

FHWA-LA-EIS-01-01-F
STATE PROJECT NO. 700-29-0112
SAP NUMBER H.004526
FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO. HP-NH-TO21(002)



**LOUISIANA 1 IMPROVEMENTS
GOLDEN MEADOW TO PORT FOURCHON**

**REVISED RECORD OF DECISION
FEBRUARY 2011**

Reference:

REVISED RECORD OF DECISION
MARCH 2009

REVISED RECORD OF DECISION
MAY 2004

RECORD OF DECISION
JANUARY 2003

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
RECORD OF DECISION (Revised February 2011)**

**Louisiana 1 Improvements
Golden Meadow to Port Fourchon
State Project No. 700-29-0112
SAP NUMBER H.004526
F.A.P. No. HP-NH-TO21(002)**

(SUMMARY: The Record of Decision (ROD) signed January 2003, revised May 2004, and March 2009, is being revised again to include updated minor refinements (planned, designed or under consideration) in the project.)

Since the Record of Decision for the project was approved on January 29, 2003, revised in May 2004, and in March 2009, there have been ongoing minor changes/refinements in design: namely a decision to return to the original plan of providing access at the Bollinger Canal and a decision to remove the old bridge pier in Bayou Lafourche to a lower depth. This revision to the ROD discusses these changes/refinements only. The revision herein will be made available for public review through publication on the DOTD's web site.

The proposed changes/refinements have been undertaken in cooperation with the resource and permitting agencies, such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Coastal Management Division, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The changes/refinements have been made through a continued collaborative decision-making process that included a thorough consideration of all identified social, economic and environmental factors with continued resource and permitting agency coordination.

Navigation and Access to Adjacent Properties

Bollinger Canal is one of the main canals used primarily by the oil and gas industry to service existing wells in the project area and is interconnected with several other oil and gas access canals near Leeville. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) commits to a 40 ft. vertical clearance for the crossing at the Bollinger Canal. During project development, the landowner requested a minimum vertical clearance of 55 ft. for Bollinger Canal. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) evaluated the request. Due to geometric constraints, it would be difficult and costly for DOTD to provide the

additional clearance at Bollinger Canal. The main constraint is the proposed interchange adjacent to the Canal crossing. Consequently, the DOTD engaged the property owners and found a solution, an alternative location, to provide the requested clearance. This change was noted in the 2009 revised ROD.

Since that time and upon further investigations, the DOTD decided to return to its original plan with the exception of a minor realignment to the channel to provide the requested clearance at Bollinger Canal. This decision was made when the DOTD learned that providing access at the new location would require the relocation of several clusters of newly discovered natural gas pipelines. Given the costs and impacts associated with the relocation of the gas pipelines, the DOTD determined that providing the requested clearance of 55 ft. at Bollinger Canal is the better decision. The property owner is in agreement. Bollinger Canal will be realigned at the crossing to eliminate the skew. The location of the parallel Access Canal on the east side of the LA1 alignment and north of Realigned Bollinger Canal may be a separate canal or included in the Construction Canal width. See the figure entitled “Navigable Crossings” attached hereto in the Appendix. The additional vertical clearance at Bollinger Canal will not prohibit the construction of an interchange per se, but it does produce constraints and geometric complexities which will be addressed when the interchange is pursued in the future.

Project Phasing

The project phasing has not changed. The southbound portion of the LA1 Improvements Project was divided into two segmented phases: The southern alignment (Phase 1) extending from Fourchon to Leeville and the northern alignment (Phase 2) extending from Leeville to Golden Meadow. Phase 1 is currently under construction with portions completed and opened. Phase 2 is currently being designed. See attached figure in appendix.

The project calls for the construction of a limited access, four-lane facility with interchanges. Access is limited by the fact that the project is on structure through the marsh for most of its length. Given the cost and complexity of the project, the DOTD is phasing the implementation of the project by constructing two lanes (future southbound) with the intent of adding the remaining two northbound lanes in the future when traffic conditions warrant and funding is available. The current design takes into consideration this phasing and makes allowances for the additional lanes and interchanges in the future.

Two interchanges are proposed at the access points north and south of Leeville. The north interchange is near Bollinger Canal and is partially in place in the interim. Although currently operating as an intersection, the roadway was constructed using the ultimate southbound entrance ramp as mainline roadway. This ramp was designed and constructed in Phase 1 with the intent of providing a 40 ft. clearance at Bollinger Canal upon implementation of Phase 2. This condition has changed as noted in the above section. The interim configuration under design will take into consideration the special design and geometric considerations to provide the clearance of 55 feet at Bollinger Canal which is 15 feet higher than originally planned. Although the interim "T" configuration will accommodate horizontal clearances to fit the future interchange, it will not be able to accommodate the vertical geometry. The vertical geometry will need to be addressed upon implementation of the interchange. See figures in the Appendix for conceptual layout of the interim, two-lane "T" intersections

A "T" intersection was built as the interim measure in the vicinity of the future southern interchange in Phase 1. Converting the southern intersection into an interchange in the future will not have the same geometric restrictions as the northern interchange location.

Navigation and Coordination of Pier Removal

The original permit called for the removal of the old bridge piers to "mud line." The permit information utilized the as built drawings which show the mud line at -16 National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD) for the pier located in the waterway (Pier 1). The channel, Bayou Lafourche, is maintained by the Corps at a depth of -12 NGVD for navigation. When the old bridge was dismantled, the pier was removed to -17.5 NGVD which is below both the mud line shown on the as built plans and the navigational requirement. An issue arose during bridge removal when it was discovered that the actual mud line at the pier in the waterway was much lower due to severe scouring at the pier. Measurements were taken on April 26, and July 6, 2010, that indicated that the scour moved the mud line to -32 NGVD and sediment is not accumulating at the pier location.

Also, the pier located at the east bank (Pier 2) was not removed to mud line. Upon coordination with permitting agencies, this pier was left in place at +4 NGVD due to its location. The concern is that if the pier were removed to mud line and the bank thereafter eroded, the pier remnants would be exposed underwater. The consensus was to leave the pier plainly visible along the bank.

Comments were received from the Joint Public Notice of the applications for the Coastal Use and Corps permits for bridge removal. The Greater Lafourche Port Commission (GLPC) on August 27, 2009, and the U.S. Coast Guard Port of Morgan City on September 2, 2009, objected to leaving the pier in Bayou Lafourche at an elevation of -16. Follow-up meetings were held with concerned parties, and it was decided that the pier in the waterway be removed to at least -22. (It may be removed to a lower depth depending on technique used for removal, pier design, further consultation with agencies, etc.) See figures in appendix. Additionally, during permit modification process, should the agencies require the pier located at the bank be removed, DOTD will comply; otherwise, it will remain at +4, plainly visible.

Permitting and Mitigation Plan

Permit modifications are required as a result of the changes noted above. This includes modification to the coastal use permit, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sections 404 and 10 permits, as well as U.S. Coast Guard bridge permit. Coordination with permitting and resource agencies is ongoing. Mitigation plans will be modified, if necessary, based on the requirements of the permit modifications. Currently, DOTD and FHWA are consulting with NMFS regarding pier removal methods to minimize effects on marine life in the project area.

Landowner & Interagency Coordination

On December 15, 2009, the project team met with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding their comments related to temporary lighting at the original Bayou Lafourche centerline and their requirements for the channel which were stated to be 125 ft of width at -22 NGVD (allows 12 feet for navigation plus 10 feet for maintenance dredging).

On March 22, 2010, U.S. Coast Guard communicated to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, via email, that the Coast Guard did not object to -22 NGVD. They also commented on other issues such as chart symbols, lighting on the bridge, and notice to mariners. On March 24, 2010, staff from project team acknowledged receipt of the Coast Guard's comments.

On March 23, 2010, DOTD received an email from U.S. Coast Guard that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will not permit the remains of the bridge pier and that the DOTD had to remove the pier to mud line.

On May 24, 2010, an agency coordination meeting was held with U.S. Coast Guard, Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, Federal Highway Administration, and Department of Transportation and

Development to discuss this issue. DOTD agreed to monitor the water bottom for 18 months while concurrently seeking a permit modification for the further removal of the pier in the waterway.

On June 16, 2010, the project team met with the Greater Lafourche Port Commission and the U.S. Coast Guard Houma office to discuss the dual track process of monitoring while applying for permit modification. They were accepting of this process.

Coordination with NMFS was delayed due to the priority of the oil spill in the Gulf. The DOTD proposed the scenario of removing the remaining portion of the pier using explosives. On October 19, 2010, NMFS requested additional information regarding the use of explosives.

On November 4, 2010, DOTD and FHWA met to discuss the project status, the pier removal, and the need to provide the 55 ft. clearance at Bollinger Canal. At this meeting, several alternatives to remove the remaining portion of the pier were mentioned as possibilities. It was decided that the DOTD would investigate several options and coordinate with NMFS via telephone conference. The general consensus was that -22 NGVD was the appropriate depth for removal rather than actual mud line now located at -32 NGVD.

On November 16, 2010, staff from the project team informed the U.S. Coast Guard of DOTD's intention to submit a request for a permit modification to allow the removal of pier 1, the pier in the waterway, to -22 NGVD rather than -32 NGVD, the actual mud line, and to allow pier 2, the pier at the bank, to remain at the elevation of +4 NGVD. The U.S. Coast Guard followed up with a request for additional information to issue the public notice. DOTD will address comments received as a result of the public notice in accordance with permitting requirements.

On November 17, 2010, a conference call was held with NMFS, FHWA, and DOTD. NMFS will provide information on the threatened and endangered species of concern so that, if at all possible, DOTD can avoid blasting activities when the species may be present in the area. Consultation with NMFS will continue as appropriate.

On January 5, 2011, staff from project team met with the affected property owner, and several requests were made. The property owner requested: 1) proper marine turning radii at the realigned Bollinger Canal; 2) to revisit the agreement regarding accessibility and usage of construction canals for access to the oil and gas facilities; and 3) continue coordination and exchange of information as the project progresses.

Conclusion and Approval

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approves the minor design changes/refinements that have taken place since the Record of Decision (ROD) was approved on January 2003, revised May 2004, and March 2009, for the subject project, in agreement with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD), and in cooperation with Federal and State permitting agencies. These changes/refinements have been made through a continued collaborative decision-making process that included a thorough consideration of all identified social, economic and environmental factors with the continued extensive resource and permitting agency coordination. These refinements will be presented for public review via the regulatory permitting process and adjusted accordingly.

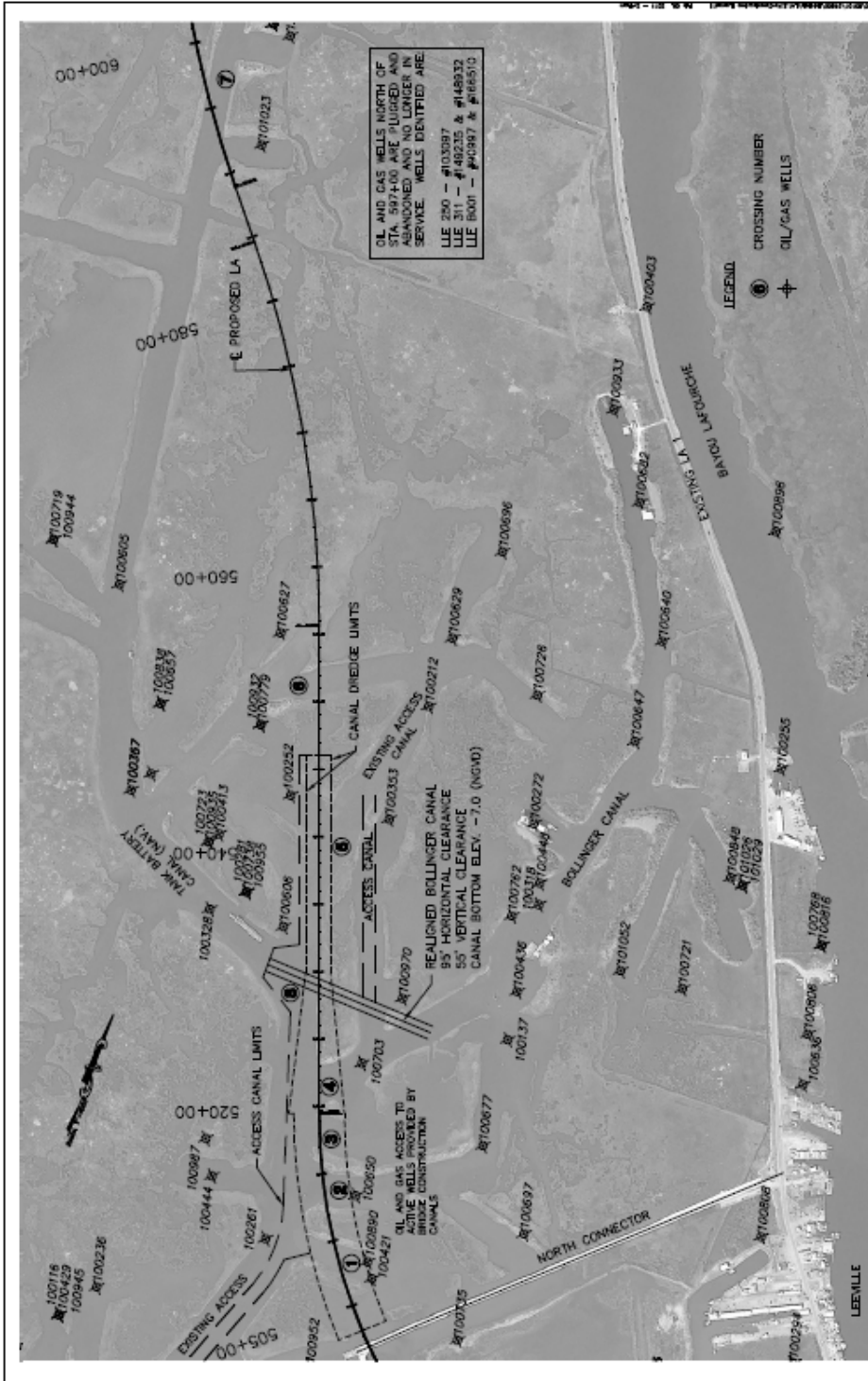
Signed 3/8/2011
Date

signed by C. W. Bollinger
Charles "Wes" Bollinger
Louisiana Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

Appendix

Exhibits

- Navigable Crossing (Bollinger Canal) (Page 8)
- Project Phasing (Page 9)
- Pier Depth (3 Figures; Pages 10-12)
- Interim, Two-Lane “T” intersections (2 Figures; Pages 13-14)



The Water Works Partnership

LAFOURCHE

MEMO	LAFOURCHE
PROJECT NUMBER	HI-NH-T021 (002)
STATE PROJECT NUMBER	700-25-0112
DATE	1/27/2011

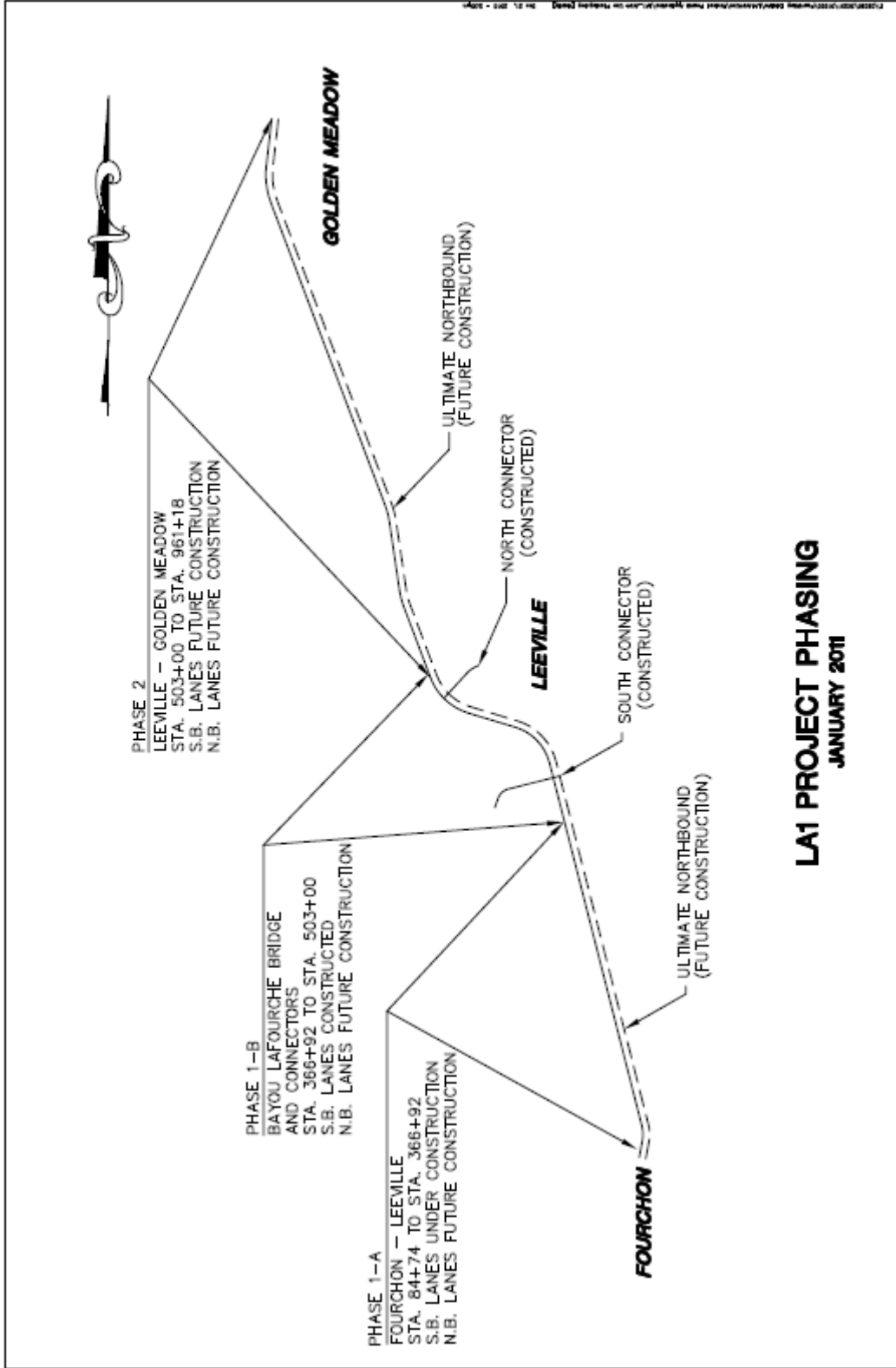
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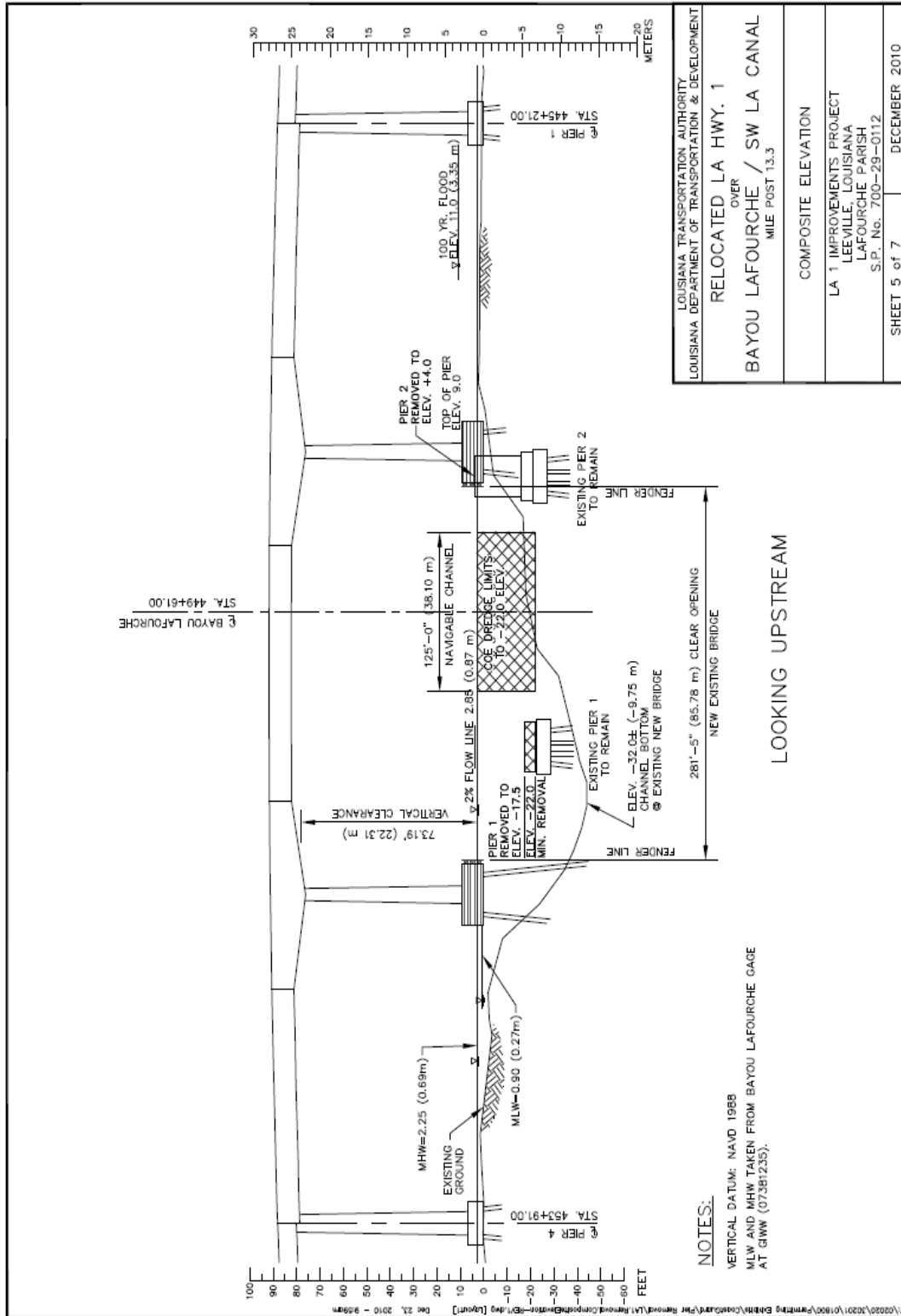
**LA 1 IMPROVEMENTS
 GOLDEN MEADOW TO FOURCHON
 LAFOURCHE PARISH**

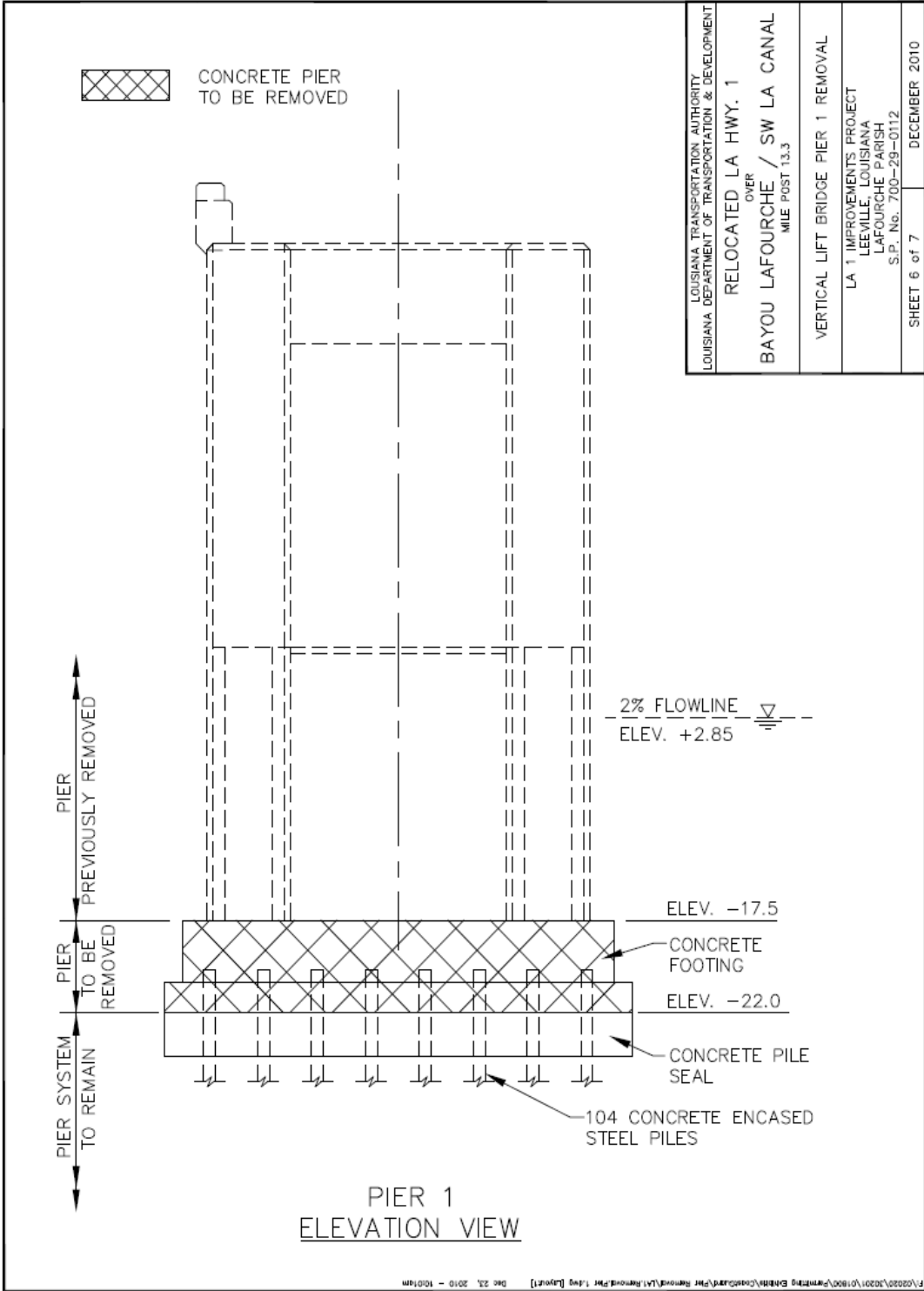
NAVIGABLE CROSSINGS

GRAPHIC SCALE

(IN FEET)
 1 inch = 100 ft.





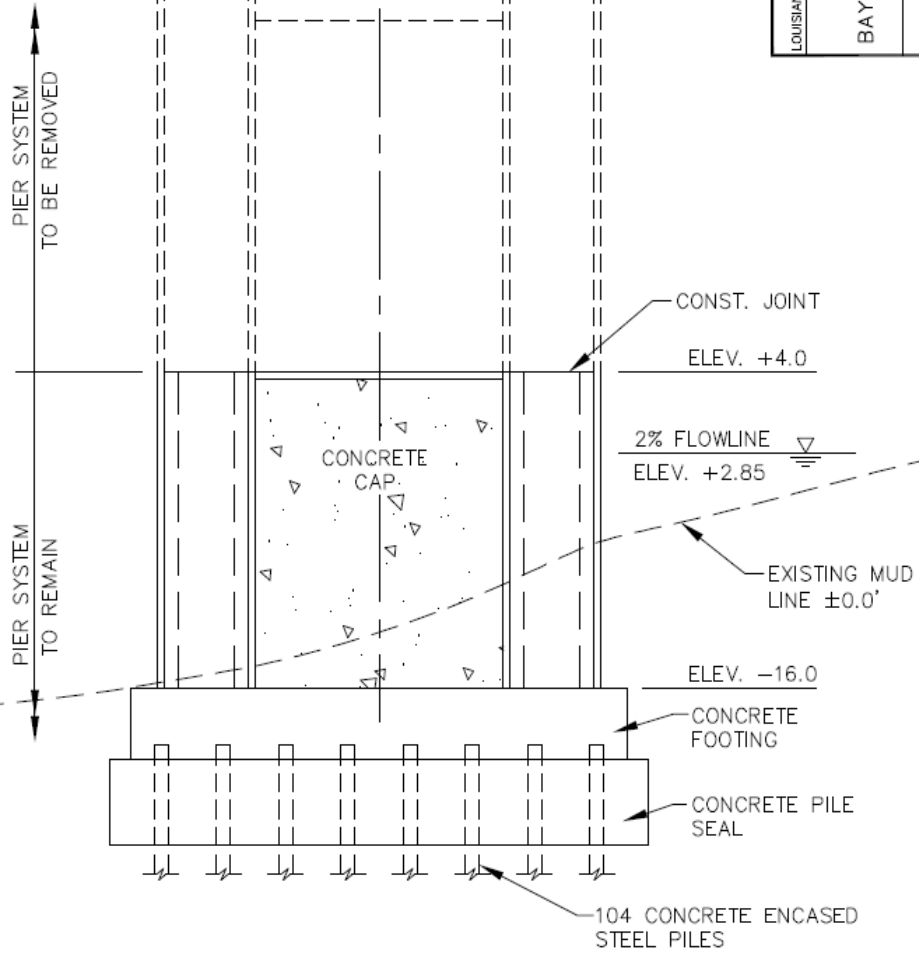


LOUISIANA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & DEVELOPMENT	
RELOCATED LA HWY. 1 OVER BAYOU LAFOURCHE / SW LA CANAL MILE POST 13.3	
VERTICAL LIFT BRIDGE PIER 1 REMOVAL	
LA 1 IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT LEEVILLE, LOUISIANA LAFOURCHE PARISH S.P. No. 700-29-0112	
SHEET 6 of 7	DECEMBER 2010

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CONCRETE PIER
TO BE REMOVED



PIER 2
ELEVATION VIEW

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LOUISIANA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & DEVELOPMENT
RELOCATED LA HWY. 1 OVER BAYOU LAFOURCHE / SW LA CANAL MILE POST 13.3
VERTICAL LIFT BRIDGE PIER 2 REMOVAL
LA 1 IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT LEEVILLE, LOUISIANA LAFOURCHE PARISH S.P. No. 700-29-0112
SHEET 7 of 7
DECEMBER 2010

