PLANNING THE UNIVERSITY AVENUE CORRIDOR
A Project for Southeast Louisiana

A **PLANNING GRANT** request for TIGER Fiscal Year 2014 Discretionary Funds to plan the extension of **University Avenue to Pride Drive**. Grant funds will be used to coordinate transportation planning with interdisciplinary factors such as economic development, education, and affordable housing. Funds will also be used to complete an Environmental Impact Statement in accordance with NEPA.

Requested Amount: $1,200,000
Match Committed: $ 300,000

Application Submitted By:

CITY OF
HAMMOND, LA

Local Government Entity

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INTRODUCTION & PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of Hammond is requesting $1.2 million in TIGER funds, to be matched by $300,000 in municipal funds, to plan the extension of University Avenue (LA 3234) to Pride Drive, an industrial corridor connecting the Hammond Northshore Regional Airport to US 190. This extension would complete an east-west corridor directly connecting the airport to I-55. And this corridor would intersect Morrison Boulevard (US 51), Cherry Street (LA 1065), and Morris Road (LA 443)—providing new and convenient transportation choices to centers of employment, training, education, and services in the Hammond Urbanized Area. The concept of extending the corridor has been under development for the last 20 years, but the explosive growth of Hammond after Hurricane Katrina and the growth of Southeastern Louisiana University and Northshore Technical Community College—the two educational centers that the proposed corridor would connect—have further stressed the transportation system, making the east-west corridor a priority. It is critical to secure funds now to plan the corridor extension to ensure a comprehensive planning effort with robust public input and thoughtful evaluation of alignments and alternatives.

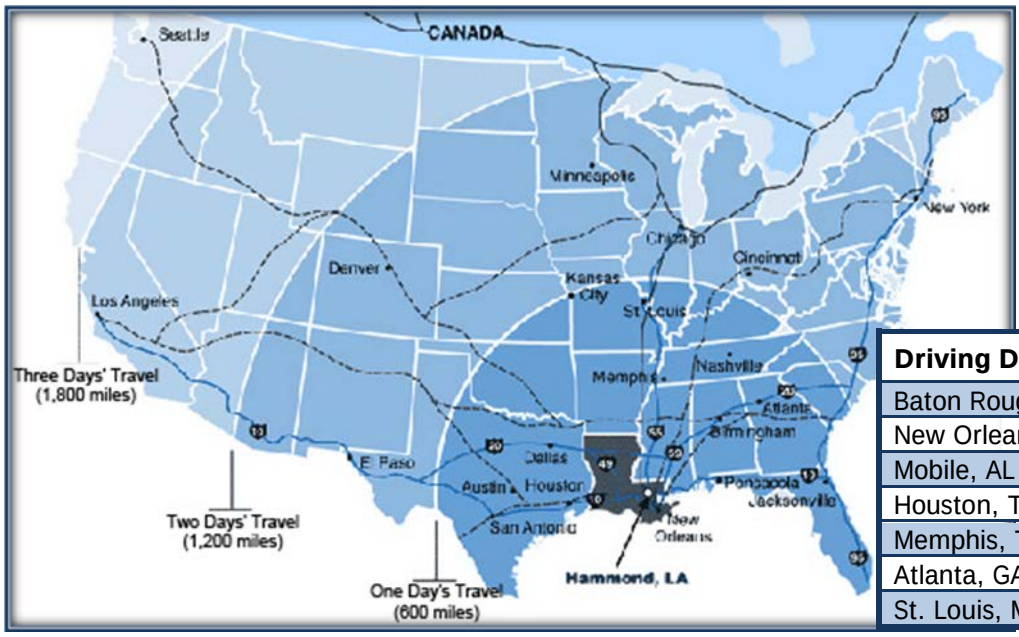
Visit the **City of Hammond's TIGER website** for quick links to all the maps, reports, and plans cited in this application.

Hammond – Crossroads of the South

Hammond is the largest and fastest-growing city in Tangipahoa, the fourth-fastest-growing parish (county) in Louisiana, and is home to Southeastern Louisiana University, one of Louisiana's largest four-year public universities with more than 16,000 students. The area population has grown by more than 10% since Hurricane Katrina in 2005—largely as people and businesses relocated to higher ground following the storm. In fact, the growth in the southern half of the parish and the commuter ties within the region catalyzed to form the new Hammond Urbanized Area (Hammond UA) with a population of 67,629 as declared in the 2010 Census. Situated almost equidistantly between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, on the Northshore of Lake Pontchartrain, and at the crossroads of two major Interstates, I-12 and I-55, Hammond serves as a staging area for hurricane response in Southeast Louisiana.

With access to key north-south (I-55) and east-west (I-12) interstates, Hammond is ideally situated as a distribution hub. Complementing the roadways, Hammond has an active freight and passenger rail line, running north-south and owned by Canadian National, that bisects the downtown area. From this rail, the City owns a rail spur that runs east-west to Pride Drive and the west side of the airport. Walmart, The Home Depot, Winn-Dixie, Entergy, and Cardinal

Health are just a few of the companies that have found Hammond to be logistically perfect for their distribution centers.



Driving Distances in Miles	
Baton Rouge, LA	42
New Orleans, LA	49
Mobile, AL	150
Houston, TX	302
Memphis, TN	338
Atlanta, GA	470
St. Louis, MO	615

Figure 1: Map shows driving distances from Hammond to Each Coast, emphasizing why Hammond is the Crossroads of the South and an ideal location for distributors.

The distribution centers and interstate connections are important factors when analyzing the average daily traffic counts (see map listing ADT throughout the Hammond area), which are much higher than the City of Hammond's population. Additionally, the two higher educational facilities and a large medical complex create large numbers of commuters throughout the area, with some students and staff driving more than an hour to and from the Hammond area every day. The high ADTs throughout the Hammond area directly correlate to the need for better corridor connectivity and more multimodal corridors to reduce congestion and crashes.

It is this unusual confluence of factors that make the Hammond urbanized area unique. **The TIGER planning grant is an excellent fit for this project because small urban areas, such as Hammond, are often overlooked in funding streams.** Hammond is too big to be defined as rural, but is far too small to compete with large urban areas that can tabulate hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries and users of transportation corridors and assets. But the role of the Hammond Urbanized Area (UA) is more significant than that held by other small urbans, and even by many of the large urban areas, due to its geographical position, educational centers, large distribution outlets, and function as the staging area for hurricane response in Southeast Louisiana. The University extension is included in the Transportation Improvement Program (post FY 2017) for South Tangipahoa as described in the support letter from the Regional Planning Commission that directs the planning efforts of the Metropolitan Planning Organization. What the TIGER grant will enable the Hammond UA to do is to move forward rapidly on a project that is ready, a project that people have been wanting for years, and a project that will benefit residents, commuters, businesses, educational facilities, and government entities throughout the region with increased connectivity, safety, and transportation options.

Transportation Challenges

The transportation challenges the project seeks to address have evolved during the years with the growth of the Hammond area include traffic congestion due to limited east-west corridors, poor connectivity from the distribution centers to I-55, high accident rates resulting in fatalities or major injuries, and no safe options for bicycles or pedestrians. Transportation and mobility throughout the Hammond area have always been complex given its proximity to two major interstates, the eight state highways that bisect the city, the active freight and passenger rail that runs through the middle of downtown, and the regional airport on the east side of town. These modalities and overall connectivity are complicated by the rivers, streams, wetlands, stormwater, drainage ditches, and flooding prevalent in southeast Louisiana.

Settlement within the Hammond area and, in general, along the Northshore of Lake Pontchartrain in Southeast Louisiana has been and continues to be influenced by transportation. One prominent example was a decision in the mid-1850s by the then New Orleans, Jackson and Great Northern Railroad to construct a rail line through Hammond—facilitating new industry, commerce, and waves of settlers (eventually, this rail line would come to be known as the "Main Line of Mid-America" and is now part of the Canadian National Railway, connecting New Orleans to parts far and wide throughout Canada through Hammond). Eventually, a small town, organized in grids radiating out from the rail line evolved into the city of Hammond. And that city has been evolving ever since.

In 1982, the Traffic and Planning Division of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development identified a number of critical transportation system deficiencies in need of improvements to address connectivity and congestion issues. Since that time, Hammond had experienced an increase in population and in large-scale, permitted development within its corporate limits, had been impacted by similar increases within surrounding unincorporated areas, had seen an expansion of local business and industry in South Tangipahoa, and was still adjusting to an explosion in student enrollment at Southeastern Louisiana University during the early 1990s. In 2002, the New Orleans Air and Marine Branch of U.S. Customs moved to the Hammond Northshore Regional Airport, bringing a new workforce and additional commuters to the airport area. City leaders knew the transportation problems were growing worse, but they did not know exactly what was causing the problems, potential remedies, or how to prioritize projects.

Accordingly, in 2006, the City of Hammond commissioned a Major Street Plan by engineering firm, Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc., to update prevailing transportation system development assumptions—including making changes to those assumptions in order to shift the focus from past-present to present-future and to encourage the kind of innovation that would be required to

create a modern, capable, and efficient multi-modal transportation system in Hammond. The plan examined a 52.2-sqaure-mile area including Hammond (13.8 square miles) and adjacent areas of unincorporated Tangipahoa Parish (38.4 miles).[1]

BKI's analysis showed that Hammond lacked "designated east-west major arterial capacity," with US 190 providing the only east-west major arterial through Hammond, cutting straight through the middle of downtown and major commercial corridors to terminate at I-55 on the far west side of the city. Average daily traffic counts showed more than 20,000 attempting to use this main arterial with traffic congestion backed up from intersection to intersection during peak commuting times and when freight and passenger trains traveling the north-south rail through downtown would bisect the arterial.

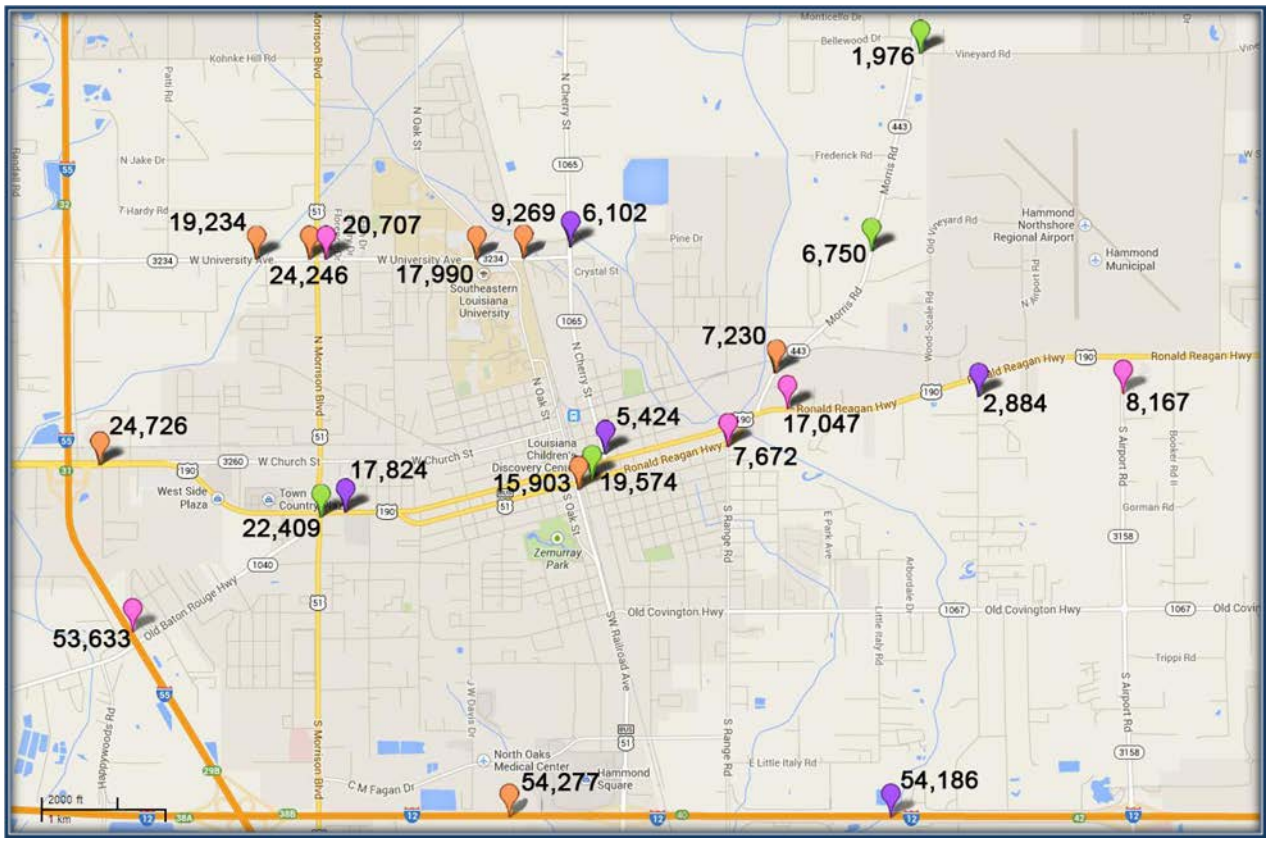


Figure 2: Average Daily Traffic Counts according to the most recent data from Louisiana Department of Transportation. The confluence of two major interstates, several federal and state highways, and the lack of east-west corridors contribute to increased traffic congestion throughout the Hammond area.

The plan also looked at trends that have a direct impact on transportation demand—such as place of work, travel time to work, and means of transportation. At the time that BKI was assembling the plan, available Census data placed the number of Hammond residents working in adjacent parishes or out of state at 26%. Comparing 1990 and 2000 Census data, BKI found that Hammond residents working outside Tangipahoa Parish had grown at nearly twice the rate of those working inside the parish; the firm also noted similar trends among non-Hammond resident

[1] Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc. *Major Street Plan for the City of Hammond*, Jun 2006. http://www.hammond.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/majorstreetplan.pdf

workers. The percentage of workers for whom the travel time to work was greater than 30 minutes was increasing. In fact, BKI found the greatest increase among workers whose travel time to work was 45–59 minutes—the equivalent of driving from Hammond to Baton Rouge, New Orleans, or McComb, Mississippi. The majority of workers traveled as single-occupants in their vehicles—with only 12.9% of Hammond residents indicating carpool participation.

BKI also observed that gaps existed in "the major arterial network… immediately outside of the center of Hammond, as the land areas transition into rural countryside." In these unincorporated areas of the parish, once-farmland and low-density residential, development had begun to emerge creating centers of growth and increasing the importance of an "effective circulation system."

In 2006, the planned opening of a new specialty hospital and 80-acre business park at the intersection of I-12 and Airport Road (LA 3158) were projected to be major generators of traffic in these areas—along with new distribution/warehousing facilities on the west side of the Hammond Northshore Regional Airport facilitated by the expansion of Pride Drive and improvements to the Hammond rail spur, and the expanding airport itself. Although an ideal location for such centers, with the combination of rail, roadway, and air access points, the location provides only one major roadway to the interstate system—US 190, the only east-west arterial in Hammond. In fact, in the 2009 Quality of Life study, residents cited roadway traffic as their number one problem—higher than crime, poverty, population growth, employment opportunities, pollution, or race relations—with 59.9% citing traffic a "major" or "moderate" problem and with an additional 18.9% describing it as "somewhat" of a problem.[2]

Following Hurricane Katrina, both the Louisiana Army National Guard's 1/244th Air Assault Helicopter Battalion and 1/204th Theater Air Operation Command, whose facilities were originally located on the Southshore of Lake Pontchartrain and devastated by the storm, relocated their operations to the airport. A new 56-acre campus, opened in 2010, which now serves 100 resident guardsmen—and some 400 more during weekend drills. The Guard's presence has helped transform the airport into the staging area for emergency response in Southeast Louisiana—with the airport's location providing, in the words of the Guard's State Aviation Officer, "an excellent strategic" center from which to respond to anything east of Baton Rouge.[3] With a new tower set to open in 2014, the airport has also seen its number of daily aircraft operations more than double since the storm—today, averaging more than 76,000 take-offs and landings annually.

[2] *The Quality of Life in Louisiana's Florida Parishes.* Southeastern Social Science Research Center. Oct 2009.
[3] Purpura, Paul. "Hammond New Base for Guard Helicopters." *The Times Picayune*. Oct 14, 2009. http://blog.nola.com/news_impact/print.html?entry=/2008/01/hammond_new_base_for_guard_hel.html

The 63,000-square-foot Cypress Pointe Surgical Hospital opened in 2010. A year later, the Hammond Area Recreation District—which, in the years following the publication of the Major Street Plan, acquired the 90 acres originally purposed for business development—broke ground on Chappapeela Sports Park, which later opened with 30 playing fields in January 2013. And several residential developments have either sprung up or been expanded around the airport. As predicted, all have been major generators of traffic—along Morris Road (LA 443), Vineyard Road, which forms the north boundary of the airport, Airport Road (LA 3158), US 190, Old Covington Highway (LA 1067), I-12, and even LA 22, which runs through the Ponchatoula, Tangipahoa's second most-populous city, south of Hammond.

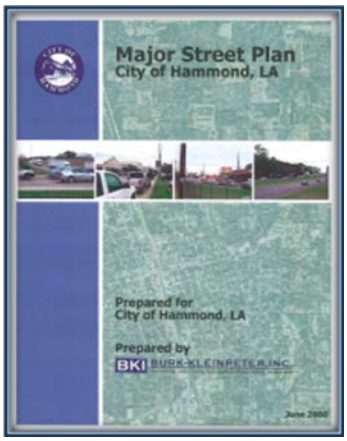
Creation of a new arterial loop connecting these areas to I-55 would, according to BKI's analyses, help to address concerns about increased traffic in these areas and growing truck traffic in downtown Hammond, as well as the demands of commuter students using Railroad Avenue/Oak Street to get to and from the Southeastern campus. Residents were particularly receptive to the idea—with some voicing concern that the University extension could be hindered by existing development west of Cherry Street (LA 1065). This suggested a need for future study and planning. BKI attempted to address some of these concerns under Right-of-Way Development and Preservation—identify specific steps related to development of right-of way along existing major street corridors and for proposed major street corridor extensions—but these steps were only intended to guide future study and planning, and the firm's analyses are now nearly 8 years out of date.

The Pride Drive and rail spur improvements resulted in a significant increase in truck traffic, further compounding the congestion and leading to more crashes. The main problem is access to I-55. Trucks exiting the distribution centers on Pride Drive have two options. The first option is to travel east on US 190 to LA 3158 (Airport Road) to I-12 and then to exit I-12 onto I-55 at a dangerous cloverleaf interchange. The second option is to travel west on US 190 through the heart of downtown Hammond and its major commercial corridors, intersecting with LA 1065 (Cherry Street), the north/south Canadian National rail line, US 51-Business (Railroad Avenue), US 51 (Morrison Boulevard), LA 3260 (Church Street), and finally terminating at I-55—a distance of six miles that can easily take 20 minutes.

Another transportation challenge that this project will address is the lack of multimodal choices for transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians, especially given the lack of connectivity between the two major educational centers—Southeastern Louisiana University and Northshore Technical Community College. Currently, the Tangipahoa Voluntary Council on Aging in partnership with the City of Hammond operates a fixed-route bus system throughout the city limits, but the route is long with 39 stops and only a single bus providing service (see map and schedule on TIGER website). The lack of bicycle paths and sidewalks is complicated by deep drainage ditches and a lack of roadway shoulders, so walking or bicycling the distance between the airport area and downtown Hammond, or from Southeastern to the distribution hubs, or from the Florida Parishes Health Services on Pride Drive to the rest of Hammond, is dangerous—although people attempt this arduous trek every day.

Project History & Description

For at least 20 years, the three-mile extension has been discussed by community members, realizing that "as the Parish and Hammond's populations continue to increase, improving the connectivity of the street network is necessary to avoid a state of gridlock and blight," a central theme related to the smart growth principles articulated throughout the Hammond Comprehensive Master Plan. The plan's primary transportation goal is to "provide safe and convenient mobility and to support a multimodal transportation system that provides linkages to neighborhoods, schools, and other community facilities and uses"—a goal that aligns directly with the TIGER program. To implement the plan, Hammond created a Unified Development Code that aligns zoning, subdivision, landscaping, and stormwater and that focuses development on resiliency and sustainability. **The University Extension is an example of such development, completing the transportation system and preparing for future growth.**



In the 2006 Major Streets Plan, BKI proposed a "University Connector" between Cherry Street (LA 1065), where University Avenue currently terminates, and Pride Drive, which forms the west boundary of Hammond Northshore Regional Airport. Of note, this connector, or extension, was **ranked as first in the priority list** of planned or programmed improvements recommended by the firm. University Avenue and its extension were also prominently featured on the very first map and table of standards included in the plan. The project was also included in the DOTD Statewide Transportation Plan as **one of seven high priority intermodal projects**. In 2007, the City of Hammond requested State Capital Outlay funds to conduct public planning and environmental analysis for the extension project, but in the wake of rebuilding post-Katrina, the request was denied.

Echoing the Major Street Plan, the 2011 Hammond Comprehensive Master Plan classifies the **creation of a new arterial loop connecting University Avenue and Airport Road as a major recommendation**. According to the master plan, the proposed arterial loop would allow for unimpeded travel east-west from the areas that are projected to grow by more than 15% in the next five years, such as those east of the airport and for the area directly impacted by the extension project, which is projected to grow 10-15% (see map next page). The new road need not necessarily result in the rezoning of lots for heavy commercial uses; it could create desirable spaces for community centers, such as those discussed in other chapters of the plan as parts of a coordinated effort to develop complete neighborhoods and more mixed-used development. Regardless of the kind(s) of land use that such a road might create, the plan observes that any change in land use "should be accompanied by planning for entire areas as coherent neighborhoods and centers."

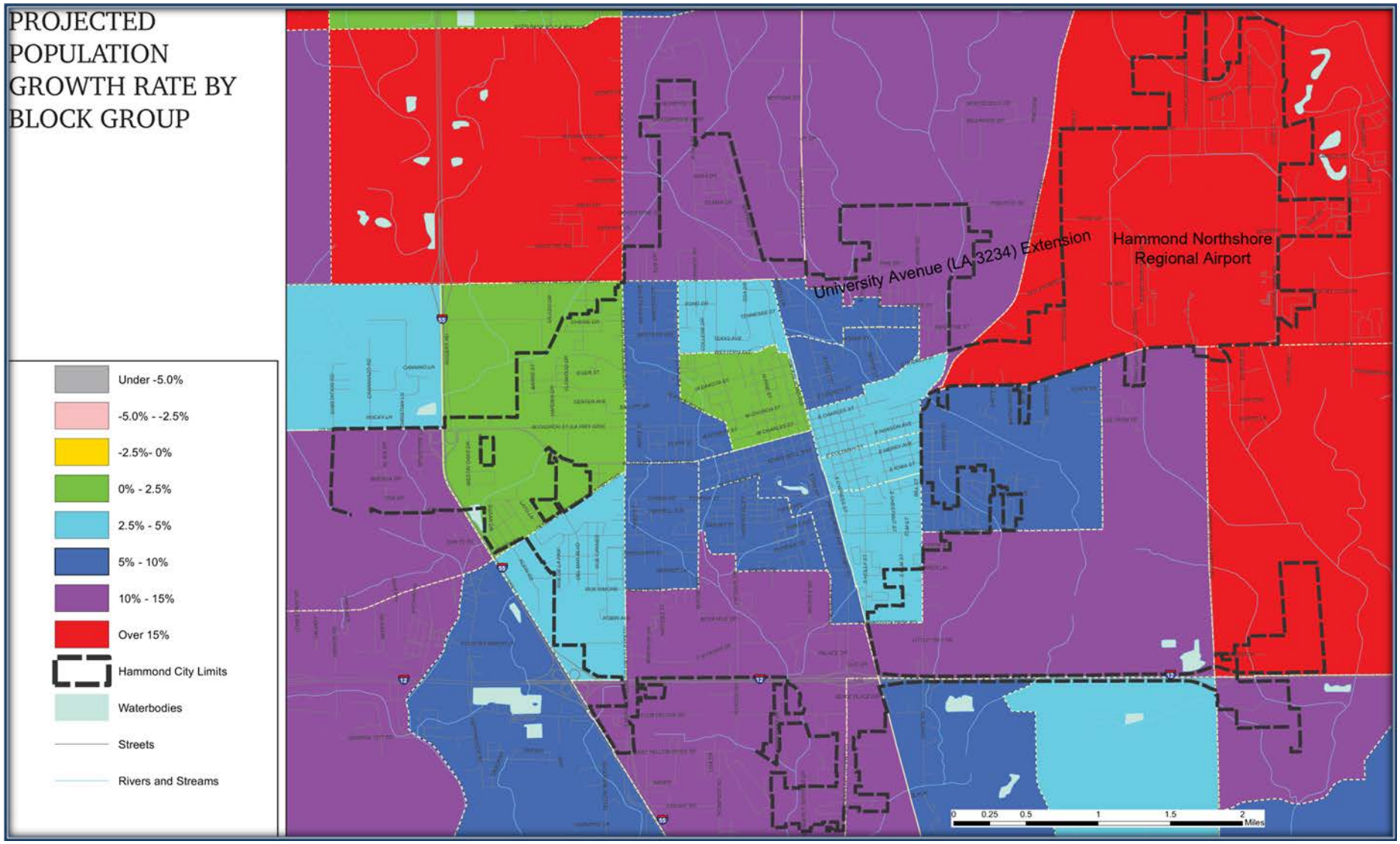


Figure 3: Projected Population Growth Rate in Hammond Area for the next 5 years. Shows the areas the will be directly impacted by the University Extension are expected to grow by 10-15% and in the areas around the airport by more than 15%.

In 2012, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development commissioned a Stage 0 feasibility study for the University Extension. The study outlined three possible alignments, estimating their environmental, land acquisition, and construction costs. Although useful for cost estimating and planning from an engineering standpoint, the study failed to gain any public input about the alignments and failed to consider the extension in the context of related development that will transpire with the building of the roadway. The TIGER planning grant will enable Hammond to comprehensively evaluate the potential alignments of the extension—updating existing safety and traffic studies, gaining public input about the socioeconomic impact of each alignment, planning for complete streets and affordable housing investments along potential alignments, and planning for new bus routes and transit stops.

The City of Hammond proposes to use TIGER funds to complete these planning activities with extensive public input and to view the corridor through the lens of the Master Plan and updated Development Codes rather than as a stand-alone roadway. In conjunction with such planning efforts, grant funds will be used to conduct an environmental impact statement (Stage 1), propelling the project forward for full design and construction. Coordinating the environmental analysis with comprehensive planning efforts provides a useful method of leveraging funds while streamlining time investments to ensure the project is thoroughly examined from every stakeholder's perspective.

The feasibility study outlined three alternates for the extension. Each alternate includes new roundabout intersections and consideration of turning lanes as required (see diagram next page).

- **Alternate A** extends the five-lane University Avenue from its existing terminus at Cherry Street (LA 1065) east along a northeasterly track, through an intersection with Morris Road (LA 443), to the northwest terminus of Pride Drive. This alternate would also include improvements from the extension south along Pride Drive to US 190, as well as from Pride Drive east along US 190 to Airport Road (LA 3158).

- **Alternate B** extends the five-lane University Avenue from its existing terminus at Cherry Street east along a southeasterly track, through an intersection with Morris Road, to Lear Drive, which intersects Pride Drive at its midpoint. This alternate would also include improvements from the extension east along Lear Drive to Pride Drive, from Lear Drive south along Pride Drive to US 190, as well as from Pride Drive east along US 190 to Airport Road. This alternate creates a new at-grade rail crossing of the Airport Rail Spur.

- **Alternate C** extends the five-lane University Avenue from its existing terminus at Cherry Street east along a southeasterly track, through an intersection with Morris Road and Old Vineyard Road, and then south to US 190. This alternate would also include improvements from Pride Drive east along US 190 to Airport Road. However, this alternate does not provide a new east-west connection from the Hammond Northshore Regional Airport to I-55 and it directs traffic through a new at-grade rail crossing of the Airport Rail Spur.

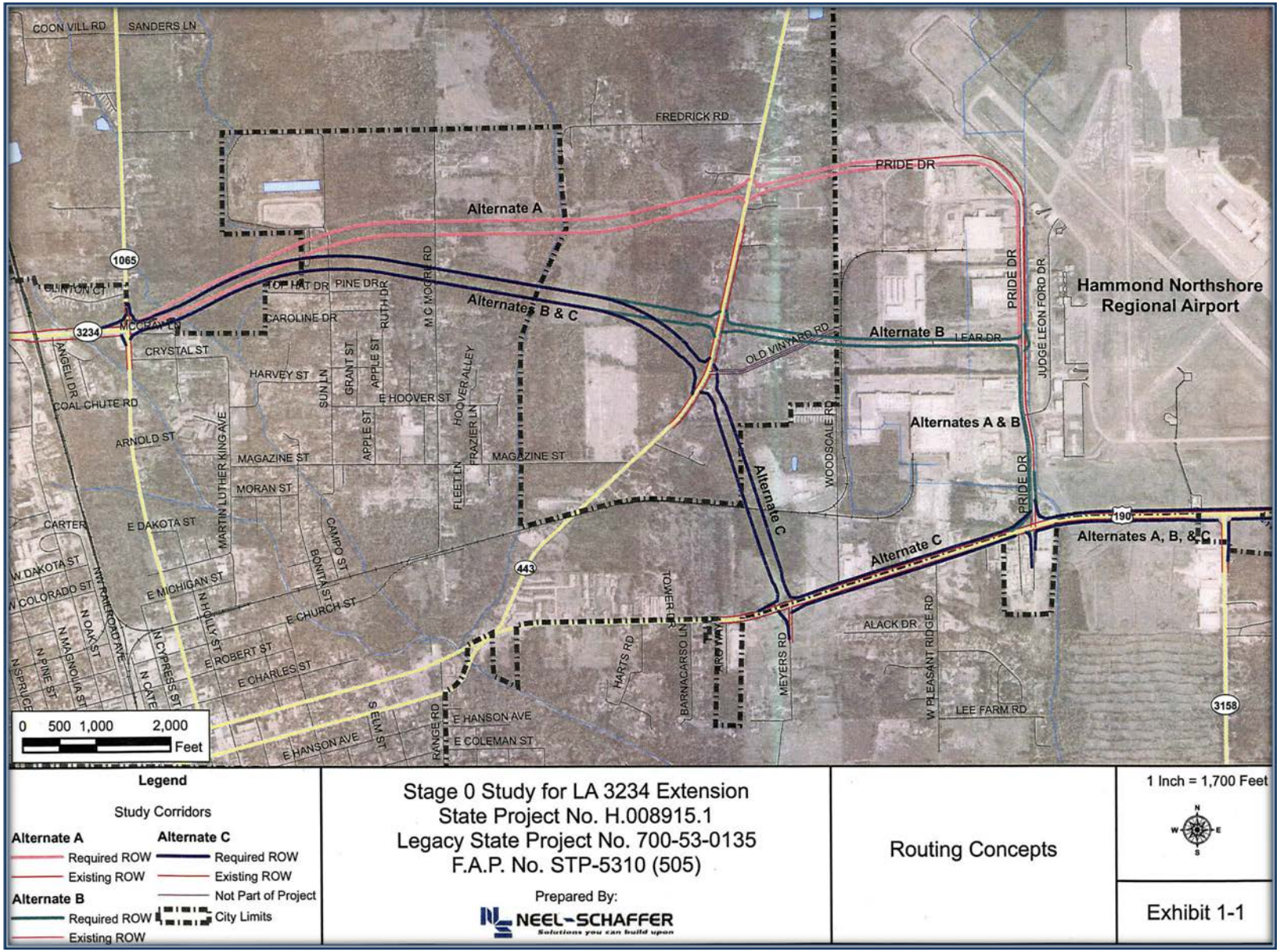


Figure 4: Proposed Alignments of the University Extension as described in the feasibility study.

Planning Project Task Detail

The planning and environmental tasks that will be completed with TIGER funds for the University Extension Corridor project are as follows:

A. Establish a Project Steering Committee

The committee will be comprised of representatives from local neighborhoods, local government, the Tangipahoa Voluntary Council on Aging (transit service provider), Louisiana DOTD, Hammond Area Economic Industrial Development District, Encore Development, 2-3 Pride Drive business owners, Southeastern Louisiana University, Northshore Technical Community College, Florida Parishes Human Services Authority, the Hammond Tree Foundation, and the Regional Planning Commission.

B. Develop and Implement a Public Participation Plan

The plan will include a schedule of public meetings, potential locations, and solicitation strategies. The plan will also include a schedule of advertisements, advertisement locations, and distribution lists. A project website will be established for all documents created in conjunction with the outreach efforts, advertising, public meetings, studies, and final publications.

C. Conduct a Transportation & Socioeconomic Impact Study of the Corridor

1. Conduct Project Kick-Off – Identify goals and objectives
2. Collect and Synthesize Data and Existing Plans (including transportation, housing, and economic forecasting)**
3. Perform a Gap Analysis
4. Perform Transportation System (including travel and land use forecasting) and Socioeconomic Impact Analyses
5. Begin Discussions of an Overlay District or TND for the Corridor
6. Develop Visual Conceptions of the Corridor and Proposed Alignments
7. Conduct Public Meetings to Present Findings and Conceptions
8. Finalize the Overlay District or TND
9. Create Economic Incentive Packages for the Corridor
10. Develop a Funding Strategy for Major Investments in the Corridor
11. Prepare Final Report with Implementation Strategies and Milestones

D. Conduct an Environmental Impact Study for the Corridor

1. Publish Notice of Intent and Begin Scoping Process with Public and with Federal, State, and Local Agencies to Determine Environmental Impacts
2. Develop Purpose, Need, Alternatives, and Criteria
3. Collect and Synthesize Environmental Data and Prepare Visual Aids
4. Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Supporting Documentation
5. Refine Preferred Alignment and Revise Draft EIS
6. Prepare Final Environmental Impact Statement
7. Release the Environmental Record of Decision

**Data will include demographics, utilities, land use, zoning, vacant/blighted land, transit stops, workforce development, businesses, flood zones, historic assets, community resources, real estate investments, capital projects, sewer and water infrastructure.

Budget – Grant Funds & Match Commitment

The City of Hammond is committed to the financial match for the project as evidenced by the City Council resolution #14-0415-02, adopted on April 15, 2014, which secures $300,000 in cash from the grant match fund appropriated annually by the City for such funding opportunities. The City of Hammond is also providing an in-kind match of staff time for Grant Administration and Committee Coordination so that all grant funding will go directly to the project. Additional partners, such as the Hammond Tree Foundation, may contribute funds to the project once the TIGER grant is secured.

		TIGER	Match	Total	%
Combined Project Tasks		**$20,000**		**$20,000**	**1.3%**
	Grant Administration & Committee Coordination	$0	$80,000 (in-kind)	$80,000 (in-kind)	0%
	Study Management & Administration	$15,000	$0	$15,000	1.0%
	Public Participation Plan	$5,000	$0	$5,000	0.3%
Transportation & Socioeconomic Study		**$400,000**	**$80,000**	**$480,000**	**32.0%**
	Project Kick-Off	$10,000	$0	$10,000	0.7%
	Data/Plan Collection & Synthesis	$90,000	$15,000	$105,000	7.0%
	Analysis of Transportation System & Socioeconomic Impacts	$150,000	$50,000	$200,000	13.3%
	Overlay District or TND & Visuals	$75,000	$10,000	$85,000	5.7%
	Incentives & Funding Strategy	$25,000	$5,000	$30,000	2.0%
	Final Report	$50,000	$0	$50,000	3.3%
Environmental Impact Study		**$780,000**	**$220,000**	**$1,000,000**	**66.7%**
	Notice of Intent & Scoping Process	$100,000	$25,000	$125,000	8.3%
	Develop Purpose, Need, Alternatives, and Criteria	$75,000	$15,000	$90,000	6.0%
	Data Collection & Analysis (includes GIS)	$200,000	$100,000	$300,000	20.0%
	Draft EIS & Supplemental Documentation	$200,000	$65,000	$265,000	17.7%
	Revised EIS–Preferred Alternative Refined	$80,000	$10,000	$90,000	6.0%
	Final EIS	$50,000	$0	$50,000	3.3%
	Record of Determination	$75,000	$5,000	$80,000	5.3%
TOTAL FUNDING		**$1,200,000**	**$300,000**	**$1,500,000**	
		80%	**20%**	**100%**	

Note: Costs for public participation are included within each category. See the project schedule for anticipated public meetings and hearings.

SELECTION CRITERIA – LONG-RANGE OUTCOMES

Properly planning and building the University Avenue Corridor will result in beneficial outcomes that will improve the lives of residents, commuters, and business owners for years to come. The new corridor will dramatically improve safety with enhanced connectivity to enable better first response and hurricane evacuation routes and with three highway intersection improvements. The project will spur an Economically Distressed Area into revitalization and development, bringing ladders of opportunities for new businesses and jobs, for more efficient transportation of goods, and for a better quality of life with more multimodal transportation choices throughout the corridor and to centers of employment, education, and services throughout the Hammond UA.

Safety

Improving safety is one of the most critical aspects of the University Extension project and is the first priority of any transportation planning, construction, or improvement process in the Hammond area, a process intended to ensure that a transportation system protects or improves the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors. Safety is often compromised by congested roadways, by freight truck operators colliding with commuters, and conflicts when highways intersect with rail and lower-speed roadways. This project will alleviate many of these concerns through the installation of three new roundabout intersections, the installation of turning lanes where needed, and the expansion of Pride Drive and US 190 at critical access points. More importantly, it will providing more connectivity to the emergency response routes used daily and those critical during hurricane response efforts—making these routes easier to navigate and establishing more direct routes to existing transportation grids and arterials, thus enabling faster emergency response.

Improving Safety at Highway Intersections

Each of the alignments proposed for the University Extension improves safety at existing highway intersections and includes the addition of turning lanes on two-lane roadways that suffer from traffic congestion and frequent rear-end collisions. First, the alignments propose to install roundabouts at the intersection of University Avenue (LA 3234) and Cherry Street (LA 1065), at University and Morris Road (LA 443), and at Pride Drive and US 190. Accidents along these same highways where local roads or highways intersect one another have resulted in major injuries and fatalities.

Table 1: Crash data for highway intersections that could be improved by the University Extension project.

Intersection	Total Acc #	PDO Only	Injy/Ftl Acc	# Fatalities	# Injuries
University/LA 3234 @ Oak Street	18	14	4	0	4
Cherry/LA 1065 @ University/LA 3234	27	16	11	0	25
Morris/LA 443 @ Magazine Street	12	7	5	1	15
US 190 @ Pride Drive	20	11	9	0	26
US 190 @ Morris/LA 443	29	13	16	0	34
US 190 @ Airport/LA 3158	20	13	7	1	15

The Hammond area has seen a dramatic decrease in crashes, especially those involving major injury or a fatality at the intersection of Airport Road (LA 3158) and Old Covington Highway (LA 1067), the only location where a roundabout intersection has been completed, so the expectation is that the roundabouts installed through this project will result in similar decreases, especially at the intersection of Pride Drive and US 190 where truck traffic and commuters often collide and where crashes have resulted in 26 major injuries. Roundabouts are also safer for bicyclists and pedestrians as vehicles reduce speeds to enter the roundabout.

The project also calls for upgrading US 190 from Pride Drive to Airport Road (LA 3158) to a four-lane capacity with a greenscaped median down the middle that will prevent vehicles from stopping and turning at the multitude of driveways, which results in traffic congestion and rear-end collisions. This two-lane segment currently bears approximately 13,345 ADT (2011 ADT presented in the feasibility study); only the signal-controlled light has turning lanes. The four-lane roadway will enable more flow of traffic as the speed limit shifts from 45 mph to 55 mph and as truck traffic from the distribution centers enters the commuter traffic on US 190 and where the traffic counts increase by nearly 5,000 with an infusion of drivers.

Creating Faster Emergency Response Times

All the emergency responders in the Hammond area—Hammond Fire Department, Acadian Ambulance, Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff's Office, State Police, and Hammond Police Department—agree that extending University Avenue to Pride Drive will enable faster response times because the extension will create a direct east-west connection to the north and east sides of the city (see support letters from these entities on the TIGER website). Because US 190 currently serves as the only main east-west connector, responders are forced to weave through traffic on a roadway that changes from two lanes with no shoulder, to four lanes with on-street parking in downtown, to four lanes with a turning lane at Thomas (US 190) and US 51 (Morrison) in the heart of the city. Given that this roadway is plagued with high traffic counts (varying from 24,726 to 17,047), the congested roadway makes bypassing vehicles, with no place to pull to the side, even more difficult and dangerous. The new extension is expected to draw nearly half of these vehicles, reducing the strain on US 190.

Enhance the Staging Area for Disaster Response

Although relatively unknown to those outside of Louisiana, the City of Hammond's role in staging operations for hurricane evacuations and emergency response is vital in southeast Louisiana. During Hurricane Katrina, while New Orleans and much of southeast Louisiana was flooded, Hammond served as the main staging area for more than 6,300 first responders. Large parking lots were converted into tent cities, so utility trucks, emergency response vehicles, and tree trimming vehicles parked on side streets and on open green spaces and recreation fields.

After the chaos of 2005, the Louisiana Army National Guard built permanent facilities at the Hammond airport, which serves as a backup landing site for the Louis Armstrong New Orleans Airport. The U.S. Customs Branch recently expanded their facility at the airport to move critical assets and equipment for emergency response. Entergy, located on Pride Drive, converts to an emergency shelter for utility workers, and Options, located on the east side of the airport, provides an emergency shelter for hundreds of adults with developmental disabilities.

Hammond also served as a staging and response area during the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in April 2010. During the first seven weeks of the spill, hundreds of British Petroleum employees, federal and state government employees, and reporters operated and traveled through Hammond while the Unified Command was coordinated from the Shell Oil Training and Conference Center in Robert, Louisiana (population of 1,339), three miles east of Hammond. The Wildlife Bird Rehabilitation Center moved into warehouse facilities on Pride Drive and operated for six months after the spill.

Clearly, location is key for these facilities, where people seek safe haven, where first responders shelter in place and then move quickly following the emergency, and where unified command posts are staged to coordinate response efforts. So improving the transportation system that supports these facilities is vital to ensuring a coordinated, rapid, and efficient response—as people are evacuating from southeast Louisiana and during the immediate aftermath of natural and manmade disasters. The extension of University Avenue to Pride Drive will create a crucial arterial for the system as a whole and will enable such a coordinated response.

Outputs for measuring the increased safety aspects will include the reduction of serious injury and fatal crashes and faster response times due to the direct route provided by the new corridor.

Economic Competitiveness

The University Extension would have profound implications for economic development—increasing the economic productivity of the land and capital in an Economically Distressed Area, improving the efficiency and reliability of moving goods from distribution centers to the interstate system, attracting new businesses and industries to Hammond, and improving economic mobility through enhanced multimodal connections to centers of employment, education, and services.

According to the South Tangipahoa TIP, the transportation system directly impacts the regional economy—providing a means for workers to access employment and for customers to access industrial, commercial, and educational centers. It is used to deliver goods and services. And it is the primary means through which visitors experience the culture and history of a place. The system also plays a critical role in future economic development and the economic revitalization of existing areas, where site selection may rest upon the quality of transportation infrastructure, its accessibility and connectedness to markets, and the modes of transportation that it supports to ship and receive goods and services and reach or be reached by customers and employees. Better access to neighborhoods supports industry and business, and the widening or extension of a highway in an undeveloped area can draw both new commercial and new residential development. The University Extension will catalyze such development.

The extension area of the project is located in a block group that meets the definition of an Economically Distressed Area with a civilian unemployment rate of 14.1%—more than double the national average—and a per capita income of $20,215 that is 72% of the national average.[4]

[4] According to the FHWA guidance, "Section 301(a)(1) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. 3161) provides that an area is economically distressed if it has a per capita income of 80 percent or less of the national average. Section 301(a)(2) (42 U.S.C. 3161) provides that an area is economically distressed if it has an unemployment rate that is, for the most

In fact, the statistics of the Hammond UA, as a larger region, are stunningly poor when compared to the national averages (see Table 1). Tangipahoa Parish is one of the 384 persistent poverty counties/parishes in the nation where more than 20% of the parish population lives in poverty as measured in the last three decades (1990 Census = 31.5%, 2000 Census = 22.7%, 2010 Census = 22.5%). Such a long-term depressed economic climate could be why some businesses choose to locate in other areas.

Table 2: Comparison of Economic Indicators Showing Hammond as an Economically Distressed Area

	Block Group 9540.002	Hammond Urban Area	Tangipahoa Parish	Louisiana	United States
Per capita income	$20,215 72% of US	$20,758 74% of US	$20,793 74% of US	$24,264 86% of US	$28,051
Civilian unemployment	14.1%	8.8%	6.9%	5.2%	6.0%
People below poverty level	Not available	23.6%	22.1%	18.7%	14.9%
Age <18 below poverty	Not available	33.1%	29.8%	26.6%	20.8%

Data comes from the 5-Year American Community Survey 2008-2012 (included on the TIGER website).

Increase Economic Productivity of Unused Land

Helping to drive east-west traffic through Hammond, the extension would stimulate additional commercial development and, consequently, increase residential real estate values along the entire University Avenue corridor. Currently, the area where the extension is proposed to run is either residential or undeveloped. Only 14 businesses operate in the entire block group area, and most of these are convenience stores or small, home-based gift basket businesses. Designing the corridor through the undeveloped area will create new locations for commercial businesses using a complete streets model that encourages commercial to be interspersed with residential, facilitating walkable communities of mixed-use development.

Figure 5: The intersection of University Avenue (LA 3234) and Cherry Street (LA 1065) showing the need for housing and business revitalization.

Airport Plaza Job Creation

The extension is seen as critical to the success of the Airport Plaza Job Creation Incentive, offered by the Hammond Area Economic & Industrial Development District, which has the potential to bring 200 new jobs to the Pride Drive/airport area. HAEIDD has been successful in

recent 24-month period for which data are available, at least 1 percent greater than the national average unemployment rate." http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/economicrecovery/guidancedistressed.htm

recruiting businesses and distribution centers to the Pride Drive industrial corridor, but with only one way in and out, Pride Drive seems like a traffic trap to many of the larger companies. What should be prime real estate with the close proximity of the rail spur, I-12, and the airport is difficult to market because it lacks connectivity to the west side of Hammond and, more importantly, to I-55. HAEIDD has committed the financial backing to provide the job incentive program within the Pride Drive corridor. Connecting Pride Drive to University Avenue will provide the missing piece of the recruitment package. The planning activities proposed to be accomplished with TIGER funding will also enable new economic incentives to be developed for the University Avenue corridor, spurring additional growth and bringing more jobs to the Hammond area. HAEIDD and the Small Business Development Center at Southeastern will lead these discussions with the Steering Committee to create targeted incentives specifically for the corridor, including qualifying the corridor as a Hub Zone, which encourages the hiring of low-to-moderate income residents and the revitalization of a depressed economic area.

More Efficient Transportation of Goods

Directly connecting I-55 and the Hammond Northshore Regional Airport, the extension would create a more efficient transportation system for airport operators—like the Louisiana Army National Guard and U.S. Customs and Border Protection—as well as Pride Drive companies—including Cardinal Health, CHEP, Graham Packaging Company, MidContinental Chemical Company, Sardo & Sons Warehousing, and Victory Packaging. (Visit the TIGER website to view letters from these entities describing how the direct connection will increase the efficient transport of their goods.) And including these entities in the planning of the corridor establishes new perspectives regarding exactly when they move the most goods and what factors they analyze and problems they face when trying to move the goods. Currently, one of the biggest problems stated by site selectors reporting that they have chosen another location is that Pride Drive dead-ends without turnarounds for trucks that overshoot their destinations. It also bottlenecks at the one point of entry and exit where Northshore Technical commuting students and airport area employees conflict with truck traffic and where Pride Drive traffic meets with US 190 traffic—the only east-west corridor through the center of Hammond. The nearest DOTD Station point just to the west of Pride Drive, capturing the westbound traffic prior to entering downtown Hammond, shows an ADT of 17,047. Creating the extension from Pride Drive to University Avenue will relieve this traffic congestion.

Connecting Centers of Learning & Workforce Development

The extension would connect the Northshore's two centers for higher learning, Southeastern Louisiana University, located on University Avenue, and Northshore Technical Community College, located on Pride Drive—facilitating their collaboration in developing a better-educated, more-highly-skilled workforce and helping to expand Tangipahoa's middle class.

For Northshore Technical Community College, located at the entry to Pride Drive and less than 3 miles east of downtown Hammond, the extension would be significant—more directly connecting the campus to the communities to its north and west and enabling its students and staff to avoid the traffic congestion of downtown Hammond. Given the number of alternative routes that the extension would make possible (e.g., LA 443, LA 1065, US 51, I-55), for many, the lengths and times of commutes could be cut in half. And, perhaps more importantly, commuters would be able to avoid the rural backroads that many use now, roads that are more

prone to congestion and crashes. The College's mission is to provide quality workforce training, education, and employment opportunities to residents of Tangipahoa, Livingston, St. Helena, Washington, and St. Tammany Parishes—a large and growing region of students seeking a competitive edge in today's global economy. Accessibility to such opportunities and relationships with like-minded partners—like Southeastern Louisiana University, which the University Extension would bring closer—are vitally important. And because the campus has no dormitories, every student is a commuter, often balancing certification classes with a full-time job, with no time to spare for traffic congestion.

In a similar situation on University Avenue, Southeastern Louisiana University considers the main arterial as a critical factor in university's growth over the past two decades—daily drawing students, faculty, staff, guests, and patrons to the campus from as far as Mississippi to the north, Baton Rouge to the west, and New Orleans to the south. As Hammond has grown, so has Southeastern—proudly becoming Louisiana's third-largest public university, with over 60 degree programs and more than 15,600 students—most of them commuters. As it looks to the future, the university is increasingly recognizing that its growth over the next two decades will similarly be linked to University Avenue and to the connections that it creates.

The proposed University Extension would connect Southeastern to the communities, schools—including the internationally-recognized Hammond High Magnet School where students are dual-enrolled and Northshore Technical Community College—businesses, and industries to the east. The extension would provide a more direct route to our campus to commuters from the east who would no longer have to fight mall or downtown traffic or completely circumnavigate Hammond to reach campus. It would also provide a more direct route from Southeastern to them.

Southeastern's mission is to lead the educational, economic, and cultural development of Southeast Louisiana. It brings this mission to life by focusing intensely on its students' success and on service and outreach in their communities. Only 2,100 students come from within Tangipahoa Parish, so the overwhelming majority of the student body is commuters with 85% of students living off-campus. A larger percentage of faculty and staff live within Tangipahoa Parish, with less of a commute from the interstates, but more than 600 drive into work every day from the interstates and highways. The traffic counts surrounding campus average greater than 22,000 with the counts on I-55 and I-12 at the two main exits that lead to campus averaging more than 56,000 ADT. Another entry point from the east side of Hammond could ease congestion. And a direct connection to Northshore Technical enables students to dual-enroll, excelling their educational progress and helping them to financially leverage more classes with the time savings.

Outputs measuring the project's impact on economic development will include the number of businesses that operate in the area, the reported time saved by the distributors using the new extension to access I-55, the number of jobs created by the new commercial investments, the increase in property values along the corridor, and the decrease in poverty and unemployment rates of the area around the corridor.

Improving Quality of Life

The University Extension will improve the quality of life for residents and commuters by increasing access to transportation choices through a complete streets model, by improving the efficiency and convenience of the affordable transit services, and by connecting people to training, education, and mental health service centers. The South Tangipahoa TIP emphasizes how the transportation system is the physical link through which people connect to each other, access work, education, and recreation, and are able to fulfill basic human needs; as such, the system is inextricably linked to community livability. A seamless, easy-to-use transportation system improves community livability by making everyday tasks easier to accomplish and offering residents a range of transportation choices to address their specific needs. System infrastructure also tends to form a large, integral part of every community's public space—having a direct and powerful impact on the physical appearance of a community and how community members interact with one another and their living environment.

Enacting the Goals of the Hammond Master Plan through Complete Streets

Currently, travel through Hammond—and throughout the Hammond Urbanized Area—is primarily by personal vehicle. The sprawling suburbs and unincorporated rural areas of the city and the Parish have led to complaints about the lengths of bus waits and rides and made the family car the more convenient—and, for those more isolated, the only—mode of travel. Consequently, like the Major Street Plan before it, the Hammond Comprehensive Master Plan encourages innovative transportation planning decisions that support a modern, capable, and efficient multimodal transportation system that will make mass transit, cycling, and walking just as comfortable, convenient, and attractive as driving the family car. Such a system will not only require streets to be interconnected but redesigned to create new and safer opportunities (e.g. sidewalks, crosswalks, bridges, tunnels, bike paths, bus stops and routes) for shared use by vehicles and pedestrians—especially to connect neighborhoods with commercial, healthcare, and educational centers.

Figure 6: Southwest Railroad Avenue. Although not shown in the photo, the sidewalk and bike path on the east side of the roadway is lined with benches.

The plan suggests that, where thoroughfares, like the University Extension, are needed that allow higher levels of automobile access, they should also permit walkability. According to the plan, the multilane road should be thought of as "unique street type in its ability to serve distinctly different kinds of traffic within a single, unified, thoroughfare." A multilane road can facilitate comparatively fast traffic along its lanes (the Automobile Realm) while providing walkability along its sides (the Pedestrian Realm). If the sides are wide enough, they can even be planted with trees and flowers and outfitted with benches—creating a linear park. Southwest Railroad Avenue (US 51-Business), which connects downtown Hammond to Hammond Square Mall, typifies this kind of unique street type and linear park—providing a wide sidewalk shared by pedestrians and bicyclists and complemented by benches and shade trees—that connects the two parts of the city, as well as providing an enticing gateway to downtown.

This type of complete street model along the University Extension would connect student walkers and bicyclists of Southeastern Louisiana University and Northshore Technical Community College. It could connect residents in the surrounding neighborhoods with the centers of employment and with the Florida Parishes Human Service Authority—an entity that provides support services to people with addictions, developmental disabilities, and/or mental illness—along Pride Drive. And this type of connection is much safer for an area that lacks sidewalks, bike paths, or even shoulders on the roadways and has deep drainage ditches, which all make transit dangerous unless operating a vehicle.

Improving Transit Opportunities

In the Hammond area, local government agencies have worked with nonprofit organizations, educational facilities, and businesses to create the TangiConnect workforce development program—a program that provides soft skills development and job placement services while also connecting candidates with childcare, healthcare, and transportation providers. What TangiConnect has learned from its job candidates in training and the employers for whom they wish to work is that transportation is one of the biggest obstacles in getting to work on time or at all, and employers report that the number one reason employees lose jobs in the Hammond area is not poor job performance, but because they fail to show up to work. The University Extension will ease some of the transportation concerns because of its complete streets design that will enable alternative modes of travel—by transit, bicycle, or foot. The extension connects neighborhoods that lack transportation access. They are more than half a mile away from a transit stop, they have no access to a vehicle, and they lack sidewalks and bicycle paths.

Figure 7: This rider uses the bus to shop at the Piggly Wiggly grocery at the intersection of US 190 and Pride Drive. He does not own a vehicle.

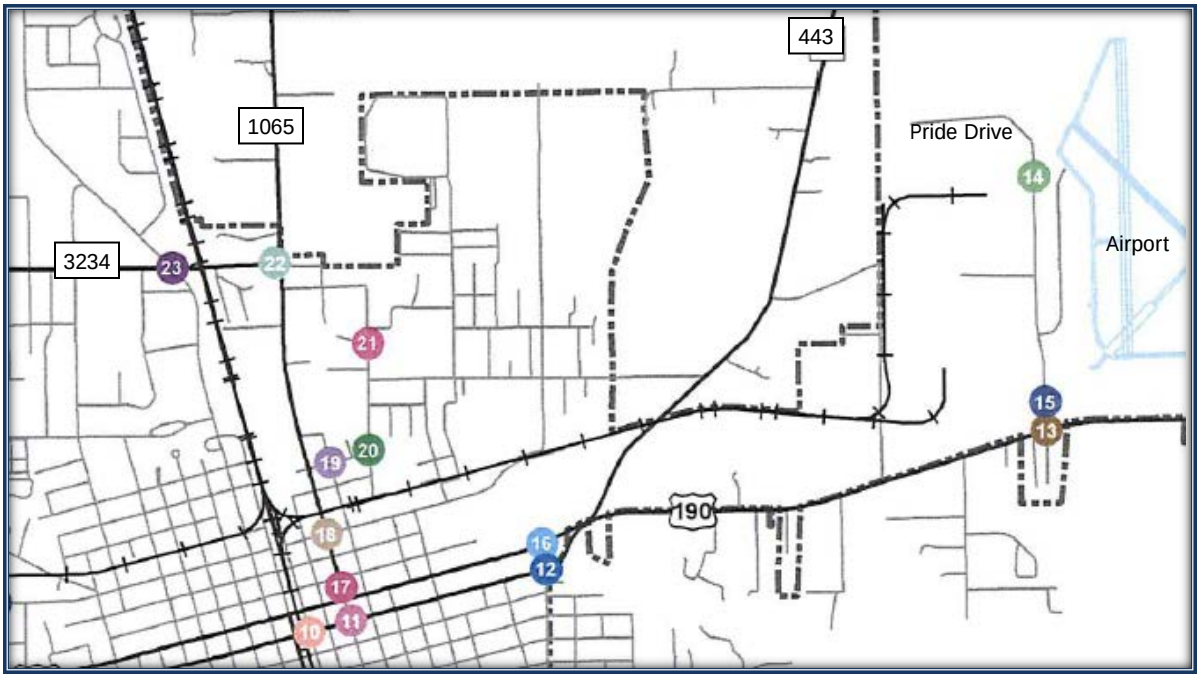


Figure 8: Bus Route Map showing transit stops on the east side of Hammond

Hammond is fortunate to have a fixed-route bus system operated as a partnership between the Tangipahoa Voluntary Council on Aging and the City of Hammond. The 50-cent fare is affordable, and the stops are conveniently located throughout most of the area (see entire route map on TIGER website). However, the distance between transit stops #21 and 22 (where University Ave (LA 3234) terminates at Cherry St (LA 1065) from the neighborhoods to the east makes the transit system unusable to those residents trying to access centers of education and employment. Also notice that the route would take nearly an hour for someone starting at transit stop #22 and needing to go to one of the distribution centers, Northshore Technical, or the Florida Parishes Human Services Authority located at transit stops #13-15. Providing the University Extension means that more convenient transit stops can be added.

Furthermore, the Southeastern transit route, which currently services seven stops throughout the campus area with four Lion Traxx busses, could be extended so that one bus runs just along the corridor—from Southeastern to the distribution hubs to Northshore Technical—improving accessibility. The route already includes a shopping shuttle once a week that brings Southeastern students to the Hammond Square Mall. Adding a bus dedicated to the University corridor would not only provide convenience for dual-enrolled students at Southeastern and Northshore Technical, but it would increase internship and job opportunities for students, especially those in industrial technology and business management studying the supply chains, logistics, and technology used in the distribution centers.

The outputs for measuring the improvement to quality of life will be shown through resident and commuter surveys, greater numbers of pedestrians and bicyclists in the area, and increased rider participation in the Southeastern and Tangipahoa transit services.

Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability is an underlying factor throughout project development and when estimating its long-term impact. The University Extension can uphold the goals outlined in the South Tangipahoa TIP for developing a transportation system that encourages travel behavior, energy consumption, and land use decisions that contribute to environmental stability.

Environmental Scoping & Mitigating Loss with New Greenspaces

Because the project will be planned with environmental scoping at the very beginning of the process and continued throughout the planning phases with extensive public meetings, the alternative that is the most environmentally beneficial will be implemented. Wetland mitigation is expected to be a part of the process; however, pocket parks and the installation of new vegetation throughout the corridor can offset this loss, and even perhaps, create beautiful natural spaces for people in the neighborhood that currently have no access to nearby parks. In fact, in the Master Plan, Cate Square Park is offered as a good model for pocket parks and is a strategy listed when designing the major corridors in the Hammond area.

Figure 9: Bioswale planted along Thomas Street, a major corridor in Hammond.

Green Infrastructure & Reducing VMT

Green infrastructure, including canopy trees and vegetative stormwater mitigation practices are goals to achieve using the complete streets model, and they align with the environmental concepts outlined in the Master Plan and the landscaping section of the Unified Development Code. Bioswales next to sidewalks will be integrated into the corridor plan, enabling the filtering and collection of stormwater to mitigate pollution and flooding. The plan also encourages Hammond, in assessing transportation infrastructure and its effectiveness, to add vehicle miles traveled to its evaluation criteria (e.g. connectedness, traffic flow, road and lane widths, presence and impact of on-street parking, pedestrian and/or bike accommodations, block size), as the city, and the larger area that it serves, could only benefit from strategies to reduce vehicle miles travelled (VMT) and provide more resilient, convenient, and cleaner transportation. Certainly, the extension of University Avenue would help to reduce VMT by creating a direct route between I-55 and the Hammond airport, by designing the corridor with bike paths, and by offering more transit stops and a dedicated shuttle transporting students and workers throughout the corridor to encourage less use single-occupant vehicle (SOV) travel.

The outputs measuring the success of the project's environmental sustainability will be the creation of an Environmental Impact Statement that is widely accepted and that avoids altogether

or at least mitigates all environmental degradation possible, the installation of green infrastructure, and the reduction of VMT and SOV.

State of Good Repair

The goal articulated for the State of Good Repair in the South Tangipahoa TIP is to strike a balance between new construction, which requires greater investment, and more efficient use of the existing system—recognizing that opportunities and obstacles for each are often linked. The University Extension will improve the overall transportation system because it completes the network and lessens the strain on US 190. It is a corridor designed to improve the efficiency of the system as it splits the east-west traffic, offering two major corridors instead of one. The investment is sound because balances the system and includes targeted improvements—such as roundabouts at three highway intersections, turning lanes, and the widening of US 190—at critical points throughout the eastern portion of the system.

If designed according to the complete streets model as proposed, the new corridor will be a more sustainable one with street trees and vegetation for stormwater management and with traffic calming aspects that reduce the likelihood of crashes and city property damage (i.e., vehicles running into street lights and signs).

Innovation

Hammond has often been the pilot testing ground for innovative transportation projects. This fall, Hammond will begin construction to install three roundabouts, each with two lanes, in a row—one roundabout on the north side of I-12, one on the south side of I-12, and one less than a mile south of I-12 at the Club Deluxe intersection. This is the first of

Figure 10: Artist rendering of a two-lane, greenscaped roundabout with public art from the Hammond Comprehensive Master Plan

A second example of an innovative project is the air traffic control tower under construction and set to open in September 2014. The tower has been funded through Federal Aviation Administration, State Capital Outlay funds, and local funds from the sale of land. The Louisiana Army National Guard is purchasing equipment for the tower and will staff it with technicians.

This innovative financing and combination of project partners shows that Hammond will do what it takes to complete the project. The University Extension shows similar promise with its innovative design incorporating roundabout intersections and greenscaped boulevards, to ensure pedestrians are provided as much safe passage as truck drivers, and with the public and private partners that have been consulted, and will continue to be consulted, during the planning and implementation phases.

Partnership

The planning of the University Extension Corridor has been and will remain a strong partnership of different agencies, entities, and people as demonstrated by the cooperation in planning efforts and by the letters of support for the project (see TIGER website). The Major Street Plan, the Hammond Comprehensive Master Plan and Unified Development Code process, formation of the South Tangipahoa MPO, and the TIP and MTP creation all involved public meetings and collaboration among residents, political leaders, educational facilities, economic development entities, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, the Regional Planning Commission, the airport entities (Louisiana Army National Guard and U.S. Customs – New Orleans Marine and Air Branch), the Tangipahoa Voluntary Council on Aging, businesses, developers, first responders, and nonprofit organizations (especially those focused in housing and workforce development). The Hammond UA has become extremely adept at organizing partners, facilitating collaboration, and ensuring that everyone can participate in the decision-making process.

Specifically, the University Extension project will rely on a project steering committee comprised of representatives from local neighborhoods, local government, the Council on Aging (transit service provider), Louisiana DOTD, Hammond Area Economic Industrial Development District, Encore Development, 2-3 Pride Drive business owners, Southeastern Louisiana University, Northshore Technical Community College, Florida Parishes Human Services Authority, the Hammond Tree Foundation, and the Regional Planning Commission.

PROJECT READINESS

The project is ready for implementation according to the task schedule on the next page. The combination of public outreach and environmental scoping will streamline the overall process for a 20-month timeline. All funds will be expended, not just obligated, by June 30, 2016.

The potential risks involved with this project are related to the environmental review process. If the alternatives evaluated require additional field studies or if endangered species, extensive wetland mitigation, or historic artifacts are located, then the EIS process may take longer and be more costly than expected. The City of Hammond is prepared to secure additional funding, if needed, to complete the project.

Project Schedule

PM = Number of Public Meetings Related to Task

Month	PM	Task
Prior to Grant Contract Period		Establish Project Steering Committee
1-2		Procure a Consultant Team through a Request for Proposals
3-6	1	Develop a Public Participation Plan
3-6	2	Publish Notice of Intent and Begin Scoping Process with Public and with Federal, State, and Local Agencies to Determine Environmental Impacts
3-4	2	Conduct Project Kick-Off for Transportation Plan – Identify Goals and Objectives
4-10	3	Collect and Synthesize Data and Existing Plans & Perform Gap Analysis
7-9		Develop Purpose, Need, Alternatives, and Criteria for EIS
10-14		Collect and Analyze Environmental Data (including GIS work)
10-13		Perform Transportation System (including Travel and Land Use Forecasting) and Socioeconomic Impact Analyses
13-14	2	Begin Discussions of an Overlay District or Traditional Neighborhood District for the Corridor
13-14		Develop Visual Conceptions of the Corridor and Proposed Alignments
14	3	Conduct Public Meetings to Present Findings and Conceptions
14-16	2	Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Prepare Supporting Documentation/Visuals, and Present at Public Hearings
16-17		Refine Preferred Alignment and Revise Draft EIS
17-18	1	Prepare Final Environmental Impact Study
14-15	1	Finalize the Overlay District or TND
15-17		Create Economic Incentive Packages for the Corridor
15-17		Craft a Funding Strategy for Major Investments in the Corridor
18-20		Prepare and Release the Environmental Record of Decision
18-20		Prepare Final Report with Implementation Strategies and Milestones
20	2	Present Final Report and Begin Implementing Strategies

OTHER APPROVALS / REVIEWS

As indicated throughout the narrative, the University Extension project is incorporated in the South Tangipahoa TIP, has been evaluated and scoped by the Regional Planning Commission that provides technical assistance to the South Tangipahoa MPO, has been evaluated by the Louisiana DOTD (to such a degree that they commissioned an initial Stage 0 feasibility study), and is one of the seven high priority Intermodal projects listed in the DOTD Statewide Transportation Plan. TIGER funds will be used to complete the Environmental Impact Statement and NEPA process. No additional local, state, or federal approvals are required for the planning activities proposed.

Visit the **City of Hammond's TIGER website** for quick links to all the maps, reports, and plans cited in this application.