

**REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Westbank Transportation Road and Rail**  
**Sub-area Analysis**  
**Jefferson Parish**  
**Stage 0 Feasibility Study**  
**(Task A-3.21JP; FY 21 UPWP)**

**INTRODUCTION**

Jefferson Parish is evaluating industrial redevelopment and expansion opportunities on the West Bank of the Mississippi River by internally inventorying available land and industrial zoning in the Avondale, Bridge City and Nine Mile Point area near the Huey P Long Bridge. This work pursues continued economic development for Jefferson Parish along the West Bank riverfront and corresponding employment opportunities for the parish and the region. In support of a robust evaluation, the RPC, in partnership with Jefferson Parish and JEDCO, will evaluate transportation limitations and opportunities within the study area for existing businesses and any potential impact of future industrial expansion on traffic growth on existing roadway infrastructure in downriver Jefferson Parish.

The project will consist of stakeholder outreach, transportation planning, infrastructure assessments, and cost estimates to develop a conceptual plan that has the support of the public, stakeholders, and agencies with interests in the study area. Data collected and analyzed during the study will include, but not be limited to:

- Land Use characteristics for areas of Industrial Development, primarily along the Mississippi Riverfront in the study area
- Potential multi-modal terminal access and products distribution facilities
- Public Infrastructure Utilities and Servitudes, including drainage, water and sewerage infrastructure
- Roadway Average Daily Traffic and vehicle classification counts and forecasts using differing methodologies
- Turning Movement Counts at selected intersections as identified by stakeholders, the parish and RPC.
- Trip Generation characteristics of disparate land uses and activity generators, both existing and forecast, in the study area

**PURPOSE AND NEED:**

The purpose of the study is to analyze proposed and forecast industrial developments on the west bank of Jefferson Parish in support of a larger planning effort that includes multi-modal transportation, land use, utility and other infrastructure evaluations, and to identify strategic transportation investments that will complement and enhance planned development in the area as described below.

The need for the study was derived by constituent and business community concerns to parish leadership related to land use, economic development, and redevelopment changes occurring or forecast to occur in the near term on the westbank of Jefferson Parish that could impact the area's transportation network, land use, and utilities if allowed to occur without appropriate management, oversight and planning.

## **STUDY AREA:**

The geographic parameters of the study area are as follow:

Mississippi River to the north

US 90B/Westbank Expressway to the South

Avondale Garden Road to the West

LA 18 (Louisiana St. Westwego) to the East

Up to three locations targeted for economic redevelopment selected by PMC within the study area

## **TASK 1: PROJECT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Consultant will assist the RPC in establishing and supporting the Project Management Committee (PMC) to oversee the work in progress, review inventory findings, and assist in the development of recommended transportation improvements (highway, rail, bike/ped and related landscaping) for inclusion in the conceptual design plan. Land use and transportation subcommittees may be established to review these areas.

The PMC will include representatives from the Westbank Task Force as constituted by JEDCO, Jefferson Parish Council Districts 2 and 3, and other organizations as deemed appropriate. The Consultant will provide all necessary agendas, handouts and exhibits in advance of the PMC's meetings for RPC review and approval and prepare summary minutes of the meetings. The PMC will meet four times during the course of the study effort: at the kick-off meeting, to review data inventory findings, to discuss alternative concepts, and to review project costs and phasing recommendations.

The Consultant will assist the RPC by attending meetings with elected officials and other local leaders and organizations in the area to discuss the project's purpose and need and project-related opportunities and concerns as necessary. The Consultant will receive approval from RPC prior to initiating these contacts and prepare summary meeting minutes for review and discussion with the PMC. It is anticipated that project findings may reveal the need for further engineering analysis through LADOTD and/or RPC prior to consideration for advancement into project implementation.

Task 1 Deliverable: Development of PMC and requisite meeting agendas, summary meeting minutes of same in technical memorandum format.

## **TASK 2: PROJECT TIMELINE & KICK-OFF MEETING**

The Consultant will prepare a draft project schedule in Gantt chart format including major milestones (including, at a minimum: project initiation and conclusion dates, tasks and subtasks as per this scope, technical meetings, site visits, draft submittal and final submittal dates). The timeline will be submitted at a project kick-off meeting that will include: the consultant team, the Project Management Committee, and other stakeholders as needed. The project kick-off meeting will take place within two (2) weeks of the Notice to Proceed.

Task 2 Deliverable: Project Schedule in GANTT chart format, including major milestones and identification of PMC decision points

## **TASK 3: SITE INVESTIGATION AND DATA COLLECTION**

### ***3A: DATA COLLECTION***

A comprehensive site investigation and data collection effort will be made at study area intersections and roadways to allow an accurate assessment of the traffic and physical characteristics of the site. The consultant will compile other land use, utility, transportation, and crash data for the area. This will include traffic counts from all available sources and for all modes; adjacent land uses (from Jefferson Parish); posted/actual speeds; crash data (to be provided by RPC); and forecast volumes on roadways in the study area for traffic (to be provided by RPC).

### *Roadway Volumes and Vehicle Classification*

#### Roadways for Analysis Inventory:

- 1) Ground level US 90B (btw Louisiana St. and US 90)
- 2) US 90 (btw US 90B and Lapalco)
- 3) US 90 (btw Lapalco and Avondale Garden Rd.)
- 4) LA 18 (btw US 90 to LA 541 River Road)
- 5) LA 18 River Road (btw LA 541 River Rd. and Avondale Garden Road)
- 6) LA 541 (btw Louisiana St. to Seven Oaks Rd)
- 7) LA 541 (btw Seven Oaks Rd to Oak Dr)
- 8) LA 541 (btw Oak Dr to Bridge City Avenue).
- 9) LA 541 (btw Bridge City Avenue to LA 18)
- 10) Louisiana St. (btw LA 18 4<sup>th</sup> Street to LA 541 -River Rd)
- 11) Louisiana St. (btw US 90B and 4<sup>th</sup> Street)
- 12) Bridge City Avenue (btw US 90 to LA 541)
- 13) LA 18 Seven Oak Between US 90 and LA 541)
- 14) Nine Mile Point Rd. (btw US 90B to W. Nine Mile Point Rd)
- 15) Nine Mile Point Rd. (btw W. Nine Mile Point Rd to LA 18-Seven Oaks Rd)
- 16) W. Nine Mile Point Rd (btw US 90 to Nine Mile Point Rd.)
- 17) Avondale Garden Rd (btw LA 18- River Rd to US 90)

Counts will be undertaken during three consecutive, non-holiday weekdays and averaged to a single 24 hour period. Vehicle classifications using FHWA's 13 category methodology will be used. Consultant will use the data collected to discern the weekday AM and PM peak periods. Consultant will prepare a memo for RPC review that documents the count locations, data collected, vehicle classifications.

#### *Turning Movement Counts:*

Consultant will undertake AM (7-9A) and PM (4-7P) peak hour turning movement counts in the study area, at the following intersections.

LA 18 (4<sup>th</sup> Street) at Louisiana St. Westwego  
LA 18 at US 90 (HP Long Bridge)  
US 90 Off ramps at Bridge City Avenue  
Seven Oaks Blvd at Nine Mile Point Road  
W. Nine Mile Point Road at Nine Mile Point Road

LA 18 at Avondale Garden River Rd.

Using the above collected data, existing Levels of Service for each intersection will be determined using latest HCM criteria.

#### *Rail Analysis*

Working with the PMC and local stakeholders, the Consultant will examine rail access connectivity needs and opportunities for improved site access into and out of the Avondale and Nine Mile Point study area, including conceptual opportunities for future inter-modal terminal development, identifying riverside cargo transfer areas, needed highway and rail access points, internal circulation and transportation-related on-site cargo storage areas and distribution center facilities, including apparent rights-of-way within the study area.

Daily rail traffic movements will also be collected from existing sources including the number of trains, train lengths and corresponding average roadway traffic stop times at rail/highway crossings within the study area by West Bank carriers (Union Pacific UP, Burlington Northern Santa Fe BNSF and New Orleans Gulf Coast Railroad (NOGC) and New Orleans Public Belt Railroad (NOPB).

The Westwego-Gretna rail/roadway confluence along 4<sup>th</sup> street will be described and any planned investment by the NOGC Railroad in the study area through the recent CRISI grant award will be noted. In addition, rail crossing safety work planned or in progress in the study area by Jefferson Parish or DOTD will be described. Remaining gaps in safety measures will be evaluated and recommendations made.

#### *Land Use*

Consultant will coordinate with the Jefferson Parish Planning Department to obtain relevant land use and zoning data. Available data will be shown as shape files and include the following: 1) existing land use parcels with lot lines; 2) existing zoning parcel data; and 3) future land use map file(s). Maps legends will display land use categories/classifications with written descriptions obtained from the Planning Department. The Consultant will need to calculate approximate land use acreage by category for Trip Generation purposes.

#### *Utility Information*

Utility information (drainage, water, sewer, electrical, gas and communication) as provided by Jefferson Parish in a geospatial database format that will be used by the Consultant in coordination with Jefferson Parish's Department of Public Works to identify existing and/or planned utility extensions to serve the study area, including potential conflicts with proposed changes to the transportation network as appropriate.

### ***3B. REVIEW OF EXISTING PLANS***

The Consultant shall review and make use of the relevant land use and economic development studies found on Jefferson Parish's website, specifically, *Envision Jefferson 2040 (November, 2019)* which is the Parish's comprehensive plan and *Jefferson EDGE 2020 (July, 2009)* which is currently being updated by JEDCO and is the Parish's long-term economic strategic plan. The consultant will consult with the Jefferson Parish Planning Department and JEDCO regarding any other reports or planning studies taking place within the study area.

Using these data, consultant will develop a trip generation forecast for various roadways in the study area in subsequent tasks. Current West Bank projects in the RPC Transportation Improvement Program and Long-Range Plan will be accounted for in the effort.

**Deliverable: Task 3**

A technical memorandum detailing and documenting existing traffic conditions for roadway and rail modes in the study area that will be based upon current, observed traffic data and counts. Existing land use and utility information will be compiled and documented for the study area.

**TASK 4 – SCENARIO PLANNING AND CONCEPT DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

Task 4A: Based on data collection from Task 3, consultant will coordinate with the PMC to undertake 2 land use, utility and surface transportation scenarios that incorporates the development of currently undeveloped areas and the redevelopment of currently vacant or underutilized properties as identified by the Parish and JEDCO. The planning horizon for this effort will be ten years. Trip generation estimates will be developed for each, particularly for specific sites identified by the PMC, and assignments of estimated volumes assigned to the transportation (roadway and rail) network. Consultant will coordinate with RPC for study area background growth rates. Forecasts of volumes (i.e. number of trains) from railroads and stakeholders in the area will be discerned and documented for inclusion in the scenario planning work effort.

Consultant will submit the planning scenarios to the PMC for review and discussion. Based on PMC approval, consultant will develop feasible options that foster and support economic growth and development; improve/enhance operational efficiency and safety for all modes; and eliminate conflicts among modes where opportunities exist to do so. This will include but not be limited to examining the feasibility of implementing various access management techniques at select locations; three-laning all or part of the corridor; turn lanes, roundabouts, minor roadway widening; rail spurs or connections to facilitate site access and development; and other potential capacity improvements where warranted. This analysis shall address safety accommodations of new rail crossings and potential conflicts at at-grade crossings. Consideration shall be given to pedestrian access and complete streets in improved corridors with corresponding conceptual layouts for alternatives promulgated.

Task 4B: The consultant will make recommendations based on technical findings about how to manage roadway and rail traffic growth over time. Recommendations should be proffered for lower cost solutions such as Transportation System Management TSM techniques, signalization modifications and access management to new or developing industrial sites or facilities, including already committed project improvements through the Jefferson Parish Local Bond Program and RPC TIP and MTP projects. The consultant will identify long term problem areas and suggest future study parameters where potential large-scale problems are identified. These recommendations will be forwarded to PMC for review. Pending PMC concurrence and/ or modification, consultant will provide an opinion of probable cost.

Deliverable: Task 4: Submittal of technical memorandum for recommended transportation improvements based upon two land use and supporting transportation development scenarios in the study area. Specific Improvements in the corridor, including concept level cost estimates (opinions of probable cost) and a list of required permits shall be included. The consultant will work with Jefferson Parish Public Works to discern utility costs related to proposed transportation improvements.

## **TASK 5 - SUBMIT DRAFT REPORT**

The consultant will distribute the draft report with proposed design concepts (ten copies) to the PMC membership and call a final review meeting, if necessary. An electronic version of the draft plan shall also be provided in Microsoft Word format. The draft plan will include cost estimates and quantities with an opinion of probable costs for the PMC recommended land use and transportation development scenario. The plan will identify future phased improvements based on the study's ten-year time horizon that could be advanced into engineering design, including other long-term recommendations which may require additional study and/or follow-on analysis.

**Task 5 Deliverable:** Distribution of Draft report to PMC members, coordination through RPC PM

## **TASK 6 – SUBMIT FINAL STAGE “0” STUDY**

Consultant shall finalize alternatives and prepare/submit the Stage 0 Feasibility Study, documenting the information and analysis described above.

All studied alternative(s) will be described in the Stage 0 Report.

The Stage 0 Report will include completed Stage 0 checklists (ref. LA DOTD Program Development and Project Delivery System Manual, Chapter 4: Stage 0 Standard Operating Procedure, Checklist for Stage 0-Preliminary Scope and Budget Worksheet, and Stage 0 Environmental Checklist) for a single alternative to be prepared at the discretion of RPC.

Ten printed copies of the report and 5 PDF and an editable Microsoft Word version, as well as digital versions of all maps and visualizations, saved on three USB drives.

Deliverables will be submitted by the Consultant to the RPC for distribution. All analysis work products and electronic files (including` SYNCHRO files) will be submitted to the RPC. All data collected as part of this effort will be provided to the RPC in formats designated by RPC staff. Submittals accomplished in CAD and/or \*.shp file format will be consistent w/ RPC standards.

The Consultant will prepare overall visualizations and “meeting-ready” graphics of the proposed improvements to be used in outreach efforts conducted by the Parish at its discretion to help the community understand the design intent by using before and after graphics in plan-view for the corridor and key destinations. The Consultant will be responsible for the development of estimated quantities and costs for proposed improvements.

**Budget:** \$105,000

**Timeline:** 8 months