



625 Texas Street, Suite 200 | Shreveport, LA 71101
318.841.5950 | F 318.841.5952 | www.nlcog.org

Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Policy Committee

MINUTES

**Friday, December 8, 2023 (9:00 AM) NLCOG
NLCOG**

625 Texas Street, Suite 200
Shreveport, LA 71101

Members Present

Mr. Alan Clarke – MPC City of Shreveport
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
Ms. Erica Bryant – Caddo Parish
Mr. Eric England – Port of Caddo-Bossier

Members Absent

Mayor Tommy Chandler – City of Bossier City
Mrs. Carlotta Askew-Brown – MPC City of Bossier City
Mr. Bruce Blanton – Webster Parish
Mr. Dinero' Washington – SporTran

Others Present

Mr. Kent Rogers – NLCOG
Mr. Chris Petro – NLCOG
Ms. Savannah Williams – NLCOG
Ms. Heidi Stewart – 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 Mayor Arceneaux to lead us in prayer and Mr. Norton to lead us in the pledge. He asked if those that cared to join them to please stand. Mayor Arceneaux began the invocation followed by Mr. Norton 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 one public comment, Mr. Perkins, then reminded him of the three-minute time frame for his comment.

Mr. Perkins thanked the board and stated he was with the Fifty-Eight Hundred Friends of Allendale Strong. He said they are excited to get to an outcome with this I-49 project so that they could move forward. Mr. Perkins stated that in mean time they are going to move forward with items that do apply like Ford Street. They're working on getting Ford Street repaired because that's one of the main things they hear about on the Fifty-Eight Hundred Friends page is that why can't we fix the bad before we add new highways. Mr. Perkins said that he thought he understood that Mr. North said they're waiting for the City of Shreveport to fix the pipes underneath. He said they haven't heard from the City of Shreveport so look to begin advocating for that with marches down Ford Street. Mr. Perkins stated that they're also going to beat their friends to the punch and open a grocery store/food co-op and they've been working on the food co-op initiative, so they hope to get that going this year. They are looking to replace the children's playground equipment at Swepeco Park that was removed during Mayor Tyler's administration when they were trying to make it not a park so it would be legal to build a highway through there. Mr. Perkins said the problem of course, is that it's a nationally recognized historic site because it's a Civil War fort inmates there in Swepeco Park. They're going to return it to the park status. He stated they're working with planners and landscape architects. He's looking forward to those three projects this year.

Business

1. Approval of Minutes

The next item on the agenda was for approval of the minutes of the October 27, 2023, meeting. Mr. England motioned, and Mayor Arceneaux 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 they had a couple of items for approval on the TIP. The first of those is actually an administrative modification for the Linwood Avenue Reconstruction Phase III project. Mr. Rogers said that the request that's made is basically to move it from FFY 23 to FFY 24. He said the state had hoped to get it out prior to the October 30th deadline but didn't quite make it so it's getting pushed to FFY 24. The current estimate with CE&I's is roughly seven million dollars, which is what they had budgeted.

Mr. Rogers said the second, which is listed in two spots, is the transfer of funds from the STBG program to the Transit program. The total transfer of three point two five million dollars is for the purchase of thirty-five-foot CNG buses. Mr. Rogers stated that this is something they have in their long-range plan and do roughly every five to six years, which is to transfer a small amount of money from the highway side to the transit side to help with the bus work. He said that that's why you'll see it listed twice. Once in the STBG>200k program then again going into the Transit program for those funds.

Mr. Rogers said the last is the series of amendments that were introduced last time dealing with the I-69 Service Road projects detailing those funds across the various different phases. He stated that again, when they introduced this at the last meeting, he had explained that they had initially taken it for the three different phases or sections of the project and just took best guess estimates and spread the money across. Now that they have better estimates it's putting those better estimates into those categories and also getting that engineering phase approved because they'll be announcing an award for that engineering phase. Those were advertised and put out for public comment, and we received no public comment.

Mr. Petro asked if he could add something to that. He said concerning the highway to transit transfer, that will allow Mr. Washington to meet his performance targets and reduce average the life of those buses and still maintain a good environmental, CNG type bus purchases procurement. It will go a long way to helping Mr. Washington meet those targets he's required to do.

Mr. Rogers stated that he thought Mr. Washington had stated that it has taken the bus manufacturers now roughly two years to get a bus. Hopefully at the January meeting there will be another amendment introduced from the state side for use of some CMAQ funds to transfer to him to get the remaining buses upgraded.

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), Mayor Arceneaux motioned, and Mr. England seconded. Mr. Clarke called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

3. Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) – Carbon Reduction Program Project Selection

Mr. Rogers stated the next item on the agenda was the introduction of the Carbon Reduction Program funding phase. It's a project selection process that they're required to have. He said a brief background, the MPO, as an area over two hundred thousand, they now receive three different pots of what they call attributable funds. The STBG Program, Transportational Alternative Program, which is the enhancement type projects that they do, and now also a Carbon Reduction Program funding. Mr. Rogers said that for each of those categories they have to develop a specific project selection process. Those processes have to follow after the state's submission of their selection procedures, the MPO's of over two hundred thousand in population have to submit theirs, the state submits theirs roughly last month he believes, so we've developed ours for our funds.

Mr. Petro said that Mr. Rogers explained it beautifully! He stated that like Mr. Rogers saying, the staff has gone ahead and created this draft for the introduction of the Carbon Reduction Program. In order to continue to receive federal funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act, what came from that was a new programmatic funding mechanism for state DOT's and MPO's over two hundred thousand in population, which we are one of them. We are required to rationally develop, it's contingent on receiving this funding, that we have to rationally develop a project selection process. Each entity has to do this to continue to receive funding and right now we are currently receiving nine hundred fifty-one thousand dollars per year. We have banked two point four million dollars after this last portion for 2024. Mr. Petro explained that when they're doing their research and trying to come up with a project selection process for Carbon Reduction, there really wasn't anything out on the internet to kind of give them

a template to go by so they had to start from scratch in doing this process. This is from a brand-new program that was promulgated he believes last year. Mr. Petro said they relied upon their existing STBG project selection process that the MPO had already approved, just to use that structure and then tweaked it so that it would meet the requirements of the Carbon Reduction Program.

The basic outline of their project selection process is shown in the draft document that they've created. They start with a project call to their local entities that participate in the MPO, which is usually done every four years like they do with the STBG Program, but since this is a new program, once they get the process selected and approved, they're going to start asking the local entities to start submitting eligible projects. Mr. Petro stated that once they get the project call and they give the entities forty-five days to submit a project, the projects will come in to NLCOG and they want to use the format of the Stage 0 process which the staff is well aware of how to complete those state zero documents, the scope and budget, the environmental check list, which is a very common thing that the staff is aware of or the consulting engineer that's working for them is aware of fulfilling. Our staff here internally will receive those project submissions after the forty-five-day period and check to make sure they're consistent with the long-range plan and that they're eligible under the Carbon Reduction Program. After that, they'll go ahead and prioritize, rank, or score those projects they've received. Once the staff has done that, they'll send it to their Technical Committee members. Those members will review it, discuss it, ask any questions, then come to a consensus as to a technical committee is concerned and provide that prioritized list, recommendation to approve the projects on the list with the funding, then it will be brought to the MPO who will ultimately make the final decision.

Mr. Petro wanted to give a brief description of how the project scoring is categorized. He stated that the primary thing they're looking at is obvious and the function of this program is to reduce carbon dioxide in the MPO area. Basically, fifty percent of the score will be devoted to how much CO₂ is being reduced in metric tons by the project that is being proposed by the local entity. There are ways to calculate those metric tons and wanted to provide an example. Let's say you have a project to replace high pressure sodium streetlights with LED streetlights. There's an analysis and study out there that can tell you how many metric tons that would reduce over a year by the number of streetlamps you plan to replace. So, there's ways to calculate the benefit of that project in metric tons. The cost of that CO₂, there's national recognized standards of what the cost would be like in 2027. You would get that then walk it back to present value with the discount rate of three percent, that gives you your benefit, then you match it, and you have rough cost benefit analysis when you match that up against the cost of the overall project. Mr. Petro said it's a pretty straight forward process. That's fifty percent of the score. They also felt that the geographic impact of the project itself plays a factor in all this. He said let's say that Mr. Washington wanted to replace three of his buses with electric buses. That's a zero-carbon dioxide source when it's an electric bus. As far as the scope is concerned, as opposed to replacing his entire fleet with electric buses, the three-bus replacement would just be a corridor level analysis or scope while a full fleet of buses would be an entire region of scope for the project that's proposed. We also take into account if the project is going to be located in an environmental justice zone. If it's low income or a high minority population within a census track, then they get bonus points for that. That's also part of the scoring to take in those types of issues that are important. Mr. Petro said the last twenty-five percent of the score will be devoted to local project support. The minimum local support for each project is twenty percent. If an entity wants to put in twenty-five percent local support for the project they're proposing, it gets a bump in the scoring as far as the eyes of the MPO staff are concerned. If they want to give thirty percent, that gets the highest level. That's basically how the scoring is calculated and how they rank it internally.

Mr. Petro stated the fun stuff is getting these projects out and getting them implemented. Currently the

state is saying since we already have a M.A.P. patrol contract up in northwest Louisiana, we can take the money that was previously devoted to the STBG>200k funds (Urban Attributable Funding) and use it for the Carbon Reduction Program because it's eligible for that. Mr. Petro said that our contract that we do at DOTD for the M.A.P. patrol up here is now being funded out of the Carbon Reduction Program at five hundred ten thousand dollars annually. That's one that's already being utilized so it freed up that much in the STBG funding pot. We definitely went ahead and pursued that option. Mr. Petro stated that some of the typical projects that local entities can submit involve deploying alternate fuel vehicles and diesel engine retrofits. Even if a school district wanted to change out to a more efficient, less emitting engine type, they would be eligible for this type of project. Replacing street lighting and traffic control devices with energy-efficient alternatives would qualify and obviously, public transportation projects qualify as well. Projects that reduce transportation emissions at the Port facilities qualify, and he's been speaking with Tyler about a project they have and may like to submit. It sounds beneficial and like it would fit as one of the projects.

Mr. Petro said the next steps involved the staff and the technical committee. They had all last month to develop and review the CRP-PSP Draft document. He said they a handful of them concur with the draft project selection process as it was written and said they were good with it and to introduce it to the policy committee, which is today. Mr. Petro said they'll obviously have a discussion and then it will go out for public comment and have to do a public engagement when it comes to something like an amendment for a long-range plan. We have to meet all of those requirements for public engagement then hopefully on the nineteenth they'll be able to address all the public comments and discuss it.

Mr. Petro wanted to make a very important comment. He said that this is one of those programs that really is a "quality of life" thing. It directly addresses environmental issues. This body here, there have been undertones in the community that we have only been interested in building highways and are automobile centric. He believes this goes a long way to alleviate and mitigate that perception of this body in particular. Mr. Petro said this shouldn't be taken lightly. We are addressing environmental issues directly.

The actual draft document is posted on the website if anyone would like to access it. It's on the transportation page on the NLCOG website. Mr. Rogers stated that this is an introduction for public comment. Technically it would be listed as an amendment to the long-range transportation plan as the selection procedures for that financial source.

Mr. Clarke asked if there were any further questions. Mr. Ford asked if these were going to be state projects or DOTD projects or are they going to do them locally. Mr. Petro said no, they are going to be done locally because this is your money. Mr. Rogers stated that it's similar to the Enhancement Program. Mr. Ford said that he's in an Enhancement Program now and it's taken five years. He asked if they were going to be in control of the funds and Mr. Rogers and Mr. Petro answered yes. Mr. Rogers said that they're working on similar procedures, a step back, but when they first introduced the Enhancement Program and the Attributable Funds for that program, they all elected DOTD to go forward with that process. The four TMA's, us and Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Lafayette have had discussions with DOTD, and they want to select their own projects and do that now versus them. They're working with them to do similar things before the Enhancement Program so they can try and speed that up too. Mr. Ford asked Mr. England if he had visits from a Carbon Capture Company and Mr. England said yes, he's had three companies visit him. Mayor Arceneaux also has had a visit. Mr. Ford said so there's some companies looking at this and this is a big issue on the Gulf Coast and now it's reached up here. Mr. Petro said to get back to Mr. Ford's question, that yes, they can hold their feet to the fire because they're in control. Mr. Ford said that's great news because if it was in Baton Rouge you'd just wait.

Mr. Clarke asked if there were any further questions. Mr. Clarke entertained a motion for the Approval of the Introduction for Public Comment to the Carbon Reduction Program Selection Process. Mr. England motioned, and Mayor Arceneaux 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 that following the public meeting and the input that was given from there, the next step was sending out Right of Entry letters for some of the additional properties along the 3A Alternative that needs to get more details on the cultural stuff. Those letters were to go out last week and they anticipate starting that work as early as December 18, 2023. It should take about three weeks if he remembers the timeframe correctly. Mr. Rogers said they're also working on finalizing the other chapters that go in with the Environmental Impact Study. They're still on track to have the draft EIS ready by March/April timeframe. At that point, there's two reviews that have to be submitted at federal level. One is to the legal sufficiency office. The other is to the civil rights office. The legal sufficiency is to make sure all I's are dotted and T's crossed correctly so it will hold up in court. The other is because a civil rights complaint has been made to the state on both of the I-49 projects so the Civil Rights Division would review it. Once those reviews are completed, which they estimate four to six weeks, that's when they can advertise it and put it out on the street. The benefit of that is that draft identifies that preferred alternative. Once it's out there's thirty days for it to be on the street, then they can hold a formal public hearing on the project. Ten days after that they'll receive public comments, the consultants and DOTD will address those comments and submit a final EIS with a recommended ROD for Federal Highway signature at that point.

Mr. North asked when the earliest date they'd have a ROD. Mr. Rogers said they're looking at the March/April timeframe for the draft, roughly a month (four to six weeks) June timeframe for that, another thirty days out, so maybe September/November timeframe the final could be submitted for the ROD signature. This time next year is just a best guess.

Mr. Ford asked Mr. Rogers if they could ask DOTD, because this is such a hot topic with the citizens, to come visit with them at least quarterly to make sure they're all on task. He knows there's going to be some changes in the administration after the first of the year, so they just want to inform the public and let them hear it from the horse's mouth as to what's going on. Mr. Rogers stated, "will do". Mr. Rogers said they're hoping to have them there at the next meeting to give a formal presentation on the comments and all the results from the public meeting.

2. I-69 SIU 15 Frontage Road Update

Mr. Rogers stated the next update is the I-69 project. Based on the TIP amendment that was just approved, they've made a selection for the engineering work along that corridor, Stanley Consultants, Inc. is the team that was selected. They can negotiate that contract and get it underway now. Mr. Rogers said that contract covers all the way through sixty percent of plans, or something to that extent, so a good way into the full engineering, right of way and all that type of stuff. Similar to any projects, they'll be given task orders of which tasks to move forward with initially. Again, at some point in time, they'll need to address the ultimate shortage of funds for

construction. He knows there's a Raise Grant request or a MEGA Grant request that's out, but no word has been received on that yet, however, they've just issued NOFA's for the next round of those so they might want to go ahead an update that to send it back out with that next submission. Mr. Rogers stated that another thought would be a Capital Outlay Request for some of it.

3. I-20 Rehabilitation Update

Mr. Rogers stated the next thing on the agenda is the I-20 project and LA 511. He asked Mrs. Buchanan with DOTD to come up to give the updates on both projects. Mrs. Buchanan stated that the I-20 Rehabilitation project is progressing very well. They are fifty percent into the transition into Phase 2. They transitioned westbound into Phase 2 which means to swap the traffic over from the inside to the outside lanes on November 30th, then the plan is to swap the eastbound direction this Sunday night. The concrete barricades are out there, and you've probably seen them if you've driven through. They've replaced the orange cones and barrels and so the look and feel of the work zone is a little different. The lane widths are a little narrower and they do have message boards lit up to encourage strongly for truck traffic to take I-220. Mrs. Buchanan said that you also may have seen activity start with the removal and demolition of the existing lanes that are out there. The contractor is already working on that and breaking that old pavement that's there in the runway base, they're starting on that on the westbound side. She said they're moving quite well with that project for Phase 2. They anticipate ten to eleven months, but of course we're into the cold, wet, and rainy season now so it could be a year. Along with Phase 2 you'll start to see the nighttime patching work that's included on the Caddo Parish side of this. And Shreveport, we have extensive nighttime patching that will occur from Pines Road to I-49. Again, that's only nighttime work, but that will also happen as part of Phase 2 as well. We'll then move into Phase 3, which is just like Phase 2, except swapped again, so they can build the outside lane.

Mr. Ford wanted to mention that he and Mayor Chandler are meeting next week, and they are going to assist DOTD with providing resources to keep I-220 open. From I-20 at Pines Road, all the way out to the racetrack. Mr. Ford said they have a CEA that they're going to be presenting to the entity of Caddo Parish and Shreveport. In the event of snow and ice they are going to try and keep I-220 open because I-20 is down to one lane. He wanted to thank everyone for their support.

4. Jimmie Davis Bridge – LA 511 Update

Mrs. Buchanan stated that for the Jimmie Davis Bridge project, if you've driven through that area, you've probably seen some equipment out. That solicited several phone calls and excitement as to what may be happening out there. Some very preliminary work is occurring, but nonetheless, the project is moving forward. They have a crane assembled on site and some early clearing and grubbing has been conducted basically of the contractor's yard out there. They're still moving through the permitting process with the Army Corp of Engineers in order to continue clearing and grubbing along the river so that's moving forward as well. Also, they'll be assembling a trussell bridge there at the site, which will be used by the contractor in order to use to construct the new bridge in the future. Mrs. Buchanan said so they're not of course to the point of actual construction of the new four lane bridge, but in the future that's still in the design phase and will be for the next several months to a year, which is what the expectation was, as well as the design of the existing bridge into the linear park. The transformation of that into a pedestrian and bicycle facility. You won't see major construction happening for quite some time, this is a five-year project so it's pretty lengthy, but you will see some activity happening out there at the site which is always a good sign that progress is happening. That's what's occurring with that if

you're wondering what's happening at the Jimmie Davis Bridge and you see some work going on, that's what's happening.

Announcements

Mr. Clarke asked if there were any announcements at this time. Mr. Rogers just wanted to say Happy Holidays to everyone.

Mr. Rogers stated that the only announcement he had was the next regularly scheduled MPO meeting is on Friday, January 19, 2024.

Adjourn

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



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: _____

Name: John Park:7c

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: () _____

I am representing: myself business organization

Name of business / organization: _____

Comment on: Agenda item Non-agenda item

Briefly describe your comment(s):

Allendale 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.

