



625 Texas Street, Suite 200 | Shreveport, LA 71101
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Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Policy Committee

MINUTES

**Friday, October 27, 2023 (9:00 AM) NLCOG
NLCOG**

625 Texas Street, Suite 200
Shreveport, LA 71101

Members Present

Mr. Alan Clarke – MPC City of Shreveport
Mr. Bruce Blanton – Webster Parish
Mayor Tommy Chandler – City of Bossier City
Mr. Butch Ford – Bossier Parish
Mr. David North – LaDOTD District 04
Mr. Michael Norton – DeSoto Parish
Mayor Tom Arceneaux – City of Shreveport
Mr. Dinero' Washington – SporTran

Members Absent

Mrs. Carlotta Askew-Brown – MPC City of Bossier City
Ms. Erica Bryant – Caddo Parish
Mr. Eric England – Port of Caddo-Bossier

Others Present

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

Call to Order

Mr. Clarke called the meeting to order. He stated that we generally have an invocation, roll call and a pledge at the beginning of the meeting. Mr. Clarke said that he was going to ask Mr. Norton to lead us in prayer and Mr. Blanton to lead us in the pledge. He asked if those that cared to join them to please stand. Mr. Norton began the invocation followed by Mr. Blanton leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Clarke asked Mr. Rogers to begin a roll call. Mr. Rogers began the roll call. A quorum was present.

Public Comments

Mr. Clarke stated they had two public comments and reminded them of the three-minute time frame for each comment.

Mr. Perkins was the first to comment. He stated that for Allendale Strong, they had a great experience at the October 17th meeting, and he wanted to thank them for hosting it. Mr. Perkins said that if they've learned anything in these past twelve years, it's that the post World War II America got really great at building highways, but we lost our ability and they're soaking in it here in Shreveport at building really great places. The highways are great at connecting places, but they don't connect us to one another. He said he's sorry to say it, but he's still going to be coming around NLCOG meetings as long as he's in Shreveport. Mr. Perkins said they're focusing now on their grocery co-op, which they haven't had the energy to work on as hard as they will now since they're on somewhat of a hiatus. He said they also hear their neighbors concerns in Allendale when you're talking about building something they don't want and why you won't repair the streets, particularly Ford Street. Mr. Perkins said they did enjoy Mr. North's commentary that the state won't fix Ford Street until the city fixes the pipes underground which is causing it to decay. He drove in on it this morning and it's not getting better. He stated they are also continuing their housing initiative with blight abatement. They figure they'll get a break from C100 who redlined the new houses they were building, maybe six or seven years ago, so they're hoping they can start building new homes and putting first time homeowners, and working core people in houses that they own. Mr. Perkins said they still want the real business boulevard to create job opportunities and business opportunities for residents through Allendale. He said in the next Allendale Strong meeting, and they're all invited, Dorothy Wiler, their founder and president, participated in the Vision Zero Conference that was held in New York City by jumping in on Zoom. He's looking forward to an update on Vision Zero especially after having another teenager die of a pedestrian death on North Market.

Mr. Patrick Harrison was the next to comment. He stated that he wanted to do something important and something different from what he normally does. He wanted to thank them all for the meeting and the public hearing that they all had on the 17th. Mr. Harrison said it was very well ran, professionally done, and he thought it had an excellent turnout for those types of events. He wanted to give kudos to NLCOG, DOTD, and Federal Highways for doing what they've asked to speed the process up to move forward and get some closure to it. Mr. Harrison said he's looking forward to a decision, hopefully after the first of the year, and they can all move on from this. He wanted to thank them all for staying on top of it because they'd done a good job. He said kudos to Mr. Rogers for working with Providence to get it done so quickly. He knows that was a challenge to put all that together and do all the work for 3A. He appreciates it.

Business

1. Approval of Minutes

The next item on the agenda was for approval of the minutes of the September 15, 2023, meeting. Mr. Norton motioned, and Mr. Washington seconded to approve the minutes as provided. Mr. Clarke called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

2. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Approval of TIP Amendments and Update

Mr. Rogers stated the next item on the agenda was the TIP amendments and they had a couple of different series of things, and he was going to use the slides to show them. He said that there were two different series of amendments. The first deals with the I-69 Service Road Project. Mr. Rogers stated that when they initially put the project in the TIP, technically there's three different projects the state's handling all the ingenuity and components of it, they're advertising them all as one project one contract, but technically three projects. When they initially put it in the TIP, they used the funding levels they had and the best guessed estimates at the time to spread out among the different categories. Mr. Rogers said that they've gotten some better estimates for several of the categories, and they also have, as they'll see in a minute, there's an engineering contract on the street right now. DOTD is reviewing that contract now and they've received several responses back and they're reviewing those now. For them to finally award that contract, they needed to add the engineering line for the three different phases, but appropriate amounts for those three different phases in there. That's basically what this series of amendments is for and what the I-69 Service Project does. It splits out that money they knew they had into better guessed estimates, but actually the amount is for the engineering line are appropriate and this also lines that contract to get awarded within the next few months. Mr. Rogers pointed to the slides to show them that it's Stonewall Frierson, and Ellerbe Rd to LA 1. The total project is broken down on the last page of what the total project cost was across the lines for what they had. They will in the future have to come back with a few more amendments to this as they line up full funding for the construction phase and as they get those better estimates down the line for each phase.

Mr. Rogers said the second set of amendments deals with, roughly about every four years, in accordance with their long-range plan, they do a transfer of funds to SporTran to help with the purchase of buses and to help keep their buses as better air quality that goes in line with their TAMP Plan. The first phase of this there's an amendment for moving the funds from STBG and an amendment to accepting the funds to the Transit spot. Mr. Rogers said these are all for introduction so there will be a public comment period. The final adoption of these will be at the next meeting, but we do need a motion to approve for public comment.

Mr. Norton had a couple of questions for Mr. England and Mr. North, but neither of them were present. He stated that regarding the MPO MEGA Projects, specifically the Service Road Projects for the Stonewall Frierson exits, they had entered a CEA with the Port Commission. He wasn't sure if it was just the Port Commission or not because this was done prior to his administration.

Mr. Rogers stated that there was an overall agreement between the Port, NLCOG, MPO, Caddo Parish.

Mr. Comeaux, Director of Operations for the Port Commission, said that the CEA that they're talking about is just Desoto, Caddo, the Port, and NLCOG.

Mr. Norton stated that they're participating in a Right Sizing Program with Mr. North at DOTD regarding swapping the Stonewall Frierson Road for them to get this project with another road and he wanted to get an update on where they are with that swap. In addition, does that swap have to occur before they can do anything on the Stonewall Frierson because he's getting a lot of calls from constituents about repairing that road and that's going to be substantial dollars out of local pockets. Mr. Norton said that in addition to CEA for additional funding of half a million dollars, he believes, from the local jurisdiction beyond of what they originally put in there, is that going to be an ask because they have additional funding that's going to be required due to Covid increases. He said he was trying to get everything together for his board because they're going to be asking him these questions.

Mr. Comeaux said he could answer him the best he could.

Mr. Rogers asked for the record to show that Mr. North was present.

Mr. Comeaux stated that he could answer the best right now. He said that right now they're not going to ask for that half a million dollars. What Mr. Rogers is putting forward for them right now is the TIP for them to be able to award the contract because the TIP currently does not reflect the appropriate amounts, and in order to award the contract, from DOTD's perspective, they have to have the proper amount of engineering contract amounts within that TIP. Mr. Comeaux said that after that, future amendments will probably be needed for the TIP because construction costs have increased. Those dollars from the board will not be requested until such time that they have to come up with their match dollars for construction. In other words, when they're ready to go to bid. Mr. Comeaux stated the engineering aspect of it all is going to cost around eight to nine hundred dollars, depending on how much cash that is, to afford the entire project. That money will be distributed based on the money in the pot from the CEA that they talked about. After that, the other funds that are going to be remaining will be given out when construction is needed. The additional funds they were alluded to are within the CEA. It's five hundred thousand from each entity which includes the Port, the MPO, and Caddo. Those funds will probably be needed during the construction and advertising phase. They will pay DOTD, out of the coffers of that CEA, during that construction phasing period. Mr. Comeaux said that will be an additional ask at a later date. He said that they will make sure that during their budgetary processes that they know that it's coming. But that's not going to be this year, obviously, next year either. Maybe next years 2025 budget.

Mr. Norton said that he noticed the contract said an estimated 2026 before they started construction on it, but he just wanted to get clarification on it. He said that goes back to his other question about the Right Sizing they have with DOTD, the Port gets Stonewall Frierson, they take 3015. Mr. Norton said that he and Mr. North can talk about it afterwards, but he just wanted to ask where they were on that.

Mr. Washington wanted to say that he knew he wouldn't be there for the final adoption, he'll be out due to surgery, but he wanted to make note that the transfer of funds their requesting for the buses, the purchase of five thirty-five-foot CNG buses. With that being said, in probably about two years receiving those buses, over the next three years they'll have about forty buses that they'll use for life. That's the reason they're requesting this two point five million dollars. They're having a hard time getting buses this day in time. Eighteen to twenty-four months is the timeframe for getting one.

Mr. Ford asked if CNG was working good for them, and Mr. Washington said they are wonderful. Barrett Electrical is still questionable, but what they're asking about for these vehicles CNG is wonderful and going very well.

Mr. Clarke asked if there were any further questions. Having none, Mr. Clarke entertained a motion for the Approval of Amendments and Update for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Mr. Ford motioned, and Mr. Norton seconded. Mr. Clarke called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

Project Updates

1. I-49 Inner City Connector – Update on Public Meeting

Mr. Rogers said to give them an update on I-49 he had a couple of quick things. They had some numbers for attendance and comments to date, and the comments to date were as Tuesday he believes. In attendance, those that signed in were two hundred and one, twenty-five elected or government officials and twenty additional team members. That's a two hundred and fifty range. They do know about ten to fifteen that were present, but didn't sign in. For written comments, they received one hundred thirty-six at the meeting, twenty-six online, one that was verbal at the meeting, and eighteen that were provided to them at the meeting. Mr. Rogers said that from those the consensus to date the general theme of the comments are supportive of Alternatives 1, 3-A, and 5. An overall general census of just get something done. Comments are due by tomorrow morning he believes. Mr. Rogers said that if you go to the I-49 website they have developed a virtual meeting room where you can go through the different Alternatives. It has a video that plays an introduction, a similar video that was shown at the meeting. As you move down the hallway you enter what they call the virtual room. The first page that pops up is Alternative 3A since that was the newer information that was provided, but you can also pan around the room and see each of the different alternatives with different boards that were on display within the meeting room. They have the Constraint boards, the Build Alternative boards and just everything about the project you can find there. And again, there's an area there where you can sign up and leave comments. Mr. Rogers stated that as they get additional comments back and numbers back, they'll update them as they get them in. The next step for the project is they'll take the comments received, address the appropriately, provide that information back to DOTD, Federal Highways, and the other federal partners. They'll review them, comment on them and from there select a preferred and present that back to them as a preferred and move on from there. They're hoping in conversations with DOTD and the team, they're hoping to have a draft EA ready sometime in the March timeframe. That draft EA will identify the preferred alternative. Mr. Rogers said that's where they are to date and asked if anyone had any questions and was very appreciative of everyone showing up at the public meeting. He felt they had a great turnout and response.

2. I-69 SIU 15 Frontage Road Update

Mr. Rogers stated the next update is the Frontage Road project and again, as mentioned earlier, DOTD does have a contract on the street for engineering services. They started the review and evaluation of those yesterday. They received seven proposals he believes, so they'll be reviewing those over the next several weeks and making a selection from those and start the process to initiate that final contract with them. Again, they can't award that final contract until that final TIP approval comes through.

Mr. Petro said to add to that, the engineering contract is for all three of those sections, the entire corridor.

Mr. Ford wanted to verify that the budget is six million and a few of the board members replied five point nine million. Mr. Rogers said the match is coming from a combination of their pot, the state, and the CEA.

Mr. Comeaux said that they are going to cut the check to them once they negotiate the actual final contract price. Once they negotiate that then they'll know what their match money checks needs to be, and they'll cut that check to them.

Mr. Ford asked who was selecting the final proposal and the group answered that DOTD has to. Mr. Rogers stated that all the contracting has to go through DOTD.

Mr. Comeaux said that they've said this before, but those three contracts will run independent of each other and if one is slower than the other then they are going to let that construction out prior to the others just to get it built as quickly as possible.

Announcements

Mr. Clarke asked if there were any announcements at this time. Mr. Rogers stated that he did.

Mr. Rogers stated that the only announcement he had was the next regularly scheduled MPO meeting is on Friday, December 8, 2023.

Adjourn

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Kent Rogers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

J. Kent Rogers, Secretary

PUBLIC COMMENT CARD

All cards must be returned to the Chair prior to the start of the meeting. Comments will not be accepted during the meeting. You will be called upon at the appropriate time to speak.

Please print:

Date: 10-27-23

Name: John Perking

Address: on file

E-mail: _____

Phone: () _____

I am representing: myself business organization

Name of business / organization: Attendale Strong

Comment on: Agenda item Non-agenda item

Briefly describe your comment(s):

I-49

As a reminder, public comment is limited to three (3) minutes per speaker.

Comments relative to any issues that are in active litigation will not be heard in this meeting.

Speakers are to address the Chairman, not each other or the audience, and are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.

The use of abusive or profane language shall not be allowed. No debate or argument between speakers and/or members of the audience shall be permitted.

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Please print:

Date: 10-27-23

Name: Frederic Harrison (Harrison)

Address: P.O. Box 4216

E-mail: fharrison@svcsteel.com

Phone: (318) 218-9008

I am representing: myself business organization

Name of business / organization: C/00 - Service Steel

Comment on: Agenda item Non-agenda item

Briefly describe your comment(s):

I 49 ILL

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