

## What Is the Purpose and Need for this project?

US 84 is part of the El Camino corridor, a historic route across the southern United States from the U.S. border with Mexico near El Paso, Texas to the U.S. Atlantic coast near Brunswick, Georgia that was used as a major route by Spanish settlers. US 84 passes through the communities of Trout, Good Pine, Midway and the Town of Jena.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the project is to improve mobility throughout the corridor in order to increase the capacity of the roadway, promote local traffic circulation, and improve the quality of life of the people in the community. To accomplish these purposes, the project proposed to widen the roadway and upgrade the facility in accordance with current design criteria.

### NEED

The following items contribute to the purpose and need for the proposed widening of US 84 from Hwy 772 to east of Hair Creek Bridge:

**System Linkage** –The El Camino Corridor has been identified by the five state El Camino East-West Corridor Commission for upgrade to a four lane facility. A study prepared in June 2002 by LADOTD addressed the importance of the corridor and promoted the upgrading of the route to present design standards to meet growth demands, improve safety and encourage economic development in communities along the corridor. This portion of LA-US 84 is a vital link in the corridor.

**Safety** – The proposed improvements will correct existing safety hazards at certain locations along the project corridor and provide opportunities for non-motorized transportation:

*Improve Access Management.* There are three abnormal crash locations along the project corridor. Two areas along the US 84 project corridor, east and west of downtown Jena, have a high rate of rear end crashes possibly due to several access points along the roadway and vehicles making left turns into side streets. The

proposed improvements will minimize these access points by employing access management principles along the corridor.

*Enhance non-motorized transportation.* There are several churches, schools and community land uses where non-motorized transportation may be utilized. The proposed improvements would accommodate all users by providing non-motorized transportation opportunities.

**Social Demands or Economic Development** – The proposed improvements will benefit the four communities located along the project corridor: Trout, Pine, Midway and the Town of Jena. The project area is 28 percent minority and 24 percent low income according to the EPA Environmental Justice toolkit. Investment along this corridor would improve the quality of life in this distressed area.

**Town of Jena Comprehensive Master Plan, “Jena Vision”** – The Town of Jena adopted a Comprehensive Master Plan for the Town of Jena and surrounding communities in January 2011. The community prioritized expanding US 84 in a context sensitive manner and expressed a need for expanding transportation choices.

**Accommodate Population Growth and Changing Land Use** – According to comments received from the Kisatchie-Delta Regional Planning & Development District, Inc., “the proposed project is compatible with local needs and benefits regional use; the proposed project is located in a distressed area and investment by the funding agency is appropriate and necessary to assist the quality of life and community and economic development; the proposed project is congruent with the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and considerate of both environmental and socioeconomic needs, and this project would substantially benefit the region by improving access to a Scenic Byway traversing the region.” (Heather Smoak Urena, Executive Director, July 8, 2010)

Detailed information relative to the project is available in the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA). This document is available for review and/or purchase at the Department’s District 58 office, located at 6217 Hwy 15, Chase, LA. The Draft EA is available for review at the Federal Highway Administration Division Office at 5304 Flanders Drive, Suite A, Baton Rouge, LA, and at the DOTD Environmental Section Office, 1201 Capitol Access Road, Room 504D, Baton Rouge, LA. The Draft EA is also available for review at the following: LaSalle Parish Library – Olla Branch, 1449 Blake Street, Olla, LA; LaSalle Parish Library – Jena Branch, 3108 North First Street, Jena, LA; and Jena Town Hall, 2908 East Oak Street, Jena, LA. The Draft EA can also be accessed online at the DOTD’s website at: [http://wwwsp.dotd.la.gov/Inside\\_LaDOTD/Divisions/Engineering/Environmental/Pages/default.aspx](http://wwwsp.dotd.la.gov/Inside_LaDOTD/Divisions/Engineering/Environmental/Pages/default.aspx). Click on the “H.000758.2 US 84 Widening” folder under the “Environmental” heading.

### For Information, please contact:

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## Widening of US 84 from Hwy 772 to Just East of Hair Creek Bridge Environmental Assessment (EA)

# PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, March 26, 2014  
4:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Jena Town Hall  
2908 East Oak Street  
Jena, LA 71342

State Project No. H.000758.2  
Federal Project No. DE-3010(503)  
LaSalle Parish, Louisiana

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development is proposing to improve mobility and transportation efficiency along US 84 from Highway 772 to just east of Hair Creek Bridge in LaSalle Parish, Louisiana.

### What Is the Purpose of this Public Hearing?

The purpose of this public hearing is to seek input from individuals and community organizations on issues and concerns related to the potential impacts associated with the proposed widening of US 84 and to receive comments on the proposed alternatives.

Tonight’s meeting is an informal open-house format, which includes stations to:

1. SIGN IN and verify your contact information;
2. view the PROJECT PRESENTATION;
3. view EXHIBITS on the project study area and alternatives;
4. receive information regarding ROW/RELOCATION ASSISTANCE; and
5. provide public COMMENT on Alternatives 1, 2A, 2B and 4. Alternative 4 is the preferred alternative.

This open forum will allow the public time to review project exhibits and talk informally with representatives from the project team.

Comment forms are provided and can be mailed or emailed to the appropriate contact information shown on the comment form, or can be filled out and left with Team representatives.



### PROJECT SCHEDULE:

- Complete environmental inventory
- Develop preferred alternative
- Prepare DRAFT Environmental Assessment (EA) Report
- Distribute DRAFT EA Report for public comments
- Hold Public Hearing – TONIGHT
- Identify selected alternative – (Spring 2014)
- Prepare FINAL EA Report – (Spring 2014)
- Issue Decision – (Spring/Summer 2014)

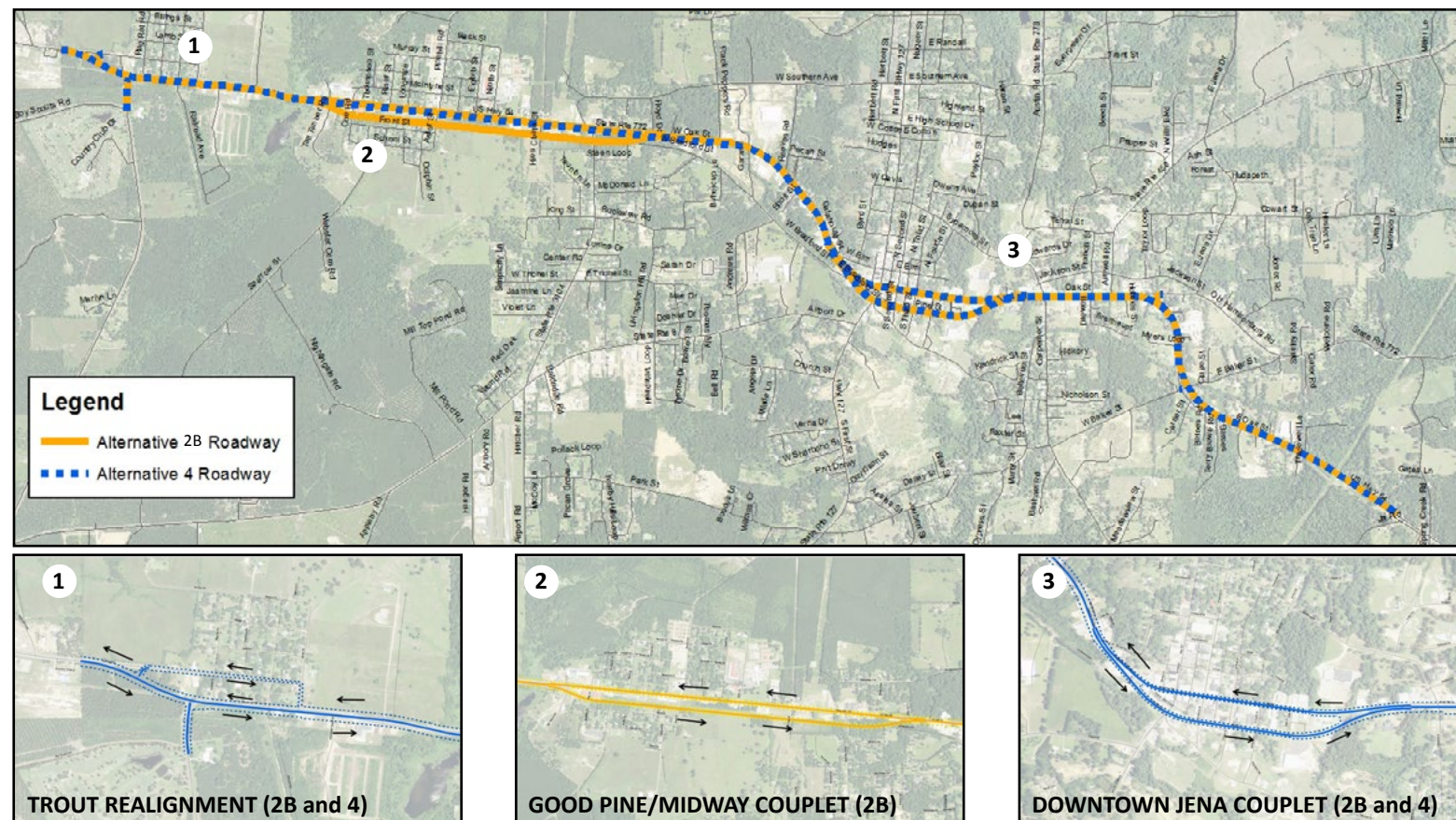


**ALTERNATIVES 2B AND 4**

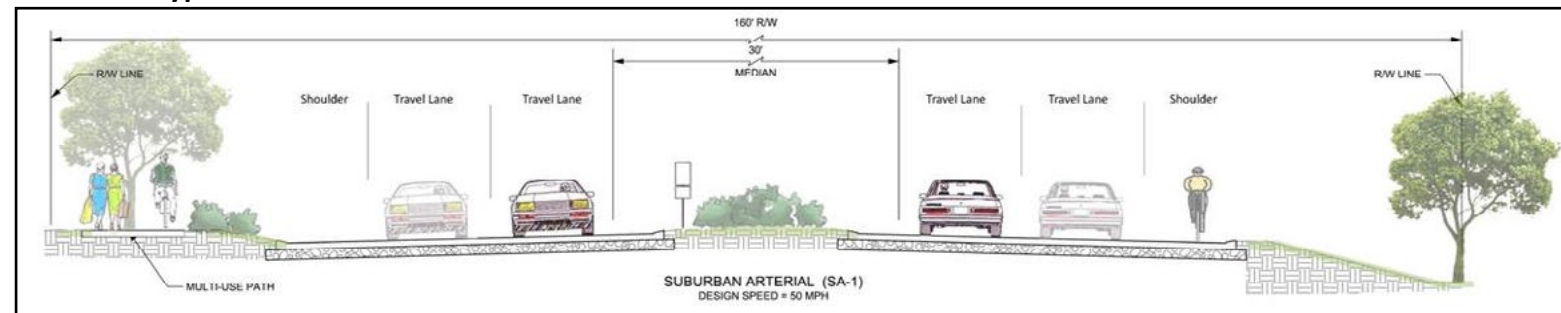
Following the Public Meeting on July 12, 2012, Alternatives 2B and 4 were identified as the preferred alternatives on which to conduct detailed field analyses. This was based on the impact data obtained during desktop evaluations for each alternative coupled with feedback received during the Public Meeting on alternative preferences. *Table 1: Alternatives Screening Matrix* outlines the impacts of each alternative.

Alternatives 2B and 4 are identical from the Town of Jena (approximately near Wal-Mart) to the eastern end of the project. The difference between the two alternatives is the two-way couplet in Alternative 2B through the Good Pine/Midway area (see *Figure 1: Alternatives 2b and 4*).

**FIGURE 1: Alternatives 2b and 4**



**FIGURE 2: Typical Section**



**PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

A majority of the impacts between Alternatives 2B and 4 are similar. The most defining difference is the potential impact of Alternative 2B to the proposed Good Pine Sawmill Historic District and Jena Cultural Center. Both alternatives meet the desired community request of keeping US 84 through downtown Jena. Both alternatives have relocation and frontage impacts; however, Alternative 4 has more business relocations and Alternative 2B has more business frontage impacts. Both alternatives could improve the streetscape and development opportunity, but the Good Pine couplet in Alternative 2B could limit development of the properties within the couplet and impact the local circulation for area residents.

Alternative 4 meets the established purpose and need of the project and addresses the concerns identified by the public; therefore, **Alternative 4 is recommended as the preferred alternative.**

**Table 1: Alternatives Screening Matrix**

Evaluation Measure	Units	No Build	1	2A	2B	4
<b>Potential Relocation Impacts</b>						
Residential Relocations	Each	0	34	25	24	24
Business Relocations	Each	0	63	18	43	57
Community Relocations	Each	0	0	1 <sup>a</sup>	1 <sup>a</sup>	0
Other Relocations	Each	0	1 <sup>b,c</sup>	1 <sup>c</sup>	1 <sup>c</sup>	1 <sup>c</sup>
<b>Potential Traffic Impacts During Construction</b>						
		NA	Low	Low	Med	Low
<b>Potential Frontage Impacts</b>						
Residential Properties	Each	0	7	9	4	4
Business Properties	Each	0	27	107	52	24
Community Properties	Each	0	4	1	2	1
Vacant/Unused Structures	Each	0	70	68	78	67
<b>Potential Underground Risk Sites</b>						
<b>Recognized Environmental Concerns (RECs)</b>						
Oil and Gas Wells	Each	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Natural Environment</b>						
Wetlands Filled	Acres	0	0.61 <sup>d</sup>	1.02 <sup>d</sup>	0.891 <sup>e</sup>	0.882 <sup>e</sup>
Scenic Streams	Each	0	0	0	0	0
Stream Crossings	Each	0	4	4	4	4
Other Waters Filled (RPW)	Acres	0	--	--	0.511 <sup>e</sup>	0.562 <sup>e</sup>
Other Waters Filled (Non-RPW)	Acres	0	--	--	0.427 <sup>e</sup>	0.598 <sup>e</sup>
Ponds Filled	Each	0	0	0	0	0
Sole Source Aquifer Impacts	Acres	0	0	0	0	0
Floodplain Encroachment	Acres	0	8.4	9.3	7.4	7.6
Protected Species	Each	0	0	0	0	0
Prime and Unique Farmland	Acres	0				
Coastal Res./Essential Fish Habitat	Each	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Utilities</b>						
LDOTD-listed Water Wells	Each	0	9 <sup>f</sup>	12 <sup>f</sup>	8 <sup>f</sup>	8 <sup>f</sup>
<b>Cultural Resources</b>						
Historic Properties recommended as eligible for NR Historic District	Each	0	9	12	2	0
Historic Properties recommended as NOT eligible NR Historic District	Each	0	26	21	15	12
Historic Properties recommended as eligible or listed on NR as individual	Each	0	0	2	2	0
Archaeological Sites Eligible for or Listed on NRHP	Each	0	0	0	0	0
Archaeological Sites Not Eligible for NRHP	Each	0	3	5	3	6
<b>Noise</b>						
Residential Receivers Design Year Noise Level > 66 dBA	Each	0	3	2	3	4
Residential Receivers Design Year Increase > 10 dBA	Each	0	2	6	6	0
Total # Impacted Receivers	Each	0	4 <sup>g</sup>	8	9	4
ROW Acquisition	Acres	N/A	63	67	47	55
ROW Costs <sup>h</sup>	\$Million	N/A	\$9.489	\$5.125	\$6.598	\$8.995
<b>Comparison of Probable Costs by Alternative</b>						
Construction Costs <sup>i</sup>	\$Million	N/A	\$53.157	\$51.004	\$50.051	\$54.728
Engineering (10%)	\$Million	N/A	\$5.316	\$5.100	\$5.005	\$5.473
ROW and Relocation Costs <sup>j</sup>	\$Million	N/A	\$17.139	\$11.121	\$12.368	\$15.556
<b>Project Totals</b>	<b>\$Million</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>\$75.611</b>	<b>\$67.225</b>	<b>\$67.424</b>	<b>\$75.757</b>

<sup>a</sup> Church, <sup>b</sup> Cell Tower, <sup>c</sup> 74 mini-warehouses, <sup>d</sup> Desktop Delineation, <sup>e</sup> Field Delineation, <sup>f</sup> Water well locations from SONRIS are approximate and may be located anywhere on the parcel they are attributed to. The locations identified are either within the proposed ROW or on the property adjacent to the proposed ROW, <sup>g</sup> There is one receiver (E030) that experiences both types of noise impacts (i.e., absolute sound level over 66 dBA and increase over 10 dBA), <sup>h</sup> The estimated ROW costs include costs for land acquisition, improvements and damages only, <sup>i</sup> Construction costs include 25% contingency, <sup>j</sup> Includes ROW costs from Table 8, relocation costs, and soft costs