



Report Highlights

Louisiana Highway 3034 Sullivan Road Improvement Project

Department of Transportation and Development

MICHAEL J. "MIKE" WAGUESPACK, CPA

Audit Control # 40220005

Performance Audit Services • March 2022

Why We Conducted This Audit

During the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget meeting on November 19, 2021, the Chairman requested an audit to evaluate the reasons for the delay in the completion of this project. Therefore, we evaluated the Department of Transportation and Development's (DOTD) progress on the Louisiana Highway 3034 Sullivan Road (Wax-Hooper) improvement and sanitary sewer system installation project (Sullivan Road) in the City of Central.

What We Found

Overall, we found that multiple issues contributed to delays of the Sullivan Road project. Specifically, we found the following:

- **Because the Sullivan Road project started as an East Baton Rouge (EBR) Green Light Plan (GLP) project, it did not follow the typical DOTD process when DOTD took over the project in 2011.** This caused project delays because DOTD had to rely on EBR's design plans, it did not have the expertise to oversee sanitary sewer system installation work, and it had to secure additional funding because EBR's local funds were not transferred to DOTD.
- **Multiple scope changes to the Sullivan Road project resulted in delays that were compounded by DOTD having to coordinate with EBR, the City of Central, and their engineer consultant every time the scope of the work changed.**
- **Utility companies did not meet their agreed-upon deadline to relocate utilities and took more than three years to relocate electricity, water, gas, and telecommunication lines, which delayed the sanitary sewer system installation work.**
- **Underground soil conditions and drainage issues delayed the progress of the sanitary sewer work, resulting in multiple change orders and the contractor stopping work on November 23, 2021.** As of December 2021, DOTD is in the process of terminating the clearing, grubbing, and sanitary sewer installation contract, which may further delay this project.

Map of the Sullivan Road Project Site



Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's office using a map obtained from DOTD.

As of January 2022, DOTD, in coordination with EBR, has not yet decided how to proceed with completing the sanitary sewer system installation work. The exhibit on the next page provides a timeline for this project.

Sullivan Road Project Site

Source: Photos were taken by legislative auditor's staff on January 7, 2022.



Continued on next page

Louisiana Highway 3034 Sullivan Road Improvement Project

Department of Transportation and Development

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
AND DEVELOPMENT

SULLIVAN ROAD PROJECT

2008

In April, DOTD agreed to provide \$3.0 million, which was originally for pavement overlay, to the GLP project, since EBR planned to widen Sullivan Road between Wax Road and Hooper Road from two lanes to four lanes.

2011

Although no written agreement was found explaining why, in 2011, DOTD's previous administration took over the Sullivan Road segment of the project, while EBR kept the Hooper Road segment of the project after splitting the original project into two segments.

In September, the Sullivan Road project was officially added to DOTD's letting schedule.

2013

In February, DOTD determined that it would need federal funding for a portion of the project because it was not fully funded by the state as it was originally an EBR project, so it began an environmental assessment for federal approval to qualify for federal funding.

2016

Clearing, grubbing, and sanitary sewer design plan completion was delayed due to the contracting out of a geotechnical soil study, waiting for federal approval to complete sanitary sewer work with the clearing and grubbing, and due to the 2016 flood in the City of Central.

2020

DOTD combined the roundabout project with the Sullivan Road project.

2021

Utility relocations began in August 2017 and continued until March 2021 and caused project delays.

Since 2018, the clearing, grubbing, and sanitary sewer contractor has faced complications in installing the sewer system due to soil conditions and drainage issues.

DOTD is currently in the process of terminating the clearing, grubbing, and sanitary sewer installation contract based on mutual agreement with the contractor.

2005

In 2005, East Baton Rouge Parish (EBR) voters approved an extension of a half-cent sales tax for local street and roadway improvements.

In 2006, the LA Hwy 3034 Sullivan Road (Wax-Hooper) Improvement project was part of a larger project to make improvements to Hooper-Sullivan Roads, to be undertaken as part of the Green Light Plan (GLP).

2010

In May, EBR's engineering consultant had completed design studies for the Hooper-Sullivan roadway improvement project and sanitary sewer system improvements along Sullivan Road.

Because both Sullivan and Hooper Roads are state roads, DOTD received GLP's design plans in October for approval.

2012

According to DOTD, design plans for the Sullivan Road project were 95% finalized and right-of-way maps were completed.

2015

Federal government approved the environmental assessment for the Sullivan Road project in May.

DOTD's Traffic Group determined that a roundabout would be a better solution than the traffic signal at the intersection of Sullivan and Hooper Roads and created a separate project to make this change.

DOTD decided to split the Sullivan Road Project into two projects: (1) clearing, grubbing, and sanitary sewer installation project and (2) the roadway construction project.

DOTD signed an agreement with the City of Central for \$89,000 for the city to create the clearing and grubbing plans and finalize road construction plans.

DOTD signed an agreement with EBR for EBR to design the sanitary sewer system along Sullivan Road, which will be handed over to EBR by DOTD after the work is completed.

2017

DOTD let the clearing and grubbing and sewer installation project to the low bidder for \$3.2 million.

2022

To avoid further road construction delays, DOTD decided to remove the roundabout at the intersection of Sullivan and Hooper Road from the Sullivan Road project.

View the full report, including management's response, at www.la.gov.