

**Proposed Connector between Airline Highway (US 61) and Interstate 10
in St. John the Baptist Parish**
State Project No. 70-48-0101
Federal Aid No. HP-TO21(517)
RPC Contract No. PSLC-STJ

October 5, 2009

INITIAL BUILD ALTERNATIVES LIST

The initial build alternatives list comprises alternatives derived both from the earlier (2004) *Environmental Assessment* as well as several new alternatives which were suggested during the Scoping Process. The previously developed alternatives were presented and discussed at the Agency Scoping Meeting on August 4th, 2009 and the Public Scoping Meeting on August 5th.

**ALTERNATIVES RECOMMENDED FOR EVALUATION FROM 2004
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA):**

AP-2 - This alternative extends from US 61 almost due north to I-10. At US 61, its alignment would connect just east of the Marathon Oil facility.

AP-7 - This alternative extends almost due north from US 61 to I-10 and is located just east of the St. John Airport. At US 61, its alignment would connect to West 19th Street.

AP-6 - This alternative extends north from US 61 to I-10 adjacent to Regala Park. Just north of US 61, its alignment would connect to Rosenwald Street. The alternative would involve the incorporate existing Rosenwald Street with some physical improvements.

AP-6B - This alternative extends north from US 61 to I-10. At US 61, its alignment would connect to LA 637 (W. 10th Street), which extends south to the Port of South Louisiana

**PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES FROM 2004 ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT BEING REEVALUATED:**

EIS-1 - This alternative extends from US 61 just west of the St. John Airport north to I-10. This alternative is on a new roadway alignment and does not connect to any existing road on the south side of US 61.

EIS-2 - This alternative extends north from US 61 to I-10, more-or-less following the route of the Hope Canal. At US 61, its alignment would connect to LA Hwy 54.

EIS-3 - This alternative extends north from US 61 to I-10 along the east side of the Reserve Relief Canal. At US 61, its alignment would connect to Homewood Place.

EIS-4 and EIS-5 - These alternatives extends from US 61 north to LA 3188 (Belle Terre Boulevard) just south of that roadway's interchange with I-10. Both routes would begin at US 61 as a widening and extension of Rosenwald Street. EIS-4 would gradually curve to the east over the wetland areas, while EIS-5 places a 90 degree turn to the east at the rear of the agricultural fields, and does not enter wetland areas until the vicinity of the Godchaux Canal. Both alternatives proceed eastward and northeastward, sharing the same alignment on a northwesterly heading near the northern edge of developed areas until intersecting with Belle Terre Boulevard about ½ mile from I-10.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVES FROM SCOPING PROCESS:

P-1 - This alternative extends north from US 61 to LA 3188 (Belle Terre Boulevard) just south of that roadway's interchange with I-10. The alternative begins as an extension of LA 3179 (E. 22nd Street) at US 61, and proceeds north over the wetland areas, gradually curving to the northwest. It shares the same alignment as EIS-4 and 5 near the northern edge of developed areas eventually intersecting with Belle Terre Boulevard about ½ mile from I-10.

P-2 - This alternative is optional extension of P-1, which would begin at US 61 in the vicinity of the Hope Canal and LA 54, extends north and east through the wetland areas north of the developed lands of St. John Parish, eventually linking to alternative P-1

P-3 - This alternative was suggested as an improvement to the intersection area of US 51, I-55 and I-10. The proponent noted that in hurricane and storm surge situations, the access to I-10 and I-55 via US-51 is often flooded and unavailable. Similarly, as there is no direct connection between eastbound I-10 and northbound I-55; nor is there a direct connection between southbound I-55 and westbound I-10, those movements are also unavailable. Several improvements to this interchange will be explored under this alternative to improve interstate access. These may include elevated ramps or connections between the three roadways (I-10, US 51 and I-55).

Improvements to US 61 - During the Scoping process it was noted that one of the problems with traffic congestion along US 61 is the lack of acceleration lanes (or the lack of sufficiently *long* acceleration lanes) for trucks turning right (east) off of side roads or highways. These trucks must immediately enter the right lane of eastbound US 61, as they take longer to accelerate, slow down the traffic flow

in that lane. It was noted that there are currently three merge lanes near the Marathon Oil facility that are being extended in order to allow large trucks more space to get up to speed without holding up traffic. Additionally, it was noted that there are also five intersections noted for improvements along US 61: New Highway 51 at US 61; Main Street (Old 51) at US 61; Hemlock Street (LA 3224) at US 61; Belle Terre (LA 3188) at US 61; and the entrance to Marathon (which, in addition to merge lanes earlier mentioned, will be signalized). It was suggested that similar improvements along US 61 at other locations should also be considered as an initial alternative.