

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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E.1 INTRODUCTION

E.1.1. Background

The proposed project involves the construction of an emergency detour route off Louisiana Highway 70 (LA 70) in the vicinity of Louisiana Highway 69 (LA 69). The detour route is proposed in the event the integrity of the existing LA 70 is threatened as a result of Napoleonville Salt Dome mining activities.

The LA 70 Detour Route Stage 0 Feasibility Study and Environmental Inventory (Detour Feasibility Study) was initiated in March 2013. The project was authorized to move forward into Stage 1 Planning and Environmental (Planning/Environmental) prior to the completion of the Detour Feasibility Study in an attempt to have an approved emergency plan in place. The need for a potential detour route arose from the August 3, 2012 discovery of a sinkhole south of LA 70 that was formed as a result of mining activities on the western edge of the Napoleonville Salt Dome. The formation of the sinkhole lead DOTD to plan for the potential closure of LA 70 in the event the integrity of the roadway became threatened due to the expansion of the sinkhole or associated area of subsidence. According to the latest survey, dated April 15, 2014, the sinkhole and surrounding subsidence area was approximately 55.2 acres. The north containment berm is approximately 700 feet south of LA 70.

E.1.2. Project Description

The proposed project is to construct a new roadway on new alignment in response to concerns associated with potential roadway instability as a result of mining activities associated with the Napoleonville Salt Dome, in particular, subsidence related to the Bayou Corne/Grand Bayou Sinkhole. Construction of a temporary LA 70 Detour Route will allow traffic to resume on this important roadway. The LA 70 Detour Route is proposed to be constructed to a Rural Arterial 1 classification, which allows for two, 12-foot travel lanes, eight-foot shoulders, and a 50 mile per hour design speed. **Figure 1** (at the end of Chapter 1) demonstrates the approved logical termini and location of the project study area.

E.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the proposed project is to provide an emergency detour route to be constructed only in the event that LA 70 requires immediate closure as a result of threats to structural integrity associated with the Bayou Corne/Grand Bayou Sinkhole.

The project is needed to provide an efficient detour of LA 70 in the vicinity of LA 69 if immediate closure of LA 70 is required. It will only be needed until a permanent bypass is approved. A second Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared concurrently

to define a permanent bypass option, which considers the LA 70 Detour Route as an alternative.

E.3 ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT AND SCREENING

E.3.1. Alternatives Considered

One build alternative in addition to the No-Build Alternative was studied for this EA. As this project is intended to serve only as a temporary solution, the consideration of multiple build alternatives was conducted during the Detour Feasibility Study, with one build alternative carried forward into the EA. The Preferred Alternative, Detour Route 2, was selected by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) project team. A complete discussion of the selection and line and grade development of the Preferred Alternative is located in Chapter 2.

E.3.2. Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative is an approximate 1.06-mile roadway on new alignment north of LA 70 between Gumbo Street and LA 69. It is proposed as a Rural Arterial 1 roadway with two, 12-foot travel lanes and eight-foot paved shoulders.

E.4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Environmental consequences of the Preferred Alternative are shown on the following page (see **Table ES-1**).

**TABLE ES-1
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE IMPACTS**

Evaluation Criteria	Detour Route 2
Purpose and Need	
Meets Purpose and Need	Yes
Cultural Resources	
Potential to Impact Historical Resources	No
Potential to Impact Archaeological Resources	No
Potential Jurisdictional Wetlands ¹	
Palustrine Emergent (acres)	1.16
Palustrine Forested (acres)	4.97
Cypress/Tupelo (acres)	2.16
Potential Other Waters of the United States (acres)	0.13
Threatened/Endangered/Protected Species	
Potential Impact to Threatened and Endangered Species	None
Community Impacts	
Residential Structures	0
Commercial Property ²	1
Churches	0
Recreational Areas	0
Other Community Facilities	0
Land Use	
Prime Farmland (acres) ³	13.50
100-yr Floodplain (acres)	18.90
Environmental Liability Concerns	
Potential Impacts to Hazardous Sites	Low
Active Oil and Gas Well Locations	0
Observation Relief Wells (ORWs) Affected ⁴	6
Other Environmental Concerns	
Potential Impacts to Noise Receptors	Yes
Air Quality Impacts	None
Potential Visual Quality Impacts	Low

NOTES:

1. Data is based on wetlands delineation conducted on 2/3/14 and 6/10/14 by Providence personnel.
2. Property includes an AT&T cell tower that may need to be relocated.
3. Based on NRCS-CPA-106 form completed by the USDA on 6/17/14.
4. According to the Well Avoidance Study any ORWs within 160 feet of proposed ROW will need to be plugged and abandoned.

E.5 COST SUMMARY

This EA is only considering the option of building versus not building. A cost comparison of the original build alternatives was prepared during the Detour Feasibility Study; the cost for the Preferred Alternative was further refined during the EA process.

The anticipated cost of the Preferred Alternative is estimated to be \$10,173,897. The true cost of not constructing the Preferred Alternative during an emergency closure of LA 70 would be in the inability for emergency services to reach residences, no longer readily

accessible due to the closure and distance of the detour route. The available detour routes, one for passenger vehicles and one for trucks, involve routing around the east/west portion of LA 70 and are approximately 44 miles and 70 miles, respectively. There is a separate detour route for trucks due to restrictions associated with height and load limits on existing pontoon bridges along the passenger vehicle route. These routes result in approximately an hour of additional drive time for each trip from the project area to Napoleonville, Labadieville, or Donaldsonville resulting in additional gas cost, lost time, and wear on the existing detour routes.

E.6 PERMITS, MITIGATIONS, AND COMMITMENTS

E.6.1. Permits

Permits required to be obtained prior to construction of the Preferred Alternative include:

- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Section 404 Permit for impacts to jurisdictional wetlands
- Coastal Use Permit issued by the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources for activities within the Louisiana Coastal Zone
- Section 401 Water Quality Certification issued by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) in support of the Section 404 permit
- Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) Storm Water Discharge Permit for Construction Activities (greater than 5 acres) issued by the LDEQ
- Assumption Parish construction permit for roadway construction, as applicable
- Assumption Parish cell tower permit for the removal and replacement of the existing cellular tower, if needed

E.6.2. Mitigation and Commitments

Utilities that may require relocation for the construction of the Preferred Alternative are defined in the table below.

TABLE ES-2
UTILITIES POTENTIALLY IMPACTED BY THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Owner/Operator ¹	Contents	Mitigation Description ²	Pipe Diameter (inches)	Length (linear feet)	Unit	Unit Cost ³	Total Cost
Assumption Parish	Water	Re-route Due to Tie-in	6	1,187.6	LNFT	\$30	\$35,629
Assumption Parish	Water	Re-route Due to Tie-in	14	1,187.6	LNFT	\$85	\$100,949
Assumption Parish	Water	Re-route Due to Tie-in	4	81.0	LNFT	\$24	\$1,944
AT&T	Buried Telecommunications Cable	Relocation Due to Tie-in	-	1,187.6	LNFT	\$35	\$41,566
AT&T/American Tower	Cellular Tower	Relocation of Tower and Equipment	-	1.0	EACH	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000
Bridgeline Holdings	Natural Gas	Split Casing of Pipeline	24	96.0	LNFT	\$1,495	\$143,580
Bridgeline Holdings	Natural Gas	Split Casing of Pipeline	24	96.0	LNFT	\$1,495	\$143,580
Bridgeline Holdings	Natural Gas	Split Casing of Pipeline	24	63.7	LNFT	\$1,495	\$95,187
Bridgeline Holdings	Natural Gas	Split Casing of Pipeline	24	63.8	LNFT	\$1,495	\$95,336
Bridgeline Holdings	Water	Split Casing of Pipeline	12	65.1	LNFT	\$1,050	\$68,366
Bridgeline Holdings	Water	Split Casing of Pipeline	12	64.5	LNFT	\$1,050	\$67,725
EnLink Midstream	Highly Volatile Liquid	Split Casing of Pipeline	10	96.7	LNFT	\$1,000	\$96,730
EnLink Midstream	Highly Volatile Liquid	Split Casing of Pipeline	6	96.5	LNFT	\$600	\$57,924
EnLink Midstream	Natural Gas (Abandoned)	Cut and Seal of Pipeline	36	108.6	LNFT	\$100	\$10,862
Energy/AT&T	Overhead Electric/Telecom	Relocation/Elevation of Lines to EnLink	-	96.0	LNFT	\$90	\$8,640
Energy/AT&T/Allen's	Overhead Electric/Telecom/Cable	Relocation Due to Roadway Tie-in	-	1,188.7	LNFT	\$115	\$136,698
Energy/AT&T/Allen's	Overhead Electric/Telecom/Cable	Relocation Due to Tie-in	-	1,945.3	LNFT	\$115	\$223,711
Enterprise Products	Highly Volatile Liquid	Split Casing of Pipeline	12	63.1	LNFT	\$1,050	\$66,297
Enterprise Products	Highly Volatile Liquid	Split Casing of Pipeline	8	59.6	LNFT	\$800	\$47,712
Enterprise Products	Highly Volatile Liquid	Split Casing of Pipeline	8	60.4	LNFT	\$800	\$48,280
Enterprise Products	Natural Gas	Split Casing of Pipeline	12	96.0	LNFT	\$1,050	\$100,811
Enterprise Products	Natural Gas (Abandoned)	Cut and Seal of Pipeline	20	109.5	LNFT	\$100	\$10,953
Enterprise Products	Natural Gas (Abandoned)	Cut and Seal of Pipeline	20	108.8	LNFT	\$100	\$10,882
Enterprise Products	Natural Gas (Proposed)	Split Casing of Pipeline	20	49.9	LNFT	\$1,350	\$67,298
Texas Brine Company	Brine	Split Casing of Pipeline	12	96.0	LNFT	\$1,050	\$100,811
Texas Brine Company	Brine	Split Casing of Pipeline	12	163.0	LNFT	\$1,050	\$171,161
Texas Brine Company	Brine (Abandoned)	Cut and Seal of Pipeline	10	96.0	LNFT	\$100	\$9,601
TOTAL							\$3,162,229

NOTES:

- Utility line locations were estimated based on available data from the Feasibility Study and through contact with the various utility companies. This data should not be used for construction purposes and a detailed survey will need to be conducted during final design.
- For costing purpose, split casing of active pipelines for the entire ROW width was the assumed mitigation option. Additional options such as rerouting and matting may be feasible and will be determined during the final design.
- Unit costs are based on assumptions made in the Feasibility Study (Appendix J: Existing Utility Conflicts and Probable Relocations Study, dated October 2013).

All right-of-way (ROW) purchased will be in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (the Uniform Act) and will be based on fair market value as determined by local, recent real estate transactions as approved by the DOTD. An AT&T cellular tower will be treated as business personal property and relocated in accordance with the Uniform Act.

According to the Well Avoidance Study conducted during the Detour Feasibility phase, any observation relief wells (ORWs) within 160 feet of the proposed should be plugged and abandoned. Six ORWs are located within 160 feet of the proposed ROW. It will be DOTD's responsibility to coordinate with LDNR, the well owner, to determine if these wells can be plugged and abandoned. This will be done in accordance with LDNR Office of Conservation requirements.

Hydrologic and hydraulic studies will be conducted during final design to ensure the construction of the detour route results in no increase in flood elevation on surrounding properties.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be defined in the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan required to be developed as part of the construction-related LPDES permit. Any BMPs defined as conditions in the Section 404/Coastal Use Permit (CUP) permit will also be followed.

Fugitive dust control measures will be implemented during construction to minimize the potential release of particulate matter from the construction site. Such measures may include cover or treatment of disturbed areas with dust suppression techniques.

In accordance with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), wading and nesting bird surveys will be conducted in the ROW no sooner than two weeks prior to construction. The LDWF will be consulted if construction activities will come within 400 meters of nesting colonies, or within 700 meters of brown pelican nesting colonies.

A preliminary jurisdictional determination (MVN-2014-00584-SY) was received from USACE dated August 11, 2014. This determination confirms the presence of jurisdictional wetlands in the project area and a Section 404 permit is required prior to the deposition or redistribution of dredged or fill material into wetlands. A joint permit application (JPA) or emergency permit will be submitted to the LDNR for the proposed project prior to construction.

Should any significant cultural resources be unearthed during construction, the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism, Offices of Archaeology and Historic Preservation will be contacted immediately. If the cultural resources are Native American, the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, will also be contacted. Construction will cease in the area of the discovery until a plan is developed for the recovery of the resources.

The potential exists for a former well site and well pit to be within the proposed ROW of the detour route. During final design, a Phase II Site Investigation/Assessment will be conducted to assess whether the site represents an environmental liability concern that requires remediation prior to construction. Remediation of the site will be conducted, if required.

Additional information regarding mitigation and commitments can be found in the Summary of Permits, Mitigation, and Commitments section.

E.7 AREAS OF CONTROVERSY/UNRESOLVED ISSUES

During the public involvement process, concerns were raised that the detour route was not located a safe distance from the sinkhole and area of subsidence. The Preferred Alternative is designed to temporarily allow for the maintenance of traffic on LA 70. Additionally, there is no data suggesting that LA 70 is presently threatened as a result of the sinkhole or area of subsidence.

A public hearing was held on December 17, 2014, to provide the public with the findings of this EA and to solicit comments. No comments from the public were received by DOTD or the consultant team during the EA comment period or at the public hearing.