



OPEN HOUSE PUBLIC HEARING

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2015

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Warren J. Harang Municipal Auditorium
Plantation Room

310 North Canal Boulevard, Thibodaux, LA 70302

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).

Detailed information relative to the project is available to those interested through copies of the DEIS. This information is available for review and/or copying at the LADOTD District Office in Baton Rouge (8100 Airline Highway, 70815) and in Bridge City (1440 US Highway 90, 70094). Copies of this data will be made available upon request at the expense of the person requesting this information, and at a cost equal to the DOTD's cost of reproduction. The EIS is also available for review through September 14, 2015, at the Lafourche Parish Library Main Branch (314 Saint Mary Street, Thibodaux), St. James Parish Library Vacherie Branch (2593 Highway 20, Vacherie), and at the Terrebonne Parish Library Main Branch (151 Library Drive, Houma). You may download the EIS from the DOTD Environmental Section's website:

http://wwwsp.dotd.la.gov/Inside_LaDOTD/Divisions/Engineering/Environmental/Pages/default.aspx.

This open house presents information regarding the DEIS and provides the opportunity to view the alternative layouts and submit comments regarding the project. There will be no formal presentation during the open house. However, there are six (6) informational stations staged throughout with representatives from the project team and LADOTD to assist with any questions or concerns related to the project. It is encouraged to visit the stations in sequential order.

STATION 1: SIGN-IN TABLE

At this station, please sign in on the provided sheet.

STATION 2: CONTINUOUS POWERPOINT

This station provides a PowerPoint presentation explaining the purpose and need for the project and information on the project description, history, and details on the proposed build alternatives.

STATION 3: PROJECT EXHIBITS

Exhibits displayed at this station define the project purpose & need, LADOTD study process, EIS flow, project boundary, the four (4) build alternatives, and the comparison of the impacts associated with each build alternative.

STATION 4: ALTERNATIVE MAPPING

The computer set up at this station provides the opportunity to focus in on any section of the four build alternatives.

STATION 5: REAL ESTATE

The LADOTD Real Estate Section is available to answer any questions regarding Acquisition of Right-of-Way and Relocation Assistance. Additional information regarding Acquisition of Right-of-Way and Relocation Assistance can be found in the LADOTD Brochure provided at this station.

STATION 6: COMMENTS TABLE

Those that wish to comment on the project, please fill out the comment form attached in this handout (page 7) or give oral comment to the court reporter located at this station. All comments will be added to the administrative record. Written comments can be submitted at this meeting, scanned and emailed to ht3127eis@bh-ba.com, or mail to the address below postmarked on or before September 21, 2015.

Buchart Horn, Inc.
18163 E. Petroleum Drive, Suite A
Baton Rouge, LA 70809



PROJECT HISTORY

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. The Tier 3 funding level refers to projects that rely entirely on additional (dedicated) revenues as their source of funding. Existing funding sources, such as State Budgets, and existing transportation revenue sources cannot be used to finance a Tier 3 project.

In 1998, Congress, in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) noted that their intent for this project (listed as High Priority Project Item 202, LA 024) was to "Construct Houma-Thibodaux to I-10 connector from Gramercy to Houma."

The December 2003 Louisiana Statewide Transportation Plan (LSTP) continued to identify this regional linkage to be of statewide importance, including emphasis on the additional facilitation of moving people during hurricane evacuation that such linkage and improvement to the transportation system would provide. In April 2004, the LADOTD, in cooperation with the FHWA, began the process of developing an EIS with the objective of providing an improved north-south hurricane evacuation route from the Houma-Thibodaux area to I-10 via LA 3127.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

What is the purpose of the project?

- The purpose of the proposed project 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.

Why is the project needed?

- Inadequate north-south transportation system linkage:
 - Existing north-south system linkage between the Houma-Thibodaux area and the Mississippi River corridor is limited to LA 20—a narrow, winding arterial without access management.
- Inadequate capacity in the roadway network in the Thibodaux area due to existing unmet travel demand in the north-south direction:
 - Existing roadway network has current peak-period congestion and Level of Service (LOS) deficiencies.
 - Portions of existing LA 20 show a LOS of E, which is characterized by very poor service, during both peak hours, along with three additional primary roadways (LA 308, LA 1, and LA 70) that have sections currently operating at LOS D, which is characterized by poor service.
- Lack of a north-south emergency evacuation route and north-south rerouting opportunities in the Thibodaux area:
 - In times of evacuation, the traffic volumes push the roadways far beyond their capacity.

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.

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.



STUDY AREA

The study area is located between US 90 and LA 3127 within the part of Louisiana known as the Bayou Region. This region is known for its abundance of natural features such as coastal wetlands, bayous, and both natural and man-made waterways. Due to the unique geography of this area, past and present development has mainly occurred near higher elevations and natural ridges. As a result, the roadway network within the study area is very limited and the existing transportation network provides better east-west connectivity than north-south connectivity. The City of Thibodaux is located at the core of the study area and provides several commercial facilities, residential developments, a major university, and other amenities.

The study area is shown in **Figure 1: Study Area** below:

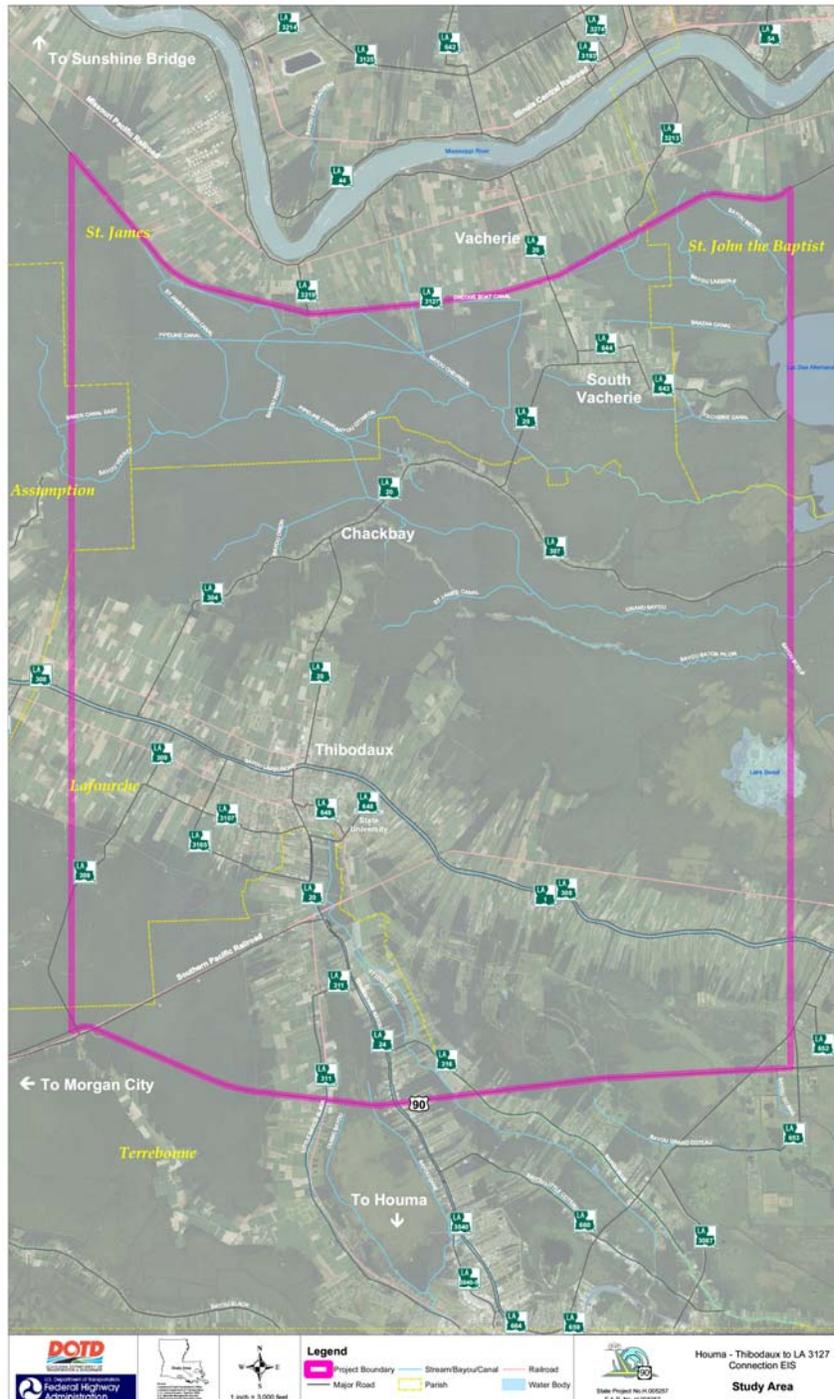


Figure 1: Study Area



ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The four alternatives selected as the reasonable Build Alternatives are described in the following paragraphs. **Figure 4: Alignments** shows the extents of the Western, Central, North A, and North B Alignments. Additional renderings are shown in **Figures 2 - 4**.

Alternative 1 (Western Alignment + North Alignment "A"): Connects US 90 and LA 3127 by incorporating existing alignment along LA 311 (Western Alignment) and LA 20 (Segment North A) as well as construction on a new location, resulting in a 26.6-mile, four-lane divided roadway.

Alternative 2 (Western Alignment + North Alignment "B"): Connects US 90 and LA 3127 by incorporating existing alignment along LA 311 (Western Alignment), but will not utilize segment North A as in *Alternative 1* to reach LA 3127. Instead, *Alternative 2* connects the Western alignment with Segment North B resulting in a 28.8-mile four-lane, divided roadway.

Alternative 3 (Central Alignment + North Alignment "A"): Connects US 90 and LA 3127 by incorporating existing alignment along LA 316 (Central Alignment) and LA 20 (Segment North A) as well as construction on a new location, resulting in a 22.6-mile, four-lane divided roadway.

Alternative 4 (Central Alignment + North Alignment "B"): Begins with the Central Alignment and connect to segment North B. The connection of the Central Alignment and segment North B will result in a 24.8-mile, four-lane divided roadway.

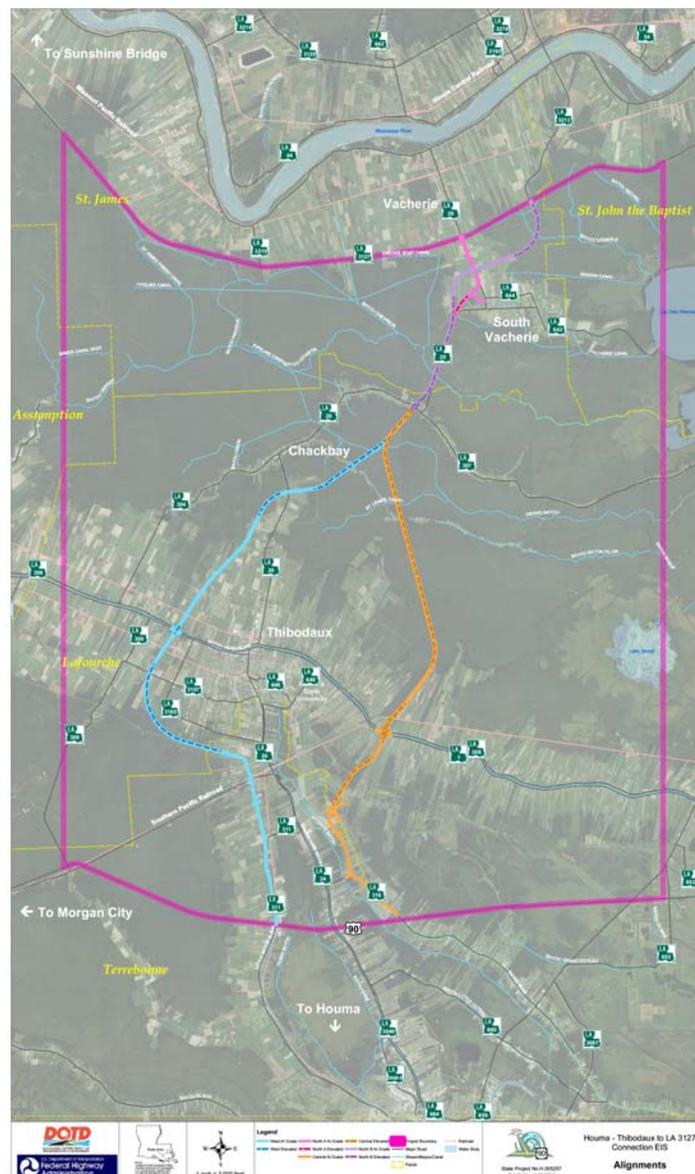


Figure 4: Alignments



TYPICAL SECTIONS

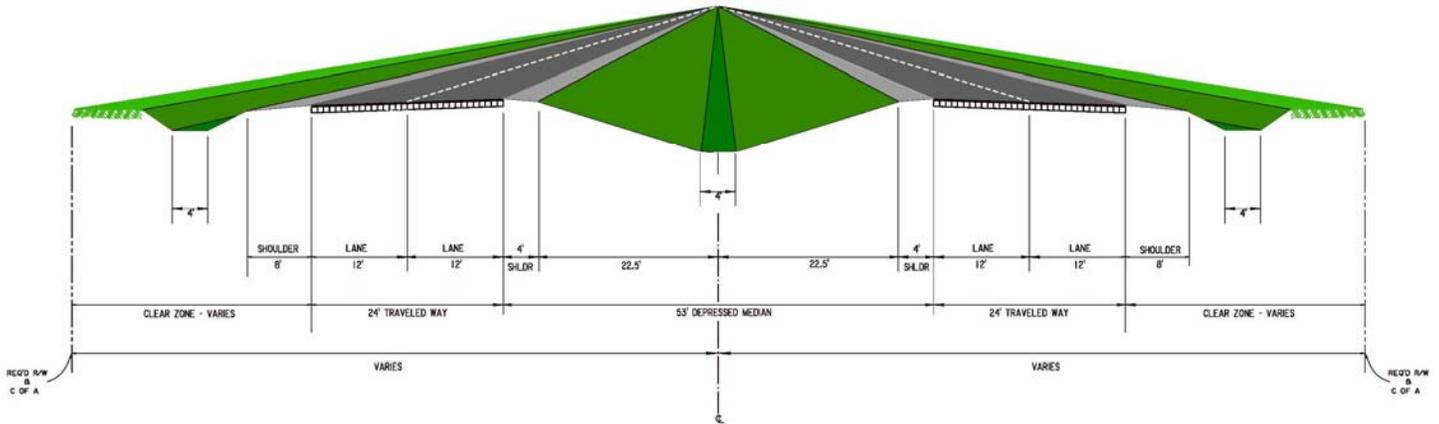


Figure 2: Rural Typical Section

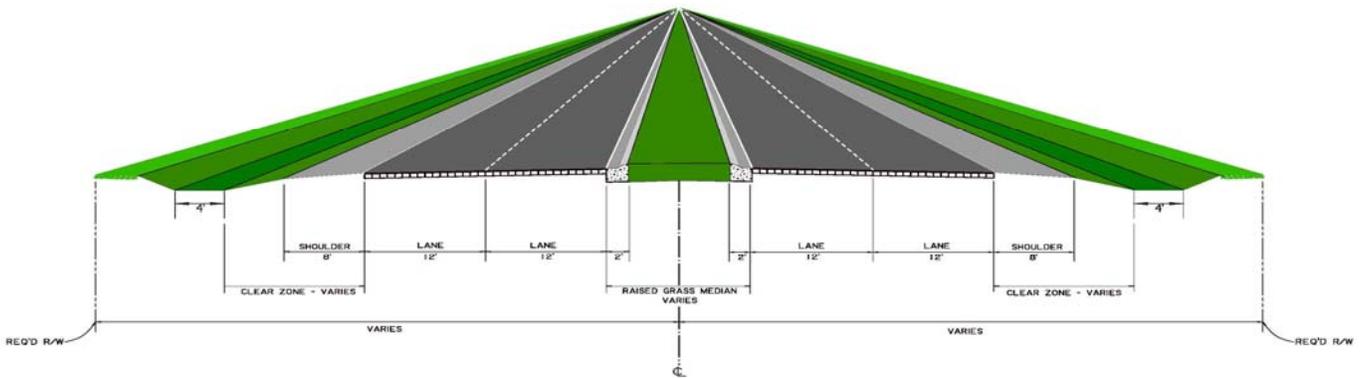


Figure 3: Urban Typical Section

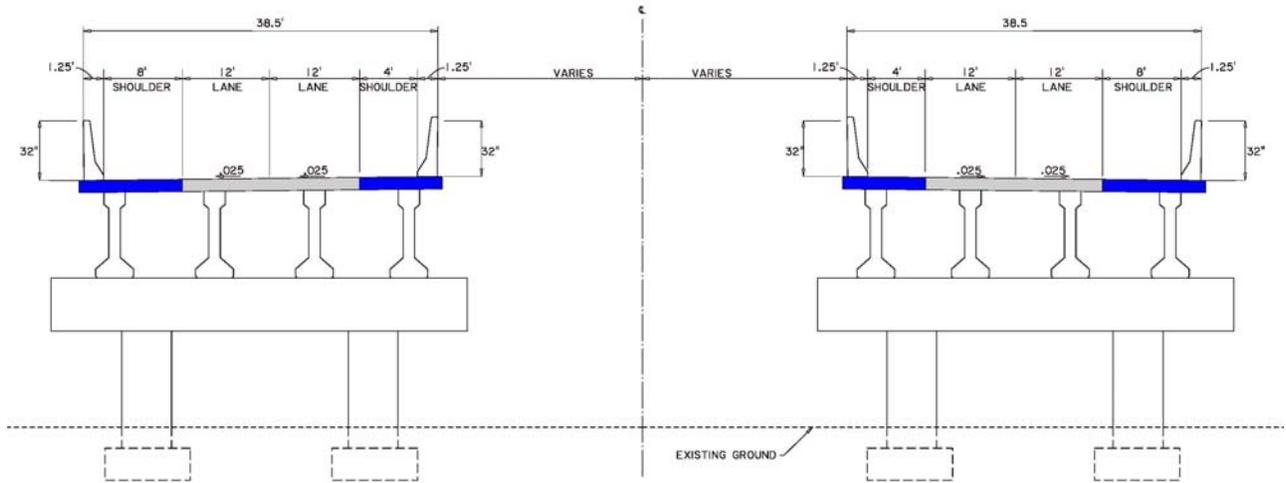


Figure 4: Elevated Typical Section

RIGHT-OF-WAY INFORMATION (FOR PROJECTS WITH RELOCATION)

It is the objective of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (the Department) to pay just compensation for all properties required for the project. Owners of required properties may be contacted by an appraiser or appraisers and given the opportunity to go with them on the inspection of the property. This will provide owners an opportunity to point out things that may be important to the evaluation of the property. After the evaluations have been reviewed by a review appraiser and approved by the Department, a Real Estate Agent will contact each property owner. S/he will present a letter setting forth the amount of the Department's cash offer for the purchase of the property. S/he will also explain the property value and discuss any alternate offers including possible options to keep and move any buildings, fencing, etc.



**HOUMA-THIBODAUX TO LA 3127
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)
STATE PROJECT NO. H.005257, FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO. H005257**



COMPARISON OF IMPACTS

	No build	Alternative 1 (Western Alignment + North Alignment A)	Alternative 2 (Western Alignment + North Alignment B)	Alternative 3 (Central Alignment + North Alignment A)	Alternative 4 (Central Alignment + North Alignment B)
Length	NA	26.6 miles	28.8 miles	22.6 miles	24.8 miles
Elevated	NA	13	14.6	14.3	15.9
At Grade	NA	13.1	13.6	8.4	9
Total Acreage	NA	1,105.0	1,167.0	975.0	1,038.0
Cost	NA	\$759,692,088	\$842,017,218	\$735,166,806	\$817,317,558
Natural Environment					
Prime Farmland					
Complete Loss	no add'l impacts	127.07 acres	139.86 acres	52.84 acres	65.63 acres
Partial Loss	no add'l impacts	34.21 acres	37.85 acres	33.44 acres	37.08 acres
Agricultural	no add'l impacts	251.06 acres	284.99 acres	163.59 acres	197.52 acres
Vegetation and Habitat					
Built on existing roads	no add'l impacts	6.1 miles	4.8 miles	3.1 miles	4.4 miles
Elevated over forested wetland	no add'l impacts	W-3.9 miles; NA-3.7 miles	W-4 miles; NB-5.4 miles	NA-5.4 miles	NB - 5.4
Built over farmlands	no add'l impacts	no data	NB-2.5 miles	NA-2.5 miles	no data
100-yr Floodplain Acreage	no add'l impacts	294.6	346.8	293.5	345.7
Wetlands (acreage)	no add'l impacts	203.3	244.8	260.5	301.9
Non-Wetland Acreage	no add'l impacts	596.5	615.6	414.5	443.7
Wetland Percentage	no add'l impacts	25.4%	28.5%	38.6%	41.0%
*Protected Lands	no add'l impacts	1	1	N/A	N/A
Human Environment					
Relocations	no add'l impacts	39	36	27	24
Commercial	no add'l impacts	8	7	3	2
Residential	no add'l impacts	31	29	24	22
**4(f) Properties	no add'l impacts	0	0	1	1
Hazardous Materials Total		33	25	19	11
Hazardous Waste Sites	no add'l impacts	23	18	11	6
USTs	no add'l impacts	4	2	2	0
Waste Pits	no add'l impacts	1	1	1	1
Oil and Gas Wells	no add'l impacts	5	4	5	4

*Protected Lands – Lands/properties listed under Section 4(f) and Section 6(f).

**4(f) Properties- Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 as amended. Section 4(f) states that no highway project should be approved which requires the "use" of any publicly owned land from a public park, recreation area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site unless there is no feasible or prudent alternative to the use of such land. In addition, adverse impacts to these 4(f) sites must include all possible planning to minimize harm resulting from such use. In the context of Section 4(f), "use" can be either a direct impact (taking of property), or a "constructive use," which may not actually require acquisition of land, but otherwise impairs the function of the resource through changes in access or surroundings.

HOW WILL THIS PROJECT BE FUNDED?

Funding sources for this project are identified through the Louisiana Statewide Transportation Plan (LSTP). This plan outlines the major revenue sources available to local governments. The highway funding sources include the Louisiana Transportation Trust Fund revenues including federal funds, self-generated funds, and other revenue sources. The LSTP was updated in 2014 and focused on identifying how transportation can best address Louisiana's needs in the long-term under the influence of the current economic climate. In an effort to allow for multiple funding scenarios, it is recommended to divide the project into phases. Phases allow for portions of the project to be constructed as funding sources become available.

WHAT'S NEXT?

After the Public Hearing, the following are to be completed:

- Address comments on Draft EIS
- Prepare Final EIS
- Submit Final EIS for approval to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Distribute Final EIS for Public Review
- 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.**



WELCOME

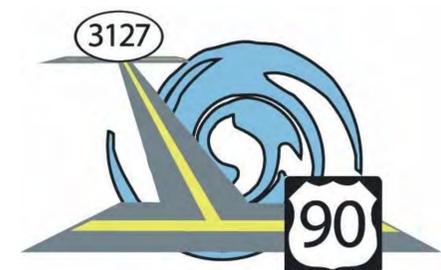
HOUMA-THIBODAUX TO LA 3127 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)

PUBLIC HEARING

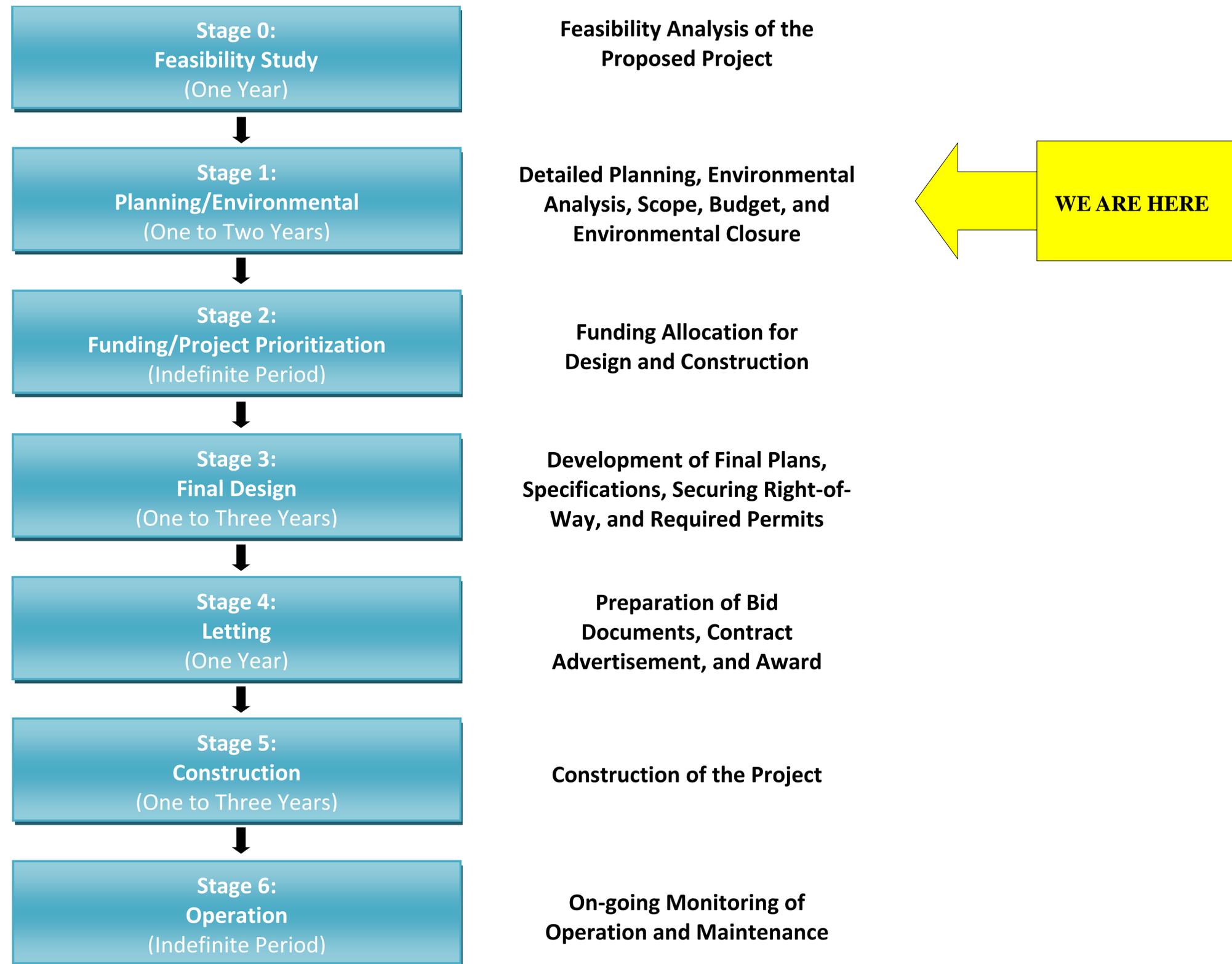
SEPTEMBER 2, 2015

PLEASE SIGN IN.

State Project Number H.005257
Federal Aid Project No. H005257



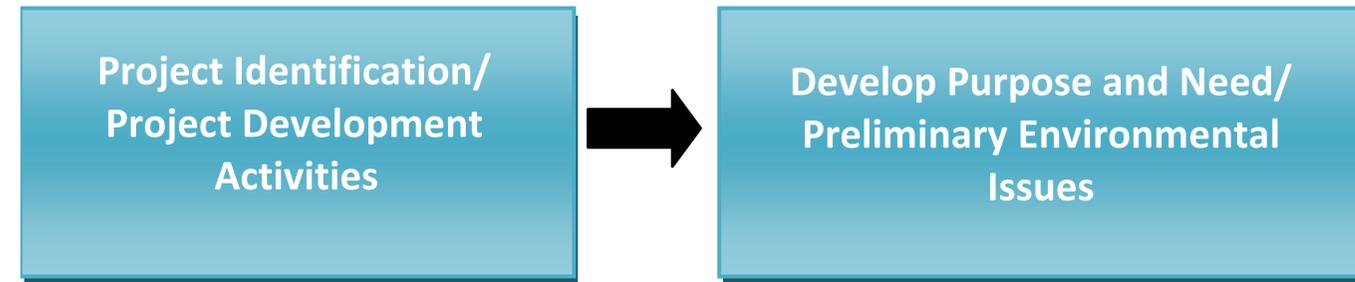
LADOTD PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



Reference: Information obtained from the DOTD Stage 1 – Planning/Environmental Manual of Standard Practice

EIS FLOWCHART

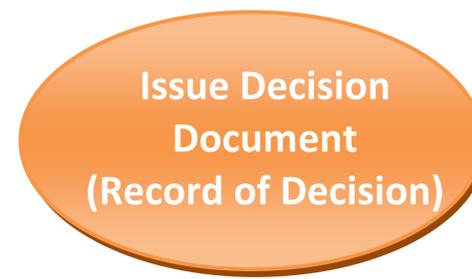
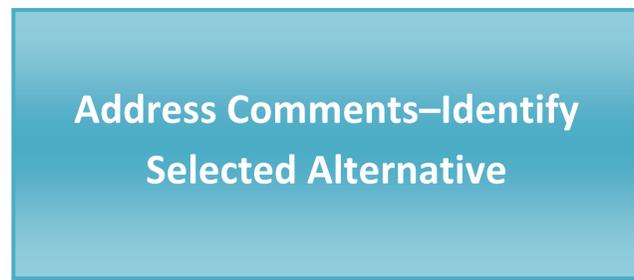
Phase I: Scoping/Purpose and Need



Phase II: Alternatives Study



Phase III: Documentation



ENVIRONMENTAL CLOSURE

The text 'ENVIRONMENTAL CLOSURE' is positioned at the end of the flowchart, following the 'Issue Decision Document' oval.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

What is the purpose of the project?

The purpose of the proposed Houma-Thibodaux to Louisiana Highway 3127 (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.

The project is proposed to accomplish the following objectives:

- Improve north-south **connectivity** and **mobility** between U.S. Highway 90 (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
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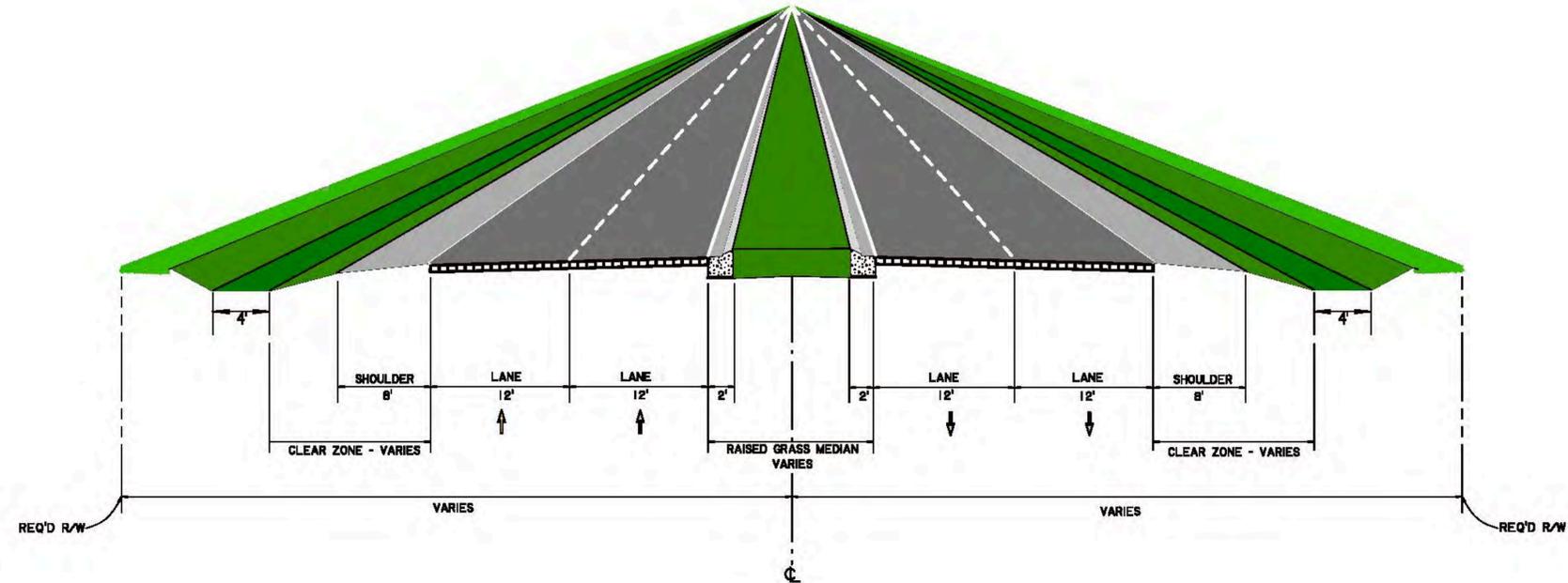
Why is the project needed?

The need for the proposed project is to remove the following deficiencies in the study area:

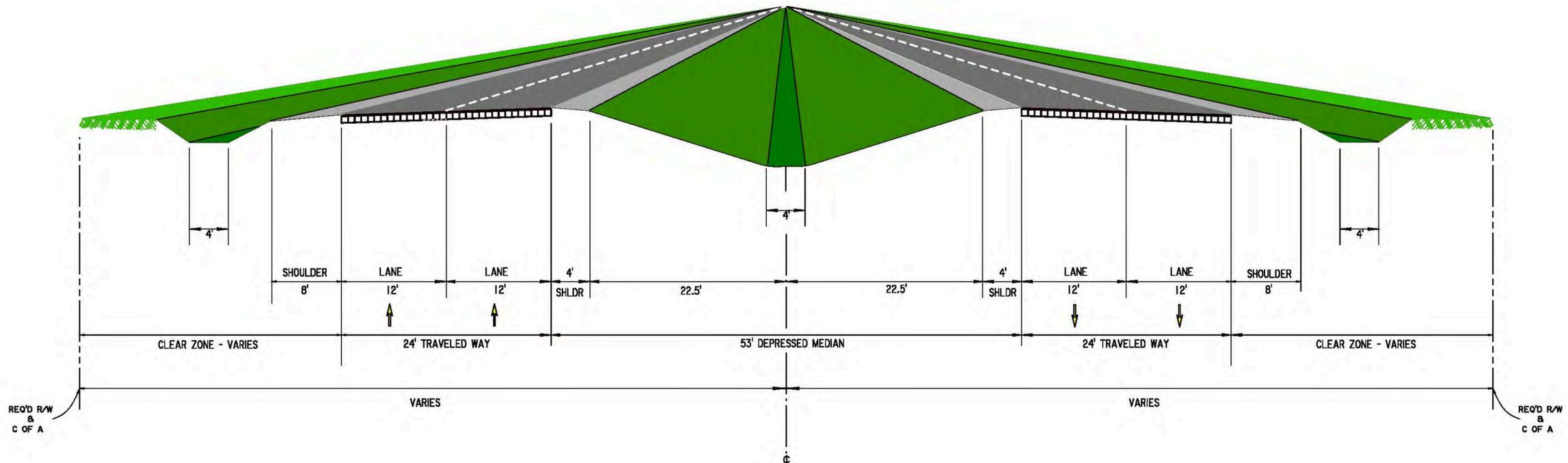
- Inadequate north-south transportation system linkage;
- Inadequate capacity in the roadway network in the Thibodaux area due to existing unmet travel demand in the north-south direction;
- Lack of a north-south emergency evacuation route and north-south rerouting opportunities in the Thibodaux area.

TYPICAL SECTIONS

Urban Typical Section

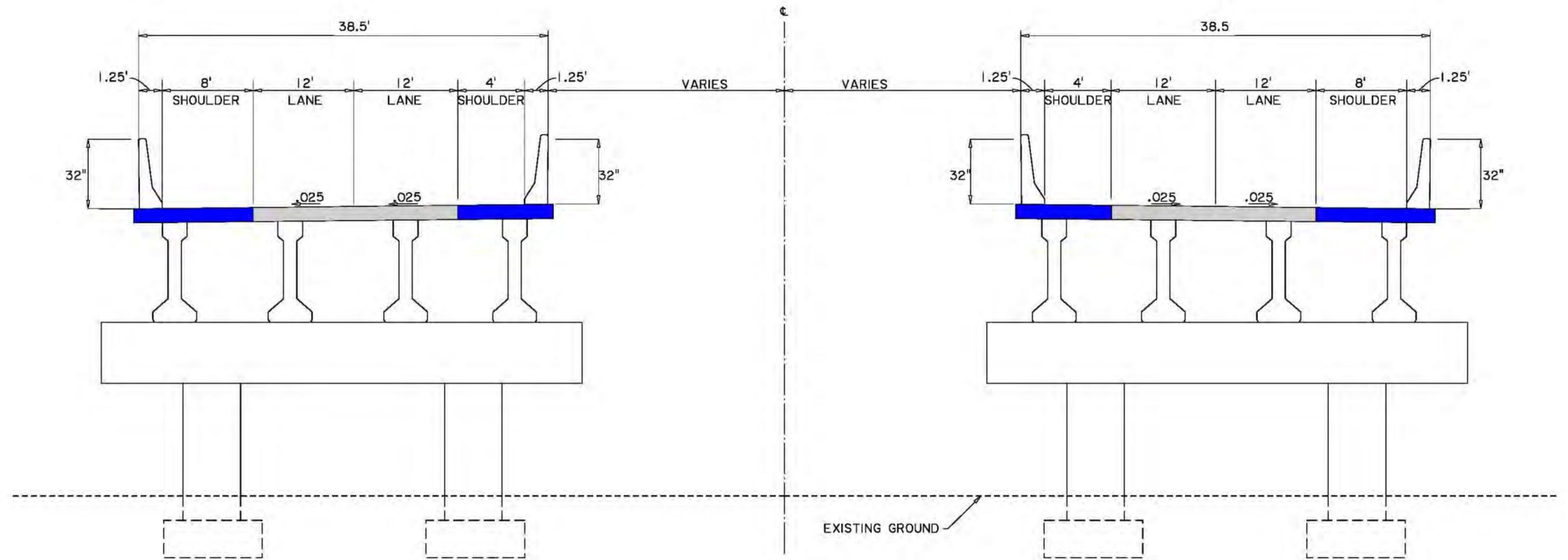


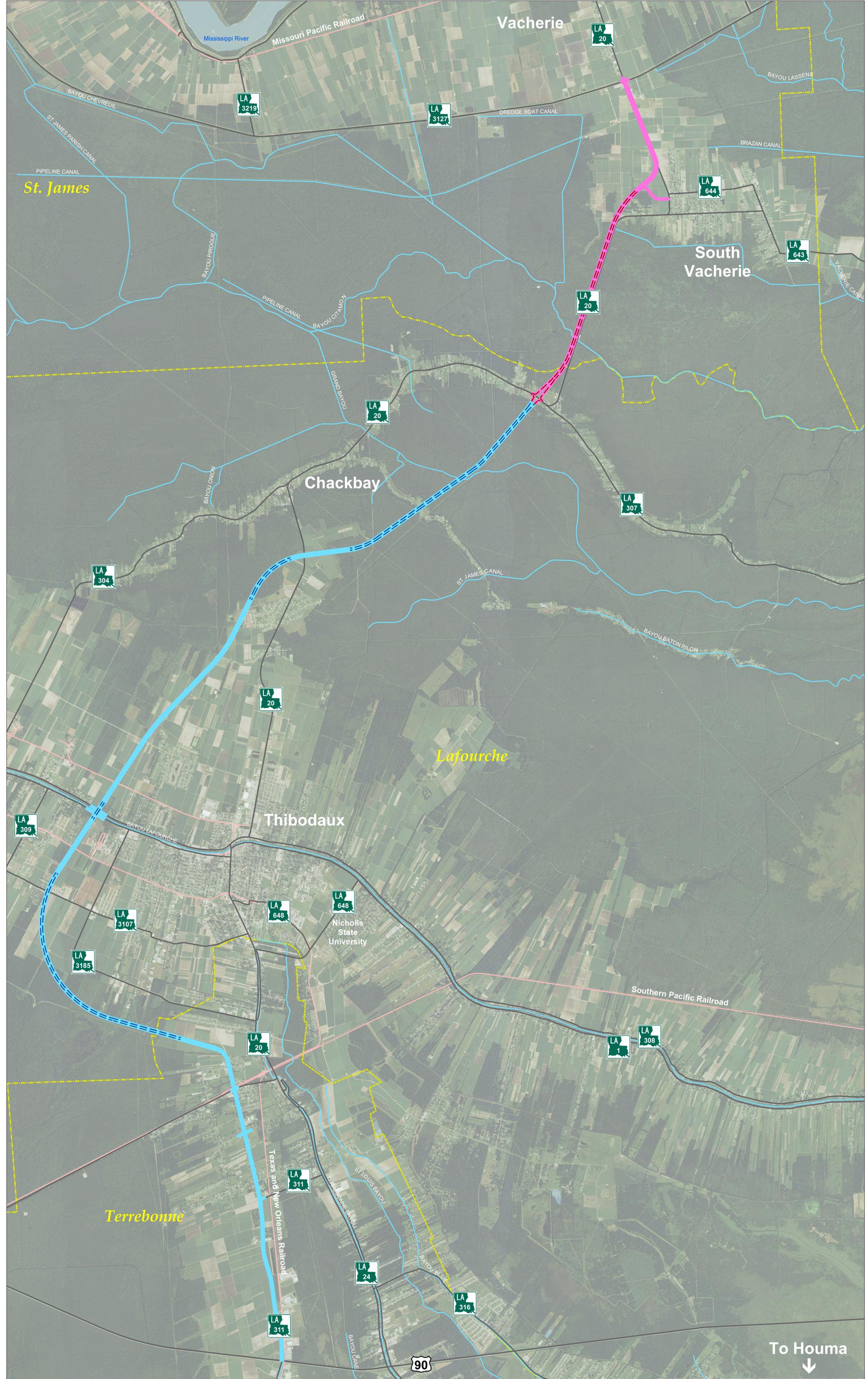
Rural Typical Section

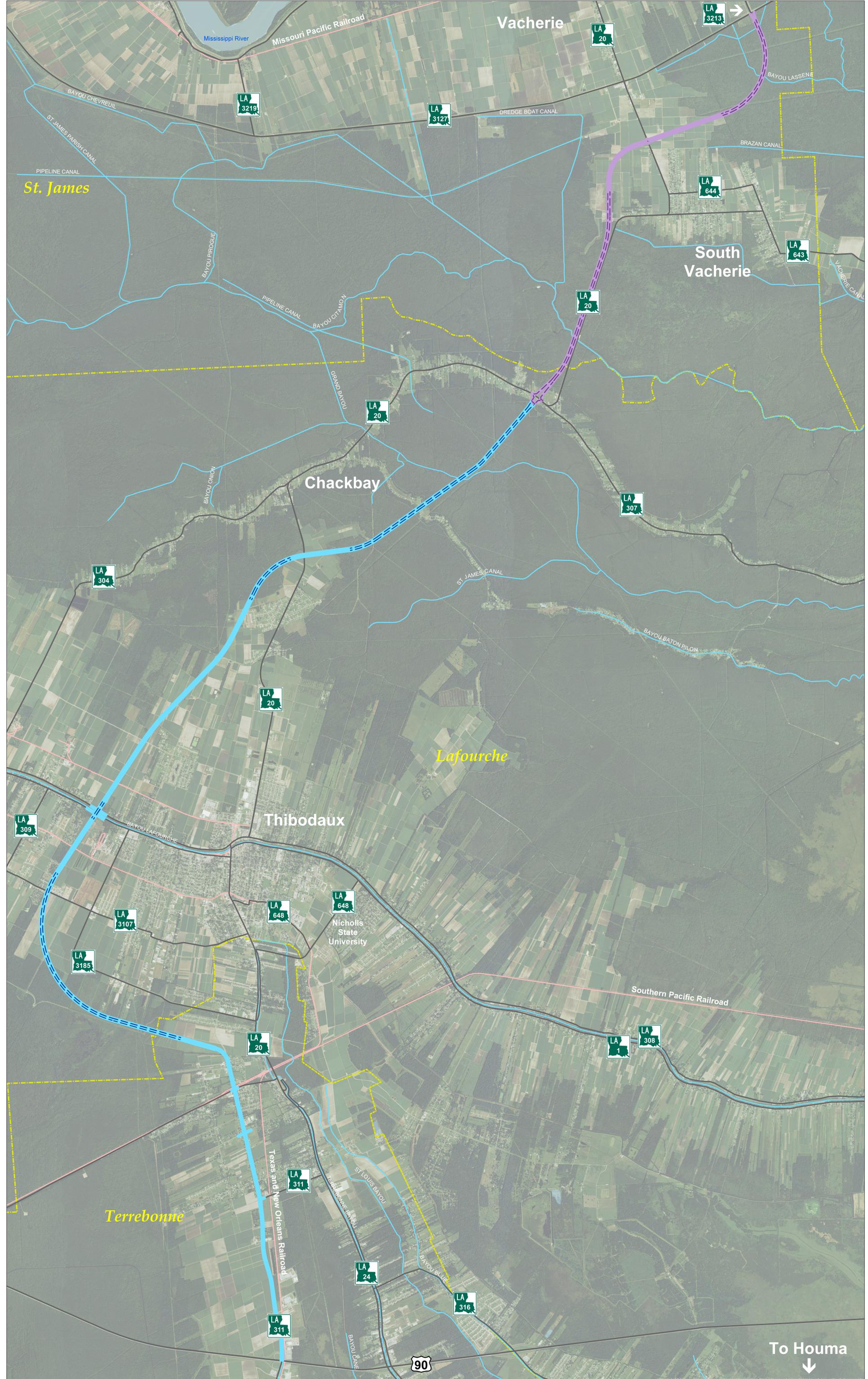


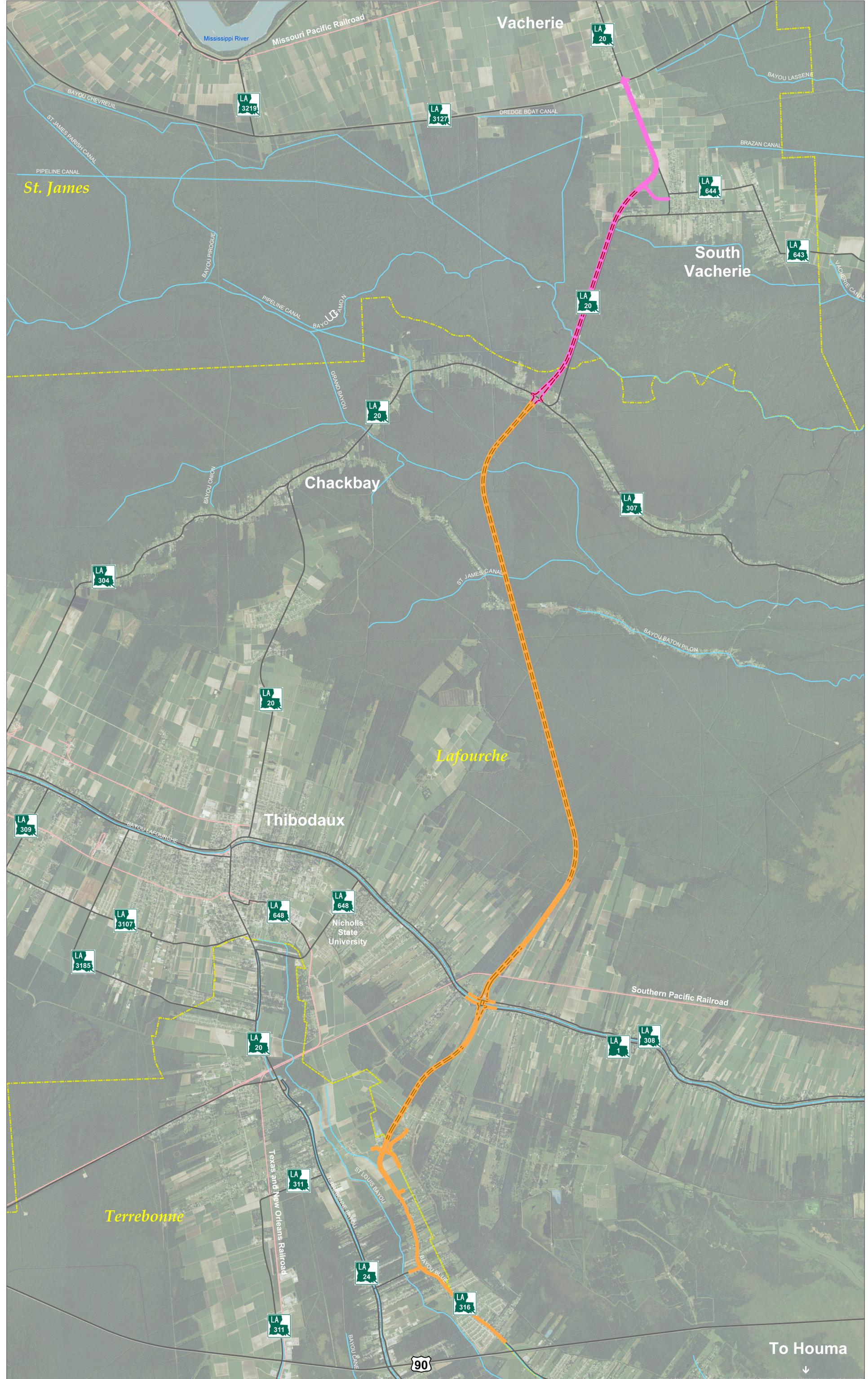
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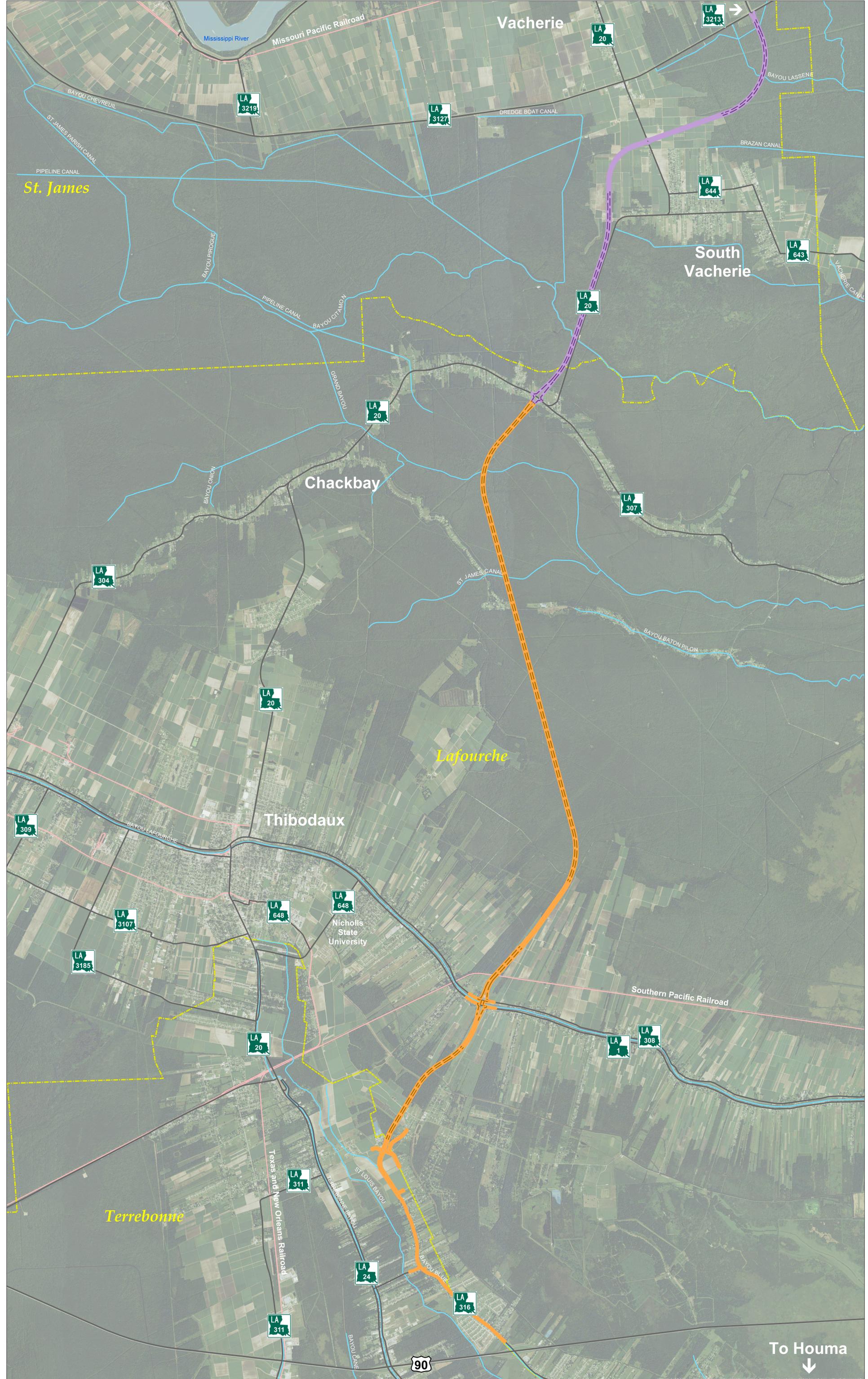
Elevated Typical Section











ALTERNATIVE COMPARISON MATRIX

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