2020

Re-Building University Avenue:

Gateway to Our Future

Lafayette
CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT

Acadiana Planning Commission

U.S. Department of Transportation

BETTER UTILIZING INVESTMENTS TO LEVERAGE DEVELOPMENT TRANSPORTATION DISCRETIONARY GRANTS PROGRAM

GRANT APPLICATION

Project Name: Re-BUILDing University Avenue: Gateway to our Future

Project Type: Road – Complete Streets

Funds Requested: $**23,298,964**

Contact:
Anne Famoso
Interim Director
Development and Planning Department
Lafayette Consolidated Government
P.O. Box 4017-C
Lafayette, LA 70502
337-291-8013
afamoso@LafayetteLA.gov

DUNS #: **07-505-4536**

Supporting Information: http://www.lafayettela.gov/ComprehensivePlan/Pages/BUILD.aspx

Narrative Contents

Appendices

Appendix A – Letters of Support

Appendix B – Benefit-Cost Analysis Memorandum

Appendix C – Benefit-Cost Analysis Calculations

Appendix D – University Avenue Corridor Study and LADOTD Stage 0

Appendix E – Figures Index

Appendix F – Tables Index

Appendix G – LaDOTD – Complete Streets Policy

Appendix H – LMPO – Complete Streets Policy

Appendix I – LCG – Complete Streets Policy

Appendix J – Acadiana MPO TIP Certification Letter

Appendix K – Full-Size Project Phasing

Appendix L – Acadiana Opportunity Zone Prospectus

Appendix M – City of Lafayette Opportunity Zone Prospectus

Appendix N – Brownfields Executive Summary

Appendix O – Cultural District Map & Approval Letter

Appendix P – Acronyms Glossary

Appendix Q – Before and After Images

Appendix R – MPO TIP Reference

Appendix S – Corridor Plan Alternatives Analysis

Appendix T – University Avenue Corridor BUILD Grant Website

Appendix U – PlanLafayette Excerpts

Appendix V – Opinion of Probable Cost

Appendix W – Environmental Analysis and Corresponding Stage 0 Report

Appendix X – Categorical Exclusion

Appendix Y – OneAcadiana Regional Infrastructure Visioning Report

Appendix Z – Job Centers

Appendix AA – Estimated Sales Tax and EDD Revenues

Project Description

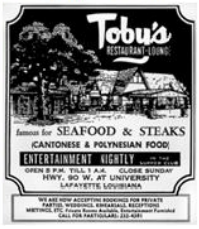
Project Overview

The Re-BUILDing University Avenue Corridor project, as proposed in this FY20 BUILD grant application, is a large-scale complete street improvement of an existing five-lane roadway to feature pedestrian and intersection improvements, roadway safety enhancements, and cohesive aesthetic elements to upgrade University Avenue into a safe, pedestrian-friendly gateway into the city of Lafayette from Interstate 10. University Avenue serves as a direct connection to vital city institutions including city-parish government offices, the city police department, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's campus, downtown Lafayette, and the Lafayette Regional Airport. Because of its position as a major connector and gateway into Lafayette, the University Avenue Corridor has been and continues to serve as an important economic asset to the entire community.

The design and planning area for this project begins north of Interstate 10 at Renaud Drive (LA 723) and extends south along University Avenue approximately 1.8 miles to the intersection at Jeanne Street just south of Cameron Street (US 90) (Project Corridor). It is a well-traveled gateway characterized by light industrial and a variety of retail uses, from auto-oriented retailers, fast food chains and hotels serving highway motorists, to shops and services. Challenges for the Project Corridor are evident as many commercial businesses have shuttered over the past two decades, remaining vacant today with adjacent residential neighborhoods on both sides of University Avenue exhibiting housing stock that was built in the period between 1920 and 1950 and, in many cases, is in disrepair or dilapidated.

To understand the potential of the University Avenue Corridor's future, its past must be explored. During its heyday in the 1950s and 1960s, this 1.8-mile segment of University Avenue contained numerous businesses, including several service stations, restaurants, and night clubs. Fine dining at establishments such as Jacob's Restaurant and Snacks were major features of this corridor. The area's many restaurants served up a variety of dishes that highlight the local Cajun and Creole cuisine as were favorites of U.S. Presidents[1] when they visited the region. Night clubs were popular at that time, and there were several along the Project Corridor including Pat's Theater, but most notably was Toby's Oak Grove Club, which was nestled in a grove of live oaks and which featured performances by a number of Jazz greats. The Corridor was also home to a local gym that hosted both live boxing and wrestling matches. Together, these restaurants and entertainment venues once made the University Avenue Lafayette's cultural hub. A hustling and bustling commercial center is what most of the local residents remember about University Avenue as they either experienced it or are second generation family members who have been told the stories of when the area flourished and was the place to be seen.

Top L to R: Toby's Oak Grove Lounge, Pat's Theater
Bottom L to R: Snacks Restaurant, Toby's Restaurant



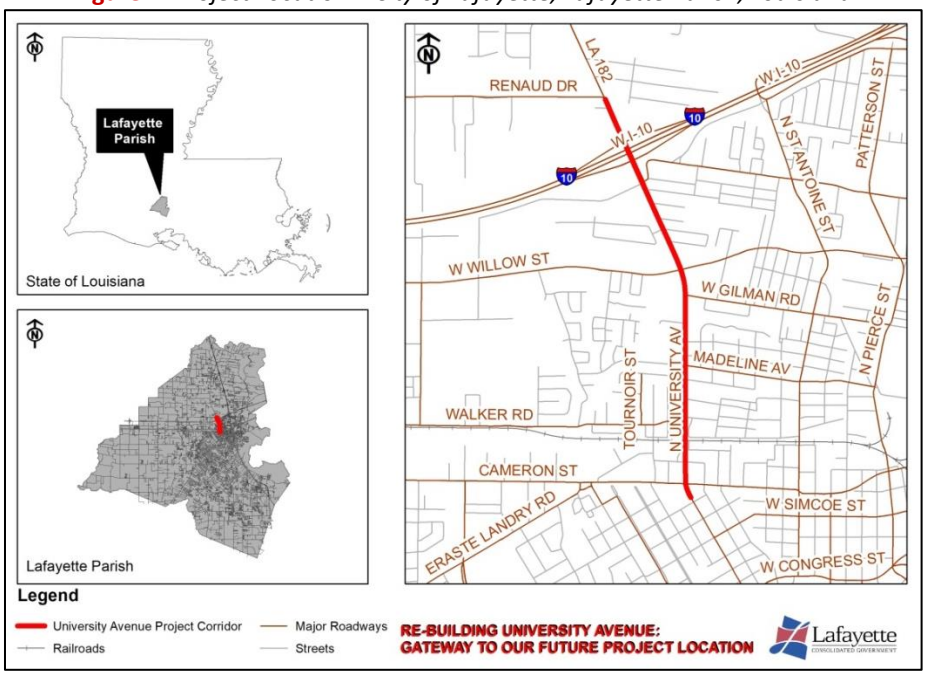
[1] *Lafayette Daily Advertiser* accounts describe visits by Presidents Kennedy, Nixon, and Clinton. Interviews with owners and employees of these restaurants detail deliveries of food from these establishments to Airforce One for these presidents.

Improvements to the University Avenue Corridor will provide its local residents with transportation alternatives unavailable today, as more than 25% of the residents of the Project Corridor area have no available vehicles with public transit being the only real option for travel. The transition of the Project Corridor from a quick-stop or overnight location (gas fill-up and/or hotel stay) near the interstate into a destination that provides a welcoming entrance into Lafayette will benefit local residents with both job opportunities and alternatives for goods and services as redevelopment begins. Additionally, gateway corridors as proposed for University Avenue make a first impression to visitors, including future University of Louisiana at Lafayette students, prospective new businesses, and new residents. Enhancing the corridor's physical environment, creating a more walkable and bikeable street, and supporting its economic health will positively influence the way visitors perceive Lafayette and the surrounding region, as well as support increased economic development and talent attraction in the area. As indicated in the "Priorities for a Better Lafayette" white paper, 77% of respondents to a recent survey noted improvements along the University Avenue Corridor to be "very important."[2]

Project Location

The University Avenue Corridor is an existing roadway and commercial corridor located west of Interstate 49, connecting rural communities north of Interstate 10 to the heart of the city of Lafayette. The Project Corridor begins north of Interstate 10 at Renaud Drive (LA 723) and extends south approximately 1.8 miles to the intersection at Jeanne Street south of Cameron Street (US 90). Beyond the Project Corridor, University Avenue continues south into the center of Lafayette providing access to downtown, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and Lafayette Regional Airport and north to Carencro eventually connecting with Interstate 49.

Figure 1: *Project Location – City of Lafayette, Lafayette Parish, Louisiana*

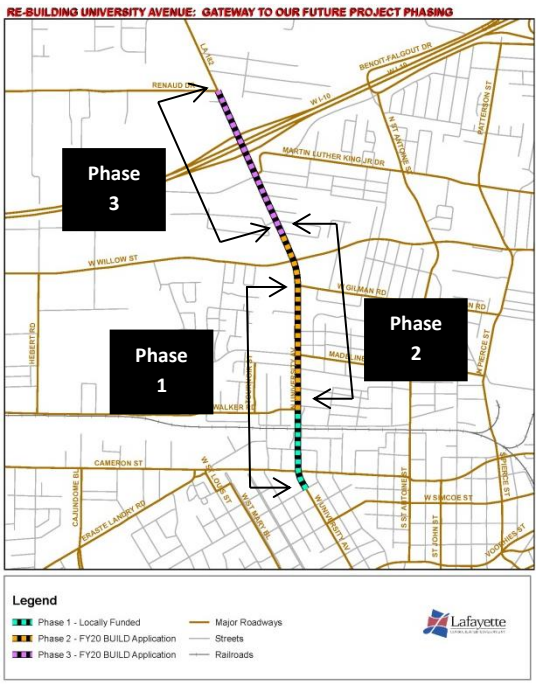


[2] "University Avenue Corridor Study Final Report," December 2018.

Project History

Recognizing the challenges facing University Avenue and its importance to the region, Lafayette Consolidated Government (LCG) began the initial steps towards revitalizing the corridor starting in 2013. The Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2014, PlanLafayette, called for the revitalization of "Four Corners" within the Project Corridor at the intersection of University Avenue and Cameron Street as an employment and job center as well as building upon the community character already present within the local area to create a sense of place through streetscape improvements and physical connections to the surrounding community. Building on a Complete Streets policy adopted by LaDOTD in 2012, the Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization (AMPO; then called the Lafayette MPO) followed suit a few years later and more recently LCG adopted its own Complete Streets policy. PlanLafayette further enshrined a revitalization project for University Avenue by directly referencing it as a growth area in the Future Land Use Map (FLUM)[3] envisioned within a transitional mixed-use transect that would feature residential (both single and multi-family), retail, and office serving as a walkable transportation corridor.[4] Further, PlanLafayette called for "prioritizing mixed-use corridors referenced in the FLUM for complete street improvements and coordinated streetscape improvements" in action item 2.5.1 and "improving physical streetscape connections from ULL along…University Avenue…to create a stronger visual relationship with the campus, improve gateways, and create more walkable connections between campus and the surrounding community" in action item 8.14.1.

Figure 2: *Project Phase Map*



University Avenue and its revitalization was envisioned and initiated by former Mayor-President, Joel Robideaux, and implementation has continued with the current Mayor-President, Josh Guillory. Former Mayor-President Robideaux campaigned on improving University Avenue and, upon election, immediately began securing resources to accomplish his vision. Utilizing funding from a $500,000 AMPO Urban Systems Grant in 2017, the city of Lafayette led a strategic planning effort to revitalize and transform the University Avenue Corridor between Interstate 10 and Cameron Street (US 90) into an attractive and activated gateway into Lafayette that was completed in 2018. This corridor study addressed and detailed key locations for public realm improvements, "first-mover" opportunity catalyst sites, and associated development programs. More specifically, the University Avenue Stage 0 Corridor Study (Appendix D) conducted a corridor planning study that evaluated existing corridor conditions and developed a plan that identified potential roadway improvement elements incorporating Complete Streets tenets, land use and economic development opportunities, and provided associated cost estimates and schedules for project evaluation and implementation. Taking into consideration the application of Complete Streets, access management, and multi-modal operations along the corridor, the

[3] PlanLafayette, CPCAC Final Version, Figure 3.1, Pg. 35
[4] PlanLafayette, CPCAC Final Version, Pg. 30

study included an analysis of traffic operations, land use and economic development opportunities, and transportation safety.

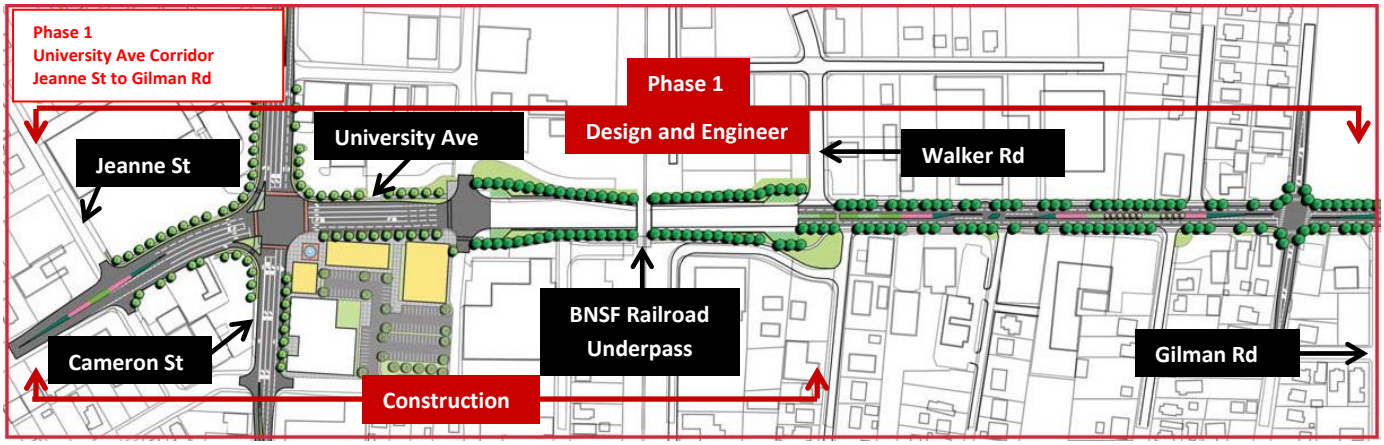
Based on conclusions and findings of the University Avenue Stage 0 Corridor Study, former Mayor-President Robideaux sought and received funding through LCG that was leveraged with additional AMPO grant funding for two phases of the University Avenue Corridor Project. The first phase is to engineer a 0.8 mile segment of the Project Corridor from its southern terminus at Jeanne Street to Gilman Road – including the intersection at Cameron Street and University Avenue known locally as Four Corners. The second phase is to construct improvements from Jeanne Street to Walker Road which largely encompasses the intersection of Cameron Street and University Avenue. The first phase of the project is tentatively set to bid in the summer of 2021.

Project Phases Funded Thru Local and State Sources

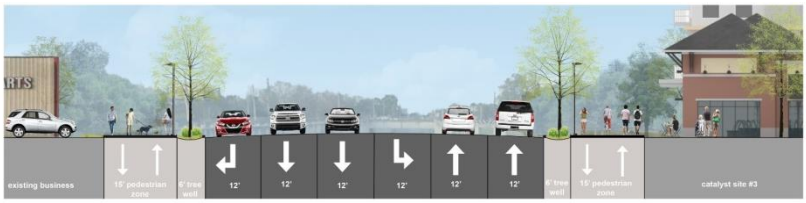
Phase 1 – University Avenue Corridor: Design and Engineering

Phase 1 of the project is to design and engineer recommended improvements as depicted in the proposed design below and originating from the University Avenue Stage 0 Corridor Study. Recommended improvements include additional turn lanes and thru-lanes with channelized right turns to assist traffic operations at the intersection. New sidewalks at all intersection quadrants will complete a sidewalk network that today is incomplete and disconnected. Additionally, splitter islands will provide pedestrian refuges for safer crossings. Lighting upgrades, new pedestrian-scale lighting and a public plaza will bring additional pedestrian traffic and provide both day and evening destination opportunities that do not currently exist. Improved pedestrian realm amenities include a fifteen (15) ft. zone that serves as a multi-use path fronting existing and future commercial establishments. Phase 1 is estimated to cost $7,325,950 with this amount being a cost share between the Acadiana MPO and LCG at $2,885,557 and $4,440,393, respectively.

Figure 3: *Phase 1 Extents – Jeanne Street to Gilman Road*



PHASE 1 TYPICAL SECTION



Other Funded Projects Related to University Avenue

There are currently six existing projects that are fully funded and will impact and improve the University Avenue Corridor and enhance Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the Corridor Project: recently completed improvements (clean, patch, and paint) to the BNSF railroad underpass ($500,000), a Sanitary Sewer Capacity Analysis, a flood zone assessment/hydraulic study that may modify the 100-Year Flood Zone classification within the Project Corridor around Willow Street, design and installation of a roundabout at Renaud Drive and University Avenue ($4 million) scheduled for 2024, and a beautification project ($1.5 million) scheduled to bid in June 2020 to include landscaping, sidewalks, bus shelters, as well as a pedestrian plaza and scaled lighting near the Cameron Street – University Avenue intersection. Securing a BUILD Grant for Phase 2 and 3 would allow the completion of all desired geometric improvements to the roadway and provide a safer and contiguous multi-modal transportation facility the entire length of the project corridor.

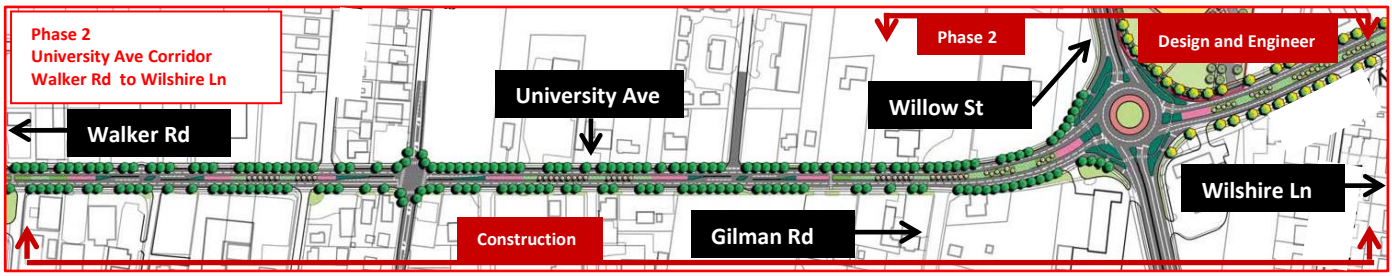
BUILD Grant Request

In pursuit of funding to provide complete street improvements and revitalize a major transportation corridor, LCG, in partnership with the AMPO, is seeking $22,440,676 in BUILD Grant funding. The funding requested is for remaining program specifications and engineering as well as construction of Phases 2 and 3 (see Figures 4 and 5 below) of the Project Corridor representing the final phases of the project, completing the Re-BUILDing University Avenue Corridor Project. The project goal is to build a multi-modal corridor with Complete Streets improvements, better access management, reduced congestion, increased safety, and improved connectivity for adjacent neighborhoods and surrounding uses as well as enhancing economic development opportunities to help revitalize the project corridor.

Phase 2 – University Avenue Corridor: Walker Road to Wilshire Lane

Phase 2 of the project focuses on completing outstanding program specification and engineering from Gilman Road to the northern project terminus at Renaud Drive (Figure 1 – Project Location, p.2). In addition, this phase includes the construction of a multi-lane roundabout at the University Avenue and Willow Street intersection. Additional activities include retrofit construction from Walker Road to Gilman Road from a five-lane to four-lane street with raised and, in some cases, planted median as well as a pedestrian zone with sidewalks, landscaping, and canopy tree plantings. The goal of these activities is to ease traffic and congestion, but to also install a walkable environment that has a unique sense of place to keep visitors and local patrons coming back. Phase 2 improvements are estimated to cost **$11,259,369**.

Figure 4: *Phase 2 – Walker Road to Renaud Drive*



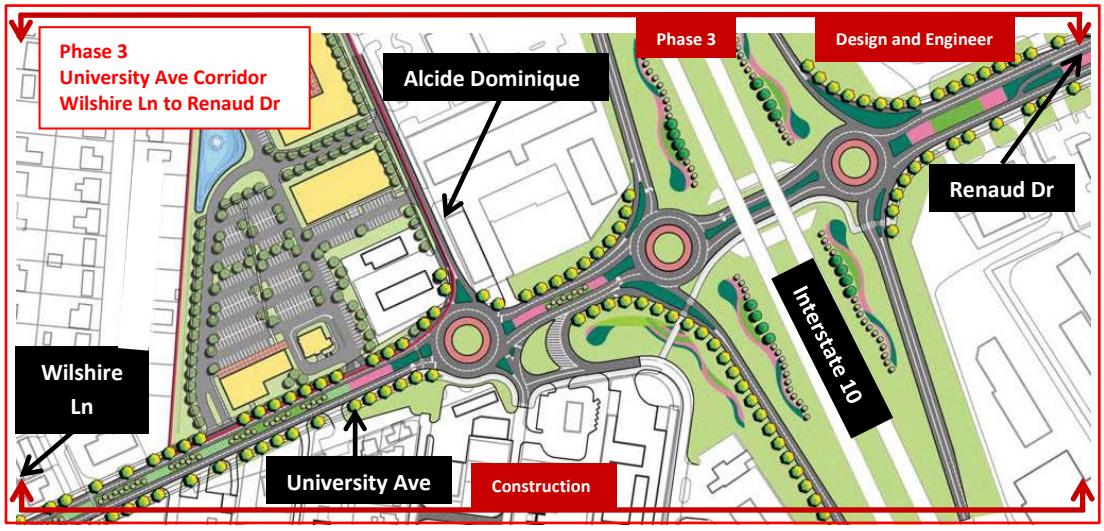
PHASE 2 TYPICAL SECTION

Phase 3 – University Avenue Corridor: Wilshire Lane to Renaud Drive

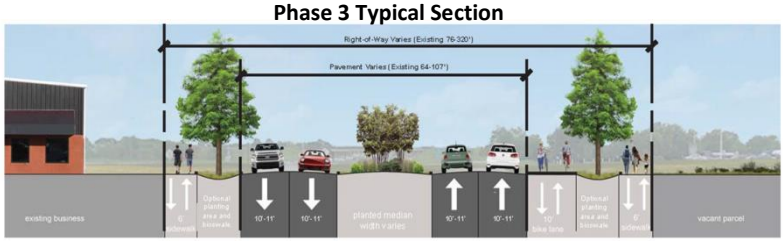
Phase 3 represents the last major portion of the University Avenue Corridor that has a proposed design, but is unfunded. Phase 3 begins at Walker Road moving northward along University Avenue crossing Willow Street, Alcide Dominique Drive, Interstate 10, and ending at Renaud Drive. Phase 3 features multi-lane roundabouts at intersections to replace traffic signals and tie Interstate 10 exit/entrance ramp approaches together. University Avenue, between the roundabouts in this section, will have a raised median.

Additionally, Phase 3 (Figure 4) activities, as part of this BUILD grant request, include the following elements: construction from Wilshire Lane to the northern project terminus at Renaud Drive; installation of three (3) multilane roundabouts to replace signalized intersections and two-way stop intersection; wide, planted medians; and, a bike lane and sidewalk for an existing underpass to provide future access that is currently prohibited by Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) to pedestrians and bikes. The goal of these activities is to ease traffic and congestion, provide multimodal choices for corridor residents and visitors and create redevelopment opportunities. Phase 2 improvements are estimated to cost **$17,864,336**.

Figure 5: *Phase 3 – Wilshire Lane to Renaud Drive*



Phase 3 Typical Section



Project Context

Founded along the Vermilion River and located midway between Houston and New Orleans, Lafayette is the heart of south-central Louisiana in a region known as Acadiana. Consisting of the incorporated city of Lafayette, unincorporated areas, and five smaller municipalities, Lafayette Parish is small in comparison to other nearby parishes but capitalizing on its long-held entrepreneurial spirit has managed to become a regional center for jobs and businesses with significant gains in the healthcare industry, oilfield services industry, and, more recently, hi-tech/computing industry.

Lafayette's history goes back to the late 1880s with the introduction of the railroad, transforming Lafayette into a major regional transportation and commercial hub attracting agricultural and light industrial manufacturing that drove the region's early economy. Future development in the city centered on the railroad and later US Hwy 90, whose path paralleled the rail line. Until the 1950s, Lafayette served as the hub and central office for the Southern Pacific Rail Line. Running from east to west, construction of US Hwy 90 through Lafayette began in the 1930's. During this time, US Hwy 90 served as the northern terminus of University Avenue and the intersection became known as the gateway to the west. Naturally, smaller commercial venues such as gas stations and restaurants developed at the intersection to provide needed services. Later, University Avenue was expanded north of US Hwy 90, further advancing commercial development and the intersection of US Hwy 90 (currently Cameron Street) and University Avenue became locally known as Four Corners.

Lafayette Parish as a whole continued to grow both in population and prosperity leading into the 1980s. The oil bust in the mid-1980s instituted a major downturn in the local and state economies. State-based transportation decisions that negatively impacted the Project Corridor—the widening of Cameron Street and University Avenue as part of a railroad underpass construction project—only compounded the oil bust distress. For many businesses along University Avenue, the acquisition of right-of-way for the road widening deprived them of valuable parking space and removed existing sidewalks that provided alternative modes of transportation and access for local residents. The combination of these two factors contributed to the first wave of business closures. More recently, a population boom brought on by displaced persons and businesses from the combination of Hurricanes Katrena and Rita in 2005 and the rapid expansion of offshore oil exploration due to oil being valued at over $100 a barrel going into 2008 energized growth and prosperity within the parish. However, not all areas of Lafayette Parish, including areas in the city of Lafayette, experienced the same growth and prosperity the overall parish enjoyed. The new growth in population required a healthy demand for housing and associated goods and services. New commercial developments quickly expanded towards the southern and largely undeveloped parts of the parish requiring significant new public infrastructure and existing infrastructure improvements. Funding was largely directed to the newer growth areas that promised new tax revenues at the expense of established neighborhoods such as Truman, Washington Heights, Rufus Peck, Azalea Park, and Monroe within the urban core of Lafayette – including

University Avenue. The Project Corridor was already in a decline prior to the oil bust days from the 1980s, but events and funding decisions as mentioned above coupled with undesirable elements (crime and abandoned or vacant buildings) sprouting within the corridor was becoming too much to overcome without a major intervention.

In 2003, a non-profit organization, Bridge Ministry of Acadiana, moved into a neighborhood (Washington Heights) along the University Avenue Corridor near Four Corners and began the process of meeting with local neighbors to discuss overarching issues they were experiencing. The top three issues identified were drugs/prostitution, children's education, and lack of children's activities.[5] Continuing their work with neighbors and building trust, Bridge Ministry of Acadiana purchased two acres along University Avenue constructing a community center to increase capacity and effectiveness in assisting the local neighborhood. Eventually, the campus developed further with a private, Christian school opening in 2017. Bridge Ministry of Acadiana has been supportive of University Avenue redevelopment efforts and has hosted several official public meetings on the project corridor study.

After former Mayor-President Robideaux's election in 2016, he was approached by a local landscape architect who was passionate about revitalizing University Avenue and the Four Corners area. The landscape architect volunteered pro-bono initial design services for a beautification plan that included landscaping, sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, and a public plaza all being on voluntary servitudes from land-owners, existing servitudes, and land owned by LCG. The landscaping plan has been completed and approved, was fully funded by LCG in the amount of $1,700,000, and is set to bid in the third quarter of 2020. Additionally, former Mayor-President Robideaux secured $500,000 in funding from the local council to clean, patch, and repaint the unsightly railroad underpass along University Avenue. In 2020, newly-elected Mayor-President Josh Guillory pledged to support and continue efforts to revitalize University Avenue including technical and monetary support for this BUILD grant application.

Project Corridor Governance and Demographics

Lafayette Parish consists of the incorporated city of Lafayette, the unincorporated areas of the parish, and smaller municipalities. LCG represents the entire parish of Lafayette as well as the city of Lafayette and areas of the parish not incorporated by the five other parish municipalities. LCG is a member entity of the Acadiana Planning Commission (APC) which houses the AMPO. The AMPO, through its Transportation Policy Committee, governs federal and state funding related to transportation within the Lafayette, LA Urbanized Area.

The city of Lafayette has a population of 133,942, and Lafayette Parish has a population of 241,849. The Project Corridor population has grown modestly since 2000 and is today home to approximately 6,000 residents. Median household income in the Project Corridor is less than $24,000, compared with nearly $49,000 citywide. According to the American Community Survey, over 90% of residents in this area are African-American and only 10% have a college degree, compared to 36% citywide.

[5] "Our Story of Learning How to Love Our Neighbor," *Bridge Ministry of Acadiana*, https://www.bridgeacadiana.com/our-story-1.

Table 1: *Population Growth and Geography, Demographic Information (2017 ACS)*

Total Population	2000	2010	2017
University Avenue Corridor	5,714	5,993	6,301
City of Lafayette	112,000	121,522	131,191

Demographics	Median Household Income	Average Household Size	Median Age	% Renter	% BA or Higher	% Black
University Avenue Corridor	$ 23,872	2.6	33.6	59%	10%	90%
City of Lafayette	$ 48,753	2.34	34.7	47%	36%	31%

As part of LCG's Five-Year Consolidated Plan, LCG found that over 10,000 households citywide are either housing-cost burdened, overcrowded, or living in substandard housing. This problem is especially pronounced in the Project Corridor. More than 50% of the housing in the target area was built prior to 1960. Many of the older properties have been poorly maintained, and as a consequence, housing values in this area are much lower than average. Data provided by LCG's Development and Planning Department indicate that there have been over 100 reported building code violations in the Project Corridor as of 2018. Additionally, nearly 150 properties were tax-adjudicated as of 2016. Within the Project Corridor the median home price is $63,700, or nearly 1/3 the median national home value.[6] The low values are largely a product of the age and condition of these structures.

Transportation Challenges Addressed

The purpose of this project is to improve the safety, operations, and efficiency as well as promote the economic redevelopment of the University Avenue Corridor. This project is necessary in order to maintain reasonable traffic operations for a 20-year design horizon, improve transportation safety/access management, and incorporate Complete Streets design elements. A feasibility study for the University Avenue project, known statewide as a Stage 0 Study, identified a number of challenges such as:

Fragmented and insufficient sidewalks	Railroad and railroad underpass barrier
University Avenue acts as a barrier to neighborhoods on either side	High traffic volumes making it difficult to cross University Avenue
Limited dedicated bicycle facilities	Few crosswalks; not ADA accessible
No rollover/mountable curbs	High speeds
Access management issues	Scale and building setbacks are outside comfort and appeal levels for pedestrians
Little to no facilities at transit stops	Lack of tree canopy, resulting in high sun exposure

Within the scope of this project, the creation of bicycle facilities and safer infrastructure for pedestrians will be implemented. With the addition of new roadway crossings and improvement of existing ones, users will gain safer and efficient utilization of neighborhood connectivity. Further, this project provides the opportunity to

[6] 2010 Census.

better accommodate both vehicular traffic and pedestrians by allowing for lane modifications and/or redesigns of intersections that will improve safety for all modes while mitigating the impacts of congestion. These changes will account for a more comfortable roadway experience for pedestrians and promote the safer use of alternative modes of transportation. The project will also provide a more inviting landscape. Right-of-ways will be used to create gateways and a sense of place while creating an overhead canopy with street trees along the sidewalks to limit hot-zones and high-sun exposure for pedestrians.

Grant Funds, Sources, and Uses of all Project Funding

BUILD Grant Funding Request: **$23,298,964**
Non-Federal Funding - Matching Grant Funds: $5,824,741

The University Avenue Corridor project in its entirety is estimated to cost $36,061,233 for Phases 1, 2 and 3. **Phase 1** has been **funded** through local and AMPO funding sources with Phases 2 and 3 being the final, unfunded segments of the project and the subject of this BUILD grant application. The total project funding sources and costs can be found in Table 3 below.

Table 2: *University Avenue Corridor Project Costs and Funding Sources*

Project Element	Phase1	Phase 2	Phase 3	FY20 BUILD Phases 2 & 3
Survey, Plan Specifications and Engineering, Environmental	$848,617	$571,080	$1,371,017	$1,942,097
Right of Way Acquisitions	$179,227	$886,920	$73,291	$960,211
Utility Relocation	$922,600	$2,103,728	$2,654,733	$4,758,461
Construction	$3,289,920	$4,247,610	$8,267,460	$12,515,070
Contingency (20%)	$878,349	$1,561,868	$2,473,300	$4,035,168
Mobilization, Traffic Control, Inspection, Etc.	$1,207,236	$1,888,163	$3,024,535	$4,912,698
Phase 1 Total	**$7,325,950**			
Phase 2 Total		**$11,259,369**		
Phase 3 Total			**$17,864,336**	
University Avenue Corridor Project Grand Total			**$36,449,655**	
FY20 BUILD Grant Project Total				**$29,123,705**
Matching Funds				
Lafayette Consolidated Government Capital Outlay			**20%**	**$5,824,741**
BUILD Grant Funds				
FY20 BUILD Grant Federal Funds Requested			**80%**	**$23,298,964**
Funds Total				**$29,123,705**
Phase 1 Funds				
Phase 1 – Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization TIP Funding				$2,885,557
Phase 1 – Lafayette Consolidated Government Capital Outlay				$4,440,393
Phase 1 Funding				**$7,325,950**

The estimated cost to construct Phases 2 and 3 of the University Avenue Corridor project is **$29,123,705** (see Appendix V for Opinion of Probable Cost). The amount of FY20 BUILD grant funds requested is **$23,298,964**. The Non-Federal funding will consist of a 20% match by LCG through approved capital outlays in the amount of **$5,826,741**.

Primary Selection Criteria

Safety

As part of the corridor study commissioned by APC and LCG, the 2014 - 2016 crash history along the University Avenue Corridor was analyzed to provide site-specific improvements and develop alternatives to reduce the number and severity of crashes along the corridor. Several intersections along the Project Corridor experience a high-number of crashes with certain segments of University Avenue classified as "abnormal" with regard to its comparative local crash rate versus state-wide crash rates by LADOTD, which indicates a high potential for safety improvement.

Based on the crash analysis, certain site-specific improvements and alternatives were developed to reduce the number and severity of crashes. The approved schematic design and cross-sections for the University Avenue Corridor is to convert three signalized intersections (Interstate 10 Eastbound off-ramp, Interstate 10 Westbound off-ramp, and Willow Street) and one un-signalized intersection (Alcide Dominque Drive) to roundabouts. The other approved component is the conversion of the existing five-lane into a four-lane with a raised median.

The current roadway cross-section is a five-lane with two northbound travel lanes, a center turning lane, and two southbound travel lanes. Changing a two-way, continuous left-turn lane to a raised median yields a Crash Modification Factor (CMF) of 0.53, which means that crashes along the segment could be reduced by 47%. Converting three existing signalized intersections to roundabouts yields a CMF of 0.74, which means overall crashes at the identified intersections are estimated to decrease by 26%. The conversion of a stop-controlled intersection into a multilane roundabout yields a CMF of 0.95, which means that crashes at the intersection could be reduced by 5%. The CMF reductions are for crashes of all levels of severity. The No-Build Scenario, assuming crashes continued at the same pace through 2040, would result in **$95,145,702** in costs from crashes of all levels of severity. Utilizing the CMFs appropriately and as installed in each phase of the project would lower total crash costs by **$42,029,289** (**$18,121,341** discounted 7%) through 2040 providing a **44% reduction** in overall crash costs and significantly lowering the corresponding number of fatal and severe crashes. Additionally, the geometric improvements drastically reduced the number of conflict points from 1,228 to 297 further improving safety and

Figure 6: *Crash Data – I-10 Eastbound Ramp*

Figure 7: *Crash Data – Willow St.*

Figure 8: *Crash Data – Cameron St.*

reducing crashes.

State of Good Repair

The University Avenue Corridor project aligns with long-term transportation objectives on the local, state and nation-wide level. The project will improve existing conditions by creating specific and separate improvements to facilitate alternate modes of transportation that do not currently exist for the elderly and youth. The infrastructure improvements will create an urban environment that accommodates traffic, walking, biking, and public transit helping to further the economic goals of this project.

Sidewalks non-existent along major sections of project

When complete, the project will have successfully improved approximately 1.8 miles of a roadway to implement the following:

- Reconfigure a five-lane two-way turn lane configuration into four-lane with a raised median;
- Intersection redesigns to improve safety and congestion by removing traffic signals and installing roundabouts;
- Installation of dedicated bicycle facilities in certain segments with a ten (10) ft. bike lane;
- Street trees/landscaping for the purposes of shade, slowing traffic, and aesthetics; and,
- Install a continuous sidewalk network for the entire corridor with improved pedestrian crossings.

Reconfiguration of University Avenue from a five-lave two-way turn lane into a four-lane with raised median as well as replacing four signalized intersections with multi-lane roundabouts will greatly enhance and ultimately reduce future maintenance costs on a transportation facility that is approaching 40 years since its last major improvements. The current roadway's condition is considered **very poor**[7] by LaDOTD with the existing condition and design hampering economic growth in the project area and seriously threatening the planned future economic growth and stability of adjacent neighborhoods. Based on LaDOTD published maintenance figures and schedules for roads and the very poor condition of University Avenue, a no-build scenario would require increasing maintenance leading to costly major roadway rehabilitation. The addition of a raised median could reduce roadway maintenance life cycle costs and frequency by up to 40%[8] and reduce traffic signal maintenance/replacement schedule costs by replacing 3 of the 5 signalized intersections within the Project Corridor. The project savings related to reduction in roadway maintenance and traffic signal maintenance/replacement due to project implementation for the analysis period and discounted 7% are **$2,350,690** and **$1,087,613**, respectively.

In December 2019, the University Gateway Economic Development District (EDD) was approved with the goal of providing resources to leverage both public and private initiatives within the University Avenue project corridor, promote redevelopment and reinvestment, and to serve as a cost-match resource for future major roadway repair and rehabilitations. The EDD, as structured, receives revenues from a dedicated 1% sales tax

[7] *See* Figure 10 – *Roughness District 03* and Figure 11 – *Roughness District 03 close-up* in the Appendix.
[8] "Federal Highway Administration University Course on Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation," *U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration*, July 2006, https://nacto.org/docs/usdg/university_course_on_bicycle_and_ped_trans_fhwa.pdf, FHWA-HRT-05-107.

and 2% hotel occupancy tax for a 40-year horizon ending in 2060. The EDD's revenues are expected to steadily increase as sales tax revenue from development related to completed transportation improvements are realized.

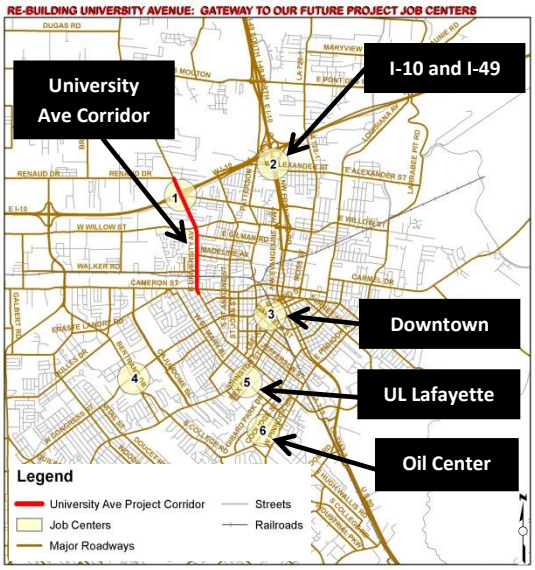
Economic Competitiveness

By providing connectivity to Interstate 10, University Avenue is crucial to the nation's energy industry. Numerous oil and gas service companies are located along its length. This close economic association to the energy industry is unfortunately not without risk; Lafayette and the larger region are both subjected to boom and bust cycles in the energy sector. Significant natural and man-made disasters have impacted the regional economy over the last 10 years. These disasters include the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, 2012; oil price decline and corresponding lay-offs; major flood event in August 2016; and, Tropical Storm Harvey. The region as a whole suffered strong economic downturns and significant job losses that have left the economy depressed. For the period ending January 2018, Stats America reports a 24-month regional unemployment rate of 6.48%, which is nearly 2% above the national average of 4.6%. Although the southern region of Lafayette Parish has remained economically viable during these downturns and disasters, certain areas within the city of Lafayette, such as the University Avenue Corridor, continue to struggle and have not shared in this stability. The University Avenue Corridor has been unable to successfully attract small businesses or larger businesses with higher-wage jobs. Further compounding corridor issues is limited access to employment centers in other parts of the city such as downtown and UL Lafayette that are crucial for the residents of the neighborhoods that surround the University Avenue Corridor.

Reliable and Timely Access to Employment Centers and Job Opportunities

The University Avenue Corridor project, among other benefits, will greatly improve connectivity and efficiency issues resulting in improved modal alternatives to employment centers and localized economic development within the project area. Currently, there is no cohesive, connected sidewalk network on either side of University Avenue within the project area limiting pedestrian and bicycling opportunities. The limiting of pedestrian and bicycling facilities has, by necessity, forced non-motorized travelers into conflicts with motorized traffic (See Figures 6, 7, 8) to travel to work or access commercial establishments. Aside from obvious safety issues, the current condition discourages alternative modes of travel for a low-income community. Many of the surrounding households do not have access to a vehicle and rely solely on alternative modes of transportation. Improvements to pedestrian and

Figure 9: *Job Centers*



JOB CENTER	TOTAL EMPLOYMENT 2010[2]	ESTIMATED TOTAL EMPLOYMENT 2040[2]
1 - University Ave & I-10 Interchange	1,597	2,358
2 - I-10 & I-49 Interchange	5,568	8,440
3 - Downtown Lafayette	5,645	7,791
4 - Congress St & Bertrand Dr	5,267	7,114
5 - University of Louisiana at Lafayette	2,635	4,169
6 - Oil Center	8,009	11,601
TOTALS	28,721	41,473

SOURCE: [1] U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010 Census; [2] Lafayette Metropolitan Planning Organization Traffic Analysis Zones, 2010 Census

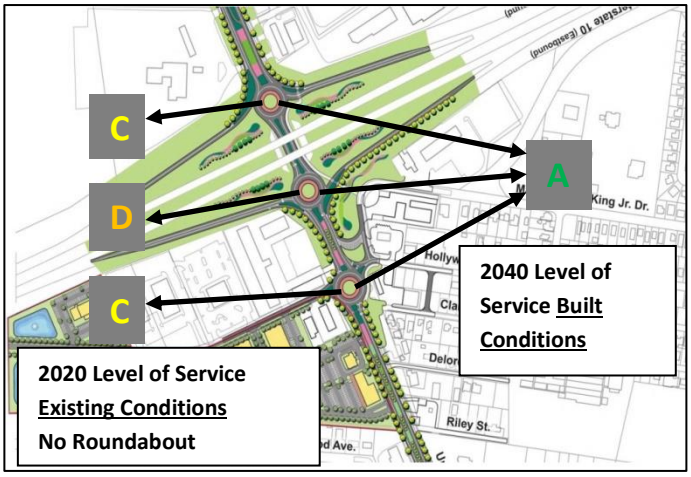
bicycle facilities will provide the much needed connectivity and access to existing job centers (See Appendix Z) along and near University Avenue, but south of the project area such as Downtown Lafayette, UL Lafayette and the Oil Center. Further, a complete multi-modal network will encourage additional foot traffic to existing local businesses, support new business development along the corridor, and connect diverse communities.

Certainly, improved alternative transportation modes will also provide opportunities for local residents to reduce dependency on cars, in households that do own them, for travel to work providing cost savings in reduced fuel usage. This savings frees up household income that can otherwise be used for food or other necessary expenses.

Improving Long-Term Efficiency, Reliability, and Costs of Transportation

Transportation projects have beneficial impacts on Lafayette's economic development objectives. Key objectives include: improving productivity, employment, business activity, investment and increased property values, and tax revenues. In general, the University Avenue Project is designed to improve overall accessibility to goods and services, while improving businesses' ability to provide those goods and services, and peoples' ability to access employment, and services.

Figure 10: *Level of Service Existing and Built Conditions*



Improving the traffic operations of the University Avenue project corridor will create time savings for travelers during both the morning and afternoon peak hours. Using SIDRA traffic modeling data provided by Vecture Consulting and the Acadiana MPO and projected for growth through 2040, a total time savings calculation was approximated for project area traffic based on peak hour estimates from on-site counts and the travel demand model for the urbanized area. The roundabout designs for intersections in Phase 3a and 3b provided significant delay reductions and improved level of service (LOS) from D to A or B. In particular, the peak hour delay reduction from no-build to build with the roundabout along the I-10 Eastbound/University Avenue intersection was **46.3 seconds** per vehicle! This intersection currently operates at no-build LOS D and will operate at LOS A after build. Said improvements will **reduce vehicle hours traveled by 227,000**, on average after all phases are completed. Taking into account all the delay reductions, volume of traffic and costs associated with traveling, the completed project's travel time savings is estimated to be **$340,861,968** undiscounted through the analysis period and **$81,091,743** discounted 7%.

Economic Productivity and Growth of Land, Capital, and Labor

Major impediments to the economic viability along the University Avenue Corridor are linked to both the form and condition of the existing built environment. Conditions of the University Avenue Corridor near Interstate 10 have uninspiring aesthetics as this area is characterized by deteriorating murals, cookie-cutter out-parcel development, and properties that are vacant or in poor physical condition. The aggregate impact of these conditions is one that actively discourages new private investment along what should be viable economic

development opportunities at the interchange and along the corridor serving as a gateway to an established state university, downtown, city hall, and regional airport. The proposed improvements are designed to make the corridor more inviting to visitors, residents, and investors. As improvements are installed, redevelopment will begin. An economic study was performed as part of the Stage 0 assessment to determine what economic activity and/or business could be supported within the local community. The economic study resulted in three catalyst project sites as green field developments with business types not readily available within the project corridor. Additionally, the project is also designed to encourage infill and brownfield redevelopment along the corridor. Brownfield redevelopment efforts are more fully described in the *Environmental Protection* section below.

Catalyst project sites were selected along three large vacant parcels within the corridor that had commercial appeal and development scenarios were created based on the Economic Analysis from the University Avenue Phase 0 Report. The first catalyst site is along Alcide Dominique Drive that fronts along Interstate 10 and currently features three hotels and one chain restaurant. Additional development that can be supported includes significant office space, mixed use and two restaurant sites. The second catalyst site is at Willow Street and can support mixed-use and neighborhood retail along with a recreation center and multi-acre open space that can also provide supplemental storm water storage. The third catalyst site is at the intersection of Cameron Street and University Avenue – Four Corners. Currently, HRI, Inc. is in the final stages of permitting to retrofit of a historic former Coca Cola bottling building and accessory storage facilities into artist lofts. The soon-to-be Bottle Arts Lofts will consume most of the third catalyst site's available space; however, the demolition of a dilapidated motel fronting University Avenue will provide outparcel development opportunities. Based on the economic study mentioned above, scenarios for economic return were developed and referenced to calculate likely revenue resulting from catalyst projects sites and resulting development coming online and producing sales tax revenue (see Appendix AA).[9] The catalyst project sites, if developed as proposed and fully operational by 2027, could provide an average of **$240,498** annually in additional city sales tax revenue and **$5,050,466** over the 20-year analysis period.

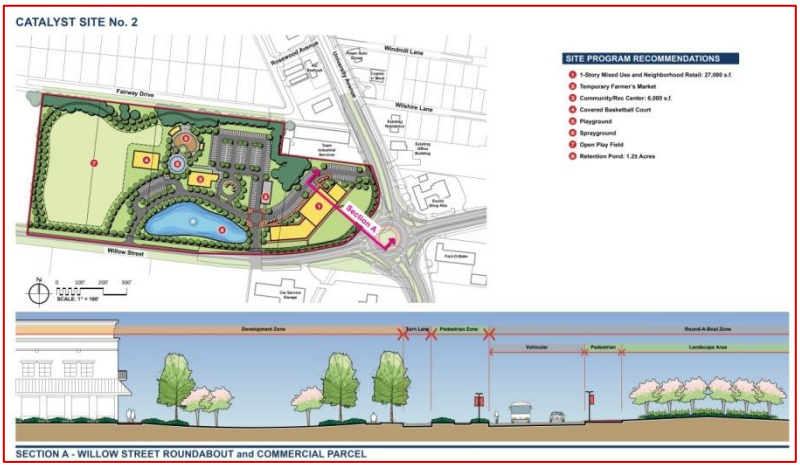
Figure 11: *Catalyst Site 1*

Catalyst Site 1

- Resides along University Avenue and Alcide Dominique Drive
- Development Potential
  - 66,000 gross sq. ft. office
  - 38,000 gross sq. ft. mixed use
  - Two restaurants sites @ 6,000 sq.ft. and 8,600 sq. ft.
  - 2.1 acres of stormwater retention

[9] Revenue estimates were based on lower decile estimates from "Dollars & Cents of Shopping Centers/The Score 2008," *Urban Land Institute*, 2008.

Figure 12: *Catalyst Site 2*



Catalyst Site 2

- NW quadrant of University Avenue and Willow Street intersection
- Development Potential
  - 27,000 gross sq. ft. mixed use and neighborhood retail
  - Playground with water feature
  - Open Space/Field for recreation
  - 6,000 sq. ft. Community/Rec Center
  - 1.2 acres of stormwater retention

Figure 13: *Catalyst Site 3*

Catalyst Site 3

- NE quadrant of University Avenue and Cameron Street intersection
- Development Potential
  - HRI, Inc. plans to rehabilitate historic warehouse and associated features into artist lofts
  - 6,000 sq. ft. outparcel retail development opportunity at corner

Growth from economic activity is not limited to additional sales tax revenue. The Project Corridor is within an economic development district, and based on catalyst project sites being fully developed and operational by 2025 (Phase 2) and 2027 (Phase 3), it is estimated the EDD would collect an additional average $120,249 annually and $2,525,233 over the 20-year analysis period[10] to re-invest in the corridor.

The University Avenue Corridor project is a $35.3 million infrastructure investment that will create jobs during project construction, but will also have a positive impact on both indirect and induced job creation as the construction activity and related salaries will generate additional purchases and jobs. According to an article from *New York Magazine*,[11] FHWA reports that every $1 billion of project costs yields 9,536 construction jobs, 4,324 indirect jobs, and 13,962 induced jobs. Utilizing the above ratio, the University Avenue Corridor project will produce **336 construction jobs, 153 indirect jobs, and 483 induced jobs**.

[10] Revenue estimates were based on lower decile estimates from "Dollars & Cents of Shopping Centers/The Score 2008," *Urban Land Institute*, 2008.

[11] Reid Cherlin, "Jobs Per Mile," *New York Magazine*, September 9, 2011, https://nymag.com/news/intelligencer/topic/jobs-per-mile-2011-9/.

Competing in a Global Economy

The University Avenue Corridor provides an alternate connection between US Hwy 90/Future Interstate 49 Corridor and Interstate 10, a direct connection from Interstate 10 to the cargo facilities at Lafayette Regional Airport, and a direct connection to UL Lafayette. The University Avenue Corridor is a critical connection to these interstate highways for the many oil and gas service companies located along federal Highway 90 south, Cameron Street, and the University Avenue Corridor itself. The project facilitates efficient and reliable freight movement that is critical to the energy sector and is vital for the United States to continue to compete in the global economy.

The new challenge, emerging from the Covid-19 emergency, is the lower price per barrel of oil and its economic effects on Louisiana and Lafayette in particular. Prices dropped to under $20 per barrel for benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) beginning in March 2020. Louisiana has always had a strong presence in the oil and gas exploration sector, which has provided a significant number of well-paying jobs. Over time, many of the major oil exploration companies have consolidated operations to larger cities, but the oil service companies have maintained, and in many cases expanded, their presence in the Lafayette area due to proximity to major ports servicing both on-shore and off-shore oil drilling operations. The oil services companies have begun downsizing operations due to low oil prices as layoffs have been announced[12] and will continue. Oil field downsizing affects support businesses for oil companies such as machine shops, supply companies and technical businesses, which in turn, begin downsizing as well. The University Avenue Corridor project will bring some much needed economic development opportunities, namely jobs, providing alternatives for recently affected workers.

Opportunity Zones and Cultural District

Through the federal Opportunity Zones Program, banks, communities and others may create Opportunity Funds to direct tax-advantaged investments to the 150 federally-designated Opportunity Zones in Louisiana. Three census tracts, containing the University Avenue Corridor, were among those designated in Louisiana. In response to those designations, APC and OneAcadiana (formerly the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce) created an Acadiana Opportunity Zone Prospectus and a University Avenue Corridor Opportunity Zone Prospectus (see Appendix L). This effort, branded InvestAcadiana was recently recognized by Forbes Magazine as a top ten Opportunity Zone Catalyst Community. InvestAcadiana has worked closely with the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council who visited the University Corridor in August of 2019. In January of 2020, representatives from InvestAcadiana participated in a joint briefing at the White House to share Opportunity Zone milestones, discuss strategy, and share information. In November of 2019, InvestAcadiana received an innovation award

[12] "Halliburton laying off 36 workers at Broussard facility," *KATC News*, April 22, 2020, https://www.katc.com/news/lafayette-parish/halliburton-laying-off-36-workers-at-broussard-facility.

from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) for its Opportunity Zone Initiative which included its work along the University Avenue Corridor.

Both the University Corridor Prospectus and the City of Lafayette Prospectus highlights the University Cultural Gateway Opportunity Zone as an area for potential investment. There are two 10+ acres sites that are currently available for development along the corridor, as well as an additional 30 vacant parcels and 10 vacant structures. Some of these sites are also brownfields which could utilize grants from the EPA (see *Brownfield Redevelopment* segment below).

Further, the corridor was recently designated as part of a Cultural District through the Louisiana Cultural District Program (see Appendix O). Such a district will allow for approximately 35 historic commercial properties and 219 income producing residential properties to access 20% state historic tax credits for qualifying expenses. LCG is also considering the possibility of applying for a National Historic District in this area, to activate Federal Historic Tax Incentives.

UNIVERSITY CULTURAL GATEWAY DISTRICT VISION

- Create an inviting gateway to the city of Lafayette
- Encourage business development/headquarters relocation
- Provide for quality neighborhood housing and home ownership
- Encourage mixed-use development with multiple residential types
- Improve transportation, pedestrian, and bicycle safety
- Promote youth activities
- Revive neighborhood and corridor image between Lafayette and Carencro
- Exhibit our culture through use of art placemaking to represent our culture and present who we are to newcomers and visitors to our community

The Opportunity Zone and Cultural District, when combined with corridor improvements in this proposal and right-zoning, will further leverage public investments along the corridor by encouraging additional infill redevelopment and brownfield redevelopment and rehabilitation of adjacent neighborhoods.

Environmental Sustainability

Congestion Mitigation Strategies

Motor vehicles are one of the single largest sources of roadway pollution and highway congestion can have many kinds of detrimental impacts on the environment and health. The main hazards are lowered air quality, decreased water quality from stormwater runoff, and noise. Slower moving traffic, often the product of road congestion, emits more pollution than cars travelling at faster speeds. In order to mitigate the environmental impact of highway congestion along the University Avenue Corridor, this project seeks to install Complete Street conceptsinstallation of Complete Streets and implementation of intersection improvements (install roundabouts) to improve the LOS (reducing congestion) along the corridor. Complete street concepts include facilities for other travel modes than automobiles. Bus stops/shelters, sidewalks, and bike lanes are implementable parts of the University Avenue Corridor project that can reduce auto trips, alter modal splits and provide transportation alternatives not readily available – all of which contribute to reducing pollution and provide health benefits through physical activity.

Traffic analysis from the current corridor study indicated that the majority of signalized intersections in the corridor currently operated at a Level of Service (LOS) E during the AM and PM peak periods. Some queuing was observed at the studied intersections in the southbound direction during the AM peak period and in the northbound direction during the PM peak period. Roundabouts, when modeled, produced significant

improvements - generally performing at LOS A during peak periods meaning greatly reduced congestion and less idle times (see Figure 10 under Economic Competitiveness). Based on traffic analysis from the corridor study and the reduction of vehicle hours traveled as geometric improvements are installed, less congestion can equates to less emitted pollution. The reduction is vehicle hours traveled, over the analysis period, reduces both nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds released from auto emissions resulting in **$712,055** and **$200,114** discounted at 7% in value of emissions that would otherwise be released into the environment.

The first and second phases of the University Avenue project will help facilitate a private TOD development within the project area by integrating corridor and intersection improvements with the HRI Lafayette Bottle Art Loft mixed-use brownfield redevelopment, which is more fully-described below. Transit-oriented development is a type of urban development that maximizes the amount of residential, business, and leisure space within walking distance of public transportation, such as centrally located and improved bus stops. Located at the intersection of two major Lafayette Transit System (LTS) routes, the Lafayette Bottle Art Lofts includes 140 units. The Lafayette Bottle Art Lofts are at the northeastern corner of University Avenue and Cameron Street – Four Corners – with direct access to restaurants, clothing stores, grocery store, etc. within walking distance. The proximity of the development to essential goods and services as well as fronting a transit stop shows the benefits of TODs by increasing public transport ridership, reducing the use of private cars, and encouraging walking or biking to destinations.

Avoid Adverse Environmental Impacts

As proposed in this project, redevelopment and reinvestment in existing corridors are valid strategies to reduce the impact of and to avoid creating new negative environmental impacts. Redeveloping existing brownfields sites, encouraging infill development, and maximizing existing infrastructure are keys to avoiding future environmental impacts in the broader community. Infill locations with existing transportation and utility infrastructure often include brownfield sites. Redevelopment within infill locations can utilize vacant buildings, parking lots, or other underused sites for new amenities, homes, and businesses that are near existing neighborhoods. When infill development occurs near transit or employment centers, it can reduce the distance residents must drive and offers other transportation options. An additional advantage of redeveloping an existing corridor, adding safety and efficiency enhancements, and utilizing existing right-of-way is that it encourages infill and brownfield redevelopment while discouraging greenfield development on the edges of the city. Because the majority of Lafayette's remaining developable land is not within the urban core it is more prone to flooding or exists as wetlands, maximizing existing developed land is key to mitigating the impacts of greenfield development on environmentally sensitive land and improving the area's resilience to natural disasters. Redevelopment of the University Avenue Corridor accomplishes all of these objectives. Additionally, in order to mitigate the impact of new right-of-way acquisition on surrounding property, where practical, all phases of the University Avenue Corridor project will maximize use of existing right-of-way.

Brownfield Redevelopment

Smart growth land use strategies can render redevelopment more cost effective by allowing brownfield properties to be redeveloped with a mix of uses or encouraging more efficient land use. Directing infrastructure spending to roads, water, and sewer lines on and along brownfield properties can also make these sites more attractive to developers. The proposed project will provide environmental benefits by promoting brownfield redevelopment along the corridor and improving stormwater mitigation by both

examining the feasibility and incorporating green infrastructure elements into the project where practicable. Street-side improvements generally make the risk of brownfield redevelopment more attractive to potential investors. Brownfield and infill development also have the potential to be synergistic with corridor improvements; when combined, the impact on traffic congestion and road safety are often greater than either strategy alone.

Infill development within the Project Corridor is of particular interest to APC and LCG. Local officials realize the substantial infrastructure costs and that "hidden" subsidies to greenfield development are not sustainable. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), brownfield redevelopment, rather than greenfield development, results in a 32% to 57% reduction in vehicle miles traveled and a corresponding reduction in air pollution emissions and traffic congestion.[13]

With the support of LCG, the APC received a $300,000 grant from the EPA in the Fall of 2017 for an assessment of sites affected by petroleum and/or hazardous materials. The grant target area was the same Project Corridor as this proposal. Under the grant, APC compiled an inventory of potential brownfield sites along the University Avenue Corridor. The Desktop Survey of the University Avenue Corridor identified properties within these areas with the greatest potential of having environmental conditions that may complicate their redevelopment and reuse. The Desktop Survey further identified specific parcels within the project areas where Recognized Environmental Conditions might be located if a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) were to be conducted. The Desktop Survey was conducted in accordance with the recommendations and requirements of the EPA in the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Standard Practice for Environmental Site Assessments: Phase I ESA Process, ASTM E1527-13 and the All Appropriate Inquiry (AAI) Standard [40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §312]. Elements of a Phase I ESA were also completed as part of the Desktop Survey and information from the survey indicated that there are more than 70 potential brownfield sites within the project area. Redevelopment of the University Avenue Corridor would help spur the redevelopment of these potential brownfield sites. The first of these is the site of the proposed Lafayette Bottle Art Lofts. APC partnered with Groundworks USA as part of the community outreach in support of this grant. As part of the community outreach, APC conducted a series of community meetings and worked with children who attended academic programs at Bridge Ministry to facilitate a community dialogue called "Neighborhood Voices". This ethnographic work was recently recognized as a community wealth-building best practice and was included as a case study by the Mayor's Innovation project at the University of Wisconsin.

On May 18 of 2020 Lafayette Bottle Art Lofts, LLC will break ground on a $16 Million Phase I adaptive re-use of a Nationally Registered Historic Industrial Building. This affordable housing development will initially have 40 affordable housing units with a leasing preference for artists and is located at 1506 Cameron Street. The Lafayette Bottle Art Lofts

[13] "The EPA Brownfields Programs Produces Widespread Environmental and Economic Benefits, *EPA*, June 2013, https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-05/documents/brownfields-benefits-postcard.pdf.

development preserves an existing building located at the "gateway" to downtown Lafayette and UL, at Four Corners, and is a high priority development area for the city of Lafayette. This property was built in 1936 and housed a Coca-Cola bottling plant. The bottling enterprise was eventually relocated to an industrial area in the 1970's, leaving the old site underutilized and eventually vacant and blighted. The project encompasses the majority of the block at Four Corners, which currently includes a blighted motel (to be demolished), the historic bottling plant and warehouse buildings that were part of the original facility. Phase II of the development will add an additional 60 affordable housing units and represents another $18 million in private investment. The total investment in the project, a former brownfield site, will be over $34 million. The completed project will provide over 100 residential units. Additional amenities will include a shared studio space, a computer center, fitness studio, art gallery, playground, picnic area, community garden space, and an art plaza. The development will be 100% affordable for residents with family incomes at or below 60% of the area median income (AMI). A service provider will offer community services in accordance with the requirements of the Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP); the services will be provided on-site at no cost to the tenants. HRI Development, LLC, is the developer, and HRI Management, LLC will manage the property. To further incentivize brownfield redevelopment along the University Avenue Corridor, LCG coordinated with APC to have the qualified census tracts along the project area designated as Opportunity Zones as discussed in the *Opportunity Zones and Cultural District* segment above.

Stormwater Mitigation

Stormwater runoff along the University Avenue Corridor is a potential source of contamination for the many water bodies to which this runoff eventually flows. In order to mitigate the impact of stormwater runoff, this project will determine the feasibility of green infrastructure strategies and the implementation of such where practicable. The addition of a new median and potentially four roundabouts along this urban corridor presents a unique opportunity to implement green infrastructure along an existing corridor. Green infrastructure is a cost-effective, resilient approach to managing wet weather impacts that provides many community benefits. While single-purpose gray stormwater infrastructure—conventional piped drainage and water treatment systems—is designed to move urban stormwater away from the built environment, green infrastructure reduces and treats stormwater at its source while delivering environmental, social, and economic benefits. Green infrastructure can make the most of limited funds by producing multiple benefits with a single investment. These benefits include:[14]

Improved water quality	Reduced energy use and associated greenhouse gas emissions
Reduced municipal water use	Increased or improved wildlife habitat
Ground water recharge	Improved public health from reduced air pollution and increased physical activity
Flood risk mitigation for small storms	Increased recreation space
Increased resilience to climate change impacts, such as heavier rainfalls and hotter temperatures	Improved community aesthetics

[14] "City Green: Innovative Green Infrastructure Solutions for Downtowns and Infill Locations," *EPA*, May 2016, https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-06/documents/city_green_0.pdf.

Reduced ground-level ozone	Cost savings
Reduced particulate pollution	Green jobs
Reduced air temperatures in developed areas	Increased property values

Quality of Life

Increase Transportation Choices

Improvements in transit access and implementation of Complete Streets along the University Avenue Corridor will increase transportation choices for individuals and will provide more freedom regarding transportation decisions. As mentioned previously in the Project Overview section, more than one fourth of the households along the corridor lack access to an automobile and are dependent upon public transportation, walking, or biking to access critical destinations and services. The lack of sidewalks also impacts transit operations. Currently, there are a total of eight (8) transit stops flanking the sides of University Avenue within the project area. Phase 1 of the project, once completed, will add three additional bus stops along University Avenue. The transit stops are simply a transit sign bolted to a wooden telephone/electrical pole. Once sidewalks are installed, proper bus shelters can be installed with shade structure, trash receptacle, and appropriate ADA requirements.

Current transit stop above.
Improved transit stop below.

Pedestrian facilities are one of the most impactful improvements for the University Avenue Corridor project positively impacting commerce, job accessibility, and safety as well as providing a dedicated multi-modal option not currently available. Although dedicated bicycle facilities are planned for northern sections of the project corridor, limited rights-of-way do not allow for the same on the southern end of the project. Fortunately, Louisiana law does not have a law that prohibits bicycles from utilizing sidewalks,[15] effectively converting sidewalks to multi-use paths furthering connectivity and multimodal choices. Sidewalks and biking, in particular, provide benefits that can be monetized. Utilizing the population within the Project Area and analyzing certain characteristics as well as employing ratios provided by studies from the Transportation Research Board and National Cooperative Highway Research Program, monetary benefits from mobility, health savings, recreation opportunity, and reduced congestion provide an estimated **$62,691,249** in undiscounted benefits for the analysis period with **$32,195,707** discounted at 7%.

Promoting Long-Term Job Creation and Other Economic Opportunities

The implementation of Complete Streets strategies along the University Avenue Corridor will encourage use of alternate modes of transportation by enabling greater access to the local transit system and the creation of bicycle and pedestrian paths that local residents along the corridor may use to travel to and from work. Infill development in three identified catalyst sites will facilitate the creation of new jobs in these new commercial and residential developments. A developer has committed to developing a 110 unit mixed-use development (see HRI support letter in Appendix A) within catalyst site 3 at the intersection of Cameron Street and

[15] "Laws Pertaining to Bicycles," *Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development*, http://wwwsp.dotd.la.gov/Inside_LaDOTD/Divisions/Multimodal/Highway_Safety/Bicycle_Ped/Pages/La_Bicycle_Laws.aspx.

University Avenue. Additional catalyst sites are located at the intersection of Alcide Dominique Drive and Willow Street. Future intersection improvements, such as roundabouts, will facilitate better access to these sites and make them more attractive to future infill developers.

Development and Planning staff undertook a rezoning effort to align both land use and performance with the future vision of the University Avenue Corridor. The goal was to afford the development community assurances of the quality of development that would provide developer confidence to invest in the corridor. After several public meetings, staff brought an administrative rezoning to the Zoning Commission and then to Council. The area south of Willow was downzoned to a Commercial Mixed (CM) zoning district. The vision of this part of the corridor was to have more neighborhood-oriented businesses that were accessible to the surrounding neighborhoods. The CM zoning district both restricts more car-centric, intensive land uses but also has build-out requirements that provide a more walkable experience. In addition, staff drafted an overlay district for the entire corridor in order to address the frontage build out, landscaping and screening requirements, architectural requirements, sign standards, etc. to begin to have some uniformity, aesthetic improvements, walkable developments that would complement the University Avenue Corridor Project.

Expand Access to Essential Services

The proposed project improves connectivity for citizens to jobs, health care, and other critical destinations, particularly for residents living in areas that continue to disproportionately lack access and connectivity. When executed with equity in mind, a corridor that is designed with Complete Streets principles will have the potential to benefit this low-moderate-income community. Easy access to transit and other modes of alternative transportation has the potential to link residents in the neighborhoods surrounding the University Avenue Corridor to employment centers, including downtown, throughout Lafayette, link students to educational opportunities at UL and the community college, improve access to healthcare facilities, create construction and maintenance jobs, and encourage investment in areas that have suffered neglect and economic decline. In times of emergency, the University Avenue Corridor is also part of the Lafayette Parish Evacuation Route Plan and serves as a hurricane evacuation route.

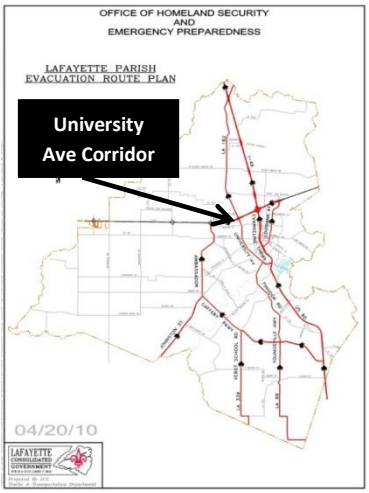


Figure 14: *Lafayette Parish Evacuation Route Plan*

Concurrent Installation of Fiber

Lafayette has a municipally-owned fiber optic service provider, LUSFiber, which provides gigabit direct fiber-to-the-home broadband services. Impoverished areas, such as the University Avenue Corridor, have been slow to adopt these services. This project could facilitate expansion of the existing fiber optic network along University Avenue Corridor all the way to the city of Carencro to the north of Interstate 10. LCG anticipates deploying an adaptive signal network that would benefit from the deployment of a fiber trunk along the University Avenue Corridor; this fiber trunk could be used to facilitate the deployment of "SMART" bus stop shelters along the corridor that would provide both free real-time route tracking kiosks and free Wi-Fi access to transit riders. Both of these improvements could help bridge the digital divide between the more affluent households in the southern part of Lafayette and the low income households along the University Avenue Corridor.

Innovation

Innovative Technologies

LCG is in the process of deploying Adaptive Signal Control Technology (ASCT) throughout its transportation network. Conventional signal systems use pre-programmed and daily signal timing schedules, however poor traffic signal timing contributes to traffic congestion and delay. ASCT adjusts the timing of red, yellow, and green lights to accommodate changing traffic patterns and eases traffic congestion. The main benefits of ASCT, over conventional signal systems, are that it can continuously distribute green light time equitably for all traffic movements, improve travel time reliability by progressively moving vehicles through green lights, reduce congestion by creating smoother flow, and prolong the effectiveness of traffic signal timing. ASCT are also kinder to the environment; using ASCT can reduce emissions of hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide due to improved traffic flow. As part of its network, LCG intends to deploy three adaptive signals within the 1.8-Mile University Avenue Corridor at the intersections of Simcoe Street, Cameron Street, and Madeline Avenue. All three adaptive signals are within this project. When combined with other anticipated adaptive signal deployments outside the project area and along the University Avenue Corridor, this system has the potential to have a dramatic positive impact on congestion within the target area for this project. Because adaptive signals require broadband access, another added benefit of the adaptive signal system is that it will facilitate the expansion of broadband fiber by the municipally-owned LUSFiber along the corridor.

Other potential benefits of fiber infrastructure that will be deployed along the University Avenue Corridor include: deployment of real-time traffic monitoring, including installation of traffic cameras along the corridor and installation of Bluetooth-enabled sensors to determine real-time traffic delays; and the potential to deploy "SMART" bus stop shelters that have real-time bus route information and provide free Wi-Fi access to commuters. This free Wi-Fi access at bus stop shelters is one strategy to help bridge the digital divide for residents in this community who lack access to broadband service. These improvements are either planned as part of this project or are integral to other ongoing and complementary projects and can be easily integrated into this project.

Innovative Project Delivery

To promote efficient and timely project delivery upon approval by LADOTD, LCG will utilize a design-build model for project delivery. According to the Design-Build Institute of America (DBIA), the design-build form of project delivery is a system of contracting whereby one entity performs both architectural/engineering and construction under one single contract. Under this arrangement, the design-builder warrants to the contracting agency that it will produce design documents that are complete and free from error. The selection process under design-build contracting can be in the form of a negotiated process involving one or more contracts or a competitive process based on some combination of price, duration, and proposed qualifications. Portions of the overall design or construction work can be performed by the design-build entity or subcontracted out to other companies that may or may not be part of the design-build team.

Potential advantages of a design-build form of project delivery include:

- Time Savings through:
    - Early contractor involvement that enables construction engineering considerations to be incorporated into the design phase and enhances the constructability of the engineered plans;
    - Fast-tracking of the design and construction portions of the project, with concurrency of design and construction phases for different segments of the project; and,

    - Elimination of a separate construction contractor bid phase following completion of the design phase.
- Cost Savings from:
    - Communication efficiencies and integration between design, construction engineering, and construction team members throughout the project schedule;
    - Reduced construction engineering and inspection (CEI) costs to the contracting agency when these quality control activities and risks are transferred to the design-builder;
    - Fewer change and extra work orders resulting from more complete field data and earlier identification and elimination of design errors or omissions that might otherwise arise during the construction phase;
    - Reduced potential for claims and litigation after project completion, as issues are resolved by the members of the design-build team; and
    - Shortened project timeline that reduces the level of staff commitment by the design-build team and motorist inconvenience due to reduced lane closures.
- Improved Quality through:
    - Greater focus on quality control and quality assurance through continuous involvement by the design team throughout project development; and
    - Project innovations uniquely fashioned by project needs and contractor capabilities.

LCG is proposing that Phases 2 and 3 of the University Avenue Corridor project will utilize a design-build form of project delivery.

Innovative Financing

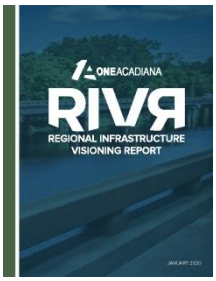
Implementing an Opportunity Zone along the University Avenue Corridor is a critical strategy necessary to realize a reduction in vehicle miles traveled and a corresponding reduction in air pollution emissions and traffic congestion. As mentioned in the *Opportunity Zones and Cultural District* section, the U.S. Census Tracts along the University Avenue Corridor were designated as Opportunity Zones. APC and LCG continue to work with local stakeholders to facilitate the formation of Opportunity Zone Funds and to facilitate OZ investment. Together APC and LCG are raising awareness of the program among local banks, financial institutions, developers/property owners, investors, and business networks to encourage the establishment of Opportunity Funds. One of the ways they have done this is by developing a prospectus for the Acadiana region. Additionally, a more granular City of Lafayette Opportunity Zone Prospectus has been developed to highlight these zones (see Appendices L and M respectively). Once these local opportunity funds have been created, APC and LCG will continue to raise awareness of the program with local entrepreneurs and high-growth companies that may be eligible for investment within the designated Opportunity Zones along the University Avenue Corridor; work with the EDA-funded LEED University Center at UL, startup incubators and accelerators, and other ecosystem partners to ready the University Avenue Corridor to take advantage of the program; work with local planners and developers to determine how this new financing model can integrate with other existing or anticipated development or infrastructure plans; liaise actively with local, regional, and national funds to ensure they are aware of eligible investment opportunities along the University Avenue Corridor; and work to integrate these designated Opportunity Zones in the University Avenue Corridor into local, regional, and state economic development marketing and outreach efforts. Central to this Opportunity

Zone marketing strategy has been the development of the www.InvestAcadiana.com website that will serve as a clearing house to connect Opportunity Zone projects, investment opportunities, and businesses along the University Avenue Corridor with potential Opportunity Zone investors and Opportunity Zone Funds.

Additionally, with an economic development district, LCG can provide direct assistance to local businesses through loans, grants or other types of business assistance to existing entities as well as new developments.

Partnership

LCG is the lead applicant, but this project requires close coordination with the AMPO, the LADOTD, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Further, there are a number of community partners who will be involved in this project. The region's economic development agencies, APC, One Acadiana and the Lafayette Economic Development Authority (LEDA), and UL have provided economic analyses for the project and will assist business recruitment and developments as well as leveraging redevelopment opportunities.



The University Avenue Corridor Project is listed in the regional chamber of commerce's (One Acadiana) report on critical infrastructure needs as a way to list projects with the highest regional priority. The report, Regional Infrastructure Visioning Report (RIVR), spotlights the University Avenue Corridor Project as the number 2 project for the region as well as ranking it highly for promoting economic development, improving quality of life and feasibility (see Appendix Y.

Environmental Risk Review

Technical Feasibility

The University Avenue Corridor Project has completed a LaDOTD Stage 0 study and analysis. A Stage 0 is the first of five stages utilized by LaDOTD for project management purposes with the final stage being construction. The Stage 0 study provided analysis on traffic design schematics/cross-sections, environmental concerns/issues, and estimates of probable cost. All cross-sections and roundabouts are designed to LaDOTD standards following applicable engineering design standards manuals (EDSM). Reducing the costs and construction time for the project was paramount and this manifested in a retrofit strategy to utilize existing rights-of-way and roadbed. The cost estimates, as provided by the consultant CSRS, Inc., built-in contingency levels of 20%. Ultimately, the Stage 0 study determined the University Avenue Corridor project was feasible and provided tangible benefits, in particular, to traffic efficiency and safety.

LCG has worked with FHWA, Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Department of Transportation (DOT), LADOTD, and AMPO on many federally-funded projects. LCG is well-versed in the importance of communication with its project partners in order to maintain positive working relationships while moving forward, keeping projects on the initial schedule and within budgetary limitations. In the past, LCG has been awarded a variety of transportation planning and project grants, including a FY14 TIGER planning grant. LCG successfully completed closeout on its TIGER grant including reports on grant activities and outcomes without

any audit findings. LCG maintains staff that have ORC credentials, has knowledge of the UPACS system and reporting through RADS.

Project Schedule

The University Avenue Corridor project has been planned and programmed for three phases. The first and second phase of the project consists of planning and engineering for a segment from Jeanne Street to Walker Road and construction of improvements at the Cameron Street and University Avenue intersection. The third phase of the project is for engineering and construction of improvements from Walker Road to Renaud Drive. The first phase of the project has been ***funded*** and is in-process for implementation. This FY20 BUILD Grant application is to fund the second and third phases of the University Avenue Corridor Project.

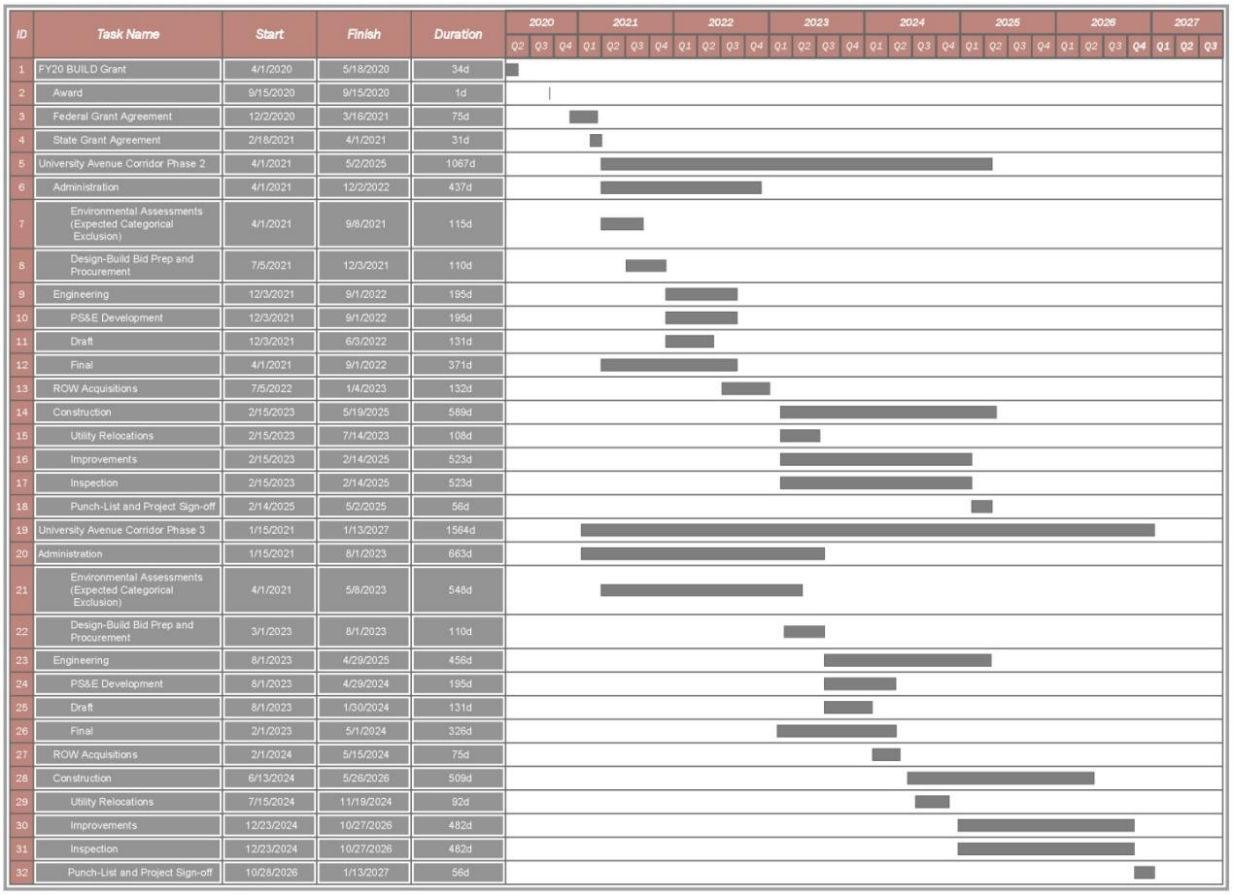
Since the project has previously completed a Stage 0 study, has been deemed feasible, and has funding dedicated to engineering and construction of Phase 1, a state and federal project number has already been assigned that will also be used for further phases and construction activities. It is important to note that assignment of a project number means that project is listed on the local MPO TIP and state TIP (STIP). In summary, if awarded BUILD grant funds, the University Avenue Corridor Project will move forward to bid on an expedited timeline and not have to wait for initial local and state administrative procedures.

The majority of construction activities are slated to be within the current roadbed and associated right-of-way. The Stage 0 report did indicate minimal ROW needs for the roundabout at Willow Street intersection. Any right-of-way acquisitions for this project will be done in accordance with 49 CFR part 24, 23 CFR part 710, and applicable LaDOTD right-of-way acquisition guidelines.

Table 3: *Project Timelines*

Activity	*Phase 2*
Begin Project & Environmental	2021
End Environmental	2021
Engineering	2021
Begin Construction	2023
End Construction	2025

Activity	*Phase 3*
Begin Project & Environmental	2021
End Environmental	2023
Engineering	2023
Begin Construction	2024
End Construction	2027



ID	Task Name	Start	Finish	Duration
1	FY20 BUILD Grant	4/1/2020	5/18/2020	34d
2	Award	9/15/2020	9/15/2020	1d
3	Federal Grant Agreement	12/2/2020	3/16/2021	75d
4	State Grant Agreement	2/18/2021	4/1/2021	31d
5	University Avenue Corridor Phase 2	4/1/2021	5/2/2025	1067d
6	Administration	4/1/2021	12/2/2022	437d
7	Environmental Assessments (Expected Categorical Exclusion)	4/1/2021	9/8/2021	115d
8	Design-Build Bid Prep and Procurement	7/5/2021	12/3/2021	110d
9	Engineering	12/3/2021	9/1/2022	195d
10	PS&E Development	12/3/2021	9/1/2022	195d
11	Draft	12/3/2021	6/3/2022	131d
12	Final	4/1/2021	9/1/2022	371d
13	ROW Acquisitions	7/5/2022	1/4/2023	132d
14	Construction	2/15/2023	5/19/2025	589d
15	Utility Relocations	2/15/2023	7/14/2023	108d
16	Improvements	2/15/2023	2/14/2025	523d
17	Inspection	2/15/2023	2/14/2025	523d
18	Punch-List and Project Sign-off	2/14/2025	5/2/2025	56d
19	University Avenue Corridor Phase 3	1/15/2021	1/13/2027	1564d
20	Administration	1/15/2021	8/1/2023	663d
21	Environmental Assessments (Expected Categorical Exclusion)	4/1/2021	5/8/2023	548d
22	Design-Build Bid Prep and Procurement	3/1/2023	8/1/2023	110d
23	Engineering	8/1/2023	4/29/2025	456d
24	PS&E Development	8/1/2023	4/29/2024	195d
25	Draft	8/1/2023	1/30/2024	131d
26	Final	2/1/2023	5/1/2024	326d
27	ROW Acquisitions	2/1/2024	5/15/2024	75d
28	Construction	6/13/2024	5/26/2026	509d
29	Utility Relocations	7/15/2024	11/19/2024	92d
30	Improvements	12/23/2024	10/27/2026	482d
31	Inspection	12/23/2024	10/27/2026	482d
32	Punch-List and Project Sign-off	10/28/2026	1/13/2027	56d

Figure 15: *Project Schedule - Timeline; see also Appendix K for full-size view*

Required Approvals

Environmental Permits and Reviews

A LADOTD Stage 0 has been completed for this project, resulting in the determination that the project is feasible. LCG has received a Categorical Exclusion (CATEX) for portions of the Project Corridor (See Appendix X); in particular, all improvements from Phase 1 into portions of Phase 2 – design and engineering from Jeanne Street to Gilman Road and construction of improvements at the University Avenue and Cameron Street intersection. Further, APC applied on LCG's behalf to have the University Avenue Corridor project segmented into phases of independent utility to allow for phased project advancement in spite of not having the full funding required to complete the project. LaDOTD and FHWA approved segments of independent utility for the project in November 2019 (See Appendix X). Additionally, there are suspected brownfields along this corridor, but those sites will not be needed for the project or right-of-way.

State and Local Approvals

Through its adoption of PlanLafayette, Lafayette's comprehensive plan, as well as the permission to apply for this grant, LCG has exhibited its support for the University Avenue Corridor project. Additionally, AMPO and LADOTD have been notified that a FY20 BUILD grant application was submitted for this project. Because the University Avenue Corridor Project has completed a Stage 0 report, a state and federal project number has been assigned, with the project number being utilized for all further activities on the University Avenue

Corridor Project. The project is listed on the local MPO TIP and STIP as H.013025 - LA 182. The environmental analysis and corresponding Stage 0 report can be found in Appendix W.

Federal Transportation Requirements Affecting State and Local Planning

Should a BUILD Grant be awarded to LCG, the AMPO would amend the current scope of the University Avenue Corridor project contained in the most recent TIP in the amount received, which will result in a corresponding amendment to the STIP. An excerpt from the local TIP is included in Appendix R.

Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies

In reference to the Stage 0 report (Appendix W), there have been no major barriers, and the project has been determined as feasible. Upon completion of a full environmental review, LCG expects to receive a Categorical Exclusion, because minimal right-of-way will be necessary. Further, there have been no major environmental issues or concerns noted in Stage 0 that will be affected by the project's construction.

Concerning mitigation strategies to be employed during the extent of this project, LCG intends to utilize traffic control tactics, temporary signs, and barricades to efficiently and effectively manage the flow of traffic. LCG is also considering a strategy that was used for certain locally-initiated roadway projects where a property owner is asked to provide a ten-foot sidewalk servitude to LCG outside of the right-of-way to reduce right-of-way costs and acquisition time and expense. At this point in the project, the servitude would not hamper current or future development and could eliminate the need to relocate all the utilities fronting the roadway. This action alone could save upwards of $2.3 million on Phases 2 and 3. Based on consultation with the contractor who prepared the cost estimates for all phases of the project, CSRS Inc., a 20% contingency provides coverage for inflation through 2025.

Benefit-Cost Analysis

An examination of the monetized benefits resulting from the construction of the entire University Avenue Corridor project relative to the project's cost reveals that it yields a benefit of $16.70 for every $1.00 invested. Based on a seven-percent (7%) annual discount rate project benefit-cost ratio is $7.61 in benefits for every $1.00 invested. These numbers do not include the significant permanent benefits expected to accrue from the property and private development as well as additional sales tax and property taxes mentioned in the grant narrative. It is grounded in a conservative set of assumptions underlying the project's benefits and costs. A full accounting of all the projects benefits and costs can be found in the Benefit Cost Analysis spreadsheets in Appendix C.

Table 4: *BCA Benefits*

BCA Summary	Entire Corridor	
	Undiscounted	Discounted 7%
Total Benefits	$477,768,955	$161,820,224
Total Costs	$29,123,705	$21,672,047
Benefit-Cost Ratio	16.40	7.47

Federal Wage Rate Requirements Certification

Lafayette CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT

Josh Guillory
Mayor-President / Maire-Président

May 6, 2020

RE: FEDERAL WAGE RATE REQUIREMENTS

I, Joshua Guillory, on behalf of the City and Parish of Lafayette, Louisiana, as an applicant for the U.S. DOT BUILD Discretionary Grant Program funding, do hereby certify we will comply with the Federal Wage Rate requirements, where applicable, as set forth in the U. S. Code, Title 40, Subtitle II, Part A, Chapter 31, Subchapter IV (Federal Wage Rate requirements), if awarded FY20 BUILD funding for the University Avenue Corridor Project.

If you have any questions, please contact Anne Famoso at (337) 291-8013.

Sincerely,

Joshua Guillory
Lafayette Mayor-President

bp

c: Anne Famoso

705 West University Avenue | P.O. Box 4017-C | Lafayette, LA 70502 | p.337.291.8300 | f.337.291.8399 MayorPresidentsOffice@lafayettela.gov