copy of the State Historic Preservation Officer's (SHPO) comments regarding the transportation project, H.010560 Essen Lane Widening in East Baton Rouge Parish. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) is proposing to widening Essen Lane from Perkins Road to the I-10 on/off ramps.

The site was surveyed by DOTD staff in October 2012. Two standing structures, greater than 50 years of age, were located. Neither structure were considered eligible for the National Register. A letter of No Affect to Historic Properties was sent to the SHPO on November 27, 2012. The SHPO concurred with our finding on January 24, 2013.

I look forward to your thoughts and comments. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 225-242-4511 or by email at Joyce.Barkley@la.gov.

Sincerely,

Joyce Barkley-Hahn
Environmental Impact Specialist
LADOTD

Encl.



Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

P.O. Box 1210 • Durant, OK 74702-1210 • (580) 924-8280

Gregory E. Pyle
Chief

Gary Batton
Assistant Chief

February 3, 2013

Mr. Noel Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator
State of Louisiana
Dept. of Transportation and Dev.
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9245

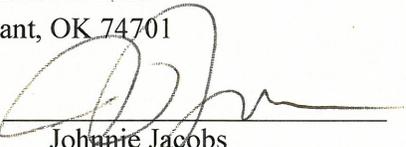
RE: LADOT, State Project No. H.010560 Essen Lane Widening, additional info received, East Baton Rouge Parish, LA.

Dear Mr. Ardoin,

Thank you for sending the additional information requested for the above referenced project. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is unaware of any Choctaw cultural or sacred sites located within the immediate project area. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma concurs that there are no known historic properties that will be affected and that work should proceed as planned. However, as the project is located in an area that is of general historic interest to the Tribe, we request that work be stopped and our office contacted immediately if any Native American cultural materials are encountered. This stipulation should be placed on the construction plans to insure contractors are aware of it. Please feel free to contact me with any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ian Thompson
Director, Historic Preservation Department
Tribal Archaeologist, NAGPRA Specialist
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
PO Drawer 1210
Durant, OK 74701

By: 

Johnnie Jacobs
Section 406 Coordinator

Choctaws... growing with pride, hope and success!



16591C
April 1, 2013

MEMORANDUM

From: David M. Frank 
CGD EIGHT (dpb)

To: Carl M. Highsmith, Program Operations Manager
Federal Highway Administration

Subj: Surface Transportation Authorization Act (STAA) Concurrence

- 1) You have determined by letter dated March 25, 2013 that the following proposed widening of Essen Lane (LA 3064) which will require the widening of the bridge crossing Ward Creek (F.A.P. No. H.010560) in East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana is exempt under the STAA from Coast Guard Permitting. We concur with your findings.
- 2) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has the responsibility for the STAA and based on the information provided by Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LDOTD), the Coast Guard accepts your determination that this bridge project meets the criteria for the STAA and is exempt for Coast Guard Bridge Administration purposes. Plans for the proposed bridge construction project should provide for navigational clearances to accommodate any recreational boating that may exist at high water and should be at an appropriate elevation to pass floodwaters.
- 3) However, this bridge is not exempt from the Coast Guard required lights and other signals as the subject Act which amended Title 23 U.S. Code, to include 23 U.S.C. 144(h), did not exclude this category of bridges from the application of 14 U.S.C. 85. The later statute requires the establishment, maintenance, and operation of Coast Guard required lights and signals on fixed structures, including bridges. The owner, in this case, the LDOTD must request the lighting exemptions and provide the reason, the only exemption being Title 33 CFR 118.40(b). The statement of the reason for this exemption must fulfill the requirements of this section. Specifically, if it is determined that no significant nighttime navigation occurs at this bridge site a statement to this effect is required before a decision can be made. Once we receive the required information from the bridge owner, we will evaluate the specified conditions and respond accordingly.
- 4) If we could be of further assistance, please contact this office.

#

Copy: LDOTD, Ms. Noel Ardoin ✓
LDOTD, Ms. Traci Johnson



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

FHWA Louisiana Division Office

March 25, 2013

5304 Flanders Drive, Suite A
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808
(225) 757-7600
(225) 757-7601 Fax

In Reply Refer To:
HDA-LA

Sherri H. LeBas, P.E.
Secretary
Louisiana Department of Transportation
and Development
Baton Rouge, LA

Subject: FAP. No. H010560
Essen Lane Widening (LA 3064)
East Baton Rouge Parish

Attention: Ms. Traci Johnson, LDOTD
Permits Program Manager

Dear Ms. LeBas:

We have determined under provisions of Section 144(c) of Title 23 U.S. Code that a USCG permit is not needed for the subject project since the waterway is not used and is not susceptible to use in its natural condition or by reasonable improvements as a means to transport interstate or foreign commerce and is non-tidal, or if tidal is used only by recreational boating, fishing, and other small vessels less than 21 feet in length. By copy of this letter we are requesting that the USCG concur in our determination under provision of 23 U.S.C. 144(c).

Should you have any questions, please contact Mr. Scott Nelson, Area Engineer at (225)757-7619.

Sincerely yours,

Digitally signed by Carl Highsmith
DN: cn=Carl Highsmith, o, ou,
email=carl.highsmith@dot.gov,
c=US
Date: 2013.04.01 10:55:05 -05'00'

Carl M. Highsmith
Project Delivery Team Leader

Enclosure (1)

cc: Ms. Noel Ardoin, LDOTD via email
Mr. David Frank, Chief,
Bridge Administration Branch
U.S. Coast Guard via email



BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT

P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9245

www.dotd.la.gov
225-242-4502



SHERRI H. LEBAS, P.E.
SECRETARY

January 25, 2013

STATE PROJECT NO. H.010560
FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO. H010560
ESSEN LANE WIDENING (LA 3064)
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH

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

ATTN: Scott Nelson, Area Engineer

SUBJECT: Bridge Navigability Determination

Dear: Mr. Bolinger,

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) is proposing to widen Essen Lane (LA 3064), from Perkins Road to the I-10 on and off ramps, in East Baton Rouge Parish. As part of the proposed work, the Ward Creek Bridge (Structure #61172583200771) will also need to be widened to accommodate the additional lane. The bridge is located at Latitude 30.4049 Longitude -91.1033 in Section 53 Township 07S Range 01E.

Based on the Solicitation of Views response from the United States Coast Guard, the proposed project will require a navigability determination by your office. Please find attached the preliminary project description, photographs of the bridge structure and water body, and location map for your use in making the determination. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Joyce Barkley-Hahn at (225) 242-4511.

Sincerely,

for Noel Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator

RECEIVED
JAN 30 2013
BY: *dk*

Attachments
NA/jbh *gibb*

PRELIMINARY DESCRIPTION

STATE PROJECT NO.: H.010560.2
FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO.: H010560
NAME: ESSEN LANE WIDENING
ROUTE: LA 3064
PARISH: EAST BATON ROUGE

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development proposes to widen Essen Lane (LA 3064) from Perkins Road to the Interstate 10 Eastbound on and off ramps. The project area is located in Baton Rouge, approximately 1.5 miles southeast of the intersection of I-10 and I-12. The approximate GPS Coordinates for the project are Latitude 30.4049, Longitude -91.1033. The Average Daily Traffic for the roadway is approximately 42,853 vehicles per day.

Currently, the roadway has three 11-foot travel lanes southbound, two 11-foot travel lanes northbound, and a 14-foot, two-way central turn lane. The roadway has no shoulders and subsurface drainage. Three alternatives are being proposed:

Alternative 1 will add a northbound travel lane from Perkins Road to Interstate 10. The final road will have seven total lanes (three northbound, three southbound, and 1 two way center turn lane) and no center median.

Alternative 2 will add a northbound travel lane from Perkins Road to Interstate 10. The final road will have six total lanes (three northbound, three southbound) and a raised center median.

Alternative 3 is the No Build alternative which will leave the roadway as it is.

Both of the build alternatives will have subsurface drainage and will require Right of Way and may require servitudes. Both build alternatives will require widening of the bridge over Ward Creek. The structure number for the bridge is 61172583200771 and it was built in 1972.

Drainage work will also be done as part of this project. It is not known if any relocations will be required as part of this project.

It is anticipated that this project will be processed as an Environmental Assessment.

Site Photographs



Ward Creek (facing NW)



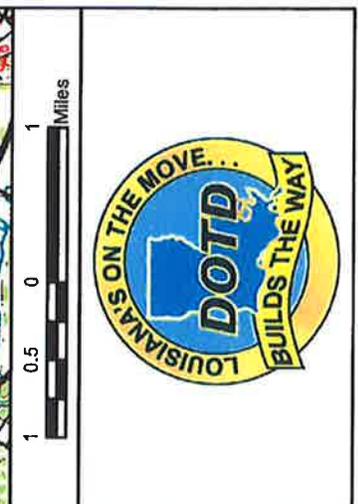
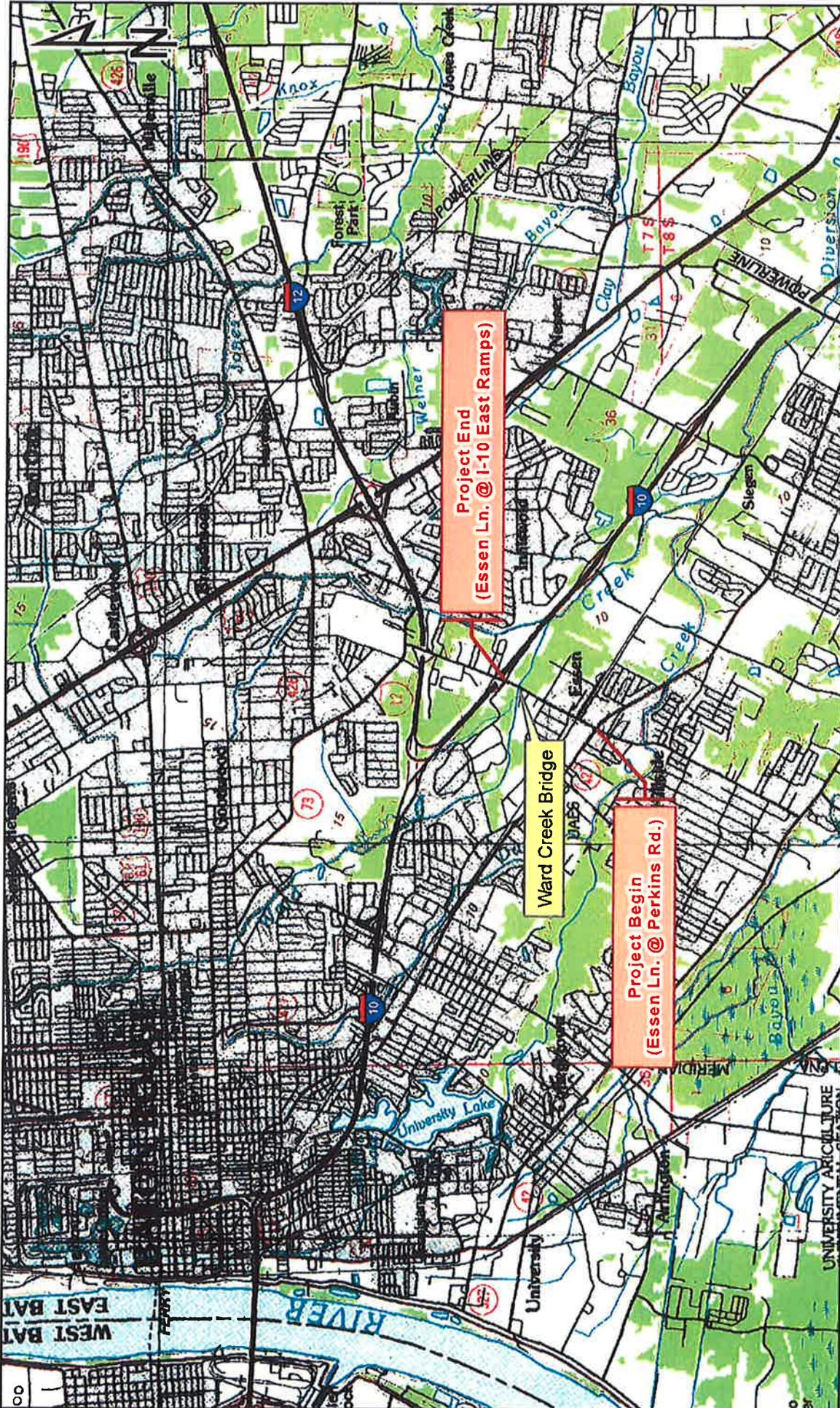
Ward Creek (facing SE)



Ward Creek beneath Essen Lane (facing NW)



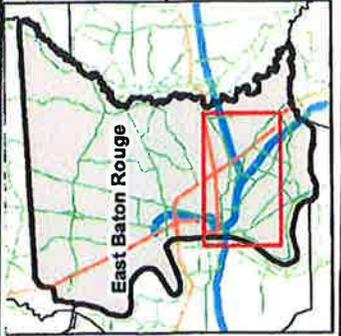
Ward Creek (facing NNW)



AERIAL OVERVIEW MAP

SOURCE: NATIONAL AGRICULTURE IMAGERY PROGRAM (NAIP)

STATE PROJECT NO. H.010560
 FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO. H010560
 ESSEN LANE WIDENING
 LA 3064
 EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH



Appendix D

Wetland Finding

WETLAND FINDING

**STATE PROJECT NO. H.010560
FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO. H010560
ESSEN LANE WIDENING
LA 3064
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH**

Introduction

The following wetland report is prepared in accordance with Executive Order 11990 and D.O.T. Order 5660.1. The *1987 Corps of Engineers' Wetlands Delineation Manual* and *2010 Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plain Region, Version 2.0* (with subsequent clarification memoranda), along with on-site field investigations, were utilized to determine the presence of jurisdictional wetlands within the project termini, and to delineate the wetland boundaries, if present. Staff biologists of the Department conducted a field survey on November 1, 2012.

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) is proposing to widen Essen Lane (LA 3064) from Perkins Road (LA 427) to just south of the I-10 Eastbound on and off ramps. The project area is located in Baton Rouge, approximately 1.5 miles southeast of the intersection of I-10 and I-12 in Sections 41 & 53 of Township 07S Range 01E.

Currently, the roadway has three 11-foot travel lanes southbound, two 11-foot travel lanes northbound, and a 14-foot, two-way central turn lane. The roadway has no shoulders and subsurface drainage. Two build alternatives are being proposed.

- Alternative 1 will add a northbound travel lane from Perkins Road to I-10. The finished roadway will have seven total lanes (three northbound, three southbound, and a two-way center turn lane) with no center median.
- Alternative 2 will add a northbound travel lane from Perkins Road to I-10. The finished roadway will have six total lanes (three northbound, three southbound) with a center raised median.

In addition to widening Essen Lane, both build alternatives include the widening of Summa Avenue at its intersection with Essen Lane. The existing movements from Summa Avenue consist of one right turn lane and one combination through and left turn lane. The proposed widening would allow for separate through and left turn lanes, in addition to the right turn lane.

Alternatives 1 and 2 will include subsurface drainage, sidewalks, additional right-of-way, and possibly servitudes. In both build alternatives, the bridge over Ward Creek (Latitude 30.4049, Longitude -91.1033) will be widened to accommodate the additional travel lane. Built in 1972, the structure (Structure No. 61172583200771) is a concrete slab span bridge. However, the widening of this structure will not require additional right-of-way. Both build alternatives will require approximately the same amount of required right-of-way. The project limits encompass 12.88 acres, which includes 12.18 acres of existing right-of-way and 0.70 acres of required right-of-way. Overall project length is approximately 0.87 miles.

Method

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic quadrangle maps were reviewed prior to the initiation of fieldwork to identify the potential extent of wetlands present along the proposed alignments. The *Soil Survey of East Baton Rouge Parish* produced by the USDA was utilized to determine what type of soils might be expected at the proposed site. The approximate centerline of the alignment was traversed to insure adequate coverage. Sites with wetland potential were investigated.

Routine Wetland Determination Data Forms, as approved by Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 11/2010 Version, were completed for each plant community encountered along the proposed alignments. These data forms contain sufficient information regarding the presence or absence of hydric soils, hydrophytic vegetation, and wetland hydrology, to support the demarcation of a wetland boundary.

Dominant vegetation was recorded on the data forms along with the indicator status as listed in the *North American Digital Flora: National Wetland Plant List*, for the State of Louisiana, published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Once dominant vegetation was recorded and evaluated, if more than 50 percent of the dominant vegetation had an indicator status of FAC, FACW, or OBL, the hydrophytic vegetation criterion was recorded as met.

Wetland hydrology indicators were also recorded at each sample site on the data form. If a sample site indicated the presence of at least one primary or two secondary hydrology indicators, the area was assumed to have wetland hydrology.

Photographs were taken at each point where a data form was completed, as well as at potential Waters of the US sites. These photographs show vegetation in each plant stratum (tree, sapling/shrub, and herbaceous vegetation when present) and a representative soil profile.

The proposed project is located within the Bayou Manchac-Amite River Watershed (HUC Code 0807020208). Ward Creek drains to directly to Bayou Manchac, which empties into the Amite River.

Results

Potential Jurisdictional Wetlands

WS 1: This site is located on the southern bank of Ward Creek, located at Latitude 30.4048, Longitude -91.1034. The dominant vegetation consists of Asiatic dayflower (*Commelina communis*), love-in-a-puff (*Cardiospermum halicacabum*), and large barnyard grass (*Echinochloa crus-galli*). One hundred percent (100%) of the dominant species have wetland indicators. Wetland hydrology indicators include saturation, sediment deposits, crawfish burrows, and the FAC-Neutral test. The matrix of the lower soil layers displayed low-chroma colors, which is indicative of a depleted matrix. The area meets all three requirements indicating that wetlands are present. The estimated area of wetlands that will be impacted is approximately **0.07 acres**.

Potential Jurisdictional Other Waters of the U.S.

OWS 1: This site consists of the portion of Ward Creek within the project limits, located at Latitude 30.4049, Longitude -91.1033. The creek is characterized by a defined bank line and an obvious ordinary high water mark, and has a water depth and inundation period that is not conducive to hydrophytic vegetation growth. The estimated area of Other Waters of the U.S. that will be impacted is approximately **0.09 acres**.

Conclusion

Following a thorough examination of the available project information and the proposed project site, it is the professional opinion of LA DOTD biologists that these sites satisfy the criteria to be jurisdictional pursuant to the *Army Corps of Engineers' 1987 Manual* (or *2010 Regional Supplement*) with subsequent clarification memoranda, and pursuant to confirmation by the Army Corps of Engineers. It is our conclusion that the proposed project will impact a total of approximately **0.07 acres of jurisdictional wetlands** and **0.09 acres of jurisdictional Other Waters of the U.S.**

Mitigation

The Department will mitigate the wetlands being impacted by construction activities for this project by minimizing impacts as listed in the Department's Standard Specification and mitigate for lost wetland habitats by reseeded with the appropriate plants and seedlings. In addition, the Department will coordinate appropriate mitigation planned with the Corps of Engineers.

In an effort to minimize damages resulting from the proposed action, the Louisiana Standard Specifications for Roads and Bridges, 2006 edition, requires that the contractor take certain measures toward reducing environmental (wetland) damages. These measures are described in, but not limited to, the following sections:

1. Scope of Work - Section 104
2. Control of Work - Section 105
3. Legal Relations and Responsibility to Public - Section 107
4. Clearing and Grubbing -Section 201
5. Removal or Relocation of Structures and Obstructions - Section 202
6. Excavation and Embankment - Section 203
7. Temporary Erosion Control - Section 204

It has been determined that there is no practicable alternative to the proposed construction involving wetlands and the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands which may result from this project.



Chad Turner *CET*
Environmental Impact Specialist,
LADOTD/Environmental Section
April 16, 2013

Site Photographs



OWS 1 Ward Creek (facing NW)



OWS 1 Ward Creek (facing SE)



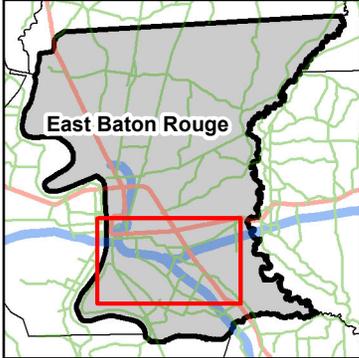
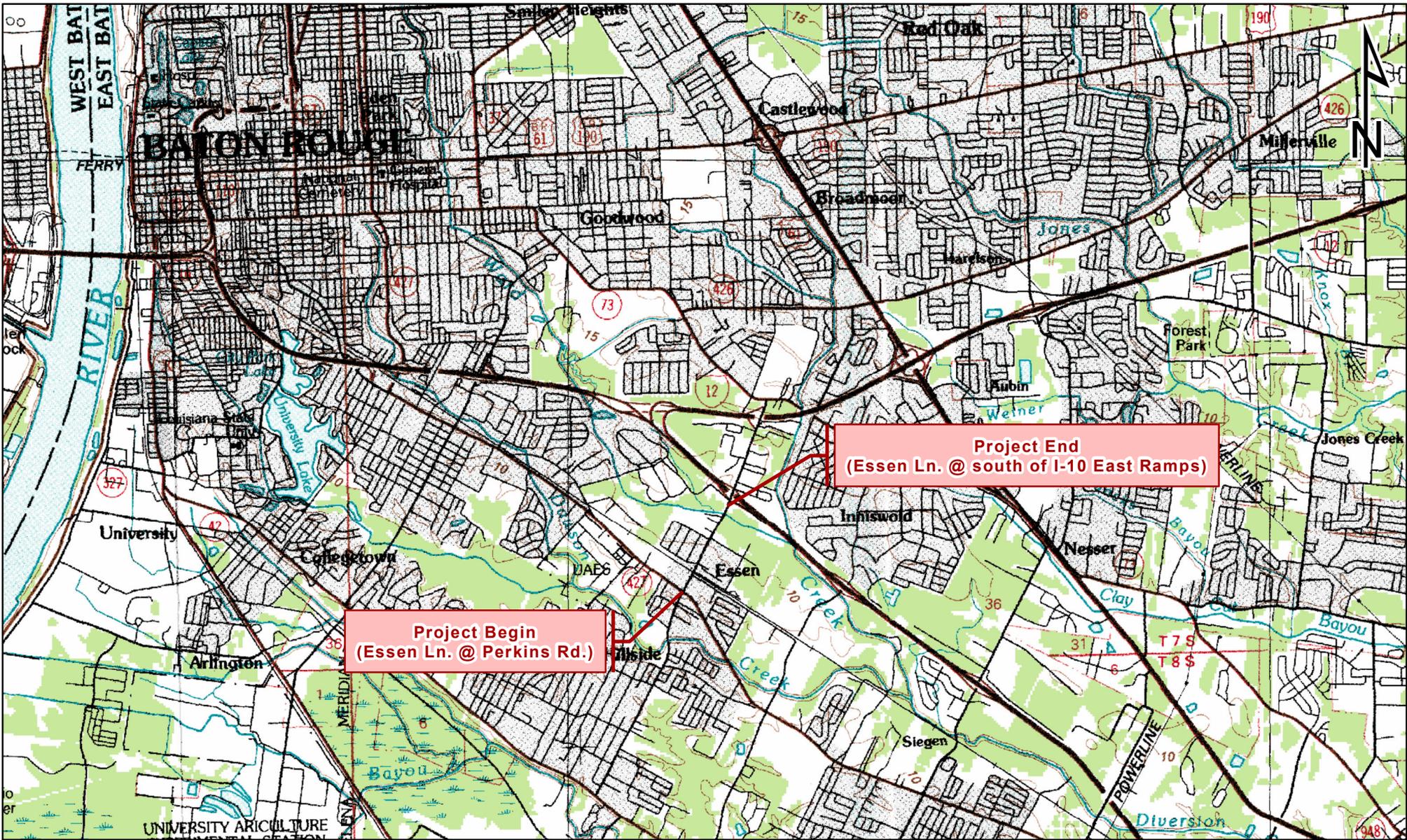
OWS 1 Ward Creek beneath Essen Lane (facing NW); **WS 1**, on the southern bank, is to the left



WS 1 Vegetation (facing NNW); **OWS 1** is pictured in the background



WS 1 Soil Profile

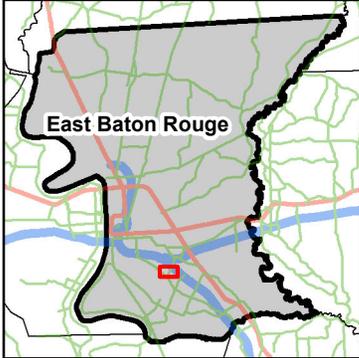
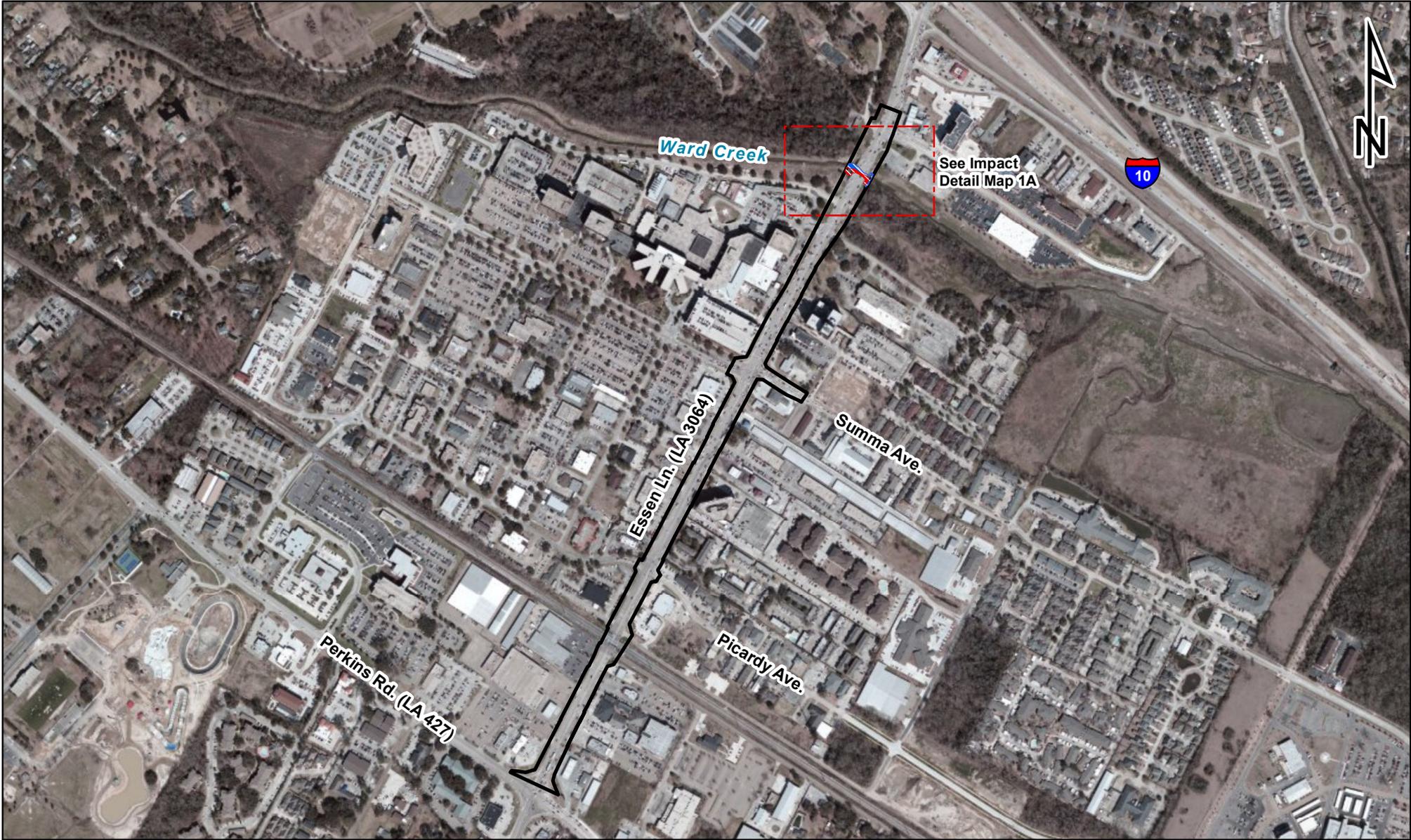


LOCATION MAP

SOURCE: USGS 1:100,000 TOPOGRAPHIC MAP - BATON ROUGE QUADRANGLE

STATE PROJECT NO. H.010560
 FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO. H010560
ESSEN LANE WIDENING
 LA 3064
 EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH





LEGEND

Project Limits
 12.88 acres

Wetlands
 0.07 acres

Other Waters
 0.09 acres

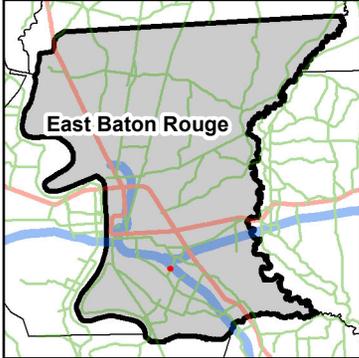
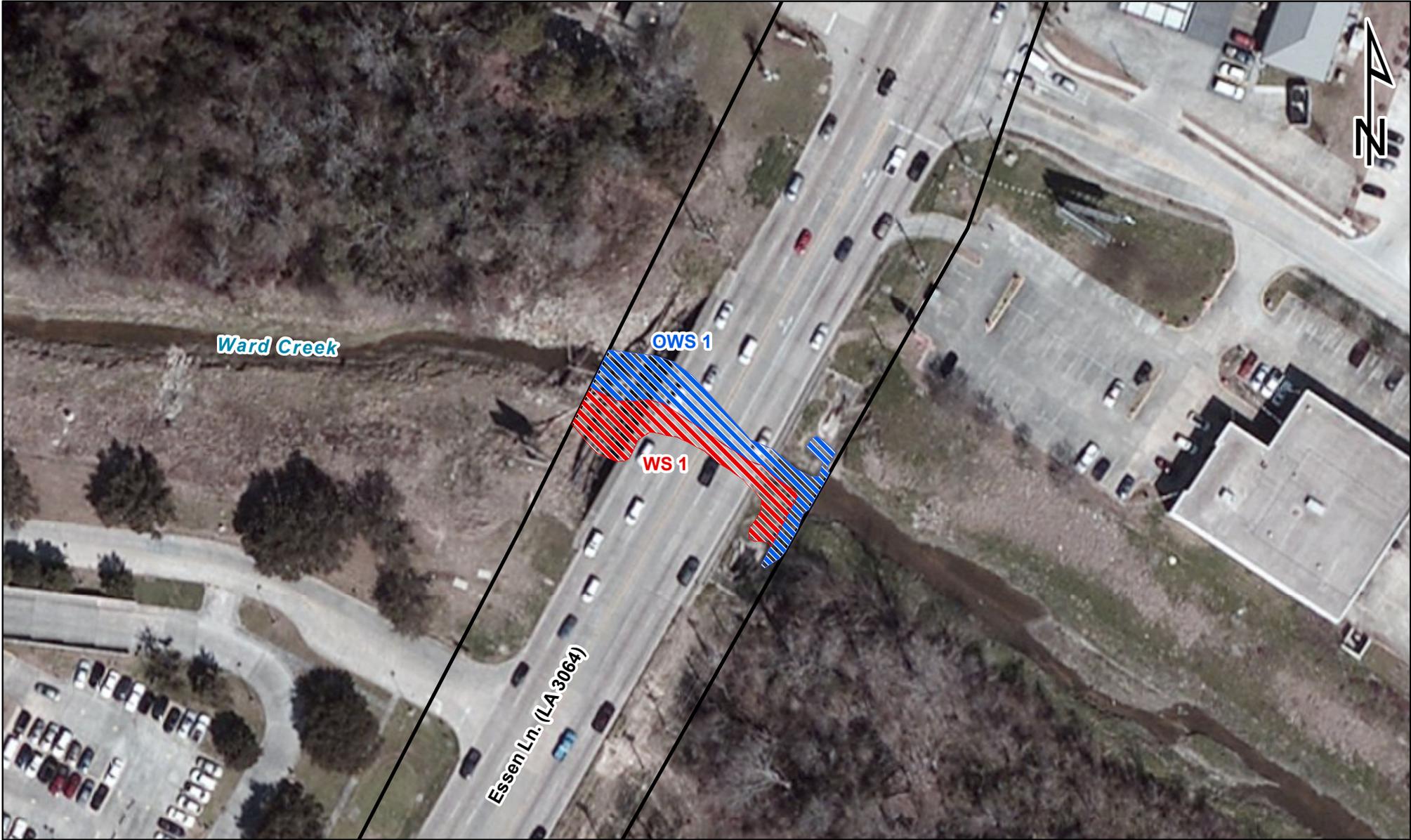


AERIAL OVERVIEW MAP

SOURCE: ESRI BASEMAP IMAGERY

STATE PROJECT NO. H.010560
 FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO. H010560
ESSEN LANE WIDENING
 LA 3064
 EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH





LEGEND

- Project Limits** 12.88 acres
- Wetlands** 0.07 acres
- Other Waters** 0.09 acres



IMPACT DETAIL MAP 1A

SOURCE:ESRI BASEMAP IMAGERY

STATE PROJECT NO. H.010560
 FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO. H010560
ESSEN LANE WIDENING
 LA 3064
 EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH



WETLAND DETERMINATION DATA FORM – Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plain Region

Project/Site: H.010560 City/County: East Baton Rouge Sampling Date: 11/1/12
 Applicant/Owner: LADOTD State: LA Sampling Point: WS 1
 Investigator(s): C.Turner Section, Township, Range: Section 53 Township 07S Range 01E
 Landform (hillslope, terrace, etc.): creek bank Local relief (concave, convex, none): concave Slope (%): _____
 Subregion (LRR or MLRA): LRR P, MLRA 134 Lat: 30.4048 Long: -91.1034 Datum: NAD 83
 Soil Map Unit Name: Udarents NWI classification: _____

Are climatic / hydrologic conditions on the site typical for this time of year? Yes _____ No _____ (If no, explain in Remarks.)
 Are Vegetation _____, Soil _____, or Hydrology _____ significantly disturbed? Are "Normal Circumstances" present? Yes _____ No _____
 Are Vegetation _____, Soil _____, or Hydrology _____ naturally problematic? (If needed, explain any answers in Remarks.)

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – Attach site map showing sampling point locations, transects, important features, etc.

Hydrophytic Vegetation Present? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No _____ Hydric Soil Present? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No _____ Wetland Hydrology Present? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No _____	Is the Sampled Area within a Wetland? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No _____
Remarks:	

HYDROLOGY

Wetland Hydrology Indicators: Primary Indicators (minimum of one is required; check all that apply)	Secondary Indicators (minimum of two required)
<input type="checkbox"/> Surface Water (A1) <input type="checkbox"/> Aquatic Fauna (B13) <input type="checkbox"/> High Water Table (A2) <input type="checkbox"/> Marl Deposits (B15) (LRR U) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Saturation (A3) <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrogen Sulfide Odor (C1) <input type="checkbox"/> Water Marks (B1) <input type="checkbox"/> Oxidized Rhizospheres along Living Roots (C3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sediment Deposits (B2) <input type="checkbox"/> Presence of Reduced Iron (C4) <input type="checkbox"/> Drift Deposits (B3) <input type="checkbox"/> Recent Iron Reduction in Tilled Soils (C6) <input type="checkbox"/> Algal Mat or Crust (B4) <input type="checkbox"/> Thin Muck Surface (C7) <input type="checkbox"/> Iron Deposits (B5) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Explain in Remarks) <input type="checkbox"/> Inundation Visible on Aerial Imagery (B7) <input type="checkbox"/> Water-Stained Leaves (B9)	<input type="checkbox"/> Surface Soil Cracks (B6) <input type="checkbox"/> Sparsely Vegetated Concave Surface (B8) <input type="checkbox"/> Drainage Patterns (B10) <input type="checkbox"/> Moss Trim Lines (B16) <input type="checkbox"/> Dry-Season Water Table (C2) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crayfish Burrows (C8) <input type="checkbox"/> Saturation Visible on Aerial Imagery (C9) <input type="checkbox"/> Geomorphic Position (D2) <input type="checkbox"/> Shallow Aquitard (D3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAC-Neutral Test (D5) <input type="checkbox"/> Sphagnum moss (D8) (LRR T, U)
Field Observations: Surface Water Present? Yes _____ No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Depth (inches): _____ Water Table Present? Yes _____ No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Depth (inches): _____ Saturation Present? (includes capillary fringe) Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No _____ Depth (inches): <u>0</u>	Wetland Hydrology Present? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No _____
Describe Recorded Data (stream gauge, monitoring well, aerial photos, previous inspections), if available:	
Remarks:	

VEGETATION (Four Strata) – Use scientific names of plants.

Sampling Point: WS 1

<u>Tree Stratum</u> (Plot size: _____)	Absolute % Cover	Dominant Species?	Indicator Status	Dominance Test worksheet:	
1. _____	_____	_____	_____	Number of Dominant Species That Are OBL, FACW, or FAC: <u>3</u> (A)	
2. _____	_____	_____	_____	Total Number of Dominant Species Across All Strata: <u>3</u> (B)	
3. _____	_____	_____	_____	Percent of Dominant Species That Are OBL, FACW, or FAC: <u>100%</u> (A/B)	
4. _____	_____	_____	_____	Prevalence Index worksheet: Total % Cover of: _____ Multiply by: _____ OBL species _____ x 1 = _____ FACW species _____ x 2 = _____ FAC species _____ x 3 = _____ FACU species _____ x 4 = _____ UPL species _____ x 5 = _____ Column Totals: _____ (A) _____ (B) Prevalence Index = B/A = _____	
5. _____	_____	_____	_____		
6. _____	_____	_____	_____		
7. _____	_____	_____	_____		
8. _____	_____	_____	_____		
_____ = Total Cover					
50% of total cover: <u>0</u> 20% of total cover: <u>0</u>					
<u>Sapling/Shrub Stratum</u> (Plot size: _____)					
1. _____	_____	_____	_____	Hydrophytic Vegetation Indicators: <input type="checkbox"/> 1 - Rapid Test for Hydrophytic Vegetation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 - Dominance Test is >50% <input type="checkbox"/> 3 - Prevalence Index is ≤3.0 ¹ <input type="checkbox"/> Problematic Hydrophytic Vegetation ¹ (Explain)	
2. _____	_____	_____	_____		
3. _____	_____	_____	_____		
4. _____	_____	_____	_____		
5. _____	_____	_____	_____		
6. _____	_____	_____	_____		
7. _____	_____	_____	_____		
8. _____	_____	_____	_____		
_____ = Total Cover				¹ Indicators of hydric soil and wetland hydrology must be present, unless disturbed or problematic.	
50% of total cover: <u>0</u> 20% of total cover: <u>0</u>					
<u>Herb Stratum</u> (Plot size: <u>30 ft.</u>)					
1. <u>Commelina communis</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>FAC</u>		Definitions of Four Vegetation Strata: Tree – Woody plants, excluding vines, 3 in. (7.6 cm) or more in diameter at breast height (DBH), regardless of height. Sapling/Shrub – Woody plants, excluding vines, less than 3 in. DBH and greater than 3.28 ft (1 m) tall. Herb – All herbaceous (non-woody) plants, regardless of size, and woody plants less than 3.28 ft tall. Woody vine – All woody vines greater than 3.28 ft in height.
2. <u>Cardiospermum halicacabum</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>FAC</u>		
3. <u>Echinochloa crus-galli</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>FACW</u>		
4. <u>Persicaria punctata</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>OBL</u>		
5. <u>Ludwigia decurrens</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>OBL</u>		
6. _____	_____	_____	_____		
7. _____	_____	_____	_____		
8. _____	_____	_____	_____		
9. _____	_____	_____	_____		
10. _____	_____	_____	_____		
11. _____	_____	_____	_____		
12. _____	_____	_____	_____		
_____ = Total Cover					
50% of total cover: <u>35</u> 20% of total cover: <u>14</u>					
<u>Woody Vine Stratum</u> (Plot size: _____)				Hydrophytic Vegetation Present? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
1. _____	_____	_____	_____		
2. _____	_____	_____	_____		
3. _____	_____	_____	_____		
4. _____	_____	_____	_____		
5. _____	_____	_____	_____		
_____ = Total Cover					
50% of total cover: <u>0</u> 20% of total cover: <u>0</u>					
Remarks: (If observed, list morphological adaptations below).					

SOIL

Sampling Point: WS 1

Profile Description: (Describe to the depth needed to document the indicator or confirm the absence of indicators.)

Depth (inches)	Matrix		Redox Features				Texture	Remarks
	Color (moist)	%	Color (moist)	%	Type ¹	Loc ²		
0-5	10YR 2/2						SiCL	
5-16	10YR 4/1	95	10YR 4/6	5	C	M	SiCL	

¹Type: C=Concentration, D=Depletion, RM=Reduced Matrix, MS=Masked Sand Grains.

²Location: PL=Pore Lining, M=Matrix.

Hydric Soil Indicators: (Applicable to all LRRs, unless otherwise noted.)

- Histosol (A1)
- Histic Epipedon (A2)
- Black Histic (A3)
- Hydrogen Sulfide (A4)
- Stratified Layers (A5)
- Organic Bodies (A6) (LRR P, T, U)
- 5 cm Mucky Mineral (A7) (LRR P, T, U)
- Muck Presence (A8) (LRR U)
- 1 cm Muck (A9) (LRR P, T)
- Depleted Below Dark Surface (A11)
- Thick Dark Surface (A12)
- Coast Prairie Redox (A16) (MLRA 150A)
- Sandy Mucky Mineral (S1) (LRR O, S)
- Sandy Gleyed Matrix (S4)
- Sandy Redox (S5)
- Stripped Matrix (S6)
- Dark Surface (S7) (LRR P, S, T, U)

- Polyvalue Below Surface (S8) (LRR S, T, U)
- Thin Dark Surface (S9) (LRR S, T, U)
- Loamy Mucky Mineral (F1) (LRR O)
- Loamy Gleyed Matrix (F2)
- Depleted Matrix (F3)
- Redox Dark Surface (F6)
- Depleted Dark Surface (F7)
- Redox Depressions (F8)
- Marl (F10) (LRR U)
- Depleted Ochric (F11) (MLRA 151)
- Iron-Manganese Masses (F12) (LRR O, P, T)
- Umbric Surface (F13) (LRR P, T, U)
- Delta Ochric (F17) (MLRA 151)
- Reduced Vertic (F18) (MLRA 150A, 150B)
- Piedmont Floodplain Soils (F19) (MLRA 149A)
- Anomalous Bright Loamy Soils (F20) (MLRA 149A, 153C, 153D)

Indicators for Problematic Hydric Soils³:

- 1 cm Muck (A9) (LRR O)
- 2 cm Muck (A10) (LRR S)
- Reduced Vertic (F18) (outside MLRA 150A,B)
- Piedmont Floodplain Soils (F19) (LRR P, S, T)
- Anomalous Bright Loamy Soils (F20) (MLRA 153B)
- Red Parent Material (TF2)
- Very Shallow Dark Surface (TF12)
- Other (Explain in Remarks)

³Indicators of hydrophytic vegetation and wetland hydrology must be present, unless disturbed or problematic.

Restrictive Layer (if observed):

Type: _____
 Depth (inches): _____

Hydric Soil Present? Yes No

Remarks:

Appendix E

Highway Traffic Noise Impact and Abatement Study

(without Appendices)

Federal Highway Administration
And
Louisiana Department of Transportation and
Development

Highway Traffic Noise Impact and Abatement Study

SP# H.010560.2
Essen Lane Widening
Route: LA 3064
East Baton Rouge Parish



April 2013

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
PURPOSE & SCOPE	6
DESCRIPTION OF LAND USAGE	6
Current Use	6
Future Use	8
TRAFFIC NOISE MODEL	8
Modeling Procedures	8
Model Validation	9
Existing Noise Levels (year 2013)	10
Future No-Build Noise Level (year 2033)	10
Future Build Noise Level (year 2033)	10
ANALYSIS OF THE NOISE ABATEMENT METHODS	13
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ZONING	13
ANALYSIS OF CONSTRUCTION NOISE	13
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	14
Figure 1: Overhead aerial of project area with labeled roadways.	2
Figure 2: Overhead aerial of project area with labeled roadways.	3
Figure 3: Overhead aerial of project area with labeled roadways.	4
Figure 4: Overhead aerial of project area with labeled roadways.	5
Figure 5: Modeling method.	9
Table 1: FHWA's Noise Abatement Criteria	7
Table 2: TNM Validation Results.....	10
Table 3: Receiver noise levels in the Current, Future No Build, and Future Build Scenarios.	11
Appendices:	
Appendix A: The LADOTD Traffic Noise policy.	
Appendix B: TNM Inputs.	
Appendix C: TNM model validation results.	
Appendix D: Current Year model information and results.	
Appendix E: Future No-build model information and results.	
Appendix F: Future Build model information and results.	
Appendix G: Project Area with Receivers.	
Appendix H: Approximate Locations of 66 and 71 dBA Threshold Lines	

**TRAFFIC NOISE ANALYSIS
STATE PROJECT NO.: H.010560.2
ESSEN LANE WIDENING
ROUTE: LA 3064
PARISH: EAST BATON ROUGE**

INTRODUCTION

The captioned project calls for widening Essen Lane (LA 3064) between Perkins Road (LA 427) and Essen Park Avenue in the city of Baton Rouge. Currently, the roadway has three 11-foot travel lanes southbound, two 11-foot travel lanes northbound, and a 14-foot, two-way center turn lane. The roadway has no shoulders and subsurface drainage. Three alternatives are being proposed: adding one northbound travel lane and keeping the two-way center turn lane, adding one northbound lane and replacing the center turn lane with a raised median, and the No Build alternative. One bridge will be widened with both build alternatives. This Federally-Aided project will be adding capacity to the roadway, and therefore meets the criteria for a Type I project and a traffic noise analysis is mandated by the regulations in the Federal Register under 23 CFR 772. This analysis will be provided to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for approval prior to receiving funding.

This report analyzes noise impacts due to the implementation of the captioned project as well as the projected normal traffic growth. Topics discussed include field measurement, computer modeling and methodology, noise impacts, and abatement methods. Projected noise impacts, based on the data for the existing and proposed conditions, will be discussed. Noise abatement measures are evaluated for areas where impacts are anticipated. Traffic noise impacts are defined by Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) as noise impacts which occur when the predicted traffic noise levels equal or exceed the LADOTD Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC), or when the predicted traffic noise levels exceed the existing noise levels by 10 dBA. The NAC are presented below in Table 1. If it is determined that there are noise impacts in the project area, then noise abatement measures will be analyzed for reasonability and feasibility. The latest LADOTD Highway Traffic Noise Policy, dated July 2011 is provided in Appendix A.

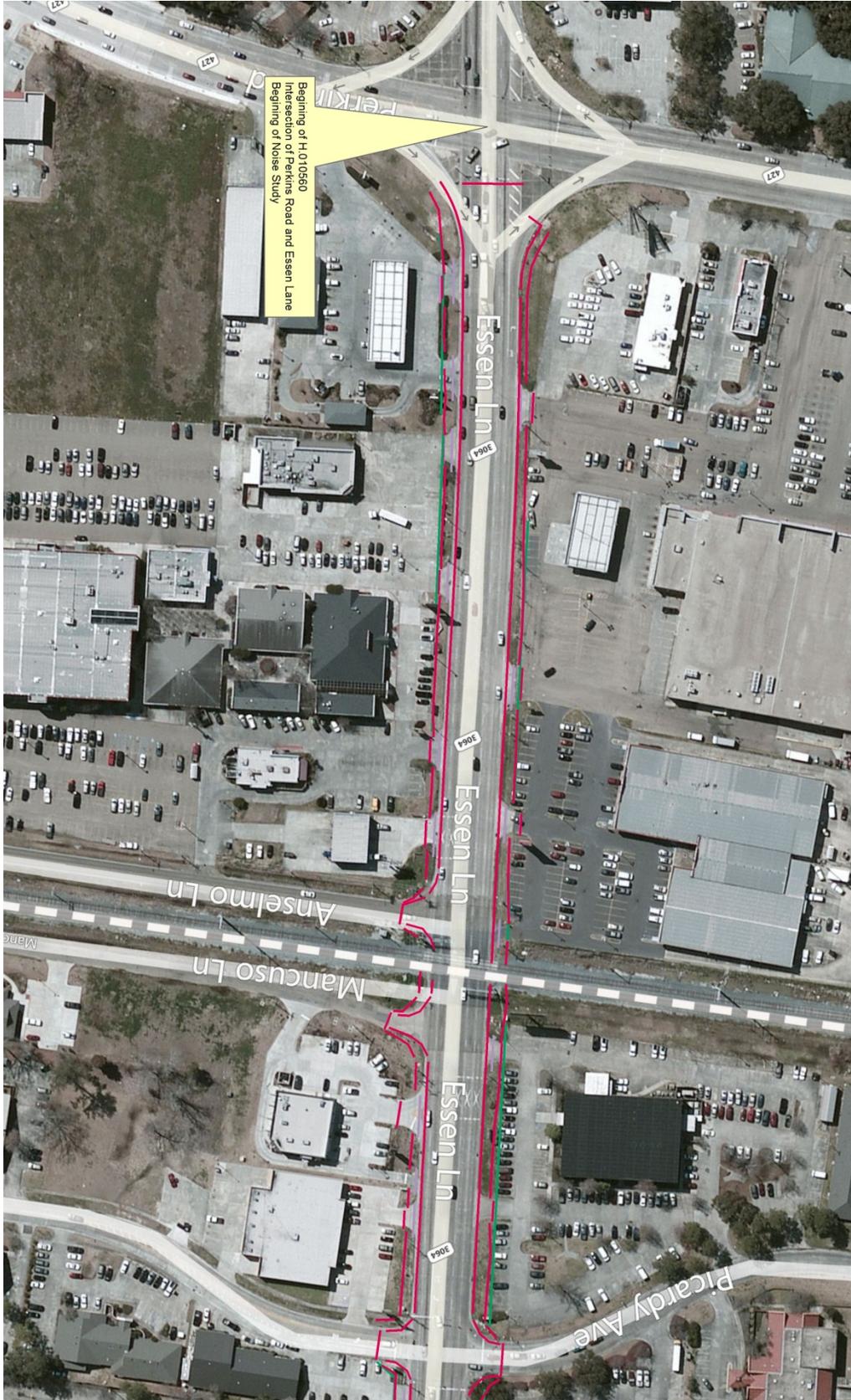


Figure 1: Overhead aerial of project area with labeled roadways.

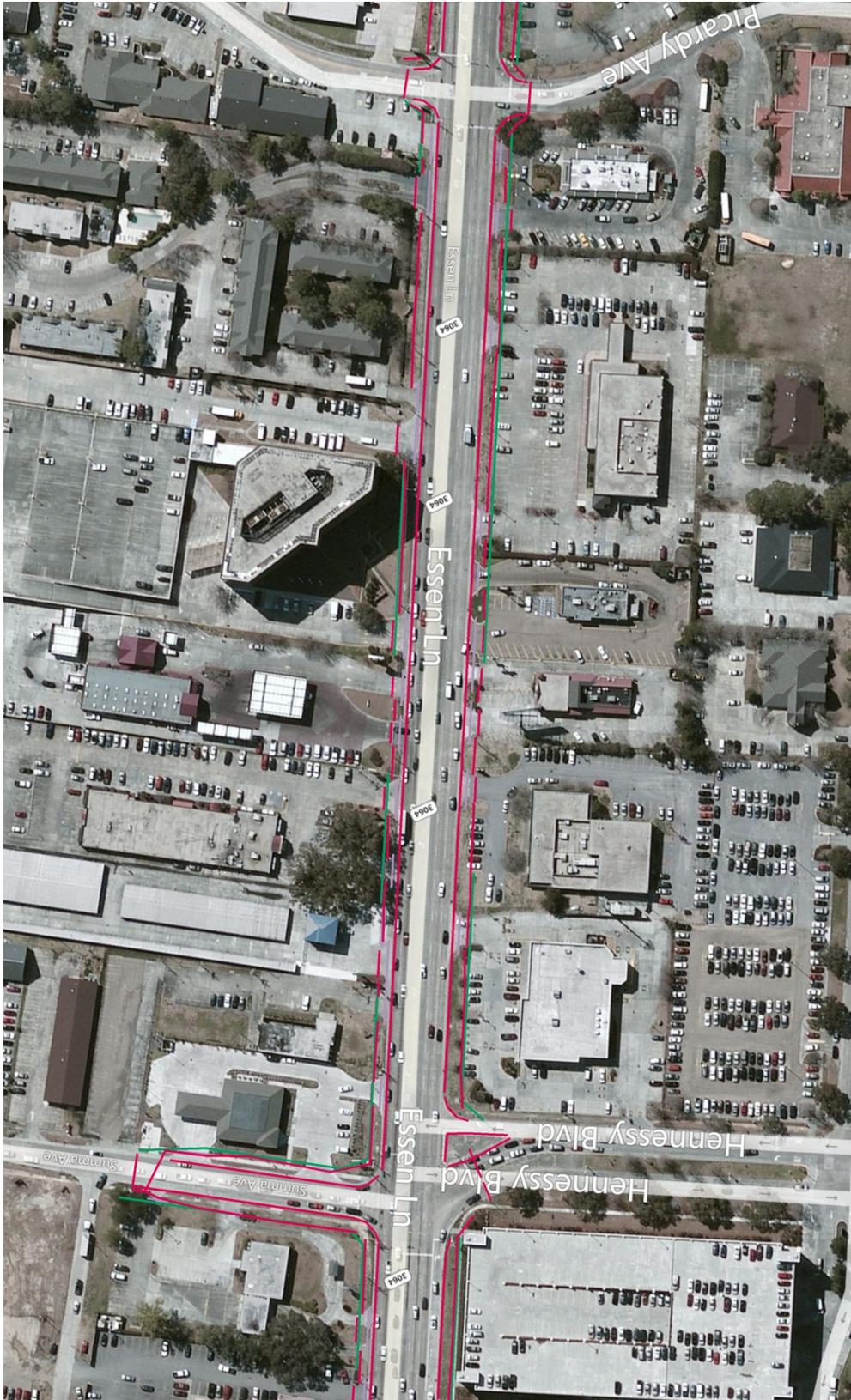


Figure 2: Overhead aerial of project area with labeled roadways.

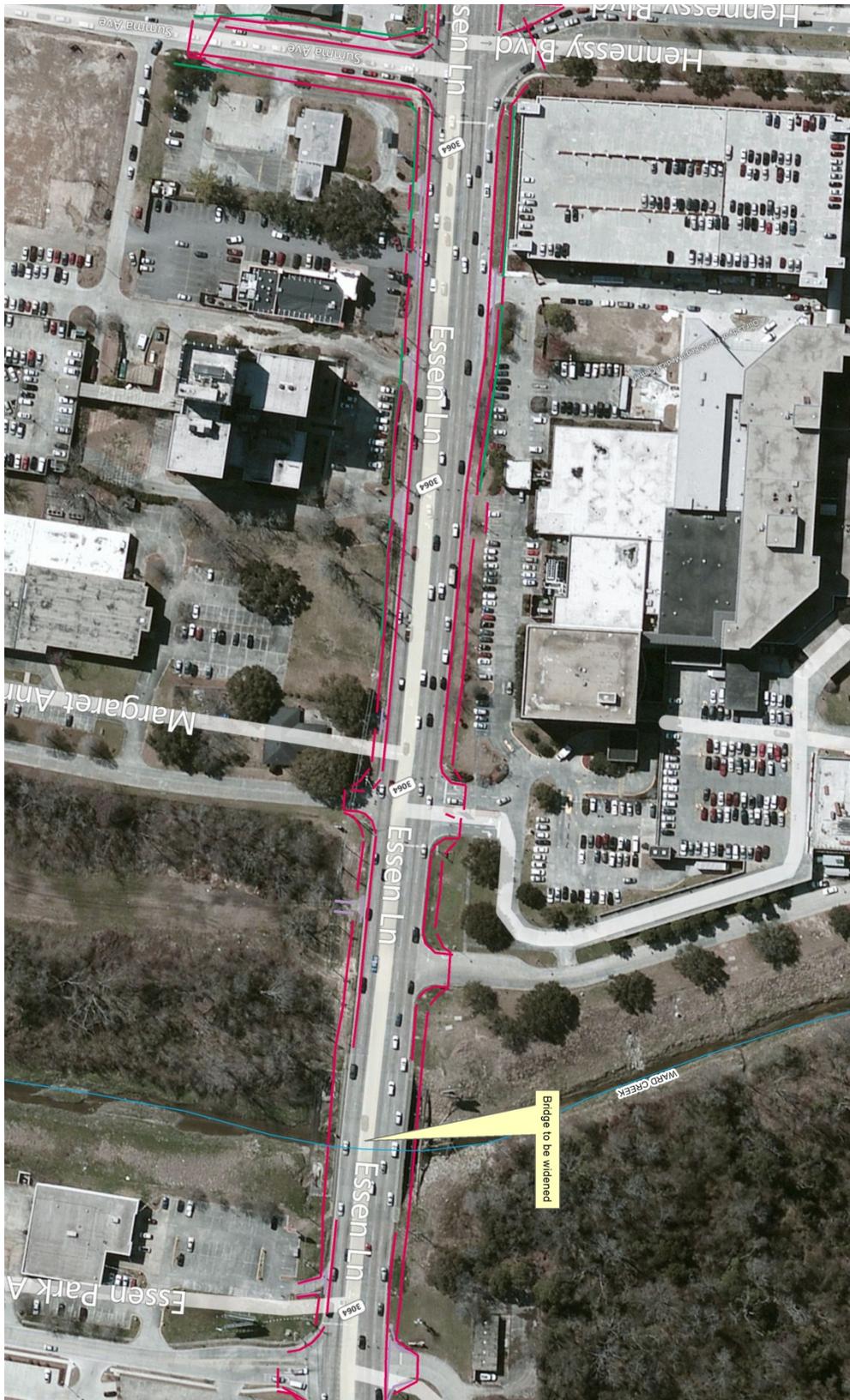


Figure 3: Overhead aerial of project area with labeled roadways.

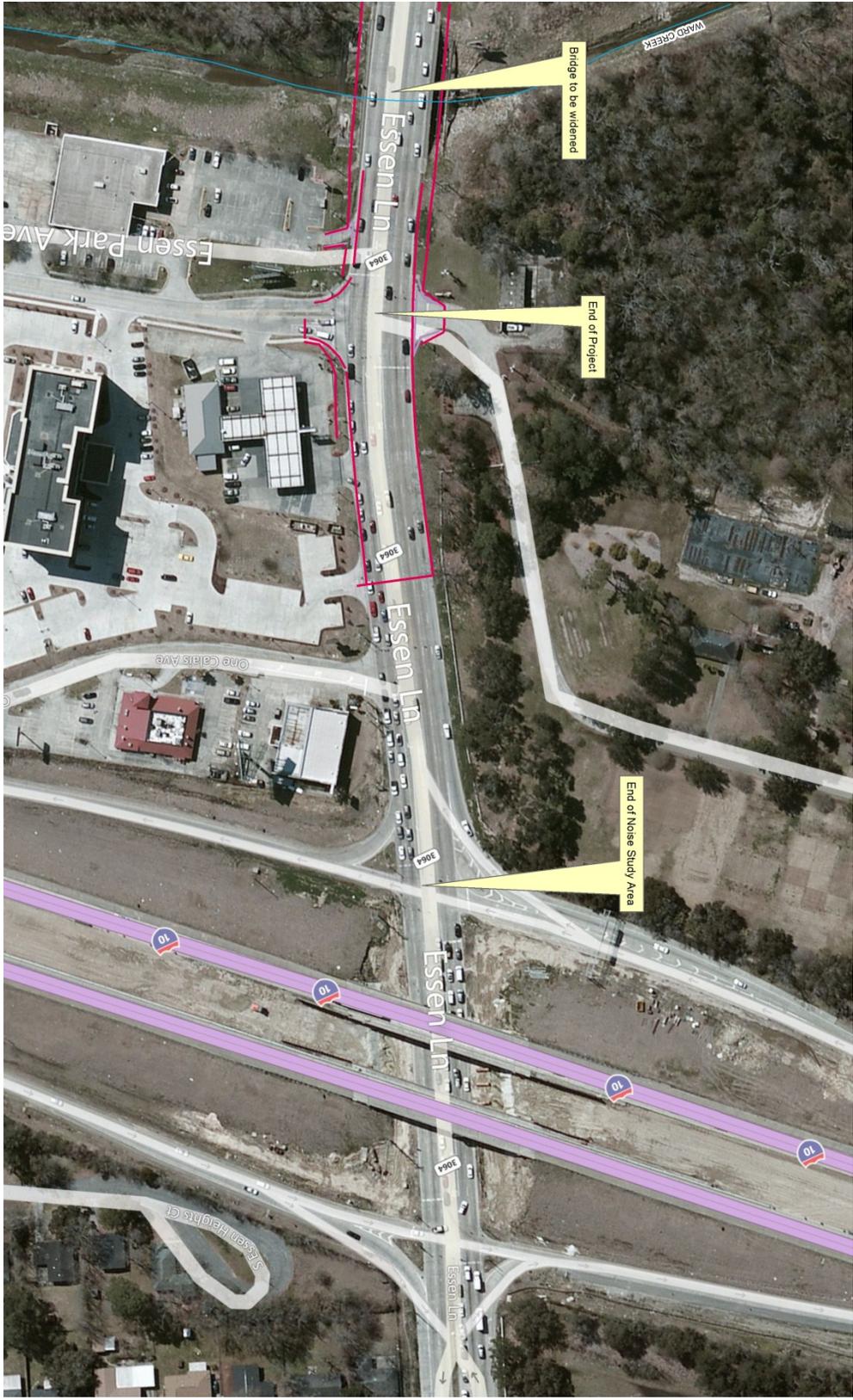


Figure 4: Overhead aerial of project area with labeled roadways.

PURPOSE & SCOPE

The purpose and need for the project is to improve the capacity of the roadway and decrease congestion. The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) for LA 3064 is 54,977 vehicles per day (vpd) in 2013 and is projected to be 81,693 vpd in 2033.

The scope of the project is to widen the roadway and the bridge on LA 3064. The project would not change the alignment of the roadway.

DESCRIPTION OF LAND USAGE

Current Use

Land usage along the project area consists predominantly of commercial property. The main exceptions are Cobblestone Apartments, a single family residence located near Margret Anne Avenue, a residence located on the Rural Life Museum properties, and the LSU Rural Life Museum. All of these receivers were included in this study. The residential properties are categorized as Activity Category B, the Rural Life Museum is categorized as Activity Category C, and the businesses are categorized as Activity Category E. No elementary or high schools or cemeteries were observed during the field visits.

Table 1: FHWA's Noise Abatement Criteria

Activity Category	Activity Leq(H)	Evaluation Location	Activity Description	In LA, impact occurs when noise level is equal to or greater than the values below
A	57	Exterior	Lands where serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need and where the preservation of those qualities is essential if the area is to continue to serve its intended purpose	56
B	67	Exterior	Residential (includes undeveloped lands permitted for residential)	66
C	67	Exterior	Active sport areas, amphitheaters, auditoriums, campgrounds, cemeteries, day care centers, hospitals, libraries, medical facilities, parks, picnic areas, places of worship, playgrounds, public meeting rooms, public or nonprofit institutional structures, radio studios, recording studios, recreation areas, Section 4(f) sites, schools, television studios, trails and trail crossings. (includes undeveloped lands permitted for these activities)	66
D	52	Interior	Auditoriums, day care centers, hospitals, libraries, medical facilities, places of worship, public meeting rooms, public or nonprofit institutional structures, radio studios, recording studios, schools, and television studios.	51
E	72	Exterior	Hotels, motels, offices, restaurants/bars, and other developed lands, properties or activities not included in A-D or F. (includes undeveloped lands permitted for these activities).	71
F	--	--	Agriculture, airports, bus yards, emergency services, industrial, logging, maintenance facilities, manufacturing, mining, rail yards, retail facilities, shipyards, utilities (water resources, water treatment, electrical), and warehousing.	N/A
G	--	--	Undeveloped lands that are not permitted	N/A

The units for the noise levels are hourly A-weighted sound levels (dBA).

Future Use

It is believed that the project area will remain predominantly commercial. The activity categories should remain C and E in the future.

TRAFFIC NOISE MODEL

Modeling Procedures

FHWA Traffic Noise Model 2.5 (TNM) was used to analyze the noise impacts following the *FHWA Highway Traffic Noise: Analysis and Abatement Guide* (FHWA 2011) and the *FHWA Traffic Noise Model User's Guide (Version 2.5 Addendum)* (FHWA 2004). LADOTD provided 2013 traffic data for the highway. Traffic speed was modeled at 40 mph. It was observed during the field work that vehicles were traveling slower than the speed limit (45 mph). When validating the model, the noise levels all of the receivers were predicted to be higher than the field measurements. When the traffic speeds were lowered to 40 mph, all of the receivers were within 3 dBA of the field measurements. Traffic lights were modeled at the intersections of Essen and Perkins, Picardy, Hennessey/Summa, Margaret Anne, Essen Park, and the I-10 exit ramp. When the morning and evening timings of the lights were compared, the noise levels were within 1 dBA and so the morning timings were used.

The TNM model combines traffic flow data with a digital representation of the project corridor to predict noise levels. The traffic data was projected from 2013 to 2033 using the 2.0% annual growth rate. The data included a vehicle classification breakdown. The traffic was broken down by lane (North/South). Peak hourly traffic was predicted to be ten percent of the ADT. In the current year and future no build scenarios, both of the traffic lanes were modeled as 11 foot travel lanes on existing alignment. In the future build scenario the roadway was modeled as two 11 foot travel lanes on the new alignment, where applicable.

No ground zones were used in this model. The only flow control methods were the traffic signals at the appropriate intersections.

For the TNM model to predict impacts at a certain location there must be a receiver in the area that is exposed to the traffic noise from the highway. Fifty-five noise receivers (not including four validation sites) were modeled adjacent to the project area. The receivers representing Cobblestone Apartments represent more than one dwelling unit. Depending on the building, the receiver represented either 7 or 12 dwelling units. A list of receivers and other TNM inputs are provided in Appendix B. A map of the project area with receiver locations and other information is provided in Appendix G.

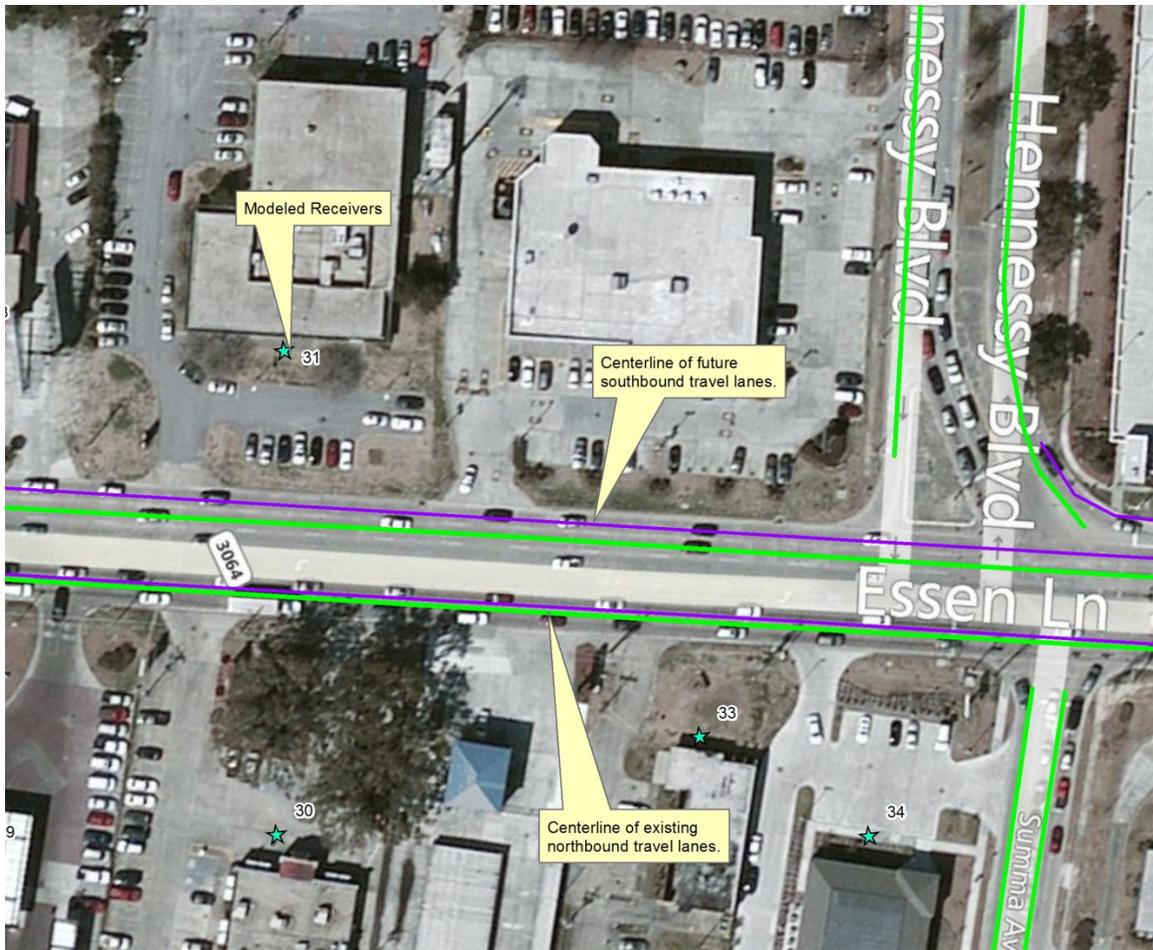


Figure 5: Modeling method.

Model Validation

The existing noise levels were measured on March 13, 2013 using an Integrating Sound Level Meter (Model 820, by Larson*Davis). This is a Type I sound level meter. The sound level meter was calibrated at the beginning of the trip and rechecked before and after each measurement. Measurements were taken in fifteen minute intervals and the traffic was manually counted by LADOTD personnel during each interval. The noise measurements were used to represent the hourly Leq and the traffic that was counted during the fifteen minute interval was multiplied by a factor of four to represent hourly traffic volume.

The model was validated by measuring the noise at four locations in the project area and comparing the actual measured noise levels to the noise levels predicted by the TNM model. If the measured noise level was within three decibels of the predicted noise level, then the model results will be considered valid. The field measurement locations used for validating the TNM model are in front of Gambino's Bakery, in front of Cobblestone Apartments, near Mary Anne Ave., and in front of the LSU Rural Life Museum. These four locations are shown in the figures within Appendix C. Table 2 shows a summary of the validation results and the details of the model validation can be found in Appendix C.

Table 2: TNM Validation Results.

Site	Time	Measured Leq (dBA)	Predicted Leq (dBA)	Difference (dBA)
Gambino's Bakery	1:30 pm	66.2	67.3	1.1
Cobblestone Apartments	2:00 pm	69.8	70.2	0.4
Mary Anne Ave House	2:25 pm	65.2	67.5	2.3
LSU Rural Life	3:00 pm	63.7	63.9	0.2

All of the validation sites are within 3 decibels and therefore the model is considered validated.

Existing Noise Levels (year 2013)

This simulation predicts which receivers are currently impacted based on the NAC. For a receiver to be impacted it must meet or exceed the NAC criteria. The TNM Model predicted that currently seven receivers (representing 30 dwelling units) are impacted. The noise levels range from 45.3 dBA to 73.1 dBA. The average noise level is 57.4 dBA. A summary of the results can be found in Table 3 below. Appendix D contains the simulation results for the existing noise levels.

Future No-Build Noise Level (year 2033)

This simulation predicts which receivers will be impacted if the future projected traffic is forced to travel on the existing highway with no improvements. Thirteen receivers (representing 36 dwelling units) are predicted to be impacted in the no-build scenario. These noise levels range from 47.0 dBA to 74.8 dBA. The average noise level is predicted to be 59.0 dBA. A summary of the results can be found in Table 3 below. The results of the future no-build simulation can be found in Appendix E.

Future Build Noise Level (year 2033)

This simulation predicts which receivers will be impacted if the future traffic is allowed to travel using the proposed improvements (new travel lanes). The model predicts that thirteen receivers (representing 36 dwelling units) will be impacted in the future build scenario. These noise levels ranged from 46.9 dBA to 74.8 dBA. The average noise level is predicted to be 59.0 dBA. The results of the Future Build simulation can be found in Appendix F. A summary of the results can be found in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Receiver noise levels in the Current, Future No Build, and Future Build Scenarios.

Description of Receiver	Receiver Number	Number of sites represented	dBA required for Impact	Current Noise Levels	Future No Build Noise Levels	Future Noise Levels
Shopping complex	1	1	71	67.0	68.7	68.5
Exxon	2	1	71	69.8	71.5	71.0
Gatti's Pizza	3	1	71	66.0	67.7	66.9
Taco Bell	4	1	71	68.9	70.7	70.5
Valero/Albertson's	5	1	71	67.7	69.4	69.0
Sushi Masa	6	1	71	67.4	69.2	68.5
Essen Crossing	7	1	71	70.5	72.2	72.1
Ichiban's & Restaurants	8	1	71	60.3	62.0	60.8
French Quarter Daquiries	9	1	71	64.2	66.0	65.2
Rapid Lube	10	1	71	70.3	72.0	71.3
Shopping complex	11	1	71	65.4	67.1	66.4
Entergy	12	1	71	68.0	69.7	69.6
Restaurants	14	1	71	68.2	69.9	68.7
Essen Square Stores	15	1	71	70.1	71.8	70.6
Professional Billing, LLC	16	1	71	61.8	63.5	62.8
Med Aid Clinic	17	1	71	68.4	70.2	69.2
Mc Donald's	18	1	71	68.7	70.4	70.5
Cobble Stone Apts	19	7	66	73.1	74.8	74.3
Cobble Stone Apts	21	12	66	68.4	70.2	69.0
Cobble Stone Apts	22	7	66	72.8	74.5	74.0
Cobble Stone Apts	24	1	66	59.4	61.2	59.8
Piccadilly	25	1	71	66.3	68.1	67.3
Wendy's	26	1	71	67.7	69.4	68.8
Essen Centre	27	1	71	68.8	70.5	69.2
India's Restaurant	28	1	71	69.1	70.9	71.4
Benny's Carwash	29	1	71	64.9	66.6	65.4
Time's Grill	30	1	71	66.5	68.2	67.0
LOLO Clinic	31	1	71	69.2	71.0	71.4
Walgreen's	32	1	71	69.5	71.3	71.6
Family Medicine	33	1	71	71.7	73.5	72.7
Region's Bank	34	1	71	68.6	70.4	69.3
Hancock Bank	35	1	71	68.4	70.2	69.2
Copeland's	36	1	71	71.9	73.6	73.1
Jacob's Engineering	38	1	71	69.0	70.8	69.8

LOLOL Hospital	39	1	66	67.9	69.6	68.9
House	40	1	66	70.8	72.5	71.6
Drug Clinic	41	1	71	60.7	62.5	61.0
VA outpatient clinic	42	1	71	51.9	53.7	53.4
Tire Kingdom	43	1	71	61.7	63.5	62.3
RaceTrac	44	1	71	68.9	70.7	69.7
Drury Inn	45	1	71	59.9	61.6	60.8
Fairfield Inn	46	1	71	53.9	55.7	55.2
Business	47	1	71	54.5	56.2	55.8
Wasabi	48	1	71	62.5	64.2	63.8
Mobility Depot	49	1	71	68.6	70.3	69.5
LSU Rural Life Museum	50	1	66	61.1	62.9	61.8
LSU Rural Life Museum	51	1	71	50.4	52.1	51.7
LSU Rural Life Museum	57	1	71	49.3	51.1	50.7
LSU Rural Life Museum	58	1	66	45.9	47.6	47.4
LSU Rural Life Museum	59	1	66	45.3	47.0	46.9
LSU Rural Life Museum	60	1	66	46.5	48.2	48.0
LSU Rural Life Museum	61	1	66	62.8	64.6	64.1
LSU Rural Life Museum	63	1	66	59.2	60.9	59.9
LSU Rural Life Museum	64	1	66	48.2	49.9	49.6
LSU Rural Life Museum	65	1	66	45.9	47.7	47.4

ANALYSIS OF THE NOISE ABATEMENT METHODS

According to the noise abatement criteria set in the LADOTD Highway Traffic Noise Policy, noise abatement measures must be considered when a receiver is impacted. Receivers are impacted currently, in the Future No Build scenario, or the Future Build scenario; however, the roadway does not have control of access and there is not enough distance between the roadway and intersections with driveways and other roads to have a noise barrier with sufficient length to be effective. Therefore, no noise walls were considered. Other noise abatement measures potentially applicable to this project are traffic management measures, altering the horizontal and vertical alignments, acquisition of property rights, and noise insulation. Traffic management measures were not considered a viable option because the roadway is already signed for a relatively low speed (45 mph) and has several signalized intersections. Also, restricting or prohibiting certain vehicle types would not be viable due to the commercial nature of the corridor. The project area is relatively land locked; therefore, altering the alignment of the roadway or acquiring property rights of the land adjacent to the project area are not viable options for noise abatement. Noise insulation is considered for Category D receivers when the interior noise levels are predicted to be equal to or greater than 51 dBA. The only Category D receiver is Our Lady of the Lake hospital. Using FHWA's Guidance (FHWA-HEP-10-025), the Future Build interior noise level is predicted to be approximately 44.6 dBA. The noise level is below the 51 dBA threshold to be considered impacted and therefore noise insulation was not considered.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ZONING

Approximate locations of the 71 dBA threshold and 66 dBA thresholds are given in order to help the local communities with planning. Noise sensitive developments (such as residential developments, schools, etc) should be located outside the 66 dBA threshold and commercial developments should be located outside of the 71 dBA threshold. A figure depicting the approximate locations of the 66 dBA and 71 dBA noise threshold lines can be found in Appendix H.

Under current conditions, the 66 dBA threshold line is approximately 175 feet from the centerline of the roadway and the 71 dBA is approximately 105 feet from the centerline. Under the future no build scenario, the 66 dBA line is located approximately 180 feet from the centerline and the 71 dBA is located approximately 122 feet from the centerline of the road. In the future build scenario, the 66 dBA line is located approximately 170 feet from the centerline and the 71 dBA threshold line is located approximately 120 feet from the centerline of the roadway.

ANALYSIS OF CONSTRUCTION NOISE

Construction noise is expected to have temporary impacts upon all of the receptors in the area. The particular receivers of concern are the ones located within 500' of the project centerline. It is recommended that all construction operations be restricted to working hours whenever possible.

Abatement measures should be employed whenever possible. All construction equipment such as pumps, compressors, generators, bulldozers, cranes, trucks, etc., should be

properly muffled and all motor panels should be closed to reduce the noise impacts. Section 107.14 of the Louisiana Standard Specifications for Roads and Bridges, 2006 edition, and the FHWA Highway Construction Noise Handbook (FHWA-HEP-06-015, August 2006) can be referenced for further details on the sources and abatement of construction noise.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The LADOTD proposes to widen LA 3064 (Essen Lane) from Perkins Road (LA 427) to Essen Park Ave near Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The roadway is being widened to improve the capacity of the roadway and to reduce congestion. Thirty-six receivers are predicted to be impacted in the Future No Build and Future Build scenarios. Noise abatement measures have been analyzed; however, they were not found to be feasible.

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

Appendix F

Phase I Environmental Site Assessment

(without Appendices)

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

Phase I Environmental Site Assessment

For

State Project No.: H.010560
F.A.P. No.: H010560
Essen Lane Widening
Route: LA 3064
East Baton Rouge Parish



May 2013

Table of Contents

SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION	2
Purpose	2
Special Terms and Conditions	2
Limitations and Exceptions of Assessment.....	2
Limiting Conditions and Methodology Used.....	2
SITE DESCRIPTION	3
Location and Legal Description	3
Site and Vicinity Characteristics	3
Description of Structures, Roads, and Other Improvements on the Site.....	3
Current and Past Uses of the Properties.....	4
Current and Past Uses of Adjoining Properties.....	4
RECORDS REVIEW	4
Standard Environmental Record Sources, Federal and State.....	4
Federal Databases	4
<i>National Priority List (NPL)</i>	4
<i>Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)</i>	4
<i>Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act Information System (CERCLIS)</i>	5
<i>Emergency Response Notification System (ERNS)</i>	5
Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Databases	5
<i>State Superfund</i>	5
<i>Solid Waste Facilities (SWF)</i>	5
<i>Registered Underground Storage Tanks (USTs) and</i>	5
<i>Aboveground Storage Tanks (ASTs)</i>	5
INFORMATION FROM SITE RECONNAISSANCE AND INTERVIEWS	6
Reconnaissance	6
Interviews	6
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS	6
SIGNATURES OF MANAGING ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS	7
QUALIFICATIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS	7

Table of Figures

Figure A: Project Location.....	3
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Appendices

- Appendix A: NRCS Soil Survey
- Appendix B: Sanborn Maps
- Appendix C: Record Review
- Appendix D: Site Visit
- Appendix E: Interviews

Summary

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) has conducted a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA). The purpose of the assessment was to disclose factual environmental information and render an opinion regarding the environmental data collected and information reviewed.

The subject area is located in East Baton Rouge parish in the City of Baton Rouge. It lies along the section of LA 3064 (Essen Lane) beginning its intersection with LA 427 (Perkins Road) and ending at the Interstate 10 eastbound on and off ramps. The roadway will be widened to seven lanes consisting of six 11 foot wide travel lanes and either a fifteen foot wide continuous turn lane or raised median. Additional right of way will be required. The total length of the project is approximately 0.9 miles.

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment is to identify, to the extent feasible, pursuant to the processes prescribed herein, *recognized environmental conditions* in connection with the subject project in accordance with the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) Standard Practice E-1527-05. The term *recognized environmental condition* means the presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products in the project area under conditions that indicate an existing release, past release, or a material threat of a release of any hazardous substance or petroleum products into structures on the property or in the soil, groundwater, or surface water of the subject property. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment is intended to reflect a commercially prudent and reasonable inquiry in order to satisfy one of the requirements to qualify for the *innocent landowner defense* under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).

Special Terms and Conditions

The findings and conclusions of this report are not scientific facts, but rather, probabilities based on professional judgment concerning the significant data gathered during the course of the assessment. The Author is not able to verify that the properties within the assessment area or adjoining land contain no hazardous substances, petroleum products, or other latent conditions beyond those detected or observed during the assessment. There are always possibilities for contaminants to migrate through surface water, air, soil, or groundwater. The ability to accurately ascertain and address the environmental risks associated with transport in these media is beyond the scope of this assessment. The opinions expressed here with reference to the subject properties within the assessment area only pertain to the conditions that existed at the subject properties within the assessment area during the time in which the site inspections and research were conducted.

Limitations and Exceptions of Assessment

This report and other instruments of service were prepared for and made available for the sole use of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, and the contents thereof may not be used or relied upon by persons or entity without the written consent and authorization from the DOTD Environmental Engineer Administrator, Section 28.

DOTD is not responsible for changes in conditions that occurred or changed after the field surveys were performed.

Limiting Conditions and Methodology Used

A ground-level property inspection was conducted and observations relating to the condition of the environment at the subject properties within the assessment area were recorded. This report was prepared to summarize the findings and observations related to the environmental condition of the subject properties within the area. This report includes descriptions of the properties within the assessment area, reviewable records, and opinions of the author regarding any *recognized environmental conditions* observed during the time in which the site inspection of the properties within the assessment area was made.

Site Description

Location and Legal Description

The properties within the assessment area are located along LA 3064. This corridor is located in Township 07 South and Range 01 East, Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana. A map showing the location of the assessment area is included in the figure below.

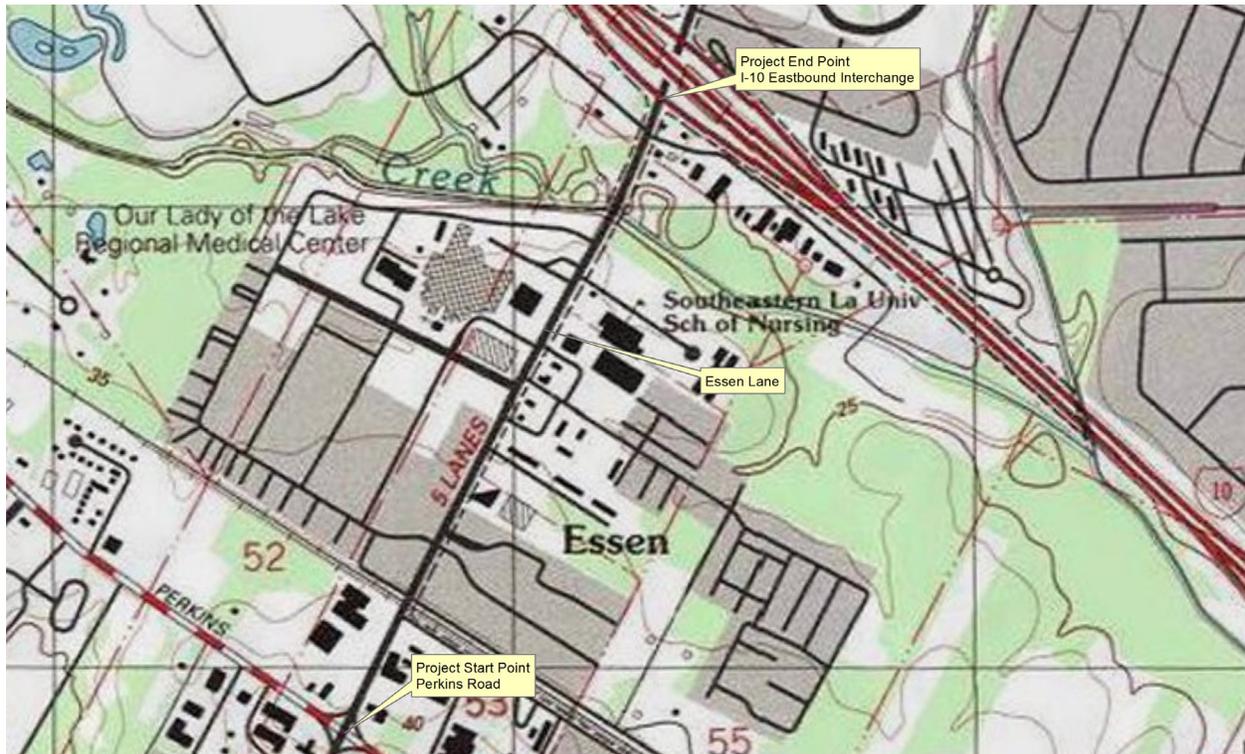


Figure A: Project location.

Site and Vicinity Characteristics

The most current United States Geological Survey (USGS) Topographic Map shows the elevation of the assessment area varies between 11 and 42 feet above mean sea level. Water runs off the assessment area into surface drains and ditches that drain into Ward Creek. The project area is relatively flat and highly developed. The Soil Survey of the project area was reviewed and is provided in Appendix A. Approximately 2/3 of the project area consisted of flood zone X and 1/3 of the project (around Ward Creek) is zone AE. City water and sewer services are available along the project corridor.

Description of Structures, Roads, and Other Improvements on the Site

LA 3064 from Perkins to the I-10 east is comprised of three southbound lanes, two northbound lanes of traffic running and a two-way-center turn lane. The surface of the road is made up of asphaltic concrete with subsurface ditches for drainage. There is one bridge located along the assessment route. The bridge is a concrete flat span. Different utility lines (gas, water, sewer, telephone, cable, etc) are located along both sides and crossing LA 3064.

Current and Past Uses of the Properties

Currently the adjoining property is mainly commercial with the exception of a few residential properties and the LSU Rural Life Museum. There is a neighborhood grocery store, several gas stations, and other businesses currently in operation along the route. Department of Natural Resource (DNR) records for the assessment area show several water wells in the area, three of which are active. DNR's Solicitation of Views (SOV) response stated that there are no oil or gas wells in the area. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) records show some monitoring wells in the area.

Sanborn maps for the years up to 1951 (latest available) were reviewed and the Essen Lane area was outside of the mapped area. The road does show up on maps as early as 1940; however these maps do not show what type of development was along the route. Examples of these maps can be found in Appendix B.

Current and Past Uses of Adjoining Properties

The current and past uses of the properties adjoining the assessment area are discussed above. The proposed project will require only a portion of the properties discussed above.

Records Review

Standard Environmental Record Sources, Federal and State

The Louisiana DOTD Environmental Section researched federal and state environmental databases for any information pertaining to the subject properties and any other sites or facilities within the project assessment area. A copy of the data generated by the database search is found in Appendix C.

Federal Databases

National Priority List (NPL)

The NPL Report, also known as Superfund List, is a USEPA listing of uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites. The list is primarily based upon a score that the site receives from the USEPA's Hazardous Ranking System. These sites are targeted for possible long-term remedial action under the Superfund Act of 1980. There were no NPL sites identified within one mile radius of the assessment area.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)

A corrective action order is issued pursuant to RCRA Section 3008(h) when there has been a release of hazardous waste or constitute actions may be required beyond the facility's boundary and can be required regardless of when the release occurred, even if it predates RCRA. A search of DEQ's RCRAINFO database revealed twenty-four (24) facilities were identified as being within 0.5 miles of the project area. Eight facilities were adjacent to the project. These facilities are: Kwik Kopy Printing (AI 26062), Walgreens #3047 (AI 25161), Exxon Mobile #50608 (AI 13366), Rapid Lube (AI 12403), Tire Kingdom #195 (AI 27772), Kadairs (AI 14339), Exxon Mobil/Circle K (AI 22658), and Jacobs Engineering (AI 20321).

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act Information System (CERCLIS)

The CERCLIS Database is a comprehensive listing of known or suspected uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites. These sites have either been investigated, or are currently under investigation by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) for the release, or potential release of hazardous substances. Once a site enters CERCLIS, it may be subject to several levels of review and evaluation and ultimately placed on the National Priority List (NPL). No Further Remedial Action Planned (NFRAP) was removed from CERCLIS Database by February 1995. No CERCLIS/NFRAP sites were found within a half a mile of the assessment area.

Emergency Response Notification System (ERNS)

The ERNS is a national computer database and retrieval system used to store information on the release of oils and hazardous substances. ERNS consist of release notifications submitted to the National Response Center of the United States Coast Guard since 1987. The system contains preliminary information on specific releases, including the reported discharges, date of release, material released, cause of release, incident location, response actions taken, authorities notified, and affected environmental medium. No properties that could be confirmed to be adjacent to or on the project area were listed on the ERNS list.

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Databases

State Superfund

The DEQ maintains a state equivalent of a CERCLIS database, in its Inactive and Abandoned Sites Division, a comprehensive list of known or suspected uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites in the state of Louisiana. No state superfund or National Priority List sites were within one mile of the project area.

Solid Waste Facilities (SWF)

The DEQ maintains a database of Solid Waste Facilities in the state of Louisiana. No landfill sites were identified within a half mile radius of the assessment area.

Registered Underground Storage Tanks (USTs) and Aboveground Storage Tanks (ASTs)

The DEQ's Underground Storage Tank Division maintains a database for USTs in Louisiana. The database includes information such as tank identification number, owner, installation date, age, closure date, status, contents, capacity, material of construction, and location. The ASTM search distance is confined to the assessment area and adjoining properties for registered tanks. For leaking tanks it is confined to a half mile area. A search of the DEQ database revealed several tanks adjacent to the project area. These were Agency Interest Number (AI #) 22658, AI # 13366, and AI # 76525. The information for these tanks was sent to DOTD Section 22 Materials and Testing (Section 22) for further evaluation. More information on these sites can be found in Appendix C.

Information from Site Reconnaissance and Interviews

Reconnaissance

On May 7, 2013, Robert Lott and Shawn Luke made a site visit and interviewed some people doing business along the corridor. Close examination of the apparent required right of way revealed no signs of leaking transformers.

DEQ records were reviewed before the field visit and four Leaking Underground Storage Tanks were identified. During the site reconnaissance, these sites were surveyed along with the other gas stations. For the most part, no evidence of past or present releases was found to be associated with these tanks and there were also no signs of non-compliance with current environmental regulations associated with these tanks. More information is located in Appendix D.

The project involves widening an existing rail road crossing. The required right of way from the rail road was surveyed and the only area of concern was a potential accumulation of creosote at the bottom of a utility pole and solid waste.

The majority of the corridor consists of commercial development and therefore the required right of way surveyed consists of driveways and parking lot. The non-paved area (grassy median) was, for the most part, well maintained and there were no signs of concerning levels of stressed vegetation. The paved areas showed no signs of stained concrete. The sites that appeared to be within the required right of way are deemed to be *de minimis* situations by the author. Details are located in Appendix D.

Interviews

Attempts were made to interview knowledgeable representatives from any of the facilities found during the records review. Mr. Daniel Holland (Facilities Asset Manager for Walgreens), Mr. Jerry Hix (Owner of Rapid Lube), Mr. Bob Cullen (Owner of land with Red Stick Sports), and Mr. Jack Dampf (Owner of land with Kadairs) were contacted between April 23, 2013 and May 2, 2013 and interviewed about their respective properties. No concerns were raised during the interviews. A sample of the questions asked during the interview along with the responses can be found in Appendix E. Mr. Tom Harris from DEQ's underground storage tank division was contacted on May 7, 2013 and confirmed that no active remediation sites were within the project corridor. No concerns were raised during the interviews and therefore no additional RECs were found.

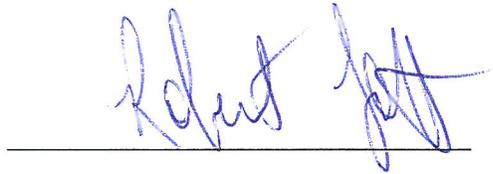
Findings and Conclusions

We have performed a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment in conformance with the scope and limitations of ASTM Practice E-1527-05 of the above reference properties within the LA 3064 (Essen Lane) corridor, running from LA 427 (Perkins Road) to just south of the I-10 Eastbound ramps in East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana. Any exceptions to, or deletions from, this practice are described in the "Limitations and Exceptions of Assessment" section of this report. This assessment has revealed no evidence of recognized environmental conditions in connection with the property except for the following: AI # 22658. This is underground storage tank in the project area and was sent to Section 22 for their review on the possible effects on the

project. The Exxon (now Circle K) located at Essen and Perkins (AI# 22658) has a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment on record but did not have a “No Further Action” status on record. However, Mr. Harris from DEQ stated that there is no active remediation in the project corridor.

The economics of the area favored smaller stores, many of which sold gas and/or diesel. Some of these may have gone out of business without ever registering their tanks. It is, therefore, possible that additional tanks will be discovered during construction.

Signatures of Managing Environmental Professionals



Robert Lott, P.E.



Shawn Luke, P.E.

Qualifications of Environmental Professionals

Robert Lott is a registered Professional Environmental Engineer with over 3 years of project experience related to hazardous substances and petroleum products. His training includes several courses in risk evaluation and corrective action as well as OSHA’s 40-hour Hazardous Waste Operator Training course. He has reviewed numerous Phase II and Phase III environmental remediation reports for refinery activities and petroleum pipeline releases.

Shawn Luke has a B.S. in Biological Engineering and is a registered Professional Engineer. He has experience in environmental evaluation and reviewing environmental documents submitted by consultants. He has also had training in Phase I Environmental Site Assessments.



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Bobby Jindal, Governor
Sherri H. LeBas, P.E., Secretary

STATE PROJECT NO. H.010560.2
F.A.P. NO. : H010560
NAME: ESSEN LANE WIDENING
ROUTE: LA 3064
PARISH: EAST BATON ROUGE

MEMORANDUM

TO: MS. NOEL ARDOIN, P.E.
ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER ADMINISTRATOR

ATTN: MR. ROBERT LOT, P.E.
ASSISTANT ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER

FROM: MR. JOUBERT HARRIS, M.S. 
ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM MANAGER

DATE: SEPTEMBER 3, 2013

SUBJECT: LEAKING UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS ALONG ESSEN LN (LA 3064)

Please be informed that our Environmental Evaluation Unit (EEU) has conducted its investigation for possible hazardous contaminated materials for the above referenced project, as requested by your office. Our findings are as follows:

- Site 1: The first site is the Circle K Store #7656, 5857 Essen Ln, Baton Rouge, La. There are three (3) underground storage tanks (USTs) outside of the required taking area. The EEU sampled along the required R/W proximal to the area where the underground storage tank system is located. Lab analysis of the samples indicated results were below RECAP standards, so routine construction at the site may continue as scheduled.
- Site 2: The second site, formerly WVLA-TV Studio, is now currently The Our Lady of the Lake Health Career Institute, and is located at 5220 Essen Ln, Baton Rouge, LA. Records in the LDEQ's database indicate that there was once a 1,000 gal. diesel UST at this location. However, the UST and all of its components were removed March 13, 2000, and a No Further Action was issued. As such, this site poses no environmental concern.
- Site 3: The third site, formerly ExxonMobil Station #5-0608, is currently The Drury Inn & Suites, and is located at 4555 Essen Lane. Records in the LDEQ's database indicate that there were once four (4) USTs at this location. However, the USTs were removed in April, 2005, and the monitoring wells that were on the site were plugged and abandoned in February, 2009. A No Further Action declaration was issued. As such, this site poses no environmental concern.



Materials and Testing Section
5080 Florida Blvd. | Baton Rouge, LA 70806
ph: 225-248-4131 | fx: 225-248-4187

Bobby Jindal, Governor
Sherri H. LeBas, P.E., Secretary

Site 4: The fourth site, formerly Simple Simon, is currently Rite-Aid #7318, and is located at 2159 Staring Lane. Records in the LDEQ's electronic database indicate that there was one (1) 550-gal. waste oil UST at this location. The UST was removed May, 1999, and a No Further Action declaration was issued in November, 1999. As such, this site poses no environmental concern.

You may contact Mr. Mark Wallace at 225-248-4139 or myself at 225-248-4141, with any further questions or concerns.

JH:mdw

cc: Mr. Chris Abadie
Mr. R. Savoie
Mr. H. "Skip" Paul
Mr. C. Vosburg
Mr. C. Winchester
Mr. R. Sanders
EEU files

Appendix G

Analysis and Recommendations in Accordance with
LADOTD Complete Streets Policies

**Essen Lane Widening
(Perkins Road to I-10)**

S.P. No. H.010560

**Analysis and
Recommendations in
Accordance with LADOTD
Complete Streets Policies**



May 14, 2013

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	i
1.0 Introduction and Background.....	1
2.0 Agency Policies and Standards	1
3.0 Local Jurisdiction Coordination.....	3
4.0 Options Considered to Incorporate Non-motorized Transportation Modes	4
4.1 WIDEN THE RIGHT OF WAY THROUGHOUT THE CORRIDOR	4
4.2 PROVIDE NARROWER TRAVEL LANE AND MEDIAN WIDTHS.....	5
4.3 PROVIDE 6' SIDEWALKS WITHIN THE EXISTING ROW	6
4.4 PROVISIONS FOR BICYCLISTS.....	7

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations	9
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Executive Summary

The Essen Lane Widening (Perkins Rd. to I-10) project (State Project No. H.010560) begins at Perkins Road and extends north to the I-10 interchange, for a total length of 0.92 miles. This project proposes to widen the existing pavement and bridge to provide an additional third northbound lane throughout the project limits. This added lane is necessary to increase the capacity on Essen Lane from Perkins to I-10.

LADOTD's desire for all construction projects is to apply complete streets principals, and incorporate those features of Complete Streets that are feasible and cost effective into construction projects in an effort to accommodate all relevant modes of transportation, including vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle. LADOTD's Complete Streets Policy was implemented on July 18, 2010. This report discusses the concepts and warrants for incorporating non-motorized modes of transportation into this Essen Lane widening project, in accordance with the Complete Streets Policy and LADOTD EDSM Nos. II.2.1.10 and II.2.1.14, considering guidance from local and national publications as well.

Taking into account such factors as the surrounding development, local plans for alternate modes of transportation in the area, potential property impacts, cost of construction and ROW acquisition, scope of the project, etc., this report finds it reasonable and feasible to include 6' sidewalks, located immediately behind the curb, along the entire project limits. In conjunction with sidewalks, other related features, such as pedestrian signal heads, marked crosswalks, and ADA-compliant curb ramps, are recommended at appropriate locations throughout the project.

This report concludes that it is reasonable and feasible for bicycle users to share the road with vehicular traffic. Consideration shall be given during final plan development for such supplemental features as roadside "Share the Road" signage to facilitate this mixing of motorized and non-motorized modes of travel. Separate bike lanes or other offset bike paths along the project are not feasible due to anticipated additional costs and ROW impacts.

Also, the project designer shall consider the future BREC linear park-path system along Wards Creek during the project design. This includes the location of drainage outfall into Wards Creek, the relocation of utilities crossing Wards Creek, and the widening of the Wards Creek bridge, as well as the potential for connections from the path to the Essen Lane corridor.

1.0 Introduction and Background

Essen Lane (LA highway 3064) is a vital transportation link within the Baton Rouge area roadway network. Classified as a principal arterial, it distributes traffic to and from Interstates 10 and 12 and the surrounding area, and carries a high volume of vehicular traffic, including a large percentage of trucks. Traffic has increased over the years to the point that there is now significant congestion on the route, particularly during peak travel hours. To increase vehicular capacity and decrease congestion along the 0.92-mile segment from Perkins to I-10, the State is proposing to add an additional northbound travel lane to the existing roadway pavement section – thus, State Project No. H.010560.

LADOTD's desire for all construction projects is to apply complete streets principals, and incorporate those features of Complete Streets that are feasible and cost effective into construction projects in an effort to accommodate all relevant modes of transportation, including vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle. This report discusses the concepts and warrants for incorporating non-motorized modes of transportation into this Essen Lane widening project, in accordance with the LADOTD, local and national policies and guidance. It also makes recommendations based on the scope of the project, the context of the surrounding development, and the potential for pedestrians and bicyclists along this stretch of Essen Lane.

2.0 Agency Policies and Standards

LADOTD's **Complete Streets Policy** was implemented by LADOTD Secretary LeBas on July 18, 2010. This policy creates a "comprehensive, integrated, connected transportation network for Louisiana that balances access, mobility, health and safety needs of motorists, transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities, which includes users of wheelchairs and mobility aides". In addition to their Complete Streets Policy, LADOTD has also developed two Engineering Directives and Standards documents (EDSM's) that address pedestrian and bike facilities. Excerpts taken from these EDSM's are noted in the following:

- **EDSM No. II.2.1.10** – Requirements for Construction of Pedestrian Sidewalk Facilities (09/30/2011)
 - "New Construction and/or Reconstruction:
 - (1) Because proper and reasonable design for pedestrians is important, sidewalks on curbed roadway sections should be considered during project development, particularly in areas of access to schools, parks, shopping areas, and transit stops.
 - (4) Sidewalks may be included in highway construction plans at the request of municipal or parish authorities, provided that all construction costs are borne by

the requesting agency and the Department is reimbursed in full by said agency prior to commencing of construction. The municipality or parish authority will be required to accept responsibility for operation and maintenance of the sidewalk.”

- **EDSM No. II.2.1.14** – Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities (01/04/2000)
 - “Policy Statement:
 - (a) Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are valuable components of the intermodal transportation network. [DOTD] will therefore develop those facilities that are considered safe, efficient, proper and cost effective within the right of ways of the state highway system. Maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian facilities will be by the Department or local government by agreement. The local governing authority must maintain sidewalks by agreement.”

In addition to discussing LADOTD’s desires for including non-motorized modes of transportation into roadway projects, the Complete Streets Policy also outlines conditions where it may be inappropriate to provide bicycle and pedestrian facilities, depending on the need or probable use. The conditions that relate to this project are:

- The cost of providing bicycle and pedestrian facilities would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use. Excessively disproportionate is defined as exceeding twenty percent (20%) of the cost of the project.
- Maintenance for sidewalks and bicycle paths outside the limits of the curb or shoulder will be the responsibility of the local jurisdiction. Maintenance agreements will be required as a provision of the project.

The City of Baton Rouge – Parish of East Baton Rouge Planning Commission developed the **FUTUREBR Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan** (September 21, 2011), which addresses the Parish’s goal to accommodate all modes of transportation in the parish. Residents, business owners, and stakeholders have made it clear that they desire better connectivity throughout the City by having multiple transit options available (walking paths, bicycle trails, bus routes, rail), widening and/or extending existing roads to add capacity, and building new roads to complete the overall transportation grid of East Baton Rouge. Offering multiple transportation options and improving the existing transportation system would reduce congestion on major and local streets, and thereby improve the citizens’ day-to-day quality of life.

In addition, the Capital Region Planning Commission has addressed the need to consider and include all modes of transportation in their **Non-Motorized Transportation Plan** (October 2009). The plan “identifies the transportation system’s existing non-motorized facilities, establishes a future conceptual network with a map and list of improvements, and identifies resources to help fund the future additions to the non-motorized transportation network.”

On the national level, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) developed two documents that provide guidance on non-motorized transportation modes. Specifically, these are:

- **Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities (2004 – 1st Edition), and**
- **Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (2012 – 4th Edition)**

All of the above policies and guidance documents were considered as they relate to the Essen Lane Widening project.

3.0 Local Jurisdiction Coordination

The local jurisdiction within the project limits is the City of Baton Rouge Department of Public Works. The City of Baton Rouge and Parish of East Baton Rouge Metropolitan Council voted on February 13, 2013 to provide for the maintenance of the sidewalks constructed on this project, as recommended to them by the Chief Administrative Office. A copy of the City's letter stating they will provide the maintenance of the sidewalks is included in the Appendix on page A-1.

As part of the project's environmental documentation process, LADOTD formally requested input from the City-Parish on the project through their Solicitation of Views. In a letter response (a copy of which is included in the Appendix on page A-2 thru A-4), the Planning Commission for the City of Baton Rouge, Parish of East Baton Rouge responded that they would like to see the project consider the following on two segments of the project:

- The first location is from Perkins Road to Summa Avenue, identified as a mixed use corridor. The City-Parish recommends wide sidewalks with transit access, dedicated turn lanes, bicycle lanes, bicycle facilities, on-street parking, curb extensions, shared parking, medians and planting strips.
- The second location is from Summa Avenue to I-10, identified as a commercial corridor. The City-Parish recommends wider travel lanes, median, transit accommodations, protected turn lanes, and wide pedestrian buffers.

The non-motorized considerations noted above are further discussed in the following section - Options Considered to Incorporate Non-motorized Transportation Modes.

Regarding transit accommodations, the Baton Rouge regional transit authority, known as Capital Area Transit System (CATS), provides bus mass transit services in the East Baton Rouge Parish area. See Appendix page A-5 for a layout of the existing routes provided by

CATS near the project limits. It should be noted that the map does not have a route that runs on Essen Lane but there are routes that cross Essen Lane (routes on Summa Ave and Perkins Road) and passengers can exit the bus onto Essen Lane. Due to limited ROW width available, and since bus service is provided perpendicular to Essen, as opposed to along Essen, it is not reasonable or feasible at the present time to incorporate additional transit features in this project along Essen Lane.

The Recreation and Parks Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC) has proposed a linear park-path system loop that extends from approximately 0.6 miles west of Essen Lane to just east of Siegen Lane. See Appendix page A-6 for a map showing the proposed conceptual plan. Phase 1 of the project is currently being built from Bluebonnet Boulevard to the Mall of Louisiana Boulevard. The bike/walking path on this phase does not connect to Bluebonnet Boulevard. Phase 2 of the project (Medical Loop) will begin design in a few months and is expected to be open to the public in approximately 2 years. On Phase 2 of the project, BREC plans to build the bike path along Wards Creek, under Essen Lane. At this time, BREC has not made a decision on whether to tie the bike/walking path to Essen Lane. This will be monitored during final plan development of the Essen Lane project to ensure that appropriate connections are accommodated, and to ensure that proposed improvements included in this project, such as the location of drainage outfalls, bridge widening elements, utility relocations, etc., account for the path and potential connections.

4.0 Options Considered to Incorporate Non-motorized Transportation Modes

As noted previously, the scope of the project is to increase vehicular traffic capacity on Essen by adding a northbound lane. In addition, two build options are being considered in the environmental process. The first is to maintain a center two-way left turn lane (TWLTL) of sufficient width to allow for conversion to a divided median with dedicated left turn pockets and U-turns at specific locations when warranted in the future. The second alternative is to construct the divided median under the current project. Since the selection of median section does not affect the overall width of the proposed road widening (the curb to curb width would be the same for both options), the discussions below regarding options to incorporate non-motorized modes into the corridor apply to both. It is noted that there would be additional roadway costs of approximately \$350,000 associated with a divided median section. Since this added cost is small relative to the overall project cost and does not affect the cost comparisons noted in this section, Alternative 1 estimated costs were used.

4.1 WIDEN THE RIGHT OF WAY THROUGHOUT THE CORRIDOR

An option was briefly considered to widen the existing ROW throughout the corridor to provide a facility that would accommodate all modes of transportation within the ROW. Additional width would be needed to accommodate such concepts as:

- On-street bike lanes that are separate and offset from the outside travel lanes for the more serious bicyclists.
- Separate, offset sidewalks that could feature landscaping, benches, etc. to make the pedestrian user feel more comfortable using the facility and would be aesthetically pleasing
- Separate, offset bike paths
- Wide, joint-use facilities that could accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists

The existing roadway right-of-way width is relatively narrow through most of the corridor - just 100' typically – for the proposed facility. The pavement widening will take up most of the available ROW, leaving only approximately 8' after the basic pavement widening, between the back of curb for the widened roadway and the existing ROW line. The surrounding area is predominantly commercial, with several business parking lots and other improvements located just behind the existing ROW (see page A-7 in the Appendix for an exhibit showing the surrounding development). Therefore, purchasing additional ROW to obtain a wider corridor to accommodate desirable features of bicycle and pedestrians is not feasible, due to ROW impacts and ROW costs. Guidance suggests that up to 200' total ROW (reference the City-Parish FUTUREBR - Transportation Elements, page 23) is needed to fully implement desirable aspects of a Complete Streets corridor, such as those suggested in the City-Parish Planning Commission's SOV response noted in Section 3. Even 10'-15' additional ROW required along each side of the road would have tremendous impacts to existing parking, circulation, signage, and in some cases buildings on developed properties. Therefore, the option to fully or partially implement Complete Streets by buying additional ROW throughout the corridor was not deemed feasible and was dropped without further investigation or detailed cost estimating.

4.2 PROVIDE NARROWER TRAVEL LANE AND MEDIAN WIDTHS

The proposed through traffic lanes are 11', and the TWLTL median width needed for future conversion to divided section is 15' (measured between opposing inside travel lanes). An option to reduce the width of travel lanes was discussed and considered. It was also considered to reduce the median TWLTL width, thereby capturing additional width that could be used for alternate, non-motorized modes of travel.

Current LADOTD design guidelines for this class of road dictate no less than 11' travel lanes be allowed without a design exception. Context sensitive principles allow for consideration of such things as reduced lane widths, but lane width reductions below the proposed 11' would negatively impact the capacity of the lanes. In addition, the reductions of the TWLTL width would be allowed by LADOTD and AASHTO guides, but the reduced width would not be sufficient for later conversion to the divided concept. Therefore, the reduced lane width option would not meet the scope of the project, and is not being considered further.

4.3 PROVIDE 6’ SIDEWALKS WITHIN THE EXISTING ROW

Commercial development along and in the area of Essen Lane, like Our Lady of the Lake Hospital and several other employers and facilities, attract many people to the area, predominantly from private vehicles and public transit (see exhibit on page A-7 of the Appendix). There is ample parking for these facilities, but patrons and employees to these and other businesses in the area currently don’t have the option to move along and across Essen by foot, as no sidewalks or pedestrian signal heads at major intersections exist along the corridor.

A sidewalk along Essen would fit well with existing sidewalks along many of the streets intersecting Essen, providing circulation options to pedestrians that don’t exist today. Table 1 presented below summarizes existing sidewalks in the area. In addition to the large businesses noted above, there are shopping centers, retail stores, and restaurants that would benefit from accommodating pedestrians within the Essen corridor. Residents of the two apartment complexes would also have the option to walk more easily around and through the area.

Table 1: EXISTING SIDEWALKS FACILITIES

Street Name	Sidewalks
Perkins Road East of Essen	✓
Perkins Road West of Essen	
Anselmo Lane	
Mancuso Lane	
Picardy Avenue East of Essen Lane	✓
Picardy Avenue West of Essen Lane	
Summa Avenue	✓
Hennessey Boulevard	✓
Margaret Anne Avenue	
Dijon Drive	
Essen Park	✓
1 Calais Avenue	

The 8’ width between the proposed back of curb and the existing ROW is sufficient for incorporation of a 6’ sidewalk immediately adjacent to the curb. This would still provide 2’ between the ROW and sidewalks, which is needed for placement of roadside signs, overhead utility poles, and related items, as well as to tie the edge of sidewalk to the existing ground

elevations at the ROW. It is noted that Complete Streets guidance suggests that along high traffic corridors such as Essen, sidewalks should be offset from the back of curb to provide a more aesthetic and pleasing experience for the pedestrian users. However, due to the tight ROW constraints and costs of acquiring additional ROW as noted in Section 4.1, this is not feasible in this case.

The estimated probable cost to implement the base project (roadway widening) was compared to the additional cost of providing a 6' sidewalk immediately adjacent to the curb. Pedestrian signal heads, marked crosswalks, and ADA-compliant curb ramps at the signalized intersections would be incorporated in the project regardless. The additional cost was found to be within the 20% guideline as documented in LADOTD's Complete Streets Policy. See Table 2 below for a summary comparison. No additional ROW is needed for this option, so the cost addition is basically for the concrete walks.

Table 2: ESTIMATED PROBABLE COSTS – BASE PROJECT AND SIDEWALKS

	Estimated Cost	Increase from Base Cost
Base Cost	\$5,100,000	---
Including Added 6' Sidewalks	\$5,300,000	3.9%

Therefore, it is feasible to implement 6' sidewalks and related features into this Essen Lane Widening construction project. It is noted that the State's requirement for a 6' wide sidewalk when located immediately behind the curb is wider than the 5' minimum required by the City.

4.4 PROVISIONS FOR BICYCLISTS

Complete Streets concepts discuss that along high traffic, highly developed corridors (such as Essen), bike lanes within the curb but separate from the travel lanes are preferred over offset bike paths. This is due to the high frequency of driveways and intersections along these busy roadway corridors, and drivers of vehicles approaching these locations aren't accustomed to watching for additional traffic, in this case bicyclists, offset from the travel lanes, thereby creating a hazard for the bicyclist. The serious biker, who is seeking to get from point A to point B timely and safely, is safer and typically much more comfortable within the curb-to-curb pavement section.

Separate bike paths, offset behind the roadway curb, are not feasible because of ROW constraints (see the discussion in Section 4.1 above). Similarly, it is not feasible to include construction of parallel but separate bike lanes on the pavement, as this would require

additional pavement widening that would result in additional required ROW. Since existing ROW is so tight, the width of additional ROW that would be required to implement separate on-the-pavement bike lanes would be comparable to the width of the bike lanes being provided, resulting in impacts to business parking areas, circulation, signage, and possibly buildings.

Costs were estimated for this bike lane option to see how it would compare to the base cost, considering the 20% added cost guideline discussed in the LADOTD Complete Streets Policy. The estimated probable cost for adding minimal bike lanes, 5' in width in each direction of travel, was found to far exceed the 20% guideline. This cost includes the added concrete pavement, base, and asphalt overlay, as well as basic additional ROW estimated at \$18/sf. This does not, however, include further expected costs due to property impacts or loss of existing use of property. Table 3 below presents the summary comparison information.

Table 3: ESTIMATED PROBABLE COSTS – BASE PROJECT AND BIKE LANES

	Estimated Cost	Increase from Base Cost
Base Cost	\$5,100,000	---
Including Added 5' Bike Lanes Each Direction	\$6,600,000*	29.4%

* Note: Costs in addition to \$6.6M are expected, and would include building impacts, loss of parking, loss of use, utility relocations, etc. These costs, if estimated and included, would further increase the percentage comparison to the base cost.

Along this Essen corridor, traffic counts taken at the major intersections during the noon and afternoon peak hours also noted a very low volume of bicyclists along Essen, which were 1 and 2 bicyclists per hour, respectively. With the surrounding context of the area being mostly business in nature, and considering the high volume of vehicular traffic and high operating speeds on Essen, it is not likely that there will be significant increases, if any, of bicycle traffic along this corridor. There is a sufficient network of other local roads and streets in the area that would be much better options for bicyclists wanting to traverse the area.

Due to the above factors, incorporation of separate bike lanes along Essen is not reasonable or feasible. However, bicyclist will be able to legally share the Essen lanes, mixing with traffic and obeying all laws applicable to vehicular and bicycle traffic alike, as they do today. Further discussions should take place as this project advances as to whether or not additional low-cost measures, such as roadside “Share The Road” signage, should be incorporated to facilitate the mixing of bike and vehicular traffic.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Table 4 below summarizes and presents the non-motorized transportation modes considered and discussed in this report.

Table 4: NON-MOTORIZED OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Option	Recommendation	Justification
Offset sidewalks, bike paths, or joint-use facilities	Not feasible	High cost of ROW acquisition; property impacts
On-street bike lanes separated from vehicle travel lanes	Not feasible	High cost of ROW acquisition; property impacts
Narrow travel lanes and median to allow for non-motorized modes in existing ROW	Not feasible	Would reduce capacity and not allow future conversion of TWLTL to raised median w/left turn lanes
6' Sidewalks Each Direction, Located at Back of Roadway Curb	Feasible	Potential for pedestrians due to surrounding commercial development; low relative cost of implementation
Bicyclists share-the-road with vehicular traffic	Feasible	Low existing bicycle volume and low expectation for increase of bicycle traffic; allowed by state laws/regulations

In summary, this report finds it reasonable and feasible to include 6' sidewalks, located immediately behind the curb, along the entire project limits. In conjunction with sidewalks, other related features, such as pedestrian signal heads, marked crosswalks, and ADA-compliant curb ramps should be placed at appropriate locations throughout the project to make the corridor more pedestrian-friendly. Pages A-8 and A-9 in the Appendix show the sidewalks with the alternative sections (center TWLTL and raised median) currently being considered in the environmental process.

While it is not feasible to construct separate bike lanes or other offset bike paths along the project due to anticipated additional costs and ROW impacts, this report concludes that it is reasonable and feasible for bicycle users to share the road with vehicular traffic. Consideration should be given during final plan development to incorporate such features as roadside “Share The Road” signage to facilitate this mixing of motorized and non-motorized modes of travel.

Also, the project designer shall consider the future BREC linear park-path system along Wards Creek during the project design. This includes the location of drainage outfall into Wards Creek, the relocation of utilities crossing Wards Creek, and the widening of the Wards Creek bridge, as well as the potential for connections from the path to the Essen Lane corridor.

In keeping with LADOTD policies, this report and the above recommendations will be sent to the LADOTD Chief Engineer for concurrence.

APPENDIX



Office of the Mayor-President

City of Baton Rouge
Parish of East Baton Rouge

222 St. Louis Street
Post Office Box 1471
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821

225/389-3100
Fax 225/389-5203

MELVIN L. "KIP" HOLDEN
Mayor-President

February 26, 2013

Mr. Michael Bruce
Stantec Consulting Services, Inc
500 Main Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Re: State DOTD Sidewalk Maintenance

Dear Mr. Bruce:

The City of Baton Rouge and Parish of East Baton Rouge Metropolitan Council, by vote on 02/13/13, has authorized the Mayor President to execute an agreement with the State DOTD to provide for the maintenance of sidewalks in association with the Essen Lane widening project (from Perkins to I-10) (SP No. H.010560). It is the City's desire for the State to construct sidewalks as part of the referenced project, and therefore, the City intends to enter into such agreement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "William B. Daniel, IV P.E.", written over the word "Sincerely,".

William B. Daniel, IV P.E.
Chief Administrative Officer



Office of the Planning Commission

City of Baton Rouge and Parish of East Baton Rouge
Post Office Box 1471, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821

or
1100 Laurel Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Phone (225) 389-3144 Fax (225) 389-5342

Troy L. Bunch, FASLA
Planning Director

December 6, 2012

Mr. Noel A. Ardoin, Environmental Engineer Administrator
State of Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245

Dear Mr. Ardoin:

This letter is in response to the request for a Solicitation of Views (State Project Number H010560) for the Essen Lane Widening project.

The City of Baton Rouge-Parish of East Baton Rouge Planning Commission is responsible for implementing the FUTUREBR Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan. FUTUREBR consists of nine elements that outline Goals, Objectives, and Action Items for implementation. There are several Goals and Action Items that relate to transportation and roadway improvements within the City-Parish.

It is our understanding that the Department of Transportation and Development adopted a Complete Streets policy. The City-Parish supports the DOTD's strategy to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected transportation network. It is important to note that the site of the proposed project is one of the targeted corridors identified in FUTUREBR to implement a "Great Streets" program.

The Essen Lane widening project is located in an area designated as a Mixed-Use Corridor in FUTUREBR. Because the location of the proposed project is adjacent to a highway and a railroad corridors, this section of Essen Lane has enormous potential for future development. By 2030, passenger rail service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans could enhance the economy of the entire region and more particularly urban areas where service is proposed. As outlined in the FUTUREBR Vision, the area will also be served by street car and Bus Rapid Transit.

Furthermore, projections indicate that road widening efforts will not be adequate to ease congestion problems in the Baton Rouge area. A fundamental change in how the City-Parish plans and invests in the transportation system is necessary. As such, widening the lanes cannot be done without incorporating Complete Streets characteristics. To successfully solve traffic, mobility, and transportation equity issues, several strategies must be employed. Among them, the following recommended actions relate to the proposed project:

Transportation Goal 3: Implement complete streets policies and design concepts

Action Item TR3.1.1 Adopt Complete Streets cross section standards. This will ensure the future integration of transportation facilities for future transportation improvements and will improve biking and walking opportunities.

Action Item TR3.1.3. Promote complete street cross section revisions whenever corridor reconstruction or reconfiguration occurs.

Transportation Goal 5: Enhance the bicycle and pedestrian network throughout the Parish

Action Item TR5.2.1 Ensure that continued development of sidewalk improvements occurs with other improvements on major arterial corridors where opportunities to enhance the pedestrian environment exist.

Below are implementation ideas that the City-Parish recommends, which are in the Comprehensive Plan known as FUTUREBR:

<http://brgov.com/dept/planning/pdf/FBRTransportationE.pdf>

- Sidewalks should be wide enough to simultaneously accommodate pedestrian movement, seating, trees, bus shelters, and other appropriate amenities that support pedestrian and transit riders social activities. The ultimate goal is to organize buildings and the spaces between them to cultivate street life. The streets and street network should be designed to make walking, sitting, chatting, and meeting a pleasure.
- Add streetscaping and buffering devices to attract pedestrians and make pedestrian and bicycle use more pleasant.
- Create priority lanes for transit vehicles to improve transit efficiency
- Redesign intersections and modify signalization to improve public transit efficiency and safe movement of passenger vehicles, transit, bicyclists, and pedestrian through the intersection.

Two Transportation Building Block types have been identified on the Essen Lane section between Perkins Road and Interstate 10:

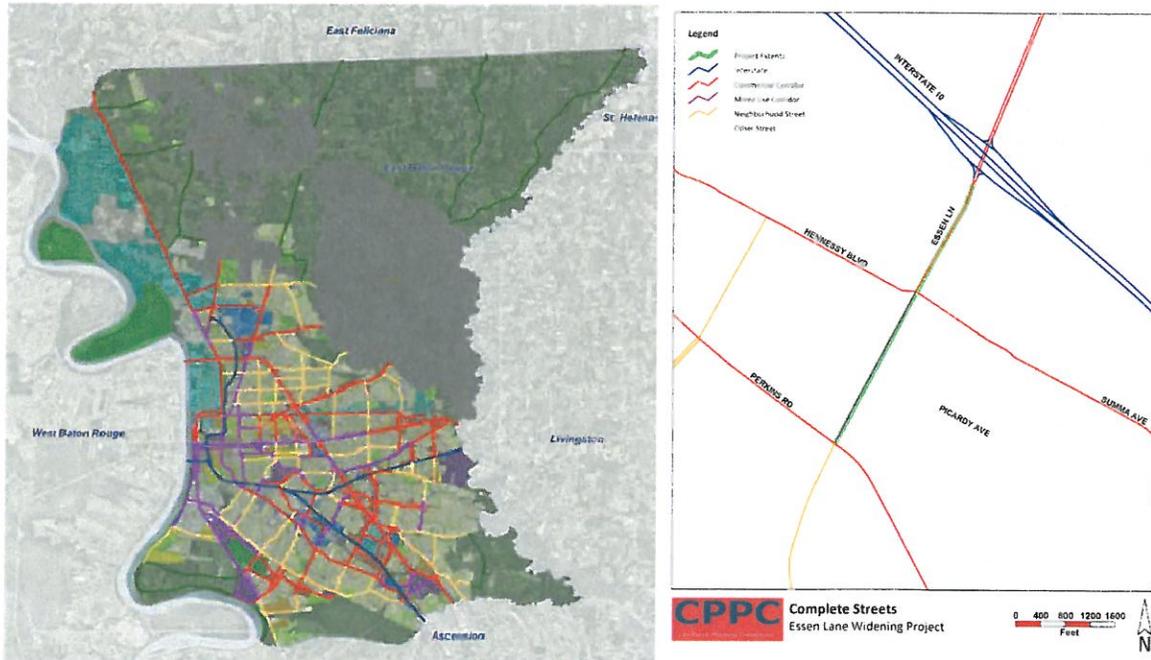
- From Perkins Road to Summa Avenue: Mixed Use corridor (in purple on the map)

The City-Parish recommends wide sidewalks with transit access, dedicated transit lanes, bicycles lanes, bicycle facilities, on-street parking, curb extensions, shared parking, medians and planting strips. These changes will serve as a fulcrum for further work to facilitate the transformation of the street into a community-supporting place. Commercial areas would be strengthened by the installation of a four-foot “mini-median” between the right of way and the sidewalk, which will allow some tree-planting and pedestrian refuge.

- From Summa Avenue to Interstate 10: Commercial corridor (in red on the map)

To serve faster moving traffic, City-Parish Planning Commission staff recommends wider travel lanes, medians, transit accommodations, protected turn lanes, wide pedestrian buffers.

Figure 13: Complete Street Locations



Out of the three alternatives proposed by DOTD, the City-Parish Planning Staff recommends Alternative 2. A center median should incorporate a center turn lane at strategic spots along the corridor, and should accommodate safe pedestrian crossing by inserting central pedestrian crossing islands. Trees should be planted along the sidewalks and in the central median. Furthermore, high medians are not encouraged, rather, below-grade medians with hydric vegetation would serve as low impact stormwater treatment facilities. The installation of curb cuts would allow runoff to collect and infiltrate in the median.

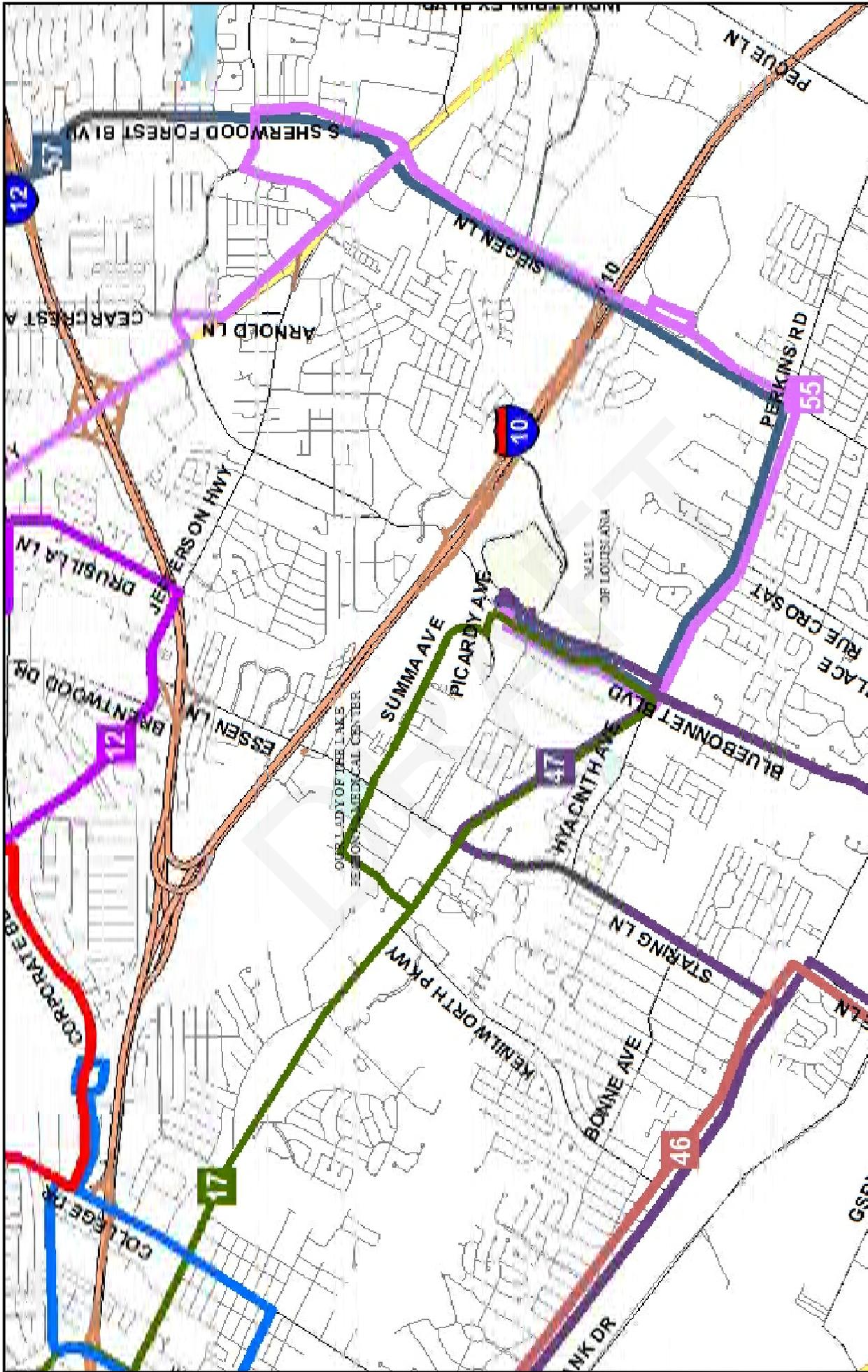
Please contact our office if you have questions regarding this subject.

Sincerely,

Troy L. Bunch, FASLA
Planning Director

TLB/SLM/omh

- c: Ellen A. Miller, Assistant Planning Director
- Ryan Holcomb, Planning Project Coordinator
- C. Lael Holton, Manager, Advance Planning and Research



PROJECT NO: 201802354
 DATE: 3/6/2013
 DRAWN BY: JJD
 CHECKED BY: GDT
 SCALE: N.T.S.

REVISIONS:

CATS ROUTES

ESSEN LANE WIDENING (PERKINS ROAD TO I-10)

S.P. NO. H.010560



CAPP

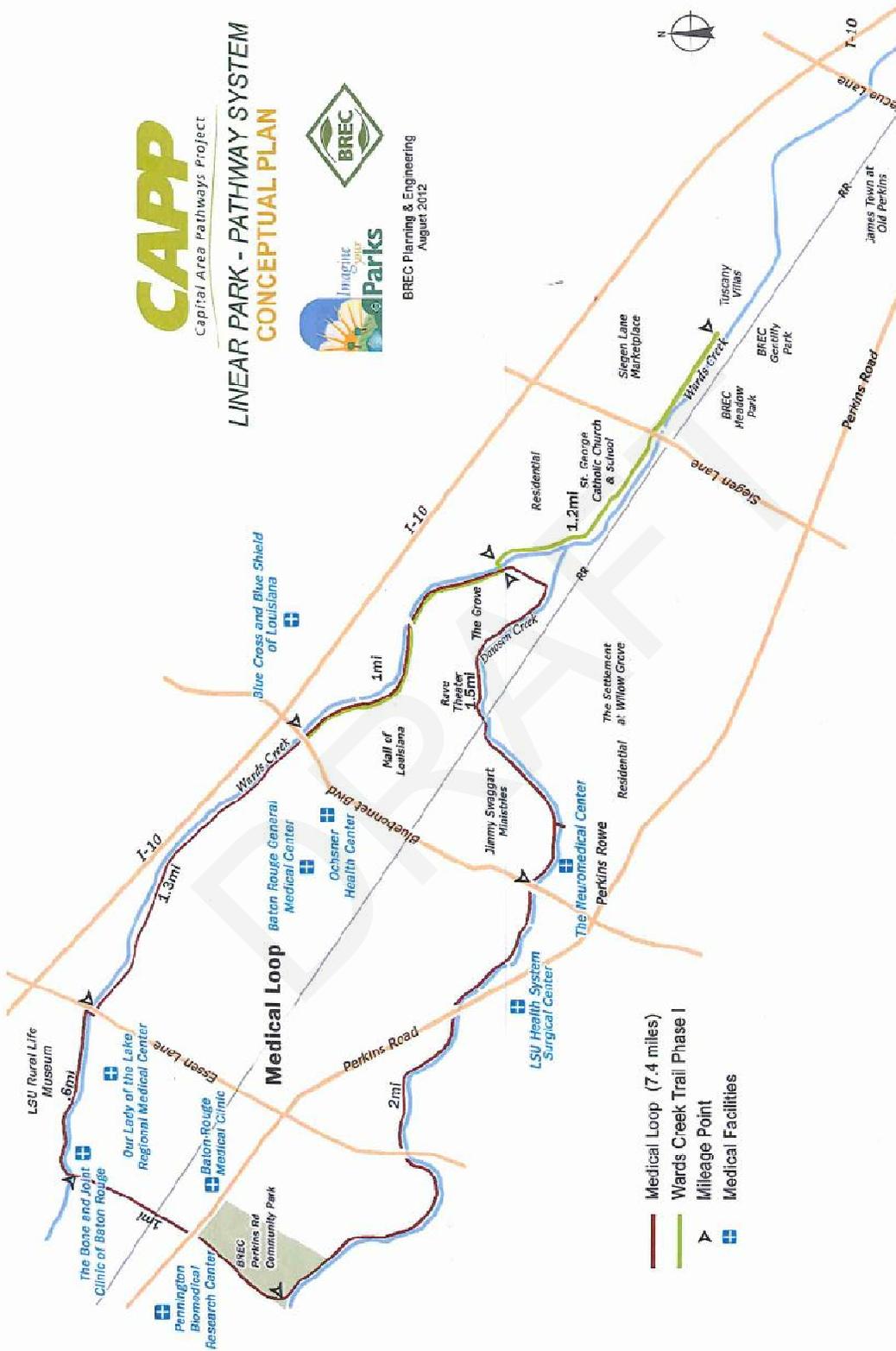
Capital Area Pathways Project

LINEAR PARK - PATHWAY SYSTEM

CONCEPTUAL PLAN



BREC Planning & Engineering
August 2012



REVISIONS:

PROJECT NO: 201802354

DATE: 3/6/2013

DRAWN BY: JJD

CHECKED BY: GDT

SCALE: N.T.S.

CAPP LINEAR PARKWAY

ESSEN LANE WIDENING (PERKINS ROAD TO I-10)

S.P. NO. H.010560



F:\Projects\201802354\02\Highway\Info\Drawings\sections\complete\streets\exhibit.dwg 05-07-13 at 03:49pm by jillard



SURROUNDING DEVELOPMENT

ESSEN LANE WIDENING (PERKINS ROAD TO I-10)

S.P. NO. H.010560

REVISIONS:

PROJECT NO: 201802354

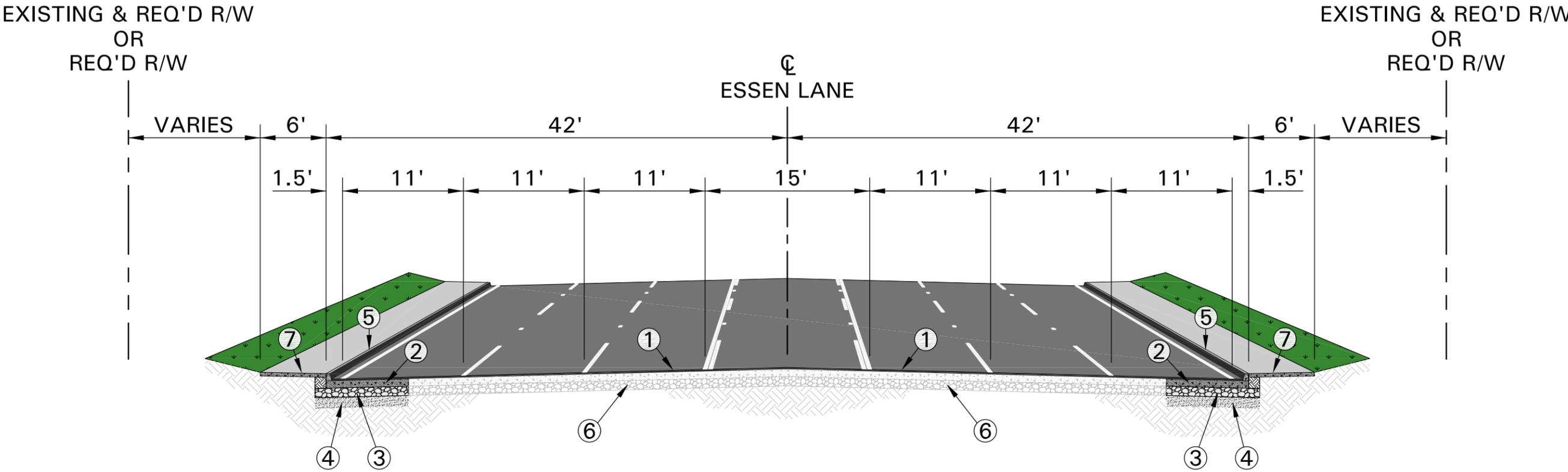
DATE: 2/4/2013

DRAWN BY: JUD

CHECKED BY: GDH

SCALE: 1"=60'

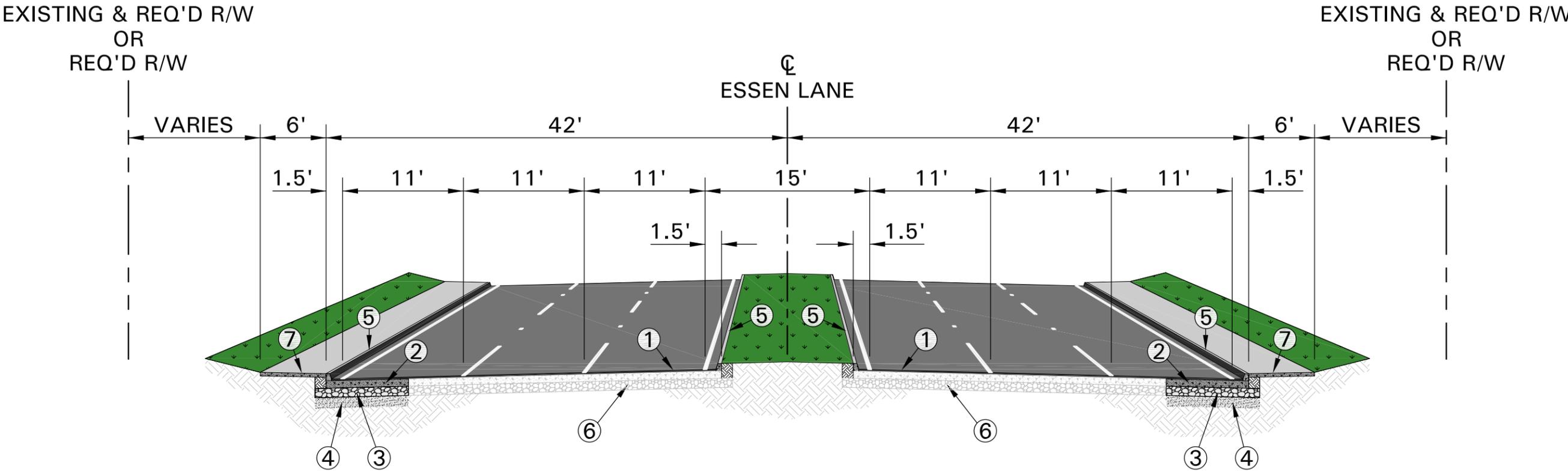
ALTERNATIVE 1



SIX LANE URBAN SECTION
WITH TWO WAY LEFT TURN LANE
(45 MPH DESIGN SPEED)

- ① 2" SUPERPAVE ASPHALTIC CONCRETE WEARING COURSE (ROADWAY)
- ② PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE PAVEMENT
- ③ CLASS II BASE COURSE (STONE OR RECYCLED PCC PAVEMENT)
- ④ TYPE "D" LIME TREATMENT (9% BY VOLUME)
- ⑤ MODIFIED INTEGRAL CONCRETE CURB (BARRIER)
- ⑥ EXISTING PAVEMENT AND BASE TO REMAIN
- ⑦ CONCRETE WALK

ALTERNATIVE 2



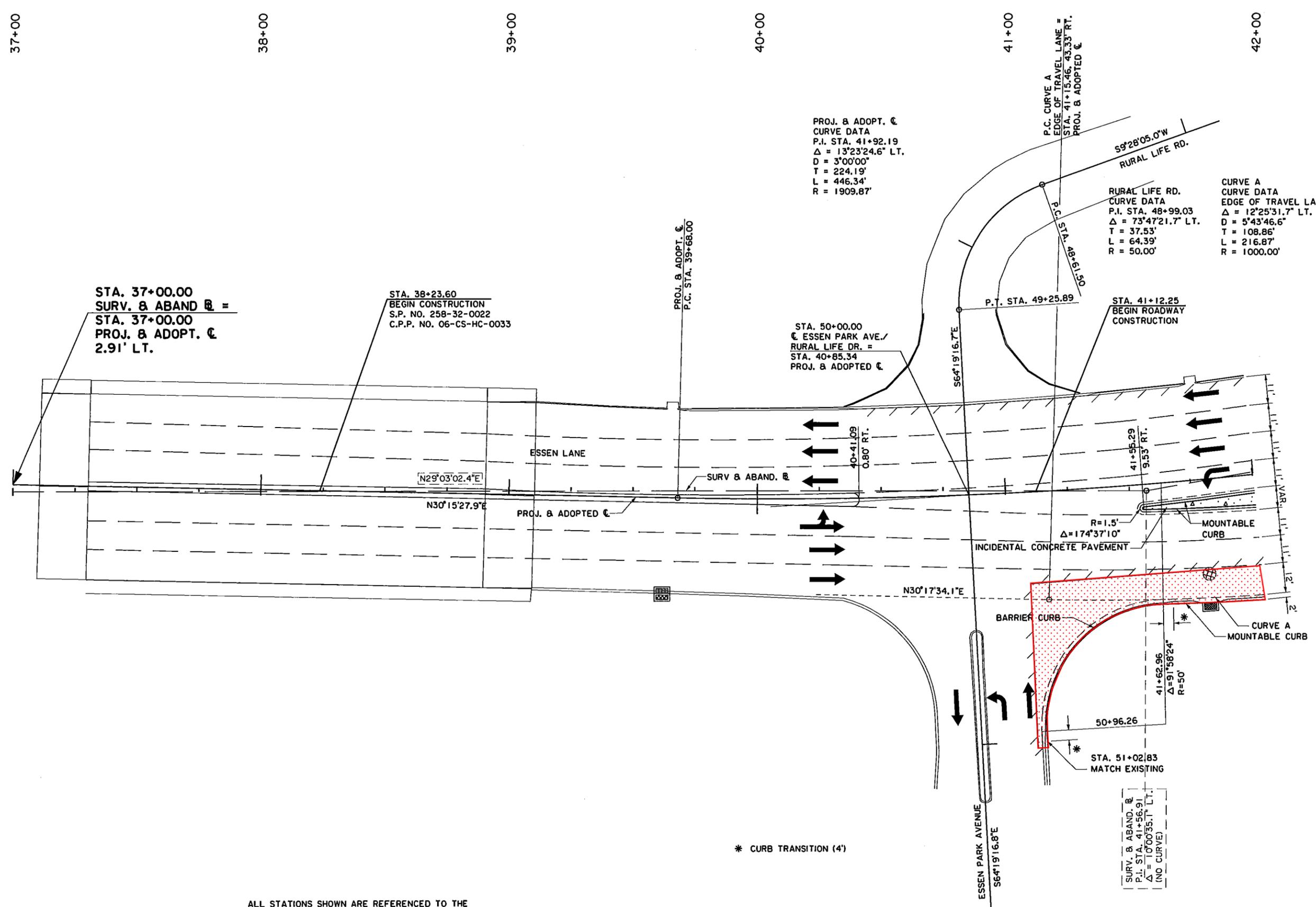
SIX LANE URBAN SECTION
WITH RAISED MEDIAN
(45 MPH DESIGN SPEED)

- ① 2" SUPERPAVE ASPHALTIC CONCRETE WEARING COURSE (ROADWAY)
- ② PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE PAVEMENT
- ③ CLASS II BASE COURSE (STONE OR RECYCLED PCC PAVEMENT)
- ④ TYPE "D" LIME TREATMENT (9% BY VOLUME)
- ⑤ MODIFIED INTEGRAL CONCRETE CURB (BARRIER)
- ⑥ EXISTING PAVEMENT AND BASE TO REMAIN
- ⑦ CONCRETE WALK

Appendix H

Preliminary Layout

City-Parish Project 06-CS-HC-0033 (Essen Lane/I-10)



ALL STATIONS SHOWN ARE REFERENCED TO THE PROJECTED & ADOPTED \mathbb{C} UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

DESIGNED	J.P.R.	CHECKED	R.W.M.	DATE	DECEMBER, 2009
DETAILED	L.K.B.	CHECKED	J.P.R.	DATE	DECEMBER, 2009
PARISH	EAST BATON ROUGE				
CITY	PROJECT				
STATE	PROJECT				
PROJECT	06-CS-HC-0033				
STATE	258-32-0022				

GEOMETRIC LAYOUT
STA. 37+00 - STA. 42+00
ESSEN LANE



SHREEF-KIYRKENDALL & ASSOC. INC.

46+00

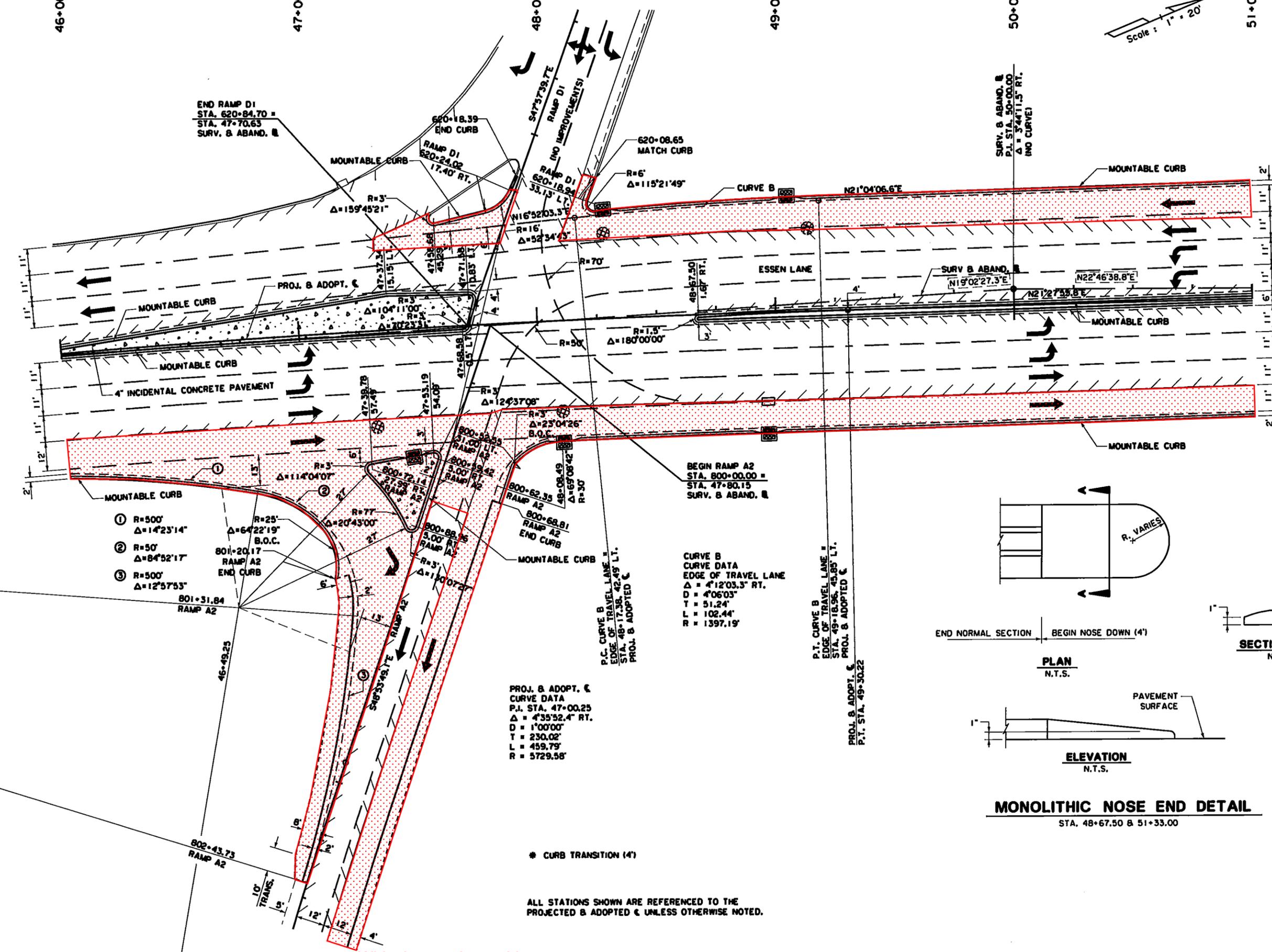
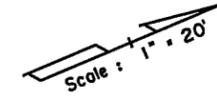
47+00

48+00

49+00

50+00

51+00



- ① R=500'
Δ=14°23'14"
- ② R=50'
Δ=84°52'17"
- ③ R=500'
Δ=12°57'53"

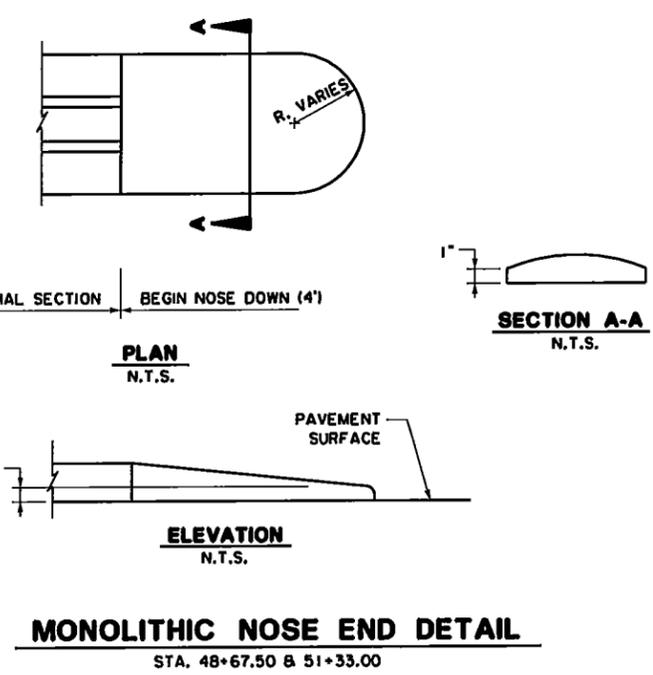
PROJ. & ADOPT. C
 CURVE DATA
 P.J. STA. 47+00.25
 Δ = 4°35'52.4" RT.
 D = 1°00'00"
 T = 230.02'
 L = 459.79'
 R = 5729.55'

BEGIN RAMP A2
 STA. 800+00.00 =
 STA. 47+80.15
 SURV. & ABAND. B

CURVE B
 CURVE DATA
 EDGE OF TRAVEL LANE
 Δ = 4°12'03.3" RT.
 D = 4°06'03"
 T = 51.24'
 L = 102.44'
 R = 1397.19'

P.C. CURVE B
 EDGE OF TRAVEL LANE =
 STA. 48+17.38, 42.49' LT.
 PROJ. & ADOPTED C

P.T. CURVE B
 EDGE OF TRAVEL LANE =
 STA. 49+18.96, 45.85' LT.
 PROJ. & ADOPTED C
 PROJ. & ADOPT. C
 P.T. STA. 49+30.22



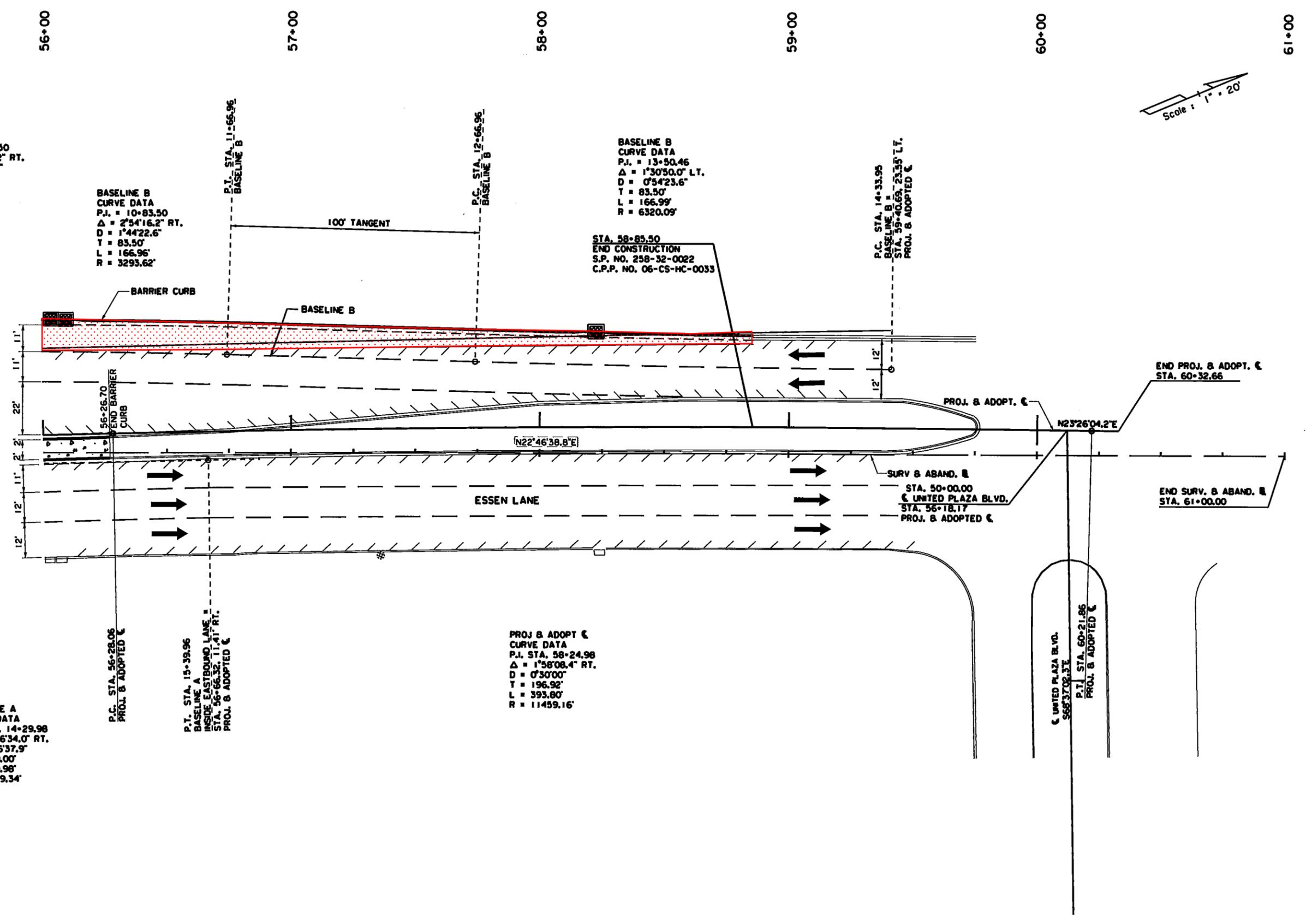
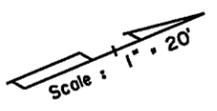
Widening continues this side ~900' total

* CURB TRANSITION (4")

ALL STATIONS SHOWN ARE REFERENCED TO THE PROJECTED & ADOPTED C UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

SHEET NUMBER	31
EAST BATON ROUGE	
PARISH PROJECT	05-CS-HC-0033
DESIGNED	J.P.A.
CHECKED	R.W.M.
DATE	SEPTEMBER, 2009
DETAILED	L.K.B.
CHECKED	J.P.A.
STATE	LA
PROJECT	
DATE	
STATE	
PROJECT	
DATE	
STATE	
PROJECT	
DATE	
STATE	
PROJECT	
DATE	
STATE	

GEOMETRIC LAYOUT
 STA. 46+00 - STA. 51+00
 ESSEN LANE



BASELINE B
CURVE DATA
P.I. = 10+83.50
 $\Delta = 2^{\circ}54'16.2''$ RT.
D = 1'44'22.6"
T = 83.50'
L = 166.96'
R = 3293.62'

BASELINE B
CURVE DATA
P.I. = 10+83.50
 $\Delta = 2^{\circ}54'16.2''$ RT.
D = 1'44'22.6"
T = 83.50'
L = 166.96'
R = 3293.62'

BASELINE B
CURVE DATA
P.I. = 13+50.46
 $\Delta = 1^{\circ}30'50.0''$ LT.
D = 0'54'23.6"
T = 83.50'
L = 166.99'
R = 6320.09'

STA. 58+85.50
END CONSTRUCTION
S.P. NO. 258-32-0022
C.P.P. NO. 06-CS-HC-0033

P.C. STA. 14+33.95
BASELINE B
STA. 59+40.69 - 23.35' LT.
PROJ. & ADOPTED C

BASELINE A
CURVE DATA
P.I. STA. 14+29.98
 $\Delta = 2^{\circ}26'34.0''$ RT.
D = 1'06'37.9"
T = 110.00'
L = 219.98'
R = 5159.34'

P.C. STA. 56+28.05
PROJ. & ADOPTED C

P.T. STA. 15+39.96
BASELINE A
INSIDE EASTBOUND LANE
STA. 56+66.32 - 11.41' RT.
PROJ. & ADOPTED C

PROJ & ADOPT C
CURVE DATA
P.I. STA. 58+24.98
 $\Delta = 1^{\circ}58'08.4''$ RT.
D = 0'30'00"
T = 196.92'
L = 393.80'
R = 11459.16'

SURV & ABAND. E
STA. 50+00.00
C UNITED PLAZA BLVD.
STA. 56+18.17
PROJ. & ADOPTED C

C UNITED PLAZA BLVD.
S66'37'02.3"E
P.T. STA. 60+21.86
PROJ. & ADOPTED C

END PROJ. & ADOPT. C
STA. 60+32.66

END SURV. & ABAND. E
STA. 61+00.00

GEOMETRIC LAYOUT
STA. 56+00 - STA. 60+00
ESSEN LANE

