



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

MINUTES

Friday, February 02, 2024 (9:00 AM) NLCOG
NLCOG

625 Texas Street, Suite 200
Shreveport, LA 71101

Members Present

Mayor Tommy Chandler – City of Bossier City
Mr. Butch Ford – Bossier Parish
Mr. David North – LaDOTD District 04
Mrs. Carlotta Askew-Brown – MPC City of Bossier City
Mr. Bruce Blanton – Webster Parish
Mr. Dinero' Washington – SporTran
Mayor Tom Arceneaux – City of Shreveport

Members Absent

Mr. Alan Clarke – MPC City of Shreveport – Mr. Stephen Jean is sitting in for Mr. Clarke, but not in a voting capacity.
Ms. Erica Bryant – Caddo Parish
Mr. Eric England – Port of Caddo-Bossier
Mr. Michael Norton – DeSoto Parish – Mr. Michael Rister is sitting in for Mr. Norton, but not in a voting capacity.

Others Present

Mr. Kent Rogers – NLCOG
Mr. Chris Petro – NLCOG
Ms. Savannah Williams – NLCOG
Ms. Heidi Stewart – NLCOG
Mr. Adam Driskill - NLCOG
Dr. Shelly Barrett - NLCOG
Ms. Rita Arnold – NLCOG
Mr. Kevin Reeves - NLCOG

Call to Order

Mr. Ford 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. Ford said that he was going to ask Mr. Johnson to lead us in prayer and Mayor Chandler to lead us in the pledge. He asked if those that cared to join them to please stand. Mr. Johnson began the invocation followed by Mayor Chandler leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Ford asked Mr. Rogers to begin a roll call. Mr. Rogers began the roll call. A quorum was present.

Public Comments

Mr. Ford stated they had three public comments and then reminded them of the three-minute time frame for their comments.

Mr. Peacock was the first to comment. He wanted to emphasize the Road Shows for the Transportation Committees for the Senate and the House that are coming up to our area and then going around the state. For our area it's going to be Wednesday, February 7th, 2024, at BPC in building H, which is the Louisiana Tech building. Mr. Peacock said that this is very important for everybody to be represented. He stated that when they go to Winnsboro and Monroe, and then they go down south, if we have a better showing and you put something in writing, they hear about it and continue to hear about it, that it works. Mr. Peacock said that he would say that the reason that Jimmie Davis Bridge is being built is because for years they kept hearing "Jimmie Davis Bridge", "Jimmie Davis Bridge". I-49 needs to be pounded into them, so they don't just hear about it in Lafayette because they will hear about it there. Mr. Peacock said that Bossier has done a fantastic job in the past with Bossier Parish and signing a letter. Caddo and Shreveport need to do something, or all of our area go to that meeting and meet those Representatives and Senators that are new to the community, shake their hands and let them know who you are, welcome them to our community, let them know your priorities and give them something in writing so they will hear it too. He just wanted to put that on their radar, and he knows it is. Mr. Peacock said if we look better and we have a better turnout than Jefferson Parish, that will help us.

Mr. North stated that they also have two local representatives on the Transportation Committee which include Representative Jackson, and Representative Phelps, from this area.

Mr. Perkins was the next to comment and stated that he and the people at Allendale Strong are excited to be partnered with national organizations this year and continue to educate and inspire citizens here and around the country. They've accepted support from the Anthropocene Alliance, the nation's largest coalition frontline communities, fighting for climate and environmental justice. A2, as they're called, is sponsoring their own Jody Doshier, who has been in these meetings, to attend meetings this weekend in New Orleans on organizing. Jody is a retired educator from the Denver public school system who returned to Shreveport, bringing his experience in organizing there over all those years. Mr. Perkins stated that they're also excited that their founder, Dorothy Wiley, founding President of Allendale Strong, will be speaking at the upcoming Smart Growth America, the Center of Excellence program, which will bring together elected officials from around the country who previously participated in the local and state champions institute to learn from national thought leaders, such as Dorothy, on issues related to the intersection of land use and transportation. Specific challenges in areas of opportunity of developing and imputing a policy around these topics and how they contribute to communities' stability, SmartGrowthAmerica.org. Mr. Perkins said they're also excited to share their experience, strength, and hope with their friends in Austin, who are beginning their lawsuit against TxDOT. No lawsuit is needed in the non-slave holding state, Minnesota, because they agreed to work with their citizens on finding adjustments and solutions. Mr. Perkins stated they're excited to see Strong uptake a local interest in converting their local stroads into business boulevards which improve business and land value while saving pedestrian lives. He said that there's a lot of energy right now especially on the Kings Highway corridor and also North Market. Mr. Perkins thanked the committee for their time and for helping Allendale Strong rise to national prominence.

Mr. Harrison was the last to comment and wanted to be brief. He just wanted to reiterate the strong support for I-49 Inner City Connector from the business community, the Chambers, and the Committee One Hundred. Mr. Harrison said they had their recent meeting, a public hearing, and the people spoke. It was well attended by the business community and the results were very positive towards I-49 and getting that completed. He said that they can't stress how important it is to keep the ball rolling as fast as they can, even with the new transition of the Department of Transportation and state. Mr. Harrison said that last week, he's sure they're all aware of the traffic Armageddon they had with I-20. They had an accident on I-20, then traffic was rerouted onto I-220, then had an accident on the bridge. He stated that he has a business that distributes metals around the state and for the Ark-La-Tex, Northwest Louisiana, and he couldn't get anywhere. There were a lot of businesses shut down, couldn't make deliveries, and he even took one on the chin that day. A lot of employees couldn't get to work, and he got stuck in it himself for almost three hours. North Market was a parking lot. He kept thinking to himself that if I-49 was done, there would be a lot of flow through traffic, which is a perfect example of why we need it. Mr. Harrison said that we don't get a lot of traffic jams very often, but we're going to be in this thing with I-20 for a while and seems to be going well. It's going to help us maneuver around our city a lot better and that was a prime example of the need for it. Not to mention the massive income development opportunities for us. From the business community, they strongly encourage NLCOG to work with DOTD and Federal Highways to get it done as soon as possible. Hopefully they'll have good news there shortly on a route.

Business

1. Approval of Minutes

The next item on the agenda was for approval of the minutes of the December 08, 2023, meeting. Mayor Arceneaux motioned, and Mayor Chandler seconded to approve the minutes as provided. Mr. Ford called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

2. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Mr. Rogers stated they had no action on the TIP at this time.

3. Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) – Carbon Reduction Program Project Selection - Amendment to the 2045 MTP

Mr. Rogers stated that during the last meeting, Mr. Petro had gone through the details of the introduction Carbon Reduction Program Project Selection Process. The funding program is one of the new categories that came out of the IIAJ which is much like their traditional Urban Area funding. This is a new fund that they will be receiving. Mr. Rogers said that as part of that they are required to do a project selection process that's like what they've done for their 200k. He said they introduced it to them at the last meeting for public comments. There are some scoring criteria that deal with calculations of omissions, graphic impact areas, local support cost sharing that goes along with that project selection process. They put it out for public comment and no comments were received. Mr. Rogers said that for today, what they're asking is for their consideration for approval for the project selection process.

Mr. Ford asked if there were any further questions. Mr. Ford entertained a motion for the Adopt the Carbon Reduction Program Project Selection Procedures. Mayor Chandler motioned, and Mr. Washington seconded. Mr. Ford called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

4. Transportation Plan (MTP) - Annual Safety Performance Measures

Mr. Rogers stated that the Safety Performance Target Measures is a requirement under the federal regulations. They are required to be reviewed and reset each year. They're based on a five-year rolling average. The state sets theirs, and then with one hundred eighty days following the state establishing their targets, the MPO's are to introduce, then henceforth pass theirs. Mr. Rogers directed the board the third slide that shows the different measures of fatalities, serious injuries, non-motorized fatalities by VMT, and serious injuries by VMT. VMT stands for Vehicle Miles of Travel. He stated that they'll notice a little bit of change in some of them and some of that has to do with the definitions used and how they calculate some of the measures. They changed over the years so there's little variation in how they calculate those numbers. Mr. Rogers said if they looked at the next slide in their packets, they could see those averages and how they've done over the years. He said the interesting thing is unfortunately with the fatalities in some areas, starting with Covid timeframe, you can see they went up drastically for a couple of years. That coincides with what they noticed in their traffic data collection from the Streetlight data they utilize that has actual speeds and volumes and whatnot on it. The average driving speed of the average driver has increased greatly since Covid, and it has stayed that way. People were just naturally driving faster, so when you get into those wrecks, the likelihood of having those more serious accidents is greater. Luckily, that's starting to come down. Mr. Rogers said the state set their average at a one percent decrease. They have elected in the past years to follow that state standard because it's just best. All the MPO's have followed that. One thing to be aware of too, is although they reported across the board, some of the measures fall on the NHS system, of which some of the NHS system like Monkhouse Drive, is all they have to go on. All they have is the small piece I-20 into the airport of Monkhouse Drive owned by the City of Shreveport. Based on that again, this is for introduction for public comment to follow the states recommendation in terms of the one percent decrease.

Mr. Ford asked if there were any further questions. Mr. Ford entertained a motion for the Approve the Introduction of the 2024 Safety Performance Targets for Public Comment. Mr. Washington motioned, and Mr. Blanton seconded. Mr. Ford called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

5. Safe Streets and Roads for All Regional Action Plan – Request for Proposals

Mr. Rogers said the next thing on the agenda was the advertisement for Safe Street and Roads For All (SS4A), which is the grant they received last year. They finally got the full agreement signed and executed with Federal Highways. This grant goes straight through between NLCOG and Federal Highways, it's not a pass through with DOTD, so it will be a little bit different than others. Mr. Rogers said that the request for proposals will be advertising it by putting it out on the web and whatnot on Monday. They're asking those who submit to tell them how they would go about doing this in essence. They will have to follow the guidelines from NOFA and Federal Highways, which the principal parts of it are Leadership Commitment and Goal Setting, Planning Structure, Safety Analysis, Engagement and Collaboration, Equity Considerations, of which there is a large portion of the grant once it hits in the range of forty percent is to be used for the Justice Forty, Policy and Process Changes, Strategy and Project Selection Procedures, and Progress and Transparency. The reason for the need for the development of the action plan is there are SS4A implementation funds available, however, you have to have a plan set in place before you can utilize or access the implementation funds. It will cover the full four parish area just as the rest of their Long-Range Plan, and just as the Active Transportation Plan that's out now. Again, they'll send it out next

Monday. They've asked for Letters of Intent by February 19, 2024, receipt to the office on March 22, 2024, the staff will review and work with the technical committee to review the submittals and ask the technical for their top three. They will be asking the top three to come make presentations to the board for final selection. Those respondents in that selection will take place on April 12, 2024, at the regular April meeting. Mr. Rogers said his intent is to give each team roughly twenty minutes including questions and answers.

Project Updates

1. I-49 Inner City Connector

Mr. Rogers stated they had a meeting scheduled with the new DOTD Secretary, his new administrative staff, and DOTD's Project Team on the Inner City along with the consultants. It was originally scheduled for the seventh, but the road show got scheduled on that same date, so it got bumped. They're looking at the first Monday in March currently. For that briefing, the main importance that they're going to stress to them is to help them keep everyone on that timeline that was set when Dr. Kalivoda was with the department. As was noted previously for the field work, some of the environmental and cultural work for the 3A had begun. They got a little delayed from the ice and rain, but they're still good and on track to complete within the timeframe. Mr. Rogers said they're still looking at the second quarter to have the draft EIS ready. Before publishing the draft EIS or announcing the preferred alternative, it's necessary for it to go through two federal reviews. Those two reviews include a legal sufficiency review and a civil rights review. The two reviews can be conducted simultaneously within a timeframe of four to six weeks. Following that we'll get it advertised and out on the street. It's a full forty-five-day timeframe. Once it's advertised and put on the street, you have to have a minimum of thirty days prior to the public hearing and a minimum of ten days following the hearing for receiving public comments.

Mr. Ford asked if Mr. Rogers was going to be meeting with the new DOTD Secretary after their next meeting. Mr. Rogers stated that was correct. Mr. Ford stated that there's been so many questions about this project and following a timeline. He asked Mr. Rogers that as soon as they have concurrence that they're going to meet that timeline to please let them know so they can pass that on to the public. He would like to know if the new DOTD Secretary is going to delay it any so they can let the public know. Mr. Ford asked Mayor Arceneaux and Mayor Chandler if they agreed with that.

Mr. Washington asked when they were estimating the ROD (Record of Decision). Mr. Rogers stated the end of this year timeframe. Mr. Washington asked that we stress to the new DOTD Secretary that we want to stick to the deadline for that because we've pushed this back about three or four years at this point and feel that we need to give the public what they've been asking for.

Mr. Harrison commented that Dr. Kalivoda indicated that they would have a route before the draft was sent out. Mr. Rogers said the draft identifies the preferred alternative. Mr. Harrison asked when that would be sent out. Mr. Ford stated that we have a new Secretary and that's why their meeting with him. Mr. Rogers said that the current schedule is sometime in the second quarter of this year. We are still plus or minus a week on that original schedule, but we are still within that schedule. The importance of this is to make sure that the new Secretary and his administrative staff see the importance and take the lead as Dr. Kalivoda had done and stay as engaged. Mr. Rogers stated that the new secretary has expressed to him that he does want to come and meet with the MPO. He's hoping possibly the April or May meeting. Dr. Kalivoda had committed that he was supposed to be at this meeting or the March meeting, but unfortunately, they worked out his retirement package and asked him to leave right away.

2. I-20 Rehabilitation Update

Mr. Rogers asked Mrs. Buchanan, from DOTD, to give the update for the I-20 rehabilitation. Mrs. Buchanan stated that as everyone knows, they are well into phase two of construction at this point. Much of the inside lanes of both eastbound and westbound direction have been removed. Heavy excavation work, hauling in and out materials continue to be underway. Mrs. Buchanan said that as many of you know, the eighteen-wheeler prohibition also remains in place for this project. Lieutenant Mondello is here with State Police Troop G, and she's glad to see him there today. They've been working closely obviously with the State Police along with their other law enforcement partners on this. They've had signage up since the truck ban went into effect late December and they are in the process of adding additional signage at all of the interchanges in advance to the work zone as far east as Minden. Mrs. Buchanan stated that at this point it's not a lack of signage or enforcement. The sheer numbers of trucks coming through the work zone is troublesome. As was mentioned earlier, they had an incident last week during the heavy rainfall, where a truck exited and they had a complete shut down of the interstate, as well as the incident on I-220, all at the same time. That coupled with some other concerns is why the truck prohibition is in play.

Mr. Rogers asked Lt. Mondello if he wanted to add to or speak in regard to the State Police on all this. Lt. Mondello stated he wanted to apologize for being late this morning. He understands the frustration, but guess where he was, he was in the construction zone westbound on I-20. Lt. Mondello said to just give everyone an update on the law enforcement presence and what they're out there doing, the men and women of the local agency including Bossier City Police Department, Shreveport Police Department, and Bossier Parish Sheriff's Office are out there doing a fabulous job. If you're not familiar, you see them as you pass through the work zone. They have four work zone officers out there for a day shift and a night shift. They put one on each end of the work zone and two in the middle. One of the main objectives in the law enforcement presence is to save lives. They're assisting the motor and public to come through the construction zone, but at the same time they're trying to keep the DOTD, J.B. James and Contracting, and everyone safe. At times, it can be a very dangerous stretch on both sides of the highway. Considering that J.B. James is out there with all this heavy equipment, trying to build that road for us, to make it better in the end. Lt. Mondello wanted to express his appreciation to the Bossier City Police Department, Shreveport Police Department, and the Sheriff's Office because they've done a fabulous job at what they're doing out there. He said that he'd answer any questions about the enforcement of commercial motor vehicles. Lt. Mondello said that they're not going to be able to stop every single one coming through. There's a lot of times when they ask them why they're coming through here, and they didn't see the signs. A lot of is that they didn't know it meant them! Or they didn't see the sign. Their GPS told them to go this way. They're working on this with the DOTD and getting new signage up. Something that could help is maybe signage on the overhead that shows a commercial motor vehicle with a circle and a line across it. You don't have to read that, you'll see it.

Mr. Ford stated that one of the things that he was surprised to learn at their meeting in December was how many accidents have occurred along that stretch of I-20. He asked if Lt. Mondello had that number. Lt. Mondello said yes, and that there's been over two hundred crashes since the beginning of September. These crashes in the work zone are maybe two, three, four, five vehicle crashes that are rear-end crashes. Fortunately, there haven't been serious injuries in these crashes, but when you have the eighteen-wheelers coming in and they're turning up or over, we never know. We don't know what eighteen-wheeler can come through on a rainy night, whether it be a hazmat tanker or what. Again, one of the main missions of law enforcement presence out there is to prevent crashes. Lt. Mondello says that with no doubt we'd have up into the three to four hundred number of crashes rather than about the two hundred if they didn't have the law enforcement presence that they have right now.

Mr. Washington said he had a question about the communication that goes out. He said that some of it says, “big truck ban” and some of it says, “commercial vehicle ban”. Which one is it? Lt. Mondello said that it’s commercial motor vehicles, the tractor trailers with the big box trailers, tankers, and all. It includes what they call “hot shot rigs” that are running through there with the trailers and the dually. He said again that they’re not going to be able to stop them all, but you will see them. Those drivers come through there and it’s hard for them to navigate those curves in those tight lanes. Lt. Mondello said that it’s not going to stop. You’re going to see one or two trickle in, but they are trying to keep the number down and decrease the crashes.

Mr. Rogers asked how they are dealing with the ones that are not cutting through, but they need to get through. Lt. Mondello said that’s like when they stop someone, you don’t always have to write a ticket. You have to use good officer discretion. We tell our officers to talk with them. Sometimes there’s a language barrier. But if you find out they’re coming from the Texas line eastbound through the construction zone, then that’s a problem. If they’re coming from somewhere that they haven’t gotten the signs up yet, we have to use good officer discretion. He said there’s nothing wrong with writing a warning.

Mrs. Buchanan stated that for an update for the Jimmie Davis Bridge, there’s really not much to update on since the last update they provided. The contractor is still working on their trestle bridge that they’ll be using for their own construction purposes at the yard next to the bridge. As well as the design work, it’s still underway. It’s pretty expansive within itself and we expected that it would take some time for that project. You may not see a lot of hustle and bustle at the work site, but just know that there’s work ongoing behind the scenes for that particular project.

Mr. Rogers wanted to add one thing about the meeting they have scheduled with the new secretary. Round Thanksgiving timeframe, he believes, the city, Mr. North’s office, himself, and Dr. Kalivoda’s office met with the Tim James Group, Willis-Knighton, and their project. Dr. Kalivoda drafted an agreement with them that if they wish to build within the Inner Loop Corridor, here’s what needs to happen and here’s what needs to be done. Federal Highways reviewed it and was in concurrence as long as when the James Group presented their stuff to DOTD, that they would forward it on to them. They were good with them moving forward with some sort of construction within the Inner loop Corridor. Part of that meeting with the new secretary is to brief him on that again and get him to go ahead and sign that agreement so it can get sent out and that group can move forward.

Mr. Ford said his office has had a lot of calls in regard to the toll bridge and where it stands. He asked Mr. Rogers if he would reach out to Tim James and maybe get a briefing there in the next couple of meetings. That way he can come and tell them where he is and what’s about to happen. Mr. Rogers said he’s hoping that when they get to that meeting with the new secretary that they can get Tim James there and he can come and explain the agreement that the department came up with for them to move forward.

Announcements

Mr. Ford asked if there were any announcements at this time. Mr. Rogers just wanted to remind everyone of the Joint Transportation Committee (DOTD Road Show) Meeting on Wednesday, February 7, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. that is being held at the LA Tech Building at Bossier Parish Community College in Building H – Moran Room.

Mr. Rogers stated the next regularly scheduled MPO meeting is on Friday, March 01, 2024.

Adjourn

With no remaining agenda items, Mr. Ford entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Washington motioned, and Mayor Chandler 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 prominent initial "J" and a stylized "R".

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.

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.

Please print:

Date: Feb 7, 2024

Name: Barrow Park

Address: Barrow Park

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):

Road Show Reminder

- wed Feb 7 BPPS

make voice heard

give us writing

meet & greet



THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMENTS

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Please print:

Date: 2-2-24

Name: John Perkins

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: () _____

I am representing: myself business organization

Name of business / organization: Allendale Strong

Comment on: Agenda item Non-agenda item

Briefly describe your comment(s):

I-49
support in Antitrapassim Alliance
climate & ES Ag
joint dashboard - (decarbon public schools)
dashboard - smart growth America
land use / transportation



THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMENTS

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Please print:

Date: 2-2-24

Name: Patrick Harrison

Address: P.O. Box 7216

E-mail: _____

Phone: (318) 218-9008

I am representing: myself business organization

Name of business / organization: C100

Comment on: Agenda item Non-agenda item

Briefly describe your comment(s):

I - 49 JCC

→ strong support for

ECC success / charter / etc

position recharter.

re transition

prob on 20/220

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