

Record of Decision

I-49 South

Route US 90

Lafayette Regional Airport to Route LA 88

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

October 2005

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

**Submitted pursuant to 42 USC 4332(2) (c)
State Project No. 700-99-0230
Federal Aid Project No. I-49-1(057)**

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1.0 Decision

1.1 Summary of Decision

This Record of Decision (ROD) approves the Selected Alternative for a segment of proposed I-49 South that would extend from just south of the Lafayette Regional Airport to the LA 88 interchange in Iberia Parish, as described in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) issued April 2005.

The Final EIS studied the proposed construction of a six-lane fully controlled access freeway with local access frontage roads along a segment of the U.S. 90 corridor approximately 10.8 miles in length. Only the upgrade of the existing US 90 corridor was considered in order to increase capacity, and to improve safety and efficiency during normal operations as well as during a coastal evacuation event. Project objectives include converting Route US 90 to a full control of access highway meeting current interstate standards (I-49), while providing: the least disruption to local, business, and through traffic during construction; least impact to the natural and human environment; best access for local and business traffic in the completed project; and an improved hurricane evacuation route. The project corridor was divided into three subsegments designated A, B, and C. Subsegment A extends from just north of the LA 88 intersection to a point just south of Bercegeay Road. Subsegment B extends from the Northern Terminus of Subsegment A to Bernard Road. Subsegment C extends from the Northern Terminus of Subsegment B to just south of Lafayette Regional Airport.

The three subsegment limits were defined by specific sets of traffic, land use, and environmental issues that distinguish one from another. The Selected Alternative combines alternatives considered in each of three subsegments as follows:

- Alternate A-1 including a relocation of LA 92 to the east and interchanges at both LA 92 east and LA 92 west (Young Street);
- Alternate B-3 with an interchange at future Ambassador Caffery Parkway having both an initial build condition and a full build-out with full directional ramps;
- Alternate B-3 at the Albertson's Parkway interchange;
- Alternate B-1 at the Eola Drive/Morgan Street interchange; and
- Alternate C-7 including the realignments of Southpark Road (LA 89) and Verot School Road at these interchanges with I-49.

A map atlas documenting the selected alternative is enclosed.

This decision is based on analyses contained in the Draft EIS issued in April 2003; the Final EIS issued April 18, 2005; the comments of federal, state and local agencies, members of the public, and elected officials; and other information in the record in this matter. Following the approval of this ROD, the project will be able to begin provisions to preserve the I-49 additional required right-of-way, and, as funding becomes available, design and construction will be implemented.

2.0 Alternatives Considered

2.1 Alternatives History and Description

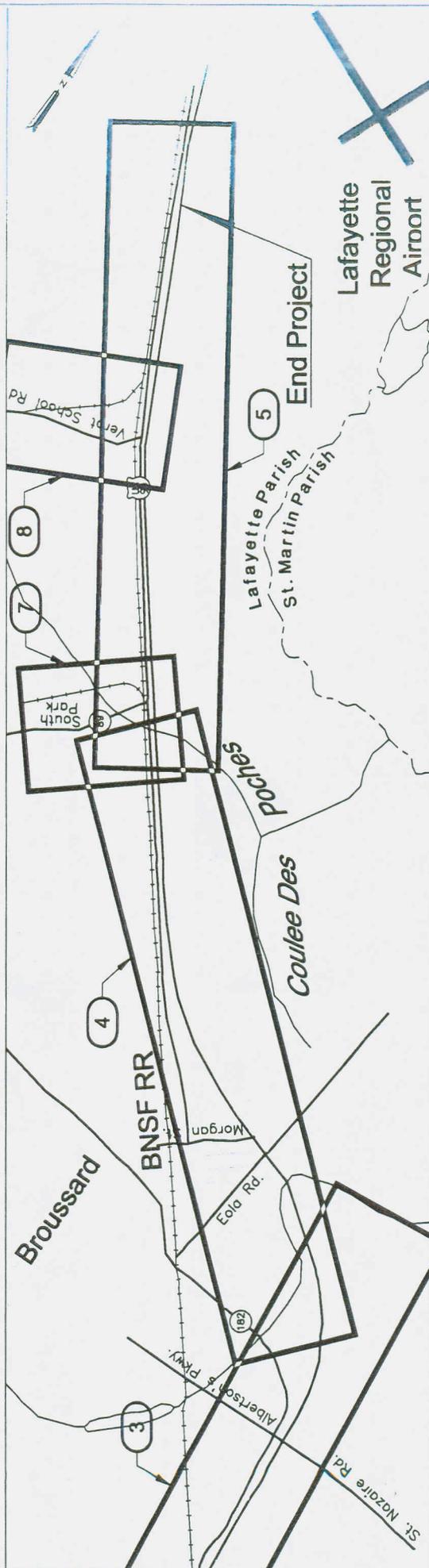
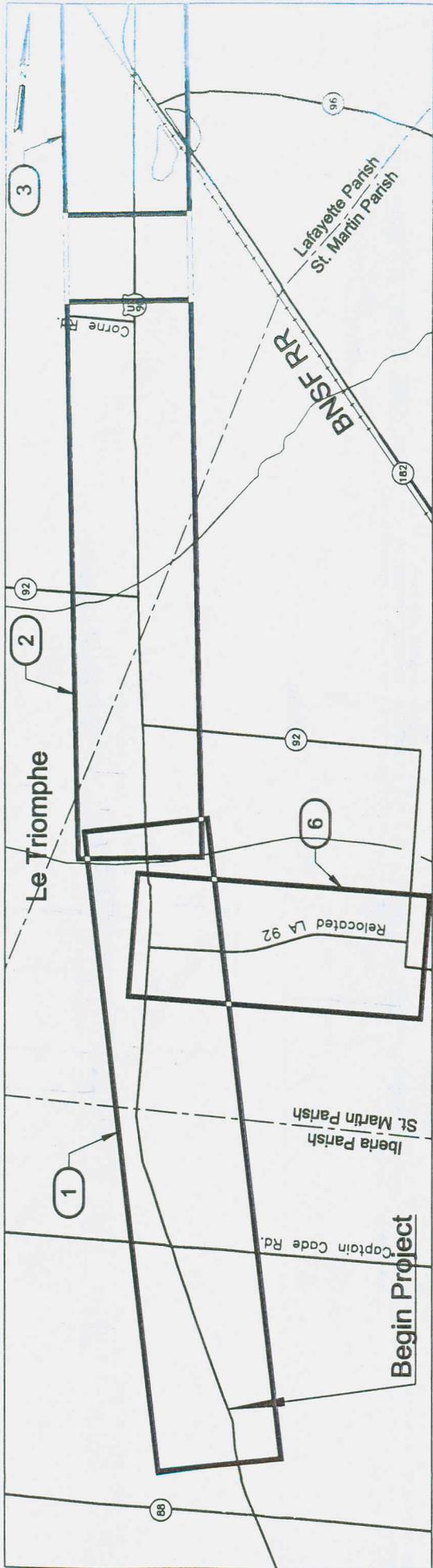
The Draft EIS for the segment of I-49 South from just south of the Lafayette Regional Airport to LA 88 was prepared and distributed in June 2003. The Draft EIS considered only line and grade alternatives that upgraded the existing US 90 corridor to a control of access freeway. The corridor was divided into three subsegments designated A, B, and C from south to north. The subsegment limits were defined by specific sets of traffic, land use, and environmental issues that distinguish one from another.

This approach enabled the alternatives analysis to be highly flexible and to focus on specific corridor issues. Alternates could be developed, refined, or eliminated in one subsegment while not affecting the same process in another subsegment. In all subsegments, it is proposed that the mainline highway would be a six-lane facility with one-way, two-lane frontage roads.

In Subsegment A, one build alternative, Alternative A-1 was developed. It begins just north of the interchange with LA 88 and proceeds north to a point just south of Bercegeay Road. The mainline is primarily at-grade, but it is elevated at two interchanges: one at LA 92 East that would be relocated as part of this project, and one at LA 92 West. LA 92 would be continuously routed along the I-49 frontage roads in the completed project.

In Subsegment B, Alternatives B-1, B-2, and B-3 were developed. All three are comprised of a freeway at-grade, except as described at each interchange, extending north from Subsegment A to a point near the intersection of Bernard Road and existing US 90. The alternatives are best described relative to the interchange areas within the subsegment.

- Ambassador Caffery: From the south, the first interchange is with Corne Road, the alignment of the future Ambassador Caffery Parkway. Alternatives B-1 and B-2 at this location were identical with I-49 elevated over the connecting road and with ramps to the at-grade frontage road. To address the concerns of the Lafayette Consolidated Government and the Town of Broussard regarding future capacity requirements, Alternative B-3 was developed to include both an initial build proposal similar to Alternatives B-1 and B-2, and a full build proposal in which full directional ramps would be constructed.
- Albertson's Parkway: At this interchange all alternatives provided for the grade separation of both the mainline and the frontage roads at the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF). Access both to Albertson's Parkway, the connecting road, and to LA 182 is accomplished by ramps to the one-way frontage roads. To reduce conflicting movements, in B-3, unlike in B-1 and B-2, LA 182 is routed on the frontage roads between the railroad and Albertson's Parkway. I-49 remains elevated for approximately a mile through this area. This alternative was developed in consultation with the Town of Broussard. Alternatives B-1, B-2,



LEGEND

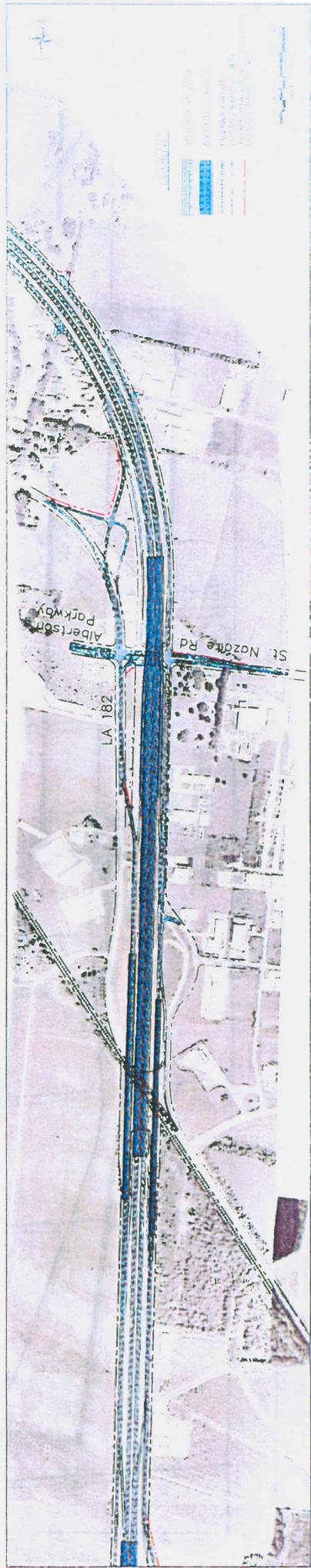
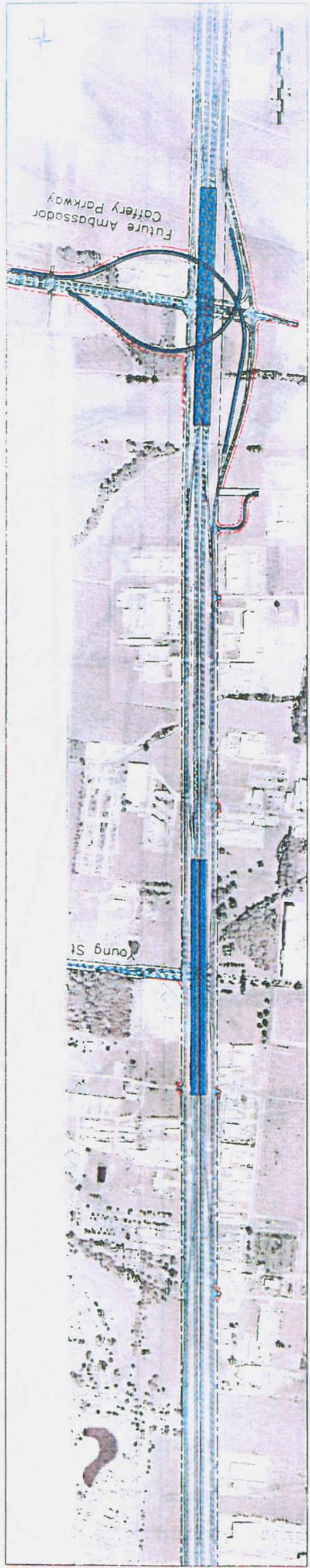
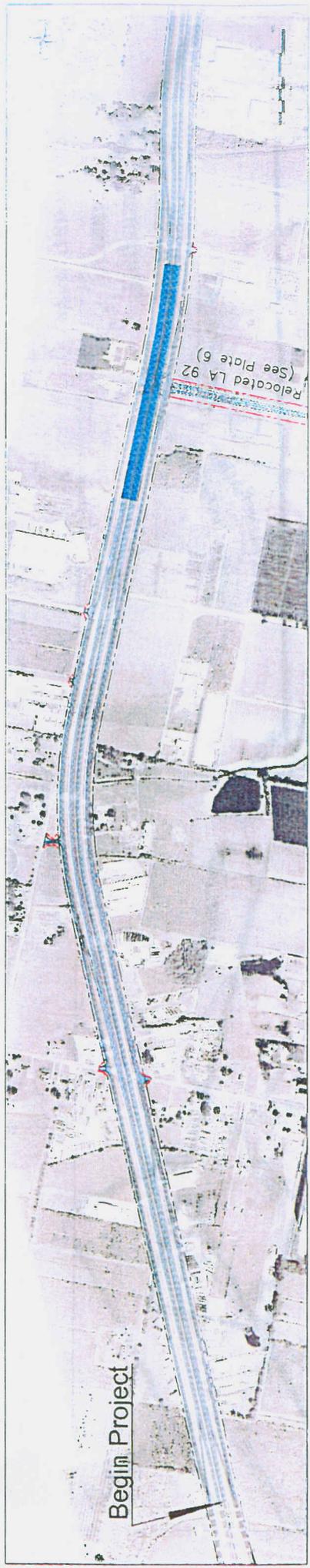
12 PLATE NUMBER



SELECTED ALTERNATIVE

PLATE MAP KEY

PLATES 1 THRU 8



Symbol	Description
[Blue shaded area]	Project Area
[Red dashed line]	Relocated LA 92
[Black dashed line]	Other Road
[Green area]	Other Features

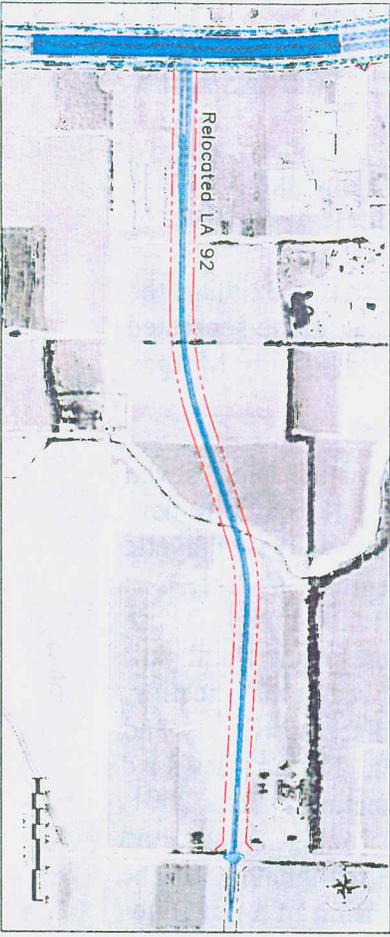


PLATE 5

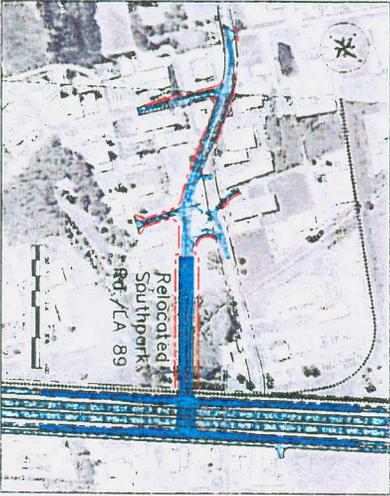


PLATE 7



PLATE 8

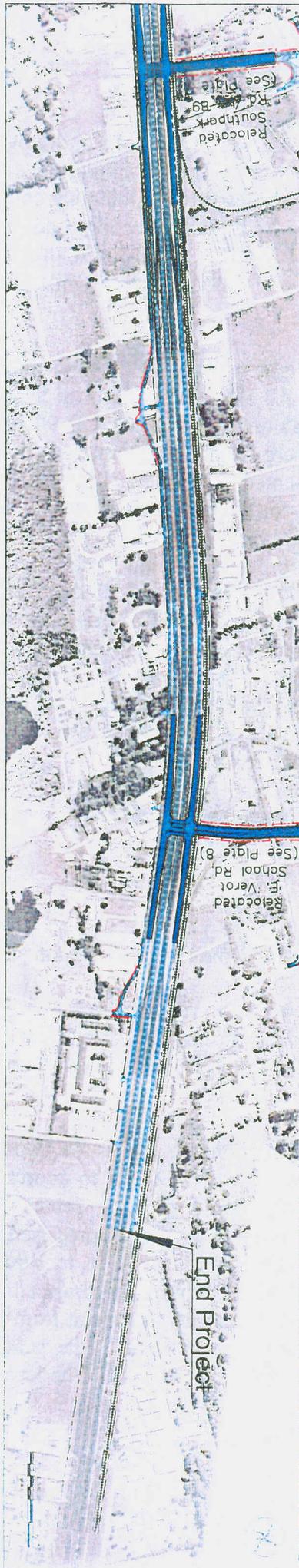


PLATE 2



PLATE 4

and B-3 differed in the locations of entrance and exit ramps and the distances between signalized intersections. Traffic simulations tested these alternatives to determine which was most successful in eliminating congestion.

- Morgan Street/Eola Road: As these connecting roads are in close proximity, the difference between Alternatives B-1 and B-2 was that the former grade separated I-49 from both roads on an elevated structure while B-2 separated only Morgan Street.

In Subsegment C, with the highest traffic volumes in the project study area, seven alternatives were developed. All extended north from Subsegment B to a point near the intersection of Kaliste Saloom and existing US 90 just south of the Lafayette Regional Airport. Initially there were four alternatives in Subsegment C, C-1, C-2, C-3, and C-4 that were presented at a Public Meeting in February 2001. These combined various alternatives for the two interchanges in this subsegment, Southpark Road (LA 89) and Verot School Road. Based on comments received at that meeting, Alternatives C-5 and C-6 were developed and reviewed with adjacent property and business owners and with the Lafayette Consolidated Government. These reviews led to the development of Alternative C-7 that was presented at a meeting in June 2001. In Alternative C-7, the mainline remains at-grade and the frontage roads and connecting roads are elevated. The project also includes the realignment of the connecting roads in the vicinity of the interchanges and the provision of a new two-way service road on the east side of the right-of-way for property access along the elevated portions of the frontage roads.

In the development of alternatives the requirements of 23 CFR 771.111(f) state that the project must:

- Connect logical termini,
- Have independent utility, and
- Not restrict the consideration of future transportation alternatives.

The proposed project meets these requirements. It has logical termini and independent utility, and it does not restrict consideration of other transportation improvements in the area, an example being the provisions for the future Ambassador Caffery Parkway.

The project limits were defined on the merits of two complementary purposes, namely to further the development of I-49, and to address local traffic demand and safety issues on a discrete and rapidly growing suburban section of US 90. The project would connect two adjacent pieces of proposed I-49, one known as "the Connector" and the other extending from LA 88 to Wax Lake Outlet in St. Mary Parish. Regardless of other I-49 initiatives, the project limits have been defined by traffic volumes and capacity requirements that result from regional growth and a need to enhance hurricane evacuation capabilities. The suburbanized character of the project corridor is relatively uniform throughout. The local traffic demand and safety

concerns affirm the project's logical termini and demonstrate the independent utility of the project.

The project is demonstrated to meet logical termini and have independent utility as it meets the following components of the Purpose and Need:

- System Linkage – Via I-49 the State of Louisiana would continue to implement a major transportation system linkage improvement that serves a substantial portion of the State's population and economy. The improvement is consistent with federal, state and local planning efforts.
- Hurricane Evacuation - The State would upgrade a critical corridor utilized for hurricane evacuation with demonstrated benefits in evacuation clearance times.
- Regional Mobility - The Lafayette Metropolitan Planning Area would experience a substantial benefit in transportation network mobility, resulting in improved vehicle trip times as well as reduced network and link congestion, with associated benefits in air quality and fuel consumption over the no-build condition.
- Safety – The existing US 90 corridor currently experiences motorist safety problems consequent to intersection conflicts, high traffic volumes, and roadway geometry. This project would convert existing US 90, operating as an urban roadway, to I-49 operating as a control of access facility. The change in roadway geometry would reduce the potential for future accidents.

The Final EIS contains an adequate detailed statement of the following: description of the proposed project; need for the project; alternatives; affected environment; environmental consequences; and comments and coordination.

The Draft and Final EIS's have been coordinated with appropriate local, state and federal agencies and also made available for public comment and at the Public Hearing for the DEIS held on June 5, 2003. The comments received have been addressed in the Final EIS and this ROD.

2.2 Selected Alternative

The Selected Alternative for the Lafayette Regional Airport to LA 88 corridor consists of a series of alternatives by subsegment and, in Subsegment B, by interchange area. These include the following alternates as presented in the Public Involvement Program considered as a combined route:

- Alternate A-1 including a relocation of LA 92 to the east and interchanges at both LA 92 east and LA 92 west (Young Street);
- Alternate B-3 with an interchange at future Ambassador Caffery Parkway having both an initial build condition and a full build-out with full directional ramps;
- Alternate B-3 at the Albertson's Parkway interchange;

- Alternate B-1 at the Eola Drive/Morgan Street interchange; and
- Alternate C-7 including the realignments of Southpark Road (LA 89) and Verot School Road at these interchanges with I-49.

Chapter 2 of the Final EIS contains additional information regarding project alternatives.

The Selected Alternative decision represents a balance of impacts in which certain factors were weighted against others in reaching a decision. The factors that stand out as the most favorable regarding the Selected Alternative are summarized below:

- The Selected Alternative reduces congestion at all interchanges and intersections, especially at Verot School Road, Southpark Road, and Albertson's Parkway,
- Roadway safety is improved, not only in the US 90 corridor, but also on the connecting roads, especially by the provision of grade separations over the BNSF Railroad at Southpark Road and Verot School Road, and
- The Selected Alternative is consistent with the transportation plans of the Lafayette Consolidated Government and the Town of Broussard and with the economic development plans of St. Martin Parish.
- Impacts to the natural and built environment have been avoided to the greatest extent possible. Unavoidable impacts have been minimized.

2.3 Selection of a Construction Alternative over the No-Action Alternative

Construction of the Selected Alternative will cause some unavoidable, adverse impacts; however, it is the alternative that best balances the identified transportation needs of the project area with project impacts. The No-Action Alternative provides a benchmark for environmental analysis, but it does not meet the project purpose and need and during the Final EIS has been dropped from further consideration as a viable alternative. For these reasons, the Selected Alternative is the "environmentally preferred alternative" for purposes of 40 CFR 1502.2(b) because it best meets the project purpose and need and balances impacts overall.

3.0 Measures to Minimize Harm

During conceptual studies and the development of alternatives, efforts were made to minimize impacts. After determining that a potential impact to a resource or other feature could not be avoided, mitigation measures or other commitments to minimize harm were developed. The discussion below identifies key project areas for which mitigation and other measures to minimize harm have been addressed. The specific mitigation measures and commitments to minimize harm are listed.

3.1 Relocation Impacts

The Selected Alternative will be located primarily in the existing right-of-way of US 90. As documented in Chapter 2, however, there would be areas along connecting roads that require the acquisition of additional right-of-way. These areas are notably in the following locations and result in the indicated number of displacements:

- Verot School Road between US 90 and Industrial Parkway, three industrial buildings within a single business site may require relocation (Frank's Casing Crew & Rental Tools at 700 E. Verot School Road);
- Southpark Road (LA 89) between US 90 and Tidelands Road, four buildings occupied by three businesses (Magnolia Chemical at 121 Southpark Road, Thomson Brothers at 125 Southpark Road, and Quality Compression at 129 Southpark Road);
- The three areas of connection between the northbound frontage road and the two-way service road on the east side of I-49 in the area of Southpark and Verot School Roads, two buildings occupied by two businesses at the intersection of Garber Road and US 90 (Texaco at 2903 US 90 E and B&B Carwash at 2835 US 90 E);
- The intersection of LA 182, Albertson's Parkway, and the southbound frontage road, three buildings occupied by two businesses (Broussard Carwash at 4730 US 90 E and Preheat Inc. at 4730 US 90 E);
- The alignment of future Ambassador Caffery Parkway from I-49 to Hardware Road, two buildings occupied by two businesses (All Cranes USA at 107 Corne Road and Petro Tool at 5574 US 90 E) may need to be relocated because of ROW acquisition; and
- The relocated alignment of LA 92 east in St. Martin Parish.

The affected buildings are identified for these business relocations on applicable Project Atlas plates. The proposed project would not displace any residential properties.

In a number of other locations small amounts of right-of-way will be required for geometric improvements at intersections of existing roadways with the frontage roads as described in Chapter 2.0, but no displacements are anticipated.

The 10 businesses to be relocated, and the one business with three buildings that may require relocation within their site, would be afforded all protections under the Uniform Relocation Act.

3.2 Noise

Application of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LDOTD) noise policy resulted in the determinations regarding barriers at the following locations in the Final EIS:

- Cote Gelee Apartments: A noise barrier would be provided as part of the Selected Alternative, starting at approximately Station 846+00 and running along the right-of-way line to Station 852+80.
- Maxie's Campground: A noise barrier would be provided as part of the Selected Alternative, starting at approximately Station 861+50 and running along the right-of-way line to Station 872+00. These proposed barriers are presented in Exhibits 4-1A and 4-1B.

3.3 Surface Water

Wherever possible, the project would utilize a rural section with swale drainage. This design would enable storm water runoff to flow through vegetated areas prior to discharge to surface waters. As with the existing condition, this rural section design would enable waterborne contaminants to be filtered from the runoff prior to discharge. The vegetated areas would slow the rate of runoff flow, thereby minimizing the effects of erosion.

3.4 Floodplains

Under the Selected Alternate, project design and construction would meet federal requirements to result in no adverse impacts on floodplains. In particular, finished roadway grades of the mainline roadway would be above the 100-year floodplain elevation so as to maintain passable roadway conditions during storm events. New or reconstructed culvert structures would be designed to convey normal drainage as well as storm flows.

3.5 Wetlands

Total wetland impact by the Selected Alternative will be 6.3 acres, and will require a Section 404 permit. Potential mitigation measures to offset unavoidable wetland impacts will be considered on an as needed basis during the permitting process.

The potential mitigation measures include restoration, creation, or purchase of replacement wetlands through an approved mitigation bank. On-site creation of wetlands would be one form of mitigation, if space were available. The created wetlands would have to be viable, functional wetlands of a predetermined value and approved by the US Army Corps of Engineers. There are several options for mitigation banks within the same hydrological unit as the project study area. The mitigation cost estimate in the Final EIS uses a cost of \$3,000 per acre.

3.6 Aquatic Ecology

During facility operations, the drainage design would utilize a rural roadway section with swale drainage design that would preserve existing drainage patterns. Storm water runoff would flow overland from paved areas through vegetated swales and vegetated areas abutting the roadways prior to discharging to surface waters. This design would slow runoff rates and enable waterborne contaminants to be filtered from the runoff prior to discharge, thereby protecting water quality and minimizing the potential for siltation.

Impacts to wetland components of aquatic ecology may occur where new intersections or interchanges are proposed. The impacts would be confined to only what is needed to construct the roadway, drainage or lighting and maintain a required right-of-way. The two primary areas of impact would be the Southpark Realignment and the Ambassador Caffery Extension. Isolated areas of forested wetlands would be impacted in both of these areas. These forested wetlands are fragmented due to commercial/industrial development and agricultural expansion. Impacts to these forested wetlands can be offset by purchasing mitigation through an approved mitigation bank in the same hydrological region.

3.7 Geology, Topography, Soils, and Prime Farmland

Cut and fill operations will be minimized, as practicable, to meet grade and level requirements set forth by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and LDOTD. Design and construction activities will incorporate best management practices (BMP) to prevent future erosion. BMP's used during construction and development activities include temporary soil erosion control measures, permanent control measures, and low-impact land use practices. During the design phase of the project, consideration will be given to limiting the amounts of impervious surfaces created, preservation of stream buffers and sensitive areas such as natural wetlands and riparian corridors, limiting disturbance of soil and vegetation, and maintaining the natural infiltrative capacity of an area.

3.8 Hazardous Waste Sites

Mitigation for hazardous materials is not anticipated at any locations within the project study area except possibly at the Texaco gas station located near Southpark Road. Due to additional ROW requirements, the UST's at this site would need to be properly closed and removed. Permanent closure of UST's would follow the procedures set forth in LAC XI.905 and LAC XI.907 (Louisiana Administrative Code). In 1996, after three years of continuous assessment, LDEQ issued a no further action required letter for this site. However, as the project advances, soil sampling and analysis will be performed around the UST's at this site. If contamination is found, mitigation would be required to bring the site into regulatory compliance. The nature and degree of mitigation at this location can not be determined at this time.

Mitigation measures, if needed, might require that the contaminated soil be hauled off to an approved disposal area.

3.9 Aesthetics

At Eola Road/Morgan Street, trees would be planted in the portion of the ROW between the frontage roads and the abutting properties. At Southpark Road and at Verot School Road, the potentially sensitive view is from the east looking under the elevated frontage roads to the mainline. This would be the view from Alida's Bed and Breakfast.

3.10 Cultural Resources

As discussed in Section 4.15 of the Final EIS, two archaeological sites, 16LY113 and 16LY114, were inaccessible during the preparation of the Final EIS. Shovel testing will be performed for these sites after the right-of-way has been acquired. If either site is determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, further coordination in compliance with Section 106 would be carried out.

3.11 Section 106 Statement

As discussed in section 4.15.2 of the FEIS, the project would have a visual effect on an element of the Comeaux House, as an elevated portion of I-49 would be visible from the Comeaux House. Consultation with the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding Section 106 properties has been completed. As a result of consultation, a finding of No Adverse Effect was determined for the Comeaux House. As noted in Section 4.15.2, evaluation of Sites 16Y113 and 16Y114, which were inaccessible during preparation of the Final EIS, will need to be undertaken following acquisition of the right-of-way. Further, it has been determined that the Marguerite St. Julien House will not be affected by the proposed project.

3.12 Impacts to Transportation Patterns

3.12.1 Vehicular Access to Businesses and Residences

Properties impacted by control of access will be compensated in accord with LDOTD policies and procedures.

3.12.2 Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

The Lafayette Consolidated Government has not adopted a bicycle route master plan, and currently there are no publicly adopted bicycle routes within the project area. Pack and Paddle Cajun Cyclists, a private company, publishes tour routes within the project area that utilize existing roadway right-of-way, including portions of US 90 and its frontage roads. Three of the bicycle tour routes currently utilize the existing US 90 right-of-way in Lafayette and St. Martin Parishes.

An overall depiction of bicycle tour routes in the region is presented in Exhibit 3-2. Exhibit 4-2 depicts adjustments in the portions of existing bicycle tour routes located within the project area as follows:

- Broussard/Youngsville: On the inbound trip, as it approaches Second Street on Morgan Street, the bicycle tour route would continue on Morgan Street across the I-49 right-of-way to the one-way northbound frontage road. Then it would proceed north along the frontage road to the beginning of the two-way service road. It would proceed north on the service road until it rejoins the frontage road and continue northbound until it departs the project area.
- St. Martinville: On the outbound trip, it would continue on the one-way southbound frontage road past Garber Road and, like the Youngsville bicycle tour route, enter Second Street and continue to South Eola Road. Unlike the Youngsville bicycle tour route, it would turn left at South Eola Road and continue across the I-49 right-of-way onto North Eola Road to Garber Road at which point it would resume its existing route. On the inbound trip, as it reaches the I-49 ROW, it would turn right onto the two-way service road and follow the route described for the Youngsville route from there.
- Hills of Acadiana: Within the project area, this bicycle tour route would be adjusted in the same manner as the St. Martinville bicycle tour route.

3.13 Construction Impacts

3.13.1 Traffic and Circulation

Construction sequence, traffic maintenance criteria, and plans will be developed as part of final design to coordinate construction activities and ensure continued access to all properties. Needs for special considerations will be identified and addressed.

3.13.2 Air Quality

Standard erosion control strategies, including transport of materials in tarpaulin-covered trucks, and selected wetting of soils within the construction zone would minimize airborne particulate matter. Any burning of material would be undertaken according to relevant local laws and ordinances. Appropriate traffic control plans serve to limit localized concentrations of emissions during construction.

3.13.3 Noise

Construction equipment that is operated with internal combustion engines would be properly muffled to minimize noise production. Shielding of stationary noise sources such as generators with temporary barriers would occur. As appropriate, construction noise abatement measures referenced in Section 107.15 of the *Louisiana Standard Specifications for Roads and Bridges*, and the FHWA Technical Advisory T 6160 2, dated March 13, 1984, would be utilized.

3.13.4 Utilities

Specific relocation plans would be developed during the final design phase of the Selected Alternative and would be completed prior to construction of the improvements. Functional or financial responsibility for relocation of a specific facility or line may differ depending on prior agreements between the utility providers, current landowners, local government, and LDOTD. The determination of responsibility would be in accordance with LDOTD policies and procedures.

3.13.5 Aquatic Ecology

Project construction would strive to avoid adverse impacts to aquatic ecology by prohibiting construction activities in existing waterways except where culvert construction necessitates such activity. In the latter case, BMP would be utilized to minimize the area of disturbance, create temporary diversion channels to maintain waterway flows during construction, stabilize slopes and exposed soils to minimize siltation and erosion, restore flow to the original channels following construction, and restore the pre-existing condition where temporary channels were created. Water areas will also be protected throughout the construction period by installing and maintaining soil erosion and sediment control protection mechanisms such as silt fencing and hay bales. All protective practices would be consistent with the LDOTD's soil erosion control procedures.

3.13.6 Geology, Topography, Soils, and Prime Farmland

In compliance with the US Environmental Protection Agency's stormwater quality guidelines, BMP for soil erosion and sediment control would be implemented during construction to reduce impacts caused by construction of the project. These measures may include the use of sediment barriers, temporary and permanent vegetative cover for soil stabilization, dust control, and the use of riprap for the protection of soils from the erosive forces of water.

3.13.7 Hazardous Waste Sites

If areas of hazardous waste contamination are encountered during the construction of the Selected Alternative, construction will immediately be stopped and the policies and procedures of LDOTD's Policy and Procedure Manual No. 48 (Underground Storage Tank and Contaminated Site Policy and Procedures) will be implemented.

3.13.8 Cumulative Impacts

Efforts to avoid or minimize these impacts, as well as the use of mitigation strategies, have been undertaken.

4.0 Monitoring and Reporting

LDOTD will monitor the project implementation to assure conformance with project commitments.

5.0 Comments on the Final EIS

This portion of the ROD includes comments received by the LDOTD on the Final EIS for the I-49 Lafayette Regional Airport to LA 88 Project. The Final EIS was approved by the FHWA on April 18, 2005. A Notice of Availability requesting comments on the Final EIS was published in the Federal Register with a comment due date of June 13, 2005.

Two comments were received in response to the publication of the Final EIS.

- The Jena Band of Choctaw Indians wrote a letter of "no objection" to the Project.
- The U.S. Coast Guard indicated the proposed bridges over Coulee Des Poches, LaSalle Coulee and the two Cypress Bayou Interchange crossings will not require specific Coast Guard permits.

6.0 Record of Decision Approval

Based on the analysis and evaluation contained in the proposed project's Final Environmental Impact Statement; after careful consideration of all the identified social, economic, and environmental factors and input received from officials representing other agencies, organizations and the public; and the factors and project commitments and mitigation measures outlined above, it is the decision of the FHWA to approve the selected alternatives as described below:

- Alternate A-1 including a relocation of LA 92 to the east and interchanges at both LA 92 east and LA 92 west (Young Street);
- Alternate B-3 with an interchange at future Ambassador Caffery Parkway having both an initial build condition and a full build-out with full directional ramps;
- Alternate B-3 at the Albertson's Parkway interchange;
- Alternate B-1 at the Eola Drive/Morgan Street interchange; and
- Alternate C-7 including the realignments of Southpark Road (LA 89) and Verot School Road at these interchanges with I-49.

Date

11/1/05



William A. Sussmann

Louisiana Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

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APPENDIX A

I-49 South

Route US 90

Lafayette Regional Airport to Route LA 88

Comments Received in Response

to the

Publication of the Final EIS



Jena Band of Choctaw Indians

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

May 19, 2005

STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & DEVELOPMENT
P. O. BOX 94245
BATON ROUGE, LA 70804-9245

RE: STATE PROJECT NO: 700-99-0230
F.A.P. NO. I-49-1(057)
I-49 SOUTH
LAFAYETTE REGIONAL AIRPORT TO LA 88
ROUTE: US 90 SOUTH
PARISHES: IBERIA, LAFAYETTE & ST. MARTIN

To Whom It May Concern:

Reference is made to your letter dated April 25, 2005, concerning the above-proposed project.

After thorough review of the documents submitted, it has been determined there will be no significant impact in regards to the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians. We have no objections to its implementation.

If I may be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Lillie Strange, Environmental Director
Jena Band of Choctaw Indians

Lilliestrange72@aol.com

318-992-8258



16591C
May 12, 2005

STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
AND DEVELOPMENT
ATTN MS JAN GRENFELL
P O BOX 94245
BATON ROUGE LA 70804-9245

Dear Ms. Grenfell:

We have received your letter dated April 25, 2005 regarding the Final Environmental Impact Statement on State Project No. 700-99-0230, F.A.P. No. I-49-1(057), I-49 South, Lafayette Regional Airport to LA 88, Route: US 90 South, Iberia, Lafayette and St. Martin Parishes. The proposed project involves Coulee Des Poches, LaSalle Coulee and two Cypress Bayou interchanges that cross this highway. No specific permit will be required for these crossings.

At the proposed crossing of this waterway, Coulee Des Poches has been determined to be a non-navigable waterway and not subject to Coast Guard jurisdiction.

According to the information you provided, LaSalle Coulee and the two Cypress Bayou waterway crossing are not influenced by tidal action or used for commercial navigation nor are they susceptible to use for commercial navigation by reasonable improvement. No commercial facilities exist along the waterways, nor are there a likelihood that future commercial development will occur. Therefore, the waterways, at the proposed sites, meet the criteria for the Coast Guard Authorization (CGA) Act of 1982, Public Law 97-322 for the construction of these construction sites. Accordingly, a specific Coast Guard Bridge Permit will not be required.

Please be advised that plans for the proposed crossings should provide adequate clearances to pass existing and future navigation and have no significant impact on the environment. Prior to construction of these projects, you should check with your local Floodplain Administrator and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to ensure that the proposed waterway crossings are at an appropriate elevation to pass floodwaters.

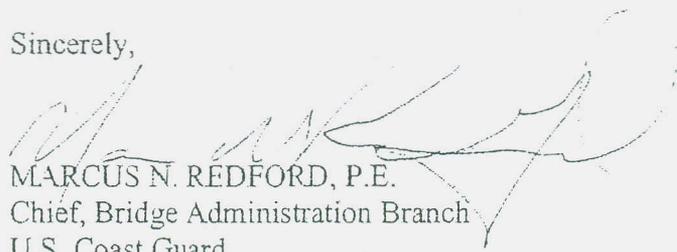
Based on your submittal of Final Environmental Impact Statement, there is no significant nighttime navigation occurring at the proposed waterway crossings and pursuant to Title 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 118.40, the proposed projects they are hereby exempt from Coast Guard navigational lighting requirements and retroreflective materials need not be installed. These exemptions are subject to review and revocation in the future provided conditions change or are found to differ significantly from those indicated in your request.

Maintenance of these crossings are the responsibility of the owner. If the waterway crossings fall into disrepair or are no longer used for these intended purposes, it must be removed by and at the expense of the owner in their entirety. The bridges shall be maintained free and clear of debris at all times.

16591C
May 12, 2005

These crossings are subject to future review by the Coast Guard to ensure that conditions do not change which may render this determination invalid. Should repairs to these crossings not be commenced within two years and completed within five years from the date of this letter, you must reapply for Coast Guard approval. Furthermore, this determination does not relieve you of your responsibility to obtain appropriate permits from any other federal or state and local agencies having jurisdiction in this matter.

Sincerely,



MARCUS N. REDFORD, P.E.
Chief, Bridge Administration Branch
U.S. Coast Guard
By direction

Copy: Mr. Vincent G. Russo, Jr.
Federal Highway Administration

