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

### **MINUTES**

**Friday, April 12, 2024 (9:00 AM) NLCOG**  
**NLCOG**

625 Texas Street, Suite 200  
Shreveport, LA 71101

#### **Members Present**

Mr. Alan Clarke – MPC City of Shreveport  
Mr. Butch Ford – Bossier Parish  
Mayor Tom Arceneaux – City of Shreveport  
Mr. Bruce Blanton – Webster Parish  
Ms. Erica Bryant – Caddo Parish  
Mr. Eric England – Port of Caddo-Bossier  
Mr. Michael Norton – DeSoto Parish  
Mr. David North – LaDOTD District 04

#### **Members Absent**

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

#### **Others Present**

Mr. Kent Rogers – NLCOG  
Mr. Chris Petro – NLCOG  
Ms. Savannah Williams – NLCOG  
Ms. Heidi Stewart – NLCOG  
Mr. Adam Driskill - 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 Mrs. Bryant 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. Mrs. Bryant 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 didn't have any public comments.

## **Business**

### **1. Approval of Minutes**

The next item on the agenda was for approval of the minutes of the March 15, 2024, meeting. Mr. Ford motioned, and Mr. Norton 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) – Introduction of TIP Amendments for Public Comment**

Mr. Rogers stated the only TIP item for today is the Introduction for Public Comment for the removal of Audrey Lane project through the City of Shreveport. The City of Shreveport is completing that project with local funds.

Mr. Clarke asked if there were any further questions. Having none, Mr. Clarke entertained a motion for the Approval of Amendment for Introduction for Public Comment for the MPO Surface Transportation Programming Update. Mr. England motioned, and Mr. Blanton seconded. Mr. Clarke called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

### **3. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – Fiscal Year 2025 UPWP Tasks**

Mr. Rogers stated the next thing on the agenda was the Unified Planning Work Program, proposed task items for Fiscal Year 2025. These task items mirror pretty consistently over the last couple of years. Mr. Rogers read through the outline on the slide for each task and said they would be providing them with full detail of each task for them to review. The drafts have been submitted to DOTD and FHWA for them to look at first to make sure everything is in line with what they are requiring.

### **4. Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) –Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) RFP Presentations**

Mr. Rogers said that they were going to have two presentations and they are for the SS4A grant that they received. They received three proposals. One, upon staff review, was eliminated. That was Stantec. Their timeframe, budget and other issues just didn't work or was lacking. There were various other issues they knew they wouldn't score well. They had conversations with them and in lieu of wasting their time of them coming in to do a presentation, they were removed from the process. The final two are ATG-Alliance Transportation Group and Atlas Technical Consultants. Mr. Rogers said he was going to have Alliance make their presentation first and they were told they have twenty minutes including questions and answers. In the packet he gave them, the last couple of pages, has the RFP that they received. He's highlighted a couple of notes that include things that are required from the NOFO and that they ask for a draft in the December timeframe. The last couple of pages show the scores from the technical group and staff which are averaged out in front of each other. Also, it has the proposed budgets they could tell from their proposals, however, there is a line that they can negotiate still within there. The final page are the items from the NOFO, as they're making their presentations, that's what he

would like for them to make sure they're highlighting. Mr. Rogers stated that following the two presentations, per their discussion, if they wish to make a selection at that time, they're welcome to do so.

### Team ATG

**Lead: Alliance Transportation Group**

**Subs: Volkert, Bonton Associates, Halff**

Presentation led by Project Manager, Ms. Ellen Soll. Please see attached link to view presentation slides.

### **Team ATG Question and Answer Session**

Mr. England asked what will be the deliverables in the eight months and how will they report back to the MPO?

Ms. Soll responded that that's a great question. She said that all of the tasks have these little technical memos along the way, but ultimately, it's a final report. It will be a graphically rich and user-friendly document. Ms. Soll said if they wanted to see an example, the Natchitoches one is still up on the website, and it's meant to be used by the public. It's full of pictures and infographics, but they will keep them posted with all the technical memoranda.

Mrs. Bryant asked them to remind her again if they were looking to complete it by December 2024 and when was the start.

Ms. Soll said the start would be May.

Mr. Rogers said the intent and what they have asked for is a draft in the December timeframe so that way they could start keying up projects to go after those implementations in the next round.

Mr. Chevallier asked if the round of implementation dollars that Natchitoches is going after now in the first round of that money.

Ms. Soll stated that it is not the first round of that money, but they are the first in Louisiana to go after it. You didn't have to do a SS4A plan, but you had to have a plan with all those things. Vision Zero is another name for this and there are other places that have Vision Zero plan before this. Hoboken, New Jersey is an example of a place that kind of started this a few years back and they've gone seven years without a severe injury or fatal crash. They were ahead of the game, so they were eligible for that implementation that first round. Most entities didn't have that. No one in Louisiana had a Vision Zero Plan or a Safety Action Plan that qualified, so Natchitoches will be the first in Louisiana to go for these dollars. Ms. Soll said that it's a five-billion-dollar program over five years and only one point seven billion has been set so far.

### Team ATLAS

**Lead: Atlas Technical Consultant**

**Subs: Gresham Smith, Franklin Associates**

Presentation led by Project Manager, Mr. Adam Davis. Please see attached link to view presentation slides.

## **Team Atlas Question and Answer Session**

Mr. Clarke stated that he had a question about them mentioning public engagement and those that are an underrepresented community. He has seen that process in trying to make it work through government information for plans. Mr. Clarke asked what is different about their approach to public engagement than any other approach?

Mr. Davis said that from his experience, he feels that they meet them where they're at. He thinks that engaging with those leaders in those communities that are difficult to reach is important. He knows for the I-49 project they met with the pastoral group.

Mr. Savoie stated that they were right and that it's about selecting the right venues that are convenient and accessible. Considering showing up at pop-up events, pre-scheduled, pre-existing community events to meet people where they are. They did that at a festival in downtown Baton Rouge and had literally thousands of people walk past their tent. Even if they don't stop, they see the branding and they notice there's something different here. That, along with identifying the right community, stakeholders themselves can help spread the word and share information about the project and emphasize the significance of it to not only the community as a whole but also to their family and those in their individual lives. It's very important to get their involvement.

Mr. Norton asked if he was correct in them stating that their plan was going to take ten months to develop and if so, was there any way for them to shave some time off of that? He was curious about the timeframe in having to submit an action plan for consideration for funding.

Mr. Rogers stated that what they asked for in RFP was that they have a draft available in the December timeframe.

Mr. Davis said that they were going to have the draft plan delivered in December.

Mr. Moore wanted to add that between Atlas and Gresham Smith, they have a number of employees that do this type of work in other places. If they need to beef up their team and bring in experts, they can certainly do that to meet any time crunch that they may have.

Mr. Davis said to expand on that, understanding what people are doing in other areas and bringing that experience and knowledge to the table is very important. He thinks that not operating in a vacuum is a great thing and to be able to have major metropolitan areas and small communities experience is a huge plus.

## **NLCOG Policy Committee Discussion (Consulting Teams Not Present)**

Mr. Ford wanted to say that they've made many applications for this money and been unsuccessful. He said that it's a process and having this study is going to help them when they make applications. They are going to identify regional things that they need to do. It's very irritating when they have all this money, and you can't make an application to get it. This is going to be an interesting process. Maybe this will help them in the future get awarded some of the funds.

Mr. Rogers stated that in the last packet he had given them, they should see the scores from the technical group and the average across those. Budgets that they outlined in there. There's quite a bit of difference in there for the budget numbers. Again, if there's something that needs to be beefed up or whatnot within the schedule of their timeframe, there's a lead way to do that.

Mr. Ford stated that he thinks both groups are well qualified, and he's worked with them both. It's nice to know that they have consultants like that who are interested in coming up there and helping. The technical group came up with one-twenty-nine. Mr. Ford asked Mr. Rogers if that was correct.

Mr. Rogers said Atlas was one twenty-nine and ATG was one twenty-six.

Mrs. Bryant noticed that there was one point difference here and there and asked Mr. Rogers to give her an idea of why.

Mr. Rogers said that when he personally went through them, it was a fresh set of eyes. Alliance has been working on several projects for them, ATG, they are doing the bike ped stuff which in essence could fold right in. However, he also feels that leads for some potential double dip or things that could be like components, but how do you know if they're charging them against the right process, the right plan or the right work. Atlas, a fresh set of eyes, and the one thing that has caught his eye and was in their proposal, Gresham Smith did talk about how many at the end of the day when it comes to taking that next step and going after that project, it's just their sheer return on projects getting rewarded. That's a high percentage. Mr. Rogers said again, either one will be great. He doesn't feel that staff would have a problem with either group. They're both qualified.

Mr. Petro stated that from the staff's perspective, the experience and knowledge that both teams bring, it's hard to discern between the two. You're just basically knit picking. From that standpoint they're almost even. Mr. Petro said from what Mr. Rogers just said it's important how when it comes to the implementation funding the Atlas team was able to deliver on a higher percentage from what he could glean from their presentation and what Mr. Savoie was saying.

Mrs. Bryant said she can appreciate them delivering a fresh set of eyes, but she thinks having the experience and knowledge of work should be a bonus, not something less.

Mr. Petro wanted to add about the public engagement. Atlas, which they have Franklin on board, they have done an admirable job. They are the ones on the I-49 Inner City for all these years. They've been steadfast and professional at handling a contentious project to say the least.

Mr. England asked if this was a professional service, he knew Mr. Chevallier had left, but wanted to know if there was room for negotiation on the fees.

Mr. Rogers said yes. There's room for negotiation with both.

Mr. Clarke said he's heard the pluses for Atlas, and they've said they're equally qualified, are there any pluses they need to be aware of for ATG?

Mr. Rogers said they're working on the Active Transportation Plan now which folds right into some of this. Some of that analysis will be some of the same analysis.

Mr. Ford stated that one of the other pluses is that they have local representation with a couple of companies like Volkert and Halff that have offices here too. They have a local connection which is a plus.

Mr. England motioned for ATG.

Mr. Clarke asked if there were any further questions. Having none, Mr. Clarke entertained a motion for the Selection of ATG for Safe Streets and Roads For All (SS4A) RFP for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Mr. England motioned, and Mrs. Bryant seconded. Mr. Clarke called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

Mr. England wanted to say that he thinks the staff did a great job in receiving the proposals and he found the presentations very informative. He said he's looking forward to the results of this.

## **Announcements**

Mr. Rogers stated the next regularly scheduled MPO meeting is on Friday, May 24, 2024.

Mr. Rogers stated that two things that were asked of prior to or within the last meeting, they have reached out with DOTD through their lighting section and Mr. Washington and Mayor Arceneaux had asked about the lighting on I-20 on the Caddo side of the river. Mr. Petro sent out a memo to some of them the other day and he thinks they've come up with a plan and a process to get that work done another way. Quite a bit cheaper than what was originally anticipated. He will bring more information about that at the next meeting.

Mr. Rogers said that he was asked by Mr. England after the last meeting to help put together a community meeting for the Tim James project. After some conversations with William Bradford and their group, he knows they're re-working some of that project, they have stated they'd prefer to meet with some of the neighborhood groups first, and if what they're working on now doesn't satisfy them then they'll approach that effort again at that point.

Mr. Clarke asked if they were to assume that the 3132 extension is off the books.

Mr. Rogers said no. The 3132 project is still in the books. They still have a FONSI for that project. They have a little bit of funding programmed to do some initial mapping or whatnot.

Mr. Ford asked how quickly their ROD is moving and Mr. Rogers said he hadn't seen their new alignment, so he didn't know. Mr. Ford said he thinks it's moving forward quickly. He's talked to Tim James once a month and he thinks he's still on board. He asked Mr. England if he had heard anything different about the toll bridge.

Mr. England said there's nothing they've seen that's stopping the project. The bridge is what's the driving force.

Mr. Ford said he wasn't sure if he had his permit to cross the river yet from the Corp, but that's what they were waiting on. The hydraulic analysis or something like that. Mr. Ford stated that they may need to have him come to one of the BOD meetings and give them an update on where he is.

Mr. England stated that update from their standpoint, at one point the Bossier-Caddo Port Commission was going to be the borrower under that USDA Program and of course it wouldn't be a true liability for the Port Commission, they would just be facilitator of the loan of all the liability with the Tim James group. They are now pursuing other financing. They're not going to pursue the USDA Loan Program that they offered. There was a USDA Direct Loan and there was a loan guaranty that they were pursuing. To do the USDA Loan they needed a governing entity, like all of them, and chose the Port, but they're no longer it. They're just not pursuing it. Mr. England stated that he

shared that information with his board on Monday of this week based on recent interactions with the Tim James group.

## **Adjourn**

With no remaining agenda items, Mr. Clarke entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Norton motioned, and Mr. England 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 underneath the name.

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J. Kent Rogers, Secretary

