



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, July 18, 2025 (9:00 AM)

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

Members' Present

Mr. Bruce Blanton – Webster Parish – Vice Chair
Mayor Tom Arceneaux – City of Shreveport
Mrs. Carlotta Askew-Brown – MPC City of Bossier City
Mayor Tommy Chandler – City of Bossier City
Mr. Alan Clarke – MPC City of Shreveport
Mr. Eric England – Port of Caddo-Bossier
Mr. David North – LaDOTD District 04
Mr. Michael Norton – DeSoto Parish
Dr. Ken Ward – Bossier Parish

Members Absent

Mrs. Erica Bryant – Caddo Parish - Chair
Mr. Dinero' Washington – SporTran

Others Present

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

Call to Order

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

Public Comments

Mr. Blanton stated that they were going to defer the public's comments to later in the meeting.

Business

1. Approval of Minutes

The next item on the agenda was for approval of the minutes for the June 13, 2025, meeting. Mayor Arceneaux motioned, and Mr. England seconded to approve the minutes as provided. Mr. Blanton called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

2. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- **FHWA – Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division TIP Request**
- **TIP Amendments and Modifications**

Mr. Rogers stated in the first part of the TIP updates they had a request from FHWA for the Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division. The request is for the inclusion of their projects and programs across the state within our TIP, and within the STP, as appropriate for ours. Mr. Rogers said it's a project in Bossier Parish with the Bayou Bodcau Dam and Reservoir and they have asked them to include that within their TIP.

Mr. Rogers stated that locally, the only thing they have is the adoption of the US371: KCS RR OVERPASSES HBI, which was initially a series of different bridges, and they've removed several of them to expedite the project. It was out for public comments, and they didn't receive any. Those are the only TIP amendments they have.

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

Mr. Rogers asked to let the record reflect that Mrs. Askew-Brown is present.

Other Matters

3. I-49 Inner City Connector

Project Update and Presentation – LaDOTD, Providence, Stantec

Mr. Rogers said that as has been stated in the past, as for LaDOTD and the consultant team, once a quarter, for them to give a comprehensive update on the project as to where we're at and where we're going. He was going to ask Mrs. Oriole, from Providence Engineering, to make her presentation. Providence is the lead firm on the project.

Mrs. Oriole thanked the board for having them today to give their quarterly update. Joining her today for the presentation is Mr. Steve Wallace from Stantec, Mr. Jonathan Taylor from Franklin Associates, and project manager, Mr. Kurt Brauner from LaDOTD.

Please click on the link below for presentation slides.

Mr. Brauner asked if there were any questions.

Mayor Arceneaux said, "We're pushing a rope up a hill. We need someone to be pulling a rope up a hill. The public deserves a decision and a movement and they're not getting that". Mayor Arceneaux said, "Every time we're getting close, it moves". He wanted to express the frustration for the people of Shreveport at this process. "There are certainly opponents and proponents, and he happens to be a proponent. Regardless of opponents or

proponents, it's time to make a decision and move forward". Mayor Arceneaux asked if someone could tell him if there's an application for Allendale National Historic District.

Mrs. Oriole stated, "Not that she's aware of".

Mayor Arceneaux said he wasn't aware of one either so why are they waiting for something that has never happened? "And we have a National Historic District that we're potentially moving to that effects a city facility that is a historic property. When we receive public comments, and there were two hundred sixty-nine public comments, on the Build Alternatives, the vast majority said to build Alternative 1. We have been attempting to move something because of opposition that we think, perhaps, another route will be appeased". Mayor Arceneaux said, "Let me tell you, it won't. We need to move down the road. Whatever litigation comes, let it come. We need to move down the road". He is frustrated and he's expressing his frustration to his constituents, many of whom are in the audience today, because we cannot seem to do this. Someone needs to be pulling the string instead of trying to push it from the bottom. He doesn't know who that person is, but it isn't the people sitting around the horseshoe. They're the ones that get the complaints and they're the ones that get the frustration expressed to them, and they come and say "well, we'll still do this". Mayor Arceneaux said that he didn't mean this in any disrespect to them, but this process is stalled and needs to get off centered and quickly.

Mr. Brauner replied, "understood". He would be relaying those comments and frustrations to the Secretary when he returns and debrief him on the meeting.

Mayor Arceneaux said he would be happy to meet with the Secretary personally to express those frustrations in person.

Mr. Brauner said, "understood, he'll let him know".

Mr. Rogers wanted to address the Mayor and stated that the Secretary expressed to him the other day that he will likely be there at one of the next few meetings once he gets settled. He had a conflict with today, they had asked him to be there for this meeting, but he had already had some things scheduled. He will be there at one of the next few meetings.

Mayor Arceneaux said that he appreciates all those words, but that's all they get is the words. He's ready for action.

Mr. Blanton asked if there were any other comments from the board.

Public Comments

Mr. Chevallier opened the public comment period from the agenda. The first public comment was from Mr. Harrison concerning the I-49 ICC. He reminded them to keep their comments to the three minutes.

Mr. Harrison said that he would try to remain calm, but he's very, very frustrated. He stated to Mayor Arceneaux that he didn't know that he could've said it much better than that. Mr. Harrison said that he's exactly right. They say they're on schedule, but the thing is that they keep moving the goal post on the schedule. The schedule changes. They had a meeting down at the Port about two years ago, they came out with a schedule, and they were supposed to get the route by 2024, and the ROD by first or second quarter of this year, which has passed. We're no further along today than they were then. Mr. Harrison said they've been screaming from the top of mountain tops and doing everything they can, but the reality of it is, the problem in Shreveport, Bossier, and their community seems to be getting worse. He has a distribution business north of town and his trucks are on 3132 traveling the city, North Market is a parking lot most of the day now. It's falling

apart and deteriorating. It's a real problem. 3132 is a disaster and certainly a long way to drive around the city. He doesn't know what else they can do. He expressed to the Mayor that he appreciated his words but says he's exactly right because he's got another presentation that was presented to them from 2017, eight years ago. Winter of 2017 – Submit Draft - EIS, FHWA, DOTD; Late first quarter of 2018 – EIS - Approve for Public Distribution; Second quarter 2018 – Public Hearing; Third quarter 2018 – ROD (Record of Decision). Mr. Harrison said that this is what they put out. He asked if they saw the difference between what they just saw and what he just read from previous presentations. He said there's like six of these and the problem is that they say they're going to schedule it until they get delayed, which they just saw another delay, and they're really not on schedule because of the meeting delay for three months in D.C., instead of being second quarter having that they pushed it back another quarter. You still say you're on schedule, but you're not. Mr. Harrison said that he can guarantee that probably the next meeting or the meeting after that they'll come back with another schedule. Then they're going to be "on schedule" again. He said that they're not stupid. They're not idiots and that's what they think they are. They keep pushing this project further and further down the road, meanwhile they keep draining money out of their community with change orders to keep it going, and what should have been a one- or two-million-dollar EIS project for Providence, now turned into millions of dollars. Mr. Harrison said that's not the biggest problem. The biggest problem is the delay in the project. The community is moving in a fast pace, hopefully towards growth, and they're just not prepared for it. It's a problem and he could go on for hours telling them the parallels of being in business in north Caddo Parish and it's getting worse and worse by the day.

Mr. Peacock was next to comment. Mr. Peacock said, "Thank you", and he didn't want to reiterate what Mayor Arceneaux and Mr. Harrison just mentioned, but even if you look at the study that was presented there, multiple tactical studies still need to be done and there's six on there, and it says it won't be completed until 2026. He said they are missing an opportunity that they'll probably never see again in their state and their local areas potential. If they wait till the end of that report and the end of 2026, they've missed it. All the timeline stuff is in the past and it should've never happened, and they can't change the past, but this going forward, completed by 2026, this is their opportunity now. By the end of 2026 they're done if they don't have anything done quicker than that. Mr. Peacock said that their proposal today isn't going to work. They've missed their opportunity.

Mrs. Linda Bernacki was next to comment. *(Please see Mrs. Bernacki's comment attached below)*

Mr. Perkins was next to comment. Mr. Perkins said, "Good morning, he's a third generation Shreveport citizen, businessperson, and a member of the National Press, (formerly, he's now retired)". He said that he started attending Allendale Strong meetings when he first heard about this because everything he's read and has come to understand about inner city highways, is that they destroy cities. If you ask Baton Rouge right now they're overbuilt with too much concrete that they can't afford to repair and Shreveport, likewise, has way more than we can keep up. A million dollars a lane mile for seventieth street, which he crosses every day, has been expanded, and that's what it would cost to repair it. Ten million dollars a mile underneath it for the utilities. We all know the plumbing goes bad and the power goes out. Mr. Perkins said that when he started attending meetings for Allendale Strong, they seemed to be in line with the modern thinking of building highways through neighborhoods. Their attorneys, civil engineers, and their urban planners from around the country are all in agreement. Their attorneys say that the problem holding this up, and he brought it up last month, is the 1965 Transportation Act, which gets into the civil rights issues that they're not dealing with on these decisions. And the 1966 National Environmental Protection Act, both signed and passed through congress, signed by President Johnson, he believes when he was about ten years old, but that's the law of the land. That's what he's always heard from every smart person, including their consultants and DOTD. DOTD sent a guy up there and he said that they've got these two laws that are stopping it, we can't build it as currently imagined by everyone because it breaks those two federal laws. Mr. Perkins said that everyone he hears from around the country, we've become a national interest, Bloomberg thanks a lot, they all say the same thing that this illegal, immoral and indecent to do to the people of Allendale. So, here we all are. The same as what his dad used to

say. It's illegal, immoral and indecent to do this. And that's the way the rest of the nation views what's going on here. Mr. Perkins thanked them for their time but said it's still illegal. DOTD has been up there to remind them it's illegal as currently planned and that's what's holding it up.

Senator Pressly was last to comment. He thanked the board for allowing him to speak. Senator Pressly said that he thinks that each of the board members have been there about as long as he has, possibly longer. He's been doing this for six years. He's come to the vast majority of NLCOG meetings, the time that he's had the opportunity to serve the people in his House District, and the last year and a half his Senate District. They continue to hear the same presentation over and over again, quarterly, monthly. Senator Pressly said the truth is it's time for action. He said that Mayor Arceneaux was spot on. They continue to try and push the rope up hill and they have to have someone that's pulling it. He thinks, as they look around this dais and the audience today, they're ready for action. The state legislature has allocated funds, prior to him even becoming a member of the legislature, toward this project. They're ready for a decision and they need one. President Reagan and his inaugural address said that "Government is not the solution to our problem. Our government is the problem". Senator Pressly said he thinks this action, this controversy and this project is a prime example of government being the problem. When Governor Landry got elected and appointed his team around him, he spoke about this government working at the speed of business. You heard from Mrs. Bernacki about this project and her platform back from 2010, we're in 2025. Fifteen years and we're still seeing the same PowerPoint presentation quarterly, over and over again with delay after delay after delay. He understands that some of these delays are challenges that may be outside of their immediate control, but the truth is that we, the people of northwest Louisiana, citizens of Shreveport, are ready for this decision to be made. Senator Pressly employs them to please push that rope faster or get on the other side of the hill and pull it more.

Mr. Blanton asked if there were any more public comments.

Mr. Chevallier stated there were no more public comments.

Announcements

Mr. Rogers said that the next regular scheduled MPO meeting is on Friday, August 15, 2025, in the Government Chambers at 9:00 am.

Adjourn

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



J. Kent Rogers, Secretary

