



## Community Input Meetings (Round 2) Comment Responses

Comments addressed in this document have been **summarized** from the written comment forms, emailed comments, comment letters received which did not generate individual responses, and verbal comments provided to the court reporter during the three Community Input Meetings held in December 2012 in Caddo Parish. Emailed comments were responded to via email after received, and those responses are included in this document. Three comment letters received prior to the end of the comment period received individual responses and have been included here as well as posted individually on this website. To read all the comments in their entirety, please reference the Community Input Meetings (Round 2) Event Summary, also located on the Documents page of this website.

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### WRITTEN COMMENTS

#### John Glassell

- **The I-49 Inner City Connector needs to be built to complete I-49**
- **It will provide better access to downtown**
- **A Ford/Caddo interchange can have wide ramps that go under the interstate like Kings Highway**
- **Alternative 1 appears to be the straightest route**
- **The loop (LA 3132) is a bad idea, LA 3132 is substandard, only four lanes, and more traffic on North Market is horrible due to congestion and traffic lights**

Response: Thank you for your comments.

#### Bill Wiener

- **Loop it using LA 3132 to I-220 to I-49**
- **Comment suggesting the meeting sponsors were preventing citizens from providing an alternate**

Response: We appreciate your comments and will take the suggestion of another build alternative under consideration. In reference the comment that citizens were prevented from providing an alternative, this round of meetings represents the 14<sup>th</sup> thru 16<sup>th</sup> community meetings held on this project. The citizens of Shreveport, particularly the affected community, have been participating in the development of the build alternatives presented during this round of meetings since 2009.

Due to requests to consider LA 3132 as a build alternative, the project is being amended to add a fifth build alternative. Approval to initiate studying the fifth build alternative is pending and anticipated to be received in May 2013.

#### Al Taglavore

- **The project provides an opportunity for growth and revitalization**
- **Allendale was a vibrant community with businesses and people**
- **Alternative 1 is positive for the city and state**

Response: Thank you for your comments.



**Father Andre McGrath, OFM**

- **Why have you not considered the “loop it” option?**
- **Using LA 3132 and I-220 saves our neighborhood**

Response: Thank you for your comments. The consideration of LA 3132 as an alternative has been included as the No Build option of not building an inner city connector. Due to requests to consider LA 3132 as a build alternative, the project is being amended to add a fifth build alternative. Approval to initiate studying the fifth build alternative is pending and anticipated to be received in May 2013.

**Chris Demopolos**

- **Build**
- **Provide a one-way frontage road on both sides of interchange; loop the road between Ford and extension of road south of Texas to provide traffic to local businesses and homes**

Response: Thank you for comments. We will consider the location of potential frontage roads for the Preferred Alternative.

**Walter Douglas**

- **Thank you**

Response: We thank you for attending and participating in the development of the I-49 Inner City Connector.

**Michael Henderson**

- **The future of our city is at stake if the “heart of the city” is not functioning**
- **Build and complete the I-49 ICC**

Response: Thank you for your comments.

**Jen Hoft**

- **Let’s get this job done, too much is at stake**

Response: Thank you for your comment.

**Mark Brossett, Jr.**

- **Hope that the I-49 ICC will not destroy houses and churches**

Response: Thank you for your comment. Part of the process we follow considers the presence of homes, churches, and other areas of special interest to the community. In our analysis of the potential impacts resulting from each of the alternatives, we will consider the number of homes, churches, and other community sensitive sites that may be adversely affected. Decisions associated with the selection of the Preferred Alternative will consider the number of adversely affected homes, churches, and other community sensitive sites.



**Henri Bradford**

- **Run along the railroad that runs by the lake into I-220**

Response: Thank you for your comment. We considered this potential route during the Stage 0 study conducted between 2009 and 2010. As it is not significantly different than the utilization of I-20 to I-220 and it would require the relocation of the city's water treatment facilities, it was dropped from further consideration.

**Auriel McLain**

- **Loop it, but if you can't, take the fewest churches**

Response: Thank you for your comment.

**Dessie M. Adger**

- **Use an alternative route other than those outlined in the legend**

Response: Thank you for your comment.

**Tim Ford**

- **Opposed to any construction that alters the parish (of Our Lady of Blessed Sacrament) in any form**
- **Supports the no build as there are no costs and no homes lost**

Response: Thank you for your comments.

**Brenda Giles**

- **Consider an alternate plan that would spare what is left of the community**
- **If you use the loop or Build Alternative 3, the community can rebuild**

Response: Thank you for your comments.

**Unknown Author**

- **Consider the Loop it route**
- **What is the reason for always selecting African American communities?**
- **What are the benefits to property owners and businesses?**
- **Please consider human factors in your decision**

Response: Thank you for your comments. The corridor in which the Build Alternatives was overwhelming identified as the most appropriate location to construct the I-49 Inner City Connector by the public (Shreveport and local community) during 10+ public meetings held between 2009 and 2010. The National Environmental Policy Act process as well as other legislation, guidance, and Executive Orders, requires that all impacts, positive and negative, are considered the decision making process. We will consider impacts to the community in our analysis of the Build Alternatives and the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Additionally, due to requests to consider LA 3132 as a build alternative, the



project is being amended to add a fifth build alternative. Approval to initiate studying the fifth build alternative is pending and anticipated to be received in May 2013.

#### **Tedd Penn**

- **People in a community are more important than a highway**
- **Many people in the project area require assistance for daily living needs**
- **If you must build, please build elevated to retain properties and the community heritage**

Response: We thank you for your comments. We will be considering impacts to the community in our analysis. We anticipate the connector may be both elevated and at-grade due to the topography of the community and the ramps necessary to connect to I-20 and future I-49 at I-220. We will continue to assess the potential impact differences between elevated and at-grade sections as we develop the build alternatives.

#### **EMAILED COMMENTS**

#### **Alva W. Ash**

- **Please build the road**
- **Favor Alternative 3 as it impacts less people**

Response: On behalf of the I-49 Inner City Connector project team, I thank you for your comment. All comments received prior to the January 14, 2013 deadline will be included in the official comments associated with the December public meetings. We appreciate your input and encourage you to utilize the project website, [www.i49shreveport.com](http://www.i49shreveport.com), to stay informed on the progress of the project.

#### **Carolyn J. London**

- **Can you advise on the affects of the project on the area of Madison/Portland/Kenneth/Andrew bordered by Murphy to the north and Laurel to the south?**

Response: The project corridor and potential area of construction relative to the four build alternatives (that may be observed on the website as well as the article in the Shreveport Times on Monday, January 7, 2013) does not involve the portion of the neighborhood you identified above. While the identified area would not be directly affected by construction if the project were to be approved, there could be impacts to your travel patterns based on which build alignment may be selected and whether the new highway is at-grade or elevated.

We are presently studying the alternative alignments relative to direct impacts, cost, and community input. When this is complete, we will have a better idea of secondary impacts (not directly related to physical construction) that may be expected. As we develop new information and it is approved, it will be posted to the website. Please continue to refer to the website for updated information on the project.

Thank you for your interest in the project. We appreciate your comments and look forward to your continued participation.



**Jason Dobbins**

- **Please build the I-49 Inner City Connector**
- **Preference for Alternative 2**

Response: On behalf of the I-49 Inner City Connector project team, I thank you for your comment. All comments received prior to the January 14, 2013 deadline will be included in the official comments associated with the December public meetings. We appreciate your input and encourage you to utilize the project website, [www.i49shreveport.com](http://www.i49shreveport.com), to stay informed on the progress of the project.

**Kenneth McMartin**

- **Do not have a preferred among the Build Alternatives**
- **There are positives to the construction of the I-49 Inner City Connector, such as removing traffic from Airline and Benton and I-20 in Bossier, less gas use, and shorter travel time**

Response: On behalf of the I-49 Inner City Connector project team, I thank you for your comment. All comments received prior to the January 14, 2013 deadline will be included in the official comments associated with the December public meetings. We appreciate your input and encourage you to utilize the project website, [www.i49shreveport.com](http://www.i49shreveport.com), to stay informed on the progress of the project.

**Kristen Brown**

- **I-49 must be connected, and not by a weird loop**
- **Build Alternative 1 is the most logical option**

Response: On behalf of the I-49 Inner City Connector project team, I thank you for your comment. All comments received prior to the January 14, 2013 deadline will be included in the official comments associated with the December public meetings. We appreciate your input and encourage you to utilize the project website, [www.i49shreveport.com](http://www.i49shreveport.com), to stay informed on the progress of the project.

**Loy Moore**

- **There are two needed projects, the completion of I-49 to the Arkansas State Line and needed upgrades to I-20 in its inner city route through downtown Shreveport, its Red River Bridge and through Bossier City**
- **The I-49 Inner City Connector should turn east at its present interchange with I-20 onto an upgraded I-20 and follow the upgraded I-20 route to a new intersection approximately under the Barksdale AFB northern runway flightpath, following the flightpath in a northerly direction and utilizing the Airline Drive corridor it should proceed to a new Red River crossing near Benton and thence to the existing I-49 corridor somewhere near Dixie**
- **This route would prevent the division of the inner city neighborhoods**
- **Utilizing the Barksdale northern flightpath, a great amount of un-useable and vacant farm land would be available for right-of-way at relatively low cost.**
- **Money for building through the Shreveport inner city could be better spent upgrading I-20 from the Common Street/Line Avenue Interchange eastward to the Industrial Drive Interchange**



- **The growth corridor from Bossier City to Benton is one of the most active in this entire area and an additional Red River Crossing at or near Benton would be well placed for this new growth.**

Response: On behalf of the I-49 Inner City Connector project team, I thank you for your well thought out comments. All comments received prior to the January 14, 2013 deadline will be included in the official comments associated with the December public meetings. We appreciate your input and encourage you to utilize the project website, [www.i49shreveport.com](http://www.i49shreveport.com), to stay informed on the progress of the project.

#### **Nancy Ash**

- **I-49 should be continued through the city**
- **Favors the 3<sup>rd</sup> route mentioned in the paper (Alternative 3)**
- **Hope it's finished quickly**

Response: On behalf of the I-49 Inner City Connector project team, I thank you for your comment. All comments received prior to the January 14, 2013 deadline will be included in the official comments associated with the December public meetings. We appreciate your input and encourage you to utilize the project website, [www.i49shreveport.com](http://www.i49shreveport.com), to stay informed on the progress of the project.

#### **T. Haller Jackson, III**

- **The I-49 portion through downtown Shreveport should be completed as soon as possible**
- **It should take advantage of the existing ramps off Murphy Street and follow the least expensive route to link with the I-49 section leaving Shreveport to the north**

Response: On behalf of the I-49 Inner City Connector project team, I thank you for your comment. All comments received prior to the January 14, 2013 deadline will be included in the official comments associated with the December public meetings. We appreciate your input and encourage you to utilize the project website, [www.i49shreveport.com](http://www.i49shreveport.com), to stay informed on the progress of the project.

### **COMMENT LETTERS**

#### **Paul J. Cirulli**

- **With 90% of the project (I-49 from Lafayette to Arkansas) complete or under construction, why does the last 10% remain in doubt?**

Response: We thank you for the time and information you provided in your comment letter referenced above. The only question that you ask is relative to why the inner city portion of the project is in doubt. The inner city portion of the project was removed from the I-49 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in 1978 due to "lack of funding". Prior to the remaining portions of I-49 from Lafayette to Shreveport and on to Arkansas being funded, there was some hesitation to studying the completion of the freeway through Shreveport. The current process was started as a feasibility study in 2009, when it appeared that the remaining portion of I-49 from Arkansas to Shreveport would be funded and constructed.

The current EIS process is designed to determine the most reasonable and feasible route to connect the north section to the existing southern terminus of I-49 at I-20. We are following federal guidelines



established under the National Environmental Policy Act, which will result in an official document approving one of the build alternatives to move forward for funding and final design or it will select to opt to not build the connector.

**Charles R. Duke**

- **Choose the shortest route**
- **Will save on fuel, time, auto repairs, and less pollution**
- **Freeway could be used for 100 years or more**

Response: We thank you for your comments.

**Tabitha Rawls**

- **It needs to be built**

Response: We thank you for your comment.

**Mark P. Vigen**

- **Please build**
- **Sooner is better, will be more cost effective**

Response: We thank you for your comments.

**VERBAL COMMENTS GIVEN TO COURT REPORTER**

*Please note again that these comments are summaries of the complete record. The full comments can be read in the Community Input Meetings (Round 2) Event Summary.*

**Tim Ford**

- **I support the No Build Alternative**
- **Mr. Ford offers support for his decision to select the No Build Alternative**

Response: We thank you for your comments.

**Raymond Elgier Green**

- **The maps are hard to understand**
- **Hopes future meetings will have more understandable information (presentation)**

Response: We thank you for your comments. We do intend to have a presentation during the next meeting.

**Theodore L. Frierson**

- **Why not use LA 3132, it's already there?**
- **Do something different to get more traffic to downtown**



Response: We thank you for your comments. Due to requests to consider LA 3132 as a build alternative, the project is being amended to add a fifth build alternative. Approval to initiate studying the fifth build alternative is pending and anticipated to be received in May 2013.

**Linda Katherine Peoples**

- **What is going to happen to my residence (I appear to be in the routes)?**

Response: We thank you for your comments. Your address is listed as 510 North Pierre. Based on the alignments that have been developed, your home is within the study corridor, *but is not* within the potential right-of-way of any of the build alternatives. Build Alternative 3 turns to the northwest just to the south of the intersection of Patzman and North Pierre. Your home, based on Google Earth mapping, is to the north of this location and would not be affected. We will send you a map showing your house in relation to Build Alternative 3.

**Sharon Denise Bryant**

- **We are spending money unnecessarily and it is going to hurt churches that have been here a long time**

Response: We thank you for your comments. We will be considering impacts to the community in our analysis.

**Ramona Green**

- **More members of the project team should have been present**
- **Appears Build Alternative 3 is the only one that misses Our Lady of Blessed Sacrament besides No Build**
- **Progress should not come at the expense of freedom to worship**

Response: We thank you for your comments. The proposed mainline rights-of-way for both Build Alternatives 2 and 3 avoid impacting Our Lady of Blessed Sacrament church and its associated buildings. However, an interchange at Ford Street associated with Build Alternative 2 does have the potential to impact the church property. With the decision to add a fifth build alternative to the study, we will be holding an extra round of public meetings. We typically staff meetings relative to the number of anticipated participants. Due to the large number of people that attended the second round of meetings, we will be adding additional staff to the third round of community input meetings to ensure adequate knowledgeable staff are available.

**Joan L. Carthrum**

- **We don't want I-49 to come here and impact our church, it's been here since 1923**
- **I have been here since I was a baby and never belonged to another church**

Response: We thank you for your comments. We will be considering impacts to the community in our analysis.

**Carolyn H. Miles**

- **We don't want our church and the Fuller homes affected**
- **Give us a fifth choice that says loop it**





Response: We thank you for your comments. We will be considering impacts to the community in our analysis. Due to requests to consider LA 3132 as a build alternative, the project is being amended to add a fifth build alternative. Approval to initiate studying the fifth build alternative is pending and anticipated to be received in May 2013.

**Brian Salvatore**

- **I am opposed to the construction of the Inner City Connector**
- **I don't want see the inner city bisected**
- **I don't want to see diesel soot on the beautiful historic neighborhood**

Response: We thank you for your comments. We will be considering impacts to the community in our analysis.

**Felicia Ransom Schneider**

- **Not sure if NLCOG is aware, but some of us (residents) like our neighborhood**
- **We relocated after Katrina and don't want to move again**
- **Take into consideration all the people and neighborhood impacts, that we worked hard to become better homeowners**

Response: We thank you for your comments. The environmental impact process will consider the comments and concerns of the residents.

**Celeste Allen**

- **I came after Katrina and have seen communities destroyed (Treme) by interstate highways**
- **I don't want to see that happen to Allendale**
- **I don't agree and think they should use LA 3132**

Response: We thank you for your comments. We will be considering impacts to the community in our analysis. Due to requests to consider LA 3132 as a build alternative, the project is being amended to add a fifth build alternative. Approval to initiate studying the fifth build alternative is pending and anticipated to be received in May 2013.

**Robert Perry**

- **People seem confused by maps, not enough explanation**
- **I prefer using LA 3132, it only needs to be upgraded, so it would save state money**
- **The other alternative would be 3**
- **I prefer they do something that is beneficial for the community**

Response: We thank you for your comments. Due to requests to consider LA 3132 as a build alternative, the project is being amended to add a fifth build alternative. Approval to initiate studying the fifth build alternative is pending and anticipated to be received in May 2013. We intend to have a presentation during the next round of meetings.



**Nadalie Bates Thomas**

- **It would be a shame to disrupt the community destroying the only black (Catholic) church in this part of Shreveport**
- **There has been a lot of work to restore the sense of community by the church**

Response: We thank you for your comments.

**Anonymous**

- **Maybe the project team should take another approach to the presentation of materials because it's hard for laypeople to understand**
- **There should be uniform answers so that better understanding is achieved**

Response: We thank you for your comments. We do intend to have a presentation during the next meeting.

**Joseph A. Levy**

- **This is my church and I don't like the format of this meeting**
- **I would like to see question and answer**
- **Even though the citizens may say no, the federal government can still build it**

Response: We thank you for your comments. We do intend to have a presentation during the next public meeting. All comments provided to the Project Team during this EIS process will be considered and will be admitted into the document as public input. All comments received during the EIS are considered in the decision making process. Comments received during this round of community input meetings requesting the consideration of LA 3132 as a build alternative have resulted in the amendment of the project to include a fifth build alternative.

**Tedd Penn**

- **Christian Services is located on Sprague Street because that is where people in need are (cannot travel to obtain food and services that Christian Services provides)**
- **People are more important than a highway no matter how good an idea that may be**
- **Reimbursement would not provide them a decent place to live**
- **If you must build I-49, please consider doing so as an elevated highway**

Response: We thank you for your comments. We will be considering impacts to the community in our analysis.

**Father Andre McGrath**

- **Shared the history of Sister Katherine Drexel and history of Our Lady of Blessed Sacrament as the first African-American Catholic Church in Shreveport**
- **Wants history preserved including other churches like Mount Canaan and Evergreen**
- **Don't put a highway through a sacred place such as this (Our Lady of Blessed Sacrament)**
- **I think I-49 is important, but would rather it be along LA 3132 and allow development at Market and south of the city**



Response: We thank you for your comments and the written description of the history of the church. We will be considering impacts to the community in our analysis.

**Brian Salvatore (2<sup>nd</sup> Comment to Court Reporter)**

- **Talked with NLCOG and I stated that the four Build Alternatives are not adequate**
- **A compromise between the four builds and the LA 3132 loop is to exit where the railroad tracks come down off I-220 at Cross Lake, follow the tracks to the water filtration plant (which would have to be moved – but I understand it’s inadequate and outdated) and on (to downtown)**
- **Let’s look at alternatives that are efficient and practical, while I don’t have a map, NLCOG knows what I am saying**
- **This option needs to be in the public record**

Response: We thank you for your comments. We considered this potential route during the Stage 0 study conducted between 2009 and 2010. As it is not significantly different than the utilization of I-20 to I-220 and it would require the relocation of the city’s water treatment facilities, it was dropped from further consideration.

**Louis Michael Brossett**

- **The voting cards are misleading**
- **They should have what we want, LA 3132 to I-220, it’s there and it’s not bothering anyone’s land**
- **I don’t want it over mine or anyone else’s property**
- **Will fight to get this done (believe that he is referencing the “loop it” agenda)**

Response: We thank you for your comments. The Choice Cards provided were designed to obtain feedback, they were not a vote.

Due to requests to consider LA 3132 as a build alternative, the project is being amended to add a fifth build alternative. Approval to initiate studying the fifth build alternative is pending and anticipated to be received in May 2013.

**Alvin R. Kirk**

- **I am in favor of building the extension, have been for many years**
- **Hoping for a service road that would allow businesses to locate in Allendale**
- **I am concerned about seeing the paper that the section would be elevated, as icing in winter could increase accidents**

Response: We thank you for your comments. The decision to elevate the entire inner city connector has not been made at this time. Portions of the new freeway would need to be elevated to connect to at I-20 and the future I-49 at I-220.



**Michael W. Henderson**

- **Please consider the bigger picture – if the heart of the city is not functioning, we cannot provide the construction needed to help our area grow**
- **We must allow life to move through the city, build and complete the I-49 ICC**

Response: We thank you for your comments.

**William Wiener, Jr.**

- **I find the alternatives presented ill-conceived, offensive, and dangerous**
- **It will never be built (wetlands, social justice, historic areas, neighborhoods, price)**
- **A better alternative is using LA 3132**
- **Truckers use LA 3132 (per witnessing, no data provided)**
- **It should be removed from maps because as long as it remains the area will deteriorate**
- **It's been turned down by the feds and state so why pursue it?**

Response: We thank you for your comments. The I-49 Inner City Connector Build Alternatives have not been turned down by the state or federal government. The concept of a connector was removed from the overall I-49 EIS in 1978 due to lack of funding. The Environmental Impact Statement currently under preparation will allow local, state, and federal transportation planners and agencies to make informed decisions relative to most prudent way to connect existing I-49 to future I-49 at I-220.

**Waltei Douglas Franklin**

- **I want to praise who is doing the job and getting the job done (lives off Martin Luther King Dr.)**
- **I am praying the work will be completed in my day (he is 90 years young)**

Response: We thank you for staying informed and for your comments.

**William Wiener, Jr. (2<sup>nd</sup> Comment to Court Reporter)**

- **Would like NLCOG to provide him more information on Providence including their contract with Providence**

Response: We thank you for your comment. In order to obtain the information you have requested, a formal written request must be provided to the NLCOG.

**Benny Ray Johnson**

- **I welcome the I-49 project**
- **I also hold my community dear and it's just as important**

Response: We thank you for your comments.



**Debra Seamster**

- **I have and continue to state that I am not for the I-49 Inner City Connector coming through the community**
- **If it may still come, Alternative 4 would have the least impact on the neighborhood**
- **We hope that it would be elevated and at-grade and that we will have input on landscaping and what will happen around the interstate**
- **We (Allendale Lakeside Ledbetter Heights Partnership) are not for the project and do not think it will bring the economic development we are looking for**

Response: We thank you for your comments. The Citizen's Advisory Committee for this project, of which you are a member, will be consulted to provide insight on the development of and evaluation of all mitigation measures proposed as part of the selection of a Preferred Alternative. Mitigation measures include landscaping, streetscaping, parks, and other community amenities.

**LETTER RESPONSES FOLLOW THIS PAGE**



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January 14, 2013

Honorable Representative Roy A. Burrell  
District 2  
Louisiana House of Representatives  
820 Jordan Street, Suite 315  
Shreveport, Louisiana 71101

Ref: Response to Your Letter Regarding the I-49 Inner City Connector Community  
Input Meetings  
Stage 1 Environmental Impact Statement (State Project No. H.003915)

Honorable Representative Burrell,

The Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments (NLCOG) is in receipt of your letter dated January 9, 2013. We appreciate your input on this project and have developed the following response to your concerns.

**Concern:**

**The public process has been contaminated by special interest groups including the Shreveport Housing Authority and Loop It, LLC.**

**Response:**

The NLCOG is bound by federal law to follow the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. This process requires considerable effort be expended to ensure the public has ample opportunity to participate in the development of any highway improvement project. The Community Input Meetings were structured to obtain maximum input from the potentially affected community. Both special interest groups mentioned either have property or members living in one or more of the proposed rights-of-way of the build alternatives. Their attendance at the meetings was expected and encouraged.

**Concern:**

**The blatant actions of the opposition (to confuse the public) could unduly bias the final outcome as to the build or no build decision.**

**Response:**

We acknowledge that during the first meeting, attendees became confused after being handed materials from the Loop It organization. To prevent this confusion from continuing, the project team in conjunction with federal officials developed guidance on measures to implement on the second and third meetings if needed.

It should be noted that for each of the three meetings, 12 to 15 members of the project team were present to guide attendees through the series of exhibits, to explain the proposed project, and to answer any questions.

At the second meeting (Mount Canaan) when it became obvious that the group of residents wanted to formally distribute information, accommodations were made by providing them adequate table space adjacent to the meeting room, where they could still interact with meeting participants. During the third meeting, Loop It participants were requested to relocate away from the exhibit area. The public process strives to provide equal participation; we cannot bar people from attending that do not support the project. The project team was active in assisting the public in understanding that the meeting was hosted by NLCOG and not the Loop It organization.

Relative to the potential bias, three methods of public input were provided at all three of the Community Input Meetings: choice cards, written comment forms, and a court reporter to take verbal comments. The choice cards were not ballots, only an expression of preference. Public preference is one of many factors in determining the preferred alternative, be it to build or not to build.

**Concern:**

**After the project team requested the opposition to cease and desist, we (the project team) acknowledged to you that they would not leave the public meeting and voting area.**

**Response:**

We did request members of the Loop It organization to take their discussions to the corner of the room during the first and third meetings, and to move to the table provided during the second meeting. No members of the project team requested Loop It members to leave the meetings, only to relocate away from the exhibit viewing area and to distribute their materials outside the meeting space to minimize confusion.

**Concern:**

**At what point will the public be given more information about the potential ICIC project (actual economic impact information) where they can make a more informed decision whether to build or not?**

**Response:**

General economic impact information will be provided in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which will be released to the public prior to the final Public Hearing on the project. At that time, the public will be able to review economic impact data typical for this type of project. The EIS does not include a full economic impact analysis specific to the construction of the I-49 Inner City Connector.

**Concern:**

**A meeting with NLCOG, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Providence, and Franklin along with Senator Greg Tarver is requested to discuss our assessment of the disruption of the process, potential damages and remedies.**

**Response:**

NLCOG, along with the mentioned members of the project team and the Federal Highway Administration will meet with yourself and Senator Tarver. We will be in contact with your office to establish some potential dates.

We extend our thanks to you for participating and for your comments in regard to the second round of Community Input Meetings. We look forward to your continued participation and assistance in ensuring a successful process.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J. K. Rogers". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Executive Director



January 29, 2013

Loop-It, LLC  
P.O. Box 427  
Shreveport, Louisiana 71162  
Ref: Response to Complaint Letter Regarding I-49 Inner City Connector  
Stage 1 Environmental Impact Statement (State Project No. H.003915)

Dear Loop-It, LLC Members:

The Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments (NLCOG) is in receipt of your letter dated December 17, 2012. We appreciate your input on this project and have listed individual responses to your complaints.

**Complaint Item 1:**

*Your team representing NLCOG blocked our participation and would not allow us to distribute our information at the December 12, 2012 meeting. Additionally, one of your representatives put hands on one of our group while taking action to remove members from the meeting at Mount Canaan Church. NLCOG has denied our rights to assemble and express our position at a public meeting on church property where you were a guest.*

**Response:**

We regret you feel your group was being blocked from participating and improperly treated while attending this meeting. During the December 11, 2012 meeting, attendees approached the project team expressing confusion as a result of your organization's handouts. Attendees were provided a packet of meeting materials from the project team to guide them through the meeting, after which they were also handed materials from your organization. This created confusion among the attendees as to what was being proposed and discussed at the meetings. To prevent this confusion from continuing and allow the public the opportunity to participate in the official project, the project team respectfully requested the opposition members to refrain from distributing materials inside the meeting room at the second meeting (Mount Canaan Church) and made available a table in the hallway outside the meeting room, but still within the meeting space to allow your members to distribute your materials to any and all attendees. If there was any touching of individuals, it was purely innocent in nature, as the room was loud and crowded and many of the attendees were elderly and in some cases, required some assistance in navigating the room.

**Complaint Item 2:**

*We further wish to challenge what we observe as NLCOG manipulating and abusing the public trust placed in your organization. We view NLCOG's process as designed to pit one neighbor against another; as not providing adequate information to the public about the destructive nature of the proposed project, as providing misleading information to the public; and as limiting our ability as citizens to have meaningful input about our concerns and possible better options. The project you propose wastes limited public resources and threatens efforts to improve prosperity for inner city residents.*

**Response:**

Please note that NLCOG is bound by federal law to follow the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Part of this process requires the various proposed build alternatives, as well as the No-Build Alternative, to be presented to the public for input. All known potential structural impacts for each build alternative were identified, including houses, business, churches, recreational areas, etc., as well as preliminary environmental impacts including wetlands, prime farmlands, and floodplains, and shared at these meetings as required by the process. Once a Preferred Build Alternative is selected as required for comparison purposes, additional studies will be completed including an air quality analysis, noise analysis, wetlands analysis, cultural resource survey, and other required documentation.

**Complaint Item 3:**

*In further public manipulation and restriction of our rights, we were told by a representative of NLCOG at the Thursday meeting that our write in ballots will not be counted as input and that the only acceptable input is the limited options on the ballot you provided to participants. Your ballot allows a "no-build" vote, however, we were instructed anyone voting for the no-build option is additionally required to vote for one of the four destructive build options that all run over our neighborhood and over wetlands. This requirement is a trick to get us to vote for something we do not want. We estimate that over 200 ballots were cast in favor of our loop it option, that we were told by NLCOG's representative, you will not report. We also believe that a "no-build" vote should not require a vote to build option and believe that all votes such cast should be counted as no-build.*

**Response:**

Three methods of public input were provided at all three of the Community Input Meetings: choice cards, written comment forms, and a court reporter to take verbal comments. Each method will have its own section in the meeting summary, which will be finalized once the comment period is over. The choice cards were not ballots, only an expression of preference. The project team wanted to provide a method by which to collate input to assist the team in gauging public preference, which is one factor in determining the preferred alternative. Every attendee was handed a choice card when they walked in and

encouraged to fill it out to provide the project team with their input. Giving one choice card per attendee was intended to assure each participant an equal voice.

In reference to not counting the submissions to which you are referring (per being advised by a representative of NLCOG), please note that we are not disregarding these. Since these *write-in ballots* that are referenced are primarily signatures on opposition flyers, not choice cards or written comments that require responses, the total number received will be reported in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The representative from NLCOG was attempting to explain that the signed flyers were not choice cards and while they will be included as part of the outreach effort, they would not be tallied in the choice card total.

In reference to the second part of Complaint 3, all choice cards with the words "No Build" circled are a preference for not building the project. As stated on the Frequently Asked Question handout, the project team will use the response from the first question to gauge the overall public support and opposition to the project provided by the meeting attendees. The draft EIS for this project will contain both a preferred build alternative along with the no-build alternative. The responses to the second question on the choice card will assist the project team in determining which alignment the public most supports as the preferred build alternative. If you prefer the no-build alternative, the second question on the choice card allowed you to voice which build alternative you would prefer, in the event the FHWA selects the build option. Not providing a build alternative preference would not give the public an opportunity to have their opinions heard should the project reach that stage.

Regarding the flyer that was attached to your letter, the Loop It option utilizing Louisiana Highway 3132 and Interstate 220 is actually the designated No Build Alternative. This No-Build Alternative will be presented along with the Preferred Build Alternative in the project EIS documentation.

We thank you for your comments in regards to the second round of Community Input Meetings and hope you feel your complaints have been addressed in the responses provided. We look forward to your continued participation in this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kent Rogers". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "K" and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

Kent Rogers  
Executive Director

Cc: per attached

Ray LaHood, US Transportation Secretary  
US Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Senator Mary Landrieu  
431 Dirksen  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Victor Mendez, FHWA Administrator  
Southeast Federal Center Building  
Room E85-336  
1200 New Jersey Ave. S.E.  
Washington, DC 20590-9898

Senator David Vitter  
516 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Sherri LeBas, Louisiana DOT Secretary  
1201 Capitol Access Road  
PO Box 94245  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-924

Congressman John Fleming  
416 Cannon HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Lisa Jackson, US EPA Administrator  
USEPA Headquarters  
Ariel Rios Building  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N. W.  
Mail Code: 1101A  
Washington, DC 20460

Congressman Rodney Alexander  
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February 20, 2013

Honorable Senator Gregory W. Tarver  
District 39  
Louisiana State Senate  
1024 Pierre Avenue  
Shreveport, Louisiana 71103

Ref: Response to Your Letter Regarding the I-49 Inner City Connector Community Input Meetings  
Stage 1 Environmental Impact Statement (State Project No. H.003915)

Honorable Senator Tarver,

The Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments (NLCOG) is in receipt of your letter dated January 10, 2013. We appreciate your input on this project and are in the process of contacting Representative Burrell's office and your office to schedule a meeting.

We delayed in scheduling the meeting in order to obtain input from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) relative to the disruption of the meetings and appropriate action that may be taken to avoid future disruptions. We have met with both agencies and have some concepts and suggestions to discuss with yourself and Representative Burrell.

Please be advised that Mr. Perry Franklin of Franklin Associates will be reaching out to you to get the requested meeting scheduled. Please also keep in mind that if we schedule the meeting in Baton Rouge, we are more likely to be able to get FHWA and DOTD to attend. Both agencies have tremendous insight into these processes, but are presently under travel restrictions and will be unlikely to attend a meeting in Shreveport.

We again thank you for your participation and look forward to meeting with you soon.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. H. Rogers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Executive Director

Cc: Representative Roy Burrell  
Perry Franklin, Franklin Associates  
Robert Mahoney, FHWA  
Ms. Joyce Barkley-Hahn, DOTD