



City of Natchitoches, Louisiana  
**2021 RAISE Grant Application**

**“Natchitoches Safe Streets Revitalization” Project**

**Table of Contents**

<b>Project Description</b>	Page 2
<b>Project Location</b>	Page 5
<b>Grant Funds, Sources, and Uses of Project Funds</b>	Page 18
<b>Primary Selection Criteria</b>	Page 19
<b>Secondary Selection Criteria</b>	Page 23
<b>Environmental Risk</b>	Page 26
<b>Benefit-Cost Analysis Summary</b>	Page 27

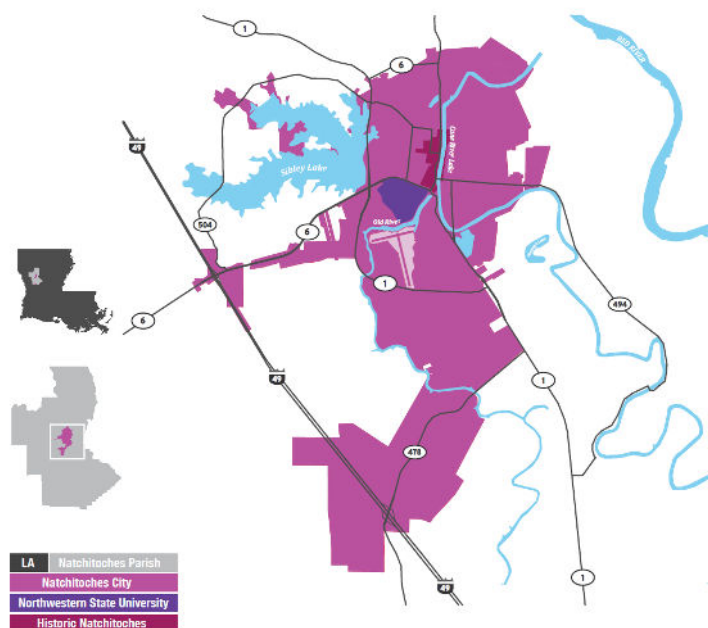
<b>Appendix</b>	Benefit-Cost Analysis
<b>Appendix</b>	Recap of Probable Costs (Full and Scaled Projects)
	• <i>With Cost Estimate Calculation Worksheet</i>
<b>Attachment</b>	Applicant Letter and Match Commitment
<b>Attachment</b>	Letters of Support
<b>Attachment</b>	City of Natchitoches Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan
<b>Attachment</b>	Welch Street Drainage Study

## I. Project Description

The City of Natchitoches, Louisiana holds a unique place in America as the oldest permanent settlement located within the Louisiana Purchase. Established in 1714, Natchitoches is a growing community ripe with natural beauty, numerous historic sites, and enormous opportunities to improve the lives of its residents. Leveraging the city's greatest asset – its people – is the City's absolute top priority. Doing so will enable further economic growth, greater opportunities for individuals to succeed, local businesses to thrive, and will ensure all the city's residents have an equal opportunity to live their dreams and build a bright future.

Such an ambitious mission requires collaboration between the public and private sectors, health, education, and social service stakeholders, private businesses, community organizations, nonprofit and faith leaders. City leadership has taken on this effort, both in engaging the community directly, as well as in defining priority projects in conjunction with a wide array of stakeholders and for the benefit of the community at large.

Ensuring equal opportunity, and leveraging the potential of every Natchitoches resident, for the betterment of their and their children's futures, requires equitable access to safe, reliable transportation infrastructure. All residents of Natchitoches must be able to travel to work, health and education providers, commercial and retail centers via an affordable mode of transportation of their choosing. Enabling this access will help unlock the potential of every person, and ensure the city thrives now and into the future. The "Natchitoches Safe Streets Revitalization" Project will



serve to accomplish these objectives. With funding from the Department of Transportation's RAISE Grant program, the City will implement a community-driven project to address access, safety, and quality of life challenges inherent in the current design and condition of transportation infrastructure in and around the Texas Street Business Corridor. Residents living in these neighborhoods and traveling through this area lack equitable access to places of work and future employment opportunities, health and education services, and commercial and retail centers. In addition, the area's economic potential is severely constrained by roads that are in poor condition and limited opportunities to walk or bike safely in, out, and around the community. Funding for the Natchitoches Safe Streets Revitalization Project will address these immediate infrastructure needs and begin to unlock the full potential of these underserved neighborhoods.

The project has not been previously funded by the Department of Transportation, through its BUILD or TIGER programs or otherwise. The project implements the City of Natchitoches Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan, adopted and approved by the city in 2020.

### **Detailed Statement of Work**

Specifically, the project scope includes the rehabilitation and revitalization of the Texas Street Business Corridor from the Highway 1 South Bypass to Washington Street, while improving the conditions of feeder roads and neighborhood streets that enable the safe movement of people and goods throughout the community. Project elements include rehabilitation of roads and drainage facilities, new pavement, new and widened sidewalks, walking paths, marked bike and pedestrian lanes, and other improvements in accordance with ADA requirements.

The project scope for this RAISE grant application includes the full Natchitoches Bike & Pedestrian Plan (attached), as well as rehabilitation of the additional streets listed in the second attachment. A potential addition includes connecting Amulet St. to Lake Street. A Planning grant request is also being considered to study the efficacy of widening Lake St. for safer travel through the community, as well as making various streets one way due to the inability for two cars to safely pass at the same time on many of these streets.

It is important to note that a key component of this project, the Texas Street Roundabout, is being supported by State of Louisiana Capital Outlay funds. While not included in the RAISE Scope of Work, this is a key component of the city's overall plan to improve quality of life for residents by addressing traffic and commuting issues that currently limit access to employment, education, health, and other public and private services.

The Detailed Statement of Work for this project includes the following components:

- Task 1: Construction of Improvements Outlined in Natchitoches Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan. This also includes:**
- Additional reconstruction of 10' wide paved shoulders as shown in the Master Plan.
  - Additional embankment and drainage for shoulder widening and paving.
- Task 2: Construction of sidewalks in project target area; those not included in the Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan.**
- Task 3: Installation of advance signing at crosswalks.**
- Task 4: Right-of-Way for construction of sidewalks, paved shoulders, and separated bike lanes.**
- Task 5: Install street lighting on Texas Street, MLK Drive, and Amulet Street.**
- Task 6: Resurfacing of streets in project target area.**

**Task 7: Planning Grant Activities: Construction of New Connector Street to tie Lake Street into Amulet Street.**

As shown in below, the project development timeline contemplates a construction period from February 2025 through January 2027.

**Natchitoches Safe Streets Revitalization Project “Impact Zones”**

In order to maximize the impact of the project and local, state, and federal investments, the city has divided the scope of this project into “Impact Zones.” The selection of these zones was initially contemplated as the Master Plan was created and implementation considerations began, while further designation of the zones was based on discussions with community stakeholders, plans to address access inequities, and opportunities to create new economic opportunity for residents and the city at large.

The project “Impact Zones” also present a scalable project for the city and its local, state, and federal partners. The full impact of the Natchitoches Safe Streets Revitalization project offers comprehensive and massive impact on access, safety, quality of life, and economic opportunities over the long-term. However, addressing the needs and opportunities presented in each Impact Zone, one-by-one, also carries substantial positive impact on the communities shown in each of the corresponding Impact Zone maps & drawings.

***Impact Zone 1: The city’s first priority Impact Zone carries with it high potential impact on historically underserved, minority, and low-income neighborhoods that suffer from a lack of access to health, education, social services, as well as job and economic opportunities. RAISE funds provided by DOT will substantially impact safety, quality of life, and economic competitiveness for residents of the targeted neighborhoods.***

***Impact Zone 2: The city’s second priority Impact Zone also has enormous potential for increased opportunity for the city’s residents. Designated improvements in Impact Zone 2 will address pockets of poverty while also addressing safety and access limitations for residents traveling from Impact Zone 1 to jobs, public services, and commercial centers located in Impact Zone 2.***

***Impact Zone 3: The city’s third priority Impact Zone captures broader investments first contemplated in the Master Plan. These improvements will substantially improve the economic competitiveness of the city as a whole, while addressing larger safety and quality of life issues experienced by all residents of Natchitoches.***

**Planning Grant Activities**

The final component of this grant application is the implementation of planning activities to consider the construction of new connector street to tie Lake Street into Amulet Street. This initiative has been contemplated as a result of ongoing city leadership discussions about how to address congestion, safety, and quality of life concerns associated with Lake Street and other adjacent narrow streets in that area.

Lake Street functions in the City system as a local connector street, providing access between two local arterials, the LA-1 Bypass at its southwestern terminus to Martin Luther King Drive. Along its length, either adjacent to or within close proximity to this street are located a large residential population center, multiple churches, a funeral home, Head Start Center, and other destinations. Thus, Lake Street carries a high volume of mostly passenger vehicles.

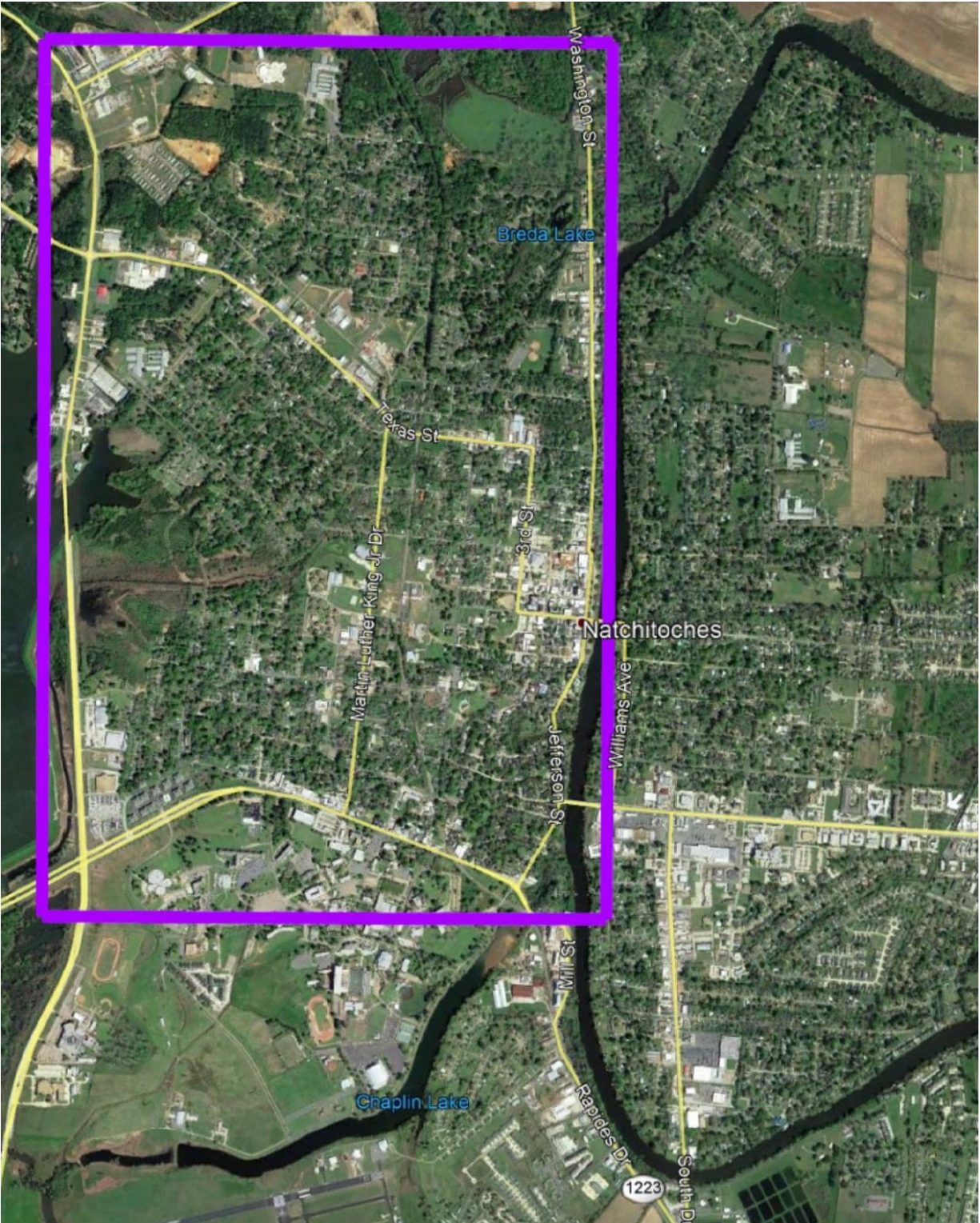
The portion of Lake Street that was reconstructed in the 1990's as part of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development project that four-laned the LA-1 Bypass is a viable two-lane street. This section extends from the Bypass to a point approximately 0.1 mile northeast of this intersection. From that point northeastward to its intersection with Old Robeline Road, however, the 15-foot average width of this street precludes the free flow of two-way traffic. Within a portion of this segment, a concrete sidewalk on the northwest side and a narrow open ditch on the southeast side of the street further constrains two-way traffic. The existing City right-of-way along this entire section of the Lake Street corridor is narrow and thus does not allow for widening of the street, even with the enclosure of the existing open roadside ditches. Purchasing additional right-of-way in this area for widening of this street, especially if subsurface drainage is constructed, would be cost-prohibitive. Therefore, other alternatives must be explored.

This new connector street would serve the same purpose as extending Amulet Street to tie directly into the LA-1 Bypass but would eliminate the problems inherent in the construction of a new access connection to the Bypass, since the existing median opening and southbound left-turn lane would continue to function as they do at the present time. As part of this estimate, a detailed topographical survey would have to be performed in order to provide data for the design of both the vertical and horizontal alignment, which must meet the current design standards for local streets. The planning grant activities contemplated in this request include the exploration of the various alternatives to address this need. Costs would be incurred primarily to procure the services of a transportation planner.

## **II. Project Location**

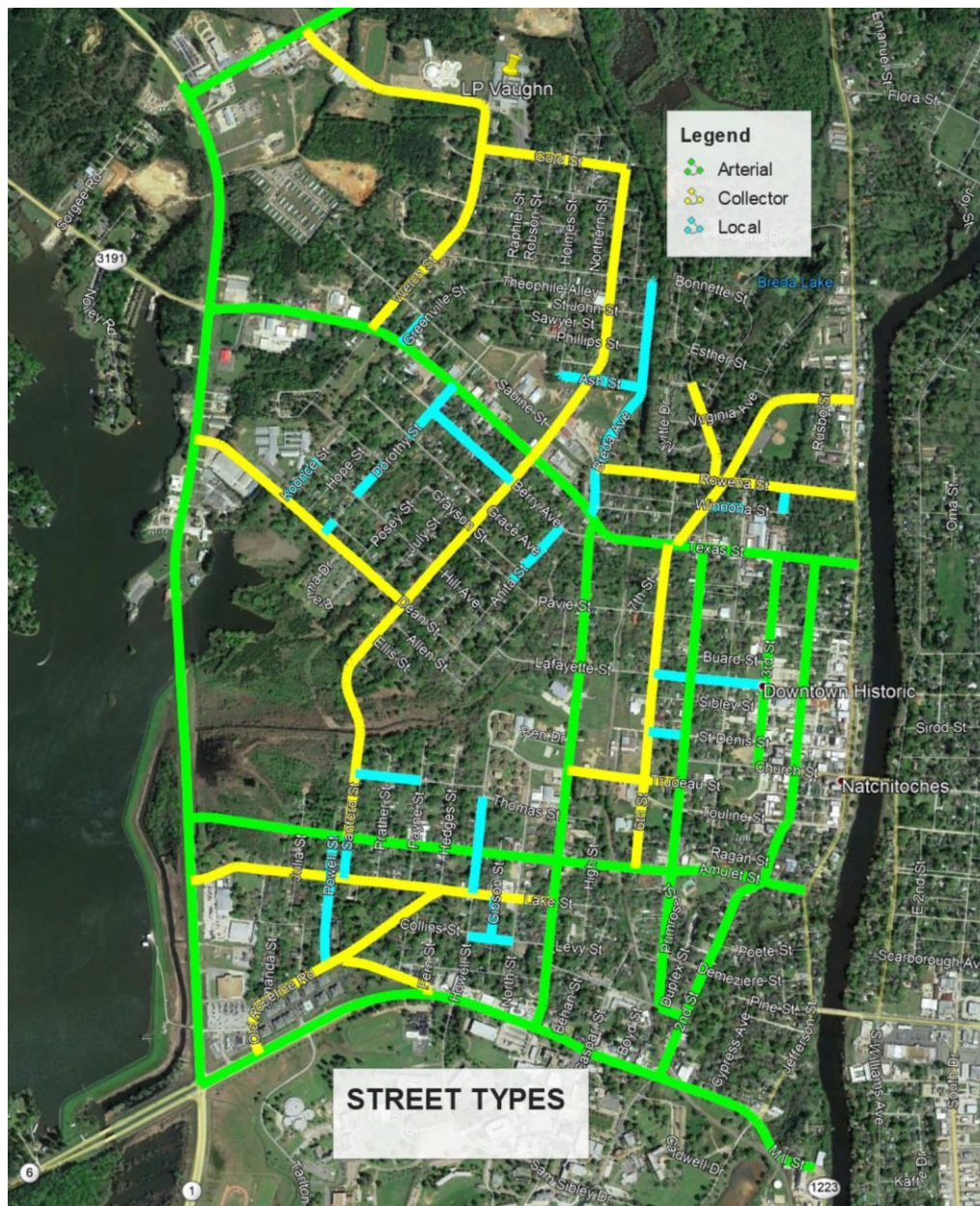
The Natchitoches Safe Streets Revitalization Project is located within a defined "Project Boundary" scoped and selected based on critical community needs to address access limitations and increase opportunities in alignment with city, state, and federal priorities. The aerial view of the Project Boundary is shown here, focusing investments in Impact Zone neighborhoods and census tracts north and northwest of the city center that qualify as both economically distressed and Areas of Persistent Poverty.







A closer review of the focused project area presents the impact of the investment on arterial, collector and local roads, which when taken together represent a comprehensive project designed to impact equity, safety, and quality of life challenges.



As the City has zeroed in on improvements first called out in the Master Plan and those targeted as part of the RAISE application, three “Impact Zones” of investment are targeted. These Impact Zones reflect the City’s prioritization of investment based on safety, quality of life and equity challenges and opportunities. This project presents a clear opportunity to lift a broader community out of poverty by increasing opportunities for economic competitiveness, equitable access to quality education and health care, while creating safe routes to places of worship, recreation, and commercial centers.

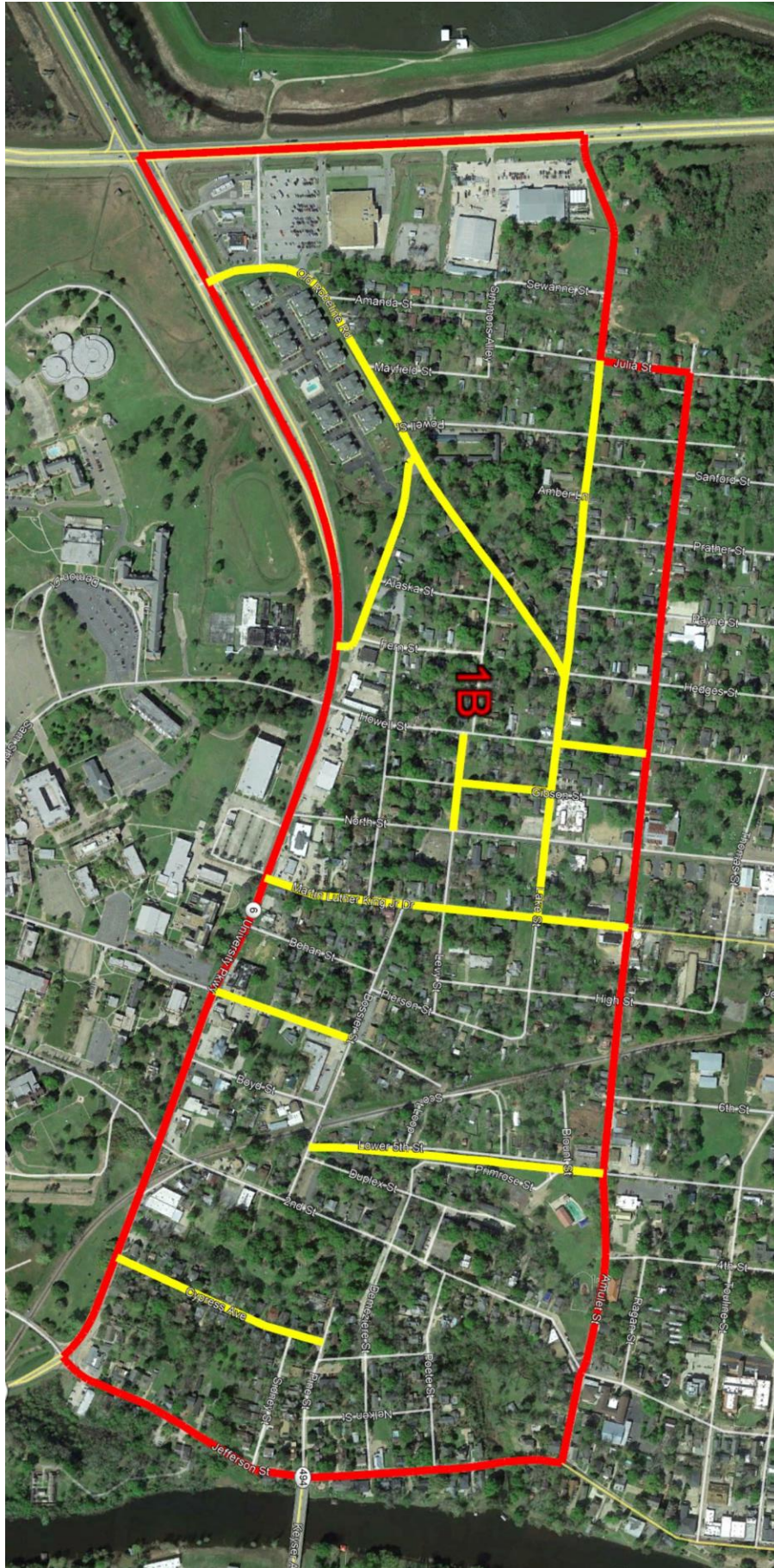


Individually, these Impact Zones of investment hone in on point-by-point improvements to streets, sidewalks, and walking paths that guide the city's plan to meet the needs of its residents. The response to this strategic and tract-by-tract approach has been overwhelmingly positive as residents, community organizations, service providers, and private businesses have expressed their support and strong desire for this project to move forward.

### IMPACT ZONE 1A, 1B AND 1C





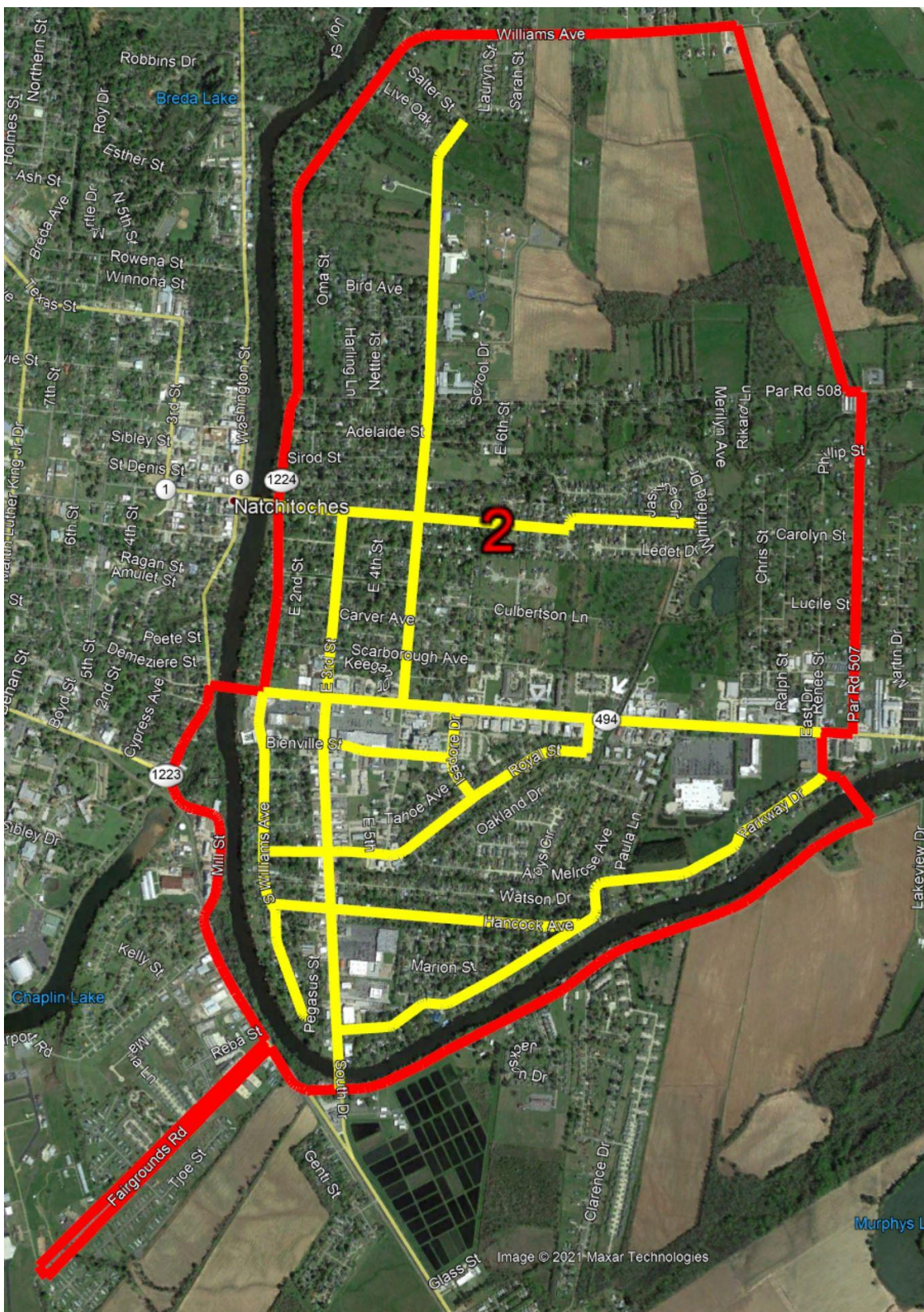






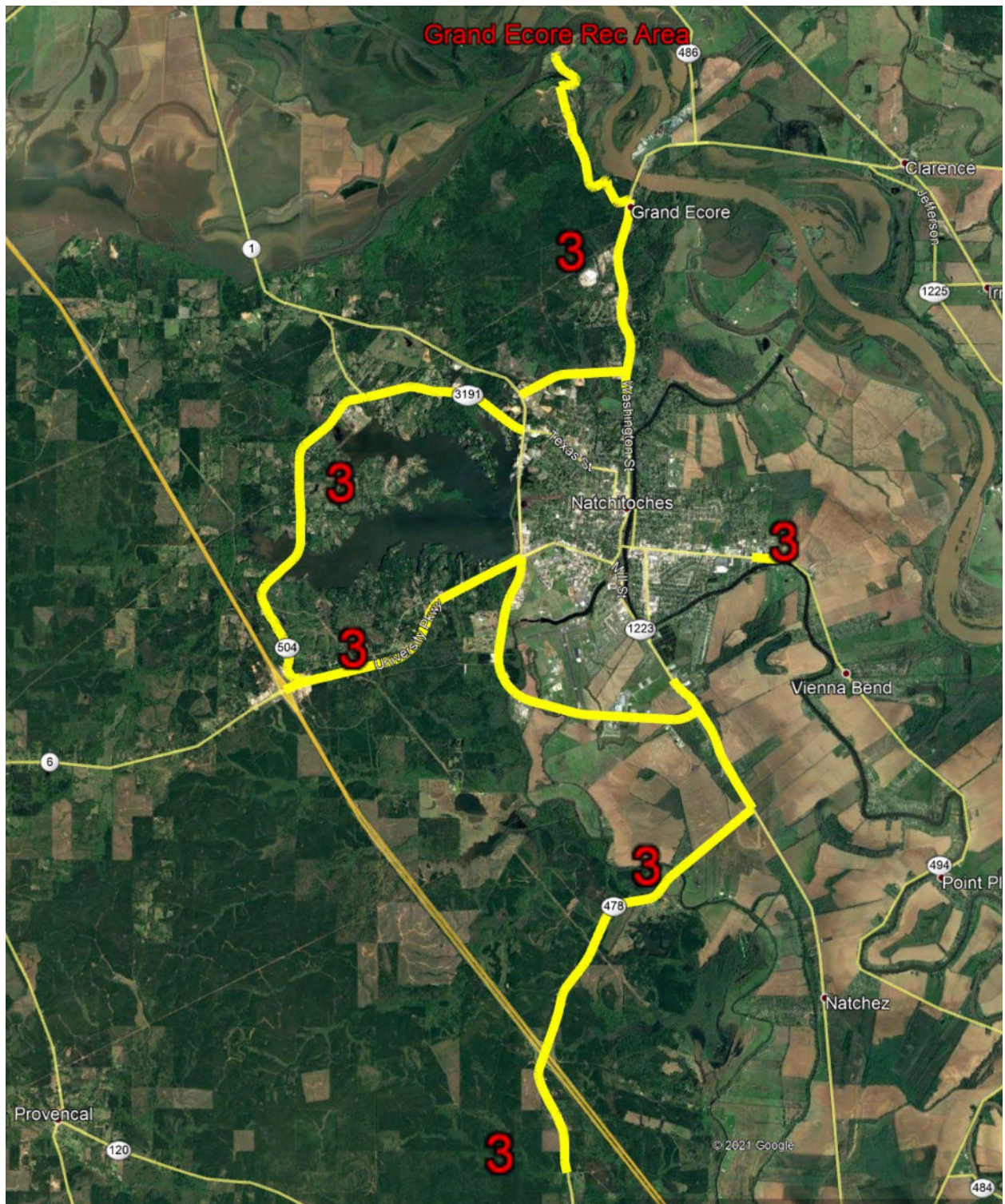


## IMPACT ZONE 2

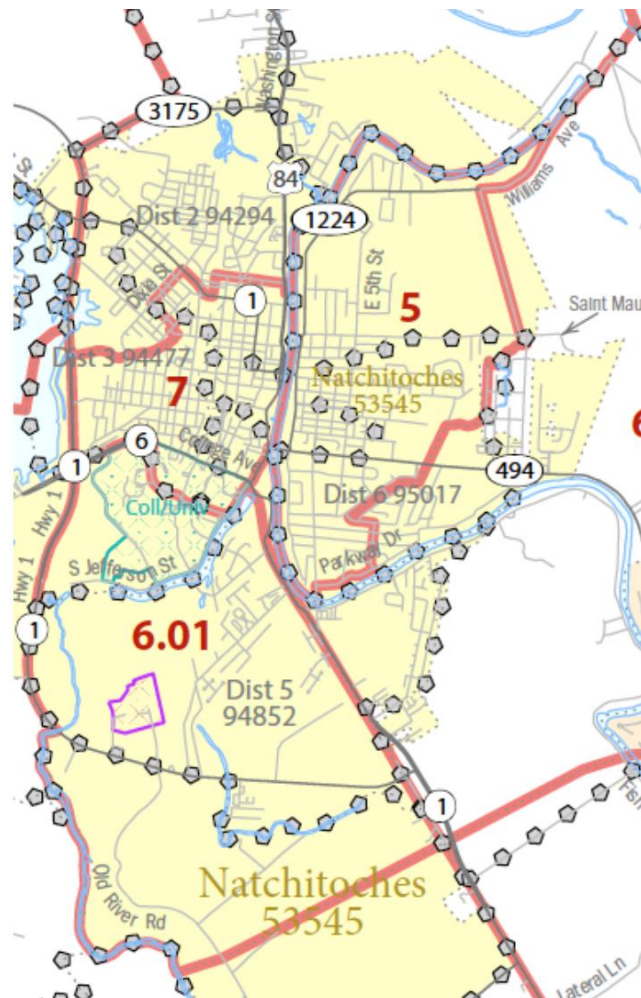




### IMPACT ZONE 3



The designated Impact Zones target Areas of Persistent Poverty as defined within the RAISE Grant. Census Tract 5 (22069000500), Census Tract 6 (22069000600), and Census Tract 7 (22069000700) comprise the majority of the Safe Streets Revitalization Project and qualify as Areas of Persistent Poverty. See Census Tract Map below:



In addition, these Census Tracts collectively suffer from higher-than-average unemployment rates and lower than average median household income levels. These disparities are felt most acutely in Census Tract 6 and Census Tract 7, as compared to state and national averages:

	Census Tract 6 (22069000600)	Census Tract 7 (22069000700)	LOUISIANA	U.S.
Median Household Income	\$ 22,201.00	\$ 15,268.00	\$ 49,469.00	\$ 62,843.00
Unemployment	19.00%	33.14%	6.45%	5.28%

*SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 5-Year American Community Survey*

As shown in “Impact Zone” visuals on the previous pages, the project has prioritized streets for improvement according to the Master Plan, as well as those identified in conjunction with city leadership and community stakeholders.

The table below clarifies the streets to be included as part of the project and the specifies the area(s) to be rehabilitated and/or revitalized.

<b>Street Name</b>	<b>Area Targeted for Rehabilitation</b>
Amulet	5 <sup>th</sup> Street to Sanford Street
Amulet	Julia Street to Prather Street
Anita Street	Pavie Street to Grace Street
Ash Street	Holmes Street to Breda Avenue
Berry Street	Dorothy Street to Dixie Street
Breda Street	Bayou Jacko to Stella Street
College Avenue	Old Robeline to University Parkway
Dorothy Street	Dean Street to Jeansonne Street
Dorothy Street	Hill Street to Grayson Street
Dorothy Street	Grace Street to Texas Street
Fifth Street	Bossier to Amulet
Fourth Street	Texas Street to Rowena Street
Gibson Street	Levy Street to Lake Street
Grace Street	Anita Street to Dixie Street
Greenville Street	Texas Street to Sabine Street
Howell Street	Lake Street to Thomas Street
Koonce Street	Dean Street to Hill Street
Lafayette Street	Third Street to Sixth Street
Lake Street	LA-1 Bypass to Julia Street
Levy Street	Howell Street to North Street
MLK	University Parkway to Texas Street
North Fifth Street	Rowena Street to Myrtle Drive
Powell Street	Old Robeline to Amulet
Raphiel Street	Theophile Alley to Sawyer Street
Rowena Street	Railroad Crossing to West Fifth Street
Sanford Street	Lake Street to Amulet Street
Sixth Street	Amulet to Texas Street (50%)
St. Denis Street	Fifth Street to Sixth Street
Third Street	Winona Street to Rowena Street
Thomas Street	Sanford Street to Payne Street
Trudeau	5 <sup>th</sup> Street to MLK
Winona Street	Fourth Street to Fifth Street



In addition to road improvements, the project implements the City of Natchitoches Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan. The plan is locally focused and intended to help implement bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure within the City. It seeks to encourage implementation by providing a focused list of local bicycle and pedestrian projects that enhance connectivity and provide routes to important residential, historic, and economic centers. These network improvements are paired with education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation programs.

Studies have shown that traditionally underserved, high-poverty populations rely on walking and/or bicycling as a primary means of transportation. These populations may have a greater need for safe facilities for walking and bicycling compared to other groups. Improving the ability of traditionally underserved communities like Natchitoches to travel safely is essential to achieving a sustainable, equitable transportation system that can provide options in how people access jobs, schools, health care services, faith entities, social gatherings, and other destinations. As an area of Persistent Poverty, the City of Natchitoches is located in Northwest Louisiana and is home to 18,323 residents with a racial makeup of 59.2% black, 37.2% white, and 3.6% other races. There are just over 7,000 households, 26.7% have children under the age of 18 and 23.2% are headed by single females. Natchitoches is a rural community with more than one-third (44.6%) of the population living below the poverty line.

It is important to note that low-income, minority, or immigrant individuals are more likely to have jobs that cause them to commute outside of traditional hours, often in the dark. Concerted efforts to improve the ability of the traditionally underserved to travel by walking and bicycling will help reduce transportation-based inequities and the negative outcomes that impact Natchitoches.

As stated previously, these considerations formed the basis for the city's strategic approach to this project and the grant application – resulting in the scalable “Impact Zones” designed to prioritize investments on those with greatest need and long-term opportunities for growth. As with this RAISE project, the City of Natchitoches has taken a holistic approach to community wellbeing and enhancing quality of life with the Master Plan. This Plan will reinforce these values and support design to serve all users, including children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and those who prefer use of nonmotorized travel modes for commuting.

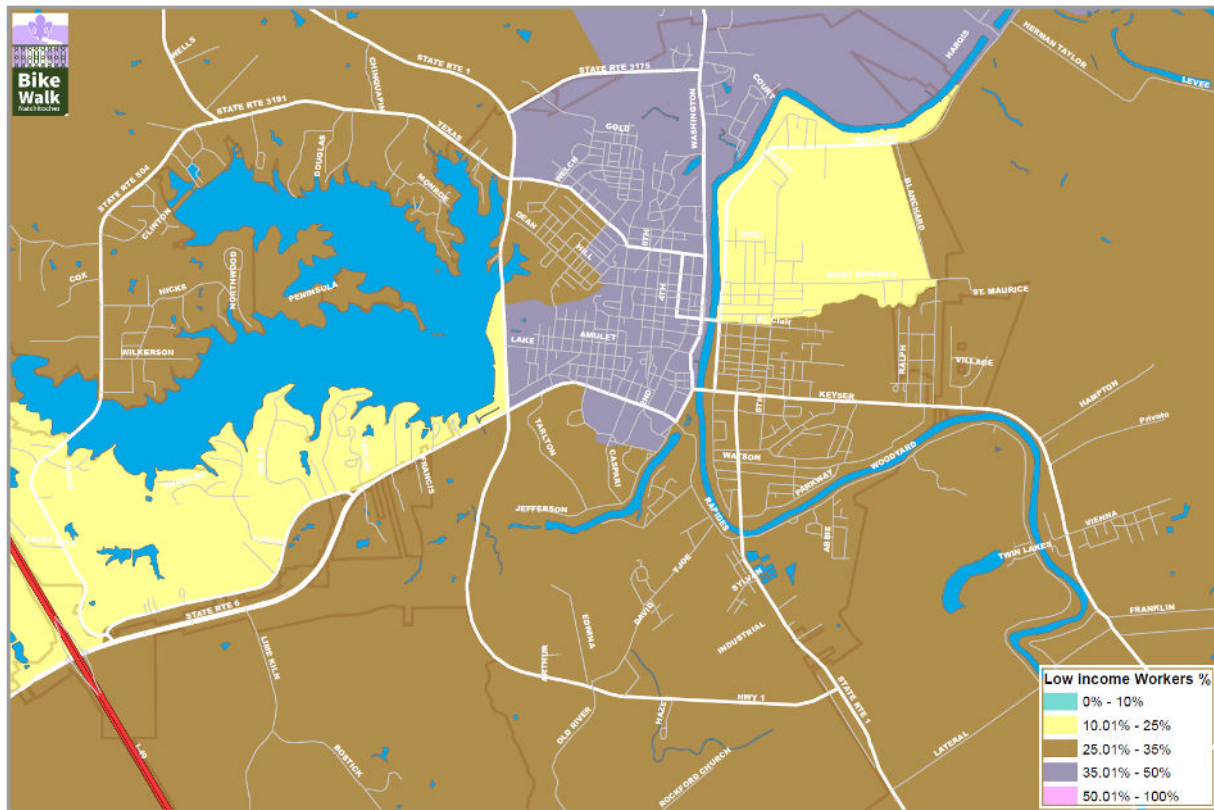
For this project and tied to the Master Plan, it is important to understand where “zero vehicle” households are located within the city. As shown below, the highest concentration of those homes fit within the area designed for this project, as do the highest percentages of low-income workers (second map).

**Zero Vehicle HH %**

0% - 5%
5.01% - 10%
10.01% - 15%
15.01% - 20%
20.01% - 30%
30.01% - 100%

16

## MAP: LOW-INCOME WORKERS % DISTRIBUTION



Source: EPA Smart Location Database, US Census

According to the Plan, at first glance, the total number of zero vehicle households in the city may seem insignificant; however, the proportion of population living below or near poverty line is substantial. Comparing the two datasets, a larger number of the population, while struggling with poverty, would inevitably make huge expenses related to driving. For instance, motor-vehicle purchase, fuel, insurance, and maintenance are all added costs for driving to have basic access to work and other essential activities.

One way of making bicycling and walking more desirable is to plan for adequate facilities that provide a safe and comfortable level of service. This will ultimately result in a healthier lifestyle, as well as aid in travel demand management in the transportation network.

### III. Grant Funds, Sources, and Uses of Project Funds

The Natchitoches Safe Streets Revitalization Project has been developed as a comprehensive approach to address the economic, quality of life, and safety challenges present in the defined project “Impact Zones.” The detailed costs shown below present the full-scale implementation of the project across all three Impact Zones.

However, similar impact and an even greater Benefit-Cost ratio would be realized if a scaled-down version of the project were implemented to focus investment on Impact Zones 1 and 2. Additional detailed information is provided in the attached documentation, but the total project cost for a scaled-down project impacting Zones 1 and 2 would have a total project cost of \$15,911,127, with a RAISE Grant budget request of \$12,716,127.



A further scaled-down project that would focus investment solely in Impact Zone 1 has also been contemplated. The total project cost for a grant supporting activities in Impact Zone would result in a budget request of \$10,460,508.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Costs of RAISE 2021 Project	\$24,316,770
<b>Source and Amount of Funds to be Used for Eligible Project Costs</b>	<b>\$21,121,770</b> <b>DOT RAISE Grant Request</b>
Non-Federal Funding (Match Commitment) / Local Funding	\$3,195,000
State Funding	\$0.00
Private Funding	Not applicable.
<b>Project Budget Breakdown</b>	
Construction of All Improvements Outlined in Natchitoches Bike/Pedestrian Plan	\$9,651,791
+ Additional for Reconstruction of 10' Wide Paved Shoulders on Routes Shown in Plan	\$745,315
+ Additional for Embankment & Drainage for Shoulder Widening/Paving	\$1,038,320
Construction of Sidewalks in Project Target Area Not Included in Bike/Ped Plan	\$3,542,600
Additional for Installation of Advance Warning Signs at Crosswalks	\$229,070
Installation of Street Lighting on Texas Street, MLK Drive, and Amulet Street	\$630,334
Resurfacing of Streets in Target Area	\$1,995,611
Additional Drainage Improvements from Welch Street to Holmes Street	\$176,381
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COST</b>	<b>\$18,009,422</b>
Right-of-Way for Sidewalks, Paved Shoulders, Sep. Bike Lanes, & Drainage Improvements	\$502,350
Utility Relocation for New Sidewalks, Paved Shoulders, Bike Lanes, & Drainage Improvements	\$930,521
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED COST FOR RIGHT-OF-WAY AND UTILITY RELOCATION</b>	<b>\$1,432,871</b>
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED COST FOR CONSTRUCTION, RIGHT-OF-WAY, AND UTILITIES</b>	<b>\$19,442,293</b>
Engineering [Preconstruction Engineering and Construction Engineering & Inspection] @ 10%	\$1,944,229
LA DOTD Administration @ estimated 3%	\$583,269
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$21,969,791</b>
10% Contingency	\$2,196,979
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED COST FOR PLANNING GRANT ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COST</b>	<b>\$24,316,770</b>

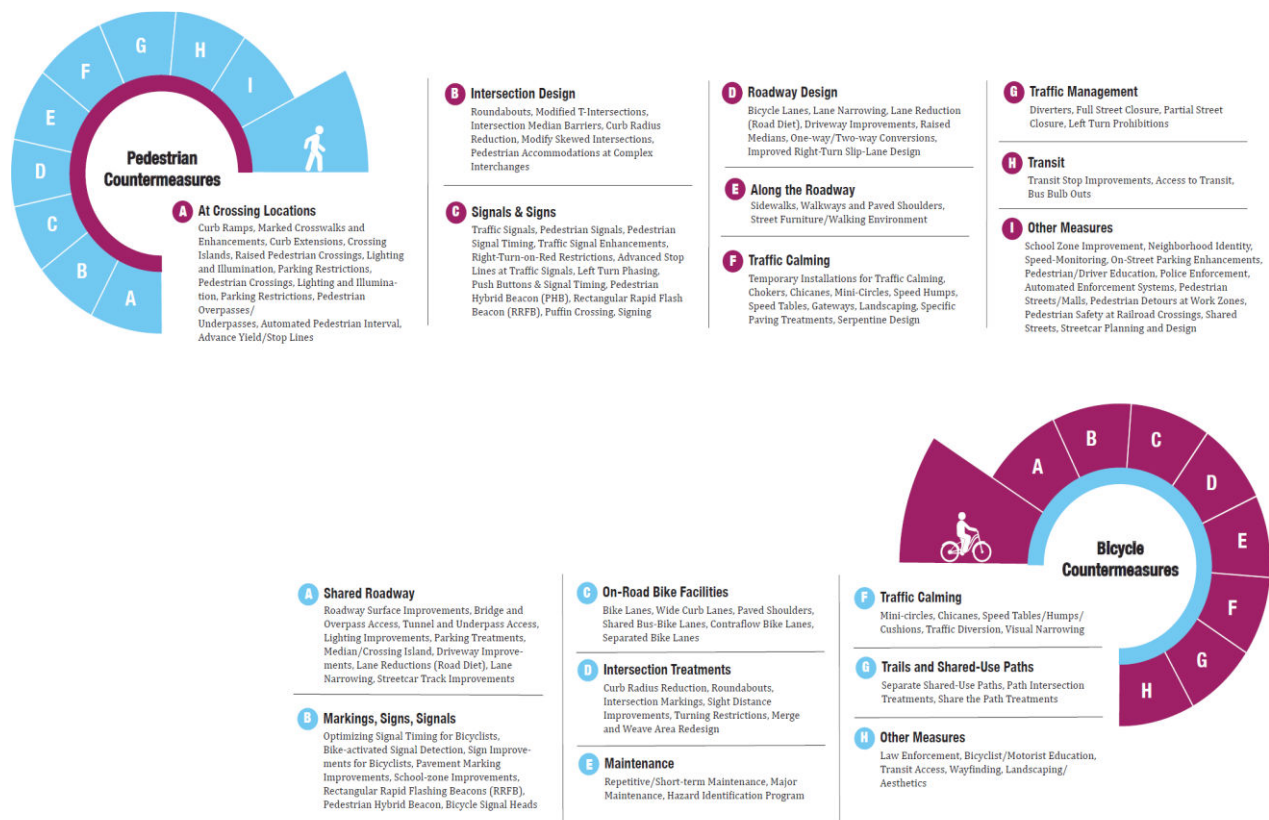
The attached Recap of Probable Costs includes the above proposed budget for the full project as well as cost estimates for the scale projects: 1) a scope of work focused on Impact Zones 1 & 2, and 2) a scope or work focused solely on Impact Zone 1.

#### IV. Selection Criteria: Primary Selection Criteria

##### Safety

The improvement of safety concerns is a primary driver for the establishment of the Natchitoches Safe Streets Revitalization Project. As contemplated in the Master Plan, safety is one of the highest concerns with a focus on providing safe and convenient transportation choices to all people as one of the criteria for “livable communities.” From 2012-2018, 75% of fatal crashes in the City of Natchitoches involved bicycle or pedestrian or both.

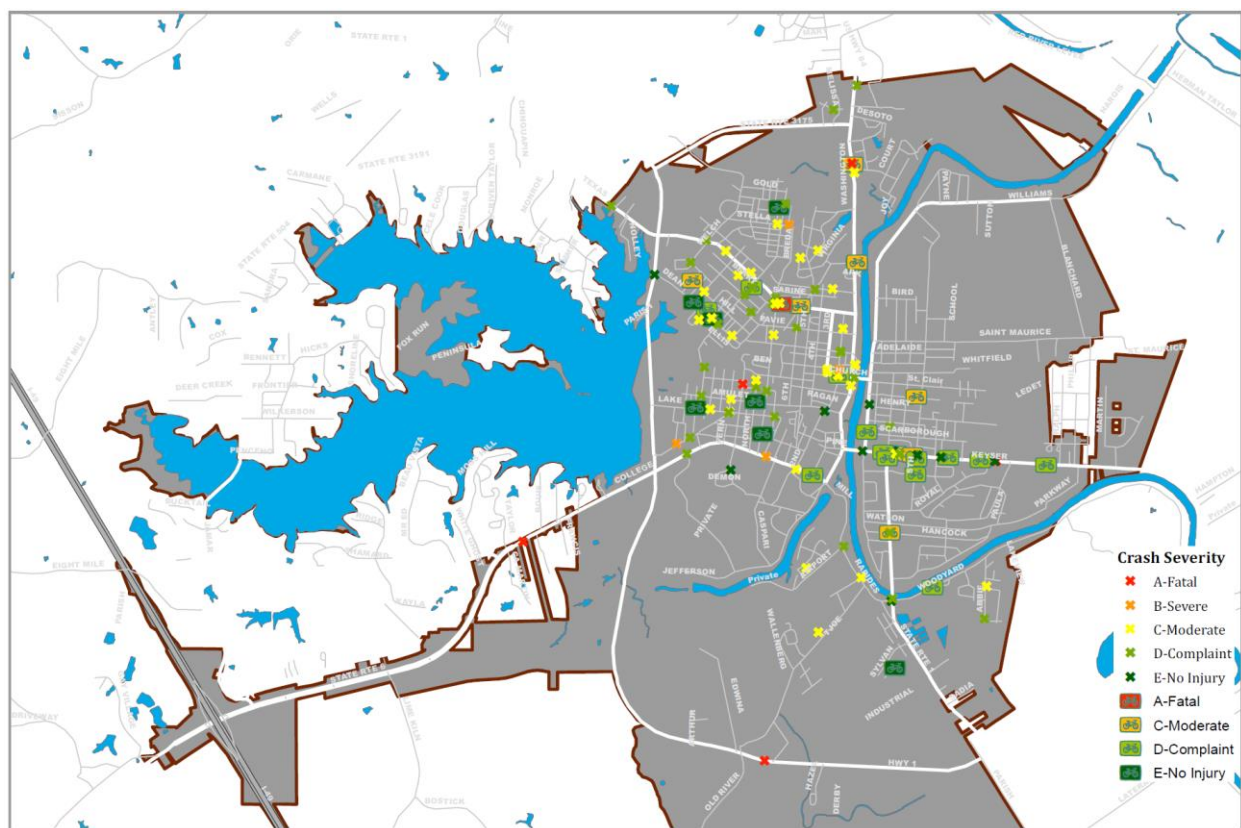
In 2012, FHWA issued an updated “Guidance Memorandum on Promoting the Implementation of Proven Safety Countermeasures”, which listed nine proven safety countermeasures to be applied when considering safety improvements. Three of the nine countermeasures are directly related to pedestrian and bicyclists, which are: Medians and Pedestrian Crossing Islands in Urban and Suburban Areas, Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon and “Road Diet”. The goal of introducing these countermeasures is straightforward: to reduce bicycle and pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries, and implement safety projects to that end. Based on FHWA guidance, activities supported by this project have been designed according to pedestrian safety “countermeasures” as shown in the below graphic:



According to the map below, several hotspots in the city have been identified using GIS tools, almost all of which fall within the defined project boundaries and/or are impacted by proposed project activities. These hotspots for bicyclists and pedestrian safety concerns include:

Bicycle Crashes	Pedestrian Crashes
Washington Avenue at Highland Park Drive	Second Street at Church Street
Texas Street at Berry Avenue	Keyser Avenue at East Fifth Street
Posey Street at Jeansonne Street	LA Hwy. 1 Bypass at LA Hwy. 6
Keyser Avenue at East Sixth Street	Washington Street at Flora Street
Texas Street at Sixth Street	Keyser Avenue at North Melrose Avenue
University Parkway at Cypress Street	University Parkway at Chester Lane

### MAP: PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLCE CRASH DISTRIBUTION



**Map 3-5**  
**Pedestrian & Bicycle**  
**Crash Distribution**

Disclaimer:

\*This document and the information contained herein is prepared solely for the purpose of identifying, evaluating and planning safety improvements on public roads which may be implemented utilizing federal aid highway funds; and is therefore exempt from discovery or admission into evidence pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 409.



Note:

The map showcases both pedestrian & bicycle crashes from 2012 - 2018 within City of Natchitoches.

In addition to the safety considerations associated with the bike and pedestrian plan, and data shown above, the City has considered pedestrian-vehicular crash data from 2012-2018 when designing this project and determining project components. Severity of incidents was considered in selecting components for the RAISE grant application, as locations were graded from an "A" to an "E," for consideration in this project.



### **Pedestrian Safety**

As shown in the Benefit-Cost Analysis, the positive impact of pedestrian-related components of this project is substantial. The installation of sidewalks across the full Safe Streets Revitalization Project (Impact Zones 1, 2, and 3) results in a Crash Reduction Factor (CRF) of 0.88, presenting an anticipated annual value of \$438,957. Additionally, the construction of paved shoulder offers a CRF of 0.71, resulting in anticipated annual value of \$2,240,252 for reduction in crashes.

The city assesses that the installation of high-visibility crosswalk markings will result in a CRF of 0.48 and an anticipated annual value of \$1,514,791 from the reduction in crashes due to this project component. The inclusion of advance yield and stop signs are anticipated to result in \$788,954 in annual value from a reduction in crashes. The installation of additional safety measures – pedestrian signals, overhead lighting, and rectangular rapid flashing beacons – result in lower anticipated annual values but positive impacts, nonetheless. ***Taken together, the total anticipated annual value for reduction in pedestrian crashes resulting from the implementation of all planned project activities across Impact Zones 1, 2, and 3 is \$5,021,342.***

### **Bicycle Safety**

As shown in the Benefit-Cost Analysis, the implementation of bicycle safety components for this project will also result in significant positive outcomes for the city. The installation of separated bike lanes will provide an anticipated annual value of \$64,085 from reductions in crashes, while the installation of overhead lighting offers a CRF of 0.23 and an anticipated annual value of \$363,052 from reduction in crashes. ***The anticipated annual value for reduction in bicycle crashes resulting from these activities totals \$427,137.***

Finally, it is important to note that the Planning Grant activities associated with the construction of the new connector street to tie Lake Street into Amulet Street will address historical congestion and safety issues associated with one of the city's most narrow and congested areas.

### **State of Good Repair**

As first contemplated in the Master Plan, improvements targeted in this grant application serve to address sidewalk, street, and bicycle path construction needs that have historically limited in the targeted Impact Zones. Resulting from a variety of factors, including limited available funding, these overdue maintenance issues have resulted in deteriorated streets and sidewalks that negatively impact safety, access to services, and overall quality of life.

The city's strategic prioritization of these Impact Zones will enable targeted investments to address areas most in need of rehabilitation and repair, while improving the city's transportation network as a whole. The scalable Impact Zone approach also takes into account economic growth opportunities at the individual and system-wide level, targeting investments in areas that can increase their economic vitality and become more competitive over the long-term.

Finally, as described within the Innovation section below, the implementation of innovative preventative maintenance measures will also serve to extend the useful life of project components.

### **Economic Competitiveness**

As previously described, the current conditions of streets and sidewalks in the designated Impact Zones greatly limits the economic competitiveness of targeted neighborhoods, individuals, and the City of Natchitoches as a whole. The scalability of this project serves to target investments in the areas of persistent poverty, those suffering from the greatest need and access inequities, and those with high potential for economic growth.

Historically economically vibrant neighborhoods have deteriorated over the last two decades, but hold substantial opportunities for growth. The city's prioritization of infrastructure improvements first considered in the Master Plan and now strategically focused in the Impact Zones present a cohesive plan to address economic competitiveness at the individual, neighborhood, and community level. The proposed scope of work included in this RAISE Grant application will focus investment on sidewalk, street, and system-wide improvements that impact the ability of low-income, minority residents to access education and workforce services to which access has been historically limited. In addition, the cohesiveness of the proposed project shows that investments made in both Impact Zones 1 and 2 presents a system-wide improvement that increases access for these same residents to travel safely and efficiently to work, commercial, and retail centers throughout the city. This comprehensive approach has the potential to increase economic opportunities for each individual, businesses, neighborhoods and the city as a whole.

### **Quality of Life**

The City of Natchitoches is taking a holistic approach to community well-being and enhancing quality of life. The Plan reinforces these values and supports design to serve all users, including children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and those who prefer use of non-motorized travel modes for commuting. The investment in a sidewalk and bicycle network will produce long-term results as we plan for an expanded network that allow us to connect neighborhoods, parks, shopping centers, schools, employment centers, levee trails, and local destinations. This project will yield a greater number and broader range of pedestrian and bicycle facility choices for users of all abilities and comfort levels.

The attached Benefit Cost Analysis information and data describes a massive impact on the quality of life of all Natchitoches residents. ***The anticipated annual value from pedestrian and bicycle crash reductions resulting from these project improvements totals 5,448,479.*** However, further review of the data indicates significant improvements to quality of life in the targeted Impact Zones. While this is initially described in the safety section above, the impact also speaks to the improved *safe* access to critical services for residents living in and commuting to/from Impact Zones 1 and 2. This includes access to quality, affordable health care services, the ability for students and families to travel to and from school (elementary and secondary), and improved access to public and private social services. The city has also prioritized zones based on opportunities to raise individuals out of poverty by providing access to employment opportunities located within and outside their neighborhoods.

## Selection Criteria: Secondary Selection Criteria

### Partnerships

As described throughout this application, the entire City and a comprehensive array of stakeholders have been consulted in the design of this project. In fact, consultations with residents, community organizations, and stakeholder groups have continued into the Summer of 2021, with two public meetings organized and well-attended. The public meetings have furthered individual conversations and planning with groups and support the City's effort to address equity, quality of life, safety, and access to health, education and other services for underserved neighborhoods and residents.

A combined file of support letters from community organizations, businesses, service providers, and local elected officials is attached to this narrative, but described in the table below.

PROJECT SUPPORTER	DESCRIPTION
<b>Community Organizations</b>	
Abundant Life Church	Community Faith-Based Organization
Cane River National Heritage Area	Cultural Organization
Concerned Citizens Association of Natchitoches	Community (Neighborhood) Organization
First Baptist Church	Community Faith-Based Organization
Living Word Ministries	Community Faith-Based Organization
<b>Service Providers</b>	
The Ben Johnson Educational Center	At-Risk Youth Services
Central Louisiana Technical Community College	Education and Workforce Services
Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts	Education Provider
Natchitoches Parish School Board	Education Provider
Natchitoches Regional Medical Center	Healthcare Provider
Northwestern State University	Education Provider
<b>Public Entities</b>	
Cane River Creole National Historic Park	Department of the Interior-National Park Service
City of Natchitoches	Local Government (applicant)
Natchitoches Convention and Visitors Bureau	Public Economic Development Organization
Natchitoches Economic Development Alliance	Local Economic Development Organization
Natchitoches Historic District Commission	Public Cultural Development Organization
State of Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development	State-wide Public Transportation Organization
<b>Private Businesses</b>	
BOM Bank	Private Business
Exchange Bank & Trust Company	Private Business
Moffett Oil Company	Private Business



Sabine State Bank & Trust	Private Business
Sharpco Hotels Group	Private Business
<b>Elected Officials</b>	
City Councilwoman Rosemary Elie	Local Elected Official
City Councilman C. Edward Harrington	Local Elected Official
City Councilman Dale Nielsen	Local Elected Official
City Councilman Christopher Petite	Local Elected Official
City Councilwoman-at-Large Betty Sawyer Smith	Local Elected Official
State Representative LTC Kenny Cox	Local Elected Official
State Senator Louie Bernard	
State Senator Jay Luneau	
US Representative Troy Carter	Local Elected Official (Federal)
US Representative Mike Johnson	Local Elected Official (Federal)
US Senator Bill Cassidy	State-wide Elected Official (Federal)
Governor John Bel Edwards	State-wide Elected Official

As the table and attachment indicates, the breadth of support for this project is comprehensive – and massive. This underscores both the critical needs of the community as well as the substantial opportunity to lift neighborhoods out of poverty by providing safe, reliable, and efficient access to multiple modes of transportation to employment, education, health, and other services.

From the beginning, the city’s approach to this project has centered on clear communication with impacted neighborhoods, residents, and stakeholders. This direct engagement has informed project design and activities, the designation of the Impact Zones, and specific interactions with community members up to and including public meetings held as recently as June 23, 2021. The response to this strategic and genuine community engagement approach has been overwhelmingly positive, as evidenced by the broad array of supporters listed above and from which the City has attached letters of support.

The community engagement strategy has focused on ensuring all residents, businesses, community organizations, and other stakeholders are aware of the project and potential impact, including via online resources available at <https://www.natchitochesla.gov/content/natchitoches-safe-streets-revitalization-project>.

This online resource has been continually updated with project information, news releases, public meeting presentations and related documents and photos. The online resources will grow to include application materials, supporting documentation, engineering and budget information, construction timeline, and more.



The city’s project website will include the following grant application documents for the public and interested parties to view:

Project Narrative	<a href="https://www.natchitochesla.gov/content/project-narrative">https://www.natchitochesla.gov/content/project-narrative</a>
Partners and Letters of Support	<a href="https://www.natchitochesla.gov/content/partners-and-letters-support">https://www.natchitochesla.gov/content/partners-and-letters-support</a>
Project Maps and Engineering Documents	<a href="https://www.natchitochesla.gov/content/project-maps-and-engineering-documents">https://www.natchitochesla.gov/content/project-maps-and-engineering-documents</a>
Benefit Cost Analysis for Full and Scaled Project	<a href="https://www.natchitochesla.gov/content/benefit-cost-analysis-full-and-scaled-project">https://www.natchitochesla.gov/content/benefit-cost-analysis-full-and-scaled-project</a>
Project Schedule	<a href="https://www.natchitochesla.gov/content/project-schedule">https://www.natchitochesla.gov/content/project-schedule</a>
City of Natchitoches Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan	<a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1f-sNFoTxHVsd1jJqt8DBS_vBx-MjeuHv/view">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1f-sNFoTxHVsd1jJqt8DBS_vBx-MjeuHv/view</a>
Contact Information	<a href="https://www.natchitochesla.gov/content/natchitoches-safe-streets-revitalization-project">https://www.natchitochesla.gov/content/natchitoches-safe-streets-revitalization-project</a>

## Innovation

As with many cities having similar size and budget realities as Natchitoches, the consideration of “innovative” activities and technologies within a project of this magnitude must be prioritized based on community and resident needs. With that in mind, the City is proposing project design and activities, as well as technology upgrades that are unique and/or uncommon to similar cities and even within the state of Louisiana. These “innovative” approaches are, at the very least, innovative to the city and have the potential to increase the positive benefit and impact on residents, neighborhoods, and local businesses.



The city has previously implemented a crosswalk project at University Parkway, situated on the campus of Northwestern State University, with a raised concrete refuge island in the center of the roadway and a rectangular rapid-flashing beacons that was the first of its kind for a city of Natchitoches’ size in the state of Louisiana. The project has been a success and similar activities are planned within the Safe Streets Revitalization Project.



The city also proposes to implement innovative technology upgrades across project components, including LED lighting, throughout the project components for overhead lighting, and solar powered advance signing at all crosswalks. The picture at left shows the crosswalk at MLK Drive that would be improved in such a way.

Finally, innovative preventative maintenance strategies that will serve to extend the useful life of the project components, will be implemented, including asphalt surface treatments suggest adding the following “that utilize specially-formulated polymer materials that maximize the performance and longevity of these treatments.”

## V. Environmental Risk

The table shown below outlines the project schedule, required approvals and permits. The timeline also accounts for NEPA environmental clearance.

Project Activity	Anticipated Start	Anticipated Completion
Funding Approval		11/30/2021
Execute Project Agreement with FHWA	12/1/2021	2/28/2022
Procure Engineering Design Firm	3/1/2022	5/31/2022
Survey, Design, & Plan Development  Planning Grant Activities ( <i>will be run concurrently to maximize efficiency with the procurement and implementation processes</i> )	6/1/2022	5/31/2023
Add Project to Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan *	3/1/2022	5/31/2022
NEPA Environmental Clearance *	7/1/2022	3/31/2023
Obtain Regulatory Permits *	7/1/2022	9/30/2022
Approval of Final Plans, Specs, and Cost Estimate / Obligation of Federal Funds	6/1/2023	8/31/2023
Right-of-Way Appraisal & Acquisition [including review by LA DOTD & FHWA]	9/1/2023	8/31/2024
Preparation for Letting	9/1/2024	9/30/2024
Bid Advertisement	10/1/2024	10/31/2024
Bid Review / Contract Award & Execution / Schedule Pre-Construction Conference	11/1/2024	1/31/2025
Construction	2/1/2025	1/31/2027

[NOTE: The \* denoted activities are concurrent with other project activities.]

As shown above and in the project timeline, the city will comply with and is planning for all required environmental permits and reviews. DOTD and FHWA approvals will be required at 30%, 60%, and 90% plan completion. Recommend adding the following: In addition, a Project Permit must be obtained from DOTD for all planned work located within the rights-of-way of routes that are part of the State highway system. Such permits are generally approved at the DOTD District level within 30 days of submittal. NEPA requirements will be met in consultation with local DOTD and FHWA officials. Recommend adding “Based on the planned scope of work, it is anticipated that the project can be environmentally cleared as a Categorical Exclusion.”



As stated previously, the city’s commitment to public engagement is well-established and evidenced by the widespread support for the project. Certainly, NEPA-required public engagement will occur as project implementation moves forward. However, additional community engagement is a critical component of the city’s strategy for this project – continuing to update residents, neighborhood groups, community organizations, local businesses, and other stakeholders as the project moves toward and through implementation and construction activities commence. As with community discussions thus far, future engagement is considered as a two-way street – residents will have the opportunity to inform plans and decision-making as the project moves forward.

## **VI. Benefit-Cost Analysis Summary**

The BCA ratio for the complete Natchitoches Safe Streets Revitalization Project is 2.47, as shown in the corresponding Benefit-Cost Analysis Tables and Figures. The BCA ratio for the scaled-down project addressing needs in Impact Zones 1 and 2 only is 3.02. Please see revised “Summary of Annuitized Project Costs and Benefits” for the Zone 1&2 project for revised B/C ratio.

The breakdown of savings and values resulting from the project is as follows:

- Safety Benefits (pedestrian crash reduction) = \$5,021,342 annually
- Safety Benefits (bicycle crash reduction) = \$427,137 annually
- Non-Safety Benefits (pedestrian and bicycle) = \$1,517,147 annually plus \$12,134 in 2027
- Street Maintenance Cost Savings = \$51,692 annually

Taken in total, the Safe Streets Revitalization Project yields an overall benefit of \$7,017,318 annually. The attached Appendix: Benefit-Cost Analysis describes the methodology behind the analysis, as well as data, figures, and tables supporting the ratios and values presented above.

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