

INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT), The Louis Berger Group, Inc. (LBG), has completed a Phase IA archaeological investigation for the proposed Christina River Bridge project in the City of Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware. The new bridge would provide a vehicular and pedestrian link within the Wilmington Riverfront area and as well as additional regional connectivity to Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Boulevard, U.S. Route 13, I-495, and I-95. Currently, a number of alternative alignments or options for the project are being evaluated under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This Phase IA study examines a broadly defined study area that includes all of the project alternatives. This study area is bounded by the Norfolk-Southern Railroad and I-495 on the south; I-95 and the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) Northeast Corridor rail line on the west; 4th Street on the north; and U.S. Route 13 and State Route 9 on the east (Figure 1). This part of Wilmington developed as an industrial waterfront area, but it is transforming into a multi-use area that includes residential, commercial, entertainment, and arts venues.

More intensive analysis was focused on the area of potential effects (APE) associated with the Preferred Alternative (Orange B option) (Figure 2). This alternative is known as the Orange B or the “Orange Light” alignment. The APE for Orange B is defined to include properties along the alignment where significant ground excavations or ground-disturbing activities may be expected, which includes the area of direct construction impacts as well as areas for temporary activity, such as staging and storage yards for the bridge construction. The APE encompasses 42.9 acres; it is coterminous with the Limits of Disturbance (LOD) that has been established for the project.

On the western side (left descending bank) of the Christina River, the Orange B alignment begins at the intersection of Beech Street and Stadium Drive and extends south along Stadium Drive following existing pavement. Orange B then turns across a paved parking lot and crosses the foot of South Justison Street, and crosses the Christina River approximately 250 to 300 feet north of the alignment of James Court. On the eastern side of the river, Orange B proceeds to an intersection with South Market Street (U.S. Route 13). The intersection of the Orange B option with South Market Street may require intersection improvements to facilitate connections with South Walnut Street and Garasches Lane. The improvements would also entail construction of a pedestrian walkway linking the Russell W. Peterson Wildlife Refuge to the new roadway, and from there to the existing Christina River Pedestrian Walkway.

From the intersection of Beech Street and Delmarva Lane to the intersection of South Market and Walnut streets, the total length of the road and bridge alignment for Orange B is approximately 1 mile. The elevated bridge structure would cross the Christina River on a slightly oblique angle and have a total span of approximately 470 feet. The proposed new pedestrian path would have a length of approximately 874 feet.

Research for this study was completed during August and September 2011.

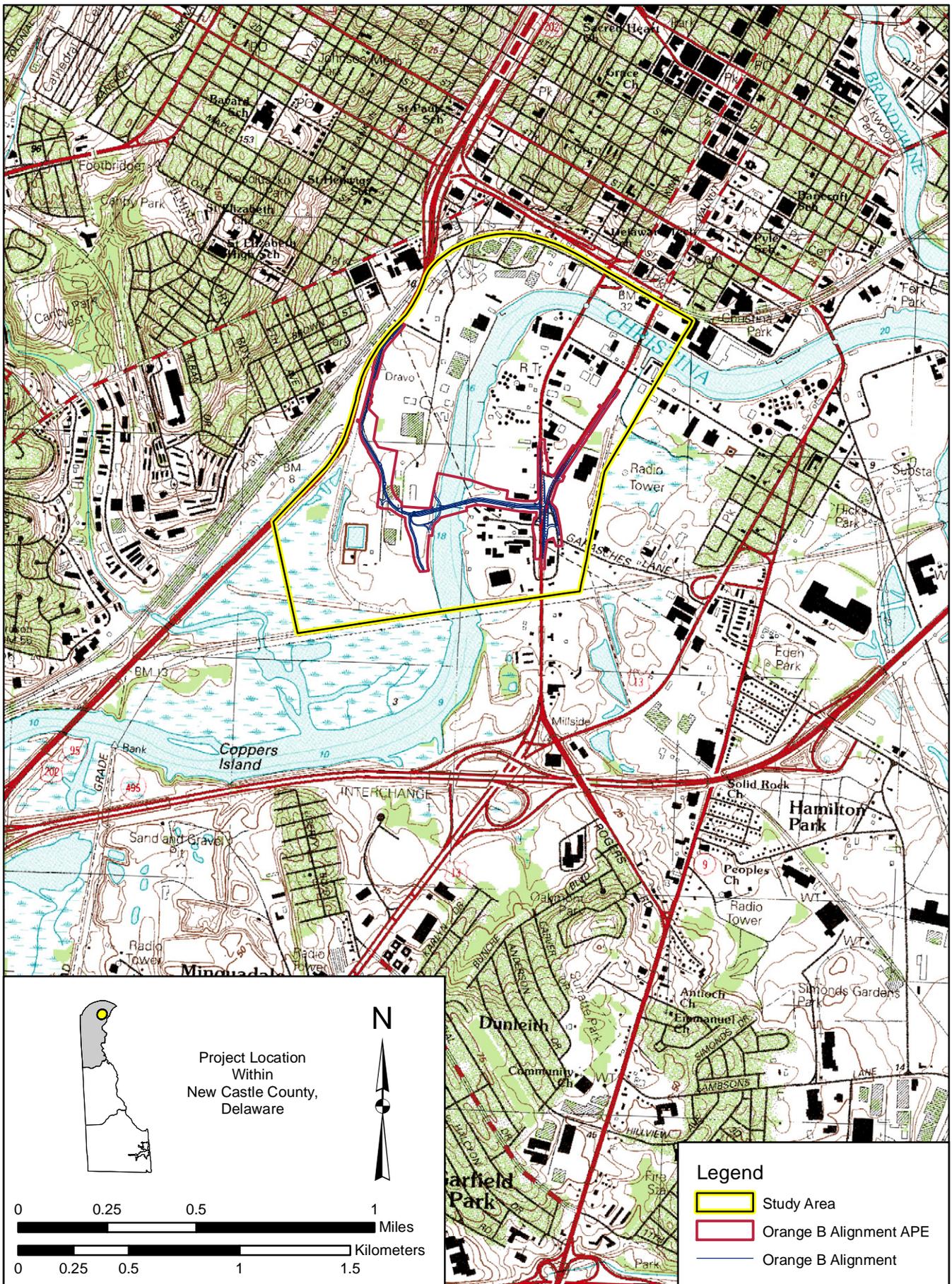


FIGURE 1: Study Area Location

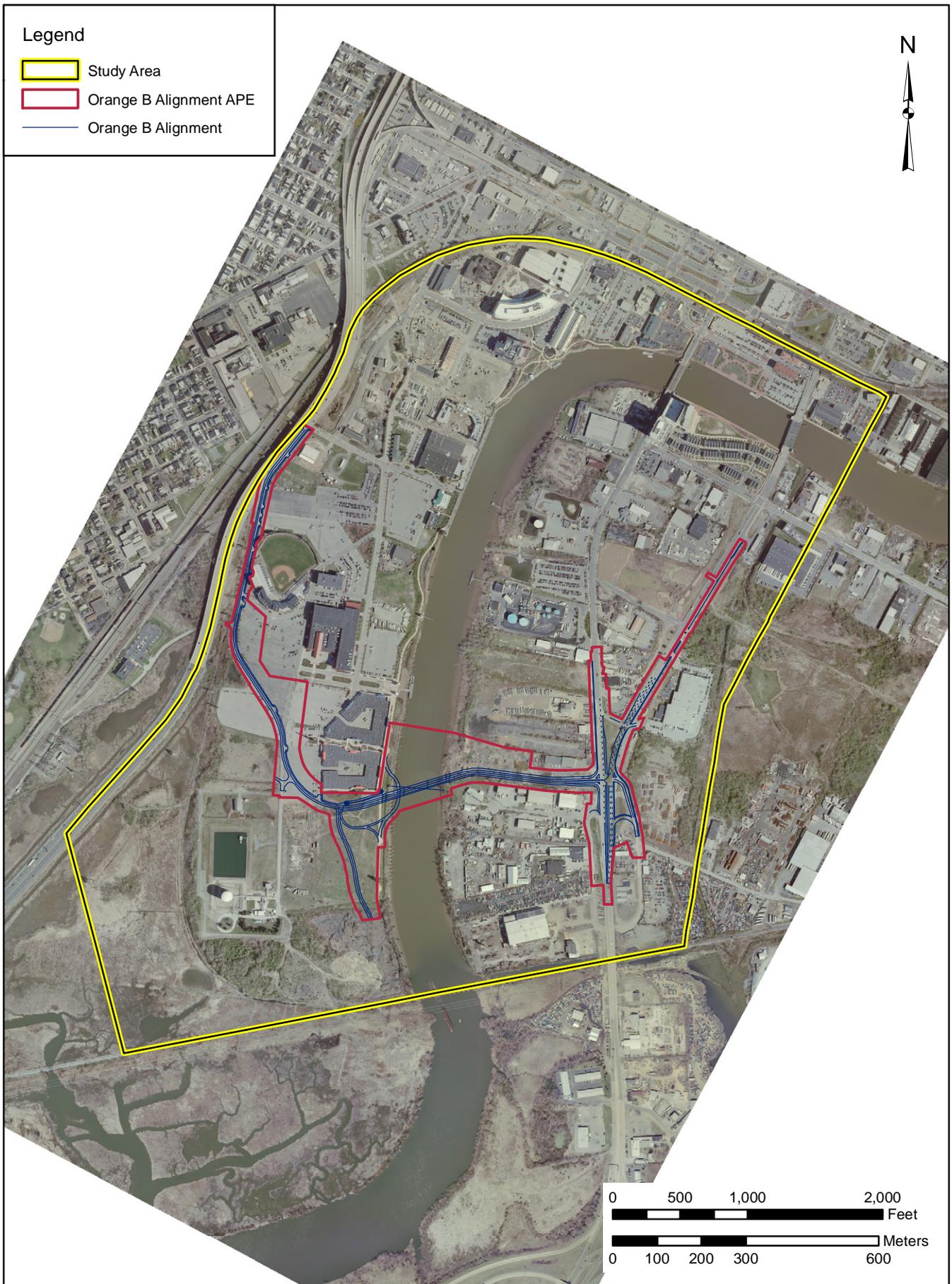


FIGURE 2: Aerial View of Study Area and APE

SOURCE: DelDOT 2011