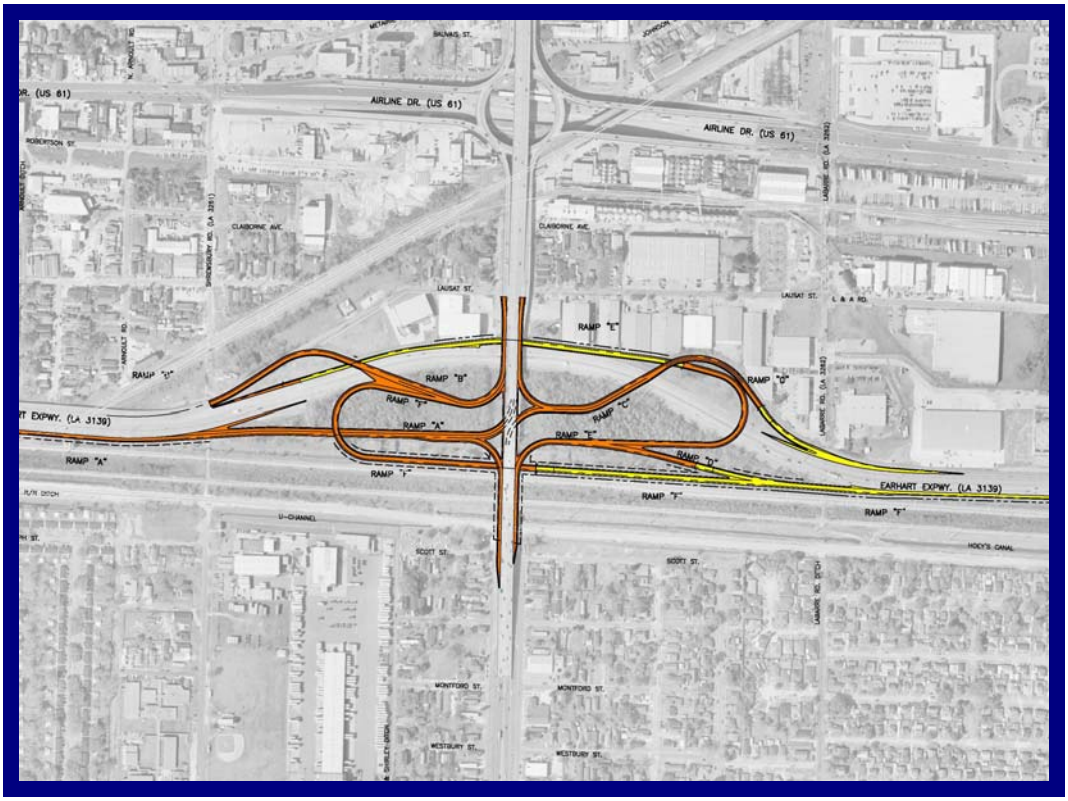
EARHART-CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE

Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)



Jefferson Parish, LA
State Project No. 736-26-0001
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Prepared for the

Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development

in conjunction with the

U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration

January 2008

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An Environmental Assessment (EA) has been conducted for a proposed new interchange between the Earhart Expressway (LA 3139) and Causeway Boulevard (LA 3046) in Jefferson Parish, LA. The purpose of this project is (1) to assist in congestion relief for east-west traffic flow in the New Orleans Metro Area, and (2) to provide better connectivity and access for vehicular traffic in the metro area. The project helps to further the original intent and vision of the Earhart Expressway, which was designed and planned to have more access points than it does currently (including an interchange at Causeway Boulevard).

The current project began with the LADOTD's completion of an *Environmental Inventory and Feasibility Study (EIFS) for a Proposed Earhart-Causeway Interchange*. The Environmental Inventory Portion of the study identified and mapped all major categories of environmental concerns, issues and sites within the study area. The Engineering Feasibility Study included the development and evaluation of alternatives for a new interchange at Causeway and Earhart. Within the EIFS, 15 initial layouts were developed and screened into 10 layout alternatives, which were then further screened into a "final four" set of alternatives, followed by a final refinement and selection of two final alternatives. These included *Layout 6*, a free flow interchange with only four movements, and *Layout 12*, a signal-controlled interchange containing all eight movements. These became the Build Alternatives to be considered in this EA.

Public and agency input was a vital portion of the project. *Solicitation of Views* (SOV) were requested both during the EIFS and EA phases, with sixteen responses received during the EIFS phase and seven received during the EA phase. The majority of responses to the SOV stated that the agencies had no comment, that the project would not impact in regards to their respective jurisdiction or that the agency had no objections to the project. In their responses, both the Office of the Parish President for Jefferson Parish and the Regional Planning Commission strongly endorsed the proposed project, specifically Layout No. 12.

Public input for the project was solicited through two public meetings during the EIFS process and one public meeting during the EA. At these meetings, there was much support expressed for the project, particularly for Layout 12.

The two build alternatives were updated and evaluated, particularly in regards to traffic data, traffic impacts, and cost. Based on the update and analysis, it was determined that both build alternatives were still considered feasible. Layout 6 was eliminated from further consideration and Layout 12 (with a conceptual cost estimate of $48,820,280) was selected as the Proposed Action based on several key factors: public support, accessibility, cost, right-of-way acquisition and relocations, and other potential impacts.

The affected environment of the project area was then described in the EA document, and the likely impacts of the two alternatives considered (No Build Alternative and Proposed Action) were assessed relative to the evaluation categories of transportation and traffic, human environment, and the natural environment. Impacts arising from the implementation of the Proposed Action were generally beneficial. *Traffic impacts* to the roadway network for the design year of 2027 with the construction of the proposed interchange are expected to be favorable. Significant volume reductions are projected on Airline Drive, West Metairie Avenue, and to a lesser extent on Jefferson Highway, Clearview Parkway, and sections of Interstate 10 and River Road. The shift of traffic from existing corridors with little or no remaining capacity to Earhart Expressway, which has available capacity, is seen as a positive result of the proposed interchange project. Likewise, the development of the proposed interchange is expected to have a positive impact on *access to community facilities and services*. By establishing additional access to the Earhart Expressway, residents and businesses will be better able to reach necessary facilities and services. Additionally, emergency vehicle access, including Jefferson Parish fire and police response and emergency medical service to trauma medical facilities at area hospitals, would be enhanced. *Indirect or secondary impacts* should be limited to some redevelopment occurring in areas surrounding the new interchange, since sites near the interchange will be very close to an Expressway access point. The overall *cumulative impacts* would also be generally beneficial. .

The only impact area category for the proposed interchange that can be considered as having unavoidable, adverse social, economic, or natural environmental impacts that require some form of mitigation is *construction period impacts*. This includes disturbances such as noise, vibration, excavation, debris as well as short-term construction traffic impacts. Several mitigation measures are proposed to lessen such construction period impacts.

A comparative analysis between the No Build Alternative and the Proposed Action (construction of the new interchange) was then completed. The two stated purposes of the project were used as criteria to assess the effectiveness of the two alternatives. As a result of the comparative analysis and due to the consensus shown by local officials and residents, the Proposed Action was selected as the Preferred Alternative.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

A comprehensive study for an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been conducted for a new interchange between the Earhart Expressway (LA 3139) and Causeway Boulevard (LA 3046) in Jefferson Parish, LA (see Figure I-1, following page, for a general location map). Both routes are on the National Highway System (NHS), and the proposed interchange is part of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the New Orleans region. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead federal agency for this project. This EA was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) addressing potential social, environmental, and economic impacts.

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The purpose of this EA is the identification, collection of data and mapping of major categories of social, economic and environmental conditions, and the assessment of the potential for these conditions to be impacted by either the proposed action or the no build alternative.

The data presented in the report text and maps characterize conditions for the general project area as well as the specific project site. Data was collected by document and records reviews, meetings with the public and local and state officials, and also via field work (site reconnaissance and field investigations).

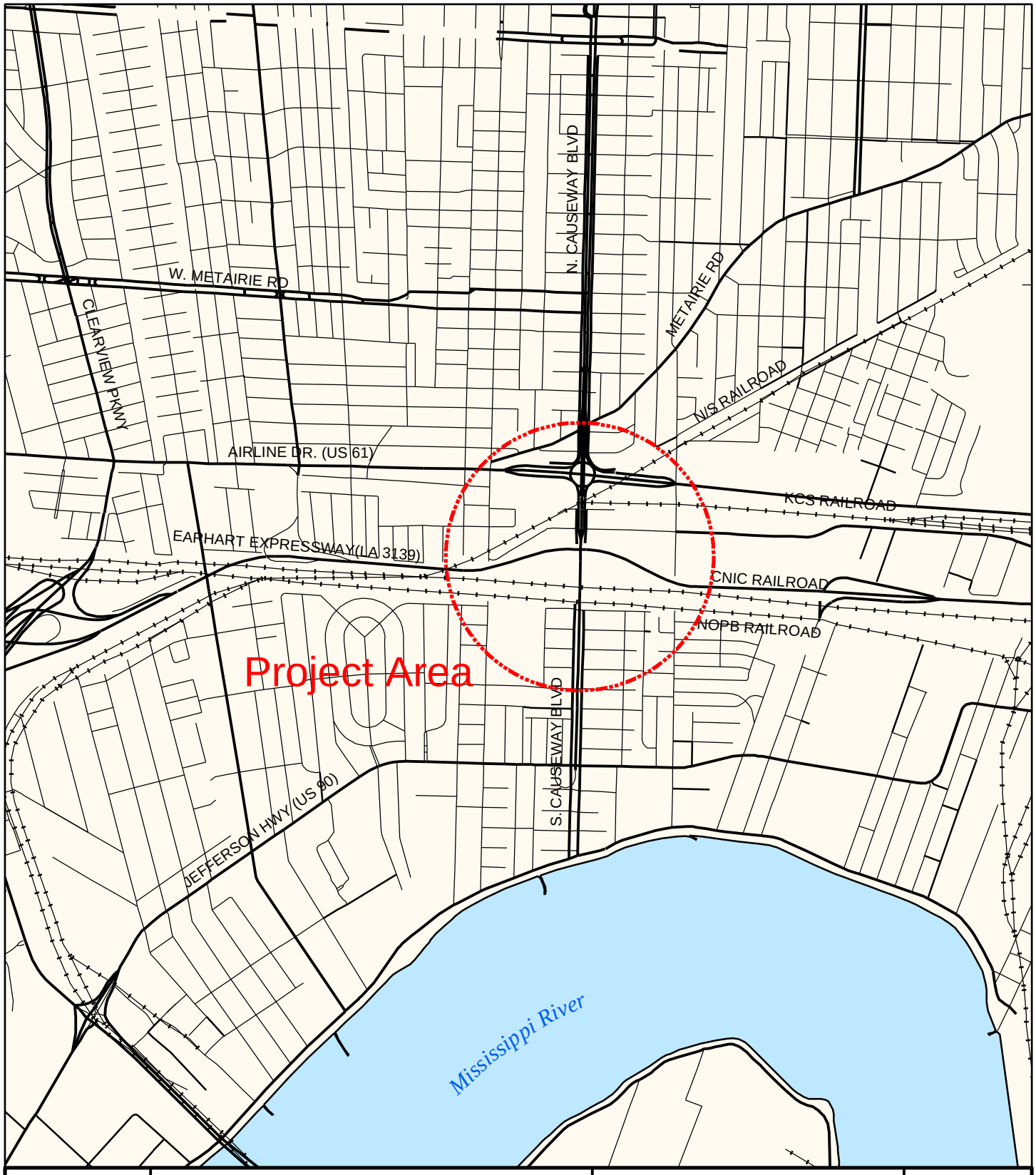
ORGANIZATION

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the purpose and scope of the EA and the organization of the EA document.

CHAPTER II – PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PROJECT

The nature of the project is fully described and its need and purpose is explained.



EARHART - CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PROJECT LOCATION MAP

NY ASSOCIATES, INC.
CONSULTING ENGINEERS
ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS
2750 LAKE VILLA DR. METAIRIE, LOUISIANA 70002 (504) 885-0500
in association with:
Evans-Graves Engineers, Inc.
Lambert Engineers
Urban Systems Associates, Inc.
Coastal Environments, Inc.

Figure

I-1

CHAPTER III – ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT, REVIEW AND SELECTION

Chapter III begins with a brief history of the project and prior studies related to the proposed project. The Chapter then provides an in-depth look at the development of project alternatives (including the no-build alternative) under this specific Environmental Assessment process. The build alternatives considered for evaluation are described and illustrated. The review and comparison of the build alternatives based on project-relevant criteria is then chronicled in the chapter, leading to the selection of a proposed action.

CHAPTER IV – DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

In Chapter IV, the roadway design criteria (which were used in the development of the proposed action) and the build alternatives considered are first described. The refined design concept of the proposed action is then described. Conceptual construction costs, which have been updated since the Environmental Inventory / Feasibility Study, are described. The conceptual construction cost section includes the sub-cost determinations and assumptions used in determining costs for:

- Mainline Structure
- At-Grade Roadway
- Construction Detours and Traffic Control
- Utility Relocation
- Street Lighting
- Right-Of-Way Acquisition
- Signalization
- Contingencies

A plan view layout, profile sheets, and typical sections of the proposed action are presented at the end of this chapter.

CHAPTER V – THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

In this chapter, the areas of primary impact and the overall project study are first delineated and described. The existing transportation system, including existing highways and roadways, rail, transit and bicycle /pedestrian facilities are presented. The chapter concludes with an examination of the affected human and natural environment for the project. For purposes of analysis, the affected environment was divided into the following categories and sub-categories:

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
- Roadways
- Railroads
- Transit
- Pedestrian and Bicyclist Conditions

EXISTING HUMAN ENVIRONMENT
- Affected Neighborhoods
- Demographics
- Zoning and Land Use
- Public Facilities and Services
- Visual/Aesthetic Conditions
- Cultural Resources
- Hazardous and Solid Waste Sites
- Flood Zones/Floodplains

EXISTING NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
- Geology and Soils
- Vegetation
- Wildlife
- Water Resources
- Coastal Zone Status
- Scenic Rivers

CHAPTER VI -- ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE CONSIDERED ALTERNATIVES AND SELECTION OF PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

In this chapter, the impacts of the two alternatives considered (No Build Alternative and Proposed Action) are assessed relative to the evaluation categories of transportation and traffic, human environment, and the natural environment. Impact assessment categories include:

IMPACTS ON TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT
- Community, Social, and Economic Impacts
  - Displacements/Relocations
  - Neighborhood/Community Cohesion
  - Access to Community Facilities/Services
  - Environmental Justice
- Zoning and Land Use
- Parks, Bicycle, Pedestrian and Recreation Facilities
- Cultural Resources
- Visual/Aesthetic Impacts
- Noise Impacts
- Hazardous and Solid Waste Sites

IMPACTS ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
- Vegetation
- Wetlands

- Wildlife
- Endangered Species
- Hydrology, Floodplains & Flooding
- Water Quality
- Geology and Soils
- Natural and Scenic Rivers

The chapter then provides a comparative analysis between the two alternatives based on their ability to meet the project Purpose and Need, and describes the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

CHAPTER VII – THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE: IMPACT SUMMARY, MITIGATION MEASURES AND PERMITS

The direct impacts to the transportation system and the human and natural environments as a result of the implementation of the Preferred Alternative are listed. For unavoidable adverse impacts, this chapter provides a discussion of mitigation measures recommended to reduce those adverse effects. The indirect and cumulative impacts of the Preferred Alternative are also examined in this chapter. Permits required to complete the project are listed.

CHAPTER VIII – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, AGENCY COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

This chapter describes the public participation process for the project, including documentation of a public meeting and coordination efforts associated with the development of the project. These efforts include contacts made with LADOTD, FHWA, other agencies and elected officials through meetings and a *Solicitation of Views* requesting written comments on the project.

CHAPTER IX – REFERENCES AND APPENDIX

The Environmental Assessment concludes with this chapter. The References section lists publications, websites and other sources of information used in the writing of this document. The Appendix lists the stand-alone documents, correspondence (such as the responses to the *Solicitation of Views*) and other data which were completed as part of this EA and are considered as part of this EA.

CHAPTER II

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PROJECT

In this chapter, the nature of the project is described and its need and purpose explained.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The project proposes a new interchange between the Earhart Expressway (LA 3139) and Causeway Boulevard (LA 3046) in Jefferson Parish, LA. The proposed project will provide at least four movements:

1. Southbound Causeway to eastbound Earhart
2. Eastbound Earhart to northbound Causeway
3. Southbound Causeway to westbound Earhart
4. Westbound Earhart to northbound Causeway

The remaining four movements were considered optional, but desired as per the scope of the original engineering feasibility study for this project completed in 2005. In essence, the four required movements focus on traffic coming from or going to the north of the project area, while the four optional movements focused on traffic coming from or going to the south of the project area.

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of this project is:

1. To assist in congestion relief for east-west traffic flow in the New Orleans Metro Area.
2. To provide better connectivity and access for vehicular traffic in the metro area.

NEED FOR THE PROJECT

Currently, over 400,000 daily east-west trips cross the Orleans Parish / Jefferson Parish Line over primary roadways. These include the following state and federal highways:

- Interstate 10
- Airline Drive (US 61)
- Earhart Expressway (LA 3139)

By the year 2025, this volume is projected to grow to over 500,000 vehicles per day[1].

Numerous projects have been completed, undertaken and planned to address this congestion issue. Most notable of these is the widening and improvement of I-10. However, even with the additional capacity and improvements along I-10, future east-west traffic demand will still not be fully addressed. Furthermore, I-10 is located in the northern section of the travel corridor through St. Charles, Jefferson and Orleans Parishes, and does little to address east-west mobility for the southern section of the travel corridor, including travel from the west bank via the soon to be improved Huey P. Long Bridge.

Within that southern section of the travel corridor, there exists a six-lane, limited-access highway that is underutilized—the Earhart Expressway (LA 3139). The Expressway's underutilization is predominately caused by poor access. Earhart, as it exists today, is essentially an "unfinished" highway—access points that were originally planned were never completed (several stub-outs can still be seen today) and its current termini are not the most beneficial locations to assist with vehicular travel.

With that in mind, the LADOTD, RPC, and Jefferson Parish have begun a series of projects to improve access along the Earhart Corridor:

- Jefferson Parish has planned an additional access point at Lead Street, primarily for commercial traffic accessing the Elmwood area;
- LADOTD and RPC recently completed an *East-West Corridor Study (Highway Component) - Final Environmental Statement*, which examined extending Earhart Expressway westward to the Airline Drive corridor and improving Airline Drive west to I-310;
- Jefferson Parish is in the design stages of several improvements at Earhart Expressway near the Jefferson Parish / Orleans Parish Line. These include a Dakin Street extension under Earhart which will link Airline Drive and Jefferson Highway, at-grade slip ramps connecting Earhart to this new roadway, and a direct exit ramp from Earhart to Jefferson Hwy (this ramp was originally planned for the Expressway but never constructed).

The project at hand is another link in these proposed improvements to the Earhart Corridor. It involves an interchange connecting Causeway Blvd. (LA 3046) to the Earhart Expressway (LA 3139). It should be noted that an interchange at this location was originally planned for the Earhart Expressway, but never constructed. The project will provide improved connectivity for both trucks and commuter traffic between major regional employment centers located in the metro New Orleans area (including the Labarre Business Park, Elmwood Industrial Park, Metairie CBD, the New Orleans CBD, and local universities). The project will also improve traffic flow along the primary east-west traffic axis in the metro area, and will provide enhanced accessibility to commuters and commercial traffic. Finally, the project will provide an alternate route for regional

[1] *Final Environmental Impact Statement, East-West Corridor Highway Component, p. 1-12*

commuter and local trips which now occur on I-10 or other roadways, thereby lessening congestion on those roadways.

CHAPTER III

ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT, REVIEW AND SELECTION

Chapter III begins with a brief history of the project and prior studies related to the proposed project. The Chapter then provides an in-depth look at the development of project alternatives (including the no-build alternative) under this specific Environmental Assessment process. The build alternatives considered for evaluation are described and illustrated. The review and comparison of the build alternatives based on project-relevant criteria is then chronicled in the chapter, leading to the selection of a proposed action.

HISTORY AND PRIOR STUDIES

HISTORY

As noted in Chapter II, one of the reasons for the Earhart Expressway operating under capacity is that it is essentially an unfinished highway—many more access points were planned, but never constructed. To gain a further appreciation for the project's need, it is useful to examine the history of its development:

In November 1964 the Jefferson Parish Council authorized the joint venture of the Jefferson Corporation and René A. Harris to prepare preliminary studies, preliminary design and preliminary plans for a proposed expressway extending across Jefferson Parish, Louisiana. The study was entitled *Preliminary Report to Parish of Jefferson State of Louisiana for Earhart Expressway from Orleans Parish to Williams Boulevard*, dated January 20, 1966 by G.A. Heft and Co., Consulting Engineers.

This document was a preliminary report for the development of the Earhart Expressway from the Orleans-Jefferson Parish line to Williams Boulevard in Kenner. Prior to preparing the final plans for the project, the financing and oversight of the project was reassigned from parish to state jurisdiction.

The consultants analyzed numerous preliminary studies of alternative routes and various intersection arrangements. After a thorough review of the alternatives, the consultants recommended an expressway-type roadway and the specific route location and layout in their report. The final layout was a 7.36 mile four and six-lane divided, controlled-access roadway with entrances and exits for access to abutting property at locations the consultants found were warranted. These included Deckbar Avenue, Causeway Boulevard, Cleary Avenue, Central Avenue, Clearview Parkway, Hickory Avenue, and Fillmore Street.

The report argued the need for an expressway was due to the documented population increases on the East Bank of Jefferson Parish and the fact that these citizens were employed in other portions of the New Orleans metropolitan area. The report noted that the population of Jefferson Parish had increased from 40,031 in 1930 to 208,769 in 1960. The population of the East Bank of Jefferson Parish had also increased from 13,397 to 132,950 between the years 1930 and 1960 and would most likely continue to increase. The report also addressed the increased access the proposed expressway would provide to facilitate the development of large unimproved industrial areas, such as the area between the Illinois Central tracks and Jefferson Highway west of Central Avenue to the vicinity of Hickory Avenue (now the Elmwood Business Park) and the area between the Kansas City Southern and Illinois Central Railroads lying east of Causeway Boulevard (now the Labarre Business Park).

The report discussed the capacity of the area's east-west arterial roadways including Metairie Road, River Road, Jefferson Highway, Airline Highway, Veterans Highway, and the still to be completed Interstate I-10. At the time of the Heft study, most of these arterial roadways were at or near capacity.

The report stated that the decision to construct the extension of Earhart Boulevard in Jefferson Parish as a limited-access expressway was based on several factors "primarily relating to convenience of all traffic, overall economic benefits as related to construction and rights-of-way cost and ultimate capacity of all east-west urban highways and major streets within the East Bank of Jefferson Parish beyond the projected date of 1980."

The general route of the proposed Earhart Expressway evolved over a number of years with input from both Jefferson Parish and the Louisiana Department of Highways. However, an actual alignment was developed in the Heft report. The alignment as designed was very similar to the existing Earhart Expressway. Three variations of note are the deletion of the Causeway Boulevard interchange, the deletion of the Central Avenue interchange and the realignment of the expressway south of the former K&B warehouse in the Labarre Business Park. But the biggest variation from the original plan was that by the end of the 1960s, the decision had been made to not continue Earhart Expressway past Hickory Avenue.

The final Earhart Expressway as we know it today was completed in phases. The first phase of construction, the Clearview Overpass, was completed in the early 1970s. The second phase was the Dickory Overpass in 1973. In the late 70s/early 80s, the Clearview Boulevard to Dickory Avenue section of the Expressway was completed. In 1983 the Orleans/Jefferson Parish line to Deckbar Avenue was completed. In 1984 the Deckbar Avenue to Cleary Avenue section was completed. By 1986 the entire route as it exists today had been completed.

PRIOR STUDIES

In April of 2005, the LADOTD completed an *Environmental Inventory and Feasibility Study (EIFS) for a Proposed Earhart-Causeway Interchange*. The Environmental Inventory Portion of the study identified and mapped all major categories of environmental concerns, issues and sites within the study area. The Engineering Feasibility Study included the development and evaluation of alternatives for a new interchange at Causeway and Earhart and geometric, structural, and traffic analysis to determine their feasibility. This work formed much of the basis for this Environmental Assessment document.

As a supplement to the above study, the LADOTD in July of 2005 completed an *Environmental Inventory and Feasibility Study for a set of Airline Highway Connectors and a Jefferson Highway On-Ramp*. This study was organized similar to the first study.

It should be noted that the two engineering feasibility studies considered the work of each other and related to each other. The Earhart-Causeway Interchange feasibility study assumed the Airline Highway Connectors and Jefferson Highway on-ramps were in place, while the Airline Connectors study assumed the Earhart-Causeway Interchange was in place.

The LADOTD and RPC recently completed an *East-West Corridor Study (Highway Component) - Final Environmental Statement*, which examined extending Earhart Expressway westward to the Airline Drive corridor and improving Airline Drive west to I-310.

Current efforts on this project were activated by the LADOTD in 2006 with N-Y Associates, Inc. being awarded a contract to complete an Environmental Assessment (EA) for a new Earhart-Causeway Interchange.

DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE

The “no build” alternative looks at the project study area without the project but with the planned improvements that would take place regardless of whether the project is constructed.

Several projects that will impact the study area are proposed, currently underway, or have been recently completed. These projects are described in detail below:

Dakin Street Improvements

Jefferson Parish recently began construction on a series of improvements just east of the project area, collectively called the Dakin Street improvements. The primary

improvement is an extension of Dakin Street from Jefferson Highway to Airline Drive. The new roadway runs along the 17th Street canal and passes under the existing Earhart Expressway overpass, and then elevates over the Union Passenger Terminal (UPT) railroad tracks before returning to ground level just south of the Cold Storage road underpass. Associated with this roadway is a reconstruction of the Cold Storage Road underpass at the Kansas City Southern (KCS) railroad (which has recently been completed), a realignment and reconstruction of L&A road, and construction of a new Hoey's Bypass Canal.

Jefferson Highway On- And Off-Ramps

Related to the Dakin Street improvements described above, a new off-ramp for eastbound Earhart traffic to access Jefferson Highway is being planned along the Jefferson/Orleans Parish line. This ramp was included in the original Earhart plans, and would use an existing ramp stub-out along Earhart. This off-ramp has gone through the environmental process and is currently listed in the Regional Planning Commission's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as a fiscal year 2008-2010 project.

In addition to the Jefferson Highway off-ramp, an on-ramp was studied in the afore-mentioned *Environmental Inventory and Feasibility Study for a set of Airline Highway Connectors and a Jefferson Highway On-Ramp*. Although a conceptual design for the on-ramp was completed, the on-ramp project has not yet gone through the environmental process.

L&A Road Ramps

A "temporary" westbound entrance ramp from L&A Road to the Earhart Expressway was installed a few years before this EA commenced. The permit for this access was given to Jefferson Parish as part of the Dakin Street Improvements project, with the understanding that this temporary ramp would be removed as soon as the new Cold Storage road underpass was complete. The Parish, the RPC and the LADOTD District office, however, desired that this access point be maintained permanently, and as such both an on- and off-ramp at this location were included both in the TIP and the *Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the New Orleans Urbanized Area - Fiscal Year 2027* (MTP).

Improvements To Earhart Boulevard

A three-mile section of Earhart Boulevard in New Orleans (which directly links to the Earhart Expressway) is being improved under the state's Transportation Infrastructure Model for Economic Development (TIMED) program. The project is divided into five segments that will be repaved and widened to four lanes. The Earhart Boulevard

TIMED project is 88 percent complete, and improvement of the entire corridor is scheduled for completion in late 2010.

Huey P. Long Bridge Improvement

The Huey P. Long Mississippi River Bridge Widening Project began construction in the spring of 2006. The project will be constructed in four phases and will be completed by the end of 2012. The project involves a major reconstruction of the bridge, with three 11-foot wide travel lanes in each direction replacing the current two 9-foot wide travel lanes in each direction. Inside and outside shoulders will also be installed on the bridge, and new signalized intersections will replace the traffic circles at Jefferson Highway and Bridge City Avenue.

I-10 Improvements

The I-10 widening project is an ongoing project which adds new lane capacity and geometric improvements at interchanges in order to alleviate congestion problems on I-10, the major western access route to the New Orleans urbanized area. The project is a multi-phase one occurring over several years. To date, several segments and interchanges have been completed, including the Williams Blvd. interchange, the Clearview to Causeway segment, and the 17th Street Canal to Metairie Road segment. Construction is now underway on the 17th Street Canal to Causeway Blvd. segment. The Causeway Interchange and Clearview to Veterans segment are under design. The last phase of the improvements - the Veterans to Williams Blvd segment - is scheduled to be let for construction in 2012.

East-West Corridor Highway Component

The Final Environmental Impact Statement for this project has been completed, and a Record of Decision was issued in May 2007. The project proposes a northwestward extension of the Earhart Expressway to a merge condition with Airline Drive just west of David Drive as well as widening and other improvements to Airline Drive from this merge to I-310. This highway project is included in the Year 2027 MTP.

East West Corridor Transit Component

This project is currently in the Environmental Impact Statement process. The project involves reviewing the impacts of a transit corridor between the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport and the New Orleans CBD. Several different methods are being considered, including commuter rail, light rail and bus rapid transit. The proposed alignment for the transit project uses portions of the KCS rail right-of-way along the south side of Airline Drive. This transit project is also included in the Year 2027 MTP.

Causeway Widening

The RPC's Year 2027 MTP includes the widening of Causeway Boulevard from US 61 to West Napoleon Avenue. The current roadway is only four lanes wide; the proposed widening would entail a widening to six or more lanes. Although the project is described in the MTP as being under design as part of a Parishwide bond issue, no environmental work or study for the project has been initiated.

BUILD ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Previous Study

In any development of project alternatives, previously developed alternatives are one source to be considered. This Environmental Assessment had the benefit of the previous EIFS, which included the development and screening of 15 initial layouts into 10 layout alternatives, further screening of the 10 layout alternatives into a "final four" set of alternatives, and a final refinement and selection of two final alternatives. These were known as Layout 6 and Layout 12. These two final alternatives are the basis for the build alternatives to be considered in this EA.

Figure III-1 on the following page presents these two alternatives as they were presented in the EIFS.

Update of Alternatives via Traffic Analysis

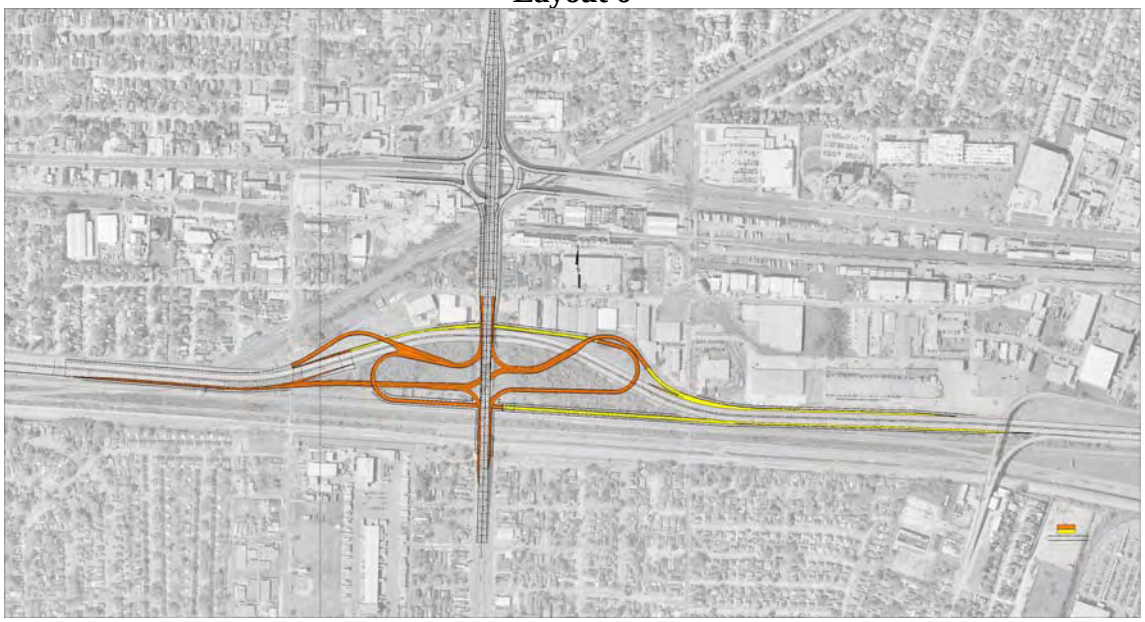
The first step in considering the two build alternatives was to update and evaluate them, particularly in regards to traffic data and traffic impacts. Since the time of the completion of the EIFS, the traffic volume projection model had been updated from a year 2025 horizon to a 2027 horizon. The LADOTD wanted to ensure that the feasibility of the two alternatives selected in the EIFS still held true with the new traffic volume projections.

A second consideration was that volumes used in the previous EIFS assumed the Airline Highway connectors and Jefferson highway on-ramps were in place. This was done as part of an engineering feasibility study to ensure that the two improvements could co-exist. However, as the Airline Connector is NOT on the Year 2027 MTP, it is not considered as a condition under the No Build Alternative, and conversely, the 2027 traffic volume projections do not consider its presence.

Additionally, due to traffic considerations, the northbound Causeway to east bound Earhart movement in Layout 12 of the EIFS had been eliminated, reducing that alternative to only seven (7) movements. The ramp was restored in this analysis, in order to ascertain if this ramp movement would, in fact, be feasible based on the new volume projections.

FIGURE III-1 EIFS FINAL ALTERNATIVES

Layout 6



Layout 12

Traffic Volumes

Historical traffic volume data was reviewed for the major corridors in the vicinity of the proposed interchange. The major east-west corridors include Airline Drive, Earhart Expressway, and Jefferson Hwy. The major north-south corridor is Causeway Boulevard. Based on the historical data reviewed, the peak hour of traffic volumes along the corridors represented approximately 8-10% of the average daily volume. The AM peak hour directional distribution of traffic along the east-west corridors was found to be

approximately 60% inbound (eastbound) and 40% outbound (westbound). The PM peak hour represented a reverse in directional distributions of approximately 40% inbound and 60% outbound. The AM and PM peak hour directional distributions for Causeway Blvd. were found to be more evenly split, with 50% of traffic traveling northbound and 50% of traffic traveling southbound during these time periods.

Vehicles classification counts were conducted in December 2006 and January 2007 to determine current percentage of trucks along the subject corridors. This data indicated that truck traffic accounted for approximately 14% of the vehicles on Airline Drive, 18% of vehicles on Causeway Boulevard, and 24% of vehicles on Earhart Expressway.

The peak hour percentages, directional distributions, and percentage of trucks described above were also used to estimate Year 2027 capacity and level of service projections.

Capacity and Level of Service

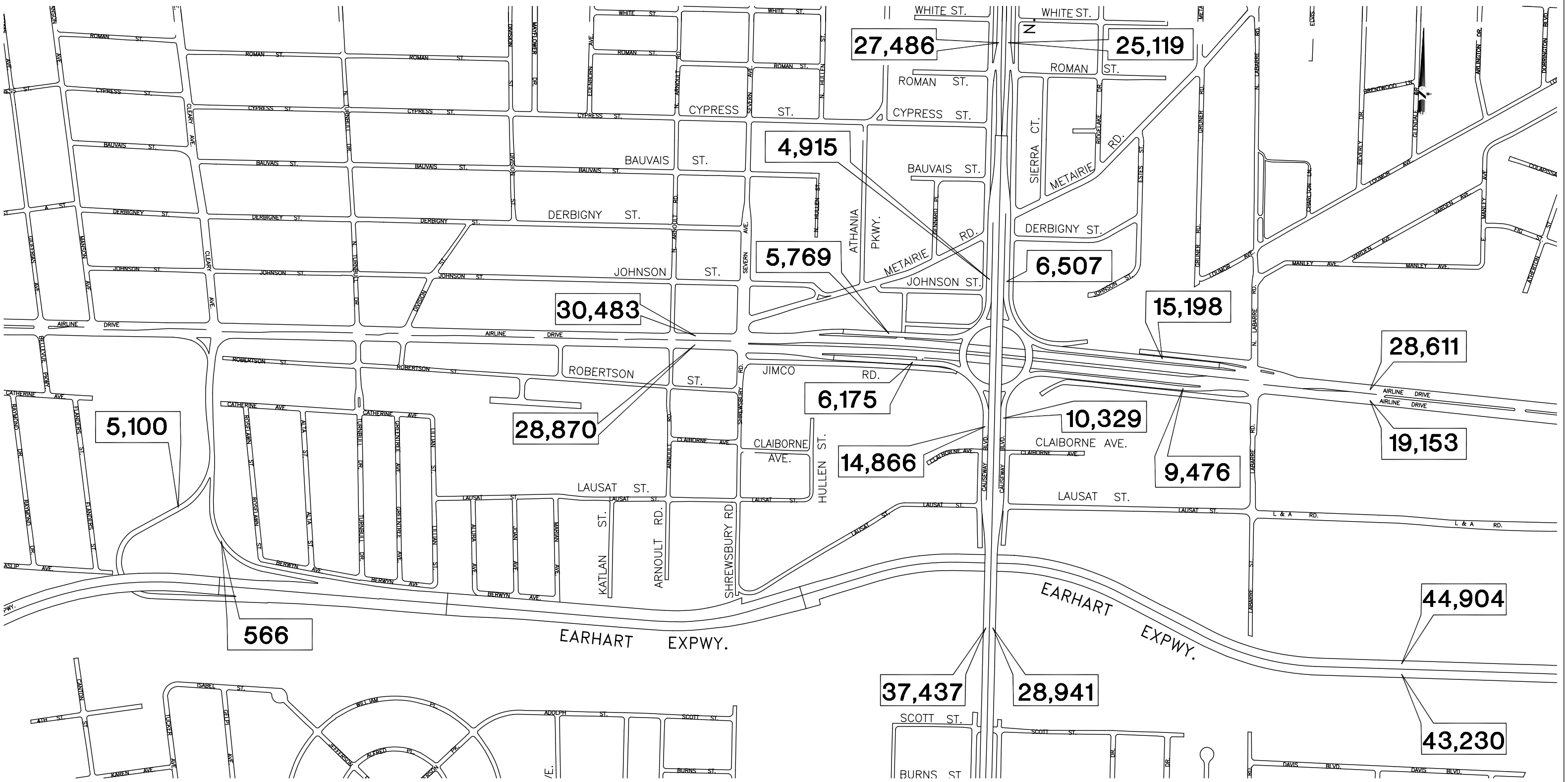
The capacities of the No Build Alternative and the two (2) final layouts were evaluated using Level of Service (LOS) analyses. Design Year 2027 traffic projections were developed for the no build alternative and for both layouts using the data obtained from the RPC's long-range travel demand model and used in these analyses.

No Build Alternative

Capacity analyses were conducted for the No Build Alternative using the projected Year 2027 volume conditions provided by the RPC.

A review of Figure III-2, on the following page, indicates that Causeway Boulevard north of Airline Drive (US 61) is expected to operate with a two-way daily volume of approximately 52,600 vehicles. South of Earhart Expressway, Causeway Boulevard is expected to operate with a two-way daily volume of approximately 66,400 vehicles. Earhart Expressway is expected to operate with a two-way daily volume of approximately 88,100 vehicles.

Basic freeway segment analyses were performed on the section of Earhart Expressway between Causeway Boulevard and the Cleary ramps with a free flow speed of 60 mph. The analyses indicated LOS D conditions for both eastbound and westbound directions of Earhart Expressway. Basic freeway segment analyses were performed on the section of Causeway Boulevard between Jefferson Highway and Airline Drive. The analyses indicated LOS D conditions for northbound Causeway Boulevard and LOS E for southbound Causeway Boulevard. Figure III-3, on the second page following, shows the LOS levels at each location.



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EARHART/CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE
ROUTE LA 3139

S.P. No. 736-26-0001 F.A.P. No. HP-2601 (515)

YEAR 2027 DAILY TRAFFIC PROJECTIONS

(Source: RPC Air Quality Conformance Model)

Figure III - 2

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT — DOTD

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EARHART/CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE
ROUTE LA 3139

S.P. No. 736-26-0001 — F.A.P. No. HP-2601 (515)

YEAR 2027 DAILY LOS PROJECTIONS

(Source: RPC Air Quality Conformance Model)

Figure III - 3

Layout 6

Capacity analyses were conducted for the Layout No. 6 Alternative using the projected Year 2027 volume conditions provided by the RPC.

A review of Figure III-4 on the following page indicates that under this scenario, Causeway Boulevard north of Airline Drive (US 61) is expected to operate with a two-way daily volume of approximately 56,600 vehicles. South of Earhart Expressway, Causeway Boulevard is expected to operate with a two-way daily volume of approximately 43,800 vehicles. With the addition of the proposed interchange, Earhart Expressway is expected to operate east of Causeway Boulevard with a two-way daily volume of approximately 90,000 vehicles. West of Causeway Boulevard Earhart Expressway is expected to operate with a two-way daily volume of approximately 88,300.

Figure III-4 also indicates that Airline Drive west of Causeway Boulevard is expected to operate with a two-way daily volume of approximately 34,000 vehicles. East of Causeway Boulevard, Airline Drive is expected to operate with a two-way daily volume of approximately 40,000 vehicles.

The configuration of Layout 6 provides four, free-flow directional movements.

- Earhart Westbound to Causeway Northbound –Ramp A
- Earhart Eastbound to Causeway Northbound – Ramp B
- Causeway Southbound to Earhart Westbound – Ramp C
- Causeway Southbound to Earhart Eastbound – Ramp D

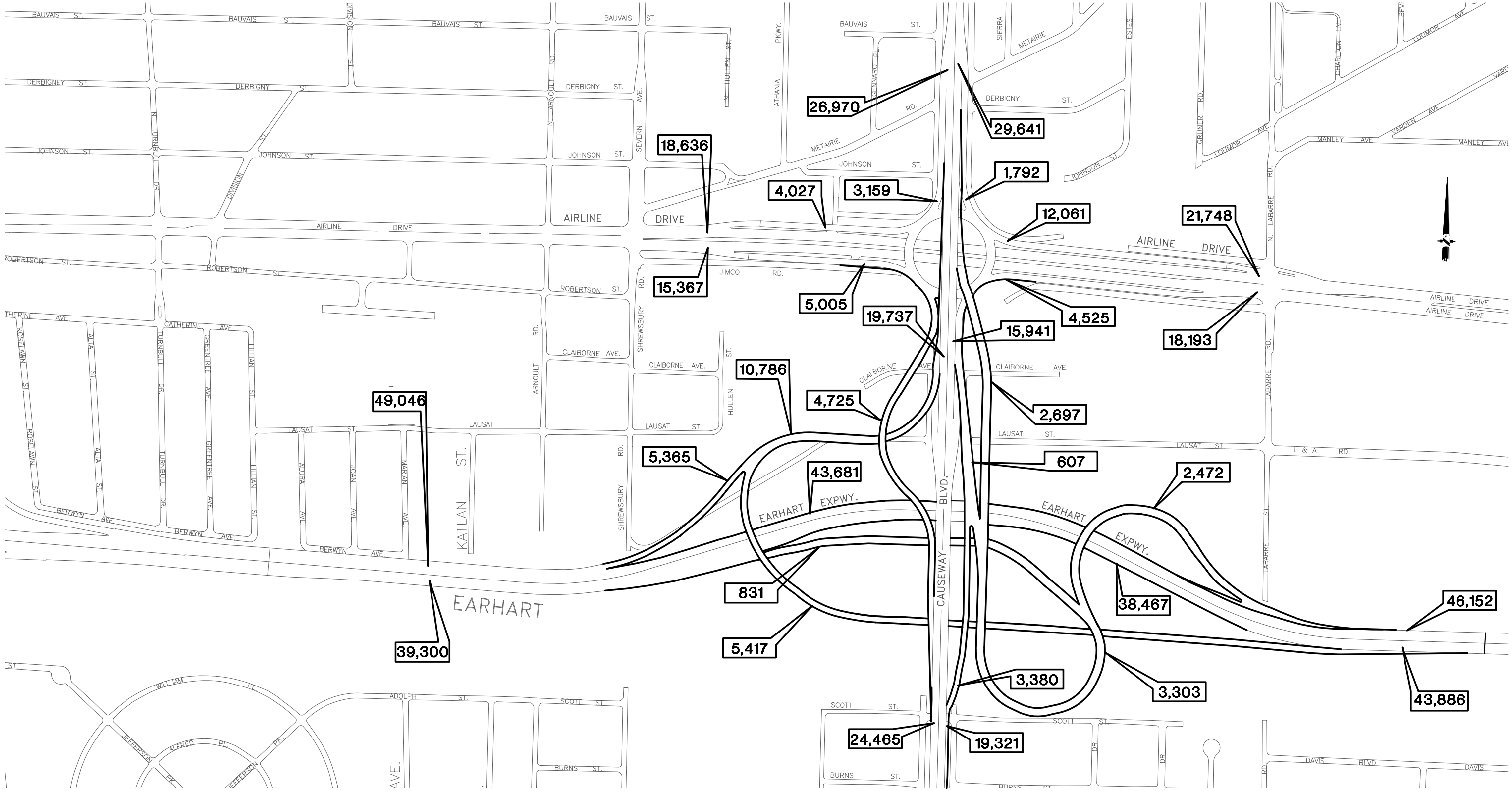
Capacity analyses were performed for:

- Basic freeway sections (six locations)
- Freeway weave sections (one location)
- Ramp merge sections (three locations)
- Ramp diverge sections (four locations)

Figure III-5, on the second page following, presents a schematic drawing identifying the projected Level of Service conditions for Layout No. 6.

Two of the basic freeway sections are located on Causeway Boulevard above Earhart Expressway with a free flow speed of 45 mph. The analysis indicated LOS C for northbound Causeway and LOS D for southbound Causeway. The other four basic freeway sections are located on Earhart Expressway, two at the Causeway overpass, and two east of Causeway, all with a free flow speed of 60 mph. The analysis indicated LOS D for all four locations on Earhart.

The freeway weave section is approximately 1,900 feet long with a freeway free flow speed of 60 mph. It is located on westbound Earhart Expressway between the Causeway overpass and the Cleary exit ramp. The analysis indicated LOS C conditions.



LAYOUT NO. 6

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT — DOTD

RPC REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION — JEFFERSON • ORLEANS • PLAQUEMINES • ST. BERNARD • ST. TAMMANY

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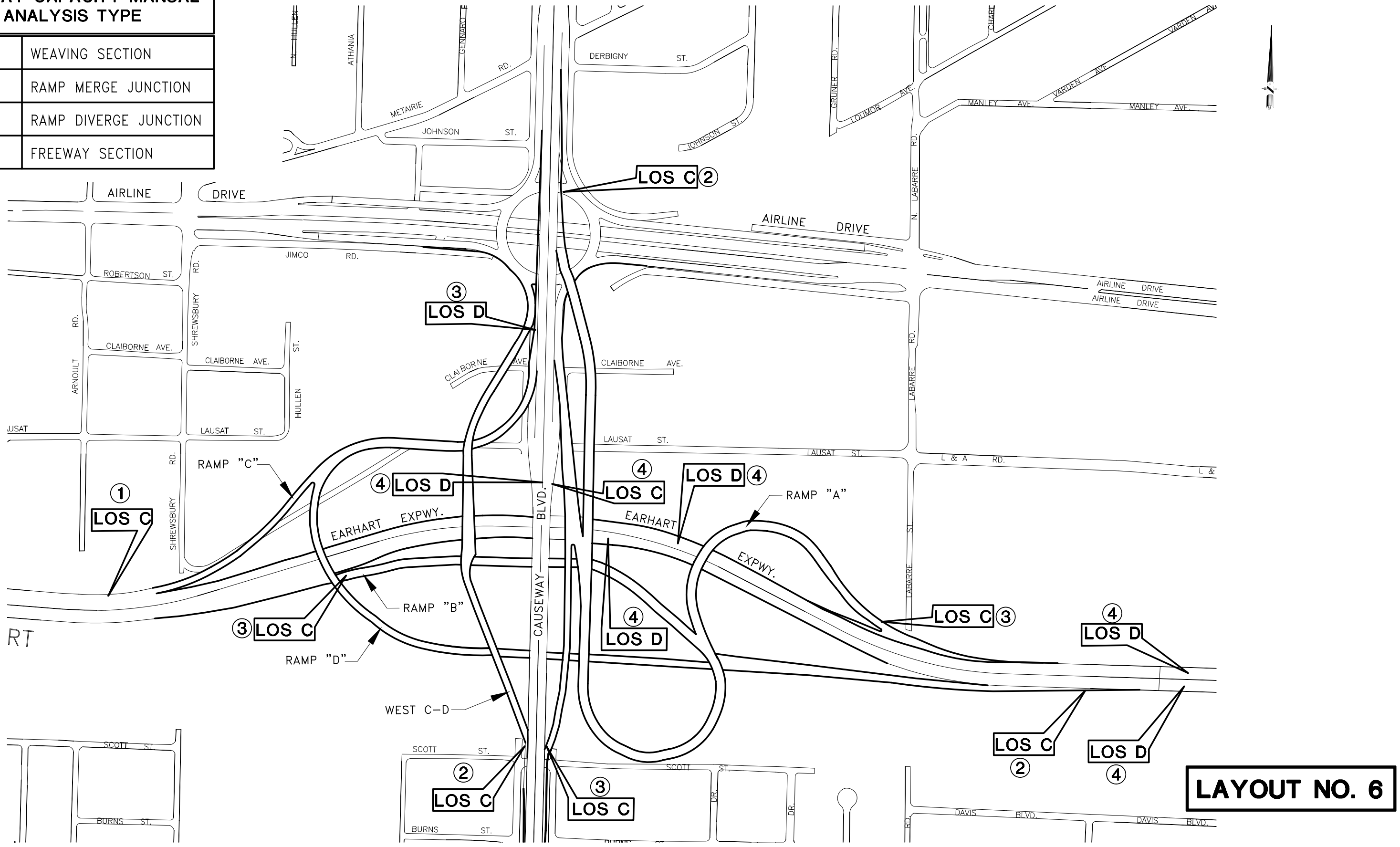
EARHART/CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE
ROUTE LA 3139

S.P. No. 736-26-0001 F.A.P. No. HP-2601 (515)

YEAR 2027 DAILY TRAFFIC PROJECTIONS WITHOUT US 61 RAMPS

Figure III - 4

HIGHWAY CAPACITY MANUAL ANALYSIS TYPE	
①	WEAVING SECTION
②	RAMP MERGE JUNCTION
③	RAMP DIVERGE JUNCTION
④	FREEWAY SECTION



LAYOUT NO. 6

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EARHART/CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE
ROUTE LA 3139

S.P. No. 736-26-0001 F.A.P. No. HP-2601 (515)

YEAR 2027- WITHOUT US 61 RAMPS
LOS PROJECTIONS
EARHART/CAUSEWAY RAMP JUNCTIONS

Figure III - 5

Of the three ramp merge sections, two are located on Causeway Boulevard and one is located on Earhart Expressway. The first ramp merge section is "Ramp B", Earhart westbound to Causeway northbound with a merge distance of approximately 665 feet and a ramp free flow speed of 45 mph. The second ramp merge section is "Ramp C-D West" to Causeway southbound with a merge distance of approximately 775 feet and a ramp free flow speed of 45 mph. The third ramp merge is "Ramp D", Causeway southbound to Earhart eastbound with a merge distance of approximately 1260 feet and a ramp free flow speed of 45 mph. The analysis for all ramp merge locations indicated LOS C conditions.

Of the four ramp diverge sections, two are located on Causeway Boulevard and two are located on Earhart Expressway. The first ramp diverge section is "Ramp C-D West" from Causeway southbound with a diverge distance of approximately 625 feet and a ramp free flow speed of 40 mph. The second ramp diverge section is "Ramp C-D East" from Causeway northbound with a diverge distance of approximately 690 feet and a ramp free flow speed of 40 mph. The third ramp diverge section is "Ramp A" from Earhart westbound with a diverge distance of approximately 750 feet and a ramp free flow speed of 45 mph. The fourth ramp diverge section is "Ramp B" from Earhart eastbound with a diverge distance of approximately 700 feet and a ramp free flow speed of 45 mph. The analysis indicated LOS D for "Ramp C-D West", LOS C for "Ramp C-D East", LOS C for "Ramp A" and LOS C for "Ramp B".

Layout 12

Capacity analyses were conducted for the Layout No. 12 Alternative using the projected Year 2027 volume conditions provided by the RPC.

A review of Figure III-6 on the following page indicates that Causeway Boulevard north of Airline Drive (US 61) is expected to operate with a two-way daily volume of approximately 50,500 vehicles. South of Earhart Expressway, Causeway Boulevard is expected to operate with a two-way daily volume of approximately 51,800 vehicles. With the addition of the proposed interchange, Earhart Expressway is expected to operate east of Causeway Boulevard with a two-way daily volume of approximately 92,600 vehicles. West of Causeway Boulevard Earhart Expressway is expected to operate with a two-way daily volume of approximately 105,600.

Figure III-6 also indicates that Airline Drive west of Causeway Boulevard is expected to operate with a two-way daily volume of approximately 30,200 vehicles. East of Causeway Boulevard, Airline Drive is expected to operate with a two-way daily volume of approximately 42,600 vehicles.

The configuration of Layout 12 provides six, free-flow directional movements:

- Earhart Eastbound to Causeway Southbound –Ramp A
- Causeway Southbound to Earhart Eastbound – Ramp B/Ramp F
- Causeway Southbound to Earhart Westbound – Ramp B
- Earhart Westbound to Causeway Northbound – Ramp C
- Causeway Northbound to Earhart Eastbound – Ramp D
- Causeway Northbound to Earhart Westbound – Ramp E

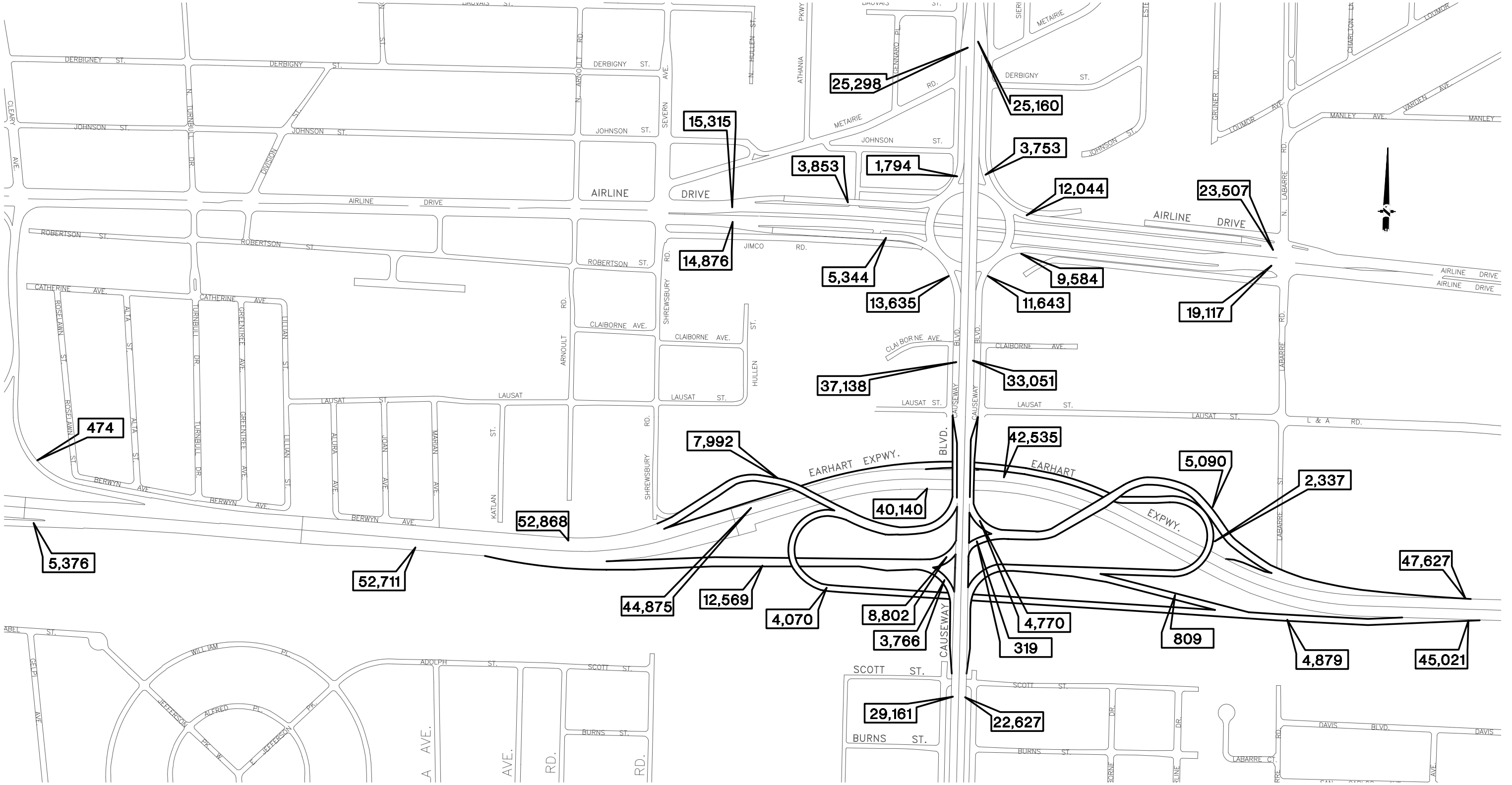
and four signalized directional movements:

- Earhart Eastbound to Causeway Northbound – Ramp A (proposed)
- Earhart Westbound to Causeway Southbound – Ramp C (proposed)
- Causeway Northbound (existing)
- Causeway Southbound (existing)

Capacity analyses were performed for:

- Signalized approaches (four locations)
- Basic freeway sections (four locations)
- Freeway weave sections (one location)
- Ramp merge sections (two locations)
- Ramp diverge sections (four locations)

Figure III-7, on the second page following, presents a schematic drawing identifying the projected Level of Service conditions for Layout No. 12.



LAYOUT NO. 12

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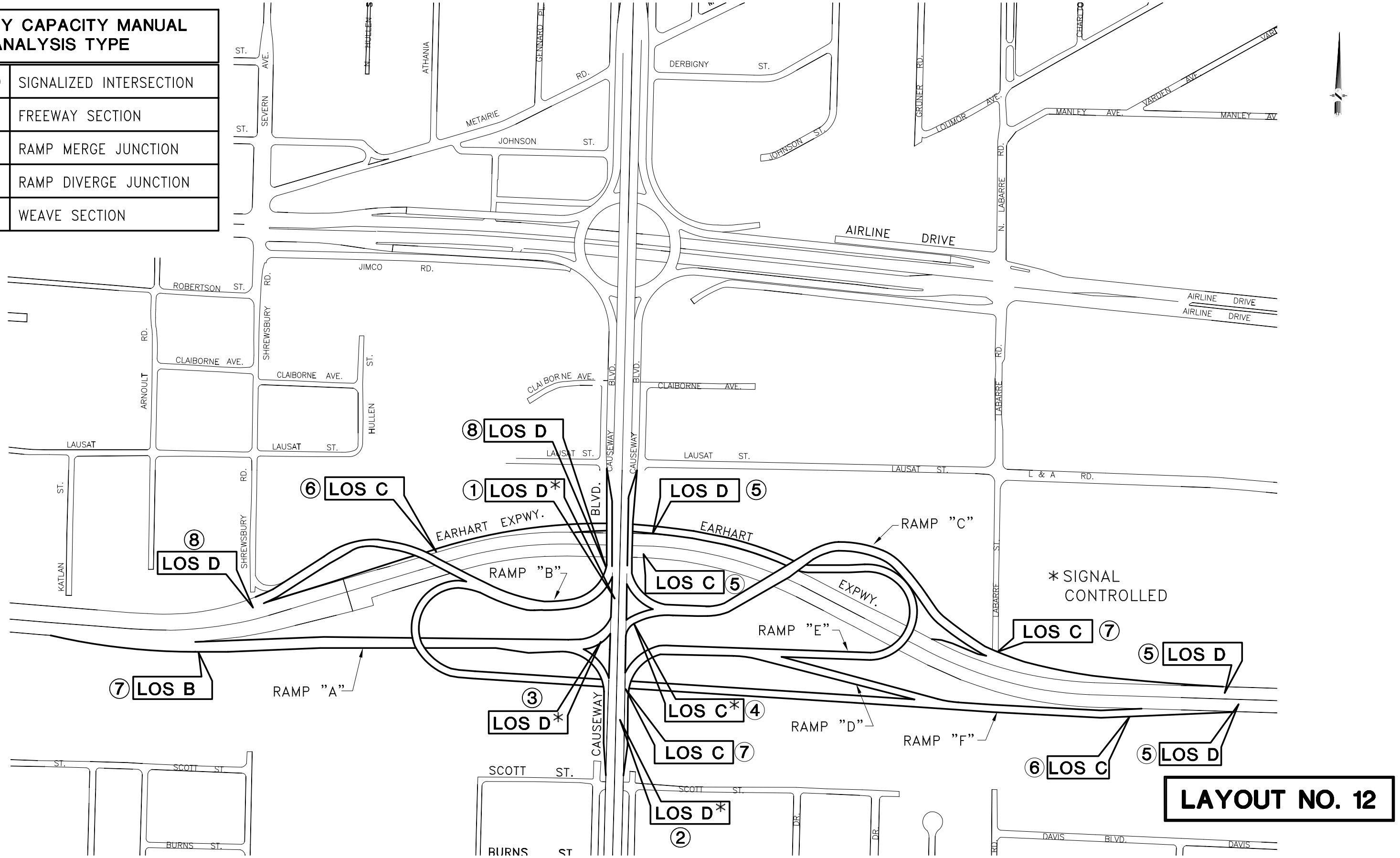
HIGHWAY CAPACITY MANUAL ANALYSIS TYPE	
① - ④	SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
⑤	FREEWAY SECTION
⑥	RAMP MERGE JUNCTION
⑦	RAMP DIVERGE JUNCTION
⑧	WEAVE SECTION



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ROUTE LA 3139

S.P. No. 736-26-0001 F.A.P. No. HP-2601 (515)

YEAR 2027- WITHOUT US 61 RAMPS WITH RAMP D- LOS PROJECTIONS

EARHART/CAUSEWAY

N.T.S.

Figure III - 7

The signalized analysis considered a two-phase, 110 second cycle length allowing 60 seconds of green time for the Causeway approaches and 40 seconds of green time for the Earhart ramp approaches (with 10 seconds for yellow/red time). The analysis indicated LOS D conditions for both directions of Causeway Boulevard. The analysis indicated LOS D conditions for Earhart eastbound to Causeway northbound ("Ramp A") and LOS C conditions for Earhart westbound to Causeway southbound ("Ramp C).

Two of the basic freeway sections are located on Earhart Expressway at the Causeway Boulevard overpass with a free flow speed of 60 mph. The analysis indicated LOS C for eastbound Earhart and LOS D for westbound Earhart. The other two basic freeway sections are located on Earhart Expressway east of Causeway with a free flow speed of 60 mph. The analysis indicated LOS D for both directions on Earhart.

The freeway weave section is approximately 1,900 feet long with a freeway free flow speed of 60 mph. It is located on westbound Earhart Expressway between the Causeway overpass and the Cleary exit ramp. The analysis indicated LOS D conditions.

The two ramp merge sections are located on Earhart Expressway. The first ramp merge section is "Ramp E", Causeway northbound to Earhart westbound, with a merge distance of approximately 1,220 feet and a ramp free flow speed of 45 mph. The second ramp merge section is "Ramp F", Causeway southbound to Earhart eastbound, with a merge distance of approximately 1,250 feet and a ramp free flow speed of 45 mph. The analysis for both ramp merge locations indicated LOS C conditions.

Of the four ramp diverge sections, two are located on Causeway Boulevard and two are located on Earhart Expressway. The first ramp diverge section is "Ramp B" from Causeway southbound with a diverge distance of approximately 400 feet and a ramp free flow speed of 35 mph. The second ramp diverge section is "Ramp E" from Causeway northbound with a diverge distance of approximately 340 feet and a ramp free flow speed of 35 mph. The third ramp diverge section is "Ramp A" from Earhart eastbound with a diverge distance of approximately 1,600 feet and a ramp free flow speed of 45 mph. The fourth ramp diverge section is "Ramp C" from Earhart westbound with a diverge distance of approximately 710 feet and a ramp free flow speed of 45 mph. The analysis indicated LOS D for "Ramp B", LOS C for "Ramp E", LOS B for "Ramp A" and LOS C for "Ramp C".

Final Determination

Based on the analysis above, it was determined that (1) Ramp "D" could be returned to Layout 12, allowing that alternative to have all eight movements, and (2) that both Build Alternatives were still considered feasible.

Update of Analysis Cost Estimates

A second task in the update of the alternatives was an update of the cost estimates originally included in the EIFS document. Unit costs for bridge construction have been volatile since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, but overall seem to have increased 35% to 45%. Some specific items seem to have stabilized, others are still rising, and some seem to be falling in the direction of the pre-Katrina levels. For updating this estimate, a nominal 1.40 increase factor for the unit costs or the lump sum costs was used, except for a few specific cost items that are known to have increased either more than or less than 40%.

As a result, the costs have increased as follows:

	EIFS Estimate *(pre-Katrina)*	**Current Estimate** *(post-Katrina, revised to include Ramp D in Layout 12)*
Layout 6:	$44,661,535	$59,490,164
Layout 12:	$35,405,514	$48,820,280

BUILD ALTERNATIVES REVIEW

The build alternatives were presented to various agencies, the general public and elected officials which allowed for a review of the alternatives, a comparison of their attributes, and eventually a decision on a proposed action for analysis.

Solicitation of Views Responses

In October of 2006, a Solicitation of Views was sent to federal, state and local agencies, organizations, and individuals. Two responses from that Solicitation indicated a preference for Layout 12. Jefferson Parish President Aaron Broussard, in a letter dater November 9, 2006, stressed several reasons behind his strong support for that alternative, as did RPC executive director Walter Brooks in a letter dated November 6, 2006.

Public Meeting Response

The first indicator of public preference between the two alternatives occurred during the final public meeting held under the EIFS process, wherein the two final alternatives – Layout 6 and Layout 12—were presented to the public. At that meeting, held on October 26, 2004, three (3) persons spoke for the record, and each voiced a measure of support for Layout 12 and/or non-support of Layout 6. The first of these speakers actually asked for a show of hands for each of the two projects; all hands were raised in favor of Layout 12, none were raised in favor of Layout 6. The second speaker voiced his

opposition against Layout 6 as he claimed it would have the most devastating impact for the African-American community south of Airline, and that it was not as cost-effective as Layout 12. The third speaker voiced his belief that it would be "an extremely bad development" to adopt Layout 6.

After that meeting, several comment forms were received. One was from a commercial property owner in the area, who strongly opposed Layout 6 and strongly supported Layout 12. One letter offered support for Layout 6, stating that while it would impact more homes, there was a greater need for free-flow traffic. A final comment came from Jefferson Parish, which announced their strong support for Layout 12 for reasons of traffic, right-of-way acquisition, and constructability.

A public meeting associated with this EA was held on November 8, 2006 in the project area to provide information and to obtain public input on the two revised design alternatives. Only one commenter stated a preference for the record and that was for Layout 12. During the recess period, when attendees spoke with project representatives one on one, several attendees expressed their preference for Layout 12. Following the meeting, 4 written comments were received that were in the same handwriting, all from homeowners under Causeway wanting to be bought out and expressing preference for Layout 6 simply because it would require them to be bought out (some of their homes were apparently damaged as a result of Hurricane Katrina).

SELECTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

At a project meeting held on December 5, 2006, to review the results of the public meeting, the LADOTD, RPC, FHWA and the project consultant decided to eliminate Layout 6 from further consideration and select Layout 12 as the Proposed Action to be examined (along with the No-Build Alternative) in the impact analysis.

This decision was based on several key factors:

- **Support.** Layout 12 had overwhelming support from the general public, from Jefferson Parish (as expressed by its elected leaders and representatives) and local and regional agencies (such as the Regional Planning Commission).

- **Accessibility.** Layout 12 provided total connectivity, with all eight possible movements being allowed, while Layout 6 only allowed half of the possible movements.

- **Cost**. Layout 6 costs roughly eleven million dollars more than Layout 12.

- **Right of Way Acquisition and Relocations.** Layout 6 required twenty-four (24) residential and six (6) commercial relocations, while Layout 12 required no residential relocations and five (5) commercial relocations.

- **Other Potential Impacts.** Cursory analysis already performed as part of the EIFS process and to date as part of the EA process revealed that Layout 6 would likely have more potential impacts than would Layout 12. Layout 6, for instance, involved acquisition of right-of-way in areas of hazardous material environmental concern, such as the Delta Petroleum Company Site and asbestos containing sites along Lausat Street west of Causeway. Additionally Layout 6, due to its Ramp "B" having closer proximity to residential areas south of the interchange, would be expected to have higher noise and visual impacts to those areas.

The Proposed Action (Layout 12) is more fully described in the following chapter, *Chapter IV - Description of the Proposed Action.*

CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

In Chapter IV, roadway design criteria, which were used in the development of the proposed action, and the build alternatives considered, are first described. The refined design concept of the proposed action is then described. Conceptual construction costs, which have been updated since the Environmental Inventory / Feasibility Study, are described. The conceptual construction cost section includes the sub-cost determinations and assumptions used in determining costs for:

- Mainline Structure
- At-Grade Roadway
- Construction Detours and Traffic Control
- Utility Relocation
- Street Lighting
- Right-Of-Way Acquisition
- Signalization
- Contingencies

A plan view layout, profile sheets, and typical sections of the proposed action are presented at the end of this chapter.

DESIGN CRITERIA

The concept design of the roadway, ramps and bridges of the proposed action meet LADOTD criteria for roadway design. The Earhart Expressway portion of the project uses the F-1 LADOTD design standard, while the Causeway Blvd. portion uses the UC-2 design standard.

Table IV-1, on the following page, lists the design criteria.

TABLE IV-1
EARHART/CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE
DESIGN CRITERIA

DESIGN FEATURES		EARHART MAINLINE (F-1)	CAUSEWAY MAINLINE (UC-2)	1 LANE RAMP (LOOP)	1 LANE RAMP (PARALLEL)
Design Speed		50 mph	45 mph	25 mph	30 mph
Pavement Cross Slope	(Ft. per Ft.)	0.025	1/8" per foot to match existing	0.025	0.025
Stopping Sight Distance		425'	360'	155'	200'
Horizontal Curvature	(Minimum with Superelevation)	700' radius	7,640' radius (0°45') w/o Superelevation	150' radius	250' radius
Roadway Grades	(Maximum)	4½ % or match existing	Match existing	5% up – 6% down	5% up – 6% down
Superelevation	(Maximum ft. per ft.)	0.10	N/A	0.08	0.08
Pavement Width		2-36' Roadways	2-24' Roadways	15' Roadway	15' Roadway
Shoulder Widths	Outside (right side) Inside (left side)	Match Existing Match Existing	Match Existing Match Existing	6' Minimum 4'	6' 4'
Required Right-of-Way Width	From C/L From Edge of Travel Lane From Edge of Bridge Structure	As Needed As Needed 15'	As Needed As Needed 15'	As Needed As Needed 15'	As Needed As Needed 15'
Fore Slope Ratio		Match Existing	N/A	6:1	6:1
Back Slope Ratio		Match Existing	N/A	4:1	4:1
Minimum Vertical Clearance	(Roadway)	16.5'	16.5'	16.5'	16.5'
Minimum Vertical Clearance	(Railroad)	23.0'	23.0'	23.0'	23.0'
Bridge Roadway Width	(Face to Face Bridge Rail, Min.)	Match Existing	Match Existing	Shldr. Width	Shldr. Width
Design Bridge Loading		HS-20	HS-20	HS-20	HS-20

DESIGN CONCEPT

The proposed action has a very compact design and begins in the vicinity of the elevated structure of Causeway Boulevard above Earhart Expressway. This alternative is designed to accommodate all eight possible directional movements; six are proposed to function under free-flow conditions and two are proposed to function under signal controlled conditions. Six new ramps are proposed.

Beginning with southbound Causeway traffic, the first ramp described is Ramp "B". Vehicles traveling southbound on Causeway could utilize this ramp to access Earhart headed westbound. Ramp "B" ties in to an existing ramp structure as Earhart transitions to an elevated section to cross the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks. Between mainline Earhart and the CNIC Railroad, Ramp "F" splits off from Ramp "B" to provide motorists with access to Earhart eastbound. Ramp "B" is a two-lane exit off of Causeway and widens to three lanes near the split of Ramp "F". Ramp "B" merges with Earhart as a one-lane facility. Ramp "F" merges with Earhart as a one-lane facility.

For northbound Causeway traffic, Ramp "E" provides access to westbound Earhart Expressway. It curves over the Earhart mainline and under Ramp "C" before merging with Earhart. Ramp "E" is a one-lane exit off of Causeway. Shortly after Ramp "E" splits from northbound Causeway, Ramp "D" splits off of Ramp "E", descending from an elevated status to ground level, where it merges with Ramp "F" to provide access to eastbound Earhart.

For eastbound Earhart traffic seeking access to Causeway, Ramp "A" is proposed. Ramp "A" is a one-lane exit off of Earhart and widens to three lanes near its intersection with Causeway. At this point, vehicles headed toward southbound Causeway exit Ramp "A" via a one-lane merge section. Vehicles headed towards northbound Causeway exit Ramp "A" with a two-lane left-turn section controlled by a new traffic signal on mainline Causeway.

For westbound Earhart traffic seeking access to Causeway, Ramp "C" is proposed. The intersection of Ramp "C" with Causeway is similar to the intersection of Ramp "A" with Causeway. Ramp "C" is a one-lane exit off of Earhart and widens to three lanes near Causeway. Vehicles headed towards northbound Causeway exit Ramp "C" via a one-lane merge section. Vehicles headed towards southbound Causeway exit Ramp "C" with a two-lane left-turn section controlled by the new traffic signal on mainline Causeway.

Layout No. 12 does not impact the traffic circle above Airline Drive; therefore, no modifications to existing exit/entrance ramps are necessary.

This alternative requires approximately 3 acres of new right-of-way and impacts 1.7 acres of existing servitudes. Five (5) commercial relocations/modifications would be required. No residential relocations are necessary.

A plan view layout, roadway geometry (including apparent right-of-way), profile sheets, and typical sections for this alternative which better illustrate the design concept are presented at the end of this chapter.

CONCEPTUAL CONSTRUCTION COST

GENERAL

Construction quantities for the proposed action were derived from the typical sections shown at the end of this chapter. Unit prices were based on Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) 2006 unit prices.

Construction costs were divided into ten basic groups: Mainline Structure, Causeway Widening, At Grade Roadway, Utilities, Mast Lighting, Right-of-Way Acquisition, Servitudes, Residential and Commercial Relocations/Modifications, and Contingencies. These are described below:

Mainline Structure

The mainline structure includes the elevated sections of all proposed ramps including tie-ins to the Causeway mainline, but excluding the traffic circle ramps. Using quantities from the typical sections and LADOTD unit costs, a square foot unit construction cost was calculated. The cost of bridge drainage was included in the average square foot unit costs. The square foot unit costs varied due to changes in the average height of the bents, estimated footing sizes and structure type. The square foot costs were used to estimate the cost of the Mainline Structure.

Causeway Widening

Costs associated with widening mainline Causeway were also calculated using square foot unit costs. This cost excludes the traffic circle ramps. The average height of the structure, the typical sections and the structure type were used to determine the square foot costs.

At-Grade Roadway

The at-grade roadway cost estimate includes earthwork, construction of the roadway pavement section, and miscellaneous construction. In areas of new construction, clearing and grubbing will be required. The area of proposed construction is mostly flat. Excavation and embankment are needed to provide drainage and to raise the roadbed. The estimated earthwork quantities for excavation and embankment were based on the proposed cross sections and field observations of the existing terrain. Portland cement concrete pavement was assumed for estimating purposes along the Earhart Expressway

Corridor. At-grade roadway costs include minor roadway drainage, erosion control, seeding, signage, striping, fences and guardrails if required.

Utilities

Costs for utility relocations were estimated based on aerial photographs and site visits. The utility relocation cost estimate was based on an estimated lump sum cost per each utility relocation required.

Signalization

The proposed action includes a new traffic signal on the elevated portion of Causeway Blvd. where the eastbound to northbound ramps and westbound to southbound ramps connect to Causeway.

Lighting

Tall mast lighting, which covers a wide area, is assumed for this project, similar to other new LADOTD interchanges being constructed or reconstructed. It was determined that seven (7) mast lights structures would be needed to illuminate the interchange area.

Right-of-Way Acquisition

Methodology

The right-of-way likely to be acquired for this project includes both vacant and developed parcels. The developed parcels include only commercial/industrial uses and industrial zonings.

A web search was undertaken in the industrial-zoned areas near the proposed project (such as those in LaBarre Industrial Park and Elmwood Industrial Park) to search "for sale" properties for pricing. The following table documents recent asking price data examined in this analysis of industrial property

Table IV-2
For Sale Listings of Prices of Industrial Property in East Jefferson Parish

LOCATION	IMPROVEMENTS	LAND AREA	PRICE PER SQUARE FOOT
1000 Dakin Street	Parcel with warehouse & office	109,072 sf	$17.42
1820 L&A Road	Parcel with warehouse and office	33,357 sf	$37.47
210 Industrial Ave.	Vacant Parcel	22,200 sf	$9.46
Lausat St. near Shrewsbury	Redevelopment Parcel	12,156 sf	$18.10
124 Airline Dr.	Acreage with warehouse and office	6.38 acres	$10.43

Determination of Right-of-Way and Servitude Costs

The active industrial parks in the study area provided a basis for the cost estimates for possible right of way acquisition and Servitude costs associated with the project, as described below:

Unimproved ROW Acquisition Cost Estimate

There were only two listings available for vacant industrial land or industrially-zoned redevelopment parcels. The prices were somewhat different in nature. The vacant parcel had a square foot figure of $9.46 while the smaller redevelopment parcel had a square foot cost of $18.10. Bearing in mind that the EIFS study two years ago used an average of $9.00/sq. ft., the $9.46 figure was seen as the more accurate of the two and chosen. Calculated in terms of acreage, this computes to $412,078/ acre, which was rounded up to a $420,000 per acre for vacant or residential property in the Earhart/Causeway area.

Improved ROW Acquisition Cost Estimate

Improved commercial/industrial properties, similar to the ones that might be acquired under this project, sold for between $10.43 to $37.47 per square foot in east Jefferson Parish. This averages to a figure of $21.77 / sq. ft. Calculated in terms of acreage, this computes to $948,446 / acre. Bearing in mind the EIFS study two years ago used a similar price of $900,000 /acre, this was rounded up to an even $950,000 per acre cost figure for improved commercial/industrial property in the Earhart/Causeway area.

Calculation of Servitude Costs

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) policy on servitudes is based on appraisals conducted on the project property as follows[1]:

- The cost allowed for **servitudes extending across railroad tracks and pipelines** is set at 50% of the appraised value of the property. The appraisal is usually determined following the design phase of the project.

As a result of the right-of-way cost determination being $420,000 per acre, and servitudes being 50% of appraised value, the conceptual cost for servitude is an estimated $210,000 per acre.

Costs for Commercial Relocations/Modifications

Relocation would occur when the majority of a building needs to be acquired and the tenants or owner relocated. Modifications were defined as those instances where only a portion of a commercial building may be required, and the building modified while the owner or tenant remains. A review of the layouts on aerial photography was used to determine the type of and amount of relocations and modifications. Under the proposed Action only commercial relocations/modifications would occur. Costs for such actions were taken from a recent similar analysis in east Jefferson Parish, the *East-West Corridor Study – Highway Component Final Environmental Statement* (February, 2007). The amount used was $37,000 for each commercial relocation/modification.

Contingencies

A 25% construction cost contingency was included for this concept-level study.

COST ESTIMATES

A cost estimate for the Proposed Action is presented in Table IV-3 on the following two pages.

[1] Mr. David Pourciau, LADOTD Appraisal Division (1-225-237-1247), and Mr. Paul Charron, LADOTD (465-3468), March 31, 2004 and April 1, 2004.

TABLE IV-3
EARHART / CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE
CONCEPTUAL COST ESTIMATE - PROPOSED ACTION

ITEM NO.	ITEM	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	AMOUNT	AMOUNT IN YEAR OF EXPENDITURE
	CONSTRUCTION:					
1	Roadway at Grade	SQ. FT.	$29.00	149,458	$4,334,282	
2	Type II PPC Girder Span (< 40' ht.)	SQ. FT.	$75.00	34,205	$2,565,375	
3	Type II PPC Girder Span (> 40' ht.)	SQ. FT.	$85.00	0	$0	
4	Type III PPC Girder Span (< 40' ht.)	SQ. FT.	$74.00	110,035	$8,142,590	
4	Type III PPC Girder Span (> 40' ht.)	SQ. FT.	$84.00	0	$0	
5	Type IV-S PPC Girder Span (< 40' ht.)	SQ. FT.	$83.00	0	$0	
5	Type IV-S PPC Girder Span (> 40' ht.)	SQ. FT.	$98.00	0	$0	
6	Steel Girder Spans-4' Depth (<40' ht.)	SQ. FT.	$98.00	0	$0	
7	Curved Steel Girder Spans-4' Depth (<40' ht.)	SQ. FT.	$113.00	59,108	$6,679,204	
8	Curved Steel Girder Spans-4' Depth (>40' ht.)	SQ. FT.	$123.00	0	$0	
9	Steel Girder Spans-5' Depth (<40' ht.)	SQ. FT.	$112.00	18,447	$2,066,064	
10	Steel Girder Spans-5' Depth (>40' ht.)	SQ. FT.	$112.00	0	$0	
11	Curved Steel Girder Spans-5' Depth (<40' ht.)	SQ. FT.	$125.00	0	$0	
11	Curved Steel Girder Spans-5' Depth (>40' ht.)	SQ. FT.	$140.00	0	$0	
12	Steel Girder Spans-6' Depth (>40' ht.)	SQ. FT.	$148.00	0	$0	
8	Curved Steel Girder Spans-6' Depth (<40' ht.)	SQ. FT.	$163.00	0	$0	
13	Slab Spans w/Curtain Walls	SQ. FT.	$70.00	13,175	$922,250	
14	Structure Widening (Earhart) Type IV Girders	SQ. FT.	$99.00	37,365	$3,699,135	
15	Widening Causeway (Rolled Girders)	SQ. FT.	$130.00	39,365	$5,117,450	
16	Pile Supported Approach Slab	SQ. FT.	$41.00	8,074	$331,034	
17	Remove Causeway Median	Lin. Ft.	$64.00	200	$12,800	
18	Signalization	LUMP	LUMP	0	$140,000	
19	Mast Lighting	EACH	$49,000	7	$343,000	
	SUBTOTAL:				$34,353,184	$41,795,901 (in 2012)

TABLE IV-3 (continued)
EARHART / CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE
CONCEPTUAL COST ESTIMATE - PROPOSED ACTION

ITEM NO.	ITEM	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	AMOUNT	AMOUNT IN YEAR OF EXPENDITURE
	UTILITIES:					
	Sewer	LUMP	LUMP	1	$78,700	
	Water	LUMP	LUMP	1	$527,200	
	Drainage	LUMP	LUMP	1	$367,100	
	Natural Gas (Atmos)**	LUMP	LUMP	0	$0	
	Natural Gas (Gulf South)	LUMP	LUMP	1	$189,000	
	Power Lines (Entergy)	LUMP	LUMP	1	$133,000	
	Cable (TV)**	LUMP	LUMP	0	$0	
	Telephone (Bell South) **	LUMP	LUMP	0	$0	
	Fiber Optic Communication Lines *	LUMP	LUMP	0	$0	
	SUBTOTAL:				$1,295,000	1,575,566
						(in 2012)
*	*Avoid lines during design & construction*					
**	*To be relocated by owner if necessary*					
	RIGHT-OF-WAY, SERVITUDES & RELOCATIONS:					
	Unimproved Commercial / Industrial ROW	ACRES	$420,000	0.000	$0	
	Improved Commercial / Industrial ROW	ACRES	$950,000	3.016	$2,865,200	
	Servitudes:	ACRES	$210,000	1.704	$357,840	
	Commercial Relocations / Modifications	EACH	$37,000	5	$185,000	
	SUBTOTAL:				$3,408,040	3,833,582
						(in 2010)

SUBTOTAL	$39,056,224	$47,205,048
25% CONTINGENCY	$9,764,056	$11,801,262
TOTAL	**$48,820,280**	**$59,006,310**

YEAR OF EXPENDITURE ESTIMATE

The Estimate of Conceptual Construction Cost, which is given in Year 2007 dollars, was used as a basis for a Year of Expenditure Estimate (YOE). The YOE is based on estimated durations for tasks and estimated date of completion for those tasks, as outlined in Table IV-4 on the following page. It should be noted that this is only a projected timeline based on the assumption that funding will be available. The actual implementation of the project will vary depending on funding availability.

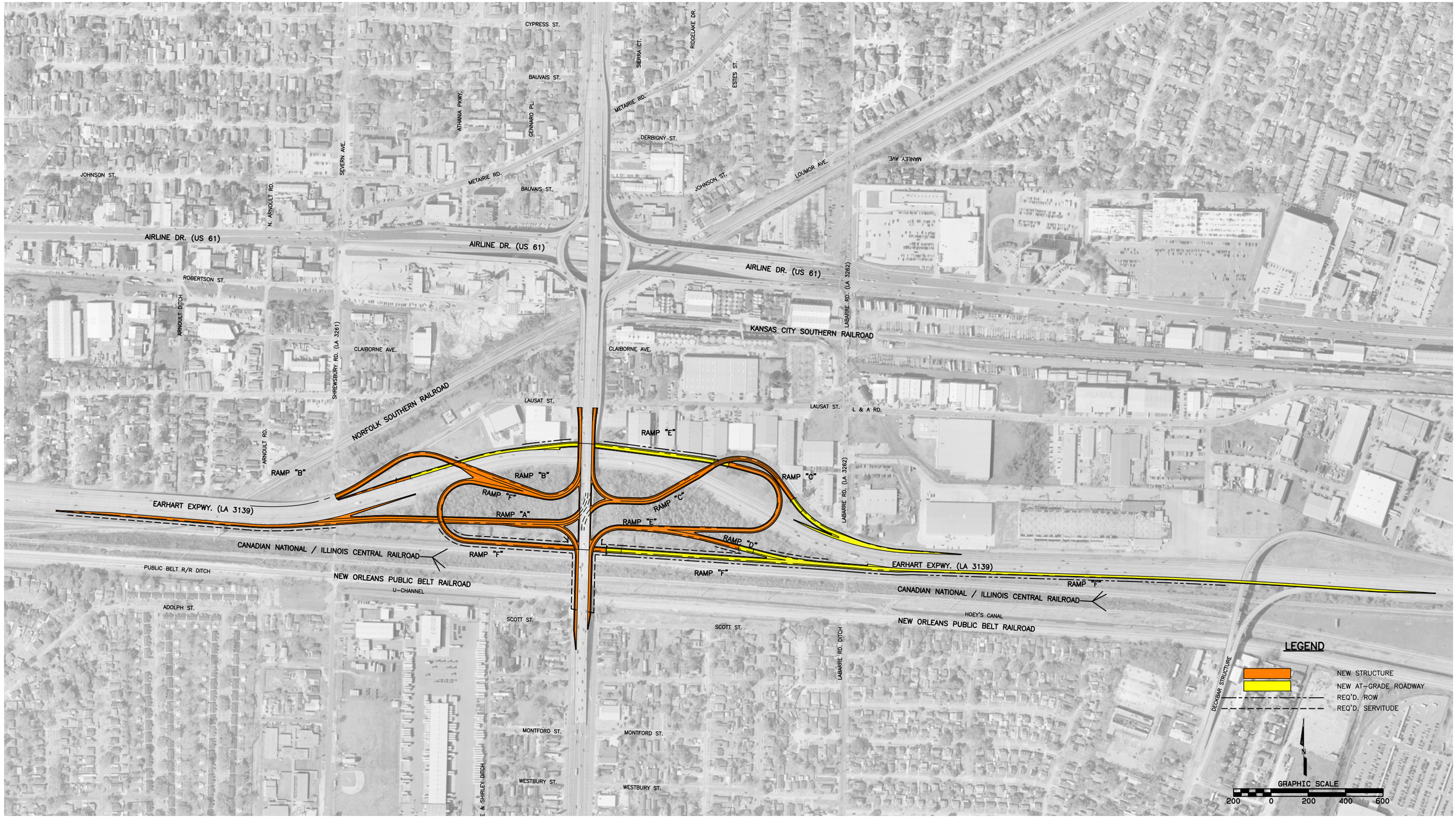
An annual escalation of 4% was used to calculate future costs, and the project is assumed to have funding available for each task at the time each task can reasonably commence. Acquisition is projected to occur in 2010, and as such the costs for that amount will be escalated three (3) years, while utility work and construction are slated to occur between the years 2011-2013. As the midpoint of construction will occur in 2012, costs will be escalated five 5 years.

TABLE IV-4
EARHART-CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE PROJECTED TIMELINE

Task	Estimated Completion	Estimated Duration
FONSI:	Early 2008	
TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY:	Mid 2008	6 months (Start with issuance of FONSI)
PRELIMINARY PLANS:	First quarter 2008	9 months (Start with completion of topographic survey)
PROPERTY SURVEY & ROW MAPS:	Mid 2009	6 months (3 months concurrent with Prel. Plans & 3 months concurrent with Final Plans)
FINAL PLANS:	First quarter 2010	12 months (Start with completion of Preliminary Plans)
ROW & SERVITUDE APPRAISALS & ACQUISITION:	End of 2010	18 months (Begin with end of ROW Maps and continue during Final Plans
ADVERTISE, BID & AWARD:	First quarter 2011	3 months (Start with completion of ROW acquisition)
CONSTRUCTION:	First quarter 2011 to first quarter 2013	26 months

NOTES:

- *The anticipated time for completion of construction is sixty-five (65) months following the issuance of the FONSI.*
- *This is only a projected timeline based on the assumption that funding will be available. The actual implementation of the project will vary depending on funding availability.*



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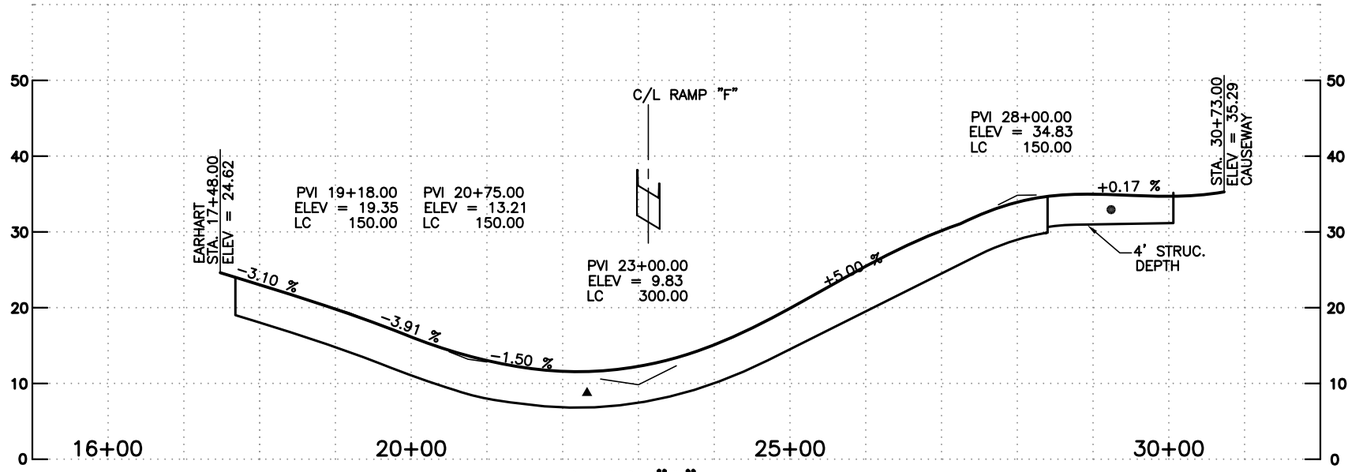
EARHART/CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE
ROUTE LA 3139

S.P. No. 736-26-0001 F.A.P. No. HP-2601 (515)

PROPOSED PLAN LAYOUT

SHT. P-1



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LEGEND:

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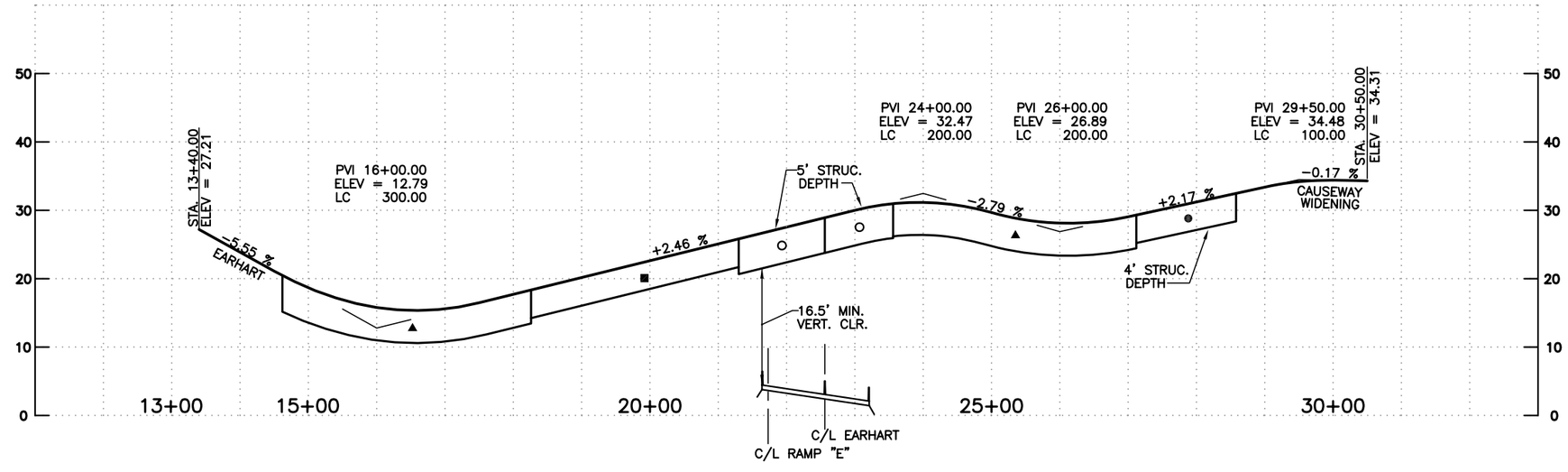
- ▲ TYPE III PRESTRESSED CONC. GIRDERS
- △ TYPE IV PRESTRESSED CONC. GIRDERS
- □ TYPE BT PRESTRESSED CONC. GIRDERS
- ○ STEEL GIRDERS
- ● CURVED STEEL GIRDERS
- ⊘ PILE SUPPORTED APPROACH SLAB
- ⊡ 25' SLAB SPANS WITH CURTAIN WALLS



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PROFILES

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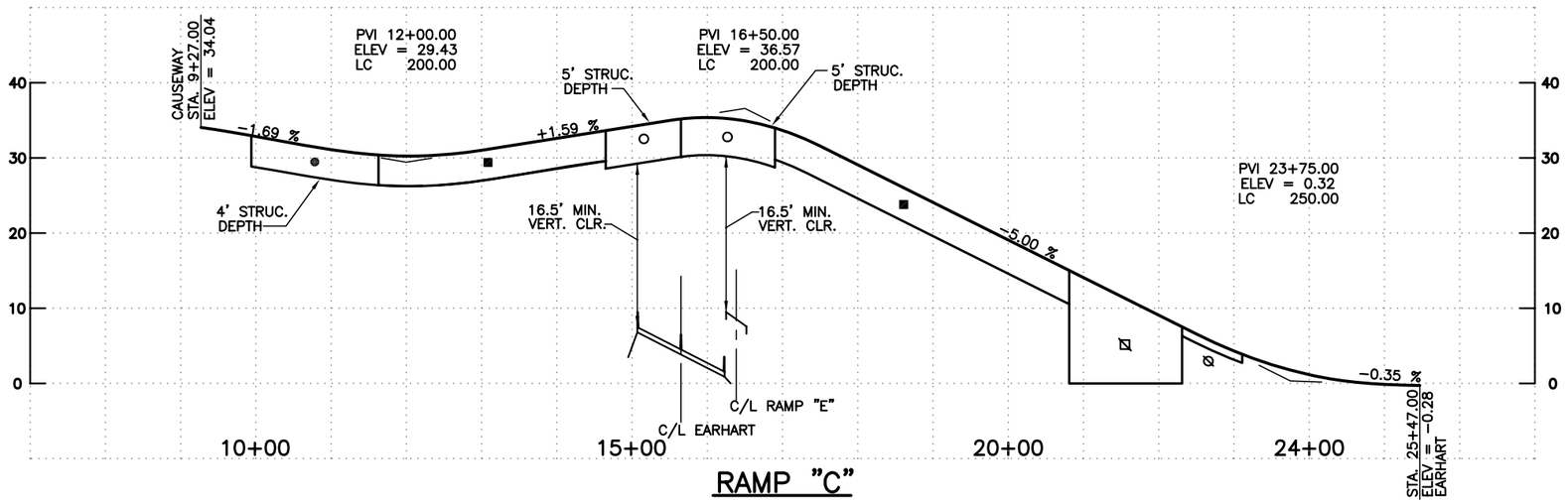

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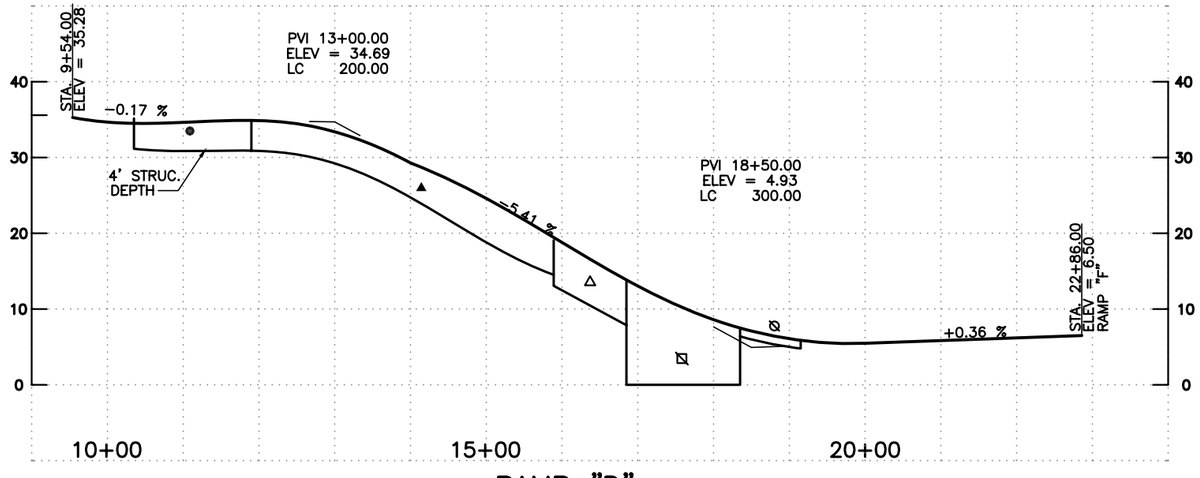

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- ▲ TYPE III PRESTRESSED CONC. GIRDERS
- △ TYPE IV PRESTRESSED CONC. GIRDERS
- □ TYPE BT PRESTRESSED CONC. GIRDERS
- ○ STEEL GIRDERS
- ● CURVED STEEL GIRDERS
- ⌀ PILE SUPPORTED APPROACH SLAB
- ⌀ 25' SLAB SPANS WITH CURTAIN WALLS

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PROFILES

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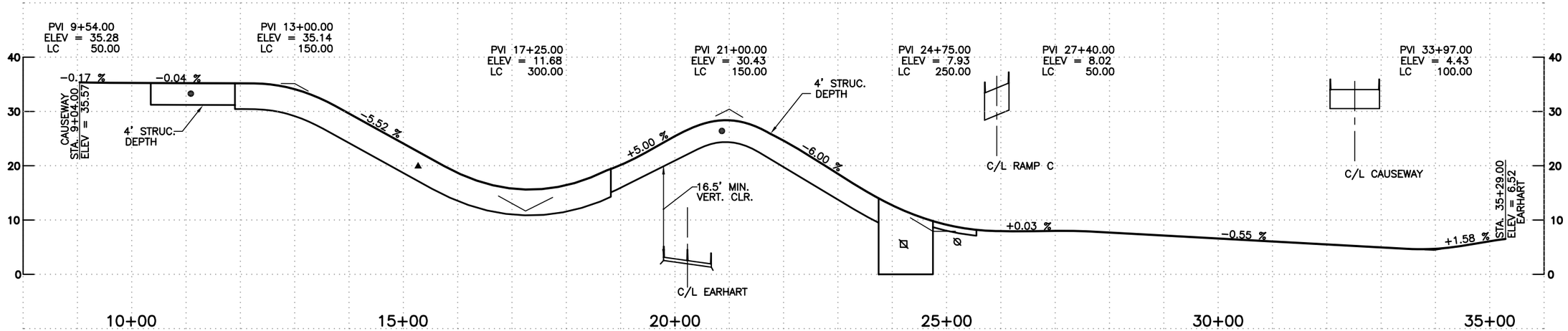

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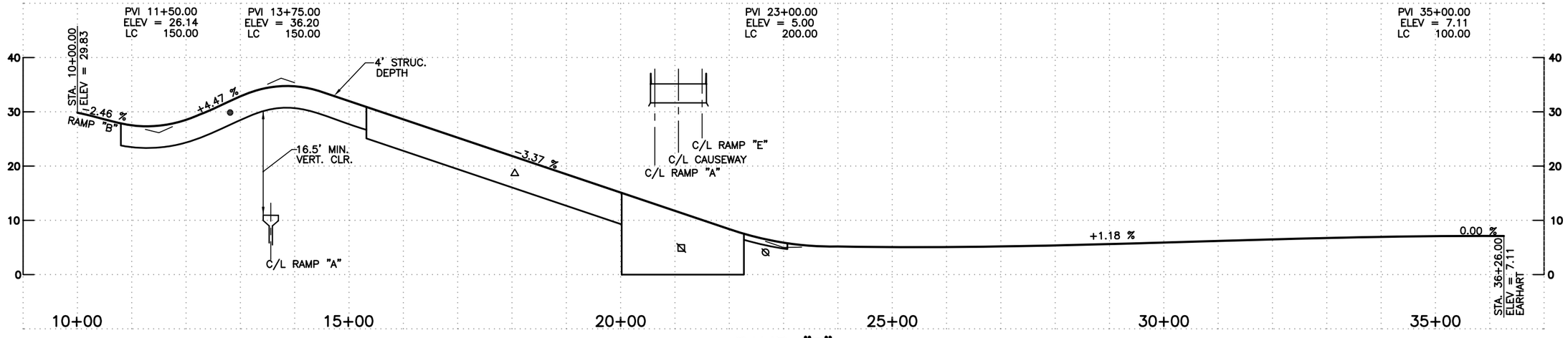
- △ TYPE IV PRESTRESSED CONC. GIRDERS
- □ TYPE BT PRESTRESSED CONC. GIRDERS
- ○ STEEL GIRDERS
- ● CURVED STEEL GIRDERS
- □ Ø PILE SUPPORTED APPROACH SLAB
- ⊠ 25' SLAB SPANS WITH CURTAIN WALLS



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PROFILES

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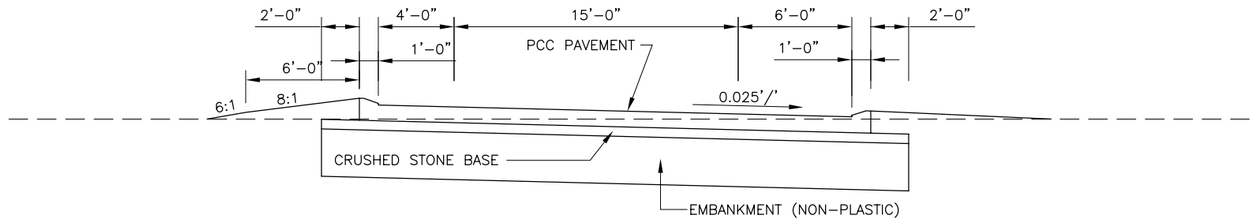
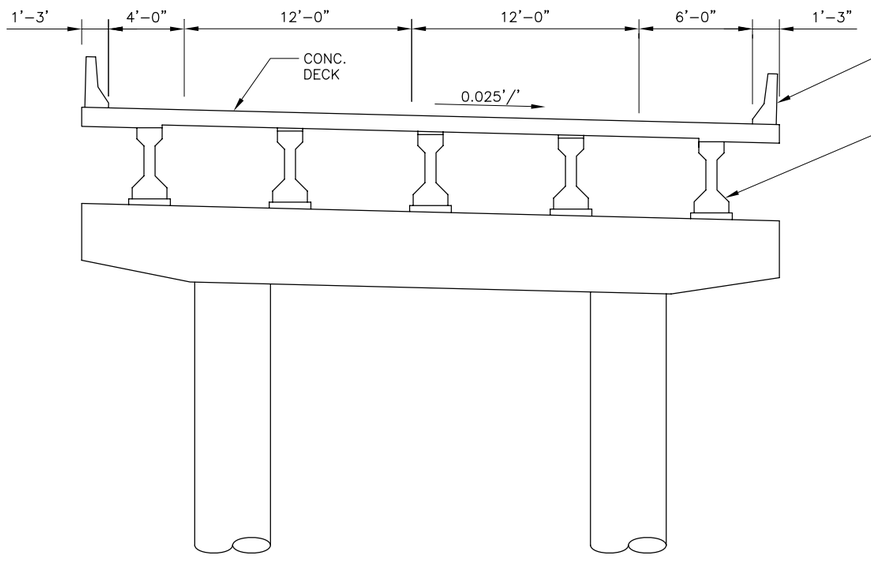


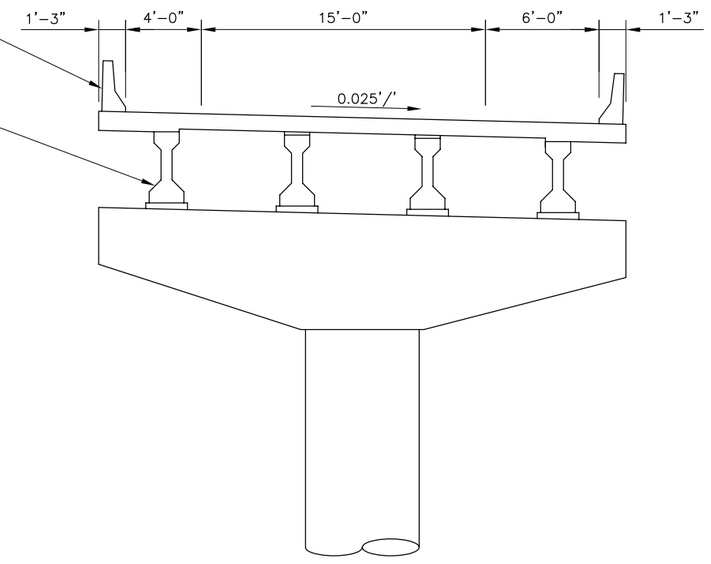
PROPOSED RAMP AT GRADE

1/8" = 1'–0"



PROPOSED TWO LANE RAMP ON STRUCTURE

1/8" = 1'–0"



PROPOSED RAMP ON STRUCTURE

1/8" = 1'–0"

8' 0 4' 8' 12' 16'

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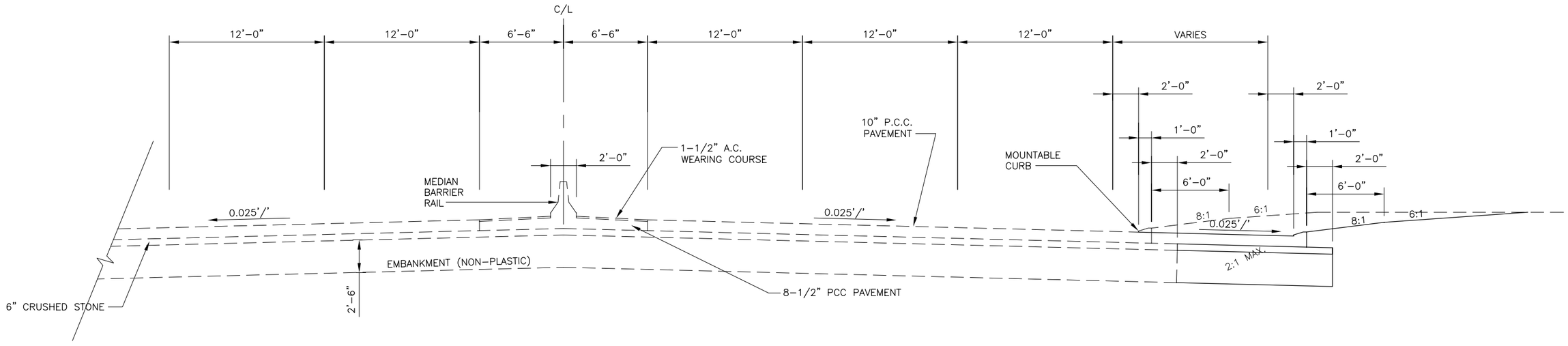
RAMPS
TYPICAL SECTIONS

SHT. TS-1



WIDENING OF EXISTING EARHART AT–GRADE
TO MATCH EXISTING EARHART SECTION

1/8" = 1'–0"

8' 0 4' 8' 12' 16'

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ROUTE LA 3139

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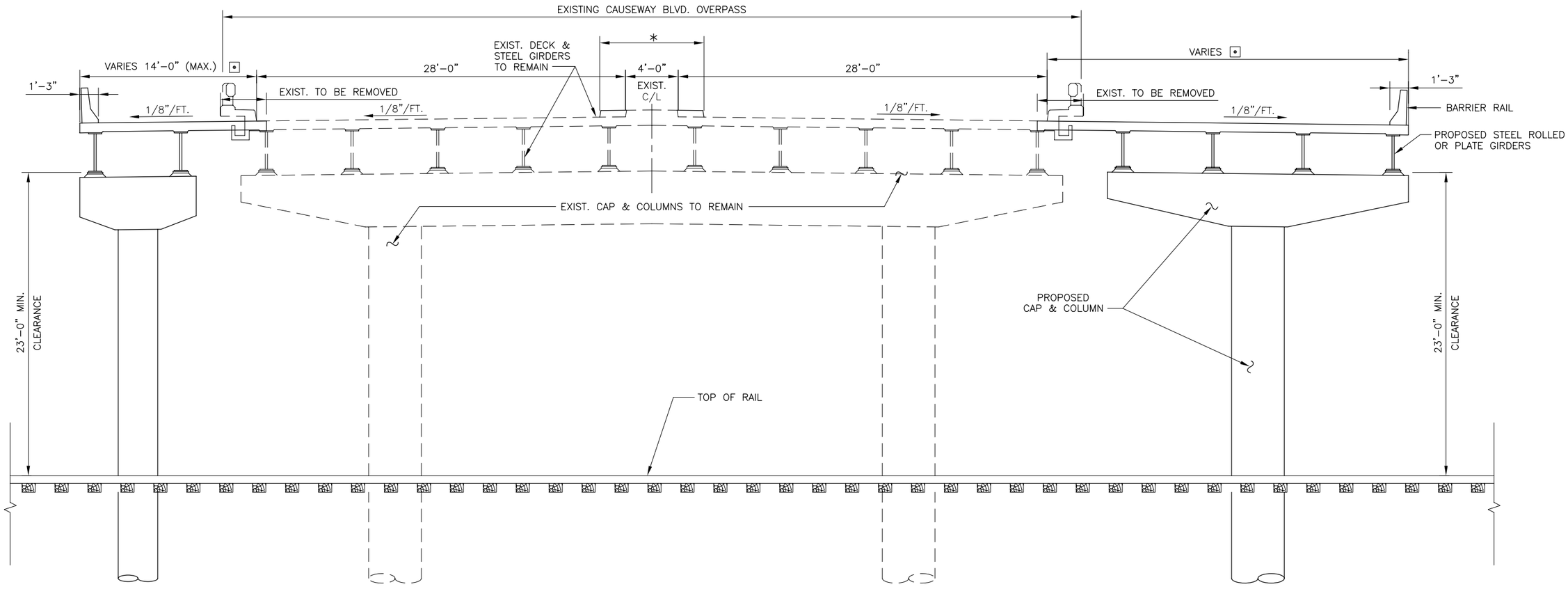
REBUILT EARHART
TYPICAL SECTIONS

SHT. TS-2



* THIS DIMENSION VARIES FROM 2'–0" MIN. TO 14'–0" MAX., SEE PLAN

⊡ WIDENING VARIES FROM 4'–0" MIN. TO 30'–0" MAX. EACH SIDE OF CAUSEWAY STRUCTURE

WIDENING OF EXISTING CAUSEWAY STRUCTURE

1/8" = 1'–0"

8' 0 4' 8' 12' 16'

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT DOTD

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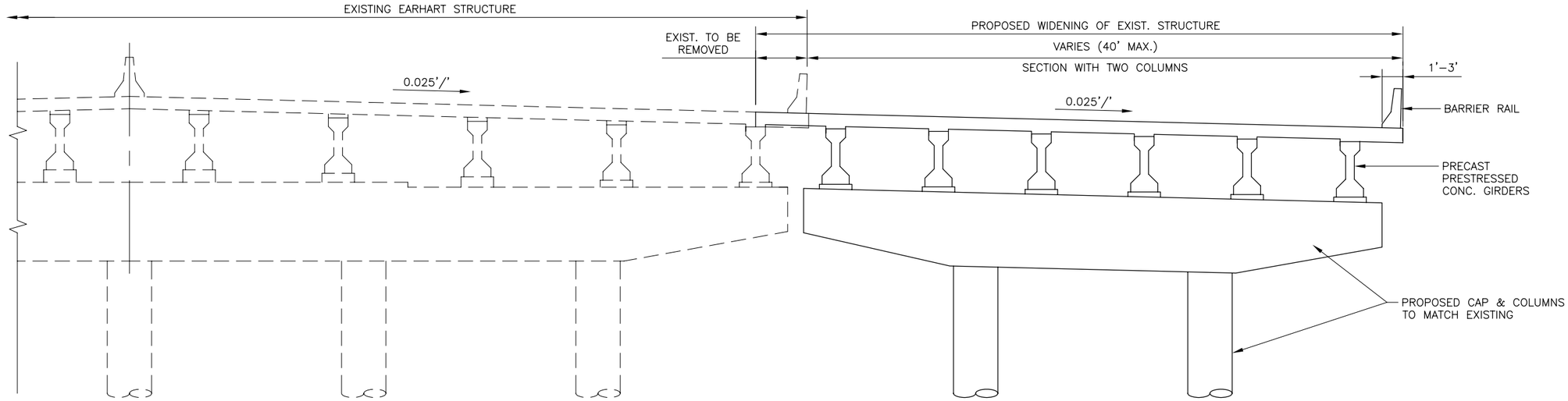
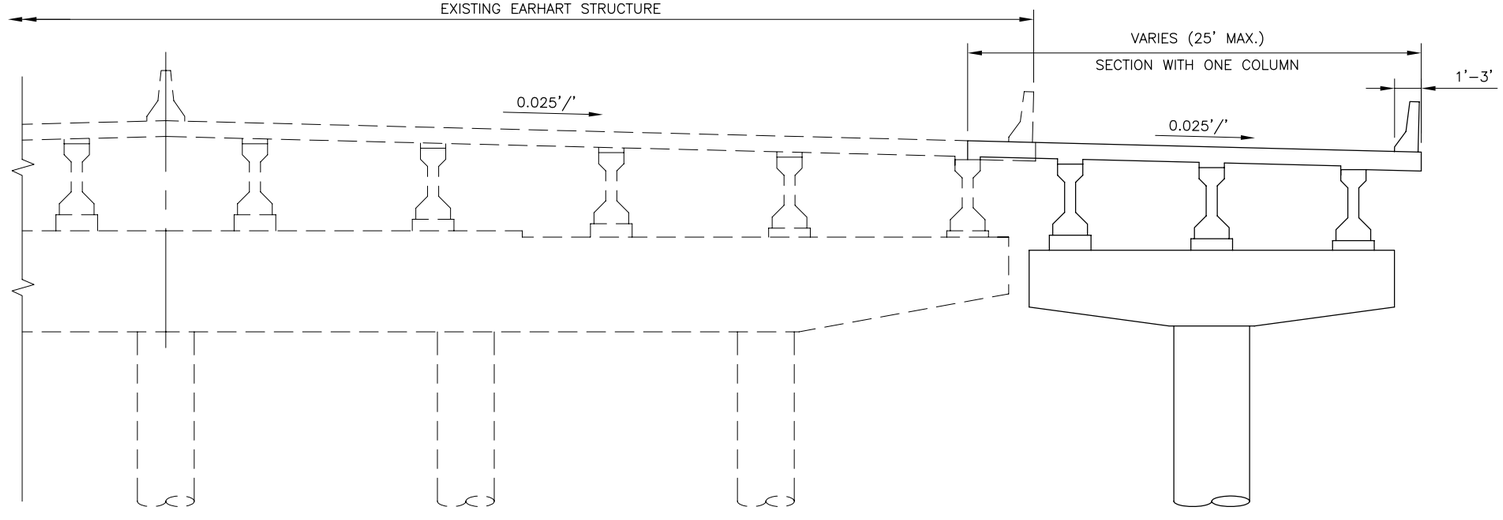
CAUSEWAY BLVD. STRUCTURE WIDENING
TYPICAL SECTIONS

SHT. TS-3



WIDENING OF EXISTING EARHART STRUCTURE

1/8" = 1'-0"



WIDENING OF EXISTING EARHART STRUCTURE

1/8" = 1'-0"

8' 0 4' 8' 12' 16'

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT DOTD

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EARHART/CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE
ROUTE LA 3139

S.P. No. 736-26-0001 F.A.P. No. HP-2601 (515)

EARHART STRUCTURE WIDENING
TYPICAL SECTIONS

SHT. TS-4

CHAPTER V

THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

In this chapter, the areas of primary impact and the overall project study are first delineated and described. The existing transportation system, including existing highways and roadways, rail, transit and pedestrian facilities are presented. The Chapter concludes with an examination of the affected human and natural environment for the project. For purposes of analysis, the affected environment was divided into the following categories and sub-categories:

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
- Roadways
- Railroads
- Transit
- Pedestrian and Bicyclist Conditions

EXISTING HUMAN ENVIRONMENT
- Affected Neighborhoods
- Demographics
- Zoning and Land Use
- Public Facilities and Services
- Visual/Aesthetic Conditions
- Cultural Resources
- Hazardous and Solid Waste Sites
- Flood Zones/Floodplains

EXISTING NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
- Geology and Soils
- Vegetation
- Wildlife
- Water Resources
- Coastal Zone Status
- Scenic Rivers

AREA OF PRIMARY IMPACT

The area of primary impact deals with the "footprint" of the project. The area includes the immediate area around the intersection of Causeway Boulevard and the Earhart Expressway as well as the area around the existing Airline Drive/ Causeway Boulevard interchange. The Area of Primary Impact encompasses an irregular, cross-shaped region, bounded by Bauvais and Bore

Streets, and Manley Avenue on the north; Metairie Lawn, Gruner Street, Labarre Road, and Santa Ana Avenue on the east; Clara and Clermont Streets, Morris Place, and San Mateo Avenue on the south; and Hyman Drive, Lillian Street, and Shrewsbury Road on the west. Figure V-1 provides a visual display of the Area of Primary Impact.

Within the primary area of impact, environmental categories associated with the project "footprint" will be assessed and explored. These include such categories as hazardous and solid waste sites, cultural resources, and most natural environmental impacts.

PROJECT STUDY AREA

The Project Study Area is a larger area surrounding the area of primary impact, and will be examined in order to categorize and list environmental aspects that would be less directly affected by project construction and more influenced by project implementation (these include traffic impacts and community, social and economic impacts). Exploration of the project study area also provides an accurate picture of surrounding neighborhoods.

The Project Study Area essentially mirrors the boundaries of the US census tracts and block groups used in the social-economic analysis. The southern boundary is static, comprising the Mississippi River. However, the northern study area boundary is uneven and varied, including W. Metairie Avenue, 47th Street / Fagot Avenue, and the Norfolk Southern Railroad. The eastern boundary includes Jefferson Avenue, the western boundary of Pontiff Playground and the Metairie Country Club, and Deckbar Avenue; the western boundary consists of Central Avenue and Manson Avenue.

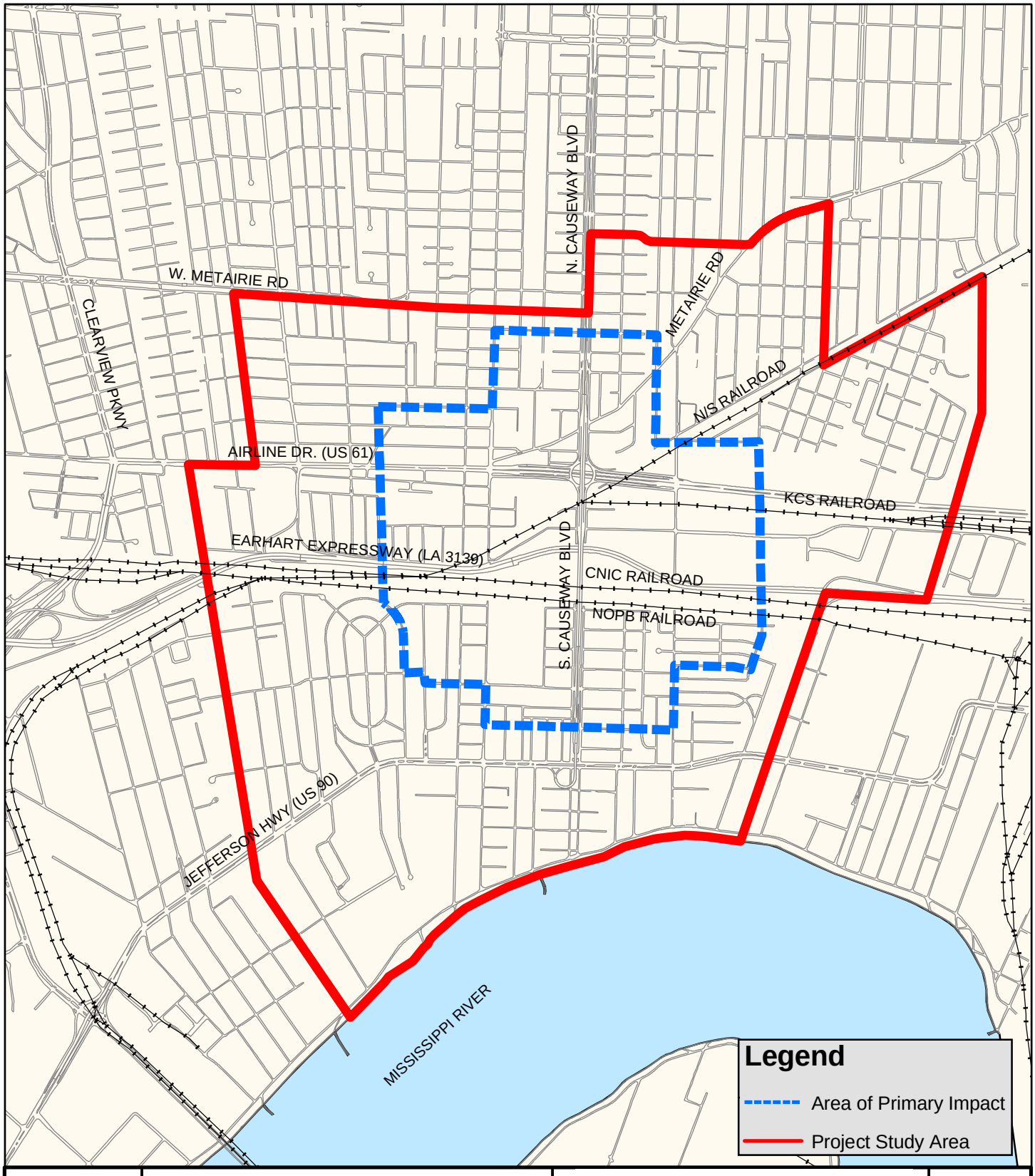
Figure V-1 also provides a visual display of the overall Project Study Area.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

This section discusses the existing transportation system within the study area, including the existing roadway, rail and transit systems.

METHODOLOGY

The LADOTD highway map was reviewed to locate state and federal roadways in the project study area. The New Orleans Railroads and Intermodal Facilities map was utilized to identify the railroads that traverse the project study area. The Jefferson Parish website was consulted to determine the bus routes that service the project area.



EARHART - CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Study Areas Map

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in association with:
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Figure

V-1

FINDINGS

Roads

Numerous state and federal roadways are located in the vicinity of the intersection of Earhart Expressway (LA 3139) and Causeway Boulevard (LA 3046). Both Jefferson Highway (US 90) and Airline Drive (US 61) are federal roadways running approximately parallel to Earhart Expressway to the south and north respectively. The state highways in the vicinity are Metairie Road (LA 611-9), Shrewsbury Road (LA 611-3), Labarre Road (LA 611-4) and River Road (LA 611-1).

Railroads

There are numerous railroad tracks that traverse the project study area. Both the Canadian National / Illinois Central (CNIC) and the New Orleans Public Belt (NOPB) railroads run east-west through the project area, south of Earhart Boulevard. A Norfolk-Southern (NS) spur line begins west of the intersection of the Earhart Expressway and Causeway Boulevard and travels northeasterly. A Kansas City Southern (KCS) Railroad spur begins just east of Severn Avenue and travels to the Jefferson/Orleans parish line south of Airline Drive.

Transit

There are 3 major bus routes that traverse the study area. These routes are the Causeway Blvd. route, the Kenner Local and the Airport Downtown Express. The Causeway Blvd. route is a north/south route from Jefferson Highway along Causeway Blvd. to West Esplanade Avenue and intersects with both the Kenner Local and the Airport Downtown Express. The Kenner Local operates on Jefferson Highway from the City of Kenner to the intersection of Carrolton Avenue and Claiborne Avenue in New Orleans. The Airport Downtown Express provides service from the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport along Airline Drive to Tulane and Carrollton Avenues[1]. This is the only bus route on the east bank of Jefferson Parish that provides direct access to New Orleans.

Pedestrian and Bicyclist Conditions

The Primary Impact area is a congested, heavily-traveled area for vehicular traffic, containing two multi-lane federal highways (US 61 and US 90), a state-owned, limited-access expressway (Earhart Expressway), and a major state highway (Causeway Boulevard). Add to this mix a convergence of three sets of railroad tracks, and the study area can best be described as

[1] The *Airport Downtown Express* currently terminates at Tulane and Carrollton Avenues in New Orleans, La. and does not go to the CBD. Jefferson Parish Transit, September 5, 2006.

uninviting to pedestrians and bicyclists. While local streets in the project area are much more conducive to bicycle travel and walking, the other transportation facilities listed above present barriers to expanded bicycle and pedestrian travel.

It should be noted that there is, however, a dedicated bicycle and pedestrian facility along the southern edge of the project study area, the *Mississippi River Trail*. The trail includes a paved path along the crown of the river levee dedicated to bicyclists, pedestrians and such.

EXISTING HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

AFFECTED NEIGHBORHOODS

The Earhart-Causeway study area is part of the large suburban Parish of Jefferson, and located within the unincorporated areas of Metairie and Jefferson. The unincorporated areas contain a multiplicity of subdivisions that comprise neighborhoods. Neighborhood identity is derived from the subdivision name, major streets, canals, and natural features such as the Mississippi River. The neighborhoods within the study area are composed primarily of single family residential development. Support facilities such as schools, churches and commercial services also contribute to the feeling of place in the neighborhood.

Some of the major residential neighborhoods in the Earhart Causeway study area include:

- Greater Old Metairie (those neighborhoods located north and south of and directly on Metairie Road)
- Beverly Garden
- Beverly Knoll
- Gilmore
- Jefferson Heights
- Metairie Club Gardens
- Rio Vista
- Shrewsbury

Industrial areas are also defined by their subdivision names:

- Labarre Business Park
- Elmwood Industrial Park

DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographics section describes the population characteristics and trends/ housing and household characteristics and business and economy characteristics of the project study area.

Population Characteristics and Trends / Housing and Household Characteristics

Methodology

Population, household, and housing characteristics demographics and socio-economic data were derived from U.S. Census Bureau 1990 and 2000 census records for census block groups 226.03, 227.02, 228.03, 229.01, 229.02, 242.01, 244.01, 244.02, 244.03, 245.01, 245.02, 246.01, 246.02, 246.03, 246.04, 246.05, 247.01, 247.02, 247.03, and 248.05. These are shown on Figure V-2. It should be noted that block group 248.03, which is located just to the east of the intersection of Causeway and Earhart, is a commercial/industrial area and has no resident population.

Findings

The project area has shown a rather high percentage of population growth considering its location. The total population of Louisiana in 2000 was 4,468,976—this represents an increase of 5.9% over 1990. In 2000, the total population in the Jefferson Parish was 455,466, which was a 1.59% increase over the 1990 population of 448,306.

As indicated in Table V-1, a 7.23% population increase occurred in the Project Study areas from 1990 to 2000, which was greater than either the parish or state population percentage increase.

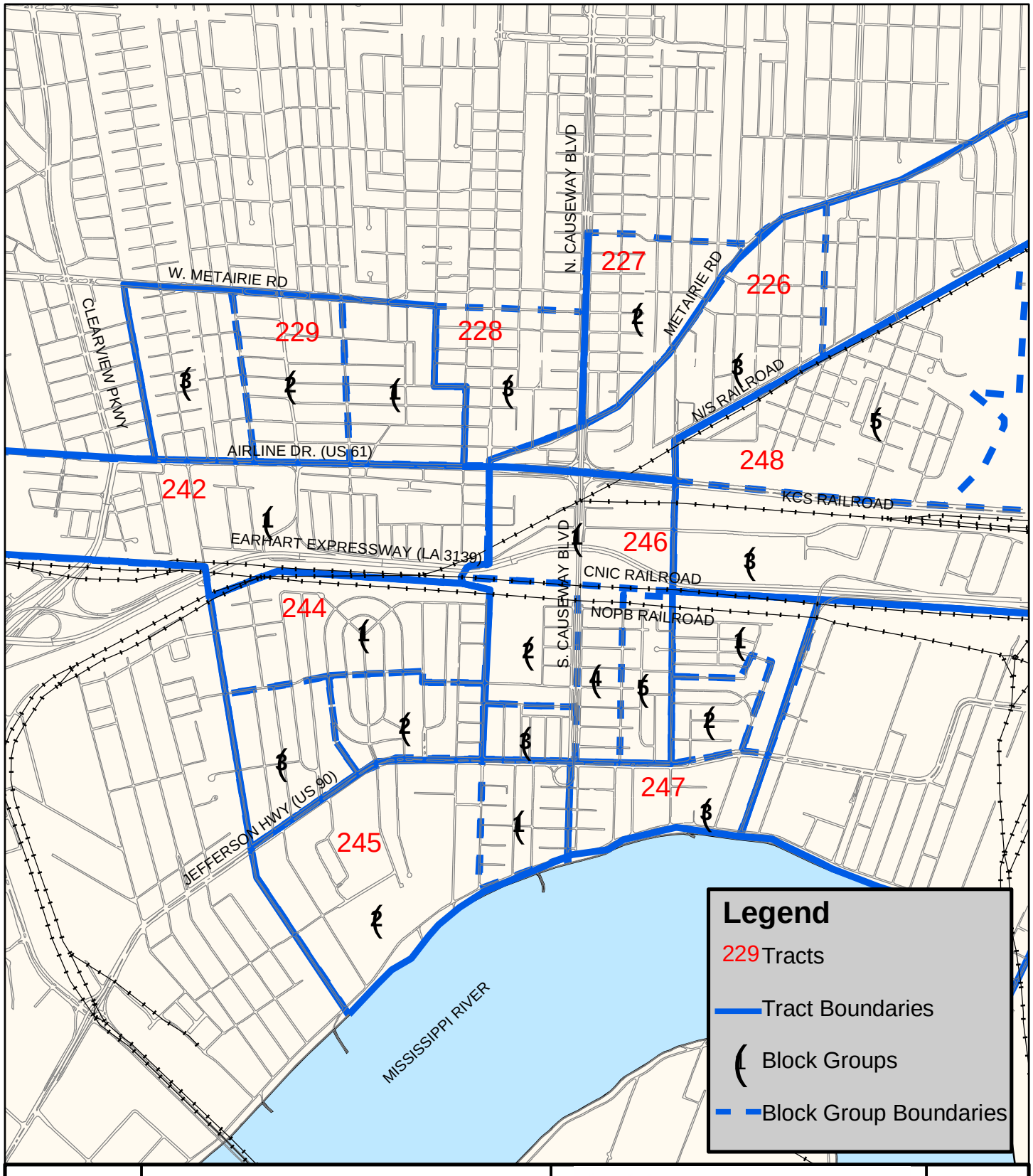
Table V-1
Total Population

	1990	2000	Change 1990 to 2000	% Change
Louisiana	**4,219,973**	**4,468,976**	**249,003**	**5.9%**
Jefferson Parish	**448,306**	**455,466**	**7,160**	**1.59%**
Study area	**15,359**	**16,469**	**1,110**	**7.23%**

As can be seen in the table below, the project area's age distribution indicates that most of the population falls within the age range of 21 to 59 years.

Table V-2
Age of Population – Total Numbers for Year 2000

Total Population	0–20 Years	21-39 Years	40-59 Years	60-84 Years	85 Years & Over
16,469	**3,731**	**4,460**	**4,559**	**2,164**	**461**



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT DOTD

EARHART - CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

2000 CENSUS TRACTS AND BLOCKGROUPS

NY ASSOCIATES, INC.
CONSULTING ENGINEERS
ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS
2750 LAKE VILLA DR. METAIRIE, LOUISIANA 70002 (504) 885-0500
in association with:
Evans-Graves Engineers, Inc.
Lambert Engineers
Urban Systems Associates, Inc.
Coastal Environments, Inc.

Figure

V-2

As seen in Table V-3, below, The study area experienced a 9.5% increase in occupied housing units from 1990 to 2000. Relative to vacant housing units, a significant percentage decrease occurred from 1990 to 2000. Thus, an overall increase in occupied housing units occurred in the study areas along with a decrease in the amount of vacant housing units during the ten-year period.

Table V-3
Housing Units Occupancy Status – Project Area

1990 Total Occupied	2000 Total Occupied	Change 1990-2000	% Change		1990 Total Vacant	2000 Total Vacant	Change 1990-2000	% Change
6,819	**7,470**	**651**	**9.5%**		**644**	**536**	**-108**	**-16.8%**

As can be seen in Table V-4 below, the number of owner-occupied housing units increased by 11.8% and the number of renter-occupied housing units increased by 5.6% from 1990 to 2000. The trend from 1990 to 2000 indicated a higher rate of homeownership within the study area.

Table V-4
Tenure – Occupied Housing Units

	1990	2000	Change 1990-2000	% Change
Total Owner-Occupied Housing Units	**4,290**	**4,798**	**508**	**11.8%**
Total Renter-Occupied Housing Units	**2,529**	**2,672**	**143**	**5.6%**

Economic characteristics are important factors that assist with the characterization of neighborhoods. Economic characteristics also assist in the assessment of services and amenities that are required to maintain and sustain neighborhoods, especially relative to infrastructure. The following economic characteristics include income, and median values of specified owner-occupied housing units. As indicated in Table V-5 on the following page, the project study area ranges in per capita income from $8,800 to $47,332. The average per capita income is approximately $20,988.

Table V-5
Per Capita Income in 1999

Census Tract	Per Capita Income
226.03	$47,332
227.02	$34,842
228.03	$25,821
229.01	$23,590
229.02	$17,626
242.01	$20,059
244.01	$20,391
244.02	$16,896
244.03	$16,922
245.01	$15,110
245.02	$30,435
246.01	$20,274
246.02	$8,800
246.03	$13,051
246.04	$11,811
246.05	$12,432
247.01	$21,011
247.02	$18,407
247.03	$14,533
248.05	$30,422
Study Area Average	$20,988

Table V-6, below presents ranged figures on household income in the aggregated study area:

Table V-6
Study Area Household Income in 1999

Total	7,386	Percentage of Total
Less than $10,000 to $24,999	2,500	33.8%
$25,000 to $44,999	1,988	26.9%
$45,000 to $99,999	2,255	30.5%
$100,000 or more	643	8.7%

As can be seen in Table V-7 on the following page, the median Year 2000 household incomes in the project area ranged from just over $21,000 to just over $48,000, with the average median household income for the study area at about $34,000.

Table V-7
Median Household Income

Census Tract	1990	2000	Change 1990 - 2000	% Change
226.03	**$37,206**	**$48,571**	**$11,365**	**30.5%**
227.02	**$24,575**	**$34,779**	**$10,204**	**41.5%**
228.03	**$19,569**	**$40,625**	**$21,056**	**107.6%**
229.01	**$19,853**	**$43,646**	**$23,793**	**119.8%**
229.02	**$27,195**	**$27,778**	**$583**	**2.14%**
242.01	**$25,921**	**$42,222**	**$16,301**	**62.9%**
244.01	**$21,193**	**$36,176**	**$14,983**	**70.7%**
244.02	**$19,792**	**$31,328**	**$11,536**	**58.3%**
244.03	**$14,868**	**$21,356**	**$6,488**	**43.6%**
245.01	**$21,985**	**$32,292**	**$10,307**	**46.9%**
245.02	**$35,208**	**$46,513**	**$11,305**	**32.1%**
246.01	**$10,568**	**$41,089**	**$30,521**	**288.8%**
246.02	**$8,730**	**$23,750**	**$15,020**	**172.0%**
246.03	**$15,250**	**$22,589**	**$7,339**	**48.1%**
246.04	**$11,776**	**$21,058**	**$9,282**	**78.8%**
246.05	**$29,167**	**$35,455**	**$6,288**	**21.56%**
247.01	**$23,068**	**$28,833**	**$5,765**	**25.0%**
247.02	**$18,971**	**$30,781**	**$11,810**	**62.2%**
247.03	**$26,333**	**$30,160**	**$3,827**	**14.5%**
248.05	**$30,598**	**$46,173**	**$15,575**	**50.9%**
Study Area Average	***$22,091***	***$34,259***	***$12,167***	***55.08%***

note: no residential population present in block group 248.03

All tracts in the study area had median income increases between 1990 and 2000, with the average increase being an impressive 55%. Census tract 246.01 experienced the largest increase from 1990 to 2000 (289%); however, it had a very low median income in 1990. The smallest increase in median household income from 1990 to 2000 was experienced by census tract 229.02 (2%).

For the most part, the median values of the study area's owner-occupied housing units have also increased significantly for that ten-year period. With the exception of census tract 246.01, all tracts within the study area experienced an increase in the median values of owner-occupied housing units. The increases could be a result of the area's sustainable and growing business activity, while the significant decrease for census tract 246.01 could be due to various factors, including its isolation and surrounding industrial uses. Census tract 248.05 experienced the largest percentage increase from 1990 to 2000.

Table V-8, below, presents these figures by census tract. Figures V-3 and V-4 show these figures graphically.

Table V-8
Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units

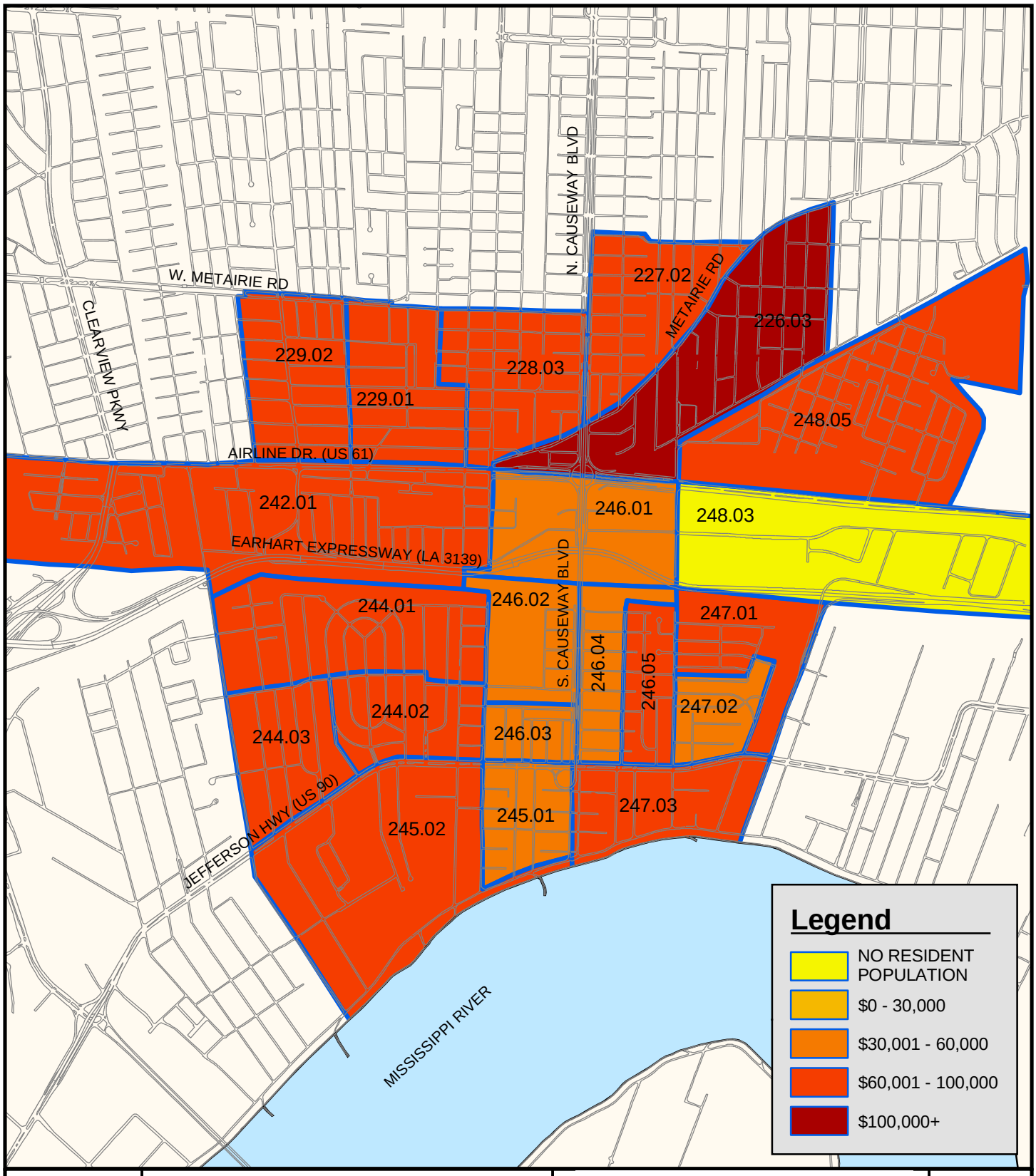
Census Tract	1990	2000	Change 1990 - 2000	% Change
226.03	**$201,100**	**$288,000**	**$86,900**	**43.2%**
227.02	**$77,100**	**$141,100**	**$64,000**	**83.0%**
228.03	**$67,500**	**$135,000**	**$67,500**	**100%**
229.01	**$70,000**	**$101,700**	**$31,700**	**45.3%**
229.02	**$63,400**	**$108,800**	**$45,400**	**71.6%**
242.01	**$63,500**	**$94,600**	**$31,100**	**48.9%**
244.01	**$66,800**	**$103,900**	**$37,100**	**55.5%**
244.02	**$67,000**	**$106,800**	**$39,800**	**59.4%**
244.03	**$64,600**	**$96,900**	**$31,400**	**48.6%**
245.01	**$57,600**	**$108,300**	**$50,700**	**88.0%**
245.02	**$86,500**	**$112,800**	**$26,300**	**30.4%**
246.01	**$37,700**	**$24,800**	**-$12,900**	**-34.2%**
246.02	**$54,000**	**$55,000**	**$1,000**	**1.8%**
246.03	**$57,600**	**$83,800**	**$26,200**	**45.5%**
246.04	**$40,900**	**$72,300**	**$31,400**	**76.8%**
246.05	**$62,300**	**$68,400**	**$6,100**	**9.79%**
247.01	**$62,300**	**$88,100**	**$25,800**	**41.4%**
247.02	**$56,300**	**$89,500**	**$33,200**	**58.9%**
247.03	**$67,000**	**$117,500**	**$50,500**	**75.4%**
248.05	**$71,500**	**$140,900**	**$69,400**	**97.1%**
Study Area Average	**$69,735**	**$106,910**	**$37,175**	**53.31%**

note: no owner-occupied housing units specified for block group 248.03

Business and Economy

Methodology

The business and economy discussion is based on field reconnaissance of the project study area's existing land use activity and input from the "The Jefferson EDGE" (published by the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Council, or JEDCO, and adopted by the Jefferson Parish Council on May 17, 2000). The employment status analysis is based on data obtained for the year 2000 from the U.S. Census Bureau.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT DOTD

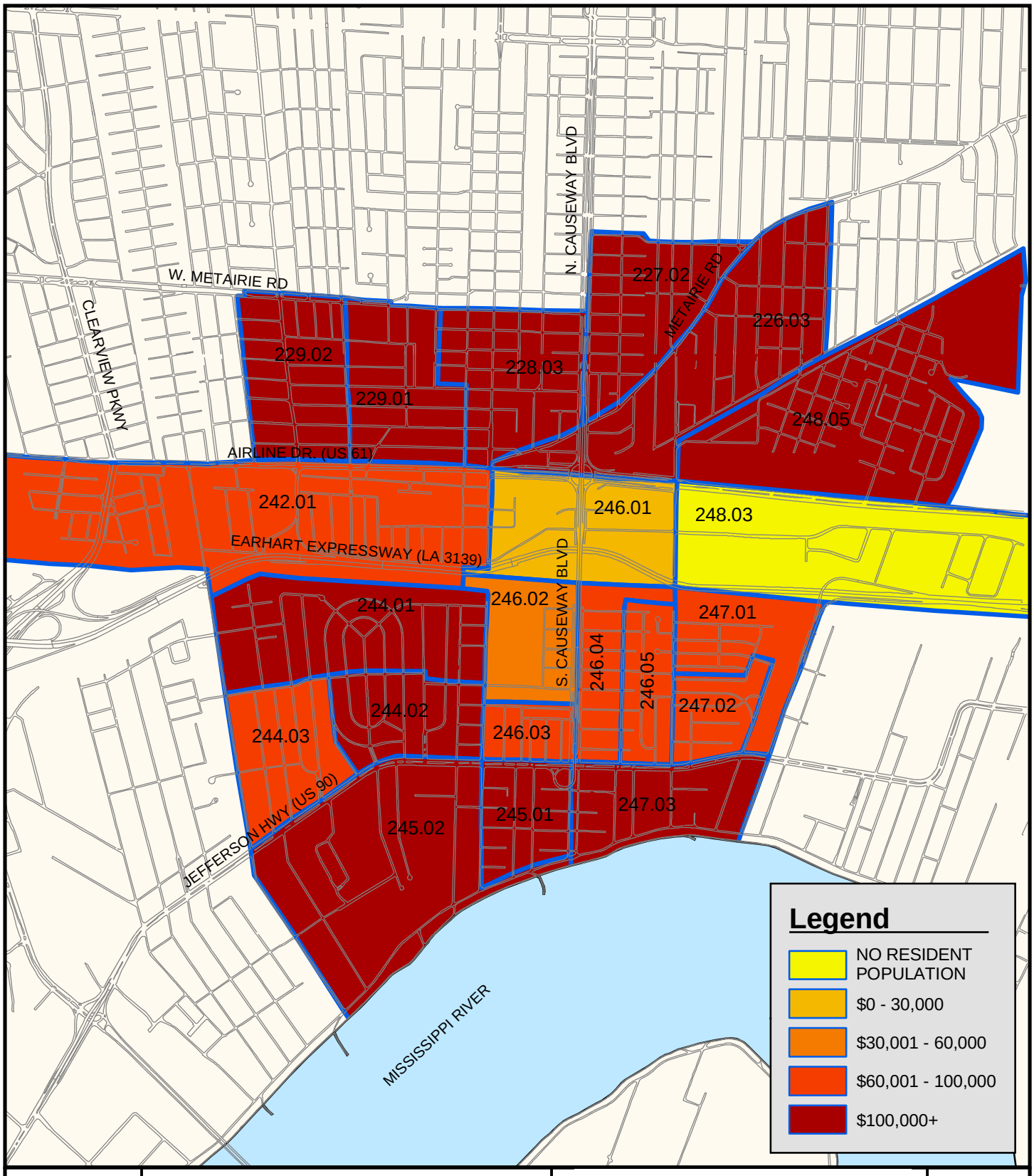
EARHART - CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

1990 MEDIAN VALUE OF SPECIFIED OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS

NY ASSOCIATES, INC.
CONSULTING ENGINEERS
ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS
2750 LAKE VILLA DR. METAIRIE, LOUISIANA 70002 (504) 885-0500
in association with:
Evans-Graves Engineers, Inc.
Lambert Engineers
Urban Systems Associates, Inc.
Coastal Environments, Inc.

Figure

V-3



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT DOTD

EARHART - CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

2000 MEDIAN VALUE OF SPECIFIED OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS

NY ASSOCIATES, INC.
CONSULTING ENGINEERS
ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS
2750 LAKE VILLA DR. METAIRIE, LOUISIANA 70002 (504) 885-0500
in association with:
Evans-Graves Engineers, Inc.
Lambert Engineers
Urban Systems Associates, Inc.
Coastal Environments, Inc.

Figure

V-4

Findings

Jefferson Parish and, in particular, the project study area, has historically experienced employment growth, and it continues to do so. The Parish continues to create new jobs even in the midst of periods of population decline. Approximately 34,000 new jobs have been created in Jefferson Parish since 1990, while over 100,000 new residents have been added. In addition, employment and wage growth rates have increased since 1990, especially with a shift from manufacturing toward service and construction industries.

However, a hindrance to development within the project study area has been the limitation of developable land for the development of major commercial, residential, or industrial projects. Redevelopment is a necessary factor to attract new investment. Business opportunities and a subsequent growing micro-economy within the project study area will be driven first by land use considerations.

The project study area contains retail strip centers, nightclubs and bars, restaurants, small and large businesses, warehouses, multi-family and single family residences, government buildings (i.e. U.S. Post Office), and office uses. Scattered vacant lots are interspersed and represent development potential. The project study area is well-positioned to capture new business, which would enhance its micro-economy and the entire Parish economy.

In terms of smaller scale commercial development, opportunities exist within the project study area and/or adjacent areas. Vacant lots for new construction and the infill of existing vacant commercial structures provide commercial development and redevelopment opportunities. Vacant "big boxes," located on large parcels or in older shopping centers with adequate parking, have provided redevelopment opportunities. For example, the former Real Superstore at Airline Drive and Cleary was adaptively reused as a Sam's Warehouse Club retail facility.

New land use activity has occurred along the Airline Drive Corridor. Hurwitz-Mintz Furniture Co. relocated its warehouse and showroom from Orleans Parish to Jefferson Parish on Airline Drive. Other recent land use activity along the Airline Drive Corridor, within the project study area or within near vicinity to it, includes a new Winn-Dixie Marketplace, Walgreen's, Auto Zone, Regions Bank, Regions Mortgage Company. To further enhance business opportunities, the Parish Council adopted the Commercial Parkway Overlay District in 1999, in order to provide guidelines for enhanced landscaping, set-back requirements, curb cuts and signage along Airline Drive. In addition, the Airline Drive corridor is a designated Economic Development District and it provides ad valorem tax benefits to property owners who substantially improve their buildings.

Thus, limited development opportunities are not insurmountable. Sustaining the project area's current business growth, as well as attracting new development and redevelopment, is vital to the project study area's continued business and economic success. Economic opportunities are also available in conjunction with effective transportation and telecommunications infrastructure.

Along with development opportunities, employment status is important in the analysis of business and economy. Employment status could be an indicator of the state of a particular area's business growth and economy. The following table presents the employment status of the project study area:

Table V-9
Employment Status

	Total	**Percentage of Total**
In the Labor Force	8,240	
- *Employed*	7,901	95.9%
- *Unemployed*	339	4.1%
Not in the Labor Force	5,144	

As indicated above, the project study area has a high percentage of employment. This percentage could be an indicator of the project study area's business and economic status.

ZONING AND LAND USE

Methodology

The methodology employed in this analysis consists of an examination of the official zoning/land use maps for the Parish of Jefferson, a review of the text of the *Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance* and windshield surveys of the study area.

Zoning is discussed first, being the determining factor for land use. An overview for each zoning district is presented including the purpose of the district, the kinds of permitted uses allowed and height restrictions. In the best case, land use matches the permitted uses in the zoning district in which the property is located.

A consideration of the land use and prevailing development patterns follows the zoning analysis. The land use in the study area is reviewed in geographic segments from west to east and north to south and separated by major thoroughfares present in the study area including West Metairie Avenue, Airline Drive, Earhart Expressway, Jefferson Highway, Cleary Avenue, Shrewsbury Road and Causeway Boulevard. These major thoroughfares often function as physical barriers in land use and frequently demarcate changes in development patterns.

Zoning and land use in the Earhart Causeway study corridor is under the jurisdiction of the Jefferson Parish Council. Boundaries for the purposes of this analysis are West Metairie Avenue and Fagot Avenue on the north, Central Avenue on the west, Deckbar Avenue on the east, and the Mississippi River on the south.

A zoning map of the area is illustrated in Figure V-5.

Zoning

Zoning[2] in the study area contains a variety of classifications including:

- Single Family Residential (R-1A)
- Two-Family Residential (R-2)
- Three and Four Family Residential (RR-3) Townhouse District (R-1TH)
- Condominium (R-1CO)
- Multiple Family Residential (R-3)
- General Office (GO-2)
- General Office (GO-1)
- Medical Services District (H-1)
- Medical Services District (H-2)
- Neighborhood Commercial (C-1)
- General Commercial (C-2)
- Office Warehouse (OW-1)
- Mixed Use Corridor District (MUCD)
- Light Industrial (M-1)
- Heavy Industrial (M-2)

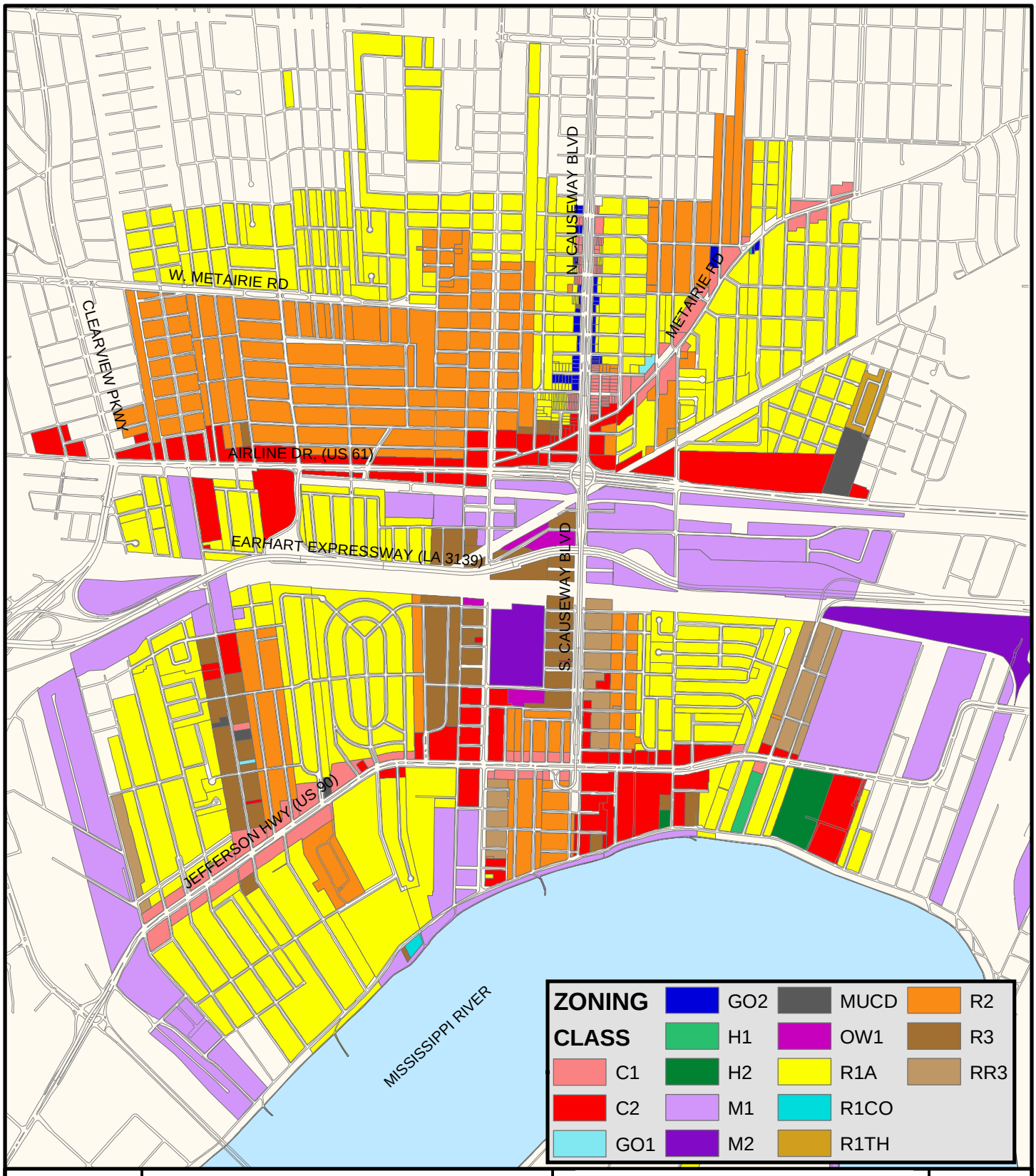
The **Single Family Residential District (R-1A)** is intended for low density single family residential development. Permitted uses include single family residential dwellings and associated uses such as churches. The maximum height for structures in R-1A is 35 feet.

The **Two-Family Residential District (R-2)** recognizes a greater density of land use for residential development. R-2 allows two-family dwellings, any use permitted in R-1A as well as condominiums. The maximum height for structures in R-2 is 35 feet.

The **Three and Four-Family Residential District (RR-3)** provides for areas of multiple family dwellings of low and intermediate density with proper design and landscape standards. RR-3 is intended to provide a transition zone between high density and low density residential development, and between commercial and residential development. RR-3 allows three and four family dwellings and associated uses. The maximum height for structures in RR-3 is 35 feet.

The **Townhouse District (R-1TH)** allows attached family dwellings in groups of twelve or less. R-1TH allows townhouses and any permitted use in R-1A. The maximum height for structures in R-1TH is 35 feet.

[2] *Jefferson Parish Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance*, June 2000.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT DOTD

EARHART - CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

ZONING

NY ASSOCIATES, INC.
CONSULTING ENGINEERS
ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS
2750 LAKE VILLA DR. METAIRIE, LOUISIANA 70002 (504) 885-0500
in association with:
Evans-Graves Engineers, Inc.
Lambert Engineers
Urban Systems Associates, Inc.
Coastal Environments, Inc.

Figure

V-5

The **Condominium District (R-1CO)** provides for greater density in residential development with common ownership of open space and amenities and individual private ownership of a townhouse or apartment. The condominium unit owners share the responsibility for maintenance of common areas such as landscaped open areas, swimming pool and other recreational facilities, entrance lobbies, elevators, halls, etc. R-1CO allows condominiums, and any of the permitted uses in the RR-3 and R-1TH Districts. The maximum height of structures in R-1CO is 60 feet.

The **Three Family Residential District (R-3)** recognizes a higher density of traditional rental residential use. Due to the greater density of population and concentration of vehicles, these districts are situated on collector streets where they may be more easily served by public and commercial services. R-3 allows multiple family dwellings, any use permitted in RR-3, mobile home parks, and elderly housing and assisted living facilities. The maximum height for structures allowable by right in R-3 is 60 feet. Under certain conditions and criteria, multiple family structures may go up a maximum of 90 feet.

The **General Office District (GO-2)** is intended for professional office development with some commercial uses to serve employees in the district and designed to protect adjacent residential and commercial uses. GO-2 allows professional offices, banks, clinics and related uses, as well as single family and two family dwellings. The maximum height for structures in GO-2 is 35 feet.

The **General Office District (GO-1)** is intended for professional offices and some commercial services with a greater density than permitted in GO-2. GO-1 allows professional offices, banks, clinics and related uses as well as multiple family dwellings. The maximum height for structures allowable by right in GO-1 is 65 feet. Under certain conditions and criteria, multiple family structures in GO-1 may go up a maximum of 90 feet.

The **Medical Services District (H-1)** is intended for low density land uses related to hospitals. H-1 allows hospitals, medical and dental offices, elderly housing, nursing and convalescent homes and any use permitted in the R-1A District. The maximum height for structures in H-1 is 35 feet.

The **Medical Services District (H-2)** is composed of lands and structures used to support hospitals of a greater density than in H-1. H-2 allows hospitals, medical offices, institutions, pharmacies and stores, retail shops, health and athletic clubs, and any use permitted in R-3. The maximum height for structures allowable by right in H-2 is 75 feet. Under certain conditions and criteria, multiple family structures in H-2 may go up a maximum of 100 feet.

The **Neighborhood Commercial District (C-1)** provides for light retail goods and services serving adjacent residential districts. C-1 allows retail stores with not more than 25,000 square feet in area, banks, clinics, dry cleaning and laundries and residential uses comprising no more than 50% of the commercial structure. The maximum height for structures allowable by right in C-1 is 45 feet. Under certain conditions and criteria, multiple family structures in C-1 may go up a maximum of 70 feet.

The **General Commercial District (C-2)** is intended for dense commercial uses providing retail goods and major services. C-2 allows retail uses greater than 25,000 square feet in area, any use permitted in C-1, adult establishments, amusement enterprises, animal hospitals, automobile sales and repair, bars, offices, and trade service and repair. The maximum height for structures allowable by right in C-2 is 65 feet. Under certain conditions and criteria, the height of structures in C-2 is unlimited.

The **Office Warehouse District (OW-1)** provides employment opportunities for business and wholesaling activities close to residences to reduce travel time from home to work. Typical development in OW-1 is an office-warehouse park. OW-1 allows office and warehouse facilities for distribution of goods and commodities, trade service and repair establishments, laundries and dry cleaning and any use permitted in C-2. The maximum height for structures in OW-1 is 65 feet.

The **Mixed Use Corridor District (MUCD)** is a special district that encourages mixed land uses along major transportation corridors with landscape, design and sign requirements. MUCD allows residential and commercial uses and mixtures thereof ranging from the single family residential districts through the OW-1. The maximum height for structures in MUCD is 65 feet, with restrictions on height when abutting residential development.

The **Light Industrial District (M-1)** is intended for light industrial land uses while protecting adjacent industrial, commercial and residential development. M-1 allows gaming establishments, truck stops and industrial uses not otherwise prohibited or restricted. The maximum height for structures in M-1 is not limited unless the property abuts a residential district in which case there are limitations based on the height set in the residential district with additional setbacks.

The **Heavy Industrial District (M-2)** is situated for heavy industrial development. M-2 allows manufacturing of chemicals, oil, paint, paper, wholesale storage of chemicals and oil and all uses not otherwise prohibited by law. The maximum height for structures in M-2 is not limited unless the property abuts a residential district in which case there are limitations based on the height set in the residential district with additional setbacks.

Land Use

Beginning in the northwest quadrant of the study area, the land use consists of single family residential development from **Central Avenue on the west to North Causeway Boulevard on the east and between Airline Drive on the south and West Metairie Avenue on the north**. Airline Drive is developed with heavy commercial uses on the north side and primarily light industrial and commercial uses on the south side. Small portions of single family residential development are present on the south side of Airline Drive near Bellevue Parkway. North Causeway Boulevard between West Metairie Avenue and Airline Drive contains a mixture of

commercial and office uses with some single family residential uses. A small number of multiple family dwellings are present between Shrewsbury Road and North Causeway Boulevard.

Continuing east of North Causeway Boulevard and north of Airline Drive is primarily single family residential development with a mixture of heavy and light commercial uses on Metairie Road. The light commercial uses extend from Metairie Road north on Metairie Heights to Fagot Street, which is developed primarily as single family residential. Most of Metairie Road east of North LaBarre Road consists of single family residences, with a small amount of commercial uses at the intersection. North LaBarre Road between Metairie Road and Loumor Avenue consists of single family residences, with the exception of some townhouses on the corner just before Airline Drive. The remaining portion of the study area east of North LaBarre Avenue and north of Airline Drive is almost entirely single family residential with the exception of a substantial townhouse condominium development south of Edinburg Street.

Moving back to **Central Avenue between Airline Drive on the north and Earhart Expressway on the south**, the area is developed as light industrial and heavy commercial, with the exception of a small amount of single family residential on Heaslip Avenue. A block of single family residences is situated between the commercial uses on Central Avenue and a large wholesale warehouse on the south side of Airline Drive at Cleary Avenue.

East of Cleary Avenue, the heavy commercial uses on Airline Drive continue to Shrewsbury Road, where the development pattern turns to light industrial uses. South of Airline Drive and beginning on the south side of Robertson Street there is a large area of single family residences, turning into commercial and industrial uses halfway to Shrewsbury Road to the east. A mixture of residential development is present south of the industrial property, including single family, two family and some small apartment complexes on and near Arnoult Road.

East of Shrewsbury Road is a mixture of industrial uses, vacant property and single family residences some of which front on Causeway Boulevard. East of Causeway Boulevard and south of Airline Drive, the area is developed in industrial uses to Deckbar Avenue.

Going back to **Central Avenue on the west between the Earhart Expressway on the north and Jefferson Highway on the south**, commercial and light industrial development is present on Central Avenue to Karen Avenue. Central Avenue south of Karen Avenue primarily consists of multiple family dwellings with some heavy commercial installations such as construction companies as well as offices. East of Central Avenue is single family residential development with some duplexes to Lauricella Road, which begins two family development to the east side of Arnoult Road.

Between Arnoult Road and Shrewsbury is a school, with some residences. East of Shrewsbury and Saia Lane just south of the Earhart Expressway is a large commercial industrial complex. A playground is located adjacent to the complex. Between Saia and Claiborne Drive are a variety of land uses with a cemetery, single family and two family dwellings, mobile homes, four plexes

and a playground. A distinct and large block of single family residential begins east of this area on Lurline Street and extends to Deckbar Avenue on the west.

The north side of Jefferson Highway between Central Avenue and Deckbar Avenue is almost entirely in commercial use, with some residential development near Causeway Boulevard and Rio Vista Avenue.

The south side of Jefferson Highway contains a small amount of light commercial uses with some vacant commercial property. A library and public school are situated on the south side of Jefferson Highway near Arnoult Avenue, followed by the Jefferson Parish East Bank Waterworks Plant. East of Arnoult Avenue, commercial uses continue with some residential development beginning on Rio Vista Avenue. Several schools are also present on the south side of Jefferson Highway.

Beginning back at **Central Avenue and south of Jefferson Highway to the Mississippi River**, single family residences are present to Arnoult Road, with the exception of a large townhouse community east of Highway Drive. Industrial and commercial land uses are present on Arnoult Road. Single family residential development with some duplexes is located between Shrewsbury Road and Maine Street to the east. Between Maine Street and LaBarre to the east is commercial development including strip malls, various retail outlets, a bank and parking lots. Apartments and a school are located to the east, with single family development present on Rio Vista Avenue. A large number of apartments and parking exist to the east on Deckbar Avenue.

The property south of River Road and extending south to the Mississippi River is largely vacant. The exception is a multistory office supply complex west of Arnoult Road.

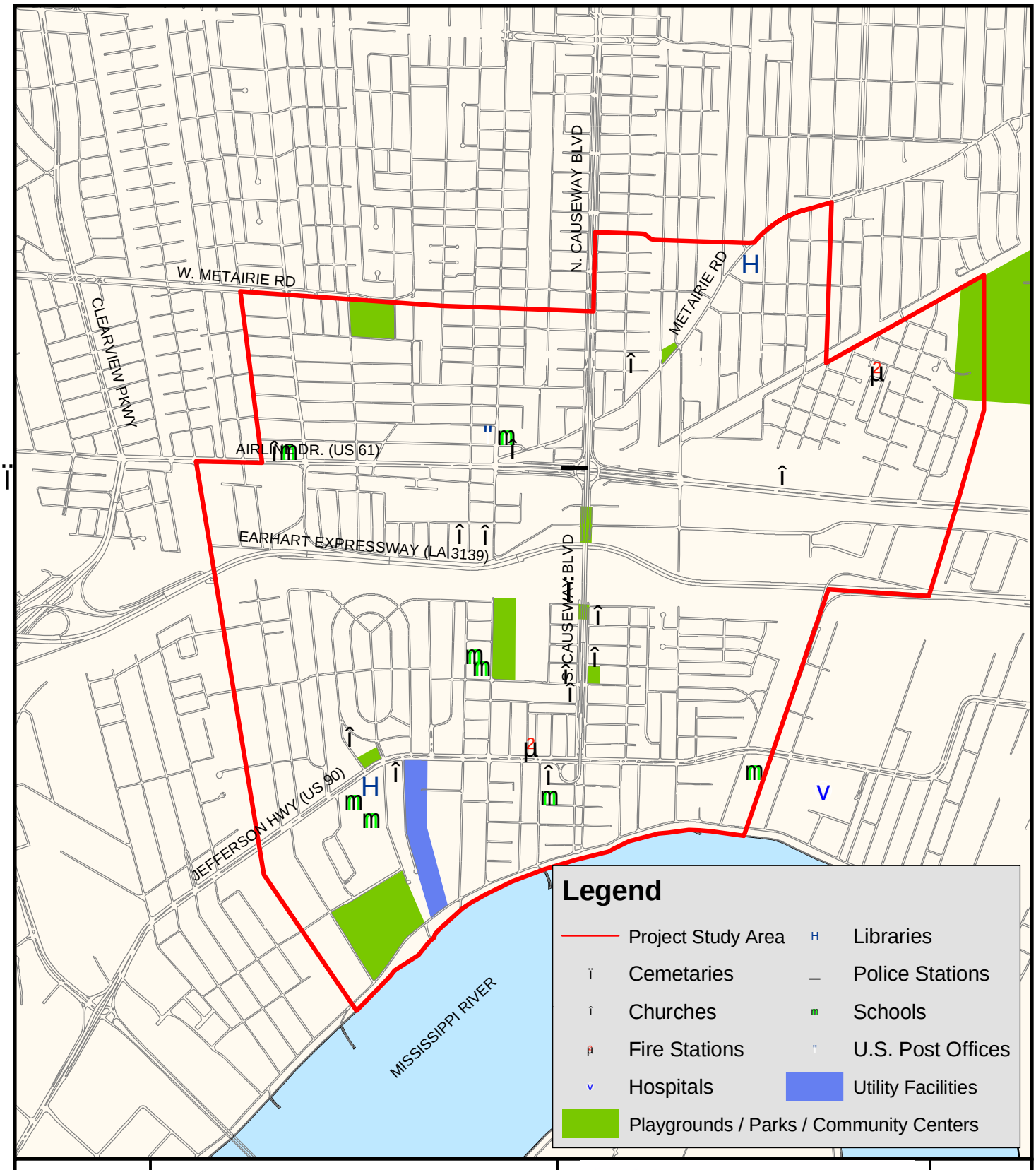
PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Methodology

Locations for and lists of addresses for public facilities were obtained from the Rand McNally New Orleans & Vicinity Map, TerraServer-USA topographic digital maps, and the Eatel Sunshine Pages Telephone Book and field reconnaissance, including site visit confirmation.

Findings

Figure V-6, on the following page, provides a map of public facilities within the study area and vicinity.



EARHART - CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PUBLIC FACILITIES

NY ASSOCIATES, INC.
CONSULTING ENGINEERS
ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS
2750 LAKE VILLA DR. METAIRIE, LOUISIANA 70002 (504) 885-0500
in association with:
Evans-Graves Engineers, Inc.
Lambert Engineers
Urban Systems Associates, Inc.
Coastal Environments, Inc.

Figure

V-6

There are numerous public services and facilities available to serve the project study area. Analysis of the study area indicates that there are eight (8) Community Centers and parks/playgrounds, nine (9) schools/learning institutions, one (1) police station, two (2) fire stations, one (1) waterworks plant, two (2) libraries, thirteen (13) churches, one (1) cemetery, and one (1) U.S. Post Office. The following is a list of public facilities and services located within the project area:

Schools

- Ella Dolhonde Elementary School – 219 Severn Avenue
- Jefferson Community School – 3528 Montford Street
- John H. Martyn Transitional School – 1108 Shrewsbury Road
- Patrick Taylor Science & Technology School – 2012 Jefferson Hwy
- Riverdale Middle School – 3900 Jefferson Hwy
- Riverdale High School – 240 Riverdale Drive
- St. Agnes School – 3410 Jefferson Highway
- St. Christopher School – 3900 Derbigny Street

Churches

- Celebration Church – 2001 Airline Drive
- Conquering Word Ministries – 3439 Metairie Road
- First Zion Baptist Church – 1221 South Causeway Boulevard
- Jefferson United Methodist Church – 3828 Leila Place
- Marine and Mount Moriah Ministries, Marine Baptist Church – 3034 Andover Street
- Mount Olive Lutheran Church – 315 Ridgelake Drive
- Rio Vista Baptist Church – 3800 Jefferson Highway
- St. Agnes Church – 3310 Jefferson Highway
- St. Christopher Church – 309 Manson Avenue
- Second House of Prayer Baptist Church – 1634 Arnoult Road

Cemeteries

There is a small cemetery located between Scott Street and the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad, and between S. Causeway Boulevard and Saia Street. This cemetery is associated with the First Zion Baptist Church.

Parks, Playgrounds, Recreational Facilities, Community Centers

- Cleary Playground – 3700 Civic Street
- Frank Lemon Playground – 1307 South Causeway Boulevard

- Kiddie Playground, also called “Little Jefferson” – north side of Jefferson Highway between Jefferson Park and Julius Avenue
- Metairie Road Play Lot, also called “ Little Metairie” – North side of Metairie Road between Labarre and Metairie Lawn Drives
- Jefferson Playground – bounded by Highway, Riverdale, and South Drives, and River Road
- Pontiff Playground/Metairie Golden Age Center/Metairie Handicap Programs – 1521 Palm Street
- Hazel Rhea Hurst Multi-Purpose Center – 1121 S. Causeway Blvd
- Airline Tot Lot – Tot Play area and outdoor (covered) basketball court. Located under Causeway overpass on the corner of Causeway Blvd. and Lausat Street)
- Unnamed basketball courts under Causeway Blvd. south of Scott Street.

Fire and Police Stations

- Jefferson Parish Sheriff’s Office, bounded by South Causeway Boulevard, Johnson Street, and Airline Drive
- Jefferson Parish Fire Station Number 11,on Jefferson Highway between Brown Street and William Avenue
- Jefferson Parish Fire Station Number 14, 1714 Edinburg Street (currently being rebuilt and is now operating out of temporay facility at Pontiff Playground, several blocks away)

Libraries

- Old Metairie Branch – 2350 Metairie Road
- Rosedale Branch – 4036 Jefferson Highway

U.S. Post Offices

- 3517 Johnson Street

Hospitals

There are no hospitals located within the boundaries of the study area but Ochsner Hospital, which is just outside the study area’s boundaries, is located on Jefferson Highway.

Utility Facilities

The East Jefferson Parish Waterworks Facility is located at 3600 Jefferson Highway. The facility extends south to River Road, and also includes fresh water intakes south on the river side of the Mississippi River levee.

Jefferson Parish has recently established a detention pond within the rights-of-way at the interchange of Causeway Boulevard and the Earhart Expressway for the purpose of enhancing drainage service in the area.

VISUAL /AESTHETIC CONDITIONS

The Area of Primary Impact for this project is characterized by very flat terrain of highly developed land, with interspersed trees and greenery and mostly small-scale structures (1-2 stories). Structure types are varied, with the predominate type being commercial and industrial buildings, with some residential uses interspersed on either side of Causeway Boulevard. Billboard structures are interspersed in the primary impact area, and these are usually very tall so that their advertisements can easily be seen from the elevated Causeway roadway and the Airline traffic circle.

The visual and aesthetic conditions of the Area of Primary Impact are described in more detail below, proceeding from north to south through the area.

North of Earhart Expressway

The area immediately north of the Expressway is primarily commercial and industrial in nature and appearance, on both sides of Causeway Boulevard. Numerous industrial buildings and warehouses, storage facilities, a concrete plant and an oil facility, active railroads, and the Causeway overpass itself are the main visual features in the area between Airline and Earhart. However, in the immediate vicinity of the overpass is a small residential section which is barely visible to the travelers on the overpass. North of Airline, there is a less industrial look as more commercial uses are located on major streets—stores, retail centers, and offices—with residential areas containing a more wooded and vegetated aspect located behind the commercial areas. Other than the peak of the Causeway overpass at Airline, the tallest structures in this area are the billboards located throughout the north side of Earhart and the electrical transmission towers which run along Lausat Street.

South of Earhart Expressway

The area immediately south of Earhart until recently was a heavily wooded section stretching south to the CNIC rail lines, an almost visual treat for travelers on the Causeway overpass who crossed over a stretch of overgrown thicket. Since Hurricane Katrina, however, the area has

been completely cleared of trees, had berms installed along its perimeter, and will serve as a detention pond in heavy rain or tropical storm events. The changed landscape provides a much wider and longer vista for travelers on both Earhart and Causeway.

The CNIC and NOPB rail lines are a second major visual feature of the area. Trains can often be seen parked on side tracks or traveling through the area, providing a visual screen between developed areas on either side of rail lines. A thin line of trees stretching both along the north side of the set of CNIC tracks and between the tracks also provides a semblance of visual screening, particularly for residents along Scott Street.

The area south of the railroad tracks is primarily residential in make-up, with modest homes and apartments. Along Causeway Boulevard, these residences are interspersed with commercial uses community facilities and churches. The large Saia trucking facility, located one block west of Causeway, is a noticeable part of the visual landscape for travelers on the Causeway overpass. The most prominent visual feature in the area is Causeway Boulevard itself, which includes approaches to two overpasses (the link to the Airline traffic circle and the Jefferson Highway overpass) and an unattractive ground level section. The ground level section contains a paved, unlandscaped median containing a chain link fence barrier meant to dissuade pedestrian crossings. Again, as on the north side of Earhart, the tallest structures in this area other than the Causeway overpasses are the numerous billboards located along Causeway and the other thoroughfares, and the line of electrical transmission towers which run in the area between the NOPB and CNIC railroad tracks.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Archaeology

A records search was conducted at the Division of Archaeology (DOA), Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. The DOA maintains archaeological site information for the State of Louisiana, assigning a trinomial number (*e.g., 16JE5 [State Number + Parish Abbreviation + Site Number]*) to each site. The DOA also maintains United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute quadrangle maps depicting the locations of all recorded archaeological sites, site forms and corresponding reports. Examination of these records indicates that there are no previously recorded archaeological sites within the proposed project area.

The vast majority of the project area has been heavily disturbed by twentieth century construction activities related to transportation (e.g., construction of Causeway Boulevard and the Illinois Central Railroad) and consists of highway and railroad embankments. Much of the remaining area has been impacted by twentieth century industrial construction. The only large, undeveloped area within the current project corridor is located between the existing Earhart Expressway and the CNIC right-of-way. Immediately prior to the initiation of the archaeological investigations to be conducted for the proposed project, however, the Jefferson Parish Council undertook the construction of a large drainage project in the vicinity of Earhart Expressway. As

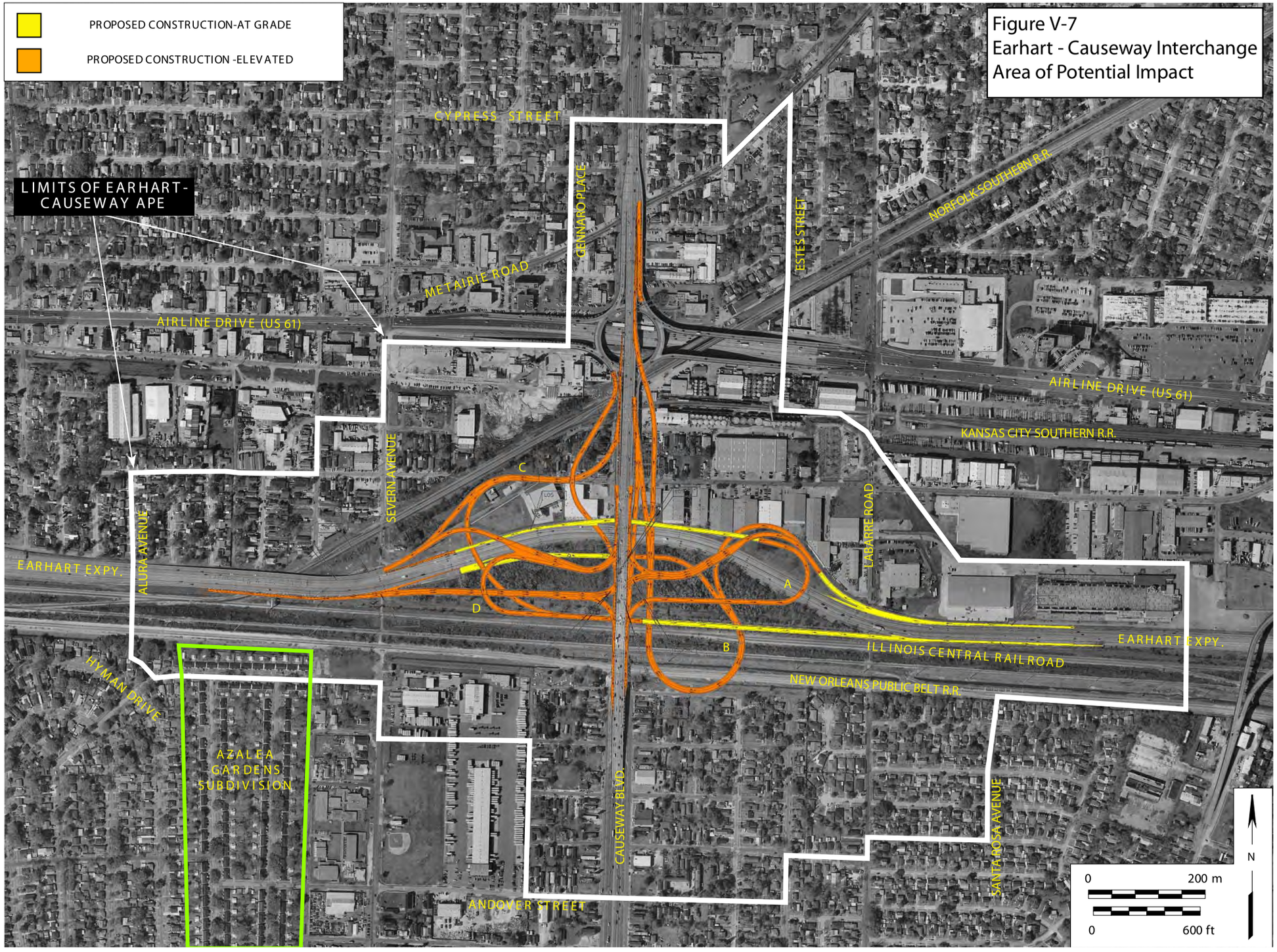
part of that project, unrelated to the currently proposed action, virtually the entire area in the vicinity of Causeway Boulevard between Earhart Expressway and the CNIC right-of-way was mechanically excavated to serve as a retention pond for surface runoff. Those excavations resulted in the removal of any cultural resources that may have existed in that area. As a result, less than 5 percent (1.34 ac or 0.54 ha) of the overall project area was amenable to archaeological survey. Even that area, however, was occupied by a number of private residences for which there was no access. Consequently, an archaeological survey of the project area has not been undertaken.

Standing Structures

As part of the EIFS, the Scott Street Cemetery (located in the southwest corner of the intersection of the Public Belt Railroad and South Causeway Boulevard) was noted as an area of concern. The report recommended that the Scott Street cemetery should be avoided, and the proposed action avoids that cemetery, with all proposed construction in that immediate area occurring within the existing Causeway Blvd. right-of-way.

A records search was also conducted at the Division of Historic Preservation (DHP), Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. Standing structure and NRHP files for the State of Louisiana are maintained by the DHP. Each recorded standing structure over fifty years of age is assigned a binomial number (e.g., 26-112 [Parish Number + Structure Number]) by the DHP. The DHP also maintains USGS 7.5-minute and 15-minute quadrangle maps, and DOTD city maps depicting the location of each recorded structure, Louisiana Historic Resource Inventory forms, and corresponding reports. Only a small area of Jefferson Parish has been previously surveyed. No previously recorded standing structures have been recorded within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the Earhart-Causeway Interchange.

In addition to the records search, a standing structure survey was conducted within the APE for the proposed project. The APE, which encompasses the project area, extends outward from the proposed ROW approximately 100 to 250 m (328 to 820 ft)—the distance varies relative to the proposed structure height (see Figure V-7 on the following page for a graphic representation of the APE). North of Airline Drive, the APE is bound by Cypress Street on the north, Gennaro Place on the west and Estes Street on the east. Between Airline Drive and Earhart Expressway, the APE extends westward from Causeway Boulevard in a step-like manner beginning at Severn Avenue and ending at Alura Avenue. East of Causeway Boulevard, the APE extends outward beginning at the intersection of Labarre Road and the Illinois Central Railroad and continuing eastward for approximately 544 m (1,785 ft). South of Earhart Expressway and east of Causeway Boulevard, the APE is stepped out and bound by Andover Street on the south side and Santa Rosa Avenue on the east side. On the west side of Causeway Boulevard, the APE extends in a step-like manner beginning at the intersection of Causeway Boulevard and Andover Street and ending approximately at Hyman Drive and Earhart Expressway. A total of 490 structures—located on 481 properties—constructed before 1961 were recorded within the APE. One group of 11 properties (26-0714 to 26-0724), which are located within the Azalea Gardens subdivision, are recommended as eligible for listing on the NRHP as part of the Azalea Gardens subdivision.


PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION-AT GRADE
PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION -ELEVATED
Figure V-7
Earhart - Causeway Interchange
Area of Potential Impact
LIMITS OF EARHART-CAUSEWAY APE
CYPRESS STREET
GENNARO PLACE
ESTES STREET
NORFOLK SOUTHERN R.R.
METAIRIE ROAD
AIRLINE DRIVE (US 61)
AIRLINE DRIVE (US 61)
KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN R.R.
SEVERN AVENUE
ALURA AVENUE
LABARRE ROAD
EARHART EXPY.
EARHART EXPY.
ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD
NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC BELT R.R.
HYMAN DRIVE
AZALEA GARDENS SUBDIVISION
CAUSEWAY BLVD.
SANTA ROSA AVENUE
ANDOVER STREET
A
B
C
D
N
0
200 m
0
600 ft

Azalea Gardens was purposely built as an all–rental subdivision between 1947 and 1950 and has remained as such, with few exceptions, to the present. Importantly, the housing stock of the subdivision, including that part within the APE, retains its period characteristics. It is recommended that Azalea Gardens is eligible for inclusion on the NRHP under Criterion A as the first, and only, purpose built all–rental subdivision in Jefferson Parish and for its contribution to the growth of Jefferson Parish by providing much needed housing immediately after World War II.

HAZARDOUS AND SOLID WASTES SITES

Methodology

Project sub-consultant Coastal Environments, Inc. (CEI) conducted an Environmental Site Assessment, Phase 1 (ESA 1) on the designated Earhart Expressway (LA 3139) and Causeway Blvd (LA 3046) Interchange tract, hereafter referred to as "the LADOTD ESA 1 property." The LADOTD ESA 1 property includes portions of Metairie and Old Jefferson, two unincorporated communities of Jefferson Parish on the east side of the Mississippi River. The LADOTD ESA 1 property is more formally described as being located in Secs. 45, 46, and 47, T-12-S, R-10-E. The LADOTD wishes to investigate the tract of land designated in this ESA 1 in conjunction with the proposed Earhart Expressway (LA 3139) and Causeway Blvd (LA 3046) Interchange and improvements associated with the approaches.

The study was conducted in compliance with the standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) for Environmental Site Assessment for Commercial Real Estate, 4th edition, ASTM E 1527-05 Standards 2005. Procedures described in this document were used to determine if any recognized environmental conditions, including hazardous waste generators and underground storage tank facilities/sites, are present on the subject property. The investigation was conducted over a thirteen-month period from February 2006 through March 2007 with site inspections made on portions of the LDOTD ESA 1 property and adjacent areas on April 3 and December 29, 2006, and February 5, 2007.

Findings

Table V-10, on the following two pages, lists hazardous waste sites, underground and above ground storage tanks and dumpsites in the area. Figure V-8 (following Table V-10) shows the location of these sites on a USGS composite base map in reference to the project footprint, zip codes and search radii (one mile and one half mile). Figure V-9 (following Figure V-8) shows the identified sites on an aerial photobase map in reference to the project footprint. This ESA 1 investigation identified no facilities/sites with recognized environmental conditions, located within or adjacent to the LADOTD ESA 1 property.

Table V-10 Hazardous Waste Sites and Storage Tank Facilities Within the ASTM Prescribed Search Radii.

Map ID No.	Facility Name	Facility Address/Location	Agency Facility ID No.	Types of Facilities/Waste Sites/Data Sources																Comments
				Storage Tanks				Facility Sites					Sources/Status							
				UST	LUST	Unregistered UST	AST	CERCLIS	Inactive and Abandoned Sites	RCRIS	Pre-RCRIS	Other	Street Directories	Sanborn Fire Ins. Maps	Aerial photographs	Field Reconaissance	Interview	Current Status	
15	Severn BP	3501 Airline HWY, Metairie, LA 70001	AI ID No. 13427, 26-012422	3A, 3R	X											X	X	active	Exxon Co. USA was former owner/operator (Station No. 50974) and is responsible party for ongoing LUST remediation program. Various gasoline stations have operated at this location since 1942. The site is still in the process of undergoing remedial actions (Brandin per. comm. 2007).
15	Exxon Co. USA 50974	3501 Airline HWY, Metairie, LA 70001	LAD985195007	X	X						3		X			X		active under new owner-ship	See preceding comments. Site currently occupied by Severn Ventures BP. Various gasoline stations operated in this location circa 1942 forward.
16	Airline Phillips 66	3801 Airline HWY, Metairie, LA 70001	AI ID No. 20673, 26-003567 R	4R	X										X	X	X	inactive	LDEQ determined no further action is required as of 01/26/06. Address also listed as 3805 Airline HWY.
26	Dump Site	SW of terminus of Katlin Ave below Earhart Expressway overpass, Metairie, LA 70001										X				X		inactive	Small pile of railroad cross ties and small amount of solid waste comprised of household refuse.
27	Unidentified fill	Behind residence located at intersection of Lausat and Shrewsbury, Metairie, LA 70001										X				X		inactive	Several loads of earthen material with unknown origin observed to have been used to fill yard by 09/23/04. Earthen material was covered in grass, no signs of fill was observed on 04/03/06.
28	Verizon Telecommunication Tower	3220 Lausat St, Metairie, LA 70001					X									X		active	FCC Tower Reg. No. 1021562; AST in bldg. used for storage of natural gas associated with emergency generator
29	Delta Petroleum Company, Inc.	3000 Airline HWY, Metairie, LA 70001	AI ID No. 1362, LAD008176364				X			2			X			X	X	active	In operation since 1946. RECAP MO-3A plan for addressing contamination at site submitted to LDEQ on 3/20/04. In a letter dated August 4, 2006 Delta Petroleum Company, Inc. supplied a Conveyance Notification for the closure of the area of investigation with contaminant levels present that are acceptable for industrial/commercial zoning. Remaining constituents that exceed the RECAP Standards were deemed impractical without destroying parts of the facility.
33	Brambles Equipment Services, Inc.	1000 LaBarre Rd, Metairie, LA 70001	LAR000026500							3					X	X		inactive	Business has relocated.
34	Roberson Print Company Inc.	3010 Lausat St, Metairie, LA 70001	LAD064625486							3					X	X		active	
37	Unidentified fill	N side of Scott, E of Causeway, Metairie, LA 70121										X				X	X	inactive	Multiple truckloads of fill material of unknown origin observed during 04/11/03 field inspection. Major portion of fill was gone by 09/09/04 field inspection. Personal interview indicates Jefferson Parish owns tract & fill material which may have originated from maintenance work (Duplechin per. comm. 2004). Site visit on 04/03/06 revealed a small pile of fill material was still present.
45	Automatic Coin Enterprise	2828 Lausat St, Metairie, LA 70001	26-000329 R	2R												X		inactive	Site now occupied by Shipyard Supply.
46	Ponchartrain Lumber Co., Inc.	1700 Shrewsbury Rd, Metairie, LA 70001					X						X	X		X		inactive	Remnant facility possibly removed for construction of Earhart. Sanborn map depicts AST.

Table V-10 (continued) Hazardous Waste Sites and Storage Tank Facilities Within the ASTM Prescribed Search Radii.

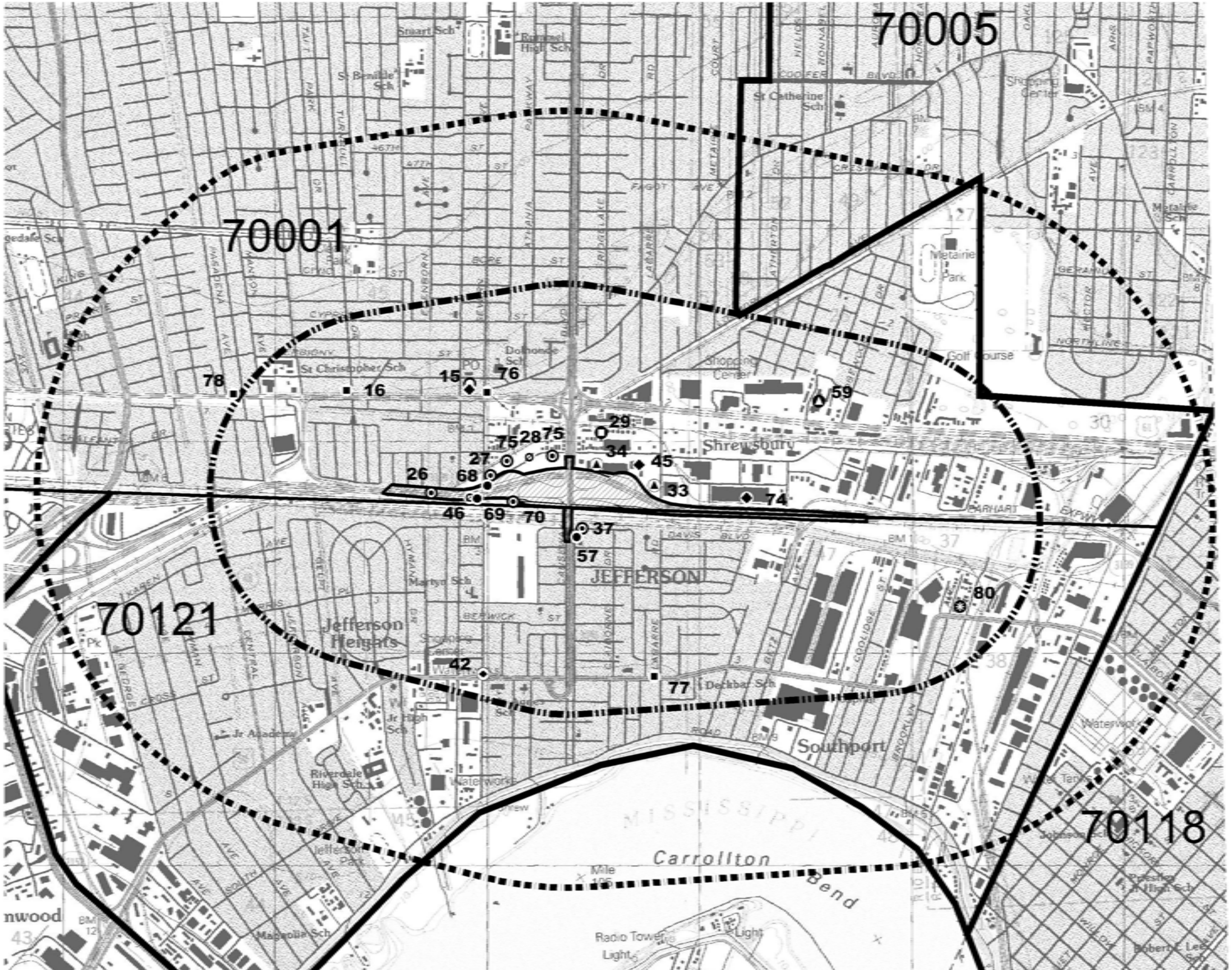
Map ID No.	Facility Name	Facility Address/Location	Agency Facility ID No.	Types of Facilities/Waste Sites/Data Sources															Comments
				Storage Tanks				Facility Sites					Sources/Status						
				UST	LUST	Unregistered UST	AST	CERCLIS	Inactive and Abandoned Sites	RCRIS	Pre-RCRIS	Other	Street Directories	Sanborn Fire Ins. Maps	Aerial photographs	Field Reconaissance	Interview	Current Status	
57	Junkyard	1415 Causeway Blvd, Metairie, LA 70001									X					X		inactive	Location estimated. Listed as "junkyard" in 1972-1982 street directories; former location of White's Repair Shop, ca 1968-1970. Now occupied by residence with parking/storage of heavy equipment including ~ 55-gal drums.
59	Borden, Inc.	1751 Airline HWY, Metairie, LA 70001	LAD008161846					N							X	X		inactive	Site now occupied by Hurwitz Mintz Furniture Store.
68	Jackson Machinery/Dump Site	1705 Shrewsbury, Metairie, LA 70001									X		X			X		inactive	Operated ca 1952-1953. On 04/03/06 two small piles of household debris and fill dirt was observed between Lausat St. and Earhart Expressway.
69	Ceiling Auto Service	1628 Shrewsbury, Metairie,									X		X			X		inactive	Operated circa 1955.
70	Dump site	Located between railroad tracks, S of and parallel to Earhart Blvd.										X				X		inactive	Discarded railroad cross ties scattered throughout area with serveral large piles. A large pile of discarded railroad ties was observed in this area on 04/03/06.
74	Super Distributors, Inc.	960 LaBarre Rd, Metairie, LA 70001	26-014456 A	4R, 1A														inactive	Review of LDEQ files indicates all UST removed; formerly occupied by New Orleans Compress & distribution center for K & B Drugs.
75	Lausat St Asbestos Site	Both sides of Lausat St, west of Causeway Blvd, Metairie, LA										X					X	inactive	Portion of two sites occupied by buildings; results of asbestos sampling & LDEQ correspondence in Appendix F. LDEQ stated that site has been cleaned.
76	LDOTD - Right of Way	NE corner of intersection of Airline HWY and Severn Ave, Metairie	AI ID No. 104405		X												X	inactive	Approx. 35 sq ft servitude adversely affected by apparent LUST or other release of gasoline. LDOTD submitted work plan to LDEQ to identify source of release. No further action has taken place (Messina personal communication 2007)
77	Shell #137505	2401 Jefferson, Metairie, LA 70001	AI ID No. 20698	3R	X											X	X	active	Initial Site Investigation has been submitted to LDEQ. Site is still in operation, but no information could be found as to how many tanks are present at the site (Messina personal communication 2007).
78	Airline EZ Mart	4115 Airline Hwy, Metairie, LA 70001	AI ID No. 70977	4A	X												X	active	Site was formely E-Z Serve #2009. Approx. 0.25 acres of contaminated soil in the groundwater zone adversely affected by release of diesel and gasoline. Initial Site Investigation has been submitted to LDEQ (Lane personal communication 2007).
80	Reliable Disposal Company	535 Iris Ave	LAD0000605192						P	3								active	

Types of Facilites/Waste Sites:

UST: Underground Storage Tank; LDEQ UST List includes number and status of UST
A: Active , R: Removed, F: Filled, U: Unknown
LUST: Leaking Underground Storage Tank; LDEQ Municipal Query LUST and LDEQ Remediation Services Division UST List
Unregistered UST: Predates LDEQ UST registration program; status of UST unknown
AST: Above ground storage tank (number undetermined)
CERCLIS: Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Information System (EPA List)
A: Active List, N: Archival List - No Further Remediation Planned
Inactive and Abandoned Sites: Inactive and Abandoned Sites Potential and Confirmed (LDEQ List); P=Potential, C=Confirmed
RCRIS: Resource Conservation and Recovery Information System (EPA List)
Hazardous Waste Generator/Regulatory Status Description: 1: Large Quantity Generator, 2: Small Quantity Generator (SQG), 3: Conditionally Exempt SQG
Pre-RCRIS: Unconfirmed activities possibly included generation and/or storage of hazardous wastes prior to RCRA regulatory program. Non-inclusive of current/active RCRIS facilities.

Data Soures:

Street Directory: (Review for historic facilities/potential waste sites)
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map
Aerial Photographs: 1945, 1958, 1960, 1967, 1979, 1982, 1990, 1994, 1998, 2000, and 2002
Field Reconnaissance: Observations from public roadways and servitudes; 04/10/03, 05/02/03, and 06/18/03
Interview: Personal interviews with agency personnel on various dates



Legend

- PROJECT FOOTPRINT
- ZIP CODE BOUNDARY
- UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS (UST)
- ABOVEGROUND STORAGE TANKS (AST)
- LUST
- LUST/PRE-RCRIS
- RCRIS
- PRE-RCRIS
- RCRIS/UST
- HALF MILE BUFFER
- ONE MILE BUFFER
- LUST/ UNREGISTERED UST
- OTHER
- RCRIS/AST
- CERCLIS
- IAS/RCRIS

Note:
Background Image - 1998 USGS 1:24000 Quad scanned and georeferenced by CEI, February 2007. Data not derived from a registered survey and should be considered approximate

ASSOCIATES, INC.
CONSULTING ENGINEERS
ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS

in association with:
Evans-Graves Engineers, Inc.
Urban Systems Associates, Inc.
Coastal Environments, Inc.
Lambert Engineers

EARHART/CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE
ROUTE LA 3139

S.P. No. 736-26-0001 F.A.P. No. HP-2601 (515)

PROJECT AREA, SEARCH AREA

FIGURE V-8

PATH: C:\Data\Cadd Dwgs\Projects\26003 Earhart Causeway Interchange

DATE EDITED: 3/8/07
DWG NAME: 26003 - 3a

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT
DOTD

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

NY ASSOCIATES, INC.
CONSULTING ENGINEERS
ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS

in association with:
Evans-Graves Engineers, Inc.
Urban Systems Associates, Inc.
Coastal Environments, Inc.
Lambert Engineers LLC

- PROJECT FOOTPRINT
- UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS (UST)
- ABOVEGROUND STORAGE TANKS (AST)
- LUST
- LUST/PRE-RCRIS
- RCRIS
- PRE-RCRIS
- RCRIS/UST
- LUST/ UNREGISTERED UST
- RCRIS/AST
- CERCLIS
- IAS/RCRIS
- UST/LUST
- OTHER

0 feet 600
0 meters 183

EARHART/CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE
ROUTE LA 3139

S.P. No. 736-26-0001 F.A.P. No. HP-2601 (515)

EARHART / CAUSEWAY
HAZARDOUS WASTE /
STORAGE TANK FACILITIES

FIGURE

V-9

FLOOD ZONES / FLOODPLAINS

Methodology

The Earhart-Causeway study area and most of the New Orleans region is considered to be a flood hazard area. The National Flood Insurance Program requires flood insurance in flood hazard areas as a condition for federally sponsored financing of homes and other buildings.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administers the flood insurance program and determines base flood elevations and flood risk zones for participating communities.

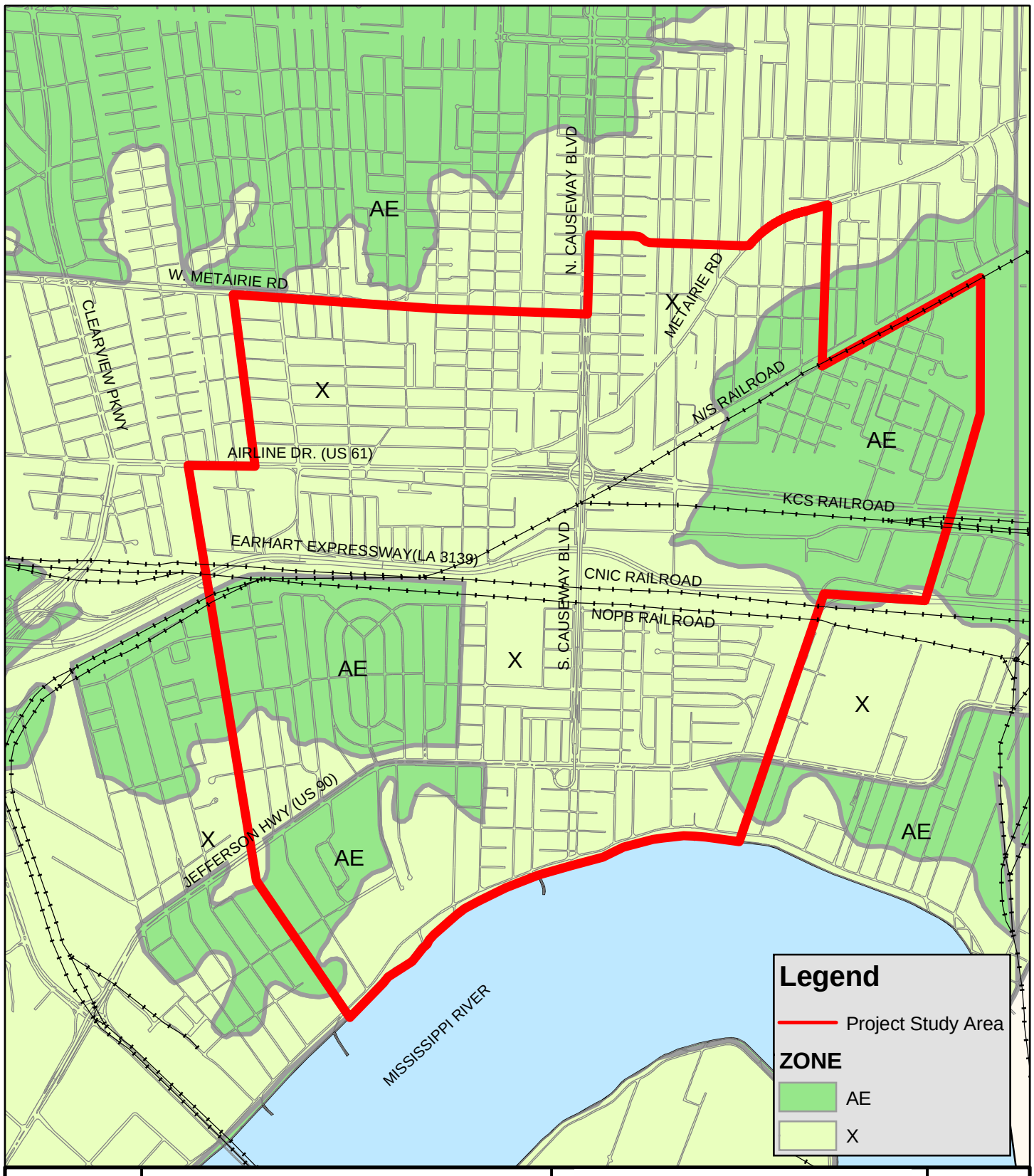
Flood zone maps were obtained from Jefferson Parish[3] to determine the flood zones contained in the Earhart Causeway Study area. These flood zones are delineated in Figure V-10.

Findings

The Earhart Causeway study area contains two distinct flood zones, "X" and "AE". The majority of the study area falls in flood zone X. No base flood elevations or depths have been determined for flood zone X and the purchase of flood insurance is not required[4]. Property within flood zone X was likely located adjacent to a river, bayou or former tributary at some point in history, the overflow of which contributed to deltaic ridge formation and higher elevations. Flood zone X is defined as areas in a 500 year flood (occurring once every 500 years), areas in a 100 year flood (occurring once every 100 years) with average depths of less than 1 foot or with drainage areas less than 1 square mile, and areas protected by levees from a 100 year flood.

The reminder of the Earhart Causeway study area is rated flood zone AE. Flood zone AE is defined as a special flood hazard area. Mandatory flood insurance purchase is required in flood zone AE[5]. Although protected by levees, portions of the study area within flood zone AE are subject to inundation by a 100 year flood.

[3] Mr. Rene' Maggio, Jefferson Parish Planning Department. May 2004.
[4] http://www.fema.gov/fhm/fq_gen13.shtm
[5] http://www.fema.gov/fhm/fq_gen13.shtm



EARHART - CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

FLOOD ZONE

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT
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NY ASSOCIATES, INC.
CONSULTING ENGINEERS
ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS
2750 LAKE VILLA DR. METAIRIE, LOUISIANA 70002 (504) 885-0500
in association with:
Evans-Graves Engineers, Inc.
Lambert Engineers
Urban Systems Associates, Inc.
Coastal Environments, Inc.

Figure

V-10

EXISTING NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Methodology

The geology and soils assessment occurred via data and map information provided by the Soil Survey of Jefferson Parish, Louisiana (U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, current version).

Findings

The primary impact area for the proposed new Earhart-Causeway interchange is composed of three (3) different soil types:

- Commerce silty clay loam
- Commerce silt loam
- Sharkey clay

These types are described below further.

Commerce silt loam

This somewhat poorly drained soil is located on the natural levees of the Mississippi River and its distributaries. The soil's slope is less than one percent (1%). Typically, the surface layer is a dark grayish-brown silt loam approximately ten inches (10") in thickness. The subsoil extends to a depth of approximately thirty-four inches (34"). The upper portion of the subsoil is dark grayish-brown silty clay loam while the middle and lower portions consist of grayish-brown silty clay loam. The underlying material, which extends to a depth of approximately sixty inches (60"), consists of grayish-brown silt loam.

Commerce silty clay loam

Commerce silty clay loam soil is also somewhat poorly drained and is located on the natural levees of the Mississippi River and its distributaries. The soil's slope is less than one percent (1%). The surface layer is dark grayish-brown silty clay loam of approximately twelve inches (12") thick. The subsoil and underlying material consists of grayish-brown silty clay loam extending to a depth of approximately sixty inches (60").

Sharkey clay

Sharkey clay is a firm but poorly-drained mineral soil located in low positions on the natural levees of the Mississippi River and its distributaries. Similar to the commerce silt loam and

commerce silty clay loam soils, the Sharkey clay soil's slope is less than one percent (1%). The soil has a dark gray, clay surface layer of approximately five inches (5") thick. The subsoil, extending to a depth of approximately thirty-seven (37") inches, consists of dark gray clay in its upper portion and gray clay in its lower portion. The soil's substratum consists of gray clay to a depth of approximately sixty inches (60").

VEGETATION

The Primary Impact Area consists of developed/unforested upland. Deciduous forest vegetation is found in the upper elevations of the study area, and is also found to a limited extent in the developed lands of the study area. Grasses and shrubs are also found in the developed areas.

WILDLIFE

The Area of Primary Impact, as well as the entire Project Study Area, is almost completely urbanized. Undeveloped lots, wooded right of ways, banks along canals and other drainage ways, and parklands and lawns in the Study Area provide the only potential wildlife habitat in this area. These areas have limited wildlife habitat potential because of their location within a broad urban setting. The habitat within the parks and lawns is further minimized because of regular maintenance (i.e. mowing). They do provide habitat to wildlife such as small mammals and songbirds, which have adapted to an urban environment.

Undeveloped vegetated areas are described below:

- The undeveloped lots and rights of ways, mainly along railroad tracks, range from densely wooded to uncut grass lots. The areas provide habitat for birds (songbirds, owls, crows, etc.) small mammals (opossum, raccoon, rabbit, rats and mice, and feral dogs and cats) as well as various reptiles and amphibians.
- In the Study Area, there are several small drainage canals and ditches. These areas provide habitat for several bird and reptile species, as well as nutria and other mammals.
- Potential habitat provided by urban parkland and lawns includes maintained grasses, trees, and/or shrubs associated with parks, and residential, commercial, or industrial lots. These areas provide low quality habitat for small mammals and birds.

Additionally, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) office in Lafayette, Louisiana and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) were contacted during both the EIFS and EA *Solicitation of Views* phases for information on fish and wildlife species and the critical habitat needed to support these species, as well as documented locations of threatened and endangered species. Responses from both agencies stated that no critical habitat had been recorded for the project area, and that the proposed activities would not significantly affect listed or proposed threatened or endangered species.

WATER RESOURCES: SOLE SOURCE AQUIFERS AND STATE OWNED WATER BODY CROSSINGS

Methodology

Data on sole source aquifers were obtained from the Water Resources Branch of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Dallas, Texas, and the EPA Internet web site. A Solicitation of Views was also sent to the EPA. Data on the names and locations of state-owned navigable waterways were obtained by the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Office of State Land (OSL).

Findings

According to a SOV response received from the EPA, the project does not lie within the boundaries of a sole source aquifer. Based upon a review of data, the project does not affect any state-owned navigable waterways.

COASTAL ZONE STATUS

Methodology

The Coastal Management Division of the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was contacted during the Solicitation of Views of the EIFS in order to obtain the project's status within the Louisiana Coastal Zone.

Findings

According to two SOV responses received from the DNR, the project is located within the Louisiana Coastal Zone. However, following a thorough review of the Coastal Management Division database and an evaluation of the activity's conformance with the Coastal Use Guidelines, in accordance with the Rules and Procedures for Coastal Use Permits, Chapter 7, Part 1, § 723.B.2, the proposed activity was determined by the Division to be exempt and a Coastal Use Permit will not be required.

SCENIC RIVERS

Methodology

The Scenic Rivers Program is authorized by Louisiana Revised Statutes (LRS) Title 56, Chapter 9, Part II and it requires permits authorizing activities in or affecting rivers that have been

designated by the Louisiana Legislature as Natural and Scenic. The Louisiana Constitution (Article IX, Section I) and the Louisiana Scenic Rivers Act (Act 1988, No. 947, §1, effective July 27, 1988) provided the information necessary to analyze this section of the Environmental Inventory.

Findings

No designated scenic rivers or streams are present in the study area.

CHAPTER VI

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE CONSIDERED ALTERNATIVES AND SELECTION OF PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

In this chapter, the impacts of the two alternatives considered (No Build Alternative and Proposed Action) are assessed relative to the evaluation categories of transportation and traffic, human environment, and the natural environment. Impact assessment categories include:

IMPACTS ON TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

- Community, Social, and Economic Impacts
  - Displacements/Relocations
  - Neighborhood/Community Cohesion
  - Access to Community Facilities/Services
  - Environmental Justice
- Zoning and Land Use
- Parks and Recreation Facilities
- Historic/Cultural Resources
- Visual/Aesthetic Impacts
- Air Quality Impacts
- Noise Impacts
- Hazardous and Solid Waste Sites

IMPACTS ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Vegetation
- Wetlands
- Wildlife
- Endangered Species
- Hydrology, Floodplains & Flooding
- Water Quality
- Geology and Soils
- Natural and Scenic Rivers

The chapter then provides a comparative analysis between the two alternatives based on their ability to meet the project Purpose and Need, and describes the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

IMPACTS ON TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

TRAFFIC IMPACTS

Traffic Modeling

The New Orleans Regional Transportation Model (NORTM), which the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) maintains, was used to project future traffic volumes in order to gauge impacts to the regional roadway network associated with the proposed improvements in the project area. The benefit of using this model to predict traffic is its ability to help identify initial impacts on traffic flow at a regional level. The model uses a combination of factors including land use information, population, employment, and school enrollment to develop a baseline number of "trips" which are then added to the roadway network in question. All of the parishes within the model include sub-areas of traffic zones, which serve as the base for trip origins and destinations.

An analysis of the final two build alternatives was performed to determine traffic related impacts to the surrounding roadway network. Design Year 2027 traffic projections were developed for both the No Build alternative and the Layout 12 alternative using the data obtained from the RPC's long-range travel demand model.

REVIEW OF CAPACITY ANALYSIS

A review of the capacity analyses discussed in *Chapter III – Alternative Development* Section indicated the following conditions:

- For the No Build Alternative, basic freeway segment analyses were performed on the section of Earhart Expressway between Causeway Boulevard and the Cleary ramps with a free flow speed of 60 mph. The analyses indicated LOS D conditions for both eastbound and westbound directions of Earhart Expressway. Basic freeway segment analyses were performed on the section of Causeway Boulevard between Jefferson Highway and Airline Drive. The analyses indicated LOS D conditions for northbound Causeway Boulevard and LOS E for southbound Causeway Boulevard.

- For the Layout 12 alternative multiple analyses were conducted. The signalized analysis indicated LOS C and LOS D conditions. The basic freeway segment analyses indicated LOS C and LOS D conditions. The freeway weave section analysis indicated LOS D conditions. The ramp merge section analyses indicated LOS C conditions. The ramp diverge section analyses indicated LOS B, LOS C, and LOS D conditions.

In summation, projected level of service conditions for both alternatives is acceptable.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE VS. PROPOSED ACTION

Design year traffic volumes for the project study area were developed using the RPC's long-range travel demand model. A comparison of area-wide impacts on major roadway corridors for the Layout 12 alternative versus the No Build alternative is discussed below. See Figure VI-1 on the following page for an illustration of the volume comparisons.

- **Earhart Expressway** – Traffic volumes on Earhart Expressway and Earhart Boulevard in Orleans Parish are expected to be significantly higher for the Layout 12 alternative versus the no build alternative. Volumes between Clearview Parkway and Causeway Boulevard are expected to be 20% higher in the eastbound direction and 15% higher in the westbound direction. Between Causeway Boulevard and Carrollton Avenue, volumes are expected to be approximately 5% higher in the eastbound direction and 4% higher in the westbound direction. At Carrollton Avenue, volumes are expected to be 10% higher in the westbound direction and 3% higher in the eastbound direction. This overall volume increase would indicate that a significant number of vehicles are expected to utilize the proposed interchange. The greatest impact is from vehicles on Causeway seeking access to Earhart westbound and from vehicles on Earhart eastbound seeking access to Causeway.

- **Causeway Boulevard** – Traffic volumes on Causeway Boulevard are expected to be lower for the Layout 12 alternative versus the no build alternative. Volumes between Interstate 10 and Airline Drive are expected to be 3% lower in the southbound direction and 1% higher in the northbound direction. Volumes between Earhart and Jefferson Highway are expected to be 22% lower in both travel directions.

- **Airline Drive** – Traffic volumes on Airline Drive are expected to be significantly lower for the Layout 12 alternative versus the no build alternative. Volumes between Clearview Parkway and Causeway Boulevard are projected to be 15% lower in the eastbound direction and 14% lower in the westbound direction. These numbers correspond closely to the increases projected for Earhart Expressway in the same area. Between Causeway Boulevard and Carrollton Avenue volumes are expected to be approximately 7% lower in the eastbound direction and 12% lower in the westbound direction. The larger volume reduction in the westbound direction is likely absorbed by increases in westbound volumes on I-10 and Jefferson Highway, in addition to Earhart Expressway.

- **Jefferson Highway/Claiborne Avenu**e – Traffic volumes on Jefferson Highway experience a variety of impacts for the Layout 12 alternative versus the no build alternative. Volumes between Clearview Parkway and Causeway Boulevard are expected to be 7% lower in the eastbound direction and 5% lower in the westbound direction. However volumes between Causeway Boulevard and Carrollton Avenue are expected to be 5% lower in the eastbound direction but 8% higher in the westbound direction. This can be attributed to the proposed interchange that would provide connectivity from northbound Causeway to westbound Earhart.

- **Carrollton Avenue** – Traffic volumes on Carrollton Avenue are expected to be higher for the Layout 12 alternative versus the no build alternative. Volumes between Claiborne Avenue and Earhart Boulevard are expected to be 8% higher in the northbound (lake bound) direction and 18% higher in the southbound (river bound) direction. Volumes between Claiborne Avenue and I-10 are expected to be 6% higher in the northbound direction and 10% higher in the southbound direction. These volume increases can be attributed to overall increases on Earhart Expressway. Morning volumes from Earhart eastbound are expected to access Carrollton southbound, while evening volumes from I-10 are expected to access Carrollton southbound to Earhart westbound.

  Volumes on Carrollton Avenue between Claiborne Avenue and St. Charles Avenue for the Layout 12 alternative are expected to be within 1% of volumes projected under the no build alternative. Volumes between Claiborne and Willow Street are expected to be approximately 1% higher in both directions, while volumes between Willow Street and St. Charles Avenue are expected to be approximately 1% lower in both directions.

- **River Road** – Traffic volumes on River Road aren't expected to change much for the Layout 12 alternative versus the no build alternative. Between Clearview Parkway and Shrewsbury Road overall volumes are expected to be 1% lower. Between Shrewsbury and Dakin Street overall volumes are expected to be 2% higher. Between Dakin and Carrollton Avenue overall volumes are expected to be 2% lower.

- **Interstate 10** – Traffic volumes on Interstate 10 are expected to change slightly for the Layout 12 alternative versus the no build alternative. Volumes between Carrollton Avenue and I-610 are expected to be 1% higher in the westbound direction and 1% lower in the eastbound direction. Volumes between the I-610 interchange and Causeway Boulevard are expected to be 1% higher in the westbound direction and 2% lower in the eastbound direction. Volumes between Causeway Boulevard and Clearview Parkway are expected to be 1% higher in both travel directions.

- **Clearview Parkway** – Traffic volumes on Clearview Parkway are expected to increase south of Earhart and decrease north of Earhart for the Layout 12 alternative versus the no build alternative. Volumes between Jefferson Highway and Earhart Expressway are expected to be 2% higher in both travel directions. Volumes between Earhart and Airline Drive are expected to be 4% lower for the northbound direction and 15% lower for the southbound direction. Volumes between Airline and West Metairie Avenue are expected to be 4% lower in the northbound direction and 1% lower in the southbound direction.

- **West Metairie Avenue** – Traffic volumes on West Metairie Avenue are expected to decrease significantly for the Layout 12 alternative versus the no build alternative. Overall volumes between Clearview and Causeway are expected to be 30% lower.

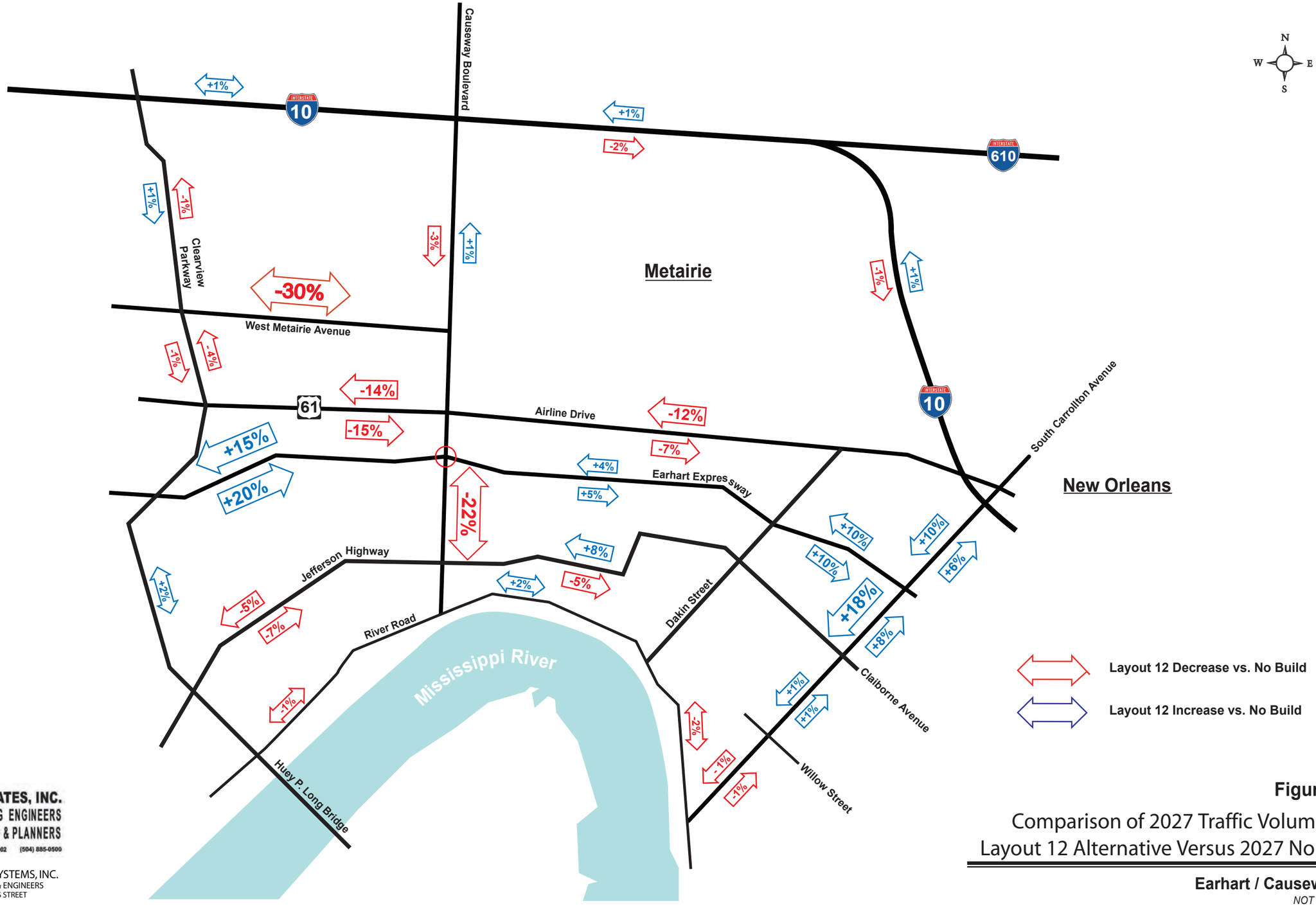

Figure VI-1

Comparison of 2027 Traffic Volumes for Layout 12 Alternative Versus 2027 No Build

Earhart / Causeway EA

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NY ASSOCIATES, INC.
CONSULTING ENGINEERS
ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS
2750 LAKE VILLA DR. METAIRIE, LOUISIANA 70002 (504) 885-0500

URBAN SYSTEMS, INC.
PLANNERS & ENGINEERS
400 N. PETERS STREET
P.O. BOX 2250
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70176
(504) 523 - 5511

Project # 06-003

FIGURE VI-1 back

In summary, impacts to the roadway network for year 2027 with the construction of the Layout 12 alternative interchange are expected to be favorable. Significant volume reductions are projected on Airline Drive, West Metairie Avenue, and to a lesser extent on Jefferson Highway, Clearview Parkway, and sections of Interstate 10 and River Road. The shift of traffic from existing corridors with little or no remaining capacity to Earhart Expressway, which has available capacity, is a positive result of the proposed interchange project.

CORSIM COMPUTER SIMULATION ANALYSES

Data from the final HCS analyses was assembled and input into two CORSIM traffic simulation models to illustrate projected "real time" traffic conditions during peak hour periods. The first model was developed to simulate traffic conditions under the "no build" scenario for design year 2027. The second model was developed to simulate traffic conditions for the Layout 12 scenario for design year 2027. The study area for the CORSIM model includes the section of Earhart Boulevard from the Cleary ramp to just east of Causeway Boulevard; the section of Causeway Boulevard from the north side of West Metairie to Jefferson Hwy; the section of Jefferson Hwy from just west of Causeway Blvd to Claiborne Ave; and the section of Airline Drive from Severn Ave to Labarre Road.

The model input included current posted speed limits along the Earhart Expressway (50 mph), Airline Hwy (40 mph), and Causeway Blvd (45 mph) roadway segments. For new ramp segments, a range of 30-45 mph was input based on design speed data for a particular ramp and engineering judgment.

The model input also included estimated AM and PM Peak Hour traffic volumes along the corridors within the study area. These peak hour volumes were derived from the Year 2027 daily traffic volume projections provided by the NORPC and based on the peak hour percentages, directional distribution factors, and truck percentages as described in the traffic analysis section of *Chapter III*.

Output from the simulated model was compared to the RPC projected volumes and adjustments to the model were made, as needed, to match the output with the projected volumes.

No Build

Design year conditions under the no build scenario illustrated the current free flow movements on Causeway and Earhart with the heavier volumes occurring on southbound Causeway between Airline Drive and Jefferson Highway.

Layout No. 12

The "real time" illustration of design year volumes for the Layout 12 scenario depicted acceptable operations. The proposed two-phase signal at the intersection of Causeway and the new interchange exit ramps provided good vehicular movement with minimal delays.

TRUCK TRAFFIC AND ACCESS

The Earhart Expressway, Causeway Boulevard, Jefferson Highway, Airline Highway, River Road, Shrewsbury Road, Labarre Road, Metairie Road, Central Avenue and Deckbar Avenue are currently designated as truck routes in the Project Study Areas. I-10 is also a major truck route outside of the project study area, and the Clearview Parkway / Huey P. Long Bridge is a major truck route just outside of the study area. The Labarre Business Park in the northwestern section of the project area is a major truck origin/destination point, as is the Elmwood Industrial Park located to the west of the project study area. There are also some industrial areas in the southeast corner of Jefferson Parish's east bank that generate noticeable truck traffic.

Projected Changes

Under the No Build Condition, the L&A road ramps leading to and from the Labarre Business Park would be completed, as would the Dakin Street extension and on-and off-ramps from Jefferson Highway to Earhart Expressway. The Huey P. Long Bridge will be widened and improved, making that crossing more amenable for truck traffic. Finally, the East West Corridor project would be constructed, which should help truck movements to and from the west (via Airline Drive, US 61) occur more efficiently. Overall, it is anticipated that with these improved access improvements to Earhart and improvements to linkage routes with Earhart, more commercial truck traffic will utilize the route for movements within the metro area. Truck traffic on this established truck route will increase.

As all access routes to and from the Earhart Expressway are existing truck routes, and as the proposed interchange links two (2) major truck routes, the implementation of the Proposed Action can only help to make truck operations in the area more efficient by providing better access and reduce truck travel times.

RAIL IMPACTS

The Canadian National / Illinois Central (CNIC) and the New Orleans Public Belt (NOPB) railroads run east-west through the area of Primary Impact, south of the Earhart Expressway. A Norfolk-Southern (NS) line begins west of the intersection of the Earhart Expressway and Causeway Boulevard and travels northeasterly. A Kansas City Southern

(KCS) Railroad spur begins just east of Severn Avenue and travels to the Jefferson/Orleans parish line south of Airline Drive

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative would have no direct or indirect impact on existing railroad traffic in the project study area.

Proposed Action

Although the proposed action will require some purchase or shared use of right-of-way with the northernmost CNIC rail line, there should be little impact on the operation of the rail line as the new ramps have been designed to provide adequate clear operation space between the two facilities. Additionally, the only impact anticipated with the widening of Causeway Boulevard over the CNIC and NOPB rail lines would be the need for coordination between the LADOTD and rail lines during construction. The widened part of the bridge will cross these rail lines at an adequate clearance (23' minimum).

TRANSIT IMPACTS

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative would have no direct or indirect impact on existing transit operations in the project study area.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would have no direct or indirect impact on existing transit operations in the project study area.

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

COMMUNITY, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Displacements/Relocations

Legal Requirements

Various federal statutes have been enacted to establish a uniform policy for the fair and equitable treatment of persons displaced, and from whom land is acquired as a result of programs designed and funded for the benefit of the public as a whole. Some of the

applicable laws that guide government actions for acquisitions, displacements and relocations are:

- 49 CFR Part 24, Department of Transportation implementing regulations for: "The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Policies Act of 1970," as amended.
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)

These laws provide for a process that is fair and require practical and financial assistance in helping individuals and businesses transition into a comparable situation. Any private property acquisition required for this project would be in compliance with the identified laws and statutes.

For housing units, these laws require that replacement housing must be "decent, safe and sanitary" and must be functionally equivalent to the number of rooms, living space, location, and general improvements of the displaced units. Replacement dwellings must also meet all of the minimum housing requirements established by federal regulations and conform to occupancy codes.

Relocation benefits may also be available for businesses, farms, and non-profit organizations. Payment may be made for:

- Moving costs
- Tangible personal property loss as a result of relocation or discontinuance of an operation
- Re-establishment expenses
- Costs incurred in identifying a replacement site

Businesses, farms or non-profit organizations may be eligible for fixed payments in lieu of moving and reestablishment costs.

No Build Alternative

Under the No Build alternative, existing conditions would be maintained. The No Build Alternative would not require any displacements or relocations and, thus, would not result in any direct or indirect impact(s) to the study area. In addition, no property acquisitions would be required with the No Build Alternative.

Proposed Action

Implementation of the Proposed Action would result in some right-of-way property acquisitions along the project corridor. No relocations of existing residential developments are foreseen. The Proposed Action will be largely constructed within existing rights-of-way or vacant property.

However, the proposed at-grade roadway of the Proposed Action is proposed in close proximity or infringes on a portion of five industrial structures between Lausat Street and the north side of the Earhart Expressway. Acquisition and or alterations to some structures will likely be necessary to accommodate the Proposed Action.

A separate *Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan* has been completed as part of this EA, and describes these impacts in detail. Copies of the plan are available from the LADOTD headquarters.

Neighborhood and Community Cohesion

The distinct and unique neighborhood areas encompassed within the project study area are composed of a series of suburban subdivisions supported by commercial and industrial areas making up the larger unincorporated area of East Jefferson Parish. Although each neighborhood is distinctive in character, each shares common aspects of pride, unity, and activism. Those aforementioned aspects essentially characterize neighborhood and community cohesion. In addition, those communities' "sense of place" contributes to their identity.

Neighborhood identity is derived from the subdivision name, major streets, canals and natural features. Support facilities such as schools, churches and commercial services also contribute to the neighborhood identity. Industrial development also supports the population by providing employment, goods and services separated from residential neighborhoods.

Several major roadways within the study area present a physical barrier to residential neighborhoods, such as Earhart Expressway, Causeway Boulevard and Airline Drive. Rail lines and drainage canals also present physical barriers in the area.

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative will maintain the status quo and should have no impact on neighborhood and community cohesion.

Proposed Action

It is anticipated that the Proposed Action would have no negative impact on neighborhood and community cohesion in the study area.

Neighborhood and community cohesion of the neighborhoods in the study area may increase with improved access to a vital east-west transportation artery.

Access to Community Facilities & Services

Community facilities and services define a community and further characterize its cohesion and sense of place. A vital factor in the utilization of these facilities and distribution of services is their access.

No Build Alternative

Existing roadway capacities in the area are at times strained to provide adequate service. The No Build Alternative will not contribute to enhancing service levels of the road network or increasing access to existing transportation corridors.

Proposed Action

The development of the Proposed Action is expected to have a positive impact on access to community facilities and services. By establishing additional access to the Earhart Expressway, residents and businesses will be better able to reach necessary facilities and services. Additionally, emergency vehicle access, including Jefferson Parish fire and police response and emergency medical service to trauma medical facilities at area hospitals, will be enhanced.

The Proposed Action would also provide additional access to area amenities, such as parks, playgrounds, other recreation facilities and services, and community centers. Those amenities are vital to the quality of life a community needs to sustain itself.

Environmental Justice

Background

Requirements for environmental justice originated in 1994 with adoption of Executive Order 12898, entitled *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations.* This order directed federal agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects of their programs, policies and activities on minority populations and low income populations in the United States.[1]

In 1998, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) formulated Order 6640.23 to establish agency policies and procedures to address environmental justice as follows:[2]

- Identify and evaluate environmental, public health and interrelated social and economic effects for FHWA programs, policies and activities;

[1] http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legsregs/directives/orders/6640_23.thm

[2] *FHWA Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Population, Order 6640.23.* 1998.

- Propose measures to avoid minimize and/or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse environmental and public health effects and interrelated social and economic effects;

- Provide mitigation and opportunities to enhance communities, neighborhoods and individuals affected by FHWA programs, policies and activities, where permitted by law and consistent with Executive Order 12898. Other factors may be taken into account include design, comparative impacts and the relevant number of similar existing system elements in nonminority and non low income areas.

- Consider alternatives to proposed programs, policies and activities, where such alternatives would result in avoiding and/or minimizing disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental impacts, consistent with Executive Order 12898;

- Provide public involvement opportunities and meaningful access to public information concerning project impacts and solicit input from affected minority and low-income populations in considering alternatives during the planning and development of alternatives and decisions.

Additionally, FHWA policy takes into account issues as aesthetic values, traffic congestion and community isolation or displacement in determining environmental justice. [3]

Methodology

The methodology employed in this section adheres to the previously noted FHWA policy in addressing environmental justice for the project in identifying concentrations of minority and low-income populations for the Earhart Causeway study area.

The key demographic elements measured are:

- Race, which examines the racial breakdown in the study area including:
  - White
  - Black or African American
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Asian
  - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
  - Some other race

- Poverty status, which analyzes a number of economic factors:
  - Population living below the poverty level
  - Per capita income

[3] *http://www.its.berkeley.edu/publications/ejhandbook.html.*

- Households with public assistance income

Percentages for the key demographic elements are determined for each census tract identified in the study area and compared to Louisiana State levels. Census tracts that exceed state thresholds are highlighted and considered for avoidance or minimizing impacts to minority and low income areas early in the planning process of project alternatives.

The Earhart Causeway study area contains 21 census tracts in Jefferson Parish, as shown earlier in Figure V-2.

Findings

Race and Minority Composition

The study area is comprised of 81% White and 15% Black or African American. The total minority population for the study area is 17%, the majority of which is Black or African American. Six of the 20 census tracts in the study area exceed the Louisiana state percentage of 19% for minority population. The minority population identified in these census tracts consists primarily of Black or African American.

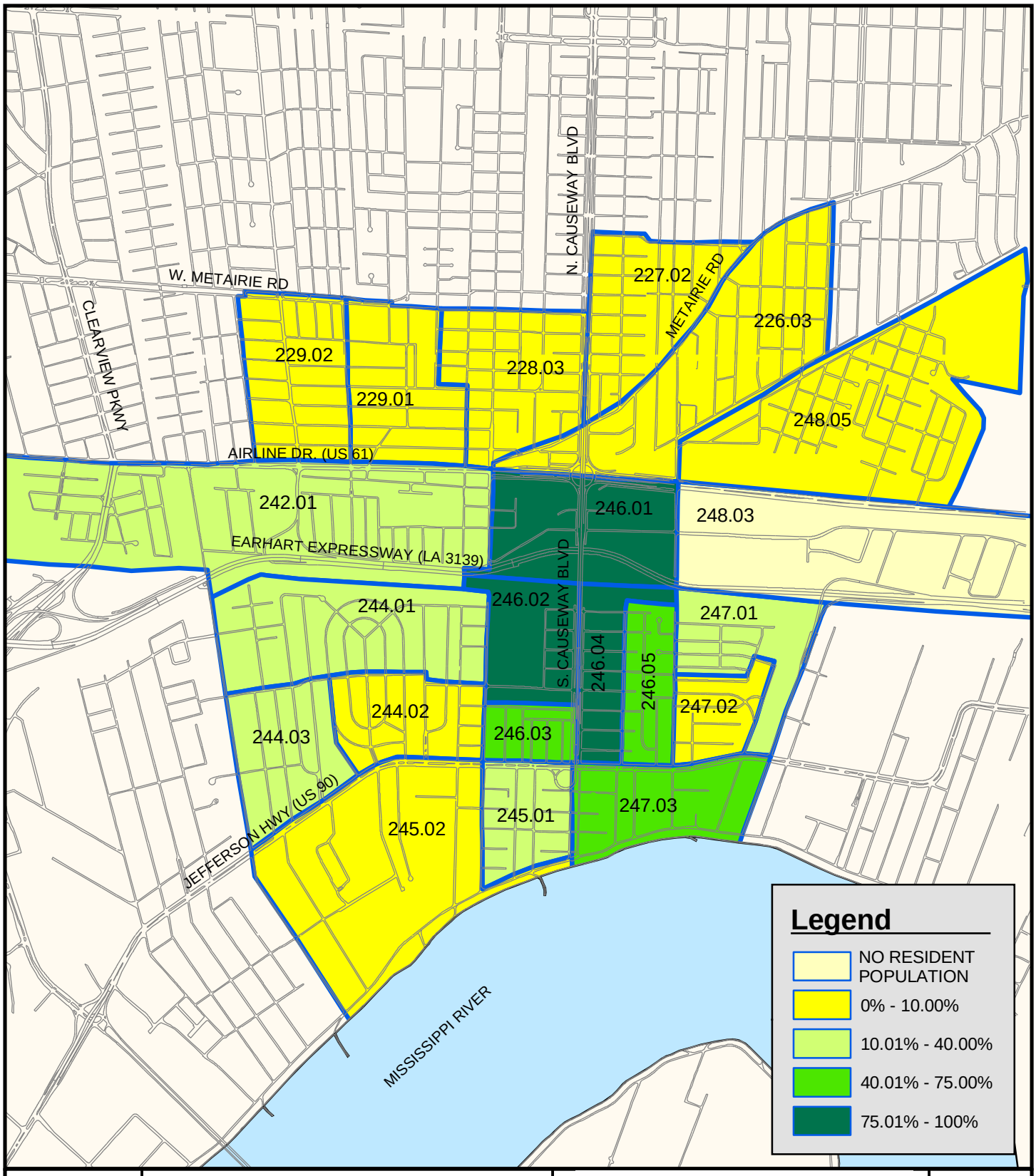
Figure VI-2, on the following page, presents a graphic representation of minorities as a percent of population in the project study area.

Poverty Levels

Poverty status in the study area is low across the three major economic indicators examined. The population living below the poverty level stands at 11% for the study area, as compared to 19% statewide. The average per capita income is $20,988, significantly higher than the $16,912 state average. The number of households with public assistance in the study area is 2%, slightly lower than the 3% state level.

However, a number of census tracts within the study area do exceed state thresholds for poverty. Four of the 20 census tracts have populations living below the poverty level at higher levels than the state average. Six of the census tracts in the study area earn per capita income lower than the state average. Seven of the census tracts have larger numbers of households with public assistance than the state level.

Figure VI-3, on the second page following, presents a graphic representation of the percent of population living below the poverty level within the project study area.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT DOTD

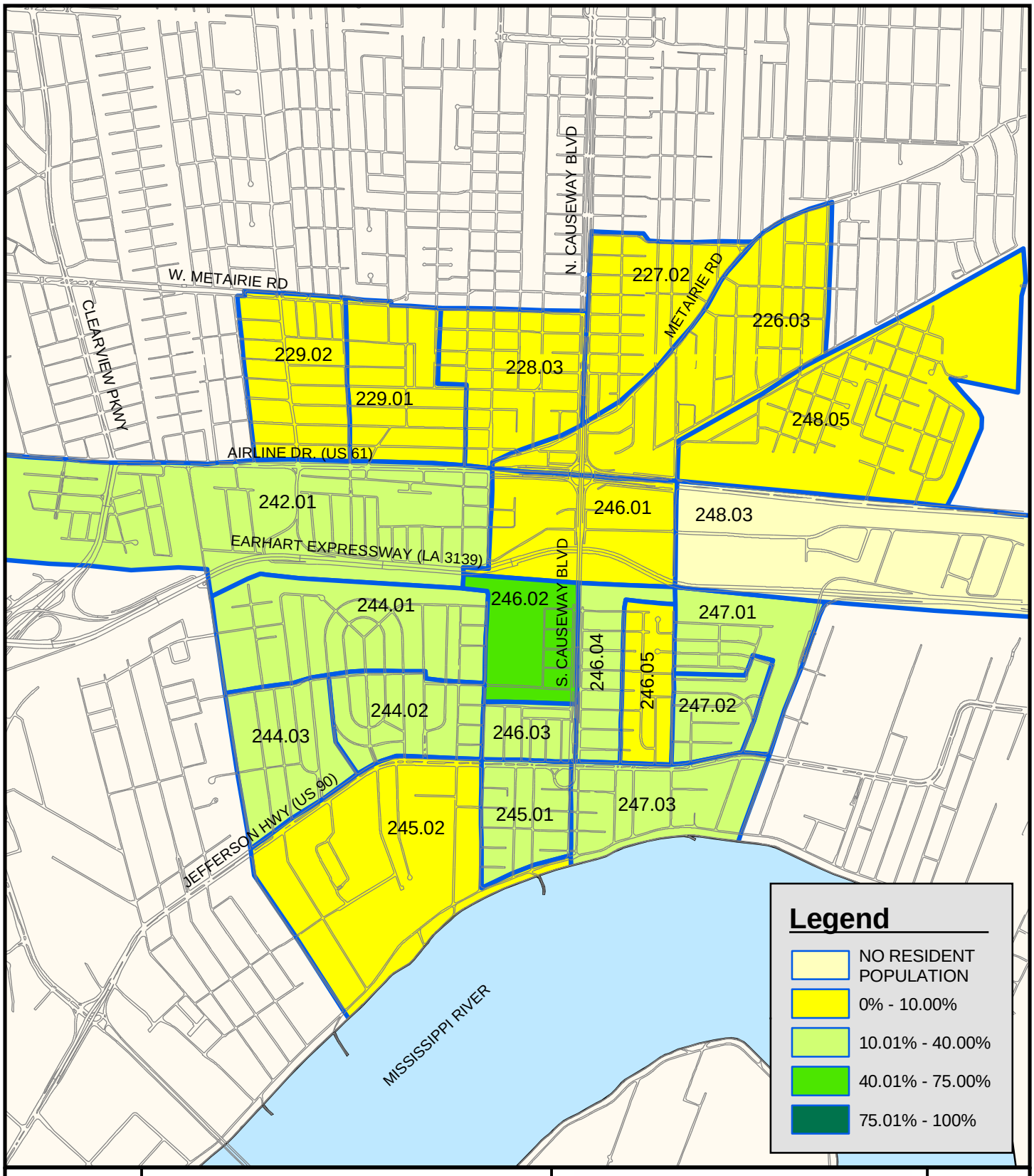
EARHART - CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

MINORITY % OF POPULATION

NY ASSOCIATES, INC.
CONSULTING ENGINEERS
ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS
2750 LAKE VILLA DR. METAIRIE, LOUISIANA 70002 (504) 885-0500
in association with:
Evans-Graves Engineers, Inc.
Lambert Engineers
Urban Systems Associates, Inc.
Coastal Environments, Inc.

Figure

VI-2



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT — DOTD

EARHART - CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

% OF POPULATION LIVING BELOW POVERTY LEVEL

NY ASSOCIATES, INC.
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Figure

VI-3

Conclusions

The Earhart-Causeway Interchange project study area does not contain a large amount of minority or low-income populations. The analysis conducted in this section does indicate some concentrations of minority and low-income populations. So as to not disproportionately impact minority and low-income populations, identified concentrations were taken into consideration to the greatest extent practical in the development of project alternatives and the selection of the Proposed Action.

The Proposed Action intersects 2 of the 21 census tracts that are consistent across all indicators for environmental justice described in the methodology above. Census tracts 246.02 and 246.04 exceed Louisiana state levels for concentrations of racial minority population and poverty status, including population living below the poverty level, income below the average per capita and households with public assistance.

These two census tracts are included in that portion of the Proposed Action on the west side of Causeway Boulevard south of the railroad tracks. The project in this area consists of an existing elevated bridge which is slated for a small amount of roadway widening within existing rights-of-way. The Proposed Action requires no displacements in this area and will have minimal impact on these 2 census tracts. Moreover, the Proposed Action will provide positive benefits to the study area (including these 2 census tracts) by increasing access and improving circulation in this area.

ZONING AND LAND USE

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative will have no impact on land use or the zoning classification(s) of the area presented earlier in this document.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action will have no direct impact on land use. The Build Alternative also will have no direct impact on zoning classification(s) and will not require reclassification from one zoning district to another for project implementation.

PARKS, BICYCLE, PEDESTRIAN AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative will have no direct impacts on parks, bicycle, pedestrian and recreational facilities in the study area.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action will have no direct impacts on parks, bicycle, pedestrian and recreational facilities in the study area.

HISTORIC / CULTURAL RESOURCES

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative would have no impact on the historic/cultural resources of the project area.

Proposed Action

An archaeological survey of the proposed project area was not undertaken as virtually the entire corridor has been heavily disturbed by past construction activities. There are no known archaeological sites within the proposed project area. A standing structure survey of the project APE recorded 490 structures located on 481 properties. Of these, a group of 11 properties (26-0714 to 26-0724) is recommended as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as part of the Azalea Gardens subdivision. The subdivision is recommended as eligible for listing on the NRHP under Criterion A as the first and only purpose-built and continuously operated, all-rental subdivision in Jefferson Parish and for its contribution to the growth of Jefferson Parish by providing much needed housing after World War II. The Azalea Gardens Subdivision—only eleven houses of which are located within the Earhart-Causeway APE—will not be directly affected by the proposed interchange. Any visual, audible and atmospheric effects will be assessed if the Azalea Gardens Subdivision is determined eligible for listing on the NRHP.

VISUAL / AESTHETIC IMPACTS

No Build Alternative

Under the No Build Alternative, there will be little if any visual and aesthetic impacts related to the completion of some planned projects and projects under construction, as most of these are not in the vistas or sightlines of the area of primary impact.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action will also have little, if any visual impact on the primary impact area. The project involves construction of an elevated interchange, containing ramps and intersection improvements built on structure, the widening of the Causeway overpass

mainline, as well as some ground level ramp roadway. Normally, the nature of a ramp or bridge structure itself means that the project will be seen, and that there will be an impact. However, two main factors will serve to make this interchange very unobtrusive to the various viewpoints in the area:

- The relative isolation of the interchange structures and their distance from residential properties. The closest that a ramp on structure comes to any residence is roughly 300' (near Shrewsbury Road on the northwestern side), and this is a point where the ramp would join an *existing* overpass structure. Along the south side (Scott Street) new ramps structures are, at a minimum, 400' from any existing residential structure.
- Intervening uses and landscaping. On the south side of the interchange, the very active NOPB and CNIC rail lines, consisting of four sets of parallel tracks, lie between the ramps and the residential areas. More often than not, these tracks are home to moving or stopped trains, which block the view north. Additionally, there is a line of trees on the north side of and between the CNIC tracks which also helps to visually screen views north, where the interchange structure will be located.

NOISE IMPACTS

A quantitative, computer-based analysis of the effects of the proposed interchange at Earhart Expressway (LA 3139) and Causeway Boulevard (LA 3046) on ambient noise levels was performed following the procedures of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This analysis consisted of the evaluation of impacts on potentially noise-sensitive sites in the project area. The general procedure used to assess these impacts included the following activities:

1) Determining the location of potential noise sensitivities of properties along the route taking into account existing ambient noise as well as future development.

2) Characterizing the existing ambient noise environment by obtaining measurements at selected sites.

3) Determining existing and future noise levels with project construction through computer modeling and assessing impacts by comparing future modeled noise levels to the LADOTD criteria and by examining the expected difference between future noise levels after project construction and existing noise levels.

4) Evaluating the feasibility of mitigation measures at sites where an impact was modeled.

Each of these steps is described in detail below.

Characteristics of Noise

Before the influence of the aforementioned project on ambient noise levels can be understood, it is necessary to understand how noise is quantified and which noise descriptors are commonly used to explain varying environmental sounds. Noise and sound are usually synonymous, although noise generally connotes unwanted sound. Noise is equivalent to the "sound pressure level." Sound is the physical manifestation of variations in pressure in a medium such as air. Humans perceive sound as a pressure on the ear, and most people are capable of responding to a wide range of sound pressures. At the threshold of pain, the sound pressure is one million times greater than the sound pressure at the threshold of hearing. Because of the large range of acoustic pressure, the decibel (dB) scale is used to logarithmically compress the range of numeric values. By using the decibel scale, the range of sounds can be expressed as 0 to 120 dB rather than 1 to 1,000,000.

Sound frequency refers to the rate at which a complete cycle of high-pressure and low-pressure regions is produced by the source. This is measured in hertz (Hz). One Hz is one complete cycle per second. The range of audible frequencies for a young person is from 20 Hz to 20 kHz. As a person ages or is exposed to excessive noise, the ability to hear the higher frequencies becomes reduced. Older adults may have an effective high frequency cutoff of 10 kHz or less. Sounds at frequencies below 16 Hz is termed infrasound and is more felt than heard. Frequencies above 20 kHz are termed ultrasound and are not audible.

For highway traffic and other noises, an adjustment or weighting of the high-pitched and low-pitched sounds is made to approximate the way that an average person hears sound. The adjusted sounds are called "A-weighted levels" (dBA). The A-weighted decibel scale begins at zero. This represents the faintest sound that can be heard by humans with very good hearing. The loudness of sounds varies from person to person. There is no precise definition of loudness; however, based on many tests on large numbers of people, a sound level of 70 dB is twice as loud to the listener as a level of 60 dB. In addition, noise is three dimensional in nature because of its sound wave characteristics. Consequently, in projecting noise effects on a specific setting, such as from a highway onto different levels of a nearby house, a model of three dimensions and a time of day factor must be analyzed. The noise levels change with the number, type, and speed of the vehicles that produce it. Traffic noise variations can be plotted as a function of time; however, it is usually converted to a single representative number, which is the sum of all the noise occurring during the time period.

Statistical descriptors are almost always used as a single number to describe varying traffic noise levels. The most common statistical descriptor used for traffic noise is L_{eq}. L_{eq} is the constant, average sound level, which over a period of time contains the same amount of sound energy as the varying levels of the traffic noise. The usual period of interest for the L_{eq} is hourly, referred to as the L_{eq} (h). The LADOTD Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) for different land uses close to highways are described in Table VI-1 on the following page.

Table VI-1 –Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) Hourly A-weighted Sound Level[1]		
Activity Category	**L_{eq}(h)**	**Description of Activity Category**
A	56 (external)	Lands on which 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.
B	66 (external)	Picnic areas, recreation areas, playgrounds, active sports areas, parks, residences, motels, hotels, schools, churches, libraries, and hospitals.
C	71 (external)	Developed lands, properties, or activities not included in Categories A or B above.
D	---	Undeveloped lands.
E	51 (internal)	Residences, motels, hotels, public meeting rooms, schools, churches, libraries, hospitals, and auditoriums.

These criteria are consistent with the FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria (23 CFR 772) allowing for consideration of traffic noise impacts 1 dBA below the FHWA criteria.

Characterization of Existing Land Uses and Activities in the Project Corridor

Different types of land uses and the human activities associated with them have different sensitivities to changes in ambient noise levels. In order to characterize these parameters, a visual survey of the project corridor was performed. The intersection is situated in an urban setting. The properties along the roadway are typically a mix of commercial, retail, and, residential. There are four residential areas near the project that present a potential for impact. Although much of the area has been built up, there are still some undeveloped parcels along the project corridor that were investigated as part of this noise analysis. There is also a major railroad system in the area.

Determination of Existing Ambient Noise Levels

Following identification of activities and land uses in the project corridor and their potential sensitivities to noise level changes, it was necessary to select specific sites at which measurements of existing ambient noise levels would be taken. Locations were chosen that would provide a good representation of areas that may be affected by changes in noise levels. These locations were spaced throughout the project area.

Four sites were selected for ambient noise measurements, which are shown later in this section on Figure VI-4. Measurements were taken on a single day between rush-hour

traffic times, which correspond to off-peak times. According to the LADOTD Highway Traffic Noise Policy (revised 3/04), peak hour noise levels will be the hour with the highest noise levels, not necessarily those with the highest traffic volumes. During rush-hour traffic, there is a higher volume of automobiles and a lower volume of medium-sized and heavy trucks, which tend to avoid this type of traffic. A higher volume of automobiles would mean slower speeds and less noise. Between rush-hour times, there will be more medium-sized and heavy trucks and fewer automobiles resulting in faster speeds for all types of vehicles and higher noise levels.

Noise measurement levels at these times were taken once at each location with a Larson-Davis Model 824 Sound Level Meter for intervals of 15 minutes. The Larson-Davis Model 814 meets the standards promulgated by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) for a Type I Sound Level Meter.

Before each measurement, a microphone was mounted on a tripod and was connected to the sound level meter with a cable. The meter continuously read and recorded the ambient noise level and integrated these values into a Leq. During these intervals, the time, date, wind speed, cloud cover, sound level, and traffic count were recorded. Specifically, the number of automobiles, medium-sized trucks, heavy trucks, buses, and motorcycles was noted. In a few cases, traffic counts were not indicated because the view was obstructed. The road was elevated and the traffic could not be visibly counted. After each measurement, the meter was calibrated and the measurement team moved on to the next site. The results of the ambient noise measurement levels are presented in TableVI-2. The measured values were compared to the appropriate LADOTD NAC for the site activity category.

Table VI-2 – Ambient Noise Measurement Levels

Site	Distance from Road (feet)	Time	Traffic Volumes[1]					$L_{eq}(h)$ (NAC)[2]
			Auto	Large Truck	Medium Truck	Bus	Motor-cycle	
Site 1 Residences Category B	40	1:43-1:58 p.m.	---	---	---	---	---	66.7 (66)
Site 2 Residences Category B	20	2:08-2:23 p.m.	234	1	2	1	1	74.4 (66)
Site 3 Residences Category B	410	2:39-2:54 p.m.	---	---	---	---	---	57.3 (66)
Site 4 Residences Category B	405	3:03-3:18 p.m.	---	---	---	---	---	58.2 (66)

[1] *Traffic counts were taken in the field during 15-minute recording intervals.*
[2] *Values in parentheses represent Noise Abatement Criteria.*

Model Results

After the measurements had been compared to the LADOTD NAC, TNM 2.5 was executed to determine the future predicted noise levels for the impact assessment.

Validation of Model

Validation of the model TNM 2.5 was performed. The model calculates noise levels based on user-supplied data for hourly traffic volumes, roadway geometry, operational speeds, and site parameters that affect transmission and dissipation of acoustic energy. TNM 2.5 was executed to determine noise levels at each of the ambient measurement sites, which had traffic count data. For validation purposes, model receivers were chosen that were closest to the measurement sites in the field. The results are shown in Table VI-3:

Table VI-3 – Validation of Model

Measurement Site	Measured Value (dBA)	Model Validation (dBA)	Difference Between Measured and Modeled Value (dBA)
Site 1 Residences Category B	66.7	67.6	0.9
Site 2 Residences Category B	74.4	74.5	0.1
Site 3 Residences Category B	57.3	58.8	1.5
Site 4 Residences Category B	58.2	59.9	1.7

In all cases, the model was validated by the field measurements. The deviations in the modeled value and the measured value resulted from differences in the actual vehicle speed, and/or numerical errors such as round off or truncation errors.

Determination of Predicted Future Noise Levels

Future noise level predictions were performed. Traffic projections for the year 2027 were provided by N-Y Associates, Inc. The results of this analysis were evaluated in the context of established criteria. A comparison of existing noise levels to future noise levels is given in Table VI-4.

Table VI-4 – Comparison of Future Build and Future No-Build Noise Levels		
Site	**Predicted Future Noise Level Build Scenario (2027)**	**Predicted Future Noise Level No-Build Scenario (2027)**
Site 1 Residences Category B	69.9	69.8
Site 2 Residences Category B	71.8	71.0
Site 3 Residences Category B	65.4	64.6
Site 4 Residences Category B	64.2	63.2

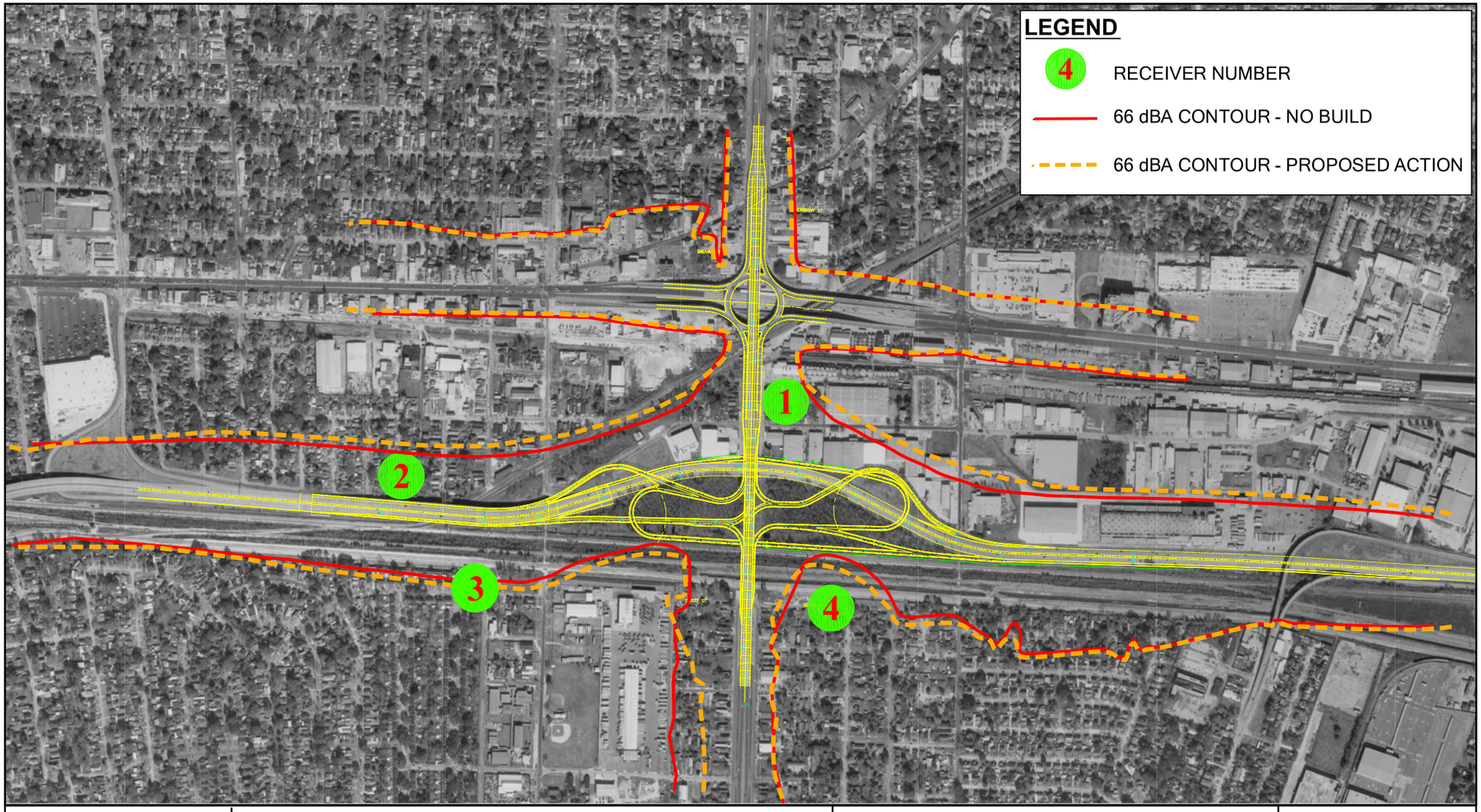
The 66 L_{eq} (h) noise contours are illustrated in Figures VI-4, presented on the following page. For a given noise contour, numerous points exist that define its location. These points may be defined as vectors, which are three-dimensional in nature. The receiver coordinates were entered into TNM 2.5 to facilitate modeling. In contrast to older models, i.e. STAMINA, where coordinates of receivers must be entered sequentially to ease calculations, TNM 2.5 takes coordinates in any order and models accordingly.

It is important to note that in order to properly execute the contour routine in the FHWA version of TNM 2.5, there must be at least one barrier present in the model. Traditionally a ground line barrier (i.e. a barrier with no elevation) would be created in order for TNM 2.5 to run correctly. Generally, the topography is flat in southern Louisiana, however, some attenuation may occur due to differences in elevation between the roadway and the receiver location.

Another important aspect of the modeling tasks conducted for this analysis includes the importation of AutoCAD drawing interchange format (dxf) files. Road alignments were drawn in AutoCAD and then converted to a dxf file. Then the dxf files were imported into TNM 2.5. Once imported into TNM 2.5 in a dxf file, the alignment was converted to a TNM roadway. The model runs were then performed in TNM 2.5. The resulting noise contours were then exported as a dxf file and then imported into AutoCAD. Once imported into AutoCAD the results were overlaid on top of existing data layers.

Determination of Future No-Build Noise Levels

The future no-build condition was also modeled. Traffic projections for the no-build scenario were provided for the year 2027 by N-Y Associates, Inc. The model results for the future no-build scenario, traffic data and calculations can be found in the *Noise Impact Report*, available under separate cover. Table VI-4 (above) compares the noise levels for the future build and future no-build scenarios.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT
DOTD

EARHART-CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NOISE CONTOURS

N

0 500 1000 1500 2000

FIGURE

VI-4

Impact Assessment

As previously discussed, LADOTD has adopted NAC for different activity categories to assess the effects of changes in ambient noise levels caused by roadway improvements. Each category designates noise levels that indicate a traffic noise impact if equaled or exceeded at a sensitive receiver. In addition, LADOTD has also specified that a traffic noise impact occurs at any sensitive receiver if the predicted noise levels under any build alternative exceed existing noise levels by 10 dBA or more, irrespective of whether these levels are below, at, or above the LADOTD NAC. When an impact is identified under either or both of these conditions, the feasibility of mitigation measures must be examined. The results of the existing and future year analyses were evaluated with regard to LADOTD criteria and policies to determine whether project impacts on noise levels are expected. Table VI-5 presents a list of the four measurement sites, the NAC applicable to each site, and the measured and future predicted noise levels at receptors near the field measurement sites:

Table VI-5 – Comparison of Existing Measured Noise Levels to Predicted Future Noise Levels

Site	NAC	Measured Noise Level	Predicted Future Noise Level – Build Condition	Increase Above Existing Conditions
Site 1 Residences Category B	66	66.7	69.9	3.2
Site 2 Residences Category B	66	74.4	71.8	-2.6
Site 3 Residences Category B	66	57.3	65.4	8.1
Site 4 Residences Category B	66	58.2	64.2	6.0

Impact Summary

As shown in the above table, two of the locations (Site 1 in the northeast quadrant of the proposed interchange and Site 2 in the northwest quadrant of the interchange) both currently and in the future will exceed the LADOTD NAC. Sites 3 and 4, in the southwest and southeast quadrants do not currently exceed the NAC and will not do so

under the Build Condition. At no locations is the existing noise level being increased by 10 dBA or more.

As a result, sites 1 and 2 were determined to have traffic noise impacts under the build condition.

Mitigation Measures

Due to the exceedances of the LADOTD NAC, noise abatement measures must be considered for areas north of the Earhart Expressway. In order to be evaluated for implementation, a potential mitigation measure must be determined to be both feasible and reasonable. Reasonableness includes such considerations as cost, the number of benefited receptors, and the effectiveness of the measure in attaining specified reductions in ambient noise levels. Feasibility considerations can include overall environmental effects, community desirability, the degree that future build noise levels exceed existing levels, the degree that future build levels exceed future no build levels, and the effectiveness of local land use controls to prevent future incompatible development. Issues related to community desirability and the views of affected residents and local officials will be ascertained from comments on the draft Environmental Assessment.

Noise Barriers

The LADOTD's Environmental Impact Procedures were consulted in order to determine the feasibility and reasonableness of noise barriers. According to these procedures, every effort should be made to obtain noise reductions of at least 8 dBA, which is considered to be a substantial reduction by LADOTD. Noise barriers should, at a minimum, provide this substantial reduction for at least one receptor. If proposed barriers cannot provide substantial noise reductions, they are determined to be infeasible. These procedures also mention that a sensitive receptor must receive a 5 dBA reduction in noise levels to be counted as benefited by the abatement measure, and the cost of the abatement measure (including the costs of real estate acquisition, construction servitude, or utility relocation) must be equal to or less than $25,000 per benefited receptor. Receptors may be counted as benefited even if they are not impacted. When calculating the cost of noise barriers to determine the reasonableness of providing this abatement measure, the following cost criterion was used based on the area of the barrier (length times height) - ground installation: $25 per square foot. Table VI-6, on the following page, shows the square footage calculated by TNM 2.5 to obtain a 5 dBA noise reduction, the maximum cost of the abatement measure, the cost per benefited receptor, and the cost of barrier installation.

Table VI-6 – Estimated Noise Barrier Cost						
Segment (Receiver #)	**Barrier Length (feet)**	**Barrier Height (feet)**	**Square Footage (square feet)**	**Barrier Cost (dollars)**	**Receivers per Segment**	**Cost per Receptor (dollars)**
Northeast side of Earhart/Causeway Interchange (Receiver # 1)	852	17	14491	$362,287	4	$90,572
Northwest side of Earhart/Causeway Interchange (Receiver # 2)	448	20	17938	$448,446	8	$56,056

The following conclusions were drawn after executing TNM 2.5 and evaluating Table VI-6:

1. A barrier on the north side of the Earhart/Causeway Interchange located along the right-of-way line, centered on the Causeway Blvd. overpass and extending roughly 425 feet both east and west would be feasible because it provided a noise reduction of 8 dBA for those receivers located immediately north of the interchange. It would not be reasonable, however, because the cost per receiver benefited, $90,572, is much greater than the $25,000 criterion.

2. A 448 ft. long structure-mounted barrier on the northwest side of the Earhart/Causeway Interchange, located on the peak of the highway overpass of the Norfolk-Southern railroad, would not be feasible because it provided a noise reduction of 4.1 dBA for those receivers north of the overpass. It would not be reasonable either because the cost per receiver benefited, $56,056, is much greater than the $25,000 criterion.

Traffic Management Measures

Traffic Management Measures may include such actions as using traffic control devices and signing for prevention of certain vehicle types. These measures may also include time-use restrictions for specific vehicle types, modified speed limits, or exclusive lane designations. These measures were considered and found to not be reasonable due to the limited number of impacted receivers.

Alteration of Vertical and Horizontal Alignments

No alterations of vertical or horizontal alignments were considered due to the limited number of impacted receivers.

Building Insulation

Noise insulation typically is limited to public use facilities or non-profit institutional buildings such as schools and hospitals. There were no impacted schools or hospitals for this proposed project. Therefore, noise insulation does not apply to this project.

Construction Period Noise

The construction of the proposed project would result in temporary noise level increases within the study area. The noise would be generated primarily from heavy equipment used in hauling materials and building the roadway. Sensitive areas located close to the construction alignment may temporarily experience increased noise levels; however, there are no areas within the Study Area where quiet is of extraordinary significance, and therefore no such areas would be significantly impacted by construction noise.

The construction contractor has the responsibility to protect the general public from all aspects of construction. All construction equipment will be required to comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Regulations as they apply to the employees' safety, and in accordance with the DOTD Standard Specifications. All construction equipment used in the construction phase of the project should be properly muffled and all motor panels should be shut during operation.

AIR QUALITY IMPACTS

Existing Conditions

In 1990, Congress amended the Clean Air Act of 1970 requiring the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to create standards for pollutants that were considered harmful to the health and well being of the public at-large. These standards, titled National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) established limits for six principal air pollutants. These six pollutants, CO, Pb, NO_2, PM_x, O_3, and SO_x are also known as criteria pollutants. As of April 30, 2004, Jefferson Parish is in attainment status for all criteria pollutants (USEPA 2004). Because this project is located within an attainment parish with regard to the criteria pollutants, it is not subject to more stringent air quality requirements.

Standards

National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and Louisiana State standards have been issued for criteria pollutants as shown in **Table VI-7.** Primary standards have been established to protect the general public health, while secondary standards are intended to protect public welfare including effects on materials and buildings, vegetation, soil, and other considerations.

Table VI-7 National and Louisiana Ambient Air Quality Standards			
Pollutant	**Primary Stds.**	**Averaging Times**	**Secondary Standards**
Carbon Monoxide	9 ppm (10 mg/m^3)	8-hour[(1)]	None
	35 ppm (40 mg/m^3)	1-hour[(1)]	None
Lead	1.5 $\mu g/m^3$	Quarterly Average	Same as Primary
Nitrogen Dioxide	0.053 ppm (100 $\mu g/m^3$)	Annual (Arithmetic Mean)	Same as Primary
Particulate Matter (PM_{10})	Revoked[(2)]	Annual[(2)] (Arith. Mean)	
	150 $\mu g/m^3$	24-hour[(3)]	
Particulate Matter ($PM_{2.5}$)	15.0 $\mu g/m^3$	Annual[(4)] (Arith. Mean)	Same as Primary
	35 $\mu g/m^3$	24-hour[(5)]	
Ozone	0.08 ppm	8-hour[(6)]	Same as Primary
	0.12 ppm	1-hour[(7)] (Applies only in limited areas)	Same as Primary
Sulfur Oxides	0.03 ppm	Annual (Arith. Mean)	-------
	0.14 ppm	24-hour[(1)]	-------
	-------	3-hour[(1)]	0.5 ppm (1300 $\mu g/m^3$

1) Not to be exceeded more than once per year. (2) Due to a lack of evidence linking health problems to long-term exposure to coarse particle pollution, the agency revoked the annual PM10 standard in 2006 (effective December 17, 2006). (3) Not to be exceeded more than once per year on average over 3 years. (4) To attain this standard, the 3-year average of the weighted annual mean PM2.5 concentrations from single or multiple community-oriented monitors must not exceed 15.0 µg/m3. (5) To attain this standard, the 3-year average of the 98th percentile of 24-hour concentrations at each population-oriented monitor within an area must not exceed 35 µg/m3 (effective December 17, 2006). (6) To attain this standard, the 3-year average of the fourth-highest daily maximum 8-hour average ozone concentrations measured at each monitor within an area over each year must not exceed 0.08 ppm. (7) (a) The standard is attained when the expected number of days per calendar year with maximum hourly average concentrations above 0.12 ppm is < 1, as determined by appendix H. (b) As of June 15, 2005 EPA revoked the 1-hour ozone standard in all areas except the fourteen 8-hour ozone nonattainment Early Action Compact (EAC) Areas.

Ambient Air Quality in the Region

Jefferson Parish is in attainment for all NAAQS and Louisiana State air quality standards. Four parishes surrounding the New Orleans urbanized area, Jefferson, Orleans, St. Bernard and St. Charles, were designated as an air-quality maintenance area for ozone in accordance with the Clean Air Act Amendments in 1995. The EPA designated areas for the eight-hour ozone standard on April 15, 2004 and published its final designation rule on April 30, 2004 (FR 23858). The four parishes comprising the New Orleans maintenance area under the one-hour standard were designated as being in attainment of the eight-hour ozone standard. Attainment of the eight-hour standard for ozone was based on three consecutive years of air quality monitoring data demonstrating compliance with the standard. In terms of transportation-related pollutants of greatest concern, periodic exceedances of the O_3 standard have been recorded during the past five years but not on a basis that was sufficient to cause a violation of the standard. There have been no violations of either the one-hour or eight-hour CO standard for many years.

Methods for Evaluation

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in Louisiana evaluate ozone (O3) and nitrogen oxides (NOx), since air quality concerns pertaining to these criteria pollutants are regional in nature. Nitrogen oxides include nitrogen dioxide (NO2), a highly reactive gas that forms from reactions in the atmosphere involving the primary pollutant nitric oxide. Ozone is a product of the photochemical reaction of NOx and volatile organic compounds (VOC) in the atmosphere. MPOs perform mesoscale analyses for VOC and NOx. Effects of CO are evaluated on a micro-scale, project-by-project basis. However, FHWA's Technical Advisory T 6640.8A *Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents* states "A microscale CO analysis is unnecessary where such impacts (project CO contribution plus background) can be judged to be well below the one- and eight-hour NAAQS (or other applicable State or local standards)." Due to the project's projected traffic volumes and role in reducing congestion, the project would not result in CO emissions that could cause an exceedance of the one- or eight-hour CO standard, and, as a result, a micro-scale analysis was not performed.

Construction Impacts on Air Quality

Construction-related effects of projects under both the No Build Alternative and the Proposed Action would be limited to minor, localized short-term increases in fugitive dust and mobile source emissions. Feasible and appropriate measures would be incorporated into project planning during the design stage to minimize air quality impacts of project construction activities.

Fugitive Dust Emissions

Fugitive dust is airborne particulate matter, generally of a relatively large particulate size. Fugitive dust is primarily caused by particulate matter re-suspended by vehicle movement over paved and unpaved roads, dirt tracked onto paved surfaces from unpaved areas at access points, earth moving operations, and material blown from uncovered haul trucks. Best Management Practices (BMP) would be employed during construction to minimize the amount of dust generated by construction activities. The guidelines below address potential preventative and mitigation measures that should be evaluated for possible implementation on the proposed project:

Site Preparation Phase:

- Minimize land disturbance;
- Use watering trucks to minimize dust;
- Cover trucks when hauling dirt;
- Stabilize the surface of dirt piles if not removed immediately;
- Use windbreaks to prevent any accidental dust pollution;
- Limit vehicular paths and stabilize these temporary roads; and

- Pave all unpaved construction roads and parking areas to road grade for a length no less than 50 feet from where such roads and parking areas exit the construction site to prevent dirt from washing onto paved roadways.

Construction Phase

- Cover trucks when transferring materials;
- Use dust suppressants on traveled paths which are not paved;
- Minimize unnecessary vehicular and machinery activities; and
- Minimize dirt track-out by washing or cleaning trucks before leaving the construction site (an alternative to this strategy is to pave a few hundred feet of the exit road just before entering the public road).

Post Construction Phase

- Re-vegetate any disturbed land not used for project construction;
- Remove any unused construction materials;
- Remove dirt piles; and
- Re-vegetate all vehicular paths created during construction to avoid possible off-road vehicular activities.

*Mobile Source Emission*s

Since emissions of CO from motor vehicles increase with decreasing vehicle speed, disruption of traffic during construction, such as the temporary reduction of roadway capacity and travel speeds and increased queuing, could result in short-term elevated concentrations of CO. A detailed traffic plan that minimizes delays to the greatest extent feasible, consistent with expeditious completion of construction activities, would be developed to address these issues during the subsequent design phases of the proposed project. Best management practices will be used to control excess VOC emissions during refueling of construction equipment and to prevent spills.

CONSTRUCTION PERIOD IMPACTS

In the construction phase of the Earhart-Causeway interchange project, constructing roadways and bridge structures and installing signalization would result in the generation of various construction-related effects. The population that would be most affected includes local residents whose neighborhoods are located adjacent to the proposed improvements. Any vehicular traffic along the proposed route would inevitably experience some delays and minor inconveniences as a result of construction.

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative includes projects located within the project study area and along the Earhart and Causeway corridors in particular. These projects may produce construction impacts within the Study Area. These projects must be coordinated with the affected

jurisdictions and authorities to ensure that proper permits are obtained and the potential construction effects limited.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action includes construction of a new interchange including bridge and ramp structures, construction of new at-grade roadways, and the installation of new signalization and intersection improvements. This construction will produce disturbances such as noise, vibration, excavation, debris and will require construction staging areas. Short-term construction traffic impacts will also be present under this alternative.

The construction impacts for the Proposed Action are described for each type of impact below:

Construction Period Noise and Air Quality

As mentioned in the previous section, the construction of the proposed project would result in temporary noise level increases within the study area. The noise would be generated primarily from heavy equipment used in hauling materials and building the roadways and bridges. Sensitive areas located close to the construction alignments may temporarily experience increased noise levels; however, there are no areas within the study area where quiet is of extraordinary significance, and therefore no such areas should be significantly impacted by construction noise.

The construction contractor has the responsibility to protect the general public from all aspects of construction. All construction equipment will be required to comply with OSHA Regulations as they apply to the employees' safety, and in accordance with the LADOTD Standard Specifications. All construction equipment used in the construction phase of the project should be properly muffled and all motor panels should be shut during operation. In order to minimize the impacts of construction noise on the local residents, the contractor should operate, whenever possible, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

The construction of the proposed project could result in short-term air quality impacts, particularly related to particulate matter (dust), during project construction. To minimize potential air quality impacts, particularly related to control of particulate matter, the contractor shall comply with all relevant State, Federal and local laws and regulations.

Construction Period Vibration

The interchange ramp structures will require pile driving. Pile driving will cause vibrations that may affect nearby structures, pavements and underground utilities. Peak particle velocities due to pile driving operations should be monitored with a seismograph at critical structures, pavements and utilities. The record of peak particle velocities will

provide information in assessing potential damage and the need for changes in the pile driving operations.

Peak particle velocities of 0.25 in./sec, as measured by a seismograph, are generally regarded as the minimum vibration level uncomfortable to humans. In addition, sustained peak particle velocities of 0.25 in./sec may densify cohesionless fill materials. This densification may result in settlement and damage to structures, pavements or utilities founded in or over these types of materials. Peak particle velocities in excess of 0.5 in./sec, as measured at a structure, may induce damage to the structure.

Excavations, Fill Material, Debris and Spoil

Excavated material for roadway and foundation is not anticipated to require specialized disposal. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was conducted for this study and a summary of this report is included as a part of this document.

Fill material for the project is readily available locally.

Construction debris from the project will require disposal. No anticipated construction debris is anticipated to require specialized disposal.

Construction Staging Areas

A construction staging area will be needed for construction. Right-of-way under the Earhart Expressway's adjacent Norfolk-Southern overpass may be used for such a site. Alternatively, vacant privately-held land along Scott Street east of Causeway and/or similar lands between Lausat St. and the expressway west of Causeway could possibly be used as staging areas.

HAZARDOUS AND SOLID WASTE SITES

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative would have no impact on facilities/sites with recognized environmental conditions.

Proposed Action

The proposed action would have no impact on facilities/sites with recognized environmental conditions.

IMPACTS ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

VEGETATION

No Build Alternative

No impacts to vegetation in the Area of Primary Impact are foreseen under the No Build Alternative.

Proposed Action

The construction of the project will have little impact on existing vegetation, other than the possible removal of a thin line of trees alongside the north side of the CNIC railroad line. Most of the area surrounding the construction of the proposed interchange has been cleared of trees as part of the detention pond project.

WETLANDS

As part of the EIFS phase of the project, Coastal Environments, Inc. (CEI) conducted a preliminary investigation to determine the presence of wetlands within an area designated by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) for construction of the proposed interchange and improvements associated with approaches. In addition, the US Army Corps of Engineers, (New Orleans District) was contacted during the Solicitation of Views process for information on the wetland status of the project area. The preliminary investigation determined that while there were no wetlands within the developed portions of the project area, the undeveloped, previously forested area located between the railroad tracks the expressway could potentially be defined as containing approximately 13.01 acres of jurisdictional wetlands.

However, an EIFS Solicitation of Views response from the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, which has final authority for determining jurisdictional wetlands, stated that based on a review of recent maps, aerial photography, and soils data, they have determined that the property is not in a wetland subject to Corps of Engineers jurisdiction, and that a Department of the Army permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act will not be required for the project.

No Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative should not adversely affect any wetlands as the US Army Corps of Engineers have stated that there is no wetlands present in the area of primary impact.

Proposed Action

Construction of the Proposed Action should not adversely affect any wetlands as the US Army Corps of Engineers have stated that there is no wetlands present in the area of primary impact.

WILDLIFE

No Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative should not adversely affect the native wildlife types as they are abundant in number and are adaptable on an individual basis. Any wildlife present should be able to re-establish itself in new locations rather easily.

Proposed Action

Construction of the Proposed Action should not adversely affect the native wildlife types as they are abundant in number and are adaptable on an individual basis. Any wildlife present should be able to re-establish itself in new locations rather easily.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

No Build Alternative

No impacts to endangered species would occur under the No Build Alternative.

Proposed Action

Potential impacts of the proposed action on threatened species, endangered species, and critical habitat have been evaluated through site investigations, literature research, and coordination with the natural resource agencies.

The area of primary impact was surveyed, and online literature research conducted to evaluate habitat suitability and threatened or endangered species occurrence. During the site survey, habitat conditions in the impact corridors were found to exhibit low habitat values as a result of disturbances from residential development, industrial development, and hydrologic modifications by levees and forced drainage. No evidence of any threatened or endangered species was found within the impact corridors during the survey. This finding was supported by online research, which indicated that the habitat conditions in the area of primary impact are not consistent with the requirements of the threatened and endangered species listed for Jefferson Parish.

During both the EIFS and EA phases of the project, solicitation of views were sent and responded to by US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. Both indicated the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect threatened or endangered species.

Based upon the findings of the site surveys, literature research and agency coordination, it has been concluded that no adverse impacts to threatened or endangered species will occur as a result of the proposed action.

HYDROLOGY, FLOODPLAINS AND FLOODING

No Build Alternative

The area of primary impact is located in a predominantly urban area of Jefferson Parish. The entire project area in Jefferson Parish is protected from flooding by levees and pump stations. Storm water drainage from developed areas protected by levees in Jefferson Parish is pumped by drainage pump stations into waterways outside of the levee system (such as Lake Pontchartrain). As the entire project area is protected by levees and drained by pump stations and/or flood gates, the hydrology in the project area is unlikely to be affected by the construction or operation of the projects included in the No Build Alternative.

Existing flooding problems may be improved due to ongoing and planned drainage and flood control improvements to the area, including the construction of the detention pond in the footprint of the project site.

Proposed Action

Similar to the No-Build Alternative, the hydrology in the project area is unlikely to be affected by the construction or operation of the projects included in the Proposed Action.

Existing flooding problems may be improved due to ongoing and planned drainage and flood control improvements to the area. The construction of the Proposed Action should have no effect on the operation of the detention pond in the footprint of the project site, as only elevated ramp structures are planned for the footprint of the detention pond. All at-grade ramps and roadways associated with the interchange occur outside of the detention basin.

WATER QUALITY

No Build Alternative

Surface water and ground water quality in the project area would be expected to remain consistent with existing conditions under the No Build Alternative.

Proposed Action

Surface waters in the project area (ditches, canals) could potentially be subject to short-term and long-term adverse effects as a result of the construction, use, and maintenance of the proposed action. Short-term effects could be caused by temporary increases in erosion, sedimentation, and from equipment-related pollutant emissions during construction. These discharges would be controlled during construction through the implementation of preventive measures contained in the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development's (DOTD) *Standard Specifications for Roads and Bridges*. Additionally, a *Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) Storm Water General Permit for Construction Activities* from the LDEQ would be required for construction of the proposed action. This permit mandates the development and implementation of a site-specific Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) which incorporates best management practices (BMPs) for spill prevention, erosion control, and sediment control. Due to the control measure implementation requirements of the DOTD and LDEQ, construction activities for the proposed action would not be expected to adversely impact water quality.

Without proper controls, runoff contaminated by vehicular use and maintenance of road and bridge construction projects can cause long-term adverse water quality impacts by introducing a variety of pollutants, including sediments, heavy metals, hydrocarbons, and toxic substances. (EPA, 2005) However, controls for the prevention of storm water contamination have been implemented in the project area through Jefferson Parish's participation in EPA's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) permit program. As a result, contributions of sediment and pollutants from the proposed action would be minimized by mitigation activities such as road surface cleaning (sweeping), storm drain cleaning, vegetation maintenance, and best management practices incorporated into maintenance work. The potential for long-term adverse effects from runoff would be further mitigated by structural control measures incorporated into the design of the proposed action. Since pollution control measures are currently in-place in the project area, operations and maintenance activities associated with the proposed action would not be expected to adversely impact water quality.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

No Build Alternative

There would be no impacts to study area soils or geology if the No Build Alternative is selected. No mitigation would be proposed or required with this alternative.

Proposed Action

It is not anticipated that the proposed action would have a substantial impact on the affected soils or study area geography. However, special design consideration may be warranted to compensate for the possibility of poor soil conditions and/or for construction limitations within the alignment area. If warranted, construction of the alignment would be subject to the appropriate criteria and requirements established by all necessary regulatory agencies prior to the issuance of construction permits.

NATURAL AND SCENIC RIVERS

No Build Alternative

No impacts to the area's natural or scenic rivers would occur under the No Build Alternative.

Proposed Action

No scenic rivers are present within a 1-mile radius of the project area. Therefore, the project will have no adverse impacts on natural and scenic rivers.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ALTERNATIVES

EVALUATION MEASURES

The two stated purposes of the project identified in *Chapter II - Purpose and Need* are used as criteria to assess the effectiveness of the two alternatives considered (the No-Build Alternative and the Proposed Action) in addressing the purpose and need for the project. A text description of how each alternative meets the purpose and need for the project is presented below.

Assist in congestion relief for east-west traffic flow in the New Orleans Metro Area.

As noted in this report, the project study area travel corridors have existing traffic congestion problems, particularly along the east-west axis with routes leading to and

from the city center. As a result, several new projects are under construction, programmed or planned in these corridors to address traffic congestion. These are all included in the No Build Alternative. New capacity will be added along I-10, Causeway Blvd., Airline Drive (west of David Drive) and the Huey P. Long Bridge. Additionally, access improvements to Earhart Expressway such as the westward connection to Airline Drive, new ramps to Jefferson Highway and additional access at L&A should make that currently underutilized roadway a more attractive route for east-west trips.

While these improvements will undoubtedly assist in congestion relief for east-west traffic flow, the proposed action will assist further by providing a centrally-located, needed, multi-directional access point to the currently underutilized Earhart Expressway. Perhaps the best indicator of this is the graphic *Figure VI-1* near the beginning of this chapter, which shows a comparison of volume change percentages for the Proposed Action vs. the No Build Alternative. This charts directly how traffic will be affected with the interchange. While the interchange appears to have little affect on I-10 traffic, with volume changes of within plus or minus 2%, it would definitely lower the traffic volumes on Airline Drive (between 7% and 15%), West Metairie Avenue (an average of 30%), and Jefferson Highway (between 5% and 7% in three instances, but with an increase of 8% in the fourth). These are combined with an overall increase of usage along Earhart Expressway (between 4% and 20% depending on location). By that measure, it would appear that the Proposed Action is more successful than the No Build Alternative in assisting in congestion relief for east-west traffic flow in the area.

Provide better connectivity and access for vehicular traffic in the metro area.

Similar to the first criterion above, under this criterion it would appear that while both alternatives succeed in addressing the criterion, the Proposed Action addresses it more so than the No Build Alternative. While the projects listed in the No Build Alternative all provide more connectivity and access than at present and will make an impact, the Earhart-Causeway interchange is the only one which provides access to Earhart Expressway in **all** directions. The interchange is also centrally located between the full-directional Clearview interchange and the expressway terminus at the Orleans/Jefferson Parish line. It also connects with a major roadway (Causeway) which leads from the river to the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain. None of the other new access locations present in the No Build alternative provide such a major connection in such a prime location.

SELECTION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

As a result of the comparative analysis above and due to the consensus shown by local officials and residents, the Proposed Action is selected as the Preferred Alternative.

CHAPTER VII

THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE: IMPACT SUMMARY, MITIGATION MEASURES AND PERMITS

The Direct Impacts to the transportation system and the human and natural environments as a result of the implementation of the Preferred Alternative are listed. For unavoidable adverse impacts, this chapter provides a discussion of mitigation measures recommended to reduce those adverse effects. The indirect and cumulative impacts of the Preferred Alternative are also examined in this chapter. Permits required to complete the project are listed.

DIRECT IMPACTS NOT REQUIRING MITIGATION

As outlined in *Chapter VI*, implementation of the Preferred Alternative (construction of the new Earhart – Causeway interchange) will likely have some direct impacts within the project study area. Two of these impact categories are considered non-adverse/beneficial, and require no mitigation measures. They include:

- Traffic Impacts
- Access to Community Facilities/Services

DIRECT IMPACTS REQUIRING MITIGATION

The only impact area category that can be considered as having unavoidable, adverse social, economic, or natural environmental impacts that require some form of mitigation is **Construction Period Impacts**. A discussion of the proposed mitigation measures for those impacts is provided below:

In terms of mitigation of construction period impacts (noise, air quality and vibration), several mitigation steps shall be taken and proper procedures followed. To minimize noise impacts, all construction equipment used in the construction phase of the project should be properly muffled and all motor panels should be shut during operation. In order to minimize the potential for impacts of construction noise on the local residents, the contractor should operate, whenever possible, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. To minimize potential air quality impacts, particularly related to control of particulate matter, the contractor shall comply with all relevant State, Federal and local laws and regulations. To minimize vibration impacts, peak particle velocities due to pile driving operations should be monitored with a seismograph at critical structures, pavements and utilities during all pile driving operations. The record of peak particle

velocities will provide information in assessing potential damage and the need for changes in the pile driving operations.

INDIRECT (SECONDARY) IMPACTS

The indirect or secondary impacts discussed in this section concern possible future conditions following construction of the new interchange.

The completion of the Preferred Alternative should not present new growth scenarios in and around the respective neighborhoods contained in the study area as these areas are almost fully built-out. Some redevelopment may occur in areas surrounding the new interchange, since sites near the interchange will be very close to an Expressway access point. Older industrial buildings may be demolished for newer uses, for example. The improved access may make the existing neighborhoods south of the Expressway more attractive to potential residents, thereby increasing housing values. Dilapidated or substandard property in the area may be considered for redevelopment sooner once the new interchange is completed.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

This section provides a definition of *cumulative impacts*; the methodology utilized to determine cumulative impacts, and describes the cumulative impacts for the Preferred Alternative. In general, the cumulative impact is the impact of this project considered with all past, present and foreseeable projects together in the area.

METHODOLOGY

The Code of Federal Regulations (Title 40, Section 1508.7), states that cumulative effects are *"…impacts which result from the incremental consequences of an action when added to other past and reasonably foreseeable future actions, …"* The assessment will determine the impact(s) upon quality of life and environmental quality. Consideration of past, present, and foreseeable future actions in conjunction with anticipated effects of the Preferred Alternative is required. The point of the assessment is to determine the past impacts that have occurred, the present impact implications, and future impacts to the entire study area.

Past Actions

The methodology of assessing the cumulative impacts of the Preferred Alternative also considers the impacts from past projects within the study area of Jefferson Parish. Cumulative impacts include the impacts from the existing Causeway Overpass and Earhart Expressway; residential, commercial, office, and industrial land uses; major area thoroughfares; and drainage.

Current Projects

The methodology of assessing the cumulative impacts of the Preferred Alternative also considers the impacts on other current projects within the study areas of Jefferson Parish. Current, ongoing projects or developments that are included in the Preferred Alternative's cumulative impact analysis include:

- Huey P. Long Bridge Widening and Improvement.
- I-10 widening and Improvement.
- Construction of the Detention Pond at Earhart and Causeway, and other ongoing drainage projects.

Future Projects

The methodology of assessing the cumulative impacts of the Preferred Alternative also considers the impacts on future foreseeable projects or developments within the study areas of Jefferson Parish. Many roadway and highway projects programmed for development are included as part of the No Build Alterantive and described in detail in *Chapter III*.

Other major foreseeable projects that are included in the Preferred Alternative's cumulative impact analysis include construction of *The St. Raymond*, a proposed high-rise twin tower development on the site of the former Jefferson Plaza Shopping Center on Jefferson Highway near Causeway.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS EVALUATION AND SUMMARY

Transportation/Traffic Circulation

The cumulative impact on the roadway system is that the proposed new interchange will serve as a supplement to that system. The project's cumulative impact on the surrounding routes is positive in that it would prevent traffic circulation delays by more evenly spreading east-west traffic to and from the city center. In addition, the Preferred Alternative should effectuate a change in transportation utility and capacity, as well as in traffic circulation and patterns on major roadways within the project study area.

Residual impacts may include right-of-way improvements such as repaving, improved street lighting, and enhancements such as landscaping.

Land Use Development/Redevelopment

New land use development and redevelopment of uses could be a positive residual effect as a result of the Preferred Alternative. New land use opportunities could entail residential, commercial, and office uses. Due to the urban setting, especially in Jefferson

Parish, it is anticipated that land use patterns would continue in a similar manner as past development. Substantial change is not anticipated to occur relative to the entire study area's land use character.

Summary

The overall cumulative impacts of the Preferred Alternative on past, current, and foreseeable future projects in the project area would be generally beneficial. The additional transportation utility and traffic capacity of the Preferred Alternative would assist in alleviating current traffic circulation problems and could encourage and increase new land use opportunities.

PERMITS REQUIRED

A Section 401 Permit (Water Quality Certification) will be required from the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.

CHAPTER VIII

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, AGENCY COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

This chapter describes the public participation process for the project, including documentation of a public meeting and coordination efforts associated with the development of the project. These efforts include meetings made with LADOTD, FHWA, other agencies and elected officials and a *Solicitation of Views* requesting written comments on the project.

A complete record of all comments and coordination, including all responses from the *Solicitation of Views*, agency correspondence, public meeting summary and transcript, sign-in sheets and handouts from the public meeting and all written comments received from citizens and interested parties are located in the project files of LADOTD.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

PUBLIC MEETING

One public meeting was conducted on the project on November 8, 2006, The meeting was held at the Metairie Senior Center located at 265 North Causeway Boulevard, in Metairie, Louisiana from 6:30 P. M. to 8:30 P. M. near the site of the proposed project. The meeting was announced in the local newspaper advertisements and mail-outs were sent to neighborhood associations and community leaders in the area. The meeting was attended by area residents, concerned citizens and public officials. Comments, concerns and questions about the project were expressed and discussed at the public meeting. Written comment forms taken during and after the meeting were compiled.

Meeting Summary

The purpose of the public meeting was to obtain public input on the two design alternatives for the proposed interchange at Earhart and Causeway Boulevards. Approximately 43 people attended the public meeting, including 27 citizens, one elected official, one local agency official, six LADOTD officials and eight members of the project team.

Mr. Bruce Richards of N-Y Associates, Inc. welcomed the attendees and recognized elected officials and their representatives, DOTD agency officials and the project team. Mr. Richards first reviewed the structure of the meeting and began with the need for the project. He then reviewed the findings from the earlier phase of the project, the *Environmental Inventory and the Feasibility Study* (EIFS).

Mr. Richards summarized the Environmental Inventory, which considered 15 different alternatives. The results of the inventory generally recommended avoidance of the Shrewsbury area along South Causeway Boulevard. This phase also indicated some areas of environmental concern relative to hazardous waste sites.

Mr. Richards also discussed the Feasibility Study, which focused on movements to and from the north, with movements to and from the south as a secondary concern. A total of 15 alternatives were considered under a number of criteria including level of service, cost, displacements, environmental constraints and constructability. After analysis and input from two public meetings conducted during the course of the feasibility study, the number of alternatives was reduced to two options, Layout 6 and Layout 12.

Mr. Richards then presented the features and attributes of the two final alternatives. Layout 6 allows for four (4) free-flow movements, operates at acceptable levels of service even when traffic volumes from future roadway improvements are considered; requires nine (9) acres of right-of-way, four (4) acres of servitudes, twenty-four (24) residential relocations, and six (6) commercial relocations; is adjacent to one known environmental hazard and was estimated to have a conceptual cost of $45 million (2004 estimate).

Layout 12 allows for all eight (8) possible movements – six (6) under free flow condition and two (2) signal controlled;, operates at acceptable levels of service even when traffic volumes from future roadway improvements are considered; requires three (3) acres of right of way, 1.7 acres of servitudes, no residential relocations and five (5) commercial relocations; is adjacent to one known environmental hazard and was estimated to have a conceptual cost of $35 million (2004 estimate).

Mr. Mike Aghayan of LADOTD noted that the project is currently unfunded.

Mr. Richards then recessed the meeting for 30 minutes to allow members of the public to review the mapped alternatives and ask questions of the project team.

Mr. Richards reconvened the meeting and called for public comments and questions. Five speakers went on record, asking a variety of questions from effects on cemeteries in the area, impact analysis, need for improvements to Causeway Boulevard and increasing traffic levels. One public comment expressed a preference for Layout 12.

After the public meeting, six written comments on the public meeting were received:

- Four of the comments were in the same handwriting, all from homeowners under Causeway Boulevard requesting to be bought out and expressing preference for Layout 6 since it would require the homes to be purchased. Some of the homes were apparently damaged during Hurricane Katrina in August of 2005.

- One comment expressed concerns about the traffic signal and a desire to not to the move the project until Causeway Boulevard is enlarged to three lanes up to Interstate-10.

- One comment was general, stating that the respondent lived four blocks away and was concerned and wanted to know more about the project.

EA DOCUMENT REVIEW AND PUBLIC HEARING

The Environmental Assessment was distributed to agencies and elected officials for review and made available to the general public for review in September 2007. Most of the public comment and input on this Environmental Assessment for the Earhart-Causeway interchange project came as a result of a weeknight public hearing held in Metairie near the project site. The Hearing was advertised twice in the *Times-Picayune* (distributed throughout the metro area) via large display advertisements on Monday September 17th, and Thursday, October 11th, 2007. The Times-Picayune also had news articles on the hearing in its October 17th and October 18th editions, with the October 18th article being a front-page story for the East Bank Metro edition. The Project and Public Hearing notice was also featured on local television station WGNO ABC-26 on October 17th, as a lead, in-depth story of the 6:00 PM broadcast and as a smaller piece on the 10:00 PM broadcast. Meeting notices were also sent to local officials and all project area neighborhood associations, as well as to those who signed in at the public meetings held in November 2006.

The Public Hearing was held on October 18, 2007 at the Metairie Senior Center. The hearing had ample public notice. The public hearing was held in an "open house" format, with attendees able to visit several "stations" to observe exhibits and ask questions of the staff manning the stations. The stations were as follows:

- Welcome/Sign-In Table
- LADOTD Real Estate / Right-of-Way Acquisitions Information
- Environmental Impacts Exhibits
- Engineering Exhibits (two sets of manned exhibits featuring plan views and cross sections)
- Traffic Impacts Exhibits (including a graphic showing projected volume changes under the proposed interchange, and a CORSIM animation showing how traffic flows would work once the interchange was in place. The CORSIM animation was projected onto a full-size screen so that several people could view it at once, and the entire station was manned by the traffic subconsultant).
- 3-D rendering station, showing the interchange modeled in 3-D using the SketchUp program. The rendering was projected onto a small screen so that several attendees could view it at the same time. The station was manned by a member of the project team, who could maneuver the rendering to show attendees the interchange through various angles and views zooming in or out at the attendee's request.
- A narrated PowerPoint presentation briefing on the project, playing on a timed loop
- Transcriptionist area, for giving oral comments.

Several copies of the Environmental Assessment document were placed on a table and available for in-house review during the hearing. An information packet handout was provided to each attendee upon entering the hearing. The packet included a text description covering *project background, project description and design concept, project history*, and *summary of impact*s. The handout also included a vicinity map, a printout of the PowerPoint presentation slides shown during the hearing, and a form for receiving written comments. After receiving their packets and signing in, attendees were allowed to examine the exhibits and ask questions of the staff. According to the sign-in sheets, 35 citizens attended the public hearing, along with several local and state agency officials.

Out of the 35 attendees, 10 speakers went on record with the transcriptionist, though two of these would not leave their names. All of these verbal comments dealt not with the findings in the document, but with the project in general, with all of them expressing concerns or opposition. More than half were from persons residing in or associated with the small residential community along Causeway Blvd. between the Earhart Expressway and the Kansas City Southern railroad. They had several issues with the project, feeling that the noise and traffic impacts from the interchange would negatively affect them, and many of them calling for a buyout of their properties based not only on the possible future impacts, but also on the impacts from past developments and future conditions. Two attendees stated that they were concerned about the possible closure of Lausat Street near Shrewsbury Road, which would leave this neighborhood with less access. Outside of these neighborhood-specific concerns, one speaker stated that he was opposed due to traffic concerns, particularly as relating to how the interchange would affect traffic flow where Earhart Expressway transitions to Earhart Boulevard in Orleans Parish.

Eight (8) written comments were received during the comment period. Similar to the verbal comments received at the hearing, most of the comments addressed the project in general, and only one comment received specifically addressed the document and its findings. All of the written comments were negative regarding the project. Most of the comments discussed traffic issues along the Earhart mainline. The overwhelming issue was additional traffic on the Earhart Expressway worsening existing traffic problems at the eastern terminus of the Expressway (roadway conditions, transition to fewer lanes, and signalization issues along Earhart Boulevard in Orleans Parish). Other issues raised included the statement that Earhart's current speed limit (50 mph) was set too low, that Earhart flooded and the interchange would worsen drainage problems, and that the current western terminus of the Expressway (at Hickory) was an existing traffic problem that would worsen with the interchange's construction. Some traffic comments focused on Causeway Boulevard. One comment was that Causeway north of Airline needed to be widened, another was that an additional stoplight on Causeway would be detrimental to traffic flow, and another comment worried about effects to traffic at the Airline/Causeway traffic circle.

The sole non-traffic related written comment dealt with the neighborhood on S. Causeway between the Expressway and the KCS railroad, re-iterating the need for a buyout and expressing a preference for eliminated Alternative # 6, which would have necessitated a buyout.

Staff members who manned the stations made note of informal comments and questions received from attendees. These generally followed the themes of the verbal and written comments that were later received: concerns over traffic, concerns over vibration and noise impacts, and the desires for a buyout of the Causeway Blvd neighborhood near the existing Causeway Blvd. overpass. All informal comments and questions were reflected in the verbal and written comments.

A summary of the formal comments received on the draft EA document (both at the Public Hearing and outside of the Public Hearing) are presented below:

Issues Raised at Public Hearing

Greg Kampen, River Ridge, LA

Comment: Connection to Causeway is not a good idea due to situation where traffic flow enters Orleans Parish: lane reduction from three lanes to two lanes, speed change from 50 to 35 miles per hour (20 mph if there is a school zone), and numerous signals on Earhart Boulevard

Response: Although the limits of the Earhart Expressway/ State Highway 3139 end just east of the Orleans/Jefferson Parish line, traffic impacts to the surrounding circulation system were projected and considered within this project. However, just as this project will not be built for some time, the impacts also considered improvements to the system which should occur before this project comes on-line.

The situation at the eastern terminus is a case in point. Louisiana State Highway 3139 (the Earhart Expressway) transitions into local street Earhart Boulevard just east of the Parish line. Earhart Boulevard is a principal arterial roadway that leads directly to the New Orleans CBD. As noted in *Chapter III* of this document, the three-mile section of Earhart Boulevard in New Orleans which directly links to the Earhart Expressway is being improved under the state's Transportation Infrastructure Model for Economic Development (TIMED) program. The project is divided into five segments that will be repaved and widened to four lanes. The Earhart Boulevard TIMED project is 88 percent complete, and improvement of the entire corridor is scheduled for completion in late 2010. Improvement of Earhart Boulevard should assist in traffic flow.

As noted in *Chapter III* of this document, a new off-ramp for eastbound Earhart traffic to access US Hwy. 90 (Claiborne Avenue / Jefferson Highway) is being planned along the Jefferson/Orleans Parish line. This ramp was included in the original Earhart plans, and would use an existing ramp stub-out along Earhart. This off-ramp has gone through the environmental process and is currently listed in the Regional Planning Commission's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as a fiscal year 2008-2010 project. This off-ramp effectively eliminates the lane reduction / "bottleneck" that currently exists, as traffic bound for uptown New Orleans destinations will likely take this route, rather than proceeding along Earhart Boulevard. Modeling numbers from the traffic analysis showed that 23% of the eastbound Earhart traffic is expected to take this off-ramp option.

Another key point is that that purpose and need for this project is not only to assist in congestion relief for all east-west traffic flow in the New Orleans Metro Area, but also to *provide better connectivity and access for vehicular traffic in the metro area*. In some instances, the two may be perceived as working towards different ends. By providing additional access to a highway facility, that particular facility may have an increase in traffic volume, which can be construed as increasing congestion on that highway facility. However, traffic projections and analysis completed for the Environmental Assessment have shown that with the interchange in place, there should be no significant impact to this stretch of roadway as compared to if the interchange is not in place. Addition of the interchange results in a projected increase of only 1,791 vehicles per day east bound and 2,723 vehicles per day westbound between Causeway and the Parish line. This change results in no difference in Level of Service along this stretch of the Expressway.

Iris Madere, owner of family property at Lausat Street and South Causeway Boulevard

Comment: Statement that noise levels will not increase is insulting; noise factor is there already because of trucks in this mostly industrial area.

Response: As stated in *Chapter VI*, a quantitative, computer-based analysis of the effects of the proposed interchange on ambient noise levels was performed following the procedures of the LADOTD and the FHWA. As part of that study, one noise monitoring station was located in the very neighborhood that Ms. Madere is discussing. Ms. Madere is correct in stating that the noise level is high there already; this particular area had a model-validated existing reading of 67.6 dBA, which is above the state's Noise Abatement Criteria level of 66 dBA for residential areas. Under projected conditions, the future noise level if the interchange is not constructed is projected to rise to 69.8 dBA, and with the interchange in place it would increase only slightly more, to 69.9 dBA. As part of this analysis, this neighborhood was determined to have traffic noise impacts under the build condition. Noise mitigation was explored for the neighborhood, and while a noise barrier was determined to be feasible as it provided an 8 dBA reduction in noise levels, it did not meet the reasonableness criterion for a sound barrier, as the cost per receiver affected was $90,572, much greater than the $25,000 per receiver criterion.

Comment: "If this is going to be done (build interchange), that the land should be purchased at a fair price. And don't come in there and construct or extend an expressway around black folks".

Response: The project does not involve construction or extension of an expressway; it involves construction of a new expressway interchange. Due to the nature of this as an interchange project, its location was predetermined, and the analysis conducted in the EA Document did indicate some concentrations of minority and low-income populations in the project area. However, as noted in *Chapter VI*, so as to not disproportionately impact these minority and low-income populations, the selection of the preferred build alternative and the design layout of the selected interchange were done in such a way as to limit impacts on surrounding communities, to the greatest extent practical. This was

done to address requirements for environmental justice as described in Executive Order 12898, and the FHWA's Order 6640.23.

It should be noted that no residential properties are to be acquired and visual and noise impacts are limited in nature. It should also be noted that any property purchased for completion of this project will be done according to both state and federal rules which establish the payment of fair market value and may also involve relocation costs.

Louisa Martin, resident along South Causeway Blvd. in project area

Comment: Opposed to project, due to noise and traffic concerns—grandkids cannot come out of front door due to too much traffic being there.

Response: See above response to Ms. Madere re: noise. Traffic increases associated with the project will be focused along the mainline of the expressway and elevated Causeway Boulevard overpass. Additional traffic is not expected to be an issue on ground-level S. Causeway Boulevard, which is not connected directly to these roadways.

J.C. Dawson, resident of Kenner

Comment: Concerned that Lausat Street is being blocked off, which would deny people access. There is a chemical plant in the vicinity and access could be critical. Reconsider blocking off Lausat Street and allowing ingress and egress from the west.

Response: During the Environmental Inventory and Feasibility Study (EIFS) as well as during the Environmental Assessment process, Parish maps and LADOTD as-builts were researched to determine right-of way information. Interestingly enough, it was found that the Lausat Street right-of-way actually extends due-east-west across the Norfolk-Southern Railroad right-of way. This is evident as west of the railroad, Lausat Street continues due west several blocks to Lillian Street. The continuation of Lausat Street that veers to the southwest and connects with Shrewsbury Road just north of the existing Earhart Expressway appears to be constructed on both state right of way (purchased for the originally-planned Earhart-Causeway interchange) and across privately-held land (conversations with the property owners held during the EIFS stage buttressed this observation).

Regardless of the ownership situation, access to the west for local streets has been present and will be maintained. During the design engineering phase, the state and Parish will work to best determine how to maintain this access, be it a shifting of the Lausat Street extension to the north, or forgoing the Shrewsbury Road railroad crossing for a new crossing on the existing Lausat Street right-of-way.

Comment: With roadway moving 12 feet closer in the area along S. Causeway, there will definitely be a noise impact. Would like consideration for a noise abatement barrier or perhaps a barrier built for aesthetic purposes in this area.

Response: See response to Ms. Madere re: noise impacts in this area. Although the neighborhood is and will be impacted by noise, noise barriers do not meet the LADOTD criteria for reasonableness as it would cost more than $25,000 per benefited receiver to construct one. In terms of aesthetics, LADOTD is amenable to allowing private property owners or the Parish to build a solid fence or wall (rather than the standard chain- link fence) for visual screening along their right-of way boundary; however, LADOTD will not maintain such a fence or wall.

Jack Mouten, resident along Claiborne Ave in the project area

Comment: Interested in a buyout—the area is now a heavy industrial area, dangerous for kids because of proximity to Delta Petroleum. There are only 25 people or houses back there.

Response: A buyout of property would only be necessitated if the property was needed for the transportation improvement. LADOTD does not buy out properties due to pre-existing conditions.

Comment: Concern over closure of Lausat Street, one of only a few exits to get out (of neighborhood). The only other exits from neighborhood are at Labarre, which is subject to blockages by train, and the underpass close to the Orleans Parish line.

Response: See above response to Mr. Dawson re: access and closure of Lausat. State and Parish will preserve local street western access during design engineering for project.

Eliza Julian, property owner along S. Causeway Blvd. in the project area

Comment: Would like a buyout—preferred earlier-eliminated Alternative 6, as it would have entailed acquisition of her property. Buyout needed due to truck traffic in neighborhood, dust, power wires, local traffic, hard to get out of area during a fire, flood, or hurricane, etc.

Response: See above response to Mr. Mouten re: buyout of area.

Anonymous male speaker - did not leave name

Comment: Opposed to project – project is ridiculous.

Response: Cannot respond – nothing specific mentioned.

Maria White, resident along Alura Street along S. Causeway Blvd. in the project area

Comment: Both she and her husband were opposed to project; noise is bad now and will be worse if project is completed. Vibration from truck traffic on Earhart is ruining the structure, exterior stucco, and inside of house.

Response: As stated in *Chapter VI* of the EA document, a quantitative, computer-based analysis of the effects of the proposed interchange on ambient noise levels was performed following the procedures of the LADOTD and the FHWA. As part of that study, one noise monitoring station was located in Ms. White's neighborhood. Ms. White is correct in stating that the noise level is high there already; this particular area had a model-validated existing reading of 74.5 dBA, which is well above the state's Noise Abatement Criteria level of 66 dBA for residential areas. Under projected conditions, the future noise level if the interchange is not constructed is projected to *decrease* to 71.0 dBA (this decrease in noise level is attributable to lower traffic speeds as traffic volumes increase along Earhart Blvd.). With the interchange in place it would also decrease, to 71.8 dBA. As part of this analysis, this neighborhood was determined to have traffic noise impacts under the build condition as the noise condition remained above the 66 dBA level. Noise mitigation was explored for the neighborhood. The noise barrier was not determined to be feasible, as it only provided a 4.1 dBA reduction in noise level. It also did not meet the LADOTD's reasonableness criterion for a sound barrier, as the cost per receiver affected was $56,056, much greater than the $25,000 per receiver criterion.

Anonymous female speaker - did not leave name

Comment: Opposed to project – don't think it's right that they are expecting us to live like that.

Response: Cannot respond – nothing specific mentioned.

Rita Dawson, resident of Kenner

Comment: Concerned for residents in the area in terms of noise, pollution, and air quality. Interchange will have a negative effect on quality of life in the area, and that needs to be considered.

Response: The EA process considered all impacts. See earlier comments regarding noise impact analysis. Air Quality impacts were also examined during the EA, and should be limited to minor, localized short-term increases in fugitive dust and mobile source emissions during construction. As noted in *Chapter VI,* Best Management Practices (BMP) would be employed during construction to minimize the amount of dust generated by construction activities and to control excess VOC emissions during refueling of construction equipment and to prevent spills. All construction will also be in accordance with the LADOTD Standard Specifications to limit construction period-related impacts.

Comment: The presentation (at the Hearing) was very informative

Response: Comment noted.

Issues Raised in Correspondence Received Outside of Public Hearing

Ron Ballestas, resident of Academy Drive in Metairie

Comment: "Need fewer ramps—Southbound Causeway ramps 'B' and 'F' to eastbound Earhart and westbound Earhart via Ramp 'C' to northbound Causeway are all that is required."

Response: The LADOTD began this process with a mandate that a minimum of four (4) movements were required, linking Earhart to and from the north side of Causeway. Throughout both the EIFS and EA processes, input was received from both the general public as well as local and agency officials that overwhelmingly indicated a desire for full (8 movement) access at the interchange.

Comment: "Pedestrian Bridges – AASHTO and Traffic Engineers require that pedestrian bridges and bike paths be piggybacked on new road projects."

Response: Although pedestrian and bicycle facilities are encouraged on new roadways, no such requirements or regulations exist. LADOTD also prohibits pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle access on controlled-access facilities. As noted in *Chapter V*, as researched through Jefferson Parish and regional plans, the only dedicated bicycle and pedestrian facility is along the southern edge of the project study area, the ***Mississippi River Trail***.

Comment: "No provision for future lite (sp) rail-- the Regional Planning Commission has been studying and recommending light rail from Louis Armstrong Airport to the CBD."

Response: The LADOTD still has underway its East-West Corridor Study transit component and is researching connecting the airport to the CBD via several different means of transit (including light rail). During both the EIFS and EA process, coordination with that effort was undertaken. As mentioned on page III-5 of this document, the proposed alignment for the transit project in the vicinity of the interchange uses portions of the KCS rail right of way along the south side of Airline Drive

Comment: "…definition of "Expressway"… On–ramps and off-ramps violate ALL rules of practicality… Jefferson Hwy to Earhart along Causeway is 2/10s of a mile, Earhart to Airline is 2/10s of a mile…Current speed limit, although not posted on the overpass itself is 45 mph"

Response: Causeway Boulevard is not controlled access facility, although Earhart Expressway is.

Comment: "The Elmwood Retention basins to solve the flooding along Clearview and Earhart would be obliterated. A Pump Station the likes of one at Pontchartrain Expressway and the Railroad overpass will be required to adequately drain both the existing expressway, Clearview Parkway, and the new ramps. The *current* drainage system for the *existing* Earhart Expressway is inadequate."

Response: The Elmwood retention basins located in the Clearview-Earhart interchange are located more than a mile and a half away from this project and will not be affected. As mentioned on page VI-36 of the document in the section on *Hydrology, Floodplains and Flooding*, the construction of the interchange should have no effect on the new detention pond in the footprint of the project site, as only elevated ramp structures are planned for that area. All drainage for the interchange will be fully addressed during the design engineering phase.

Comment: Over twenty years ago, a study has been completed saying that there was a need for an elevated expressway along Causeway Blvd from Airline Hwy to the lake.

Response: Although such a *study* may have been completed in the past, there are no *plans* at present to construct an elevated expressway along Causeway Blvd. The interchange project does take into account the RPC's *Year 2027 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)*, which includes the widening of Causeway Boulevard from US 61 to West Napoleon Avenue. The current roadway is only four lanes wide; the proposed widening would entail a widening to six or more lanes.

Comment: "In the Design Criteria, the "Required Right-of-Way Width" states "as needed" How much is needed?"

Response: As this is an interchange project, there is no set width of right-of-way as there is for a highway mainline. As described in *Chapter III*, a total of 3.016 acres of right-of-way and 1.704 acres of servitude area is estimated for the project. Actual amount of right-of-way will be determined during design.

Comment: "Page IV-3 states that "Layout 12 does not impact the traffic circle above Airline." However, the traffic circle mergers onto Causeway are dangerously close to the proposed new stoplight to be located on the elevated section of the Causeway overpass."

Response: The statement on page IV-3 refers to physical impacts on the circle, thus no modifications to existing exit/entrance ramps are necessary. The traffic circle is not located "dangerously close" to the stoplight; all interchange improvements meet or

exceed AASHTO guidelines, meet LADOTD criteria for roadway design, and have been developed under review of LADOTD engineering staff.

Comment: "The number of traffic lights along Jefferson and Causeway Blvd. will have traffic backed up to Ochsner Hospital in the east and the I-10 Causeway interchange to the North, especially during rush hour." (numerous listed signalized intersections) "need to be accounted for if a signal is to be added on Causeway".

Response: A full traffic analysis for design year (2027) conditions was completed as part of the EA. The design year analysis included not only the proposed interchange, but also planned improvements scheduled to be completed by the design year. The analysis also included a CORSIM traffic simulation modeling analysis. All analyses showed that traffic should flow at acceptable levels in the design year once this interchange is completed.

Comment: "Page IV-4 Mainline structure excludes the traffic circle ramps. I do not think you can exclude a study on the traffic circle ramps."

Response: The reference on this page refers only to the conceptual construction cost section. No cost for construction is anticipated for the traffic circle ramps as they will not be physically altered. As mentioned above, the traffic circle was examined in terms of traffic.

Comment: "A more accurate estimate of the roadway may be obtained if you can find out how much it cost to fix the submerged area of Airline Hwy after the storm."

Response: The existing cost estimate in Table IV-3 uses post-Katrina figures and is deemed accurate; no portion of the proposed interchange is located below grade and requires pumps (as the Airline underpass does).

Comment: "Address quality of life impact for residents of Scott and Burns".

Response: Impacts to the area south of the proposed interchange (including Scott and Burns Streets) was examined in the EA process and documented in the EA report. The area should have little if any impacts in terms of "quality of life" categories, as explained in *Chapter VI* of the document.

Comment: "At-Grade roadway: "miscellaneous construction"; no figures are given in estimate for guardrail, metal signs, fencing, landscaping, brick column covers, previous signage that was removed and never replaced by previous projects, previous signage that was removed and never replaced by Katrina."

Response: The estimate given in the document is a conceptual estimate of construction cost – not a detailed line item estimate, which wll be developed during design engineering.

Comment: "Are the railroads affected?"

Response: As described on page VI-8 of the document, there should be little impact on the operation of the rail line as the new ramps have been designed to provide adequate clear operation space. The only impact anticipated is the need for coordination between the LADOTD and the rail lines during the widening of the Causeway overpass.

Comment: "Mast lighting is ugly and too industrial and not appropriate along a residential corridor. Mast lights are the first ones to get blown down in a hurricane. Was a light pollution study done, and for that matter, a noise abatement study? "

Response: Mast lighting is the preferred method of lighting new or reconstructed interchanges for the LADOTD, and is only mentioned in the document for lighting cost estimation purposes. The new mast lights at the Causeway and Clearview interchanges of I-10 survived Hurricane Katrina without toppling. A "light pollution" study was not done, and the actual lighting design has not been completed. LADOTD will do all lighting design in a context-sensitive manner. However, as mentioned in earlier comment responses, a full noise impact analysis was complete as part of the EA process.

Comment: "Table IV-2 - 210 Industrial Avenue is located neither in Labarre Industrial Park nor Elmwood Industrial Park?"

Response: Neither that address nor 1000 Dakin Street is located in Labarre or Elmwood Industrial Park. The document states that "a web search was undertaken in the industrial zoned areas near the proposed project (such as those in Labarre Industrial Park and Elmwood Industrial Park)". The two parks were given as examples, not limitations of search area.

Comment: "Contingencies states that a 25% contingency was allowed for construction costs. What contingencies were allowed for other costs? (i.e. right of way acquisitions?)"

Response: As can be seen on *Table IV-3*, the 25% contingency was applied to the sub-total, including right-of-way acquisitions and all project costs other than engineering.

Comment: "Page IV-8, why does the median (neutral ground) have to be removed? Are the crepe myrtles going to be impacted? These trees were located here by volunteer organizations in an effort to beautify the strip as well as the calming effects of landscaping.."

Response: The removed causeway median section in the cost estimate refers to the raised concrete median on the Causeway overpass. Sections of this would need to be removed to allow for the sweeping left turns from the ramps onto Causeway Boulevard. No ground-level median, nor its landscaping, is to be affected.

Howard Davenport, resident of Jasper Street in Metairie

Comment: Need Causeway exit from Earhart, but how will cars be able to travel north on Causeway during peak time? The two lanes on Causeway cannot handle the current traffic, and would become unmanageable with the added cars from the new link. The only way this would work is if a third lane is added to Causeway.

Response: As was described in *Chapter III* and mentioned in an earlier response, the interchange project does take into account the RPC's Year 2027 MTP, which includes the widening of Causeway Boulevard from US 61 to West Napoleon Avenue. The current roadway is only four lanes wide; the proposed widening would entail a widening to six or more lanes.

Comment: I don't like the idea of another traffic light on Causeway, which would slow traffic down more than what it is now. It would be much better for motorists if this project could be accomplished without another light on Causeway.

Response: Layout 12 was selected as the preferred alternative primarily due to its balance of providing all access movements with a minimum amount of signalization disruption of traffic on Causeway Boulevard. Six (6) of the eight (8) possible movements occur in a free-flow manner, and the signalized intersection is a brief two-phase signal with short red times for Causeway traffic. As shown in the CORSIM modeling analysis, under future conditions, with all planned traffic projects completed, future traffic volumes accounted for, and the interchange in place, the traffic should flow adequately and meet acceptable Levels of Service (LOS) even during peak times.

Anne H. Montgomery, Resident of River Ridge, LA and daily commuter on the Earhart Expressway

Comment: Address the Earhart Expressway consolidation of lanes as it enters Orleans Parish. This is a common source of congestion that will only be aggravated when the Causeway connection is completed.

Response: See above response to Mr. Kampen above re: transition at Orleans Parish line and improvements to Earhart Boulevard.

Comment: Address the Earhart Expressway consolidation of lanes as it ends at Hickory and Airline Highway. This is a common source of congestion that will only be aggravated when the Causeway connection is completed.

Response: As described in *Chapter III*, a Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision have recently been completed for the East-West Corridor Project, Highway Component. The project proposes a northwestward extension of the Earhart Expressway to a merge condition with Airline Drive just west of David Drive as well as widening and other improvements to Airline Drive from this merge to I-310. This highway project is included in the Year 2027 MTP, and as such was considered in addressing traffic impacts.

Comment: Address the speed limit of 50 mph on this six-lane expressway. It seems that 60 mph in the body of the expressway would be a more reasonable speed limit.

Response: Earhart was constructed to the LADOTD F-1 design standard, which has a design speed of 50 mph. This urban freeway section allows for tighter curves, less sight distances, and less space for merge ramps in exchange for lesser travel speeds. The standard is used to help develop freeways in tight, land-restricted urban corridors (such as the Earhart Expressway corridor).

Dewey M. Scandurro, resident of River Ridge, LA and commuter on the Earhart Expressway

Comment: Adding more commuter traffic to the Earhart Expressway is a terrible idea. Traffic moves well on the Expressway until it approaches the Parish line. There commuters encounter a series of red lights that back up traffic from Carrollton Avenue all the way back into Jefferson Parish… When the traffic lights malfunction, it has taken me 90 minutes to cover the same distance… The afternoon commute is no better, with traffic stacking up from the east side of Carrollton all the way to the oft-malfunctioning light at the Jefferson Parish line. And don't get me started about the condition of the pavement on Earhart Boulevard in Orleans Parish, which crumbles under the existing traffic faster than crews can fill the potholes.

Response: See above response to Mr. Kampen above re: transition at Orleans Parish line and improvements to Earhart Boulevard.

Mark P. Dauer, resident of Harahan, LA and frequent driver on the Earhart Expressway

Comment: Opposed to project. The Expressway cannot handle the extra traffic that would result from the interchange connecting to Causeway Blvd. due to the severe bottleneck that arises at peak commuting hours at the Orleans Parish terminus of the Expressway. At that point the Expressway constricts to two lanes at Earhart Boulevard and encounters several traffic lights from the Parish line to S. Carrollton Avenue.

Response: See above response to Mr. Kampen above re: transition at Orleans Parish line and improvements to Earhart Boulevard.

Eliza Julian, property owner along S. Causeway Blvd. in the project area

Comment: "It is my understanding that the majority of people voted on Project #6, but the state and local governments voted for project # 12, which doesn't represent the people's interest."

Response: There was no "voting" to decide between the two final alternatives. As described in Chapter III, the selection of Layout 12 over Layout 6 was a result of several factors including public input. Public input over the life of the project has, in fact, generally been in favor of Layout 12. At the final public meeting held under the EIFS process, where the two final alternatives – Layout 6 and Layout 12—were presented to the public, the response was overwhelmingly for Layout 12. The three speakers who went on record announced their preference for Layout 12, and after one speaker actually asked for a show of hands for each of the two projects, all hands were raised in favor of Layout 12, and none were raised in favor of Layout 6. At the public meeting associated with this EA, only one commenter stated a preference for the record and that was for Layout 12. During the recess period, when attendees spoke with project representatives one on one, several attendees expressed their preference for Layout 12. Following the public meeting, four (4) written comments were received that were in the same handwriting, all from homeowners under Causeway wanting to be bought out and expressing preference for Layout 6 simply because it would require them to be bought out.

Comment: "This is just another project to box the people in and put us in even more in harm's way. We are mostly elderly people that are in need of a safer environment to live. I hope and pray that you reconsider your decision and relocate us to a safer area."

Response: See above response to Mr. Mouten re: buyout of area.

Cathy T. Slumber, resident of River Ridge, LA

Comment: "The stretch of Earhart near Causeway is already prone to serious flooding during typical summer thunderstorms. The addition of tons of more concrete will only exacerbate the problem without some extensive drainage work. Is such drainage infrastructure part of the proposal? If not, why not?"

Response: There is a known drainage issue with stormwater drainage along Earhart Expressway; however, it is focused at the Clearview interchange, not the Causeway area. The LADOTD and Parish have begun implementing measures to deal with this drainage issue at this location (namely detention ponds in open "cloverleaf" areas of the interchange) and will continue to work to address drainage issues at this location.

The area of the proposed Causeway interchange is now the site of a large, levied detention pond for general drainage. As the majority of the interchange is elevated ramps, it is anticipated that most runoff from those ramps will be delivered directly into the detention pond and not overwhelm the local drainage system.

Drainage will be fully addressed during the design engineering phase of the project prior to construction.

Comment: "Adding an interchange at Causeway will likely attract far too many north shore commuters to the never maintained stretch of Earhart Boulevard from Broadway to the Expressway entrance near the Parish line. Wouldn't state tax dollars be better spent on improving that section of Earhart before attracting Causeway Bridge users to the area with a new interchange?"

Response: See above response to Mr. Kampen above re: transition at Orleans Parish line and improvements to Earhart Boulevard.

Comment: "There is already gridlock at the exit of the expressway into Orleans Parish during morning rush hour. Adding hundreds or thousands of north shore commuters to the mix will not improve anything, and will result in traffic congestion between the Parish line and the Causeway interchange."

Response: See above response to Mr. Kampen above re: transition at Orleans Parish line and improvements to Earhart Boulevard.

Comment: "Traffic already backs up on the Causeway traffic circle during rush hour as cars try to exit at Airline. Adding a lane of traffic to converge into or cross over the lane filled with those jockeying for position to exit at Airline will result in more traffic accidents."

Response: As mentioned in earlier responses, all interchange improvements meet or exceed AASHTO guidelines, meet LADOTD criteria for roadway design, and have been developed under review of LADOTD engineering staff. Also, as shown in the CORSIM modeling analysis, under future conditions, with all planned traffic projects completed, future traffic volumes accounted for, and the interchange in place, the traffic should flow adequately and meet acceptable Levels of Service (LOS) even during peak times.

James Guilbeau, resident of Metairie, LA and transportation Chairperson of Sierra Club

Comment: "We favor Layout 12. The half-century old overpass has no shoulders. Even if safety shoulders are added, at minimum there should be a full third lane (not a typical weave lane) from Ramp 'C' north and from Ramp 'A' southbound. No additional right-of-way is necessary. To avoid 'merge congestion' on the southbound lanes, add a third

lane full width from Ramp 'A' and 'E' down to ground level (at Montford Street). The 3rd lanes can be used as a safety shoulder until traffic requires a 3rd ground level lane." (Mr. Guilbeau submitted a sketch illustrating these comments)

Response: Layout 12 does feature a full third lane along the Causeway Blvd. mainline between the Airline traffic circle ramps and interchange Ramps "B" and "C". The 'third lane' for Ramps "A" and "E" are deceleration/and acceleration lanes (respectively) for those particular ramps. Extending the deceleration and acceleration lanes two more blocks (to Montford Street) may result in more negative impacts on the Shrewsbury community, and the current lane lengths meet or exceed AASHTO guidelines, meet LADOTD criteria for roadway design, and have been developed under review of LADOTD engineering staff.

SOLICITATION OF VIEWS

Early in the planning stages of a transportation project, views from federal, state and local agencies, organizations and individuals are solicited. The special expertise of these contacts is invaluable in the early identification of possible adverse economic, social or environmental impacts and concerns.

In October of 2006, a Solicitation of Views (SOV) package describing the two final alignments under consideration in the proposed Earhart Causeway Interchange was distributed by LADOTD. The package included a preliminary project description and limits, a project location and vicinity map, a schematic of Layout No. 6, a schematic of Layout No. 12 and a notice of the public meeting scheduled for November 8, 2006. The SOV was mailed to approximately one hundred agencies, elected officials and organizations.

Seven responses to the SOV were received from the following agencies:

- Jefferson Parish, Office of the Parish President
- City of New Orleans, Department of Public Works
- Regional Planning Commission for Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Tammany Parishes
- State of Louisiana, Department of Natural Resources, Office of Conservation
- State of Louisiana, Department of Natural Resources, Office of Coastal Restoration and Management
- State of Louisiana, Department of Wildlife & Fisheries
- United States Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

The majority of responses to the SOV stated that the agencies had no comment, that the project would not impact in regards to their respective jurisdiction or that the agency had no objections to the project. The exceptions are the Office of the Parish President for

Jefferson Parish and the Regional Planning Commission, both of which strongly endorsed the proposed project, specifically Layout No. 12.

It should be noted that a *Solicitation of Views* was also completed during the EIFS process and (sixteen) 16 responses were received during that process.

A full copy of the *Solicitation of Views* packages for both the EA and EIFS processes is available for review from LADOTD.

CHAPTER IX

REFERENCES AND APPENDIX

The Environmental Assessment concludes with this chapter. The References section lists publications, websites and other sources of information used in the writing of this document. The Appendix lists the stand-alone documents, correspondence (such as the responses to the *Solicitation of Views*) and other data which were completed as part of this EA and are considered as part of this EA.

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Jefferson Parish Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, June 2000.

LADOTD Highway Traffic Noise Policy, March 2004

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ). *Chicot Equivalent Aquifer System Summary, Baseline Monitoring Project, FY 2003*. LDEQ Environmental Evaluation Division, Baton Rouge, LA.

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ). *2004 Louisiana Water Quality Inventory: Integrated Report*. LDEQ Office of Environmental Assessment, Environmental Planning Division, Baton Rouge, LA.

Louisiana Natural and Scenic Rivers System's *Louisiana Natural and Scenic Rivers' Descriptions*

N-Y Associates for LADOTD, April, 2005. *Environmental Inventory and Feasibility Study for a Proposed Earhart-Causeway Interchange.*

N-Y Associates for LADOTD, July, 2005. *Environmental Inventory and Feasibility Study for a Set of Airline Highway Connectors and a Jefferson Highway On-Ramp.*

Regional Planning Commission, *Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the New Orleans Urbanized Area – Fiscal Year 202.*

Rollo, J.R., 1966. *Ground-Water Resources of the Greater New Orleans Area, Louisiana*. Louisiana Department of Conservation and Louisiana Department of Public Works, Water Resources Bulletin 9.

United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, S*oil Survey of Jefferson Parish, Louisiana*

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990 – Data Set: Census 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1) – 100 Percent Data – Table P001. (Persons)

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 – Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) – 100 Percent Data – Table P12. (Sex by Age - Total Population [49])

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 – Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-Percent Data

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 – Data Set: Census 1990 Summary Tape File 3 (STF 3) – Sample Data – Table H061A. (Median Value (Dollars) for Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units)

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 – Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) – Sample Data – Table H76 (Median Value (Dollars) for Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units [1])

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990 – Data Set: Census 1990 Summary Tape File 3 (STF 3) – Sample Data – Table P114A (Per Capita Income in 1989 – Universe: Persons)

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 – Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) – Sample Data – Table P82 (Per Capita Income in 1999 (Dollars) [1] – Universe: Total Population)

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990 – Data Set: Census 1990 Summary Tape File 3 (STF 3) – Sample Data – Table P070 (Sex by Employment Status – Universe: Employed persons 16 years and over);

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 – Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) – Sample Data – Table P43 (Sex by Employment Status for the Population 16 Years and Over [15] – Universe: Population 16 years and over)

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990 – Data Set: Census 1990 Summary Tape File 3 (STF 3) – Sample Data – Table P077 (Industry – Universe: Employed persons 16 years and over);

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990 – Data Set: Census 1990 Summary Tape File 3 (STF 3) – Sample Data – Table P070 (Sex by Employment Status – Universe: Employed persons 16 years and over);

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 – Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) – Sample Data – Table P077 (Sex by Industry for the Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over – Universe: Employed civilian population 16 years and over)

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990 – Data Set: Census 1990 Summary Tape File 3 (STF 3) – Sample Data – Table P090 (Wage or Salary Income in 1989 – Universe: Households);

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 – Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) – Sample Data – Table P59 (Wage or Salary Income in 1999 for Households – Universe: Households)

U. S. Census 2000, American Factfinder.

URS for LADOTD, February, 2007. *East-West Corridor - Final Environmental Impact Statement*

APPENDIX:

The following are stand-alone documents which were completed as part of this EA and are considered as part of this EA. They are available for review from the RPC.

- *Noise Impact Report for F.A.P. No. Hp-2601(515) State Project No. 736-26-0001, Earhart / Causeway Interchange, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana.* Prepared by Lambert Engineers, LLC, March 2007.

- *Earhart-Causeway Interchange Environmental Assessment: Meeting Report - Public Meeting, November 8, 2006.* Prepared for the LADOTD by N-Y Associates, Inc.

- *Draft Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan - Earhart-Causeway Interchange* , March 2007. Prepared for the LADOTD by N-Y Associates, Inc.

- *Draft Environmental Site Assessment, Phase I for State Project No. 736-26-0001 F.A.P. No. Hp-2601(515), Earhart / Causeway Interchange, Route LA 3139, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana.* Prepared by Coastal Environments, Inc., March 2007.

On the following pages, the *Solicitation of Views* responses are presented.

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY
BOB ODOM, COMMISSIONER

November 1, 2006

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

State Project NO. 736-26-0001
F. A. P. N. HP-2601(515)
EARHART/CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE
(ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT)
LA 3139
JEFFERSON PARISH

RE: Solicitation of Views

Dear Mr. Ardoin:

I have no comment at this time regarding the above referenced projects.

Sincerely,

Bradley E. Spicer
Assistant Commissioner

BES:vw

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

KATHLEEN BABINEAUX BLANCO
GOVERNOR

Phone (225) 242-4502 Fax (225) 242-4500

JOHNNY B. BRADBERRY
SECRETARY

October 24, 2006

State Project No. 736-26-0001
F.A.P. Project No. HP-2601(515)
Earhart/Causeway Interchange (Environmental Assessment)
Route LA 3139
Jefferson Parish

RE: 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.

Over the last few years, an *Environmental Inventory & Feasibility Study* has been completed and public meetings have been held in regards to a proposed interchange connecting Earhart Expressway to Causeway Boulevard. This process involved the development and screening of alternatives. Two (2) alignment alternatives have been selected from the original fifteen (15) and are currently under consideration in an Environmental Assessment. Enclosed with this request is a map showing the location of the project and drawings of these two alternatives, along with a preliminary project description.

It is requested that you review the attached information and furnish us with your views and comments by **November 30, 2006**. Replies should be addressed to Environmental Engineer Administrator; LA DOTD; P.O. Box 94245; Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70804-9245. Please refer to the State Project Number in your reply.

Sincerely,

for Noel Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator

NA/qvn
Attachments
cc: Michael Stack (District Administrator)

PRELIMINARY PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LIMITS

Earhart/Causeway Interchange
Route LA 3139
Jefferson Parish
State Project No.: 736-26-0001
F.A.P. Project No.: HP-2601(515)

The project proposes a new interchange between the Earhart Expressway (LA 3139) and Causeway Boulevard (LA 3046) in Jefferson Parish. The proposed project is required to provide at least four movements:

1. Southbound Causeway to eastbound Earhart
2. Eastbound Earhart to northbound Causeway
3. Southbound Causeway to westbound Earhart
4. Westbound Earhart to northbound Causeway

Two alignments are currently under consideration. The first alignment, Layout #6, accommodates the four movements described above in free-flow fashion and requires the construction of six new ramps. It begins in the vicinity of the elevated structure of Causeway Boulevard above the Airline Drive traffic circle. Traffic traveling south on Causeway will access westbound Earhart via Ramp "C." Between the Norfolk Southern Railroad and Lausat Street, Ramp "D" splits from Ramp "C," allowing southbound Causeway traffic to also access to eastbound Earhart. Traffic from the Airline traffic circle would use new Ramp "West C-D" to merge with the southbound Causeway Blvd. traffic flow. Earhart traffic seeking to access Causeway northbound, would use Ramp "A" when approaching from the east and Ramp "B" when approaching from the west. Ramps "A" and "B" merge together providing two exit options – northbound Causeway or the Airline traffic circle. Ramp "East C-D" would allow northbound Causeway traffic to directly access the Airline traffic circle.

The second alignment, Layout #12, is designed to accommodate eight directional movements; six are proposed to function under free-flow conditions and two will require a two-phase traffic signal. Six new ramps would be required. It begins in the vicinity of the elevated structure of Causeway Boulevard above Earhart Expressway. Southbound Causeway traffic will access westbound Earhart via Ramp "B" or eastbound Earhart via Ramp "F". Earhart traffic seeking to access Causeway (north or southbound) would use Ramp "C" when coming from the east and Ramp "A" when traveling from the west. Northbound Causeway traffic will use Ramp "E" to access westbound Earhart and Ramp "D" to access eastbound Earhart.

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.

Nov 2, 2006

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

State of Louisiana

KATHLEEN BABINEAUX BLANCO
GOVERNOR

SCOTT A. ANGELLE
SECRETARY

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
OFFICE OF COASTAL RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT

11/02/2006

LA DOTD
P.O. BOX 94245
BATON ROUGE, LA 70804-9245

RE: P20061668, Coastal Use Permit Application
LA DOTD
Description: Proposed interchange at Earhart-Causeway Environmental Assessment (State Project No. 736-26-0001)
Location: Lat ° ' "N / Long ° ' "W;
Jefferson Parish, LA

Dear Noel Ardoin:

You are hereby advised that your application for a Coastal Use Permit (CUP) has been determined to be complete and review by the State for compliance with the Louisiana Coastal Resource Program (LCRP) and consistency with the federal Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). Additionally, it has been determined that your proposed activity is a use of state concern in accordance with Louisiana Revised Statue 49:214.5. This letter also acknowledges receipt of your payment of the application fee.

The Coastal Management Division (CMD) has sent a copy of this permit application to the New Orleans District Corps of Engineers (NOD/COE). The NOD/COE and CMD will each process this application separately. Please be advised that if your project is located outside of the New Orleans District, it is your responsibility to apply to the appropriate COE District.

All correspondence and calls regarding this application should reference the Coastal Use Permit Number (P#) indicated above. The analyst responsible for processing your application is Kimberly Arcement and should be the primary contact with CMD. Please note that all information concerning your application is in our database and can be found on our webpage at http://lamap.dnr.state.la.us/permit/index.html. The information in the database is updated throughout the day as changes to the status of the application occur.

Should you have any questions, please check the online database or contact Kimberly Arcement at (225) 342-8738 or kimberlya@dnr.state.la.us.

Sincerely,
William Pittman
Permit Coordinator

WP
cc: Ron Ventola, NOD/COE
LA DOTD

State of Louisiana

KATHLEEN BABINEAUX BLANCO
GOVERNOR

SCOTT A. ANGELLE
SECRETARY

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
OFFICE OF COASTAL RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT

November 9, 2006

Noel Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator
LA Dept. of Transportation & Development
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

RE: P20061668, Solicitation of Views
LA Department of Transportation & Development
Description: Proposed interchange at Earhart-Causeway Environmental Assessment (State Project No. 736-26-0001)
Location: Earhart-Causeway; Metairie;
Jefferson Parish, LA

Dear Mr. Ardoin:

A review has been completed of the referenced application. In accordance with the State and Local Coastal Resources Management Act of 1978, as amended (La. R.S. 49:214.34.a), the proposed activity is exempt and a Coastal Use Permit is not required.

This determination is valid for two (2) years from the date of this letter. If the proposed activity is not initiated within this 2-year period, this determination will expire and the applicant will be required to submit a new application. This authorization does not eliminate the need to obtain a permit from the United States Army Corps of Engineers or any other Federal, state, or local approval that may be required by law.

This determination has been made on the basis of information provided by your application. If it is later established that you furnished erroneous data, you may be directed to alter or modify your plans, to remove structures you have installed, and/or to restore the work area to pre-project conditions at your own expense. If it is established that you knowingly furnished erroneous data, you could also be subject to legal action.

P20061668, Solicitation of Views
La DOTD
November 9, 2006

The drawings submitted with your referenced application are attached hereto and made a part of the record.

Sincerely,

Jim Rives
Acting Administrator

JR/kaa

cc: Ron Ventola, COE w/plats
Venise Ortego, LDWF w/plats
Karl Morgan, CMD/SS w/plats
Tim Killeen, CMD/FI w/plats
Jason Smith, Jefferson Ph. w/plats

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

JEFFERSON • ORLEANS • PLAQUEMINES • ST. BERNARD • ST. TAMMANY PARISHES

November 6, 2006

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

Re: Solicitation of Views, Earhart Causeway Interchange (Environmental Assessment)
State Project No. 736-26-0001
FAP No. HP-2601 (515)
Route LA 3139, Jefferson Parish

Dear Ms. Ardoin

This project is included in the latest Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the New Orleans Urbanized Area, dated October 12, 2004. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for this area, the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) of Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, and St. Tammany Parishes wishes to express its support for the project as described in the Solicitation of Views letter, dated October 24, 2006. We believe this to be among the most important mobility projects in the New Orleans urbanized area.

We trust this project will be undertaken with minimum disruption and impacts to the neighboring community and area residents. RPC awaits the results of the environmental assessment to determine which of the proposed layouts to endorse. However, given the facts known at this writing, we believe that Layout 12 would be the most cost effective, provide better mobility, and have the least amount of community disruption of the two alternatives promulgated by LADOTD.

We believe this to be an important mobility improvement that can improve the economic viability of the area, and ultimately enhance the quality of life for the people of this area of Jefferson Parish.

If you have any questions or comments please contact either myself or Jeff Roesel of my staff at (504) 568-6611.

Sincerely

Walter R. Brooks

Walter R. Brooks
Executive Director

Telephone (504) 568-6611
Fax (504) 568-6643
Email: rpc@norpc.org; Web Site: http://www.norpc.org

1340 POYDRAS STREET • SUITE 2100 • NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA • 70112-5276

JEFFERSON PARISH
LOUISIANA

OFFICE OF PARISH PRESIDENT

AARON F. BROUSSARD
PARISH PRESIDENT

Our Mission Is:
"Provide the services, leadership, and vision to improve the quality of life in Jefferson Parish."

November 9, 2006

State of Louisiana
Department of Transportation and Development
PO Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245

Attention: Ms. Noel Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator

Re: State Project No. 736-26-0001
FAP Number: HP-2601 (515)
Earhart/Causeway Interchange (Environmental Assessment)
Route LA 3139
Jefferson Parish

Dear Ms. Ardoin:

With regard to your solicitation of views letter dated October 24, 2006 for the referenced project, please be advised that Jefferson Parish considers the proposed interchange to be of vital importance to the continued economic development of the Greater New Orleans Metropolitan Region. The proposed interchange will grant relief to the I-10 corridor by providing incoming traffic from St. Tammany Parish traveling south on Causeway Blvd. access to Earhart Blvd., an under-utilized east-west route that accesses both downtown New Orleans and the Elmwood Business District of Jefferson Parish. In addition, upon completion of the widening of the Huey P. Long Bridge, the amount of traffic on Clearview Parkway, a major north-south arterial, will increase significantly. Since Earhart Blvd has an existing direct connection to Clearview Parkway, this interchange has the potential to relieve traffic congestion on Clearview Parkway by distributing a portion of this north-south traffic onto Causeway Boulevard.

Please be advised that Jefferson Parish has reviewed the Environmental Inventory and Feasibility Study for the referenced project and wishes to express its strong support for the selection of Layout No. 12 from the two (2) interchange alternates deemed feasible by the study for the following reasons:

1. *Traffic:* This alternate provides total connectivity, allowing for all eight possible interchange movements as opposed to the other feasible alternate, Layout No. 6, which provides only the four required main movements. In addition, this layout is projected to have a net positive impact on the existing Airline Dr./Causeway Blvd. traffic circle as opposed to a negative impact created by the other alternate.

   As opposed to Layout No. 6 which provides a totally free-flow connection between Earhart Blvd. and Causeway Blvd., Layout No. 12 requires a traffic signal on Causeway Blvd. to regulate the eastbound Earhart to northbound Causeway movement and the westbound Earhart to southbound Causeway movement. However, this additional signal is of little concern to the Parish. Mainline Causeway Blvd. is not free-flow in this area. To the south of Earhart Blvd., Causeway Blvd. has signalized intersections at Jefferson Hwy. approximately 3,200 ft. away and at River Road approximately 4,500 ft. away. To the north of Earhart Blvd., Causeway Blvd. has signalized intersections at West Metairie Ave. approximately 3,500 ft. away and West Napoleon Ave. approximately 7,400 ft. away.

2. *Right-of-Way Acquisition:* Layout No. 12 requires no residential relocations and five (5) commercial relocations, as opposed to twenty-four (24) residential relocations and six (6) commercial relocations for the other feasible alternate. Maintaining the existing integrity of the surrounding neighborhood is a major priority of the Parish; therefore, Layout No. 12 is clearly superior to Layout No. 6 in satisfying this requirement.

3. *Constructability:* Layout No. 12 is approximately $11,000,000.00 less expensive than Layout No. 6. Layout No. 12 has no conflicts with the preferred, proposed future light rail transit alignment. The Environmental Constraints are determined by the study to be "Medium" for Alternate No. 12 as opposed to "Major" for Alternate No. 6. Finally, the actual Construction of the interchange and its effects on existing traffic is reported as "Moderate" for Layout No. 12 as opposed to "Difficult" for Layout No. 6.

In summary, all the previously referenced factors make implementation of Layout No. 12 a significantly greater benefit to the residents of Jefferson Parish.

Finally, we wish to thank you for the opportunity to provide relative comments and express our support for the project. If Jefferson Parish can be of further assistance in advancing these improvements, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Aaron F. Broussard
Jefferson Parish President

AFB/MRD/ch

cc: Honorable Council Chairman John F. Young, Jr. (e-mail)
Honorable Councilman-At-Large Thomas J. Capella (e-mail)
Honorable Councilman Elton M. LaGasse (e-mail)
Honorable Councilwoman Jennifer Sneed (e-mail)
Mr. Tim Whitmer (e-mail)
Mr. Jose Gonzalez (e-mail)
Mr. Mark Drewes (e-mail)
Mr. Walter Brooks (RPC) (e-mail)

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
1300 PERDIDO ST., ROOM 6W03 - NEW ORLEANS, LA 70112
658-8000 - FAX: 658-8007

C. RAY NAGIN
MAYOR

ROBERT C. MENDOZA
DIRECTOR

November 13, 2006

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

State Project No. 736-26-0001
F.A.P. Project No. HP-2601(515)
Earhart/Causeway Inter Change (Environmental Assessment)
Route LA 3139
Jefferson Parish

RE: Solicitation of Views

Dear Sir/Madam:

The City of New Orleans, Department of Public Works has no objections to the captioned project.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Mendoza
DIRECTOR

CC. Nguyen D. Phan, Chief Engineer
File.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue, South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

November 27, 2006 F/SER44/RH:jk
225/389-0508

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

Dear Mr. Ardoin

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) has reviewed the project information transmitted in the Solicitation of Views identified below. We anticipate that any adverse effects that might occur to marine and anadromous fishery resources would be minimal and therefore, do not object to issuance of the permit.

STATE PROJECT NO.	LOCATION	NOTICE DATE	DUE DATE
736-26-0001	Jefferson	10-24-06	11-30-06
737-99-0799	Jefferson	11-06-06	12-15-06

Sincerely,

for Miles M. Croom
Assistant Regional Administrator
Habitat Conservation Division

State of Louisiana

Kathleen Babineaux Blanco
Governor

Department of Wildlife & Fisheries
Post Office Box 98000
Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000
(225) 765-2800

Janice A. Lansing
Acting Secretary

Date	November 30, 2006
Name	Noel Ardoin
Company	LA DOTD
Street Address	P.O. Box 94245
City, State, Zip	Baton Rouge, LA 70804
Project	State Project No. 736-26-0001; F.A.P. Project No. HP-2601(515) Earhart/Causeway Interchange (EA) Route LA 3139 Jefferson Parish
Invoice Number	06113001

Personnel of the Habitat Section of the Fur and Refuge 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,

Nicole Lorenz for

Gary Lester, Coordinator
Natural Heritage Program

State of Louisiana

Kathleen Babineaux Blanco
Governor

Department of Wildlife & Fisheries
Post Office Box 98000
Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000
(225) 765-2800

Janice A. Lansing
Acting Secretary

INVOICE

RETAIN THIS COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS

Date	November 30, 2006
Invoice Number	06113001
Project	State Project No. 736-26-0001; F.A.P. Project No. HP-2601(515) Earhart/Causeway Interchange (EA) Route LA 3139 Jefferson Parish
Name	Noel Ardoin
Company	LA DOTD
Street Address	P.O. Box 94245
City, State, Zip	Baton Rouge, LA 70804
Number of Quads Reviewed	1
Total Due	$0.00

Payment should be made to "Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries" within 30 days of the date of this invoice. Please include the invoice number on your check and return a copy of this invoice with your remittance to the following address:

Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries
Attn: Nancy Hunter
P.O. Box 80399
Baton Rouge, LA 70898-0399

Should you have any questions regarding this invoice, for review of the Louisiana Natural Heritage database for information on known sensitive elements at a charge of $20.00 per quad reviewed, please contact LAHP at (225) 765-2357.

02605/File
FN
MFN
CFN
JES
DV
BR
DE
LJ
KH

State of Louisiana

KATHLEEN BABINEAUX BLANCO
GOVERNOR

SCOTT A. ANGELLE
SECRETARY

JAMES H. WELSH
COMMISSIONER OF CONSERVATION

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
OFFICE OF CONSERVATION

November 30, 2006

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

RE: S. P. N. 736-26-0001
F. A. P. N. HP-2601(515)
Earhart/Causeway Interchange (Environmental Assessment)
Route LA 3139
Jefferson Parish

Dear Ms. Ardoin:

In response to your letter dated October 24, 2006, regarding 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.state.la.us/CONS/Conserv.ssi

A review of our computer records for the referenced project area indicates no oil, gas, injection or water wells located in and adjacent to the proposed project area. However, there are three monitoring wells located within the project area at DC Metco, Incorporated. Due care must be taken to accurately locate wells that may have been installed before registration was required. The proposed project area is not located within a drinking water protection area, as designated by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.

P. O. BOX 94275 • BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70804-9275 • 617 NORTH THIRD STREET • 9TH FLOOR • BATON ROUGE, LA 70802
PHONE: (225) 342-5540 • FAX (225) 342-3705 • WEB http://www.dnr.state.la.us/conservation

Additional information about such designation can be obtained from that agency. The prevention of groundwater contamination should be considered at all times.

The Office of Conservation maintains records of all activities within its jurisdiction in either 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:

Division	Contact	Phone No.	E-mail Address
Engineering	Jeff Wells	225-342-5638	JeffW@dnr.state.la.us
Pipeline	Michael Peikert	225-342-2989	MichaelP@dnr.state.la.us
Injection & Mining	Laurence Bland	225-342-5515	LaurenceB@dnr.state.la.us
Geological	Mike Kline	225-342-3335	MikeKl@dnr.state.la.us
Ground Water	Tony Duplechin	225-342-5528	TonyD@dnr.state.la.us

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

EARHART-CAUSEWAY INTERCHANGE

Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

Jefferson Parish, LA
State Project No. 736-26-0001
F.A.P. Project No. HP-2601(515)

Prepared for the

Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development

in conjunction with the

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

January 2008

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS (FONSI)

FOR

State Project No. 736-26-0001
F.A.P. Project No. HP-2601(515)
Earhart/Causeway Interchange
Route LA 3139
Jefferson Parish

The FHWA has determined that this project will not have any significant impact on the human environment. This Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) is based on the Environmental Assessment which has been independently evaluated by the FHWA and determined to adequately and accurately discussed 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. HIGHSMITH
PROJECT DELIVERY TEAM LEADER
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
DATE 1-9-08

Summary of Mitigation, Commitments and Permits

Mitigation, Commitments and Permits for the impacts associated with the implementation of the preferred alternative for the Earhart–Causeway Interchange include the following:

- Relocations will be addressed in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act, as amended.

- A Section 401 Permit (Water Quality Certification) will be required from the Office of Environmental Services, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.

- Coordination required with Jefferson Parish Department of Public Works to insure that all appropriate reviews for the project are obtained at the time of final design.

- During preliminary and final design, representatives of Jefferson Parish will be consulted relative to coordination between the proposed project and the Parish's plan for utilities and drainage, particularly in regards to the detention basin in the project area.

- During construction, the following mitigation measures shall be in effect:

    - In order to minimize the potential for impacts of construction noise on the local residents, all construction equipment used in the construction phase of the project should be properly muffled and all motor panels should be shut during operation, and the contractor should operate, whenever possible, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

    - To minimize potential air quality impacts, particularly related to control of particulate matter, the contractor shall comply with all relevant State, Federal and local laws and regulations.

    - To minimize vibration impacts, peak particle velocities due to pile driving operations should be monitored with a seismograph at critical structures, pavements and utilities during all pile driving operations.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION CHECKLIST

State Project No.: 736-26-0001
Federal Aid No.: HP- 2601(515)
Name: Earhart - Causeway Interchange Environmental Assessment
Route: LA Hwy 3139, LA Hwy 3046
Parish: Jefferson

1. General Information

Status: (**X**) Conceptual Layout ( ) Plan-in-Hand
( ) Line and Grade () Preliminary Plans
( ) Survey ( ) Final Design

2. Class of Action

( ) Environmental Impact Statement (E.I.S.)
(**X**) Environmental Assessment (E.A.)
( ) Categorical Exclusion (C.E.)
( ) Programmatic C.E. (as defined in letter of agreement dated 03/15/95, does not require FHWA approval)

3. Project Description (use attachment if necessary)

See Document

4. Public Involvement

(**X**) Views were solicited on October 24, 2006.
Responses are attached.
( ) No adverse comments were received.
(**X**) Comments are addressed in attachment.
( ) A public hearing (P/H)/Opportunity is not required.
( ) An opportunity for requesting a P/H will be afforded upon your concurrence.
( ) Opportunity was afforded, with no requests for P/H.
(**X**) A Public Hearing was held on October 18, 2007..
(**X**) A Public Meeting was held on November 8, 2006..

5. Real Estate (If yes, use attachment)

	NO	YES
a. Will additional right-of-way be required?.....	( )	(**X**)
b. Will any relocations be required?..... (Attach conceptual stage relocation plan if yes)	( )	(**X**)
c. Are construction or drainage servitudes required?.....	(**X**)	( )

6. Cultural and 106 Impacts (If yes, use attachment)

		NO	YES
a.	**Section 4(f) or 6(f) lands**		
	Are any impacted by the project? (If so, list below)……..	(**X**)	( )
	Are any adjacent to the project? (If so, list below)……..	(**X**)	( )
b.	**Known Historic sites/structures**		
	Are any impacted by the project? (If so, list below)……..	(**X**)	( )
	Are any adjacent to the project? (If so, list below)……..	(**X**)	( )
c.	**Known Archaeological sites**		
	Are any impacted by the project? (If so, list site # below)…….....	(**X**)	( )
	Are any adjacent to the project? (If so, list site # below)…….....	(**X**)	( )
d.	**Cemeteries**		
	Are any impacted by the project? (If so, list below)……..	(**X**)	( )
	Are any adjacent to the project? (If so, list below) ***(see page V-27)***… ……	( )	(**X**)
e.	**Historic Bridges**……..	(**X**)	( )

7. Wetlands (Attach wetlands finding, if applicable)

		NO	YES
a.	Are wetlands being affected?.....	(**X**)	( )
b.	Are other waters of the U.S. being affected?.....	(**X**)	( )
c.	Can C.O.E. Nationwide Permit be used?.....	(**X**)	( )

8. Natural Environment (use attachment if necessary)

		NO	YES
a.	Endangered/Threatened Species/Habitat……..	(**X**)	( )
b.	Within 100 Year Floodplain?.....	(**X**)	( )
	Is project a significant encroachment in Floodplain?.....	(**X**)	( )
c.	In Coastal Zone Management Area?.....	( )	(**X**)
	Is the project consistent with the Coastal Management Program?.....	( )	(**X**)
d.	Coastal Barrier Island (Grand Isle only)……..	(**X**)	( )
e.	Farmlands (use form AD 1006 if necessary)……..	(**X**)	( )
f.	Is project on Sole Source Aquifer?.....	(**X**)	( )
	Is coordination with EPA necessary?.....	(**X**)	( )
g.	Natural & Scenic Stream Permit required……..	(**X**)	( )
h.	Is project impacting a waterway?.....	(**X**)	( )
	Has navigability determination been made?.....	(**X**)	( )
	…..Will a US Coast Guard permit or amended permit be required?.....	(**X**)	( )

9. Physical Impacts (use attachment if necessary)

		NO	YES
a.	Is a noise analysis warranted (Type I project)……..	( )	(**X**)
	Are there noise impacts based on violation of the (NAC)?.....	( )	(**X**)
	Are there noise impacts based on the 10 dBA increase?.....	( )	(**X**)
	Are noise abatement measures reasonable and feasible?.....	(**X**)	( )
b.	Is an air quality study warranted?.....	(**X**)	( )
	Do project level air quality levels exceed the NAAQS for CO?.....	(**X**)	( )
c.	Is project in a non-attainment area for Carbon monoxide (CO), Ozone (O_3), Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), or Particulates (PM-10)? ……..	(**X**)	( )
d.	Is project in an approved Transportation Plan,Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)?.....	( )	(**X**)
e.	Are construction air, noise, & water impacts major?……..	(**X**)	( )
f.	Are there any known waste sites or U.S.T.s?.....	( )	(**X**)
	Will these sites require further investigation prior to purchase? ……..	(**X**)	( )

10. Social Impacts (use attachment if necessary)

		NO	YES
a.	**Land use changes**.....	(**X**)	( )
b.	**Churches and Schools**		
	Are any impacted by the project? (If so, list below).....	(**X**)	( )
	Are any adjacent to the project? (If so, list below).....	(**X**)	( )
c.	**Title VI Considerations**.....	(**X**)	( )
d.	**Will any specific groups be adversely affected**		
	(i.e., minorities, low-income, elderly, disabled, etc.)?	(**X**)	( )
e.	**Hospitals, medical facilities, fire police**		
	Are any impacted by the project? (If so, list below).....	(**X**)	( )
	Are any adjacent to the project? (If so, list below).....	(**X**)	( )
f.	**Transportation pattern changes**.....	( )	(**X**)
g.	**Community cohesion**.....	(**X**)	( )
h.	**Are short-term social/economic impacts due to construction**		
	considered major?.....	(**X**)	( )
I.	**Do conditions warrant special construction times**		
	(i.e., school in session, congestion, tourist season, harvest)?.....	(**X**)	( )
j.	**Were Context Sensitive Solutions considered?** (If so explain below).....	(**X**)	( )
k.	**Will the roadway/bridge be closed? (If yes, answer questions below)**.....	(**X**)	( )
	Will a detour bridge be provided?.....	(**X**)	( )
	Will a detour route be signed?.....	(**X**)	( )

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

Preparer: Bruce J. Richards, AICP
Title: Project Consultant
Date: January 3, 2008

Attachments

(**X**) S.O.V. and Responses
( ) Wetlands Finding
( ) Project Description Sheet
(**X**) Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan
(**X**) Noise Analysis
( ) Air Analysis
(**X**) Exhibits and/or Maps
( ) 4(f) Evaluation
( ) Form AD 1006 (Farmlands)
( ) 106 Documentation
(**X**) Other Environmental Assessment Document