Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Policy Committee

MINUTES

Friday, January 15, 2016 (9:00 a.m.)
First Floor Seminar Room
NLCOG Office, Shreveport Bar Association
625 Texas Street, Suite 200
Shreveport, LA 71101

Members Present
Dr. Woody Wilson – Caddo Parish Commission
Mayor Lo Walker – City of Bossier City
Mayor Ollie Tyler – City of Shreveport
Mr. Sam Marsiglia – Bossier MPC
Mr. Mark Sweeney – Shreveport MPC
Mr. Danny Malone, representing Eric England – Port of Shreveport – Bossier (non-voting)
Mr. Dinero Washington – SporTran
Mr. David North – LaDOTD District 04

Others Present
Ms. Anna O’Neal – Legal Counsel for NLCOG
Mr. Kent Rogers – NLCOG

With due notice, Dr. Wilson called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

I. Call to Order

Dr. Wilson called the meeting to order.

II. Roll Call

Members present: Dr. Woody Wilson – Caddo Parish Commission; Mayor Lo Walker – City of Bossier City; Mayor Ollie Tyler – City of Shreveport; Mr. Sam Marsiglia – Bossier MPC; Mr. Mark Sweeney – Shreveport MPC; Mr. Danny Malone, representing Eric England – Port of Shreveport – Bossier (non-voting); Mr. Dinero Washington – SporTran; Mr. David North – LaDOTD District 04

III. Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Wilson welcomed the public and the committee members to the meeting.

IV. Public Comments (Agenda Items)

Dr. Wilson called for public comments. Mr. Scott Sinclair spoke about the LA 3132 traffic study. Mr. Sinclair stated that after looking at the traffic study performed during the Stage 0, and recognizing there may have been some updates, it was difficult for him to justify $160 -170 million to accommodate that level of traffic. He stated the distance, particularly for B1 and B2, is about 6 miles as BKI was asked to study all of the way to I-69. He further stated the traffic study in the Stage 0 forecasts on the model for traffic at peak times that would be using this road in 2032 concluded there would be in peak traffic times in the morning 7/10 of a passenger car per mile on the northern section and 3/10 of a passenger car per mile per lane on the southern portion. He stated this tells you that peak travel times in the morning, if you take a snapshot of this roadway, you
would see 6 cars on 6 miles of interstate at peak times. He stated the p.m. peaks are a little different. It is 3/10 of a mile on the northbound and 5/10 of a mile in the southbound lanes. So these are the peak times and we’re talking about spending $160 million here and $170 million here to accommodate that level of traffic. He stated his question was has the traffic study or traffic impact been updated and if not, if these are still the valid numbers, then he would encourage the MPO to look seriously at that component. He stated he understands there are a lot of factors, but to please look at this factor and think about whether it justifies this expenditure and the effort and the energy and the resources that are being consumed to pursue this.

Dr. Wilson asked for any other public comments. Mr. Steve Lenert spoke about the LA 3132 preferred routes. Mr. Lenert stated if it doesn’t come through his front yard, it’s real close on B1. He stated aside from the fact that it’s his personal issue with it; it makes more sense in his opinion that if this happens someday that down the road on Alternative B2 there would be a lot less of an infringement on a lot of people on Robson Road. He stated there is a nesting bald eagle site right where Alternative B1 comes through, so in addition to not wanting it to come through his yard or his neighbor’s yard; it would be disappointing to see it go through either his or his neighbor’s yard. He stated the committee’s consideration of that information would be greatly appreciated.

Mr. John Perkins stated he would like to thank Mayor Walker for starting a conversation about the costs of all of these highways and how they would be paid for. He stated he is confused as he is hearing from other city officials that there is a 60/40 split and it’s on Louisiana and we’re broke. He asked why the discussion and the angst created in the City of Shreveport if we’re broke. We’re not going to be able to build a highway anytime soon or fix the roads. We can’t even fix what we have. He stated he wondered why we’re even here today discussing building more roads and we can’t even fix what we have. He stated he did appreciate the Mayor’s thoughts and for stepping forward and being a part of that conversation. It meant a lot to the people in Shreveport and he did appreciate it. Dr. Wilson asked for any other public comments. There were none.

V. Unfinished Business

A. Public Transportation Study – Adoption

Dr. Wilson moved the committee into unfinished business. Mayor Walker motioned to begin discussion of the Public Transportation Study adoption with Mayor Tyler seconding. The committee approved unanimously. Mr. Rogers directed the members to the resolution approving adoption of the study and stated staff received two comments from the public. He stated one was regarding the article in the paper and stated he was pleased with the route configurations and different types of services. The comment stated there was a concern regarding the signs for stops and to please not put one in front of his home as there is one now. Mr. Rogers stated the second comment received was from a city councilmember who stated they would have preferred the comment period begin earlier and not so close to the holiday season. Mr. Rogers stated it is a common concern with anything that is introduced for public comment anytime between November and January, but that the projects need to continue moving forward rather than wait two months to introduce it for public comment. Mr. Rogers responded to the comment that it would probably be about a year before these routes are implemented and may be some minor tweaking along the way as the intermodal center gets underway. Mr. Washington stated he submitted 171 surveys from the survey SporTran posted to their website. He asked how that data would be used to correlate the concerns received. Mr. Washington stated he submitted the surveys to Mr. Hunter with AECOM and had not received a return call after four or five phone calls. Mr. Rogers stated he had not heard anything back from Mr. Hunter either, but that typically they do an appendix to show how they addressed those comments. Mr. Rogers stated that similar to the councilmember’s comment, the routes may be tweaked as we start to implement them. Mr. Washington stated he wanted to make sure the record showed that there were more than just two comments received and that the 171 surveys were a part of this process and submitted back
to the planners for inclusion in this study. Dr. Wilson asked if the study is adopted today, how will the revision take place. Mr. Rogers stated typically there is an appendix showing the comments and how they were addressed. Mr. Rogers stated the committee could hold off on approving the plan or wait until the appendix is received. He stated they would defer to Mr. Washington and SporTran. Mr. Rogers asked Mr. Washington if waiting would hinder their process. Mr. Washington stated it would not as they are behind due to the weather. Dr. Wilson stated he would like an update on the status, but would wait so as not to confuse the two during this discussion. Mr. Washington agreed. Dr. Wilson confirmed that waiting would not impact SporTran. Mr. Washington stated it would not and he recommended waiting until the appendix is received and reviewed so that the citizen’s concerns would be heard. Mr. Washington stated he would like to see a final draft prior to adoption. The motion to approve was withdrawn by Mayor Walker with Mayor Tyler seconding. Mr. Washington motioned to delay the approval until a final report is received. Mr. Sweeney seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ayes: Dr. Woody Wilson – Caddo Parish Commission; Mayor Lo Walker – City of Bossier City; Mayor Ollie Tyler – City of Shreveport; Mr. Sam Marsiglia – Bossier MPC; Mr. Mark Sweeney – Shreveport MPC; Mr. Dinero Washington – SporTran; Mr. David North – LaDOTD District 04

B. Approval of Minutes – September 18, 2015

Dr. Wilson moved the committee into the approval of the minutes from the September 18, 2015 meeting. Mayor Walker motioned to approve the minutes as presented; Mayor Tyler seconded. Mr. Rogers stated these were the minutes Mr. England asked to be postponed for the inclusion of parts of pages 5 and 6, some additional discussion from Mr. England in terms of I-69 and LA 3132. Mr. Rogers stated Mr. England wanted more detail included. Mayor Walker asked if these minutes included the additional details Mr. England requested. Mr. Rogers affirmed. Mr. Rogers stated Mr. England had reviewed the amended minutes. Dr. Wilson asked for further discussion. There was none. The motion passed unanimously.

Ayes: Dr. Woody Wilson – Caddo Parish Commission; Mayor Lo Walker – City of Bossier City; Mayor Ollie Tyler – City of Shreveport; Mr. Sam Marsiglia – Bossier MPC; Mr. Mark Sweeney – Shreveport MPC; Mr. Dinero Washington – SporTran; Mr. David North – LaDOTD District 04

VI. New Business

A. LA 3132 Inner Loop Extension

Dr. Wilson moved the committee into the first order of new business which was the discussion of the recommended alternatives moving forward with the Stage 1 Environmental Study for the LA 3132 Inner Loop Extension. Mayor Walker motioned to begin discussion of the recommended alignments as the MPO Preferred Alignments for further environmental analysis. Mayor Tyler seconded. Mr. Rogers introduced Mr. Tyler Comeaux with BKI to give a brief presentation and update on what has occurred since the last public meeting. Mr. Comeaux stated this committee would need to recommend alternatives to LaDOTD and the Federal Highway Administration before further study could be completed. Mr. Comeaux briefly went through the background of the project. Mr. Comeaux stated LaDOTD accepted the traffic study from the Stage 0. He stated that is Alternatives A or C were selected, then a traffic study would be completed for the intersection of LA 1 and Leonard Road and not necessarily the entire route. He stated if LaDOTD determined further or different traffic study was needed, then they would proceed from there. He briefly described the Alternatives A, B1, B2 and C, as well as the No-Build. Mr. Comeaux stated that the ramps with Alternative C would require further traffic study due to LaDOTD’s comments from June of 2013 regarding what interchanges
would be needed in that area. Mr. Comeaux discussed the technical review, the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) comments, and the community input. He discussed the potential impacts with each alternative. He stated each of the four build alternatives have varying degrees of impact. Mr. Comeaux stated the evaluation matrix was available at the public meeting. He noted the community input from the Stage 0 showed the majority wanted Alternative A. He stated the community was asked to prioritize the alternatives based against each other. He stated public comments received at the November 19, 2015 public meeting showed that B1 is the most preferred alternative closely followed by Alternative A and B2. He stated the No-Build and Alternative C received less support. He stated Alternatives A and C were the most costly due to the elevated portions and to still have access at the Port. He stated B1 and B2 appeared to be more feasible as far as costs and displace fewer structures. Mayor Walker asked Mr. Rogers if the Port’s objection was to B1 and B2. Mr. Rogers stated the Port’s major concern was with Alternatives A and C in that the massive increase in cost on those alignments was to provide the continuous support and entrance and the major ingress and egress needed to maintain access to the businesses and the residence back by the levee. He stated it was the same with the large truck stop on LA 1. Mr. Comeaux stated with all of this said, when the committee comes to a recommendation, BKI will go out into the field to complete investigations. He stated the solicitation of views to the agencies and aerial imagery has given the most up-to-date information to this point. He stated the alternative evaluation matrix will be finalized by going out into the field to verify each structure that would be displaced and make sure everything is taken care of that needs to be shown in the study as displaced structures. Mr. Comeaux stated there were 41 in attendance at the meeting and 23 written and 15 completed preference forms from after the meeting. He stated the comments from the public meeting mainly focused on displacement and noise considerations. Mr. Comeaux stated B1, A, and B2 were supported. He asked the committee for any comments or questions, as well as which alternative(s) the committee would like to recommend to LaDOTD and FHWA to move forward.

Mr. Rogers stated as was previously described, the committee as the MPO would make a recommendation to LaDOTD, who would then concur or not concur and send their recommendation to FHWA. FHWA can then concur or not concur. Mr. Rogers stated the contract states that up to two alternatives can be recommended for further review. He said eventually it would be narrowed down to one final preferred alternative. Mr. Sweeney asked if the information had been through the PAC. Mr. Comeaux stated B1 and B2 were significantly ahead in the PAC preference. Mayor Tyler asked if Mr. England was concerned about Alternatives A and C. Mr. Rogers and Mr. Malone stated that was correct. Mr. Rogers stated the continued access needed on those alternatives contributed significantly to the cost increase. Mr. Comeaux stated due to the comments received by LaDOTD on June 8, 2014, BKI went back to the public with the four alternatives because of the significant changes outlined by LaDOTD from before the LaDOTD traffic comments. Mr. Comeaux reviewed the evaluation matrix and the public comment preference shown in the slide. He stated Mr. Washington asked about cost projection and the noise mitigation plan, what type of plan is proposed for residents in those areas. Mr. Comeaux stated it would be further defined in the line and grade. Mr. Washington asked if we were looking at a significant cost increase. Mr. Comeaux stated no, that was included in the cost projections. Mr. Rogers stated a general cost was done in the cost projections. Mr. Comeaux stated BKI knows the number of structures within 500 feet of the right-of-way and those structures would need noise mitigation. Dr. Wilson asked what the cost was on I-49 North for the entire project. Mr. Rogers stated $700 close to 800 million. Dr. Wilson asked if it was approximately 32 miles. Mr. Rogers affirmed. He stated rural areas are less expensive than urban areas. Dr. Wilson stated these numbers seem quite high for 5 miles of road. Mayor Tyler agreed. Mr. Rogers stated the more urban areas have a higher cost. Mr. Comeaux stated as a ball-park it is 10 times more expensive to build a bridge than at-grade. Dr. Wilson stated we need to come up with two choices that will be whittled down to one. Mr. Comeaux stated BKI would finalize the environmental with those two and then the committee would choose a preferred alternative to do line and grade, that would be the bridges and crossings – a semi-plan. Mayor Tyler stated regardless of what we do today, it goes to the
Federal and they tell us. Mr. Rogers stated that at the end of the day, it is FHWA’s decision as they issue the expected Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the study it will be on what they call the Environmentally Preferred Alternative. Mayor Tyler asked how many stages until construction. Mr. Comeaux stated funding is next and then design and construction. Dr. Wilson asked within the discussion point they are at now, what is next. Mr. Rogers stated he had drafted a resolution for the recommendation, with blanks. He read the resolution. Mr. Sweeney motioned to consider B1 and B2 with Mr. Washington seconding. Dr. Wilson asked for continued discussion. Dr. Wilson stated he was comfortable with B1 and B2. Mayor Tyler confirmed her support. Mayor Walker stated the Port’s position with A, B1 and B2 included in these options. Mr. Malone clarified the Port’s position of preferably B1. There was no further discussion. The motion passed with no opposition.

Ayes: Dr. Woody Wilson – Caddo Parish Commission; Mayor Lo Walker – City of Bossier City; Mayor Ollie Tyler – City of Shreveport; Mr. Sam Marsiglia – Bossier MPC; Mr. Mark Sweeney – Shreveport MPC; Mr. Dinero Washington – SporTran; Mr. David North – LaDOTD District 04

B. Approval of Minutes – November 20, 2015

Dr. Wilson, Mayor Tyler motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Washington seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

Ayes: Dr. Woody Wilson – Caddo Parish Commission; Mayor Lo Walker – City of Bossier City; Mayor Ollie Tyler – City of Shreveport; Mr. Sam Marsiglia – Bossier MPC; Mr. Mark Sweeney – Shreveport MPC; Mr. Dinero Washington – SporTran; Mr. David North – LaDOTD District 04

VII. Presentations and Project Updates

1. I-49 Inner City Connector – Community Meetings Update

Mr. Rogers directed the members to the copies of the flyer and push cards for the six upcoming meetings. Mr. Rogers stated that originally there were five meetings scheduled, but due to weather damage at one church and conflicts with other venues, an extra meeting was added. Mr. Rogers stated there will be information on all five build alternatives at the public meetings and will also be posted to the project website. Mr. Rogers stated that with the six different meetings, the various times and locations, he feels that there is ample opportunity for the public to participate at any meeting and provide feedback. Mr. Washington asked when this type of presentation will be available for I-49. Mr. Rogers stated that 15 days for for postmarked comments to be received after the last meeting, and allowing the consultant to compile the public input received at the upcoming meetings, the committee can expect a presentation in about a month, depending on how many comments and what kinds of comments come back. He stated probably March or April, and then following this committee would need to make a recommendation on preferred alternative(s). There was no further discussion.

2. Long Range Transportation Plan Update

Mr. Rogers directed the members to the Long Range Transportation Plan Update and stated the draft chapters had been distributed to the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) for review. He stated that once the feedback is received from the TCC and any changes made, the draft would come to this committee for approval to open for a 30-day public comment period. Dr. Wilson asked if this would include the bicycle plan. Mr. Rogers stated that it would and that it is a separate review than this document. Mr. Washington asked how the transit study played into the development of the long range transportation plan. Mr. Rogers stated that at the Board of Directors meeting next, is an amendment to allow Alliance Transportation to do an executive
summary of all of the studies that have occurred including the rail, transit and bike studies to create a comprehensive 2040 transportation plan for the area. Dr. Wilson stated that would be good. Mr. Rogers reminded the members the TCC is currently reviewing. Dr. Wilson asked if the rail study was fully complete. Mr. Rogers stated yes, and that it was adopted at the last meeting. Mr. Rogers stated Amtrak had looked at our study and the Texas study and would like to move the combined corridor further into the federal process. He stated that study will go into further detail such as stop times, etc. He stated that in terms of highway, the rail study was like a Stage 0 feasibility study and the combined Ft. Worth to Atlanta would be further detailed with most information focused on Ft. Worth to Meridian, MS. Mr. Sweeney stated he wanted to focus for a minute on the Regional Thoroughfare Plan and that it would be appropriate to schedule a meeting for NLCOG to formally present information at the city council and parish commission to inform them and get their buy-in for the plan. He stated with the process for gathering money already started, he felt it would be prudent to inform the council members and commissioners in Caddo and probably Bossier, too, that it would be politically prudent so as not to get to the middle of the process and have negative feedback regarding not being informed. Mr. Rogers agreed and said that staff would put together a presentation based on the draft scope that’s been developed. Mr. Washington stated he would like to see a similar presentation for the transit development plan and how the system and stops would be realigned. Mr. Rogers stated the intent was to take the summary of all the plans to the governing bodies and to ultimately have each jurisdiction adopt their appropriate portions. Mr. Rogers stated they would do the thoroughfare plan up front. There was no further discussion.

3. **Regional Safety Coalition**

Dr. Barrett reminded the members of the invitation for the January 26, 2016 Regional Safety Coalition kick-off meeting with the LaDOTD safety section who will discuss the four emphasis areas and expectations. Dr. Barrett stated she is excited to get the official process rolling.

Dr. Wilson asked for an update of the intermodal facility. Mr. Washington stated they are about six months behind. He stated due to site conditions and the weather, the project was stalled. A basement facility was full of water and is being pumped out. It is expected to open fourth quarter of 2016 barring any weather issues. He stated he would keep the committee up-to-date.

Mr. Rogers stated there was a fact sheet developed by staff on the Motorist Assistance Patrol (MAP). He stated this is something he would like to include each month on different aspects and programs. He stated part of the sponsorship comes through the MPO. Mr. Washington asked who they report to. Mr. Rogers stated the contract comes through LaDOTD on a five-year basis. Mr. Rogers stated the MAP runs through the major urban areas in the state and in our area it extends to the Haughton exit on I-20, about to start or have just started patrolling north on I-49, and extending a little further on I-49 south.

**VIII. Adjourn**

With no further discussions, Mayor Walker motioned to adjourn with Mayor Tyler seconding.

J. Kent Rogers, Secretary