

RECORD OF DECISION

Interstate 69 Section of Independent Utility 15

US 171 to I-20
Bossier, Caddo & DeSoto Parishes



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RECORD OF DECISION

INTERSTATE 69 Section of Independent Utility Number 15

US Department of Transportation - Federal Highway Administration

Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development

Louisiana State Project No. H.005184 (Legacy Project No. 700-94-0003)

Federal Aid Project No. HPI-69-1(001)

US Highway 171 near Stonewall, LA to Interstate Highway 20 near Haughton, LA

Bossier, Caddo and DeSoto Parishes, LA

1.0 DECISION

This Record of Decision (ROD) approves the selection of the Selected Alignment (SA) [*Draft EIS Preferred Alignment (Line 6) with minor modifications*], for the Section of Independent Utility Number 15 (SIU 15) of Interstate 69, as described in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)* issued August 13, 2013 for this project. The *Final EIS* studied the proposed construction of a divided four-lane, controlled access highway on new location, approximately 35 miles in length between US Highway 171 (US 171) near the Town of Stonewall in DeSoto Parish, Louisiana and Interstate Highway 20 (I-20) near the Town of Haughton in Bossier Parish, Louisiana. The Notice of Availability for the *Final EIS* was published in the *Federal Register* on August 23, 2013 (see **Appendix A**).

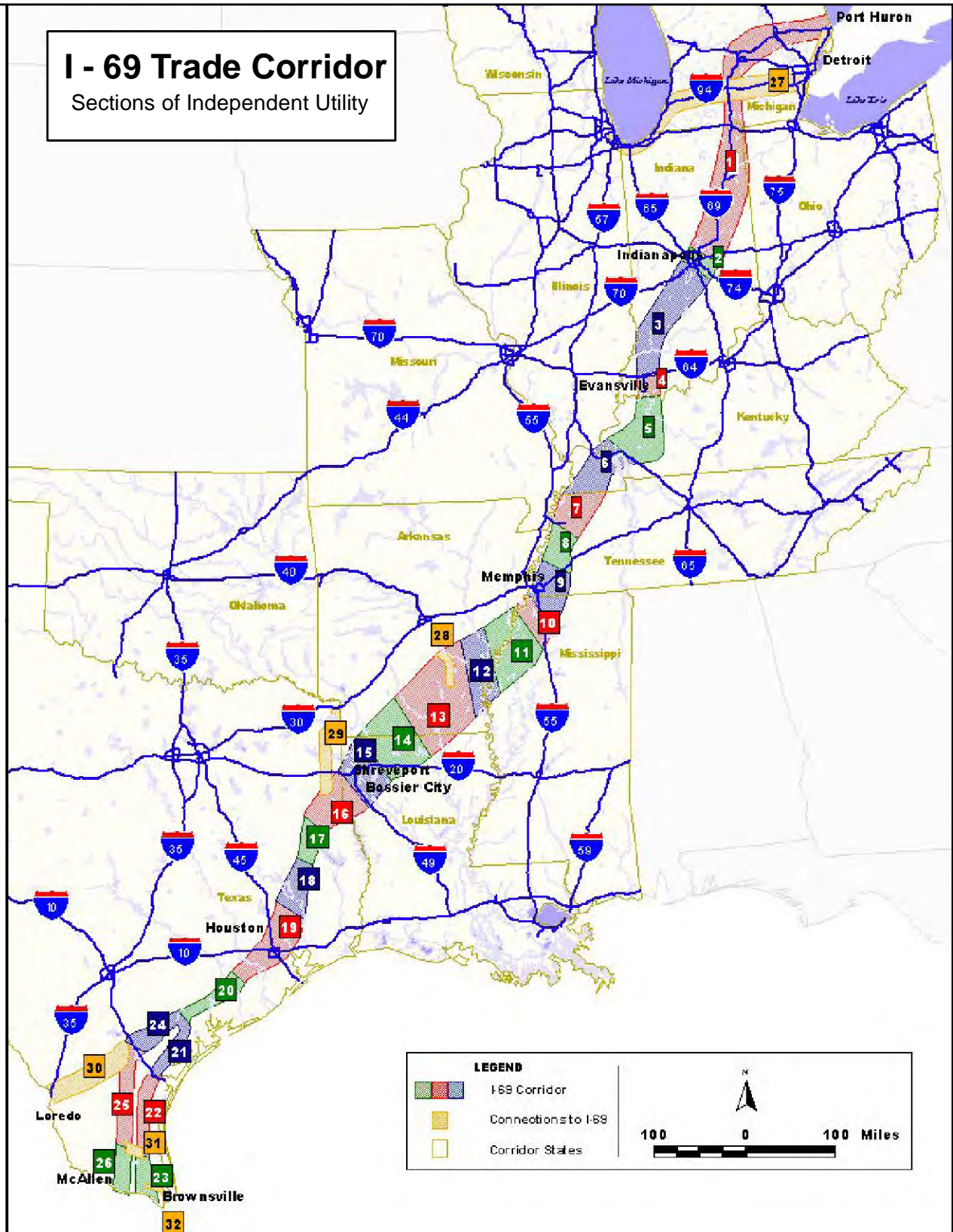
The project area, depicted in **Exhibit 1** as SIU15, is part of the National Interstate 69 (I-69) Corridor and represents one section of the I-69 Corridor connecting Port Huron, Michigan, to the border between Texas and Mexico. This project would provide a new interstate highway in northwestern LA where one does not currently exist, facilitate economic development and provide improved surface transportation service.

The selection of the SA is conditioned upon compliance with mitigation, commitments and permits described in the *Final EIS* (Pages S-27 to S-34). This decision is based on analyses contained in the *Draft EIS* issued in May 2005, the *Final EIS*, the comments from federal and state agencies, members of the public, elected officials, and other information in the record in this matter.

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I - 69 Trade Corridor

Sections of Independent Utility



I-69
US 171 to I-20

Exhibit 1

**I-69 TRADE CORRIDOR
SECTIONS OF INDEPENDENT
UTILITY**

Baker

NOT TO SCALE

DOTD
Texas Department of Transportation

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2.0 COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND RELATED PROCEDURES

2.1 Compliance

The proposed project meets the requirements set forth in 23 CFR 771.111(f), that states the project must:

- ☐ Connect the logical termini and be of sufficient length to address environmental matters on a broad scope;
- ☐ Have independent utility or independent significance, i.e., be usable and be a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made; and,
- ☐ Not restrict the consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.

The project limits were defined to further the development of I-69, and to address local traffic demand and safety issues. The *Final EIS* contains adequate detailed statements of the proposed project, need for the project, alternatives, affected environment, environmental consequences, comments, and coordination.

Both the *Draft* and the *Final EIS* were coordinated with appropriate local, state, federal, and tribal agencies and also made available for public review. Public Hearings for the *Draft EIS* were held on July 20 and 21, 2005. Comments received have been addressed in the *Final EIS*.

2.2 Purpose and Need

Previous studies completed for the National I-69 Corridor have demonstrated that extending I-69 from Port Huron, through Indianapolis, Memphis, Bossier City and Houston to several points on the Mexican/Texas border is a feasible project. Nationwide needs that will be addressed by SIU 15 include:

- ☐ More efficiently move goods, primarily by truck, within the continental United States
- ☐ Improve the economic development opportunities in the traditionally depressed Mississippi Delta and Lower Rio Grande Valley regions
- ☐ Provide for improved transportation linkages in areas of the United States overlooked in the original interstate system.

Completing the I-69 trade corridor addresses directives of legislation associated with the I-69 Corridor, as well as federal and state legislation.

Coordination with local elected officials in and around the Study Area identified several locally based needs for the project. These include:

- ☐ Intermodal connectivity with rail and the Port of Shreveport-Bossier
- ☐ Compatibility with existing heavy rail lines and consideration for adding/relocating heavy rail lines within the same transportation corridor in the future
- ☐ Attracting new businesses to the Study Area and economic improvement of northwest Louisiana, especially south DeSoto Parish
- ☐ Maintaining close proximity to the Shreveport / Bossier City metropolitan area and the Port of Shreveport-Bossier.

3.0 ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT, EVALUATION AND SELECTION

3.1 Alternatives Eliminated From and Retained For Further Consideration

Three broad transportation alternatives (Transportation Systems Management, Mass Transit, and Upgrade the Existing Facilities) were eliminated early from further consideration because they did not meet the Purpose and Need for the project.

Only the No-Action and Build alternatives were retained for further study. The No-Action alternative was retained as a basis for comparing the relative benefits and impacts of the Build alternatives. Under the No-Action alternative, the only projects undertaken would be currently planned safety and capacity improvement projects in the Study Area. Safety projects generally involve shoulder widening and curve realignment where necessary and would be implemented regardless of the decision to construct the proposed highway. I-69 SIU 15 would not be completed under the No-Action alternative.

3.2 Alternatives Development Process

The development of alternatives for I-69 SIU 15 followed a multi-step study approach that evaluated possible highway locations at both the corridor and alignment levels, with increasing detail as the study progressed. Initially, a GIS-based Environmental Inventory was created for the Study Area by collecting available environmental information from federal and state sources. This information was used to identify sensitive environmental resources so that only the most practicable alternatives, those that met the project purpose and need and that had the potential to minimize environmental impacts, were advanced to the next phase of study.

This process satisfied various regulatory and coordination requirements for projects integrating the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Section 404 Permit process by allowing a thorough consideration of all alternatives developed with respect to potential impacts to "waters of the United States", including wetlands, as required under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

The required Section 404 b(1) alternatives analysis was conducted during both the corridor and alignment studies phases as the project progressed. This approach first emphasized avoidance, and then minimization efforts to insure that the identified Preferred Corridor and ultimately the Selected Alignment, minimized wetland impacts to the greatest extent possible.

3.3 Corridor Studies

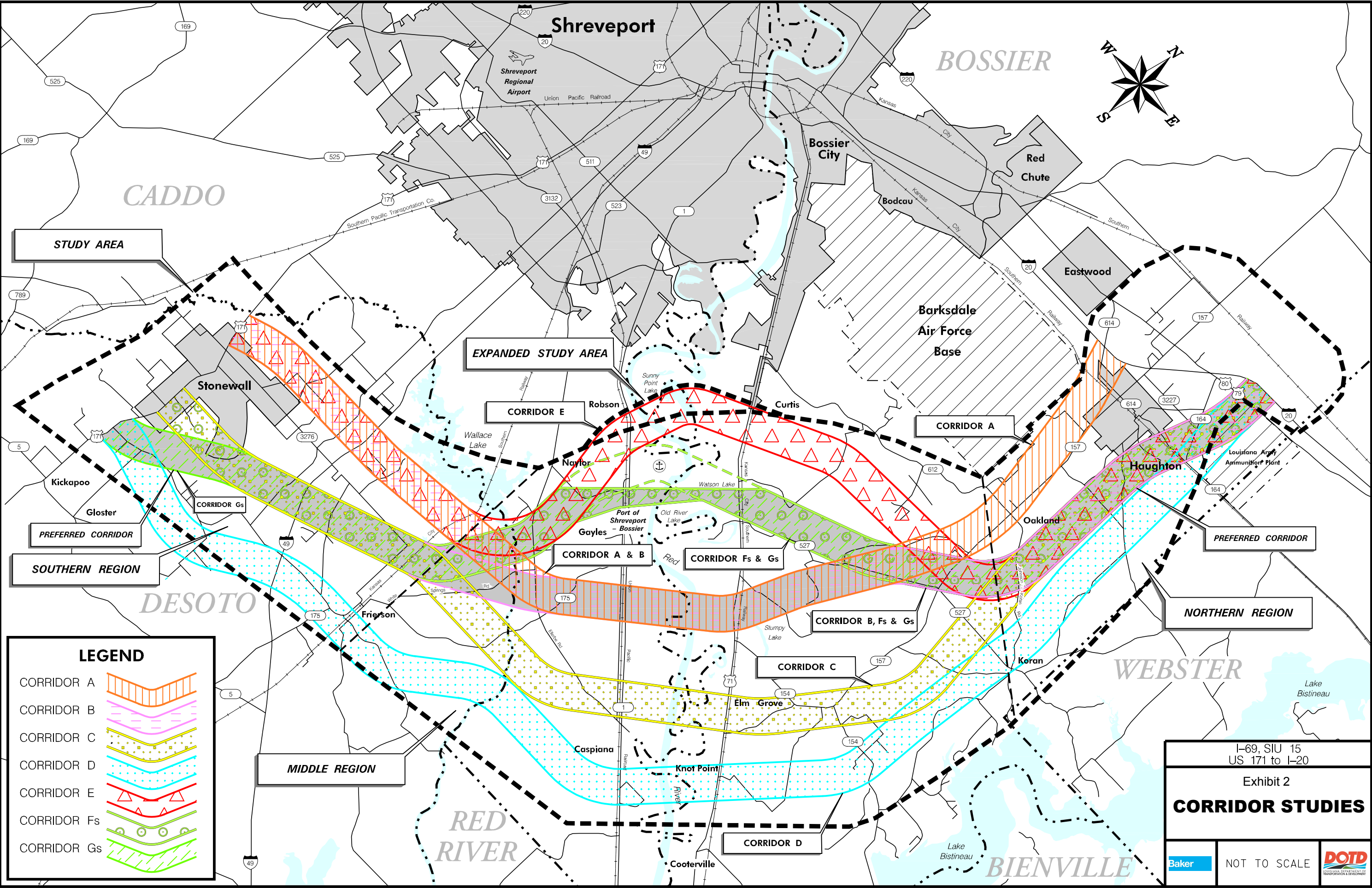
Seven distinct corridors, shown in **Exhibit 2**, were developed within the Study Area using the Environmental Inventory as a guide to avoid and minimize impacts to sensitive resources in addition to consideration of appropriate

engineering design criteria and local community leader concerns. All corridors were analyzed and screened against the sensitive resources, and reviewed by the public, local community leaders, participating Native American tribes, and resource agencies, including the cooperating federal agencies.

Sufficient information and public opinion existed to identify a Preferred Corridor as Corridor G_s in its entirety along with a segment of Corridor B through the Red River Alluvial Valley. The Preferred Corridor best balanced the social, natural, cultural resources, and engineering considerations with the expected national, regional and local benefits and provided the opportunities for economic development and intermodal connectivity identified by local officials. The Preferred Corridor avoided the Williamson Road/Stacey Lane residential area and the Old Port Petroleum solid waste site. It crossed the Red River at the narrowest location of all of the corridors developed, resulting in the shortest bridge length, and provided sufficient clearance to develop an interchange between the protection levee and LA 1. The proposed interchange location with I-49 avoided potential point of access issues with adjacent interchanges and secondary and cumulative development impacts to area floodplains.

The Preferred Corridor had the least potential involvement with wetlands, nearly the least potential involvement with floodplains and areas of high/medium probability for prehistoric archaeological resources, did not have the greatest inventory in any natural resources inventory category, and did not involve known threatened or endangered species locations.

The Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments (Shreveport-Bossier City area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)) adopted an October 30, 2002 Resolution supporting the Preferred Corridor recommendation (see *Final EIS* Appendix F, page F-47). A Preferred Corridor recommendation was submitted to the federal cooperating agencies [US Army Corps of Engineers (COE), US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), US Coast Guard (USCG), and US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)], other participating federal and state resource agencies and participating Native American Tribes. The recommendation detailed the corridor studies process, provided the rationale for selecting the Preferred Corridor, and requested written comments. The COE, FWS, USCG, and EPA concurred with the Preferred Corridor (see *Final EIS* Appendix D, pages D-54 to D-59).



3.4 Alignment Studies

Alignment development within the Preferred Corridor first emphasized avoidance, if practical, and then considered efforts to insure that the alternatives minimized impacts to sensitive resources such as wetlands, threatened and endangered species, and residential areas. This phase of study also included updating and refining the Environmental Inventory based on specific field investigations within the Preferred Corridor. Four preliminary alignments were initially developed.

3.4.1 Draft EIS Preferred Alignment

A comprehensive public involvement program conducted during the Alignment Studies involved the public, local community leaders, appropriate state and federal resource agencies, and participating Native American Tribes. Comments from those involved resulted in revisions to the four preliminary alignments and the addition of a fifth and sixth alignment developed by combining portions of the four initial alignments. As a result of this program, sufficient information and public opinion existed to identify Line 6 as the Preferred Alignment in the *Draft EIS* (see **Exhibit 3**). The basis for the identification of the Preferred Alignment is discussed in detail in *Draft EIS* Section 2.

A Preferred Alignment recommendation was submitted to the Federal cooperating agencies (COE, FWS, USCG, EPA) and the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma. The recommendation detailed the alignment study process, provided the rationale for selecting the Preferred Alignment, and requested written comments. The COE and the EPA concurred with the Preferred Alignment recommendation. The USCG had no comments at that time. The FWS could not concur with the Preferred Alignment recommendation until biological assessments (BA) of the potential effects to Federally-listed endangered species were completed. It was agreed that the BAs would be conducted and that the Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultation with the FWS would be completed prior to the issuance of the *Final EIS*. Correspondence is provided in *Final EIS* (see Appendix D, pages D-93 to D-104). The Caddo Nation of Oklahoma did not respond.

The *Draft EIS* Notice of Availability was published in the *Federal Register* on June 17, 2005 (see *Final EIS* Appendix C, page C-35). Public Hearings were held in Haughton and Stonewall, Louisiana on July 20 and 21, 2005, respectively. Over 140 *Draft EIS*s were distributed to federal and state agencies, elected officials, participating Native American tribes, and other organizations and places listed in *Draft EIS* Section 6.

3.4.2 Final EIS Selected Alignment

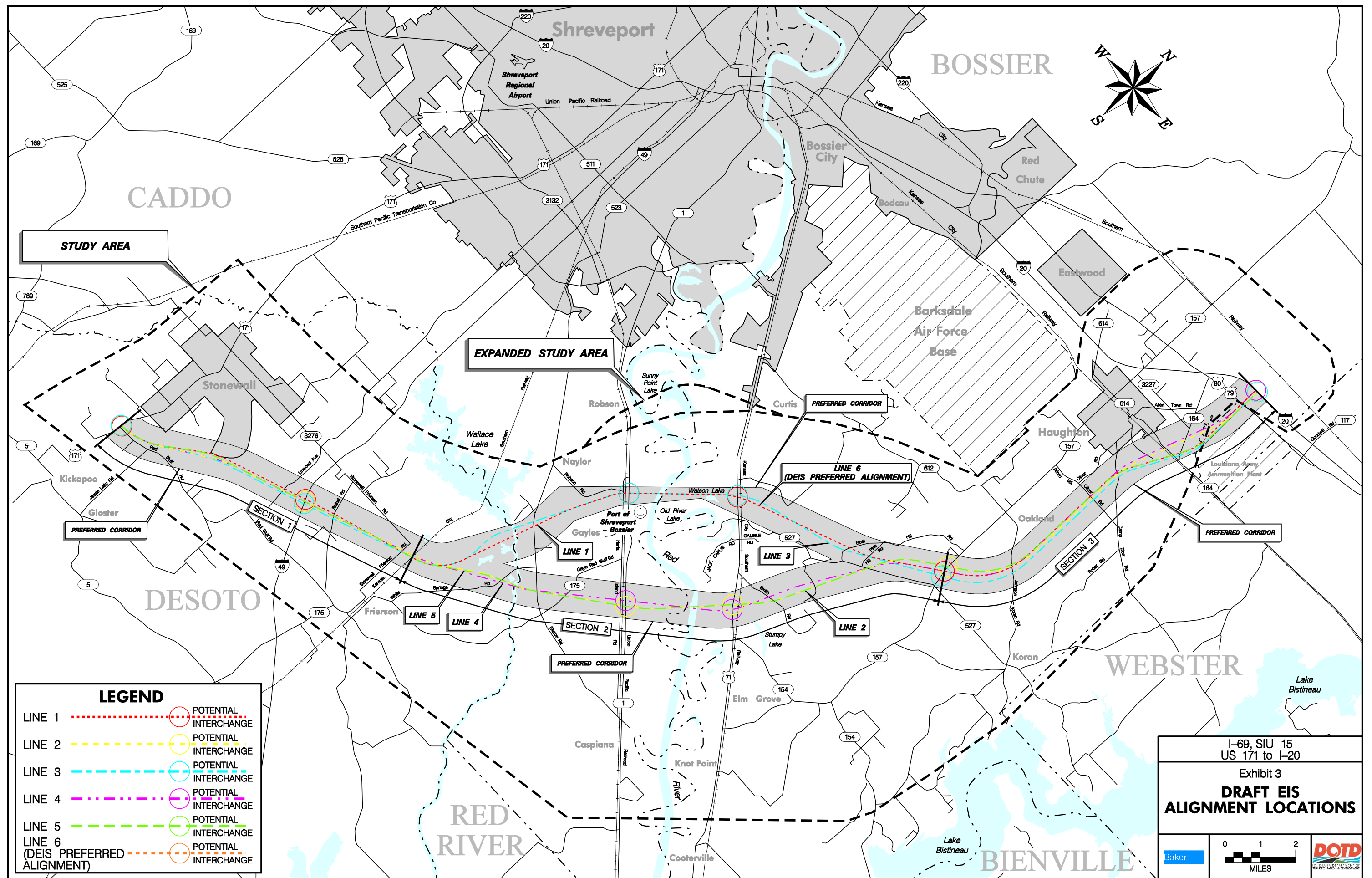
Additional engineering and environmental studies were conducted on the *Draft EIS* Preferred Alignment (Line 6) in response to Public Hearing comments or commitments made in the *Draft EIS*. The *Draft EIS* review period closed on August 1, 2005. These additional studies included:

- ☐ Making a minor southeastern shift to the Preferred alignment and the interchange with US 71 to avoid direct impacts to the Elm Grove Baptist Church
- ☐ Adding a Frontage Road between Ellerbe Road in Caddo Parish and Stonewall Frierson Road in DeSoto Parish to maintain access to properties along Old Church Road and improve area access for police, fire protection, and emergency medical services
- ☐ Conducting Interior least tern (ILT) (*Sterna antillarum*) and Red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) (*Picoides borealis*) Biological Assessments in response to FWS comments resulting in an FHWA “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” determination
- ☐ Conducting a Red River Bridge Conceptual Bridge Study in response to USCG comments to provide additional information relative to navigation and the effect the bridge would have on navigation interests using the waterway.

In a June 15, 2007 letter to US Senator Mary Landrieu, the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center (LSU AgCenter) expressed opposition to the *Draft EIS* Preferred Alignment (Line 6) passing through the LSU AgCenter Pecan Research Station (Station) and requested her assistance in reconsidering the Preferred Alignment decision. Senator Landrieu forwarded the LSU AgCenter’s letter to the FHWA for appropriate action.

In response to the LSU AgCenter comment, a protracted alignment and interchange evaluation was conducted to identify possible revisions to the *Draft EIS* Preferred Alignment (Line 6) that avoided the Station. No feasible alternatives along the Preferred Corridor’s *northern* route through the Port of Shreveport-Bossier were identified. Alignments that avoided the facility while satisfying both driver expectations and AASHTO and DOTD design criteria could not be developed due to the proximity of the Station to the Port and their current and planned infrastructure improvements; the CCS Midstream and ChemTrade Logistics properties, both identified hazardous waste sites; and an existing SWEPCO electric substation.

Two additional alignments were developed, Line 6R within the Preferred Corridor’s *northern* route that shifted the Preferred Alignment slightly southward and utilized a retaining wall to minimize Station impacts. The other,



Line 6-2-6, was an avoidance alternative within the Preferred Corridor's *southern* route that impacted the Lucas Sludge Disposal facility. Line 6R, Line 6-2-6 and the *Draft EIS* Preferred Alignment (Line 6) (see **Exhibit 4**) were presented for federal and state agencies, local community leaders, participating Native American tribes, and public review at August 2 and 3, 2010 outreach meetings. The aerial photography and Environmental Inventory were both updated prior to the meetings to better represent the project's current natural and social contexts. The local officials and the Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments (Shreveport-Bossier City area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)) did not support Line 6-2-6 because the alignment would increase regional transportation improvement costs to widen LA 1 and US 71 and extend the future Inner Loop Extension to meet this alignment.

On September 6, 2011, the LSU AgCenter informed DOTD that as a result of a continuing decline in state appropriations, LSU had decided to close the Station and their opposition to the *Draft EIS* Preferred Alignment (Line 6) was withdrawn (see *Final EIS* Appendix F, page F-121). No timeline for closing the facility was cited. Consequently, Line 6R and Line 6-2-6 were eliminated from further consideration.

After thorough consideration of the comments received on the *Draft EIS*; the additional environmental and engineering studies performed; and the comprehensive involvement by the public, local officials, federal and state resource agencies, and participating Native American tribes; sufficient information and public opinion existed to identify the Selected Alignment for I-69 SIU 15 (see **Exhibit 5 and Appendix C**).

The Selected Alignment is identical to the *Draft EIS* Preferred Alignment (Line 6), except it includes a minor horizontal shift at US 71 to avoid the Elm Grove Baptist Church, a slight adjustment to the vertical profile to center the vertical curve over the Red River navigation span to reduce the bridge height, and the Red River bridge and the LA 1 and US 71 interchange bridges were lengthened to reduce the fill heights. The Selected Alignment also includes a Frontage Road between Stonewall Frierson Road in DeSoto Parish and Ellerbe Road in Caddo Parish.

The Selected Alignment:

- ☐ Has the least wetland impacts
- ☐ Has the fourth lowest residential impacts
- ☐ Does not have the greatest involvement with areas of high/medium probability for prehistoric archaeological resources
- ☐ Does not have the greatest impact to other identified environmental resources

- ☐ Has a moderate estimated overall cost
- ☐ Is endorsed by the Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments, the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization

Although construction of the Selected Alignment will cause some unavoidable, adverse impacts, it is the “environmentally preferred alternative” for purposes of 40 CFR 1502.2(b) because it best satisfies the purpose and need and balances the expected project benefits while minimizing environmental impacts. The Selected Alignment also minimizes wetland impacts to the greatest extent practicable in accordance with Clean Water Act Section 404 b(1) Guidelines.

3.4.3 NEPA Re-evaluation

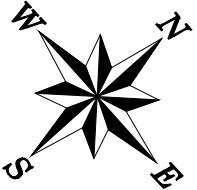
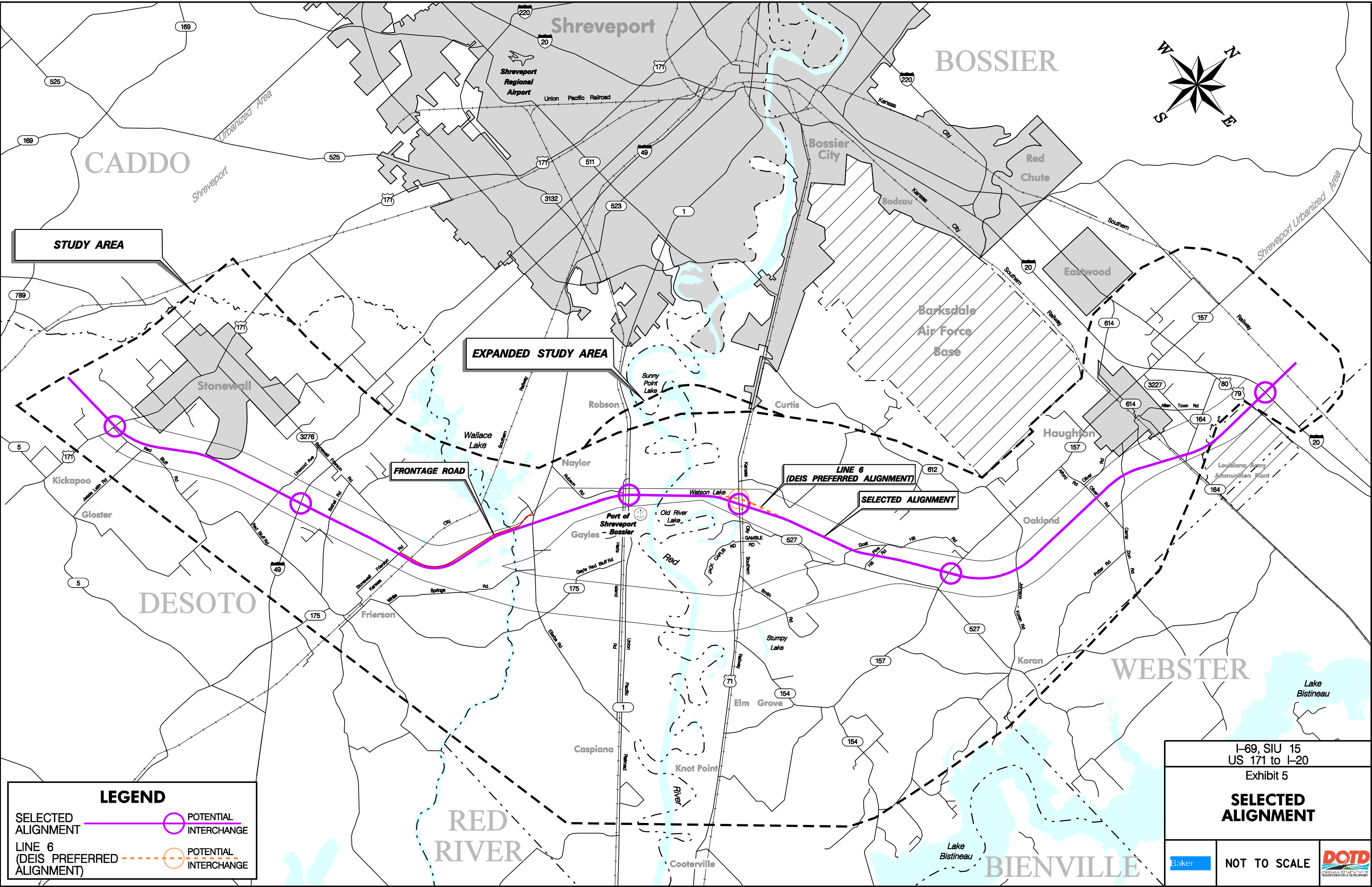
The evaluation of additional alignments and preparation of the *Final EIS* was not completed within three years of FHWA approving the *Draft EIS*, and in accordance with 23 CFR 771.129(a), DOTD prepared a written evaluation assessing changes that have occurred and their effect on the adequacy of the *Draft EIS*. DOTD concluded that a Supplemental EIS was not required because there were no changes in the issues encountered, and the project was constantly under environmental study with no stoppage in the NEPA process. FHWA concurred with the assessment in September 2011 (see *Final EIS* Appendix D, page D-172).

3.5 I-69 SIU 15 Preliminary Cost Estimate, Implementation and Schedule

3.5.1 Preliminary Cost Estimate

Final EIS Table S-1 presented the SIU 15 preliminary cost estimate of \$915 Million based upon 2011 dollars. The cost estimate included engineering, mitigation, right-of-way acquisition, utilities, roadway and bridge construction costs, and contingency costs.

Updated FHWA regulations, as described in the *Guidance for FHWA Major Project Cost Estimate Reviews (CER)*, (October 5, 2011) requires cost estimates be shown in current year dollars. As such, the *Final EIS* preliminary cost estimate was updated from 2011 to 2013 dollars utilizing DOTD 2013 costs for applicable project items. As a result, the project cost was estimated to increase to approximately \$1.048 billion in 2013 dollars. This preliminary cost estimate does not include the prior expenditure of \$5.7 million for the NEPA phase of the project.



STUDY AREA

EXPANDED STUDY AREA

FRONTAGE ROAD

**LINE 6
(DEIS PREFERRED ALIGNMENT)**

SELECTED ALIGNMENT

LEGEND

SELECTED ALIGNMENT		POTENTIAL INTERCHANGE	
LINE 6 (DEIS PREFERRED ALIGNMENT)		POTENTIAL INTERCHANGE	

I-69, SIU 15 US 171 to I-20 Exhibit 5	
SELECTED ALIGNMENT	
	NOT TO SCALE

3.5.2 Implementation and Schedule

SIU 15 will be implemented in construction stages separated by the six project interchanges at US 171, I-49, LA 1, US 71, LA 157 and I-20 with five segments of highway connecting those interchanges. The construction stages represent portions of the project that can be constructed independently and provide a reasonable schedule and funding level for planning purposes. The limits, lengths and priority of the five implementation segments are shown in Table 1 and Exhibit 6. An Implementation Plan is presented in the *Project Management Plan (PMP) Section 6*.

Table 1 IMPLEMENTATION SEGMENTS AND PRIORITIZATION				
Implementation Priority	Segment ID	Parish	Limits	Approx. Length (miles)
1	3	Caddo / Bossier	LA 1 to US 71 Red River Crossing	3.1
2	2	DeSoto / Caddo	I-49 to LA 1	10.1
	Frontage Road	DeSoto / Caddo	Stonewall Frierson Road to Ellerbe Road	4.2
3	4	Bossier	US 71 to LA 157	6.2
4	5	Bossier	LA 157 to I-20	10.6
5	1	DeSoto	US 171 to I-49	5.6

Source: Michael Baker Jr., Inc.

The implementation schedule presented in *Final EIS* Table S-2 was revised to show a scheduled start date of 2015 and extends 11 years to a 2026 completion date. The 2026 completion date is consistent with completion of SIU 15 and the start date of SIU 14, identified in the SIU 14 Record of Decision and PMP. The project implementation stages consist of:

- ☐ Preliminary Engineering
- ☐ Mitigation
- ☐ Final Design
- ☐ Utilities
- ☐ Rights-of-Way Acquisition
- ☐ Construction (Earthwork, bridges and interchanges, base and paving)

SIU 15 is included in the Northwest Louisiana Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP-2030) and was added to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) through MPO administrative amendment on February 27, 2012 (see *Final EIS* Appendix F, page F-128). FHWA approved the STIP amendment on March 28, 2012 (see *Final EIS* Appendix F, page F-130). Project appropriations currently exist to advance the Red River Bridge preliminary design upon completion of the NEPA studies and execution of the Record of Decision.

3.6 FHWA Major Project Definition and Delivery Process

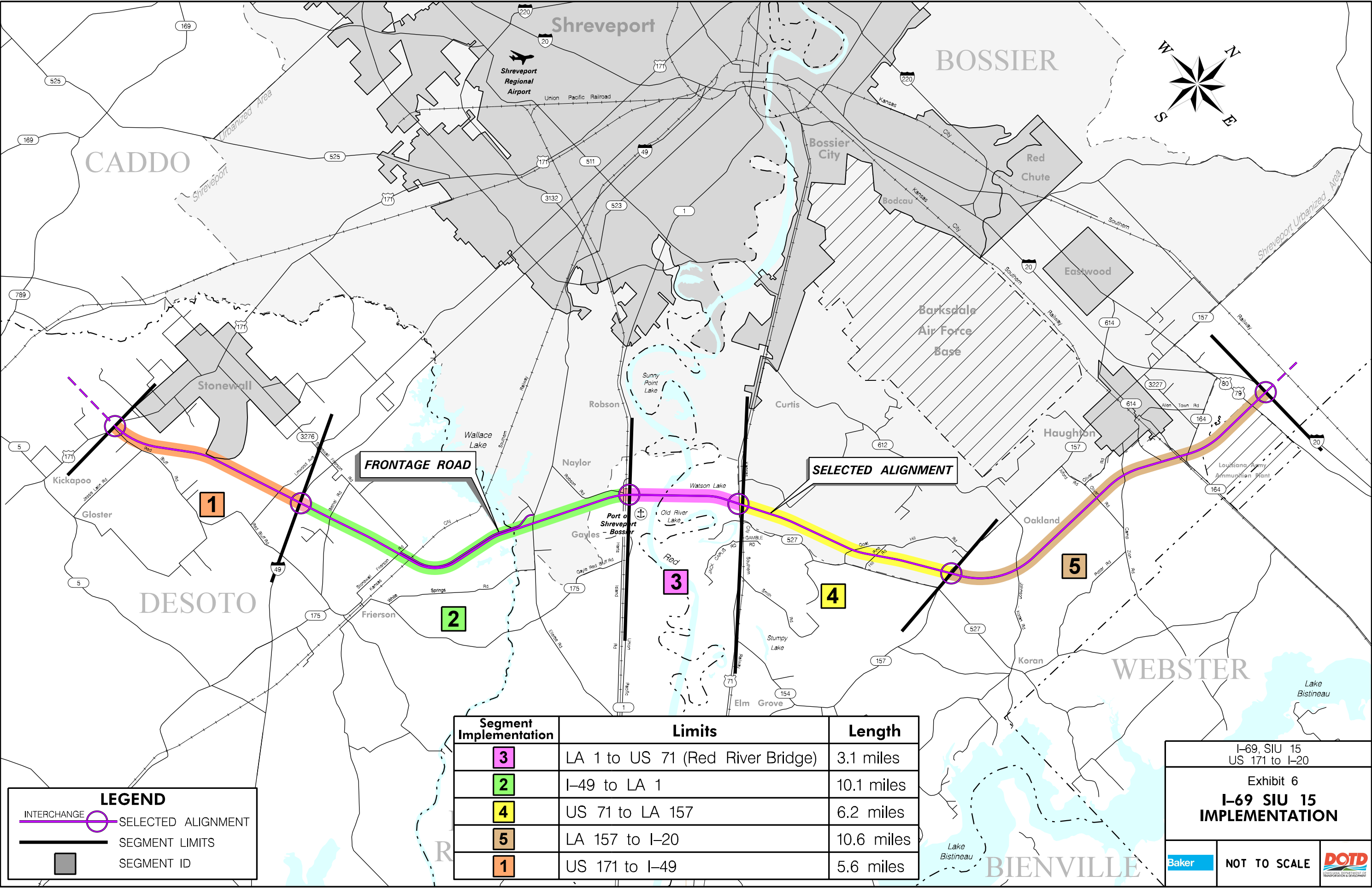
3.6.1 Major Project Definition

In accordance with the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU), the project is considered a Major Project, which is defined as “a project with a total estimated cost of \$500 million or more that is receiving financial assistance.” The project delivery process for a large transportation project defined as a Major Project is often complex, requires extensive coordination, and undergoes various review processes before Federal funds can be released. In accordance with the FHWA Project Delivery Process, “the Project Owner must demonstrate to the FHWA that the project has been carefully planned out, i.e. costs have been estimated as accurately and meticulous as possible; risks have been carefully considered and mitigated; financial requirements and strategies have been clearly defined; and the implementation of the project has been carefully planned.” This is accomplished through the development and review of a series of financial and management plans.

3.6.2 FHWA Major Project Delivery Process

In order for FHWA to authorize and release Federal funding for major projects (greater than \$500 million), careful project planning must be demonstrated and various review processes are required through all phases of the project, including:

- ☐ NEPA Process
- ☐ Final Design / Rights-of-Way
- ☐ Construction, and
- ☐ Project Closeout

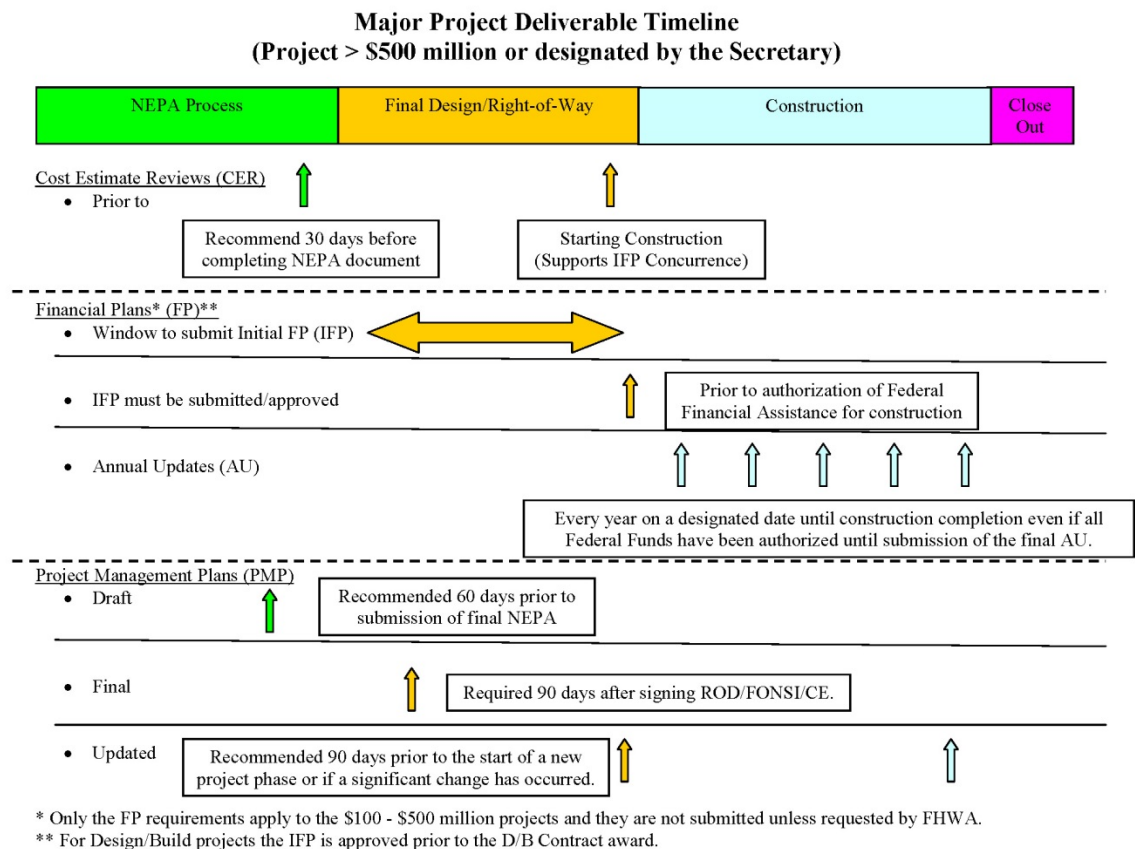


The required FHWA processes include:

- ❑ Cost Estimate Review (CER) – that is as accurate and meticulous as possible;
- ❑ Financial Plan – that clearly defines financial requirements and strategies;
- ❑ Project Management Plan (PMP) – that identifies projects risks, mitigation of those risks, and carefully plans project implementation.

The FHWA timeline in **Exhibit 7** identifies the major requirements and milestones for the three required processes, together with their relationship and other milestones in the overall project delivery process as it extends from planning/NEPA, to final design and rights-of-way, to construction, and ending with project closeout.

Exhibit 7: MAJOR PROJECT DELIVERABLE TIMELINE



Source: Federal Highway Administration

The SIU 15 project status relative to the Major Project Delivery processes is as follows:

- ❑ NEPA Process – The Final EIS was approved in February 2013.
- ❑ Cost Estimate Review (CER) – The first CER was conducted February 3 to 6, 2014 and is summarized below.
- ❑ Project Management Plan (PMP) – A *Draft PMP* was submitted in October 2013. Review comments will be incorporated and the PMP finalized within 90 days after the ROD has been signed. PMP updates will occur as recommended 90 days prior to the start of a new project phase or if a significant change has occurred.
- ❑ Financial Plan - A Financial Plan will be prepared prior to the first federal authorization for construction funds and will be updated annually throughout the course of the project. The Financial Plan will be prepared as outlined in PMP Section 6.
- ❑ Cost Estimate Review – A second CER will be conducted during final design/ROW and will serve as the programmed funding level within the Financial Plan.
- ❑ Final Design / Rights-of-Way – Design will begin with the Segment between LA 1 and US 71 (Red River Crossing) using existing funding already appropriated to the project. Subsequent final design/ROW for each consecutive segment will proceed as outlined in the Implementation Schedule in *PMP Section 6*.
- ❑ Construction - Will proceed as outlined in Implementation Schedule in *PMP Section 6*.
- ❑ Project Closeout – Project closeout procedures will follow as outlined in *PMP Section 18*.

3.7 I-69 SIU 15 - Cost Estimate Review (CER) and PMP

3.7.1 Cost Estimate Review

The DOTD and FHWA jointly participated in the first SIU 15 Cost Estimate Review (CER) from February 3 through 6, 2014. As stated in *Guidance for FHWA Major Project Cost Estimate Reviews (CER)*, (October 25, 2011), the objective of the FHWA cost estimate process is to conduct an unbiased risk-based review to verify the accuracy and reasonableness of the current cost estimate and schedule to complete a major project and to develop a probability range for the cost estimate that represents the project's current level of design. The identified project costs from the cost estimate review shall be used in the major project Financial Plan and the NEPA decision document. "All costs associated with the project from the NEPA phase through final construction must be included" in the CER. The outcome of the CER is to identify the project cost in year of expenditure (YOE) dollars at the 70% confidence level; this is the value that will be programmed within the

initial Financial Plan and similarly presented in the NEPA decision document. A range of costs between the 0% and 100% confidence levels are also identified as part of the CER; these values can be presented in the NEPA decision document as well.

During the CER, DOTD subject matter experts in financial, environmental, right-of-way, engineering and construction disciplines provided input into the base year cost estimate. This input was utilized to populate the FHWA CER Excel Template. Cost adjustments were made to the 2013 base year cost estimate to capture the following items:

- ☐ Adjustments to Louisiana Girder (LG) and steel plate bridge unit costs;
- ☐ Adjustments to utility relocation unit costs;
- ☐ Soft costs including market conditions and inflation.

As a result of the cost adjustments, the 2013 base year cost estimate increased to \$1.171 billion.

A Project Risk Matrix was developed in advance of the CER as part of the overall *Draft PMP Risk Management Plan*. The risk matrix included known project risks on a global basis - those occurring in all 5 implementation segments, and those that would exclusively occur on a segment by segment basis. Opportunities were identified that could serve to expedite and enhance the project, and to mitigate project risks.

Through a collaborative effort among the project team, the probability of these events occurring (either as an opportunity or risk) were defined and their potential impact on the project relative to cost and schedule (where applicable) were established. This data was input into the risk register within the FHWA CER Excel Template.

3.7.2 YOE Total Project Cost

The FHWA CER Excel Template, in conjunction with Oracle based software Crystal Ball, was utilized to establish the YOE total project cost. The total project cost includes construction costs, utilities, construction support, construction inspection, ROW and project uncertainty. The total project cost also includes the \$5.7 million previously expended for the NEPA phase of the project.

The results of CER in terms of total project costs are as follows:

- ☐ YOE Project Cost at the 70% confidence level - \$1.719 billion; and
- ☐ YOE Project Range of Cost (0% to 100% confidence level) - \$1.208 billion to \$2.194 billion.

The schedule analysis at the 70% confidence level shows SIU 15 being completed by March 16, 2028.

3.7.3 Project Management Plan

DOTD and FHWA jointly prepared a draft I-69 SIU 15 Project Management Plan (PMP). It will be adopted as the accepted management procedures for completing the project from issuance of the Record of Decision (ROD) through project completion. The PMP will be available for public review on DOTD's website, www.dotd.la.gov.

The draft PMP was prepared in accordance with FHWA Project Management Plan Guidance (January 2009) to assist recipients of federal financial assistance in meeting the requirements of Section 1904(a) of the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU). In accordance with the guidance a final PMP will be submitted to FHWA for approval within 90 days of the signing of the ROD.

DOTD and FHWA acknowledge that the PMP will be continuously evaluated and revisions issued as the project progresses in order to implement the most effectively managed project that will meet all project objectives.

4.0 SECTION 4(F) & SECTION 6(F) RESOURCES

The Selected Alignment would not impact any resources protected by Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 or Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965.

5.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

During the development of alternatives, efforts were made to avoid or minimize environmental impacts to the social, physical, natural, and cultural environments. Once a potential impact was identified as unavoidable, mitigation measures or other commitments to minimize harm were considered. Section 4 in the *Final EIS* fully discusses the environmental impacts of the Selected Alignment and specifically describes mitigation measures and commitments to minimize harm. Below is a brief overview of this analysis.

5.1 Social Environment

5.1.1 Relocations

The alignments were specifically developed and located within the Preferred Corridor through sparsely populated areas currently in use for agricultural, oil and gas, and timber purposes to minimize community, residential, and business impacts while attempting to maximize public access to this transportation facility. Further steps to minimize displacements will be considered during the final design of the highway. The Selected Alignment will impact twenty-eight residential structures, no commercial structures, and no institutional structures. All displaced residents will be provided with relocation assistance in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies of 1970 by the DOTD and every reasonable effort made to relocate affected residents within their immediate community.

5.1.2 Community Access

Grade separations are proposed at all existing U.S. highway, state highway and parish road crossings via overpass or underpass structures. A frontage road will be constructed between Stonewall Frierson Road in DeSoto Parish and Ellerbe Road in Caddo Parish, in lieu of grade separating either I-69 or Old Church Road, to maintain access to the properties and residents in the area. Access within and between communities would not appreciably change as a result of the project. Maintenance of access to individual property parcels will be considered and addressed during the final design of the highway.

5.2 Physical Environment

5.2.1 Oil and Gas Resources

Oil and gas exploration within the Study Area is dynamic with new well facilities being established throughout the study of the project. In 2008, Haynesville Shale became a potentially major shale gas resource within the area and is expected to increase in production over the next several years. Oil and gas wells are scattered along the Selected Alignment from Stonewall in DeSoto Parish to LA 157 in Bossier Parish, with most wells

located within the Elm Grove Field in Bossier Parish. The Selected Alignment will impact twelve producing gas wells, with ten of the wells located within Bossier Parish, and will not impact any Haynesville Shale wells. As a result of the project, economic impacts may occur to landowners due to the loss of active oil or gas wells. In conjunction with the property acquisition process, a qualified petroleum engineer will conduct a feasibility study for each impacted well to determine the estimated reserves. Results of the study will determine whether a well would be replaced by directional drilling or compensation provided to landowners based on the estimated reserves.

5.2.2 Air Quality

Direct effects on ambient air quality resulting from the construction of the Selected Alignment are expected to be minimal. Limited traffic volumes and the rural nature of the project location indicate that neither the one-hour nor the eight-hour National Ambient Air Quality Standard for carbon monoxide will be violated. Currently, Bossier, Caddo and DeSoto Parishes are classified as attainment parishes with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and have no general conformity determination obligations.

5.2.3 Noise

Potential noise impacts to sensitive receptors were minimized through alignment shifts and overall avoidance of residential areas. The results of a Type I traffic noise analysis concluded there are no reasonable and/or feasible noise abatement measures to eliminate or reduce expected highway traffic noise impacts associated with the Selected Alignment. Although noise barriers would achieve noise reduction goals, they are unreasonable because they exceeded the cost effectiveness criteria. No abatement measures would be incorporated into the Project unless, due to changes during final design, they were re-evaluated and determined to be feasible and/or reasonable.

5.2.4 Hazardous Materials

A Phase I environmental site assessment was conducted along the Selected Alignment to identify, to the extent feasible, recognized environmental conditions. The Selected Alignment encroaches on two properties identified as known potential hazardous waste sites, the most western forested portion of the Louisiana Army Ammunition Plant and ChemTrade Logistics located at the Port of Shreveport-Bossier, but those encroachments are in locations where plant operations did not occur and there was no evidence of contamination. If areas of hazardous materials contamination are identified, appropriate measures will be taken to remediate the areas prior to construction.

5.2.5 Farmland Soils

Due to the extensive agricultural activity in the Study Area, there is no practicable highway alternative that would avoid impacts to this resource. The Preferred Corridor and the subsequent Selected Alignment were developed to balance impacts to environmental resources, including productive farmland soils. Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Forms were submitted to NRCS and they determined that the Selected Alignment does not require consideration for farmland protection under the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA).

5.3 Natural and Cultural Environment

5.3.1 Surface Waters

Avoidance of crossing surface water resources was not possible due to the direction of the project alignments. The developed highway alignments run roughly west to east while existing drainage patterns run mainly north to south. Surface water resources crossed by the Selected Alignment include perennial and intermittent streams or bayous, and man-made ponds primarily associated with agricultural activities. Bridges or culverts are proposed at each stream crossing depending on the roadway alignment and the upstream watershed area. Water quality impacts will be restricted to temporary surface runoff associated with culvert and bridge placements. No long-term adverse impacts are expected. Coordination with the U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers and other jurisdictional resource agencies will be conducted throughout the design and construction of the Selected Alignment to determine the mitigation needs for potential direct adverse stream effects.

5.3.2 Floodplains

The Study Area is bisected by floodplains associated with the Red River Alluvial Valley. Consequently, there is no practicable alternative to the proposed construction of the Selected Alignment that does not cross floodplains or floodways. The Selected Alignment includes all practicable measures to minimize floodplain impacts. A detailed floodplain evaluation will be conducted during the final design phase of the project.

5.3.3 Wetlands

Due to the relative number and spatial distribution patterns of wetland communities, as well as a thorough consideration of other environmental concerns including existing topography, residential structures and communities, a practicable alignment that avoids all wetlands was not possible within the Preferred Corridor. The Selected Alignment has the least wetland impacts and includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands as specified in Executive Order 11990. During the final design process continued efforts will be made to further avoid and/or minimize wetland impacts through consideration of design alternatives. Continuing

coordination between the COE and the DOTD will insure that all regulatory concerns are addressed. Wetland area lost due to the construction of the Selected Alignment will be replaced through mitigation activities.

5.3.4 Natural Communities

Impacts to terrestrial and aquatic communities would primarily result from the conversion of existing land to highway rights-of-way. Pasture/cropland and pine forest are the community types most affected by the Selected Alignment, consistent with the dominant vegetation found throughout the Study Area. Aquatic community impacts would be limited to the conversion and filling of several isolated ponds, primarily used for cattle production, and increased levels of sedimentation at stream crossing areas during construction. Increased sedimentation could adversely impact both aquatic invertebrates and fishes and cause temporary habitat degeneration for a number of species. No terrestrial or aquatic-species populations would be eliminated due to construction. Some individual species mortality would occur to less mobile species, such as reptiles and amphibians, during initial construction activities. Construction of the Selected Alignment would convert existing habitat communities to early successional grassy or shrubby vegetation commonly associated with highway right-of-way, which may be suitable habitat for many of the wildlife species within the Study Area. No community types would be extensively impacted based on their overall availability within the Study Area.

5.3.5 Threatened and Endangered Species

Known locations of federally listed threatened and endangered species as well as a list of state species of concern were obtained from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Natural Heritage Program (LNHP). Review of the information and further consultation with FWS indicated that one federally listed species, the interior least tern (*Sterna antillarum*), had been sighted in the Study Area. Additionally, the FWS suggested that potential habitat for the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) (*Picoides borealis*), listed as an endangered species, may occur within the Study Area. Eleven state species of concern were identified within the Study Area but no locations were located within any of the alignments. Biological Assessments (BA) were conducted to determine potential impacts to the ILT nesting habitat and to the RCW and its foraging and nesting habitat. FWS concurred with FHWA's determination that the project "may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect" these species.

5.3.6 Cultural Resources

A Phase I Cultural Resource Survey was conducted to identify archaeological and historic resources along the Selected Alignment where right-of-entry was granted. Un-surveyed portions of the Selected Alignment will be evaluated once project rights-of-way have been acquired or right-of-entry granted and coordinated with the

Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The Selected Alignment will impact one previously recorded site that is considered potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP. One additional site was identified during the Phase I Cultural Resource Survey as impacted by the Selected Alignment and is considered potentially NRHP-eligible. Additional testing is required for both sites to determine their final NRHP eligibility status. The Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office concurred with the survey findings and National Register of Historic Places eligibility presented in the *Final Phase I Cultural Resources Survey Report*. A summary of the findings is presented in *Final EIS* Section 4.14.

6.0 DESIGN REQUIREMENTS, PERMITS, MITIGATION, COMMITMENTS AND ADDITIONAL STUDIES NEEDED PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION

Throughout this project, the DOTD and FHWA have consulted and coordinated with federal and state agencies, as well as the public, regarding important issues. Many issues have been resolved throughout the course of the preparation of the *Final EIS*. The resolution of other issues cannot be completed until the project moves forward into the design phase, when additional information becomes available. These issues have been resolved by agreeing to the manner in which they will be addressed at a later date. The following summarizes the planning, environmental and design tasks that must be completed prior to project construction.

6.1 Design Requirements

The Selected Alignment requires a Design Exception because the interchange with I-49 is less than the three-mile spacing between rural interchanges specified in the AASHTO Interstate Design Standards (AASHTO 2005) and DOTD Engineering Directives (DOTD 2006). Per DOTD requirements, the Design Exception will be requested during final design.

Crossovers will be provided for emergency access. The number and location of the emergency crossovers will be determined during final design.

Red River Bridge design requirements include:

- ☐ Required 62-foot vertical clearance above the normal pool elevation
- ☐ Required 300-foot minimum horizontal clearance for the navigation span, measured normal to the flow of the river
- ☐ No piers shall be placed through existing levees or foundations constructed in and around the levee's toe of slope
- ☐ New facilities crossing levee systems must provide for a 15-foot minimum vertical clearance above the top of levees
- ☐ Levee armoring with riprap or revetment mats may be required in the shadowline of the proposed structure to mitigate erosion and loss of vegetation
- ☐ During final design, a comprehensive barge impact study will be conducted to ensure that piers within the 100-year floodplain are impact worthy and a detailed navigation study will be coordinated with the USCG
- ☐ The final main span unit configuration, pier sizes, and construction methods will be established during final design

- ☐ Navigation lighting will be in accordance with 33 CFR 18
- ☐ Detailed hydrology and hydraulic studies will be performed during the final design
- ☐ Engineering “No Rise” Certificates will be prepared during final design and submitted to the Parish Floodplain Administrators for review and approval

6.2 Permits

No permits have been secured or permit applications submitted for the Project. The following permits must be obtained prior to construction:

- ☐ State Water Quality Certification issued by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, as required by Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.
- ☐ Clean Water Act Section 404 permit issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the placement of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States. A draft Section 404 permit application for the Selected Alignment is included in *Final EIS* Appendix O.
- ☐ National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit required by Section 402 of the Clean Water Act issued by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.
- ☐ Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) permit issued by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.
- ☐ Bridge Permit issued by the USCG, pursuant to the General Bridge Act of 1946, for crossing the Red River, a navigable waterway. No other USCG Bridge Permits are required.
- ☐ Levee Crossing Permit that includes letter of “no objection” from the COE, Vicksburg District and permits issued by the Bossier and Caddo Levee Districts.
- ☐ Construction and maintenance agreements with the Kansas City Southern Railway Company and Union Pacific Railroad acquired during final design.
- ☐ Comply with the DOTD Statewide Bridge Construction and Maintenance Activity Permit (LA0125563) issued by LDEQ through its LPDES program.

6.3 Mitigation, Commitments and Additional Studies

6.3.1 Corridor Preservation

- ☐ The FHWA, the DOTD, and the Caddo-Bossier Parishes Port Commission entered into a Corridor Preservation Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to preserve Commission land, in an unimproved state, along the route of the *Draft EIS Preferred Alignment (Line 6)* subject to completion of the NEPA process. The route of the Selected Alignment and *Draft EIS Preferred Alignment (Line 6)* are identical through Commission property. This MOA, included in *Final EIS Appendix M*, remains in full force and affect.
- ☐ DOTD has no plans, at this time, to develop a management approach and prepare a formal corridor preservation plan for the Project. A joint cooperative endeavor agreement between DOTD, FHWA, Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments and/or other municipalities will be entered into should future preparation of a corridor preservation plan be warranted.

6.3.2 Relocations

- ☐ Further consideration will be given to reducing residential and business displacements during final design. All displaced residents will be provided with relocation assistance by the DOTD and every reasonable effort made to relocate affected residents within their immediate community.
- ☐ DOTD will provide relocation assistance to residences and businesses displaced during acquisition of right-of-way in accordance with the *Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970*. The DOTD is committed to assist with locating replacement housing within the occupant's financial means and within the general area of the project and when necessary providing housing of last resort. Real estate availability will be reassessed once final design of the highway has been completed. The DOTD publication, *Acquisition of Right of Way and Relocation Assistance* is included in *Final EIS Appendix K*.

6.3.3 Oil and Gas Resources

- ☐ In conjunction with the right-of-way acquisition process, a qualified petroleum engineer will conduct a feasibility study for each impacted well to determine the estimated reserves.
- ☐ All wells impacted by the proposed highway will be properly abandoned according to procedures established by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.
- ☐ Gas and oil collector lines will be identified during final design. When feasible, these lines will be avoided or relocated to continue service to these well sites.

6.3.4 Water Quality

- ❑ The DOTD will minimize non-point discharge water quality impacts and comply with all requirements of the Clean Water Act, as amended. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan will be prepared in conjunction with the NPDES permitting. This Plan will include all specifications and best management practices (BMPs) necessary for control of erosion and sedimentation due to construction-related activities.
- ❑ Mitigation measures implemented to reduce impacts resulting from stormwater runoff will include:
 - Implementation of a LADEQ approved Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan
 - Use of properly sized and engineered culverts for stream crossings to minimize impacts attributed to flood height and flood duration
 - Construction of detention treatment facilities where necessary
 - Perpendicular stream crossings where practicable
 - Scheduling construction activities to minimize exposed areas and duration of exposure
 - Prompt re-vegetation of all disturbed areas
 - Minimize duration of in-stream work by heavy equipment
 - Control of runoff within the right-of-way limits using temporary stormwater management ponds before discharging into receiving streams
 - Use of gentle slopes and wide shallow channels for grassed swales to remove pollutants through filtration, settling, and infiltration
 - Designation of impervious areas for construction equipment, vehicle storage, and fuel to minimize accidental spills.
 - Storing fuels, other similar materials, and construction vehicles and equipment away from designated Well Head Protection Areas.

6.3.5 Floodplains

- ❑ Detailed hydrology and hydraulic studies will be performed during the final design to demonstrate that proposed encroachments would not result in any increase in flood level due to construction that would violate applicable floodplain regulations, including National Flood Insurance Program Regulations and Bossier, Caddo and DeSoto Parishes Flood Ordinances. DOTD and FHWA will review these studies to confirm that adequate measures have been taken to insure that floodplain encroachment does not increase

the risk of flooding to adjacent properties. These studies, along with applicable Engineering “No Rise” Certificates, will be submitted to the Parish Floodplain Administrators for review and approval.

6.3.6 Wetlands

- ❑ Under the combined authority of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act, the COE determined that there will be impacts to jurisdictional waters of the United States, and issued a Preliminary Jurisdictional Determination (JD) for the Selected Alignment (*Final EIS* Appendix N).
- ❑ The DOTD will attempt to further minimize wetland impacts during final design when practicable. All unavoidable wetland impacts will be mitigated for by the DOTD and the FHWA. Final mitigation ratios and requirements will be determined during an evaluation of the Project pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. This evaluation process will take place after issuance of the Record of Decision.
- ❑ The DOTD and its contractors will not excavate, fill, or perform land clearing activities within Waters of the United States or any areas under jurisdiction of the COE, except as authorized by the COE. The DOTD will require its contractors to comply with all local, state, and federal regulations.
- ❑ Construction-related wetland impacts will be avoided through implementation of mitigation measures, including:
 - Wetlands outside the construction limits will not be used for construction support activities (borrow sites, waste sites, storage, parking access, etc.) unless the contractor obtains Section 404 permits from the COE
 - Clearing of wetland vegetation will be limited to the minimum required for job completion
 - Coordination with the contractor to ensure that all appropriate measures will be taken to protect the water quality of adjacent wetlands through the use of straw bales, silt fencing, and seeding and mulching.

6.3.7 Threatened and Endangered Species

- ❑ Biological assessments were conducted for the Interior least tern (*Sterna antillarum*) and Red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) and the FWS concurred with FHWA’s determined that the project “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” either species. No further Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultation is required unless there are changes in the scope or location of the Project, or if project construction has not been initiated within one year. If the project has not been initiated within one

year, follow-up consultation will be completed prior to construction (see *Final EIS* Appendix D, page D-166 for the latest correspondence).

6.3.8 Migratory Birds

- ☐ Compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), which includes monitoring before and during construction activities, will be addressed during construction. To the extent possible, removal of trees and potential bird breeding habitat in the project area will occur outside the typical nesting season, March through September, noting that the prohibitive provisions of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (16 USC 703-712), as amended, apply year-round. During construction, removing or destroying active migratory bird nests (nests containing eggs and/or young) will be prohibited until the nests become inactive. A qualified wildlife biologist will be consulted to determine or examine nests for eggs and young as needed. Measures will be utilized, to the extent practicable, to prevent or discourage migratory birds from building nests within portions of the project area scheduled for immediate construction. With these measures in place, the project is not expected to result in any take of migratory birds or cause a measurable negative effect on migratory bird populations.
- ☐ If the project is unable to avoid the take of birds protected under the MBTA a permit will be obtained from the Fish and Wildlife Service.

6.3.9 Cultural Resources

- ☐ A Phase I Cultural Resource Survey of un-surveyed properties along the Selected Alignment will be conducted once project rights-of-way have been acquired or right-of-entry granted. The survey will also include reassessing the current condition and potential NRHP significance of previously recorded Site 16BO196.
- ☐ Geomorphological testing will be conducted along the Selected Alignment within the Red River Alluvial Valley. The geomorphological testing and survey findings will be submitted for Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) evaluation and concurrence as the project is advanced and funding is available.
- ☐ The DOTD, FHWA and the SHPO agreed on continuing efforts for completing the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Section 106 process with respect to the Project's effect on Historic Properties (see *Final EIS* Appendix D, page D-169). The DOTD and FHWA will enter into additional agreements to ensure the successful completion of the NHPA Section 106 process should the findings of additional studies warrant such action.

6.3.10 Hazardous Materials

- ❑ The Selected Alignment encroaches on two properties identified as known potential hazardous waste sites, the Louisiana Army Ammunition Plant and ChemTrade Logistics, but those encroachments are in locations where plant operations did not occur and there was no evidence of contamination. If areas of hazardous materials contamination are identified, appropriate measures will be taken to remediate the areas prior to construction.
- ❑ The Selected Alignment interchange at LA 1 is adjacent to CCS Energy Services, Inc. (formerly known as Arkla Disposal Services, Inc.) an identified hazardous materials site. The interchange ramps will be configured during final design to avoid the property.

6.3.11 Interchange Justification

- ❑ An Interchange Justification Study (IJS) was performed using the regional traffic model maintained by the North Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments (Shreveport-Bossier City area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)) to evaluate and verify the serviceability of the highway system and the I-69 conceptual interchanges. All locations are forecast to operate at an acceptable level of service. An IJS engineering and operational determination for the proposed Project interchanges with I-49 and I-20 was found acceptable by FHWA on January 18, 2008 (see *Final EIS* Appendix D, page D-140).
- ❑ A revised traffic analysis was performed in June 2012 to re-evaluate and verify the serviceability of the highway system and the I-69 conceptual interchanges, including the Project interchanges with I-49 and I-20 using the MPOs updated regional traffic model that included additional interchange access to the Barksdale Air Force Base (BASF) and forecast traffic volumes for the I-69 Project as part of the entire National I-69 Corridor (Full Build) as well as for a stand-alone section of independent utility (Partial Build). The revised traffic analysis concluded that there were no significant changes in condition and all locations are forecast to operate at an acceptable level of service, as previously determined in the IJS. The results are included in *Final EIS* Section 2.
- ❑ Final FHWA approval of the IJS may be given after issuance of the Record of Decision. If the Project has not progressed to construction within eight years of receiving affirmative determination of the engineering and operational acceptability from FHWA, a re-evaluation is required.

6.3.12 Frontage Road

- ❑ In its July 27, 2005 Resolution, the DeSoto Parish Police Jury (DPPJ) requested that a frontage/access road be constructed, in lieu of a grade separating either I-69 or Old Church Road, to maintain access to properties and residents along Old Church Road.
- ❑ A Frontage Road will be constructed between Stonewall Frierson Road in DeSoto Parish and Ellerbe Road in Caddo Parish. It will be a two-lane, undivided, uncontrolled access facility on new location designed to DOTD Rural Collector Roads and Streets (RC-2) Standards. The roadway will have one 11-foot lane in either direction with 8-foot outside shoulders and include a new at grade crossing with the KCSR rail line. Construction and maintenance agreements with KCSR will be executed during final design.
- ❑ At the completion of the project, a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with DeSoto Parish Police Jury (DPPJ) will be executed to transfer ownership of the Frontage Road to the DPPJ.

6.3.13 Operational and Maintenance Responsibilities

- ❑ Louisiana State legislation limits the amount of roadway that can be included in the State highway system. Therefore, before the project is authorized for construction, operational and maintenance responsibilities for the equivalent length of the project must shift from the State to the local municipalities, most likely Bossier, DeSoto and Caddo Parishes, so the amount of roadway included in the State highway system remains unchanged. Parish-City/State Agreements will be required to transfer maintenance responsibilities to the municipalities.

6.3.14 Air Quality

- ❑ Bossier, Caddo and DeSoto Parishes are currently classified as attainment parishes with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and have no general conformity determination obligations (see LADEQ September 6, 2013 letter in **Appendix B**).
- ❑ The Project will be constructed in strict accordance with the Louisiana Standard Specifications of Roads and Bridges (DOTD 2006). Section 107.14 addresses controlling environmental pollution such as air, water and noise pollution, including fugitive dust. Section 108.06 addresses labor, methods and equipment. Mitigation measures to reduce air quality construction impacts will include:
 - Specifications requiring the contractor to tune equipment/motors to manufacturer's specifications in order to reduce air emissions of construction equipment

- Burning alternatives, such as air curtain destructors (equipment that creates nearly complete combustion of vegetative materials with little or no emissions), sending to landfills, or on-site composting, in areas where nuisance dust and particulates becomes a concern.

6.3.15 Noise Analysis

- ❑ The *Final EIS*, containing the noise analyses, has been provided to the Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments, Mayors of Stonewall and Haughton, and the Bossier, Caddo, and DeSoto Parish Police Juries to assist these local officials in their planning efforts to limit, to the extent possible, adjacent future land development that is incompatible with anticipated highway noise levels.

6.3.16 Navigation

- ❑ In accordance with 23 USC 144(h), (23 CFR Section 650.805), FHWA determined, and USCG concurred, that a USCG bridge permit is required Red River Bridge crossing at River Mile 212.2 and that no other USCG bridge permits are required (see *Final EIS* Appendix D, page D-174).
- ❑ A Conceptual Red River Bridge Study was conducted to provide information relative to navigation and the effects the bridge will have on navigation interests using the waterway. Pier locations, horizontal and vertical clearances, and the alignment of the main channel navigation opening and approach spans were established; and hydrologic/hydraulic and scour analyses performed. The results are included in *Final EIS* Section 2. The USCG reviewed the study in coordination with the COE and various waterway associations, and found the study acceptable and determined that no further reviews were necessary at this time (see *Final EIS* Appendix D, page D-177). Detailed navigation studies and collision design alternatives, and the Bridge Permit application, will be coordinated with the USCG during final design.

7.0 COMMENTS ON THE FINAL EIS

The *Final EIS* for this project was approved by FHWA on February 18, 2013 as documented on the signature page of the *Final EIS*. The Notice of Availability of the *Final EIS* was placed in the *Federal Register* on August 23, 2013. A copy of this notice is included in **Appendix A**.

The *Final EIS* review period ended October 7, 2013. **Table 2** summarizes the comments received and a response to the comment, if needed. Copies of the comments received on the *Final EIS* are included in **Appendix B**.

8.0 RECORD OF DECISION APPROVAL

Based on the analysis and evaluation presented in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed project, after careful consideration of all the social, economic, and environmental factors and input from other agencies, organizations and the public, and the factors and project commitments and mitigation measures outlined above, it is the decision of the FHWA to approve the selection of the Selected Alignment, Draft EIS Preferred Alignment (Line 6) with minor modifications, for the Section of Independent Utility Number 15 (SIU 15) of Interstate 69 proposed in Bossier, Caddo and DeSoto Parishes Louisiana.

8/28/2014

Date approved

Signed

Charles "Wes" Bolinger, P.E.
Louisiana Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

<p style="text-align: center;">Table 2 SUMMARY OF FINAL EIS AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES</p>	
<p>Agency: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, FEMA Region 6, August 16, 2013 Mayra G. Diaz</p>	
<p>Issue: PERMITTING</p>	
Comment:	<p>We would request that the Parishes Floodplain Administrators be contacted for the review and possible permit requirements for this project. If Federally funded, we would request project to be in compliance with EO11988 & EO 11990.</p>
Response:	<p>The DOTD and FHWA will comply with and obtain all necessary permits for the project.</p> <p><i>Final EIS Section 4: Environmental Consequences and Mitigation and the Summary</i> indicate that detailed hydrology and hydraulic studies in accordance with Executive Order (EO) 11988 will be performed during final design to demonstrate that proposed encroachments would not result in increased flood levels and that these studies, along with applicable Engineering “No Rise” Certificates, will be submitted to Parish Floodplain Administrators for review and approval. The <i>Final EIS</i> was distributed to the Bossier, Caddo and DeSoto Parish Floodplain Administrators. No comments were received.</p> <p><i>Final EIS Section 4: Environmental Consequences and Mitigation</i> discusses wetlands evaluation in accordance with EO 11990. The <i>Final EIS Summary</i> also identifies measures to avoid and/or minimize construction-related wetland impacts.</p>
<p>Agency: U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, August 27, 2013 Brad S. Rieck</p>	
<p>Issue: ENDANGERED SPECIES/WETLANDS</p>	
Comment:	<p>Please reference your August 13, 2013, letter requesting our review of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for I-69 Section of Independent Utility (SIU) I5 Bossier, Caddo and Desoto Parishes, Louisiana. The Service submits the following comments in accordance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.).</p> <p>In a letter dated August 8, 2005, in response to the I-69 SIU 15 Draft EIS, the Service's Louisiana Ecological Services Office recommended the selection of Alternative 6 (Line 6) as the preferred alternative (PA) because it would affect the least amount floodplains and wetlands. Since providing those comments, an August 11, 2010, Draft EIS Preferred Alignment Revisions was received by our office. In a letter dated September 15, 2010, in response to the 2010 Draft EIS, the Service maintained the recommendation to select the originally proposed Line 6 as the PA.</p>

Table 2 (cont.) SUMMARY OF FINAL EIS AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	
Agency: U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, August 27, 2013 (cont.) Brad S. Rieck	
Issue: ENDANGERED SPECIES/WETLANDS (cont.)	
Comment: (cont.)	<p>According to the Final EIS, Line 6 with minor modifications has been selected as the PA. The Final EIS states that the proposed minor modifications would slightly reduce the initial amount of jurisdictional wetland impacts associated with the Line 6 alignment that was discussed in the 2005 I-69 SIU 15 Draft EIS. Accordingly, because we recommended the selection of Line 6 in both our previous letters and now it appears that wetland impacts associated with that recommended alignment have been slightly reduced, we have no further comment regarding alignment selection.</p> <p>Furthermore, as stated in our August 11, 2010, letter, we received a solicitation-of-views letter in September 2009, requesting our review of the proposed revisions to the PA-Line 6. On October 20, 2009, our office provided a response stating the alignment revisions, as proposed, would not likely adversely affect threatened and endangered species in Louisiana. No further consultation with our office, regarding threatened or endangered species associated with the PA-Line 6 will be necessary.</p> <p>Because the proposed project will impact wetlands, we recommend that a complete jurisdictional wetland delineation of the proposed project be conducted. Please contact Mr. Charles Allred (601/631-5546) at the Vicksburg District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) for assistance in that effort. Our office will provide comments, pertaining to wetland impacts, in response to the corresponding Public Notice.</p> <p>We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments in the planning stages of this proposed project. If you need further assistance, please contact Joshua Marceaux (337-291-3110) of this office.</p>
Response:	<p>Under the combined authority of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act, the COE has determined that there will be impacts to jurisdictional waters of the United States, and issued a Preliminary Jurisdictional Determination (JD) for the Selected Alignment (Line 6 – DEIS Preferred Alignment with minor modifications). Continuing coordination between the COE and the DOTD will insure that all regulatory concerns are addressed. During the final design process continued efforts will be made to further avoid and/or minimize wetland impacts through consideration of design alternatives.</p>

Table 2 (cont.) SUMMARY OF FINAL EIS AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	
Agency: Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, September 6, 2013 Linda M. Hardy	
Issue: DOCUMENT EVALUATION	
Comment:	There are no objections based on the information provided in your submittal.
Response:	Comment noted.
Issue: PERMITTING	
Comment:	<p>Please take any necessary steps to obtain and/or update all necessary approvals and environmental permits regarding this proposed project. If your project results in a discharge to waters of the state, submittal of a Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) application may be necessary.</p> <p>If the project results in a discharge of wastewater to an existing wastewater treatment system, that wastewater treatment system may need to modify its LPDES permit before accepting the additional wastewater.</p> <p>All precautions should be observed to control nonpoint source pollution from construction activities. LDEQ has stormwater general permits for construction areas equal to or greater than one acre. It is recommended that you contact the LDEQ Water Permits Division at (225) 219-9371 to determine if your proposed project requires a permit.</p> <p>If your project will include a sanitary wastewater treatment facility, a Sewage Sludge and Biosolids Use or Disposal Permit application or Notice of Intent must be submitted no later than January 1, 2013. Additional information may be obtained on the LDEQ website at http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2296/Default.aspx or by contacting the LDEQ Water Permits Division at (225) 219- 9371.</p> <p>If any of the proposed work is located in wetlands or other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, you should contact the Corps directly regarding permitting issues. If a Corps permit is required, part of the application process may involve a water quality certification from LDEQ.</p> <p>All precautions should be observed to protect the groundwater of the region.</p> <p>Please be advised that water softeners generate wastewaters that may require special limitations depending on local water quality considerations. Therefore if your water system improvements include water softeners, you are advised to contact the LDEQ Water Permits to determine if special water quality-based limitations will be necessary.</p>

Table 2 (cont.) SUMMARY OF FINAL EIS AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	
Agency: Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, September 6, 2013 (cont.) Linda M. Hardy	
Issue: PERMITTING (cont.)	
Comment: (cont.)	Any renovation or remodeling must comply with LAC 33:III.Chapter 28, Lead-Based Paint Activities; LAC 33:III.Chapter 27, Asbestos-Containing Materials in Schools and State Buildings (includes all training and accreditation); and LAC 33:III.5151, Emission Standard for Asbestos for any renovations or demolitions. If any solid or hazardous wastes, or soils and/or groundwater contaminated with hazardous constituents are encountered during the project, notification to LDEQ's Single-Point-of-Contact (SPOC) at (225) 219-3640 is required. Additionally, precautions should be taken to protect workers from these hazardous constituents.
Response:	The DOTD and FHWA will comply with and obtain all necessary permits for the project. <i>Final EIS Section 4: Environmental Consequences and Mitigation</i> discusses water quality and permitting requirements. The <i>Final EIS Summary</i> also lists the required NPDES and Section 404 permits and Section 401 Water Quality Certificate. Approvals and permit requirements will be reviewed during final design.
Issue: AIR QUALITY	
Comment:	Currently, Bossier, Caddo and DeSoto Parishes are classified as attainment parishes with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and have no general conformity determination obligations.
Response:	Comment noted.
Agency: U.S. Coast Guard, Eighth District, September 26, 2013 Eric A. Washburn	
Issue: RED RIVER BRIDGE	
Comment:	We have completed our review of the FEIS and determined it inadequately covers provisions required under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and lacks an in-depth discussion of river transportation usage of the waterway, including impacts the new bridge will have on river traffic during and after its construction. Once these issues are resolved we will reevaluate the project's environmental documentation for adequacy in support of issuing a Coast Guard Bridge Permit.

Table 2 (cont.) SUMMARY OF FINAL EIS AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	
Agency: U.S. Coast Guard, Eighth District, September 26, 2013 (cont.) Eric A. Washburn	
Issue: RED RIVER BRIDGE (cont.)	
Response:	<p>Coordination with the Port of Caddo-Bossier concerning the area of the proposed Red River Bridge concluded that the conditions along the Red River are not usable for Migratory Bird breeding grounds or temporary feeding. The Port stated that there are no wetlands located to the immediate right descending bank that would be usable for migratory breeding grounds or temporary feeding on the flyway. The same condition generally applies on the left descending bank as well, except for the immediate area next to the river.</p> <p>There is an area that is the result of river inundation caused by the original river impoundment and subsequent rock revetment forming a secluded area that has seen some use as a stopover area. Additionally a large lake left over from the river meander scar, called Moon Lake, is a stop-over area but would not be impacted by the proposed Red River bridge or the approach to the bridge. Additionally, biological assessments were conducted for the Interior least tern and Red-cockaded woodpecker, species protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and the FHWA determined that the project “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” either species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) concurred with FHWA’s determinations.</p> <p>The Project is not expected to interfere with migratory birds. Compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which includes monitoring before and during construction activities, will be addressed during construction. To the extent possible, removal of trees and potential bird breeding habitat in the project area would occur outside the typical nesting season. During construction, removing or destroying active migratory bird nests (nests containing eggs and/or young) would be prohibited until the nests become inactive. A qualified wildlife biologist will be consulted to determine or examine nests for eggs and young as needed. Measures would be utilized, to the extent practicable, to prevent or discourage migratory birds from building nests within portions of the project area scheduled for immediate construction. With these measures in place, the project is not expected to result in any take of migratory birds or cause a measurable negative effect on migratory bird populations.</p> <p>A <i>Conceptual Red River Bridge Study</i> was conducted to provide information relative to navigation and the effects the bridge will have on navigation interests using the waterway. Pier locations, horizontal and vertical clearances, and the alignment of the main channel navigation opening and approach spans were established; and hydrologic/hydraulic and scour analyses performed in coordination with the USCG, the COE and various waterway associations. The results are included in <i>Final EIS Section 2</i>. The USCG reviewed the study in coordination with the COE and various waterway associations, and found the study acceptable and determined that no further reviews were necessary at this time (see <i>Final EIS Appendix D</i>, page D-177). The <i>Final EIS</i> also states that detailed navigation studies and collision design alternatives, and the Bridge Permit application, will be coordinated with the USCG during final design.</p>

Table 2 (cont.) SUMMARY OF FINAL EIS AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	
Agency: U.S. Coast Guard, Eighth District, September 26, 2013 (cont.) Eric A. Washburn	
Issue: RED RIVER BRIDGE (cont.)	
Response: (cont.)	<p>The official end of navigation of the J. Bennett Johnston Waterway is north of the proposed bridge crossing at the I-220 bridge on the north side of Shreveport at RM 234.5. River traffic is very limited above the Caddo-Bossier Port, currently limited to movement of casino boats into berthed position and potential movement for shipyard retrofit/maintenance. Since traffic is limited and federal maintenance funds are low, the COE has established the Port as the end of navigation until such time as further movement north is warranted.</p> <p>The Caddo-Bossier Port property extends to the north side of Wilkerson Point (RM 214.75) and to the south to the Couples Landing DBN (RM 210). The current main docks are between RM 211.75 and RM 210.75. The Red River bridge is located at RM 212, between the Port of Caddo-Bossier Headquarters to the northwest and the main docks to the southeast. The Port has indicated that the main docks where all activity presently takes place will continue to be the main docks. As such, construction of the bridge will have limited impact on the operation of the port docks or navigation near the Port.</p> <p>The Port recently completed a slack water harbor (RM 212.6) north of the proposed bridge. They reviewed the bridge location for sufficient distance for navigation to the harbor and felt there was adequate steerage. The Port indicated that this would be the closest activity upstream of the bridge and other future facilities upstream would be less of a concern.</p> <p>Activity over the next few years will primarily be limited to heavy oversized equipment offloaded and moved to the new Benteler Steel/Pipe mill presently under construction on Port property. This construction is estimated to be complete in mid-2015.</p> <p>The COE maintains tonnage reports by month and lock for each river system. The Joe D. Waggoner Jr lock is located downstream from the proposed bridge crossing at RM 200. For the period November 2012 through October 2013, 488,750 tons was transported through the Waggoner Locks according to the COE summary report.</p> <p>Coordination with the Port concluded that the proposed bridge will have limited impact on the operation of the port docks or navigation in the vicinity of the Port. According to the Port, an average of 485,000 tons of cargo per year has been transported to/from the Port over the past five years with all of the cargo loaded/unloaded at the Port docks located to the south of the proposed Red River bridge. Construction of the Benteler Steel/Pipe Mill will increase tonnages thru the Port starting in mid-2015, with an increase of about 500,000 tons per year. The cargo is expected to increase to 1.75 million tons when the mill is in full production in 2025. As cargo tonnage increases over the next ten years, the Port expects to continue to process the cargo from the existing facilities south of the proposed bridge crossing.</p>

Table 2 (cont.) SUMMARY OF FINAL EIS AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	
Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, October 17, 2013 Debra Griffin	
Issue: DOCUMENT EVALUATION	
Comment:	<p>In accordance with our responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (CAA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 office in Dallas, Texas, has completed its review of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Interstate 69 Segment of Independent Utility 15 prepared by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).</p> <p>EPA rated the Draft EIS as EC-2, "Environmental Concerns and Requests Additional Information in the Final EIS" due to air quality issues. The EPA's Rating System Criteria can be found here: http://www.epa.gov/oecaerth/nepa/comments/ratings.html.</p> <p>EPA appreciates the opportunity to review the FEIS. EPA requests that LADOTD and FHWA address our concerns in a revised Final EIS or Supplemental Analysis document to complete the NEPA process. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Rhonda Smith, Chief, Office of Planning and Coordination at 214-665-8006 or the project manager John MacFarlane at 214-665-7491 or macfarlane.john@epa.gov for assistance.</p>
Response:	Thank you for your comments on the <i>Final EIS</i> . EPA's concerns are addressed below. A revised Final EIS or Supplemental Analysis document is not required.
Issue: GENERAL COMMENTS	
Comment:	<p>Eight years have elapsed since the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), thus, the environmental conditions of the project area may have changed. Therefore, some of our comments will require updates and additional language and/or evaluation. EPA requests the LADOTD and FHWA revise the Final EIS (FEIS) to accommodate our comments or prepare a supplemental analysis (SA). The SA should be made available prior to the issuance of the Record of Decision (ROD) and included in the record.</p> <p>The revised FEIS or SA should ensure that all resources are properly updated, characterized, and quantified because of the extended period of time between the DEIS and FEIS. We are especially concerned with homes and businesses that may be displaced by the proposed project. New homes and businesses can be constructed within just a few months, thus, this information must be appropriately updated. If new homes and businesses are discovered, the owners should be provided the opportunity for public participation.</p>

Table 2 (cont.) SUMMARY OF FINAL EIS AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	
Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, October 17, 2013 (cont.) Debra Griffin	
Issue: GENERAL COMMENTS (cont.)	
Response:	<p>The digital orthophotography map base and environmental inventory were updated prior to the August 2010 stakeholder outreach meetings to present Line 6R, Line 6-2-6 and Line 6 (Draft EIS Preferred Alignment), to better represent the project's current natural and social contexts (see <i>Final EIS Section 2</i>, Page 2-87). Updated mapping and environmental coverages included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Mapping – Obtained NLCOG 2009 digital orthophotography • Standing Structures – Photo-interpreted NLCOG 2009 digital orthophotography to update primary standing structures including residences, businesses, churches, schools, and other public facilities • Floodplains – Acquired FEMA DFIRM data in 2010 to determine the extent of the 100-year floodplains and floodways (Bossier, Caddo and DeSoto Parishes datasets, 2008, 2004, and 2003 respectively) • Soils - Obtained Bossier, Caddo and DeSoto soils data from NRCS Soil Data Mart to determine the extent of farmland soils • Oil & Gas Wells – Obtained digital oil and gas well information from the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources SONRIS database • Water Wells – Obtained water well information from the DOTD Well Registry database • Property – Obtained Bossier and Caddo parish parcel boundary and ownership information from the NLCOG. <p>The information contained in the <i>Final EIS</i> is based on this updated information.</p> <p>The <i>Final EIS</i> was not completed within three years of FHWA approving the <i>Draft EIS</i>, and in accordance with 23 CFR 771.129(a), DOTD prepared a written evaluation assessing changes that had occurred and their effect on the adequacy of the <i>Draft EIS</i>. DOTD concluded that a Supplemental EIS was not required because there were no changes in the issues encountered, and the project was constantly under environmental study with no stoppage in the NEPA process. FHWA concurred with the assessment in September 2011 (see <i>Final EIS Appendix D</i>, page D-172).</p> <p>The <i>Final EIS Notice of Availability</i> (NOA) appeared in the Federal Register on August 23, 2013 (Vol. 78, No. 164, Page 52524). The <i>Final EIS NOA</i> was also publicly publicized through area newspapers – The Times (August 25, 2013); Shreveport Sun (August 29, 2013), The Enterprise and Interstate Progress (August 29, 2013) and the Bossier Press-Tribune (August 26, 2013). Proof of Publication is on record at DOTD.</p>

Table 2 (cont.) SUMMARY OF FINAL EIS AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	
Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, October 17, 2013 (cont.) Debra Griffin	
Issue: CHILDREN'S HEALTH	
Comment:	<p>Since the release of the DEIS, Children's Health has become an issue of concern for EPA and other federal agencies. Executive Order 13045 on Children's Health and Safety directs that each federal agency shall make it a high priority to identify and assess environmental health and safety risks that may disproportionately affect children, and shall ensure that its policies, programs, activities, and standards address these risks. Analysis and disclosure of these potential effects under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is necessary because some physiological and behavioral traits of children render them more susceptible and vulnerable than adults to health and safety risks. Children may be more highly exposed to contaminants because they generally eat more food, drink more water, and have higher inhalation rates relative to their size. Also, children's normal activities, such as putting their hands in their mouths or playing on the ground, can result in higher exposures to contaminants as compared with adults. Children may be more vulnerable to the toxic effects of contaminants because their bodies and systems are not fully developed and their growing organs are more easily harmed.</p> <p>Based on current EPA policy and guidance, an analysis of impacts to children should be included in a NEPA analysis if there is a possibility of disproportionate impact on children related to the proposed action.¹ EPA views childhood as a sequence of life stages, from conception through fetal development, infancy, and adolescence. Therefore, exposures to children at each life stage, as well as pregnant and nursing women, are relevant and should be considered when addressing health and safety risks for children.</p> <p>Because children can be more susceptible to noise levels, mobile source air pollution, construction dust, and the chemicals associated with building and construction materials, we recommend that the revised FEIS or SA specifically address the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the proposed project on children's health, including consideration of prenatal exposures (exposures that may be experienced by pregnant women). Without a children's health evaluation, EPA cannot determine if there may be a possibility of disproportionate impacts on children from the selected alignment.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>The revised FEIS or SA should first determine if children are present within the project area, if so, then impacts to children's health should be evaluated. Although there may be no schools within the study area, there may be daycares, homes, and churches where children live and play. If an evaluation finds that there are children present within the study area, the FEIS should address children's exposures and susceptibilities to the pollutants of concern, which should include the following:</p>

Table 2 (cont.) SUMMARY OF FINAL EIS AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	
Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, October 17, 2013 (cont.) Debra Griffin	
Issue: CHILDREN'S HEALTH (cont.)	
Comment: (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the pollutants and sources of concern: Consider exposure and impacts to children from mobile source air pollutants, including children's proximity to transportation corridors, transportation hubs and ports, and project construction emissions. Combine these with other area sources/baseline air quality, such as, existing or new power generation or energy extraction facilities, mining operations, industrial facilities, dry cleaners, etc. • Exposure Assessment: Describe demographics of affected neighborhoods/populations/communities and focus exposure assessments on schools, recreation areas, childcare centers, parks, and residential areas in close proximity to the proposed project, and other areas of apparent frequent and/or prolonged exposure. • Baseline health conditions: Consider obtaining and including available relevant health data/records for the neighborhoods/populations/communities of concern. • Respiratory Impacts/Asthma: Consider data on existing asthma rates and asthma severity among children and the general community living, working, playing, and attending school and daycare near the project site. To the extent feasible, identify impacts of the project on asthma rates and severity in children near the project site and quantify associated costs. • Noise Impacts: Consider impacts from noise on health and learning, especially near homes, schools and daycare centers. • Impacts Regarding Obesity Factors: Consider potential impacts that could influence childhood obesity factors, such as impacts on school commutes, and on the accessibility of neighborhood parks, green spaces, and recreation areas. • Impacts from Air Pollutant Emissions: Consider exposure and impacts to children from mobile source air pollutants, including proximity to transportation corridors, transportation hubs, and ports, and project construction emissions. Combine these with other area sources/baseline air quality. • Impacts from Other Chemical or Physical Exposures: Consider impacts to children from other site activities, such as pesticide application, demolition, etc... <p>¹http://www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/policies/nepa/children-health-risks"og.pdf</p> <p>These resources may assist you in the evaluation of children's health impacts.</p>

Table 2 (cont.) SUMMARY OF FINAL EIS AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	
Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, October 17, 2013 (cont.) Debra Griffin	
Issue: CHILDREN'S HEALTH (cont.)	
Comment: (cont.)	<p>America's Children and the Environment (ACE) presents data on children's environmental health. ACE brings together information from a variety of sources to provide national indicators in areas of environments and contaminants, bio-monitoring, health rates for asthma, and others. The objectives of EPA's ACE report is to 1) compile data from a variety of sources to present concrete, quantifiable indicators for key factors relevant to the environment and children's health in the United States, 2) inform discussions among policymakers and the public about how to improve data on children's health and the environment, and 3) include indicators that can be used by policymakers and the public to track trends in children's environmental health, and ultimately to help identify and evaluate ways to minimize environmental impacts on children.</p> <p>Asthma rates are high in Louisiana with the childhood current asthma prevalence of 8.3 percent and the lifetime prevalence rate of about 11.6 percent.² Ozone is a trigger for asthma attacks. Increased traffic patterns in the community may increase the incidence of asthma attacks.</p> <p>Centers for Disease Control (CDC) state asthma statistics are available by state if the state is an asthma control program grantee. Louisiana is currently a grantee. Contact information for the Louisiana asthma program is:</p> <p>Mark Perry Asthma Program Manager Louisiana Asthma Management and Prevention Mark.Perry@la.gov 225-342-2657 http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/directory/detail/4946 CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance: http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/ Another site for data is http://childstats.gov/ ² http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/brfss/2010/child/lifetime/tableL1.htm</p>
Response:	<p>Due consideration has been given to EPA's comment on Children's Health and Safety. Based on the analysis presented in the <i>Final EIS</i>, the Build Alternatives will not have a disproportionate adverse effect on the general population and therefore, is not expected to have a disproportionate effect on children.</p>

Table 2 (cont.) SUMMARY OF FINAL EIS AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	
Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, October 17, 2013 (cont.) Debra Griffin	
Issue: SURFACE WATER RESOURCES 4.8.1	
Comment:	<p>Table 4-7 lists the various waterways that will be impacted by the proposed project and the type of crossing structure; culvert or bridge. However, the FEIS does not provide the areal extent of impacts to waterways, nor does it fully characterize the physical attributes of the waterways.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>The information located in Appendix N, Table 1 - Surface Water Impacts Summary should be provided in Table 4-7. The table should also include the type of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit required, e.g. nationwide, pre-construction notification, individual.</p> <p>Chapter 3.8- Water Quality should contain a characterization of the physical attributes of each waterway impacted by the proposed project. Attributes should include the ordinary high water mark, floodplain width, depth, etc.</p>
Response:	A <i>Wetlands and Surface Waters</i> technical document was prepared which discusses the physical attributes and the impact to each waterway within the proposed project. A copy of the technical document can be provided upon request. Additional information for each of the impacted waterways will be collected during final design to satisfy permitting requirements.
Issue: FARMLANDS 4.13	
Comment:	<p>All alternative alignments would impact agricultural lands. Converting productive agricultural lands to transportation uses not only directly converts that land from arable land to impervious surfaces, but reduces the amount of food and fiber produced in this region. By reducing crops available for sale, farm revenues may be adversely affected. Farmers would incur access issues and longer travel times when traveling to fields that are bisected by the proposed project.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>The FEIS should fully disclose the local and regional economic impacts of converting an estimated 1,202 acres of farmland to transportation uses, including additional conversion by induced development. The discussion of impacts should include an analysis of farmland access and farm equipment travel time.</p>
Response:	The Build Alternatives were developed with consideration to several factors including minimizing impacts to sensitive resources, engineering design standards, maintaining property access and minimizing right-of-way acquisition. For much of the route, the Build Alternatives extend in a southwest-northeast direction making it difficult to follow property boundaries. Maintenance of access to individual property parcels will be further evaluated during the final design of the highway. Travel times, crop loss and other farm impacts will be considered during right-of-way negotiation and acquisition.

Table 2 (cont.) SUMMARY OF FINAL EIS AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	
Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, October 17, 2013 (cont.) Debra Griffin	
Issue: AIR QUALITY 4.15	
Comment:	<p>EPA recommends adding a description of the impact to air quality (increases/decreases in existing traffic congestion, increases in vehicle capacity over the functional life of the project, increased demands on established transportation systems for towns/cities that the roadway will be serving) expected from the operation of the proposed highway, particularly with respect to the transportation-related criteria pollutants.</p> <p>4.15.1 Air Quality Construction Impacts</p> <p>This document correctly states that the study area of Bossier, Caddo, and DeSoto Parishes within the Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments' planning boundaries is currently in attainment of all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). It should be noted that the Shreveport-Bossier City Metropolitan Statistical Area is vulnerable to being designated as non-attainment for ozone in the next few years. The City of Shreveport has applied for and been accepted by EPA into the EPA Ozone Advance program, with other entities in the area (City of Bossier City, Caddo Parish Commission, Bossier Parish Police Jury, DeSoto Parish Police Jury, and the Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments) expressing support and interest in joining the program. The Advance program is a collaborative effort between EPA, states, and local governments to enact expeditious emission reductions to help near non-attainment areas remain in attainment of the NAAQS. This further reflects the sensitivity of ozone levels in the area, and the need for federally-funded projects in the study area to consider emissions which contribute to the formation of ozone.</p> <p>Because of the air quality concerns of significant population centers within the FEIS study area, EPA recommends that in order to reduce potential short-term air quality impacts associated with construction activities, the agencies responsible for the project should also include a Construction Emissions Mitigation Plan and adopt this plan in the ROD.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>In addition to all applicable local, state, or federal requirements, EPA recommends that the following mitigation measures be included in the Construction Emissions Mitigation Plan in order to reduce impacts associated with emissions of NO_x, CO, PM, SO₂, and other pollutants from construction-related activities:</p>

Table 2 (cont.) SUMMARY OF FINAL EIS AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	
Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, October 17, 2013 (cont.) Debra Griffin	
Issue: AIR QUALITY 4.15 (cont.)	
Comment: (cont.)	<p>Fugitive Dust Source Controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stabilize open storage piles and disturbed areas by covering and/or applying water or chemical/organic dust palliative where appropriate at active and inactive sites during workdays, weekends, holidays, and windy conditions; • Install wind fencing and phase grading operations where appropriate, and operate water trucks for stabilization of surfaces under windy conditions; and • Prevent spillage when hauling material and operating non-earthmoving equipment and limit speeds to 15 miles per hour. Limit speed of earth-moving equipment to 10 mph. <p>Mobile and Stationary Source Controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan construction scheduling to minimize vehicle trips; • Limit idling of heavy equipment to less than 5 minutes and verify through unscheduled inspections; • Maintain and tune engines per manufacturer's specifications to perform at EPA certification levels, prevent tampering, and conduct unscheduled inspections to ensure these measures are followed; • If practicable, utilize new, clean equipment meeting the most stringent of applicable Federal or State Standards. In general, commit to the best available emissions control technology. Tier 4 engines should be used for project construction equipment to the maximum extent feasible; • Lacking availability of non-road construction equipment that meets Tier 4 engine standards, the responsible agency should commit to using EPA-verified particulate traps, oxidation catalysts and other appropriate controls where suitable to reduce emissions of diesel particulate matter and other pollutants at the construction site; and • Consider alternative fuels and energy sources such as natural gas and electricity (plug-in or battery). <p>Administrative controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare an inventory of all equipment prior to construction and identify the suitability of add-on emission controls for each piece of equipment before groundbreaking; • Develop a construction traffic and parking management plan that maintains traffic flow and plan construction to minimize vehicle trips; and. <p>Identify sensitive receptors in the project area, such as children, elderly, and infirmed, and specify the means by which impacts to these populations will be minimized (e.g. locate construction equipment and staging zones away from sensitive receptors and building air intakes).</p>

Table 2 (cont.) SUMMARY OF FINAL EIS AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	
Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, October 17, 2013 (cont.) Debra Griffin	
Issue: AIR QUALITY 4.15 (cont.)	
Response:	<p>The Project will be constructed in strict accordance with the Louisiana Standard Specifications of Roads and Bridges. Section 107.09 addresses navigable waters and wetlands. Section 107.14 addresses controlling environmental pollution such as air, water and noise pollution, including fugitive dust. Section 108.06 addresses labor, methods and equipment.</p> <p>Construction commitments cannot be made at this time, because final design and construction staging within and external to the project right-of-way are not yet known. In addition, DOTD specifications, state air rules and EPA rules do not prescribe specific Best Management Practices (BMPs) but contain distance limits, and operational and/or emission limit provisions. DOTD contract provisions require contractors to comply with all applicable laws and regulations.</p>
Issue: TRIBAL RESOURCES APPENDIX E	
Comment:	<p>The FEIS indicates that Federally-recognized Tribes were contacted for coordination and government-to-government consultation; however, the State of Louisiana recognizes non-Federally Recognized Tribes like the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>EPA recommends LADOTD contact state-recognized Tribes, including the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, for additional coordination.</p>
Response:	<p>Solicitation of Views (SOV) letters informing Federal and state agencies, local and elected officials and Native American tribes of the Project and soliciting their participation and early comments. Native American tribes and tribal interests with possible interest in the Project were obtained from the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office. SOV letters were sent to seven Federally- and six State- recognized tribes and two tribal interests (see <i>Final EIS Appendix C</i>, Page C-4).</p> <p>Tribal coordination, including meeting invitations/minutes and circulation of the <i>Draft and Final EISs</i> continued with the Tribes expressing interest in the project.</p>

Table 2 (cont.) SUMMARY OF FINAL EIS AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	
Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, October 17, 2013 (cont.) Debra Griffin	
Issue: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS	
Comment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA recommends the bridge over the Red River be designed with the ability to collect and treat all stormwater runoff before it is discharged into the river. Runoff should be conveyed to a central location(s) where petroleum, salt, sand, and other materials are removed and/or treated prior to discharge. This would ensure the river and surrounding waters remain in attainment for their designated uses under the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's Water Quality Standards. Table 3-8 on page 3-18 should define each of the Designated Uses listed in the table. The term "floodways" should be defined.
Response:	<p>Research indicates that highway runoff would generate few substantial impacts when ADT is less than 30,000 vehicles (Maestri et al. 1988). The forecast Design Year (2030) Full Build ADT for the I-69 SIU 15 Red River Bridge is 20,000. Based on this forecast ADT, no substantial impacts to water quality would be expected due to highway runoff.</p> <p>Cross Lake is the City of Shreveport's primary public water supply. The I-220 bridge over Cross Lake utilizes a containment system to convey stormwater runoff for collection and sediment disposal near the I-220 / LA 173 interchange. According to the DOTD website, the 2009 average daily traffic (ADT) on I-220 at the Cross Lake Bridge is approximately 36,000 vehicles per day (VPD) (DOTD Website 2013, Milepoint 2.698 / Station 127641).</p> <p>In contrast, the Red River is not a public water supply for the Shreveport metropolitan area and the Full Build Design Year (2030) ADT for I-69 Red River Bridge is less than 20,000 VPD. Based on this forecast ADT of less than 30,000, no substantial impacts to water quality would be expected due to highway runoff.</p> <p>In the absence of any research demonstrating the need for such a system, the design, construction, maintenance and safety, and disposal issues and costs associated with a highway runoff collection system for the Red River Bridge is, at this time, unsupported.</p> <p>If conditions change they will be addressed during final design.</p>

Table 2 (cont.) SUMMARY OF FINAL EIS AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	
Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, October 17, 2013 (cont.) Debra Griffin	
Issue: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (cont.)	
Response: (cont.)	<p>The Designated Uses long-form descriptions in <i>Final EIS</i> Table 3-8 (page 3-18) are identified on page 3-17 as:</p> <p>PCR – Primary Contact Recreation</p> <p>SCR – Secondary Contact Recreation</p> <p>FWP – Fish and Wildlife Propagation</p> <p>DWS – Drinking Water Supply</p> <p>ONR – Outstanding Natural Resource</p> <p>OYS – Oyster Propagation</p> <p>AGR - Agriculture</p> <p>LAL – Limited Aquatic and Wildlife Use</p> <p>FEMA defines a "Regulatory floodway" as the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height (44 CFR 59.1).</p>
Agency: U.S. Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, October 30, 2013 Robert A. Heffner	
Issue: FINAL EIS COMMENTS	
Comment:	<p>Vicksburg sent me a copy of the final EIS for I-69. I haven't given it any attention since it is already final and I didn't have a role in the development of the document. I figured that at this point, our involvement would begin with the receipt of a permit application. I don't know if Vicksburg would have any comments since they were involved in developing the EIS and are named as the cooperating agency.</p> <p>I talked to MVK this morning and they said they won't be providing comments because the PM involved in the EIS development is no longer in the District.</p>
Response:	Comment noted. COE coordination and permitting during Final Design will be coordinated through the New Orleans District Corps of Engineers.

Source: Michael Baker Jr. Inc.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - FINAL EIS NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

APPENDIX B - FINAL EIS COMMENTS

APPENDIX C - SELECTED ALIGNMENT EXHIBIT

APPENDIX A
Final EIS Notice of Availability

serve motions to intervene or protests on persons other than the Applicant.

The Commission encourages electronic submission of protests and interventions in lieu of paper using the "eFiling" link at <http://www.ferc.gov>. Persons unable to file electronically should submit an original and 5 copies of the protest or intervention to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street NE., Washington, DC 20426.

This filing is accessible on-line at <http://www.ferc.gov>, using the "eLibrary" link and is available for review in the Commission's Public Reference Room in Washington, DC. There is an "eSubscription" link on the Web site that enables subscribers to receive email notification when a document is added to a subscribed docket(s). For assistance with any FERC Online service, please email FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov, or call (866) 208-3676 (toll free). For TTY, call (202) 502-8659.

Comment Date: 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on September 6, 2013.

Dated: August 19, 2013.

Kimberly D. Bose,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2013-20602 Filed 8-22-13; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. OR13-30-000]

Sunoco Pipeline LP; Notice of Petition for Declaratory Order

Take notice that on August 15, 2013, pursuant to Rule 207(a)(2) of the Commission's Rules of Practices and Procedure, 18 CFR 385.207(a)(2)(2013), Sunoco Pipeline LP (SPLP) filed a petition requesting a declaratory order approving priority service and the overall tariff and rate structure for the proposed Mariner South Pipeline Project. SPLP respectfully requests that the Commission act on this petition by no later than November 1, 2013, so that this new transportation alternative serving the Gulf Coast area can be completed as quickly as possible, as more fully described in their petition.

Any person desiring to intervene or to protest in this proceedings must file in accordance with Rules 211 and 214 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (18 CFR 385.211 and 385.214) on or before 5:00 p.m. Eastern time on the specified comment date. Protests will be considered by the

Commission in determining the appropriate action to be taken, but will not serve to make protestants parties to the proceeding. Anyone filing a motion to intervene or protest must serve a copy of that document on the Petitioner.

The Commission encourages electronic submission of protests and interventions in lieu of paper, using the FERC Online links at <http://www.ferc.gov>. To facilitate electronic service, persons with Internet access who will eFile a document and/or be listed as a contact for an intervenor must create and validate an eRegistration account using the eRegistration link. Select the eFiling link to log on and submit the intervention or protests.

Persons unable to file electronically should submit an original and 5 copies of the intervention or protest to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St. NE., Washington, DC 20426.

The filings in the above proceedings are accessible in the Commission's eLibrary system by clicking on the appropriate link in the above list. They are also available for review in the Commission's Public Reference Room in Washington, DC. There is an eSubscription link on the Web site that enables subscribers to receive email notification when a document is added to a subscribed docket(s). For assistance with any FERC Online service, please email FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov, or call (866) 208-3676 (toll free). For TTY, call (202) 502-8659.

Comment Date: 5:00 p.m. Eastern time on September 19, 2013.

Dated: August 19, 2013.

Nathaniel J. Davis, Sr.,
Deputy Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2013-20580 Filed 8-22-13; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[ER-FRL-9010-7]

Environmental Impacts Statements; Notice of Availability

Responsible Agency: Office of Federal Activities, General Information (202) 564-7146 or <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/nepa/>
Weekly receipt of Environmental Impact Statements
Filed 08/12/2013 Through 08/16/2013
Pursuant to 40 CFR 1506.9.
Notice:

Section 309(a) of the Clean Air Act requires that EPA make public its comments on EISs issued by other

Federal agencies. EPA's comment letters on EISs are available at: <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/nepa/eisdata.html>

EIS No. 20130244, Draft EIS, USFWS, CA, South Farallon Islands Invasive House Mouse Eradication Project, Farallon National Wildlife Refuge, Comment Period Ends: 09/30/2013, Contact: Gerry McChesney 510-792-0222, ext. 222. This document was inadvertently omitted from the FR Notice published 8/16/2013. The Comment Period will end 09/30/2013.

EIS No. 20130245, Final EIS, BR, CO, Arkansas Valley Conduit and Long-Term Excess Capacity Master Contract, Review Period Ends: 09/23/2013, Contact: J. Signe Snortland 701-221-1278.

EIS No. 20130246, Draft EIS, USFS, NV, Greater Sage Grouse Bi-State Distinct Population Segment Forest Plan Amendment, Comment Period Ends: 11/20/2013, Contact: James Winfrey 775-355-5308.

EIS No. 20130247, Final EIS, FHWA, LA, Interstate 69 Segment of Independent Utility 15, US 171 to I-20, Review Period Ends: 10/07/2013, Contact: Carl M. Highsmith 225-757-7615.

EIS No. 20130248, Final EIS, USDA, NC, ADOPTION—North Topsail Beach Shoreline Protection Project, Review Period Ends: 09/23/2013, Contact: Frank Mancino 202-720-1827. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Housing Service has adopted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers FEIS #20100025, filed 01/26/2010 with the USEPA. The Rural Housing Service was not a cooperating agency to this project. Recirculation of the document is necessary under Section 1506.3(b) of the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations.

EIS No. 20130249, Draft EIS, USACE, LA, West Shore Lake Pontchartrain Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction, Comment Period Ends: 10/07/2013, Contact: William Klein 504-862-2540.

Amended Notices

EIS No. 20130237, Final EIS, NMFS, NJ, FEIS Amendment 14 to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan, Review Period Ends: 09/16/2013, Contact: Aja Szumylo 978-281-9195.

Revision to FR Notice Published 08/16/2013; Correction to Review Period Ends: Change from 10/14/2013 to 09/16/2013.

APPENDIX B
Final EIS Comments



FEMA

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
REGION VI
MITIGATION DIVISION

NOTICE REVIEW/ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTATION

☐ We have no comments to offer. ☒ We offer the following comments:

**WE WOULD REQUEST THAT THE PARISHES FLOODPLAIN ADMINISTRATORS
BE CONTACTED FOR THE REVIEW AND POSSIBLE PERMIT REQUIREMENTS
FOR THIS PROJECT. IF FEDERALLY FUNDED, WE WOULD REQUEST PROJECT
TO BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH EO11988 & EO 11990.**

REVIEWER:

Mayra G. Diaz
Floodplain Management and Insurance Branch
Mitigation Division
(940) 898-5541

DATE: August 16, 2013



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
646 Cajundome Blvd.
Suite 400
Lafayette, Louisiana 70506



August 27, 2013

Mr. Christopher Gesing
Senior Project Manager
Michael Baker Jr., Inc.
2600 CitiPlace Drive
Suite 450
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808

Dear Mr. Gesing:

Please reference your August 13, 2013, letter requesting our review of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for I-69 Section of Independent Utility (SIU) 15 Bossier, Caddo and Desoto Parishes, Louisiana. The Service submits the following comments in accordance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.).

In a letter dated August 8, 2005, in response to the I-69 SIU 15 Draft EIS, the Service's Louisiana Ecological Services Office recommended the selection of Alternative 6 (Line 6) as the preferred alternative (PA) because it would affect the least amount floodplains and wetlands. Since providing those comments, an August 11, 2010, Draft EIS Preferred Alignment Revisions was received by our office. In a letter dated September 15, 2010, in response to the 2010 Draft EIS, the Service maintained the recommendation to select the originally proposed Line 6 as the PA.

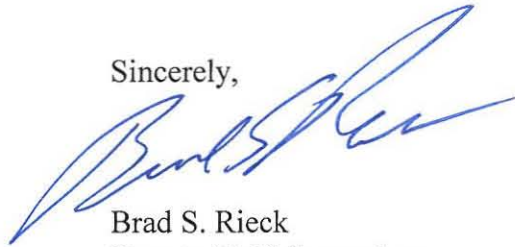
According to the Final EIS, Line 6 with minor modifications has been selected as the PA. The Final EIS states that the proposed minor modifications would slightly reduce the initial amount of jurisdictional wetland impacts associated with the Line 6 alignment that was discussed in the 2005 I-69 SIU 15 Draft EIS. Accordingly, because we recommended the selection of Line 6 in both our previous letters and now it appears that wetland impacts associated with that recommended alignment have been slightly reduced, we have no further comment regarding alignment selection.

Furthermore, as stated in our August 11, 2010, letter, we received a solicitation-of-views letter in September 2009, requesting our review of the proposed revisions to the PA-Line 6. On October 20, 2009, our office provided a response stating the alignment revisions, as proposed, would not likely adversely affect threatened and endangered species in Louisiana. No further consultation with our office, regarding threatened or endangered species associated with the PA-Line 6 will be necessary.

Because the proposed project will impact wetlands, we recommend that a complete jurisdictional wetland delineation of the proposed project be conducted. Please contact Mr. Charles Allred (601/631-5546) at the Vicksburg District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) for assistance in that effort. Our office will provide comments, pertaining to wetland impacts, in response to the corresponding Public Notice.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments in the planning stages of this proposed project. If you need further assistance, please contact Joshua Marceaux (337/291-3110) of this office.

Sincerely,



Brad S. Rieck
Deputy Field Supervisor
Louisiana Ecological Services Office

cc: Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg, MS
FHWA, Federal Highway Administration, Baton Rouge, LA
LADOTD, Baton Rouge, LA
LDWF, Natural Heritage Program, Baton Rouge, LA

Subject: FW: DEQ SOV 130822/1705 Interstate 69, SIU 15, US Hwy 171 to Interstate Hwy 20

From: Linda (Brown) Hardy

Sent: Friday, September 06, 2013 2:25 PM

To: Noel Ardoin

Cc: Lynn Wilbanks

Subject: DEQ SOV 130822/1705 Interstate 69, SIU 15, US Hwy 171 to Interstate Hwy 20

September 6, 2013

Noel Ardoin, Environmental
Engineering Administrator

LA DOTD

PO Box 94245

Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245

Noel.Ardoin@la.gov

RE: 130822/1705 Interstate 69, SIU 15, US Hwy 171 to Interstate Hwy 20

H 005184 Federal Highway Administration & DOTD Funding

DeSoto, Caddo and Bossier Parishes

Dear Mr. Ardoin:

The Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), Business and Community Outreach Division has received your request for comments on the above referenced project.

After reviewing your request, the Department has no objections based on the information provided in your submittal. However, for your information, the following general comments have been included. Please be advised that if you should encounter a problem during the implementation of this project, you should immediately notify LDEQ's Single-Point-of-contact (SPOC) at (225) 219-3640.

- Please take any necessary steps to obtain and/or update all necessary approvals and environmental permits regarding this proposed project.
- If your project results in a discharge to waters of the state, submittal of a Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) application may be necessary.
- If the project results in a discharge of wastewater to an existing wastewater treatment system, that wastewater treatment system may need to modify its LPDES permit before accepting the additional wastewater.
- All precautions should be observed to control nonpoint source pollution from construction activities. LDEQ has stormwater general permits for construction areas equal to or greater than one acre. It is recommended that you contact the LDEQ Water Permits Division at (225) 219-9371 to determine if your proposed project requires a permit.
- If your project will include a sanitary wastewater treatment facility, a Sewage Sludge and Biosolids Use or Disposal Permit application or Notice of Intent must be submitted no later than January 1, 2013. Additional information may be obtained on the LDEQ website at <http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2296/Default.aspx> or by contacting the LDEQ Water Permits Division at (225) 219- 9371.
- If any of the proposed work is located in wetlands or other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, you should contact the Corps directly regarding permitting issues. If a Corps permit is required, part of the application process may involve a water quality certification from LDEQ.
- All precautions should be observed to protect the groundwater of the region.

- Please be advised that water softeners generate wastewaters that may require special limitations depending on local water quality considerations. Therefore if your water system improvements include water softeners, you are advised to contact the LDEQ Water Permits to determine if special water quality-based limitations will be necessary.
- Any renovation or remodeling must comply with LAC 33:III.Chapter 28, Lead-Based Paint Activities; LAC 33:III.Chapter 27, Asbestos-Containing Materials in Schools and State Buildings (includes all training and accreditation); and LAC 33:III.5151, Emission Standard for Asbestos for any renovations or demolitions.
- If any solid or hazardous wastes, or soils and/or groundwater contaminated with hazardous constituents are encountered during the project, notification to LDEQ's Single-Point-of-Contact (SPOC) at (225) 219-3640 is required. Additionally, precautions should be taken to protect workers from these hazardous constituents.

Currently, DeSoto, Caddo and Bossier Parishes are classified as attainment with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and has no general conformity determination obligations.

Please send all future requests to my attention. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (225) 219-3954 or by email at linda.hardy@la.gov.

Sincerely,

Linda M. Hardy

Technical Assistant to the Deputy Secretary
Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
Office of the Secretary
P.O. Box 4301
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4301
Ph: (225) 219-3954
Fax: (225) 219-3971
Email: linda.hardy@la.gov

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



Commander
Eighth Coast Guard District

1222 Spruce Street
St. Louis, MO 63103-2832
Staff Symbol: dwb
Phone: (314)269-2380
Fax: (314)269-2737
Email: peter.j.sambor@uscg.mil
www.uscg.mil/d8/westernriversbridges

16591.1/212.2 RED
September 26, 2013

Ms. Noel Ardoin
Louisiana DOTD
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Subj: PROPOSED I-69 (SIU 15) BRIDGE, MILE 212.2, RED RIVER

Dear Ms. Ardoin:

Please refer to your contractor's Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) submission for the proposed bridge project. We have completed our review of the FEIS and determined it inadequately covers provisions required under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and lacks an in-depth discussion of river transportation usage of the waterway, including impacts the new bridge will have on river traffic during and after its construction. Once these issues are resolved we will reevaluate the project's environmental documentation for adequacy in support of issuing a Coast Guard Bridge Permit.

If you have any questions please contact Mr. Peter Sambor at the above telephone number.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric A. Washburn".

ERIC A. WASHBURN
Bridge Administrator, Western Rivers
By direction of the District Commander

Copy: Chris Gesing, Michael Baker Jr., Inc.



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Region 6

**1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733**

October 17, 2013

Carl Highsmith
Federal Highway Administration
Louisiana Division
5304 Flanders Drive, Suite A
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Subject: Interstate 69 Segment of Independent Utility 15, Bossier, Caddo, and DeSoto Parishes, Louisiana [CEQ# 20130247]

Dear Mr. Highsmith,

In accordance with our responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (CAA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 office in Dallas, Texas, has completed its review of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Interstate 69 Segment of Independent Utility 15 prepared by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

EPA rated the Draft EIS as EC-2, "Environmental Concerns and Requests Additional Information in the Final EIS" due to air quality issues. The EPA's Rating System Criteria can be found here: <http://www.epa.gov/oecaerth/nepa/comments/ratings.html>.

EPA appreciates the opportunity to review the FEIS. EPA requests that LADOTD and FHWA address our concerns in a revised Final EIS or Supplemental Analysis document to complete the NEPA process. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Rhonda Smith, Chief, Office of Planning and Coordination at 214-665-8006 or the project manager John MacFarlane at 214-665-7491 or macfarlane.john@epa.gov for assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Debra A. Griffin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Debra" being the most prominent.

Debra A. Griffin
Associate Director
Compliance Assurance and
Enforcement Division

Enclosure

cc: Noel Ardoin, LADOTD

**DETAILED COMMENTS ON THE
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION'S
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FOR THE INTERSTATE 69
SECTION OF INDEPENDENT UTILITY 15
BOSSIER, CADDO, AND DESOTO PARISHES**

BACKGROUND:

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), proposes to construct a four-lane fully controlled access highway on new location design to interstate standards. The Interstate 69 (I-69) project extends between U.S. Highway 171 near the town of Stonewall in DeSoto Parish and I-20 near the town of Haughton in Bossier Parish, a distance of approximately 35 miles.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Eight years have elapsed since the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), thus, the environmental conditions of the project area may have changed. Therefore, some of our comments will require updates and additional language and/or evaluation. EPA requests the LADOTD and FHWA revise the Final EIS (FEIS) to accommodate our comments or prepare a supplemental analysis (SA). The SA should be made available prior to the issuance of the Record of Decision (ROD) and included in the record.

The revised FEIS or SA should ensure that all resources are properly updated, characterized, and quantified because of the extended period of time between the DEIS and FEIS. We are especially concerned with homes and businesses that may be displaced by the proposed project. New homes and businesses can be constructed within just a few months, thus, this information must be appropriately updated. If new homes and businesses are discovered, the owners should be provided the opportunity for public participation.

Children's Health

Since the release of the DEIS, Children's Health has become an issue of concern for EPA and other federal agencies. Executive Order 13045 on Children's Health and Safety directs that each federal agency shall make it a high priority to identify and assess environmental health and safety risks that may disproportionately affect children, and shall ensure that its policies, programs, activities, and standards address these risks. Analysis and disclosure of these potential effects under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is necessary because some physiological and behavioral traits of children render them more susceptible and vulnerable than adults to health and safety risks. Children may be more highly exposed to contaminants because they generally eat more food, drink more water, and have higher inhalation rates relative to their size. Also, children's normal activities, such as putting their hands in their mouths or playing on the ground, can result in higher exposures to contaminants as compared with adults. Children may be more vulnerable to the toxic effects of contaminants because their bodies and systems are not fully developed and their growing organs are more easily harmed.

Based on current EPA policy and guidance, an analysis of impacts to children should be included in a NEPA analysis if there is a possibility of disproportionate impact on children related to the proposed action.¹ EPA views childhood as a sequence of life stages, from conception through fetal development, infancy, and adolescence. Therefore, exposures to children at each life stage, as well as pregnant and nursing women, are relevant and should be considered when addressing health and safety risks for children.

Because children can be more susceptible to noise levels, mobile source air pollution, construction dust, and the chemicals associated with building and construction materials, we recommend that the revised FEIS or SA specifically address the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the proposed project on children's health, including consideration of prenatal exposures (exposures that may be experienced by pregnant women). Without a children's health evaluation, EPA cannot determine if there may be a possibility of disproportionate impacts on children from the selected alignment.

Recommendations:

The revised FEIS or SA should first determine if children are present within the project area, if so, then impacts to children's health should be evaluated. Although there may be no schools within the study area, there may be daycares, homes, and churches where children live and play. If an evaluation finds that there are children present within the study area, the FEIS should address children's exposures and susceptibilities to the pollutants of concern, which should include the following:

- **Identification of the pollutants and sources of concern:** Consider exposure and impacts to children from mobile source air pollutants, including children's proximity to transportation corridors, transportation hubs and ports, and project construction emissions. Combine these with other area sources/baseline air quality, such as, existing or new power generation or energy extraction facilities, mining operations, industrial facilities, dry cleaners, etc.
- **Exposure Assessment:** Describe demographics of affected neighborhoods/populations/communities and focus exposure assessments on schools, recreation areas, childcare centers, parks, and residential areas in close proximity to the proposed project, and other areas of apparent frequent and/or prolonged exposure.
- **Baseline health conditions:** Consider obtaining and including available relevant health data/records for the neighborhoods/populations/communities of concern.
- **Respiratory Impacts/Asthma:** Consider data on existing asthma rates and asthma severity among children and the general community living, working, playing, and attending school and daycare near the project site. To the extent feasible, identify impacts of the project on asthma rates and severity in children near the project site and quantify associated costs.
- **Noise Impacts:** Consider impacts from noise on health and learning, especially near homes, schools and daycare centers.
- **Impacts Regarding Obesity Factors:** Consider potential impacts that could influence childhood obesity factors, such as impacts on school commutes, and on the accessibility of neighborhood parks, green spaces, and recreation areas.

¹ <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/policies/nepa/children-health-risks-pg.pdf>

- **Impacts from Air Pollutant Emissions:** Consider exposure and impacts to children from mobile source air pollutants, including proximity to transportation corridors, transportation hubs, and ports, and project construction emissions. Combine these with other area sources/baseline air quality.
- **Impacts from Other Chemical or Physical Exposures:** Consider impacts to children from other site activities, such as pesticide application, demolition, etc...

These resources may assist you in the evaluation of children's health impacts.

America's Children and the Environment (ACE) presents data on children's environmental health. ACE brings together information from a variety of sources to provide national indicators in areas of environments and contaminants, bio-monitoring, health rates for asthma, and others. The objectives of EPA's ACE report is to 1) compile data from a variety of sources to present concrete, quantifiable indicators for key factors relevant to the environment and children's health in the United States, 2) inform discussions among policymakers and the public about how to improve data on children's health and the environment, and 3) include indicators that can be used by policymakers and the public to track trends in children's environmental health, and ultimately to help identify and evaluate ways to minimize environmental impacts on children.

Asthma rates are high in Louisiana with the childhood current asthma prevalence of 8.3 percent and the lifetime prevalence rate of about 11.6 percent.² Ozone is a trigger for asthma attacks. Increased traffic patterns in the community may increase the incidence of asthma attacks.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) state asthma statistics are available by state if the state is an asthma control program grantee. Louisiana is currently a grantee. Contact information for the Louisiana asthma program is:

Mark Perry
Asthma Program Manager
Louisiana Asthma Management and Prevention
Mark.Perry@la.gov
225-342-2657
<http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/directory/detail/4946>

CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance: <http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/>

Another site for data is <http://childstats.gov/>

4.8.1 Surface Water Resources

Table 4-7 lists the various waterways that will be impacted by the proposed project and the type of crossing structure; culvert or bridge. However, the FEIS does not provide the areal extent of impacts to waterways, nor does it fully characterize the physical attributes of the waterways.

² <http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/brfss/2010/child/lifetime/tableL1.htm>

Recommendation:

The information located in Appendix N, Table 1 - Surface Water Impacts Summary should be provided in Table 4-7. The table should also include the type of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit required, e.g. nationwide, pre-construction notification, individual.

Chapter 3.8 - Water Quality should contain a characterization of the physical attributes of each waterway impacted by the proposed project. Attributes should include the ordinary high water mark, floodplain width, depth, etc.

4.13 Farmlands

All alternative alignments would impact agricultural lands. Converting productive agricultural lands to transportation uses not only directly converts that land from arable land to impervious surfaces, but reduces the amount of food and fiber produced in this region. By reducing crops available for sale, farm revenues may be adversely affected. Farmers would incur access issues and longer travel times when traveling to fields that are bisected by the proposed project.

Recommendation:

- The FEIS should fully disclose the local and regional economic impacts of converting an estimated 1,202 acres of farmland to transportation uses, including additional conversion by induced development. The discussion of impacts should include an analysis of farmland access and farm equipment travel time.

4.15 Air Quality

EPA recommends adding a description of the impact to air quality (increases/decreases in existing traffic congestion, increases in vehicle capacity over the functional life of the project, increased demands on established transportation systems for towns/cities that the roadway will be serving) expected from the operation of the proposed highway, particularly with respect to the transportation-related criteria pollutants.

4.15.1 Air Quality Construction Impacts

This document correctly states that the study area of Bossier, Caddo, and DeSoto Parishes within the Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments' planning boundaries is currently in attainment of all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). It should be noted that the Shreveport-Bossier City Metropolitan Statistical Area is vulnerable to being designated as non-attainment for ozone in the next few years. The City of Shreveport has applied for and been accepted by EPA into the EPA Ozone Advance program, with other entities in the area (City of Bossier City, Caddo Parish Commission, Bossier Parish Police Jury, DeSoto Parish Police Jury, and the Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments) expressing support and interest in joining the program. The Advance program is a collaborative effort between EPA, states, and local governments to enact expeditious emission reductions to help near non-attainment areas remain in attainment of the NAAQS. This further reflects the sensitivity of

ozone levels in the area, and the need for federally-funded projects in the study area to consider emissions which contribute to the formation of ozone.

Because of the air quality concerns of significant population centers within the FEIS study area, EPA recommends that in order to reduce potential short-term air quality impacts associated with construction activities, the agencies responsible for the project should also include a Construction Emissions Mitigation Plan and adopt this plan in the ROD.

Recommendation:

In addition to all applicable local, state, or federal requirements, EPA recommends that the following mitigation measures be included in the Construction Emissions Mitigation Plan in order to reduce impacts associated with emissions of NO_x, CO, PM, SO₂, and other pollutants from construction-related activities:

Fugitive Dust Source Controls:

- Stabilize open storage piles and disturbed areas by covering and/or applying water or chemical/organic dust palliative where appropriate at active and inactive sites during workdays, weekends, holidays, and windy conditions;
- Install wind fencing and phase grading operations where appropriate, and operate water trucks for stabilization of surfaces under windy conditions; and
- Prevent spillage when hauling material and operating non-earthmoving equipment and limit speeds to 15 miles per hour. Limit speed of earth-moving equipment to 10 mph.

Mobile and Stationary Source Controls:

- Plan construction scheduling to minimize vehicle trips;
- Limit idling of heavy equipment to less than 5 minutes and verify through unscheduled inspections;
- Maintain and tune engines per manufacturer's specifications to perform at EPA certification levels, prevent tampering, and conduct unscheduled inspections to ensure these measures are followed;
- If practicable, utilize new, clean equipment meeting the most stringent of applicable Federal or State Standards. In general, commit to the best available emissions control technology. Tier 4 engines should be used for project construction equipment to the maximum extent feasible;
- Lacking availability of non-road construction equipment that meets Tier 4 engine standards, the responsible agency should commit to using EPA-verified particulate traps, oxidation catalysts and other appropriate controls where suitable to reduce emissions of diesel particulate matter and other pollutants at the construction site; and
- Consider alternative fuels and energy sources such as natural gas and electricity (plug-in or battery).

Administrative controls:

- Prepare an inventory of all equipment prior to construction and identify the suitability of add-on emission controls for each piece of equipment before groundbreaking;
- Develop a construction traffic and parking management plan that maintains traffic flow and plan construction to minimize vehicle trips; and

- Identify sensitive receptors in the project area, such as children, elderly, and infirmed, and specify the means by which impacts to these populations will be minimized (e.g. locate construction equipment and staging zones away from sensitive receptors and building air intakes).

Appendix E. Tribal Resources

The FEIS indicates that Federally-recognized Tribes were contacted for coordination and government-to-government consultation; however, the State of Louisiana recognizes non-Federally Recognized Tribes like the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana.

Recommendation:

EPA recommends LADOTD contact state-recognized Tribes, including the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, for additional coordination.

Additional Comments

- EPA recommends the bridge over the Red River be designed with the ability to collect and treat all stormwater runoff before it is discharged into the river. Runoff should be conveyed to a central location(s) where petroleum, salt, sand, and other materials are removed and/or treated prior to discharge. This would ensure the river and surrounding waters remain in attainment for their designated uses under the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's Water Quality Standards.
- Table 3-8 on page 3-18 should define each of the Designated Uses listed in the table.
- The term "floodways" should be defined.

Subject:

FW: I-69 EIS (UNCLASSIFIED)

-----Original Message-----

From: Heffner, Robert A MVN [<mailto:Robert.A.Heffner@usace.army.mil>]

Sent: Wednesday, October 30, 2013 1:07 PM

To: Robert Lott

Subject: I-69 EIS (UNCLASSIFIED)

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Caveats: NONE

Bobby,

Vicksburg sent me a copy of the final EIS for I-69. I haven't given it any attention since it is already final and I didn't have a role in the development of the document. I figured that at this point, our involvement would begin with the receipt of a permit application. I don't know if Vicksburg would have any comments since they were involved in developing the EIS and are named as the cooperating agency.

I'll be glad to provide additional assistance,

Rob Heffner

New Orleans District Corps of Engineers

504-862-2099

mailing address:

P.O. Box 60267

New Orleans, LA 70160-0267

physical address:

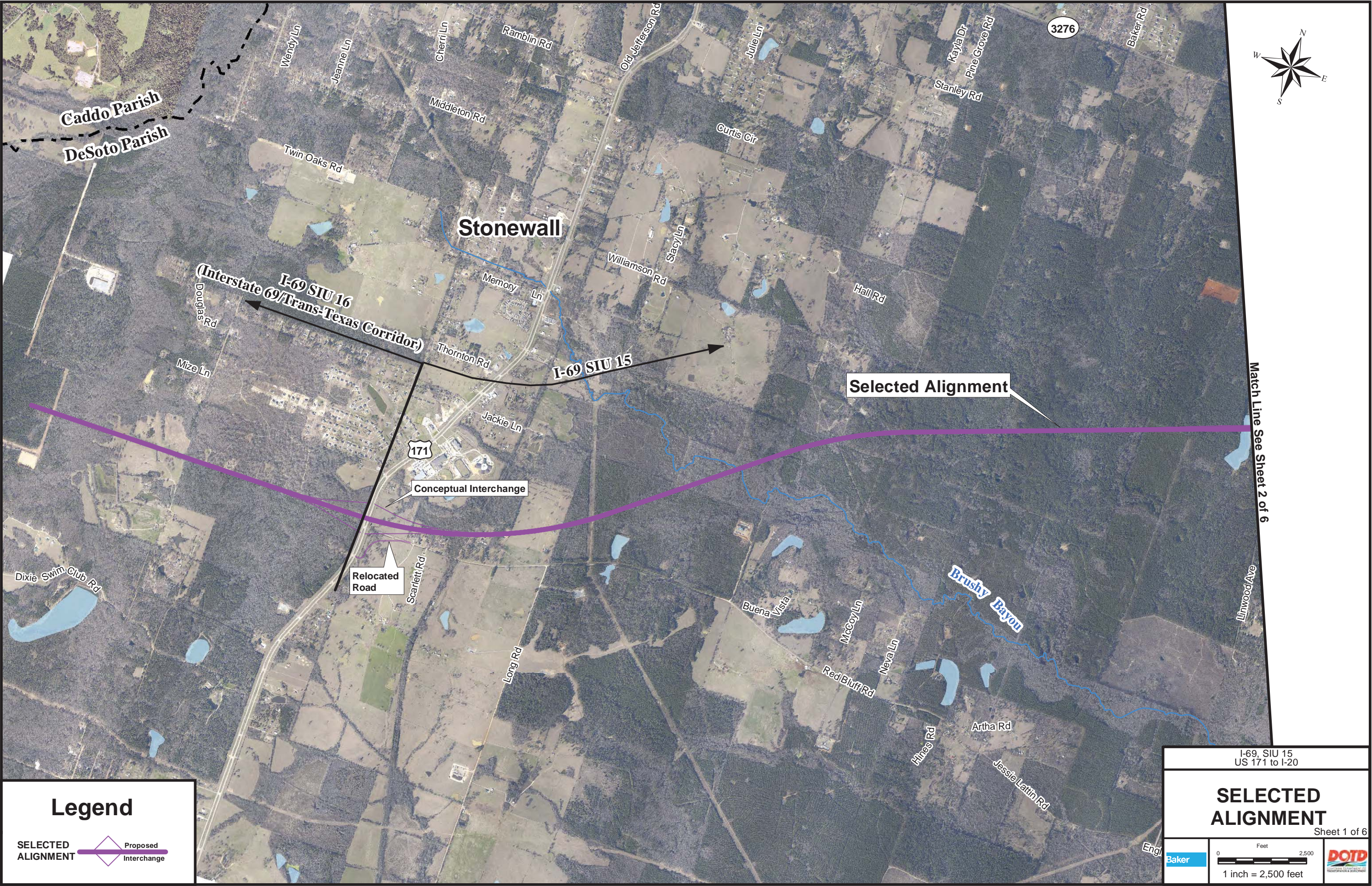
7400 Leake Ave

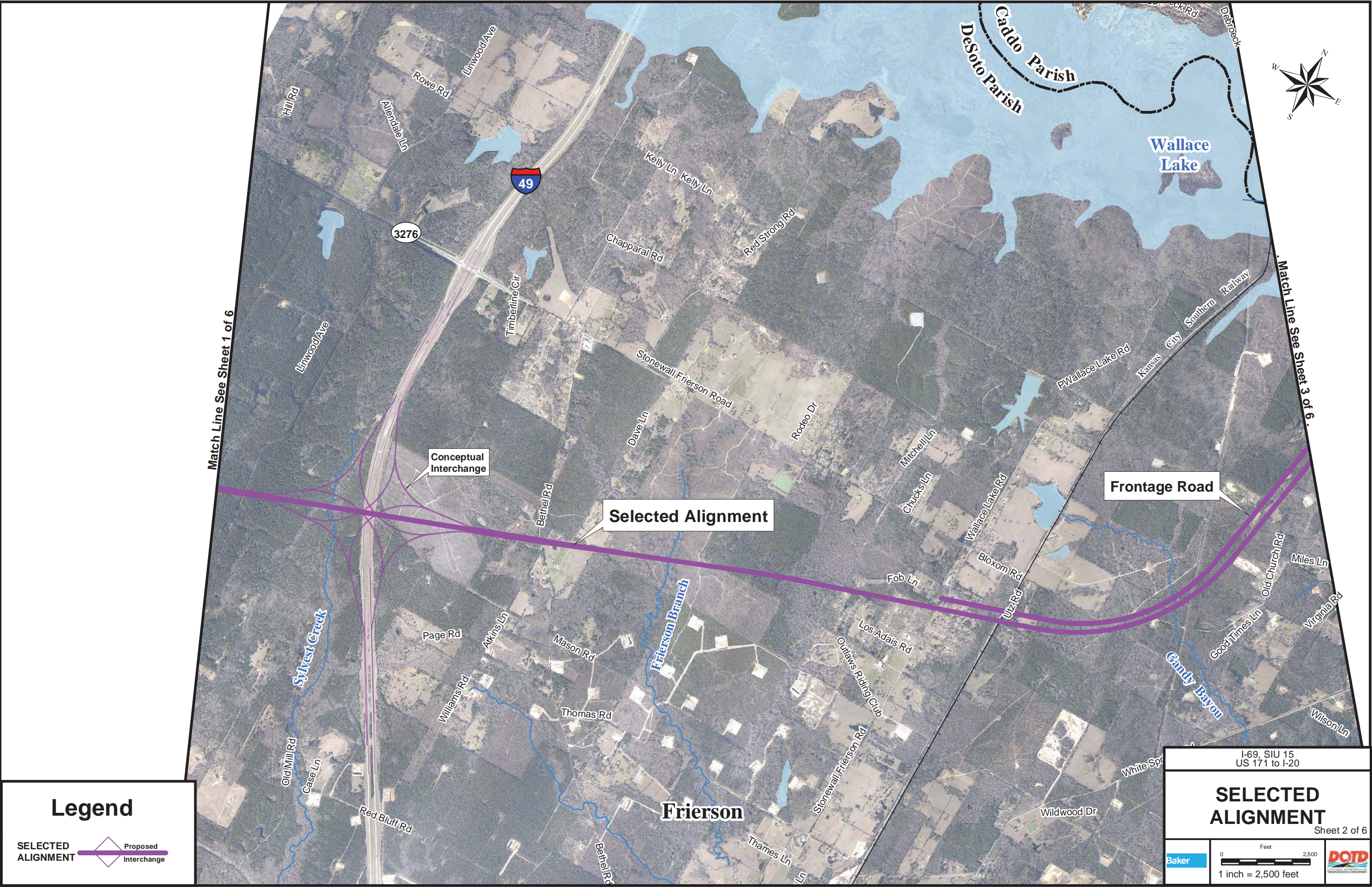
New Orleans, LA 70118

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Caveats: NONE


APPENDIX C
Selected Alignment Exhibit





Legend

SELECTED ALIGNMENT

 Proposed Interchange

I-69, SIU 15
US 171 to I-20


SELECTED ALIGNMENT

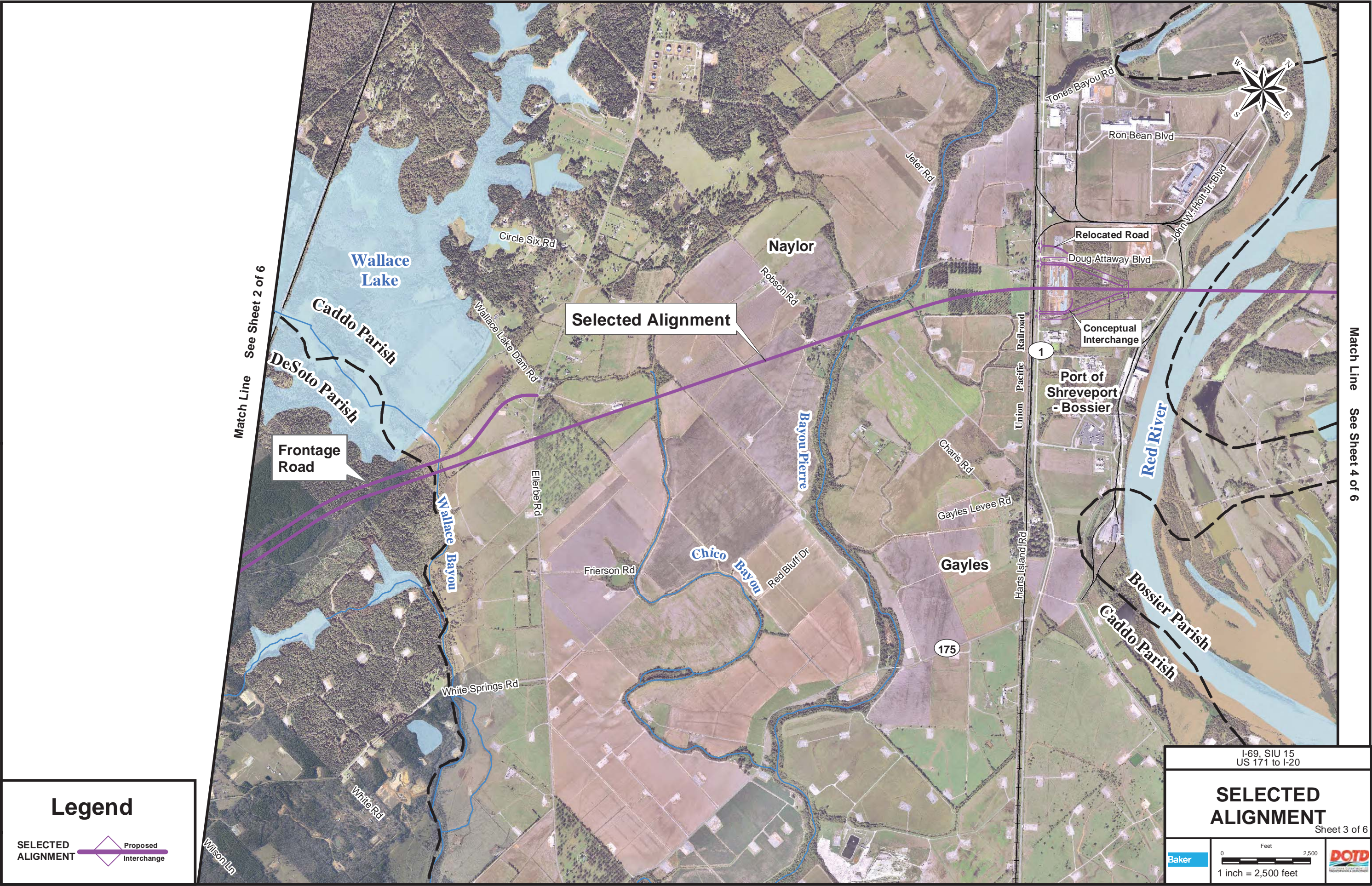
Sheet 2 of 6

Baker

0 2,500

1 inch = 2,500 feet





Legend

SELECTED ALIGNMENT

Proposed Interchange

I-69, SIU 15
US 171 to I-20

SELECTED ALIGNMENT

Sheet 3 of 6

Baker

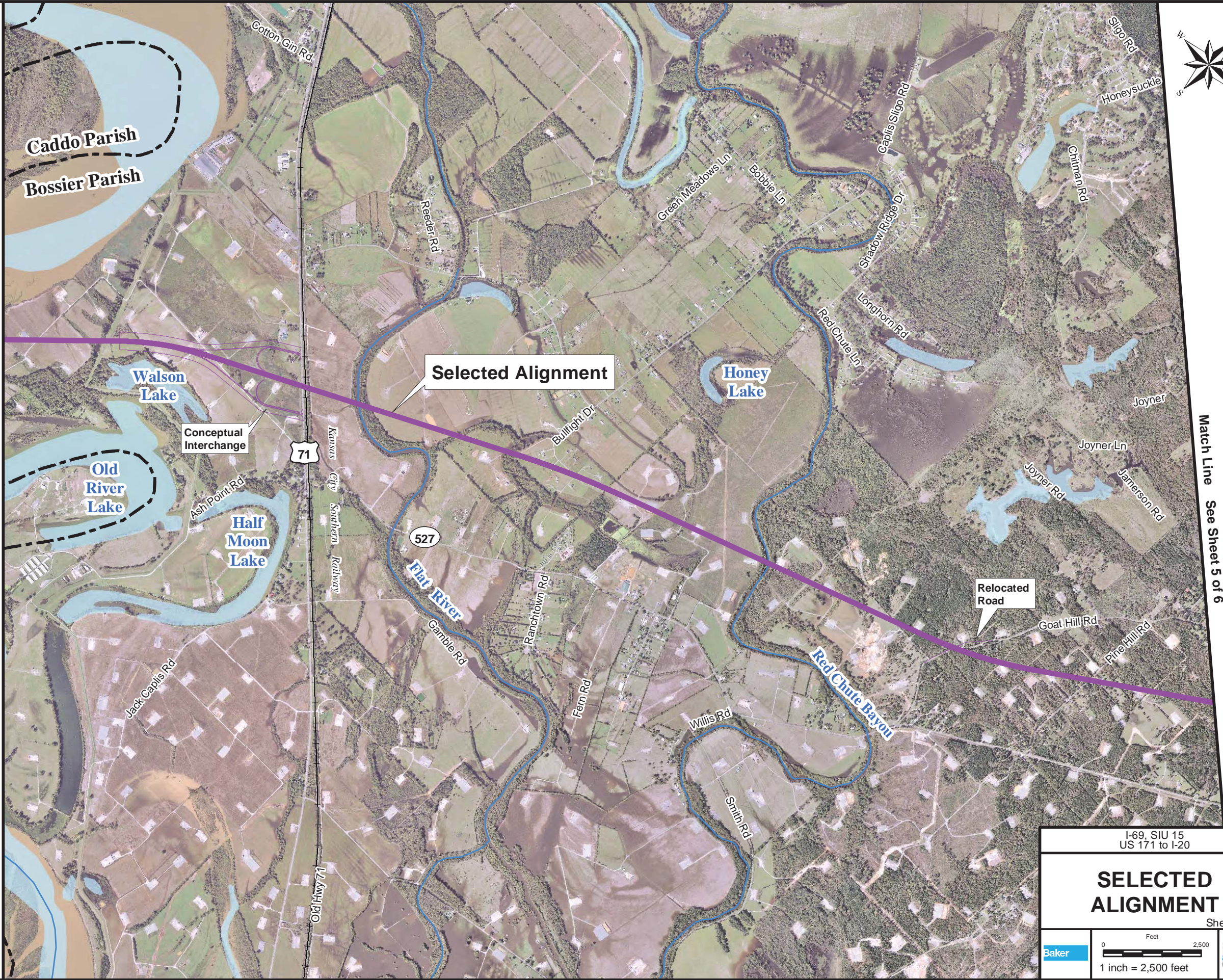
02500

Feet

1 inch = 2,500 feet

DOTD

Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development



Legend

SELECTED ALIGNMENT

Proposed Interchange

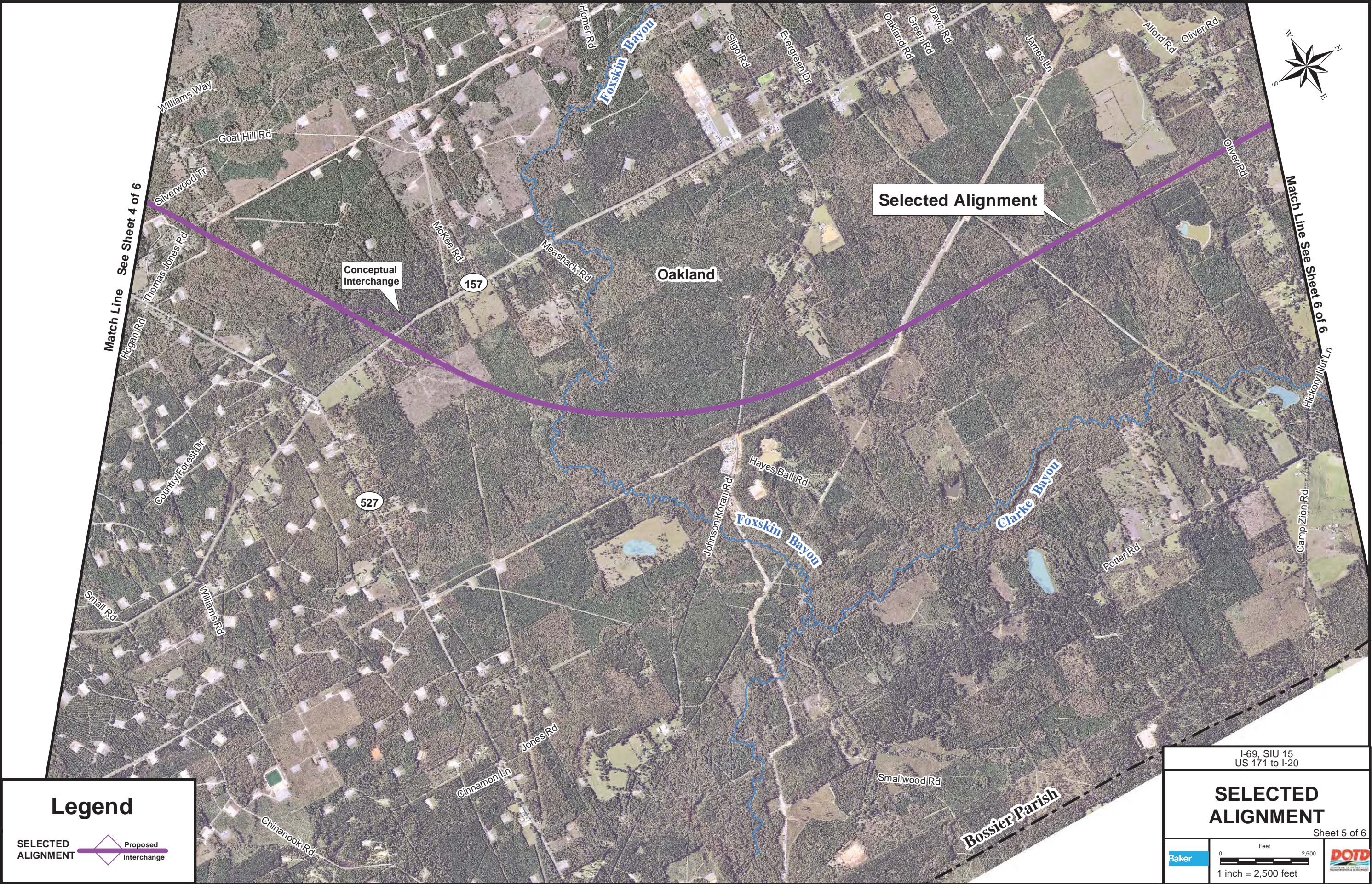
I-69, SIU 15
US 171 to I-20

SELECTED ALIGNMENT

Sheet 4 of 6

Baker

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1 inch = 2,500 feet



Legend

SELECTED ALIGNMENT



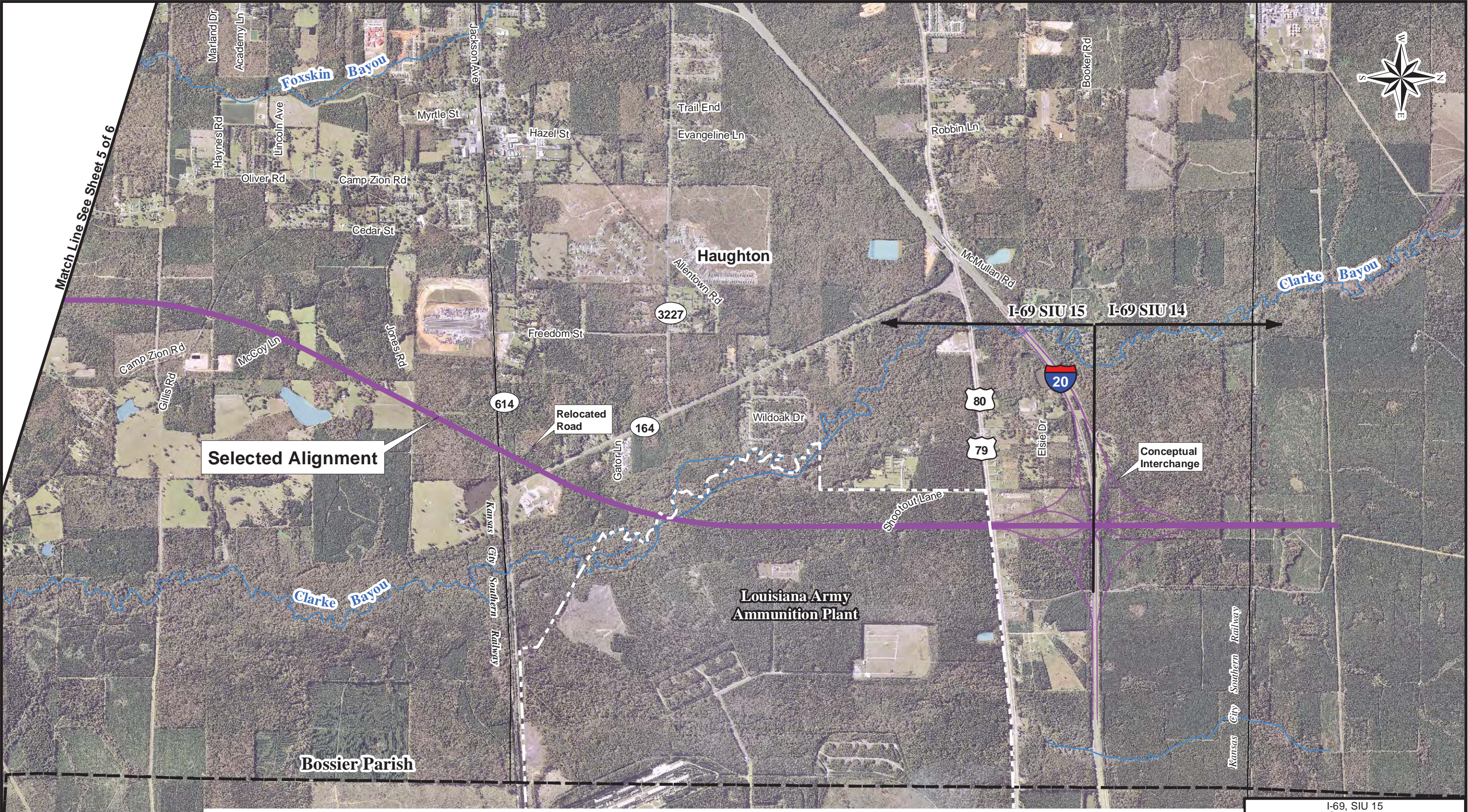
I-69, SIU 15
US 171 to I-20

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ALIGNMENT

Sheet 5 of 6

Baker

0 2,500
1 inch = 2,500 feet




Selected Alignment

Conceptual Interchange

Legend

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Proposed Interchange

I-69, SIU 15
US 171 to I-20

SELECTED ALIGNMENT

Sheet 6 of 6

Baker

0 2,500

1 inch = 2,500 feet

