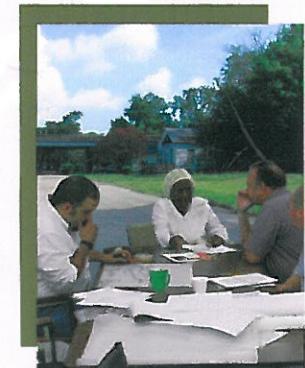


I 10 CORRIDOR STUDY

Baton Rouge, Louisiana



community + design

I-10 Corridor Study

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Public Involvement Report

submitted to:
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development

submitted by:
Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc.

in association with:
Louisiana State University Office of Community Design and Development
and
Gulf Engineers and Consultants, Inc.

State Project Number 700-29-0026
F.A.P. No. NHI-10-2(212)
Mississippi River Bridge to Essen Lane
Route I-10, East Baton Rouge Parish

May 2002



**Introduction**

1

Project History

Introduction

3

Summary of Phase I, Major Investment Study

5

Summary of Phase II, Major Investment Study

10

Environmental Impact Statement Public Involvement

Role of the Office of Community Design and Development

14

Precedent Review

16

Summary of Events

27

Public Input: Questions and Answers

42

Community Awareness Meetings and Design Charrettes

56

Public Involvement Process

68

Conclusions

70

Appendix

Precedent Review Bibliography

Sound Wall Research

Sound Wall Bibliography

Resources

Digital Files Index

Materials Archives

Acknowledgements



View of I-10 looking south from the roof of the Marriott Hotel near College Drive.



View of I-10 looking north from the roof of the Marriott Hotel near College Drive.

During the summer of 2000 The Office of Community Design and Development (OCDD) was contacted by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) and asked to assist them with the public involvement component of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed I-10 widening project in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. OCDD was added to the I-10 project consulting team as a subcontractor to Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade & Douglas, Inc., the consultant for the EIS and Phase I and II of the Major Investment Study (MIS). The Phase II MIS recommended adding lanes to I-10 between the Mississippi River Bridge and Acadian Thruway, as well as improving interchanges and providing frontage roads in the eastern part of the corridor as the best alternative to address the congestion and safety problems that exist on the portion of I-10 between the Mississippi River Bridge and Essen Lane.

On August 24, 2000, Dr. Kam Movassaghi, Secretary LADOTD, announced that the OCDD collaboration was an effort to better inform the citizens of Baton Rouge who may be impacted by the future widening of I-10. The purpose of the collaboration was to help Baton Rouge citizens understand what was being proposed, how it might impact them, articulate their concerns about the project, and develop strategies and solutions to minimize adverse impacts from the proposed improvements.

In September 2000, OCDD opened a field office at 4347 Perkins Road and over the next six months held a series of public forums to discuss the project proposal. OCDD soon discovered that at the center of the debate over of this project was a dilemma of contemporary



The media reports on community response to the proposed project at the LADOTD meeting on August 24, 2000.

community life, how to determine the maximum infringement on private rights in the interests of the public good. The resulting debate over subjugating community ideals to individual interests became increasingly contentious, making public discourse on these issues extremely difficult, and achieving consensus virtually impossible. In the end, special interest politics won out over reasoned decision-making and in February 2001 the EIS was terminated when the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) headed by Baton Rouge's newly elected mayor voted to not support the project. The following report is a summary of the activities and findings of the public involvement activities during that period.

introduction

I-10 is among the early interstate highways in the United States.

Planning for I-10 in Baton Rouge began in the late 1950s when I-10, I-12 and I-110 were established as part of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways. It was planned for a peak capacity of 80,000 vehicles per day, and was constructed in the 1960s using design principles contemporary at that time. At the present time, a five-mile stretch of Interstate 10 starting at the southeastern edge of the downtown core of the City of Baton Rouge experiences traffic congestion problems causing stop-and-go traffic for much of the day during peak traffic periods. The large number of trucks in the traffic stream exacerbates the congestion problem. The truck traffic is primarily generated by the chemical and petroleum industry in the region and by cross country trucks, many of which are engaged in NAFTA shipping between border regions and the east coast. Baton Rouge is a key destination in the I-10 corridor and both through and local traffic use this section of the highway. In addition, this is the only place on I-10 from coast to coast that narrows to an exit ramp. The corridor traverses four distinct areas of the city: Washington Street district, a traditional African American urban neighborhood, University Lakes Perkins Road district, a 1920s shopping district and residential area, College Drive, a 1970s suburban shopping district and, Essen Lane an area of upper socio-economic income neighborhoods and related services.

The I-10 corridor in Baton Rouge has been the subject of previous studies identifying the need for major safety and capacity improvements. These studies include:

Horizon Plan – Transportation Element July 1991

The plan recommended modification of the I-10/I110 interchange and the construction of an elevated freeway section over the existing I-10 lanes from I-110 to I-12. The plan also noted that Baton Rouge is deficient in freeway and expressway mileage and that LOS “C” or “D” should be maintained during peak periods.

The Baton Rouge Metropolitan Area Financially Constrained Plan (1995-2015)

This plan recommended widening I-10 from I-110 to the I-10/I-12 split and modifications and safety improvements to the I-10/I-110 interchange, especially the eastbound ramp from one to two travel lanes.

In order to address the identified problems, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LaDOTD) initiated preliminary conceptual engineering analyses and environmental studies. However, it was determined by FHWA that the federal planning mandates prescribed by Congress in 1993 would apply to the I-10 improvement project and a Major Investment Study (MIS) would be required as a first step in the project development process.

The I-10 Major Investment Study (MIS) in Baton Rouge was separated into two stages, to be followed by an environmental impact statement. Each phase was characterized by a significant decision:

- The Phase I MIS identified the purpose and need for the project, as well as a full range of logical alternatives to be examined. Phase I concluded with the identification of an “investment strategy” recommending the more feasible alternatives for further study.
- During the Phase II MIS, these investment strategy alternatives were further analyzed and refined through in-depth conceptual engineering and preliminary environmental review. The outcome of Phase II was the designation of alternatives to be the subject of an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the project.
- Phase III involved the initiation of the EIS.

summary of phase I, major investment study

In 1995 the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) authorized the preparation of a Major Investment Study to examine the problems in the five-mile stretch of I-10 between the I-10/ I-110 split and Essen Lane. In 1996 the first phase of the study was completed which identified the purpose and need for the project, examined 16 alternatives for solving the congestion problems and recommended three feasible alternatives for further study.

In 1960, when the planning and development of I-10 was taking place, the population of metropolitan Baton Rouge was approximately 230,000 people. Today the population of metropolitan Baton Rouge is estimated to be approximately 467,000. The original 1962 plan for interstate highways in the Baton Rouge area states that the 1975 traffic volumes for this portion of I-10 would be between 54,200 and 86,400 vehicles per day (VPD). A survey of current conditions reveals volumes greatly in excess of the original design projections. Recent traffic counts along I-10 within the study area indicate volumes of approximately 150,000 VPD, and this is forecast to increase to 185,000 VPD by 2020.

Several factors have contributed to this tremendous traffic increase. In addition to growth in the area-wide population over the past 40 years, there has been a general shift in land-use patterns, including significant suburban residential development to the east and southeast of downtown, and the consequent development of major traffic generators in these areas to serve this dispersed population, including new shopping malls, hospitals, office parks, and industrial sites. While much new growth has

taken place to the east, existing major trip generators within and along the corridor, including businesses in the College Drive interchange area and LSU, continue to grow.

I-10 is not simply an urban freeway; it is a major interstate highway connecting the nation's east and west coasts and linking major cities that have experienced significant population and economic growth since the beginning of the interstate era. Consequently, heavy volumes of trucks travel I-10 in Baton Rouge and compound problems associated with facilities already inadequate from a capacity and condition standpoint. Previous studies have indicated truck volumes along I-10 to at approximately 15 percent. The problems associated with this large volume of trucks are especially acute during peak hours.

Condition problems are emerging along I-10 as much of the pavement has reached or surpassed its original projected service life. Normal wear due to age is exacerbated by heavier truck weights that were legislatively authorized in the early 1980's and by the significant volume of heavy trucks on I-10. Similar condition-related problems can be anticipated for the portions of the route that are elevated on bridge structures. Such structures are generally expected to serve for approximately 50 years before major rehabilitation is required, but large numbers of heavier vehicles can produce premature problems. Warning signs of condition problems are already evident, including potholes, surface cracking, polishing, and spalling. The recently completed construction along I-10 has alleviated these problems east of the Acadian

Thruway interchange, but they still exist in the western portion of the corridor.

Summary of Needs for Improvements in the I-10 Corridor

Because of the numerous traffic-generating activities at both ends of the I-10 corridor, as well as throughout its entire length, the route functions as a major spine for a large percentage of the region's travel. Rapid residential development to the east and southeast, and the lack of alternative continuous east-west arterial routes in the city have placed an additional burden on I-10 to link residents with jobs.

The large volume of through and local trucks that use I-10 each day is evidence of the importance of the route to interstate and regional shipping. Inadequacies of I-10 produce longer shipping times and increasing costs for transported goods.

The distribution of Baton Rouge's hospital emergency rooms, industrial employers, fire-fighting and police services, and the diverse residential and commercial land uses in the area make I-10 a critical link in the rapid response to emergencies.

I-10 links the area's residents and businesses with the region's port, airport, and inter-city bus facilities. Equally important is the link between Baton Rouge's significant petro-chemical and manufacturing processes with major ports, railheads, and distribution facilities.

While there are several routes that provide some east-west service in the corridor (such as Florida Boulevard, Perkins Road, and Jefferson

Highway), none are parallel to I-10 and all lack the connections to accommodate both I-10 and I-12 needs.

Its increased use by large numbers of heavier trucks have deteriorated the roadway's condition, resulting in more frequent and costlier repairs and disruptive lane closures. Business, government, and recreational activities presently located in downtown Baton Rouge depend on I-10 for access.

Continued problems along I-10 that affect commuting, emergency services, and mobility could affect future decisions regarding downtown interests and investments and could hamper future growth and vitality for the area.

An initial range of investment strategies or "alternatives" was identified to address congestion and safety problems in the I-10 Corridor in Baton Rouge. The alternatives were identified through a review of previous I-10 studies, meetings with the Steering Committee, and comments received during the public involvement activities and refined during discussions among LADOTD officials, Capital Region Planning Commission planners, and members of the consulting team. The alternatives represent packages of improvements that incrementally or individually would result in approaching the desired LOS "D" in the study corridor. LOS "D" is a traffic engineering term that refers to freely flowing traffic that is beginning to experience congested conditions.

Alternative 1:	No Build
Alternative 2:	Congestion Management System Plan
Alternative 3:	Reasonable Cost/Transportation System Management (TSM)
Alternative 4:	Alternate Route Improvements
Alternative 5:	Combination of Reasonable Cost/TSM and Alternate Route Improvements
Alternative 6:	Lane Balancing
Alternative 7:	Lane Balancing Plus Additional Improvements
Alternative 8:	Express Lanes and I-10/I-110 Interchange Reconstruction
Alternative 9:	Express Lanes and Reasonable Cost/TSM
Alternative 10:	Express Lanes Plus Lane Balancing
Alternative 11:	Combinations to Provide LOS "D" in 2020
Alternative 12:	Bypass
Alternative 13:	Bypass Plus Reasonable Cost/TSM
Alternative 14:	Bypass Plus Alternate Route Improvements
Alternative 15:	Bypass Plus Combination of Reasonable Cost/TSM and Alternate Route Improvements
Alternative 16:	Bypass Plus Lane Balancing

Although improved public transit was considered as an element in various congestion management strategies to reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicles on I-10, improved transit was not deemed to be an independent alternative to address the congestion and safety problems along the route.

Congestion Management Plan: Baton Rouge's status as a non-attainment area for air quality standards requires a special study focusing on congestion management approaches to solving urban freeway problems as part of the MIS. Congestion management measures that meet conditions for providing reasonable improvements in the study corridor are:

1. Intersection and arterial improvements;
2. Ramp metering;
3. Incident management;
4. Highway advisory radio;
5. Variable message signs;
6. Employer trip reduction;
7. Area-wide ridesharing;
8. Telecommuting;
9. Work schedule changes;
10. Improved new transit services;
11. Park and ride lots

There was considerable opportunity for public involvement during the initial study process. Large aerial photograph displays of the study area were developed to enhance the public's understanding of the proposed improvements and associated issues. The displays included:

- A large aerial photographic base map illustrating identified environmental and social constraints;
- A large aerial presentation of the project's safety analysis identifying locations of abnormal accident rates and freeway features inconsistent with current design standards; and
- Large-scale aerial photo-mosaics that depicted proposals for additional lanes, interchange modifications, auxiliary ramps, and frontage roads, and the limits of the present I-10 right-of-way.

Five meetings were held to obtain input from neighborhood residents and business operators who may be directly affected by project improvements. The meetings were held in the downtown area, Washington Street area, Lakeshore/Perkins Road area, College Drive area and Concord Estates area. At the suggestion of the City/Parish Planning Commission, City Councilmen whose districts include the project corridor were asked to identify key neighborhood leaders to assist in organizing the meetings. These representatives were subsequently requested to serve on the project's Steering Committee.

Questionnaires were developed to obtain public perceptions of problems along I-10, preferred solutions, and concerns regarding possible solutions. Approximately 500 questionnaires were distributed at

the four neighborhood meetings and the first public meeting at Baton Rouge City Park. As this sample would disproportionately represent those who had interests in the areas adjacent to the corridor, an additional 500 questionnaires were distributed to motorists traveling along I-10 at the I-10/Essen Lane and the I-12/Sherwood Forest Boulevard interchanges during the morning and afternoon rush hours.

In general, the survey respondents identified rush-hour traffic and the eastbound connection between I-10 and I-110 as the corridor's worst problems. The most frequently cited solution was a bypass, followed by the provision of an additional travel lane in each direction. Identified concerns included the potential destruction/displacement of homes and businesses, potential disruption during construction, and noise.

Two general public meetings were also held (one at the City Park Recreation Building and one at LADOTD's Auditorium) to encourage public involvement by area citizens.

Alternatives Evaluation and Screening

A preliminary screening process was developed as an objective method for comparing and evaluating the relative benefits and costs for each of the sixteen alternative improvement strategies. Screening criteria were developed to address the issues identified in the study's purpose and need statement, the stated preferences and concerns expressed during public involvement activities, the safety issues along the I-10 corridor, and to provide a preliminary evaluation of costs, environmental impacts, and constructability issues.

The results of the screening analysis indicate three options with the greatest combination of favorable characteristics: Reasonable Cost/TSM, Lane Balancing, and Lane Balancing Plus Additional Improvements. Reasonable Cost/TSM refers to low cost, spot improvements such as striping and minor widening to improve traffic flow. The Lane Balancing Alternative would furnish an additional lane in each direction along I-10 between the I-10/I-110 interchange and Acadian Thruway. Lane Balancing Plus Additional Improvements provide an additional lane in each direction (an 8-lane freeway) plus interchange improvements and frontage roads.

Upon completion of the first phase of the I-10 MIS, the initial study findings were presented to the Capital Region Planning Commission. By unanimous decision, the commission adopted the initial study findings and voted to proceed with subsequent phases of the study to advance the Phase I recommendations.

summary of phase II, major investment study

Line and Grade Studies, Conceptual Engineering

The LADOTD advanced the I-10 Baton Rouge MIS project into its second major phase in March 1998. During Phase II of the study the alternative solutions identified to be advanced for more detailed study and analysis in Phase I were further refined. This effort included in-depth conceptual engineering for each of the alternatives and options under study. Although the work in phase I of the MIS identified three alternatives to be advanced for further study, a preliminary engineering review revealed that each contained numerous design options that required detailed analysis. One of the major tasks of the second phase of the MIS was to provide more detail to the potential options in order to determine their abilities to address previously established goals for traffic service, provide consistency with current design standards, resolve constructability issues, determine interference with adjacent land uses, and estimate costs.

An interdisciplinary subcommittee (subsequently referred to as "The Design Standards Subcommittee") was formed to examine and resolve issues pertaining to the range of design options that had been identified to address the I-10 congestion problems. The committee was composed of representatives from LADOTD and FHWA. The Design Standards Subcommittee evaluated each option to determine if it should be advanced or set aside from further study. During some committee meetings additional options were identified for examination. After a review of all related project information, the LADOTD recommended the strategies to be brought forward into the draft environmental impact

statement. Upon approval of the EIS, the I-10 corridor improvement project may be incorporated into the metropolitan area's long-range transportation plan and, ultimately, constructed. The project's development activities and environmental impact analysis were anticipated to be documented in the environmental impact statement.

On April 3, 1998 the FHWA issued a formal notice in the *Federal Register* to advise the public that an environmental impact statement would be prepared for proposed improvements to I-10 in East Baton Rouge Parish. On April 23, 1998 an interagency scoping meeting was held at the LADOTD headquarters in Baton Rouge. The consulting team presented an overview of the I-10 project, including an outline of the proposed conceptual design activities and the changes in federal legislation that affected the LADOTD's decision to transition the MIS to an EIS. The consultants presented the sixteen investment strategies considered in Phase I, the initial evaluation process, and the results of that evaluation, including the three alternatives carried forward into Phase II for conceptual engineering and more detailed environmental analysis.

The conceptual engineering investigations examined each of the alternatives to determine optional design approaches, consistency with project traffic service goals, access issues, right-of-way needs, displacements, traffic impacts, need for design exceptions, constructability problems, public acceptability (based on public involvement findings from Phase I of the study), and costs. The design

work was produced to a detail that provided basic information regarding lane and interchange configurations, shoulder locations, ramp locations, traffic impacts, right-of-way needs and cost estimates for both construction and right-of-way.

The basic conceptual design for each option was analyzed to determine traffic impacts using the Baton Rouge area TranPLAN travel demand model and a CORSIM model developed for the corridor. The purpose of the modeling was to determine travel speeds and levels of service (LOS) that each design option would produce for traffic in the corridor. The results of this analysis indicate the designs' consistency with the project goal of LOS "D" for the corridor improvements. Additionally, environmental planners from the consulting team examined each alternative and option to identify obvious intrusion into areas such as parklands, churches, and schools, as well as consistency or inconsistency with concerns expressed in previous public involvement activities associated with the study.

Summary of Findings

The most significant finding of the conceptual design studies was that design alternatives and options were identified for addressing I-10 congestion within the present I-10 corridor that could provide LOS "D" (the project goal) for traffic forecasted to use the facility over the next 20 years. Additionally, while some displacements and disruption will be required, much of the work can be accomplished within existing right-of-

way. Also, the identified improvements can be constructed in logical stages with funding increments in the \$40-to-\$50 million range.

Another important initial finding that was identified during the traffic analysis for the segment from the Mississippi River Bridge to Dalrymple Drive was that the “Low Cost/TSM” alternate was ineffective. Without the provision of additional lane capacity, this alternate simply moved the present eastbound bottleneck from the Washington Street area to the Dalrymple Drive area. As a result, it was eliminated from further study as a stand-alone alternative.

Modeling of future traffic conditions under “no-build” and “build” scenarios were performed. Results of these studies concluded that the low-cost alternatives did not achieve desirable improvement of corridor-wide traffic flow and were subsequently eliminated from further consideration. The remaining design concepts were segmented and evaluated through detailed conceptual engineering. Layouts were developed in detail, impacts to adjacent property were defined, and probable costs of construction were quantified. Based on intensive review by the Design Standards Subcommittee the following alternatives were recommended for further study and public review:

1. Washington/Dalrymple Options

EB-2 Auxiliary Lanes	I-10 widening with existing ramp configuration
EB-4 Louise Exit	I-10 widening with left exit to Louise Street
WB-4 Existing Ramps	I-10 widening with existing ramp configuration

2. Washington/Dalrymple Add-Ons

Modified 50 MPH Curve	Add to all recommended options
Dalrymple Eastbound On-Ramp	Subject to further deliberation & consideration

3. Perkins/Acadian Options

EB-2 & WB 2 Existing Ramps	I-10 widening with existing ramp configuration
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4. College/Split/Essen Options

EB-1 & WB-1 One-Way FRS	Frontage road system with street access
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5. College/Split/Essen Add-On

Essen Lane Single-Point Urban Interchange	Add-ons
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In summary, these improvements would provide four lanes along I-10 in each direction between the Mississippi River bridge and the Acadian Thruway interchange to match the four-lane section that was constructed along I-10 east of the Acadian Thruway interchange in 1999. They also provided two options to address the merging and exiting problems at the Washington Street off-ramp that are caused by southbound I-110 traffic seeking to exit at Washington Street. This movement interferes with eastbound I-10 traffic merging on to the main lanes of I-10. These operational difficulties currently produce bottleneck conditions (LOS F), especially during afternoon peak travel times. The present curve on the I-10 eastbound main-lanes that begins immediately east of the Mississippi River bridge would be reconstructed to current design standards. Additionally problems caused by the close spacing between the interchanges at Perkins Road, Acadian Thruway, and

College Drive would be addressed through the implementation of a frontage road system in the area. A frontage road system would also be employed to remove the bottleneck produced by eastbound traffic entering the freeway at the College Drive interchange. The proposed design alternatives would furnish improvements for all of the interchanges in the corridor, thus providing improved safety and traffic flow.

The alternatives and options that were identified for improving I-10 will produce significant benefits. These benefits include:

- Reduction in traffic congestion that will enable traffic forecast to use the facility over the next 20 years to drive at or near posted speed limits, even during peak travel times,
- Improved travel times for the large volume of trucks that travel into and through the Baton Rouge area,
- Improved interchange ramps and spacing that will furnish safer access to and egress from I-10,
- Wide shoulders along the entire corridor to improve safety and accommodate incidents and breakdowns, thus avoiding traditionally long traffic blockages,

- A frontage road system to facilitate circulation and accommodate local travel movements that presently use the main travel lanes of I-10,
- Reduced congestion along College Drive through the improvement of the College Drive interchange with I-10, and
- Improved response times for emergency vehicles that rely on I-10.

The MIS concluded that a design concept within the existing I-10 corridor was identified that addressed the congestion, safety and operational problems that exist along I-10 in Baton Rouge between the Mississippi River Bridge and Essen Lane. It recommended that the identified improvements along with an optional on ramp at Dalrymple Drive be examined, along with the no-build alternative, in an EIS.

environmental impact statement public involvement

role of the office of community design and development



Mr. Mike Hereford, OCDD transportation consultant discusses the impact of the proposed widening on District 2 with a local resident



Open Design Session during the District 1 Community Awareness Charrette

The Louisiana State University Office of Community Design and Development was added to the I-10 project consulting team in August 2000, as recommended by LADOTD. The OCDD was given the responsibility to present the design concepts developed in the Phase II MIS at a number of public forums as a component of the public involvement process for the project EIS. The primary purpose of the public involvement was to receive and record public input to the proposal.

Specifically, the Office of Community Design and Development was engaged to:

- Document the public perception of impacts in the I-10 corridor from the Mississippi River Bridge to Essen Lane through a series of Community Awareness Meetings and Community Design Charrettes,
- Develop design interventions to mitigate the identified impacts in the I-10 corridor and,
- Identify opportunities to enhance the impacted communities beyond what is typically required for mitigation.

To accomplish this work, the OCDD opened a project office at 4347 Perkins Road, Baton Rouge, and provided the public access to documentation explaining the project proposal, as well as previous

role of the office of community design and development



Local media interviews a resident from District 1 following the opening night of the Community Design Charrette



Introductory meeting at the beginning of the District 1 Community Design Charrette

reports on related project activities. In addition, the Office developed a project web site, which provided access to electronic copies of the Major Investment Study documents and additional project information and reports. Paper copies of the reports plus all available project and background material were maintained in the office library for public access.

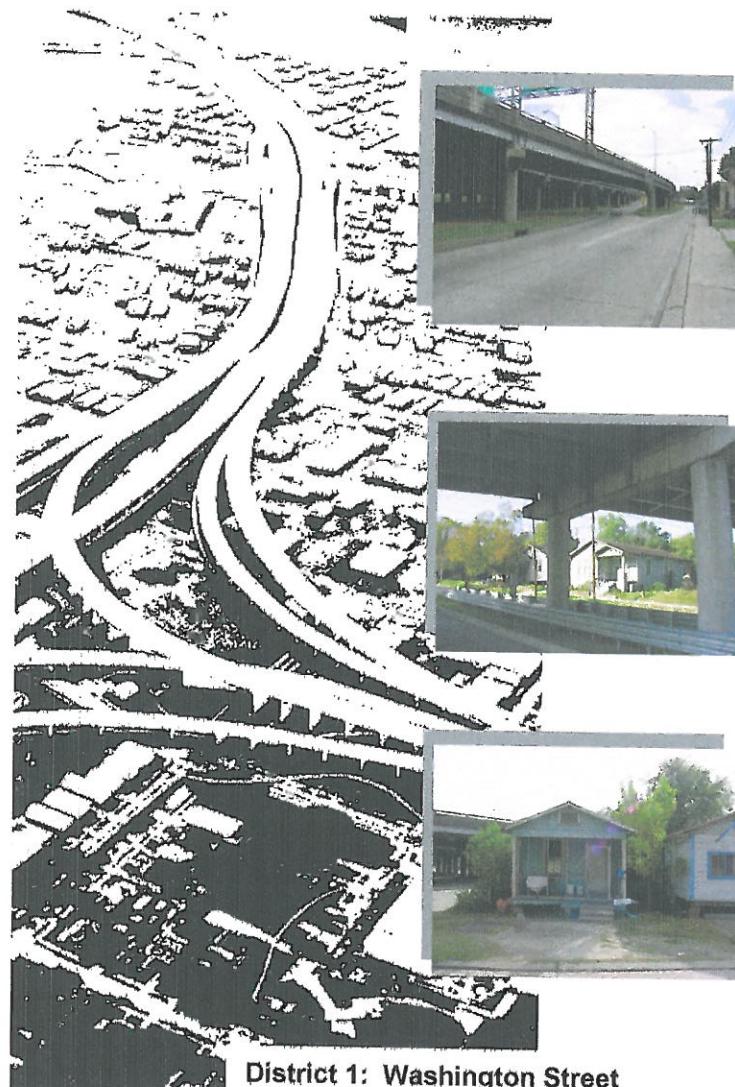
The OCDD knew as it embarked on this project that community emotions ran high and maintaining a neutral position would be critical to achieving community acceptance.

The public involvement process began with a search for examples of projects similar to the I-10 widening project in Baton Rouge. OCDD reviewed the literature for examples around the country that used highway funds to restore and revitalize neighborhood districts similar to those in the I-10 project corridor.

The I-10 Corridor Project Study Area was divided into four districts to make community input more manageable, and allow for clear identification of issues. Each of the districts has a unique physical relationship with the present highway infrastructure and with proposed plans.



Mr. Alexander Garvin, author of The American City: What Works and What Doesn't, visits the OCDD project office and discusses the impact of the proposed widening on local neighborhoods



District 1: Washington Street

I. STUDY AREA

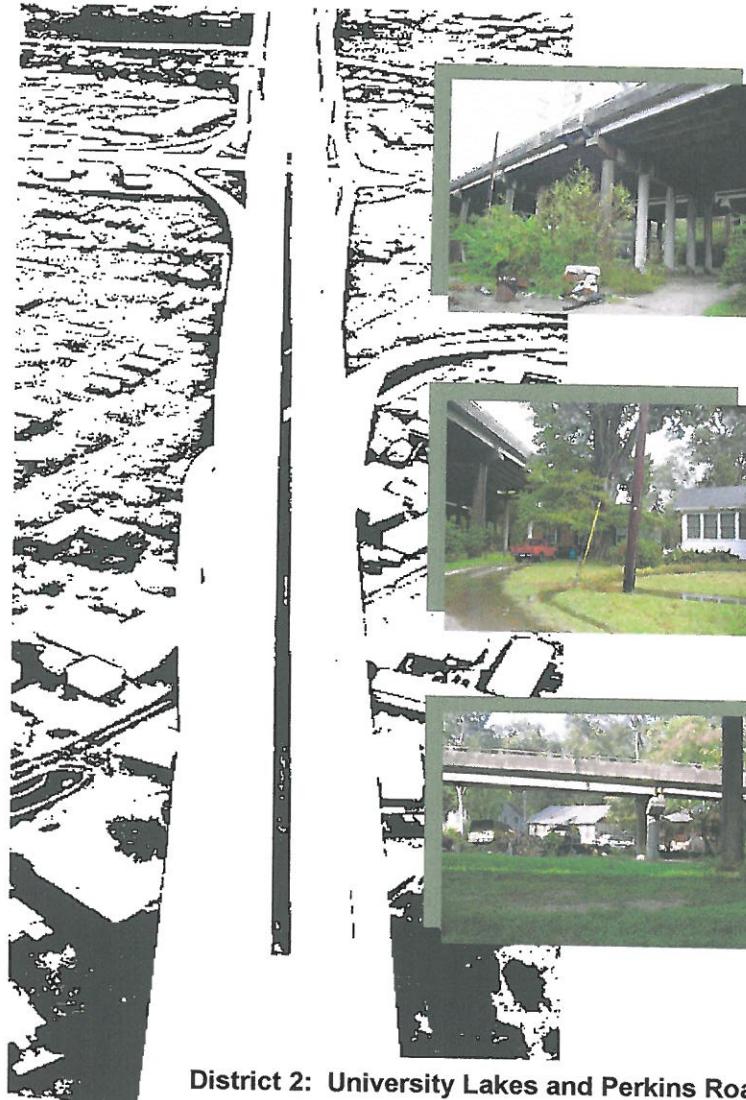
District 1: Washington Street

(Mississippi River Bridge to Carolina Street)

The I-10 freeway is elevated through most of this part of town. The area beneath the highway structure presents a jumble of large concrete supports, interspersed parking lots, through streets, and highway ramps which are further separated from the community by service and access roadways along both sides of the elevated structure.



View looking toward I-10 as it intersects the neighborhood grid of District 1



District 2: University Lakes and Perkins Road

District 2: University Lakes and Perkins Road

(Carolina Street to Acadian Thruway)

This district is the most diverse in the corridor starting with the University Lakes and City Park at the West end and continuing east to Acadian Thruway. The focal point of this district is the “Historic Perkins Road” commercial area, centrally located in South Baton Rouge convenient to a large concentration of residential areas and to the University. It has a great significance for the people of this part of the city because of its neighborhood shopping and numerous restaurants. This neighborhood commercial district is unique in Baton Rouge unmatched anywhere else in the city because it provides a full range of amenities such as hardware stores, grocery stores, dry-cleaners, clothing stores, gift shops, barber shops, gas stations and convenience stores, and a bookstore. At present, the six lane, elevated I-10 interstate highway, divides the Perkins Road commercial area. A portion of the area underneath the highway is used for parking but otherwise is dark and not maintained.





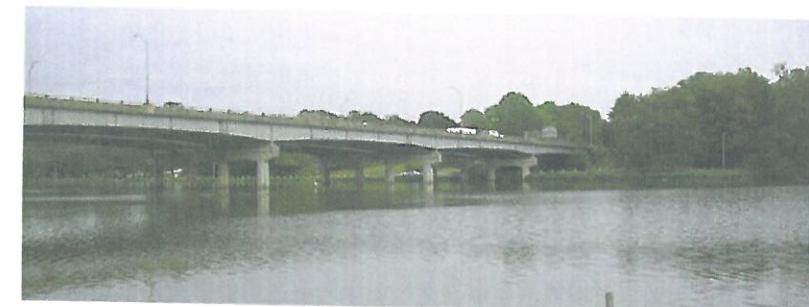
View of Ivar's Sports Bar in the Perkins Road Business district



View of Zee Zee Gardens in the Perkins Road Business district

There is in general a lack of street definition in this commercial area, especially in the vicinity of the I-10 overpass. There are no clear or paved sidewalks, there is a haphazard pattern of street lighting, and no pedestrian facilities such as benches, crosswalks, etc. The traffic through this area is frequently heavy as Perkins Road is used as a major east-west corridor for city traffic. Just east of the commercial district Perkins Road widens to four through lanes to accommodate the heavy traffic flow.

The majority of the restaurants are clustered around the I-10 overpass. In the evenings, and especially on the weekends, this area is congested with haphazardly parked cars. The area remains important to many South Baton Rougeans because the concentration of neighborhood scale commercial and dining uses is unparalleled in the city.



View of I-10 crossing City Park Lake in District 2



District 3: College Drive



District 4: Essen Lane



Eastbound on I-12 entering District 4

District 3: College Drive

(Acadian Thruway to Ward Creek) and

District 4: Essen Lane

(Ward Creek to Essen Lane)

This area contains a high density of commercial uses of all types clustered around a major highway access system. It represents an unplanned and largely uncontrolled pattern growth and today boasts some of the worst traffic congestion in the city. Just to the north of the freeway is a large office park development that is growing into surrounding wooded land with new commercial and high density residential developments promising even greater traffic congestion. Here, more than anywhere else along the system the traffic planning has been largely reactive.



View from overpass looking toward College Drive exit in District 3

II. PRECEDENT REVIEW

The goal of this precedent search was to find examples of federal and state highway money being used to improve the communities impacted by a transportation project. Improvements might involve clear street definition and sidewalk construction; improved and extended parking for the adjacent businesses; provision of streetlights and other street furniture for pedestrian comfort and safety such as benches, crosswalks and landscaping.

Trends encountered were new urbanism, traffic calming, smart growth, building livable communities, pedestrian safety guidelines and protection of environmental resources in line with the design of new highway initiatives. The following sections examine each of these programs

Government Sponsored Initiatives

ISTEA and TEA-21

Examples discovered were primarily concerned with the improvement of areas immediately adjacent to highway access ramps and bridges. Larger scale improvements are common, such as extending parks over depressed highways so that a sense of connection between neighborhoods could continue uninterrupted in spite of the highways presence.

There are numerous examples of the use of ISTE monies for the improvement of abandoned transportation facilities. Many of these are

old passenger train stations. Typically, these kinds of facilities have been located near the traditional downtown area. Restoration and adaptive reuse of these has fit well into urban revitalization plans due to their downtown location and their sturdy construction and nostalgic architectural references.

Extensive literature is available in publication and on the Internet relating to the various guidelines for applying for ISTE and TEA-21 monies. Many state transportation departments have supplemented the federal materials with guidelines of their own. New Jersey and Oregon stand out in this regard.

The Alameda Corridor in California and the Ybor City redevelopment in Tampa, Florida provide two prime examples of this kind of endeavor. These are both extensive and successful examples of the use of federal ISTE monies at the local level by State and other authorities to clean up and landscape transportation corridors and rebuild facilities directly associated with the highway infrastructure. However, they are not examples of using such funds to reconstruct collateral affected commercial areas such as the Perkins Road corridor.

Building Livable Communities

The Building Livable Communities initiative is a federally sponsored effort to assist local communities in developing patterns of growth that take quality of life issues into consideration. It serves primarily as a clearinghouse for information about ideas and projects around the country. The descriptions of examples are very general and

primarily focus on setting community goals and the coordination of efforts of various levels of government. For example:

Aquidneck Island, Rhode Island. Residents realized that open space on the island was disappearing, traffic congestion increasing, and the bucolic character of the island vanishing. In response, the Aquidneck Island Partnership – a collaborative effort of local organizations committed to fostering economic development that enhances the natural and social resources of the island – developed a report illustrating islanders' vision for the future. In addition, the Partnership is working to develop a formal re-use plan for over 400 acres of Navy land and 10 miles of Narragansett Bay shoreline.

Massachusetts. Governor Paul Cellucci issued an executive order directing state agencies, whenever they award discretionary grants, to give priority to those communities that are making good faith progress toward creating new housing. His order also made \$9 million available over the next two years for community planning to help cities and towns find ways to make more housing available while also preserving open space.

"Main Street" Program - National Trust for Historic Preservation
The Main Street Program of the national Trust for Historic Preservation is among the more successful such initiatives in the country. It is based on public/private partnerships and is focused narrowly on the restoration of traditional historic American main street commercial districts within the context of economic development. The National Trust provides guidelines and structure to locally funded commitments.

There are a wide variety of such local programs across the country, each influenced by the specifics of the local commitment and the character and focus of the State level coordinating agency.

While there does not seem to be much overlap between these downtown revitalization efforts and large-scale ISTEA type federal programs, there is at least one interesting example in Orange, Virginia. This is an instance of ISTEA monies used in concert with a local main street project to restore an abandoned downtown train station and landscape the pedestrian approaches to the building. Even if the restoration is in concert with the local program, the application of federal funds are limited to the ISTEA guidelines and deals entirely with the train station and its immediate sidewalk area.

The Main Street program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation has a long record of improving districts such as this Perkins Road commercial area. The primary difference however is that Main Street programs concentrate on downtown areas of towns and cities able to marshal resources from a large community. Baton Rouge has a struggling downtown that already draws such resources. Main street support of secondary commercial centers within such medium sized cities is untypical.

Private Sector Initiatives

Congress for New Urbanism

This is an affiliation of architects, urban and other design professionals and many interested citizens with a broad agenda relating to redirecting the way development occurs in and around America's cities. The central focus of the group is an interest in "traditional neighborhood developments" (TND) and the various characteristics of their effectiveness. These include recommendations for mixed-use developments, which carefully balance pedestrian and vehicular uses in the context of architectural styles, based on historical American models. The emphasis is on creating density, security and a certain symbolic coherence lacking in many of the uncontrolled peripheral areas of post-war American cities. The group publishes a variety of guidelines ranging from patterns of hierarchical land use to suggestions for "traffic calming" in neighborhoods.

In all their work, architectural design is placed in the context of building community. Members of this congress have been responsible for the design and development of a wide variety of largely exclusive TND suburbs across the country.

The Congress for the New Urbanism views disinvestments in central cities, the spread of placeless sprawl, increasing separation by race and income, environmental deterioration, loss of agricultural lands and wilderness, and the erosion of society's built heritage as one interrelated community-building challenge.

The Congress stands for the restoration of existing urban centers and towns within coherent metropolitan regions, the reconfiguration of sprawling suburbs into communities of real neighborhoods and diverse districts, the conservation of natural environments, and the preservation of our built legacy.

The Congress is an advocate for the restructuring of public policy and development practices to support the following principles: neighborhoods should be diverse in use and population; communities should be designed for the pedestrian and transit as well as the car; cities and towns should be shaped by physically defined and universally accessible public spaces and community institutions; urban places should be framed by architecture and landscape design that celebrate local history, climate, ecology, and building practice.

Project for Public Spaces

This is a twenty-five year old non-profit technical assistance, research and educational organization dedicated to a community/place-based approach to planning and decision-making that has evolved from William H. Whyte's *Street Life Project*. Their focus is organized around an urban parks institute, transportation and livable communities, a public market collaborative, and a concern for public buildings and architecture. The group publishes a variety of excellent materials describing examples and processes for planning successful public places.

This process is carried out with such tools as systematic on-site observations, time-lapse filming, customized interviews and user surveys, that allow us to go out to people in the places where they live, work and congregate to gather their input, document and analyze their activities, and reach those who otherwise might not participate in an improvement effort. The process also includes facilitated public forums, workshops, meetings and committees that give people an opportunity from the effort's outset to identify issues, contribute ideas and make decisions about improvements that can holistically address their manifold concerns and enhance the places where they live and work. Using this approach, we can help rebuild communities both in spirit and as places.

Smart Growth

Smart Growth is a rubric used widely to describe the coordination of development and planning practices to encourage mixed use, pedestrian friendly communities that avoid some of the problems created by chaotic and unplanned suburban environments over the last thirty years. One center of this discussion is provided by the Smart Growth Network, which sees itself as a clearinghouse for education, information, tool development and collaboration relating to the building of better communities. There are many parallels between the discussion being carried on by the Smart Growth Network, the Congress for New Urbanism, the Livable Communities Initiative, and the Project for Public Places.

In communities across the nation, there is a growing concern that current development patterns dominated by "sprawl"--are no longer in the long-term interest of our cities, existing suburbs, small towns, rural communities, or wilderness areas. Though supportive of growth, communities are questioning the economic costs of abandoning infrastructure in the city, only to rebuild it further out. They are questioning the social costs of the mismatch between new employment locations in the suburbs and the available work force in the city. They are questioning the wisdom of abandoning "brownfields" in older communities, eating up the open space and prime agricultural lands at the suburban fringe, and polluting the air of an entire region by driving farther to get places. Spurring the smart growth movement are demographic shifts, a strong environmental ethic, increased fiscal concerns, and more nuanced views of growth. The result is both a new demand and a new opportunity for smart growth.

Smart growth recognizes connections between development and quality of life. It leverages new growth to improve the community. The features that distinguish smart growth in a community vary from place to place. In general, smart growth invests time, attention, and resources in restoring community and vitality to center cities and older suburbs. New smart growth is more town-centered, is transit and pedestrian oriented, and has a greater mix of housing, commercial and retail uses. It also preserves open space and many other environmental amenities. But there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution. Successful communities do tend to have one thing in common--a vision of where they want to go

and of what things they value in their community--and their plans for development reflect these values. (Text from executive summary of *Why Smart Growth: A Primer* by International City/County Management Association with Geoff Anderson, 7/98.)

Local Precedents

There have been a number of planning studies done in Baton Rouge since the Second World War relevant to this I-10 Corridor Study. Three of the most important are the Baton Rouge Master Plan by Harland K. Smith (1948), the Scotlandville-Bypass Design Team Report (1970s) and the Horizon Plan of the 1980s.

The 1948 Master Plan was conducted at a time before the city had been affected by the growth of automobile driven post-war suburbs and development was still concentrated within the Airline Highway loop. Although the plan provides a rather comprehensive look at the city, its needs and potential for growth, it does not address political or institutional mechanisms for effective implementation or reevaluation of its design suggestions and priorities.

The Scotlandville Bypass study is a comprehensive study of design issues and possibilities relating to the construction of an interstate style loop around this North Baton Rouge neighborhood that includes suggestions for many kinds of things discussed during the I-10 project charrettes, such as playgrounds and commercial development under elevated freeway structures; a continuous "ribbon park" network including specific neighborhood parks and a BREC run recreational

area utilizing under used adjacent lands; mitigating noise and view disruptions; pedestrian crossings, etc. There are drawings as well as other information about this kind of possibility. The problem seems to be that while many of the design ideas are well intentioned, they include rather formulaic design suggestions that were generated outside of the community itself. The larger project definition did not include mechanisms to assure that these were not all a part of the completed project nor did it contain ways to tie these design suggestions to the actual realities of the surrounding communities. Many of the "community improvement" suggestions included development of related pieces by unspecified public or private agents.

The Horizon Plan has been the guiding document behind the City/Parish's prioritizing of a wide variety of public infrastructure projects over the last decade and a half. It considers land use patterns broadly but does not provide effective mechanisms for public involvement and reevaluation in an ongoing manner.

Perspectives

Many of the emerging perspectives on the urban and suburban environment have been developed in response to decades of single issue planning by government agencies at all levels. The strategies of groups like the New Urbanists and the Coalition for Smart growth are focused primarily on avoiding common pitfalls in the development of new areas. These are typically outside of the vision of public sector agencies, which, in contrast, are responsible for the maintenance, and

renewal of existing infrastructures. Even their most far-reaching efforts are by definition reactionary in most sectors of the country. Agencies such as the Boston Redevelopment Authority, which combines planning and economic development, are unique and have at best limited records of success.

An example is provided by a recent design charrette sponsored by the New York Regional Planning Association focused on Somerset County, New Jersey , which was organized through the collaboration of a variety of public and private organizations. The area investigated was similar in many ways to the I-10 Corridor study project area. The more comprehensive task at hand was summarized by participant Bill Lennertz, *"How do you take what was built in the last fifty years, compact it, and make it into communities?"*

The charrette identified several focus issues: identification of under utilized areas, the creation of mixed use walkable communities, making roads that connect rather than divide, and using green infrastructure as connective tissue. The result was a list of priority projects that may be instructive: tame the urban highway, extend the existing grid to frame new development, create complete mixed-use neighborhoods wherever possible, consolidate new development at an urban density, protect and enhance watercourses and look for ways of connecting low-density developments to one another.

III. SUMMARY

While there appears to be both a great interest in emerging strategies of community improvement and many federal and state level sponsored initiatives towards this result, there are few examples of the use of federal auxiliary funds, to rebuild and reinvigorate collateral areas such as the Perkins Road commercial district and the Washington Street neighborhood. However, while there are no guidelines for a project of this magnitude, it offers an opportunity to demonstrate how federally funded mitigation can, if done correctly, restore neighborhood quality. Freeway improvements are not by definition inconsistent with good urban planning. LADOTD and FHWA were highly supportive of the effort to develop an enlightened plan not only to mitigate the impacts of the proposed project, but also enhance neighborhood quality.

summary of events



DISTRICT 1: Washington Street



DISTRICT 2: University Lakes/Perkins Road



DISTRICT 3: College Drive



DISTRICT 4: Essen Lane

AUGUST 2000

- 8.17 Office of Community Design and Development begins work
8.24 Public Meeting at DOTD Auditorium
MIS concludes, EIS Public Involvement begins

SEPTEMBER 2000

- 9.18 Meeting with District 1 Senior Citizens at the Leo Butler Center
9.24 OCDD Field Office opens at 4347 Perkins Road
9.25 District 1 Community Awareness Meeting, Leo Butler Center

OCTOBER 2000

- 10.5 – 10.7 District 1 Community Design Charrette, OCDD Field Office
10.19 Meeting with City Park Civic Association, OCDD Field Office
10.26 Meeting with Garden District Civic Association, OCDD Field Office

NOVEMBER 2000

- 11.1 Meeting with Hundred Oaks Civic Association, OCDD Field Office
11.8 District 2 Community Awareness Meeting, Catholic Life Center
11.15 – 11.13 District 2 Community Design Charrette, OCDD Field Office

DECEMBER 2000

- 12.13 Meeting with Neighborhood Civic Association

JANUARY 2001

- 1.4 District 3 Community Awareness Meeting, Pennington Center
1.11 – 1.13 District 3 Community Design Charrette, OCDD Field Office
1.16 District 4 Community Awareness Meeting No.1, Pennington Center
1.18 State Representative Daniel's Community Meeting, Marriott Hotel
1.23 District 4 Community Awareness Meeting No.2 and 3, Pennington Ctr.
1.26 Meeting with Bocage Neighborhood Association

FEBRUARY 2001

- 2.1 – 2.3 District 4 Community Design Charrette, OCDD Field Office
2.5 Meeting with Perkins Road Merchants Association, OCDD Field Office
2.15 Meeting with EBR Traffic and Fire, OCDD Field Office

MARCH 2001

- 3.1 Meeting with HazMat personnel, OCDD Field Office
3.6 Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting
(I10 proposed widening not supported)

APRIL 2001

- 4.28 OCDD Field Office closes

Overview

In August 2000, the Office of Community Design and Development (OCDD) was engaged by Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas (PBQD) to conduct the public involvement component of the I-10 Study Baton Rouge Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) held a public meeting on August 24, at 2:00 PM, marking the conclusion of the Major Investment Study (MIS) Phase II and the beginning of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). During this meeting representatives from PBQD presented the findings of the MIS, LADOTD officials solicited public comment and announced the process through which community input would be gathered for the EIS, and the OCDD outlined the community input process and announced the preliminary dates for upcoming Community Awareness Meetings and Community Design Charrettes.

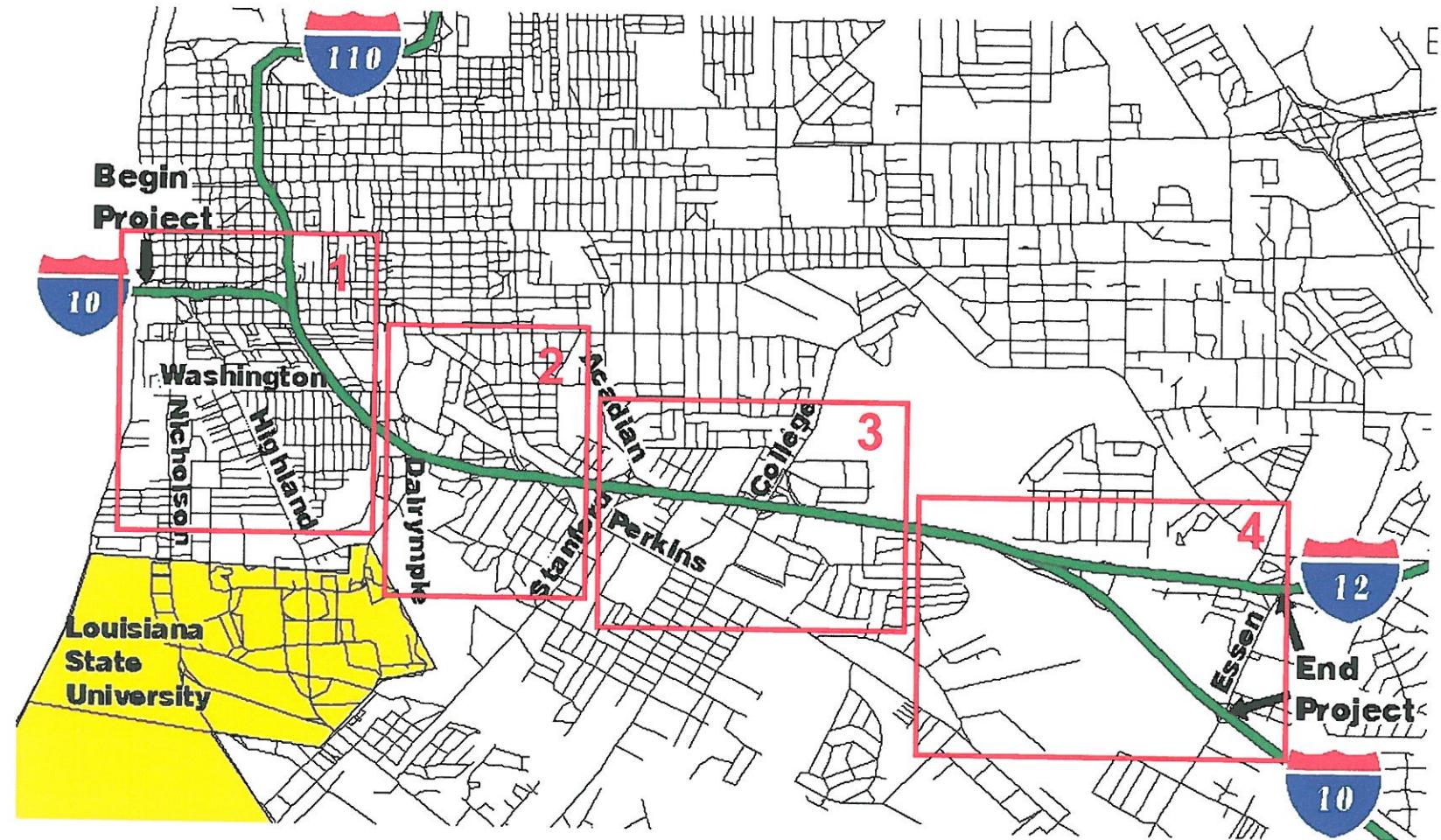
Districts

In an effort to facilitate project management and provide the best environment for all community interests to be expressed and recorded, the OCDD in collaboration with PBQD and LADOTD, divided the 5.5 mile long I-10 project corridor into four districts. The districts were identified as follows (see district maps):

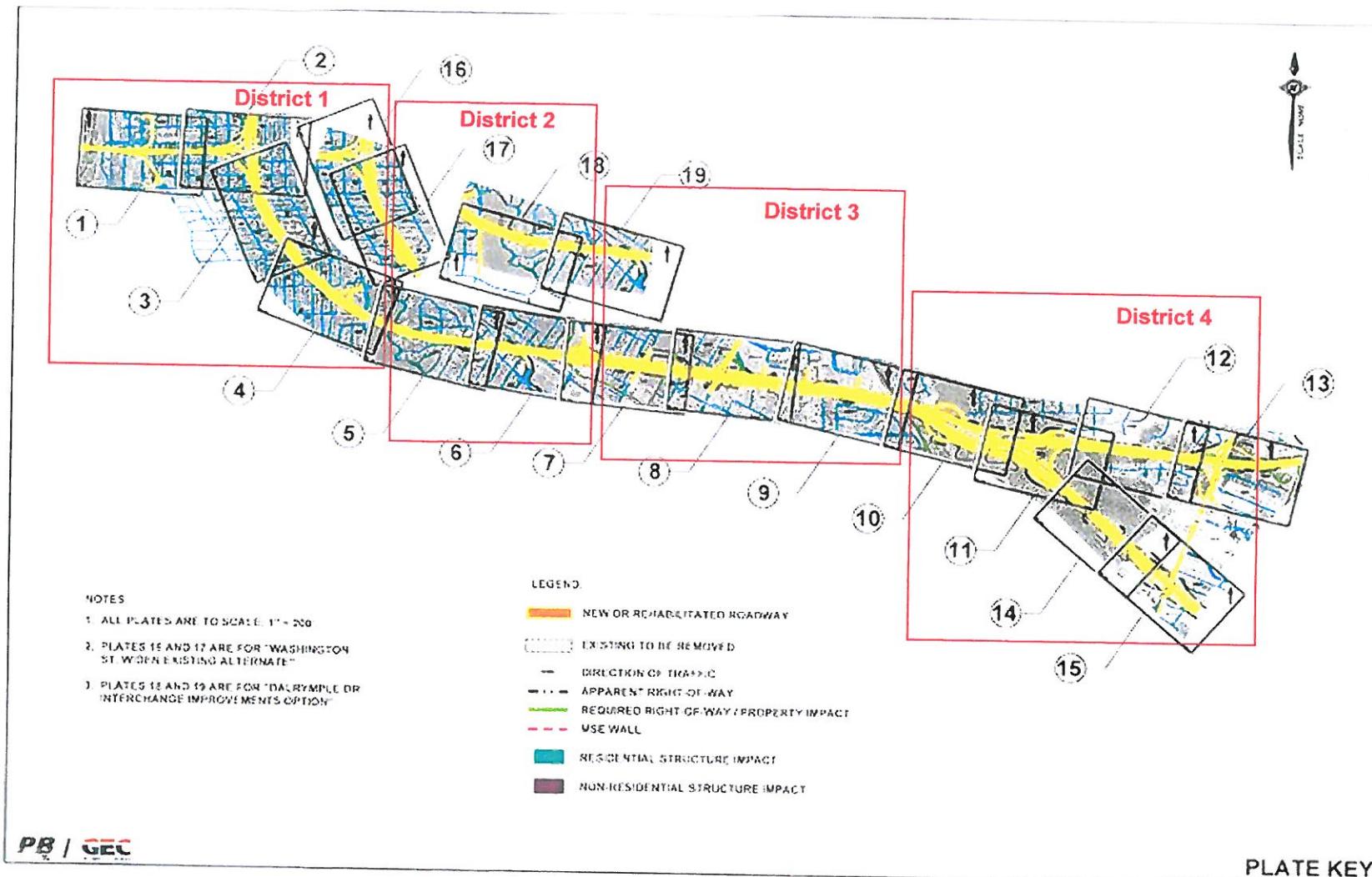
- District 1: Washington Street (Mississippi River Bridge to Carolina Street)

- District 2: University Lakes / Perkins Road (Carolina Street to Acadian Thruway)
- District 3: College Drive (Acadian Thruway to Ward Creek)
- District 4: Essen Lane (Ward Creek to Essen Lane)

A separate Community Awareness Meeting followed by a Community Design Charrette was scheduled for the citizens of each of the four districts. All of the Community Awareness Meetings and Community Design Charrettes were open to anyone interested in the project, but focused on issues of concern for the scheduled district. The Community Awareness Meetings introduced district residents and stakeholders to the process, reviewed the history of the project, provided a detailed schedule for the District's upcoming Community Design Charrette, and answered questions related to the proposed project. These meetings were generally held in the evening to ensure broad participation. Some problems were encountered in securing acceptable meeting spaces in each district due to the number of attendees and the controversial nature of the project. The Community Design Charrettes were scheduled on either three or four consecutive days, depending on the size and complexity of the district. All Community Design Charrettes were held throughout the day and evening in the OCDD field office. The Community Design Charrettes informed citizens and stakeholders of the project impact on their district, gathered public input, conducted neighborhood site tours and engaged the public and design professionals in collaborative design discussions regarding the potential for mitigating project impact.

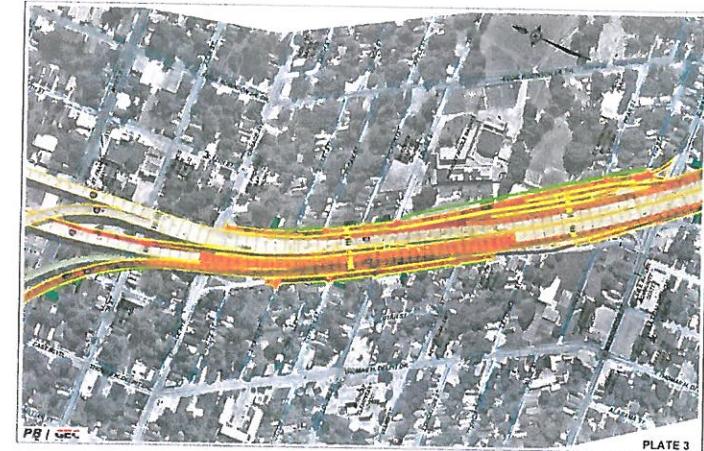
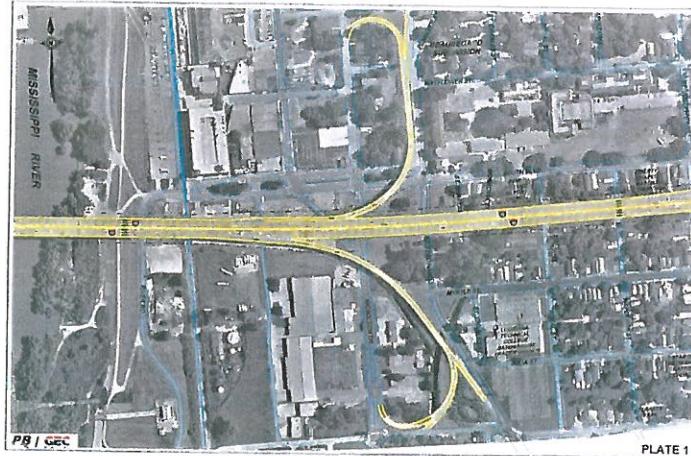


Location Map for I-10 Corridor Study, District 1-4



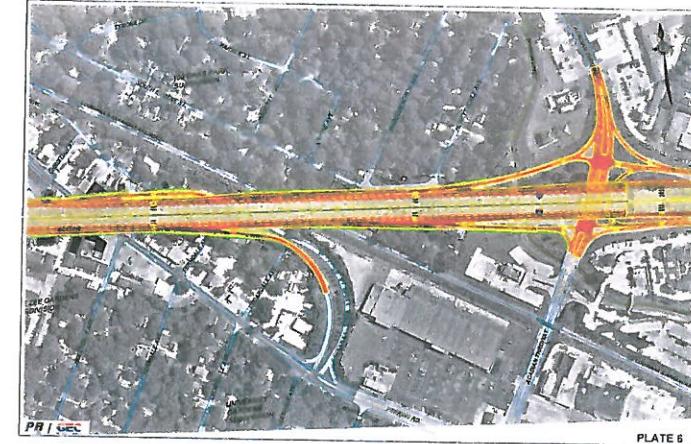
I-10 Corridor Study Plate Key for Districts 1-4

summary of events



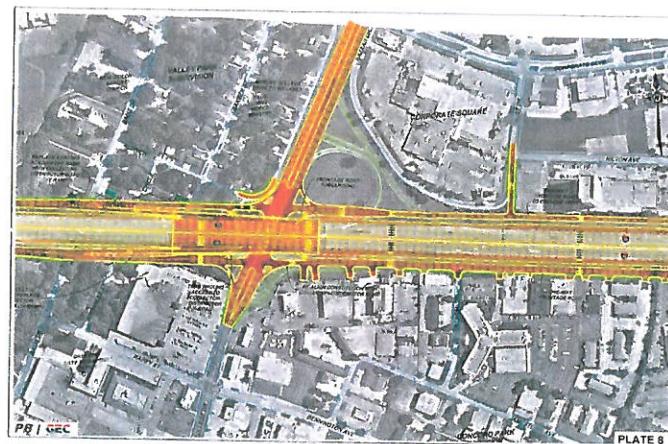
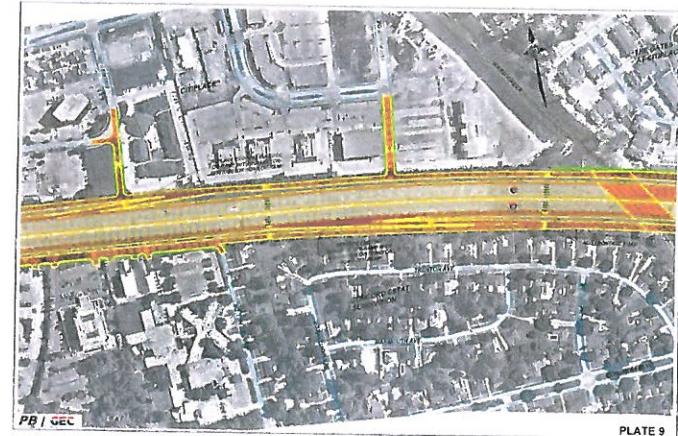
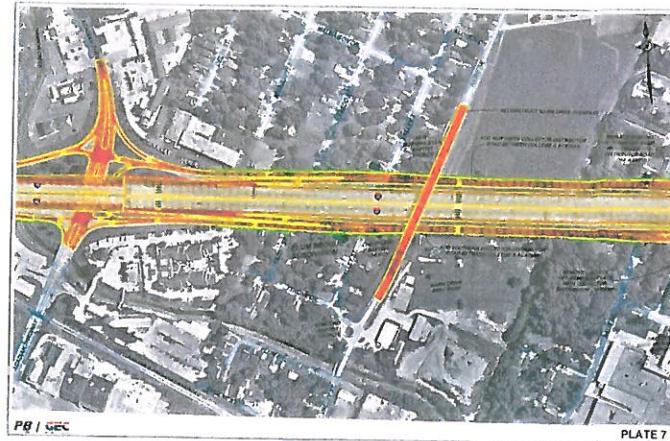
District 1: Plates 1, 2, and 3

summary of events



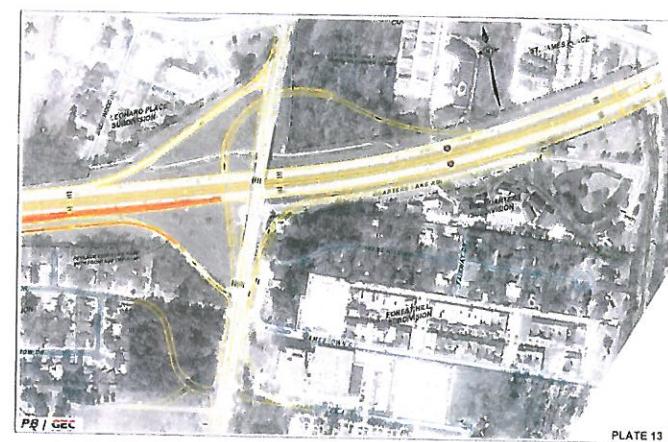
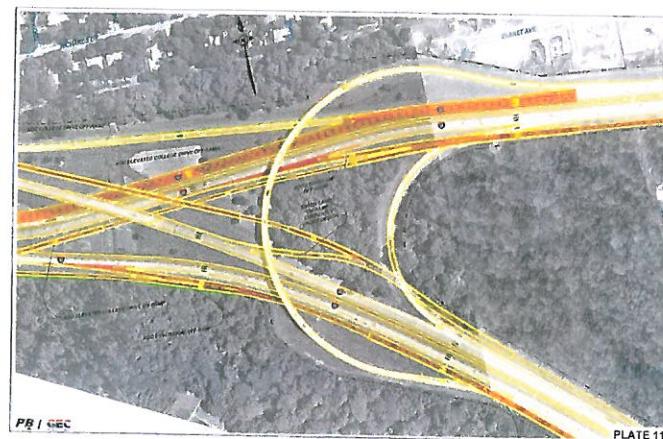
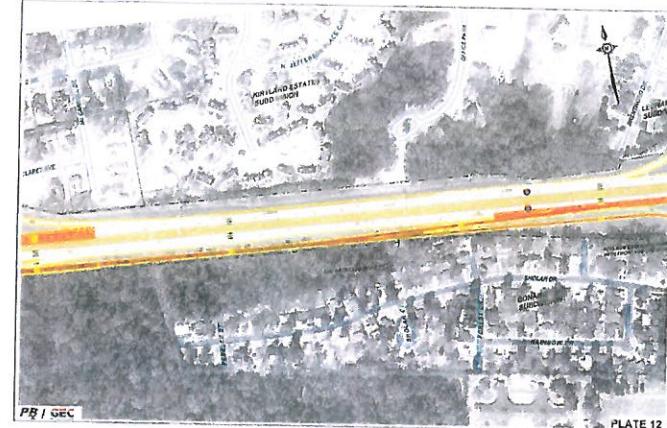
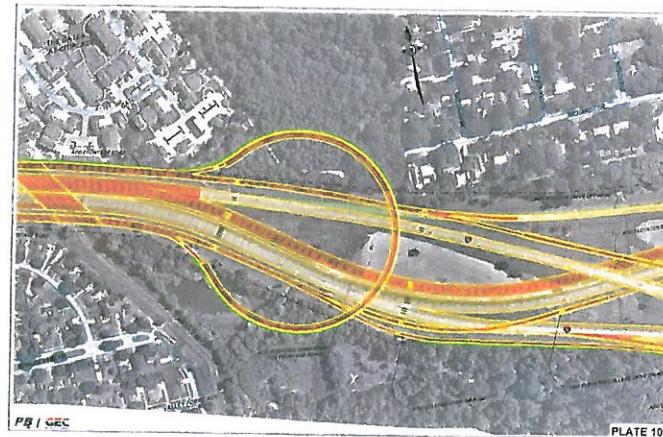
District 2: Plates 4, 5, and 6

summary of events



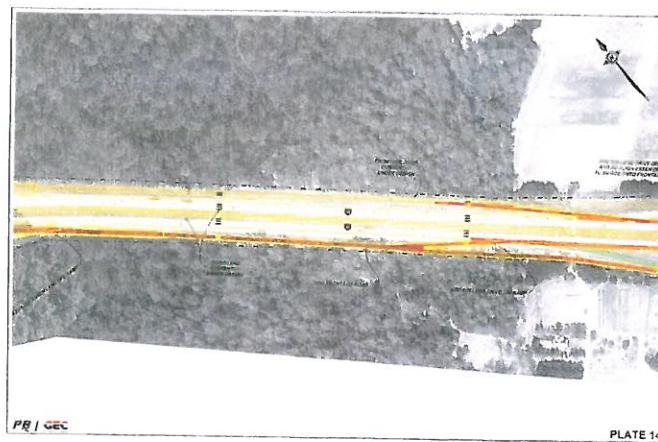
District 3: Plates 7, 8 and 9

summary of events



District 4: Plates 10, 11, 12 and 13

summary of events



District 4: Plates 14 and 15

OCDD Field Office

The OCDD project field office opened on September 24, 2000. It was located at 4347 Perkins Road, the approximate mid-point of the project corridor, and was open Monday through Friday, from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, and by appointment. This office housed the project staff and the majority of work related to the project was completed on location. Visitors to the field office were provided one-on-one explanations of the project and were encouraged to participate in the community awareness process. When visitors had specific questions they were encouraged to write them on comment cards.

The resources available in the project office included:

- personal assistance by OCDD staff,
- a project library of previous I-10 reports and related materials (see bibliography),
- reading space for visitors,
- a composite aerial photograph of the project corridor, measuring ten feet high and 50 feet long at a scale of 1"=50'-0", illustrating the proposed improvements,
- a 1"=200'-0" scale model of the project corridor (constructed in the field office),
- a 1"=50'-0" scale model of the project corridor (constructed in the field office), and
- copies of the work completed during the Community Design Charrettes.



OCDD field office at 4347 Perkins Road



OCDD project staff in field office

Community Awareness, Recording and Publicity

To improve citizen awareness of the public involvement activities, an OCDD I-10 project website was launched at www.ocdd.lsu.edu. The project web server was located on the Louisiana State University campus for security purposes and initial access to the Internet. The website offered detailed schedules of events, a community bulletin board, digital copies of the MIS reports, a bibliography of the documents available in

the project field office, and aerial photographs depicting the corridor with overlays of the proposed widening (the website permitted a viewer to zoom into each district). As the work proceeded the website was continuously updated to include photographs from the district Community Awareness Meetings and Community Design Charrettes, comments and questions received from members of the community, and links to related sites.

To ensure absolute accuracy, the Office of Community Design and Development required that all public comments regarding the project be made in writing or recorded on videotape. OCDD staff members were not permitted to paraphrase comments by individuals in the community. The OCDD developed a rigorous procedure for gathering and recording written and oral comments from the community, which were adhered to for the duration of the project. Throughout the project, OCDD staff encouraged citizens to submit questions, which were forwarded to PBQD, LADOTD and FHWA for response. The questions formed the most significant resource for determining citizen input. The questions and responses are reported in their entirety in the public involvement chapter of this document. The OCDD also maintained a bulletin board on the project website for citizen comment.

To ensure active community participation, the OCDD advertised meeting dates and times through the *The Advocate*, *Gambit Weekly*, *Baton Rouge Business Report*, and *South Baton Rouge Journal*. Special announcement inserts were included in *The Advocate* on Thursday, the week prior to important events. Local TV and radio stations were

informed of all project events. In addition to media coverage, the OCDD hand delivered between 500 and 1500 fliers in each district. Names, addresses, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses for civic associations, government and political leaders and organizations, local and federal highway personnel, media outlets, real estate developers, police, EMS, fire, and Haz Mat representatives, were gathered to inform them directly.

To ensure that the individuals who were directly impacted by the project were contacted, OCDD used the impacted properties list developed in the MIS, and visited and photographed each property. When possible the owners and/or renters were contacted directly and encouraged to attend the Community Design Charrette and discuss their personal concerns with a relocation specialist.

Community Awareness Meetings

One week prior to the Community Design Charrette, the OCDD held a Community Awareness Meeting for each district (For specific dates and locations, see the Public Involvement Timeline at the beginning of this chapter). The purpose of the Community Awareness Meeting was threefold:

1. explain the role of the OCDD, provide attendees detailed project background and explain the EIS and subsequent project approval process,

summary of events

2. provide attendees a detailed explanation of the events and purpose of the community design charrette to be held the following week, and
3. to provide attendees an opportunity to comment on the public involvement process and suggest additional topics for discussion at their district's Community Design Charrette.

The OCDD utilized a power point presentation tailored to each district to facilitate dissemination of information and discussion at each Community Awareness Meeting. Each presentation was subsequently available on the project website (copies of each presentation are available on the project website included in the digital appendix)

Attendees of the Community Awareness Meetings were encouraged to sign-in to generate an accurate count of participation and develop a mailing list for subsequent contact.



Registration table at District 1 CAM
Leo Butler Center, August 25, 2000



Audience at District 1 CAM
Leo Butler Center, August 25, 2000



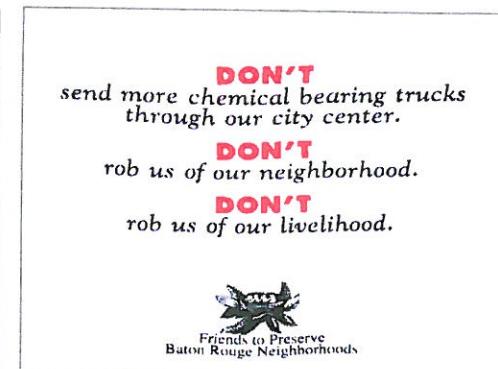
Ms. Marilyn O'Brien at
the August 24, 2000
LADOTD introductory
meeting



District 2 CAM attendees examining aerial
maps before the meeting



Mr. Smokey Bourgeois
at District 2 CAM



Logo from T-shirt distributed by project
opponents



Idea Forum at District 3 Community Design Charrette



Focused Design Session at District 1 Community Design Charrette with Judge White and Professor Laura Lawson, LSU School of Landscape Architecture

Community Design Charrettes

The purpose of the Community Design Charrettes was to provide an opportunity for district residents and stakeholders to interact with design professionals in a discussion of environmental issues and concerns arising from implementation of the proposed highway improvements. Henry Sanoff, in his book *Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning*, defines charrette as follows:

"The word charrette derives from the French translation of "chariot" or "cart," reminiscent of the one used to collect architectural designs produced at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris at the end of the nineteenth century. Often, the students would be drawing while the carts were moving, giving the word the meaning of a last minute burst of activity to meet the deadline. The charrette process, as used today, ensued from the production. But a newer component, consensus, has emerged as a guiding principle throughout the charrette."

Each of the four Community Design Charrettes for the I-10 Corridor Study provided residents with an opportunity to work with professionals to explore ideas that might mitigate the impacts of the proposed I-10 widening from the Mississippi River Bridge to Essen Lane. These events provided a framework for citizens to learn about the proposal, voice and record concerns, and with the assistance of the design professionals, generate ideas and solutions about specific problems or issues that would result if the project were to move forward. A range of ideas that resulted from these events is included in the following chapter.

summary of events



Open Design Session for District 2 with students from LSU School of Architecture



Mr. Mike Hereford, Relocation Specialist, discussing property impacts with a resident from District 1

The following forums, design sessions, meetings and tours were scheduled during each of the Community Design Charettes.

1. Idea Forums: Attendees participated in roundtable discussions about a specific topic of concern.
2. Focused Design Sessions: Attendees participated in focused design activities, facilitated by local design professionals that translated their concerns and ideas into sketches and drawings.
3. Open Design Sessions: Attendees participated in one on one discussions regarding the proposed project. These sessions were on-going during the entire period of the community design charrette.
4. Impacted Property Owners' Meetings: Individual property owners had the opportunity to meet with the OCDD Relocation Consultant regarding the impact of the proposed improvements on their property.
5. Neighborhood Tours: OCDD staff, charrette session facilitators, consultants, representatives from LADOTD and FHWA, and interested citizens were given an introductory tour of each district on the first day of the Community Design Charettes. Each tour was lead by a long-time district resident

summary of events



Ms. Michele Deshotels, LADOTD, participates in the District 2 Neighborhood Tour led by Mr. Smokey Bourgeois



Ms. Patty Pitzer from the Louisiana State Office of Recreation, Culture and Tourism presenting the Main Street Program at the District 2 Community Design Charrette

who provided a narrative history of the area, which included a discussion of the historic impacts of I-10 and the potential additional impact of the proposed expansion. A second tour was given on Saturday morning of each charrette to provide interested citizens the opportunity to discuss their concerns with OCDD staff, consultants, LADOTD and FHWA personnel on-site.

6. Video comments: All attendees were provided with the opportunity to videotape their comments and questions.

In addition, availability of community enhancement funds was discussed during each Community Design Charrette. Attendees of community design charrettes were encouraged to sign-in to generate an accurate count of participation and develop a mailing list for subsequent contact.



District 1 Neighborhood Tour led by Mr. Phil Myers, GEC



Mr. Bryan Davis, PBQD, discussing the project with a journalism class from LSU

As a method of soliciting community concerns about the proposed project, citizens were asked to submit their concerns in writing, or visit the project office and provide a videotaped commentary. The Office of Community Design and Development received 340 written comments, the majority of which were copied and placed on the project web site. In addition, questions from concerned citizens were recorded at all meetings and forwarded to the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, and Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade and Douglas, Inc., for responses. The following questions were received from citizens during the public involvement period and provide the most accurate representation of the interests and concerns of the public. In total there were 73 questions formally answered and posted on the project web site.

Q. Why did DOTD conduct a Major Investment Study (MIS) for this project?

In 1993 Congress authorized new urban planning guidelines, which required Major Investment Studies for major urban transportation projects prior to their inclusion in area-wide transportation plans and their subsequent eligibility for federal aid. The I-10 corridor had been the subject of several previous studies that identified the need for major safety and capacity improvements along the route. It was determined by DOTD that the federal planning mandates prescribed by congress would apply to the I-10 improvement project and a Major Investment Study would be required as a first step in the project development process.

Q. Why is the project needed?

It was planned in the 50's and built in the 60's and doesn't have many of the features that are included in more recently designed interstates. By current design standards,

the interchanges do not have adequate spacing to accomplish weaving movements by entering and exiting vehicles. The acceleration and deceleration lanes are not long enough. There are not adequate shoulders to permit disabled vehicles to be removed from the main travel lanes and there are not frontage roads to accommodate local traffic movements that presently use the main lanes of the freeway. The most serious problem is that there are not adequate general-purpose lanes to accommodate traffic that is currently using the freeway and is forecast to use I-10 in the future. The original plan for I-10 anticipated approximately 86,000 vehicles per day would travel the I-10 corridor. At that time, the U.S. Bureau of the Census established Baton Rouge's population at 230,058 persons. Recent estimates find approximately 467,000 persons living in the area or about double the original number of residents. Traffic counts in the last few years have indicated approximately 150,000 vehicles per day using the facility. This traffic is forecast to increase to approximately 185,000 vehicles over the next 20 years. The large volumes of heavy trucks that are included in the traffic stream exacerbate the problems. As a result, the facility functions at a "Level of Service (LOS) "F", which is a traffic engineering term that indicates severe congestion with stop and go conditions.

Q. What kinds of problems are produced by these inadequacies?

The main problem is persistent congestion caused by bottlenecks. The trucks that accelerate and stop more slowly than automobiles increase these problems. As a result, they greatly influence platoon speeds, merging distances and reactions to grade changes. These conditions also produce an environment prone to lane-blocking incidents. The worse conditions occur in the afternoon peak travel hours in the eastbound direction. Congestion also contributes to air quality pollution.

Q. How do problems along 1-10 affect Baton Rouge?

I-10 is a key component for Baton Rouge mobility. It serves a major amount of the daily commuting trips; it furnishes access for the area's port, airport, and industries and accommodates a number of the region's emergency response services. It is also a

major access route for students and employees at LSU. Additionally, the facility is a vital link for commercial truck traffic for both local trips and interstate freight transport. One of the main reasons that traffic is dependent on I-10 is that there are no efficient alternative routes. Some arterials such as Perkins Road, Florida Blvd, Burbank Drive, Airline Hwy., Old Hammond Hwy. and combinations of these routes provide alternative routes; however, they are not direct routes, lack capacity, and are not controlled access facilities. Other combinations of routes can be used but they are indirect and frequently congested. As a consequence, when I-10 experiences problems, much of Baton Rouge traffic is adversely affected.

Q. Who was on the steering committee?

Major transportation stakeholders in the Baton Rouge area who may be affected by the project were on the Steering Committee. These included representatives of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Baton Rouge Mayor/President's Office, Police Department, Corps of Engineers, Capital Region Planning Commission (CRPC), Baton Rouge's Port, Federal Highway Administration, Louisiana Motor Transport Association, City/Parish Council Member representing the Washington Street area, Baton Rouge Planning Commission, Capitol Transit Corporation, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Downtown Development District, Lakeshore Civic Association, and the Federal Transit Administration.

Q. How were the 1-10 MIS improvement alternatives identified?

Through discussions with the project steering committee and review of previous studies in the corridor.

Q. What alternatives were examined in the MIS?

No Build - this alternative would provide no new construction along I-10
Congestion Management - An alternative that focuses on reduction in use of single occupancy vehicles along I-10, strategies such as carpooling, staggered work hours,

park and ride lots, etc. and operational improvements (signal timing and intersection improvements) to routes that provide similar service to I-10, as well as ramp metering along I-10.

Reasonable Cost/Transportation System Management - this alternate would combine congestion management and minimal construction to address the identified bottlenecks along the corridor.

Alternate Route Improvements - under this alternate, major widening and improvements of Florida Blvd., Airline Hwy., Burbank Drive, Old Hammond Hwy. and Siegen Lane were examined to determine if such measures would divert enough traffic from I-10 to alleviate the congestion.

Lane Balancing -This alternate would provide four lanes in each direction along I-10. Lane Balancing plus additional improvements - This alternative would provide four lanes in each direction and would address bottleneck problems in the east bound direction at the I-10/I-110 Interchange and College Drive Interchange. It would also address interchange spacing and operational problems and examine the effects of frontage roads along the facility.

Express Lanes and Reconstruction of the I- 10/I- 110 Interchange - this alternative has been referred to as the "Highpass" and would provide two express lanes in each direction through the I-110 Interchange and the I-10/ I-12 Split. It would also involve the construction of the I-110 Interchange to current freeway standards.

LOS "D" Alternative - this is a conceptual alternative that would be examined if none of the other identified alternatives would be found to adequately address I-10 congestion. The alternative would examine the impacts of constructing five or more general-purpose lanes in each direction within the corridor. LOS "D" is a traffic engineering term that refers to dense but stable traffic flow, which is the target condition for the proposed improvements.

Bypass - this alternative examined the effects of a four-lane southern bypass of I-10. The bypass concept examined the affects of the facility that was identified in the *Baton Rouge Freeway Bypass Final Report* (June 1995) by HNTB Corp. for CRPC.

Combination Alternatives - several combinations of the previous alternatives were also evaluated to determine their relative costs and benefits.

Q. Was transit considered as an alternative?

Transit improvements were examined along with the congestion management measures but were not considered a viable option for the following reasons: Baton Rouge does not have optimal densities for effective transit usage, typical mode share for effective transit is not adequate to address I-10 congestion problems and transit as a stand-alone alternative was not deemed to be viable by both the steering committee and the public.

Q. Which alternatives were set aside from further consideration?

Congestion Management - Congestion Management alone would provide only minimal relief to I-10 congestion. However, because of the area's air quality problems, congestion management measures are required to be implemented along with any other capacity improvements. Therefore, congestion management will be included with the alternatives to be examined in the environmental impact statement. It should be noted that CRPC is presently implementing congestion management measures such as park and ride lots, car/van pooling, signal optimization, intersection improvements, staggered work hours and improved transit.

Reasonable Cost/Transportation System Management - this alternative simply moved the bottlenecks to the next interchange.

Alternative Route Improvements - Preliminary analysis using the Baton Rouge travel demand model indicated that such improvements would not divert enough traffic from I-10 to routes that furnish similar service to adequately relieve 1-10 congestion.

The "Highpass" or elevated express lanes - This alternative did not produce more traffic relief than less disruptive measures, would cost almost twice as much to construct and would potentially cause constructability problems as well as potential difficulties at connection points.

Bypass - Over the past several years, three different studies have examined the affects of a bypass on I-10 traffic; *The Baton Rouge Bypass* by HNTB Corp. in 1995, *The I-10/I-12 Baton Rouge Bypass Major Investment Study* by Rust Environment and Infrastructure in 1998 and *The I-10 Study – Baton Rouge* by Parsons Brinckerhoff in

1996. These studies found that a bypass would reduce traffic using I-10 between the Mississippi River Bridge and the I-10/I-12 Split by between 6 to 11 percent which is inadequate to address I-10 congestion problems, especially during peak travel periods. LOS "D" Alternative – This conceptual alternate would have examined the affects of widening I-10 to five or more lanes in each direction if necessary to satisfactorily relieve traffic congestion (LOS "D"). In-depth conceptual engineering and traffic analysis revealed that four lanes and direct improvements to I-10 were adequate to relieve traffic congestion. Therefore widening in excess of four lanes would not be necessary. Consequently, this alternative was set aside from further consideration.

Combinations Alternatives - Combinations of the above alternatives were also examined. However, they did not adequately address the I-10 congestion problems, were more intrusive and more costly than the recommended alternative.

Q. What improvements to I-10 are recommended by the MIS?

The Lane Balancing Plus Additional Improvements Alternative was recommended by the MIS. More specifically; Widen I-10 to provide four lanes in each direction between the I-110 Interchange and Acadian Thruway. Add adequate shoulders. Provide two continuous eastbound lanes through the I-10/I-110 Interchange (presently, there is only one lane that exits at Washington Street). Improve the curve between the Mississippi River Bridge and the I-10/I-110 Interchange to current standards. Relocate the Washington Street east bound off ramp to a location that does not impede I-10 traffic. Improve all interchanges in the study corridor to current standards (i.e. adequate spacing, ramp lengths and standard configurations). Address the College Drive east bound on ramp bottleneck. (Although the recently completed improvements have helped relieve this bottleneck, it is anticipated to interfere with future traffic forecast to use the facility). Add frontage roads between Acadian Thruway through the I-10/I-12 Split.

Q. Is this the first time the public has been aware of this project and the recommendations?

No. During the initial phases of the project, two public meetings, five neighborhood meetings, a newsletter and several press releases were provided to inform the public about the project's deliberations and findings. Numerous project related articles have appeared in the *Advocate* as well as reports in the area television and radio media pertaining to the project.

Q. Will there be more opportunities for the public to become involved in this project?

Yes. LSU's Office of Community Design and Development will assist with public involvement for I-10 improvements. Their main objective will be to explain the proposed improvements, determine the public's concerns about the project and identify measures to minimize and mitigate negative impacts and explore ways to enhance the area. There will also be opportunities for public involvement throughout the environmental study process.

Q. How will the LSU Office of Community Design and Development participants engage the public?

A project office has been opened at 4357 Perkins Road, Suite 12A to permit the public to obtain project information, view exhibits (a scale model of the project, a large aerial based map that shows the proposed layout of the freeway improvements and graphic simulations that display what the improvements will look like). The office also has facilities to permit citizens to record their concerns and preferences. Additionally, neighborhood meetings and design charrettes will be employed to provide information and obtain public input into measures to address concerns about the project. Other public information will be furnished through a web site, a newsletter, another general public meeting and a future public hearing.

Q. What will happen next in this process?

An Environmental Impact Statement is presently being prepared. It will include and consider the public involvement findings and will conduct in-depth investigations to determine and document specific impacts that will be produced by the proposed improvements.

Q. How many homes and businesses appear to be structurally affected by the proposed improvements?

Approximately 15 residences and 1 business in the Washington Street area and 15 residences and 9 businesses in the Acadian/Perkins Road area could be structurally impacted. If an eastbound on ramp were provided for the Dalrymple Drive Interchange, an additional residence would be affected.

Q. Was “double-decking” I-10 considered as a means of addressing existing and future problems?

Yes. This was referred to as “express lanes” or “the Highpass”. Analysis of this proposal found that while it would address congestion problems along I-10, it was significantly more costly than other alternatives that would address these problems, would cause major disruption to traffic while it was being built and would require significant amounts of right of way and impacts at tie-in points.

Q. Why was I-10 built through Baton Rouge instead of around it?

Citizens have related that at the time the Interstate Highway System was being planned in the area, Baton Rouge leaders and residents opted for a location close to downtown for fear that a more remote location would draw business away from downtown merchants. It should also be recognized that in the 1960s much of the area currently traversed by I-10 past College Drive in the Baton Rouge area was undeveloped at the time.

Q. Have there been other studies to determine if a bypass could be provided to address the congestion along I-10?

Yes. Over the past several years, three different studies have examined the affects of a bypass on I-10 traffic: *The Baton Rouge Bypass* by HNTB Corp. in 1995, *The I-10/I-12 Baton Rouge Bypass Major Investment Study* by Rust Environment and Infrastructure in 1998 as well as *The I-10 Study – Baton Rouge* by Parsons Brinckerhoff in 1996. These studies found that a southern bypass would reduce traffic using I-10 between the Mississippi River Bridge and the I-10/I-12 Split by between 6 to 11 percent which is inadequate to address I-10 congestion problems, especially during peak travel periods.

Q. Was a northern bypass around Baton Rouge considered?

Yes. Three different possible locations for a north bypass were examined by CRPC using the area's travel demand model. The examinations found that northern bypasses produced only minimal relief for I-10 congestion; far less than needed to solve present and forecast problems.

1. **Outer Loop Alternative** – This alternative is the northern portion of the outer loop corridor proposed by the RBA Group in the *Baton Rouge Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update*. The alternative involves constructing a four-lane freeway facility beginning on I-10 East near the East Baton Rouge Parish/Ascension Parish line, connecting to I-12 near the Livingston Parish line, traversing the northern portion of the Baton Rouge area, and then terminating at Airline Highway on the west side of the Mississippi River;
2. **Choctaw Alternative** – This alternative was developed as a result of the *I-10/I-12 Baton Rouge Bypass Major Investment Study* conducted by Rust Environment and Infrastructure. The alignment involves constructing a four-lane freeway facility beginning on I-10 East near the East Baton Rouge Parish/Ascension Parish line, connecting to I-12 near LA 3002 in Denham Springs, then follows Choctaw Drive through Baton Rouge before terminating along I-10 on the west side of the Mississippi River; and,
3. **Airline Highway Alternative** – This alternative involves constructing a four-lane elevated limited-access freeway facility along the existing Airline Highway alignment through Baton Rouge. The new facility would begin on Airline Highway at the East Baton Rouge Parish/Ascension Parish line, following Airline Highway through Baton Rouge before terminating on the west side of the Mississippi River at LA 1.

Q. Why not improve both I-10 and build a bypass?

The primary reason is cost. A bypass is estimated to cost between \$750 million and a \$1 billion. DOTD receives a limited amount of funding to address all statewide transportation needs and as a consequence must target available money to areas of highest priority. While a bypass may be needed for future economic development, it is not needed to accomplish the purpose and need of this project, which is to improve traffic flow to LOS "D" on I-10. Additionally, previous studies have identified significant impacts and public opposition to a bypass proposal.

Q. Could Florida Blvd. and Airline Highway be improved to provide an alternative bypass?

This suggestion has been examined by using the area travel demand model. While it would provide some congestion relief, it would not adequately address the I-10 problems, especially during peak travel times. This is partially due to the large amount of trips that have origins or destinations within the I-10 corridor itself.

Q. Could trucks be restricted from I-10 and diverted to other alternate routes?

It is legally possible to restrict trucks from the Interstate. However to the best of our knowledge, it has never been done. Such action will, basically, have to be initiated on the request of the Governor or the Governor's authorized representative. Requests from the Governor or the Governor's authorized representative need to be submitted along with justification for the restriction. The request has to be in writing, and it is considered for approval at the Washington Headquarters level of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The justification accompanying a request shall contain the following:

- Analysis of evidence of safety problems supporting the restriction as identified in Section 658.11c of 23 CFR
- Analysis of the impact on interstate commerce

- Analysis and recommendation of any alternative routes that can safely accommodate commercial motor vehicles of the dimensions and configurations described in Sections 658.13 and 658.15 of 23 CFR, and serve the area in which such segment is located.
- Evidence of consultation with the local governments in which the segment is located

The proposed restriction is published in the Federal Register as a Notice of Proposed Rule Making. The FHWA will consider the factors set out above and the comments of interested parties. If approved, the restriction is then published as a final rule.

The Interstate promotes interstate commerce and is key to the economic vitality of the Nation. Within the existing Baton Rouge highway network system, I-10 provides the safest and most efficient route. A quick look at a road map of the Baton Rouge area does not reveal any reasonable alternate routes to carry cargo in an east-west direction. A copy of 23 CFR that contains the complete regulation could be downloaded from the following Internet address: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legsregs/legislat.html>

Q. Could trucks that are transporting hazardous cargoes be restricted from using I-10?

The same procedure discussed above applies for establishing Hazardous Cargo restrictions on the Interstate. Hazardous material restrictions, however, have been made for selected situations. Section 397 of 49 CFR, "Transportation of Hazardous Material: Driving and Parking Rules" addresses the process of establishing alternative routes for hazardous cargo. The intent of the regulations is to ensure that hazardous materials are moved safely and that commerce is not burdened by restrictive, uncoordinated, or conflicting requirements of various jurisdictions.

Within the existing Baton Rouge highway network system, I-10 provides the safest east west corridor for the movement of hazardous and non-hazardous cargo. A quick look at a road map of the Baton Rouge area does not reveal any reasonable alternate routes to carry cargo in an east-west direction.

Q. If I-10 is improved, will noise walls be constructed?

An initial task of the Environmental Impact Statement preparation will be a thorough analysis of noise impacts that would be produced by the I-10 widening. If the analysis reveals that the forecast conditions meet the Department's noise abatement criteria and noise barriers are found to be reasonable and feasible, noise barriers will be provided.

Q. What traffic needs support the widening of I-10?

The main problem is there are not enough travel lanes to accommodate the traffic that is presently using the facility and is forecast to increase. I-10 was originally designed to provide service for 86,000 vehicles per day (VPD). Recent traffic counts reveal approximately 150,000 VPD using the current facility with forecast volumes of approximately 185,000 VPD. The congestion is exacerbated by operational problems produced by a lack of shoulders, inadequate and obsolete interchanges and lane discontinuity in the vicinity of I-110 and Washington Street. Additionally, the large volumes of trucks that use I-10 contribute to the problems.

Q. Is safety a problem?

I-10 presently has no shoulders, inadequate spacing for existing volumes between interchanges, acceleration and deceleration ramps that are not long enough to accommodate the number of vehicles that exit and enter the freeway, discontinuous lanes and inadequate lanes to provide for the traffic that is presently using the facility as well as forecast traffic. This is one of the issues that support the need for improvements to I-10.

Q. Can tolls be placed on the interstate bridge to build a loop or bypass?

The current federal law does not allow tolling of the Interstate Bridge except to totally reconstruct the existing bridge. Should the I-10 Bridge require reconstruction in the future, the imposition of such tolls would be a State decision.

Q. If DOTD simply corrected the eastbound one-lane problem at the I-110/10 near Washington Street, would this relieve the congestion so that the rest of the facility would not have to be widened?

No. This proposal has been carefully analyzed. It simply moves the bottleneck to Dalrymple Drive. In addition to operational problems, there are not enough lanes to accommodate present as well as forecast traffic that will use the facility, which results in serious peak hour congestion.

Q. What would be the affects of providing an east bound on-ramp at Dalrymple Drive?

If this option was implemented, traffic would increase on Dalrymple Drive and decrease on Morning Glory. Access to I-10 from LSU would be improved. The effect on I-10 traffic would be minimal. The environmental impacts of this action will be analyzed and addressed in the forthcoming environmental impact statement for the project.

Q. What will be the affects of this project to City Park Lake?

The bridge that presently spans City Park Lake will be widened on both sides over the lake to provide an additional lane and shoulders (34 feet on each side). If the option to furnish an eastbound on ramp at Dalrymple Drive is implemented, it would require an additional structure approximately 30 feet wide also improvements to the Dalrymple Interchange would require the use of additional land from the park. The environmental impacts of these actions will be analyzed in the environmental impact statement for the project.

Q. What is the purpose of the Environmental Impact Statement?

The purpose of the study is to (1) document the impacts to both the human and natural environment expected to result from highway improvements identified through the

Major Investment Study, (2) identify measures to mitigate the environmental impacts, and (3) identify opportunities to enhance the impacted community beyond what is required for mitigation. It is important for interested residents and business owners to participate in this process to voice their concerns and offer suggestions regarding modifications to the highway improvement concept, mitigation of expected impacts, and community enhancements. Once this study has been completed, rational decisions can be made based on facts rather than preconceived notions or misconceptions.

Q. Who makes the decision to proceed with implementation of this project?

Improvements to Interstate 10 along with any mitigation and community enhancements would involve substantial sums of money to implement. Barring a dedicated state funding source, such an undertaking would require the use of federal funds over many years for phased construction. For projects, funded in whole or in part with federal highway monies, within a metropolitan area, the decision-making process involves five distinct steps before design or construction can begin. These steps are summarized below:

1. Federal law requires the designation of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) within any urbanized area with a population of 50,000 or greater (i.e., a metropolitan area). An MPO is typically composed of a technical staff, at least one Technical Advisory Committee, and a Policy Committee. The Capital Region Planning Commission serves as the MPO technical staff for the Baton Rouge Metropolitan Area. The MPO Technical Advisory Committee, as the name implies, is composed of people with transportation expertise. The MPO Policy Committee is primarily comprised of local elected officials from the various municipalities within the metropolitan area. It is the decision-making body regarding transportation projects within the metropolitan area. With the results of the Environmental Impact Statement and Technical Advisory Committee recommendations as a basis, the Policy Committee will decide whether or not they support the I-10 project and, if so, what priority they assign to it relative to other projects in the Baton Rouge Metropolitan Area.

2. Projects on state highways that are supported by the MPO must then compete for funding with projects from other metropolitan areas and non-metropolitan areas in Louisiana within one of four categories, namely, System Preservation, Traffic Safety, Additional Capacity/New Infrastructure, and Operations/Motorist Services. The Interstate 10 project falls within the Additional Capacity/New Infrastructure category. Within a predetermined budget, a committee of fourteen DOTD officials selects the projects to be funded from the available candidates.
3. The selected projects for all four-project categories are assembled into the proposed Highway Program and submitted to the Joint Legislative Committee on Transportation, Highways, and Public Works. The Joint Legislative Committee holds public hearings around the state. The final Highway Program is then prepared and submitted to the Legislature for approval. State law allows the Legislature to delete projects; however, the Legislature may not add nor substitute any projects.
4. All federal-aid projects within the metropolitan area (such as the I-10 project) must then be formally approved by the Policy Committee of the MPO. The MPO must include the project in both the fiscally-constrained long-range transportation plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for that area. If the project is not approved and entered into both the long-range transportation plan and the TIP, the project cannot proceed with federal funds.
5. Once the State Legislature has approved the Highway Program and the Policy Committee of the MPO has placed the project in both the fiscally-constrained long-range transportation plan and the Transportation Improvement Program, the Federal Highway Administration can make the Record of Decision on the Final Environmental Impact Statement in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. The project can then proceed with federal funding. Because of the magnitude of the I-10 project (which would entail several construction phases over many years including any mitigation and community enhancements), the Federal Highway Administration would make the Record of Decision for the entire project but implementation would proceed on each phase as funding becomes available.

Q. How does DOTD treat historic properties?

FHWA and DOTD follow the regulation set forth by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as overseen by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. As part of Section 106 compliance DOTD determines if any historic properties over 50 years in age are located within the project's Area of Potential Effect. In order to do this, DOTD looks for properties already listed on the National Register as well as those properties within the Area of Potential Effect that meet the National Register eligibility criteria but are not listed on the National Register. Once DOTD has determined there are historic properties (both eligible for and listed on the National Register), DOTD will assess the effect (none, no adverse, or adverse) on those identified historic properties. These effects are examined to see if they can be avoided, minimized, or mitigated.

Q. Are there minutes of the steering committee meetings, and are they public record ?

Yes. Minutes of the initial Steering Committee meetings, during which decisions were made regarding the need to widen I-10, are available on the project's website at www.ocdd.lsu.edu. Minutes of subsequent Steering Committee meetings are being placed on the website.

Q. How was it determined that this is the best option for attempting to improve the traffic problems in Baton Rouge?

In 1991, Congress passed a law that directed the Federal Highway Administration to require a Major Investment Study (MIS) be prepared for significant urban interstate highway projects. In 1995, LaDOTD conducted an MIS to determine the best methods to address I-10 congestion in Baton Rouge. The MIS examined 16 alternatives that were identified by the project's Steering Committee. The alternatives were analyzed using public involvement, conceptual engineering, and traffic modeling.

Q. The alternatives examined in the MIS included improving other routes that provide similar service to I-10, transit improvements, elevated lanes, and a bypass. The results of the analysis demonstrated that direct improvements to I-10 were the best way to address the congestion problems along the facility.

A number of citizens have inquired why a bypass was not a better solution. The MIS examined the effects of a bypass on I-10 traffic using a state-of-the-art travel demand computer model for Baton Rouge. The analysis revealed that a bypass would not divert enough traffic away from I-10 to solve present and forecast congestion. This finding has been verified by two other independent studies that examined a Baton Rouge bypass.

Q. Why is this being pursued and who is really behind it?

Since 1983, transportation studies have identified serious capacity problems along I-10 in Baton Rouge. Area-wide transportation plans conducted by the Capital Region Planning Commission (CRPC) have found congestion problems along I-10 among the more serious in the area. In response, LaDOTD, with funding provided by FHWA, initiated studies to determine appropriate solutions for I-10 congestion between the Mississippi River Bridge and the I-10/I-12 split. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Baton Rouge concurred with the initiation of these studies.

Q. What has been done to this point?

Initial studies were conducted to determine the optimum methods for addressing I-10 congestion in Baton Rouge. These studies concluded that the best strategy to improve the facility was to add lanes and shoulders to I-10 and improve interchanges. Conceptual studies were conducted to provide a design concept for widening I-10 through the city. Consultants (including LSU's Office of Community Design and Development) working for LaDOTD are conducting public involvement as part of the process to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the widening project.

Q. How can an accurate EIS be made so far in advance of such a major project?

The depth the traffic analysis and conceptual design that have been conducted for this project to-date provide adequate information regarding traffic impacts, construction limits, structures that would be affected, and other construction information that would be needed for impact determination. Additional social, economic and environmental studies and public involvement activities are being carried out.

Q. Won't it be obsolete by the time it is completed? And what then?

No. The traffic forecasts for the project anticipate that the proposed facility will function adequately for the next 20 years. Forecasts of both traffic and land use beyond the 20-year horizon are highly speculative and unreliable, and would not furnish adequate information to conduct sound planning for more extensive improvements. Additionally, measures will be deployed to further preserve the capacity of I-10. These include incident management, ramp metering, a traffic control center, transit improvements and other similar non-structural capacity enhancements. It should also be pointed out that the capacity restraints for facilities that connect with the segment of I-10 such as I-110, the Mississippi River Bridge, I-12, etc., limit the ultimate amount of traffic that will use the facility.

Q. When will construction begin if the proposed project is approved?

The DEIS is anticipated to be completed in July 2002. The Metropolitan Planning Organization will then review the results and decide whether or not to proceed with the project. If the decision is to proceed, then the first phase of the project must compete for funding statewide. This will take approximately one year. Plan development and right-of-way acquisition may take another 36 months. Assuming FHWA approval and funding availability for the initial stage of the project, construction could begin in State Fiscal Year 2007 (i.e. sometime after July 1, 2006).

Q. How long is it estimated to take to complete?

Normally, each segment would take about 2 years to complete. Assuming that the project is divided into four segments (contracts) all initiated consecutively, the work could be completed in 8-to-10 years. Obviously, such a schedule is contingent on LaDOTD's priority phasing over many years and is subject to the availability of funding as well as phasing to minimize community and business impacts.

Q. How were the alternatives rated?

A matrix-based evaluation methodology was conducted by the MIS Steering Committee to compare all 16 alternatives on the basis of traffic service, impacts, costs, constructability, displacements of structures, public sentiment, and similar factors. The evaluation process is documented in Appendix I of the *I-10 Study - Baton Rouge Final Report*, which is available on the project's website at www.ocdd.lsu.edu.

Q. How much wider is the Interstate to be widened?

Between City Park Lake and the Perkins Road off-ramp, I-10 would be widened 22 feet on each side of the freeway. In the Perkins Road commercial area, the widest portion of the freeway would extend a maximum of 32 additional feet for the eastbound direction, and an additional 20 feet for the west bound portion, from the centerline of the roadway. In other areas, where no shoulders presently exist, the freeway would be widened between 20 and 32 feet for both directions of travel. Where shoulders presently exist, the widening would extend approximately 22 feet for both directions of travel.

Q. What is the condition of the Interstate through this corridor?

From a capacity standpoint, the facility functions at stop-and-go conditions during rush hours. Lane-blocking incidents occur frequently. There are not enough lanes for the traffic that is presently using the freeway, shoulders are lacking in numerous locations, and the interchanges are inadequately spaced and do not meet current interstate standards. Much of the roadway pavement has reached or surpassed its

projected service life and requires rehabilitation. Bridges are also displaying signs of deterioration and require extensive rehabilitation or replacement.

Q. How much impact will the community's involvement actually have on the decision-makers?

The main purpose for retaining LSU's Office of Community Design and Development to participate in this study is to obtain the public's concerns about possible impacts resulting from the project, and to define steps to minimize harm and mitigate adverse effects. Proposals for impact minimization and mitigation will be incorporated in the EIS and they will become commitments for implementation. Subsequent designs for the proposed improvements would be conducted in light of the commitments made during this planning phase.

Q. Will Perkins Road be closed during construction?

Perkins Road will not be closed during construction. However, the work could involve minimal detours for limited times. The LaDOTD's construction supervisors will contact business owners long before construction interference is anticipated to discuss and determine effective impact minimization methods and to assure that access to businesses is properly maintained.

Q. Will businesses be compensated for their losses during construction?

No. However, all efforts will be made to minimize economic affects to businesses. State law mandates the provision of reasonable access to businesses during reasonable business hours. Failure to maintain such access affords legal recourse for affected business operators. Business operators will be contacted to participate in decisions regarding the best times to conduct construction activities that could interfere with business access. An effort to coordinate construction activities with special events, such as LSU home games, will also be made.

Q. Is there a way to make the joint-use areas under the interstate more attractive and safe? Can we build there?

Yes. This is one of the main thrusts of the public involvement in this area. The concept is to avoid removing businesses from this area. Where the widening project cannot avoid structural interference with existing businesses, the LaDOTD will consult with the owners to determine methods to reconstruct the establishment within the immediate area. Such a strategy could envision the use of spaces under the freeway. Additionally, as part of the steps to mitigate impacts, efforts to make the area under the freeway more attractive and functional will be employed. These efforts will be coordinated with business owners and the public.

Q. Will pile drivers be used?

No. A technology known as drilled shafts, which does not require pile driving (and its associated vibrations), will be employed.

Q. Can there be a study done in the neighborhoods regarding vehicular vibration and its physical impact?

Yes, if the need for such a study is determined.

Q. Has a study been completed regarding the distance required from an interstate structure to eliminate measurable impacts from vibrations?

No.

Q. Where will the staging areas for the equipment be in each neighborhood?

This will have to be determined jointly between the LaDOTD and the contractor. Typically, the staging is accomplished within the highway right-of-way. Steps will be

employed to minimize impacts to adjacent land uses and to ensure the appearance of the area is restored upon completion of the construction activity.

Q. What will be done about the noise from construction?

Standard specification requirements regarding construction noise will be used. Noise will be controlled in residential areas and, for the most part, limited to normal work times. A decision regarding night construction will have to be made. This decision will consider impacts to adjacent land uses, traffic disruption and overall time to construct facility requirements.

Q. What will be done about the noise from the Interstate traffic?

Noise studies will be conducted as a first effort in the EIS to determine the extent of anticipated impacts and conformity with the LaDOTD's noise abatement policies. Areas that qualify for abatement measures will be analyzed further to determine optimal approaches for abating the noise. Additional public involvement is anticipated in order to obtain public input into noise abatement decisions.

Q. Can the areas along the construction zone be made more pedestrian friendly with better sidewalks, streetlights, and landscaping as part of this project?

Yes. These measures are presently being examined by the LSU Office of Community Design and Development as part of the public involvement process. Decisions will be documented in a mitigation plan, which will be a part of the EIS for the project.

Q. Do you plan to start maintaining the undersides of the elevated portions? They are eyesores in the neighborhoods.

Improvements to the areas beneath the elevated sections will be examined in the EIS. Community input regarding improvements (i.e. noise, appearance, landscaping,

parking, etc.) would be valuable. While maintenance of the structure and graffiti removal is DOTD's responsibility, maintenance of lighting, maintenance of landscaping, litter removal, etc., would be performed under a joint use agreement with the City Parish or other appropriate local entity.

Q. What will be done to prevent erosion of sloped graded areas?

Erosion control measures will be applied to all areas disturbed by construction. Temporary erosion barriers will be placed adjacent to work areas during construction. Upon completion of construction, typically, grass sod is established on affected slopes.

Q. Will there be more signage on the interstate directing people to LSU via more exits than the two we have now, directional signage through the neighborhoods for those people going to LSU, and signage directing them from LSU back to the interstate through various routes?

Since access to LSU will not be directly affected by the project, such measures are not anticipated to be part of this project. If additional signing is deemed necessary, such efforts will be coordinated with City/Parish officials.

Q. What is the status of the plan to four-lane Park Boulevard?

LaDOTD is unaware of plans to four-lane Park Boulevard. It is not a state highway, therefore, if any such work is planned, it would be proposed by and be the responsibility of the City of Baton Rouge.

Q. Is it possible to make March Street one-way into the neighborhood? Exiting from March onto Dalrymple is dangerous.

Since these streets are not state highways, such decisions would have to be made by the City of Baton Rouge.

Q. Why is there no long-range plan to properly address the traffic problems in Baton Rouge? It seems that a loop should be on the drawing board.

The CRPC, Baton Rouge's metropolitan planning organization, maintains and updates long-range transportation plans to address traffic problems in the Baton Rouge area. Such plans are required to identify funding sources for all projects. To date, no priority, traffic study, or funding source has been developed that would cause a loop to be included in the plan.

Q. Why does LaDOTD only look at short-term solutions? The LOS "D" does not seem to be very far-sighted, considering the expense and effort. Would it not be wiser to spend \$200 million on starting a loop around the city?

LOS "D" is not a "short-term solution." It provides for an adequate level of traffic flow along I-10 during worst-case conditions over the next 20 years.

Before federal funds could be dedicated for a loop around Baton Rouge, an EIS would have to be prepared and approved for the project. Three separate studies have previously been conducted examining the effects of a loop on I-10 congestion. All three studies found a loop would not alleviate congestion along I-10. The recently completed MIS for a loop calculated its cost at over \$1 billion, and the study identified extensive environmental impacts and public opposition to a loop.

Q. How was the decision made to proceed with this option?

The project's Steering Committee conducted a screening process that resulted in the recommendation to widen and improve I-10.

A presentation of the study's findings was made to the CRPC Policy Committee in December 1996. The Policy Committee was chaired by Mayor McHugh and consisted of the principal elected officials of area parishes and towns. A motion was made and approved by the Policy Committee to accept the study's recommendations and to proceed with the EIS for the project.

Q. What level of damage (e.g., number of people harmed) from potential chemical truck spills is considered acceptable?

No such criteria have been established. The response to a chemical spill is the responsibility of the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction for I-10.

Q. What hazardous materials are regularly transported on I-10?

Studies to determine this information will be undertaken during the EIS.

Q. Does the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality have any involvement in the approval process?

Yes. The Department of Environmental Quality will review and comment on the DEIS.

Q. When will traffic be back to the current level of service after improvements?

The improvements have been forecast using state-of-the-art travel demand traffic modeling to provide free-flowing traffic over the next 20 years. Traffic along I-10 is functioning presently under stop-and-go conditions during rush hours. With constructed improvements, it would be at least 20 years before traffic may begin to

deteriorate back to present conditions. Additionally, traffic and congestion management measures such as a traffic control center, incident management, ramp metering, improvements to routes that furnish similar service to I-10, increased transit usage all can extend the time for satisfactory performance of the proposed improvements.

Q. Were sound contours completed 10-to-12 years ago in the University Lakes area?

If so, there is no documentation of this work.

Q. Will the geologic fault in the University Lakes area have an impact on the project?

The effects of this fault will be examined during the preparation of the EIS.

Q. Who is funding the I-10 corridor study?

The study is being funded 80 percent with Federal Aid Highway funds and 20 percent with state funds.

Q. Where will construction begin?

This decision has not been made yet, however as a first construction phase, it may be logical to begin at the foot of the Mississippi River Bridge and proceed eastward to the Acadian Thruway interchange.

Q. When did this project begin?

The Major Investment Study for I-10 in Baton Rouge began in the spring of 1995.

Q. Who (names of individuals) made up the Steering Committee?

The following individuals comprised the project steering committee.

Federal Transit Administration.....	Blas Uribe
Lakeshore Civic Association.....	Catherine Schober
Downtown Development District.....	Davis Rhorer
Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.....	Chris Roberie
Capital Transit Corporation	Debbie Moore
Baton Rouge City/Parish Planning Commission	Ellen Miller
Washington Street Area.....	City/Parish Council Member
Louisiana Motor Transport Association	Cathy Geautreaux
Federal Highway Administration	Bill Farr
Port of Greater Baton Rouge	Karen St. Cyr
Capital Region Planning Commission.....	Huey Dugas
Baton Rouge Police Department	Lieutenant Doug Cain
Baton Rouge Mayor's Office	Jim Brewer
Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce.....	Don Powers
LaDOTD Environmental Section	Michele Deshorts (Chairperson)
LaDOTD Road Design Section	Guy Leonard
LaDOTD Bridge Section	David Miller
LaDOTD Geometric Section	Nick Kalivoda
LaDOTD Planning Division	Coan Bueche (Chairperson)

community awareness meetings and design charrettes



Signing-in before the introductory meeting for the District 1 Community Design Charrette



University Lakes area residents examining the project model during the District 2 Community Design Charrette

The data collected from the Community Awareness Meetings, Community Design Charrettes, and written comments has not been analyzed due to the project being withdrawn from the MPO Plan; however it is possible to make some observations concerning the public involvement activities to date.

Sound Walls

The four districts of the corridor have concerns distinct to their neighborhood, which are not common to the entire corridor. One exception to this is a common concern about greater noise levels as a result of increased traffic. This resulted in discussions about installation of sound walls in every District's Community Design Charrette. As a result of community concern over this issue, OCDD completed preliminary research on sound walls and prepared a source guide and bibliography (see Appendix) in anticipation of a series of neighborhood meetings focused on this topic.

Alternate Design Proposals

Citizen input also played a large role in developing alternate design proposals. In District 1, considerable attention was focused on the manner in which non-local traffic moved through the neighborhood. This situation coupled with difficult automobile circulation for vehicles dropping off or picking up students at McKinley Middle Magnet School lead to an alternate interchange proposal which was developed in greater detail by Gulf Engineers and Consultants (GEC).

community awareness meetings and design charrettes

A similar situation occurred in District 2. Because the greatest concern of residents in that district was the impact on the shopping district, an alternate proposal was developed that eliminated impact to all but one business. This proposal was also developed in greater detail by GEC.

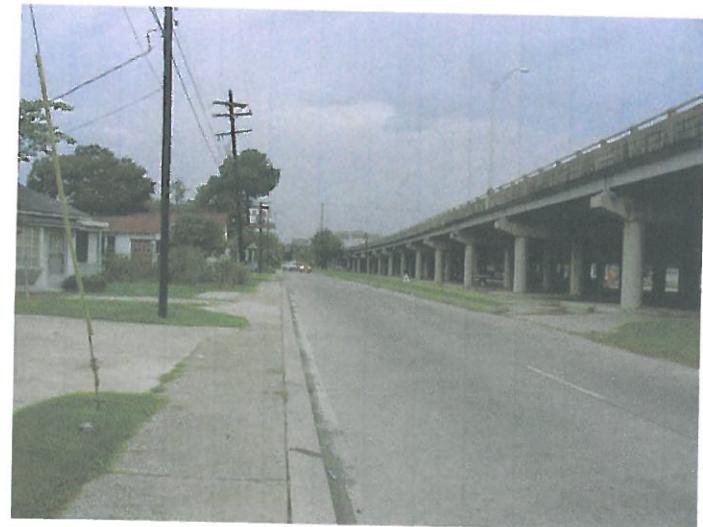
Conceptual Drawings

On the following pages are samples of the conceptual drawings generated at each of the four District's Community Design Charrettes. None have been developed in detail but they represent a cross-section of the work completed during the Community Design Charrettes.

DISTRICT 1: WASHINGTON STREET

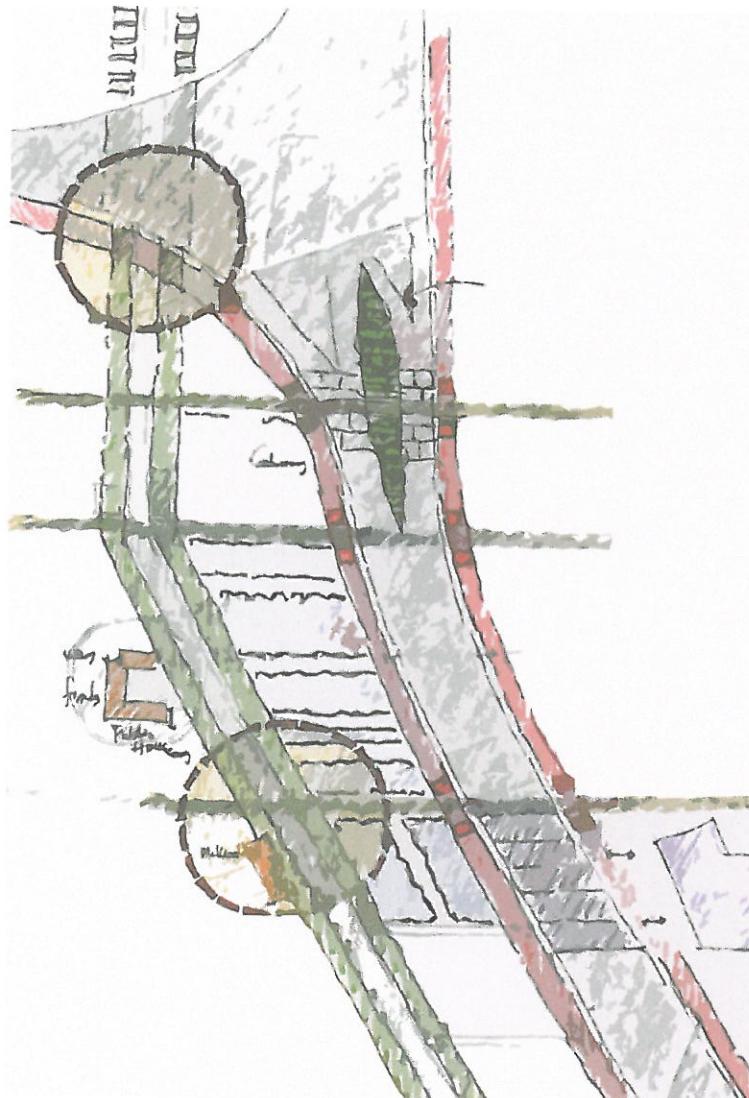


Aerial Map of District One showing proposed design changes developed from community input. The proposal includes an alternate "east-on" strategy from Dalrymple Drive, reconfigured entrances and exits on Washington Street to minimize excess traffic in neighborhoods, and improved circulation for bus and vehicle traffic around the McKinley Middle Magnet School. (Aerial Map Prepared by Gulf Engineering Consultants)



View down Braddock Street looking north in District 1

community awareness meetings and design charrettes



Design sketch from a focused design session during the District 1 Community Design Charrette examining neighborhood connectivity under the elevated portion of I-10.

COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARRETTE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5 • FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6 • SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7

Location: I-10 Corridor Study Project Office, 4347 Perkins Road, 219-0319 (gr)

DISTRICT 1: WASHINGTON STREET

Mississippi River Bridge to Carolina Street

Please join us for the neighborhood connectivity design charrette. This event provides an opportunity for you to share, discuss, and refine your ideas about the proposed project, and participate in a variety of hands-on design activities that will document your recommendations. The following activities are scheduled during the community design charrette:

- Ideas Forums
A discussion group to generate ideas about a specific topic
- Focused Design Sessions
A design activity to develop ideas about a specific topic
- Open Design Sessions
A design activity to refine individual ideas
- Neighborhood Walks
On site discussion of the proposed project
- Impacted Property Owner's Meetings
- Individual meetings regarding the proposed impact on adjacent property
- Children's Design Session
Children explore planning ideas in their neighborhood

I-10 CORRIDOR STUDY

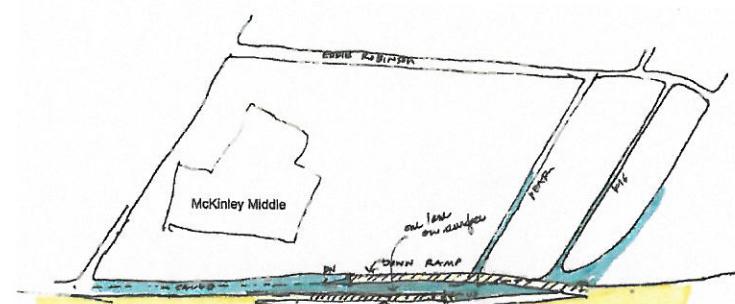
TRANSPORTATION TO THE PROJECT OFFICE
WILL LEAVE THE DIXIE LEG BUTLER COMMUNITY CENTER
EVERY HOUR ON THE HALF HOUR
Friday, October 6, beginning at 9:30 AM
Saturday, October 7, beginning at 7:30 AM

Please mark your calendar!!

See reverse side for the schedule of events

Sponsored by the City of New Orleans Office of Community Design and Development ocdd.nola.gov

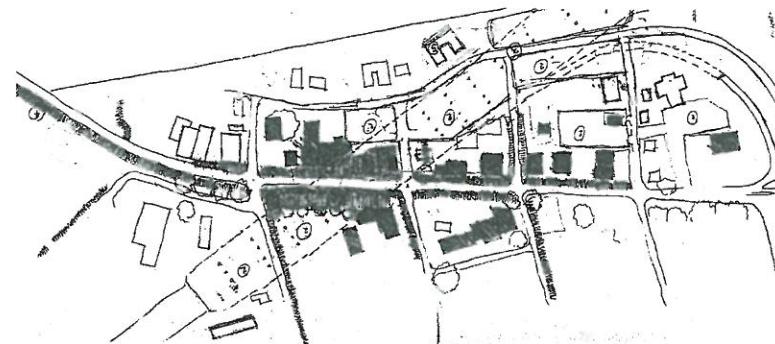
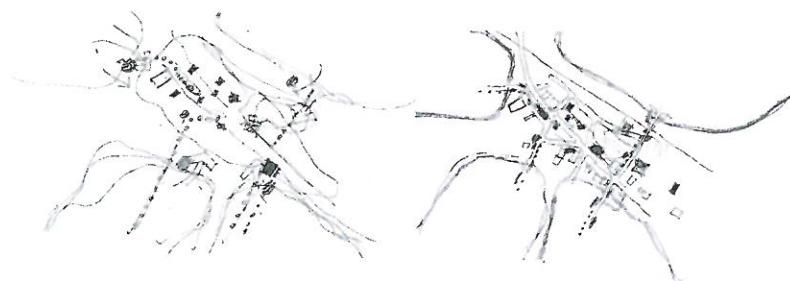
Flyer distributed in the neighborhoods for District 1 Community Design Charrette.



This reduces problem with children crossing lawns and cars nervous
need to perform a traffic study to determine if appropriate.

Design sketch from District 1 Focused Design Session

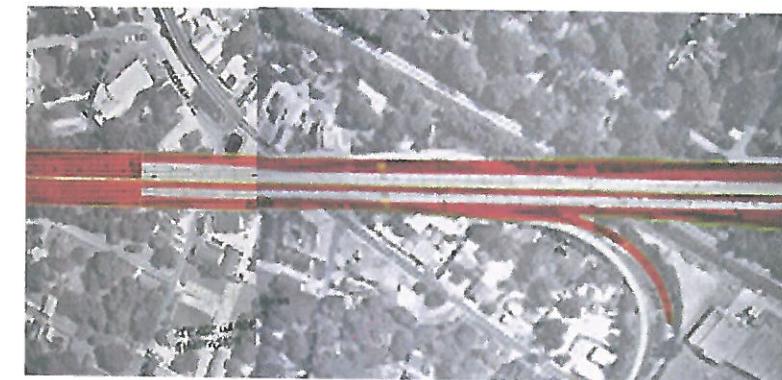
DISTRICT 2: UNIVERSITY LAKES / PERKINS ROAD



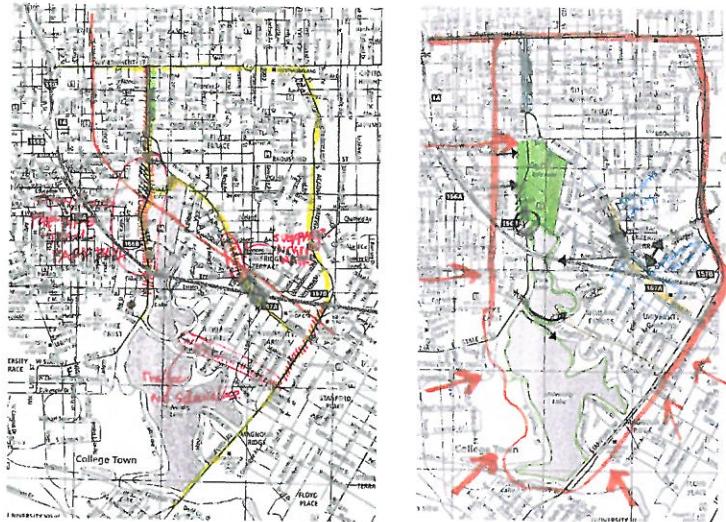
Planning sketches from the Focused Design Sessions at the District 2 Community Design Charrette, examining pedestrian and bicycle circulation feeding into the business district



Concept sketch of Perkins Road Business District



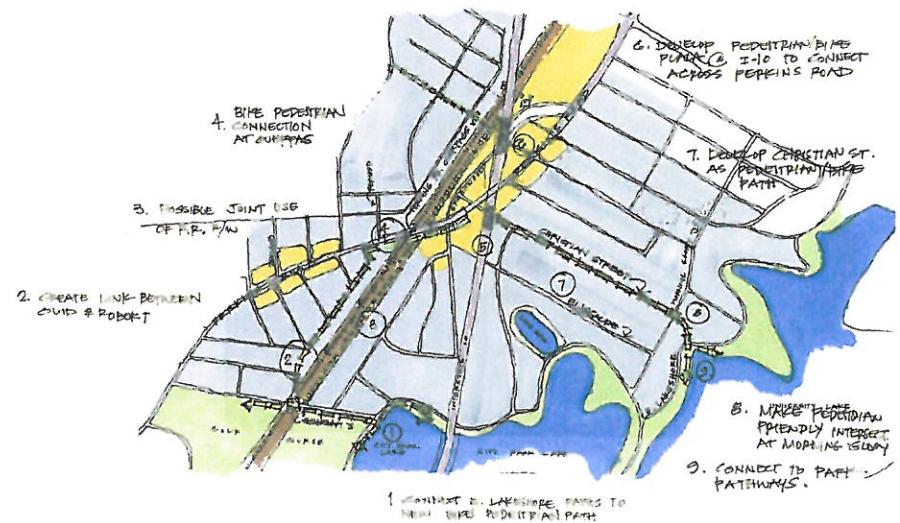
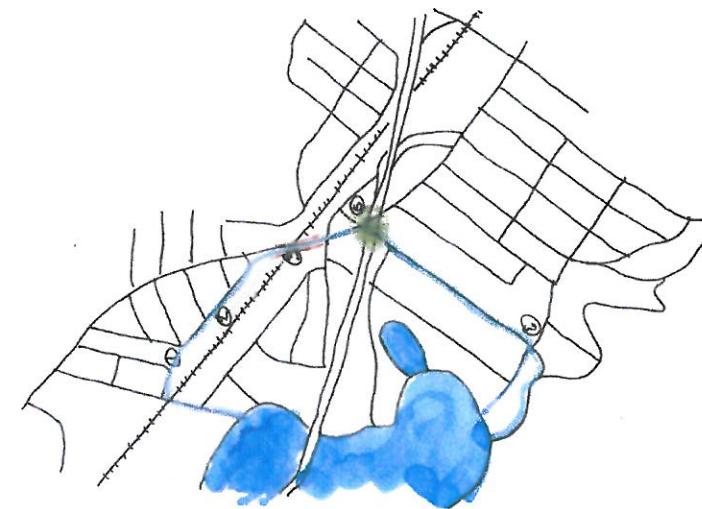
Aerial map of Perkins Road Business District area showing proposed design changes developed from community input. The Proposal eliminates the westbound on-ramp and makes most improvements within existing right of way by re-engineering this section of the highway. This proposal eliminated the need to physically alter any building in the District except for the rear 3'-0" of the Zee-Zee Gardens building. (Aerial Map prepared by Gulf Engineering and Consultants)

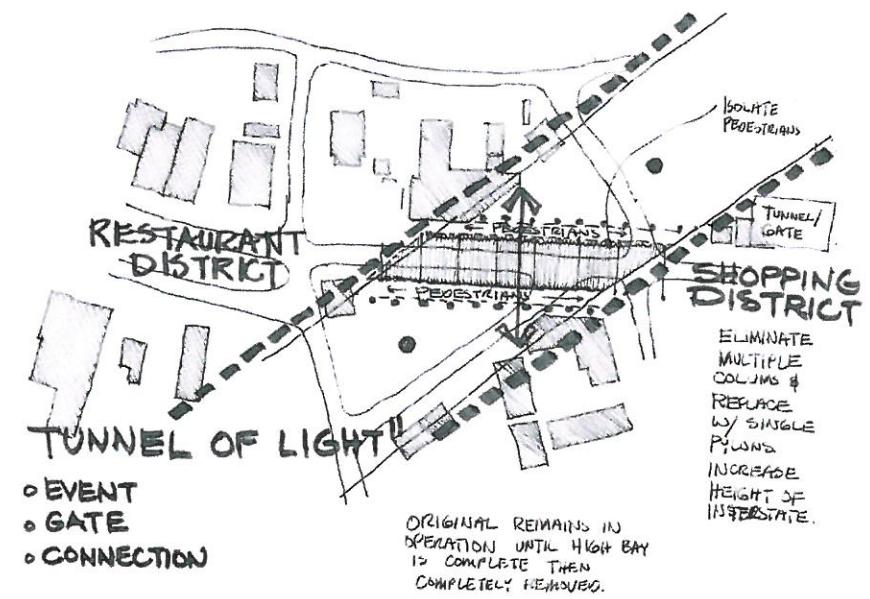
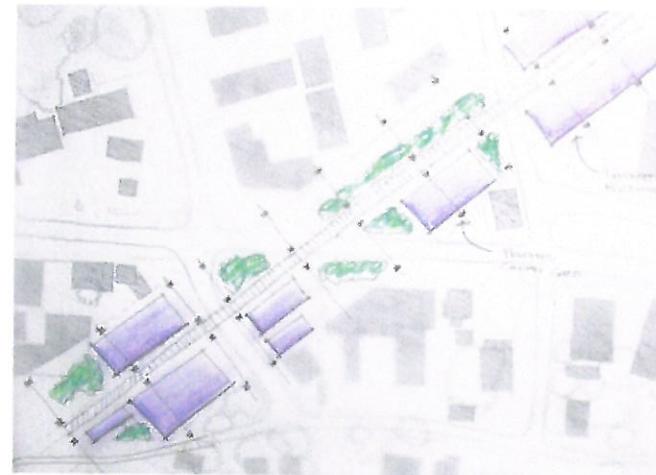


Sketches from the Focused Design Sessions at the District 2 Community Design Charrette examining potential pedestrian/bike routes between City Park and Acadian Thruway along the I-10 corridor.



Neighborhood tour of District 2, University Lakes



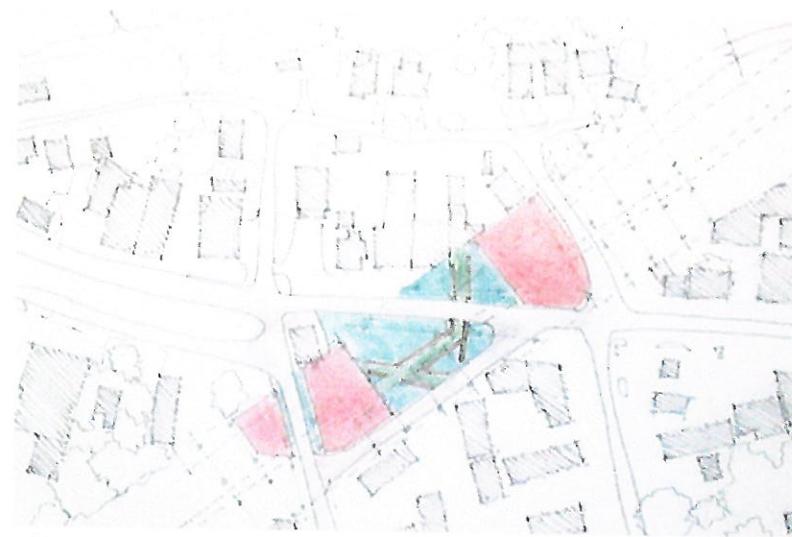


Design sketches from the District 2 Community Design Charrette examining the impact of the project on light under the elevated section of I-10 at Perkins Road

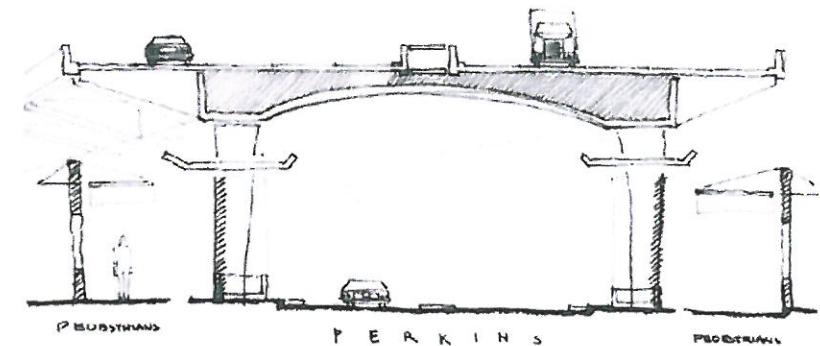
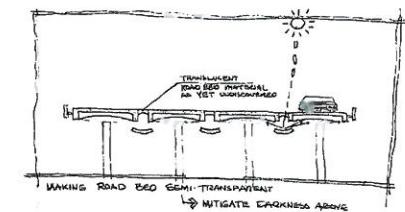
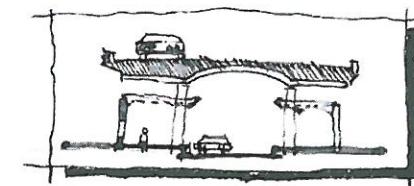
community awareness meetings and design charrettes



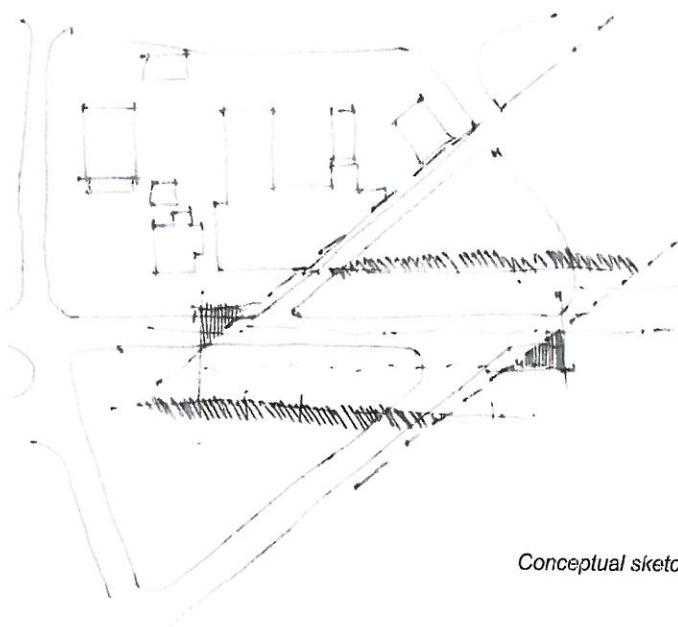
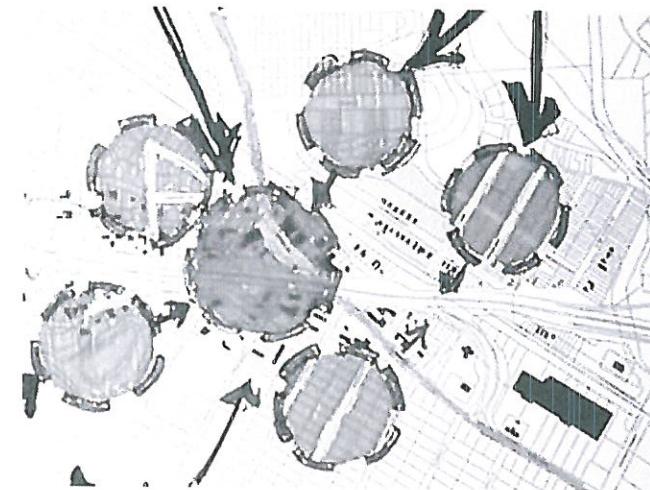
Mr. Phil Meyers (GEC), Jack Ford (CSRS), and Matthew Dunn (OCDD) investigate alternatives during an open design session at the District 2 Community Design Charrette



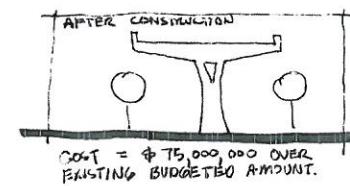
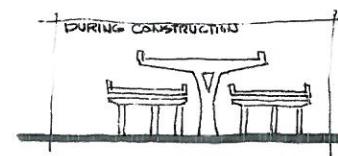
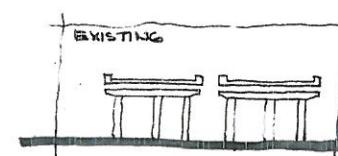
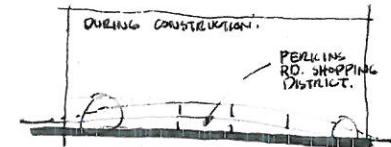
Sketch examining improved circulation on local streets in the Perkins Road business district



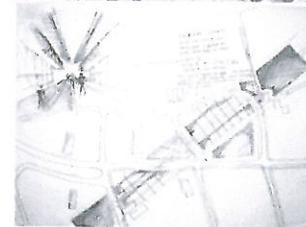
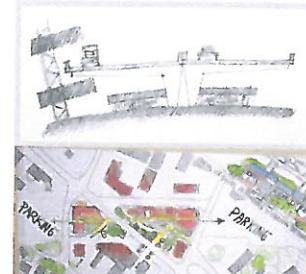
Design sketches from the District 2 Community Design Charrette examining the effects of raising the I-10 roadbed.



NEW CONCERN:
HOW RESIDENCES AT LSU
LAKES CAN SEE
INTERSTATE. IS THIS WORTH
HELPING PERKINS RD. SHOPPING?

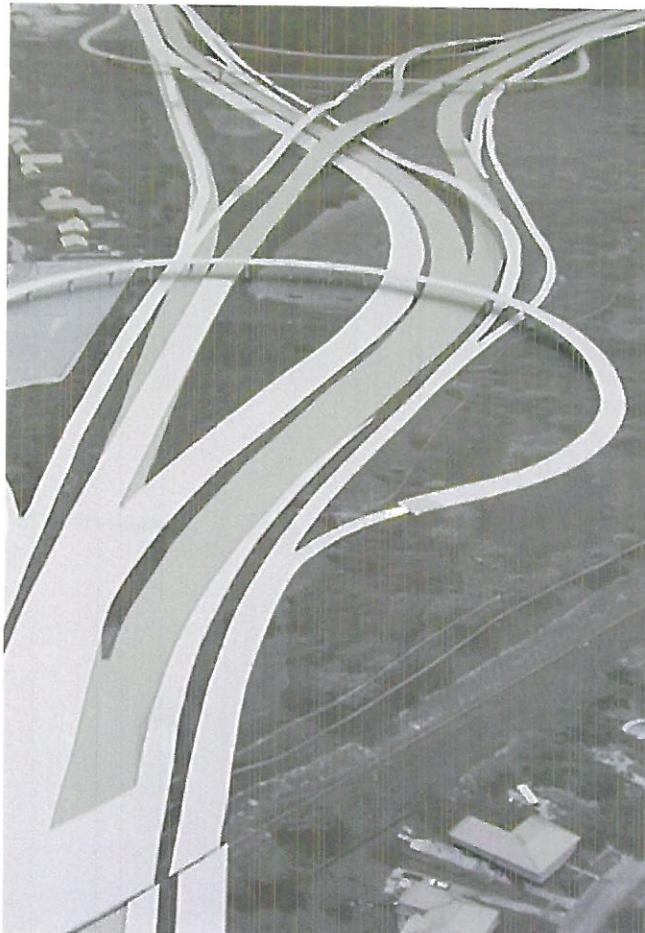


COST = \$75,000,000 OVER
EXISTING BUDGETED AMOUNT.

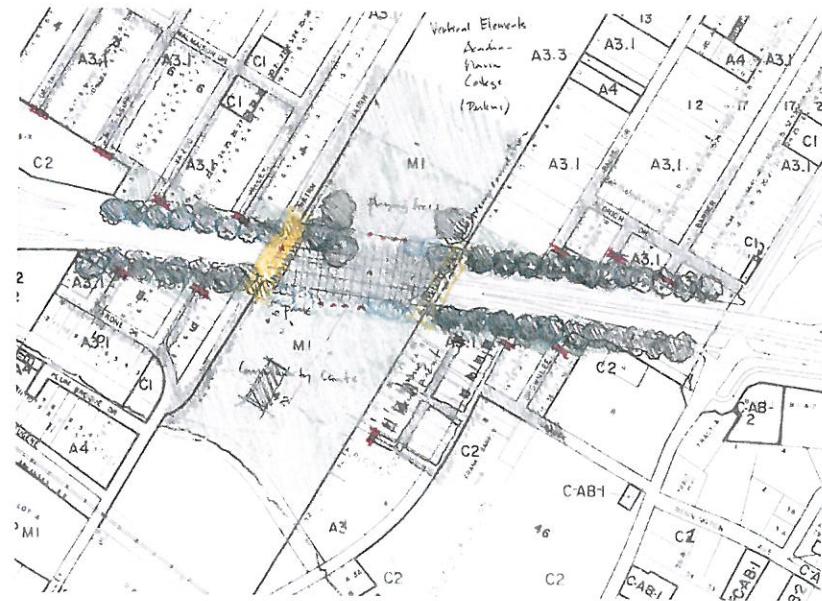


Conceptual sketches from District 2 Community Design Charrette

DISTRICT 3: COLLEGE DRIVE



District 3 section of the project model depicting the existing and proposed conditions



Design sketch from a Focused Design Session at the District 3 Community Design Charrette showing a proposal for an elevated park connecting two neighborhoods divided by I-10



Neighborhood Tour during the District 3 Community Design Charrette

community awareness meetings and design charrettes

DISTRICT 4: ESSEN LANE



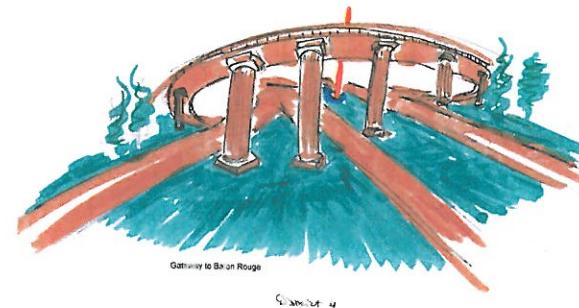
Professor Van Cox (LSU) discusses a master plan for City Park during an Idea Forum at the District 4 Community Design Charrette



Focused Design Session at the District 4 Community Design Charrette



Design concept for water feature and column design at proposed fly-over in District 4



At both the Community Awareness Meetings and Community Design Charrettes, the most frequently cited concerns involved issues that can be loosely defined as “quality of life issues.” However, many of the concerns resulted from project misinformation rather than actual project impacts. Without completing the data analysis it is not possible to determine whether the largely negative responses to the project are representative of the population in the corridor. The data analysis was not completed due to the project being withdrawn from the MPO Plan. Although a significant number of the citizens were vocal opponents, OCDD believes their highly publicized objection has deterred proponents from voicing their opinions regarding the proposed expansion.

Based on meetings with traffic, fire, emergency medical services, and hazardous materials representatives, the proposed highway expansion would improve safety on the interstate and through adjacent neighborhoods.

Although the public involvement process has served to reduce the number of public misconceptions concerning the project, many of the project opponents continue to focus on exaggerated claims of community impacts. This is true for the entire corridor but is most severe in the University Lakes and Perkins Road area. The two most common misconceptions concerning the project are as follows:

1. People believe that many houses will be destroyed and residents will be displaced as a result of the project. The facts are that 29 buildings are directly impacted in the entire corridor. A number

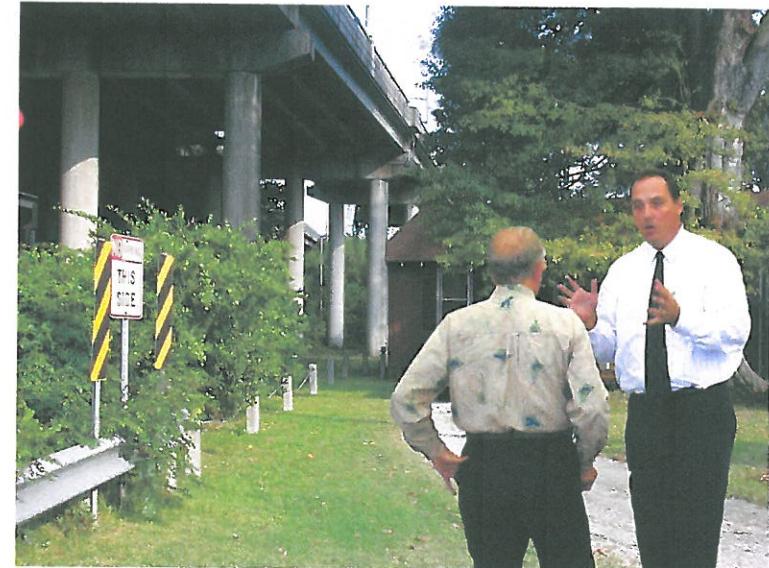
of these are abandoned, and the majority of the impacted homeowners that OCDD was able to contact were not opposed to fair market value buy-outs of their property.

2. The area of greatest vocal concern was the Perkins Road Shopping District. The public perception was that most businesses in the district would be destroyed, and construction would close Perkins Road to vehicular traffic. Although the initial proposal would have impacted several businesses, a redesign of the section of the highway in the area, and the possible elimination of the Perkins Road west-bound on ramp, resulted in 90% of the work falling within existing right of way, no businesses being removed, and one business requiring modification to the rear of its building (less than four feet). In addition, Perkins Road would only be closed for short intervals during construction when major structural elements were being placed or poured, and those periods would have been coordinated with business owners.

Because the public involvement process is incomplete no definitive conclusions can be made at this point. However, it is believed that the majority of identified impacts in the project corridor can be successfully mitigated. By using highway funds and associated grant funds, significant contributions to the physical character and quality of the abutting and impacted neighborhoods are possible. These contributions

community awareness meetings and design charrettes

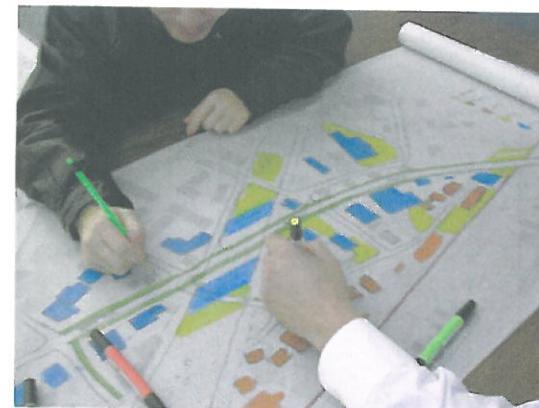
consist of, but are not limited to, improvements such as enhanced paving, public parking, lighting, landscaping, seating, potential noise and sound barriers, and possible joint use arrangements for space below the elevated portions of the highway.



Mr. Phil Meyers (GEC) discusses the I-10 proposal for District 2



Meeting regarding District 1 with the Senior Citizens at the Leo Butler Center, September 2000



LSU architecture students working on a design concept during the District 2 Community Design Charrette

Despite considerable organized opposition, successful public involvement was achieved. The OCDD facilitated one Community Awareness Meeting and a three or four-day Community Design Charrette for each of the four districts in the I-10 project corridor. In addition to scheduled events, additional meetings were held with neighborhood groups, as were meetings with fire, police, emergency medical services and hazardous material unit representatives. During the public involvement period 564 people attended the Community Awareness Meetings, 193 people attended the Community Design Charettes, and 270 people visited the project office.

The public involvement process is not complete because the LADOTD was forced to suspended work on the EIS after the Metropolitan Planning Organization voted to not support the project in their long-range transportation plan. At the time the EIS was suspended, the OCDD had successfully:

- Gathered input from the community through neighborhood meetings, written and video comments
- Held six Community Awareness Meetings
- Sponsored four Community Design Charettes to provide residents an opportunity to work with professionals to explore ideas that mitigate the impacts of the proposed highway expansion, and



Staff preparing for the District 2 Community Design Charrette

- Organized and classified the data collected to the date of the project suspension.

The work remaining to be completed, should the project be reactivated consists of:

- Analysis of the data collected during the Community Awareness Meetings, Community Design Charrettes, and written comments,
- Development of a master plan of the corridor using charrette findings and other community input,
- Gathering public input on sound and noise issues and examining methods for mitigation,
- Public presentations of the study outcomes, and
- Preparation of a final report on community concerns and proposals to be incorporated in the EIS.



State Representative William Daniels discusses the proposed project with residents from District 2.

A final comment on the successes of the OCDD public involvement is necessary. The process involved soliciting input from the people most directly affected by the proposed project in order to determine its impacts. The design charrettes and community awareness meetings were instrumental in developing an understanding of the public sentiment. Using the citizen input developed during the design charrettes and community awareness meetings, OCDD, DOTD, FHWA, and the project engineers collaborated to develop alternative design approaches that minimized project impacts and proposed other improvements to improve the environment in the neighborhoods abutting the project corridor.

Even though the process resulted in resolving most of the identified impacts, there remained a number of community groups and/or individuals that expressed opposition to the project. As the ideas for mitigation became known, attitudes about the project began to change, and by the end of the OCDD public involvement phase, proponents of the project began to step forward. Unfortunately the intensity of the debate and a small but well-organized opposition created an unfavorable political environment for the project. This was exacerbated because some of the early public involvement activities took place during a local election period and the project itself became a campaign issue. Some citizens expressed their opposition, and the winning mayoral candidate responded by opposing key elements of the proposed project.

The climax to the political opposition occurred on January 18, 2001, at public meeting about the project. At that meeting, several local and

state elected officials announced their opposition to key elements of the project.

Shortly thereafter, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, chaired by Mayor Simpson, did not adopt the project as part of the MPO's Long-range Plan. This resulted in the Secretary of DOTD suspending work on the EIS.

Because the EIS process was stopped prior to completion, it is valuable to reflect on the issues that contributed to this action. First, opposition to the project resulted in creating a negative political environment that generated momentum that was impossible to overcome. Even though the preliminary results of the OCDD's public involvement process indicated that many of the project impacts could be mitigated. Second, project suspension does not solve any of the problems identified in the Major Investment Study, and the problems will only be exacerbated. Unfortunately, many citizens still believed that a loop around the City would solve the problems and permit the project corridor to remain unchanged. This perception was fueled by both the political debate and media coverage of the project without regard for the multiple studies that clearly stated otherwise. Third, the public is aware that there are problems that need to be corrected, and paradoxically, there is considerable sentiment that "something" needs to be done to alleviate the congestion and traffic safety problems. Finally, because the public did not have an opportunity to evaluate and comment on the results of the

public involvement they may not perceive the public involvement process as a valuable tool for developing consensus for future projects.

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(ABSTRACT: Vol. 1 surveys a variety of user-friendly community planning and design ideas. Vol. 2 explores the ideas in more detail, and offers specific strategies for public officials, planners, developers and citizens for making their communities more transit-compatible.)

A Guidebook for School Pedestrian Safety. Olympia: Washington State Department of Transportation Traffic Office, 1995. (ABSTRACT: A guidebook designed to

precedent review bibliography

- provide direction on how to develop and implement school walk routes, identify pedestrian safety deficiencies along school walk routes, and suggest remedial actions. Available from WSDOT Traffic Office, 505 E. Union St., Olympia, WA 98504-6826.)
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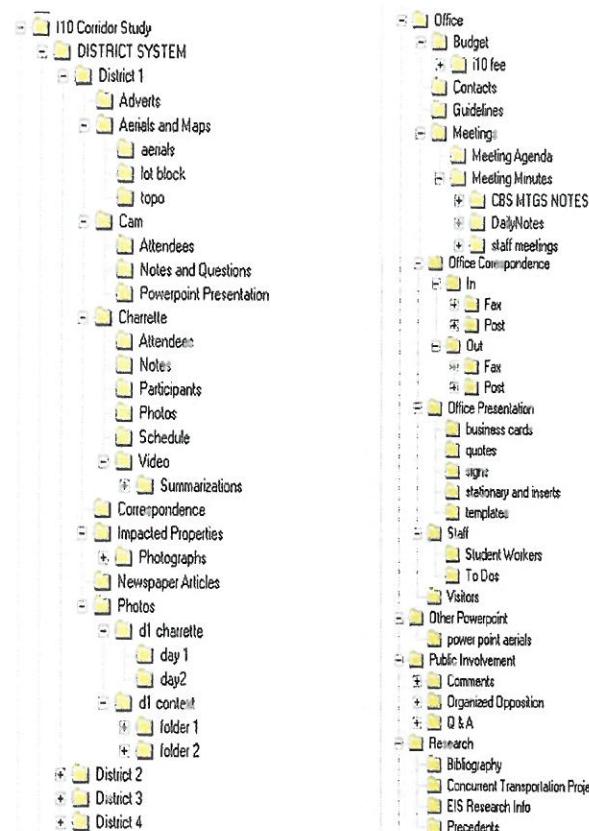
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The index of folders is the contents of the digital database of information for this project. These files are included on three compact disks. In addition, the most frequently accessed information is available in a summary format on the project website which can be accessed at www.ocdd.lsu.edu.



The resource material for this project is archived at LADOTD and consists of:

- 3 compact disks containing project files and digital photographs
- 1" = 50" scale model of the project corridor, in packing crates (located at the Florida Street LADOTD office)
- 10' - 0" x 50' - 0" aerial map of the project corridor
- Aerial maps of the project corridor including proposed design changes (on paper, prepared by GEC)
- Project library
- 8mm digital video recordings of the Community Awareness Meetings, Community Design Charrette activities, neighborhood association meetings, and video comments from citizens (in file boxes)
- Original drawings from the Community Design Charrettes
- Miscellaneous project files and materials in file boxes



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