

For More Information

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

Our website contains a wealth of information, updates, and announcements pertaining to the project:

http://wwwapps.dotd.la.gov/administration/public_info/projects/home.aspx?key=90

SEND US AN EMAIL

We want to hear from you! If you have any questions or comments about the project, or you would like to be added to our project email list, send us an email at ht3127eis@bucharthorn.com!

GIVE US A CALL

To speak with someone directly about the project, give us call at (225) 755 – 2120. Make sure to reference the Houma Thibodaux to LA 3127 EIS project name when you call.

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The Project Team

FHWA | LADOTD | Buchart Horn | CDM Smith | Urban Systems | Aptim | Earth Search | Providence

Houma Thibodaux to LA 3127 Connection Newsletter
February 2018



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Houma Thibodaux to LA 3127 Connection Newsletter

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Introduction

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to address the environmental impacts of the proposed construction of the approximately 22 to 28 miles of new roadway, from U.S. Highway 90 (US 90) to Louisiana Highway 3127 (LA 3127).

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide the public with updates on project information including background information on the project, the purpose and need of the project, project milestones, current status, and what's next.

Project Background

Since March 1996, the Louisiana Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan placed the Houma-Thibodaux to Interstate 10 (I-10) Connection in the Tier 3 funding level of projects to pursue.

A Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for the North-South Hurricane Evacuation Route Houma Thibodaux to LA 3127 was published in the Federal Register on June 7, 2004. In 2006, development of the EIS was put on hold by LADOTD due to the resource agencies' desire to expand the project area.

LADOTD expanded the study and initiated a screening study of the new study area in July 2007. Based on the recommendations of the screening study, the study area was officially expanded to include the Sunshine Bridge and the northernmost east/west alternative considered would be carried forward into the EIS. After further analysis, it was determined that the east-west alternatives did not fulfill the purpose and need of the project.

After thorough alternative analysis and refinement, four alternatives were carried forward into the DEIS. The DEIS was published in July 2015. On September 2, 2015, a public hearing was held in order to provide the public and agencies with the opportunity to view the alternative layouts and submit comments regarding the project.

What Is An EIS?

An EIS is a document that describes and analyzes a proposed action that may have significant social, economic, or environmental impacts

The National Environmental Policy Act, known as NEPA, requires federal agencies to prepare an EIS if a proposed major federal action is determined to significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

Through the NEPA process, a purpose and need for the proposed action is developed and refined. Each alternative derived throughout the EIS, including the no build alternative, is analyzed with regard to the following potential environmental impacts:

- Social
- Economic
- Cultural
- Noise
- Air
- Farmland
- Recreational areas
- Wetlands
- Water resources
- Flood plains
- Endangered or threatened species, and/or their habitat





Photo, above: Wetlands in the Project Area

Project Milestones

Apr 26, 2004	Notice to Proceed Issued by Lead Agency
Apr 28, 2004	Project Team Kickoff Meeting
Jul 13, 2004	Formal Interagency Scoping Meeting
Jul 15, 2004	Public Meeting No. 1
Nov 18, 2004	Agency Coordination Meeting, Public Meeting No. 2
Dec 9, 2004	Community Information Meeting
Jan 2005 - May 2006	Development of preliminary routes
Jul 2006	Project put on hold due to agency desire to expand project area
Apr 2007	LADOTD Preliminary Screening Study of expanded project area
Apr 2008	Based on Screening Study, agencies decide to expand the project area
Nov 2009	Updated NOI is issued to expand the project area of the EIS
Mar 2010	Agency Coordination Meeting, Public Meeting No. 3
Apr 2010 - Nov 2010	Refined Purpose and Need, Traffic Report, and Toll Study
Nov 2010	Presented agencies with recommendations on alternatives to carry forward
Mar 2011 - Aug 2011	Refined Project Alternatives and approval of alternative footprint
Oct 2011 - Feb 2012	Evaluation of alternatives
Mar 2012	Agency Meeting on Alternative Evaluation
Dec 2013 - Jun 2015:	Agency Review of Draft EIS
Jul 2015	Publication of Draft EIS
Sep 2, 2015	Public Officials Meeting, Public Hearing on Draft EIS
Sep 2015 - Nov 2015	Agency Meetings on Preferred Alternative
Nov 2015	Selection of Preferred Alternative

What Are The Objectives Of The Project?

- Improve north-south connectivity and mobility between US 90 and LA 3127 through an increase in the number of north-south links;
- Provide north-south system redundancy by identifying alternatives that enable additional options for north-south travel when LA 20 fails;
- Provide improved north-south highway network capacity in the project area;
- Provide a direct, limited access route between the Houma-Thibodaux area and the Mississippi River corridor to improve access to and from the Houma-Thibodaux area; and
- Maximize the efficient use and operation of hurricane evacuation routes by improving system redundancy; decreasing travel time; and providing facility access, capacity, and balanced distribution of evacuation traffic among critical Mississippi River crossings.

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The purpose and objectives of the project are consistent with local transportation planning by providing solutions and resolutions to economic and physical needs in the area while supporting metropolitan community, economic development, and social goals.

What Is The Purpose Of The Project?

The purpose of the proposed Houma-Thibodaux to LA 3127 Connection is to improve north-south system linkage between the Houma-Thibodaux area and the Mississippi River corridor and improve emergency and hurricane evacuation within Louisiana's bayou region through the establishment of a functional north-south transportation facility.

What Are The Needs Of The Project?

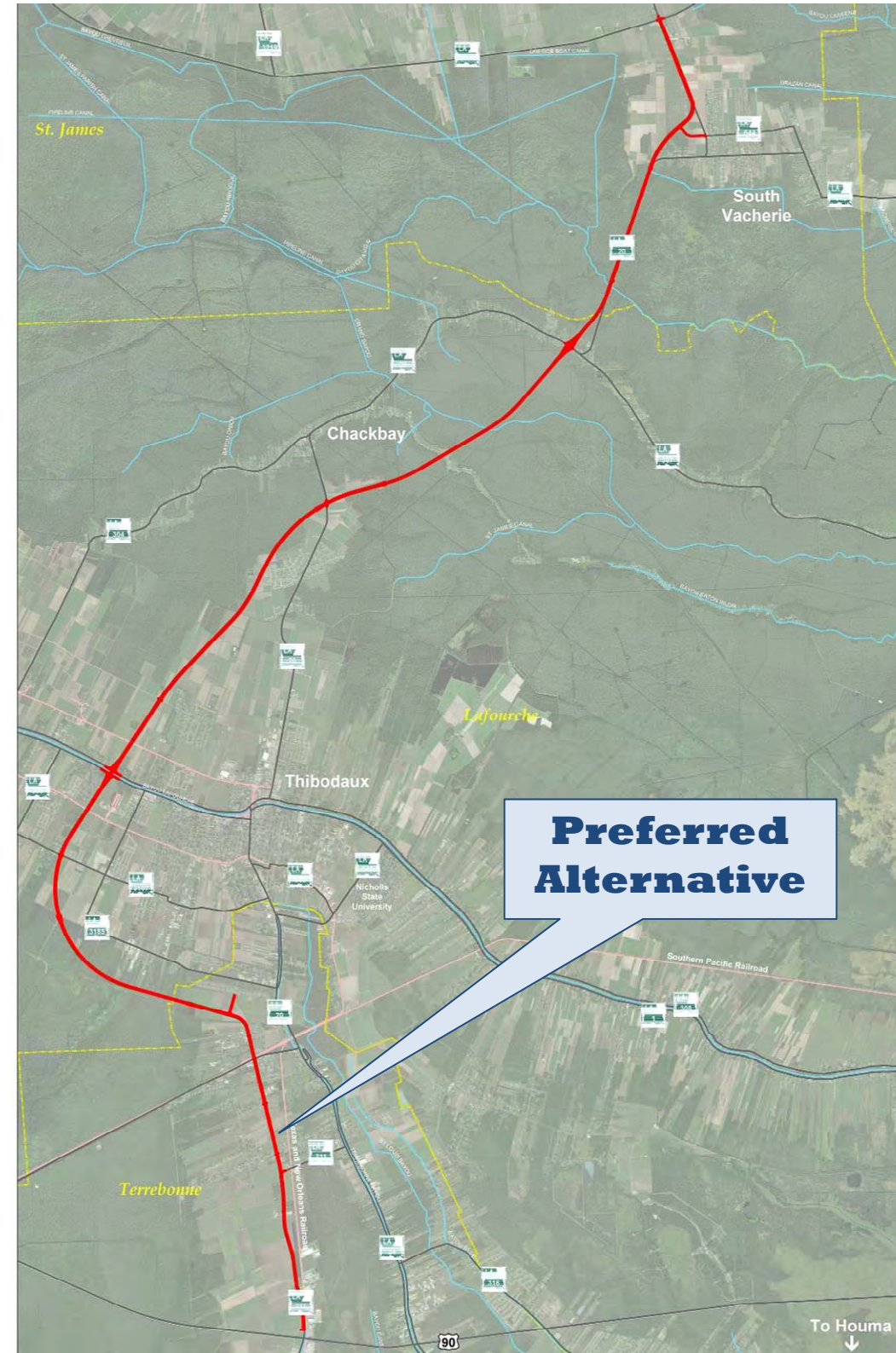
- Inadequate north-south transportation system linkage
- Inadequate capacity in the roadway network in the Thibodaux area due to existing unmet travel demand in the north-south direction
- Lack of a north-south emergency evacuation route and north-south rerouting opportunities in the Thibodaux area



Photo, above: Louisiana residents sit in traffic while evacuating ahead of Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

Where Are We Now?

Following the September 2, 2015 Public Hearing, the Project Team met with numerous public agencies in order to present the outcomes of the Draft EIS, the public hearing, and the comments that were received from both. From these meetings, in conjunction with comments received from members of the public, the project team gained valuable insight on which alternative the public and agencies would like to select as the Preferred Alternative. The map below represents the Preferred Alternative (shown in red). Since the selection of the Preferred Alternative, the project team has been in the field collecting additional data, further analyzing the anticipated impacts associated with the Preferred Alternative, and preparing the Final EIS for approval and publication in Summer 2018.



What Is Next?

- Submit Final EIS for approval to FHWA
- Distribute Final EIS for Public Review and Comment (Summer 2018)
- Address Comments on Final EIS
- Develop the Record of Decision (ROD) for approval
- LADOTD submit ROD to FHWA
- FHWA signs and publishes ROD
- Tentative schedule for right-of-way acquisition and construction is to be determined.

