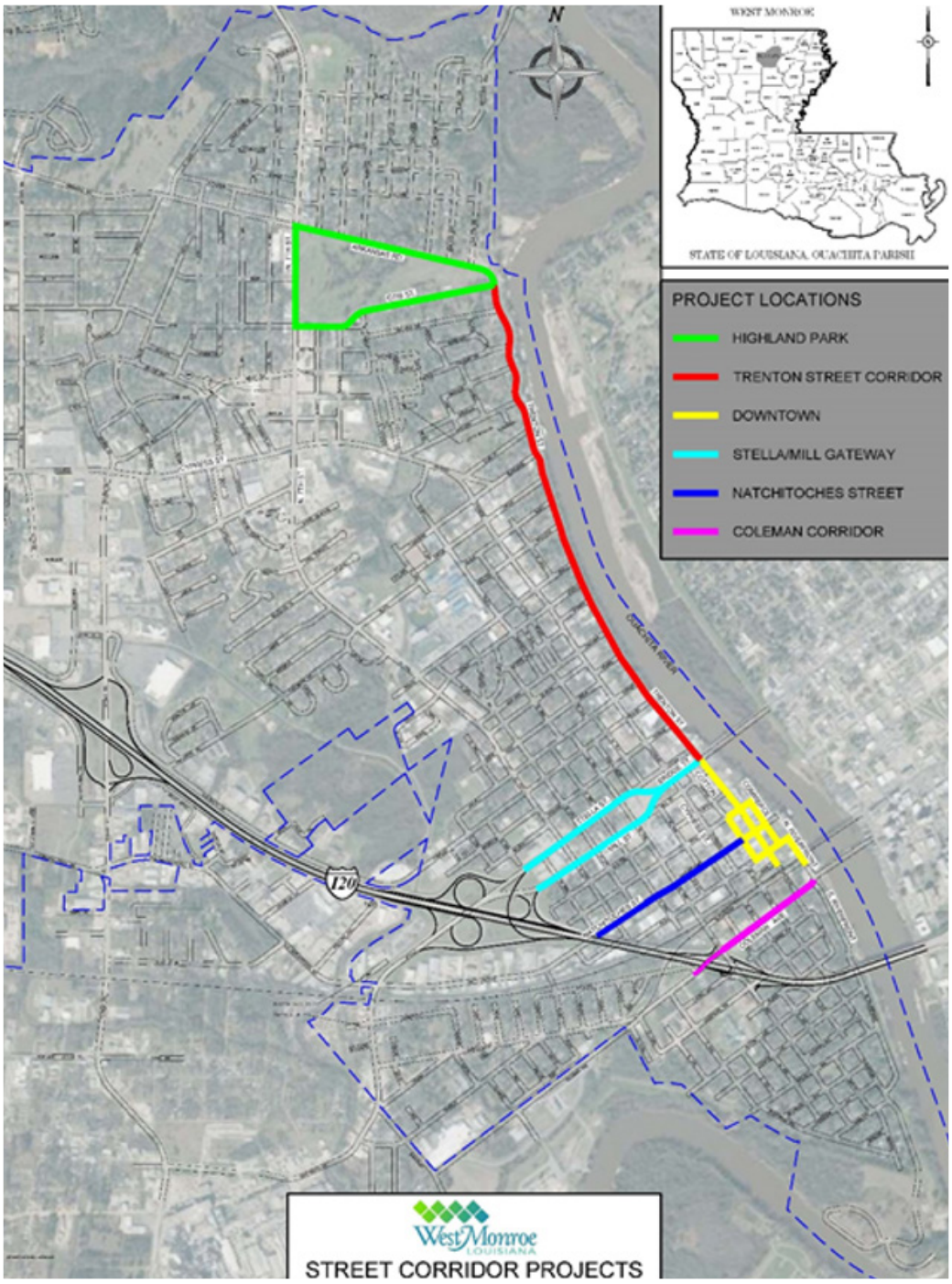


RAISE FY 2021 RAISE Grant

West Monroe

West Monroe, Louisiana Revitalization Project

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Informed by recently completed master plans and studies, the West Monroe RAISE Grant will benefit local and commercial traffic by reconstructing deficient roadways, adding shared use pedestrian facilities including bike paths, improving drainage to reduce flooding, burying aging utilities, and redesigning the streetscape to increase foot traffic, improve connectivity throughout the community, and comply with ADA accessibility standards. Overall, the West Monroe Revitalization Project features improvements to six primary components.

Project Components

The City of West Monroe will leverage the RAISE Grant to make critical infrastructure improvements to the following project components:

1. **Highland Park:** Located within the triangular region between North Seventh Street, Arkansas Road, and Otis Street, proposed improvements include trailheads, parking, lighting for sidewalks and trails, and restroom accommodations.
2. **Trenton Street Corridor:** Located along Trenton Street between Otis Street and Bridge Street, proposed improvements include road rehabilitation, utility relocations, drainage improvements, street lighting, and new and expanded sidewalks with environmentally sustainable green buffers.
3. **Downtown:** Located along Trenton Street past Bridge Street (near the Lea Joyner Bridge with four-lane traffic between Monroe and West Monroe) and throughout downtown including parts of Commerce Street, Cotton Street, Natchitoches Street, Wood Street and North Riverfront Street, proposed improvements include road rehabilitation, undergrounding utilities, pedestrian-friendly and environmentally sustainable streetscape design, shared use paths and crossings, parking, street lighting, signage, and smart city technology.
4. **Stella/Mill Gateway:** Located along Stella Street and Mill Street from I-20 to the foot of the Lea Joyner Bridge into Monroe, proposed improvements include ADA compliant sidewalks, curb ramps, pedestrian crosswalks, and street lighting.
5. **Natchitoches Street:** Located along Natchitoches Street from I-20 to Cotton Street in downtown, proposed improvements include enhanced pedestrian facilities and street lighting.
6. **Coleman Corridor:** Located along Coleman Avenue from South Riverfront Street at the Endom Bridge to Phillips Street just past the I-20 overpass, proposed improvements will occur in conjunction with a current LADOTD project to improve the roadway, sidewalks, and utilities along Coleman Avenue to the Endom Bridge by also installing a 10' shared use path and street lighting from I-20 to the Endom Bridge.

Selection Criteria

The West Monroe Revitalization addresses all primary and secondary selection criteria including:

- **Safety:** Reduce traffic accidents downtown by 55% with the addition of bump outs, one-way traffic, and ADA compliant sidewalks and ramps. Eliminate the number of incidents with utility poles by nearly 100% with the undergrounding and modernization of public utilities. Reduce roadway incidents by 35% with new lighting throughout the component areas.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Maximize multimodal transportation opportunities to

reduce carbon emissions and ensure all utility improvements meet the city's zero-impact stormwater policy to mitigate flooding impacts that disrupt local businesses and create hazardous road conditions for residents.

- **Quality of Life:** Expand multimodal transportation opportunities for residents and visitors, including expanded sidewalks, bike lanes, and lighting to improve connectivity throughout the city - especially for 11% of households without access to a vehicle. Enhance streetscape design throughout downtown to increase pedestrian traffic that supports more than 70 small businesses located in the historic and cultural districts along the Ouachita River.
- **Economic Competitiveness:** Improve public infrastructure along key corridors such as Highland Park - a certified, shovel-ready site designated by Louisiana Economic Development (LED), Stella/Mill Gateway - a major roadway connecting vehicular traffic from Interstate 20 (I-20) to downtown West Monroe and Lea Joyner Bridge into Monroe, and Coleman Avenue - a roadway connecting West Monroe to Monroe through the Endom Bridge and intersecting with a railway supporting regionally-significant industry such as Graphic Packaging International.
- **State of Good Repair:** Reconstruct some of the city's most highly trafficked roadways that have been susceptible to vehicular and pedestrian accidents as well as severe flooding in recent years. Additionally, replace and modernize aging infrastructure that is past its useful life - asphalt roads 20+ years old and utilities 50+ years old.
- **Partnership:** Ongoing partnership with all levels of government, including the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Delta Regional Authority, and U.S. Department of Agriculture - Rural Development to implement the project and ancillary developments. Additionally, the city has built strong partnerships with its local development district, economic development organizations, private utility companies, local industry, and institutions of higher education - among others - to sustain regional collaboration beyond the life of the project.
- **Innovation:** Incorporate several innovative technologies including Light-Emitting Diode (LED) street lighting fixtures with dimming capability, small cell wireless facilities, Emergency Location Marker (ELM) system, and weather stations to save energy and enhance public safety.

Environmental Risk Review

Few risks can be identified with the funding of this project. The projects that have been or will be funded through the Urban Systems Program have coordinated construction timelines with the RAISE Grant components. The proposed schedule has the entirety of the RAISE Grant obligated by June 14, 2024 and all funds liquidated by June 18, 2026 in advance of the statutory deadline.

Benefit Cost Analysis

The discounted Benefit-Cost ratio over the 30-year analysis period is 1.02 and non-discounted ratio is 2.25.

Funding

Funds for this project are supporting construction and right-of-way costs. Additionally, the city has committed and expended funds for design and engineering for each of the six components.

Source	Amount	%
City of West Monroe	$2,601,249.00	13%
RAISE Grant	$17,997,254.75	87%
Total Project Cost	$20,598,503.75	100%

Work Schedule
If awarded a RAISE grant in November 2021, the project is anticipated to be implemented between May 2022 and June 2026.

RAISE Grant Awarded	November 2021
Design	May 2022 to February 2024
Bid Letting	September 2022 to January 2025
Construction	December 2022 to June 2026

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Informed by recently completed master plans and studies, the West Monroe RAISE Grant will benefit local and commercial traffic by reconstructing deficient roadways, adding shared use pedestrian facilities including bike paths, improving drainage to reduce flooding, burying aging utilities, and redesigning the streetscape to increase foot traffic, improve connectivity throughout the community, and comply with ADA accessibility standards. Overall, the West Monroe Revitalization Project features improvements to six primary components.

The project components are described in detail below. Each component description includes its geographic location, existing conditions, proposed improvements, and project costs as well as its independent utility.

Project Components

The City of West Monroe will leverage the RAISE Grant to make critical infrastructure improvements to the following project components:

1. Highland Park
2. Trenton Street Corridor
3. Downtown
4. Stella/Mill Gateway
5. Natchitoches Street
6. Coleman Corridor

For detailed renderings of each component, see Appendix A.

1) Highland Park

Known as Highland Park, this component is the triangular region located within North Seventh Street, Arkansas Road, and Otis Street. Proposed improvements include trailheads, parking, lighting for sidewalks and trails, and restroom accommodations. In the past three years, the city has already invested or committed $1,524,890 towards planning, design, and infrastructure improvements for this component. The RAISE Grant request for this component is approximately $429,955 (28%) and matched by $1,126,249 (72%) in non-federal funding.

Existing Conditions

- A certified, shovel-ready site for commercial, residential, and recreational development as designated by LED (see Appendix C)
- 60 acres of quality, underutilized land that was previously a public golf course
- Eight percent of the site has been converted into a detention/greenspace area to alleviate local flooding
  - The wetlands have been designated for a 1.17-mile trail system with 6' and 10' wide paths
- The approximately 8,000' perimeter around the site has been designated for 10' shared use paths

Proposed Improvements

Since 2018 the city has made strategic improvements in and around the Highland Park area to revitalize an underutilized, publicly owned property into a mixed-use development including commercial, residential, and recreational uses. These improvements have and continue to be implemented through three key phases:

1. **Detention & Flooding Mitigation:** To address the negative impacts of climate change, alleviate local flooding from frequent storms and major weather events, and mitigate the impact of the planned mixed-use development at Highland Park, a portion of the site was converted into a detention and greenspace area which can be used for public recreation in dry weather. This phase will be completed in late Summer 2021.

2. **Shared Use Paths & Wetland Trails:** Along the perimeter of the Highland Park property will be 10' wide ADA compliant shared use paths which includes North Seventh Street, Arkansas Road and Otis Street. The paths along North Seventh Street received funding through the Louisiana Recreational Trails Program and are currently under design. Funded through LADOTD's Urban Systems Program, Otis Street and Arkansas Road will undergo street rehabilitation and sidewalk expansion which will include 10' shared use paths along the northern and southern sides of Highland Park. As of July 2021, the Otis Street project is in final review and the Arkansas Road project has been slated for 2023. To activate the wetland area, the city received approximately $285,000 from the Louisiana Recreational Trails Program to develop 1.17 miles for wetland trails which will consist of 10' shared use paths (concrete) and 6' asphalt paths with three weathered steel bridges throughout the Highland Park development. This project went out for bid in early Summer 2021, will begin construction immediately, and is anticipated to be completed by November 2021.

   The RAISE grant will provide funding for lighting on all shared use paths and walkways along Arkansas Road, Otis Road, and throughout the wetland trails system. Additionally, RAISE grant funds will assist with the development of trailheads along Arkansas Road, a parking lot with lighting and a clearly marked trailhead entrance on Otis Street, bicycle racks, and the renovation of an existing restroom facility in disrepair to accommodate pedestrians utilizing the shared use paths and wetland trail system.

3. **Commercial Development:** Located along North Seventh Street (LA-143) the commercial subdivision soon to be under construction includes site grading, new concrete streets, and the installation of water and sewer lines to serve the new 15-acre development. Additionally, this construction will include drainage pipes, concrete curbs, fire hydrants, and sanitary sewer manholes. The city leveraged local funding with a $900,000 grant from the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) to make these improvements which will begin at the end of 2021 and is estimated to create at least 20 new jobs.

   The RAISE grant will provide funding for all roadways within the commercial development to have 5' concrete sidewalks and lighting. The sidewalks throughout the commercial subdivision will also connect to the wetland trail system in Highland Park.

Component Utility

Highland Park has been a high priority project for the city for several years and has been developed strategically by leveraging local funding with state and federal grants. Now that the city has addressed flooding mitigation through the development of the detention basin and began moving forward with the shared use paths around the perimeter of the property, Highland Park will soon be a highly sought after commercial and residential area featuring recreational amenities in and around the site. Many of the transportation-related segments that have or will be implemented were identified as priority projects in the city's 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (see Appendix D) published by North Delta Planning and Development District. Highland Park is bounded by three heavily traveled streets positioning the commercial subdivision for high quality development that will subsequently generate high quality jobs for local residents. The completion of this component will not only transform 60 acres of underutilized land, but it will bring about better connectivity and safer multimodal transportation opportunities, especially for non-vehicular traffic traveling to and from residential areas to commercial centers and recreational amenities. With all other project segments planned for and funded, the RAISE Grant will ensure Highland Park is well-positioned for low impact, mixed-use development while also connecting the property to the local transportation network, residential neighborhoods, and centers of commerce for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

2) Trenton Street Corridor

This component is located along Trenton Street between Otis Street and Bridge Street. Proposed improvements will impact 8,350 feet of existing infrastructure and will include road rehabilitation, utility relocations, drainage improvements, street lighting, and new and expanded sidewalks with environmentally sustainable green buffers. The RAISE Grant request for this component is approximately $5,850,852 (98%) and matched by $150,000 (2%) in non-federal funding.

Existing Conditions

- Roadway is at the end of its service life and requires reconstructive repairs
- Insufficient drainage facilities result in flooding and poor road conditions
- 40% of the roadway lacks accommodations for non-vehicular traffic due to a shortage of sidewalks and deep open ditches
  - 50% of existing sidewalks are cracked or in severe disrepair, and are only three to four feet wide
- Existing sidewalks lack street lighting and nearby intersections do not have proper crosswalks to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists safely

Proposed Improvements

Bordering the levee along the Ouachita River, the Trenton Street Corridor component begins at the southeasterly terminus of the previous component, Highland Park, and extends to Bridge Street at the foot of the Lea Joyner Bridge. West Monroe is highly susceptible to natural disasters, other major weather events, and frequent rainfall which has severely deteriorated the roadway, sidewalks, and drainage system at a quicker rate than areas with dryer climates. Through the Urban Systems Program, LADOTD has allocated funding to the Trenton Street Corridor in 2024 and 2025 for street rehabilitation and the installation of 10' shared use paths.

Complimentary to the LADOTD-funded infrastructure upgrades, the proposed improvements funded by the RAISE Grant will relocate aerial utilities underground, eliminate deep open ditches by constructing subsurface drainage, and install street lighting and pedestrian facility amenities (ex. bench seating) along the 10' shared use path being constructed through the Urban Systems Program. In accordance with the city's ADA Transition Plan, the entire shared use path will incorporate ADA compliant curb ramps at all intersections to accommodate safer traffic crossings which will limit threats to people with disabilities as well as all non-vehicular users. Moreover, the undergrounding of utilities will improve the reliability of service for all residential and commercial consumers along the Trenton Street Corridor.

Component Utility

The completion of this component is critical to connect Highland Park and downtown and will provide a safe route for all modes of transportation to two significant areas in the city. Additionally, the drainage improvements will not only address the negative impacts of climate change and increased frequency of major weather events but will also create

safer roadway conditions for vehicular traffic by alleviating flooding and stormwater buildup. To accommodate users without access to a vehicle and mobility impaired individuals, the ADA compliant shared use paths will facilitate multimodal transportation opportunities and create safer modes of transport for pedestrian traffic traveling to and from Highland Park or downtown, and also providing ease of entry across the Lea Joyner Bridge into neighboring Monroe.

3) Downtown

This component is located along Trenton Street past Bridge Street (near the Lea Joyner Bridge with four-lane traffic between Monroe and West Monroe) and throughout downtown including parts of Commerce Street, Cotton Street, Natchitoches Street, Wood Street, and North Riverfront Street. Proposed improvements will impact 5,550 feet of existing infrastructure and will include road rehabilitation, undergrounding utilities, pedestrian-friendly and environmentally sustainable streetscape design, ADA compliant sidewalks and crossings, parking, street lighting, signage, and smart city technology. In the past three years, the city has already invested or committed $849,000 towards planning, design, and infrastructure improvements for this component. The RAISE Grant request for this component is approximately $8,825,495 (88%) and matched by $1,250,000 (12%) in non-federal funding.

Existing Conditions

- Downtown street network is beyond its useful life, has undergone extensive patchwork, and requires reconstructive repairs
- Public utilities are approximately 50+ years old and above ground utility infrastructure has caused various safety hazards for all users
- Parking facilities requiring vehicles to back up into the existing right of way presents hazardous conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicular traffic
- Combined, the width of the roadway and parking spaces create a very wide cross connection for pedestrians
  - There are no bump outs and sidewalks are in disrepair and lack ADA compliant ramps and surfaces

- Public spaces and outdoor amenities have been limited due to deteriorating, unsafe streetscape design

Proposed Improvements
In July 2020, the City of West Monroe completed a Downtown Master Plan (see Appendix D) which focused on public infrastructure and streetscape design, housing, and cultural amenities as well as area-specific branding and wayfinding. Based on extensive public engagement, the master plan identified four transportation and streetscape-related goals: 1) Provide an equal balance between pedestrian and vehicular needs while maintaining wide and walkable sidewalks within key corridors and nodes, 2) Plan for additional public gathering spaces or green spaces, 3) Improve connectivity to the Ouachita River, and 4) Incorporate additional plantings and shade trees to improve the pedestrian experience.

In response to these community-driven goals, the city must first address the aging infrastructure throughout historic downtown. The existing utilities are constantly at risk of failure due to being beyond their service life and have experienced numerous major weather events for decades but especially during the past five to seven years. This component will replace all existing water, sewer, and subsurface drainage and will relocate all aerial electrical and telecommunication utilities underground. Beyond the aesthetic appeal of undergrounding utilities, the more than 70 small businesses and 250 residents located downtown will benefit from increased reliability of service which will drive economic growth and improve quality of life.

To foster a more pedestrian-friendly environment downtown, the downtown master plan made recommendations for improved streetscape design and safer traffic flow. Since Trenton Street is a highly trafficked road, the city will redesign the existing two-way route into a one-way street to reduce vehicular speeds and create a safer environment for pedestrians shopping and eating downtown as well as for vehicles backing out of angled parking spaces. Additionally, the city will convert Commerce Street from a two-way route to a one-way street to alleviate congestion stemming from Trenton Street and to circulate more vehicular and pedestrian traffic to a less-travelled road with retail storefronts and new restaurants. By eliminating a lane width on Trenton Street and Commerce Street, respectively, the city will have substantially more opportunities to develop shared use paths (between 9’ and 16’ feet widths), other pedestrian facilities, and public space amenities for residents and visitors alike. Each intersection will have ADA compliant crosswalks with bump outs for safer pedestrian mobility as well as environmentally sustainable landscaping, such as shade trees, throughout the streetscape design. The improvements made to this component will extend to portions of Cotton Street, Natchitoches Street, Wood Street, and North Riverfront Street in addition to Trenton Street and Commerce Street.

At both ends of downtown are the only two bridges crossing the Ouachita River connecting Monroe and West Monroe. Since 70% of all vehicular traffic travels across the Lea Joyner Bridge at the north of downtown, the city will incorporate gateway signage

on Trenton Street (adjacent to Bridge Street) to drive more traffic into downtown and help support local businesses. Additionally, branded wayfinding signage will complement existing signage produced by the Monroe-West Monroe Convention and Visitors Bureau to assist pedestrians and vehicles with directions and references to various destinations throughout downtown and nearby neighborhoods. Beginning at the gateway and throughout this component, street lighting will be installed to promote a safe environment for all users.

Component Utility

Downtown West Monroe is already a highly trafficked area for both vehicular and non-vehicular traffic. It is designated a National Register Historic District, Cotton Port Historic District, Don Juan Historic District, and West Monroe Cultural District. It is home to more than 70 local businesses and 250 long-term residents who enjoy their proximity to goods and services, restaurants, and the Ouachita River. This area also serves as the nearest center of commerce for the Riverbend neighborhood, which has a disproportionately high rate of poverty (49%) and households without a vehicle (13%) compared to the rest of the city (20.1% and 11%, respectively). The completion of this component will revitalize and sustain a historic downtown, position at least three existing brownfield sites for redevelopment, and provide more reliable utility services to businesses and residents. Additionally, this component will create a safer environment for both vehicles and pedestrians with new one-way routes, ADA compliant sidewalks and curb ramps, shorter and clearly marked pedestrian crossings, proper lighting for daytime and nighttime traffic, and modernized utilities and drainage to help mitigate flooding and damage from major weather events. These improvements will also alleviate the level of maintenance throughout the downtown area that is in response to the abundance of patchwork that has occurred over the years and will replace it with regular public works maintenance that is proactive so the city can invest in and sustain this new infrastructure.

4) Stella/Mill Gateway

This component is located along Stella Street and Mill Street from I-20 and merges into Bridge Street right before entering the Lea Joyner Bridge into neighboring Monroe. Proposed improvements will impact 5,540 feet of existing infrastructure and will include ADA compliant sidewalks, curb ramps, pedestrian cross walks, and street lighting. The RAISE Grant request for this component is approximately $1,915,705 (100%).

Existing Conditions

- Sidewalks are in severe disrepair and are only four feet wide.
- Intersections lack ADA compliant curb ramps and striping to accommodate safe crossings for pedestrians
- Sparse and inconsistent street lighting is insufficient and unsafe for both vehicular and non-vehicular traffic

Proposed Improvements

In addition to the Lea Joyner Bridge and Endom Bridge, I-20 serves as a major entry point into the heart of West Monroe. The Stella/Mill Gateway receives vehicular traffic from both I-20 and the Lea Joyner Bridge and are two heavily trafficked roadways throughout the day. Stella Street and Mill Street are bounded by residential neighborhoods, local businesses, and one of the largest churches in Ouachita Parish. The proposed improvements will create safer transportation opportunities for pedestrians and other non-vehicular traffic by installing new 7' sidewalks with ADA compliant curb ramps at all intersections. Additionally, this component will include street lighting to provide better illumination and visibility for drivers and pedestrians. These improvements will safely connect both vehicular and non-vehicular traffic to downtown and the rest of the components and will also serve as distinct gateway into West Monroe for residents and visitors alike.

Component Utility

I-20 is one of the most heavily traveled highways in the country. The completion of this component is essential to safely circulate the vehicular traffic exiting the interstate while also accommodating pedestrians and bicyclists. Additionally, this component will create a distinct gateway into West Monroe which will serve residential, commercial, and tourism-related traffic. The completion of this component will not only ease traffic for area residents traveling to and from their place of employment but will also encourage more local commerce and foot traffic and create better connectivity for all users into downtown and across the bridge into Monroe.

5) Natchitoches Street

This component is located along Natchitoches Street from I-20 to Cotton Street in downtown. Proposed improvements will impact 2,800 feet of existing infrastructure and will include enhanced pedestrian facilities and street lighting. In the past three years, the city has already invested or committed approximately $310,000 towards planning, design, and infrastructure improvements for this component. The RAISE Grant request for this component is approximately $333,499 (82%) and matched by $75,000 (18%) in non-federal funding.

Existing Conditions

- Roadway is in disrepair and drainage facilities are insufficient
- Sidewalks are cracked, deteriorated, and incongruous
  — Lacks ADA compliant accessibility
- No street lighting creates hazardous conditions for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists

Proposed Improvements

Natchitoches Street has been identified as a high priority project for the city, which can also be demonstrated by LADOTD's grant commitment through its Urban Systems Program. This funding will be used to rehabilitate the roadway, improve the drainage system, and install 5' sidewalks for pedestrians. In coordination with this project, the RAISE Grant will install street lighting throughout this component to provide better illumination for safer vehicular and non-vehicular traffic. Additionally, bicycle racks will be installed on the corner of Natchitoches Street and Cypress Street to accommodate other modes of transportation, especially for those lacking access to a vehicle.

Component Utility

Natchitoches Street serves approximately 12 local businesses and serves as another entry point into downtown and other areas of commerce, especially for local residential and commercial traffic. Although less frequently traveled by interstate traffic, the westernmost point of this component on Natchitoches Street also serves as another entryway for vehicles exiting I-20. The completion of this component will provide all users with enhanced public infrastructure to alleviate stormwater buildup and flooding along the roadway, improve road conditions and pedestrian facilities for safer and illuminated transportation, and expand multimodal transportation opportunities for walkers, runners, and cyclists to and from downtown and across the river to Monroe with better access to both the Lea Joyner Bridge and Endom Bridge.

6) Coleman Corridor

This component is located along Coleman Avenue from South Riverfront Street at the Endom Bridge (a two-lane bridge connecting West Monroe to Monroe) to Phillips Street just past the I-20 overpass. Proposed improvements will impact 2,025 feet of existing infrastructure and will occur in conjunction with a current LADOTD project to improve

the roadway, sidewalks, and utilities along Coleman Avenue to the Endom Bridge by also installing a 10' shared use path and street lighting from I-20 to the Endom Bridge. The RAISE Grant request for this component is approximately $741,749 (100%).

Existing Conditions

- Roadway is at the end of its service life and requires reconstructive repairs
- Drainage facilities are insufficient for regular rainfall and major weather events
- Incongruous sidewalks are cracked and only three to four feet wide with no curb ramps for safe, non-vehicular usage
- No street lighting creates hazardous conditions for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists

Proposed Improvements

Coleman Avenue bridges the divide between downtown and the Riverbend neighborhood, which has suffered disproportionately from generational poverty due to limited access to quality economic opportunities especially for those residents who live in a household without access to vehicle. In a town the size of West Monroe, it is financially infeasible to build and sustain public transportation infrastructure at scale. Although the city does offer public transportation at no cost to all residents, trips must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance and the city can only offer transport to and from a limited number of locations due to capacity. The proposed improvements are essential to generate greater economic opportunities for underserved individuals residing in the Riverbend neighborhood that have for too long been disconnected from essential goods, services, and resources that the city, businesses, and local organizations have to offer. What's more, these infrastructure deficiencies are impacting people of color at a higher rate than their white counterparts as 75% of this area is home to minority populations. Therefore, these proposed improvements will help create and sustain an economic and social environment that not only supports but also advances racial equity.

Currently, portions of Coleman Avenue are under construction including a high priority LADOTD project to realign the Endom Bridge through the development of new road, drainage system, and sidewalks for safer vehicular traffic and pedestrian crossings. This intersection alone is incredibly dangerous especially for non-vehicular traffic which poses a substantial connectivity issue for individuals without access to a vehicle. Funded through its Urban Systems Program, LADOTD will make these improvements on

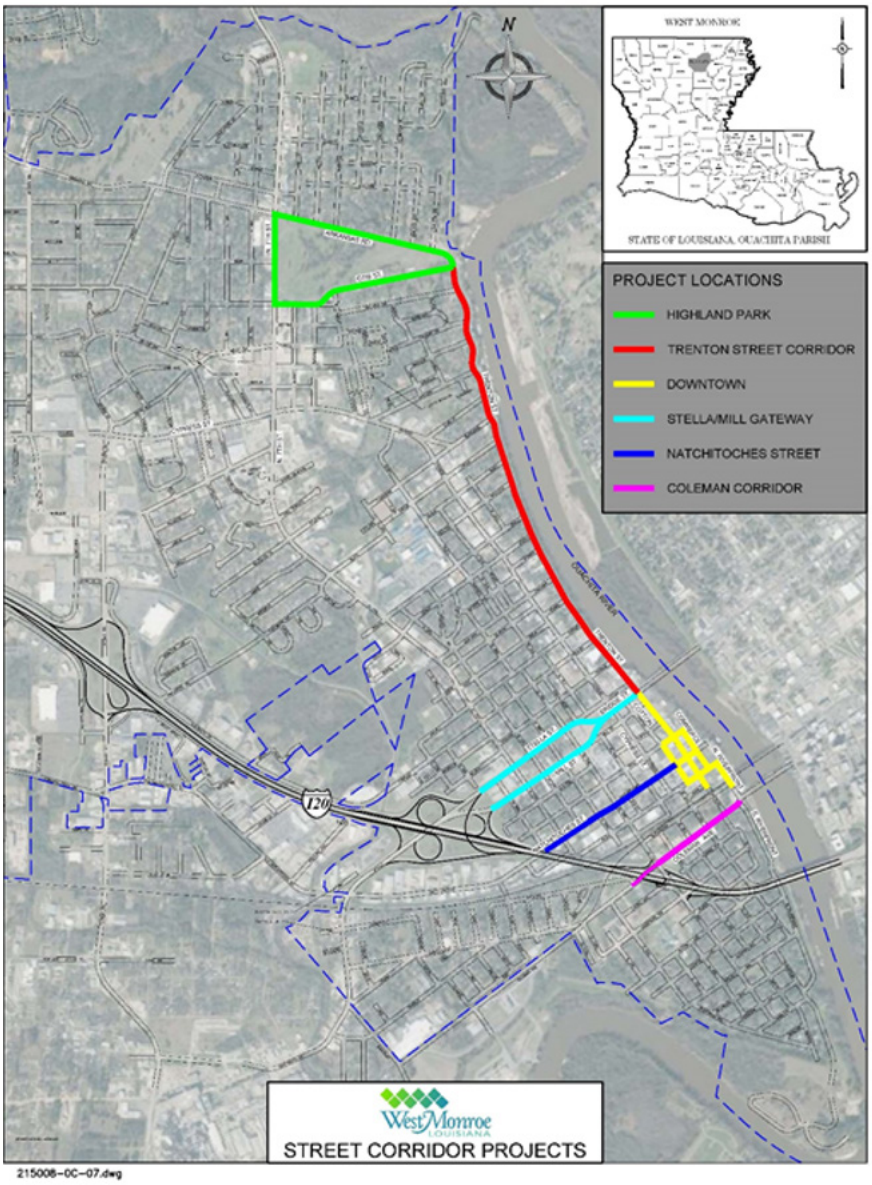
Coleman Avenue, South Riverfront Street, and at the intersection of the Endom Bridge. In coordination with this significant project, the RAISE Grant will expand multimodal transportation opportunities by installing 10' shared use paths, ADA compliant curb ramps, and street lighting from the I-20 overpass to the Endom Bridge. These proposed improvements will also connect to the shared use paths and pedestrian facilities across all other components throughout the West Monroe Revitalization Project, which will facilitate greater access for underserved individuals to high quality jobs, healthcare, essential goods and services, skill training and education and recreational amenities, among other things.

Component Utility

The completion of this component will capitalize on existing LADOTD projects to realign the Endom Bridge and improve the road, drainage, and sidewalks near the intersection and a portion of Coleman Avenue by extending these improvements through the I-20 overpass to Phillips Street. Beyond Phillips Street sidewalks have already been installed along Coleman Avenue which provide even greater access to commercial areas, job opportunities, and other residential neighborhoods.

II. PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed northern terminus of the project is located at the intersection of North 7th Street (LA-143) and Arkansas Road (32° 31’ 40.44”N, 92° 8’ 51.10”W) and extends southward to the intersection of Coleman Avenue and Phillips Street (32° 29’ 42.87”N, 92° 7’ 38.59”W). The entirety of the project is connected to existing transportation infrastructure, including the I-20, Lea Joyner Bridge, and Endom Bridge. The project is located in Ouachita Parish which has been designated a persistent poverty parish. This project is not located within a 2010 Census designated Urbanized Area.



III. GRANT FUNDS, SOURCES, AND USES OF PROJECT FUNDING

The City of West Monroe has committed 13% cash match for all expenses related to the project and has also invested approximately $500,000 for the design and engineering fees associated with this project across all six components. The City of West Monroe anticipates incurring an additional $2,000,000 for design, engineering, and professional services throughout the components.

Each component's costs are grouped categorically and are shown below in dollars and percentages.

Phase	Component	Source	Right-of-Way	Construction	Total	Percent Share
1	Highland Park	Non-Federal		$1,126,249.00	$1,126,249.00	72%
		RAISE Grant		$429,955.00	$429,955.00	28%
2	Trenton Street Corridor	Non-Federal		$150,000.00	$150,000.00	2%
		RAISE Grant	$100,000.00	$5,750,852.00	$5,850,852.00	98%
3	Downtown	Non-Federal		$1,250,000.00	$1,250,000.00	12%
		RAISE Grant		$8,825,494.75	$8,825,494.75	88%
4	Stella/Mill Gateway	Non-Federal		$0.00	$0.00	0%
		RAISE Grant		$1,915,705.00	$1,915,705.00	100%
5	Natchitoches Street	Non-Federal		$75,000.00	$75,000.00	18%
		RAISE Grant		$333,499.00	$333,499.00	82%
6	Coleman Corridor	Non-Federal		$0.00	$0.00	0%
		RAISE Grant		$741,749.00	$741,749.00	100%
TOTAL		**Non-Federal**	**$0.00**	**$2,601,249.00**	**$2,601,249.00**	**13%**
		RAISE Grant	**$100,000.00**	**$17,997,254.75**	**$18,097,254.75**	**87%**
		Total	**$100,000.00**	**$20,598,503.75**	**$20,698,503.75**	**100%**

IV. SELECTION CRITERIA

Primary Selection Criteria

Safety

The West Monroe Revitalization Project will provide a safer transportation system, reducing both transportation related fatalities and serious injuries. Anticipated impacts include a **reduction in traffic accidents downtown by 55%** with the addition of bump outs, one-way traffic, 10' shared use paths, and ADA compliant curb ramps designed to serve the area's most vulnerable roadway users. Undergrounding and modernizing public utilities will **eliminate the number of utility-pole-related incidents by nearly 100%**, while **reducing roadway incidents by 35%** with new lighting throughout the component areas. All assumptions referenced throughout the component areas are reflected in the Benefit Cost Analysis.

The **Highland Park** component includes the development of ADA compliant shared use paths, designed to reduce the risk of injury to all users, including children and elderly people, not only ADA users. The proposed addition of lighting to sidewalks and trails will reduce the possibility of user collisions with an object (or other users), prevent falls, allow users to recognize potential security threats, and provide a deterrent to criminal activity.

The highly trafficked **Trenton Street Corridor** represents an integral multimodal connection between Highland Park and Downtown and should be designed to serve the mobility and accessibility needs for all modes of transportation in the area. In its current state, the Trenton Street Corridor is unsafe putting motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians at risk with its insufficient lighting, deteriorated roads, and too few, severely dilapidated, narrow sidewalks. According to crash data available from 2010 to present-day, there is an incident involving pedestrians once per year on-average, which can be attributed to a lack of sidewalks or shared use paths available for use. There are also four or more accidents each year on Trenton Street that are caused by the existing drainage system. Additionally, downstream property owners are in danger from drainage systems that are ill-equipped to match the climate and weather-related challenges of the area. Proposed improvements to the Trenton Street Corridor will improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, creating a more human-scaled environment for non-motorized users. Further, drainage improvements will create safer roadway and residential/commercial property conditions by alleviating flooding and stormwater buildup.

Consistent with proposed improvements and related impacts throughout other areas, the **Downtown** component will create safer streets through the rehabilitation of roads, minimizing or eliminating myriad incidents related to potholes, hydroplaning from water-filled ruts, and other incidents related to common failures of infrastructure, the burying of utilities, and the inclusion of shared use paths, ADA compliant crossings, lighting, and signage. Additionally, as enumerated in the Project Description, critical commercial and residential roadways will undergo extensive streetscape design for safer traffic flow and pedestrian mobility. According to available crash data, there are 11 accidents that occur that occur every year that could be reduced to six or less accidents per year with the implementation of these proposed infrastructure improvements.

Similar to the Trenton Street Corridor, the **Stella/Mill Gateway** is noted for its insufficient and highly degraded sidewalk system, sparse lighting, and lack of ADA compliant curbs. The West Monroe Revitalization Project will address uneven sidewalks, torn up walkways, improperly designed curbs, and inadequate lighting to better serve neighboring residential neighborhoods and local businesses, minimizing or eliminating risk to human safety.

Recognized as a center of commerce for West Monroe, safe, equitable, non-vehicular access to **Natchitoches Street** is critical. Economically disadvantaged populations are at greater risk of the downstream costs and impacts of injury. Ensuring safe pedestrian access to local businesses and services is a priority. This area is also geographically relevant to the city's stormwater drainage/ flood mitigation strategy – enhancements to public infrastructure will alleviate flooding along the roadway and ensure prolonged integrity of safe road conditions despite varying levels of precipitation.

Investments in the **Coleman Corridor** represent a commitment to improved transportation safety measures in areas of persistent poverty. As mentioned in the Project Description, the underserved neighborhood of Riverbend represents a disproportionate number of residents without access to a motor vehicle. Cracked sidewalks, lack of lighting, and no curb ramps create a hazardous environment for all residents, and unreasonably so for a population that is heavily dependent on this infrastructure for primary or sole transportation. Additionally, insufficient drainage systems further imperil an immobilized, underserved population, placing residents of this area at increased risk in the event of a severe weather event. Improvements to pedestrian facilities, lighting, and associated drainage system will initiate a balance in access for vulnerable transportation system users connecting them to jobs, education, healthcare, and other economic opportunities not yet realized.

Environmental Sustainability

The West Monroe Revitalization Project will support the mobility needs of West Monroe in a manner that is less damaging to the environment. Sustainable street design, stormwater and drainage provisions, and improved pedestrian resources will reduce carbon emissions and ensure all utility improvements meet the city's zero-impact stormwater policy to mitigate flooding impacts that disrupt local businesses and create hazardous road conditions for residents. These features of the proposed infrastructure improvements align with the priority areas and guiding principles in West Monroe's Citywide Master Plan (anticipated completion November 2021), which are based on input from more than 575 local residents (4.4% of the total population).

In 2019 West Monroe was awarded a $479,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency alongside the City of Monroe and Ouachita Parish to conduct a Community-Wide Assessment of brownfields throughout the parish. As of July 2021, all sites in West Monroe have undergone a Phase I and Phase II assessment with prospective plans for redeveloping at least two out of three that are along the project components. Before redevelopment takes place, the coalition will develop a Revitalization Plan (anticipated completion January 2022) to ensure all properties are revitalized in an environmentally sustainable manner and the development incorporates substantial input from nearby populations, especially those living in nearby neighborhoods that have been historically marginalized, to minimize adverse impacts to the built environment.

Due to the ever-increasing impacts of climate change, West Monroe has become more and more susceptible to natural disasters and major weather events with greater force and frequency than ever before. Since 2019 Ouachita Parish has experienced five Major Disaster Declarations including severe storms, tornados, hurricanes, flooding, winter storms, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The West Monroe Revitalization Project has strategically incorporated disaster preparedness and resiliency throughout each component to mitigate the damage realized during these events. In response to these environmental impacts, the Louisiana Governor's Office of Coastal Activities has nearly completed the state's new Climate Action Plan (see Appendix D) which, by 2025, calls for the reduction in net greenhouse gas emissions by 26-28% from 2005 levels – the year Hurricane Katrina wreaked havoc on Louisiana's gulf coast. As evidenced by the proposed improvements, the West Monroe Revitalization Project addresses several objectives in the state's Climate Action Plan including the following: minimize greenhouse gas emissions and maximize quality of and access to essential goods, services, and infrastructure for residents. Additional objectives are identified below for each component.

The conversion of underutilized public land at **Highland Park** into a detention and greenspace area for flood mitigation improves disaster preparedness levels and allows for the use of RAISE funds toward the development of a related wetland trail system and shared use path, providing improved area connectivity. This project will introduce efficient infrastructure for active transportation options such as walking and bicycling, decreasing motor vehicle usage and dependence on nonrenewable resources, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. **Climate Action Plan Goals:** *Maximize preservation of natural resources and ecosystem services; Increase resilience of the built and natural environment to climate change.*

Like the drainage improvements at Highland Park, improved stormwater systems will improve the disaster preparedness and resiliency outcomes for the **Trenton Street Corridor**. In West Monroe, a city which disproportionately experiences climate-change-related consequences, these improvements will relieve flooding problems, reduce flood damage and costs of damage, overtopping of roads with drain water, while also keeping roadways clear and available for safe transport during periods of high precipitation. **Climate Action Plan Goal:** *Increase the resilience of communities to climate change.*

The West Monroe Revitalization Plan will introduce critical, energy saving improvements to the aging utility infrastructure currently serving the **Downtown** area, while positioning at least three significant brownfield sites for redevelopment. Since downtown is composed of multiple historic and cultural districts, and is also designated a Louisiana Main Street Community, these improvements will facilitate enhanced preservation efforts for the area's oldest structures. These proposed improvements will also address environmental justice issues in and around downtown West Monroe, which is adjacent to neighborhoods with disproportionately high rates of poverty. **Climate Action Plan Goals:** *Maximize the preservation of cultural heritage; Maximize engagement with and participation of communities in decision-making and implementation.*

The **Natchitoches Street** component represents continued improvements to the city's stormwater and drainage system, further supporting disaster preparedness and resiliency efforts. The installation of bicycle racks in concert with sidewalk improvements support broader

encouragement to shift away from vehicle dependence toward more active transportation. The long-term climate-forward impacts of this shift are evidenced through a minimized collective carbon footprint. **Climate Action Plan Goal:** *Maximize positive public health outcomes and public safety.*

The **Coleman Corridor** is adjacent to one of the most impoverished and economically underserved neighborhoods in all of Ouachita Parish. This area will realize environmental justice impacts from sustainable, pedestrian-forward infrastructure improvements, such as cleaner air and increased pedestrian access to critical services. The proposed improvements to drainage facilities will ensure safer roads and shared use paths and, ultimately, safer homes and neighborhoods. **Climate Action Plan Goals:** *Reduce socioeconomic, demographic, and geographic disparities in future opportunities and outcomes; Maximize reduction and mitigation of historic and structural inequities and their impacts for underserved and marginalized communities.*

Lighting throughout the project components will incorporate intelligent LED's which will adjust brightness to the current weather conditions and ultimately reduce energy consumption while providing appropriate lighting for all circumstances.

Quality of Life

The West Monroe Revitalization Plan will expand multimodal transportation opportunities for residents and visitors, including expanded shared use paths and lighting to improve connectivity throughout the city - especially for the 11% of households without access to a vehicle. Enhanced streetscape design, represented across multiple components, will improve mobility and accessibility options for underserved socioeconomic and minority populations, and specifically, West Monroe's differently abled populations. These improvements will also increase pedestrian traffic that supports more than 70 small businesses located in the historic and cultural districts along the Ouachita River, which will incentivize more entrepreneurialism and business expansions throughout the city. Ultimately, the six components combined create an interconnected transportation system connecting users to grocery stores and farmer's markets, community centers, public parks, hospitals and medical clinics, workforce training centers, public schools, and faith-based organizations.

The **Highland Park** component will introduce ADA compliant shared-use paths and lighting along critical roadways and throughout a designated wetland area, creating new connections and opportunities for underserved populations. Indirectly, as detailed in the Project Description, this completed component will connect underserved populations to high-quality jobs along with the presumed corollary quality of life outcomes including growth opportunities, benefits, work-life balance, career advancement, and job security.

The **Trenton Street Corridor** will connect the residents in neighborhoods near Highland Park, Downtown, and the Coleman Corridor via safe ADA compliant routes for all modes of transportation, expanding their access to essential goods and services including access into neighboring Monroe.

As a result of the proposed improvements to the streetscape, lighting, parking, sidewalks, and signage, the **Downtown** area will attract more businesses, more pedestrian traffic, and increased river usage - all elements that support an improved quality of life due to increased tax revenues, business growth, and prolonged visitation. The proposed improvements will have direct impact on the safe flow of traffic and targeted focus on improved connectivity for differently abled residents via ADA compliant crosswalks and bump-outs at critical intersections. The improvements will also allow for more public and community-wide events downtown with increased pedestrian facilities and public amenities.

Improved connections between pedestrians and local businesses will improve the quality of life for residents and visitors of the **Stella/Mill Gateway** area. Ease of access to local businesses not only improves the social fabric of a neighborhood but offers sustainability and growth opportunities for local entrepreneurs through increased visitation and sales. This component also borders neighborhoods and one of the largest faith-based organizations in the region. The proposed improvements will provide safer, more reliable transportation opportunities for these individuals who either do not have access to a vehicle or who opt for non-vehicular forms of transportation.

The proposed lighting and sidewalk improvements along **Natchitoches Street** will increase the ability to safely and comfortably walk to and from neighborhoods, which will improve health outcomes, build social capital, promote neighborhood safety, and deepen a sense of place for residents.

The **Coleman Corridor** is home to a minority, predominantly African American population. Proposed improvements from Phillips Street to the Endom Bridge will increase pedestrian safety, effectively minimizing the disproportionate impacts of transportation-related injury to people of color. These improvements will also address and alleviate unsafe transportation options from the Riverbend community, across Coleman Avenue, and into downtown and other areas of commerce throughout the city which will connect these individuals to greater economic opportunities.

Economic Competitiveness

Proposed public infrastructure improvements along key corridors will improve access to employment centers and job opportunities, improve long-term system reliability through flood mitigation efforts, strengthen the local economy by increasing the productivity of the land, and generate direct high-quality job opportunities through project-related employment.

Site certification is an effective marketing tool for economic development and creates a competitive advantage in successfully locating significant manufacturing operations. Improved access to the Louisiana Economic Development (LED) certified, shovel-ready site at **Highland Park** will give West Monroe priority ranking in the national landscape for encouraging the location of important industries and future innovations and technology sectors.

During the pandemic small businesses located **Downtown** were severely impacted until restrictions began being lifted and nearby restaurants started offering more outdoor seating and regular events (ex. live music). Public input for the downtown master plan indicated the need for improved pedestrian facilities and amenities, which has only increased in demand as a result of the pandemic. Revitalizing the downtown area will increase the economic competitiveness for

local businesses through improved and pedestrian-centric streetscape design, modernized utilities with more reliable service, and intentional traffic flow bringing more vehicles to streets that are currently less frequented than Trenton Street.

Significant improvements to sidewalks along the **Stella/Mill Gateway** will decrease transportation costs and increase pedestrian access to downtown, the city's local business epicenter. Removing transportation barriers will increase access to jobs and growth opportunities for residents previously hampered by vehicular limitations. Additionally, these improvements will create a safer, more efficient roadway for vehicles traveling to or from West Monroe using the I-20.

The **Coleman Corridor** will rehabilitate a roadway connecting West Monroe to Monroe through the Endom Bridge and intersecting with a railway supporting regionally significant industry such as Graphic Packaging International. Increased infrastructure accessibility and reliability will attract continued private investment through industry growth opportunities, including the potential to invite and support corollary supply chain developments.

State of Good Repair

The proposed improvements will ensure the six components function at the highest and most efficient levels possible during predictable daily traffic and peak traffic, such as in the case of special events or road closures. The completion of this project will improve public infrastructure 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 will continue to deteriorate to the point they are rendered obsolete. If left as is, failures in the existing infrastructure network will contribute to the loss of economic output and local job opportunities which will especially impact the areas of **Highland Park, Downtown, Natchitoches Street, and the Stella/Mill Gateway**. What's more, these infrastructure failures could impact disadvantaged neighborhoods and people of color to a life-altering extent by disconnecting them from greater economic opportunities that could be realized with the completion of these improvements. Already the city has experienced frequent service disruptions due to the current state of the water, sewer, and drainage facilities along the project route which has also contributed to cave-ins in the roadways and cracks and buckling along existing sidewalks, creating an unsafe environment for vehicular traffic and pedestrians alike.

The positive impact of these improvements will extend well beyond the limits of construction. The shared use paths constructed throughout the project route will connect impoverished neighborhoods to essential goods and services, high-quality jobs, and other public resources which will contribute to a level of connectivity that has not been realized by West Monroe nor its residents since its incorporation as a city. Additionally, the undergrounding of utilities will minimize maintenance and repairs subsequently reducing the number of service interruptions that currently affect businesses and residents while also reducing traffic interference. Moreover, these improvements will set the standard for multimodal transportation connectivity for small and rural communities, which is often unrealized due to a lack of funding and administrative capacity.

Secondary Selection Criteria

Partnership

The West Monroe Revitalization Project is widely supported at all levels of government, local businesses, institutions of higher education and K-12, hospitals, and faith-based organizations, among others. Although the city has contributed the entire match for this project, most of the components have leveraged other federal and state funding to lay the groundwork for this larger infrastructure project. LADOTD, Delta Regional Authority, U.S. Department of Agriculture - Rural Development, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Louisiana State Parks have all made grants to the city to invest in related projects throughout the six components and continue to be vital partners for ongoing and future projects. Additionally, the city has and continues to rely on the contributions and expertise of regional organizations such as the Ouachita Council of Governments, Northeast Louisiana Economic Partnership, Monroe-West Monroe Convention and Visitors Bureau, and West Monroe-West Ouachita Chamber of Commerce to help guide strategic investments throughout the city to ensure municipal decisions are community-driven, collaborative, and focused on the sustainable economic development of the region. For proposed improvements made to telecommunications utilities, the city has also engaged impacted service providers, such AT&T, to ensure efficient, effective, and cohesive deployment of resources. Moreover, the city has been engaged with Atlas Community Studios – a firm specializing in strategic planning and rural economic development – since 2018 to conduct various planning efforts including the downtown master plan (completed 2019), citywide master plan (ongoing), and most recently an EPA-funded brownfields revitalization plan to ensure municipal efforts are evidence-based and data-driven, strategically coordinated, and ultimately reflective of the public's wants and needs.

Innovation

Innovative Technologies

Throughout the project components, the city will incorporate several innovative technologies including LED street lighting fixtures with dimming capability, small cell wireless facilities, ELM system, and weather stations. Collectively, these technologies will save energy and enhance public safety. All new and improved street and walkway lighting will utilize LED bulbs which use approximately 50% less energy, produce five percent less greenhouse gases, and last significantly longer than traditional incandescent bulbs. This new lighting will also be equipped with light-sensing controllers that will automatically adapt to ambient lighting conditions that can fluctuate due to seasonal changes and ever-evolving weather conditions. Additionally, wireless communication devices will be installed with the lighting fixtures to enable remote control and real-time reporting of power outages. This capability will also make it possible for the police department to integrate security devices and gunshot sensors for faster response time in the case of an emergency. Along the Stella/Mill Gateway component, smart dimming technology will be integrated into the new lighting which will limit energy use along this corridor by maintaining lights on at a lower level (25-50% of energy use for traditional lighting) until motion is detected from vehicles and/or pedestrians. This lighting can detect a vehicle and/or pedestrian well in advance to activate the streetlights to full brightness until the vehicle and/or pedestrian has passed which provides the city with additional cost savings, limits energy usage,

and extends the life of the light bulbs.

Additionally, the city recently amended its ordinances to accommodate small cell wireless facilities within the public right-of-way to improve wireless data signals in areas where the carrier's cell tower lacks a strong signal. Throughout the project components, the city will install these small cell wireless facilities to the nearest lamp post where wireless coverage is weak to not only provide households and businesses with better cellular and internet service, but also to ensure pedestrians utilizing the trails, shared use paths, and sidewalks also have high quality service. Along the trails at Highland Park, the city will establish an ELM system which will have markers assigned a 911 address, be geolocated, and incorporated into the Ouachita Parish 911 database. This system will allow first responders to quickly locate individuals along the trails during an emergency. Since the city installed an ELM system at another public park in February 2021, it has already proven to be a crucial public safety tool and a mutually beneficially partnership between the city's GIS department and the Ouachita Parish 911 Communications District.

In response to climate change impacts and harsher weather conditions annually, the city will install two weather stations as a part of the project which will be equipped with data loggers and cellular cards to allow for the wireless transmission of real-time data to the city's database. This information will include granular weather and atmospheric data that is not currently being collected, which will benefit the city's departments of Public Works and Parks & Recreation by collecting real-time data and storing historic records for future reference. The city will also make this information available for public consumption via website, social media, and/or smartphone application.

Innovative Project Delivery

The West Monroe Revitalization Project will utilize a variation of an innovative design strategy through the integration of a road diet in four of the six components. 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 included enhanced safety, mobility, and access for all road users and a 'complete streets' environment to accommodate a variety of transportation modes." Although none of the components will reduce four-lane highways to two lanes, the integration of shared use paths will provide increased safety, mobility, and access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and differently abled and will ultimately enhance the multimodal transportation opportunities offered throughout the city for all users. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Transportation also states, "a key feature of a road diet is that it allows reclaimed space to be allocated for other uses, such as turn lanes, bus lanes, pedestrian refuge islands, bike lanes, sidewalks, bus shelters, parking or landscaping." This concept can be applied to most of the components but most appropriately describes the improvements that will be made to the downtown area, which will reduce multiple roadways from two-lane streets with parking and narrow, incongruous sidewalks to one-way streets with more consistent angled parking and shared use paths with bump outs and environmentally sustainable landscaping. This variation of a "road diet" will ensure the community's desire for safe and equitable transportation opportunities for vehicular and non-vehicular users is realized while also improving quality of

life amenities such as pedestrian/bicyclist facilities and programmed public spaces (ex. seating and tables for outdoor dining).

Innovative Financing

In the past three years, the City of West Monroe has strategically leveraged local funding with federal and state grants to address public infrastructure, advance economic development, and improve quality of life for current and future residents. The city has pursued and been awarded grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Rural Development, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Delta Regional Authority, LADOTD Urban Systems Program and Louisiana State Parks Recreational Trails Program, among others, over the past three years alone.
As previously described, the majority of the six components have received or are slated to receive grants from these federal and state agencies to make critical improvements to public infrastructure and quality of life amenities.

The city has also activated one Economic Development District (EDD), which is a special taxing district established to provide funding for economic development projects within a defined geographical area. The EDD can collect funds either as incremental taxes or as new taxes and has already proven to be a useful reinvestment tool at the West Monroe Commercial Park near the Ike Hamilton Exposition Center (one-cent sales tax and one-cent hotel occupancy tax) which has received significant infrastructure upgrades and new business expansions in the past two years due to the EDD raising nearly a million dollars annually. Another EDD that the city will consider activating is the Central Downtown Development District which includes the downtown area addressed by the proposed project. This funding can be used to reinvest in the downtown area to ensure infrastructure improvements are maintained appropriately and the component remains in a state of good repair.

In the Spring 2021, the city also launched the multimillion dollar "Picture This Capital Campaign" to raise private funds for infrastructure and amenity improvements to downtown and the riverfront area. The capital campaign has prioritized this funding for the implementation and maintenance of the new downtown streetscape, gateway and wayfinding signage, and public recreational amenities throughout downtown and along the Ouachita River. Depending on the success of the campaign, these funds can and will also be utilized for other city improvements throughout the six components and beyond.

V. ENVIRONMENTAL RISK REVIEW

The City of West Monroe has successfully administered multiple state and federally funded infrastructure projects. The city's staff have the capacity and experience necessary to successfully administer a RAISE Grant if awarded funding for these critical improvements.

Once a notice to proceed is issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the city will begin design and engineering of the six components. In accordance with the RAISE Grant, the components with projects funded by the Urban Systems Program are operating on a coordinated timeline for design and engineering. The firms that have been assigned the engineering tasks have a long history of completing complex projects with expedited timelines, and the city has the utmost confidence that the presented dates are accurate and easily attainable.

Technical Feasibility

The infrastructure improvements outlined in this project are common in transportation design and construction, and through continual maintenance and rehabilitation projects multiple contractors in our region have proven these improvements are all constructible with mitigatable interferences. The following improvements are included in the construction:

- Rehabilitation of existing roadways
- Rehabilitation/replacement of existing subsurface infrastructure
- Relocation of aerial utilities underground
- ADA compliant shared use paths and sidewalks
- New street lighting
- Enhanced streetscaping

The costs estimates have been produced through coordination with local utility companies and engineers licensed in Louisiana with experience in transportation projects in our local area.

Project Schedule

A detailed project schedule is included in the Appendix F.

Component	Activity	Date
	FY 2021 RAISE Grant Awarded	11/1/2021
Highland Park	Final Design	5/17/2022
	Obligate Construction Funds	9/14/2022
	Award Construction Contract	11/14/2022
	Construction Notice to Proceed	12/14/2022
	Project Component Closeout	8/12/2023
Trenton Street Corridor	Final Design	8/15/2022
	Acquire Right of Way	1/15/2023
	Award Construction Contract	2/15/2024
	Construction Notice to Proceed	3/16/2024
	Project Component Closeout	8/9/2025

Downtown	Final Design	3/1/2023
	Obligate Construction Funds	8/28/2023
	Award Construction Contract	11/15/2023
	Construction Notice to Proceed	11/30/2023
	Project Component Closeout	6/18/2026
Stella/Mill Gateway	Final Design	1/15/2024
	Obligate Construction Funds	5/14/2024
	Award Construction Contract	1/15/2025
	Construction Notice to Proceed	2/14/2025
	Project Component Closeout	7/15/2025
Natchitoches Street	Final Design	6/30/2022
	Obligate Construction Funds	10/13/2022
	Award Construction Contract	12/13/2022
	Construction Notice to Proceed	1/12/2023
	Project Component Closeout	9/10/2023
Coleman Corridor	Final Design	2/15/2024
	Obligate Construction Funds	6/14/2024
	Award Construction Contract	11/15/2024
	Construction Notice to Proceed	1/15/2025
	Project Component Closeout	9/13/2025

Required Approvals

- As a result of more than 30 town hall meetings, public visioning sessions, focus groups, and interviews facilitated during the development of the downtown master plan and ongoing citywide master plan, there is an overwhelming consensus of approval for the proposed improvements (see Appendix D).
- This project is broadly supported on both a national, state, and local level with numerous elected officials having pledged their individual support (see Appendix B).
- LADOTD Transportation Improvements Program (TIP) is aware of this project's incorporation into their existing projects throughout the components.
- NEPA reviews have not been completed but no findings of significant impacts on adjacent multimodal transportation projects have been found that included roadway rehabilitations, drainage improvements, and shared use paths.

Assessment of Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Few risks can be identified with the funding of this project. The projects that have been or will be funded through the Urban Systems Program have coordinated construction timelines with the RAISE Grant components. If selected for funding, the remaining engineering tasks will be managed and completed by highly capable consultants with vast knowledge of all programs and timelines to be met with the various funding sources impacting the West Monroe Revitalization Project.

The proposed schedule has the entirety of the RAISE Grant obligated by June 14, 2024 and all

funds liquidated by June 18, 2026 in advance of the statutory deadline.

VI. BENEFIT COST ANALYSIS

Over the last three years the City of West Monroe has experienced a steady rise in traffic congestion and related accidents, and anticipate the conditions to worsen until infrastructure improvements are made and alternative modes of transportation are offered throughout the city. Upon completion of the project the city anticipates the proposed improvements will promote safety, connectivity, and reliability of services.

A detailed Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) has been prepared in accordance with the Notice of Funding Opportunity and can be found in Appendix E. It was determined that the discounted Benefit-Cost ratio over the 30-year analysis period is **1.02**. Assumptions used to prepare the BCA can be seen below with further explanation in Appendix E.

Pedestrian

Currently within the proposed project components sidewalks are either sporadic or nonexistent, lacking proper ramps at intersection crossings, in disrepair, and narrow. The lack of pedestrian infrastructure disconnects local underserved communities from essential goods, services, and resources that the city, businesses, and local organizations have to offer. The proposed RAISE Grant project will provide ADA compliant sidewalks along with street lighting throughout. The anticipated annual safety savings from the new and rehabilitated shared use paths is **$237,461**.

Bicycle

There are no dedicated shared use paths and anyone who opts to commute via bicycle must ride in the roadway creating hazards for both the cyclist and vehicular traffic. The proposed RAISE Grant will install ADA compliant shared use paths throughout the project components. The neighboring underserved communities that have a higher rate of homes with no vehicles compared to the rest of the city will now have multiple safe options to safely access necessary goods and services.

Vehicle

As mentioned previously, the installation of shared use paths will eliminate the hazard vehicular traffic currently encounters due to bicyclists riding in the roadway. Another hazard vehicular traffic faces are the deteriorated roadways and subsurface infrastructure throughout the project area. Subsurface infrastructure failures lead to patchwork in the roadway, delayed travel times, and unsafe conditions during wet weather due to localized flooding. The new subsurface drainage infrastructure will alleviate flooding during inclement weather, promoting safer travel with shorter travel times. It is estimated that during inclement weather the Trenton Street Corridor will realize 2.5 minutes per day saved by its users. The economic benefit of the travel times savings is estimated to be **$278,857** annually.

Sales Tax Revenue

The infrastructure and streetscape improvements to the components are anticipated to increase the City of West Monroe's sales tax revenue. Access to local underserved areas along with drawing in visitors to the area will boost the existing business revenue within the project area along with encouraging the establishment of new businesses in now vacant lots and structures. Further explanations and assumptions are included in Appendix E.

Non-Quantified Benefits

- The relocation of aerial utilities and telecommunications will provide fewer service interruptions to local businesses and residents.
- Property values in the surrounding areas will increase due to the infrastructure improvements and increased connectivity to local services and recreational amenities.
- Street lighting will create safer environments for pedestrians and vehicular traffic.
- Multimodal transportation options to local areas will reduce vehicular traffic by residents and visitors.
- The new infrastructure will encourage new businesses to relocate or expand into the area creating job opportunities for residents in economically underserved areas.

	Non-Discounted Totals	7% Discounted Totals
Total Benefits	$50,261,818.38	$17,902,123.10
Total Costs	$22,305,536.49	$17,623,039.61
Benefit-Cost Ratio	2.25	1.02

APPENDICES