

## Chapter 5 Comparison and Evaluation of Alternatives

***“ One purpose of the Tier 1 EIS is to identify a preferred Baton Rouge Loop Corridor, including corridor alternatives for the North, South, and East Units.”***

### 5.1 Methodology

The methodology used to determine the alternatives was to create a matrix based on 17 different evaluation parameters.

***“The Baton Rouge Loop Project Team consists of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Capital Area Expressway Authority (CAEA), HNTB Corporation, ABMB Engineers, URS Corporation, and Marmillion/Gray. Evaluation parameters were discussed and selected by the Project Team in conjunction with FHWA, LADOTD, and the CAEA. For each individual Unit Corridor Alternative, evaluation parameters were quantified or a “desirability/feasibility” value assigned. Using best professional judgment each Corridor Alternative evaluation parameter was then given a qualitative ranking of High, Medium, or Low on a Unit basis by the Project Team.”***

### 5.2 Evaluation Parameters

The parameters were consistent across all of the considered corridor possibilities except for the river crossing as shown below.

***“ River crossing feasibility was initially considered applicable to all Project Units. However, after further consultation with the applicable resource agencies and following corridor alternative refinements and reductions in the North Unit, it was decided that it would only be applied to the South Unit evaluation.”***

### 5.3 Evaluation

These 17 different evaluation parameters are further reduced to a set of 10 parameters for the North and South corridors (There are only 9 for the East corridors) that are determined to be necessary for determining the actual corridor recommendation from the Project Team. Each of these parameters is issued a H-High, M-Medium or L-Low ranking for each corridor alternative. The final parameters are:

- Estimated Capital Cost w/new Miss R. Bridge
- Estimated Capital Cost w/o new Miss R. Bridge
- Traffic & Transportation Improvement
- Developed land
- Prime Farmland Soils
- Wetlands
- 100-year Floodplain
- Waste Sites
- Public/Stakeholder Input
- Agency Input

The East corridor dropped the Estimated Capital Cost w/new Miss R. Bridge.

### Sections 5.4 Baton Rouge Loop Corridor Recommendation

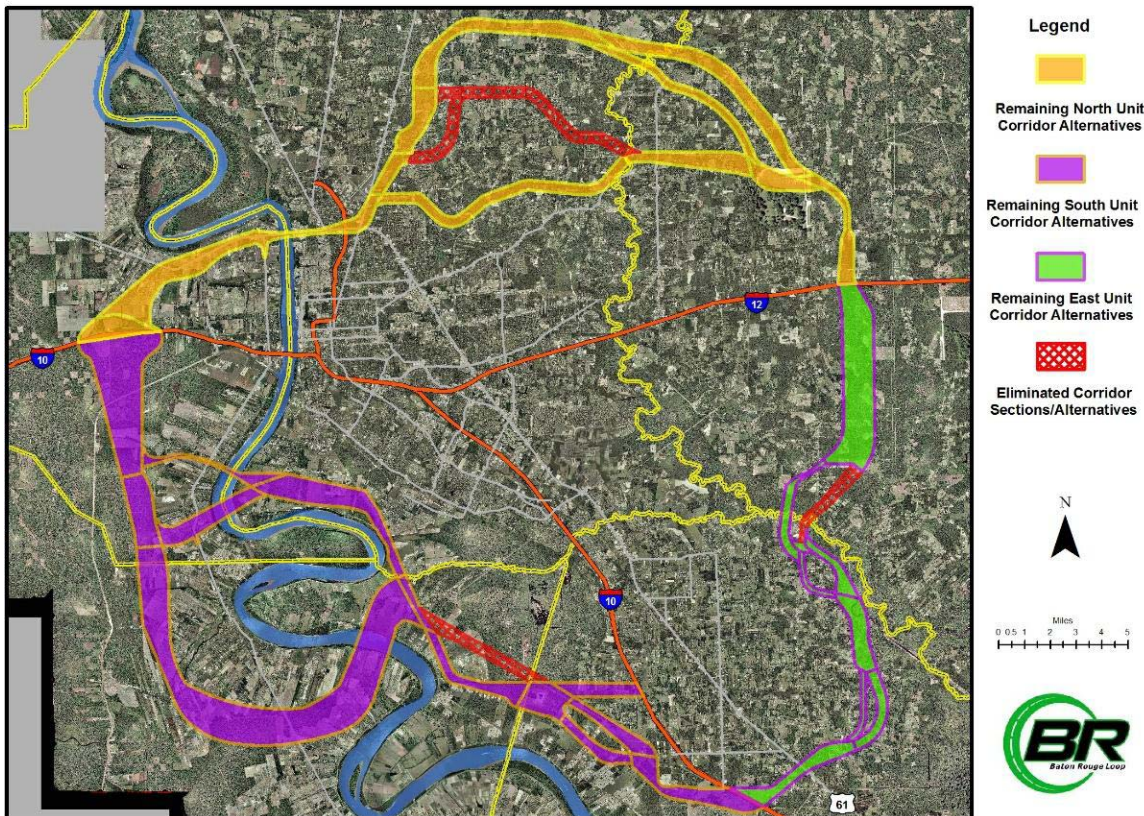
“Based on an evaluation of capital cost, traffic, environmental resources, and agency and public input the Project Team has not been able to reach a consensus on a single Preferred Baton Rouge Loop Corridor at this time.

In the North Unit, several alternatives have comparable capital cost and environmental impact potential but they also have stakeholder and public input issues. The Project team is of the opinion that it would be appropriate to eliminate Corridor Alternatives NB and NC, because of the public and stakeholder input. It is recommended that the remaining three alternatives be carried forward for additional agency, public, and stakeholder input.

In the South Unit, the Project Team has been able to make a determination that one-half (9) of the alternatives should be eliminated from further consideration. The nine alternatives are recommended for removal due to the potential for significant environmental impacts and agency concerns resulting from the wetland mitigation banks in section S6. This determination leaves nine alternatives with three alternatives using each of the three Mississippi River crossing locations. The Project Team concludes these nine should be carried forward for additional agency, public, and stakeholder comment. The nine Corridor Alternatives for further consideration are SB, SD, SF, SH, SJ, SL, SN, SQ, AND SR.

In the East Unit, the Project Team recommends four Corridor Alternatives - EB, ED, EF and EH, be removed from further consideration principally as an outcome of public and stakeholder input. While the remaining alternatives do have some variation it is the opinion of the Project Team they should be carried forward for additional agency, public, and stakeholder comment. The four remaining and eliminated Unit Corridor Sections/Alternatives are shown in *Figure 5-1*.

**Remaining and Eliminated Project Unit Corridor Sections/Alternatives**



## **Figure 5-1: Remaining and Eliminated Unit Corridor Sections/Alternatives”**

Here is where they present the loop corridors they have determined to be the most viable routes for the corridor to be placed. The map we are all so familiar with.

### **Summary :**

The comparison and evaluation of alternatives presents a compelling picture of the manner in which the loop proposal has been put together. It sounds well thought out and reasonable.

And, if it had been presented as they stated then been able to be debated and consideration of actual input from the public in 2010 been used in determining where and how the loop was to be implemented we would agree.

The problem is that in all of the meetings of 2010 that were held to access the input from the public there was no input. The people who wanted to ask questions or speak to the merits and viability of the Project Teams determinations would not be heard.

At each of the meetings held to discuss and question the planning, financing and implementation there was no discussion allowed. Instead the group making the presentation were there to show those affected by the placement and construction of the Loop where it could possibly go and be advised that it would be put in one of the proposed locations.

The locations and viability of this plan is the exact same as that presented in 2010, and still contains the problems that were previously questioned and presented during the 2010 meetings.

The Livingston, Ascension and Iberville Parish Presidents dropped from the Project Team in objection to the loop proposal.

That’s a pretty fair objection to the plan, and a response from the public about having the loop built on any of the projected routes.

Remember that the purpose as stated at the beginning of this section:

***“ One purpose of the Tier 1 EIS is to identify a preferred Baton Rouge Loop Corridor, including corridor alternatives for the North, South, and East Units.”***

Which was not accomplished? And like so many other government projects we are supposed to support the loop so that we can find out where it will be placed and what effect it will deliver. Once the loop is passed through the **Tier 1 EIS** it is a build. At that point you have no control over the project. It is passed and it will be built with all the flexibility that is inherent within these documents. The only agency overseeing the project agency will be the Project Team.