

MINUTES

OCTOBER 20, 2021, 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM, VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT (QUORUM)

Nick Pestello (Vice Chair)
Stacy Dowden (Chair) (Proxy is Jennifer Thorn)
John Cardone (City of Lake Charles)
Kevin Melton (Chennault International Airport)
Seth Woods (LaDOTD)
Heath Allen (Lake Charles Regional Airport)

LCMPO STAFF

Michael Hollier (Executive/MPO Director)
Jamie Gaines (Special Projects Manager)
Steve Jiles (Transportation Manager)
Walter Council (Transportation Planner III)
Ashifur Rahman (Transportation Planner)

GUESTS

Angela Murrell (LaDOTD)
Kelli Van Norman (City of Lake Charles)
Mike Huber (City of Lake Charles)
Marion Greene (City of Lake Charles)
Al Hoover (City of Lake Charles)
Cade McClemore (CPPJ)
Brennan Marque (IMCAL)
Justin Habetz (IMCAL)
Michael Bernard (IMCAL)

1. OPENING

A. Call to Order Roll Call

Ms. Nick Pestello, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order.

B. Roll Call

Mr. Mike Hollier called Roll:

- Nick Pestello (Port of Lake Charles)
- Stacy Dowden (City of Sulphur) (Proxy is Jennifer Thorn)
- John Cardone (City of Lake Charles)
- Kevin Melton (Chennault International Airport)
- Seth Woods (LaDOTD)
- Heath Allen (Lake Charles Regional Airport)

He stated there was quorum for Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

C. Minutes (9/29/21)

Mr. Kevin Melton motioned, to approve and adopt the draft minutes of the meeting held on September 29, 2021, seconded by Mr. Seth Woods. Mr. Pestello requested a vote on the motion which passed unanimously.

2. OLD BUSINESS**A. TAC Membership****1. City of Sulphur -**

Mr. Hollier indicated that changes are coming to TAC membership, as Chair Ms. Stacy Dowden is leaving City of Sulphur for City of Lake Charles as Public Works Director. Also, the MPO Bylaws indicate that by the first regularly scheduled meeting of even number calendar year, Chair and Vice Chair needed to be elected. January or February of 2022 would likely be first TAC meeting.

2. Trucking Industry -

Mr. Hollier stated LaDOTD request. He is seeking an individual familiar with local freight/trucking industry that could be appointed to the TAC, to start in 2022. Mr. Pestello indicated he would search for relevant individuals. Mr. Mike Huber mentioned Agrilectric as locally based company that could potentially provide trucking/freight contacts. The company hauls freight to and from local ports and surrounding area. Mr. Hollier noted he would look into the recommendations provided.

3. Election of New Chair -

Mr. Hollier stated LCMPO Bylaws indicate by first regularly scheduled meeting of even numbered calendar year, Chair and Vice Chair needed to be elected. January or February of 2022 would likely be first TAC meeting for this election.

B. 2019-22 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Project Status**1. H.013870 Enterprise Boulevard Overlay Reconstruction -**

Mr. Council stated that Enterprise Boulevard contained some sewer and water elements that were not federally aid eligible. In response, LaDOTD, City of Lake Charles (CoLC), and consultant were discussing potential necessary changes. Mr. Hollier added he was recently told, tentatively, LaDOTD would allow a particular exception on sewer line, with no loss of MPO funds. His emphasis is making sure all the MPO funds are utilized and hoping no further issues.

2. H.014370 Post Oak Road Overlay –

Mr. Hollier indicated that total project cost jumped from \$700K - \$800K to \$2.2M. The problem was additional MPO funds would be needed to cover project, with biggest concern if City of Sulphur would be able or willing to put up match. Ms. Stacy Dowden confirmed they would be willing to do that. This project is further along than H.011839 Henning Drive/Weekly Road. Mr. Hollier's understanding from Ms. Dowden is Post Oak Road is priority and City of Sulphur would rather delay Henning Drive/Weekly Rd project in the current TIP. Overall, additional information is incoming, but project should work even if there is a discrepancy of no more than

\$200K - \$300K. Ms. Jennifer Thorn confirmed she spoke to Ms. Dowden and the information shared by Mr. Hollier is correct.

3. Recommendation on TIP Projects -
Mr. Hollier stated that the recommendation is to wait and see what modifications might be made, and at next TAC meeting, request recommendation from the TAC on aforementioned projects.

C. MPO 2045 Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan Project Review

1. Survey Results on 2nd set of 30 projects elected for removal-
Mr. Council, Mr. Steve Jiles, and Mr. Hollier shared results of TAC member feedback on 2nd set of 30 roadway projects recommended for removal from the 2045 MTP. Four (4) projects were retained in the 2045 MTP.
2. Questions and Comments on Survey Results –
 - N-52 Smith Rd @ Orleans St to South Park Dr
 - Mr. Jiles: N-52 goes into subdivision but is hard to access this neighborhood. He wasn't sure what purpose for project other than to access McNeese's athletic facilities. He was skeptical and had concerns about project.
 - Mr. Mike Huber stated the various interconnected neighborhoods adjacent to potential developable greenfield areas, the closest east-west connection is north at LA 3186 East McNeese St. It would be easier to create a cross connection here, with intention to open area for development. Also, he referenced Ham Reid Road extension by Calcasieu Parish as an example, as it, like N-52 could alleviate congestion on nearby arterials.
 - Mr. Jiles: Suggested east-west road, with dead end near Walk-Ons restaurant, would be more amenable with less impact on neighborhood.
 - Mr. Huber: Reiterated N-52's purpose was not to connect with McNeese's athletic facilities but opening up and supporting development.
 - Mr. Hollier: Asked who owned tract of land near Smith Road extension, and when developers make proposal for multifamily, single family, etc does not CoLC require N-52 type of connections.
 - Mr. Huber: Replied it was several owners, but not sure specifically. He agreed those are the type of long-term influential regulatory processes the city was aiming towards, including coordination with the MPO process. In general, large tracts of land in south Lake Charles are in 1-mile square blocks. Therefore, people drive 2 miles to get to the other side, so projects like N-52 take pressure off state highways.
 - Mr. Hollier: Agreed with the concept and wanted to additionally weigh in on this project, and if goal was to retain then suggests further conversation. It can be reviewed further in the future as TAC and staff go back through the long-range plan, to make some specific recommendations.

- Mr. Council: Noted virtual comment by FHWA's Mr. Carlos McCloud asking if the Right of Way was being reserved by property owner? Mr. Hollier stated he didn't think that would have happened until official proposal submitted.
- C-95 E. Prien Lake Rd Realignment @ LA 397 (E. Ward Lin Rd) to Corbina Blvd
 - Mr. Jiles: Stated C-95 goes from LA 14 to LA 397 and staff recommended as 3-lane curb gutter section from LA 14 to Corbina Road, and maybe beyond with new Saint Louis High School being constructed nearby. At that point it would transition to 2-lane rural roadway from there to LA 397, with wider shoulders and curbs would be re-aligned as shown here. So entire road would be south of railroad track, and that should align with Farm Road, and eliminate railroad crossing on E. Prien Lake Road.
 - Mr. Pestello: Added the railroad was owned by the Port of Lake Charles. All property south of railroad was outside Chennault's campus and was owned by private property owners, Louisiana Multimodal Terminal.
 - Mr. Hollier: Asked about location of new Saint Louis High School in the Morganfield development, which Mr. Huber stated was about 13 acres east of Lake Charles Ward 3 Recreation Center.
 - Mr. Jiles: Asked Mr. Melton what he found objectionable about C-95, with Mr. Melton's response inquiring what happens to existing E. Prien Lake Road alignment once out service?
 - Mr. Jiles replied that the existing E. Prien Lake Road, north of the C-95 alignment becomes Chennault's concern and should be able to free up additional development for the airport. Mr. Melton stated he would not support the current C-95 project, until he can understand exactly the goal being achieved. Furthermore, he stated that after multiple conversations with the city and parish, the objective as they understand it, is for Chennault to start creating access to the airport.
 - Mr. Melton didn't understand rationale for moving E. Prien Lake Rd (N-95) to the southern alignment. From Chennault perspective he would appreciate if someone sat down with him and explain, since his role is protecting Chennault's assets. It appears that it would be taking access from Chennault and not to it as far as he can currently see. He would argue that there is so kind of project that can improve roadway to improve access to airport, including to the Mallard Cove Golf Course that will eventually be transferred to Chennault from the CoLC.
 - Mr. Hollier: Noted that TAC and TPC made a Chennault access and transportation analysis a #6 priority concern for the MPO. He suggested to let MPO staff and TAC evaluate this project in conjunction with a comprehensive review of all access points in a permanent transportation plan for the Chennault campus. He thought that the time to look at and analyze dialogue on C-95. Mr. Jiles noted the C-95

project was for re-alignment of main road and not access points. Mr. Melton understood but his position was firm.

- N-87 Cagle Lane @ Dead End to Golden Nugget Access Rd
 - Mr. Huber stated his disagreement by noting project H.011065 Nelson Road Bridge, to connect downtown Lake Charles, Port of Lake Charles, and I-210/Nelson Road Interchange, would generate additional traffic. Reiterating, traffic studies have shown there would be a lot of additional traffic volume north of I-210/Nelson Road interchange moving south and piling up because of the new Nelson Road Bridge. Some of the traffic currently on Lake Street would move to Nelson Road. He explained there should be a continuous service road, on north side of I-210, from Lake Street all the way to Cove Lane exit to allow traffic to find path of least resistance. Traffic should not involve having to cut through Lauberge Casino to get to come at Golden Nugget to Golden Nugget to get to same point. There needs to be a way to connect service road to the N-87 project. Eliminating N-87 removes opportunity for a service road, like many places around the country.
 - Mr. Cardone: Agreed with Mr. Huber, that removing N-87 is premature and does not seem like an optimal approach, without closer evaluation. Over the years, various road segments along I-210 have had support from Lake Charles officials to add service roads. He noted, retaining N-87 may provide some benefit, especially when the new Nelson Road Bridge is built. He added, if N-87 is performing as desired, even if more congestion occurs at I-210/Nelson Road interchange because of addition of Nelson Road Bridge, it could be mitigated with new road behind Target shopping center.
 - Mr. Pestello: Asked Mr. Woods if diamond interchange improvements, were still planned at I-210/Nelson Road interchange. Mr. Woods responded some improvements were programmed with future incoming projects. One improvement, he added, is between Lake Street and Nelson Road, an auxiliary lane to I-210. There is going to be some improvements at Nelson Road, but he was not sure about diamond interchange. Nelson Road at Prien Lake Road would create a congestion problem that should be mitigated over time. Other LaDOTD traffic engineers agreed the N-87 Cagle Lane extension was a good idea, as an extra option as Mr. Huber stated, connecting the north service road not currently available. The right-in and right-out was suggested, composed of a south bound right turn lane, keeping as much traffic out of the intersection area as possible.
 - Mr. Jiles: Noted when he was with LaDOTD District 7, an added lane on I-210 westbound was added nearby to facilitate the exact movement Mr. Huber is referencing. He added, Mr. Huber's suggestion is within 50 feet of the I-210. To fix issue of southbound congestion on Nelson Road another southbound lane could be added approaching the I-210 intersection. The route through intersection by golf course and roundabout area

- of the casinos invites risks when you could have had a free lane to get from Nelson Road down to Cove Lane.
 - Mr. Woods: Agreed another right turn lane would help.
 - Mr. Cardone: Supported not removing N-87 until fully evaluated. Regarding the full diamond diversion, that was Phase III of Cove Lane interchange project. He did not see a full diamond diversion being constructed.
 - C-96 LA 397 (Ward Line Rd) @ MPO Boundary to Lincoln Rd
 - Mr. Jiles: Stated the wording in the scope leaves the proposal open ended. Need to identify plan of action as it requires a different cost. The cost figured in this project identified a 4-lane road but does not identify what revised cost would be, which may include shoulders for example. Need to get that cost from Calcasieu Parish.
 - Mr. Cardone: Suggested not removing C-96 without getting feedback from Calcasieu Parish.
3. Project Recommendations to Transportation Policy Committee -
John Cardone motioned to retain N-52, C-95, N-87, C-96 in 2045 MTP Roadway and Freight section, while removing the other 26 projects consisting of N-34, N-16, N-85, N-37, N-44, N-45, M-19, C-84, C-57, N-17, C-63, C-62, C-13, N-31, N-63, N-47, N-48, N-75, N-21, C-01, C-64, N-53, N-66, N-78, C-23a, and N-30. Seconded by Mr. Woods, the Motion was passed unanimously.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Congestion Mitigation Techniques

1. Infrastructure Discussion –

Mr. Hollier noted congestion mitigation techniques were identified as an important priority for LCMPO. Congestion challenges being experienced on the area's roadway network are directly impacted by what and when you build a roadway segment. Identification of regulatory tools are needed.

2. Access Management Discussion –

Mr. Hollier questioned, in general, what tools are available to local jurisdictions to control access from private development from along all the major arterials? Is it open ended? Is it restricted? He added that DOTD has adopted very specific access management requirements. He asked Mr. Cardone and Mr. Huber if CoLC had access management restrictions on roadway through zoning ordinances or development regulations?

- Mr. Huber stated that CoLC did, with tools like curb cut limitations.
- Mr. Cardone added CoLC access management examples, like a home not allowed certain distances from existing intersection or if a homeowner has one curb cut on property, certain spacing requirements are needed. He said it ultimately depends on location.

- Mr. Hollier said when a developer is building on any major arterial the city has limitations, which Mr. Huber agreed. Mr. Hollier reiterated the importance to continue to use access management as a congestion mitigation technique.

Mr. Hollier said the general infrastructure discussion regarding proposals being pushed for the next TIP, through the Project Call, seem overwhelmingly about maintenance and not addressing capacity. He recommended furthering discussion by sending out recommendations to TAC members to see how to address and what options might be out there to consider. He added that with all the escalating costs for overlays that are dominating the recent project proposals, it is worth exploring through further discussion how jurisdictions fund infrastructure. Objective should be to free resources that specifically targets congestion.

B. Major Roadway Corridors

1. Sound and Buffer Discussion

Mr. Hollier noted different types of interstate buffers. It is incumbent for an entity putting in a highway through existing neighborhoods to put in a screen and/or sound barrier. Developers who build after a highway is built, should put up some type of sound and visual screening. He is not a supporter of a basic wall, citing a concerning example on Ambassador Cafferty Parkway in Lafayette, LA. He reiterated that there is opportunity for discussion on landscaping. He asked TAC members if the homeowners living adjacent to a highway, what would they want to see. This effort has potential to be examined further with options for sound, visual, and even air quality discussion.

2. East Prien Lake Road Safety Discussion

The MPO adopted this corridor as Designated Safety Corridor. Working with Louisiana Local Technical Assistance Program and SWLA Regional Safety Coalition providing funding and tools. His concern is the process could be lengthy, but since the 4 intersections are entirely in CoLC he recommended follow-up conversation.

3. Country Club Road Discussion

Mr. Hollier stated he attended 2 meetings on this state route with no definitive direction on what needs to be completed. As TAC continues to assess recommended removals in the 2045 MTP Roadway and Freight revisioning process, there may be a later time to further evaluate the several Country Club Road proposals on the table. Since the corridor involves the 3 jurisdictions of CoLC, Calcasieu Parish, and LaDOTD, there should be short-and-long term examinations on how to bring Country Club Road up to capacity necessary.

4. Chennault Accessibility

Mr. Hollier stated this is another TAC/TPC identified priority focus study area, related to transportation needs addressed in the airport's infrastructure and master plan. He suggested stakeholder entities like Port of Lake Charles, and its rail connection, also be part of discussion. There are resources to examine Chennault access.

4. INFORMATION

A. Moving Freight

1. Identification of Barriers –

Mr. Hollier noted that staff initiated a study of freight movements, specifically, and the MPO's Travel Demand Model. Mr. Hollier wants to identify barriers to freight movement in the area, such as if it is a road, intersection, bridge, signalization, sufficient Right-of-Way, turning lanes, etc? He wants to prepare an inventory of barriers to freight movement. He requested TAC members consider the barrier question in day-to-day transportation work operations, to help identify chokepoints or problem locations for freight movement.

2. Priority Infrastructure Needs –

Mr. Hollier noted that once an identified inventory of problem freight movement locations, consider those as priority infrastructure needs for the area.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Cardone motioned to adjourn the TPC meeting, seconded by Mr. Melton. The motion passed unanimously.



Nic Pestello
Vice Chair



Michael Hollier
Executive/MPO Director