

New Orleans Rail Gateway Program

Jefferson and Orleans Parishes
State Project No. H.005168

Avondale Rail Crossing Grade Separation Public Scoping Meeting

October 27, 2026

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

Thank you for attending today's public scoping meeting for the New Orleans Rail Gateway Program Avondale Rail Crossing Grade Separation Study.

We hope you find this meeting interesting and informative.

Special Assistance

- **If you require special assistance due to a disability in order to participate in today's public meeting, please see a Study Team representative at the Welcome Table.**
- **Si usted necesita ayuda especial debido a una discapacidad con el fin de participar en la sesión pública de hoy, consulte a un representante de nuestro equipo en la mesa de bienvenida.**



If you require special assistance due to a disability to participate in today's public meeting, please see a Study Team Representative at the Welcome Table.

Purpose of Today's Meeting

- **Provide an open-house style (open forum) opportunity to learn about the Avondale Rail Crossing Grade Separation Project and talk informally with Study Team representatives**
  - **Present an overview of the completed Avondale Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study**
  - **Describe current NEPA/Environmental Study**
  - **Solicit input on issues of concern regarding the Environmental Study**
  - **Explain how to receive Study information and participate in the decision-making process**



Tonight's public scoping meeting is an informal, open-house style or open forum format.

The meeting consists of:

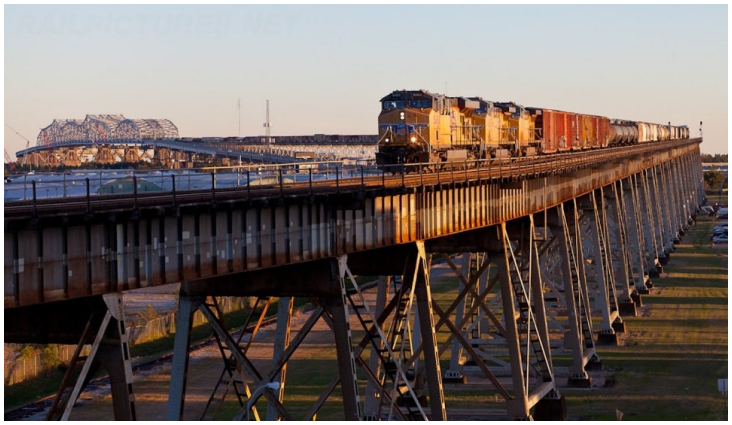
- An overview of the completed Planning and Environmental Linkages, or PEL, Study,
- The Study continuance and current NEPA/Environmental Study
- The opportunity to talk with Study Team Representatives,
- Obtain Project comments, and
- Let you know how to stay informed and involved.

To get the most out of this presentation, please refer to the materials that were handed out at the Welcome Table.

After you've listened to this presentation, review the project exhibits, talk with Study Team representatives, and give us your comments.

This public meeting is an important part of the transportation decision-making process, and your input is encouraged and appreciated.

Public Private Partnership (P3)



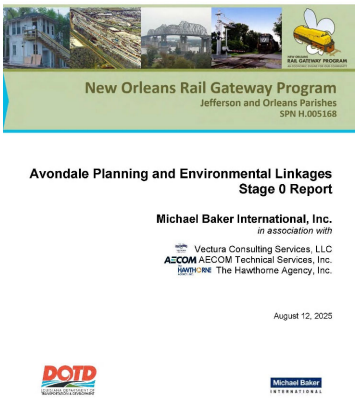
The New Orleans Rail Gateway Program, and the continuation of this Avondale Study are being advanced through a Public Private Partnership between the:

- Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development,
- Federal Highway Administration,
- Federal Railroad Administration,
- New Orleans Regional Planning Commission,
- Association of American Railroads representing the six Class 1 Railroads operating in the New Orleans metropolitan area,
- New Orleans Public Belt Railroad, and
- Amtrak

to collectively investigate solutions to reduce highway crossing delays and improve rail service.

Avondale PEL Study

- **Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study evaluated the feasibility of consolidating some or all of the roadway-rail at-grade crossings at:**
  - **Avondale Garden Road,**
  - **George Street,**
  - **Willswood Lane, and**
  - **Live Oak Boulevard**
- **Replacing them with one, or possibly more, road-over-rail grade separations**
- **Avondale PEL Study Webpage**
  dotd.la.gov/about/office-of-multimodal-commerce/rail/freight-and-passenger-rail/new-orleans-rail-gateway-program/avondale-planning-environmental-linkages-study-documents/



The Avondale PEL Study, completed in 2025, evaluated the feasibility of consolidating the roadway-rail at-grade crossings at:

- Avondale Garden Road,
- George Street,
- Willswood Lane, and
- Live Oak Boulevard

And replacing them with one, or possibly more, road-over-rail grade separations.

Avondale PEL Study Goals

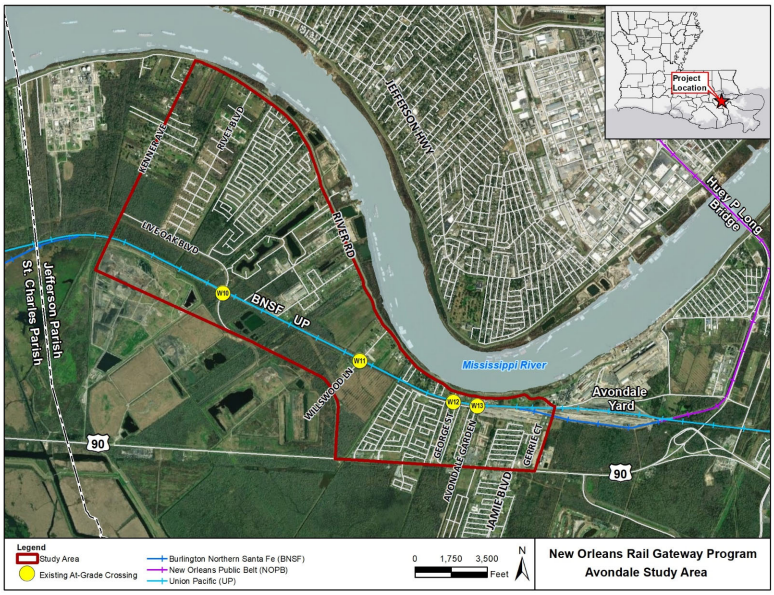
- **Reduce vehicle delay due to rail traffic and Avondale Rail Yard switching operations**
- **Eliminate truck traffic from roadways posted as "No Truck Route" with a 5-Ton Weight Limit**
- **Improve intermodal connectivity**



The goals identified at the beginning of the PEL study included:

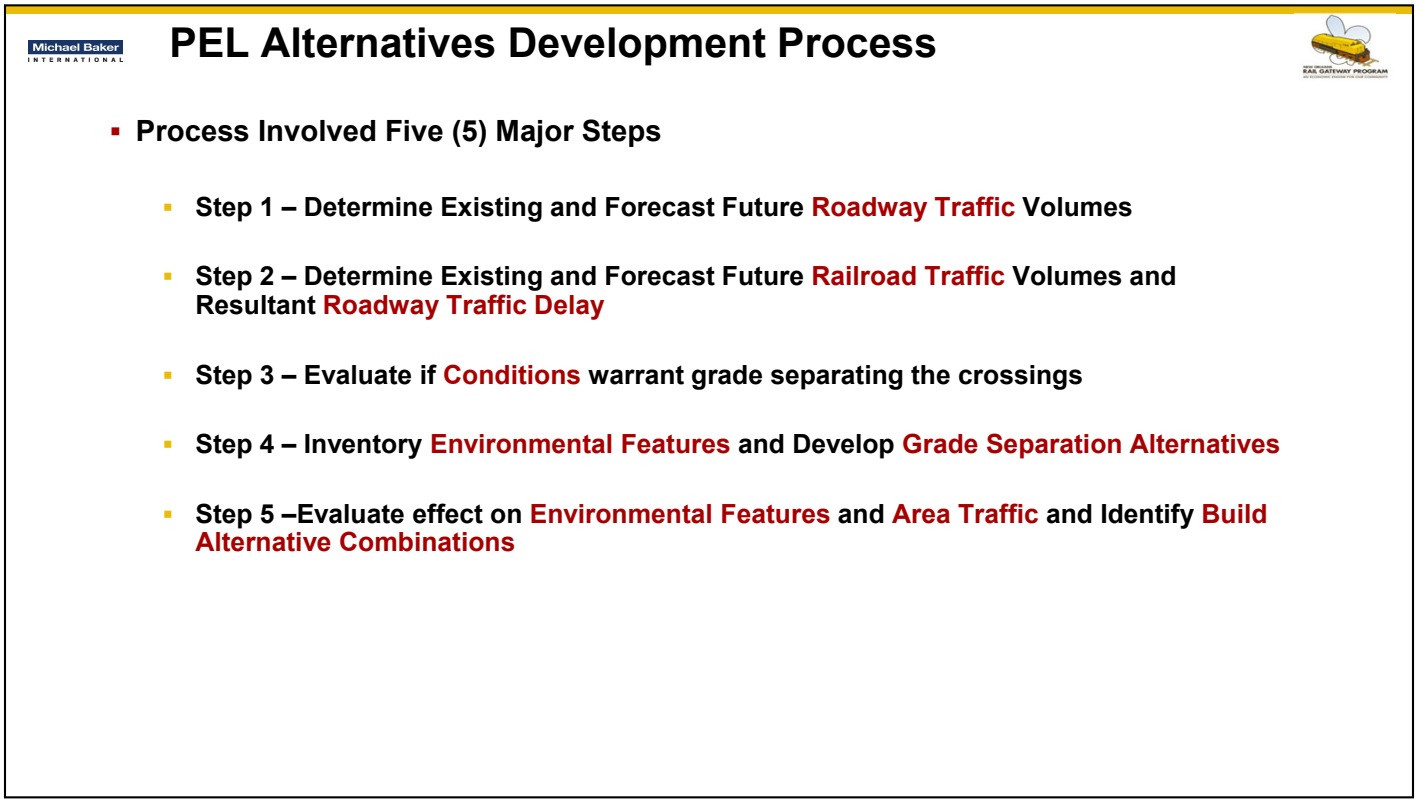
- Reducing vehicle delay due to rail traffic and Avondale Rail Yard switching operations,
- Eliminating truck traffic from roadways posted as "No Truck Route" with a 5-Ton Limit, and
- Improving intermodal connectivity.

Avondale PEL Study Area



The PEL Study Area encompassed the four (4) roadway-rail at-grade crossings.

These crossings were identified as Projects W10 through W13 in a prior New Orleans Rail Gateway study.



The process for developing the alternatives followed five basic steps:

- Step 1 – Determine existing and forecast future roadway traffic volumes
- Step 2 – Determine existing and forecast future railroad traffic volumes and the blocked crossing roadway traffic delay
- Step 3 – Evaluate if conditions were met to grade separate the crossings
- Step 4 – Identify the area environmental features and develop the alternatives, and
- Step 5 – Evaluate the effect on environmental features and area traffic, and identify Build Alternative Combinations

Step 1 – Existing and Future Roadway Traffic Volumes

- **Existing (2021) Traffic Volumes – August & November 2021**
- **Future (2048) Traffic Volumes – Forecast at 0.5% compound growth rate**

Crossing Location	Functional Classification	Speed Limit (mph)	Trucks (%)	School Buses	2021 AADT	2048 AADT
Avondale Garden Road	Local Road	20	2	9	**1,070**	**1,220**
George Street	Local Road	20	2	14	**1,910**	**2,190**
Willswood Lane	Local Road	40	10	12	**1,210**	**1,380**
Live Oak Boulevard	Minor Arterial	40	6	17	**3,610**	**4,130**

NOTE: AADT – Average Annual Daily Traffic

This table shows the truck percentages, number of school bus crossings, and average annual daily traffic at the four crossing locations.

Avondale Garden Road had the least daily traffic and school bus crossings, while Live Oak Boulevard had the most.

Step 2 – Existing and Future Crossing Blockage & Delay

- **Existing (2021) Train Volumes – FRA Crossing Inventory Forms**
- **Future (2048) Train Volumes – Forecast at 1.0% compound growth rate**
- **Spreadsheet analysis to calculate crossing occupancy times**

Crossing Location	Existing Year 2021					Year 2048 No Build				
	Trains Daily	Thru Trains (hpd)	Switching Moves (hpd)	Total Crossing Blockage (hpd)	Total Vehicle Delay (vhpd)	Trains Daily	Thru Trains (hpd)	Switching Moves (hpd)	Total Crossing Blockage (hpd)	Total Vehicle Delay (vhpd)
Avondale Garden Road	44	3.46	4.34	**7.80**	**47.98**	57	5.60	5.67	**11.27**	**80.26**
George Street	32	2.72	2.99	**5.71**	**47.72**	42	4.40	3.92	**8.32**	**77.76**
Willswood Lane	31	2.48	0.80	**3.28**	**33.30**	41	4.22	1.05	**5.27**	**54.22**
Live Oak Boulevard	14	1.82	-	**1.82**	**13.42**	18	3.17	-	**3.17**	**19.37**

NOTE: hpd – hours per day | vhpd – vehicle hours per day

Blocked crossings due to thru train and switching moves were calculated using existing and forecast train volume data.

Switching moves exceed thru trains at the Avondale Garden Road and George Street crossings due to their proximity to the Avondale Rail Yard.

On average, the number of hours vehicles are delayed at these crossings each day varies from approximately 13 hours at Live Oak Boulevard (in 2021) to approximately 80 hours at Avondale Garden Road (in 2048).

Step 3 – Grade Separation Warrants

- **FHWA Warrant Guidance – when grade separation should be considered**

Warrant Condition	Avondale Garden Road	George Street	Willswood Lane	Live Oak Blvd
An average of 30 or more trains per day	⊕ 44 (57)	⊕ 32 (42)	⊕ 31 (41)	⊖ 14 (18)
Vehicle delay exceeds 30 vehicle hours per day (vhpd) with consideration for cost effectiveness	⊕ 47.98 (80.26)	⊕ 47.72 (77.76)	⊕ 33.80 (54.22)	⊖ 13.42 (19.37)
Other Warrant Conditions	⊖ Not Met	⊖ Not Met	⊖ Not Met	⊖ Not Met

NOTE: Values 2021 (2048)

- **Whenever a new grade separation is constructed, consideration should be given to the possibility of closing one or more adjacent crossings provided:**
  - **Acceptable alternate access across the rail line exists within one (1) mile measured along the track**
  - **The median trip length normally made over the crossing would not increase by more than 2.5 miles**
- **Avondale Garden Road and George Street crossings both satisfy this Guidance**

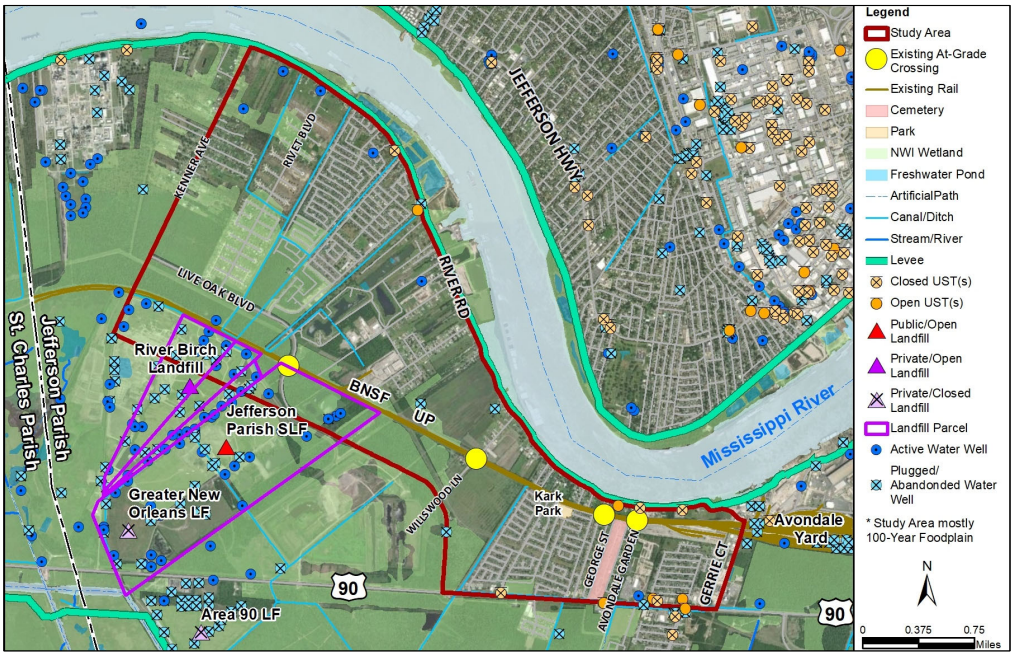
Federal Highway Administration guidance identifies warrant conditions to be considered in evaluating whether an at-grade crossing is a candidate for grade separation.

Only two of FHWAs warrant conditions were applicable to these crossings, the average number of trains per day and the daily vehicle delay due to blocked crossings.

Only the Avondale Garden Road, George Street and Willswood Lane crossings exceeded these warrant conditions. The Live Oak Boulevard crossing did not exhibit the number of train crossings or resultant vehicle delay required to consider grade separation.

The Guidance also indicated that consideration should be given to closing adjacent crossings, given certain criteria, when a grade separation is contemplated. The Avondale Garden Road and George Street crossings satisfied the listed distance criteria. The Willswood Lane crossing did not.

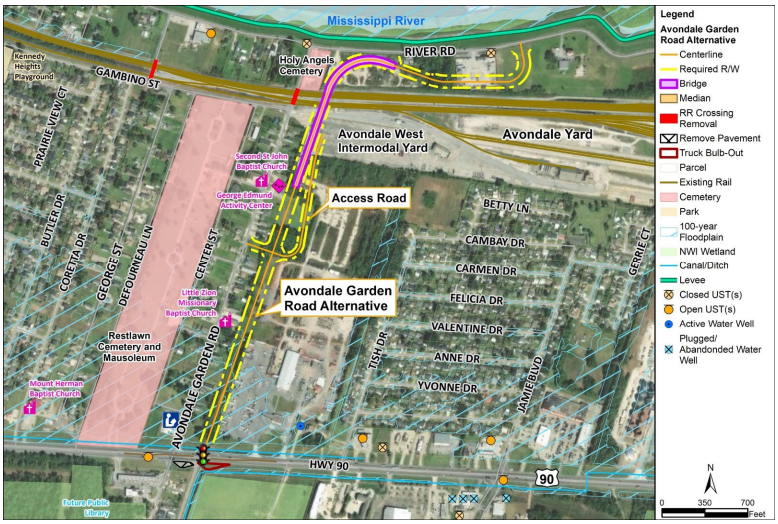
Step 4 – Environmental Inventory



Numerous environmental features were identified throughout the Waggaman/Avondale area.

The dominant environmental features within the Study Area are residential and commercial development, wetlands, floodplains, and the Greater New Orleans, Jefferson Parish & River Birch landfills south of the railroad tracks.

Avondale Garden Road (AGR) Alternative

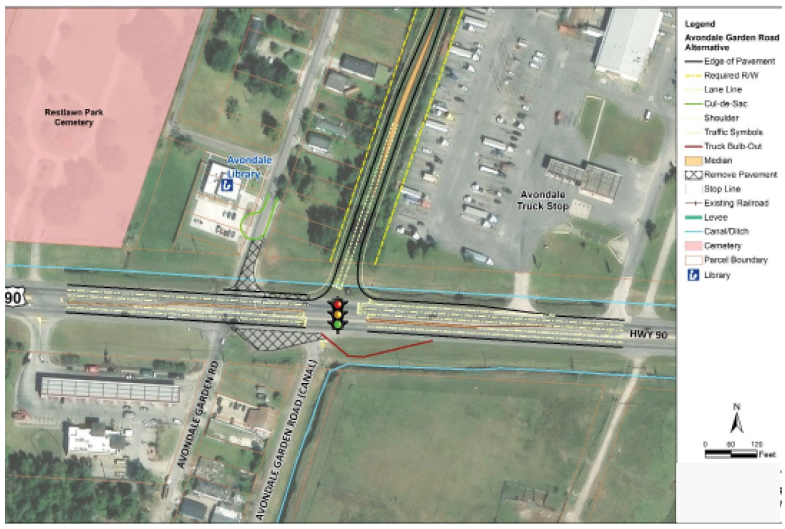


- **New grade separated roadway connecting US 90 and River Road**
- **Closes the existing George Street and AGR at-grade crossings**
- **Adds access from AGR to the Realigned Alternative**
- **Relocates access to the Intermodal Yard via a new Access Road**
- **Expands Jefferson Parish's Bicycle/Pedestrian Access**

The Avondale Garden Road Alternative developed during the PEL Study would:

- Construct a new grade separated roadway between the AGR residential properties and the Avondale Truck Stop and Container Yard, connecting US 90 and River Road,
- Close both the existing George Street and AGR at-grade crossings,
- Add a new, direct connection from AGR to the Realigned Alternative and relocate access to the Intermodal Yard via a new Access Road, and
- Expand Jefferson Parish's Bicycle/Pedestrian Access.

Avondale Garden Road (AGR) Alternative



- **Cul-de-sac's AGR**
- **Relocates the existing intersection to a new Signalized intersection**
- **Retains dedicated left- and right-turn, and U-turn movements**
- **Estimated Cost - $62.0M**

Avoids wetlands | Impacts floodplains | Two commercial relocations | Eliminates train horn noise

The Avondale Garden Road Alternative would also:

- Cul-de-sac AGR and remove the existing intersection with US 90,
- Relocate the existing intersection to the new signalized intersection, and
- Retain the existing dedicated left- and right-turn and U-turn movements at the new intersection location.

The cost was estimated at $62.0M

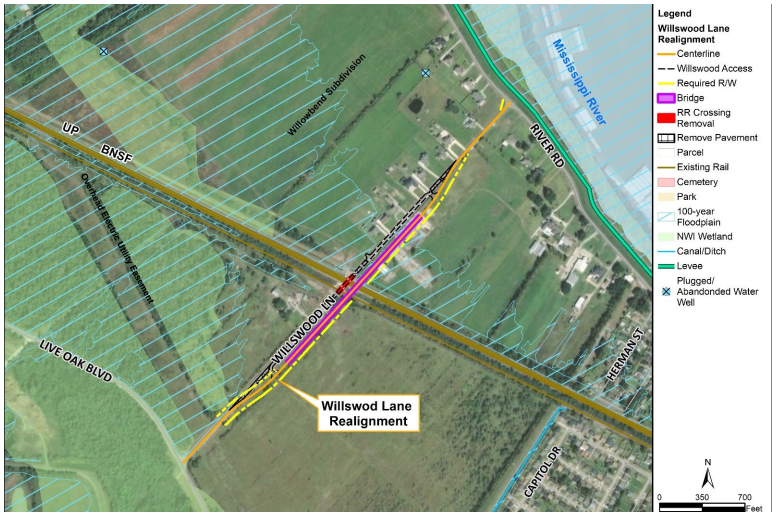
This alternative would avoid wetlands but would impact floodplains. It would result in two commercial relocations – Concrete Busters and MTC Trucking. Closing the George Street and AGR crossings would eliminate the required train horn auditory warnings.

Avondale Garden Road (AGR) Alternative



The Avondale Garden Road Alternative could look similar to this.

Willswood Lane Realignment



- **Realigns and grade separates existing Willswood Lane**
- **Closes the existing Willswood Lane at-grade crossing**
- **Maintains access to residential properties**
- **Expands Jefferson Parish's Bicycle/Pedestrian Access**
- **Estimated Cost - $57.2M**

Avoids wetlands | Minimizes floodplains | Avoids residential/commercial relocations | Eliminates train horn noise

The Willswood Lane Realignment would:

- Realign and grade separate the existing Willswood Lane to the east,
- Close the existing Willswood Lane at-grade crossing,
- Maintain access to existing residential properties via the existing roadway, and
- Expand Jefferson Parish's Bicycle/Pedestrian Access.

The cost was estimated at $57.2M

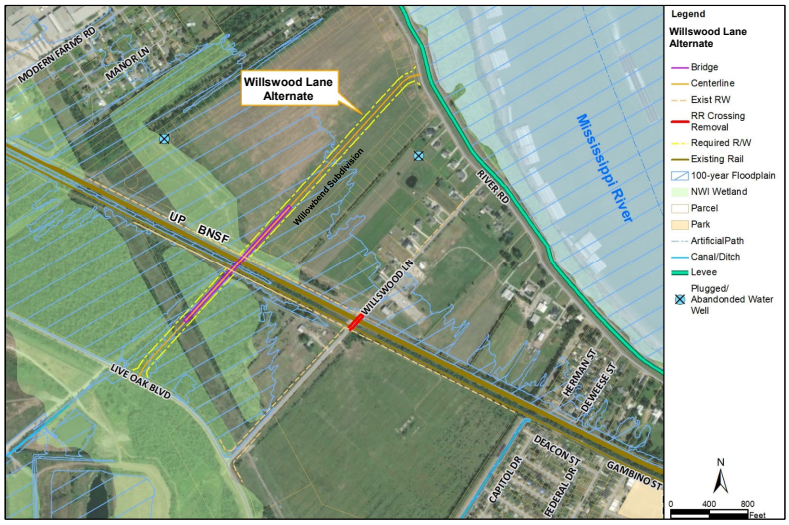
This alternative would avoid wetlands and minimize floodplain impacts. It would also not result in any residential or commercial relocations and would also eliminate the required Willswood Lane train horn auditory warning.

Willswood Lane Realignment



The Willswood Lane Realignment could look similar to this.

Willswood Lane Alternate

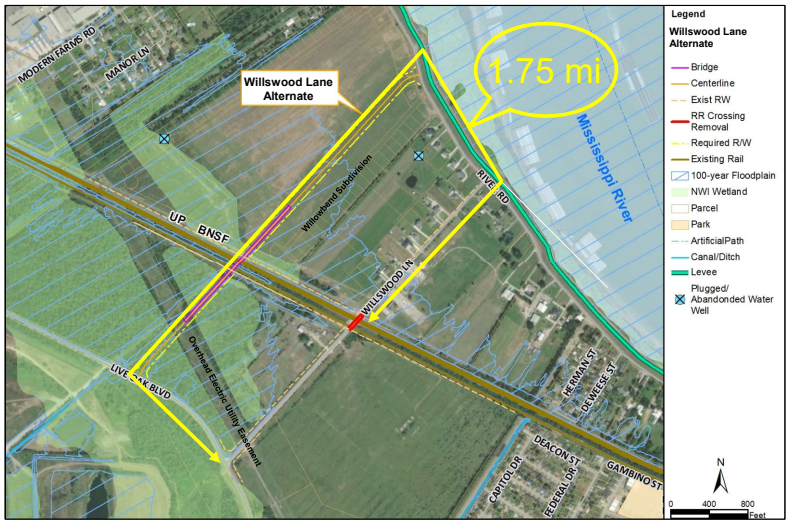


- **New grade separated roadway connecting Live Oak Boulevard and River Road**
- **Closes the existing Willswood Lane at-grade crossing**
- **Expands Jefferson Parish's Bicycle/Pedestrian Access**
- **Increases the trip length by no more than 1.75 miles**
- **Estimated Cost - $48.1M**

The Willswood Lane Alternate would:

- Construct a new grade separated roadway west of Willswood Lane connecting Live Oak Boulevard and River Road,
- Close the existing Willswood Lane at-grade crossing, and
- Expand Jefferson Parish's Bicycle/Pedestrian Access.

Willswood Lane Alternate



- **New grade separated roadway connecting Live Oak Boulevard and River Road**
- **Closes the existing Willswood Lane at-grade crossing**
- **Expands Jefferson Parish's Bicycle/Pedestrian Access**
- **Increases the trip length by no more than 1.75 miles**
- **Estimated Cost - $48.1M**

Bridges wetlands | Impacts floodplains | Avoids residential/commercial relocations | Eliminates train horn noise

This alternative would increase the trip length for Willswood Lane residents by no more than 1.75 miles, depending the travel destination.

The cost was estimated at $48.1M

This alternative would bridge wetlands but would impact floodplains. It would not result in any residential or commercial relocations. Closing the Willwood Lane crossing would eliminate the required train horn auditory warning.

Step 4 – Willswood Lane Alternate



The Willswood Lane Alternate could look similar to this.

Step 5 – Build Alternatives and Environmental Impacts

Description	Build Alternatives					No Build
	1	2	3	4	5	
Avondale Garden Road Alternative						
Willswood Lane Realignment						
Willswood Lane Alternate						
Wetlands Impacts	Avoids	Avoids	Bridges	Avoids	Bridges	None
Floodplain Impacts	Impacts	Minimizes	Impacts	Impacts	Impacts	None
Relocations	Two Commercial	Avoids	Avoids	Two Commercial	Two Commercial	None
Total Estimated Cost	**$62.0M**	**$57.2M**	**$48.1M**	**$119.2M**	**$110.1M**	**$0**

These three alternatives, in various combinations, resulted in five Build Alternatives.

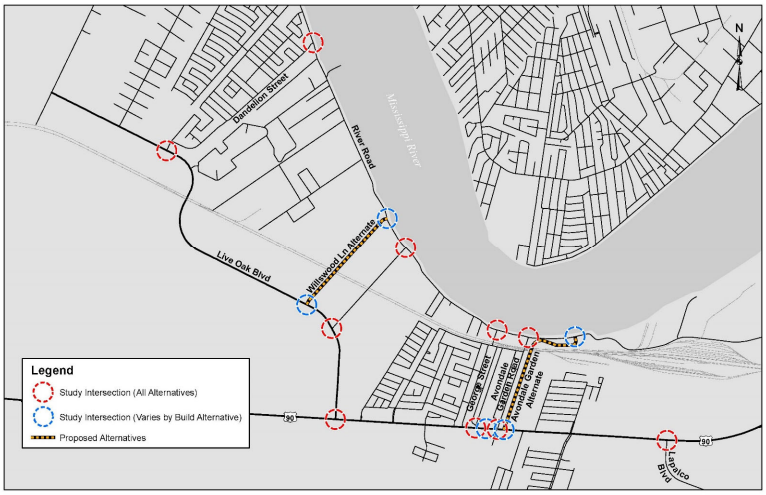
- Build Alternative 1 is the Avondale Garden Road (AGR) Alternative and would close both the existing AGR and George Street crossings
- Build Alternative 2 is the Willswood Lane Realignment and would close the existing Willswood Lane crossing
- Build Alternative 3 is the Willswood Lane Alternate, and would also close the existing Willswood Lane crossing
- Build Alternative 4 combines the Avondale Garden Road (AGR) Alternative (Build Alternative 1) and the Willswood Lane Realignment (Build Alternative 2), closing the existing Willswood Lane, George Street, and AGR crossings
- Build Alternative 5, combines the Avondale Garden Road (AGR) Alternative (Build Alternative 1) and the Willswood Lane Alternate (Build Alternative 3), also closing the existing Willswood Lane, George Street, and AGR crossings

These five Build Alternatives can be viewed in more detail along with rendering of the alternatives in the Exhibits Area.

The potential impacts and estimated costs of the five Build Alternatives are summarized in this table.

The No Build Alternative would not result in any impacts to wetlands or floodplains or require any relocations, and would have zero cost, but would not correct any of the stated goals.

Step 5 – Area Traffic Analyses



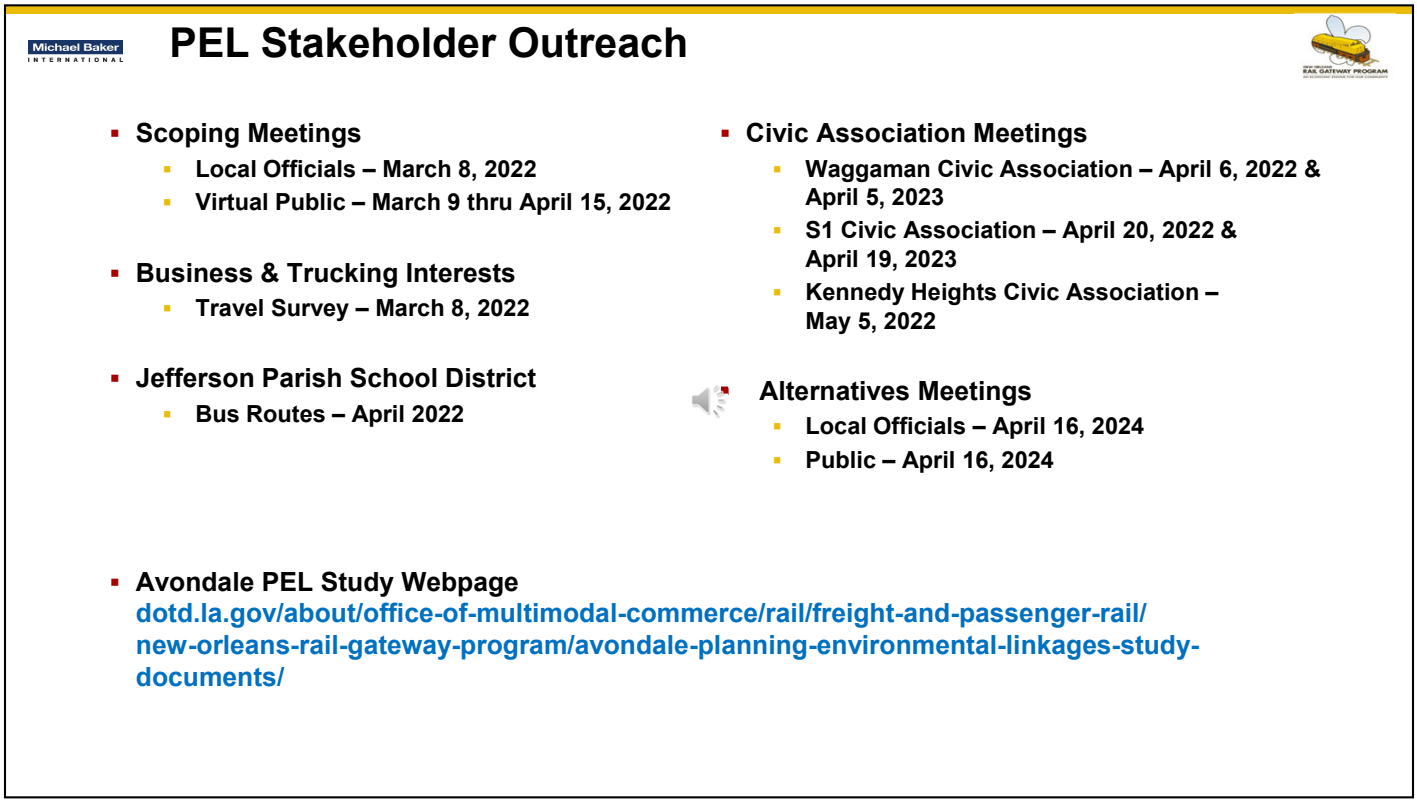
- **Existing and new intersections were evaluated to determine potential impacts to surrounding roadway network**
- **None of the five Build Alternatives would result in any significant intersection delays or travel impacts to area roadways**

Area intersections were evaluated to determine any impacts of the Build Alternatives on the surrounding roadway network.

The red dashed circles indicate existing intersections where analyses were conducted for the forecast future No Build and all five Build Alternatives.

The blue dashed circles indicate the new intersections that were evaluated for the Build Alternatives. These intersections differ depending on the Build Alternative being evaluated.

None of the five Build Alternatives would result in any significant intersection delays or travel impacts to area roadways.



Numerous stakeholder engagements were held throughout the course of PEL Study.

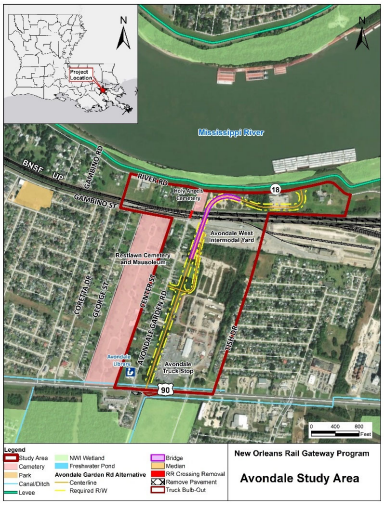
- Scoping meetings like this one were held in 2022
- This was followed by travel surveys with business and trucking interests and bus route discussion with the Parish School District
- DOTD was invited to talk about the Study at several civic association meetings
- In 2024, meetings were held to present these three (3) alternatives

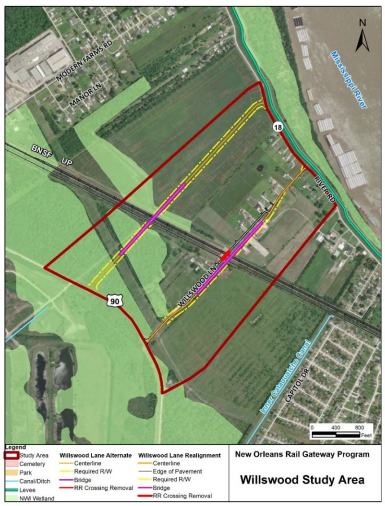
The PEL Study was completed in 2025.

The PEL Study report is available on the DOTD webpage shown.

Moving Forward – Environmental Study

- **The Project is now advancing to the NEPA/Environmental phase**
- **Additional engineering/environmental studies focusing within two discreet Study Areas encompassing the PEL Alternatives**



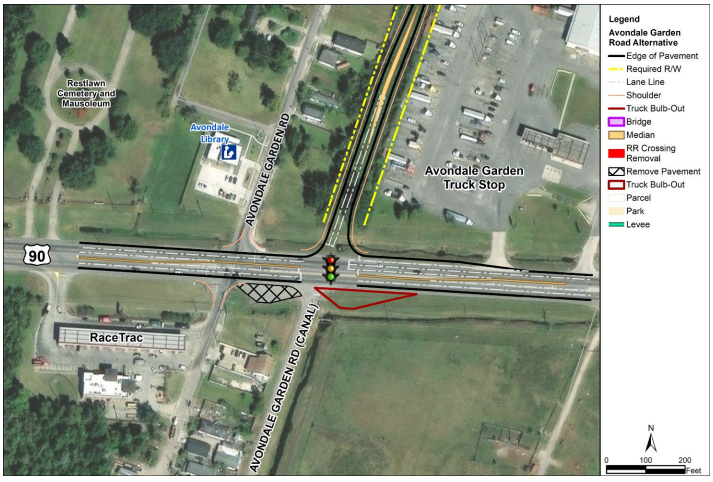


The Project is now advancing to the NEPA/Environmental phase of study.

Additional engineering and environmental studies are focusing within two discreet Study Areas encompassing the PEL Alternatives.

Avondale Garden Road Intersection Studies

- **The Avondale Garden Road Alternative removed the US 90/AGR intersection and terminated Avondale Garden Road with a cul-de-sac**
- **Upon further review, DOTD and Parish officials decided that the cul-de-sac be eliminated and the intersection remain open but with the traffic signal removed**
- **Confirmed continued eastbound and westbound access to the Avondale Truck Stop and RaceTrac**



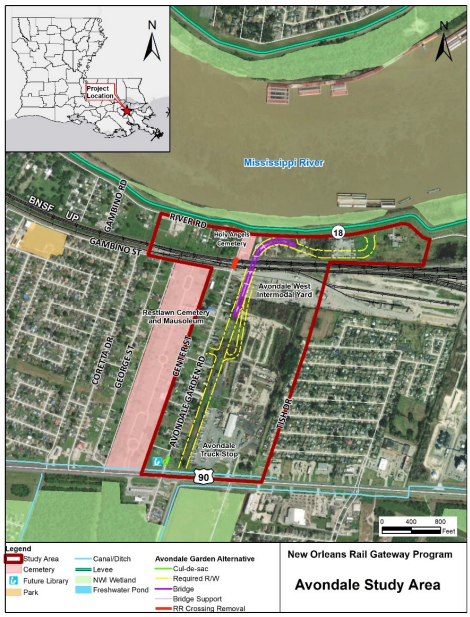
The Avondale Garden Road Alternative developed during the PEL Study removed the US 90/AGR intersection and terminated Avondale Garden Road with a cul-de-sac.

Upon further review, DOTD and Parish officials decided that the cul-de-sac be eliminated and that the intersection remain open but with the traffic signal removed.

The eastbound and westbound access to the Avondale Truck Stop and RaceTrac was also reviewed to ensure continued access to these facilities.

Environmental Studies

- **Field surveys along and adjacent to the Alternatives to identify and document environmental resources:**
  - **Noise**
  - **Hazardous Materials**
  - **Wetlands and Water Resources**
  - **Threatened and Endangered Species**
  - **Significant Trees**
  - **Historic Properties and Archaeological Resources**
- **Field surveys are necessary to support the environmental review for this Study phase**
- **Right-of-Entry (ROE) letters will be sent to property owners requesting access for the surveys**
- **Field surveys will begin in late 2026 or early 2027**



Environmental Studies will include field surveys along and adjacent to the Alternatives to identify and document environmental resources, such as

- Noise
- Hazardous Materials
- Wetlands and Water Resources
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- Significant Trees
- Historic Properties and Archaeological Resources

These field surveys are necessary to support the environmental review for this Study phase.

Right-of-Entry (ROE) letters will be sent to property owners requesting access for the surveys.

These surveys will begin in late 2026 or early 2027.

NEPA/Environmental Documentation

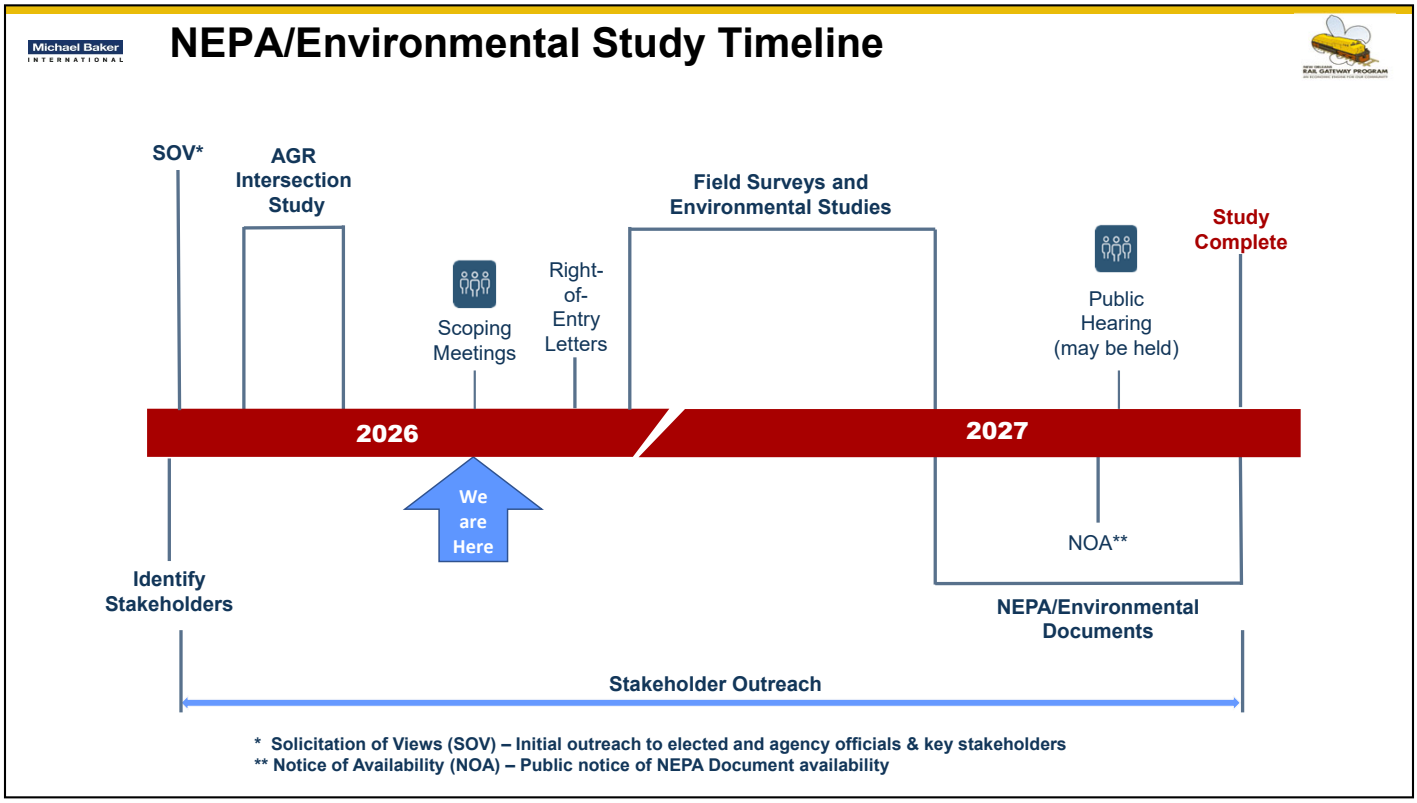
- An Environmental Document will be prepared:
  - Satisfying National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements, and will be available for public review
  - A Public Hearing may be held
- A decision to move forward would be made by Jefferson Parish as these are Parish roadways. Moving forward will depend on funding.
- The Project would take several years to complete.

The Study will end with the preparation of an Environmental Document satisfying National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements and will be available for public review.

A Public Hearing may be held.

A decision to move forward would be made by Jefferson Parish as these are Parish roadways. Moving forward will depend on funding.

The Project would take several years to complete.



The study is anticipated to take about 18 months to complete.

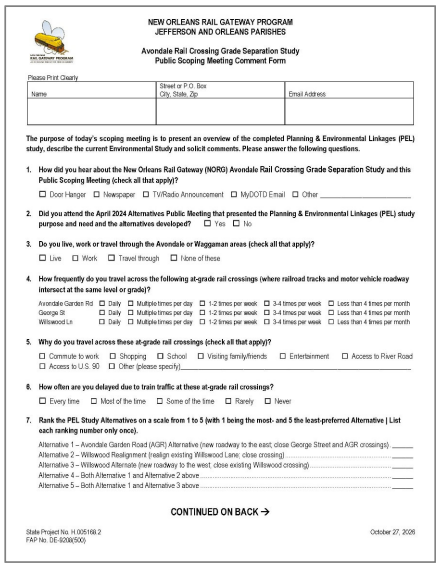
A Public Hearing may be held to present alternatives, the findings from the environmental studies and to solicit public comment.

If you signed in tonight, you will be added to the mailing list to receive study information and future announcements.

Announcements will also be made through newspaper notices, mail and e-mail notices, press releases and on the NORG webpage.

We Want to Hear From You!

- ***Comment Forms are available at Tonight's Meeting or at*** **dotd.la.gov/about/office-of-multimodal-commerce/rail/freight-and-passenger-rail/new-orleans-rail-gateway-program/avondale-rail-crossing-grade-separation-documents/**



NEW ORLEANS RAIL GATEWAY PROGRAM
JEFFERSON AND ORLEANS PARISHES

Avondale Rail Crossing Grade Separation Study
Public Scoping Meeting Comment Form

Please Print Clearly

Name	Street or P.O. Box City, State, Zip	Email Address

The purpose of today's scoping meeting is to present an overview of the completed Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) study, describe the current Environmental Study and solicit comments. Please answer the following questions.

1. How did you hear about the New Orleans Rail Gateway (NORG) Avondale Rail Crossing Grade Separation Study and this Public Scoping Meeting (check all that apply)?
   ☐ Door Hanger ☐ Newspaper ☐ TV/Radio Announcement ☐ MyDOTD Email ☐ Other _____
2. Did you attend the April 2024 Alternatives Public Meeting that presented the Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) study purpose and need and the alternatives developed? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Do you live, work or travel through the Avondale or Waggaman areas (check all that apply)?
   ☐ Live ☐ Work ☐ Travel through ☐ None of these
4. How frequently do you travel across the following at-grade rail crossings (where railroad tracks and motor vehicle roadway intersect at the same level or grade)?

Avondale Garden Rd	☐ Daily	☐ Multiple times per day	☐ 1-2 times per week	☐ 3-4 times per week	☐ Less than 4 times per month	
George St	☐ Daily	☐ Multiple times per day	☐ 1-2 times per week	☐ 3-4 times per week	☐ Less than 4 times per month	
Willswood Ln	☐ Daily	☐ Multiple times per day	☐ 1-2 times per week	☐ 3-4 times per week	☐ Less than 4 times per month	

5. Why do you travel across these at-grade rail crossings (check all that apply)?
   ☐ Commute to work ☐ Shopping ☐ School ☐ Visiting family/friends ☐ Entertainment ☐ Access to River Road
   ☐ Access to U.S. 90 ☐ Other (please specify) _____
6. How often are you delayed due to train traffic at these at-grade rail crossings?
   ☐ Every time ☐ Most of the time ☐ Some of the time ☐ Rarely ☐ Never
7. Rank the PEL Study Alternatives on a scale from 1 to 5 (with 1 being the most- and 5 the least-preferred Alternative | List each ranking number only once).
   Alternative 1 – Avondale Garden Road (AGR) Alternative (new roadway to the east; close George Street and AGR crossings) ____
   Alternative 2 – Willswood Realignment (realign existing Willswood Lane; close crossing) ____
   Alternative 3 – Willswood Alternate (new roadway to the west; close existing Willswood crossing) ____
   Alternative 4 – Both Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 above ____
   Alternative 5 – Both Alternative 1 and Alternative 3 above ____

CONTINUED ON BACK →

State Project No. H.005168.2
FAP No. DE-9208(500)
October 27, 2026

- **Submit at this meeting**
- **USPS Mail to:**
  - NORG – Avondale Rail Crossing Grade Separation
    c/o The Hawthorne Agency, Inc.
    P.O. Box 56845
    New Orleans, LA 70116
- **Email to:** NORG@mbakerintl.com
  (Subject: *NORG Avondale Rail Crossing Comment Form*)
- **Include your contact information to receive future study notices**
- **Comment forms received at this meeting or post-marked/emailed no later than November 10, 2026, will be included in the public record**

We want to hear from you!

If you want to comment about the study or this presentation, please complete the Comment Form you received at the Welcome Table. The comment form is also available on the Study webpage and can be downloaded and printed for sending via USPS mail or email.

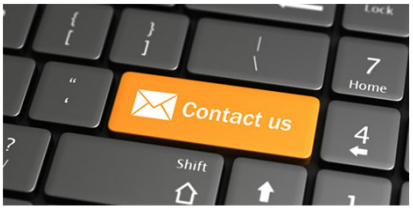
Comment forms must be received or postmarked no later than November 10, 2026, to become part of the public record.

Please complete your full name and contact information. Anonymous comments cannot be fully considered.

Stay Involved!

- **Provide your contact information to receive:**
  - **Newsletters**
  - **Future Study Notices**

- **Contact us:**
  - **Telephone - (504) 488-6196**
  - **Email - NORG@mbakerintl.com**
    - **Subject: Avondale Grade Crossing Grade Separation**
  - **USPS Mail**
    - **New Orleans Rail Gateway Program**
      Avondale Rail Crossing Grade Separation
      c/o The Hawthorne Agency, Inc.
      P.O. Box 56845
      New Orleans, LA 70116



- **Visit the DOTD Avondale Rail Crossing Grade Separation Webpage**
  dotd.la.gov/about/office-of-multimodal-commerce/rail/freight-and-passenger-rail/new-orleans-rail-gateway-program/avondale-rail-crossing-grade-separation-documents/

Please provide your contact information to receive newsletters and future notices.

You can contact us any time during the study by telephone, email and USPS Mail as listed here. This contact information is also available on the DOTD Avondale Rail Crossing Grade Separation Web page.

Study information will also be posted to this webpage.

Thank you for Watching!

THANK YOU



This public meeting is an important part of the transportation decision-making process, and your input is encouraged and appreciated.

After this presentation, please review the project exhibits, talk with Study Team representatives, and give us your comments.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask one of the Study Team representatives. We're all wearing name badges. **Remember, the only bad questions are the ones not asked!**

Thank you again for attending today's public meeting!