

A 10-minute
slide presentation
will begin shortly.

Please be seated

Silence

WELCOME

Public Meeting

Florida Avenue Project Environmental Assessment (EA)

September 8, 2016

4:00 PM to 7:00 PM



Florida Avenue Project Environmental Assessment (EA)
Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes, Louisiana
State Project No. H.005720
F.A.P. No. H005720

On behalf of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, we would like to welcome you to the Public Meeting for the Florida Avenue roadway project.

MEETING PURPOSE

- Explain this Project Implementation Step vs. Others
- Share known information about the project alternatives
- Receive your input
 - Questions and Concerns
 - Comment Forms



This project has a long history. Tonight we will explain what is different about this step in the process versus the previous studies.

We also need your help. We need to know your concerns and preferences. This information is an important part of the evaluation, which includes regulatory requirements, engineering standards, consistency with other plans and costs.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

- What is your view on the type and height of the IHNC bridge and why?
- What is your view on the North-South Alternative, and why?
- What issues do you believe the planning team should be considering?



We have some questions for you, which will be shown at the end of this presentation too.

PROJECT HISTORY

NEW ORLEANS MASTER PLAN

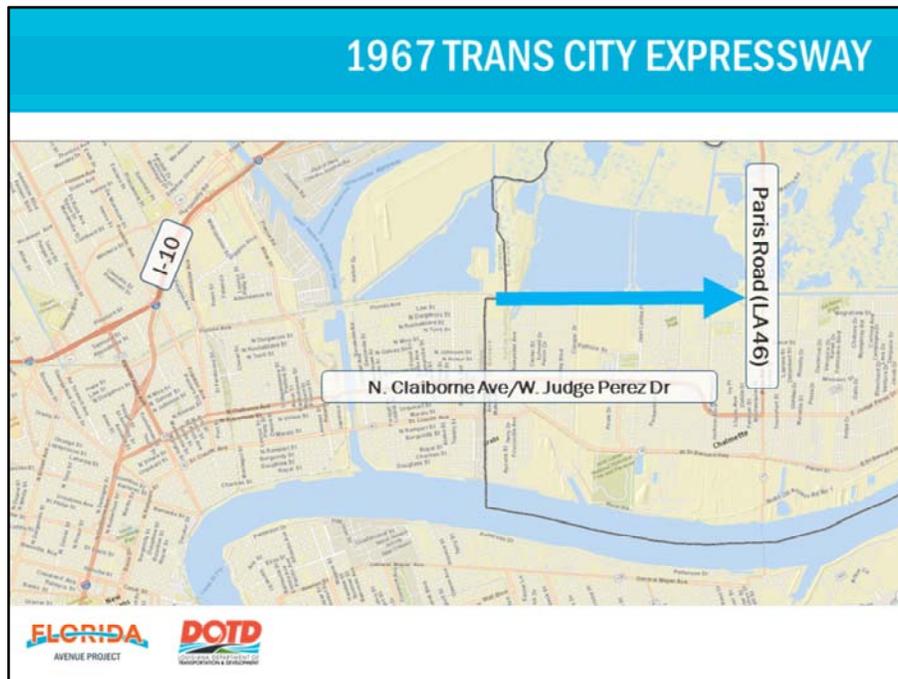
1927 - New Orleans Master Plan



Nolaparkhistory.org



The idea for this project has been around since the early 20th century. The New Orleans 1927 Master Plan included a thoroughfare that extended from West End Blvd. in Orleans Parish to the St. Bernard Parish line.

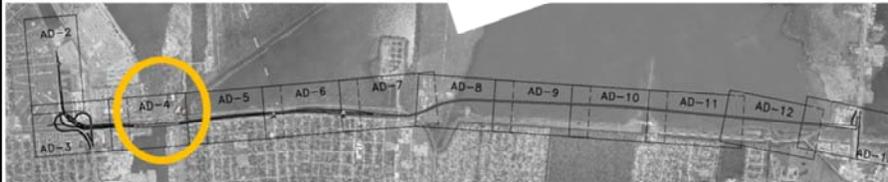


In 1967 the a Trans City Expressway was evaluated. (CLICK) This thoroughfare extended the proposed route in the 1927 master plan to Paris Road in St. Bernard Parish.

In 1985 (CLICK) a corridor study for the current project termini was completed, which proposed construction of a fixed bridge across the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal or IHNC. Construction of the proposed bridge was originally included in the Transportation Infrastructure Model for Economic Development (TIMED) program created by the Louisiana Legislature in 1989. However, construction of the bridge was later placed on hold by LADOTD due to environmental concerns surrounding the project and the need for further studies.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

2005/07 – Project Resumed; Focused on Bridge over
The Inner Harbor Navigational Canal



1996

Project Paused

2003

Project Resumed

2005/07

Environmental
Assessment
Completed

FLORIDA
AVENUE PROJECT

DOTD
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

In 2003 the project resumed with an Environmental Assessment that is completed for all federal actions or funded projects. It was completed in 2005, and amended in 2007. (CLICK) The 2007 environmental assessment focused on the bridge over the IHNC. Connections to Florida Avenue were considered secondary features.



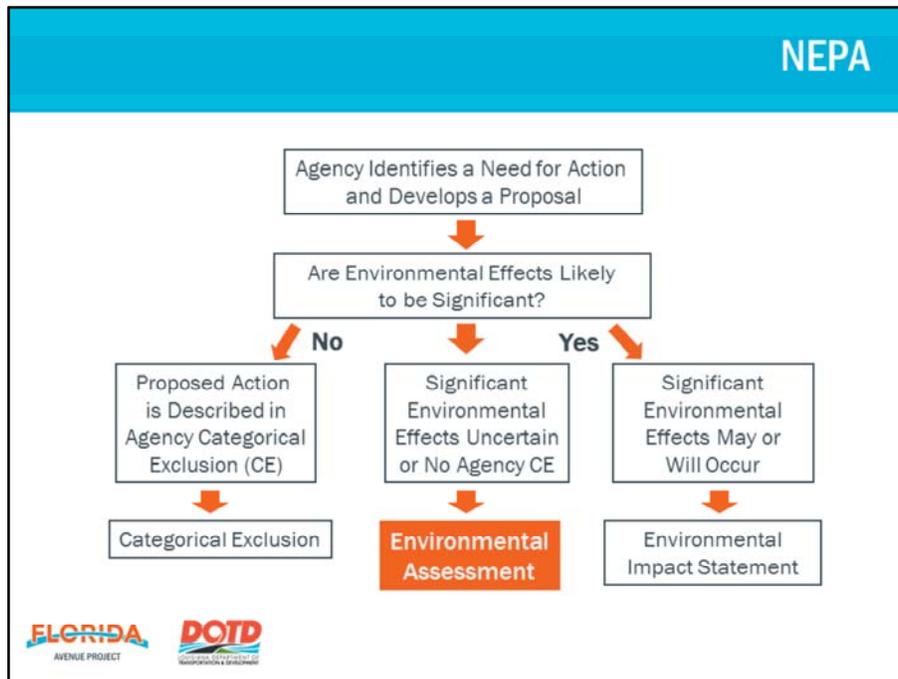
In 2013, (CLICK) LADOTD revisited the project to identify cost saving opportunities. The alternative from 2007, which included an elevated section through the central wetlands, north of the 40 Arpent Canal in St. Bernard Parish was reconfigured as an at-grade roadway (CLICK).

The study underway now, is the next step toward federal approval and construction.



WHAT ARE THE STUDY OBJECTIVES?

Pause – So what is the project team trying to accomplish?



This step in the implementation is required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). NEPA requires that a federally funded action or project must to be evaluated on its merits. The evaluation objective is to improve federal funding and action decisions based on planning data and analyses; and upon agency, official and public input.

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and the Federal Highway Administration have determined that the significance of potential impacts is uncertain for this project, so an Environmental Assessment or EA is the appropriate level of study.

PROJECT PURPOSE

Purpose

- Reevaluate the proposed action in the 2007 Final EA and analyze additional bridge alts. to ID overall cost savings.

Need

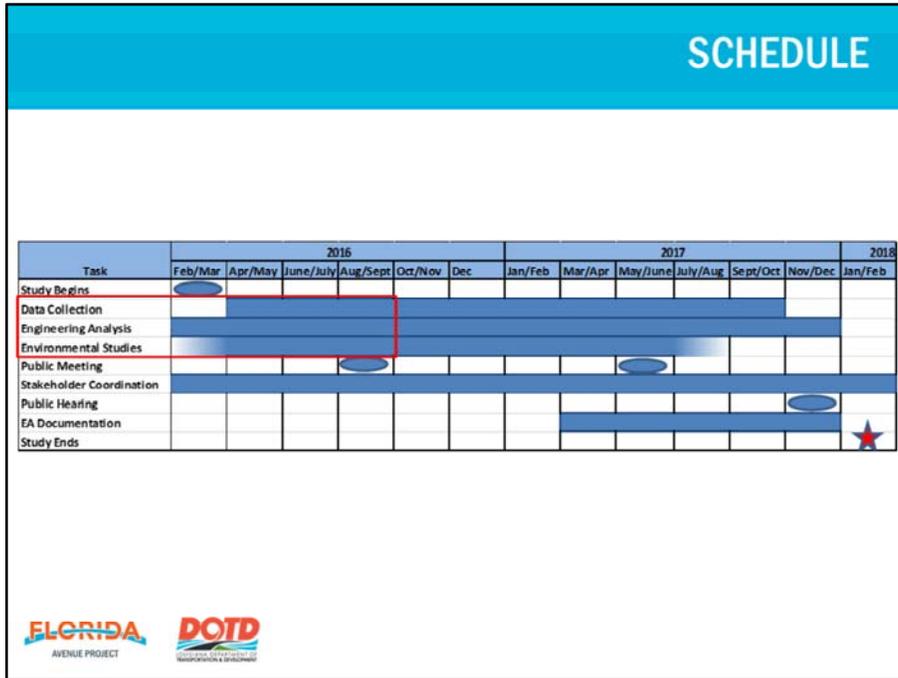
- Provide a reliable Florida Avenue connection from Elysian Fields Ave. to Paris Rd.
- Provide an optimal north/south connection from Florida Ave. to the Port of St. Bernard, and build a new roadway bridge over the IHNC adjacent to the existing Florida Ave. Bridge.



A key feature of the NEPA process is the establishment of the project purpose and need.

Needs for the project are to

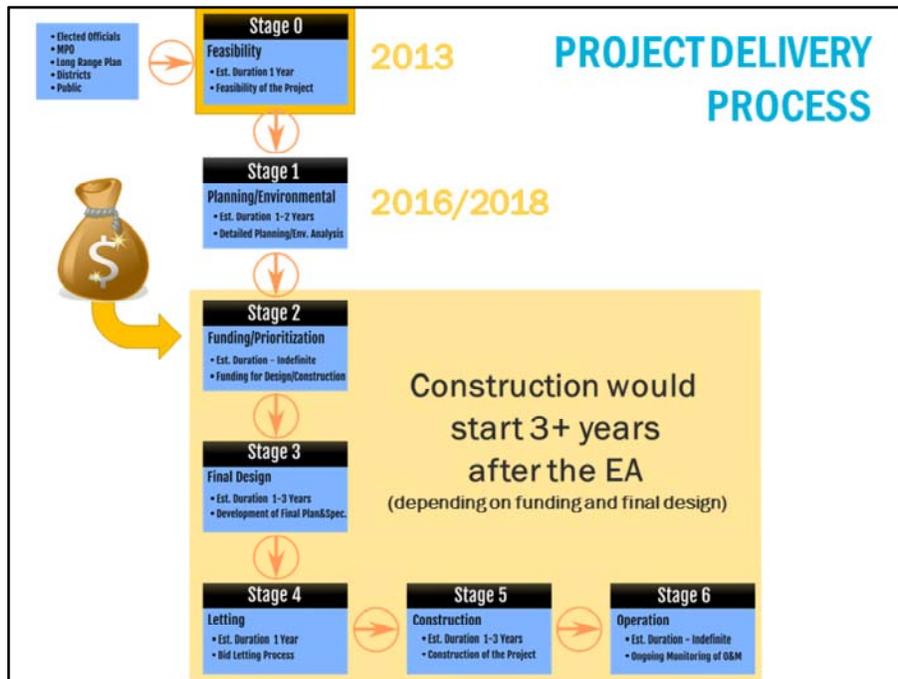
- provide a reliable Florida Avenue connection from Elysian Fields Ave. to Paris Rd.
- And to provide an optimal north/south connection and new bridge over the IHNC.



The environmental assessment process varies in length but typically ranges from 1 to 2 years. The schedule for this study includes many activities that are dependent upon others.

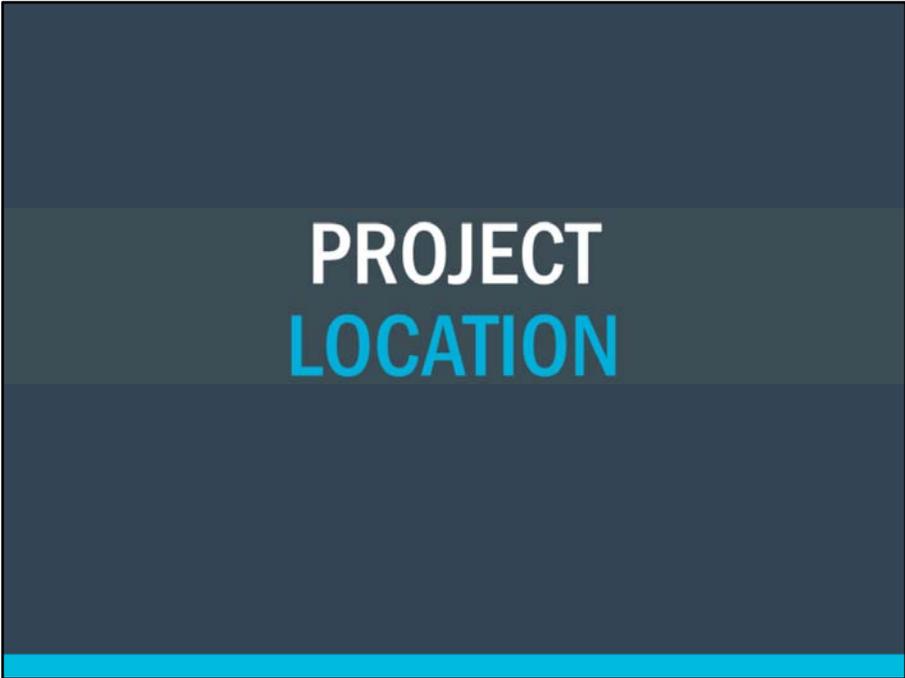
We are currently at the Data Collection, Engineering, and Environmental studies stage.
(CLICK)

The study is anticipated to be completed in February 2018.

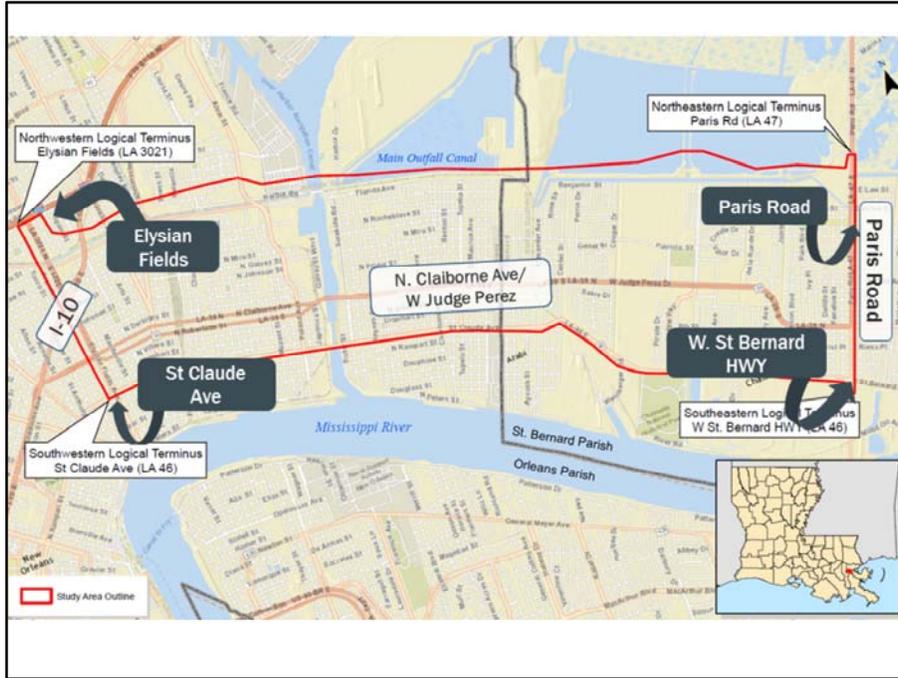


Each LADOTD project goes through these seven stages of the project delivery process. (CLICK)The 2013 study was stage 0. (CLICK) The current study, or Environmental Assessment is stage 1.

(CLICK) Construction would start 3 or more years after the Environmental Assessment.



**PROJECT
LOCATION**



The project area is located between Elysian Fields Avenue (CLICK) and Paris Road (CLICK), extending south to St. Claude Avenue (CLICK) in Orleans Parish and West St. Bernard HWY (CLICK) in St. Bernard Parish.

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES?

CONCEPT ALIGNMENTS

Table 1. Alternatives Sections Based on the 2013 Stage "0" Feasibility Study

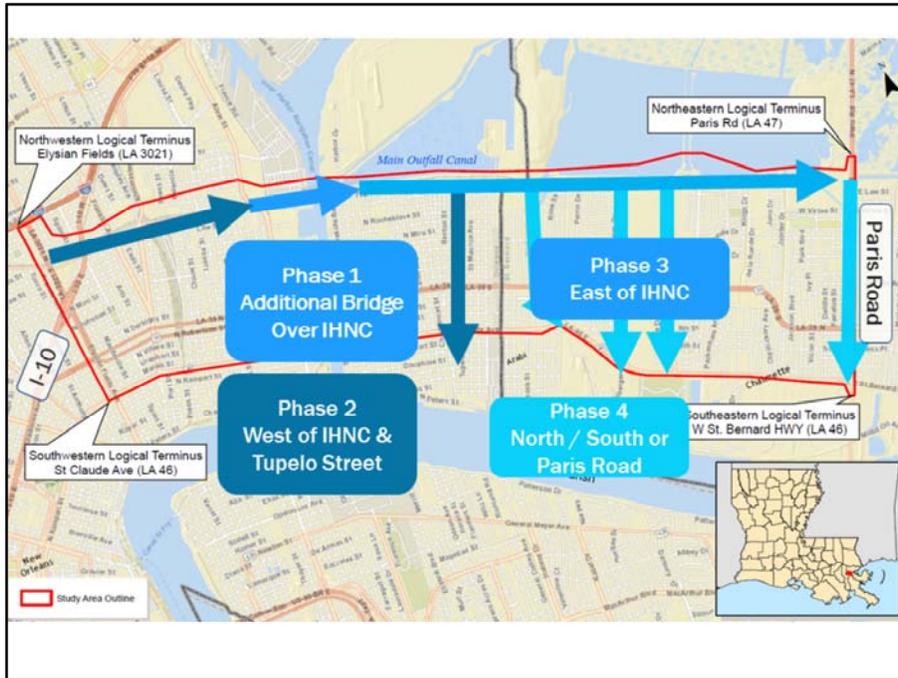
Phase 1 Center Bridge Section	Phase 2 West Section and Tupelo Street	Phase 3 East Section	Phase 4 North/South Section
Fixed Bridge A	Elysian Fields to Alvar Street/Poland Avenue	Caffin Avenue to Paris Road	North/South 1
Fixed Bridge B			North/South 2
Fixed Bridge C	Elysian Fields to Alvar Street/Poland Avenue Elevated		North/South 3
Movable Bridge A/B*			Paris Road Improvements
	Tupelo Street		

*Movable bridge alternatives A and B provide the same traffic configuration, thus, for the current evaluation, they will be treated as the same alternative from a traffic perspective.



The alternatives can be broken down into priority phases for construction as shown here, with the center bridge section having the highest or first priority. Alternatives will initially be evaluated per the purpose and need for the project.

Then, using input from officials, you, and other members of the public the team will consider available environmental and traffic planning data to identify the best alternatives for detailed study.



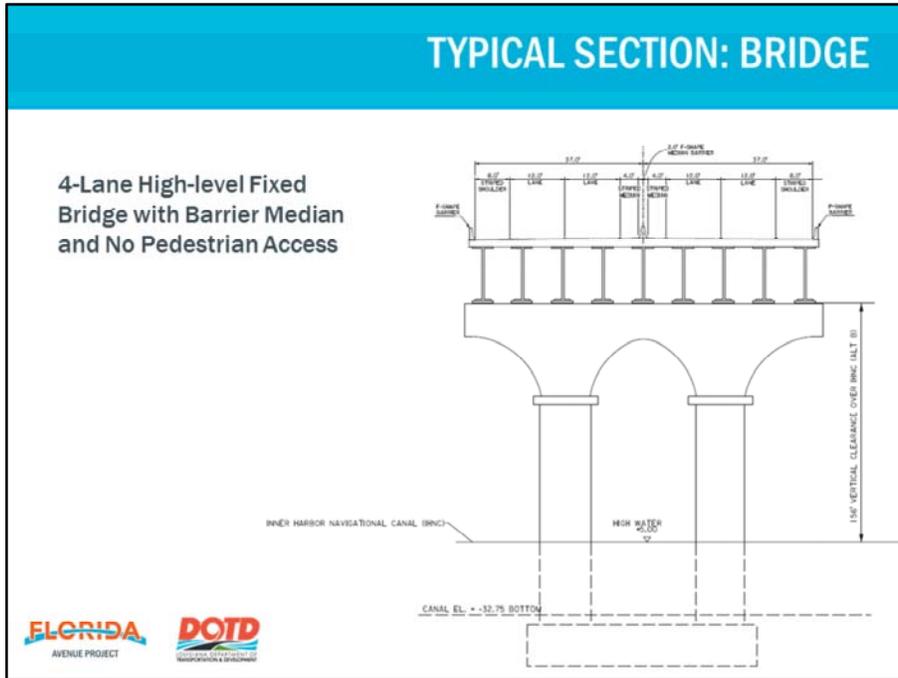
This graphic illustrates the phasing priority of the project.

As noted, the highest priority, Phase 1 (CLICK) includes an additional bridge over the Inter Harbor Navigational Canal. The new bridge will be adjacent to the existing "blue bridge."

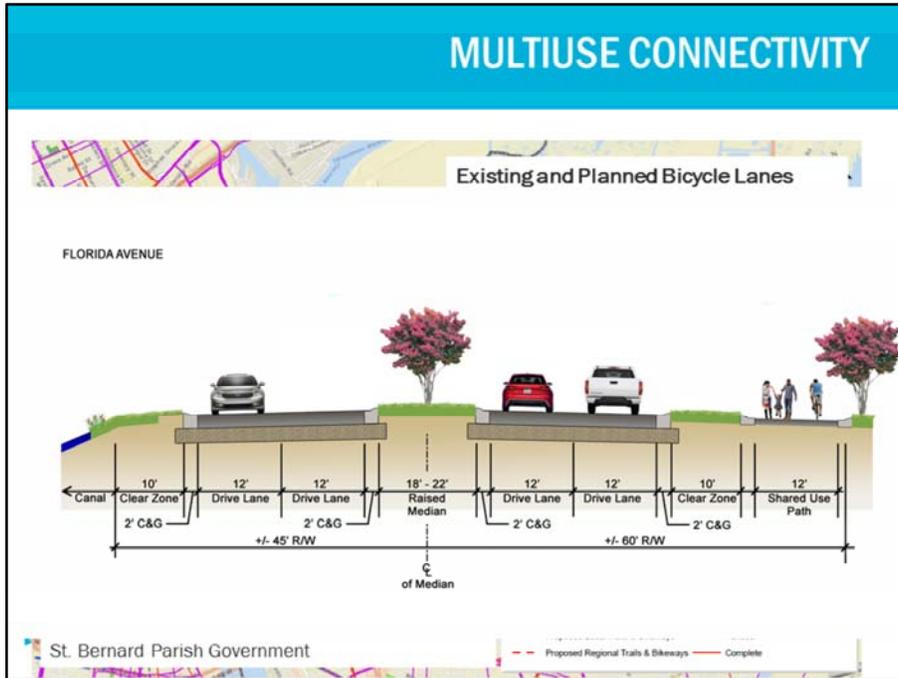
Phase 2 includes (CLICK) improvements to existing Florida Avenue between Elysian Fields and Alvar Street/Poland Avenue. (CLICK) Phase 2 also includes improvements to Tupelo Street.

Phase 3 (CLICK) includes improvements to existing Florida Avenue east of the IHNC in Orleans Parish as well as a new roadway along this alignment in St. Bernard Parish. Current plans show the roadway in St. Bernard Parish will be constructed at-grade and will connect to Paris Road.

Phase 4 (CLICK) includes one of three north/south alternatives that would connect Florida Avenue to St. Claude Avenue/St. Bernard Highway or improvements to Paris Road.



Both a fixed-span and movable bridge designs are being considered for the crossing of the IHNC. The display area contains boards that show what these alternatives would look like. This example typical-section illustrates the cross-section for the fixed bridge alternatives. For safety reasons, bicycle and pedestrian access across the high-level fixed bridge would not be permitted.



The project team is aware of local plans for bicyclists and pedestrians. The New Orleans 2030 Master Plan as well as St. Bernard Parish’s 2014 Comprehensive Plan include planned bicycle lanes along Florida Avenue and the Florida Walk Canal respectively.

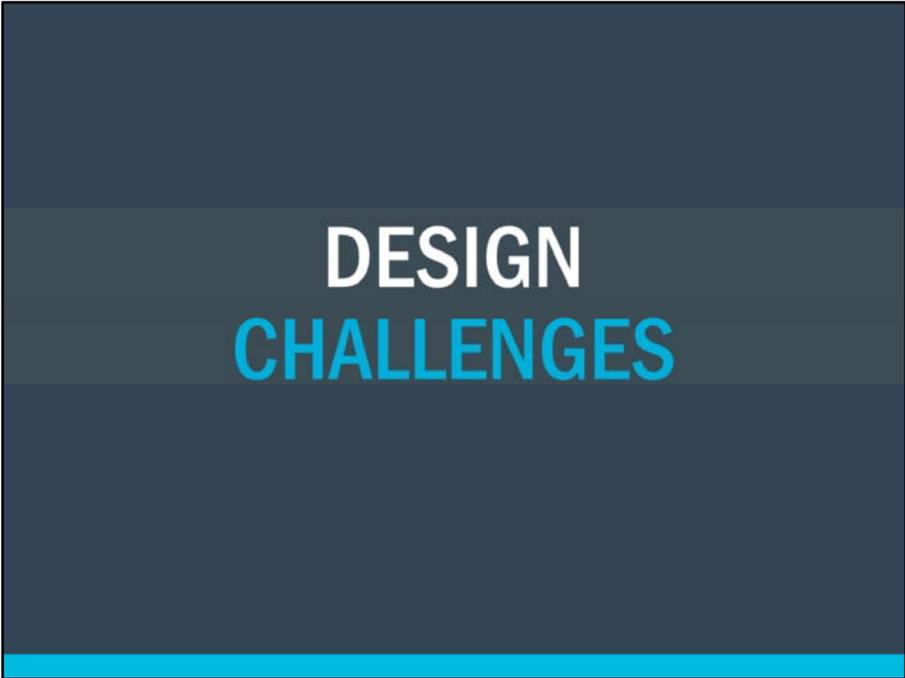
In keeping with the plans of the local governments and following the LADOTD complete streets guidelines, the proposed Florida Avenue project will implement multiuse pedestrian paths along corridor (CLICK).

ALTERNATIVES SCREENING

- Type of Bridge
- Height of Bridge
- N-S Alternative
- Traffic Configuration
- Community Impacts
- Environmental Regulations
- Costs

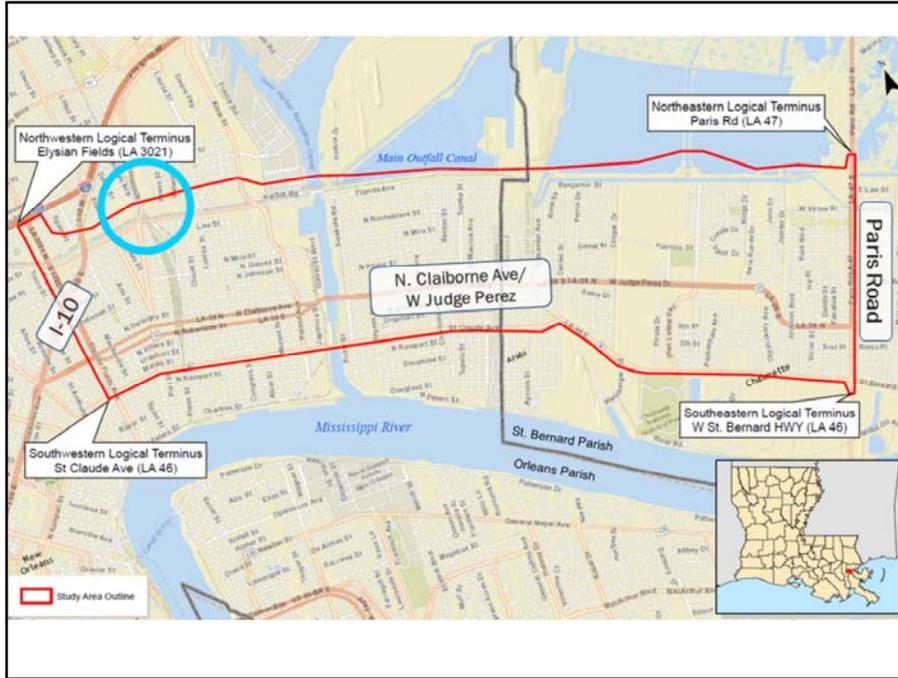


As noted, beneficial and adverse effects of the preliminary alternatives on display tonight will be compared to each other. Using public and official input and available technical information, some alternatives and options will be omitted from further considerations; others will be retained for detailed study.

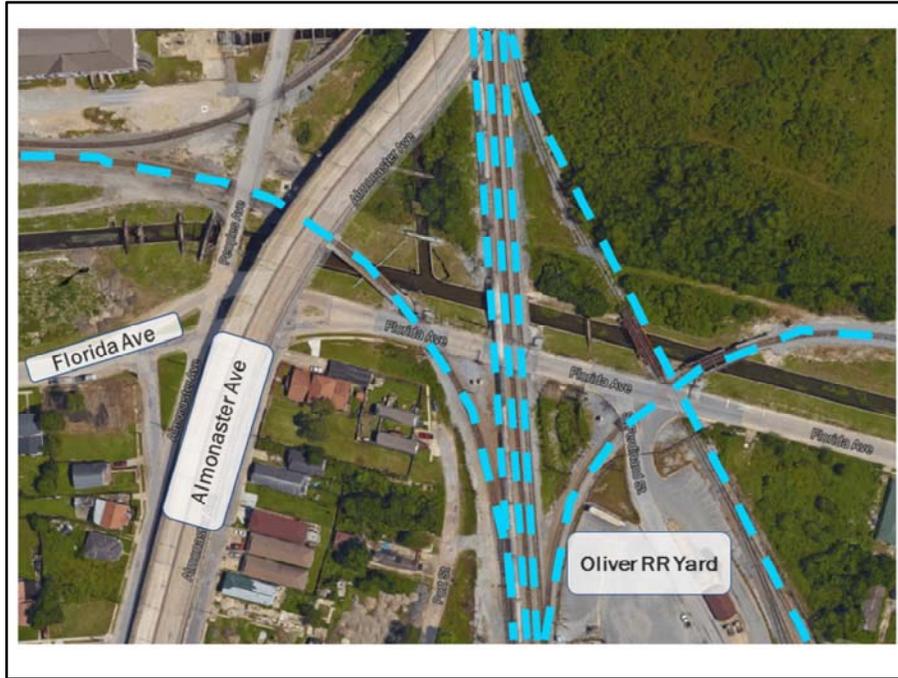


DESIGN CHALLENGES

Throughout the environmental assessment process, the project team will be faced with challenges. An important step in resolving these issues is early identification of challenges and seeking government, agency, and public input.

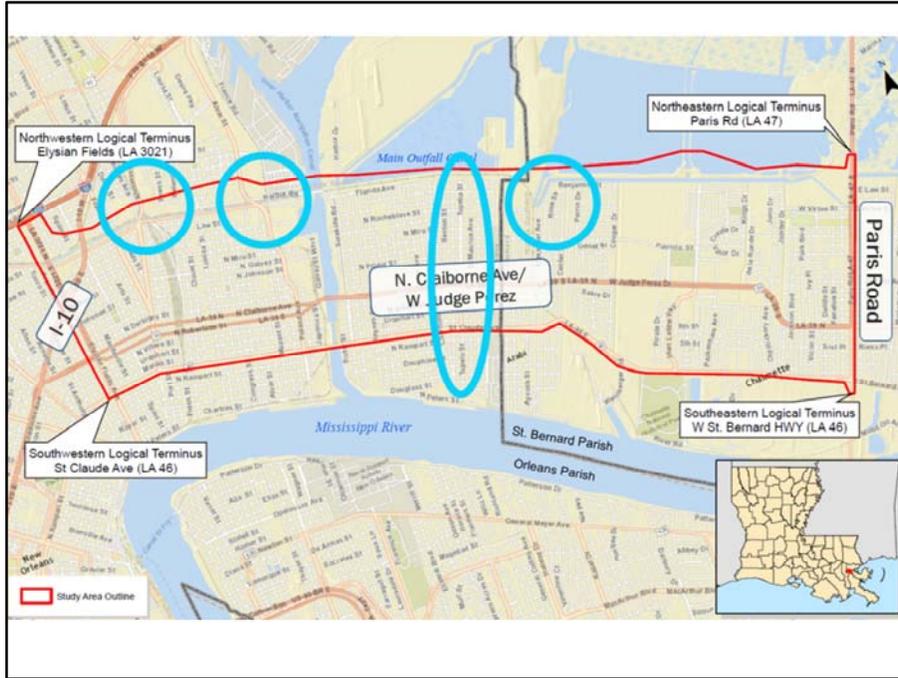


One issue the project team is facing is the railroad crossing at the Norfolk Southern Oliver Yard (CLICK). The Oliver yard is located in Orleans Parish near the intersection of Florida Avenue and Almonaster Ave.



At the Oliver Yard, shown here, Florida Avenue crosses 6 railroad tracks (CLICK). Preliminary estimates show that a car waiting for a train to pass at this location, would be stopped between 4 and 21 minutes.

On average, approximately 62 trains cross Florida Avenue throughout a 24-hour period at this location.



Please refer to the “design challenges” board for more details on the Oliver Yard crossing and other project issues.

WHAT WILL BE EVALUATED?

What issues will be considered and evaluated in the detailed study of retained alternatives?

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

- Traffic counts
- Crash records
- Existing roadway conditions
- Identification of wetlands
- Threatened/Endangered species habitat
- Existing land use and property information
- Census data
- Planned developments
- Existing drainage systems and drainage patterns
- Contamination sites
- Archeological/Historical sites
- Compliance with Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act



Issues of concern expressed by officials and the public will be a focus area along with other issues identified through regulatory requirements and engineering and planning judgement.

All analyses will start with collection of data such as those listed here.

ENGINEERING ANALYSIS

- Traffic Analyses
 - Intersection Configuration
 - Signal Timing
 - Roadway Level of Service
- Roadway Geometry
- Safety Analyses



Following data collection, traffic analyses will be conducted to determine design configurations that will operate effectively upon opening and into the future planning horizon of 2040. Using the results of this analysis and other physical constraints identified, the team will configure alternatives to accommodate future needs.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

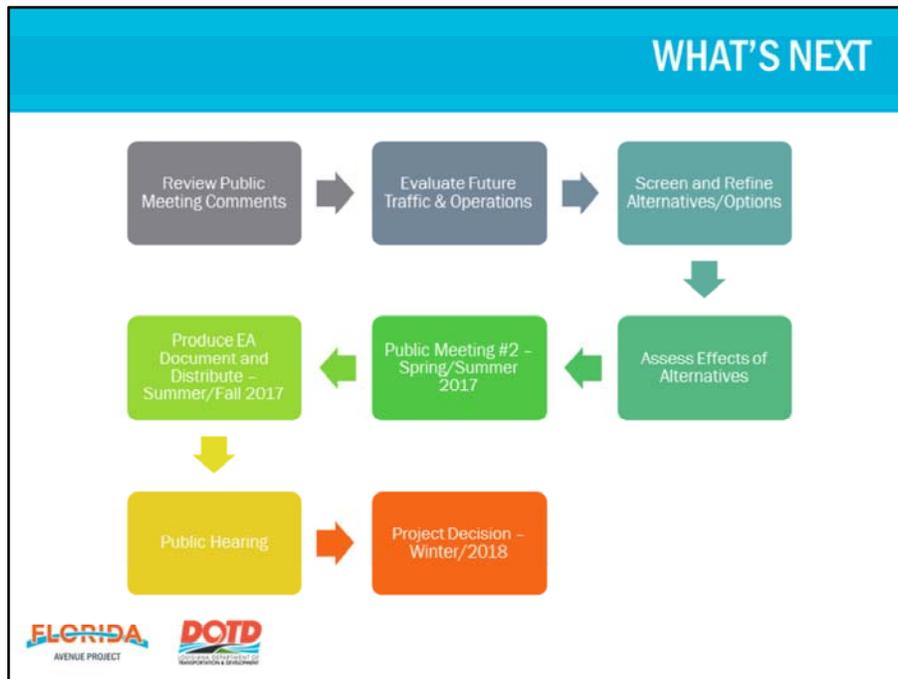
Social and cultural environment
Natural environment
Physical environment



Next, the team will evaluate the effects – both adverse and beneficial – of the retained and refined alternatives. (CLICK)

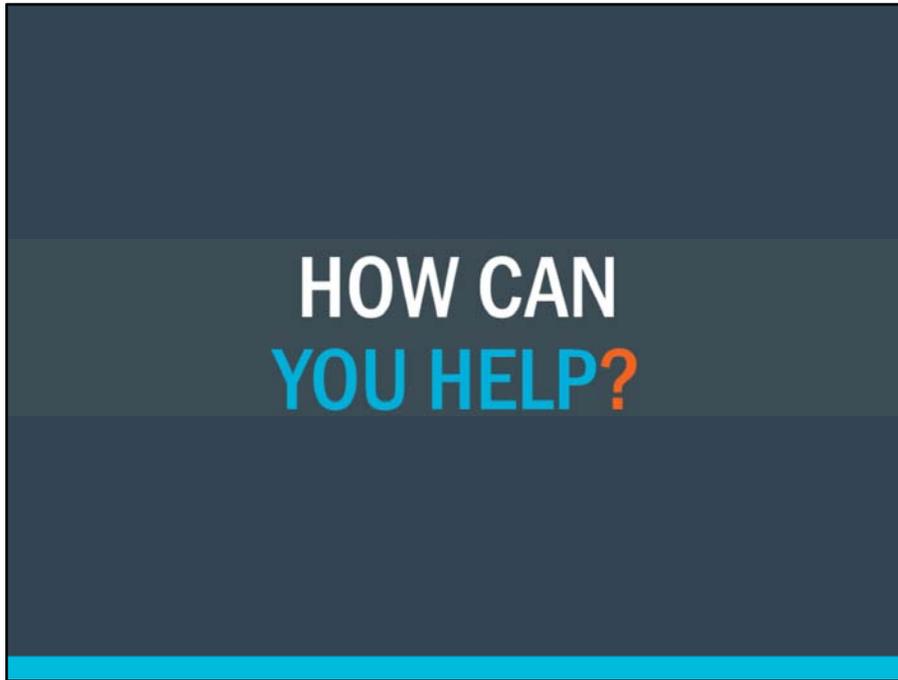
Analysis on refined alternatives will include wetlands, wildlife and habitat, and endangered species. (CLICK)

Analysis will also consider pedestrian and bicycle facilities, contamination sites, air and noise impacts, and construction.



We have initiated coordination with agencies, officials, and public along with coordinated decisions on project features and collected selected data sets.

Following this meeting, the team will proceed with screening alternatives, followed by detailed traffic, engineering and environmental studies. All of this will be documented in the EA that will be distributed; followed by public hearing and a project decision regarding the selected alternative.



Again, we need your help. This is the first public meeting for this current implementation step.

SIGN UP AND BE INVOLVED

- Public Meeting No. 1 (tonight)
- Public Meeting No. 2 (detailed alternatives)
- Public Hearing
- Local Outreach
- Contact the Study Team Project Manager



First – sign-up for future notices and provide comments.

Following refinement of alternatives, the team intends to hold another public meeting, and following distribution of the Environmental Assessment, a public hearing will be held.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

- What is your view on the type and height of the IHNC bridge and why?
- What is your view on the North-South Alternative, and why?
- What issues do you believe the planning team should be considering?



You will soon be directed to the display area where project team members can answer questions, but please consider these questions in your verbal or written comment forms, and please remember to answer the question, “Why?” We need to understand your reasoning for your comments to fully use them.

PROVIDE COMMENTS

- Verbal Comments may be made at the Comment Station at tonight's meeting.
- Written Comments may be made at the Comment Station or by mail, postmarked by September 28, 2016 to:

Mail:
Florida Avenue EA
P.O. Box 56845
New Orleans, LA 70156

Email:
FloridaAveEA@gmail.com



If you choose to mail the comment form, please be sure that it is postmarked no later than September 28, 2016. The address for mailing is pre-printed on the Comment Form. You may also email your comments to the address shown here.

Many of the graphics displayed in this presentation are available for viewing tonight. A copy of this presentation will be included in a summary of this meeting on the LADOTD website.

CONTACT INFORMATION

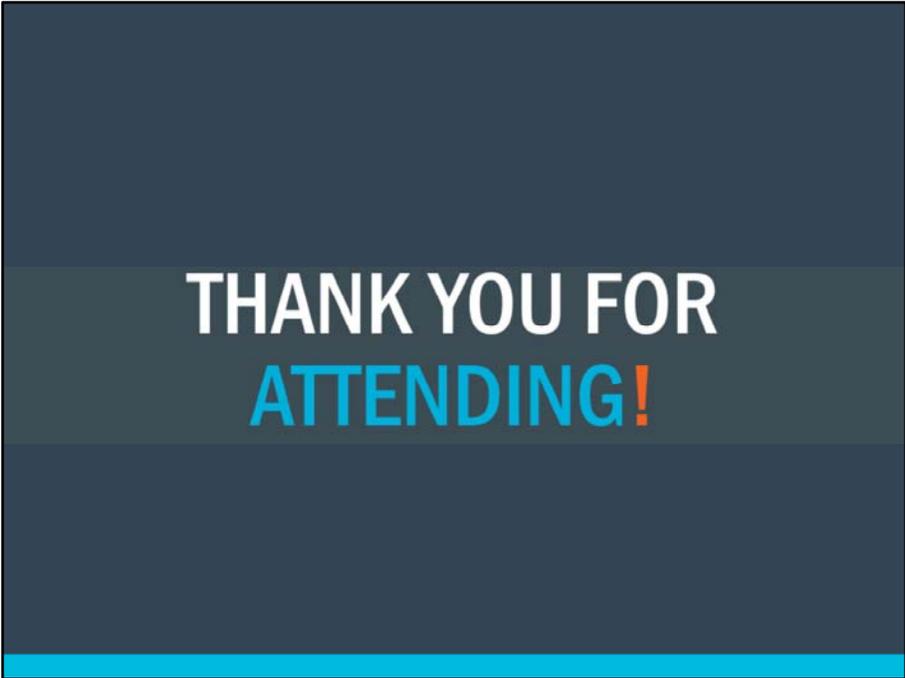
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We appreciate your time tonight and promise that your comments will be used in the evaluation and selection of an alternative for implementation.

Now, please proceed to exhibits area to speak with our project team members, who will answer your questions.



**THANK YOU FOR
ATTENDING!**

Thanks again. This is the end of the presentation. It will be repeated every 15 minutes until 7:00 pm tonight.