

# I-49 North Inner City Connector

June 28, 2024

MPO Update Meeting  
Since October 2023 Public Meeting



# Project Team



# Project Update

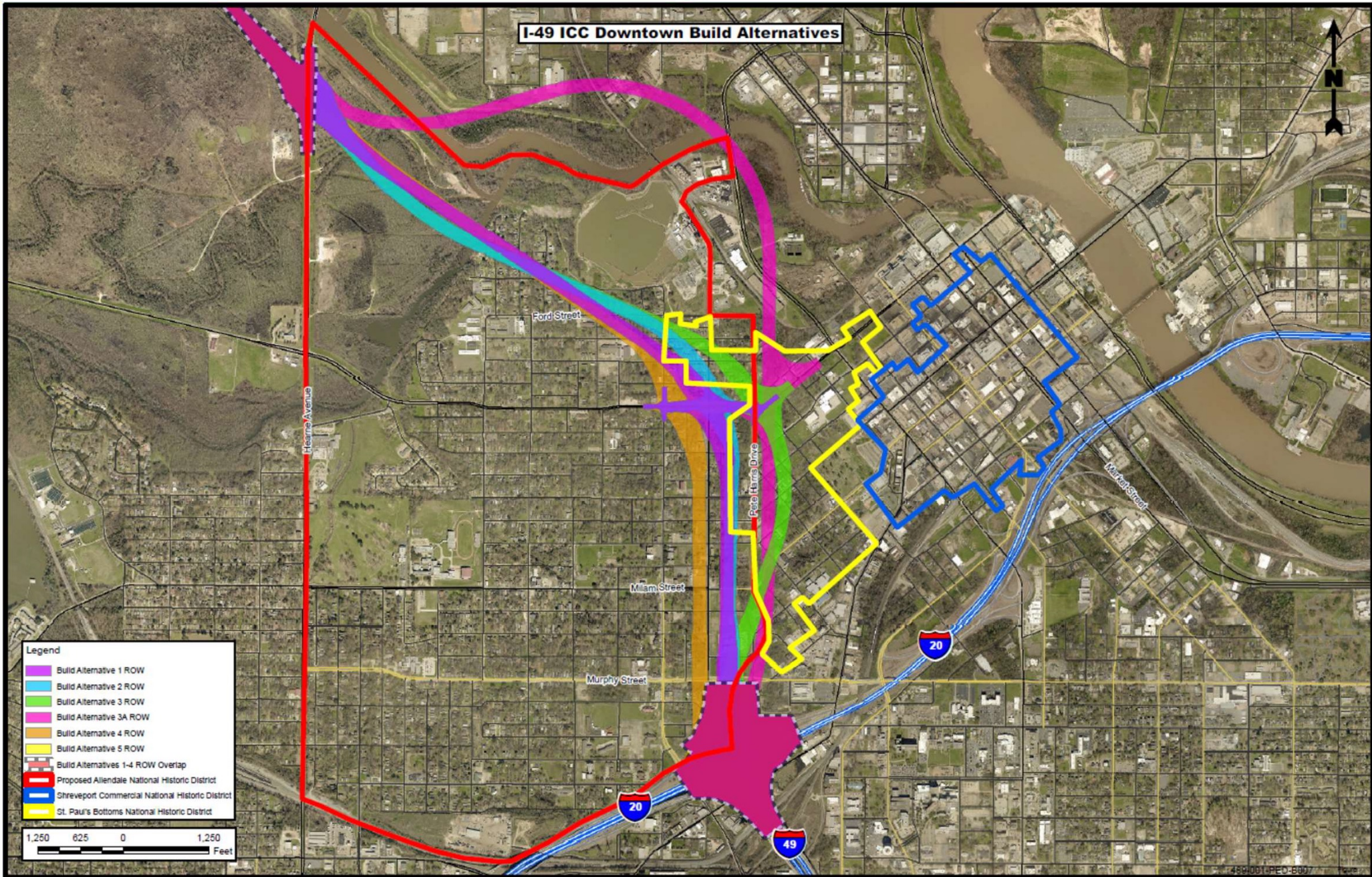
- Build Alternative 3A
- Community Input Meeting – October 17, 2023
- Cultural and Historical Update
- Traffic Update
- Timeline

# BUILD ALTERNATIVE 3A

- A Community Input Meeting was held on October 17, 2023 to share a new build alternative, Build Alternative 3A
- Build Alternative 3A was developed to serve as a build alternative that would remove or lessen impacts to potential Section 4(f) properties
- This build alternative along with Build Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 5 was presented to the public during the October meeting
- Build Alternative 3A would avoid impacts to Cross Lake and would lessen direct and indirect impacts to historic properties, particularly in the potential Allendale NHD (Build Alts 1-3)

Section 4(f) refers to the original section within the US Department of Transportation Act of 1966 which established the requirement for consideration of park and recreational lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites in transportation project development.





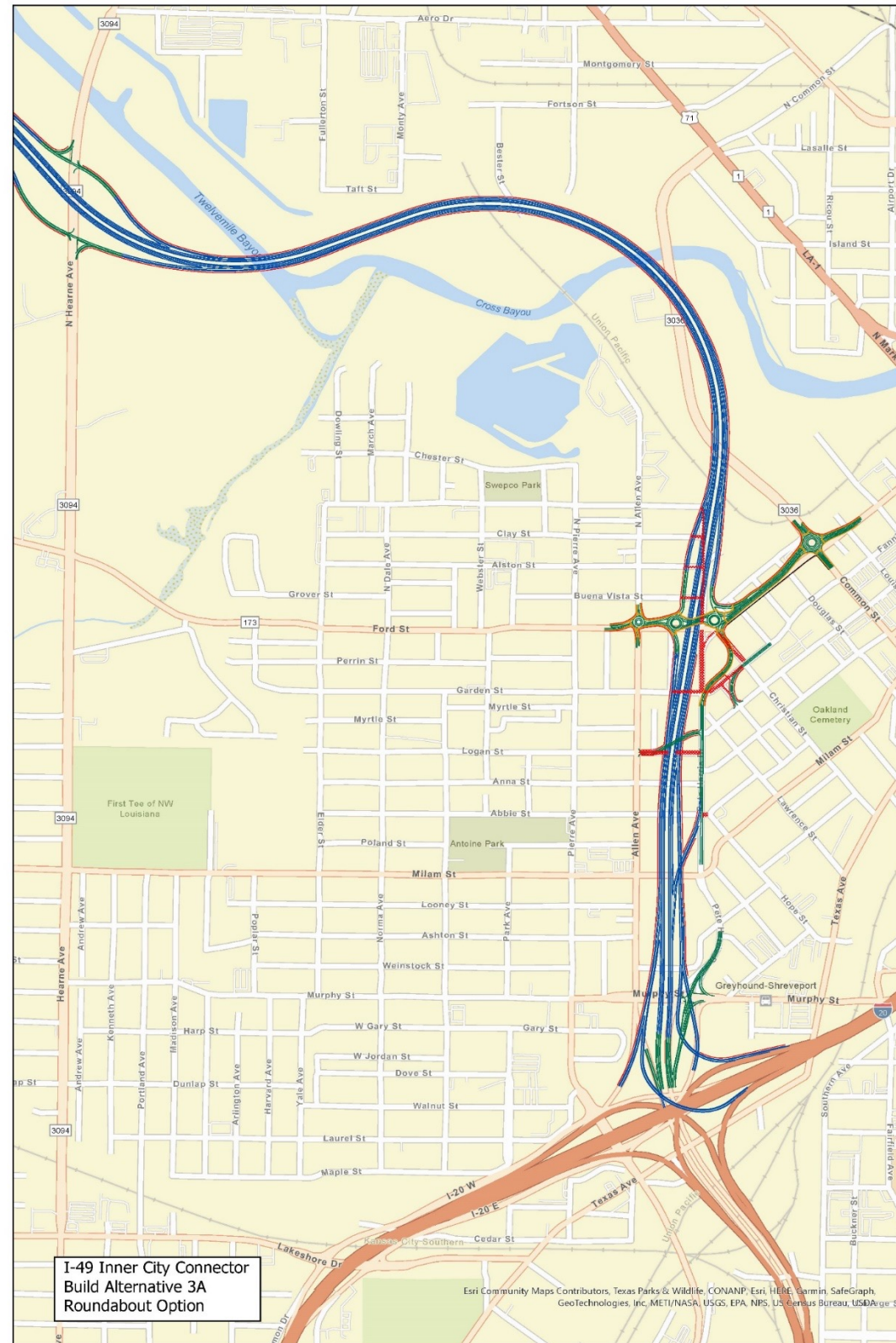
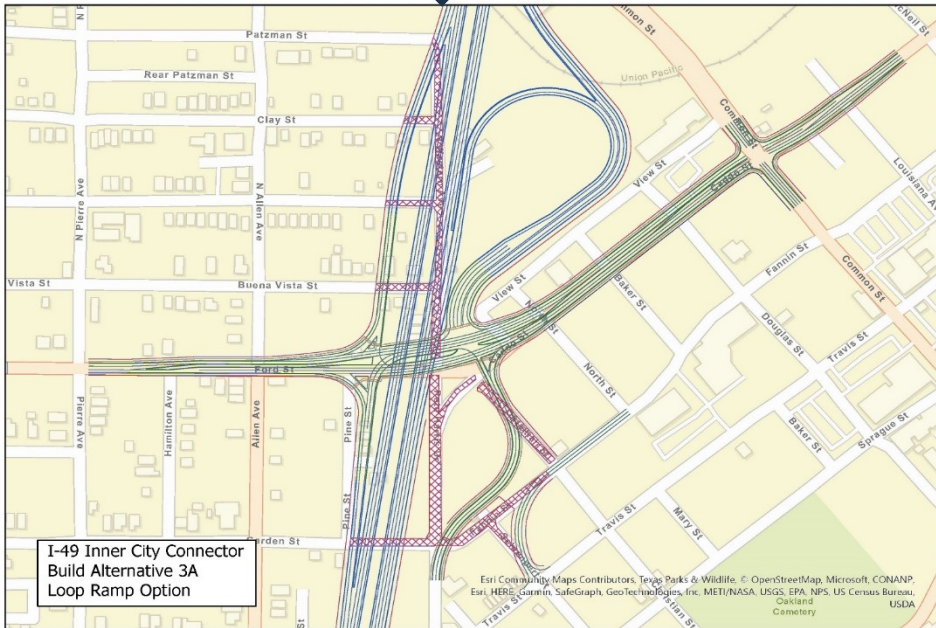


# BUILD ALTERNATIVE 3A

ROUNDBOUT OPTION AT CADDO/FORD



LOOP RAMP OPTION AT CADDO/FORD



# BUILD ALTERNATIVE 3A

- Build Alternative 3A passes through the St. Paul's Bottoms NHD
  - In May 2014, only 12 percent of the original contributing structures remained
  - From 2014 to present, decay and fires have removed even more
- The State Historic Preservation Office has indicated the potential for delisting or reducing the boundary of the St. Paul's Bottoms NHD due to loss of density of historic properties
- Most of the remaining historic structures are on piers and may be able to be moved as mitigation for adverse impacts

# COMMUNITY INPUT MEETING

- As stated, a Community Input Meeting was held on October 17, 2023, to inform the public of the new build alternative that had been added to the study for the I-49 Inner City Connector project in Shreveport
- Build Alternative 3A, with roundabout and loop ramp options, was offered to the public for consideration, with its route and anticipated impacts presented alongside previously introduced Build Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 5



# COMMUNITY INPUT MEETING

- Guests who signed in manually at the registration table: 213
- Guests who used the touch-free sign-in form: 32
- Total comments received 269
  - Submitted online: 80
  - Submitted verbally: 1
  - Submitted via email or mail: 50
  - Submitted at the meeting: 138
  - Signed into the online form without leaving comment: 1

# COMMUNITY INPUT MEETING

- The majority of commenters indicated a preference to build the connector and to do so through the inner-city area (Build Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 3A)
- Of the build through alternatives, Build Alternatives 1 and 3A were mentioned the most often as preferred routes
- Some commenters favored not building the connector
- Some commenters focused on support of the project (without stating a preference) with the common theme of requesting to move forward as quickly as possible

# CULTURAL/HISTORIC SURVEYS

- Archaeological survey of the Build Alternative 3A route began in January 2024 and examined 17 house lots in the Direct Area of Potential Effect (APE)
- The standing structure survey, initiated in March, recorded 238 new structures in the Direct and Indirect APE and revisited 350 previously recorded structures to verify their current condition
- Washing, sorting, cataloging, and analysis of artifacts collected during the archaeological surveying continued through April
- Work on the standing structures forms, site forms, and draft Cultural Resources Survey continues and is expected to be completed by early July



# CULTURAL/HISTORIC SURVEYS

- Upon completion, the Cultural Resource Survey report will be provided to DOTD, FHWA, and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review and comment
- DOTD has initiated consultation with the National Park Service relative to potential indirect effects to the Water Works Museum, a National Historic Landmark
- Once the SHPO has reviewed the draft Cultural Resources Survey report, DOTD will consult with the SHPO concerning potential effects to other historic properties that may be present along the Alternative 3A route

# Traffic Study and Scoping

- Since the Public Meeting, NLCOG and the Providence Team have successfully negotiated a reduced scope with DOTD and FHWA to complete the required traffic studies
- The approved scope reduces the traffic schedule by approximately one year
- Additional traffic studies will be required as part of the environmental clearance work
- Interchange Access Approvals / Traffic Studies will be required to complete the I-49 / I-20 interchange and the I-49 / I-220 Interchange
- The geographic coverage for the interchange access approvals is substantial– 13 interchanges will be analyzed (see following map)

# Interchange Access Approvals - Analysis Coverage (13 Interchanges)





# Where do we go from here?

- A fair comparison among the build alternatives can be made with the completion of the cultural studies, after which we can begin developing a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) with a preferred alternative
- Consultation with the National Park Service relative to the potential to have an adverse indirect impact on the Water Works Museum will impact the timeliness of resolving cultural concerns
- Any further documentation as required by FHWA to evaluate Civil Rights inquiries will also be submitted with the draft EIS

# Where do we go from here?

- Multiple technical studies will be required to be completed and submitted with the draft EIS; these include:
  - Wetlands Finding
  - Phase I Environmental Site Assessment
  - Air Quality Assessment
  - Noise Assessment
  - Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan
  - Section 4(f) Documents
  - Environmental Justice

# Proposed Project Schedule

- **3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2024** – Submit draft Alternatives Chapter of the EIS for the identification of a preferred alternative
  
- **4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2024** - Development of draft EIS
  - Will include a “preferred alternative”
  - Will include more detailed environmental evaluation
  - Will include required technical studies
  - Traffic Study update will be concurrent
  
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2025** – Legal Sufficiency Review of Draft EIS by FHWA\*
  - Review by FHWA
  - Concurrent review of Civil Rights Inquiries

\* Review times may be longer than 60 days, which could result in schedule slippage



# Project Schedule (continued)

- **3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2025** – Publish draft EIS
  - Assumes 30 days to address comments from Legal Sufficiency Review
  - Must notice public and provide a minimum 30-day review period prior to Public Hearing
- **4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2025** – Public Hearing
  - Public can make comments up to 10 days following the Hearing
  - Responses to public comments must be included in final EIS
- **1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2026** – Submit final EIS and draft Record of Decision (ROD) to FHWA
- **3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2026** – ROD approval by FHWA

# Project Schedule - Notes

- The previous schedule did not delineate the time required for review of the alternatives analysis
- The development of the draft EIS is only off by two quarters despite the delays that have occurred in 2024 (including weather, administration changes, personnel changes, multi-agency traffic study meetings)
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2025 Legal Sufficiency Review starts procedural reviews that are bound by regulatorily required time frames
- Updates will be provided to the MPO once per quarter

# Closing Comments

- It is common to be frustrated with the duration of the environmental process:
  - Duration is not uncommon for major projects
  - I-10 in Lake Charles - 20+ years
  - I-10 in Baton Rouge - 20+ years
  - I-49 Connector in Lafayette – 30 years
- Working through the process takes considerable time, but we have a path forward



# Closing Comments

- For the inner-city build through alternatives, the intent has always been to work with local officials and citizens to use the project as a catalyst for community revitalization
- If one of the inner-city alternatives is selected as the preferred alternative, we will need and expect the business sector to step forward, not to fund the infrastructure, but rather to invest in the community even if that investment does not show a near-term return

# Questions?