

**LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND
DEVELOPMENT**

PUBLIC MEETING TRANSCRIPT

FOR

**STATE PROJECT NO. H.012449
F.A.P. NO. H012449**

**KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN RAILROAD CROSSINGS BETWEEN
GAYOSA STREET & LOUISE STREET, BATON ROUGE
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH**



**LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION & DEVELOPMENT**

FEBRUARY 2022



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

REFERRED TO

- REFERRED FOR ACTION
ANSWER FOR MY SIGNATURE
FOR FILE
FOR YOUR INFORMATION
FOR SIGNATURE
RETURN TO ME
PLEASE SEE ME
PLEASE TELEPHONE ME
FOR APPROVAL
PLEASE ADVISE ME

MEMORANDUM

TO: File
FROM: Shawn Luke, P.E. Project Manager
DATE: October 5, 2021

Handwritten signature of Shawn Luke

BY DATE
BY DATE
BY DATE

SUBJECT: H.014229 Public Meetings for project along the KCS line in Baton Rouge

This memorandum is to document the Public Meetings held for the FRA Grant funded railroad safety project along the KCS rail line in Baton Rouge. There were four meetings (November 6, 2017, January 23 and 29, 2018, and May 25, 2021) held to present the initial concept, gather public information and input, and present the final proposal to move into design. The project involves the sixteen (16) at-grade crossings between the KCS yard (near I-110) and Baton Rouge City Park. This corridor has ten (10) crossings with active warning devices (flashing lights, bells, and possibly gates) and six (6) passive crossings (only signs). Many of the crossings with active warning devices have older equipment that is approaching the end of their life span. The project is proposing to upgrade/install flashing lights with bells and gates at ten of the crossings and close five (one of the crossings in the project was upgraded as part of H.011295, a separate roadway construction project).

Initially, the project was proposing to install/upgrade the warning devices and perform some maintenance and rehabilitation at the following crossings: North St., Main St., Laurel St., Florida Blvd., Convention St., Government St., Wisteria St., Myrtle Walk St., Terrace St., and Louise St. Raised medians were also proposed at the Laurel St., Florida Blvd., Convention St., Government St., and Myrtle Walk St. crossings. The project was proposing to close Gayosa St., South Blvd., Julia St., Smith St., Orange St., and Apple Street. Some connector roads were proposed to mitigate some of the impacts from the closures.

The public meetings were held on November 6, 2017, January 23, 2018, January 29, 2019 presented the initial project proposal. There was a significant amount of public participation and information about local pedestrian and bicycle use of the crossings was obtained. Additional information on the type (business vs. residential) of traffic and other seasonal factors (such as school traffic) was gathered. This information was collected and analyzed by the Project Team and changes to the project

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were made accordingly. The updated scope was presented to the public in the final Public Meeting held on May 25, 2021 as the project that will go forward into the design phase.

The updated scope for the project will include installing/upgrading warning devices and some maintenance/rehabilitation at the following crossings: North St., Main St., Laurel St., Florida Blvd., Convention St., Wisteria St., South Blvd., Myrtle Walk St., Terrace Ave., and Louise St. Raised medians are being proposed for Laurel St., Florida Blvd., Convention St., South Blvd., Myrtle Walk St., and Terrace St. The project will close Gayosa St., Julia St., Smith St., Orange St., and Apple St. The project is proposing connector roads and multiuse paths/sidewalks to mitigate impacts from the closures. DOTD let a project on Government Street (H.011295, Government Street Road Diet) that made changes at the railroad crossing that necessitated changes and upgrades to the warning devices. Because the upgrades were made in the Road Diet project, the crossing was removed from the current project.

The following documents are transcripts, displays, question/answer documentation, other public comments, and other documentation from the public meetings.

Public Meeting Date	What was presented
November 6, 2017	Initial project proposal.
January 23, 2018	
January 29, 2018	
May 25, 2021	Updated project with changes based on information from public meetings.

November 6, 2017

Public Meeting

Carver Branch Library

720 Terrace Ave.

Baton Rouge, LA 70802



Open House Public Meeting for

KCS Baton Rouge Crossings

East Baton Rouge Parish

State Project No. H.012449

Federal Aid Project No. H012449

Carver Branch Library
720 Terrace Avenue
Baton Rouge, LA

November 6, 2017
4:00 - 7:00 p.m.



Objective of Public Meeting

- ▶ Provide information about the proposed project
- ▶ Solicit comments about the project from the public and other interested parties



Preliminary Project Description

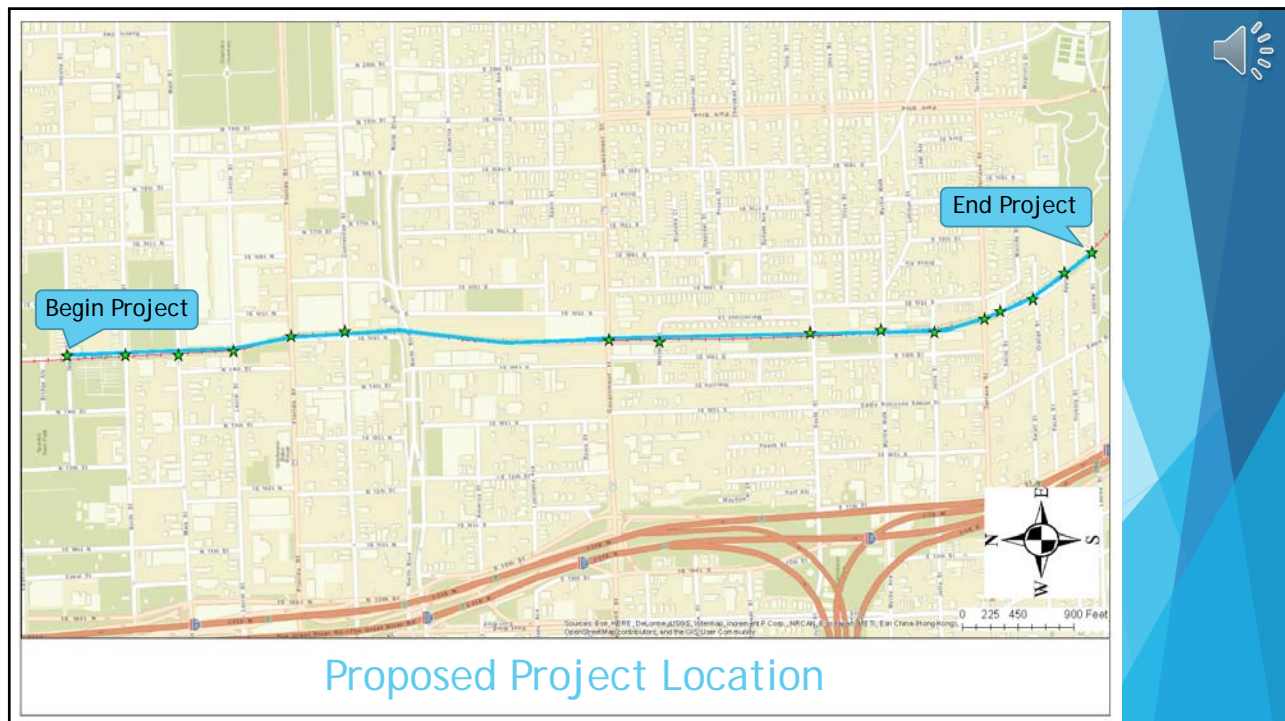
- ▶ Maintenance and rehabilitation of ten (10) railroad crossings along the Kansas City Southern (KCS) railroad in the City of Baton Rouge.
 - ▶ North Street, Main Street, Laurel Street, Florida Boulevard, Convention Street, Government Street, Wisteria Street, Myrtle Walk Street, Terrace Avenue, and Louise Street
- ▶ Permanent closure of six (6) railroad crossings along the KCS railroad in the City of Baton Rouge.
 - ▶ Gayosa Street, South Boulevard, Julia Street, Smith Street, Orange Street, and Apple Street
- ▶ Sidewalks at these crossings would be removed; however, pedestrian crossings would be created at several of the other crossings where maintenance and rehabilitation is proposed.

Preliminary Project Description (Continued)

- ▶ Detours will be required for the maintenance and rehabilitation during the in-roadway crossing work. The detours will be coordinated with the City of Baton Rouge at the time of construction. Detours will not be required for the signal work.
- ▶ Maintenance and rehabilitation work will be completed within existing KCS, City of Baton Rouge, or LADOTD right-of-ways. No Relocations are anticipated.
- ▶ Additional right of way may be required for street connectivity on the east end of Orange Street to connect Orange Street to Matilda Street. Slides outlining DOTD's Acquisition of Right of Way process are included later in this power point presentation.
- ▶ Roads on KCS right of way are proposed that will connect Smith Street, Orange Street, and Apple Street, paralleling the west side of the railroad tracks.

Project Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to improve safety of the the KCS railroad corridor by eliminating six (6) crossings and conducting maintenance and rehabilitation on ten (10) crossings along the KCS railroad in the City of Baton Rouge.



Closed Railroad Crossing with T-Style Turn Around

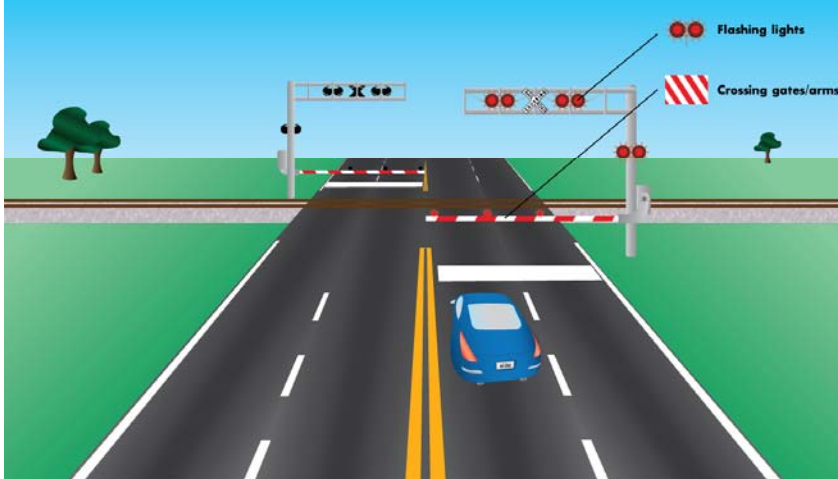


Gayosa Street



- ▶ Close roadway crossing railroad.
- ▶ Remove 32-foot timber crossing surface.
- ▶ Remove asphalt road approaches.
- ▶ Reslope ditch line to facilitate drainage.
- ▶ Install metal guard rail with retro-reflective object and end of road markers.

Railroad Crossing with Flashing Lights and Gates

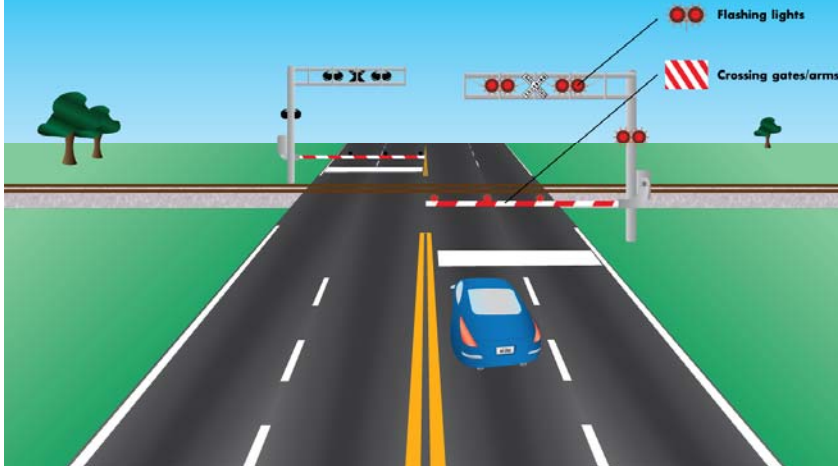


North Street



- ▶ Install two (2) crossing gates/arms in front of existing signal cantilevers.
- ▶ Upgrade existing lights to LEDs.
- ▶ Adjust vertical curve on roadway approaches.

Railroad Crossing with Flashing Lights and Gates

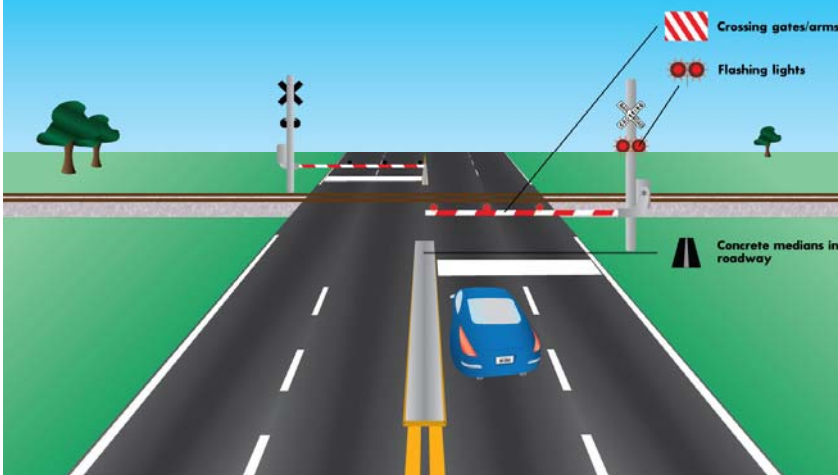


Main Street

- ▶ Install two (2) crossing gates/arms in front of existing signal cantilevers.
- ▶ Install signal mast with flashers and crossing gates on N 15th Street at northwest corner of intersection with Main Street.
- ▶ Upgrade existing lights to LEDs.
- ▶ Adjust vertical curve on roadway approaches.



Railroad Crossing with Flashing Lights, Gates, and Medians



Laurel Street

- ▶ Construct two (2) concrete medians on both roadway approaches.
- ▶ Install four (4) delineators on each end of median curbs.
- ▶ Install retro-reflective stop bars, pavement markings, and advance warning signs.
- ▶ Install two (2) crossing gates/arms on existing signals.
- ▶ Upgrade existing lights to LEDs
- ▶ Adjust vertical curve on roadway approaches.



Railroad Crossing with Flashing Lights, Gates, and Medians

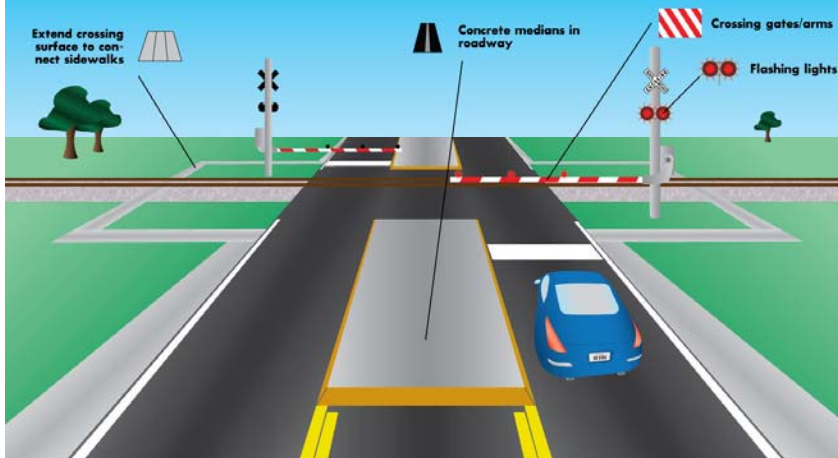


Florida Boulevard



- ▶ Rehabilitate 72 foot timber crossing surface.
- ▶ Construct concrete medians on both sides of roadway approach.
- ▶ Install four (4) delineators on each end of median curbs.
- ▶ Install retro-reflective stop bars, pavement markings, and advance warning signs.
- ▶ Install two (2) crossing gates/arms on existing signals.
- ▶ Upgrade existing lights to LEDs.

Railroad Crossing with Flashing Lights, Gates, Medians, and Sidewalks

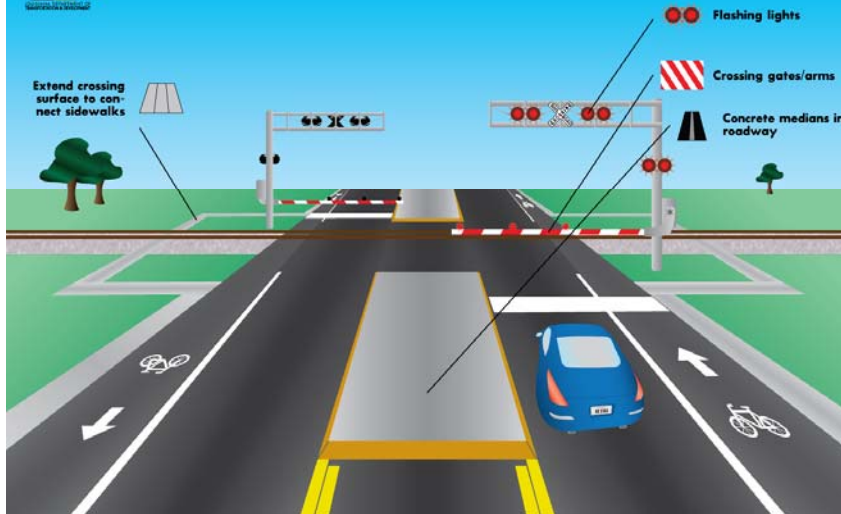


Convention Street



- ▶ Construct concrete medians on both sides of roadway approach.
- ▶ Install four (4) delineators on each end of median curbs.
- ▶ Install retro-reflective stop bars, pavement markings, and advance warning signs.
- ▶ Install two (2) crossing gates/arms on existing signals.
- ▶ Upgrade existing lights to LEDs.
- ▶ Extend crossing surface south by approximately 16 feet to connect sidewalks.
- ▶ Adjust vertical curve on roadway approaches.

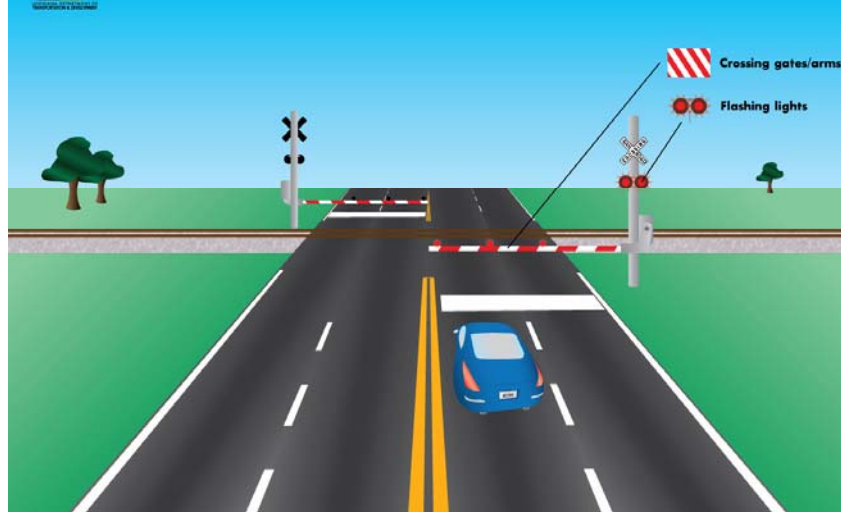
Railroad Crossing with Flashing Lights, Gates, Medians, and Sidewalks



Government Street

- ▶ Rehabilitate 57 foot crossing surface.
- ▶ Construct concrete medians on both sides of roadway approach.
- ▶ Install four (4) delineators on each end of median curbs.
- ▶ Install retro-reflective stop bars, pavement markings, and advance warning signs.
- ▶ Install new crossing gates/arms and flashers.
- ▶ Adjust vertical curve on roadway approaches.

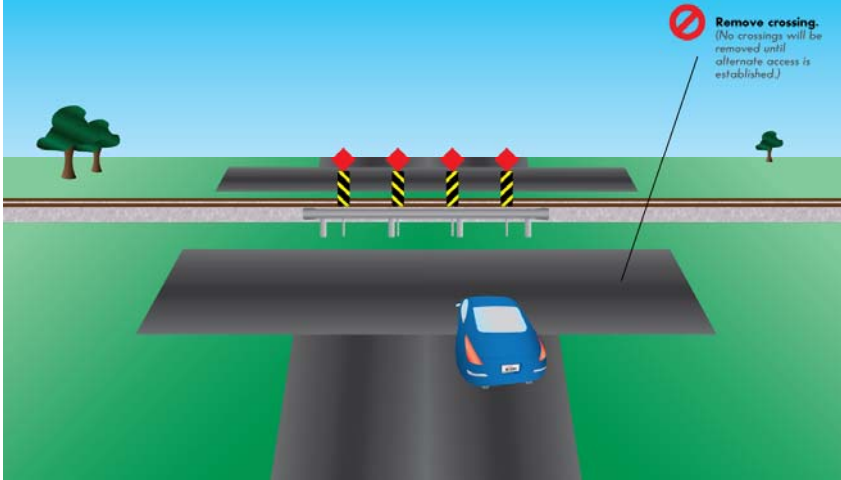
Railroad Crossing with Flashing Lights and Gates



Wisteria Street

- ▶ Install flashing lights and crossing gates/arms.

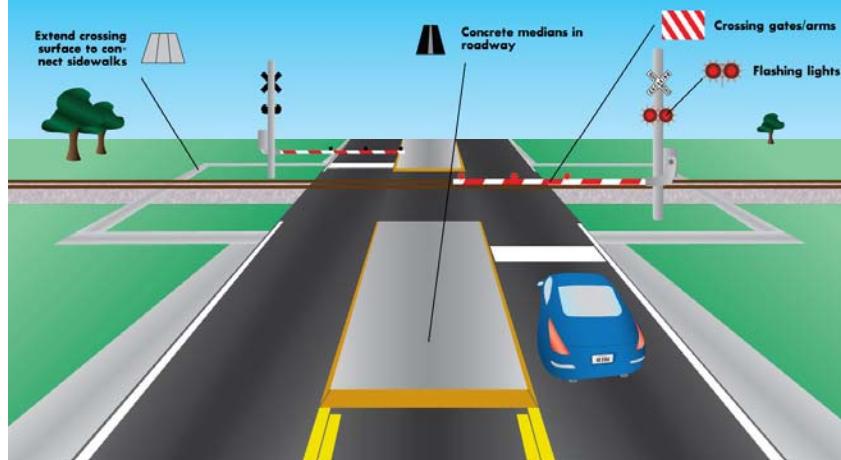
Closed Railroad Crossing with T-Style Turn Around



South Boulevard

- ▶ Close roadway crossing railroad.
- ▶ Remove existing timber crossing surface.
- ▶ Remove asphalt approaches.
- ▶ Reslope ditch line to facilitate drainage.
- ▶ Install metal guard rail with retro-reflective object and end of road markers.

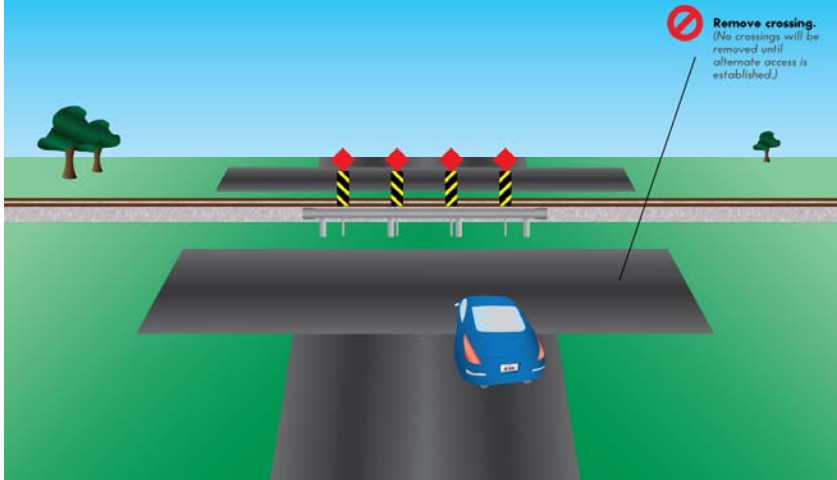
Railroad Crossing with Flashing Lights, Gates, Medians, and Sidewalks



Myrtle Walk Street

- ▶ Construct concrete medians on both sides of roadway approach.
- ▶ Install four (4) delineators on each end of median curbs.
- ▶ Install retro-reflective stop bars, pavement markings, and advance warning signs.
- ▶ Install flashing lights and crossing gates/arms.
- ▶ Adjust vertical curve on roadway approaches.

Closed Railroad Crossing with T-Style Turn Around

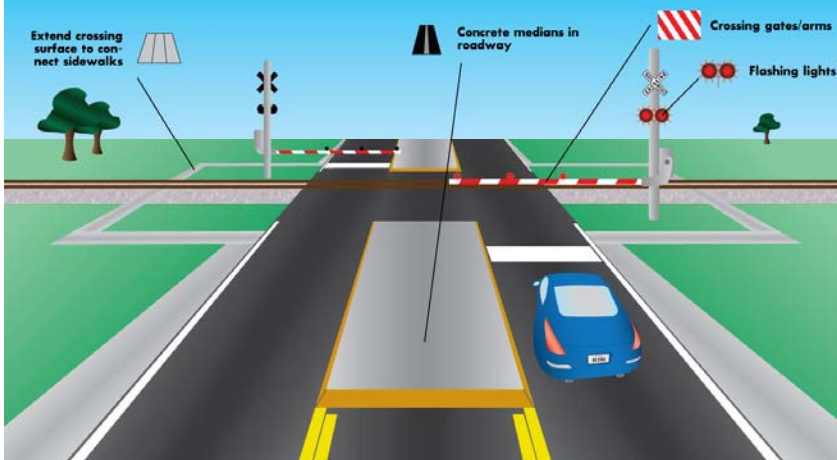


Julia Street



- ▶ Close roadway crossing railroad.
- ▶ Remove existing timber crossing surface.
- ▶ Remove asphalt approaches.
- ▶ Reslope ditch line to facilitate drainage.
- ▶ Install metal guard rail with retro-reflective object and end of road markers.

Railroad Crossing with Flashing Lights, Gates, Medians, and Sidewalks

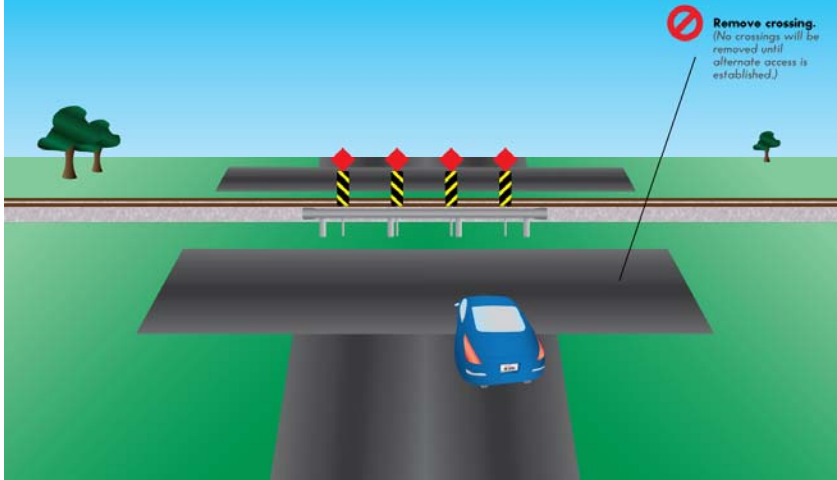


Terrace Street



- ▶ Construct concrete medians on both sides of roadway approach.
- ▶ Install four (4) delineators on each end of median curbs.
- ▶ Install retro-reflective stop bars, pavement markings, and advance warning signs.
- ▶ Install flashing lights and crossing gates/arms.
- ▶ Extend crossing surface south by approximately 16 feet to connect sidewalks.
- ▶ Adjust vertical curve on roadway approaches.

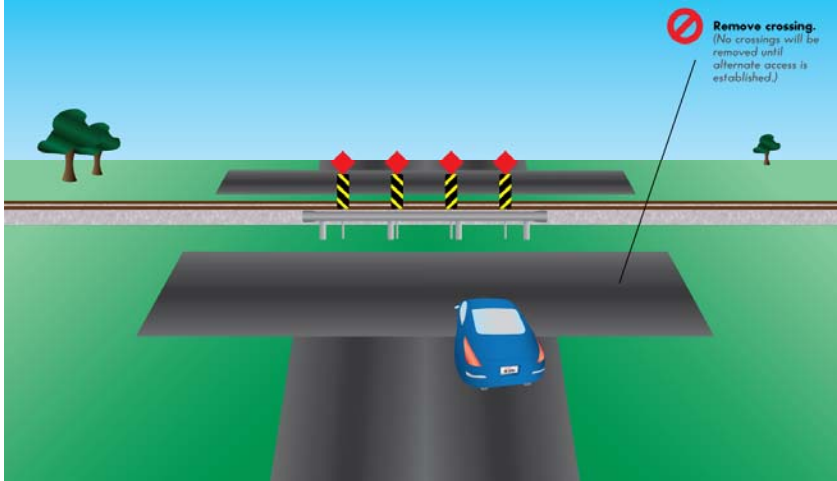
Closed Railroad Crossing with T-Style Turn Around



Smith Street,

- ▶ Close roadways crossing railroad.
- ▶ Remove existing timber crossing surfaces.
- ▶ Remove asphalt approaches.
- ▶ Reslope ditch lines to facilitate drainage.
- ▶ Install metal guard rails with retro-reflective object and end of road markers.

Closed Railroad Crossing with T-Style Turn Around



Orange Street,

- ▶ Close roadways crossing railroad.
- ▶ Remove existing timber crossing surfaces.
- ▶ Remove asphalt approaches.
- ▶ Reslope ditch lines to facilitate drainage.
- ▶ Install metal guard rails with retro-reflective object and end of road markers.
- ▶ LADOTD is working with the City of Baton Rouge to maintain connectivity on the east side of Orange Street.

Closed Railroad Crossing with T-Style Turn Around



Apple Street

- ▶ Close roadways crossing railroad.
- ▶ Remove existing timber crossing surfaces.
- ▶ Remove asphalt approaches.
- ▶ Reslope ditch lines to facilitate drainage.
- ▶ Install metal guard rails with retro-reflective object and end of road markers.

Comment/ Question Number	Question/Comment	Response
Joel Ponter	I believe the propose closures are an excellent idea. Especially at Smith, Apple, and Orange St. I would like to be involved in the design phase of the closure plans.	Noted
Jewel Hampton	I think that the streets with the closed vehicle access should have access for bikes and pedestrians forcing pedestrians to walk multiple blocks out of the way to cross is highly unlikely. Those that are able will just cross between the bollards. Also once the streets w/o vehicle access will have less through traffic, they are going to be more attractive to cyclists. I am very glad to see Julia St. is being closed.	When evaluating crossings for closure, the inconvenience to all of the users was a significant consideration. While directing pedestrians and bicyclists to adjacent crossings with active warning devices is inconvenient, it is safer for the users than converting the crossing to a passive pedestrian/pathway crossing.
Michele Deshotels	Please don't do construction on Myrtle Walk and Terrace @ same time. Do one first and then the other.	The Project Team will attempt to plan the sequence of construction in a way that minimizes inconvenience to the public while still providing a crossing surface that will last.
Martha Salomon	If any Federal Funds are involved, please perform a <u>Section 106 Review</u> in regards to South Blvd. There are many important historically significant sites on South Blvd. near the tracks. It is one of Baton Rouge's most culturally significant streets, and is an important connection to other historically significant neighborhoods. Bethel AME Church is significant in the Women's Rights and Civil Rights Movements. There was a (illegible) School "Live Oak" Elementary just down the street. The Purple Circle Community Center was an early NAACP Organizational Point. Many other sites too... Just look at the Sanborn Maps from 1885 on through the 1950's to glimpse the significance of South Blvd. It is truly one of the most valuable cultural assets of Baton Rouge and should not be cut in two/ripped apart.	A Section 106 review will be conducted.
Rannah Gray	Like: Better grade for crossings; crossing arms. Worries: Access for bicyclists- Don't close South Blvd. or Gayosa- Downtown is expanding in that direction.	The Project Team is working to improve pedestrian and bicyclists' access at many of the crossings by extending sidewalks and rehabilitating crossing surfaces. We

	Priority: Government St. Road Diet and improvements.- This will make a great impact on surrounding neighborhoods.	are working with the City to make the project compatible with future growth.
Unknown	When I read that the crossing would be closed- I had no idea they meant they would be totally removed! I am happy to see sidewalks that actually cross the tracks though I believe you should include (illegible) and restrictions on pedestrian traffic.	The proposed sidewalk crossings are close enough to the vehicular crossings that the pedestrians will be alerted by the flashing lights and bells for the cars.
Martha Salomon	South Blvd. is too important to close at the crossing. I use it all the time to get home from work and to get home from downtown when everything else is grid-locked.	DOTD and KCS are continuing to coordinate with the City's engineering department to make sure that closures do not adversely impact traffic significantly. If the City informs us that the closure of a particular crossing will do so, we will revisit that location. Update: After reviewing information from the City as well as feedback from the public, the project team is proposing to keep South Blvd. open and upgrade the warning devices.
Judge Trudy White	I am specifically requesting that minority participation with contracts folding out of this joint adventure be easily made public to the public. Please at least send this information to all the elected officials.	The construction work on the crossing surfaces and warning devices will be performed by the railroad's forces or their contractor. The construction work for the connecting roads will be bid through DOTD and will have the normal federal requirements.
Dorothy Prowell	Residents and organizations indicated above are concerned about the proposed closure of South Blvd. at the railroad crossing in the Old South Baton Rouge (OSBR) neighborhood. After examining data on traffic levels, accident history, connections and community composition of the three actively traveled, connecting streets through OSBR included in this project (Terrace Ave., Myrtle Walk, and South Blvd.), we see no justification for closing South Blvd. other than lack of funds. Beginning at the western edge of the Garden District at 18 th St., Terrace Ave., Myrtle Walk, and South Blvd. span about 1 mile through OSBR. At their terminuses on the west side, they connect to Nicholson,	When evaluating crossings for upgrades, closures, and other actions DOTD analyzes more than just crash history and traffic. While these crossings have not had crashes recently, there is still a significant number of crossings within a short distance of each other. These crossings also have numerous roads connecting them. We are continuing to receive feedback from the public meetings and the City/Parish to further evaluate the project.

	<p>Highland, and River Road, respectively. These three streets contain active communities as indicated by numbers of residences, businesses, churches, parks, etc.². Traffic data (annual average daily traffic counts for 2010 obtained from DOTD) put these streets in a similar range (Terrace=2774; South=1591; Myrtle=1355) far above other proposed closures (Julia=398; Smith=200; Apple & Orange both=100, & Gayosa=67). Although Wisteria traffic is in the range of other closures (=200), it is slated to remain open because of complications with a connecting one-way street, Marcellious. Collision history for the past 10 years provided by the Federal Railroad Administration lists 1 collision on South and none on Terrace or Myrtle. However, a single incident does not support significant safety differences among these crossings.</p> <p>South Blvd. is the only street connecting directly to the Mississippi River levee at River Road. Because of this and because traffic flow is low in OSBR compared to other through streets such as Government (comparable 2010 traffic=14,100), South Blvd. is often the chosen path for bike travel from neighborhoods east of and including OSBR riding to downtown or the levee bike path. Bike counts on South Blvd. at East Blvd. (conducted by Bike BR over 2 days in 2017) obtained a weighted daily average of 221 bikes indicating significant use. Biking advocates as represented by Bike BR and the BR Bike Club would prefer to see South Blvd. remain open, at least for pedestrians and people on bikes. This street represents a safe pathway to downtown Baton Rouge and the levee bike path for commuters and biking enthusiasts from many neighborhoods and interfaces indirectly with the existing Capital Heights bike path.</p> <p>Although we cannot speak for OSBR residents that are directly affected by the South Blvd. proposed closure, we heard</p>	<p>Update: After reviewing information from the City as well as feedback from the public, the project team is proposing to keep South Blvd. open and upgrade the warning devices.</p>
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	<p>emotional opposition from them at the public hearing at Carver Library. They stand to lose the most by closing this active street and fragmenting the long-standing predominantly African American community on South Blvd. Garden District residents who responded to this issue are unanimously opposed to closing South Blvd.¹</p> <p>We believe additional funds should be sought to upgrade the crossing at South Blvd. while also maintaining crossings at Terrace and Myrtle. This railroad project involves three levels of government, Federal (Federal Railroad Administration), State (DOTD) and City (DPW of Baton Rouge) and a private entity, Kansas City Railroad. Although we greatly appreciate the efforts of all involved to increase safety of these crossings, closing South Blvd. for strictly financial reasons seems unjustified considering the street's use and significance as well as this level of government and private involvement. Surely the combined efforts of these groups can produce a solution that avoids closing any of the major, connecting streets in OSBR.</p> <p>Thanks for your consideration of our concerns and for working with and for us to maintain Baton Rouge communities and enhance safety on our streets.</p>	
<p>Christine Nichols</p>	<p>I request that you Do Not close the Myrtle St. crossing as this serves as an alternate route into Downtown Baton Rouge. Nothing could be worse for traffic flow and bringing very diverse Soco Economic Groups together. I personally use Myrtle Street 3 to 7 times a week going from my home Downtown to City Park, Perkins Road Overpass area etc. The goal of our city is to reduce traffic on the interstate closing Myrtle totally defeats that goal.</p> <p>I also request that you do not close the South Blvd crossing as we have made great strides in improving that area with upgrades</p>	<p>The Project Team was informed by the Office of the Planning Commission that Myrtle St. is part of the City-Parish's Major Street Plan. Therefore, we are planning to upgrade the warning devices.</p> <p>DOTD and KCS are working with the City-Parish to minimize impacts to connectivity by having sidewalks at the open crossings nearby.</p> <p>Update: After reviewing information from the City as well as feedback from the public, the project team is proposing to</p>

	<p>to the park as well as planned walk Run Bike trail.</p>	<p>keep South Blvd. open and upgrade the warning devices.</p>
<p>David Applegate</p>	<p>I am property owner (Louis & Lee, Inc) for commercial property 3 of 4 corners @ Julia the 4th is Entergy Substation. During the past 2 years I have worked hard to eliminate illegal dumping at this crossing. Turn around will be an attraction to that. Because of that and that in the entire "Block" North and South would be better served w/ dead end- No turn-around signs and consideration to adjacent property owners.</p>	<p>The City regulations dictate when turn-arounds are required.</p>
<p>Downtown Development District</p>	<p>On Behalf of the Downtown Development District (DDD), I'd like to take this opportunity to share some concerns regarding the KCS Rail Crossings in Baton Rouge from Gayosa Street to Louise Street (Project No. H.012449). In general, the closure and/or separation of neighborhood streets has historically divided neighborhoods and spurred disinvestment and safety issues amongst the nearby properties. Several streets in the downtown area were closed or divided when interstates 1-10 and 1-110 were constructed, including Louisiana Avenue. The neighborhood east of the interstate at Louisiana Avenue has suffered devastating disinvestment over the years, prompting our office to seek and receive state grant and local funding to reconnect the neighborhood via bicycle and pedestrian access under 1-110. Additional permanent road closures that restrict access between the neighborhoods may cause a further erosion of community and economic activities around the eastern portion of the Downtown Development District.</p> <p>Of particular concern, both the South Boulevard and Gayosa Street proposed closures inhibit resident access to nearby neighborhood amenities. In the event the Gayosa Street access is permanently closed, residents accessing Spanish Town Park on</p>	<p>DOTD and KCS are working with the City-Parish to minimize impacts to connectivity by having sidewalks at the open crossings nearby. While the project scope is limited to the area around the railroad crossing, the City-Parish is part of the Project Team and, therefore, will be sent these comments and be made aware of which roads may need consideration for pedestrian access.</p> <p>Update: After reviewing information from the City as well as feedback from the public, the project team is proposing to keep South Blvd. open and upgrade the warning devices.</p>

	<p>the east side of the railroad tracks must utilize Spanish Town Road. Sidewalk installation and repairs along Spanish Town Road would thus be needed to ensure safe pedestrian access. The potential closure of South Boulevard would also impede resident access to Expressway Park and the Downtown Greenway. Bicycle and pedestrian improvements along South Boulevard west from the railroad tracks to Expressway Park and along Eddie Robinson from Government Street to Myrtle Street would help connect existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and increase user safety.</p> <p>The Downtown Development District is concerned about the proposed railroad crossing closures, as well as the potential impact on neighborhood stability and access to goods, services, and amenities. In the event that the proposed closures become a reality, we would appreciate continued collaboration and consideration of the above cited bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. This will help mitigate the closures' impact on the community, as well as ensure user accessibility and safety. Please let me know if you have any further questions or would like to discuss further.</p>	
<p>Fannie Williams</p>	<p>My concerns for South Street to remain open for it is a way to and from church for many on Sundays thru Thursday every week and special occasions for special events at church.</p> <p>It all as walking paths and bicycling much safer than to future plans for Government St.</p> <p>Both Government needs to remain with crossbars across four lanes.</p> <p>Both is needed for Emergencies for EMS, Firetrucks, for parents to get to school for kids, to check on love ones.</p> <p>The Churches on South Street serves the neighborhood on both sides and afar.</p>	<p>DOTD and KCS are continuing to coordinate with the City's engineering department to make sure that closures do not adversely impact connectivity for the area significantly. If the City informs us that it will, we will revisit the closures. The Project Team is working with emergency responders to determine if the project will hinder their responses to emergencies.</p> <p>Update: After reviewing information from the City as well as feedback from the public, the project team is proposing to keep South Blvd. open and upgrade the warning devices.</p>

<p>Mary Fontenot</p>	<p>I believe that the Project Team is making decisions solely by looking at the map and what would be convenient for the railroad. There are other factors to take into consideration I realize that Myrtle Walk and South Blvd are next to each other, but there have separate uses. South Blvd is a street that is used as a cut-through even though it has a half block jog in it at S. 18th. It is a route for bicycles and has historical and scenic (murals) significance. Myrtle Walk is not safe for kids riding bikes to school because of the drug trade and the trucks at the ice business. Those things don't show up on a geographic map. Ending the street will block the AME Church from the parking lot that they use.</p> <p>At the public meeting I heard people talking about the Gayosa St. crossing. It sounds like problems with connectivity have been through out there. These need to be addressed before the decision to block the street is made. Entrance and exists to the Jewish Cemetery and having a 2-way street along the railroad might be needed. The upgrades at crossings are welcomed!</p>	<p>The project is still in the planning phase and the information gathered at the public meetings will be used to shape the final project.</p> <p>Update: After reviewing information from the City as well as feedback from the public, the project team is proposing to keep South Blvd. open and upgrade the warning devices.</p>
<p>This comment was received verbatim from six sources</p>	<p><u>Sound Barriers</u> Noise Nuisance: The noise level of the train presents disturbances of various degrees during the day and night. Particularly, noted is the loudness of the noise and vibrations from the train; excessive horn warnings and vibrations of the rapid speed is a nuisance.</p> <p><u>Firmly Anchored Planks onto a sound (reinforced) ground foundation</u> Damage to home foundation, frame structure, concrete, trees and the earth's natural firmness; years of rapid train travel through our communities destroys the fabric of the earth's natural firmness, perpetuates the loss of tree roots and their firmness to the earth and erosion.</p> <p><u>Present Data for Review on Accident Rate and severity</u> As life-long members of the community, we respectfully disagree with the assertion of</p>	<p>Sound Barriers & ground foundation: The project scope and funding limit what DOTD is able to do away from the railroad crossings.</p> <p>Accident data: When evaluating crossings for upgrades, closures, and other actions at railroad crossings DOTD analyzes more than just crash history and traffic. While these crossings have not had crashes recently, they have steep approaches and the tracks and the roadway cross at an angle. When there are several such crossings within a short distance, DOTD evaluates the feasibility of redirecting the roadway users to one crossing where safety upgrades can be made.</p> <p>Unbiased Decisions: Additional public meetings have been held in an attempt to gather as much input from as many of the residents of those streets as possible.</p>

	<p>excessive accidents warranting the closing off of noted streets. We request your data on the number and severity rating of accidents covering the last 10 years (On the streets cited to close for such safety reasons). May present to Civic Association Vice President</p> <p><u>Consideration and Unbiased Decisions</u> This is a major plan; in current form it neglects to equalize the playing field of and how as related to modifications, provisions; community usefulness, improvements, etc. We ask that citizens of each proposed shut-off and/or street with major changes, have representation (At least 1 representative; if streets choose no representative, they will be afforded the opportunity) in Team Planning; safeguarding against oversights and/or bias decisions.</p> <p><u>Minutes from this Meeting</u> Please present the South Baton Rouge Civic Association with the minutes from the KSRNO. H.012449 meeting, dated 11/05/2017; Moreover, please include the comment cards and how The Project Team plans to evaluate for Study, and address noted comments.</p>	<p>Minutes from the meeting: The meeting minutes as well as the comments received and responses to comments will be sent to local branch libraries, the state library, and local leaders.</p>
<p>Renee Smith</p>	<p>My name is Renee Smith and I'm a community activist and I've been in the community over 50 years. And from looking at this here plan I think it's unfair because they got a federal grant but they never talked to the people that's in the community and how it's gonna effect the community. They're closing down small parts of the streets to save the tracks but they're affecting hundreds of people in the community, and that's bad. So I feel this has been sadly brought to us and to our attention on what they would like to do. I understand it is not the final say so but it needs to be more hands on where they can come out to the community to talk to the community. I once worked at the Department of Transportation and Development and some things that goes on there coming from the federal government</p>	<p>The goal of the project is to improve the safety of the roadway users when they cross at a railroad crossing. The Project Team recognized an opportunity to secure additional funds to improve the safety of the area and this also allowed for the crossings to be improved sooner than they might have been otherwise.</p>

	<p>it's about money. It needs to be now about the people and how this is gonna effect the people who have lived in this community for over fifty years and have families. Again my name is Renee Smith, you can all reach me at South Baton Rouge, my number is XXX-XXX-XXXX. And I'm very upset in a sense about this but I do know this is not the final plan. Thank you.</p>	
<p>Unknown</p>	<p>This is an objection to the proposed closures and acquisitions of Right of Way and elimination of 6 crossings. This negative impact upon the socially downtrodden neighborhood will be devastating to many seniors. Present homeowners will have to relocate and incur great debt at an age when they have already struggled to get out of debt. The potential hardship is unfair. Maintenance and rehabilitation should be done. The street was there before the railroad tracks. If needed, close the track and maintain the street. Grant funds, safety, care, and concern for the citizens of our City/Parish should always remain in the forefront.</p>	<p>The lots being analyzed for the proposed connecting roads currently do not have houses on them. Any acquisition of right of way will go through the process as defined in the Uniform Relocation Act.</p>
<p>Winston Riddick</p>	<p>I generally support the closing and improvements to railroad street crossings. Please allow property owners to review the <u>actual</u> designs of each closing and improvement. The "T" closing for Gayosa Street may adversely impact ingress and egress for (illegible) (Jewish Cemetery) and Square 13 road frontage along the present 15th Street access. Also, crossing improvements to North Street and Main Street should take into account proposed conversion back to 2 way traffic on both streets. Also, the dropping elevation of Gayosa Street approaching the railroad on both east and west sides may impact usage of 15th Street.</p>	<p>The City-Parish is reviewing all of the potential closures to verify that all of the properties will continue to have access and any impacts to ingress or egress will be minimal. Significant changes to the railroad warning devices will be necessary to change the streets from one-way to two-way. The Project Team has not be presented with any definite plans to make changes to the traffic patterns.</p>

January 23, 2018

Public Meeting

McKowen Missionary Baptist Church

1255 Louise St.

Baton Rouge, LA 70802

January 29, 2018

Public Meeting

New St. John Baptist Church

1455 South Blvd.

Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Comment/ Question Number	Comment/Question	Response
Debra Douglas	<p>My concern is not about \$1.1 million that you have. My concern is that the eldest left behind in this area when an emergency happens. How is EMS, Fire Trucks, or police is going to reach my people. If you do construction on S. 15th St./Matilda St, there is no road access on Apple/Orange St. Smith is the only thru road. It don't connect into Apple/Orange St. What about the business and churches in this area.</p> <p>Are you going to (illegible) down house first along the railroad track to get to the area by making a street beside the track (illegible) construction start on S. 15th St.</p> <p>Why haven't EMS/Fire Dept/Kansas representative been in the house during meeting? To guarantee safety for my mother and father of SBR.</p>	<p>DOTD, the City, and KCS continue to work with first responders to verify that any proposed closures will not adversely impact their ability to respond.</p> <p>While the alignments for the connecting roads being studied will require right of way, it not believed that any houses will be impacted. There are currently no houses on the property where the proposed connecting roads would be located.</p>
Justin Kozak	<p>1) Transportation projects have a long history of dividing neighborhoods. Whether deliberate or inadvertent, this is something that needs to be considered. The crossings that are being closed are also used by pedestrians to get to church, friend's houses, local businesses and schools. It is very important to maintain connectivity. All efforts should be made to maintain pedestrian crossings at crossings that are being closed.</p> <p>2) The upgrades to the crossing are a transportation project but are also going to affect drainage and storm water mgmt. The cement medians should use green infrastructure to store storm water. They should not be cement. They should allow for infiltration and storage of storm water. This is <u>not</u> cost-prohibitive so there is no excuse not to do it.</p>	<p>The goal of this project is to improve the safety of the project area while causing a little impact as possible to community cohesiveness. While the project will close some of the crossings, it will attempt to direct pedestrians and bicyclists to pedestrian crossings created at remaining crossings.</p> <p>The Project Team will utilize green infrastructure concepts in the project where it is practical and effective.</p>
Jeannette Dubinin	<p>For proposed closures: In the spirit of complete streets, please consider ped/bike traffic and not only vehicles. Accommodations for ped/bike should be made because they will occur. For</p>	<p>The goal of this project is to improve the safety of the project area while causing a little impact as possible to community cohesiveness. While the project will close some of the crossings, it will</p>

	<p>their safety, closed crossings should allow for ped/bike. This will further alleviate dividing neighbors and neighborhoods. For upgrades: Concrete medians could be improved in design, these do not contribute to 21st century development standards. Please consider “greener” options. I support an upgrade to South Blvd., not closure.</p>	<p>attempt to direct pedestrians and bicyclists to pedestrian crossings created at remaining crossings.</p> <p>The Project Team will utilize green infrastructure concepts in the project where it is practical and effective.</p> <p>All of the proposed closures are still being evaluated.</p> <p>Update: After reviewing information from the City as well as feedback from the public, the project team is proposing to keep South Blvd. open and upgrade the warning devices.</p>
<p>A. Williams</p>	<p>My concern is the proposed changes with closing the railroad crossing at Apple, Orange and Smith streets. The change will affect the residents of this neighborhood tremendously. How will they get emergency help from first responders (EMS, Fire Department)? I would like to suggest we keep Apple Street crossing opened, build an asphalt two way street to Louisa Street. Please do not create a dirt road. Roads made with dirt and rocks tend to create lots of mud holes. This will cause extreme wear and tear on the vehicles. These streets are within the city limits and should be treated accordingly. I would like to suggest the ditch on the right hand side of the track to be closed to make the street a two way street. I understand the ditch is owned by the city and not DOTD, but can we suggest these two parties get together to make the changes. We are concerned residents that are tax payers too. We desire our surrounding to be nice and to live in an attractive, secured area same as the suburban area residents. This change will also affect the market values of the homes in the area.</p>	<p>The Project Team continue to work with first responders to verify that any proposed closures will not adversely impact their ability to respond.</p> <p>Connecting roadways that are being discussed in this project will be asphalt or concrete and will be incorporated into the City’s roadway system. If ditches will need to be converted to subsurface drainage, coordination between DOTD, the City, or KCS will take place.</p>
<p>Larry Hudson</p>	<p>First, I’d like to thank the Secretary and the Mayor-President for meeting with the citizens of South baton Rouge to discuss the railroad improvements and possible closures.</p>	<p>All of the proposed closures are still being evaluated. The Project Team continues to work with first responders to verify that any proposed closures will</p>

	<p>I am OPPOSED to the closing of the South Blvd. RR crossing. South Blvd. stretches from the Mississippi River to the Historic Garden District.</p> <p>There are two major Churches on South Blvd. that are east of Eddie Robinson Dr. that would be adversely affected by the closure of South Blvd. RR Crossing.</p> <p>I understand that SAFETY should be a priority when this project begin, that's why the Police, Fire & EMS Depts should be contacted for their input concerning response times if South Blvd. is closed.</p> <p>Please do not divide the community by closing South Blvd. Many of the neighborhood citizens use South Blvd. to move around South Baton Rouge.</p> <p>Thanks for your help in this matter.</p>	<p>not adversely impact their ability to respond.</p> <p>Update: After reviewing information from the City as well as feedback from the public, the project team is proposing to keep South Blvd. open and upgrade the warning devices.</p>
<p>Eli Jackson</p>	<p>On the east side of Orange St. Baton Rouge, LA 70802, there are 4 homes (4 addresses) and 2 lots. These homes need to be provided with proper access. In case there is an emergency the responders need a road large enough to travel on safely. The mail carrier and waste collectors need a road to travel on to be able to do their jobs. I suggest that the East side of Orange St. to be connected to Apple St.. There is a drainage ditch that can be covered and converted into a safe road. The drainage ditch is between the railroad tracks & #### Orange St.. That area will provide a large enough road to accommodate the residents, first responders, mail carriers, waste collectors and any other personnel that is needed to travel on that road.</p>	<p>The Project Team continues to work with first responders to verify that any proposed closures will not adversely impact their ability to respond.</p> <p>If the residents of a street do not have alternate access out of their neighborhood and the project is not able to provide alternate access, the crossing will not be closed.</p>
<p>William Fontenot</p>	<p>It is disruptive to disconnect a neighborhood by blocking street, but there are definite and valid reasons not to block South Blvd in particular.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Residents use that crossing to walk to church. 2. Residents use that crossing to walk to vote. It is important to never discourage voters. 3. Pedestrians and bikers are safer on South Blvd. than Myrtle Walk because Myrtle Walk has more commercial Truck Traffic. 	<p>All of the proposed closures are still being evaluated.</p> <p>Update: After reviewing information from the City as well as feedback from the public, the project team is proposing to keep South Blvd. open and upgrade the warning devices.</p>

<p>Evie M.</p>	<p>I would like to see the South Baton Rouge area between Mitlda St., Terrace St., Orange St. all the streets in that area to be made easy asset (access?) to the house in that area for EMC (EMS?), Police Department to get in if anything was to happen. Beautyfile (Beautify) that area. Put the arms crossing to the rail road track so no cars can cross until the train has pass. Make sure that ya'll consider the elderly people who need help.</p>	<p>The Project Team continues to work with first responders to verify that any proposed closures will not adversely impact their ability to respond.</p> <p>If a connecting road is not able to be constructed to allow alternate access, the crossings will be evaluated for upgraded warning devices.</p>
<p>Dedra Matthews</p>	<p>I have land on Orange St. I would like to see improvement. They need road fix. Railroad crossing need the arm railings when train come through.</p>	<p>If a connecting road is not able to be constructed allowing residents an alternate access out of their neighborhood, the crossing will be evaluated for upgraded warning devices.</p>
<p>Brenda Smith</p>	<p>My name is Brenda Smith I live at ##### Matilda Street.</p> <p>I hope and pray that you all make the right decision because I been living on Matilda St. for a very long time. I am asking you all to DO NOT CLOSE Apple St., Orange St., or Smith St. FIX THEM MAKE THIS AREA BETTER. I think you all should extend Apple St. for the cars can come across the railroad track all the way down to 17 Street and also do the same for Orange St. and when the train has stopped on the Railroad Track the drivers has more than one way to go to Park Blvd or school buses goes through City Park. Now I have a granddaughter that goes to Glasgow and the bus sometimes has to go around. Also, sometimes between 6:30 and 7:00 their is a carpool line at McKinley Magnet and it takes time to go through. Please fix the roads that you are all responsible for going down by the railroad track, children, adults and elderly I have seen many times walking down the track to Terrace Grocery and to their homes after they get off the school bus. The school buses don't drop off the students in from of their home. Last year I had about three fires on Matilda St. plus a car set on fire on the side of the Church New Bethel. We need speed bump now if you all do close the street. Matilda St. will have a lot of traffic in this street. Same people already walking, jogging, driving fast etc. The train shakes my</p>	<p>The proposed closures are still be evaluated. If the residents of a street do not have alternative access out of their neighborhood and the project is not able to provide alternate access, the crossing will not be closed. As part of the project, we are able to improve the road near the track between Smith and Apple to make it safer and smoother for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists to use.</p>

	<p>home every time it comes. I saw one child got hit by a car on my street. I saw one child got hit by a car on Matilda St. Please put speed signs up or speed bump. Thank you.</p>	
<p>Downtown Development District</p>	<p>On Behalf of the Downtown Development District (DOD), I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your consideration of leaving the KCS Rail Crossings at South Boulevard active and share some continued concerns regarding the other crossings poised for closure, particularly at Gayosa Street.</p> <p>In general, the closure and/or separation of neighborhood streets has historically divided neighborhoods and spurred disinvestment and safety issues amongst the nearby properties. Streets in the downtown area that were closed when interstates 1-10 and 1-110 were constructed, including Louisiana Avenue, suffered devastating disinvestment over the years, prompting our office to seek and receive state grant and local funding to reconnect the neighborhood via bicycle and pedestrian access under 1-110. In contrast, streets that were left open and conserved the city grid street system have experienced less disinvestment and emergency vehicles have maintained access. Additional permanent road closures that restrict access between the existing neighborhoods, as well as neighborhoods developed in the future, may cause a further erosion of community and economic activities around the eastern portion of the Downtown Development District.</p> <p>Of particular concern, the Gayosa Street proposed closure would inhibit resident access to Spanish Town Park, a recently revitalized community park. Residents accessing Spanish Town Park on the east side of the railroad tracks must utilize Spanish Town Road. In the <i>event</i> Gayosa is closed, sidewalk installation and repairs along Spanish Town Road would be necessary to ensure safe pedestrian access.</p>	<p>DOTD and KCS are working with the City-Parish to minimize impacts to connectivity by having sidewalks at the open crossings nearby. While the project scope is limited to the area around the railroad crossing, the City-Parish is part of the Project Team and, therefore, will be sent these comments and be made aware of which roads may need consideration for pedestrian access.</p> <p>Update: After reviewing information from the City as well as feedback from the public, the project team is proposing to keep South Blvd. open and upgrade the warning devices.</p>

	<p>We appreciate your continued collaboration with East Baton Rouge City-Parish public representatives and citizens. In addition, we appreciate your consideration of the continued requests/concerns cited in this letter. Please let me know if you have any further questions or would like to discuss further.</p>	
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May 25, 2021

Public Meeting

McKowen Missionary Baptist Church

1255 Louise St.

Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Railroad Safety Project along the KCS Line in Baton Rouge

East Baton Rouge Parish
State Project: H.012449
Federal Aid Project: H012449



www.dotd.la.gov

Purpose and Need for the Project

The purpose of this project is to improve safety of the railroad crossings along the KCS railroad tracks by upgrading the warning devices and rehabilitating ten (10) of the crossings and by eliminating five (5) crossings along the railroad in the City of Baton Rouge.



www.dotd.la.gov

Brief History

- In 2016, the FRA awarded a Grant to DOTD, Baton Rouge, & KCS to improve the safety of crossing on the KCS line between City Park and the KCS yard.
- This Grant allows DOTD to upgrade the warning devices in this corridor much sooner than possible through the normal process.



3

Brief History (cont.)

- Three Public Meetings were held between November 2018 and January 2019.
- The Project has been updated based on feedback from the public and discussions with the project team.



4

Objective of this Public Meeting

- This is the final Public Meeting in the series committed to by the Project Team and will present the updated project scope with changes based on feedback from the public and additional information received.
 - This is the scope that will be progressed into design.
- Solicit comments about the project from public and other interested parties.



5

Project Description

- Maintenance and rehabilitation of ten (10) railroad crossings and upgrade of the warning devices along the Kansas City Southern (KCS) railroad in the City of Baton Rouge.
 - North Street, Main Street, Laurel Street, Florida Boulevard, Convention Street, Wisteria Street, South Boulevard, Myrtle Walk Street, Terrace Avenue, and Louise Street.
 - Any detours necessary will be coordinated with the City and State.



6

Project Description (Cont.)

- Permanent closure of five (5) railroad crossings along the KCS railroad in the City of Baton Rouge.
 - Gayosa Street, Julia Street, Smith Street, Orange Street, and Apple Street.
 - Sidewalks at these crossings would be removed; however, pedestrian crossings will be created at several of the other crossings where maintenance and rehabilitation is proposed.



7

Project Description (Cont.)

- Connector roads will be constructed between Smith St., Orange St., Apple St., and Louise St. paralleling the railroad tracks. The connector roads will maintain access for the residents. Crossings will not be closed until the connector roads are completed and open for traffic.

Clarification- A wide sidewalk or multi-use path will be constructed between Apple and Louise on the west side of the tracks. A connector road on the east side of the tracks will depend on right of way. If right of way is not available, a wide sidewalk or multi-use path will be proposed.



8

Major changes based on information received

- South Blvd. was initially planned to be closed. Based on feedback and information received from the City, it will be upgraded.
- The project now proposes to construct connector roads between Apple St. and Louise St. on both sides of the railroad tracks.
- The upgrades to the Government Street crossing are being completed as part of the Road Diet project.



The project proposes connector roads between Smith, Orange, and Apple. A wide sidewalk or multi-use path will be constructed between Apple and Louise on the west side of the tracks. A connector road on the east side of the tracks will depend on right of way. If right of way is not available, a wide sidewalk or multi-use path will be proposed.

Preliminary Scope at crossings

North St.:
Improve steepness of crossing. Upgrade flashing lights and gates (2 gates on east side of tracks).
Railroad Crossing with Flashing Lights and Gates

Main St.:
Improve steepness of crossing. Upgrade flashing lights and gates (2 gates on west side of tracks). Add gate to N. 15th St.
Railroad Crossing with Flashing Lights and Gates

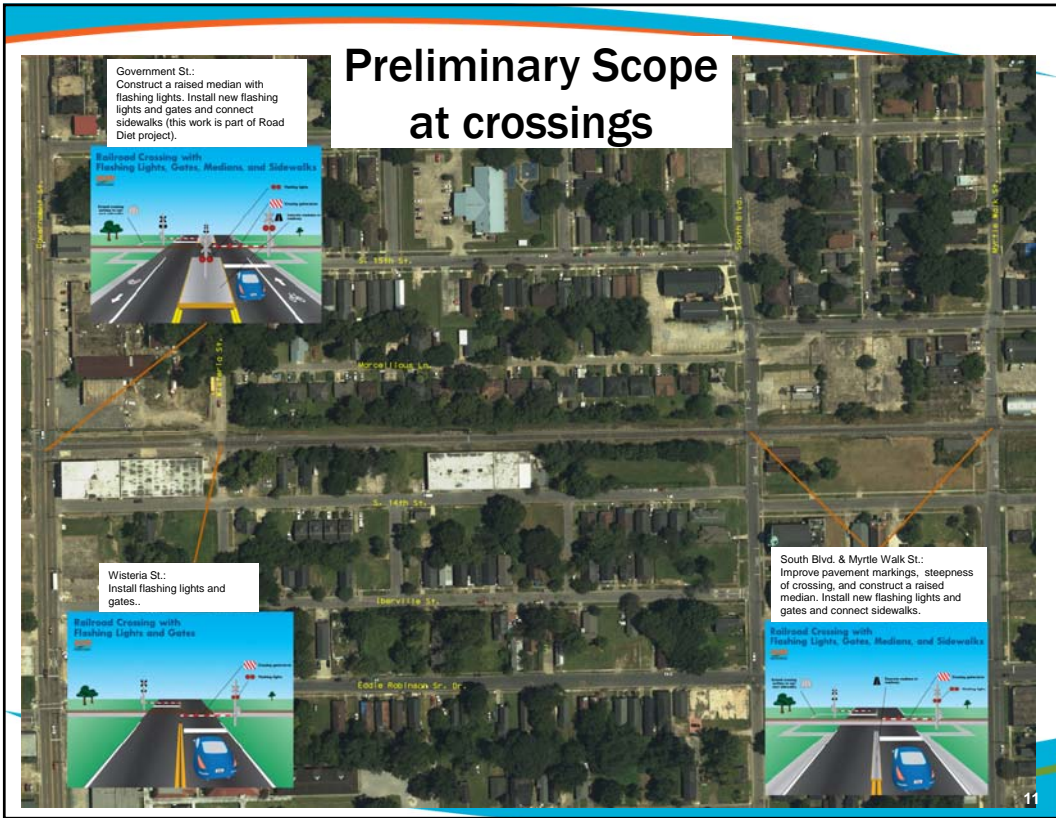
Florida Blvd.:
Construct raised median & improve steepness of crossing. Rehabilitate crossing surface. Upgrade flashing lights and gates.
Railroad Crossing with Flashing Lights, Gates, and Median

Laurel St.:
Construct raised median, improve pavement markings and improve steepness of crossing. Upgrade flashing lights and gates.
Railroad Crossing with Flashing Lights, Gates, and Median

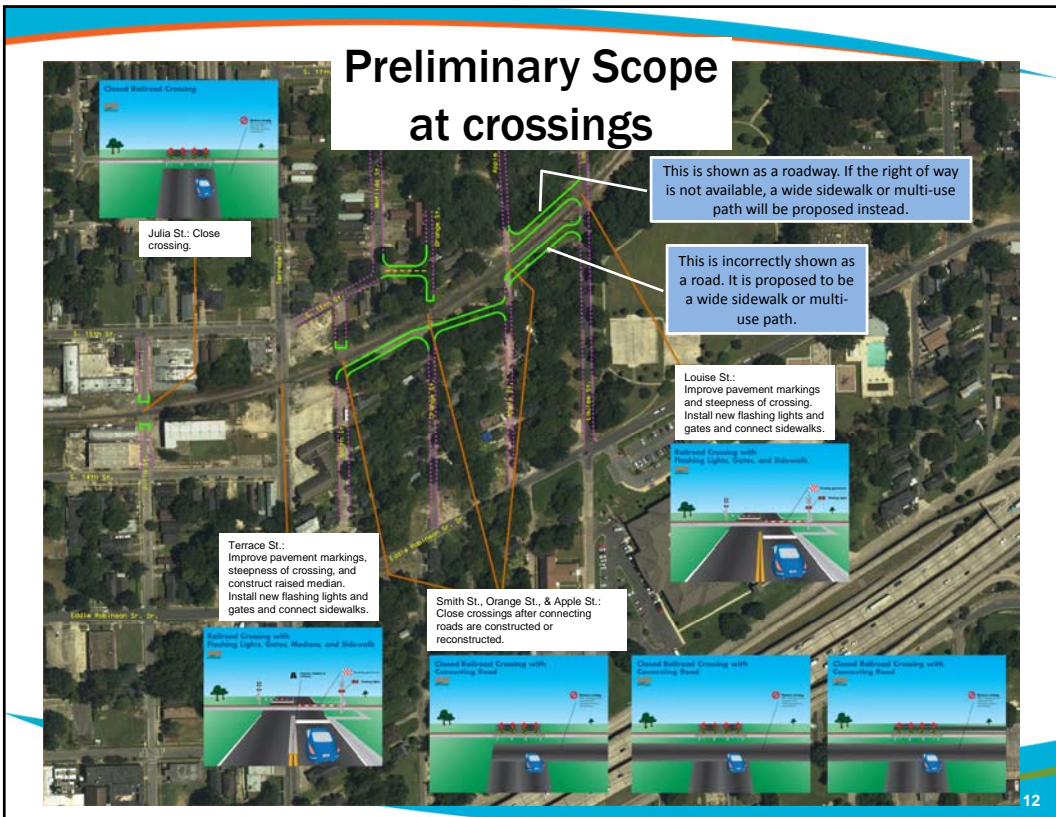
Gayosa St.:
Close Crossing
Closed Railroad Crossing with Connecting Road

Convention St.:
Construct raised median & improve steepness of crossing. Upgrade flashing lights and gates and connect sidewalks.
Railroad Crossing with Flashing Lights, Gates, Median, and Sidewalks

Preliminary Scope at crossings



Preliminary Scope at crossings



Thank you for your time.
Please remember to provide
comments.



KCS Xings Between Gayosa St. and Louise (BTR)
Project # H.012449
May 25, 2021

Public Meeting Transcript

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

Meeting begins-trouble with first minute of audio

Dr. Shawn Wilson addressing audience:

"...corridor here, by adding and upgrading recording devices and rehabilitating 10 crossings and in that process the elimination of 5 crossings along the railroad in the City of Baton Rouge. This is a standard protocol for us when we make improvements with Federal dollars, where you make improvements, and you reduce the overall number of crossings ideally in an effort to ensure safety. To give you a brief history, in 2016, the Federal Railroad Administration awarded a grant to DOTD, the City of Baton Rouge, Kansas City Southern, uh to improve the safety of the crossings on this line between City Park and the KCS Rail yard. For those of you that don't know, the KCS Rail Yard is right next door to DOTD and parallels the Interstate all the way to City Parks and then it crosses over the Interstate eventually and continues down to New Orleans. This grant allows for DOTD to upgrade the warning devices along this corridor much sooner than it would be if we were doing it using traditional delivery methods. Typically, you're talking about 3 crossings at a time and they might take this long just for 3 crossings. So this is a pretty, bold progressive effort, to get this done for an entire corridor to maximize the benefits in that corridor. We have had 3 Public Meetings between November of 2018 and January of 2019 whereby we took information and processed it and I regret to tell you that Covid happened and that took about a year away from everybody in many different ways and so there was a delay in a result of Covid following those subsequent meetings. The project has been updated based on the feedback that we received from the Public. Those discussions and the project team that worked on this; because this is multi-jurisdictional in terms of the railroad, in terms of the local government, we spent a lot of time with law enforcement, public safety, we actually done drive-thru with Fred (inaudible), we've been out on the sites, walked with a group of residents and ministers to look at the project and talk about the benefits and the pros and cons of what we were doing. I think I made almost all of those meetings, I know Fred and I have been here, I think the last time we were here we were next door in the hall as opposed to being in the sanctuary. This is the final Public Meeting in a series of meetings that was committed by the Project Team. One of the things that Mayor Broom wanted us to do is to make sure that we exercise as much due diligence to try and refine the scope as much as we can, but with a commitment to ensure public safety. We're going to present the updated scope with changes based on the feedback at those public meetings and give you additional information. This is the scope that we are going to take from this point with your feedback and move into the design phase. And so, our goal is not, we're not able to go back to the very beginning and debate whether or not we should even do this but we're going to refine the scope based on what we're seeing. And this, is a process where we just funneled information down to the material that we

have today. We're going to solicit comments about the project from the public and other interested parties. And so, you got information here, you choose not to give us information tonight, we provide information where you can submit it to us over a period of time. This process is a part of our typical authorized Federal Environmental process and so we are following our protocols in that regard. So here is a project description of what we are doing. We are going to maintain, we're going to do maintenance and rehabilitate 10 of the railroad crossings, and upgrade the warning devices along the railroad tracks here. The areas that we are going to make improvements are: North Street, Main Street, Laurel Street, Florida Boulevard, Convention Street, Wisteria Street, South Boulevard, Myrtle Walk Street, Terrace Avenue and Louise Street. All the detours that will be necessary are going to be coordinated with City and the State depending on the owner of the road. In conjunction with those Public Agencies like law enforcement, fire, and health care providers in case they need to be able to move not just during construction but throughout the process once it's completed. It contemplates and proposes doing five permanent closures of railroad crossings along the same corridor, so there is a total of fifteen, ten will remain with improvements and five will be closed. Those are Gayosa, Julia Street, Smith Street, Orange Street and Apple Street. Sidewalks at those crossings would be removed, however, pedestrians' crossings will be created at several of the other crossings where maintenance and the rehabilitation is proposed. So this isn't just closing and walking away, it's actually making improvements and connections to provide safe mobility across the tracks in different locations based on the corridor. Connected roads will be constructed between, Smith, Orange, Apple Street, and Louise. We are going to have a correction because we worked on that. Good Afternoon Mayor-President! We worked on that and will make that corrections on one of the slides when we get to it. They'll maintain access for residents, crossings will not be closed until the connector roads are complete. So we're not going to close the crossings and then build the connector roads we actually build the connectivity. The crossing are going be the last elements of what you'll see before it is open to traffic. Some major changes based on the information that we received, and this is an important slide, because it's documenting and its proof that we paid attention to what you shared with us. Went back looked up the engineering and all the elements of the conversations and made decisions and made some changes. South Boulevard was initially planned to be closed and based on the feedback and information received from the City its one that is going to be upgraded. The project now proposes to construct connector roads between three streets, in the area of Apple, Orange and Smith. And those connections, as I said are going to modified and we'll talk about that. And then the upgrades to the Government Street crossing are being completed as part of the Road Diet project. So we've worked together very well with the City, that's a State road, and we're going to be transferring it to them. As part of that project we made the improvements necessary for the crossing consistent with this plan. So one of the things you can't really see very well, but I'll walk you through it. Is, I told the staff that we're not going to show a picture if you can't read it, but unfortunately it's not projecting very well, and we'll make this presentation available online for those of you who want to get access to it. But I'll walk you through exactly what these different crossings are. The font is only so big but we wanted to put a picture in proximity with where it fits on the corridor. You can see it on these boards

here as well, after the meeting, if you need to come up at any point of time, feel free to do that. Once we completed this then we will open this up for questions and answers. We're going to start, I guess from the northern portion. At this location, right here, this is, down here actually, this is Gayosa and this is one of the crossings that will be closed. At this crossing, as you can see we're actually going to have a connector here for the road that exist today you just won't be able to cross the tracks at that location. You would be going to the next location which is North Street, one block away here or one block away down South or West of there. On North Street, we're going improve the steepness, that's probably not something average citizens think about. But for vehicles, we've seen cases where we had low boy trucks and it's steep, the truck goes over the front wheels make it across the back wheels are still down and the bed of the truck sits on the tracks. So we actually have to look at the steepness of the particular crossings and so here on North Street we're going to improve the steepness of the crossing as well upgrade flashing lights and gates. So it'll be two gates on the East side of the tracks. So you can see the idea here is not that you can go around the vehicle as much as possible. So that's another element of safety at North Street. Up the next street, just two blocks away from Gayosa, is Main Street. Again, we're improving the steepness of the crossing, we're upgrading flashing lights and gates. Here you will also have two gates on the East side of the tracks and add a gate to the North 15th Street. So, this is that stretch here, again you got two gates and the crossing and steepness will be reduced. One block further, and this hopefully puts into perspective that you got so many of these crossings right next door to each other, block after block after block, and that's some of the issues with the crossings and the trains. And so, down here at Laurel Street, we're going to construct a raised median here because this is a two way road. There is going to be a raised median, ideally so that cars won't go around. We see it all the time, and those are places where people get killed. So that raised median is a deterrent for those vehicles, and we're going to improve pavement markings as well as improve the steepness of the crossing, upgrade flashing lights and gates at this location. So this is something we have not done in a lot of places, it's something we're doing more of and so that median barrier does work. Inevitably, genius will happen and go around it and when he get hits, those numbers affects the State of Louisiana and our safety concerns. Ok! Up the next....oh wait...too far there. One more....wait...this thing goes fast doesn't it. Alright, so I am, this was Laurel Street, and right here at Florida Blvd. We're going to construct a raised median there on Florida, as well. Very similar to this single one lane in each direction or two lane roads or four lane roads, two lanes in each direction. It too will have the raised median, it'll improve the steepness of the crossing, rehabilitate crossing surface and upgrade flashing lights and the gates at that location. And then on Convention Street, which is one block over. Convention Street, we're going to construct the raised median, and improve steepness crossing, of the crossing, upgrade flashing lights, gates, and connect the sidewalks on this stretch. And so, while you might not be able to see it there is a sidewalk designed to go on either side to connect so that pedestrians don't have to walk in the road when they're crossing the tracks. The next slide is showing you Government Street. Government Street is going to have a constructed raised median, with flashing lights as well as install new flashing lights and gates and again we're connecting the sidewalks. This is a part of the Road Diet Project. This is a much larger median and if you remember this was four

lanes and as part of the Road Diet. You now have a bicycle lane on each side and you have the connecting sidewalks to be able to work and walk across Government. Going to the next street is Wisteria Street. Wisteria Street we're going to install flashing lights and gates. Again, this one does not have the raised median. I'm not an engineer, but chances are it has a lot more to do with the average daily traffic or amount of vehicles that we will have crossing that. So you do not have a raised median here, it's a lower level service road and it's right next to Government Street, one block over. Walking our way back South. South Boulevard and Myrtle Walk Street we're improving the pavement markings, the steepness of the crossing as well as construct a raised median on this one. Install flashing lights as well as the sidewalks. And so these are some of the value added benefits as a result of closing them because we can't do all of these improvements at all of the locations. And then for the last section of this corridor project, Julia Street, is one that is slated to be closed right here. In large part because on either side you've got the connectivity. Tara Street, Tara Street is going to have improved pavement markings, steepness of the crossing, as well as constructing a raised median. Install new flashing lights, gates and connecting the sidewalks. On this stretch there's your median, and you got the sidewalks on one side of that footprint. And then you get to the Apple, Orange and Smith Street crossings, and then you also have on here the Louise Street crossing up here. These are 3 that are very close together in a curve, which complicates it a little differently than a straight away that you saw in the other stretches. And you also have some of the connector roads in here, and if you remember I mentioned at the very beginning, that we have an error on this map. We attempted to working with Fred Raiford from the City, to acquire this piece, and use this piece as a connector. We will not be able to meet the standards of what we would have to have for a road, because of utility poles and a house, right on this corner here. And so, outside of growing the cost much bigger at terms of a right of way, as well as these improvements, knowing this was a grant we received. What we are looking at and considering is just creating a larger sidewalk path, slash bike path, to be able to cross and go from to these two streets here. Now remember, you also have access to flow all through these streets, in this stretch and come into here and or across. And so, this is one stretch, that we're not going to be able to build on this side. This piece remains, and you'll then have connectivity on the East side of the tracks and you have a connection right there. And so, at these crossings, there will be closures at the end, and connector road that are providing it. And it seems like on every slide this same blue car shows up at every railroad crossing and I don't know how that happens. But... So that's basically the layout of what we're improving on this corridor. And at the end of the day, I'll tell you, all of these improvements are focused on safety. And if this is not a concern for you, I assure you that we just saw some statistics that talked about Louisiana being one of the top ten places you're likely to get killed on a bicycle. It has a lot to do with steepness, pavement conditions, distracted driving, all kind of reasons that happens. But were also the Top 10 State for the number of deaths that we have at crossings as well as pedestrian deaths at crossings. Given the fact, that in 2020 we had fewer people driving, significantly fewer people driving, we'll have killed more people in 2020 on our roads than we did in 2019 with more people driving. That's not a good statistic. So for the last two years in a row, Louisiana, has missed its federal performance standards for safety. Thirty states missed it this year, we're one of the 22

states that have missed it two years in a row. And so, a great deal of what we're doing in Baton Rouge, in the Legislature, has to do with safety. No different than these types of projects that we're issuing here, to ensure that all the travelers are safe. Whether you're walking, whether you're bicycling, whether you're driving, whether you're on that train. It's important to ensure that people are safe in these corridors. And if you've not seen it, it's one of the goriest and most difficult days when you have to go on one those sites and see and witness what has just happened. If I'm not mistaken Mayor, we were here two years ago on the same day that there was a death in North Baton Rouge of a pedestrian and a train. And so, it's a real issue. And so, those are the changes. Much of the changes you see here are as a result of the public input and information. And so we just want you to know that we're interested in hearing your thoughts. I'm going to invite Mayor-President to come up and say a few words. Before we open it up, to let her express her commitment for safety. She has been an absolute stellar partner, at what we're doing with regards to public infrastructure here in Baton Rouge and I've enjoyed working with her. I'm not saying that because she's here, I'm saying it because it's the truth. Welcome Mayor!

SPEAKER: Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broom:

Thank you Dr. Wilson and Pastor Robinson for opening up your church for this meeting tonight. First all, I wanted to say that thanks goes out to Dr. Wilson and his team as well as our team in City-Parish government. Um, you know I was talking with my team earlier, and I said that, the conversation we had two years ago, as I looked at the plan of where we are today, we've come a mighty long way as they say in the church. I think that there's been some significant improvements, in terms of the scope of the project. As I have read most of the concerns have been addressed. I know there will never be 100% in terms of acceptability by some, but I believe that we've made tremendous progress. I should say that Dr. Wilson and his team has and I'm so glad to see so many people out tonight. So we can discuss where we are, and where we are going in terms of this project. So thank you so much, Dr. Wilson.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

So with that Ladies and Gentlemen. We have a microphone here that we would invite your comments about the proposals that you see here. We'll attempt to record it. We encourage you to give us your name and if you're a resident of the area or some affiliation with the area and then proceed to make your comments. We've got recording taking place and so we welcome you to come up to mic at this time.

Resident: No name given (Reverend L. Kemp)

Good Evening, City Mayor and Dr. Wilson. I know noticed that a lot of the changes that are being made to pertaining to Smith Street, Orange Street, Apple and (inaudible) are very pertinent. There are some things that really bothers me about it. It's not really, some of the things is not, haven't been addressed. The thing I like to address, is ok I'm pastor a church, (inaudible). I was born and raised here. And the train is passing

through and tears up the DOTD. It passes streets up, ok. And it's been tearing the streets up. The level of noise, the decibels that they have 96 to 110. Well, a person hearing could technically be exposed to sum of up to 85 decibels is dangerous to their health. They were telling me earlier that they won't blow their horns when they pass in certain areas. That's not true. You have Louisa Street and in between Louisa Street and (inaudible), you have Smith, Orange and Apple. I was wondering if you could deal with the tractor-trailer on the interstate noise, the decibels are about 80 to 90 decibels. And you have walls to keep the noise down and for some reason they going red-line district. Every red-line, every ruby red-line goes right under it. If you do nothing, I mean it's good. It's going to make the railroad look better, and saving money where they don't have to you know take care of those crossings. All that's good but what about the damage its doing to the houses. I mean if (inaudible). It shakes the houses. The houses are cracking, the streets are cracking. It's good that they're doing something. But when are you going take care of the individuals that live within there? That's good for them because they continue to make millions of dollars. But what about the people, the minimum wage people that live in different areas that are going to be affected by the noise. With those decibels continue to be exposed with the kids. And even if the (inaudible) I seem to have different areas so far and that's good. So in case something catastrophic happens we can get out and that was one of my major concerns on the last meeting that they had over here. But now my, otherwise its the damage of property and the streets and also to your hearing. I mean, It's just horrible!

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

Correct! Ok! What's your name again? Just for the record!

Resident:

My name is Reverend L. Kemp and I live in this community

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

Correct Ok! Reverend Kemp thank you for the comments. I appreciate that. I always exercise public service by being honest with people. I'll just share with you within the scope of what we can do is what you see. I can't argue with you on the decibels. I can't argue with on what happens on adjacent property. Unfortunately, the railroad tracks were here much longer than I was Secretary. And the Mayor was Mayor. And in many cases, perhaps in advance of these communities.

Resident: Rev. L. Kemp

Excuse me! No! Anything in 1939 (inaudible) there were here for hundreds of years.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

I'm not disputing that. So, I don't mean to insult you or suggest that you have bad information. That's not my intent. My only comment to that is, those aren't things that we have the capacity to have authority over the railroads. Because in terms of our authority the railroads were given some additional powers. I can't in the scope of what we do on projects, change and stop that. That's just not something I have the authority or the State even has the authority. Much like the maritime, the railroads have pre-empted authority that was given to them by the Federal Government when they created the railroads. And so, this is an issue that is happening all over the country. People, it's all been legitimate points and I'm not disputing any of them. I unfortunately don't have any tools to govern that aspect of it. The one thing I will tell you, if sound walls were going to be the option for that train. We would be much more evasive in removing property and people from the community to be able to build that both for the constructability and the final piece. I don't know that we have the resources to do that, nor do I think displacing citizens like that makes the best possible solution. But, I appreciate your comments.

My goal wasn't to respond and get into a back and forth but to receive your comments. But, I just felt compelled to tell you because I think it was very legitimate points you've made.

Resident: Rev. L. Kemp

No, I totally agree with you. But I did my homework. I found out that it wasn't until 1939 that KCS started coming through Baton Rouge. At first, it was Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana and that came in 1897. KCS came in 1887 and that was in Pittsburgh, and then later on moved to the south. But they came through Shreveport, Alexandria and they travelled on the West side of the river. Then only came to Baton Rouge in 1939. I mean, then the houses that most of the people lived in back in this area you had over 100 years.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

And, I don't doubt that

Resident: Rev. L. Kemp

They are really the ones, and I know that you can't do anything about it. They're the ones that are intruding on the people and damaging the people that can't get out (inaudible) by making their (inaudible) invalid. I thank you for your time. God Bless.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

Thank you! I appreciate your comments. I will tell you, all across this country, the infrastructure development wasn't done fairly to people. Which is why we have the NEPA process. Which has us here today to ensure that we don't repeat some of those mistakes going forward.

Yes ma'am.

Resident: Brittany Zeno

Hi my name is Brittany Zeno, I'm Assistant Director, of Old South Baton Rouge Economic Redevelopment Group.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

Brittany Zeno, Old South Baton Rouge Economic Development Group. I mean Redevelopment Group.

Resident: Brittany Zeno

Yes! The first comment would be about the way the meeting went out. And the way that the meeting went out they sent out the first set of postcards. Then two days later they sent out another set of postcards. And then, when they sending cards out for the public meeting. They didn't send cards out to every house. They sent cards out to every third or every fourth house. And how I know that is because that my family owns a couple of houses on one street. Out of fifteen houses, one house got a postcard. One house got a postcard. And what I ended up doing was I created an event on Facebook. And that's how I got the word out. But, I'm not sure how they chose the Church. But with the Church knowing the date, and being within the community they should have make some type of announcement to connect with the other churches around it. To make sure that people within the community were aware of this meeting. Because I believe that if one house wouldn't have not got the postcard and took a picture and, a lot of people just know a lot people, and we started sending it around. Half of the people here wouldn't be here probably. So that's something that needs to be addressed in the long run. Because it's not just, oh I gave a meeting and nobody showed up in South Baton Rouge because they don't care. If you're supposed to make sure that the people within the community are aware so they can come to the meeting to ask the questions that they need to ask. If you don't let them know then no one is going to show up.

The second question that I, well that was a comment, but the second question that I have is; it goes along with Reverend Kemp's comment and question. With the houses that go along the railroad most of the houses were built between 1905 and 1915 the neighborhood has been here since 1886. So what does the railroad company have in place for when the damage is done to the foundations because it's going to be done to it. It's going to damage the houses, it's going to damage the structures, it's going to creates problem when someone has a heart attack and someone has emergency with them cutting off these streets. And having to turn instead of just going straight through and they have to turn around. That's was part of the first issue when they introduce this

a couple of years ago. And when everyone showed up and they were like oh we're going to have a meeting in a couple of months and it just got quiet. People within this-- well I know people in this room and people within this community some these people have probably died. But they had those questions and they contacted the railroad company and no one were able to give us answers on anything. So then to come back three years later with the same exact proposal minus shutting down I think Myrtle Walk. Nothing has change on it. Nothing has change on it. So it's still detrimental. It's still creating a problem for the people of South Baton Rouge. Because at the end of the day the people that are creating this plan, they don't live here. So if they have a heart attack or they stop breathing or something happens to a child or something they have a way to get to the hospital. It's already that (inaudible). It takes us, the closest hospital is 10 minutes away... that's an issue within itself. And then to creates these roadblocks where it going make it even longer and its going to create more time for us to get to the hospital when we need it. Because I even remember at the last meeting, they had a lady that said her husband had a heart attack at Expressway Park. And when her husband had a heart attack at Expressway Park, it took 15 minutes for an ambulance to come and her husband died. So to say that the railroad company have this authority because they've been placed above what is already said from the Mayor from the Secretary of DOTD. What is gonna be done. Because even if you go down and look at the little side roads that go along the railroads now. Those streets are crumbling and they've been crumbling for about 15 to 20 years. And no one has done anything about them. But yet they said they going to do these changes. They haven't fixed any of the problems they have already created. So you gonna give them more leeway to create more problems and not to fix them also. That's not, I'm not seeing where that's gonna make sense. And for you to just say that, oh well, they have this above authority, but at some point someone has to take responsibility for the damage that they're doing. And like Rev. Kemp said that they're making billions and billions of dollars. It doesn't take that much to fix those problems. And then when you do fix them, who's going to pay for it? They're not paying for them, it's going to be on the taxpayer. It's going to be on the people within the community for them to pay for it. South Baton Rouge has 43 churches in a 2.5 square mile radius. Those churches don't pay tax. So, where is this money gonna come from if the streets have to be fixed? When they increase the decibels, increase the speed of the train, and they close these streets and they create all of these issues. What is the plan that going to be put in place to benefit the people within the community? Because what it seems though is that it is not beneficial to people that are in the community at all. So, what is the plan?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

So, thank you for your comments. I think, in response to a lot of what you said in terms of emergency responders and how they operate. We engage them directly on where they go and don't cross now. In making these improvements of steepness, one of the things we factor in are fire truck and emergency vehicles. While we can't speak to their routing and what they do, they factor all that in. In terms of the larger road system that's there. Government is more dissected and convoluted then people realize. That we have limited authority, that parish have authority for certain things, and we got authority

for certain things. In this case, we have authority primarily for the crossing themselves, and not necessarily the entire road that goes there. So that's a systematic issue. With regards to the improvements that we're making, whether they're gates, arms, sidewalks. We're very limited in scope of what we can do and the focus in this project was safety at that corridor and not the overall community. I don't dispute your suggestion in terms of the larger impact.

Resident: Brittany Zeno

So what you're basically saying is that the work you're doing is to benefit the railroad company and not the community.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

The point isn't to benefit just the railroad. It's the people that cross the tracks.

Resident: Brittany Zeno

We are the people that cross the tracks.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

I understand that. So the structure of what we're doing is making the crossings safer. Making them easier to traverse, providing those sidewalks. Does this benefit a railroad company? Absolutely! Because when they kill someone or have a crash, it has impacts on them. No doubt. The bigger impact is on the victim, I believe, that's been in that footprint. And so, it's the scope of the project, which is very narrow, which is no different than if you look at every project we do. It's very focused on a specific project. So I don't dispute the larger issues that you're saying, many of them are going to be outside of the scope of what we're doing. Outside of the fact, that we're making it more efficient, safer to cross that corridor, your pedestrian, your vehicle. And in some cases, the safer alternative is to provide fewer opportunities for those accidents. And thus you have, the closure of some them where you have one right next to it. And as a part of the improvements that have been made, as we're making the connections to be able to have the ability to move through a community without necessarily having to just cross the track to be that only alternative.

Resident: Brittany Zeno

So what other communities are you doing this type of improvements in besides old South Baton Rouge?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

There communities in New Iberia, there communities in West Baton Rouge, there communities in Shreveport. There several locations. And remember, we as a state,

this was a grant that was received in 2016, to target this area as a way to improve the quality of life, the safety of this corridor, as it relates to what there are doing. Whether it's parks, whether it's bicycle lanes, whether it's sidewalks, there are number of alternatives and options out there. There are multiple places where we're exercising this process. And I also mentioned, that we're typically looking at just 3 crossings because of the constraints. The idea that we have the amount of money we have to make this larger improvement, is also a benefit for this area, as opposed to just doing 3 crossings and not doing the next 3 and making those improvements.

Resident: Brittany Zeno

Ok, so if the people in the community are against those crossings being put into place, what do we have to do?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

I think part of it is making the comments that you're making here today. And we factor all of those comments in. We know that there is never going to be 100% agreement on anything that any government proposes. And we appreciate that. We respect your opinion, and the reason we're here and the reason we're coming back and making these changes is because it matters to us. And so our goal is to get as close to what satisfies the masses of that community which is practical and feasible. Again, this was a grant. The department did not institutionally or individually go say let's go do this. This was collective effort of multiple governments trying to improve the safety corridor at these crossings and this footprint.

Resident: Brittany Zeno

So, once we put these complaints in and we try to get a update like we did last time and we're not able to get in touch with anyone. Who do we, or who can I contact personally call to make sure?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

So there is information on who to contact for the final results of this public meeting on the handouts. It'll be posted on our website, and it will be published as part of our NEPA process that we're required to do to publish the final results of what's been proposed.

Resident: Brittany Zeno

Ok, is that final process going to be mailed out? Or if it is mailed out is it mailed out to every house or is it mailed out to every six house like you did the postcards

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

We do not mail to every resident. We mail and communicate to people who have participated in the process. The law requires us to advertise and post it in the appropriate journal for that community and put it on our website. And that's consistent with every environmental process that we follow.

Resident: Brittany Zeno

What if that community doesn't have a journal? Old South Baton Rouge doesn't have one.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

Well, it does have a journal in terms of the newspaper that we obligated or required to post it in as well as the website.

Resident: Brittany Zero

Ok.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

The other piece that Shawn Luke just said is that the transcript is going to be deposited in the Public Library for a required period of time as well for additional responses and comments. Thank you for your comments.

Church Member:

I would ask that everybody using the mic, step up to the mic, so that people in the back can hear you. Ok?

Dustin LeFont-Executive Director of Front Yard Bikes

Good evening! My name is Dustin LeFont, I'm the Executive Director of Front Yard Bikes, the Youth Workforce Development Program. Located here in South Baton Rouge. We have some the most amazing young people in the South. Everybody knows that I'm sure. That's not new news to anybody. Right? Thank you! (inaudible)

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

The most amazing young people. Front Yard Bikes! Right?

Dustin LeFont-Executive Director of Front Yard Bikes

That's right! Don't forget it! I want to say thank you for allowing us to be at this meeting. I'm thankful for our representatives and elected officials also being present for our

neighborhood and the well-being of our neighborhood. It is rare for us not to be working with young people directly and be at an event of this nature. But unfortunately, on July 4, 2019, we had a young man who was hit while riding his bike across the train tracks on Convention. He assumed that because the train was stopped and there were no barricades that the best solution was to try to get his bike and himself across because he was late getting home. Unfortunately, he chose to try to drag it underneath the train and halfway through the train started. Thankfully, he survived but he is still wheel chair bound. So when we looked at these plans we saw the closures of some of these streets. Thankful that there are less streets closed than originally. Which I think is at least a fortunate compromise. But there still is a concern because we know a number of young people on Julia Street that attend in our programs. We know a number of young people on Orange and on Smith. While it ideal for a vehicle in that diagram to travel along the railroad tracks, it's not for a young person walking or a young person riding. Unfortunately, no matter how much Safety Education training we do in our programs, we all too often still find ourselves in incidents of this nature. Safety Education of our children is extremely valuable. We're trying to do it as much as we can, but still not enough within our school system and our communities. But, something that would be really valuable to us and even consideration of what happens to our property values when you have dead-end road that is no longer attractive for people to live, or reside and or even have access for those very necessary needs. Was there even consideration of pedestrians or cycling overpasses that are similar to cities in New Orleans and other places? Was there any consideration of the cost of those? Of maybe fortunate ways that will make it safer to not have to try to figure out that this road is a dead end. How far do I have to go left or right to get across? Because unfortunately, it is still our habit when you see the dead-end you going to walk across it. I understand we want safety to be the number one concern, but in my hat that I look at as far as insurance goes that just alleviates the liability of the railroad. That oh it was closed, it was your fault that you crossed. But for a young person or any individual that is walking they're just trying to get to their neighbor across the tracks. They're not trying to be a delinquent or a problem they're just trying to get across the street. Right? So, are there any other considerations aside from walking? Unfortunately, this plan requires 3 blocks to 4 blocks in any direction depending on where you live to just cross over the train tracks. Is there any other thoughts, of like an overpass or something?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

So, good question. I appreciate your work with young people and biking. I bike at home myself and I haven't done it a while. So I appreciate that. I will tell you we do look at the distance to the neighboring crossings and what can work. We look at the engineering and complexity of there in terms of sight distance and what have you. I'm not foolish enough to think that just because we doing these, that folks are not going to cross where they're not supposed to. A number of deaths in Louisiana and across the country happen when people cross at places they're not supposed to, whether it's roads, railroads tracks or waterways. That happens all of the time. So we're not blind to that fact. Also, not blind to the fact that in some places the elevated structures work. But the vast majority of them, they end up being extremely costly, extremely invasive

because you have to have a bigger footprint, you have to have certain clearances and The higher you go, the wider you have go in terms of the steepness. And in places where we have them in Louisiana, while every places or no places are going to be the same, they're not used very much. They become more of a location of either blight or accidents. Valid opportunities, not necessarily something that is always feasible or constrained within the scope of the grant that was written or the nature of what we're doing. So, given the limited resources, the limited footprint of what we have on the job, on the project site in terms of the corridor, the more efficient alternative to make more crossings safer, would be to just to move to the neighboring crossing one way or the other, left or right. In the case of Apple, Smith, and Orange we tried to make as much connectivity through there for vehicles and pedestrians. But you just physically can't do it because a lot of older and more historic communities have very narrow streets and in many cases aren't there. We looked at a number of improvements. when you close a crossing, whether it's landscaping or whether it's signage. Those are things that we look at from a design perspective and cost perspective but we also look at the long term maintenance of it. Because it's not something that the State, is in a position to say, we want to go and plant and do a garden at the end of the road to make it more attractive. If no one is going to take care of it. I don't want to create a scene of blight or you know not such a nice sight for the neighborhood. To say we planted some trees and didn't take care of them. And so that's a challenge for local government and it's a challenge for State government. And clearly, if we have right of way at the end of the road, we're more than happy to work with neighborhood groups to help beautify that and to make improvements that are appropriate.

Dustin LeFont-Executive Director of Front Yard Bikes

And that ticks the last one I was curious about, and I hear that funding is challenge. But there always grants that we need to go forward with. There are a lot of people in here that are interested at least some residential improvements or community improvements. Are you guys, and especially DOTD, willing to partner up with the City of Baton Rouge, and partner up with neighborhood associations and community organizations like ourselves. Because if a grant can fix that and make it better for our kids, why not?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

Absolutely! We partner now! And so, I can tell you that we're partnering on major infrastructure project with the City. On a couple of occasions in several locations, we had a location over on Hardy Street, where this community does more perhaps than others in terms of investing on property that's not theirs to get it done to make people safe. And this is an example of going above and beyond what the grants call for to give you the best project. Because the original scope of the grant didn't include some of these connectivity that you see. It didn't include some of the sidewalks things that you see. And so, we've actually gone above and beyond that already. The one thing that I will tell you is I don't think it's in our benefit to not act while we apply for the grant. Because it continues the exposure of risk and liability and hurt and pain for families.

And so while we can do this as a step, there is nothing that says we can't continue to partner, to try to make improvements to what we do ultimately with this corridor. Likewise, we have a partner with Baton Rouge Green in terms of trees and planting. Where we're going to plant, for every tree we remove, we going to go back and give two trees. We're not telling them they have to be in that same location. And so whether they're low level trees or shrubs all of those are things that we worked with different organizations. And your non-profit is no different in terms of being able to partner on things like the Government Street project, or others to address the young people cycling and community quality of life. So we're happy to partner, and I think this this is a result of us coming together to not just put words in it but we're putting dollars, we're putting action. And this isn't about me, but I don't know too many Secretary's that show up at these public meetings and talk about this and face the crowds and deal with these questions. This is the kind of commitment you have from the department and the Mayor-President and the staffs that we have.

Dustin LeFont-Executive Director of Front Yard Bikes

Well, I appreciate that. I appreciate y'all's time to let us speak tonight.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson:

Thank you! Thank y'all for riding your bicycles here tonight. I thought that was pretty impressive.

Walter Williams

Good Evening, my name is Walter Williams and I don't live in the neighborhood. I attend church at St. Francis Xavier which is in the neighborhood and we're concerned about the neighborhood. I keep hearing that we're doing this for safety. And I heard what the young man just said about the gentlemen that got caught under the train and I get that. But has anybody done a study, has anybody looked at the actually number of car vs. train, pedestrian vs train, bicycle vs. train accidents along this corridor. To justify, for me that would justify, if the number are proper that will justify what we're doing. Because I keep hearing we're doing it for safety. My other concern, and still was on the safety lines of echoing what Ms. Zeno I think her name was said. And you said it yourself, Dr. Wilson, if you get an ambulance or fire truck on Orange Street and that's blocked off. Let's take an ambulance, the time it's going to take that ambulance to maneuver itself off of Orange Street and come back out to Eddie Robinson is time that may make a difference to someone leaving (inaudible). Because it's blocked off. There's no way, for him to cross if you close that crossing, there's no way for the ambulance to cross that and it's going to take time to maneuver that narrow street. But still I would like to know if there's been any kind of study with the number of accidents along the corridor.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

Valid question! I don't have them available. The grant proceeded my leadership as Secretary. We can make the grant available to you, and if the staff has that information I will ask them to get it and bring it up to me and share it. We do look at the number of actual deaths, we look at the conditions, we don't necessarily make a decision just on a site, and the number of deaths on a location. We make them on a programmatic level. And I will tell you we're a Top 10 State for these types of incidents that occur at crossings. Because we have a disproportionate number of crossings. Because we got 6 class I railroads here across the State of Louisiana. That only happens in two places in the entire country. And so, when we look at this, we improve the conditions of crossings overall as a way to improve safety. In these grant programs, there actually competitive in terms of other communities, and based on the fact that the Federal Railroad Administration funded this grant for this corridor, they saw the value in making these improvements. But we can absolutely get you the actual numbers here, but that doesn't necessarily translate to say not do this because we look at the overall system. In regards to the First Responders, whether they're Fire, Police, or Ambulance we consulted them on this plan and what these closures are. And in some cases were complimented because they said they don't do them now. One of the harsh realities, is there train is parked on the tracks, which is a huge issue, there's a resolution in the Legislature now, to try and force trains to shorten themselves so they don't block crossings as long. When there is a train there, that same opportunity exists, and so the idea that we're making this overall improvement, is a value to them in terms of how they operate. And we do this all across the State, where we actually look at the time savings for Emergency Responders, when we do these closures. So that was a part of the Engineering decisions and a part of why you see the crossings where you see them. Based on the scope of the project.

Walter Williams

One more question and concern. I don't know if anyone is here from the East Baton Rouge Parish Transportation? Is it?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

Fred Raiford!

Walter Williams

From School Transportation. East Baton Rouge School System Transportation. I'm a retired Assistant Principal and I worked closely with our bus drivers. A lot the kids in fact went to the school that I worked at. These kids get up at 5:30 in the morning, it's dark, and now we're going to have to have them possibly walk a further distance to get to a bus stop. That's another concern, and I don't know if you all consulted with them.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

We consulted with the School Board and it's the same thing. Buses are very limited on where they can go. And so, when the conditions of these crossings, when they have to stop at railroads, on these very narrow streets with on street parking and what have you. They don't do that today because of the safety concerns of having folks on the buses and the risks associated with the improvement or the condition of the crossing. We did consult them from an engineering prospective and aberrational prospective and got their concurrence on the plan.

Walter Williams

I would very much like to get that information on the accidents.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

Duly noted! Thank you!

Reginald Broomfield-Interim Director of (inaudible) /Resident

Good Evening Secretary Wilson and Weston-Broome! My name is Reginald Broomfield; I am the interim director of (inaudible) Sports (inaudible). However, today I'm here as a concerned property owner because five of the properties directly affected by the crossings I actually own. But I want to point out one safety improvement that is glaring to me being an owner here. Orange Street has three houses that right now when a train crosses, can't be accessed by any emergency vehicle. And the connector that is proposed, even though it is through my property, I actually agree with, because one of the residents right there, that can't get access from emergency vehicles if a train is there, is Mr. J.D in the back here. I've known Mr. J.D. my whole life and so I appreciate that safety aspect. I know there is a lot of concerns here about what are they going to do. But I can see the benefit in it and I just wanted to speak to that. And also say that I appreciate what DOTD and KCS is doing. And I just wanted to make sure that on my end that everything is equitable for all the residents involved in the project and that are directly affected by the acquisitions of land in this project.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

So thank you for your comments. I will tell you, no different than how we have to get public engagement, when we acquire right of way, we have to follow State Protocols and Procedures for Fair Market Value and the Uniform Right of Way and Relocation process. And so there is going to be equity in that. I will tell you when we first started, none of these connectors were even contemplated. That a part of the commitment of the Mayor-President and the Secretary to do exactly what you're saying. We know this is not going to be ideal for everyone but how do we add value in its place. I think that's what's our ultimate goal is. So I appreciate hearing that! As a property owner you'll be treated fairly and respectfully in terms of the value of your property.

And ensure that, that is separate from the actual construction costs. And so, our Right of Way costs don't determine whether or not. I should say they don't determine. The

right of way costs are not associated with the limited dollars that we have for the actually improvements. That's a different ball game. And both Fred has offered and I've offered and the challenge with this one was in fact Right of Way and Utilities. That it wasn't the same value and bang for what we're going to get by doing that, in terms of making a bigger impact for that community. And so, we'll still do some level of access here. Just not for vehicles. But for pedestrians and bicyclists to get to the protected crossing over here on Louise Street. But the acquisitions will be equitable.

Reginald Broomfield-Interim Director of (inaudible) /Resident

Yes, one thing I just want to kind of point out for some of the concerned persons here. The roads proposed West of the railroad track there. They already exist, they're abandoned. Well the railroad already owns their Right of Way and those roads have a lot of illegal dumping along there. Everybody here already knows that. If you make those road official City and Parish roads then that will eliminate a lot of that dumping through there. I haven't seen the details of the plans, I'm pretty sure they will have landscaping as a part of that package with the roadway improvement.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

So, you make a good point in terms of the Right of Way and what that property is and whether or not we can wholly acquire that property. But we can operate it a lot differently to ensure that it's not an illegal dumping site and that it's operated and maintained like we should be doing all of our roadways.

Reginald Broomfield-Interim Director of (inaudible) /Resident

Thank you very much!

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

Thank you.

Daria West-Property Owner

Good evening. I'm Daria West, I have several questions or comments to make. As a former DOTD employee, that worked in Auditing, Accounting, and Program Manager for one of the Public Transit systems. I know what the scope is that you're talking about. I'm like the other guy. The comment with the bicycles is if you-- I only work at my husband's shop on Wednesdays. But if you would see all of the people that jump on the trains to go across them. They take their bicycles they sling them underneath. I think, you Dr. Wilson and you Mayor Broome, need to get together and just come and sit in our parking lot and you will see all the people trying to cross the roads when the train is there. I understand what you said about they're going to try to shorten them, that's great. But that's not happening now.

Ok, my other comment is. Well, question. Do you have an idea of when this will start? Because our property is on two corners, Florida and Convention.

The other one is are people from Right of Way going to be coming to talk to us soon? We got a whole bunch of cards for all the properties we have. We do not live in Baton Rouge currently. I moved out right before I retired and we are still property owners and we still get to pay our taxes here.

And I just have questions about when the timelines is? Are both Convention and Florida going be worked on at the same time or are we going to do one stop at a time?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

So, a couple of points. Once we complete the Environmental process, this planning process we're in, we go into the design. I don't know that we have a construction start date at this point but we're making the decision to proceed. Once that decision is made, if Right of Way has to be acquired, we will then begin that Right of Way acquisition process. We can't begin the construction until we have the entire footprint secured. We will then begin to construct in the most minimally invasive way to travel in public. And so, I don't expect that you are going see all of these crossings all under construction simultaneously. It'll move along the corridor, but that a constructability question that will be resolved by the contracting side when we bid the project on how they do it. They may do some clearing, they may do some things at all of the locations, and then do some of the construction and improvements by sections. Those are decisions that are going to made through the bid process and the final design once it's completed.

Daria West-Property Owner

Ok, I think you need to think about the overpass for the pedestrians.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

Thank you! I appreciate that comment.

Brenda Glenn Brooks-Resident of South BR area

Good evening! My name is Brenda Glenn Brooks and I'm a resident of the South Baton Rouge area. I'd like to thank all of you for entertaining us and asking our input. First of all, I like to know if we have any representatives from KCS out? Anyone from KCS?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

I do not think we do.

Brenda Glenn Brooks-Resident of South BR area

Ok, well I'm asking a question. Will KCS Railroad receive funding from the proposed violence infrastructure plan for railroads?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

The question is probably yet to be answered. The Federal government does not readily fund railroads companies in writing them checks. But they may invest in infrastructure improvements and whether or not KCS is set to receive any additional money in what those are chosen for. It's typically going to go through the Federal Railroad Administrative in the forms of grants that they are going to make to governments to do work.

Brenda Glenn Brooks-Resident of South BR area

Yes, absolutely! That's my understanding as well. I think they have some close to \$80 billion dollars that will be available or more. Ok, so I have to write out what I'm going to say because I'm not that spontaneous. Ok, but that particular infrastructure plan is for equalizing the playing field for marginalized and struggling communities. The proposal for making our communities dead end streets will accomplish just the opposite. If our streets become dead ends they will kill our communities. We all know that. The original plan agreed upon, we met with the Mayor, Pat Smith, Reverend Kemp, myself, Reginald Morgan, the minister of North Baptist Church. They were gracious enough to come out and meet with us a couple of years ago. On the corner, down there by Railroad Avenue on the corner of Orange and Apple Street between those two. The plan was agreed upon at that time for a compromise not to close our streets off. But to provide a parallel street that runs along with the railroad where we could have access to Louisa Street. We would not be locked in and it would not be a dead-end community. Ok, now, if they want to do something KCS. They can fix the foundation of the railroad track which is shaking and diminishing the property value and foundations of our homes. That needs to be fixed. Ok, we know that the train has been coming there for years, but my family own property there for over a 100 years. So I'm highly concerned. At that time when they acquired the property, the frequency of travel, the weight of the freight, and many other factors have changed. Ok, this is not railroad related but when we think about infrastructure. Sidewalks are being built up all over Baton Rouge. We have asked repeatedly to have sidewalks placed from McKinley Middle School on both sides all way up so the children travelling from McKinley on Eddie Robinson will have somewhere safe to walk. Finally, we want to think about the economic impact. Most of the violence that people receive in the community, that citizens receive, they stem from ignoring the profound need for mental health services. This is my opinion. Simple acts of having the City work with us, clean up the trash, cut the grass, just making the overall community look better. Because I have to call 50 times just to get trash picked up ok in my community. It's not that no one cares it's that no one is listening it appears. Now at time I've gotten responses and it just depends on who I get on the telephone. Finally, I

would like to say the social and economic focus on infrastructure presents a unique opportunity. We must seize this moment for the future generations to restore and not tear down our legacy. Did you know that McKinley Alumni Building on Thomas Street was one of the first high school in the State to graduate African Americans? It's time to be about our father's business here. Thank you.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

Thank you.

Pastor Devin Wright, New Ark Baptist Church

Good evening everyone! To Secretary Wilson, Mayor Broom, Pastor Robinson. I'm Pastor Devin Wright, I pastor New Ark Baptist Church which is located on Terra Street. We are, perhaps, the largest property owner to be affected on Terra Street. Owning property on both the North and South side to the West of the tracks. I would like to say first that I'm pleased to see that there are sidewalks included. That was a major issue that I brought up the first time. That the sidewalks needed to be connected because there is no true sidewalk. But I would like to see more detail in the plan, about whether those sidewalks are going to be on the East or West side of the street. Also, looking at the plan there is mention of the 8 x 12 x 6 foot concrete median. And so being a property owner that backs up to both sides, again North and South, for our church of the railroad. I do want to know what will those medians look like? That are supposed to be on the West and East side. Although it seems small, I'm looking at the 60 foot portion of it. Is that all on the North side of it or the South side of it? What does that look like and how does that impact again our property as we navigate forward? Because our property that is most close, or closest rather to the railroad is our parking lot. So I don't know what that median looks like and how it impacts us and can I have more detail about that. I'm also looking at the connector street, which I see we have on the website. Will that be expanded, to make sure that it is large enough for two way traffic and not just using what is already there and making that officially a part of City Parish in terms of maintenance? Someone addressed earlier a real timeline because we've kind of gone through this and I understand that the process is rather extensive and I'm glad there is community input. But a real timeline about when this is going to happen, how's it going to take place and where we'll be able to access that timeline once it is laid out and readily updated. My also concern, and I don't know if this is DOTD or if it's KCS. So I wish that they were here about the construction machinery and debris. My church parking lot still has debris on it from a City Parish construction that has never been removed. I disbelieve that they not going to try to use, because it's open and available. Not try to use my church parking lot for the placement of machinery for leftover debris. Especially, if they're pulling up these portion of the tracks, and closing it off and that's going to be a problem. Not only for our community, a problem for my congregation. It should be a problem and concern that is addressed. I want to make sure I go on public record saying that we want to make all certainty that machinery and debris will be cleaned up. And that our property is not available in that regard just for because we have various events throughout the day on a regular basis. It's not available for the machinery to just sit there over time. Also, concerned about

drainage in the area. Anybody passes through on Terrace Street knows that it doesn't take a hard rain for the water to pool and collect right by the railroad. It becomes so much that's its almost dangerous depending on the type of car or vehicle you have to cross by. And again, not something that is astronomical like a 100 year flood, I'm talking about a Tuesday afternoon rain. And so, when we're talking about, when ya'll talking about closing down and in several of the places that you're talking about re-sloping the ditch in order to affect the drain line. What does that look like in real time? How does that impact the poor drainage that is already there? On Terrace what is that going to look like on the side streets, again, like Julia, Smith, Orange, and Apple? Again it said re-sloping the ditch line toward the drain. I have serious concerns about that. Serious concerns, because again we already see it readily happening and I don't know if we're increasing the pitch. All these various things that you laid out if that's going to be addressed. And so I would hope that the Mayor being here and others. will come out and do some type of Feasibility Study. Because the last thing I would want is for our Church to take on water because of how this is re-draining or looking differently. Because then we won't be a Safe Haven for those in our community, that have their homes that potentially take on water like we saw recently in these past two weeks. And so, I just really want to make sure that that is thought about. So I know I've taken up a good bit of time but I do want to make sure that a public comment is made on behalf of the New Ark Baptist Church because there are several things that are still not in detail in the plan. And again as property owners on both sides at North and South side of the track. We want to make sure that this is right. That there is equity all in line, that certain things are addressed and they're not just overlooked because it's something that's regular business and operating for you all, but it has a direct impact on us who live, breathe, eat each and every day. Thank you.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

Thank you!

Jerrel Warren (sp?)-Resident

Good Afternoon! My name is Jerrel Warren (??), I'm property owner and land owner on Apple Street. I'm very concerned about a lot thing on this particular project. One of things I want to ask Wilson is, is this money that has been appropriated for KCS is it distributed through the State or distributed through the Federal Government? Or how is it distributed?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

It's money from the Federal Government to Baton Rouge through the State of Louisiana like we do many of our Transportation projects.

Jerrel Warren (sp?)-Resident

In other words, you guys are the bumper zone between the railroad and the public?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

I would say so.

Jerrel Warren (sp?)-Resident

Because the last meeting we had KCS wasn't there representing themselves. Another thing is, I feel like if you going to do something on this large a scale you should have everybody involved. Last meeting, we had EMS, Fire Department, and several others. My post lady, she brought me those little cards that ya'll mailed out and I told her the situation. Well, she said it was going to be difficult for her to deliver the mail. It may be a couple of hours late if you close off Apple and Orange Street. To me it makes no sense. Either they're gonna make a parking lot of it for the railroad or are they going run two more tracks down there to accommodate KCS and there great emerging with the Canadian Northern Railroad, KSC. I mean you know, all kinds of things goes on that helps the railroad. We're not part of the railroad, we're just crossing the tracks. I don't want to get up out from my house and got to go one way all the time. Right now, I can go East or West. But at this particular rate of doing business I can't go but one way. I come here tonight, I'm saved by the bell. Half my property would been gone if that utility pole wouldn't have been there on the corner of Louise Street and the railroad tracks. And they got a house right there. Man, you know we have all of these proposals and all this, but we need to get down to the grass(inaudible) about the whole situation. I feel that there is a hidden agenda somewhere. Furthermore, at the last meeting, I told them that the distance they want to close down, is the same distance between Lakeshore drive(?) Drive and Mattie Street. There is nothing blocking the railroad they can (inaudible) Mattie Street or either way coming. The train will be the same distance from Gayosa to Louise Street. And, I went looked on Gayosa Street today and it was blocked off one side of the tracks, they're building some apartments or something. We need better insight on what's going on and better know how. The only I'm getting out of this meeting tonight if that power pole wasn't on Louise Street some my property would've be gone. I mean you know, so I'm glad of that. I want all of my property and I want to use the crossing. That crossing was (inaudible) for 40 years and now it's almost getting closed in 40 years. So we need to get some real good understanding. Port Allen. I went through Port Allen and I went through Plaquemine just to check their crossings out. No problem. As I told yall before, Catfish Town, Illinois Central, runs through there about 5 miles an hour. Nobody talks about that. KCS he goes at variable speeds. Sometimes he goes slow, sometimes he go fast. But if he can marginalize his speed we don't have to worry about no accident or no problem or nothing like that. We can live with our crossing. I mean I'm at the end of my wits with this thing. I understand about the grant and I understand about this. When President Obama, was in office he come here and give us a grant for us to extend I-10 to I-12. You know, all that is great and good, but it was for the better. Our other no good Mayor, (inaudible), he made the Central Thruway from Central to O'Neal Lane. All that benefits

people. Our little benefit is to get cut off. I think we need to address this in a different manner. Thank you!

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

I appreciate your comment. So, just for public disclosure my staff double-booked me. I've another event after this one. I'm not shutting the meeting down. I'm going to turn it over to Shawn Luke and let him continue to receive comments. And at some point, we want you to be able to walk up and see the slides, and then, make additional comments if you like to. So, I didn't want to walk out on you, but I made a commitment I was going to leave for 7:00 p.m. So that's just my personal statement, I'm not shutting the meeting down. I do appreciate your patience in being here and sharing with us your input.

Jessica Stroope-Resident

Dr. Wilson thank you for being here. I'm Jessica Stroope I live a few blocks from the railway. I want to follow up on what the woman a few moments ago said, and the gentlemen in the polo, and Dustin. That this plan may be more safe for people in cars. Absolutely, but it's unlikely to be more safe for people on foot. Or the kids in the neighborhood are not likely go the extra block. I really would like to see the data on the crashes between pedestrians, people on bikes, and people in cars. This could be more dangerous for the kids that live on these streets. That's all.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

Duly noted! I will tell you that safety of all of our traveling citizens are equally important and they all have different mitigation and responses. No doubt whatsoever. But duly noted! That's why we attempt to put sidewalks and education and signs and detours. It's a very comprehensive thing. Government is a very complicated entity. We can't be everything for everybody but we try our best to keep people safe with what little resources we have. Thank you for your comment.

Megan Sheehan-Dean-Resident

Good evening my name is Megan Sheehan-Dean I live a few blocks away from here. And to the point that was just made about safety. I understand that the intent of this project is to improve safety and I'm all about safety and safe communities. But I think it is also crucial to look at the impact and examine the impact. And at looking at the maps, as many people have mentioned, I'm really concerned about the closing of Smith, Orange, Apple and Louise, 4 consecutive blocks. And while on the one hand, I understand the logical argument that by minimizing the number of crossings we're going to improve safety. But taking a moment to understand human behavior, I fear however,

that with 4 consecutive crossings, and close crossings in a row. People, and I most concerned about young people, people walking and people on bikes, are going to attempt to cross there anyways. And that means the impact is actually creating a less safe situation.

Secondly, I also concerned about the decrease in property values on those streets turned into dead-end streets. How will those property owners be compensated for the negative impact on their homes equity? How will the residents of those 4 streets be financially compensated? We have to think about the impact as well. Thank you!

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

Duly noted! Thank you for your comments! I'm trying to get the last two comments in before I walk out. I don't won't to leave them.

Yes Ma'am!

Dionne Milton-Resident

I'm Dionne Milton, I'm a home owner in South Baton Rouge. I just have one particular question. While I understand that it is for safety. Ultimately, closing off the road and installing the railing, would that allow the trains to increase their speed?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

You make a good question. The trains coming and going are going into a yard and their standards and speeds in which they can go. So it's like people tell me that they were in accident on the Interstate here in Baton Rouge at 5:30 doing 60 MPH. It's not practical. And so, because of the crossings because of the gates that you have on the other piece. They're slowing down to get into the yard to assemble and disassemble their train units. And so, in some cases one might assume they are going to be speeding up. But the fact that they're in a curve coming into that is also a factor they are considering. And so, I do not envision that they will be doing speed, or increasing their speed. That is enforced by the Federal Railroad Administration. We can't write them a ticket, unfortunately, for trains. That would be phenomenal for us do. I've seen too many accidents where trains were going above their speed limits, on straightaways, where they had no crossings, or one crossing, or a private crossing.

Dionne Milton-Resident

Ok, just a comment. I did a Google search. If you do a KCS speed increases. It seems that all the increases that they do are in combination or coordination with railroad crossing projects.

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

I don't doubt that logic. But again, I going back to geometrics of what they have on their train. And speeding in those curves, increase the potential for them to move off the track. So coming into that yard is another issue where we see that not occur. Duly noted! Thank you very much.

Last comment for me, not the last comment for tonight. But the last comment for me, is this gentlemen.

Pastor Palmer

Good evening I'm Pastor Palmer. I don't live this area but I have parishioners who live in this area. And on Apple Street, yesterday, I was visiting one of them in my pickup truck. Somebody was parked along the street and I had to go all the way around because there not enough room on the street to pass. So, how would a firetruck get in there if I can't get in with my pickup truck? Next thing, is that I looked at your long range plan on the internet. All of these streets that you got improvements on will be either entrance ramps or exit ramps for the Interstate when it comes through. So my question is will these streets where you're doing the closing, is that going to be property that you going to have acquisition to? Is that some of the property that's was in that number 24 that they were going to acquisition or some combination that I saw that will be done? Where does that stand at?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

None of these projects-- None of the properties here are impacted by the I-10 Interstate job. The ramp that you'll have is going to be on Terrace. Which is going to remain a four lane road. You don't have. I'm sorry it's a two lane road. I'm sorry. So Terrace Street is the only place where you're going to have an off ramp for the Interstate going East. You'll continue to have Dalrymple exit and you'll have a Washington Street going West. And so, none of those are going pour directly into it but they'll have access to the service road that you have today.

Pastor Palmer

But you have to have property to build the off ramp to get to Terrace Street?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

The way Terrace Street is right now. We have 95% of the Right-of-Way. Most of the right of way that's going to be acquired for the I-10 job is going to be at intersections. Having to deal with geometry and or roundabouts for surface streets and the network on the ground.

Pastor Palmer

And these improvements has it been looked at? That the properties that are located in these areas where the railroad crossings, would be stopped, blocked off, or whatever you want to call it, that it would decrease their property values?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

I don't doubt that logic. We did not, in our evaluations, get into adjacent property values. We look at the Right-of-Way and the corridor improvement and the road surface. I don't doubt that this neighborhood has been impacted by the presence of the train and the economics of it. Totally understandable and logical. It's outside of the scope of our authority that I have to stop that.

Pastor Palmer

Ok, one other thing. The area where you pointed out that you wouldn't be able to build a through street by the track. Then these other residents will just have one way out?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

They've got circulation on these streets. All of these streets will be able to be circulated. They're accessed here and they access here and their cross streets. This will cross the tracks, this street will access that street, this street will access here. Those cars will access that way and can access here.

Pastor Palmer

So Apple Street will be able to get out what other way, then coming back out the way they went in?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

On either side of Apple Street, on the East side and West side. You'll be able to get to the adjacent street here or on that side and cross at this location. You just won't be able to cross from here to get to Louise.

Pastor Palmer

One last thing, I said (inaudible) preacher. One other thing I want to ask you?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

Preaches on the third closing. They do that at my church too.

Pastor Palmer

But one other thing I want to ask you and then I'm going to sit back down. When you were speaking you were saying, we're going to do. Not can we do. So in other words, all this has already been approved and its already done. All your doing is saying this is what we are going to do. Is that right?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

The intent of tonight was to get feedback on the changes that we made. If there is additional mitigations that we can make in response to the comments that we received tonight. Fred's here, Mayor-President here, I'm here, my staff's here. They will make those changes, as best we can, and we're going to make a decision. And then proceed to publish that, document that in the Library, document in the required places. And then proceed to implement the project.

Pastor Palmer

But my question is whether it will be done or will not be done, it's going to be done?

SPEAKER-DOTD Secretary-Dr. Shawn Wilson

In some fashion there will be some corridor improvements here. Correct! I appreciate your patience; I have to leave. Shawn will continue to receive comments. And at some point if you have other questions one on one, you're welcome to visit with the staff. But I appreciate your patience and respectful conversations. Thank you again Pastor for letting us use your Sanctuary. God Bless you!

Pastor Robinson

Let me just say this. First of all, I want to certainly thank Dr. Wilson. Would ya'll give him a hand? Because a lot of Secretary's don't even come to our community and talk. So I want to thank Dr. Wilson! I want to thank our Mayor for coming. Ya'll give our Mayor a hand. She's sitting here through this.

And let me say as a 31 year Pastor in this community, I do want to address the Sister in regard to the community announcement. As a 31 year Pastor in this community, I've always been sensitive to the change in our community. And I've always try to be on the cutting edge of how that's going to effect the people in our community. And as we came to this meeting I did ask Brother Shawn, was there anything that I could do to make sure that the information was there. They assured me that they would make the proper preparation to make sure that the community was aware. So I just want to make sure that you leave my number, as a pastor of this community, because most times when changes come through here, I'm basically aware of that. And if you want to contact me for information or any information that I may have, my number is a public number, 225-773-4545. And if I can help you understand what's transitioning in this community, I'll

be glad to do so. So I just want to make sure that you understand that as a Church, Brother Shawn, did assure me that the proper information and communication would get out concerning this meeting. Amen! Thank you so much! Ya'll give Brother Shawn a hand as he come.

Shawn Luke-DOTD Representative

I do want to start off by saying that I apologize, if the notices did not get out to all the residents. It took us a while to figure out where we would be able to hold it due to certain churches and other facilities we normally used not being open. Once we got and we're able to coordinate and confirm that we're able to use the church. We scrambled to try to get the notices out and give ya'll enough time to plan accordingly.

Yes ma'am!

Stephanie Anthony-Community Kids Outreach

Hi, I'm Stephanie Anthony with Community Kids Outreach of Little Rising Sun Baptist Church at 16th and Terrace. And I have a redirect for the first lady that commented on the communication. And I think the reply was, you know, that you were doing what was within the law. So I'm wondering if there's anything within the law that prohibits you from expanding the communication. Right now, select people in the community, would get a card, or I guess just the Advocate which is the Journal that you referred to. So I'm wondering if you will take input, and is there any law that prevents you from using other ways to communicate about the project to the community?

Shawn Luke-DOTD Representative

No ma'am. We tried to reach out as best as we can when we advertise these public meetings. And as I said, we tried to reach out to, we have the previous list of views, from previous public meetings. We tried to make sure that those residents, that those same addresses were noted.

Stephanie Anthony-Community Kids Outreach

I understand!

Shawn Luke-DOTD Representative

Yes.

Stephanie Anthony-Community Kids Outreach

Ok, I think is it Dr. Wilson?

Shawn Luke-DOTD Representative

Yes ma'am.

Stephanie Anthony-Community Kids Outreach

That said, that you do not mail to everyone? That's a part of how you function? I'm asking will you allow input on how to best communicate with this community?

Shawn Luke-DOTD Representative

Yes ma'am. If you have methods that would be more applicable and better for this community. Let us know and we will try to implement them in the future.

Stephanie Anthony-Community Kids Outreach

Great! So we're going to be giving you ideas of other ways to communicate. It seems like, this project, although you don't have a time for its beginning or its end. But that you do know how about how long it will take as proposed. Is it a 5 year project? Is it a 10 year project? Is it a 15-year project?

Shawn Luke-DOTD Representative

It's closer to 5 years. Probably a little less than 5. Once we have a meeting, we'll be able to move forward to start doing the engineering.

Stephanie Anthony-Community Kids Outreach

Super! And as you weed through the comments that have been made tonight and make adjustments. Is that possible at this point?

Shawn Luke-DOTD Representative

We can make some adjustments. There are constraints because of the funding and it's a competitive grant. We can't make a significant change because at that point they will say that wasn't what ya'll--

Stephanie Anthony-Community Kids Outreach

Proposed?

Shawn Luke-DOTD Representative

Yes ma'am. We can make smaller changes. Such as, we were able to propose some of the connective roads that weren't originally in the award. We're able to work with the FRA and they were ok us adding that.

Stephanie Anthony-Community Kids Outreach

Lastly, I really would like to get a copy of that data of pedestrian accidents that was referred to a couple times.

Shawn Luke-DOTD Representative

We will try to make that available.

Stephanie Anthony-Community Kids Outreach

Will you post it on your website?

Shawn Luke-DOTD Representative

I'll have to get with our group to see about how we can go about posting that. It is, the FRA, keeps an inventory of all the collisions at crossings. And so it is available that way also. We may be able, on the website for the public meeting, we may be able to post a link that will direct you there.

Stephanie Anthony-Community Kids Outreach

Thanks, so much! Sometimes, you know, people are frustrated for a whole number of reasons. But we appreciate your hard work and your effort in trying to communicate with us. And we look forward to us continuing to open the doors of discussions.

Shawn Luke-DOTD Representative

Thank you very much ma'am.

Resident-No name given

I just have one quick question. About the information for the crossings, the accident?

Shawn Luke-DOTD Representative

Yes ma'am.

Resident-No name given

Is there a way to call the main office to have it where I can pick it up? How do you go about doing that as opposed to?

Shawn Luke-DOTD Representative

Umm-

Resident-No name given

Have you ever tried to navigate their site? Have you ever tried to navigate their site? It's not that easy for everyone. I rather they print it out and put it out to be distributed to people that are asking for it.

(inaudible)

Shawn Luke-DOTD Representative

Yes sir!

Resident- No name given??

Just want to reiterate, I'm appalled at KCS is not here. So we don't know how they stand-- there was the side street. There were some of those things that I myself wanted to have Smith Street to Louise Street extension. But for years my parents live there. Matter of fact I was born on Orange Street. And my parents lived over there, and my parents lived over there. And for years I always tried to get that little side street fixed. The railroad KCS never fixed there little part of the street, what they had. Because I think its 40 feet from the crossies is their property. They would never fix it, potholes. Are they going to keep those streets fixed? After that way, they would tell me "we turned it to the City." When I called the City, the City said it was for the railroad company. And so the street was never kept up. I don't want them to come over there and put a little blacktop down, little blacktop down and just leave. (inaudible). The value of the property, I'm hearing this over and over. But it's a horror. They're not here. They're supposed to been answering questions. Well you can do it for DOTD. But they're not here to answer any of the questions that individuals have. Ok, if it's going to take- Ok, most of the people that live right back of me here. Ok, most of them are impoverished individuals which you going to have their properties drop again. It's not worth that much but it's going to drop. So, it's just totally beating these people down. I live over there myself but I retired from Exxon. I can move where I want to move. But the people that I came up around, they can't. What's going. You know, every time it's like you're not doing anything for the people. I hear they say about safety. I told ya'll, I'm 69, I was born over there. You haven't heard about a kid getting hurt over there in years. I mean so many years. I mean it might have happened up North. North of Government, but not back down this way. Not that far back this way. And then you, say it's about the safety. That's not true! So it's like you plan-- It's almost like you bring us

here and you're already have the mind made up. And I don't like people to play with my intelligence or the other people intelligence in here. That's why they're voicing their opinion. I don't know why it's going to help. Because they're not keeping up with what they've already put down for years. Ok, they say it's for the safety of the people, the decibels, the kids have to live around all this loud noise and everything else. It's not improving the livelihood of the people. So I even wonder why they even called us in. It's because it's not really improving anything for the community. It's just improving for the railroads to make billions and billions of dollars and the community is being torn up by them. Like I said if you go to any, to Orange, Apple, or Smith, right where the railroads come. The streets are just cracking. Not only that, if you go to the individuals that live in their homes, walls are cracking, the foundations. But then it's like we supposed to be elated that someone is going to block the street off. Then the people that block it off don't come, they send DOTD to come give us a hurrah speech. It hurts. It really hurts. You've been going through it so many years and you keep having to go through the same ole, same ole. And then you go back and have to tell. I talked with my congregation, and I talked to the people that live back there, in the areas I live in. But you can't comfort them in anything because it's nothing to comfort them about. I really appreciate you guys coming from DOTD and our Mayor, she fights for us hard. I really appreciate her. (inaudible). There are things that's going on that not profitable for the community. And I can't see it! God Bless you!

Shawn Luke-DOTD Representative

Mayor did you have anything else you.

Mayor-President Broom-Weston

I'll just speak from here. Shawn thank you for taking over when Dr. Wilson had to leave. I'll say that we certainly will have some post conversations with DOTD. The process is not totally over. That's why we had this meeting tonight. Two years ago, I want to say, when we had the initial meeting. I did go out and meet with some of the citizens in the community. I remember it was raining, and we all came out to talk about some of the concerns that you had. Fred and our group, took those concerns back. This was what came out of the concerns, a compromise. I'll say this and I almost hesitate to say it. But I'm going to say it. The railroad is difficult to deal with sometimes. Ok, so I mean that's just a given. I'm trying to be very diplomatic in saying it. So I don't think you should have-- but that doesn't keep us from advocating with the railroad. But the railroad is difficult to deal with. But with that being said I encourage you to-- We can certainly work to keep the lines of communication open. We can improve the communication and I'll talk to Dr. Wilson's team about how that communication can be improved. And certainly the comments that were given tonight will be taken into consideration. I'll tell you now. This is separate so I'm going to put a period there and move to another paragraph.

We're working on some community enhancements from the City's point of view. That's kind of separate from DOTD. Which hopefully will compliment and address some of

the concerns, for example sidewalks for the schools that are in the area. That's one of the things that we're working to do. So, I hear you all and I certainly believe in Dr. Wilson's leadership too. I'll say that in his absence. I know his heart and I know he wants to do the right thing by people. So we'll have some follow-up conversations. This is not the final frontier. But above of all, I think it's valuable and needed that the lines of communication be kept open with DOTD and the citizens of this community. I'll certainly work to assure you that that will be improved. I'll talk to Dr. Wilson about how we can improve that. Feel free to reach out to me with any concerns that you might have about anything. We got a lot of issues going on that we're trying to improve. I don't have to tell to you about that big rain that we had last week. So we're still working through issues like that, but feel free to reach out to me with any concerns you might have at Mayor@BRla.gov, Mayor@BRla.gov or you can call 225-389-3100. Thank you all for coming out tonight.

Shawn Luke-DOTD Representative

Alright, the package ya'll have has comment forms in the back. There also some comment forms over by the table over here. Fill them out, if you want to mail them in later on. Take some time to collect your thoughts, there's an address on there, fold it over, put postage on it and we'll receive it in the mail. Or if your able, you want to, you can leave it. We have a collection basket over here for the comments forms.

Thank you very much!

Comment/ Question Number	Question/Comment	Response
Walter Williams	<p>Has a study been done into the number of accidents have occurred along this corridor? Train vs car... Train vs. pedestrian... train vs bicycle. I would like to be able to see the results of these studies.</p>	<p>When evaluating crossings for upgrades, closures, and other actions at railroad crossings DOTD analyzes more than just crash history and traffic. While some of these crossings have not had crashes recently, some have less than desirable approaches, obsolete warning devices, and the tracks and the roadway cross at an angle. When there are several such crossings within a short distance, DOTD evaluates the feasibility of redirecting the roadway users to one crossing where safety upgrades can be made.</p>
Ruthie Losavio	<p>In regards to better communicating with affected residents in a community, we've found that a number of community-based/community-driven methods works more effectively than mass media approaches such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notices in church bulletins - Announcements during religious services or events - Printed flyers made available or hung at local businesses - Announcements in newsletters or on social media accounts of non-profits or organizations that serve the community <p>Don't assure pastors and community members that everyone will hear from you. Encourage and empower them to spread the word!</p>	<p>These will be passed on to the groups that manage public outreach for review.</p>
Arthur Hebert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My comment was going to be about South Boulevard. Y'all changed that, but it would have been good to know about it sooner. - I'd prefer more safety numbers to be included in this handout. How much safer are the new standards? I'm skeptical of the safety reason. - How much do pedestrian crossings cost? It's much smaller than a road, Wouldn't that be a good compromise? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -We attempted to show this in the Public Meeting Notice. South Blvd. was in the list of crossings to have maintenance/rehabilitation. - The current industry data indicates an approximate 90% reduction in collisions at crossings equipped with flashing lights and gates (vs. crossings with just signs). Also, DOTD has seen a significant reduction in collisions at crossings when replacing older flashing lights and gates with newer flashing lights and gates (the

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Another room for more one on one talking with many people might have been nice. I think voting on the meeting format at the start of the meeting would have been better. - UNRELATED TO PROJECT: Just want to mention that I don't think busses stopping at every railroad crossing adds safety. I think the disruption to traffic flow is more dangerous. 	<p>computers and electronics better meet driver expectations).</p> <p>-While the costs for pedestrian crossings are less, the Federal Railroad Administration and the railroads view pedestrian crossings in the same way as vehicular crossings from a safety perspective.</p> <p>-Due to the pandemic and social distancing policies that were in place when planning for the meeting, there were issues finding venues for the meeting. Regarding the format of the meetings, DOTD has to follow state and Federal guidelines regarding the format of the meetings and the wording of the advertisement and other aspects of the meeting are determined by the format. Therefore, we cannot determine or change the meeting format at the start of the meeting.</p> <p>-The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and other Federal Regulations determine which vehicles are required to stop at railroad crossings.</p>
<p>Beauregard Town Civic Association</p>	<p>The board of the Beauregard Town Civic Association was pleased to see that the current project proposal has been adjusted to include the maintenance and rehabilitation of ten (10) railroad crossings along the Kansas City Southern (KCS) railroad in the downtown Baton Rouge area, specifically including the maintenance and rehabilitation of the following three RR crossings: South Blvd., Myrtle Walk St./Myrtle St., and Terrace Ave.</p> <p>While many of the crossings proposed for rehabilitation are used by our neighborhood, we want to emphasize that the crossings at South, Myrtle, and Terrace are regularly utilized by residents and workers throughout the Downtown Development District (DDD), not just in the Beauregard Town and adjacent neighborhoods. These routes not only provide convenient access into the DDD by routes other than the interstate, but they</p>	<p>-Noted</p>

	<p>also provide residents and workers a way out of the DDD (without utilizing the interstate) to reach multiple services, including businesses, recreational facilities, and the Baton Rouge Health District. Additionally, we noted that with completion of the recent Downtown Greenway there has been a notable increase in bicycle traffic on the Myrtle route.</p> <p>Again, the board of the Beauregard Town Civic Association supports the above project with the specific inclusion of South, Myrtle, and Terrace for maintenance and rehabilitation.</p>	
<p>Downtown Development District</p>	<p>Dear Sir/Madam:</p> <p>The Downtown Development District was pleased to see that the current project proposal has been adjusted to include the maintenance and rehabilitation of ten railroad crossings along the Kansas City Southern Railroad in the downtown Baton Rouge area, specifically including the maintenance and rehabilitation of the following three railroad crossings: South Blvd., Myrtle Walk St./Myrtle St., and Terrace Ave.</p> <p>The crossings at South, Myrtle and Terrace are regularly utilized by residents and workers throughout the Downtown Development District, as well the adjacent neighborhoods. These routes not only provide access into downtown by routes other than the interstate, but they also provide residents and workers a way out of the DDD (without utilizing the interstate) to reach multiple services, including businesses, recreational facilities and the Baton Rouge Health District. This type of connectivity is important to preserve and enhance in our community. Additionally, these routes have seen an increase in bicycle and pedestrian traffic with the recently completed phases of the Downtown Greenway.</p>	<p>-Noted</p>

	<p>The Downtown Development District has been working to improve physical connectivity in the area, so we support the above project with the specific inclusion of crossings at South, Myrtle and Terrace for maintenance and rehabilitation.</p>	
<p>Deverene Jackson Sr.</p>	<p>My name is Deverene “DJ” Jackson.</p> <p>I grew up in South Baton Rouge on 1490 Orange Street.</p> <p>All my life, I remember the trains traveling in front of our homes. We were used to the train traveling at a higher speed to its destination and gotten used to the train’s noise. My dad currently lives in the home, and my fears are he will be highly affected by these changes. He grew up in the home with his relatives. He experienced the condition when there were no street crossings on Apple and Orange Street. There were no crossings from the east side to the west side OF THE track. Eventually, the crossings were built to provide access to public and emergency services to enter the area. Now the plans are to close the railroad crossing, which we will terminate the access to these vital services. Why are we going backward? The area is a disaster today because the city is not cleaning up or cutting the grass. The area is currently a dumping ground for waste and we have continuously called 311 for cleanup to no avail.</p> <p>For more than 40 years, the trains have traveled in this area. Our homes have become damaged, and the foundations of the homes in the area have been destroyed. Now, the plans are to close the crossings on Apple and Orange Streets, so that the train can travel at a</p>	<p>-The Project Team reached out to the different Emergency Response groups (Fire, EMS, and Police) and have confirmed that the closures proposed will have little, if any, impacts on the time it takes for them to respond.</p> <p>-The railroad safety community has a more thorough understanding of the potential safety concern crossings create. Nationwide, efforts are being made to evaluate crossings for the possibility of directing users to nearby crossings which have or will have upgraded warning devices. Because we have a larger overall project, we are able to build connector roads and sidewalks to try to minimize the impacts and maintain connectivity over the tracks for residents.</p> <p>-The speed of the trains is determined more by the class of track, restrictions of the train yard, and other infrastructure rather than the number of crossings in this area.</p>

	<p>higher rate of speed. The increased speed will further deteriorate the foundation of the homes and the property value will continue to plummet. This will cause an inconvenience for the remaining residents and will cause the property to become unsellable.</p>	
<p>Megan Sheehan-Dean</p>	<p>I understand that the intent of this project is to improve safety. While intent is important, it is crucial that we also examine impact. Looking at the maps, I'm especially concerned about the closings of Smith, Orange, Apple, and Louise—four consecutive blocks. On the one hand, I understand your thinking that by minimizing the number of crossings, you'll minimize risk, and that improves safety. However, is there concrete data to support that thinking? Understanding human behavior, with four closed crossings in a row, I fear that people (mostly concerned about young people) will attempt to walk or cycle across anyway. And the impact of the closings would ultimately be a <u>less</u> safe situation. Secondly, I'm concerned about the decrease in property values on those streets turned into dead ends (due to closed crossings). How will those property owners be compensated for that negative impact on their home equity? How will the residents of those four streets be financially compensated?</p>	<p>-Louise Street will remain open and the sidewalks (which currently end on both sides of the crossing) will be connected over the crossing. The project will attempt to minimize the impacts on the residents by connecting Smith, Orange, and Apple on the west side of the tracks with a connector road and connecting Apple with Louise with a sidewalk/multiuse path so pedestrians and bicyclists will not have as long of a detour.</p>
<p>Antoinette R. Williams</p>	<p>My name is Antoinette Williams. I grew up in South Baton Rouge at 1490 Orange Street. Today, I own property on Apple Street, and my Grandmother and Aunt own homes on Orange Street. All my life the trains have travelled in this area. We were used to the train traveling at a manageable speed to its destination and</p>	<p>-The Project Team reached out to the different Emergency Response groups (Fire, EMS, and Police) and have confirmed that the closures proposed will have little, if any, impacts on the time it takes for them to respond.</p> <p>-The railroad safety community has a more thorough understanding of the</p>

<p>have gotten used to the train's noise and vibrations. This same noise and vibrations have caused damages to our homes and the foundation of our homes. The plans are to close the crossings on Apple and Orange Streets so that the trains can travel at a higher rate of speed. The increased speed will further deteriorate the foundation of the homes, and the property value will continue to plummet. This will cause an inconvenience for the remaining residents and will cause the property to become unsellable.</p> <p>I am almost 60 years old, and when I was a little girl, there were no crossings from the east side to the west side of the track. Eventually, the crossings were built to provide access to public and emergency services. Also, to provide access to other areas of the city. Now the plans are to shutter toe railroad crossing, which we will terminate the access to these basic vital services and strip access and connectivity from us.</p> <p>To some, the neighborhood may seem like nothing but a bunch of overgrown lots, full of weeds and neglected houses, but it's our home. The area is in disrepair today because the city is not clearing lots, picking up trash, razing abandoned structures, or cutting the grass.</p> <p>Public works employees can often be seen parked in the overgrown weeds which they should be cutting. The area is currently a dumping ground for waste and we have continuously called 311 for cleanup to no avail.</p> <p>Kansas City Railroad, the company that is planning to close the crossings, does</p>	<p>potential safety concern crossings create. Nationwide, efforts are being made to evaluate crossings for the possibility of directing users to nearby crossings which have or will have upgraded warning devices. Because we have a larger overall project, we are able to build connector roads and sidewalks to try to minimize the impacts and maintain connectivity over the tracks for residents.</p>
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	<p>not think we deserve the respect of their presence. They have not attended any of the meetings to discuss their plans, and why the changes are needed. I would like to ask the stakeholders to come together and come up with a plan to keep these crossings open. Ensuring the survival of an area that is rich with culture and sentimental value to its residents.</p>	
<p>Eli Jackson & Deverene Jackson</p>	<p>Requesting for the KCS railroad crossings at Apple & Orange Streets to not be closed.</p> <p>As the owner(s) of property along the eastern side of the railroad tracks on Apple and Orange Streets. We would like to formally ask you and the Metro Council to ask the KCS Railroad Company, LADOTD, FHWA, and FRA to cease from closing the railroad crossing of Apple and Orange Streets here in Baton Rouge, LA. These closures will definitely put a tremendous strain on the residents of the neighborhood. This is the fifth time that a State, LADOTD, or the Federal Government project in Old South Baton Rouge has adversely affected travel and accessibility.</p> <p>The others are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The initial construction of the interstate in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s destroyed a wide swath of houses and business and the heart of the thriving Old South Baton Rouge to create the monstrosity that we call I-10. This single-handedly divided the community into two halves and destroyed the street grid that 	<p>-The Project Team reached out to the different Emergency Response groups (Fire, EMS, and Police) and have confirmed that the closures proposed will have little, if any, impacts on the time it takes for them to respond.</p> <p>-The railroad safety community has a more thorough understanding of the potential safety concern crossings create. Nationwide, efforts are being made to evaluate crossings for the possibility of directing users to nearby crossings which have or will have upgraded warning devices. Because we have a larger overall project, we are able to build connector roads and sidewalks to try to minimize the impacts and maintain connectivity over the tracks.</p>

	<p>existed causing some areas to be inaccessible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Closure of Terrace at Highland to accommodate updated I-10 E exit ramp- New I-110 S exit onto Terrace Street- The I-10 widening project through the heart of Old South Baton Rouge- KCS Railroad Crossing Closures <p>When combined with these other projects, the crossing closures will cause the Old South Baton Rouge neighborhood to be further subdivided, chopped up into disconnected bits. People living in this area will find it increasingly difficult to travel into, out of, and around the neighborhood. This will have a lasting negative impact that follows an unfortunate historical trend in this neighborhood.</p> <p>We feel that this plan will cause harm to residents along; Orange, Apple, and Smith Street. Housing values will likely plummet. It will be extremely difficult for public and emergency services to access this area as the streets are already abnormally narrow by today's standards. The quality of life in this area will be non-existent. Youth are extremely unlikely to walk several blocks out of the way to access City Park. We must ask ourselves why these crossings were initially constructed in the first place, to provide access to city and emergency services to the residents on the eastern side of the tracks. Now you want to remove this access to the residents again?</p>	
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	<p>The current plan provides safety improvements for trains, vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, and other vulnerable road users are a mere afterthought. The railroad came after our neighborhood was built, but we continue to shoulder the harm, depreciation, and division of our community. We are not only concerned about the residents of our streets, but about what these choices say about our community as a whole. Whose voice matters?</p> <p>We encourage you to voice concern about the safety and harm to this community. We would like to see DOTD, FHWA, FRA, and KCS come up with funding for basic safety measures to keep these crossings open.</p>	
<p>Clinton Rouyea</p>	<p>Putting concrete medians on Florida Blvd. would prevent 18 wheel trucks delivering raw materials to bakery, they enter on Florida Blvd.</p> <p>Putting concrete medians on convention St. would prevent above trucks from leaving bakery, they exit on Convention St.</p> <p>We received one to three deliveries per week, they unload between RR tracks and bakery.</p> <p>How long would these streets be closed for project?? This also may impact us depending on length of time.</p>	<p>-We will work with the designers to attempt to minimize the impact to the trucks accessing the Bakery. -The crossings where the surfaces will be reconstructed will be required to be completely closed for 3-4 days (usually over a weekend to minimize impacts).</p>