Monroe Street Corridor Project

GRANT APPLICATION

USDOT National Infrastructure Investments:

2018 FY BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grants
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Executive Summary

The City of Ruston in partnership with Louisiana Tech University is requesting $17,929,835 in FY 2018 BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant Capital Investment, as part of an estimated total cost of $22.3 million dollars for the Monroe Street Corridor Project. Using a thirty-year analysis period to anticipate a return of benefits, this project is forecasted to yield over $2.87 in net public benefits per every $1 invested.

The Monroe Street Corridor Project is a critical component of a broader collaboration between the City of Ruston and Louisiana Tech University to remake and redevelop the core of our city as a hub for technology-based economic development and create quality of life amenities around transportation, health, safety, culture, and recreation in an environmentally sustainable manner conducive to a 21st century knowledge economy workforce and economic base. The Project is composed of seven interconnected multimodal transportation components, which will increase efficiency and safety between Louisiana Tech University, the University’s Enterprise Campus, downtown Ruston, and the I-20 corridor.

The innovative design of the Monroe Street Corridor Project includes “complete streets” that integrate road diets, incorporates existing brownfield sites, and utilizes the low-impact design principles of zeroscaping, bioswales, and LED lighting. The proposed project will also connect sections of the Rock Island Greenway, the backbone of a citywide active transportation system.

Growth of economic activity in the Louisiana Tech Enterprise Campus, growth of the university student and faculty community, and related growth in downtown Ruston and along the U. S. Interstate 20 Corridor has put great pressure on the transportation infrastructure in the core of the City. These developments have created significant safety risks and transportation inefficiencies which are expected to increase significantly in the next several years as new buildings and expanded companies come on line in the Enterprise Campus, as enrollment at Louisiana Tech continues to grow, and as complimentary economic activity increases.

Over the last decade significant investments in transportation, technology, and economic development infrastructure have been made by the City of Ruston, Louisiana Tech, the State of Louisiana, and other partners in the core of the City guided by the City’s strategic plan and the university’s master plan. The next phase of that investment will soon launch with the City’s new $80 million dollar infrastructure initiative. We are asking the U.S. Department of Transportation to partner with us to fund one of the critical near-term components of our overall infrastructure enhancements—the Monroe Street Corridor Project—to create an efficient, sustainable transportation infrastructure for our city that promotes safety, health, quality of life, and technology-based economic development.
Background

Ruston, Louisiana is a small city located along the I-20 Corridor in north central Louisiana, about an hour’s drive from the Arkansas, Texas and Mississippi state lines. Ruston is the Lincoln Parish seat and home to Louisiana Tech University, one of the state’s preeminent research institutions and a major regional economic driver which is producing a 21st century workforce and attracting technology-based economic development to its Enterprise Campus and the surrounding region.

Ruston is a rural community with a population of 22,287. Ruston inspires intense local pride, embodied every fall in the crowds that turn out for Ruston High and Louisiana Tech football games and every summer for the annual Louisiana Peach Festival, honoring of one of the city’s most famous exports. While the regional economy has historically been heavily dependent on the oft-volatile oil and natural gas markets and the timber industry, Ruston is a focal point of collaborative technology-based economic development projects between the City, its partner Louisiana Tech University, and other public and private partners in the region. The growth in the technology sector in Ruston and along the I-20 Corridor in north Louisiana has been substantial over the last ten years with much greater opportunities emerging.

While Louisiana Tech—as the region’s only Tier 1 National Research Institution in a 200 mile radius—has partnered to attract and support the growth of key regional leaders outside Ruston such as CenturyLink and IBM in Monroe (30 miles east) and General Dynamics IT and Air Force Global Strike in Bossier City (50 miles west), a significant share of recent technology-based economic development has been focused in the University’s Enterprise Campus—adjacent to the main campus and located in the core of Ruston. New jobs and business focused in defense technologies, digital marketing, software development, health IT, cyber-security, bio and nano-tech, and engineering design have been created next to the University. To support the growth of these companies and seize the opportunities for even greater growth will require substantial transportation and utility infrastructure improvements. The Monroe Street Corridor Project is directly designed to support that growth and enhance prospects for future growth.

The City of Ruston and Louisiana Tech University have been engaged in a decade-long collaboration to remake and redevelop the core of Ruston to make it a hub for technology-based economic development and create the quality of life amenities around transportation, health, safety, culture, and recreation in an environmentally sustainable manner conducive to a 21st century knowledge economy workforce and economic base. That city core lies just south of U.S. Interstate 20 and is dissected by U.S. Highway 167. It contains our historic downtown, core local government facilities, major retail and lifestyle businesses, 5 large public parks interconnected through 6 miles of active transportation infrastructure in the form of a 100’ wide linear park and sidewalks, major sports and event facilities, historic residential neighborhoods, Ruston High School, Delta Community College, the nationally renowned Louisiana Center for the Blind, and the major economic driver in our region—Louisiana Tech University and the Louisiana Tech Enterprise Campus.

The project proposed here—the Monroe Street Corridor Project (the “MSCP” or “Project”)—is the latest of many improvements that are remaking our city, and it is part of a major new initiative around transportation and technology infrastructure that will enhance Ruston’s competitiveness for the kinds of companies and employees that are driving technology-led economic growth in our region and around the world.
Over the last decade over $98.5 million dollars have been invested by the City of Ruston, Louisiana Tech University, the State of Louisiana, and various private partners to rebuild Ruston’s historic downtown pedestrian transportation infrastructure, deploy high speed internet throughout Ruston, transform six miles of abandoned railroad bed into a bike and pedestrian greenway that connects the entire north-south length of Ruston, develop the University’s Enterprise Campus that houses the high-tech corporate partners of the University and other knowledge economy companies from the region, and equally important to develop programs and capacity for generating a high-skilled workforce to meet the growing needs of our regional and national employers.

In addition, in April of 2016, the citizens of Ruston passed a ¾ cent local sales tax – called Moving Ruston Forward—to undertake a dramatic enhancement of water, sewer and transportation infrastructure as well as fund economic development projects in the core of our City. As a result, $80 million has been earmarked for renovations to major storm water collection systems, 35 miles of street overlay, 3 miles of new road construction, the 6-mile greenway which is the backbone of a city-wide active transportation system, a 36 field regional sports complex, AMI water meters, and other infrastructure improvement opportunities directly focused on quality of life, efficiency, safety, health, and economic competitiveness.

The MSCP is a critical component of this broader initiative in that it is a connecting piece for many of the recently completed projects and those currently planned over the next few years. The Project is composed of seven interconnected multimodal transportation components, which will increase efficiency and safety between Louisiana Tech University, downtown Ruston, and the I-20 corridor. The innovative design of the MSCP includes “complete streets” that integrate road diets, incorporates existing brownfield sites, and utilizes the low-impact design principals of zeroscaping, bioswales, and LED lighting. The proposed project will also connect sections of the Rock Island Greenway, the backbone of a citywide active transportation system. In addition, Louisiana Tech will utilize the area around the Enterprise Campus to create a Smart Cities Innovation Testbed by installing a network of wireless sensor motes to disseminate data collected by sensors in underground drainage facilities, above ground environmental sensors, and sensors on smart lights and traffic signals will incorporate cameras and radar sensors to measure distance and velocity to facilitate Smart Traffic controls. The creation of this testbed will provide repeatable, scalable, and sustainable research that can be utilized by other entities throughout the United States.

At the convergence zone between Louisiana Tech and downtown Ruston, the project area exhibits significant safety risks for all user modes - lacking accommodations for people traveling outside of automobiles, insufficient drainage that results in flooding and poor road conditions, deteriorating road surfaces, and nonexistent or insufficient street lighting contribute to the unsafe nature of the area. The BUILD investment in this Project is essential for addressing these needs. The City of Ruston, and Louisiana Tech, consider the Project as a vital component to the long-term enhancements to the core of Ruston enabling the emerging growth opportunities associated with the Louisiana Tech Enterprise Campus and the related activity. When the Project is completed and connected to all the other infrastructure improvements recently completed and soon to be underway it will be transformative for our community’s goal of building a transportation infrastructure and quality of life to enable us to attract and retain the most talented workers and most competitive companies in the world.

In 2009, Louisiana Tech created and began the development of its Enterprise Campus which utilizes a significant portion of its main campus. The Enterprise Campus is located in a master-planned, mixed-use
district designed to house the University’s corporate partners and other technology-based companies emerging and attracted to the region. The district plan also includes housing and retail development to support the presence and growth of major employers. As the Enterprise Campus has grown—now with nine companies and over 700 employees, and as the University has grown to record enrollment with plans and expectations to continue significant growth, and as the demand for new construction in the district has increased (four new buildings planned with over 3,500 employees), such as resulted in extensive pressure on existing infrastructure. The MSCP is a critical near-term component to support that growth.

Louisiana Tech recorded its largest enrollment in school history this past academic year with 12,873 students, an increase of 17% since 2013. In addition to students there are 1,466 faculty and staff. Taking into account the 2,450 beds provided on Louisiana Tech’s campus, there are approximately 11,889 people, or 82% of the campus population commuting to and from campus on a daily basis.

Perhaps the foremost impact of this significant growth is the increased strain being placed on the aging transportation infrastructure. As new buildings continue to replace old dormitories and parking lots, and the student body continues to grow, students, faculty and visitors must drive further, and spend more time commuting which compounds the increasing congestion surrounding the campus. In addition, the Enterprise Campus does not have direct access to the I-20 corridor. Currently to access the Enterprise Campus from anywhere north of I-20, one has to either drive through downtown Ruston, crossing multiple pedestrian routes, or go through the main entrance of the campus on the west side and travel along Railroad Avenue, a campus street with heavy pedestrian traffic. This congestion not only severely impacts Louisiana Tech, but also local residents and commercial traffic attempting to travel to work, school, and their residences. Severely compounding the situation is the fact that a large number of blind and visually impaired persons commute by foot on a daily basis throughout town and to and from University campus due to the nationally recognized rehabilitation programs of the Louisiana Center for the Blind located in the heart of downtown Ruston.

In the last five years Louisiana Tech and the City of Ruston have begun to address the exponentially increasing demand for safe, multimodal, transportation alternatives. Despite significant progress, the City's overall transportation system is still unsafe and inefficient and primarily automobile-centric—a major obstacle to our economic development goals. There are currently no dedicated bicycling facilities in the Project area near Louisiana Tech, the Enterprise Campus, or Ruston’s downtown area, and the existing sidewalk network is fragmented and of inconsistent quality. This single-mode transportation system contributes to chronic inactivity and related health problems; exacerbates inequality by restricting access to health care, jobs, education, and other everyday needs and limits amenities to those with access to and the ability to use motor vehicles. This results in a sprawling development pattern that
reinforces automobile-dependency, reduces safety, and discourages walking and cycling for transportation and recreation.

The core of Ruston contains a wealth of commercial, institutional and increasingly residential activity. As a result, it is a place with heavy foot and automotive traffic. Non-motorized traffic is only expected to increase as Tech continues to increase enrollment, builds out its Enterprise Campus, and planned residential and commercial investment in the vicinity continues to mushroom. In response the City now requires complete streets be built whenever feasible for new developments. Nonetheless, these challenges will continue to compound until a safe alternate route for bicyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles is established to access the eastern side of Louisiana Tech’s campus. The Monroe Street Corridor Project will directly address these problems.

A centerpiece of the grand transportation and quality of life strategy is the development of an active transportation system anchored by the Rock Island Greenway—a 6-mile active transportation path currently under construction that spans the entire north-south expanse of the city and connects with downtown and the Enterprise Campus. This path will result in more people walking and biking to the core of the City. The Greenway is a shared-use path and linear park that will serve as the keystone of an appealing and safe active transportation system that enables and encourages such transit. The Greenway and its planned connectors will form a web across the City, improving transportation by establishing unprecedented opportunities for active transportation by linking neighborhoods, Ruston’s revitalized downtown, Louisiana Tech, the Enterprise Campus, and Delta Community College, and beautiful natural settings. The Greenway bisects the City, running north/south along the western edge of downtown and the eastern edge of University campus. Demand for and interest in utilization of active
and healthy transportation modes by current students and staff has increased significantly with the advent of the Greenway. Many prospective students see multimodal infrastructure as a prerequisite for enrollment. As is, a significant concentration of students and employees live in close proximity to campus yet all surrounding roadways lack bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and have high vehicle speeds, so bicycle/pedestrian modes are largely considered unsafe. This Project will alleviate the safety concerns and help encourage the entire campus community to choose a healthier and more cost effective mode of travel when commuting to and through campus.

Project Description

The MSCP is composed of seven interconnected multimodal transportation infrastructure components that will increase the efficiency and safety between Louisiana Tech, the Enterprise Campus, downtown Ruston and Interstate 20. The Project incorporates reliable multimodal transportation improvements that span over 2.2 miles and includes the construction of new two lane roads across existing “brownfield” sites while also rehabilitating existing roads, sidewalks and streetscapes.

Each outlined project component has independent utility and will alleviate issues that the City currently experiences, and the completion of all project components will extend benefits far beyond the limits of the improvements.

This Project will improve or eliminate highway crossings, while reducing the user’s dependency of heavily trafficked state maintained routes (see Appendix C). The completion of this Project and the new north/south corridor will create new traffic patterns which will relieve the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (“LADOTD”) of significant maintenance responsibilities due to wear along U. S. Highway 167 and other state routes. Implementation of this Project is pursuant to guidelines established by the LADOTD “Louisiana Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.” In addition to the traffic related benefits, both City owned electrical infrastructure and fiber optic network will be expanded to any portion of the Project area that lacks access to these essential services. Any existing overhead portions of these utilities will be upgraded and relocated underground, while the City continues to cultivate its $6.5 million investment by increasing the range and reliability of such utilities.

This Project will deploy innovative technologies that were developed by Louisiana Tech to create the Smart Cities Innovation Testbed within the Enterprise Campus. This area will provide valuable research that will be a repeatable, scalable, and sustainable platform by which the safety, health, and quality of life of the local populace will be improved.

This Project is still currently under review for NEPA compliance, however the Categorical Exclusion review should be concluded prior to the BUILD 2018 announcement on December 18, 2018.

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<td>- New Road Surface</td>
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<td>- New Drainage Facilities</td>
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<td>- 5’ to 12’ wide sidewalks and multiuse paths</td>
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<td>- Energy Efficient LED lighting</td>
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<td>- Relocation of electrical and fiber optic utilities underground</td>
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<td>- Removal of Hazardous parking</td>
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Project Location

The proposed northern terminus of the Project is located along the South Interstate-20 service road (32° 32' 22.73"N, 92° 38' 36" W) and extends southward to the intersection of South Monroe Street and U.S. Highway 80 (32° 31’ 25.75” N, 92° 38’ 28.49” W). The western terminus of the Project will be the west end of the proposed Louisiana Tech Railroad Trail at Hideaway Park (32° 31’ 48.57” N, 92° 39’ 22.32” W). This Project is not located within a 2010 Census designated Urbanized area.
Proposed Project Components

Under the BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grants, improvements are proposed to be made to the following transportation components:

1. N. Monroe St
2. Downtown Monroe St
3. Dan Reneau Dr.
4. S. Monroe St, W. Texas Ave, W. Louisiana Ave, Oil Mill
5. S. Homer St.
6. W. Mississippi Ave.
7. Louisiana Tech Railroad Multiuse Path

1) N. Monroe St.

This component of improvements will involve the construction of 3600’ of new two lane road that will connect the I-20 corridor to Downtown Ruston at LA Highway 150.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

– Incongruous road, road users currently have to navigate several problematic intersections, steep inclines/declines, and avoid deep open ditches
– Roadways and surrounding intersections are marked by significant safety risk factors for all user modes
– Roadways lack key accommodations for people traveling outside of automobiles, no sidewalks or marked crosswalks in the vicinity of the project

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The road will incorporate two 12’ travel lanes complete with subsurface drainage and concrete curb and gutter. Behind the curbs there will be 5’ of green space separating the road from a 12’ wide ADA compliant multiuse path along the western edge and a 5’ wide ADA compliant sidewalk along the eastern side. Aesthetic street lighting will be installed as indicated by the photometric study. Existing overhead electrical and fiber optic telecommunication utilities will be relocated underground, improving the service and reliability of these public utilities. Improvements will also include the removal of hazardous parking and unnecessary commercial driveways, and the establishment of new pedestrian crossings at Highway 150.

The 12’ wide multiuse path designed into this component will connect to the existing phase of the multiuse path directly to the north, and is an integral part of the City’s active transportation system that is outlined in “Ruston Re-Imagined”, the City’s current master plan.
The City has invested approximately $1.141 million in the design and environmental impact study of this project component. The estimated cost for construction and construction administration and testing is $5.45 million.

COMPONENT UTILITY

The completion of this segment will create a new north/south corridor, establish a route for safe multimodal traffic, and help complete the conversion and repurposing of the formerly abandoned brownfield of the historic Rock Island Railway as the “trunk line” of Ruston’s new active transportation corridor. All of these improvements are outlined in “Ruston Re-Imagined” master plan. The construction plans and specifications for this component have been finalized and the necessary right of way has been acquired. The City is now awaiting funds that can be immediately utilized to complete this shovel ready component.

2) Downtown Monroe St.

This component of the Project will unify the improvements being made in the new north/south corridor and the existing and future improvements to our downtown core district.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

- Only 25% of the roadway is constructed with sidewalks. These existing sidewalks are constructed adjacent to parking facilities that allow vehicles to encroach into the walkway.
- The presence of parking facilities that must back into the existing right of way place bicyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles in hazardous conditions.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The improvements will commence at the southern terminus of the previously described component, Hwy 150, and span two blocks, approximately 675’ south, to the intersection of Monroe St. and W. Park Ave.

Since 2009 the City has made improvements to its Downtown Core District including road surface improvements, electrical and fiber optic utilities underground relocation, drainage facilities upgrade, and revitalization of the streetscape in the downtown area. Additionally, the City has invested over $6.5 million in a high speed fiber optic network as previously mentioned. The improvements proposed in this component will match the previous aesthetic improvements made in Downtown Ruston, and provide new 8’ to 10’ wide ADA compliant sidewalks (critical to the continued national recognized success of the Louisiana Center for the Blind), striped and signed crosswalks at each intersection, resting benches, LED lighting, trash receptacles, while upgrading both pedestrian and vehicular safety with the replacement of hazardous parking that backs into travel lanes with pedestrian facilities.
The City has allotted $92,950 to the engineering and design of this component, with all of the alterations being completed in the existing right of way. The cost estimate for this construction, construction administration, and required testing is $1.19 million.

COMPONENT UTILITY

Without the funding of the other project components, the completion of this portion would still greatly benefit the public by eliminating dangerous and problematic parking, replacing aging asphaltic road surface, establishing 8’ to 10’ wide ADA compliant sidewalks on both sides of the road, and incorporating the same streetscape and amenities that are consistent with the previous improvements in the historic downtown Ruston area.

3) Dan Reneau Dr.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

- Wide roadway creates hazards at all road crossings, creating multiple points of conflict between vehicles as well as between vehicles and those utilizing active transportation modes
- Pedestrian facilities are in poor condition with multiple vehicular crossings that can be consolidated to limited points of access
- Roadway lacks key accommodations for people traveling outside of automobiles, no sidewalks or marked crosswalks in the vicinity of the projects

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The improvements along Dan Reneau Dr. will be completed along 1230’ segment between the proposed improvements along S. Monroe St. and completed enhancements at Homer Street. All improvements will be made in the existing right of way due to an innovative road diet plan. The road diet will reduce the existing road from four lanes to two lanes with the incorporation of bike lanes between the travel area and the curb line. The improvements will also include the replacement of existing sidewalks with 10’ wide ADA compliant sidewalks, while also limiting the number of existing vehicular crossing points to prevent incidents involving vehicles and pedestrians utilizing other active transportation modes. The implementation of the proposed road diet will allow a high volume of traffic flow through a smaller footprint while increasing the safety and promoting the use of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. The
reduction of the width of the road will also accommodate safer cross connections, providing safer perpendicular traffic intersections and limiting threats to all users.

This will also be an area dedicated to the **Smart Cities Innovation Testbed**. This component will have sensors installed to measure and report ongoing conditions in the area that can be used to make real time decisions, and also provide documentation to public officials in other cities and university researchers so that this testbed can be replicated based on data provided on the Louisiana Tech website.

The City has allotted $135,665 to the design of this component of the Project. Property acquisition for this portion is not necessary due to the innovative design strategy of incorporating a road diet. The cost estimate for construction of this section, construction administration, and required testing is $1.913 million.

**COMPONENT UTILITY**

The reconfiguration of this road is critical to Louisiana Tech and its ability to complete key sections of its master plan (See Appendix D), while the updated infrastructure will make the area more appealing to future businesses and further the economic growth of this area. The completion of this transportation infrastructure will complement the new $35 million College of Engineering and Sciences Building that is currently under construction. The new engineering building will provide 135,000 square feet of new classrooms, offices, and lab space to continue innovative technologies on the Louisiana Tech Enterprise Campus. The funding of this component will create new and enhanced access for all modes of traffic in this area of campus, as well as provide valuable information from the **Smart Cities Innovation Testbed**. This component will establish the first section of dedicated bike lanes in the City and on Louisiana Tech’s campus and set a precedent for innovative strategies and the complete streets model that will be followed when feasible in the future.

4) S. Monroe St, W. Texas Ave, W. Louisiana Ave, Oil Mill

This portion of the Project consists of the rehabilitation of approximately 4300’ of roadway across eleven (11) blocks. Five (5) of those blocks will represent the southern segment of the proposed north/south corridor, while the other six (6) will extend to the University campus, tying into previous street and utility infrastructure improvements.

**CURRENT CONDITIONS**

- Insufficient drainage facilities result in flooding and poor road conditions.
- Roadway lacks infrastructure for all active transportation modes, specifically in the location of the Louisiana Tech Early Elementary Education Center.
- Existing road surface has multiple locations of failures, associated to the roads age and failing subsurface support.
- Existing street lighting is insufficient, and intersections lack appropriate striping and signage for safe pedestrian and bicyclist use.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The new improvements will include the elimination of hazardous potholes, adding curb and gutter and installing new subsurface drainage, relocating all overhead utilities underground, and adding ADA compliant 10’ wide multiuse paths along both sides of S. Monroe St. Sidewalks, 6.5’ wide, will be installed behind parallel parking, and new curb and gutter and environmentally friendly bioswale landscaping will be added along W. Texas Ave., W. Louisiana Ave., and Oil Mill St. Energy efficient LED lighting will be installed as designated by a photometric study. These enhancements are in conjunction with plans of major telecommunications providers to begin installation and expansion of 5G coverage in this area, as well as setting up a network necessary for autonomous vehicles.

The improvements along S. Monroe St. would finalize the necessary improvements outlined by “Ruston Re-Imagined”, while the other improvements would achieve major milestones set forth in the master plan for the University. The improvements along W. Texas Ave. are also critical for the safety of the young students at the Louisiana Tech Early Elementary Education Center. This component will also deploy innovative technologies in the Smart Cities Innovation Testbed.

The City has allotted $100,000 to the design of this component of the Project. Our project partner, Louisiana Tech, will donate any necessary property as an in-kind match. The City will be responsible for acquiring any additional property necessary if this component of the project is selected for funding. The cost estimate for construction, construction administration, and required testing is $5.733 million.

COMPONENT UTILITY

The completion of this component will accommodate safer facilities in the Enterprise Campus, including the new engineering building, and the Early Childhood Education Center, along with the completion of major portions of both Louisiana Tech’s and the City of Ruston’s master plans. The completion of this infrastructure is paramount to the continued success of Louisiana Tech’s Enterprise Campus and the development and innovation of new technologies. These improvements will make it possible to facilitate the development of new technologies by the telecommunications and cyber space industries, as the University continues to provide research and other resources for the advancement of these industries. This section is also paramount to the quality of life of the sprawling lower income community that is connected by the previously completed portion of the Monroe Street Corridor and the ongoing phases of the Rock Island Greenway expansion. Upon completion of this component, residents of the
underserved area will have safe pedestrian access to high quality jobs around the Louisiana Tech campus
and downtown Ruston.

5) S. Homer St.
CURRENT CONDITIONS

- Wide lane widths increase the perceived road speed, as well as lengthen the conflict areas, factors
  consistent with dangerous roadways and intersections
- New student housing and parking recently completed opposite of university classroom and office
  buildings has significantly increased the number of pedestrians crossing the road.
- Insufficient subsurface drainage infrastructure contributes to unsafe
  road conditions and downstream flooding during rain events.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

This component will reduce the existing lane widths from 15’ to 11’. Matching adjacent improvements,
this component will construct parallel parking along the travel lanes, new curb and gutter, environmentally
friendly bioswale landscaping, and 6.5’ wide sidewalks. The reclamation of this right of way will allow
pedestrians to safely travel from the newly constructed high density student housing and parking areas on
the east side of Homer Street to the multiple buildings dedicated to the College of Engineering located on
the west side of Homer Street.

With the necessary upgrades to be made to the underground drainage system, this area will also use
sensors integrated into the Smart Cities Innovation Testbed to monitor potential flooding conditions and
give officials real-time data to make informed decisions regarding the public’s safety.

The City of Ruston has pledged $129,800 for the engineering and design. Like Dan Reneau Ave, the
acquisition of additional property will not be necessary due to the innovative design implemented in this
component. The cost estimate for this section is $2.028 million.

COMPONENT UTILITY

One major improvement will be the renovation of the subsurface drainage infrastructure. The upgraded
drainage facilities will increase capacity of the drainage while reducing the serious flooding issues that
local residents experience during weather events. In addition to these improvements we propose parallel
parking and a new streetscape that is consistent with the updated portions of Homer Street. New street lighting will
appropriately illuminate the area, while the new sidewalks will give pedestrians safe walking areas
outside the influence of traffic.

The independent funding of this component will alleviate dangerous flood patterns that currently plague
the local community. Additionally, the reduced lane widths and the installation of sidewalks and
streetscape will make the route safer for all users.
6) W. Mississippi Ave.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

- The deteriorating roadway quality and insufficient drainage facilities create hazardous environments all user modes.
- The lack of sidewalks and marked crosswalks promote unsafe conditions to non-motorized users.
- These unsafe conditions especially impact the disproportionate percentage of visually impaired and blind persons in the local population that attend the university and/or participate in rehabilitation and training programs provided by the Louisiana Center for the Blind.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

This component of the proposed corridor improvements will extend the proposed enhancements along the new north/south corridor approximately 1800’ west to Louisiana Tech student housing. Currently, there is no pedestrian infrastructure from the Downtown Ruston area to the high density university housing complex. The completion of these basic improvements will bridge the existing gap and provide a safe conduit for all users.

The eastern terminus of this component will intersect the proposed project improvement in Downtown Ruston, previously defined on page 6 as the Downtown Monroe Street. While the western extent will terminate at the intersection of Everett Street and W. Mississippi avenue, on Louisiana Tech’s campus. The improvements will include replacing aging asphaltic road surface, making necessary upgrades to the existing storm water collection system, adding 8’ wide sidewalks on both sides of the road, and placing the overhead electrical and fiber optic infrastructure underground, installing energy efficient LED lighting, and extending the streetscape amenities that currently exist in Downtown Ruston. The City of Ruston has pledged $150,000 to the design and property acquisition for this portion, which will begin upon the project’s selection. The cost estimate for this section’s construction, construction administration, and required testing is $1.63 million.

COMPONENT UTILITY

There is currently only one bridge dedicated to the non-motorized users which crosses the highly trafficked Kansas City Southern Railway line. This line has operates through the heart of downtown Ruston and separates the central Louisiana Tech Campus from major student housing developments, all
university sporting venues, the campus intramural complex and the majority of Techs panhellenic houses. Upon this components completion pedestrians and bicyclists will be able to safely access this bridge, making passage across the rail line exponentially safer and easier to access this active transportation infrastructure. The funding of this component is critical to the safety of anyone moving between the downtown area and Louisiana Tech’s campus.

7) Louisiana Tech Railroad Multiuse Path

Current Conditions

- The Kansas City Southern Railroad (KCSRR) bisects Ruston and Louisiana Tech Campus
- The railroads right of way is 150’ wide, however it only utilizes the inner most 60’
- Existing pedestrian facilities along Hwy LA 150 are more narrow than new regulations allow, in close proximity to the highway, and not wide enough for both pedestrians and bicyclists to use simultaneously.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Louisiana Tech has pledged $300,000 for the design and engineering of this component. With an estimated cost of $3 million this multiuse path will extend from the western extent of the W. Mississippi Ave improvements, incorporating a 12’ wide path in the existing east-west line of the Kansas City Southern Railroad right of way. This project component will continue to connect high density university housing with other components outlined in this project. This path will give students, faculty, and the local public a safe, pedestrian-friendly route to access the major sporting venues Louisiana Tech offers, while utilizing an area that is currently unused and unsafe for anyone.
The construction of the path will also incorporate sound and security barrier fencing on both sides of the existing railway, while the trail will be illuminated by solar powered lighting. The construction of this trail will create a linear park that will create dedicated space for congregation and viewing the Louisiana Tech’s baseball facility, J. C. Love Field.

COMPONENT UTILITY

Upon completion, pedestrians and bicyclists will have a dedicated route to all of the universities sporting venues, the only dedicated pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the KCSRR, and the high density student housing that is separated from the bulk of Louisiana Tech’s Campus by the railroad. With the creation of this new multiuse trail, and its connection to the W. Mississippi Ave component, users would be able to utilize parking facilities in the downtown area and safely travel to and from destinations that are inundated with traffic during major events. In addition, the new sound and security barrier will increase the safety of the railroad, while limiting unnecessary noise pollution.
Additional Details

If the Department of Transportation finds that it is more advantageous to only fund certain components of this project, it would be the City of Ruston’s wishes that funding priority be granted in the order in which the projects are listed above.

The completion of this project will incorporate numerous regional goals, as well as expand the Rock Island Greenway network. Currently, the extent of our greenway system consists of one single segment that can only be utilized for recreational purposes. The second and third phase of our greenway should begin construction in the fall of 2018 and add approximately three (3) miles to the system by the spring of 2019. The completion of the Monroe Street Corridor Project is essential to the completion of the Ruston Rock Island Greenway Plan and a Regional Trail that will span 130 miles from El Dorado, Arkansas to Alexandria, Louisiana. The completion of this project is also essential to the goals laid out in “Ruston Re-Imagined”.

In May 2018, the City of Ruston completed the southernmost component of this corridors renovations (shown below), with funds generated through a new ¾ cent sales tax “Moving Ruston Forward”. The first component of this project was the renovation of 950’ of existing road way. This component replaced the road surface, installed curb and gutter to the portions that lacked it, removed all parking that would enter roadways, and installed a 8’ wide path on the west side and a 5’ wide side walk along the eastern edge. This component was completed six (6) weeks before the construction contract expired for a total investment of $1.3 million. These improvements have made the route safer for all modes of transportation, and is a strong prototype for future roads to be built in the city of Ruston.

Ancillary improvements and developments

While Louisiana Tech’s student population growth continues to increase, the strain on the existing and insufficient infrastructure has increased, and the City of Ruston currently has multiple developments under construction that will increase the local volume of traffic and exacerbate the need for a new north/south corridor. The new 36 field Ruston Sports Complex will host 275,000 visitors annually with an anticipated attendance of 12,000 people for the 2019 Dixie World Series alone. The majority of these visitors will stay in hotels approximately four to five miles north of the complex, and without an alternate route to relieve the new traffic, existing routes will be inundated, causing long delays and loss of economic production. In addition to the new sports complex, the city of Ruston is experiencing a boom in real estate development, with approximately 3,000 new beds to be developed within the next three years, which will further tax the existing infrastructure.
Grant Funds, Sources, and Uses of Project Funds

The City of Ruston has currently allocated:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Funds</th>
<th>Remaining Engineering</th>
<th>Right-of-way</th>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Percent Share</th>
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<tr>
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<td>$36,020</td>
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<td>Proposed BUILD Grant Funds</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>$71,755</td>
<td>$21,424,400</td>
<td>$22,344,192</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Merit Criteria

Safety

The purpose of this project is to provide a safe efficient, and reliable route to both Downtown Ruston and the Louisiana Tech Enterprise campus for local and commercial traffic, as well as students, faculty, staff, and visitors of the university through multiple forms of transportation.

One leading factor that will contribute to the safety of all users will be the elimination of reliance on LADOTD maintained highways. Currently all existing courses to these areas are along state routes with up to four (4) intersecting highways (I-20, US HWY 80 East, LA 150, US HWY 80 West). The new corridor will minimize the number of highway crossing to only one (1) intersection at (LA 150).

According to data provided by the City of Ruston Police Department, 15 accidents have been recorded in the past year along the areas marked for improvement. Not only do these accidents pose a risk of bodily harm or death, they also create an environment that could lead to less private sector investment, significantly hampering, slowing or even halting economic development. We anticipate the proposed project to reduce 2 moderate accidents and 6 additional minor accidents annually. These reductions will be both in the Monroe Street Corridor Project area and on the major arterial routes that are currently utilized by traffic. These assumptions are shown in the benefit-cost analysis (see Appendix E).

The proposed project will enhance safety along the corridor and campus community by incorporating the following into the design:

- Independent facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists;
- Improved roadway surfaces;
- Improved drainage facilities that will reduce hazardous road conditions and flooding;
- New and improved striping and signage at road crossings consistent with pedestrian and bicycle transportation;
- Minimizing the number and width of intermittent road connections;
- Replacing dangerous and problematic parking ingress and egress with pedestrian friendly facilities;
- New lighting will provide necessary illumination for safe transportation for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.

Studies conducted by the FHWA have shown that the implementation of these improvements, as well as the removal and reduction of these hazards, have contributed to a substantial decline in the severity and frequency of crashes.

The City of Ruston will be able to utilize the existing LADOTD crash database to quantify the frequency and severity of accidents before and after the improvements have been completed.

State of good repair

The improvements laid out in the project description will ensure that the new corridor will function at the highest and most efficient levels achievable during predictable daily traffic and peak traffic concomitant with special events. The completion of this corridor will also improve facilities to a state of good repair that will deliver people and goods safely and efficiently through various forms of transportation.
Currently, if left unimproved, the condition of the existing facilities would continue to deteriorate at a pace that could render the infrastructure obsolete. Failures in this infrastructure could not only contribute to the loss of economic output, but would have devastating effects to the disadvantaged areas at the storm water collection systems outfall.

The positive impact of the improvements will extend well beyond the limits of construction. The improvements outlined to the storm water collection system will reduce the frequency and intensity of flooding currently experienced at the collection systems outfall. Also, the reduction of traffic on existing routes will increase the safety of those routes while minimizing the necessary maintenance and repairs and subsequently reduce liability and frequency of repairs for responsible parties, such as LADOTD and FHWA.

**Economic Competitiveness**

The Monroe Street Corridor Project will decrease transportation costs and improve reliable access for all users. These improvements will create new opportunities by providing reliable and efficient connections between residences, businesses, classrooms, public recreational areas, governmental offices, healthcare facilities, grocery stores, and new areas previously not accessible for development all in the core of the city.

The primary impact on economic competitiveness through this project will be the impact on the Louisiana Tech Enterprise Campus. The Monroe Street Corridor Project as part of the larger infrastructure enhancement initiative by the City and the University will greatly improve the quality of life factors that are so critical for growing, recruiting, and retaining 21st century growth companies and the knowledge workers that drive their performance—safety, health, recreation, efficiency, and

This Campus is already attracting high-wage jobs and supporting economic development across the spectrum in the region by facilitating partnerships between Louisiana Tech University, the City of Ruston and key corporate partners that want to locate near the university for collaborative purposes. These developments are supporting high quality job growth in Ruston, Lincoln Parish, and the region. Beyond the direct impact of tenant companies, the Enterprise Campus is enhancing growth of other regional business and industrial parks, attracting and retaining knowledge economy workers to the region, and improving the regional labor market for prospective graduates and incumbent workers.

During the first 6 years of operation, the Enterprise Campus has generated between 500 – 650 direct new permanent private sector jobs in software development, digital media, research and development, marketing, educational services, and cyber-security with a total annual private sector payroll in 2015-2016 estimated between $22.5M and $29.5M. The total combined economic impact of the employment and construction investments in the Enterprise Campus since 2010 is estimated between $210M and $249M for the region.

The Enterprise Campus is also supporting the growth and competitiveness needs of other major employers in the region like CenturyLink and General Dynamics IT. Both companies house major components of their innovation and R&D operations in the Enterprise Campus at Louisiana Tech.

The Monroe Street Corridor Project through impacts on infrastructure capacity, safety, efficiency and quality of life, will expand the competitiveness of the City of Ruston and Louisiana Tech to retain existing companies, support their growth opportunities, and generate new corporate partnerships that can generate additional high quality jobs, enhance the attractiveness of the regional labor market for
knowledge economy workers, and continue to grow high wage employment and socially and environmentally sustainable economic activity in the region. This project will significantly enhance the prospects for development of additional Enterprise Campus property enabling up to five new multi-tenant facilities totally over 400,000 square feet. Based on the impact of new economic activity in the first phase of the Enterprise Campus, this next phase, facilitated by the Monroe Street Corridor Project investment, could generate up to 3,500 new jobs with a total economic impact (direct and indirect) of over $620m annually for the region.

**Environmental Protection**

The Monroe Street Corridor Project will enable the City of Ruston to make great strides in environmental stability. With the incorporation and promotion of multi-modal transportation, each user that opts for alternative transportation over vehicular transportation will significantly reduce the amount of carbon emissions released.

Another factor that will reduce fuel consumption and the amount of emissions will be the rehabilitation of the existing driving surfaces. While, the creation of the new corridor will reduce congestion along the existing routes and create efficient traffic patterns for all users.

The City of Ruston also has a zero impact storm water policy that all developments must satisfy. Upon development, storm water must leave in substantially the same manner that it did prior to any alterations. Therefore, these improvements will not increase the volume or velocity of storm water. The outlined improvements will achieve significant storm water mitigation; allowing for increased storage capacity and reduced rate of storm water outfall. This will positively impact numerous residents downstream that frequently face flood conditions during rain events.

Much of the Monroe Street improvements will be brownfield redevelopment. Before decommission in the early 1990’s, the majority of this corridor was occupied by a commercial railroad. Since then the property has sat vacant and neglected, and it has become an area for unwanted pests and other hazardous vectors in addition to providing a convenient concealed corridor for those involved in delinquent behavior. The redevelopment of this corridor will mitigate this regression and revitalize what was once a vibrant corridor.

**Quality of Life**

Downtown Ruston and Louisiana Tech’s campus were built before the rise of the car, and as such are perhaps the most walkable and most-walked sections of the city, with concentrations of pedestrian generators, and more are expected in the near future. The website WalkScore.com rates the city’s downtown a 72, meaning that most errands can be accomplished on foot, thanks to the numerous restaurants, stores, and other commercial entities that lie in close proximity to one another. Downtown Ruston’s integrated network of wide sidewalks and pedestrian-friendly land use patterns set it apart from the rest of the city, which rates, on average, a car-dependent 23. For context, a WalkScore of 50 indicates an area is “somewhat walkable.”

Foot traffic in the project area also owes to the proximity to Tech and to the presence of the city’s thriving farmer’s market, popular restaurants and shopping opportunities, outdoor entertainment venues, essential goods and services and adjacent low-income neighborhoods in which many people lack access to automobiles. Perhaps most significantly from both a quality of life and safety standpoint, independent
living will be much more attainable for clients of the Louisiana Center for the Blind, an institution for whose clients walking is, by necessity, a predominant mode of transportation.

The Louisiana Center for the Blind, one of the most important facilities in the nation for training the visually-impaired, provides residential orientation and adjustment training to adults and summer programs for children and their families. LCB hosts dozens of students at a time. Over the course of a year hundreds of children and adults are serviced by the program, all of these being legally blind individuals. LCB is located one block from the Monroe Street Corridor Project. MSCBP will establish safe routes used daily by students from the Louisiana Center for the Blind. LCB stands as a strong partner on this project.

Louisiana Tech and the City of Ruston have invested significantly in enhancing the appeal of the university campus and downtown area in recent years, burying powerlines, expanding sidewalks, and becoming an official historic district, and these investments are attracting new residential and commercial interests. Pedestrians will only become more commonplace in the years to come, especially with the opening of the Rock Island Greenway, a 6-mile active transportation corridor now under construction with funding from the city, FHWA, Lincoln Health Foundation, and the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation. This, will draw even more people on foot to the downtown area, which unfortunately, will also mean more conflicts between automobile and foot-bound traffic as well as cyclists.

The City of Ruston suffers from persistent economic distress, with much of the population living in poverty, relatively low household incomes, and high unemployment. Relatedly, the population is also more obese than the national average with lower levels of physical activity and shorter life expectancy. All are negatively affected by these trends, but negative health outcomes accrue disproportionately to the city's African-American residents, who account for 45% of Ruston's population.1 This population is arguably most affected by the car-dependent culture, which has strained budgets, limited opportunities for exercise, recreation, and socialization, and served to further isolate the poor in a city starkly divided along racial and economic lines.

Acknowledging these facts, the City is aggressively addressing the harmful health outcomes related to chronic inactivity and lagging opportunity by developing a more suitable environment for walking and cycling for transportation and recreation. The City believes the entire community, and especially the underserved, will greatly benefit from the Monroe Street Corridor Project as it establishes efficient, safe, healthy, appealing, convenient, and money-saving multimodal transportation infrastructure connected to some of the most poverty stricken and economically deprived areas of the community.

**Innovation**

The Louisiana Tech Enterprise Campus sits squarely in the middle of, and is an integral component of the I-20 Innovation Corridor, which includes the General Dynamics IT’s Integrated Technology Center, the Cyber Innovation Center, and the National Cyber Research Park sixty (60) miles to the west and the CenturyLink campus and IBM Technology Center thirty (30) miles to the east. The improvements contemplated by this project will greatly enhance the innovative activities and concepts being developed and utilized within the Enterprise Campus as well as the entire I-20 Innovation Corridor. Moreover, the utilization of multimodal transportation and complete street design in the construction of a new transportation project such as this represents cutting edge concepts and innovation in this region. In

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1 US Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, 2011-2015

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addition to innovative design strategies, innovative financing strategies will be provided by revenues from the “Moving Ruston Forward” ¾ cent sales tax. The newly established tax will fund the City of Ruston’s necessary contributions, as well as other transportation infrastructure investments (see Appendix C).

Regionally, the City is on the leading edge of incorporating infrastructure that responsibly accommodates bicycle and pedestrian traffic in every new transportation project. Within the last three (3) years the City has sponsored the construction of 3.8 miles of shared-use path, both adjacent to roadways and through corridors dedicated to the multi-use path infrastructure. In addition to what has already been constructed, the City of Ruston has another 6.07 miles in the design phase, awaiting funding.

One innovative design strategy that will be utilized on two of the components outlined in the project description is the integration of a road diet. As defined by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, “a road diet offers several high-value improvements at a low cost when applied to traditional four lane undivided highways. In addition to low cost, the primary benefits of a road diet include enhanced safety, mobility and access for all road users and a ‘complete streets’ environment to accommodate a variety of transportation modes.”

The component along Dan Reneau Dr. will reduce an existing four lane highway to two directional lanes with the additional right of way accommodating independent bike lanes. The sidewalks will also be widened and the number of existing vehicular crossing points will be consolidated, increasing safety for pedestrians while maintaining ADA compliance.

Not only are these projects utilizing innovative strategies in their construction, innovative technologies developed at Louisiana Tech will be used to create the Smart Cities Innovation Testbed. The project area that is on the Tech Enterprise Campus will be constructed with a network of wireless sensor motes. The sensors placed on these motes will serve a number of purposes, including but not limited to (1) pipes and drainage, (2) environmental monitoring, and (3) driver safety and security. Water sensors will be used to collect measureable quantities of vertical liquid levels, flow rate, and the presence of liquid contaminants. Above-ground sensors will capture data to monitor environmental conditions such as temperature, pressure, humidity, and particle concentrations of harmful gases (e.g. CO₂, NO₂). Weather stations connected via these motes will detect wind speeds and rainfall to develop a finer-grained approach to storm and tornado tracking, and can be used in control algorithms to automatically adjust Smart Lighting. Sensors on smart lighting and traffic signals will incorporate cameras and Radar sensors to measure distance and velocity to facilitate Smart Traffic control. While the City of Ruston has recently authorized national telecommunications companies to create a 5G network in the areas around Tech campus. This innovative technology, along with the upgrades to the transportation infrastructure, is crucial for the safe deployment of autonomous vehicles and the new technologies currently being developed on Louisiana Tech’s Enterprise Campus.

The research produced in the Smart Cities Innovation Testbed would be uploaded to the Cloud. Once on the Cloud, artificial intelligence and deep learning algorithms will be developed to perform data fusion and make only the most relevant statistics available to interested parties. This information would allow officials to make real time decisions and could publish the information and alerts to online dashboards and smartphone apps so local residents can keep up-to-date about the progress of potentially damaging weather patterns (e.g. tornadoes or flooding) and transit information (e.g. traffic congestion and parking availability). For the cost of $40,000 the Smart Cities Innovation Testbed will provide a repeatable,
scalable, and sustainable platform by which the safety, health, and quality of life of the local populace will be improved.

Due the proximity of these improvements to the Enterprise campus, this project is crucial to the development of innovative technologies and support of global cyber-security initiatives for the foreseeable future. The investment in these transportation improvements is an investment in new technology that will impact, not just the local community, but the nation as a whole.

**Partnership**

The completion of this project is widely endorsed at all levels of government, and local public institutions (see Appendix B). The City of Ruston and Louisiana Tech have entered into a partnership for this application through a Memorandum of Understanding (see Appendix B). While the City of Ruston is the primary applicant Louisiana Tech has pledged its full support of this project. The City of Ruston and Louisiana Tech have a proud history of mutual support in all transportation infrastructure efforts and the completion of this project will continue to reinforce that relationship. While the City of Ruston is prepared to carry the necessary design cost, the university will contribute all necessary right-of-way across their property.

**Non-federal Revenue for Transportation Infrastructure Investment**

In April of 2016, the citizens of Ruston passed a new ¾ cent sales tax to fund new investment in transportation infrastructure and economic growth. The new tax, titled “Moving Ruston Forward”, showcased over $80 Million of new investments to be made over the twenty (20) year life of the tax (see Appendix C).

The revenues from this new tax will be, and have been, invested in existing infrastructure needs and economic development opportunities. Some of the specific improvements this tax has been appropriated for are thirty-five (35) miles of street overlays, rehabilitating insufficient drainage facilities, planned new road construction, and water and sewer rehabilitation projects, while other improvements provided by the tax will create new revenue opportunities. The installation of new water meters are expected to capture 15-30% more usage, capitalizing revenues that are currently lost. The construction of a thirty-six (36) field sports complex, which will attract hundreds of thousands of patrons each year. Any additional returns over the budgeted $80 million will be invested in future transportation infrastructure needs and maintenance.

The revenues from this new tax will fund City of Ruston contribution necessary to complete the Monroe Street Corridor project. For this project these funds will be used to acquire needed right-of-way and pay design fees necessary for completion.
Project Readiness

Technical Feasibility

The features outlined in this project are common in transportation design and construction, and have been proven to be constructible by multiple contractors in our local area. The following features are included in the construction:

- New two lane, curb and gutter road
- Rehabilitation of existing roadways and drainage systems
- Relocation of overhead utilities underground
- ADA compliant multiuse path and sidewalks
- New and improved pavement markings and signaling at road crossings
- New aesthetically pleasing LED street lighting

The plans and cost estimates have been produced by engineers licensed in Louisiana and experienced in multimodal transportation construction in our local area.

Project schedule

A detailed project schedule is included in the Appendix F

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018 FY BUILD Grant Award</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Monroe St: Award Construction Contract</td>
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<td>North Monroe St: Construction Notice to Proceed</td>
<td>03/04/2019</td>
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<td>North Monroe St: Project Closeout</td>
<td>10/29/2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Downtown Monroe St: Award Construction Contract</td>
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<td>04/08/2019</td>
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<td>Downtown Monroe St: Project Closeout</td>
<td>12/04/2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>S. Monroe, Texas, Louisiana, Oil Mill: Complete Final Design</td>
<td>08/01/2019</td>
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<td>S. Monroe, Texas, Louisiana, Oil Mill: Complete ROW Acquisition</td>
<td>07/15/2019</td>
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<td>S. Monroe, Texas, Louisiana, Oil Mill: Award Construction Contract</td>
<td>10/07/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Monroe, Texas, Louisiana, Oil Mill: Construction Notice to Proceed</td>
<td>11/20/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Monroe, Texas, Louisiana, Oil Mill: Project Closeout</td>
<td>03/01/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Reneau and Homer St: Complete Final Design</td>
<td>07/01/2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan Reneau and Homer St: Complete ROW Acquisition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan Reneau and Homer St: Construction Notice to Proceed</td>
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<td>Dan Reneau and Homer St: Project Closeout</td>
<td>12/30/2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>W. Mississippi Ave: Complete Final Design</td>
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<td>W. Mississippi Ave: Award Construction Contract</td>
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<td>LaTech Railroad Multiuse Path: Complete Final Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>LaTech Railroad Multiuse Path: Project Closeout</td>
<td>03/02/2020</td>
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Required approvals

- Anticipated completion date for the Categorical Exclusion Review and any additional environmental permits is 12/31/2018
- LADOTD is aware of this project and has been notified that any necessary permits will be applied for upon the projects selection. All necessary permits will be acquired by the City of Ruston in time to meet the milestones set forth in the project schedule.
- This project is broadly supported on both a national and state level, with multiple elected officials on all levels have pledged their individual support. (See Appendix B)
- The LADOTD is aware of this grant submission, and upon the announcement of award, the project will be programmed into the LADOTD Transportation Improvements Program.

Assessment of project risks and mitigation strategies

Very little risk can be identified with the funding of this project. With multiple components either having completed design, or currently in development, and multiple components either being built in the existing right of way or the necessary right of way being previously acquired, the risks for not meeting the obligated BUILD Funding have been mitigated.

The proposed schedule has all awarded funding obligated by September 9th, 2020.

The proposed schedule has all of BUILD funding liquidated and construction activities completed by December 31st, 2021, 45 months before the September 30th, 2025 deadline.
Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA)

Over the last five years the City of Ruston and Louisiana Tech have seen a steady rise in traffic congestion and related accidents, and anticipate the conditions to worsen until alternative routes are completed. Upon completion of this project we anticipate new traffic patterns that will promote efficient transportation. A detailed Benefit- Cost Analysis was prepared in accordance with the Notice of Funding Opportunity (see Appendix E) and it was determined that the proposed improvements will have a Benefit- Cost Ratio of 2.87 over the 30 year life of the project. Assumptions used to prepare the BCA are described below.

All benefits were assumed to be take effect upon the entire projects completion. Therefore the values shown in the BCA reflect the calculated future values of the benefits.

The following modes of traffic were analyzed in the development of the BCA:

Pedestrian

Currently, in the Monroe Street Corridor Project area, sidewalks are either sporadic or non-existent, in a state of disrepair, or unsafe due to a high frequency of vehicular crossings. Upon the project’s completion pedestrian travel times would be 20 minutes (1.0 miles) from the north side of I-20 to existing pedestrian infrastructure on Louisiana Tech’s campus, and shorter for any destinations along the way. Additionally, the on campus community would only be a 10 minute (0.5 miles) walk to popular downtown destinations. Local residents, who lack access to vehicular transportation are unable to pilot their own vehicles, such as clients from the Louisiana Center for the Blind, will have shorter and safer routes to jobs and essential goods and services.

Bicycle

There are currently no facilities, bike lanes or multi-use paths, which connect residents to popular destinations both on campus or downtown. With the projects incorporation of the Rock Island Greenway, users will be able to access these destinations and essential goods and services, all while utilizing dedicated infrastructure. Currently some commuters must travel over 3 miles each way in a vehicle, from major residential areas to popular destinations both on Louisiana Tech Campus and in the downtown Ruston area. We anticipate roughly 10% of both students and faculty to alter their main mode of commuting to and from work, class, and daily errands from vehicular traffic to bicycle traffic. It is also anticipated that 1000 people outside of the university will opt for this mode of transportation due to it convenience of not having to find a parking place and the dedicated infrastructure will allow for low-confidence riders to feel safe while utilizing the route. We assumed that anyone who opts for this mode of transportation will not only save time through their ability to travel directly to the entry of their destination, but also reduce the miles driven in a vehicle by 2.5 miles, each way, daily. These assumptions are reflected in the Vehicle Operating Costs Savings in the Benefit- Cost Analysis computations.

Vehicle

Currently all 10,423 commuting students, as well as the 1,466 faculty and staff must access the Louisiana Tech campus using major arterial routes (see Appendix C). The creation of the new corridor will draw traffic away from existing congestion, while promoting alternative forms of transportation. We can safely assume that 40% of all commuters both to campus and downtown would utilize this new corridor daily. The new route will shorten some vehicular commuters times by as much as 4 minutes each way while
also provide safer alternative routes for emergency vehicles. As shown in the Benefit-Cost Analysis we have assumed an average of 4 minutes saved daily by users of this route.

Additionally we anticipate the proposed project to reduce 2 moderate accidents and 6 additional minor accidents annually. These safety benefits will be a direct result of improvements being made along the Monroe Street Corridor Project area, and through the reduction of existing congestion the major arterial routes that are currently utilized by traffic. These assumptions are represented in the benefit-cost analysis.
Appendix

Appendix A: Component Maps

a) N. Monroe St.
b) Downtown Monroe St.
c) S. Monroe St, W. Texas Ave, W. Louisiana Ave, Oil Mill
d) Dan Reneau Dr.
e) S. Homer St.

f) W. Mississippi Ave.
g) Louisiana Tech Railroad Multiuse Path

Appendix B: Letters of Support
Appendix C: Supporting Studies
Appendix D: Master Plans
Appendix E: Detailed Benefit-Cost Analysis
Appendix F: Detailed Work Schedule and Cost Data
Appendix G: Federal Wage Certification