

Allendale

for

Loop-It.

**Get to know Allendale through
Stories from Neighbors and Friends**

Ongoing Initiative to Grow Support for Allendale

Shreveport, Louisiana

10.14.2013

LOOP

49

Introduction

Place matters. Our relationships with our planet and with each other define us. Neighborhoods reflect community life of America. Many of our neighborhoods across the United States have suffered over the last 60 years as cities have expanded their limits. We have become more and more disconnected as a society. During that time we have seen a decline and abandonment of our inner-cities along with an expansion of infrastructure that is revealing itself unsustainable.

There are many reasons for the increasing level of problems in cities. One of the chief culprits is a 1950's decision that in hindsight was as destructive to US cities as dropping bombs. Building limited-access-expressways through cities was a huge mistake. The originators of the US interstate envisioned connecting cities, not going through them. Now that the country is waking up to the destructive nature of inner-city expressways the question is: Why do US transportation bureaucracies and highway planners continue their addiction to destroying communities socially and economically?

In the following pages are stories of an inner-city neighborhood that is threatened by a planned inner-city expressway, "I-49 Inner-city connector". The people that you will come to know through their stories are residents of the neighborhood and friends, like me, that are discovering the wonderful people of Allendale, a neighborhood that a few years ago everyone had come to fear. Malcolm X once said, "A person who stands for nothing will fall for anything." These people are standing for community in the belief that no community should be run over by an expressway.

The first story, Heaven's Gate, describes my experience getting to know my new friends in Allendale. All of our stories have had a helping hand from skilled writers and authors, **Annette Simmons** and **Terri Thrash**. At the end of each story is a short paragraph about another city leading a world-wide movement to tear down and block these destructive highway projects. Where these brave citizens are winning cities are renewed in remarkable ways. We will continue to add stories and update this publication. Please share your stories and join us in the adventure.

Kim Mitchell

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Heaven's Gate 8.12.2013

Kim Mitchell

It was a cool evening in late February 2012. I was walking up the steps to the porch of a Community Renewal International (CRI) Friendship House in Allendale. Ten minutes earlier, I left my 12th floor office in downtown and drove through a nowhere-land. In 1980 almost 25,000 people lived here and shopped in adjacent downtown. During the 1980's this place was designated a National Residential Historic District, a distinction justified by one of the country's largest collections of 'shotgun houses'. All but a handful of these treasures are gone, fallen from neglect, inadequate planning and political brinksmanship. I passed what was a neighborhood park several years ago. The park was replaced with an industrial building for movie production. The hope placed in this city give-away now seems ill-conceived. Even a small restaurant built anticipating hungry moviemakers has closed three times after local restaurateurs failed to attract enough business.

What if the politically systematic clearing of shotgun houses over 25 years was actually a strategy to remove an obstacle to the inner-city connector? Are those few who reap rewards from these community-killing-roads that deceptive?

Three years ago during an Allendale neighborhood planning meeting a resident revealed truth that stuck with me, "Why don't downtown leaders get it? Downtown thrived when Allendale thrived." March 7, 2013 the state representative promoting the inner-city expressway to Blessed Sacrament Church leadership provoked a church member to comment; "We, people of color, are being pushed farther away from downtown. Look at all the property laid bare around the [Municipal] Auditorium. Nothing is there. We are not informed about what is going on. It seems we are being systematically wiped out!" Blessed Sacrament Church is in the path of the NLCOG proposed inner-city expressway.

Faith, caring, determination and sweat transformed three-blocks around two CRI Friendship Houses into an Allendale Oasis of Hope. During the last 8 years abandonment gave way to 45 new homes now occupied by Hurricane Katrina evacuees and locals. CRI, The Fuller Center for Housing and Habitat for Humanity collaborated to create a special community. In addition to volunteer time, private investment of over \$5 million aligned with CRI's relational model to lift this community. Crime is down over 50%, educational outcomes significantly improved, Shreveport's first community garden is thriving and a corner store will soon open. Good work deserves celebration and encouragement, not a demoralizing destructive roadway wiping it out.

The door opened. I was greeted by my friend Mike and Sherry, the Community Coordinator living in this CRI Friendship House with her family. While Mike was introducing me, Kim Mitchell, an architect and planner, a voice inside said, "Listen first". I stood and looked around the table at 15 men and women. Their

depths of feelings were apparent. Some seemed cautious toward me as though I might be one of those confusing highway planners.

Ms. Rosey spoke first; “our lives will never be as good as they are now. We live in a neighborhood with the lowest property values in the city. They can buy us out, but it will never be enough to replace the life we have made here in Allendale.” Rosey started the city’s first community garden at Allendale’s low point in 1999. It was her way of fighting drug dealers who took over the neighborhood and hung out at the vacant lot she targeted. Today the drug dealers are gone and the ‘Allendale Garden of Hope & Love’ thrives as a symbol of Allendale’s turning point.

John, a neighbor who worked at the Fuller Center added, “No one in the city seems to care about Allendale. If they would come and see what we have accomplished maybe they would understand Allendale should not be wasted. We believe that no neighborhood should be run over by an expressway.”

“We are about to be run over by this highway and there is nothing we can do.” Louis commented while sharing his 2006 celebration picture standing in front of his new home surrounded by Senator Landrieu, Millard Fuller and 20 volunteers from across the country who invested their love and time in the “build”. Louis still corresponds with several of the volunteers.

Conversation moved around the table. Everyone spoke. The room filled with a sense of hopelessness and betrayal. I could see minds around the table capturing images of a concrete serpent swallowing the caring investments, renewed lives and re-emerging community.

The last person around the table to speak was Dorothy, a Katrina evacuee that endured the post Katrina horror of the Super Dome with 3 grandchildren, one in a wheelchair. “We lived on Claiborne Avenue in New Orleans before the storm. I watched an elevated expressway, I-10, constructed over a thriving community. Live oak trees were cut to make way for the elevated highway. The neighborhood died. It’s no longer a place you would choose to live. I found renewed hope in Allendale. Please Lord! Not again! My family has been through enough!”

Emotions yielded to questions that revealed mistrust of the powerful highway machine. “Why isn’t there open conversation about the connector proposal? Who is behind the revival of the inner-city connector? Why? Who will benefit from the wasteful public spending?”

I added questions. “Why are you being told the connector will bring economic development to Allendale? The hard facts are contrary to that misinformation. Why hasn’t NLCOG informed you that in the entire history of the US interstate system, every limited access freeway constructed through an inner-city neighborhood destroyed that community?”

“We are not alone,” I continued. “Citizens are taking action in cities around the world threatened by destructive road projects like the one NLCOG proposes. Their success is revealing that these roads are not inevitable. There is a better way. A new trend is emerging. I called and emailed people around the country involved in successful expressway opposition. If their stories motivate you, we can meet regularly and together grow our knowledge and organize to influence better outcomes for Shreveport and Allendale.”

I shared a few stories of cities that have changed for the better by tearing down or blocking destructive inner-city limited access expressways. Cities such as Milwaukee, Syracuse, Portland, Chattanooga, New Orleans and Seattle have joined a seemingly ever growing list. Around the world communities are improving their prosperity with new strategies to tear down high speed elevated roads through their cities and replace them with boulevards that support thriving local business. *(Please read a short description about one of these communities at the end of this story)*

A new spirit began to grow in the Friendship House that February night. Men and women around the table could see they don't have to settle for being wiped out. I saw a sparkle of change in their eyes revealing readiness to open the gate to a new adventure. We agreed to keep meeting. At this writing we have met monthly for over a year. I have come to know and love the people I met that night. We continue to grow together in ability to be part of making a better community. Our networks of support and caring for Allendale are growing across the community, state and country. Please join us.

Another example of a city working to stop highway planners from continuing the destruction of America's cities:

In New Orleans a move is currently underway to tear down I-10 over Claiborne Avenue and replace it with a business boulevard to bring back what was once a vibrant neighborhood. New Orleans received a \$2 million Challenge Grant from a DOT HUD partnership to plan outcomes that will result from this tear-down. This follows the tradition in NOLA that fought 15 years to block a 3.5 mile Vieux Carre' Riverfront Freeway planned between Jackson Square and the Mississippi River. The successful fight is chronicled in a book, The Second Battle of New Orleans. One of the authors, Bill Borah, a land-use attorney and leader for the wining opposition, made the following statement in an email following our phone conversation in early March 2012: “High-speed, limited-access highways are not appropriate for the inner city, and it was a serious mistake by this nation to subsidize their construction. Taking these highways down and creating multi-lane boulevards is an effort long overdue.”

See more examples at ***Agile Infrastructure for 21st Century Communities***
<http://apinfrastructure21.wordpress.com/tag/i-49connector/>

Not Again 8.12.2013

Dorothy Wiley

Sitting in the filled Superdome, looking out into the crowd, I see people throwing themselves from 30 feet above and plunging to the ground. People were committing suicide all around. All because of fear, death had taken place. I am Dorothy Wiley, a Katrina survivor. Around me I hear someone saying, "Are there any more body bags?" another person answers, "No there are not and we ordered a thousand." At this point, my heart is racing as I try to gather together my family. And then I hear more voices around me saying, "Did you hear about the little girls who were raped and beaten in the bathroom?" I fall to a pallet beside me as fear took full control. I envisioned a man dressed in black with a top hat. He leaned over and said to me, "You don't want to go out there. It's worse on the outside than it is on the inside." I watched this man as he floated down the corridor, and then vanished in midair. Instantly, fear left me, and returned to me was my faith in knowing that God will pull us through.

After spending a week in the Superdome, my family and I came to Shreveport with nothing but the clothes on our backs. Devastated and psychologically traumatized, we heard about the Fuller Center for Housing out of Americus, Ga. They had come to Shreveport to build houses for the families that endured this horrible Hurricane by the name of Katrina. When I heard about this, my hope was made strong. Volunteers came from all across America to help build these houses, leaving their loved ones behind to donate their time and monies. Houses went up and the relationships we built will last forever. We brought hope to a hopeless community.

Now, here I am, seven years later, facing the possibility of losing my home again. I-49 is to connect New Orleans to Kansas City, Missouri (I-49 in Louisiana runs from I-10 in Lafayette, La. to I-20 in Shreveport, La.). Construction is progressing for a 34 mile segment from loop I-220 in North Shreveport to the Arkansas state line. Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments (NLCOG) is tasked with connecting I-49 in south Shreveport to I-49 in north Shreveport. They are now promoting a new route through the inner city, rather than use an existing loop that already connects I-49 South to North at Shreveport.

In a process to silence our voices and confuse our communities, NLCOG failed to provide the public with adequate information. They described three 'build' options that are all essentially the same route that will pit neighbors against each other and a fourth similar route added to avoid Housing Authority property. Their recommendations totally ignore negative impacts on citizens living adjacent to elevated expressways.

Furthermore, NLCOG's public process did not address the wetlands impacts nor provide maps for viewing wetland issues. It also omits the historic district maps

that show the I-49 connector will go through a national historic district. The inner-city connector promoted by NLCOG will destroy neighborhoods. A ground level 'I-49 Business Boulevard' from the north terminus of existing I-49 at I-20 will better serve the local Shreveport community. This business route can revitalize neighborhoods.

Instead of promoting NLCOG's 'build' options for a 3.5 mile inner-city limited access expressway through a minority poverty neighborhood, cultural assets, historic assets, wetlands and natural areas, *use the existing loop limited access freeway composed of I-220 and Louisiana 3132 (NLCOG's 'no build' option) to accommodate through traffic.* I was powerless against a hurricane named Katrina, but I am not powerless against a man-made roadway that could equally destroy my home and life.

Dorothy Wiley is President of LOOP-IT, LLC

Another example of a city working to stop highway planners from continuing the destruction of America's cities:

Roger Millar, VP with Smart Growth America, was part of the 1980's Portland Interstate Withdrawal Program that showed communities that highway funding can be traded for smarter alternatives. During a March 2012 phone conversation he shared a story about a Portland neighborhood group successfully blocking 2 planned inner-city expressways. One of the neighborhood leaders, Margaret Strachan, became a city councilwoman. Another leader in the efforts is now Congressman Earl Blumenauer. Roger also described the positive outcomes and incredible private mixed-use investment resulting from a Portland expressway tear down.

See more examples at ***Agile Infrastructure for 21st Century Communities***
<http://apinfrastructure21.wordpress.com/tag/i-49connector/>

Unforgotten Memories 8.12.2013

John Press

My name is John Press. I evacuated during Hurricane Katrina to Shreveport and decided to stay. I like the people I met and decided to move to Allendale.

I don't want to be "evacuated" again. Katrina Evacuees are still trying to recover. Many of the homeowners here would not be able to recover from another displacement, especially our elderly who have embedded themselves in this community and could never afford to rebuild a home or the kind of neighborhood support system that they've built from scratch. How can they buy in another area of Shreveport with only the "fair market value" of their existing Allendale home?

I recently retired from the Fuller Center for Housing (Northwest Louisiana). Do you realize the Fuller Center for housing built 45 new homes in our Allendale neighborhood for evacuees and local families to purchase since December 2005? Demolishing the houses and improvements that rescued what was a blighted area would be a discredit and disservice to the Fuller Center's investment of \$4 million dollars; the volunteers from throughout the country who contributed their time and caring; the companies that donated materials; and more importantly the proud home owners who invested their sweat equity to begin new lives.

It would be an insult to the memory of founder, Millard Fuller and his director of operations, Glen Barton, if these houses were removed.

I am not opposed to I-49 but I am opposed to the current Allendale routes that place the connection in the middle of established neighborhood areas. The current NLCOG proposed routes disrupt and displace people in our neighborhood. Please support the use of existing Highway 3132 and I-220 loop as the connector route for I-49 traffic passing through our city. Help us renew Shreveport's inner-city neighborhoods.

Thank you. John Press, LOOP-IT, LLC Committee

Other examples of cities stopping the highway planners from continuing to destroy America's cities:

- *A 1.4 mile stretch of elevated inner city expressway is referred to as Syracuse's Berlin Wall. Planning is in progress to tear it down to bring back a neighborhood and in part because re-decking required in a few years will cost \$500 million.*
- *A proposal to tear down a 40 year old elevated limited-access freeway in downtown Dallas joins the growing list of communities that are awakening to the unsustainable negative impacts inner-city expressways have imposed on cities around the world. [A New Dallas](#) is a web site that explains a new vision for Dallas that builds the city in the downtown area devastated by the inner city IH345.*

See more examples at **Agile Infrastructure for 21st Century Communities**

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A Mother's Dream Continued 8.12.2013

Louis Brossette

My name is Louis Brossette. I live in the Allendale community at 1524 Clay St. in Shreveport Louisiana and I am a member of our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church. I have lived in Allendale most of my life. I've seen this neighborhood change many times and out of all these changes, we, citizens of Shreveport, have taken what the city decided to dish out – which wasn't much.

I lived in the shotgun houses of Allendale from a little boy until my teenage life.

We knew of larger, beautiful homes, but we thought our houses were just as big and beautiful. In the 1970s, after all the landlords had passed away, the city came in with the Beaird Foundation and other companies to “revitalize” these houses. What we thought would be better living for us, turned out to be a paint job of crazy colors on houses we thought were going to be improved.

There was no improvement, but no one tore the houses down. That paint only hid the pain our parents had to endure. When I was a child, my mother worked for two families cleaning and taking care of their homes and their children. She had to take the city trolley and several buses to get to and home from work. She would be so tired she would come in the house and the first thing she would say is, “Honey I can't breathe, come loose this strap.” My mother had asthma and emphysema, and was too weak to unhook her own bra strap. No matter how she felt, she always provided for us six children.

Near our house, we had a garden with eggplant, mustard greens, collard greens, and purple hull peas – all grown from seeds. Allendale now has its own community garden growing. My mom was a true provider. She was mother and father to us. She would be so tired I had to massage her back and feet so she could get up and cook for us six children. Sometimes I would cook for us. My mom taught us all how to cook and clean.

We lost her to lung cancer on December 10, 2001 (one day short of her December 11 birthday). I still miss my mother so much, and find comfort in continuing the tradition of our neighborhood. I find myself doing some of the same things she did. I know how hard I have to work to keep my family together and provide for them, and I remember her and how hard she worked.

I love my community and the rich values and traditions we carry forward in this place. The current NLCOG proposed inner-city connector route of I-49 through Allendale will tear down our beautiful new homes. Limited access expressways like proposed by NLCOG should not destroy anyone's neighborhood.

I-49 through-traffic can follow Highway 3132 and I- 220, an already constructed limited access interstate. We could build an inner-city business connector as a

ground level boulevard that connects to an upgraded North Market instead of bulldozing Allendale homes and community. We are outraged over NLCOG's plans and ask you to help with this most precious decision.

Another example of a city that stopped the highway planners from continuing to destroy America's cities:

Former 17-year Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist led a successful community initiative to tear down elevated Park East expressway that blighted the landscape. He then blocked two expressways planned for the downtown Milwaukee area. Prosperity returned to this part of Milwaukee. John is now the CEO for the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) that publishes annually the Top 10 "Freeways without Futures" and their "Highways to Boulevards Initiative". John tells a story about the inner-city expressways of Detroit. "Environmentalists are wrong, cities can build their way out of congestion. Look at Detroit. Freeway after freeway was built through the city. Today congestion is the least of Detroit's problems. Half of Detroit's population left." John wrote an editorial (3.18.2012) for the Shreveport Times in support of Allendale neighborhood.

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A Home Built with Love 8.12.2013

Terri T. Thrash

I walked onto the foundation to which my house would be built and I looked up toward the sky and couldn't help but know that God was smiling down on me. I was standing on a solid foundation and even though my house was not yet built, I already felt like I belonged here. Right here, in this spot, in Allendale. I saw the vision of a beautiful home in a foreign land, a land that I would become very familiar with, a land that I already called home.

It was seven o'clock in the morning when I clocked out at work and came to start a new journey. Once again, I walked onto my foundation and I was overwhelmed with the people from all around the country, whom I had never met, came to me, hugging me, introducing themselves and saying, "I'm going to help you build this house." Every morning from that day forward, I clocked out at work at seven A.M. to come and build something that I would one day call my own; my home, the house that love built.

I was twenty-four years old when I had an experience of a lifetime. I was able to be a part of something that would change the life and direction of my family. I look forward to sitting my grandchildren on my lap and saying, "You see this right here? This is where Milliard Fuller stood beside me and nailed this board up. You see up there, on that roof? That's where I stood and helped with putting this roof over our heads."

The day that people like Mr. and Mrs. Fuller, Mr. Jack, Jason Beaver, Gail Grimes, Dana Pope, Ernest and Kitty Baird, just to name a few, changed my mind about people. There really are strangers who really do care about the welfare of others. I have been living in Allendale for six years now and I've met a new family and I've built real friendships. Yes, I've heard the story about Allendale many years ago, the stories about the guns, drugs, and violence. But living here, right now, I see hope, love and a sense of real community. Where did those rumors go about this area being the worse area in Shreveport? Well, let me tell you. The course of Allendale's direction has changed for the better. Lives have been touched and dreams have been birthed. Yes, this neighborhood that was once put to death has been revived and it's not over yet.

After one week, my house was built; all four walls up by the hands of many strangers that became like my family. My daughter stood with me as they handed me the key to our brand new home and we were in tears. It was the beautiful start of a new beginning. The process of seeing my home being built and being a part of it was overwhelmingly unbelievable and now every time I sit in the quiet of my home, I look around at these four walls and say, "Look at what faith and love did!" I put blood, sweat, and tears into building my home and to have someone say that they are looking to destroy the area that I call home,

baffles me. To think that houses built out of love, and a neighborhood that has been redeemed, could even be on the list of destruction just so someone could have a expedited travel, is behooving. Something amazing built selflessly out of love, destroyed for selfish ambitions is of none existence because we, the people of Allendale, will fight until the end. Yes, we stand together and say, **“NO BUILD ON THIS SOLID FOUNDATION BUILT OUT OF LOVE!”**

Another example of cities working to stop highway planners from continuing the destruction of America’s cities:

- *Bill Holloway with the “State Smart Transportation Initiative” shared his opinion about NLCOG type proposals during a webinar in December 2012, “Innovative DOT”. “A big highway in our most valuable locations [inner-cities] is shooting ourselves in the foot with the blight they create.” He went on to say “DOT’s [Departments of Transportation] are on an unsustainable path to build and maintain infrastructure.”*
- *In Seattle a rising young political star, Cary Moon, and the People’s Waterfront Coalition are standing against powerful interests determined to waste taxpayer dollars on an old style mega billions of dollars Seattle version of Boston’s Big Dig.*

See more examples at ***Agile Infrastructure for 21st Century Communities***
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Little by Little, a Community Restored

8.14.13

Rosie Chaffold

When I came to Shreveport with my family, we came looking for a great place to live, one that was decent and affordable. My desire was to live close to great schools and churches and I, Rosie Chaffold, found that place right in the heart of Allendale. My family and I loved the community and the neighbors were friendly. The adults were working people, the children attended school and the families attended church together. Everyone loved and took pride in their community. I loved, enjoyed, and became closely connected to Allendale, and my family and I built a wonderful life here for about fifteen years.

Things began to change. The neighborhood began to decline and many people moved out and many new faces moved in. The new people of the neighborhood seemed to lack pride and showed little respect toward the community and themselves. People seemed to care less about the community. As the community began to descend, so did the family structure. Many adults lacked employment, the children stopped going to school, and the churches were vacant of family. The yards, lots, and streets were soiled with trash and filth. Drugs, crimes, and other illegal activities became a way of life.

This once beautiful neighborhood had become one of the most dangerous and unhealthy places to live. My garage was burned and my windows were shot out and I had become afraid for me and my family's lives. I asked the residents of Allendale to come together to save our community from the devastating state that it was in, but no one was willing to help. I felt sad and disappointed with the residents for the lack of care they had for their community. However, I did not give up. I felt that somehow or some way that God would bring Allendale back to its beauty and glory.

I kept praying and asking God what I could do to help Allendale return to the way it used to be. Each morning I went in my front yard and worked in my flower garden, but then one morning I began feeling sorry for my family, the condition of my community, and myself, and I started to cry. I said, "Lord, send me a miracle", and as I started to wipe my tears, I saw some people walking on the streets. They stopped and said, "Good morning. We are from Shreveport/Bossier Community Renewal, and we came to help you." One member of the group began telling me their plans for the community, and the more he talked, the more I cried.

At first, I doubted his words being that many others had come through saying that they wanted to help Allendale, but nothing changed. But then I told him that if he was willing to work with me, I was ready and willing to work with him, and we began working together. Little by little, things began to change. Other residents

began to come together with Community Renewal after building trust. Community Renewal treated us with love and respect, which gave us the desire to help ourselves. We began to feel so much better about ourselves and our community.

After Community Renewal came to Allendale, I decided to start a flower and vegetable garden. The flowers would bring beauty and the vegetables would encourage the community to eat healthier. The garden was a great success to the Allendale community because it brought a sense of pride, fellowship and friendship too. Now many other communities throughout Shreveport/Bossier have started a community garden. The Allendale Garden of Hope and Love, along with Community Renewal, has made a huge difference in the improvement of Allendale and it helped to encourage other people, businesses, and organizations to get involved and help make things even better.

The Fuller Center for Housing and Habitat for Humanity are working in the community and have built over fifty new homes for families to live in and one day own. Once again, Allendale is becoming a community of beauty, prosperity, pride and hope. I love my community and this is where I want to stay. I thank God for sending the many people here who believe in us and were willing to help us restore our community as a whole.

Now I am in fear of this community being taken away from me by way of I-49 Inner-City Connector. It is not that we don't want I-49; we just see a greater possibility in using the alternative and looping through traffic using existing Highway 3132 and I-220. That way it would not directly affect our families, churches, schools, historical landmarks, and our community as a whole that has made tremendous progress. We do not want a highway to divide our great community that we've worked so hard to rebuild.

Another example of cities working to stop highway planners from continuing the destruction of America's cities:

Interstate 70 in St. Louis was built in 1964 dividing the City from its Mississippi riverfront. This elevated inner-city limited access expressway devastated downtown vitality and separated the symbolic Gateway Arch from the city. A citizens group has formed, [City to River](#), and is leading a successful movement to remove I-70 and improve connectivity of the riverfront with downtown St. Louis. Plans are underway to coordinate the expressway removal to make way for a surface boulevard and other walkable alternatives. Congestion is anticipated to be cut in half by looping through traffic that currently clogs I-70 downtown.

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Cherished Memories

10.14.2013

Eric S. Thomas

I am Eric S. Thomas, and I grew up in Allendale on Garden Street. There are so many great memories that I have and I've experienced so many wonderful things while living there. I attended Ingersoll, J.S Clark, and Booker T. Washington High School, which were all wonderful neighborhood schools. I enjoyed walking to school with my brother and just taking in the beauty of Allendale, knowing that this was home.

I remember when my brother and I built go carts and rode up and down the unpaved streets of Allendale as we raced for fun. So many things we did and games we played, like running fifty yard dashes on Garden Street brought us joy. We had fun and we cherished where we grew up. My brother and I also loved going to the store for our elderly neighbors and walking to church on Sundays. I'd even gotten married in Allendale on Garden Street and I cherish every one of those memories. Yes, I still cherish Allendale today.

My mother still lives in Allendale and she loves it there. I also attend church there at St. Rest Baptist Church. Allendale means a lot to so many people, and I am one of those people. I love Allendale and I want to see it continue to thrive. I do not want to see my beautiful neighborhood destroyed by an interstate. This neighborhood is worth so much more than that. I believe that since 3132 is already built to link up with I-49 that it should be used to do just that and leave our beautiful Allendale standing strong.

Another example of cities working to stop highway planners from continuing the destruction of America's cities:

On September 16, 2013 Mary Ebeling posted an article on State Smart Transportation Initiative (SSTI), [A new future for downtown Rochester: Removing the Inner Loop Highway](#). The article quotes Mayor Richards, "The project will convert the 8-12 lanes of expressway and frontage roads into a single two-lane street, with parking, a separated bicycle track and sidewalks...This project will remove this barrier to downtown revitalization and will enable residents to walk safely and conveniently on an appropriately-scaled city street."

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Don't Kill Our Dreams

10.14.2013

By Phyllis Davis

I am Phyllis Davis and I'm a proud home owner and resident of the Allendale neighborhood. I grew up in the "bottom" of Allendale and lived with my single mother and my nine siblings. We lived in a small, one bedroom apartment. While my mother slept in the bedroom with three of my youngest siblings, the rest of us slept in the living room on blankets on the kitchen floor. I remember praying at the young age of thirteen, asking God to bless my family with a big house. There were even times when I wrote letters to God, asking Him to bless me with my own home when I come of age. I even went as far as dropping those letters of hope into the mailbox, believing that they would one day reach God.

I used to hear my mother's Landlord, threatening to put us out every time my mother was short on her rent. I remember hearing her say, "Just give me a little more time, I will have it." I used to feel so bad for her and I didn't want her to know that I could hear him with his threats. It was during those hard times, I knew that I wanted to own my own home one day and I never wanted to hear another Landlord again, threatening to put my family out.

I went on to have four children of my own, following in my mother's footsteps as a single mother. I lived under the Section Eight program, housing for lower income families, for a while. I even lived in the "projects" for a while, yet wherever my family was blessed with a roof over our heads, I tried my best to make it a home even though, I couldn't call it a home of my own. As years went by, my dream finally came true. I was blessed with a home through Fuller Center for Housing and Community Renewal International. I am grateful to know that God heard and answered my prayers.

All of this came during the time my second son had taken ill and we were living in a bad neighborhood. We needed to get out and have a new start. To know that my son was able to live long enough to see my dream come true, was a true blessing. Besides, that's what he wanted for us. I can still hear him saying, "Momma, one day I'm going to buy you a big home." I'm overjoyed that he was able to move into his new bedroom instead of going back to the living conditions we were in before he went to the hospital. And even though God called him home, I'm left with the memories of him being there with me.

My son was able to see a community come together to bless families with new beginnings. He was blessed to witness beautiful people who joined together, who left their own families to lend a helping hand, to build homes for strangers. North Wheelchair Ramp, First United Methodist Church, Temple of Vision Ministries and everyone who sponsored our home, I am ever so grateful that they

stepped in, giving a helping hand, and to the Fuller Center for choosing to help my family.

Dreams do come true. You have to see that our homes were built with loving hands. Now I am asking God to keep our dreams alive so that our children and grandchildren can see that dreams do come true.

Another example of cities working to stop highway planners from continuing the destruction of America's cities:

Vancouver British Columbia has completed a transportation plan for the future, [Transportation 2040](#). Without a single limited access freeway this city metro of over 2.3 million and growing sets an example for the rest of the world in sustainability. Rather than look to new roads to accommodate population growth, alternative modes of transportation move to the front. Here is an excerpt from the web site that describes goals for the plan.

The plan supports goals that address the many challenges we face, and seeks to meet Vancouver's economic, environmental, and social needs:

Economy – *We envision a smart and efficient transportation system that supports a thriving economy while increasing affordability*

People – *We envision healthy citizens in a safe, accessible, and vibrant city*

Environment – *We envision a city that enhances its natural environment, ensuring a healthy future for its people and the planet*

See more examples at ***Agile Infrastructure for 21st Century Communities***
<http://apinfrastructure21.wordpress.com/tag/i-49connector/> .