

Department of Transportation
Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD Transportation) Grants
Program

Kansas Lane Extension Regional Multi-Modal Connector



City of Monroe, Louisiana
May 2020

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-- Application Snapshot

Project Title: Kansas Lane Extension Regional Multi-Modal Connector

Application Type: Rural

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Location of Supplemental Materials

The Project application webpage with a copy of the application and supporting and referenced documents is located at: <https://monroela.us/buildgrant>



Project Description

Concise Description

The City of Monroe, Louisiana (Monroe), located in Ouachita Parish, is requesting funding from the 2020 Department of Transportation Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grants in the amount of **\$17,500,000.00** for the Kansas Lane Extension Regional Multi-Modal Connector Road (Kansas Lane Extension). The requested BUILD funding represents a critical source of funding for this project.

The Kansas Lane Extension Regional Multi-Modal Connector project will extend Kansas Lane (2.5 miles) from its terminus at the intersection with US 80 (DeSiard St.) to Forsythe Avenue Extension at its intersection with US 165. The project will provide alternative and more direct transportation routes for residential and commercial traffic to the north and south of Monroe while relieving U.S. 165 and U.S. 80 of traffic congestion, increasing safety, increasing economic competitiveness, maintaining a state of good repair and the improving quality of life of our city. The project has strong support from the local community, local and state agencies, elected local and state officials, and private businesses.

This project, the **Kansas Lane Extension** is the **final section of a four part project** that will accommodate current and future traffic needs along U.S. 165 and U.S. 80 as well as provide a direct link to Interstate 20. The entire project was first proposed in 1975 in the Monroe Area Multi-Modal Plan. The first two segments (Forsythe Extension to U.S. 165 (2.96 miles) and Kansas Lane Expansion from U. S. 80 to Millhaven (1.79 miles)) have been constructed with federal, state and local investment of \$30 million. The third segment, the Kansas Garret I-20 Interchange has been funded through Louisiana State funds and will be completed in the fall of 2025. The 2.5 mile Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector, the portion relevant to the 2020 BUILD request, will be the final segment that connects U.S. 165 to U.S. 80 and to Interstate 20. This project, once completed, will provide a regional multi-modal connector between all segments of the economic and civic region and will decrease traffic congestion along the major interior corridors of the city of Monroe.

Figure 1 (below) shows the final portion of the transportation project, the **Kansas Lane Extension** and Figure 2 (below) shows each section (labeled) of the entire project.





Figure 1: Kansas Lane Extension Regional Multi-Modal Connector Project Detail Map.
(Inset of map provided by Lazenby & Associates, Inc for City of Monroe, LA)





Figure 2: Kansas Lane Extension Regional Multi-Modal Connector (A) Map With Forsythe Loop (B), Kansas Lane Expansion (C) and Kansas Garrett I-20 Interchange (D) labeled. (Inset of map provided by Lazenby & Associates, Inc for City of Monroe, LA)



Transportation Challenges

Traffic studies for the Monroe, Louisiana Metropolitan area forecast that the major corridors of U.S. 165 and U.S. 80 in Northeast Louisiana are severely deficient in 2020 causing serious traffic congestion, increased vehicle crashes and increased pollution resulting in higher transportation cost for commuters, business and freight. The improvements concluding with the Kansas Lane Extension are essential to adequately accommodate the current and future traffic needs along U.S. 165 and U.S. 80 in Monroe, Louisiana.

Traffic volumes on both U.S. 165 and U.S. 80 exceed the road capacity. Under the current condition, U.S. 165 is significantly congested with low travel speeds and a high number of accidents. The rapid growth in residential, commercial, office and industrial development along U.S. 165 and U.S. 80 has contributed to traffic congestion and the situation is expected to get worse. The announcement in 2019 that CenturyLink, the nation's third largest telecommunications company, headquartered in Monroe, Louisiana and located on U.S. 165, has confirmed its commitment to Northeast Louisiana and will keep their headquarters in Monroe means that there will be continued congestion on U.S. 165. In addition, rapidly expanding commercial and residential areas to the north along the US. 165 continue to grow. The transportation efficiency improvements that have been completed in the area will reduce some congestion but are not sufficient to reduce congestion to U.S. 165 to an acceptable and safe level.

In the Final Environmental Impact Statement a capacity analysis was conducted to determine the impact of the area's growing transportation network in the proposed Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector area especially along U. S 165 and U.S. 80. The Level of Service rating for U. S. 165 rated an "F". An "F" rating is defined as vehicles moving in stop and go traffic conditions where traffic volumes exceed the roadway capacity. In addition hazardous queues develop and congestion causes traffic to stop for long periods of time.

Further, the Final Environmental Impact Statement analyzed the congestion on U.S. 165 and U.S. 80. According to the measure of congestion "volume to capacity ratio", which measures the level of congestion on a roadway, a serious level of congestion occurs when traffic is a 1.00 to 1.24. In the Environmental Impact Study the volume to capacity ratio for U. S. 80 from Kansas Lane to U.S. 165 is 1.08 and is expected to be 1.62 by 2030. Similarly, the volume capacity ratio for U. S 165 between the Forsythe Extension and U. S. 80 is 1.17 and is expected to be 1.62 by 2030. Both the level of congestion "F" rating and the volume to capacity ratio projections reflect significant and dangerous increase in roadway congestion over time. Construction of the Kansas Lane Extension will help lower congestion levels along both U.S. 165 and U.S. 80, which will enhance public safety, move traffic, freight and goods more efficiently, reduce the number of



traffic accidents significantly, reduce congestion and result in substantial savings in average vehicle miles traveled and vehicle hours traveled.

[See Appendix D – Permits, p. 140 – 143 or the Final Environmental Impact Study may be found at <https://monroela.us/buildgrant>

Addressing Traffic Challenges

The major traffic corridors for Northeast Louisiana (U.S. 165 and U.S. 80) are congested and will remain so unless alternative routes are provided for more direct and accessible connections to commercial, educational and manufacturing hubs in the Monroe, Louisiana, area. The Kansas Lane Extension will provide that alternative route.

The Kansas Lane Extension will construct a new four-lane undivided 2.5 mile extension of Kansa Lane with partial control access between U.S. 80 and U.S. 165 and center turn lanes at U.S. 80, U.S. 165, Bon Aire and the Old Sterlington Highway. In addition, the new roadway will facilitate the expansion of public transit to an underserved area. Current ridership of Monroe Transit System is 760,350 passengers and the new roadway will open the opportunity for new routes to serve the city and the rural surrounding areas. The Extension will provide traffic relief for U.S. 165, a major North - South urban arterial highway that runs through Monroe connecting southern Arkansas with Interstate 10 in Lake Charles, Louisiana. By establishing additional transportation alternatives the project will greatly improve access between critical elements of the regional economy by connecting the regions manufacturing and education hub, the regional airport and an Intermodal Transportation Center at the University of Louisiana at Monroe, and the region’s medical, retail and employment hub to the Interstate Highway System and U.S. 165 and U.S. 80. In addition to the University of Louisiana at Monroe, in July 2020, Monroe is opening the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine. The new medical school will have 100 staff members and 720 students. This exciting new addition to Monroe’s educational hub will provide further pressure to an already stressed transportation system. These improvements are critical to retain and attract jobs to Northeast Louisiana and will provide easy access and multi-modal options for commuters, student and commercial traffic.

The Kansas Lane Extension will reduce traffic congestion along existing U.S. 80 and U.S. 165, provide new and expanded cost effective and environmentally friendly transportation alternatives by offering additional transportation options while providing direct access to residential and commercial areas; and improve area-wide mobility and safety. The need for this project was identified in the 1996 Monroe, Louisiana Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan and the Monroe Urbanized Area Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan 2035 and in the 2013 City of Monroe Comprehensive Plan and is included in the Louisiana Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan. It is the last essential element in a multi-modal four phase project connecting the northern



and southeastern areas of Monroe with Interstate 20 and the Monroe Regional Airport and other commercial centers in the region.

Project History

This entire project was first proposed in 1975 in the Monroe Area Multi Modal Plan. The other three segments of this four part multi-modal project have been constructed with federal, state and local investment. These segments include

- the Forsythe Extension (2.96 miles)
- the Kansas Lane from U.S. 80 to Millhaven Road (1.79 miles)
- the Kansas Garret I-20 Interchange from Millhaven to I-20
- The final segment, the 2.5 mile Kansas Lane Extension will link these three segments directly from U.S. 165 to U.S. 80 and on to I-20.

Several additional projects in the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector area have already been programmed and funded and completed through the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and the City of Monroe that has helped ease the congestion problems along U.S. 80 and U.S. 165 and improve mobility in the region. These projects include the widening of Old Sterlington Road from two lanes to four-lanes; the addition of turn lanes on U.S. 80 at Kansas Lane; and the installation of an intelligent traffic signal system on U.S. 165 at 18 intersections.

In addition, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development has programmed for widening U.S. 165 from the northern intersection with Old Sterlington Road to U.S. 80 from four lanes to six lanes. None of these completed, funded or programmed improvements, however, provide a direct link between the existing Kansas Lane at U.S. 80 and the Forsythe Avenue extension at U.S. 165 nor do they provide an alternate route to U.S. 80 and U.S. 165 and a direct link to Interstate 20 as will the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector.

Benefit to Rural Communities

The majority of the new roadway (Kansas Lane Extension) is located outside of the city limits of Monroe, Louisiana. The project serves both urban and rural communities in the Monroe Region.

The purpose of the Kansas Lane Extension is to provide the final connection needed to link Forsyth Avenue to Kansas Lane and I-20 to provide access from outlying rural areas into the regional retail center, as well as, the regional airport and the regional education hub made up of the University of Louisiana at Monroe, Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine and Louisiana Delta Community College.



Project Location

The Kansas Lane Extension Regional Multi-Modal Connector is located in Monroe, Louisiana in Ouachita Parish in the Northeastern section of the state of Louisiana.

Monroe, Louisiana is the eighth largest city in the state of Louisiana, with a population of 47,877 (2018) and is the parish seat of Ouachita Parish (population of Ouachita Parish - 154,571 (2018)). It is located 99 miles east of Shreveport, Louisiana, 95 miles northeast of Alexandria, Louisiana, 114 miles west of Jackson, Mississippi and 65 miles south of El Dorado, Arkansas.



Figure 3: Map that shows location of Ouachita Parish. Monroe, Louisiana is located in this parish. (gisgeography.com)



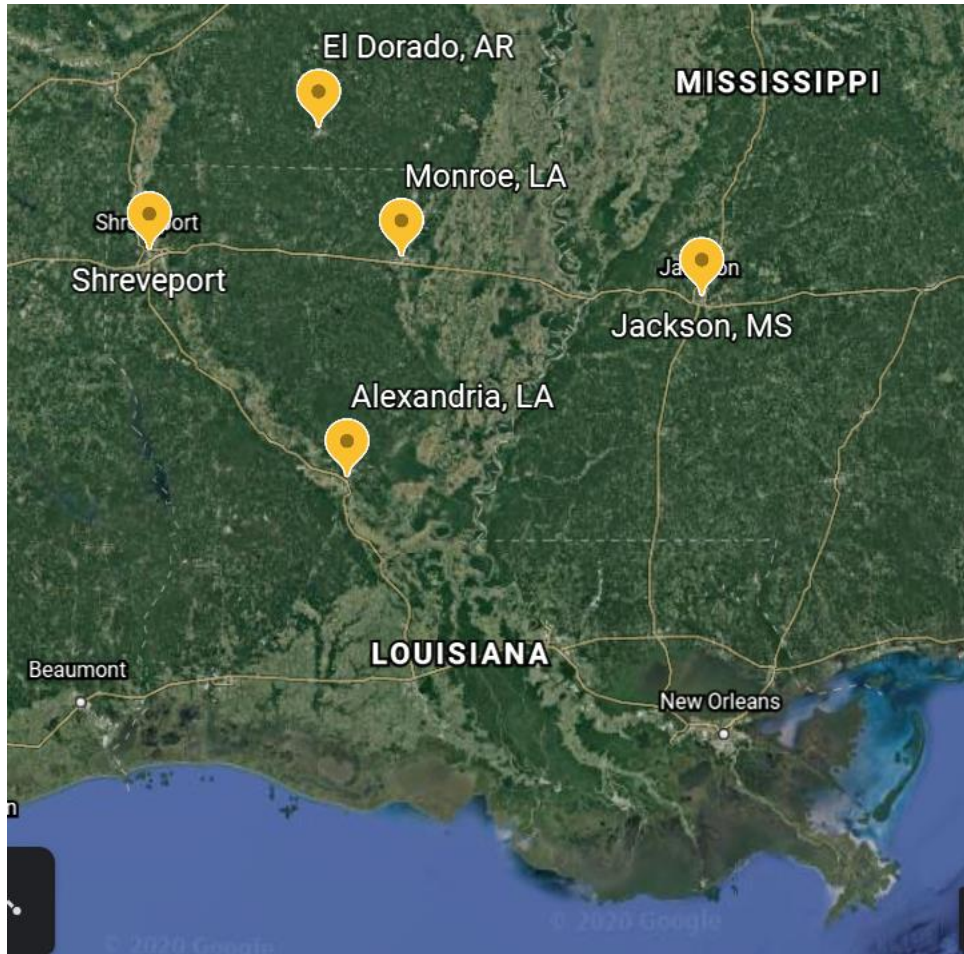


Figure 4: Relative locations of Shreveport, LA, Jackson MS, El Dorado, AR, and Alexandria, LA. (earth.google.com)

The Kansas Lane Extension project begins at its terminus at the intersection of Kansas Lane and U.S. 80 (32°31'33"N, 92°03'08"W) and extends north across Bayou DiSiard. After crossing the bayou the road turns west and northwest to the intersection of Forsythe Avenue and U.S. 165 (32°33'03"N, 92°04'37"W).

[See Figure 2 on page 6 of this document or on <https://monroela.us/buildgrant>]

The constructed road is not within an Urbanized Area as designated by the US Census. But Monroe, Louisiana's population is below the 200,000 threshold set for being considered an urban project, therefore it is a rural project. Monroe, Louisiana is located in UA 58330.



Grant Funds, Sources and Uses of Project Funds

The City of Monroe, Louisiana (Monroe), located in Ouachita Parish, is requesting funding from the 2020 Department of Transportation Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grants in the amount of **\$17,500,000.00** for the Kansas Lane Extension Regional Multi-Modal Connector Road (Kansas Lane Extension). The requested BUILD funding represents a critical source of funding for this project and will enable the completion of the entire project as well as address transportation issues that have been a constant problem in the city of Monroe, Louisiana.

Project budget

[Detailed Cost Estimate (2018\$) found in Appendix C or <https://monroela.us/buildgrant>]

Table 1: Kansas Lane Extension Regional Multi-Modal Connector Project Budget

Item	Total
Construction Costs	\$35,617,586.93
10% Contingency	\$3,561,758.69
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$39,179,345.62</i>
CE&I	\$3,917,934.56
<i>Total Project Costs</i>	<i>\$43,097,280.18</i>

Table 2: Funding Sources and Amounts (2018\$)

Source	Total Funding Amount	% of Total	Type of Funding
Requested BUILD Funding	\$17,500,000	41%	Federal Funding
Louisiana Capital Outlay Funding	\$25,600,000	59%	Non-Federal Funding
<i>Total Project Costs</i>	\$43,100,000	100 %	

Funding Commitments

The Kansas Lane Extension Project has committed funding sources from the State of Louisiana. [See Appendix C or <https://monroela.us/buildgrant>]

Costs related to the grubbing and clearing portion of the preparation for the Kansas Lane Extension have already been funding by Louisiana Capital Outlay Funding in the amount of \$2,456,524.00. This completed portion of the project (pre-construction) indicates the



commitment that the city of Monroe and the state of Louisiana have to this project and its necessity to meet the transportation needs of this area.

Selection Criteria

Safety

The Kansas Lane Extension project aligns with the Safety criteria for the BUILD discretionary grant by decreasing the volume of traffic on roadways that currently access U.S. 165 and U.S. 80 by providing an alternative and direct route to educational, industrial and commercial hubs in the city of Monroe, Louisiana.

Increased residential development in areas north and west of Monroe has expanded demand on the U.S. 80 and U.S. 165 corridor as many residents of these neighborhoods are traveling to the growing employment areas in Ouachita Parish that are located along U.S. 165 and along Interstate 20, U.S. 80, and LA 594 (Millhaven Road). As these areas continue to develop, greater demand will be placed upon the U.S. 165 and U.S. 80 corridors.

As a part of the Final Environmental Impact Statement a capacity analysis was conducted to determine the impact of the area's growing transportation demand on the existing transportation network in the proposed Kansas Lane Road Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector area. A qualitative measure called the Level of Service was used to rate roadway conditions in the project area. U.S. 165 rated a Level of Service "F". According to the measure of congestion "volume to capacity ratio", which measures the level of congestion on a roadway, a serious level of congestion occurs when traffic is a 1.00 to 1.24. At the time of the study, the volume to capacity ratio for U.S. 80 from U.S.165 to Kansas Lane is 1.08 and is expected to be 1.49 by 2030. Similarly, the volume to capacity ratio for U.S. 165 between Forsythe Extension and U.S. 80 is 1.17 and is expected to be 1.62 by 2030. Both the Level of Service "F" rating and the volume to capacity ratio projections reflect a significant increase in roadway congestion over time.

According to the 2010 Monroe Urbanized Area Transportation Plan the majority of crashes along U.S. 165 and U.S. 80 took place between peak travel hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. with the majority occurring between 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. and 80% occurring under dry conditions. The likely cause of the majority of the accidents was that the roadway was not designed to accommodate large traffic volumes and the congestion that currently exists. The Kansas Lane Road Extension will improve the capacity along U.S. 165 and U.S. 80 which will help prevent vehicle accidents, injuries and fatalities. The Benefit Cost Analysis projects that the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will help to lower congestion levels along U.S. 165 and U.S. 80, improve safety.



The free flow of traffic on the Kansas Lane Extension will reduce the rate and consequences of motor vehicle accidents caused by human factors, resulting in improved safety and better connections on the urban area transportation system. This project will facilitate a change in travel patterns that will reduce motorists traveling through the University of Louisiana at Monroe campus to reach either U.S. 165 or U.S. 80. In addition, the project will reduce the number of vehicles traveling from U.S. 165 through residential neighborhoods to reach Kansas Lane and the Monroe Regional Airport.

Based on the finding in the Motorized Transportation Plan that many of the crashes occurred due to road congestion it follows that the alternative route provided by the Kansas Lane Extension would decrease the number of crashes on these roads. The new roadway will reduce the critical response time for emergency responders who are traveling to neighborhoods in northeast Ouachita Parish. In addition, Louisiana State Police identified U.S. 80 east of Kansas Lane as problematic as it is used as an alternate route for Interstate 20 for hazardous materials. Further, both U.S. 165 and Interstate 20 are designated Hurricane Evacuation Routes. In addition, the Kansas Lane Extension will result in a significant decrease in Vehicle Miles Traveled resulting in less vehicle emissions and a cleaner environment.

[See Appendix D- Final Environmental Impact statement and Appendix E- Benefit Cost Analysis or <https://monroela.us/buildgrant>]

State of Good Repair

Included in State and Local Transportation Plans: The Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector is a roadway of independent utility that is consistent with the 1996 Monroe Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan and the Monroe Urbanized Area 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the Louisiana Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan, the 2013 City of Monroe Comprehensive Plan, the Rethinking the Delta 2008-2013 Regional Development Plan and the 1986 City of Monroe Bicycle and Jogging Trails Plan.

Upgrade Surface Transportation Network Efficiency: The City of Monroe has implemented a strategy of asset management in planning, financing, building, preserving, and operating the City's infrastructure more cost effectively. In addition, the City of Monroe Public Works Department seeks the best value in building, operating and maintaining the City's infrastructure.

The Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector, as an alternative route, will reduce the cost of maintenance and wear and tear on roadways along U.S. 165, U.S. 80 and on local streets around the University of Louisiana at Monroe Campus and through neighborhoods located near the Monroe Regional Airport between Kansas Lane and U.S. 165. These routes were not



intended for the high volume of traffic that currently exists. The Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will reduce traffic on these streets, relieve congestion along U.S. 165 and U.S. 80 and reduce the annual maintenance costs for these roadways and improve the overall condition of the existing transportation system.

If Kansas Lane Extension is not completed the result would be inconsistent with plans to maintain the transportation system and there would continue to be an increase in traffic volume on the current North - South routes that would continue to slow efficiency and mobility of goods and people to the economic, commercial, industrial and educational hubs of the city.

Project Appropriately Capitalized: The cost to construct the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector is \$43.1 million. The City of Monroe has secured 59% of the overall project cost through a LA Capital Outlay Funding commitment. The \$17,500,000 million BUILD grant will be the final funding step to complete the transportation project that will alleviate traffic congestion in an already stressed traffic system and increase safety and efficiency of movement for goods and people to provide easier connections to the economic, educational and commercial hubs of the city through the transportation network in the Northeast Region of Louisiana.

Sustainable Source for Long Term Maintenance: In 2000, the City of Monroe passed a one-cent sales tax dedicated to infrastructure maintenance and improvement. As a new roadway, the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will initially require minimal maintenance. At the time maintenance becomes necessary, the City of Monroe will place the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector on a regular road maintenance schedule.

Reduce Average Transportation Costs: The current route from the Kansas Lane intersection at U.S. 80 to the Forsythe Extension intersection at U.S. 165 is problematic with no direct access. Currently, access to these two intersections is limited to traveling east on U.S. 80 through the University of Louisiana at Monroe campus and five stoplights before turning right onto U. S. 165, and then through an additional five stoplights before reaching U.S. 165 at Forsythe Extension. Depending on the congestion, the route can take as long as twenty minutes. According to the Benefit Cost Analysis, the new Kansas Lane Extension Multi- Modal Regional Connector is an average trip savings of two miles. In addition, the new unobstructed roadway will reduce the average travel time by five minutes which will decrease the annual vehicle operation and maintenance costs and provide significant annual savings to individuals and businesses that will use the route. In addition it will improve safety and reduce vehicle accidents. [See Appendix E- Benefit-Cost Analysis or <https://monroela.us/buildgrant>]

Enhance Points of Modal Connectivity and Improve Accessibility and Transport Service: The Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will provide direct access from



U.S. 165 to U.S. 80 and the Monroe Regional Airport, the gateway to Northeast Louisiana and Southern Arkansas and on to Interstate 20. Currently, limited public transit service is provided to the Kansas Lane Extension Regional Multi-Modal Regional Connector area. The Connector road will provide direct access from commercial, medical and public facilities to existing residential areas making it easier to expand service to the area with the addition of new transit stops. Further, the new roadway will allow the Monroe Transit Service to expand both scheduled and fixed route paratransit service for the elderly and people with disabilities and to underserved neighborhoods which will enhance transportation options for economically disadvantaged populations, non-drivers, senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

For manufacturing firms in the Monroe Air Industrial Park and manufacturers located north of Monroe the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will provide direct access to Interstate 20 and for those like Ouachita Fertilizer, Poly Processing and ANGUS Chemical that export goods the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will provide direct access to Interstate 20 and the Greater Ouachita Parish Port facilitating the transport of freight and commercial traffic.

Project is the Result of Coordinated Planning Process: The Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector was recognized as an inter-modal connector project of high priority in the Monroe Urbanized Area MTP 2035, the 2013 City of Monroe Comprehensive Plan, the Monroe Regional Airport Master Plan and the City of Monroe Bicycle and Jogging Trails Plan (1986). The project is supported by the Ouachita Council of Governments, the Ouachita Parish Police Jury, and the City of Monroe, and Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development. Regional community and business leaders have been working to construct the new roadway for over thirty years.

Project will Improve Connections between Residential and Commercial Areas: The Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will provide a new roadway between the residential and commercial areas developing in northwestern Monroe along U.S. 165 and the residential, commercial office, retail and industrial development in eastern and southeastern Monroe. The Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will offer an alternate route between these rapidly growing areas that is direct and that will bypass the intersection of U.S. 80 and U.S. 165, which is dangerously congested.

Economic Competitiveness

An efficient transportation network is essential to sustaining the economic health of a community. As outlined in *Linking the Delta Region with the Nation and the World*, “the connection between transportation improvements and the demonstrated economic improvements in the region is direct, fundamental, and unambiguous.” The economic health of a community



directly impacts the amenities and quality of life of the community. The proposed Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will have a positive effect on the surrounding area by reducing travel delays and providing safer driving conditions

The proposed Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will provide connectivity and mobility improvements between points north along U.S. 165 and the growing service region surrounding the Interstate 20 Corridor and Millhaven Road. The commercial operating benefits are estimated in the quantitative benefit-to-cost analysis in the “avoided costs of travel time” and “avoided operational costs” calculations.

The area along U.S. 165, Kansas Lane and Interstate 20 has been identified for industrial growth. The Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector mobility and connectivity improvements will make this region more attractive for development. The new facility would decrease travel by two miles and five minutes from the existing route, and result in a more even distribution of traffic on the Monroe roadway network. This benefit is projected as “avoided costs of travel time” in the quantitative benefit-to-cost analysis. [See Appendix E - Benefit Cost Analysis or <https://monroela.us/buildgrant>]

Considerable commercial office and industrial development is occurring in the area around the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector, due to the proactive approach taken by the City of Monroe and Ouachita Parish in marketing federal programs and state and local economic development districts that provide incentives to encourage economic growth. In 1994, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development designated Ouachita Parish as an Enterprise Community. When the Enterprise Community program ended, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development designated Ouachita Parish as a Renewal Community. These programs encourage public-private collaboration to generate economic development in distressed communities to help preserve and create jobs. The Enterprise Community and Renewal Community designations have helped to stimulate growth in the region. In addition, the City of Monroe has commissioned several studies to develop strategies to improve job growth.

In addition, there are three federal opportunity zones that are in the area of the full project that includes all four portions of transportation improvements. These zones are located south of the Kansas Lane Extension but within the area of the Kansas Garrett I-20 Interchange project that is fully funded. These areas will benefit from the economic opportunities provided by increased connection to the educational, economic and industrial hubs of the city.

Located just off Kansas Lane is the Monroe Regional Airport, the birthplace of Delta Airlines. The airport constructed a new \$39 million terminal and invested over \$5 million for runway rehabilitation. The airport serves as the gateway to Northeast Louisiana and Southern Arkansas with a majority of passengers traveling for business purposes. Also located in the Kansas Lane-



Monroe Regional Airport area is the Headquarters of the 528th Engineer Battalion of the Louisiana Army National Guard.

The economic health and future of the City Monroe and Ouachita Parish are heavily dependent on the effective and efficient movement of goods and mobility of people throughout the community with the ability to connect effortlessly to the national transportation system. The Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will improve economic competitiveness by providing more reliable transportation options for the movement of goods and trade. The potential for increased economic development activity will be enhanced as result of the improved accessibility to the national, statewide and local transportation network and will facilitate the continued growth and development of new business and industry.

Environmental Sustainability

The Kansas Lane Extension aligns with the Department of Transportation’s criteria for environmental sustainability. Once completed, the new North - South route in Monroe, Louisiana will alleviate the traffic congestion that exists on the current routes from the commercial, industrial, educational and residential areas in the city.

The route for the new Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will pass through the Chauvin Swamp. As such, it is necessary to allow for the flow of water at intervals under the roadway. In addition, the area supports various wildlife. This project includes the installation of large box culverts that will provide a walk through for wildlife and serve the dual purpose of providing an outlet for water flow. This dual purpose solution will protect both motorists and wildlife and aligns with the criteria to avoid adverse environmental impacts to wetlands and wildlife.

[See Appendix D, p. 279-307 or <https://monroela.us/buildgrant>]

Quality of Life

The Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will provide transportation benefits that have a positive impact on the quality of life of the community in and around Monroe, Louisiana, by increasing transportation choices for the region. The alternative route the new roadway will provide will expand access and services to the educational, commercial and retail hubs in the area. By improving the transportation options for our citizens, the Kansas Lane Extension connects our population to the resources found in our community. The Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will improve community cohesion and is consistent with the Monroe City Comprehensive Plan.

The Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will provide a route for personal



and commercial travel that is two miles shorter than the existing route which will in turn result in associated fuel and other operating cost savings. The facility will reduce travel time by 5 minutes from the existing route, and result in a more even distribution of traffic on the area roadway network. It will improve safety and reduce costs associated with vehicle accidents. It will also result in 717 man-hour savings per day and a savings of approximately 750,000 million vehicle miles traveled each year for personal and business users. The reduction in vehicle miles traveled will also result in lower greenhouse gas emission, reduced air pollution and dependency on foreign oil. [See Appendix E - Benefit-Cost Analysis or <https://monroela.us/buildgrant>]

The City of Monroe has a poverty rate of 34.9 percent, which is approximately 2.5 times the national average of 11.8 percent. The Monroe area has the ignominy of being one of the poorest areas in the nation. In addition, the average per capita income in the City of Monroe for the past 12 months is \$21,845 or which is less than the national average of \$32,621. The unemployment rate in the City of Monroe and Ouachita Parish as of March, 2020, was 6.8 percent which is higher than the national average of 4.4 percent for the same month. However, there are many people in the area and region who have used all their unemployment compensation benefits and are still not employed. Many have given up on finding work or are working part time. The unemployment rate for the Monroe area is probably much higher than 6.8 percent. Due to the high poverty in the Monroe area, access to affordable transportation options is critical.^{1 2}

The completion of the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will facilitate expanded public transit to underserved neighborhoods and will connect these services directly to the Intermodal Transportation Center at the University of Louisiana at Monroe that links directly to the Monroe Central Business District and the main terminal of the Monroe Transit System. In 2019, 760,350 passengers used the Monroe Transit System with 60% traveling to or from work. These expanded transportation options are especially important to the 9,000 students enrolled at the University of Louisiana at Monroe. Approximately 2,300 students live on campus. The remaining 6,700 commute each day along with 500 faculty and staff members. Many of these students live in single family and multi- family rental units in the region. In addition, there are some low income and section 8 housing in the Kansas Lane area. These residents will especially benefit from additional transportation options which will foster better community cohesion by providing low cost access to work, school, health care, centers of commerce and other public services.

As noted the University of Louisiana at Monroe campus and the new Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine is located just south of the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector and the campuses will benefit greatly from the new roadway. It will provide an

¹ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/monroecitylouisiana/INC110218>

² https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.la_monroe_msa.htm



additional entrance from the northeast. In addition, the City of Monroe Fire Department's fire station at the Monroe Regional Airport will benefit from the direct access to neighborhoods and the University of Louisiana at Monroe allowing for faster critical response time for emergencies through the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector.

The Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will provide better mobility from U.S. 165 and Interstate 20 and the Monroe Regional Airport and industrial sites along Kansas Lane and Interstate 20 corridor that have been targeted for industrial growth. The mobility and connectivity will make the region more attractive for economic development and will support the growing employment from existing businesses that was cited earlier. The Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will provide fuel and other operating cost savings for business that will result in a significant annual benefit.

[See Appendix E or <https://monroela.us/buildgrant>]

Innovation

The route for the new Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will pass through the Chauvin Swamp. This location required innovative technology to allow for the adequate flow of water at intervals under the roadway as well as support various wildlife. This project includes the installation of large box culverts (bottomless) that will provide a walk through for wildlife and serve the dual purpose of providing an outlet for water flow. This dual purpose solution will protect both motorists and wildlife. [See Appendix D, p. 307 or <https://monroela.us/buildgrant>]

The City of Monroe recently upgraded its signalization along U.S.165 with a closed loop signal system that is tied together with fiber optic cameras and uses live streaming video. This allows traffic engineers to monitor and manage the flow of traffic and to make real time adjustments to traffic lights as traffic begins to back up. The traffic light at U.S.165 and Forsythe Lane is in this system. This is the northern terminus of the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector, which will also be tied into the closed loop signal system. The intersection of Kansas Lane and U.S. 80 will be tied into the closed loop signalization system allowing for more efficient and coordinated traffic management. These traffic lights use cost efficient Light Emitting Diode lights.

In 2009, the Monroe Transit System was the Recipient of the Department of Environmental Quality Environmental Leadership Award for Green Initiatives and was presented with the Environmental Leadership Program Municipality Achievement Award in Pollution Prevention as the first Transit System in Louisiana to purchase a hybrid bus and to use soy-based bio-diesel fuel blended with ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel in all buses. The Monroe Transit System celebrated its



114th anniversary in 2020. It is the nation’s oldest publicly-owned transit system. Current ridership for the system is 760,350 passengers. Service is provided in and around the City of Monroe and to other modes of transportation including the Greyhound/Trailways terminal, the Monroe Regional Airport and the University of Louisiana at Monroe Intermodal Transportation Center as well as the main office of the Monroe Transit System.

The Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector is supported by the regional business community and state and local elected officials. Due to the importance of the roadway to the area business community 1-20 Development Board has obligated funds to the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector project. This innovative commitment demonstrates the importance the regional business community places on the completion of the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector which will continue to facilitate additional growth. In addition, the Monroe Chamber of Commerce provided support in preparing the BUILD grant application.

Partnership

Jurisdictional Stakeholders: All legislative approvals required to move this project forward are complete. The U.S. Delegation, the City of Monroe, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, the Ouachita Parish Police Jury and state Legislators officials strongly support the project.

In addition, evidence of the widespread support for the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector project is demonstrated by the agencies and businesses providing letters of support and collaborating on this project.

[See Appendix B - Letters of Support <https://monroela.us/buildgrant>]

Government and Elected Officials

U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy, M.D.	Louisiana State Representative Foy
U.S. Senator John Kennedy	Gadberry - District 15
U.S. Representative Ralph Abraham, M.D.	Louisiana State Representative Francis C.
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development	Thompson - District 19
City of Monroe, Louisiana	Louisiana State Senator Jay Morris - District
Ouachita Parish Police Jury	35

Business Community

Acadian Ambulance	Chase Bank
ANGUS Chemical	Express Employment Professionals
ATMOS Entergy	Guaranty Bank and Trust
Brookshire’s	Gulf South Warehouse, LLC



Holyfield Construction, Inc.
Home Builders Association of Northeast
Louisiana
Homeland Bank
James Moore, III
Fox 14 KARD/NBC 10 KTVE
Mid-South Extrusion

Progressive Bank
Southern Hospitality Service
St. Francis Medical Center
Steel Fabricators of Monroe, LLC
Vantage Health Plan

Transportation, Education & Workforce Development

Monroe Chamber of Commerce
Monroe Housing Authority
Monroe Transit System
North Delta Regional Planning and Development District
University of Louisiana at Monroe

Demonstrated Project Readiness

The Kansas Lane Extension project is aligned with the Department of Transportation's criteria for Demonstrated Project Readiness in the BUILD discretionary grant.

Environmental Risk

The National Environmental Policy Act Environmental process for the project was certified by the Federal Highway Administration in April, 2005. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development completed the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Kansas Lane Connector on February 8, 2005 and found the project will have no significant impact. In 2019 the Environmental Impact Statement was Re-Approved by the Federal Highway Administration [Both documents Final Environmental Impact Statement Kansas Lane Connector Monroe, LA State Project No. 700-37-0110 Federal Aid Project No. HP-T021 (018) Issued February 8, 2005 and Environmental Impact Statement Re-Approval may be found by going to <https://monroela.us/buildgrant>] The Federal Highway Administration approved the Preferred Alternative for the Kansas Lane-Garrett Road Regional Multi-Modal Connector as described in the Final Environmental Impact Statement and issued a Record of Decision for the Kansas Lane Connector in April 2005. [The Record of Decision may be found by going to <https://monroela.us/buildgrant>] In addition, on January 25, 2012 the Department of the Army Corps of Engineers approved a Request for Modification to their original permit number CEMVK-OD-FE-ASJ-2000-1263. There are no additional actions by other agencies or permits required for the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector Project to proceed to construction. Above documents may be found at <https://monroela.us/buildgrant> or in the attached Appendix D]



Implementation Plan:

Project Schedule: The final plans and right of way acquisition has been completed. The timeline for the remainder of the overall project is as follows:

Kansas Lane Extension Project Schedule	
Item	Date
Letting (Bidding Opens)	October 14, 2020
Notice to Proceed	February 14, 2021
Estimated Project Completion	February 14, 2023

The schedule demonstrates that the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector will move quickly to construction once the BUILD Discretionary Grant is received. The project preliminary final design is complete and the final plans and right of way acquisition are complete. Bids for construction will be let in October 14, 2020 with construction underway by February 14, 2021. Construction will be complete February 14, 2023.

Environmental Approvals: As noted above, the Record of Decision for the Kansas Lane Connector was approved on May 9, 2005 (Federal Aid Project No. Hp-TO21 (018)). The Final Environmental Impact Statement was finished February 8, 2005. Re-Approval of the Environmental Impact statement was received in 2019. As previously noted, this project is strongly supported by local, state and federal elected officials.

State and Local Planning: The project is included in the Monroe Urbanized Area Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2035, the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan, the 2013 City of Monroe Comprehensive Plan, and the Monroe Regional Airport Master Plan.

Technical Feasibility: The City of Monroe and Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development have extensive experience in managing large infrastructure construction projects which is demonstrated by the construction of the \$39 million Monroe Regional Airport terminal. In addition, the City has a Professional Civil Engineer on staff to oversee this project.

Financial Feasibility: The \$17.5 million BUILD Discretionary Grant will complete the funding needed for the completion of the Kansas Lane Extension Multi-Modal Regional Connector.

Federal Wage Certification: The city of Monroe certifies that work performed under the contract funded by this grant will be required to comply with all applicable state and federal laws, including but not limited to subchapter 31 of title 40, United States Code (Federal Wage Requirements)

Benefit Cost Analysis

The proposed four-lane Kansas Lane-Garrett Road Regional Multi-Modal Connector would provide a shorter and faster travel route for personal and commercial intra- and inter-city travelers who currently use the existing U.S. 165/U.S. 80 route. The 2.5-mile Kansas Lane Connector would reduce travel by two miles from the existing, competing route via U.S. 165 and U.S. 80 and provide an approximate five-minute travel time savings per vehicle. This equates to more than 700 hours of time saved each day.

Additional Benefits of the Kansas Lane Extension as described in the Benefit Cost Analysis [See Appendix E – Benefit Cost Analysis or <https://monroela.us/buildgrant>]

- **Improved transportation facilities and system**-The new facility would decrease travel by two miles and five minutes from the existing route, and result in a more even distribution of traffic on the Monroe roadway network. This benefit is projected as “avoided costs of travel time” in the quantitative benefit-to-cost analysis.

- **Improved economic competitiveness**-The new facility will provide connectivity and mobility improvements between points north along U.S. 165 and the growing service region surrounding the Interstate 20 Corridor and Millhaven Road. The commercial operating benefits are estimated in the quantitative benefit-to-cost analysis in the “avoided costs of travel time” and “avoided operational costs” calculations.

- **Improved livability**-As noted the new facility will result in a usable 5-minute travel time savings to users of the facility, which include both intra-city Monroe area travelers and intercity travelers. This benefit is projected as “avoided costs of travel time” in the quantitative benefit-to-cost analysis.

- **Improved energy efficiency**-The new facility will reduce travel by 2 miles for users of this route when compared to the existing route, resulting in associated fuel and other operating cost savings. This benefit is projected as “avoided operational costs” in the quantitative benefit-to-cost analysis.

Benefit Cost Ratio – As described in the Memorandum in Appendix E, the project will have a **Benefit-Cost Ratio of 1.69 over a 30 year period of analysis**. Given that property values, noise reduction, and other intangible benefits are not germane to the analysis conducted it is believed that the 1.69 is a conservative depiction of the benefit-cost ratio for the proposed project versus a “no-build” alternative.

Net Present Value – The net present value of benefits overcomes capital costs between project year 16 and 17, and is inclusive of over \$52 million in anticipated benefits versus a \$31 million capital investment, or roughly **\$20.8 million in benefits per mile constructed**.

The Kansas Lane Extension Regional Multi-Modal Connector project will relieve traffic congestion, increase safety and provide easier connections for people and goods to travel through the transportation network of Northeast Louisiana. This potential grant funding will be the key that unlocks the possibility of increased economic growth for the region.