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## Central Officials Announce Plans to Work to Find Acceptable Loop Route

Officials from Central met yesterday with City-Parish officials and the Baton Rouge Loop project team and have announced their support for the Loop if the route for the Northern Bypass is acceptable to the Central community.

Project team leaders added that they are confident an acceptable route will be found and applauded the cooperation from those involved.

Attending the meeting were Central Mayor Mac Watts and his Executive Assistant David Barrow; State Representative Clif Richardson whose District 65 includes the Central area; Mayor Kip Holden's Chief Administrative Officer Mike Futrell; Mayoral Advisor Walter Monsour; Central Planning & Zoning Commission Committee Members Rodney Bonvillain and Wade Giles; Central City Council members Louis DeJohn and Lucky Ross; East Baton Rouge Metro Council Member Scott Wilson; Central resident Graydon Walker who sits on the BR Loop Stakeholders Committee, and BR Loop project team members Mike Bruce and Craig Gardner.

"I'm very pleased that we can move forward together," said Mayor Holden. "This project is critical to solving traffic congestion throughout our parish and we should be working together to keep this important project on schedule. I appreciate the time and cooperation of the Central officials."

Mayor Holden's Chief Administrative Officer Mike Futrell reiterated the intent to work together to move the Loop project forward. "We are committed to holding one or more public meetings in the Central community during this phase of the project to keep this project moving."

Futrell said that moving forward, leaders from the City of Central area will have a prominent seat at the table in the process of determining the route through Central.

In addition, regular meetings between the Loop team and leaders from the City of Central will be held.

Representative Richardson, who represents the Central area said, "I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this process and look forward to finding a consensus route."

Central Mayor Watts added, "We support the Loop as long as we can agree on a route acceptable to the people of Central."

Mike Bruce, a principal on the Loop project said the use of land around the new loop, such as zoning, access, feeder roads and other issues that affect the Central area will be decided by the people of Central during a land use planning aspect of the current phase.

He added that the financial model for funding the loop appears viable, especially for the Northern Bypass of the loop where tolls could produce a great majority of the construction costs.

Bruce said that historically, toll roads similar to the Baton Rouge Loop have also generated revenues for improvement and widening of local feeder roads.

The Loop will provide multiple access points in the Central area and will not cut off existing routes.

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