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## **Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Policy Committee**

### **MINUTES**

**Friday, February 21, 2025 (9:00 AM)**

Government Chambers at Government Plaza  
505 Travis St., Shreveport, LA 71101

#### **Members' Present**

Mayor Tom Arceneaux – City of Shreveport  
Mr. Alan Clarke – MPC City of Shreveport  
Dr. Ken Ward – Bossier Parish  
Mrs. Erica Bryant – Caddo Parish  
Mr. David North – LaDOTD District 04  
Mr. Bruce Blanton – Webster Parish  
Mrs. Carlotta Askew-Brown – MPC City of Bossier City  
Mayor Tommy Chandler – City of Bossier City

#### **Members Absent**

Mr. Michael Norton – DeSoto Parish  
Mr. Eric England – Port of Caddo-Bossier  
Mr. Dinero' Washington – SporTran

#### **Others Present**

Mr. Kent Rogers – NLCOG  
Mr. Chris Petro – NLCOG  
Mrs. Savannah Williams – NLCOG  
Mrs. Heidi Stewart - NLCOG  
Mrs. Rita Arnold – NLCOG  
Dr. Shelly Barrett – NLCOG  
Mr. Josh Chevallier – NLCOG Legal Council

### **Call to Order**

Mrs. Bryant called the meeting to order. She stated that we generally have the invocation, roll call and a pledge at the beginning of the meeting. Mrs. Bryant said that she was going to ask Mr. Clarke to lead us on the pledge and Dr. Ward to lead us in prayer. She asked if those that cared to join them to please stand. Mr. Clarke led us on the pledge followed by Dr. Ward leading us in prayer. Mrs. Bryant asked Mr. Rogers to begin the roll call. Mr. Rogers called roll. A quorum was present.

Mr. Rogers stated that they had a couple of individuals from the safety coalition, along with Dr. Barrett, that would like to make some comments on the Safety Plan and whatnot. He wanted to see if they could move those two items under number three on the agenda, the Northwest Louisiana Safe Streets For All Regional Safety Action Plan and the Annual Safety Performance Measures Report, to the end. That way they have time to hear from them all and not get mixed up.

Mrs. Bryant asked if they could get a motion to Approve item number three on the agenda, SS4A Regional Safety Plan - ATG, to the end of the agenda. Mayor Arceneaux motioned, and Mr. Clarke seconded. Mrs. Bryant called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

## Public Comments

Mrs. Bryant asked if there were any public comments. Mr. Chevallier stated they had two comments and reminded him of the allotted three minutes.

**Mr. Dave Hackney** was first to comment. Mr. Hackney said, "Good Morning" to the board, introduced himself and stated that he's a retired registered professional engineer. He said he was there today to make some comments on last month's meeting where Mr. James addressed the MPO committee and gave an update on the Red River Express. *(Please see Mr. Hackney's attached comment below.)*

**Mr. Curtis Rambin** was next to comment. Mr. Rambin said, "Good Morning", and that he and his wife live off Milbank Drive in Twelve Oaks neighborhood. Mr. Rambin said they built their home in 2011, and they picked that particular lot because the lot behind them was on the perimeter of the neighborhood, an open field with a tree line along the bayou, an expensive view. They've been there fourteen years, and it's afforded them a lot of privacy and enjoyment. He said this expressway would spoil all of that. This right-of-way comes right up behind their property line. The traffic would be just beyond that. Mr. Rambin said that it's not just going to spoil it for him and his wife, but for a lot of their neighbors. It's proposed it could run right next to the playground or park. He asks that when the time comes, don't approve it. Mr. Rambin said that's all he has to say.

## Business

### 1. Approval of Minutes

The next item on the agenda was for approval of the minutes for the January 17, 2025, meeting. Mayor Arceneaux motioned, and Mr. Clarke seconded to approve the minutes as provided. Mrs. Bryant called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

### 2. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Amendments and Modifications

Mr. Rogers stated that under the TIP program, they have two sections that have items under them from the DOTD program for items for adoption. US371: KCS RR OVERPASSES HBI and KINGS HWY: HEALTHCARE & DEV. CORRIDOR. They've both been put out for public comment period and they've received no public comments so they're ready to go. Mr. Rogers said KINGS HWY: HEALTHCARE & DEV. CORRIDOR is putting the engineering phase at \$1.834M this year and construction phase in next fiscal year. For US371: KCS RR OVERPASSES HBI, it's putting the additional construction phase into this fiscal year.

Mr. Rogers said the second piece of TIP agenda items is for introduction. It's for SporTran's 5307 Transit Program for this calendar year, utilizing the appropriations from last year. The total amount is roughly \$8.7 million. The federal share of that is roughly \$5.884 million. Again, that's for introduction.

Mrs. Bryant asked if there were any further questions. Having none, Mrs. Bryant entertained a motion to Approve the Adoption of the Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications and Amendments. Mr. Clarke motioned, and Mayor Arceneaux seconded. Mrs. Bryant called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

#### **4. Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update - Draft Scope of Services for MPO - LaDOTD Project Agreement**

Mr. Rogers said the next item, and it's informational only at this time, is the update for the long-range plan scope of services. They have been working with DOTD. The long-range plan is a twenty-five year plan, but it has to be updated every five years. They have to include a full twenty years for it to be in compliance with the federal regulations. Mr. Rogers said that the basic scope items that are included are Project Management, Developing Guiding Principles and Criteria for MTP Update, Public Involvement, Existing Conditions Review (which is reviewing the existing conditions of the system as it is currently). There's also a task for Updating the Transportation Model, that's their TransCAD Travel Demand Model that they run traffic analysis on for various heaps of years. Task six is Development of Forecasts for those. Mr. Rogers said they do population and employment projections, add those into the model, and look at the different scenarios for the years they'll be looking at. 2025 would be what they call the E+C (Existing Plus Committed). For 2030, 2040 and 2050 Networks, they'd be looking at the different needs that come from those and testing those out. Another task is the Public Transit Element. Mr. Washington has asked that while doing this process they look at some Bus Rapid Transit Corridors, similar to what will be coming out of the Medical Corridor, doing some similar things with a few other corridors throughout the area. They're also looking at some additional connections from the Rural Transit providers in DeSoto, Webster, northern Bossier Parish and how they could connect those better to the Urban system. Task nine is the Review of Existing Freight Network and Services. Mr. Rogers said they've been working with the Port. They've done some work on freight analysis, including truck traffic coming in and out of the Port and around that area. Next is incorporating the Active Transportation Plan, which was recently approved, and parts of the SS4A Plan, into that process for those bike ped and safety components of the plan. Last, but not least, there's a financial constraint component that they have to do with the plan. Looking at what funding is projected to come into the region, how much the funding would be, and how they could spread that across the various programs and projects. Then identify a plan development and an identifiable implementation to go along with it. They hope to have the Scope Agreement and the agreement with DOTD, then have a BAQ ready for their approval at the March meeting. Then they'll have presentations from different firms at the April meeting for them to make a selection. One thing that DOTD has now required, previously they've done a lump sum for safe complete contracts, but all contracts now have to be negotiated with man hours, time and material, so it will be a little different looking at those proposals and negotiating that contract then the previous time.

#### **5. Project Updates**

**I-49 ICC** - Mr. Rogers said the biggest thing they would like to emphasize is that they are on track and they're still on schedule to what was presented in June 2024. Probably the biggest thing about this is that the draft alternatives chapter and a draft introductory chapter have been submitted to DOTD and FHWA. They have been reviewing those and have asked for comments back from Stantec and Providence for some clarification on some things on there. Those answers have gone back and forth between them. DOTD and FHWA are hoping to hold a meeting to discuss some of the cultural and Section 4(f) things at the end of this month. Mr. Rogers said that again, they're still on track for the timeline that was outlined.

**I-69** - Mr. Rogers said the Port received a RAISE Grant. This was an application grant that they went after to bridge that gap after COVID. That grant was a little more than \$22.5M. It brings their total funding for the Service Road Project up to \$81 million. The Port and DOTD are working with federal highways on how that grant agreement will work out for that RAISE Grant. The city went through that with the Medical Corridor Grant also, so they'll be going through that same process. Mr. Rogers said they have a contract and there's some right-of-way surveying and some environmental updating going on currently so they're moving forward with that.

He directed them to the map that's up in the top right-hand corner of the I-69 slide. Mr. Rogers stated that that was some of the truck traffic analysis that they'd done with the Port while looking at this project. That is all truck traffic coming into and out of the Port and mapping it to its final destinations. They use the Streetlight data they have that tracks actual vehicles through there using GPS transponders and cell phone activity and whatnot. There's a clear corridor. If you look, the far corner is Memphis, the bottom corner down is Houston and there's a clear need for I-69 to be completed through the area to help with that truck traffic.

**I-20 Rehab Project** - Mr. Rogers said they have moved into Phase 3 of the project, the final phase. Old Minden and Industrial Drive interchanges should reopen around the March-April timeframe. Estimated completion of the project is late this year 2025 or early next year 2026. He's driven on some of that new pavement and it's pretty nice. It will definitely be nice when the entire thing is completed.

**Jimmie Davis Bridge** - Mr. Rogers said it's moving along quite well. He knows the parkways have been closed off a couple of times these past few weeks while they're moving around equipment. The construction of the temporary trestle bridge is nearly complete, and the estimated completion date of the new bridge is early 2027.

**Youree Drive Overlay (LA 1)** - Mr. Rogers said now for a nice, little, new update that he knows a lot of people in Shreveport are interested in. The DOTD District office got some additional funding this year and \$3.8 million of that was dedicated to the Youree Drive Overlay project. It will go from Southfield Road to Stoner Avenue, three miles. He knows they've started working on that project and people have been curious about some of the delays, but in the end with the I-20 project it will be well worth it once it's completed. Estimated completion is end of June this year.

Mr. North stated June 30, 2025. He said that they've been having some problems with the patching on this project. When they start a patch, they find utilities that are disconnected and still there. It's the product of being in an urban environment, but the contractor is moving on it.

Mr. Rogers said that now they were going to jump back to item three on the agenda.

***Mr. Rogers also asked to let the record reflect that Mr. Blanton has arrived.***

### **3. SS4A Regional Safety Plan - ATG - 2025 Annual Safety Performance Measures Report (Adoption)**

Mr. Rogers said the first part of this he'd like to cover is the Performance Measures/Target Setting Report. This is an annual effort that they're required to make through Federal Highways and the current legislation for that defining performance measures for the area. They introduced this at the previous meeting. It looks at the targets and there's a couple of different categories including Fatal accidents, Suspected Serious Injuries (SSI), Non-motorized Fatalities plus Suspected Serious Injuries (SSI), and Fatality Rate (per 100M VMT-vehicle miles travelled). In the past we've tracked these along with the DOTD measures. This performance measure is a rolling five year average. The recommendation at this point is a one percent decrease. They hope to achieve a one percent decrease in that rolling five year average overtime.

Mr. Rogers was going to make some personal comments on this now for this part in should we adopt the Regional Safety SS4A Plan. This number in the future will need to change. This year we're good, but as we begin to implement the Safe Streets Plan, in order to truly achieve those goals for the Safe Street Plan, these numbers will also have to change. Basically, continuing to follow the DOTD recommended and statewide numbers of one percent, one percent, one percent and he thinks a couple of years ago it was a one point five percent or something to that extent, but it hasn't been much. To ultimately achieve those goals of the Safe Streets Plan, an

implementation of those projects, that one percent should change and hopefully bring down those numbers for our region in particular. We did put that out for public comments, but we didn't receive any back.

Mr. Petro said that it is just a reminder to the committee that this is an amendment to their Long-Range Transportation Plan not their Transportation Improvement Plan. They amend this every year. He wanted to echo what Mr. Rogers was saying in that when you consider the Safe Streets For All Plan, that will have a tremendous impact on these numbers and help drive them down in the future and hopefully get to the point where they don't have any deaths on highways. Mr. Petro said that that's what they're striving for, and he knows it's a very difficult goal to achieve, but they have to set that bar pretty high with no death because every death is very important. So, when you consider the Safe Streets For All Plan, that will allow them to go after implementation grants not only for infrastructure, but for behavioral issues. Dr. Barrett will have some guests speak on this and give some compelling comments concerning this. The behavioral side is also very critical not just infrastructure. They would be able to obtain implementation grants to help fund improvements in both areas. That's why these performance targets are so important to help keep us on track and give them an idea of how they're doing as a region and state.

Mrs. Bryant asked if there were any further questions. Having none, Mrs. Bryant entertained a motion to Approve the Adoption of the 2025 Annual Safety Performance Measures Report. Mr. Clarke motioned, and Mayor Chandler seconded. Mrs. Bryant called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

### **SS4A Regional Safety Plan - ATG - Northwest Louisiana Safe Streets For All Regional Safety Action Plan (Adoption)**

Mr. Rogers stated that he was going to have Mrs. Soll from ATG come up to give her presentation. Following that they received a few comments from the Safety Coalition and afterwards Mr. Rogers himself had some personal comments he liked to make.

Mrs. Soll thanked the board for inviting her back to talk about the Safe Streets For All Regional Safety Plan and said that hopefully this will be the last time they'll see her for a while. She said that this plan was prepared by a consultant team, with ATG being the prime consultant. Other consultants include Volkert, and a couple of them were there today, as well as Bonton Associates and Halff. Mrs. Soll was going to run through a couple of items in the presentation really quickly since she's already given them briefs on it. ***(Please see Mrs. Soll's attached presentation below.)***

Mr. Rogers said that next they had Dr. Barrett who is an NLCOG staff member that covers the Regional Transportation Safety Coalition. That coalition consists of members of the police, fire, 911, emergency services, and basically all those related entities. Mr. Rogers said they had a few guests from her coalition that would like to make some comments, but he was going to turn it to Dr. Barrett at this point. He said that a lot of what the Safety Coalition does is that non-infrastructure side of the Safe Streets Program.

Dr. Barrett said that in August of 2015, almost ten years ago now, Mr. Rogers called and said he had this new position, not sure what she would be doing, but there are nine of them in the state now so make it your own. Make it work for northwest Louisiana. Dr. Barrett said that it has been her pleasure to facilitate, partner with, and create all kinds of educational programs. Mr. Rogers had asked her to pick a few that are kind of summed up of what they've done. She did from the earliest to the most recent. One of the earliest things they did was partner with Think First and Caddo Sheriff's Department for a middle school education program that they brought through all the Caddo Parish middle schools. They were selected as one of four locations in the United States by the Preusser Research Group and that was an FHWA Grant, and a lot of fun! Dr. Barrett said they had Mr. Fletcher from Think First here today and they've done a lot over the years. At one point, T. W. Starr interviewed her, and

she said on camera that if they had roadway concerns just to let her know she would take care of it for them. That started a lot of phone calls and a lot of situations making her wish she hadn't said that, but it has been fun figuring out who owns the road, learning about the parish and city engineers, and what they can do, Mr. North's team with DOTD, and Mr. Jim Hollier, they're just wonderful. Dr. Barrett said that she'll give Brandon a lot of locations, a lot in Webster Parish, and law enforcement will text her and say they've had a lot of crashes there, they're not fatal or serious, but they're hydroplaning and what can we do about this. Just making those connections and being that middleman. They created a Travel Safely video that a lot of them were in a couple of years ago and put that out. They also partnered with DIGIVision Media and had digital billboards for about a year. They had around thirty-six hours of six second plays for a long period of time. Dr. Barrett said they have facilitated video contests for colleges and high schools, and they've had a couple of winners in our area. Most recently, Plain Dealing High School just won twenty-five hundred dollars for a statewide video contest for Distracted Driving. Operation Clear Track, Mrs. Buchanan was just in there a minute ago, she had asked the state police if they wanted to do this law enforcement detail, mostly because she wanted to ride a train, and they said yes. They've done this for a couple of years now and it's an education for the citizens, "don't go under when the lights are flashing". Dr. Barrett said that the most recent thing they were honored by was that the state police issued a Leaders in Law Enforcement application and won forty thousand dollars for the troop, and they featured the Safety Coalition as someone that has been helpful to the community. That's just a few things that they've done overtime that have been exciting and fun, and she looks forward to another ten years if Mr. Kent will keep her.

**Lieutenant Frank Kuba** said "Good Morning" to the board and stated he is the Executive Officer at Troop G in Bossier. He just wanted to make a few brief comments. Lt. Kuba said they started a DWI project in 2019, and it was under Lt. Barry Spinney. Lt. Spinney reached out to Dr. Barrett at NLCOG to purchase a multi-use trailer. Their intent for that was to have something they could house at the troop to put their supplies in so other agencies could come and hook up to this trailer, take it to their safety initiative, fairs, DWI check points, and things of that nature. It's been very beneficial, not just to them, but to the community. They really appreciate it, and it's had a huge impact on the community. Lt. Kuba said that he just wanted to say thank you for that.

**Mr. Ronald "Bubba" Fletcher, Executive Director of Think First**, was next to comment. Mr. Fletcher introduced himself and stated that Think First is an injury prevention non-profit that's been here for almost thirty years. A lot of people still haven't heard of them so that's why it's so important to have partnerships like they do with the Safety Coalition. It opens them up to other opportunities for other partnerships in the community. Recently, they were able to fit over fifty children and teenagers with bicycle helmets. A lot of things that aren't thought of, especially through the holiday season when there are a lot of bicycles, scooters, skateboards and everything else. Usually, helmets aren't even considered when buying those things. Fortunately, they're able to get out in their community with their partnerships, and like he said before, they were able to fit over fifty children and teenagers with helmets and also provided them with bicycle lights to put on their bicycles if they're going to be riding at dusk or dawn in situations. Mr. Fletcher said that the thing is with these partnerships, so many times they don't get to see the lives that they save. Unfortunately, they get to see all the unfortunate outcomes. They see deaths and severe injuries. Through this partnership they're able to multiply the lives that they're saving and they're truly doing that here in their community. Mr. Fletcher wanted to thank Dr. Barrett, NLCOG and everyone for that opportunity.

**Sargent DJ Belanger, Shreveport Police Department** was next to comment. Sgt. Belanger said "Good Morning" to everyone. He said that Dr. Barrett asked him to come this morning to speak briefly about some of the things they're doing in the DWI unit. It's his understanding that Dr. Barrett has helped to secure funding to help out with their program, particularly to pay off-duty paramedics and firefighters to conduct blood drawings in regard to impaired driving. Sgt. Belanger said that when they target and arrest drunken drivers, there's two ways they can chemically test for intoxication and that's through breath and blood. Breath is obviously the easiest and less invasive, but it requires consent. With blood, they can take it without consent via a warrant, and it can also tell

them if they have other agents on board as far as drugs and give them a more accurate result. Their ultimate goal in doing the blood draws is to reduce habitual drunken drivers. You have individuals out there that consistently get arrested, and they refuse over and over again. This helps ensure quality prosecution. They can bring good cases and hopefully get these people off the roadway. If anyone had any questions, he'd be happy to answer them. Sgt. Belanger wanted to thank Dr. Barrett for inviting him to speak today.

Dr. Barrett said that these are just a few of the partnerships they have throughout the community and it's a pleasure to provide that education. Like Mr. Fletcher said it's to multiply the good things that are happening and through NLCOG's participation with the Safety Coalition, they're able to do those things.

Mrs. Bryant said "thank you" to all of them and to Mr. Rogers for all that they're doing to keep the citizens safe and educated.

Mr. Rogers said they've heard a lot of things from the infrastructure side about how and why they do this. He knows that they initially told them when they got the grant and what a lot of it was. To be able to do the infrastructure side you have to have the plan. You have to have a plan in place, we put a plan in place and developed that plan. Part of the real reason we do this: in 2022 thirty-nine thousand fatalities across the United States, more than 1.6 million serious injuries due to crashes. In Louisiana, there were eight hundred thirty-two fatal crashes during that time frame. Within our region, there were eighty-four fatalities on our roadways. Four thousand two hundred eighty-six injuries across the region.

*Mr. Rogers wanted to tell them why he does this. His daughter. She passed away in a serious car accident. "If we're able to implement **ONE** of these projects and save **ONE** life, then it's all worth it." He knows that we all have experienced issues in our lives, crashes and accidents at some point in time. Mr. Rogers said he's sure members of your family have been involved in accidents and whatnot, but it truly is a tragedy when that happens. "Again, if there's any way that they are able to implement just **ONE** project and save **ONE** life," to him, "that makes it all worthwhile."*

Mr. Rogers asked if they had any questions or comments and said he'd be happy to answer and if they had any questions on the plan Mrs. Soll would be happy to answer.

Mrs. Bryant thanked Mr. Rogers and said they do recognize the personal tragedy that he's experienced in relation to this, and they truly understand why it's necessary to keep the citizens safe and why they would hate for anyone to lose their life. If there's anything they can do they'd like to help.

Mr. Rogers said, "thank you."

Mrs. Askew-Brown had one general question. "For the implementation plan, where does that grant come from? Does it come from the place as the SS4A?"

Mrs. Soll said "yes", she thinks they were very successful in making that connection. "This region has already done a lot of great work with the educational and non-infrastructure side so this implementation grant will allow for more of that as well as infrastructure projects." The program, as it currently exists, is this SS4A Implementation Grant. She believes the next application cycle or notice of finding opportunity would open up some time in March. They will continue at least four or the remaining couple of years that are left on the cycle. Now that the projects have been developed, it could also be available for additional funding sources. Whether those be other discretionary grant sources or formula funds that they already have through their MTP and TIP process. But the answer is "yes". The intention is that those projects in that appendix, you could apply for any group of them in the implementation grant under the same program. It still does require a twenty percent match which will probably be the determining factor on which ones you go for.

Mr. Rogers said that they needed approval for the adoption of the SS4A and it would also be the approval for the Vision Zero Statement.

Mrs. Bryant asked if there were any further questions. Having none, Mrs. Bryant entertained a motion to Approve the NLCOG Safe Streets For All Regional Safety Action Plan adoption and the Vision Zero Statement. Mr. Arceneaux motioned, and Mrs. Askew-Brown seconded. Mrs. Bryant called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

## **Announcements**

Mr. Rogers said that the next regular scheduled MPO meeting is on Friday, March 21, 2025, in the Government Chambers. In the meantime, several already know, he will be travelling to D.C. the week before that with all the state and I-69 group to meet with their delegation and to also meet with Federal Highways and the administration on the corridor as a whole. Hopefully to get some push from them. One of the things he is going to ask is for Texas to step up to the plate and start the environmental process for that joint section between Louisiana and Texas. But also, to continue to push for the projects, the corridor in our region.

## **Adjourn**

With no remaining agenda items, Mrs. Bryant entertained a motion to adjourn. Mayor Arceneaux motioned, and Mr. Clarke seconded, and the meeting was adjourned.



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J. Kent Rogers, Secretary





