

Welcome to the Public Hearing for the Neches River Bridge Environmental Assessment



AGENDA

5:30 PM – Displays available for viewing

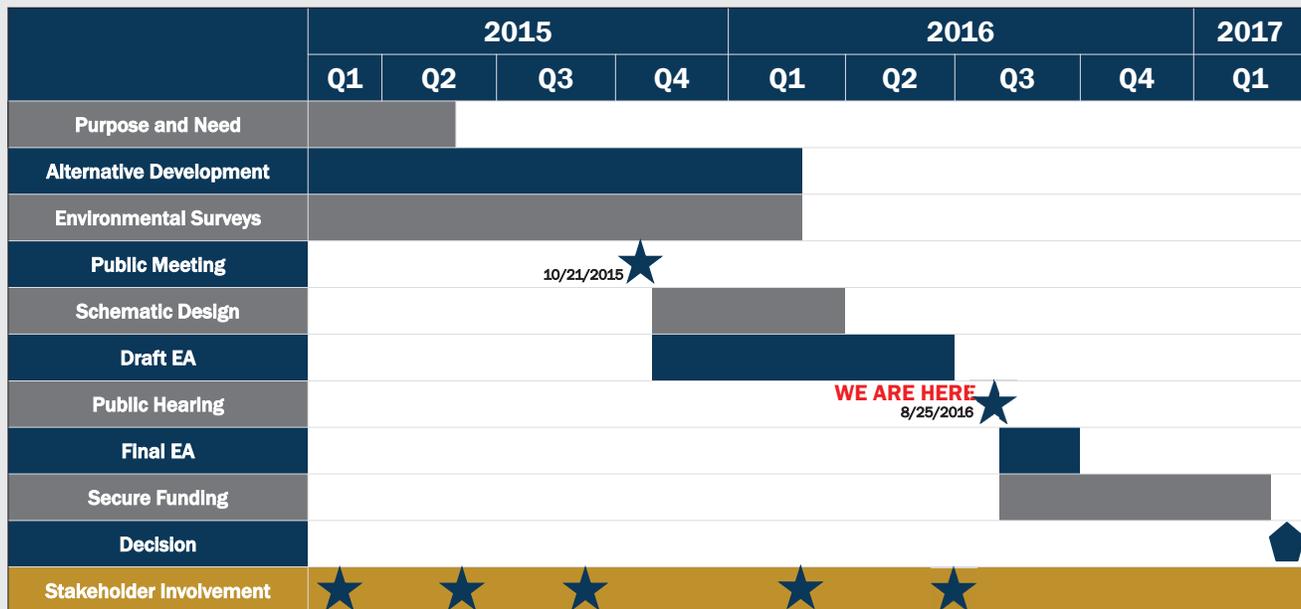
6:30 PM – Formal hearing commences:

- **Welcome and Introductions**
- **Technical Presentation**
- **Verbal Comments***

***The comment portion of the hearing will remain open until all speakers have been heard.**

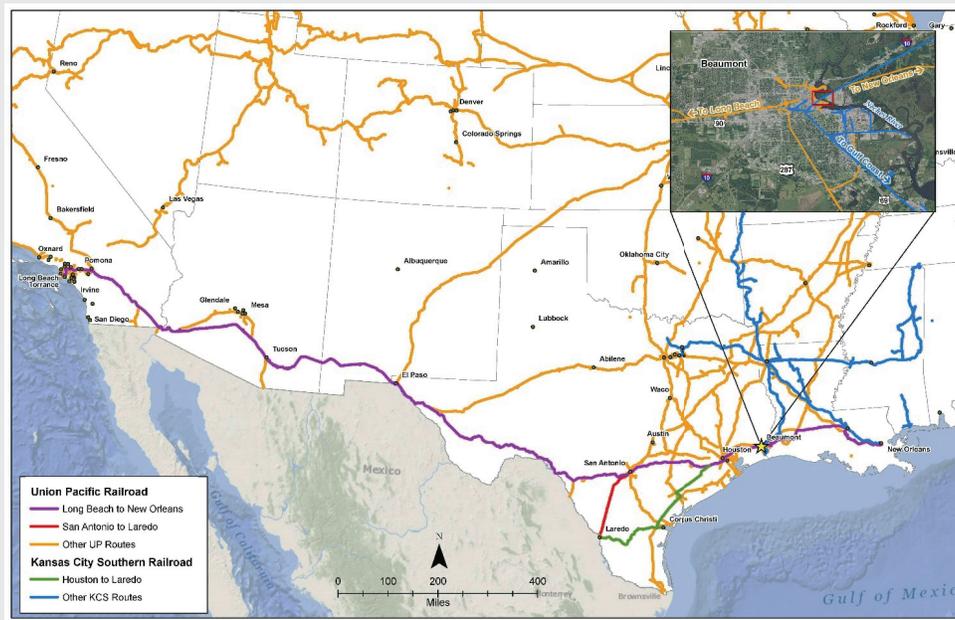


Environmental Assessment



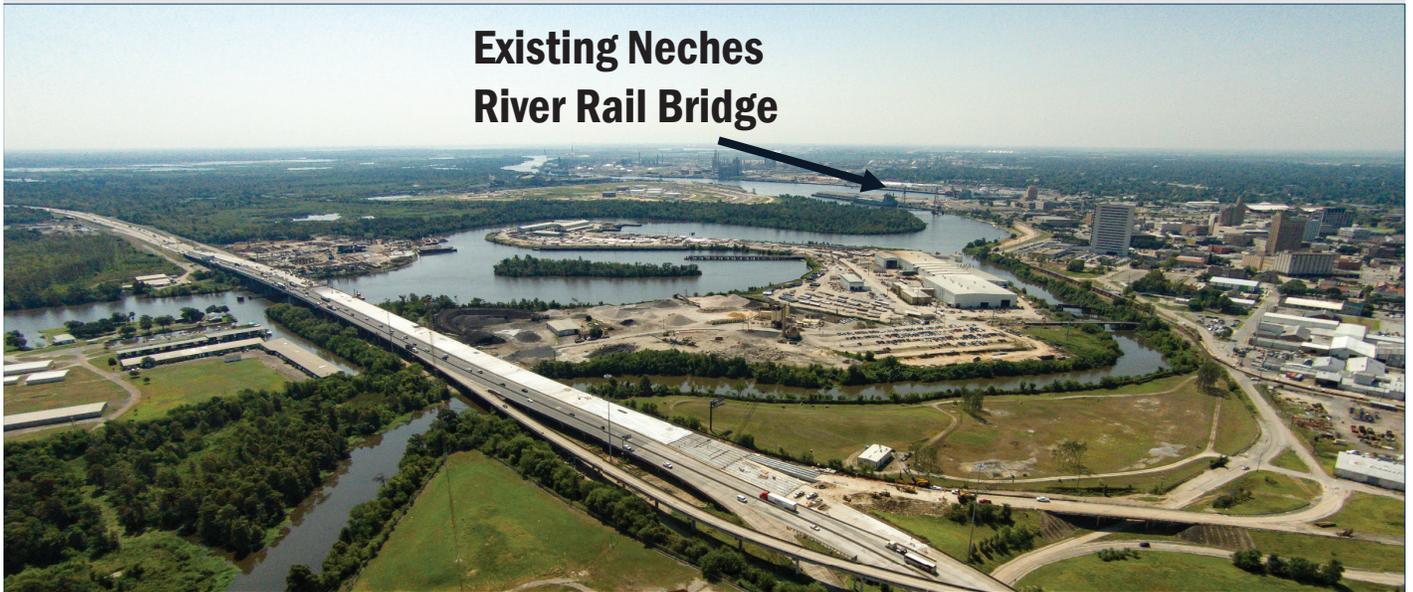
- The Environmental Assessment (EA) includes the project’s purpose and need, alternatives analysis, impact assessments, proposed mitigation for unavoidable adverse impacts, and a summary of coordination.
- The draft EA is currently available for agency and public review/comment.
- Comments will then be addressed in the final EA and funding identified prior to the environmental decision.

Project Importance



- The project is of local, regional and national importance.
- The location of the existing single railroad track at the Neches River Bridge crossing area in Beaumont, is the number two choke point in the state (after Tower 55 before recent improvements).

Purpose



Existing Neches
River Rail Bridge

- Improve rail operations through the Beaumont area by providing a second rail crossing of the Neches River.
- Support and enhance industrial facilities that use rail, marine, and highway services.

Need



- Existing rail operations are affected by track capacity, track switching, industrial service access, and bridge openings for marine vessel traffic.
- Future rail traffic across the Neches River is expected to increase with both through traffic along this national corridor, as well as local rail traffic serving the region's existing and expanding industrial facilities.
- Without improvements, operations will deteriorate in the future with increased rail traffic.

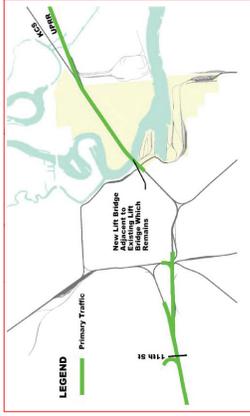
Build Alternative Development and Screening

2012

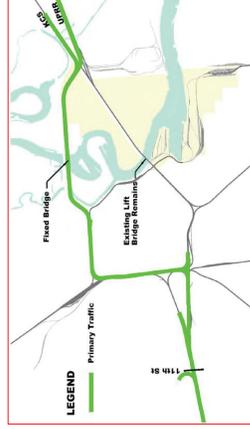
Phase 1 Alternatives Feasibility Study

Expand Existing Route
New Pine St. Alignment
New I-10 Alignment

New I-10 Alignment (Advanced)



Expand Existing Route (Advanced)



New Pine St. Alignment



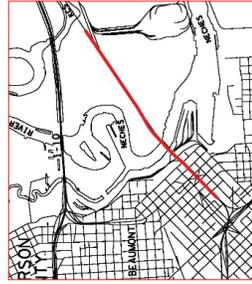
2013

★ Feb 2015

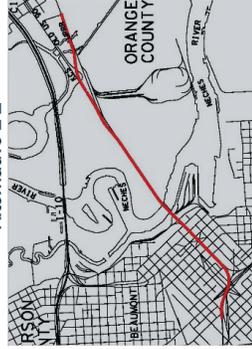
Phase 2 Alternatives Draft 10% Design

Alternative E-1
Alternative E-2
Alternative N-1
Alternative N-2

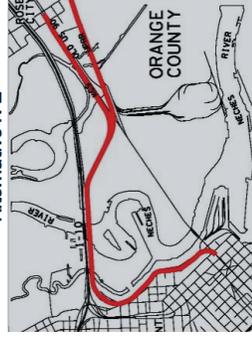
Alternative E-1 (Advanced)



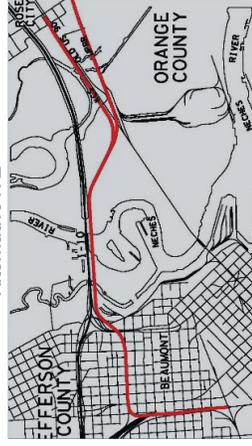
Alternative E-2



Alternative N-1



Alternative N-2



★ Feb 2016

Phase 3 Alternatives Final 10% Design

Alternative E-1
Alternative E-3

Alternative E-1 (Advanced)



Alternative E-3



★ Jul 2016

Recommended Preferred Alternative 30% Design

Alternative E-1

Alternative E-1 (Preferred Alternative)



★ Aug 2016

★ = Joint Stakeholder Meeting
★ = Public Meeting or Hearing

Alternative Matrix – Phase 2

Criteria Measure		Alternative E-1	Alternative E-2	Alternative N-1	Alternative N-2
Improve Rail Operations	Track Capacity	Adds single track bridge			
	Dispatching	Maintains existing		Introduces 3 rd dispatcher	
	Industrial Access	Maintains existing			
	Design Speed	30 mph W of river, 40 mph E	20 mph W of river, 40 mph E	10-20 mph W of river, 40 mph E	
Improve Movement and Interface	Rail Movements	Reduces bottleneck at river crossing			
	Marine Movements	Comparable to existing conditions			
	Vehicular Movements	No change to traffic movements.	No change to traffic movements, except two highway-rail grade crossings at Old US 90.	Access to Long Avenue prohibited with some closures at cross streets. Grade separation at MLK. Increase in delay at remaining grade crossings.	Grade Separation at Old US 90. Increase in delay at remaining grade crossings.
	Planned Industrial	Future connections NE of river can be made from new track.	Future connections NE of river limited by elevation of new track.	Future connections NE of river can be made from the existing track.	
	Historic Structures	Neches Rail Bridge (close proximity)	UPRR Bridge	0	0
Historic Districts	Beaumont Commercial District (adds track in KCS right-of-way at existing grade)	Beaumont Commercial District (adds track N of KCS right-of-way on elevated structure)	0	0	
Historical Landmarks	0	0	0	0	
Archeological Sites	0	0	Shipwrecks (in vicinity)	Terrestrial site, shipwrecks (in vicinity)	
Wetlands	9.2 acres	9.9 acres	14.5 acres	14.3 acres	
Waters	Neches River	Neches River, 2 crossings of Baird's Bayou tributaries	Neches River, Brakes Bayou, 4 crossings of Baird's Bayou tributaries		
Floodplains	23.5 acres	28.9 acres	39.2 acres	42.8 acres	
Hazardous Sites	14 within/adjacent	14 within/adjacent	25 within/adjacent Acquires Superfund Site	24 within/adjacent Acquires Superfund Site	
Displacements	0	3 (commercial)	3 (commercial)	0	
Right-of-way	2.7 acres	7.4 acres	34.8 acres	17.7 acres	
Cemeteries	0	0	0	0	
Parks	Riverfront Park (parking area, boundaries under review)	Riverfront Park (parking area, boundaries under review) MLK Memorial Park	0	Riverfront Park (strip along BNSF, boundaries under review)	
Community Facilities	City parking	Church/school, city parking	0	0	
Low Income / Minority	25% low income 64% minority		26% low income 65% minority	22% low income 52% minority	
Cost	Program Cost	~\$120 M	~\$380 M	~\$430 M	~\$400 M
Other Considerations	Constructability	Adjacent to active mainline. Sufficiently offset from existing rail operations to build with minimal disruption.		Varies by section. Majority of work on new alignment reduces operational coordination with active rail. Construction of a higher and longer structure may offset distance benefits.	
	Construction-Related Impacts	Temporary delays to existing rail traffic at tie-in points.			
		No roadway impacts.	Temporary delays to roadways for construction of grade separation structures.		
	No grade crossings.	Temporary road closures and delays for grade crossing improvements.			

Alternative Matrix – Phase 3

Criteria Measure		Modified Alternative E-1	Alternative E-3
Improve Rail Operations	Track Capacity	Adds single track bridge	Existing single track bridge replaced with new double track bridge
	Dispatching	Maintains existing	
	Industrial Access	Maintains existing	
	Design Speed	30 mph W of river, 40 mph E	40 mph W of river, 40 mph E
Improve Movement and Interface	Rail Movements	Reduces bottleneck at river crossing	Reduces bottleneck at river crossing. Crossover tracks are not necessary
		Crossovers allow the use of either bridge.	Less impact to rail traffic because base elevation of bridge provides a higher clearance for marine traffic. Rail grade is increased.
	Marine Movements	Comparable to existing conditions	
	Vehicular Movements	No change to traffic movements.	
Planned Industrial	Future connections NE of river can be made from new track.		
Cultural, Natural, and Community Resources	Historic Structures	Neches Rail Bridge (close proximity); Beaumont Police Station (ROW from parking area)	Neches Rail Bridge (demolished); Beaumont Police Station (ROW from parking area)
	Historic Districts	Beaumont Commercial District (adds track in KCS right-of-way at existing grade)	
	Historical Landmarks	0	0
	Archeological Sites	0	0
	Wetlands	9.2 acres	9.6 acres
	Waters	Neches River	
	Floodplains	23.3 acres	22.9 acres
	Hazardous Sites	7	7
	Displacements	0	0
	Right-of-way	2.0 acres	2.2 acres
	Cemeteries	0	0
	Parks	Riverfront Park (parking area)	
	Community Facilities	City parking	
	Low Income / Minority	23% / 52%	
Cost	Program Cost	~\$120 M	~\$160 M
Other Considerations	Constructability	Adjacent to active mainline. Sufficiently offset from existing rail operations to build with minimal disruption.	
	Construction-Related Impacts	Temporary delays to existing rail traffic at tie-in points.	
		No roadway impacts.	
		No construction at grade crossing.	

No Build Alternative

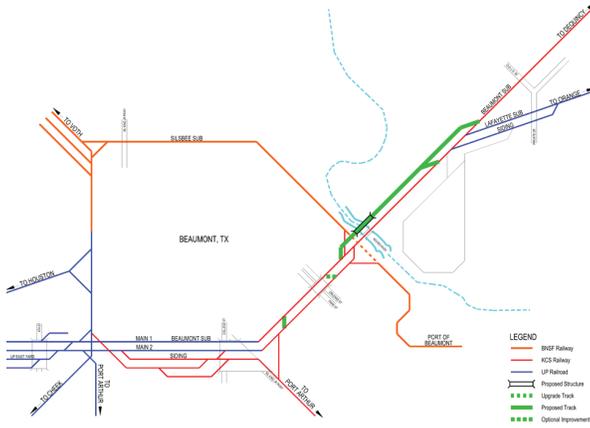


- Includes preservation of the existing rail network and other programmed improvements.
- Required for the EA to provide a baseline to gauge the effectiveness of the Build Alternative at accomplishing the purpose and need.
- 69.7 train delay hours in year 2035.

Impacts:

- Idle emissions would increase as delay hours increase.
- Noise environment would continue to be dominated by train noise. Existing noise levels exceed 70 dBA.

Preferred Alternative

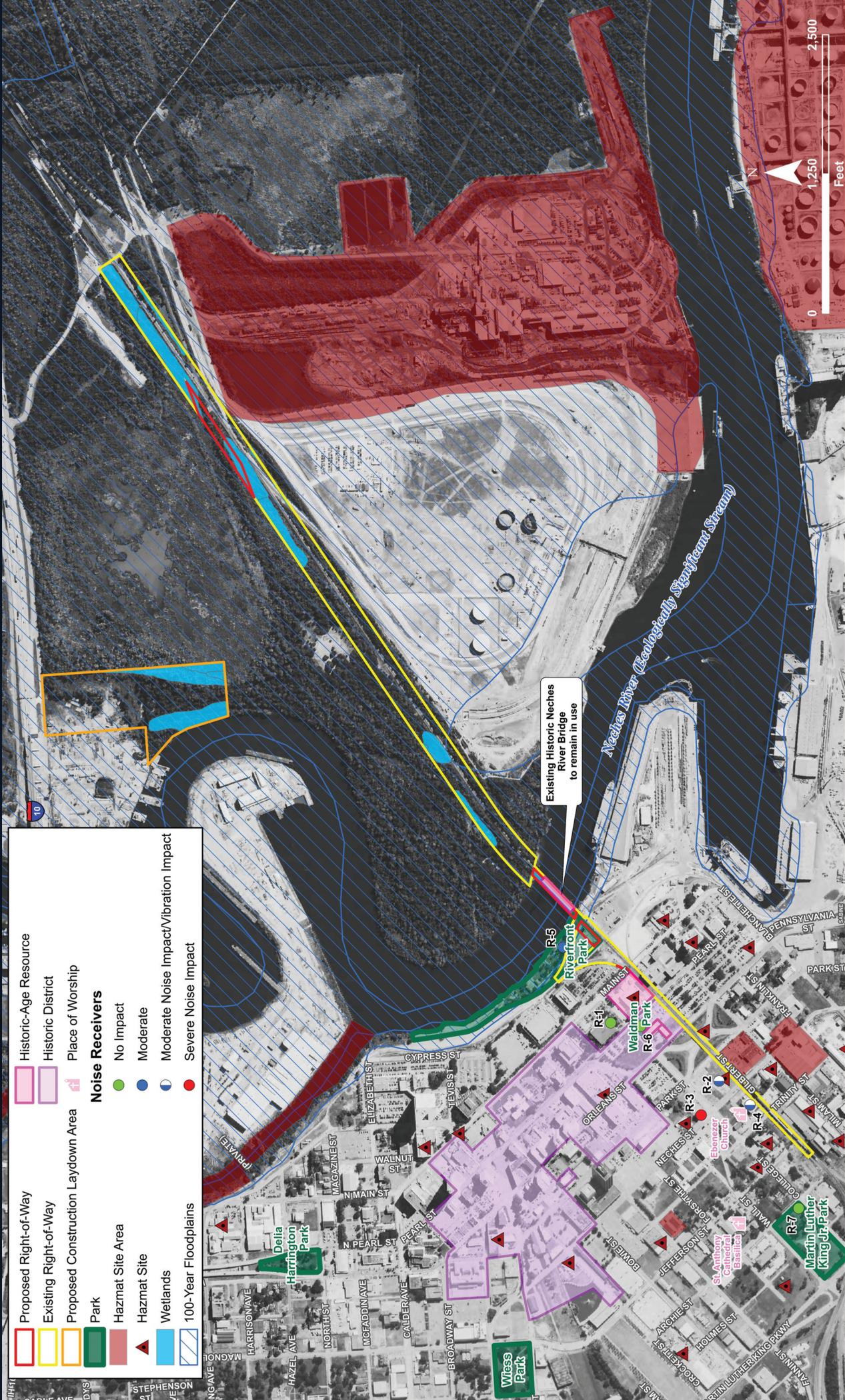
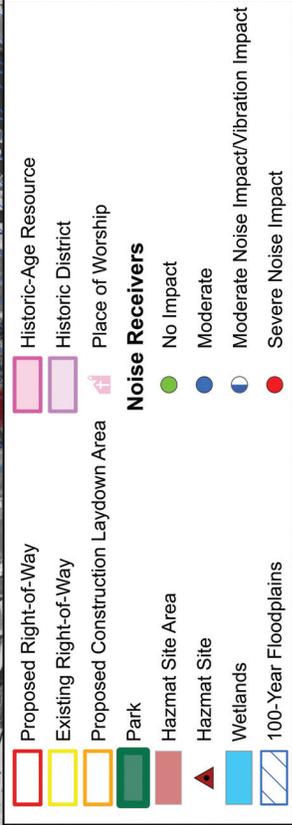


- Includes a lift bridge matching the existing KCS lift bridge's vertical and horizontal clearances in the locked and up positions.
- Evaluation is based on 30% design. Impacts have been avoided or minimized by shifting centerline closer to existing bridge.
- 23.4 train delay hours in year 2035.

Impacts:

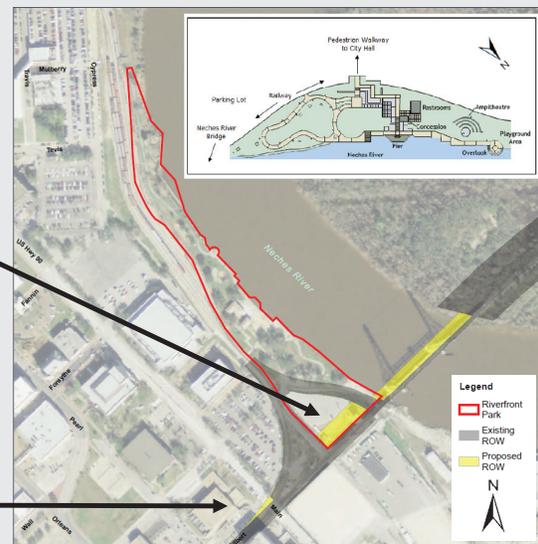
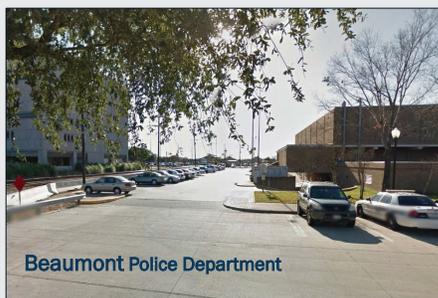
- Individual Section 404 Permit, U.S. Coast Guard Bridge Permit, and Texas Pollution Discharge Elimination System Construction General Permit.
- FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area and Section 303(d) impaired waterbody.
- 2 acres of land acquired. 21.5 acres of temporary construction easement. No relocations.
- Chenier Plain - Mixed Live Oak forest, riparian habitat, and essential fish habitat.
- 3 moderate and 1 severe noise impact. 2 moderate vibration impacts (noticeable but not anticipated to cause property damage).
- Reduced idle emissions compared to the No Build Alternative.
- No adverse effect to historic resources.

Environmental Impacts



Section 4(f)/6(f) & Chapter 26

- A *de minimis* finding is anticipated for minor property takes from **Beaumont Police Department (0.04 acres)** and **Riverfront Park (0.41 acres)** to satisfy requirements of Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act.
- Acquisition of land from **Riverfront Park** would be acquired in accordance with conditions outlined in Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act.
- The Build Alternative satisfies requirements of Texas Parks and Wildlife Code, Title 3, Chapter 26 for **Riverfront Park**.



Provide Us Your Comments

- Present verbal comments during the hearing.
- See the court reporter to leave a verbal comment.
- Leave a comment form in the comment box tonight.
- Email comments to: gil.wilson@txdot.gov
- Mail comments to:

Mr. Gil Wilson, TxDOT Rail Programs
125 East 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701-2483

Comments must be received on or before
Friday, September 9, 2016
to be part of the official public hearing record.



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION