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## Loop's labor lost

A developer's request for access to Flourney Lucas Road near its intersection with the Inner Loop set off an odd chain of April events.

In considering the proposed entrance to developer Tim Larkin's new 150-acre Esplanade neighborhood, the region's transportation planning panel discovered that an overlay of an Inner Loop extension corridor would wipe out 40 upscale houses in the adjacent Twelve Oaks subdivision. (See adjacent map)

Yikes! was sort of the response as the — take a breath — Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Planning Committee calculated the \$15 million cost to plow through those upscale houses, while Mayor Cedric Glover counted the lost property taxes.

So the committee, led by Glover, killed the corridor.

Never mind that an MPO staffer noted that the preferred route since 1992 actually would miss Twelve Oaks. Instead of intersecting with Louisiana 1, the preferred route would more closely brush Larkin's high-end development on its more southerly route toward a hoped-for intersection with the dreamed-of

Interstate 69. The goal: complete a controlled-access loop around Shreveport-Bossier City.

(Don't smirk. As expensive as it might be, it's that kind of vision that yielded the speedy interstates, loops and parkways we now enjoy. The downside: all those highways encouraged inefficient sprawl.)

The presence of Larkin's expensive homes and the still-close brush with Twelve Oaks probably means both corridors are dead. And a possible alternate corridor that would cross Flournoy Lucas next to The Oaks retirement community is viewed as a tight fit.

So without the hope of an Inner Loop continuing south, some now see Flournoy Lucas doomed as the permanent "industrial" loop for heavy traffic traveling to and from the Port of Shreveport-Bossier.

That's what Bert Kouns — the Bert Kouns Industrial Loop — used to be before the Inner Loop was extended from Bert Kouns to Flournoy Lucas.

But where Bert Kouns was lined by auto malls, restaurants and hospitals, Flournoy Lucas is more residential, and elderly residential at that. Several retirement communities are located there.

The Shreveport Metropolitan Planning Commission staff even had ideas about a scenic overlay district along the newly five-laned road.

Let's now circle back to that entrance for Larkin's development onto state-controlled Flournoy Lucas Road...

(Orange cone irony detour: Larkin sits on the Bossier City Council which is involved in a lawsuit over a curb-cut a Shreveport developer wants for a development on the Arthur Ray Teague Parkway.)

After Larkin met with the state transportation department, followed by an appeal from Glover on the developer's behalf, DOTD said OK to the access — but the city of Shreveport would have to take over maintenance and control of not only Flournoy Lucas, but the Inner Loop south of Bert Kouns and a portion of Ellerbe Road.

You may remember that Shreveport voters recently approved the largest bond issue in city history, \$175 million to try and catch up with maintenance needs for all those sewer lines, buildings and streets we already have.

But Glover likes the takeover plan.

First, he says, the current five-laning of Flournoy Lucas means the road will be new and have a 15-year life expectancy before major maintenance would be required. Presumably that projection factors in all those heavy trucks rumbling through.

And, second, the city would be able to make its own call on future curb-cut or traffic-light requests in exchange for the promise of quality developments.

But does the city have the discipline to make wise decisions in that regard? Consider that Glover's administration now is having to bridge a mistake in past planning that allowed two major adjacent retailers on Youree Drive — Sam's Club and Target — to have no connecting drive.

But Glover believes the city can learn from its mistakes.

Of course the chief mistake, in fact a bureaucratic and leadership mystery, is just how a couple of major subdivisions were allowed to not just deflect, but perhaps kill, the path of a 19-year-old Inner Loop corridor.

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