

MINUTES

MARCH 22, 2021, 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM, VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT (QUORUM)

Stacey Dowden (Chair)
John Cardone (City of Lake Charles)
John Bruce (Calcasieu Parish)
Mary Bass Fontenot (Calcasieu Parish School Board)
Brian Duplichain (Westlake)
Health Allen (Lake Charles Airport)
Kevin Melton (Chennault International Airport)
Carlos McCloud (FHWA La Regional Representative) (Non-Voting Member)
Dawn Sholmire (LaDOTD State Planning Section) (Non-Voting Members)

LCMPO STAFF

Michael Hollier (Interim Executive/MPO Director)
Walter Council (LCMPO Transportation Planner)
Jamie Gaines (Special Projects Manager)

GUESTS

Ed Elam (Alliance Transportation Group)
Ben Magallon (Alliance Transportation Group)
Abby Coyle-Richards (IMCAL/LCMPO)
Robert Smith (IMCAL/LCMPO)

1. OPENING

A. Roll Call

Ms. Stacy Dowden, TAC Chair, called the meeting to order. Mr. Mike Hollier called Roll to identify attendance. He stated there was quorum for Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC).

B. Mr. Hollier requested that previous special TAC I-10 meeting discussion minutes be deferred to a later meeting. Ms. Dowden agreed to postpone adoption of those meeting minutes.

2. NEW BUSINESS

A. Project H.003931 New Proposed I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge –

Review of options and alternatives for member consideration on design and approaches proposed for the new I-10 Bridge across the Calcasieu River and associated costs. There are several items for review following last meeting discussion:

- Design
- Rail Impact
- Bike/Ped

Design: Mr. Hollier initiated the discussion to start with design.

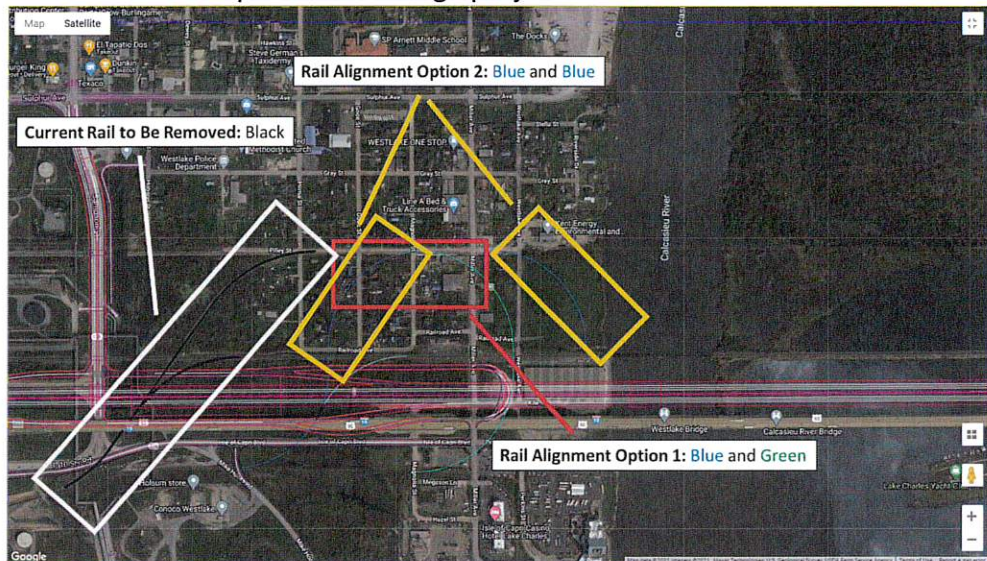
- Mr. John Cardone critiqued that the current bridge is plain and asked if lights would be included?
 - Mr. Carlos McCloud stated it is typically an agreement with the state.
 - Mr. Hollier and Ms. Jamie Gaines, after checking with consultant during the meeting, stated there would be lighting.
- Ms. Gaines noted that a suspension bridge would double the cost of the project.
 - Mr. Kevin Melton said that may be a little expensive, but consider those elements.
 - Mr. Cardone stated that doubling the cost of the project was excessive, but did not need to be plain vanilla bridge either. He added that the bridge should be considered a gateway from Texas into Louisiana and should be designed accordingly with that aspect in mind.

Bike/Ped: Mr. Hollier started dialogue on bike/ped element as part of the bridge project.

- Mr. Hollier relayed that it was his understanding that FHWA allows bike/ped on federal highway projects, but Louisiana state legislature has a law that prevents that element on interstate projects, which is cited as followed:
 - LRS 32:263
Special restrictions on use of Louisiana Interstate highways
 - A. No person owning livestock, as defined in R.S. 3:2802, or having same under his care and control, shall knowingly, willfully or negligently permit such livestock to go upon any Louisiana interstate highway.

- **B.** No person shall drive, or permit to be driven on any Louisiana interstate highway, any farm tractor, road tractor or other vehicle which is normally operated at a speed of less than 20 miles per hour.
 - ***C. The use of any Louisiana interstate highway by pedestrians, bicycles, or other non-motorized vehicles is prohibited.***
 - Acts 1962, No. 310, §1. Amended by Acts 1964, No. 87, §1.
 -
- Ms. Dowden wanted to understand why put a bike/ped element at this location.
 - Mr. Hollier stated because a bike/ped project across the Calcasieu River is shown in the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.
- Mr. Melton inquired who makes the final decision?
 - Mr. Hollier state that TAC provides recommendation to get the ball rolling towards a final decision.
 - Mr. Hollier added that the office has about 30 years of files on a new bridge, and an iconic element has been alluded to since that time.

Westlake Rail Spurs Re-Alignment: Mr. Hollier started dialogue on Westlake rail re-alignment element as part of the bridge project.



- Ms. Gaines and Mr. Hollier explained, in conjunction with Mr. Brian Duplichain, that there were two Kansas City Southern rail re-alignment options for the 5G alternative in Westlake: **1) Option 1:** Central rail re-alignment shown displayed as the blue curve and green curve **2) Option 2:** Combine the blue line from the central area with the blue curve on the east side near the river.
- Ms. Gaines, Mr. Hollier and Mr. Duplichain noted that Westlake’s Mayor Hardey was interested in redevelopment opportunities in the same area.
- TAC members asked about different options for re-aligning tracks in the area.
- Mr. Melton asked what business Kansas City Southern was serving in area, and what is the rail companies’ requirements?

Final Discussion: Next Steps

- Ms. Dowden suggested she believed most TAC members supported the 5G alternative, however, it was going to be difficult to make a comprehensive recommendation without knowing the decision for the rail spurs.
 - Mr. Melton suggested in any conversation with TAC/TPC, Kansas City Southern, FHWA, LaDOTD, and HNTB that they consider land near Chennault International Airport, located 5 – 6 miles away, for the anticipated freight activities they planned for this Westlake location.
 - Mr. Cardone suggested drawing up most efficient options and determine what does and does not work.

- Mr. Health Allen asked if Kansas City Southern was willing to give up land?
- Mr. Hollier mentioned dealing with large freight rail corporations in the past, where he anticipated meeting with one or two people, but nearly 30 company representatives were involved in negotiations.
- It was inquired if LaDOTD, HNTB, FHWA, and Kansas City Southern would be willing to have a meeting before TAC made a recommendation and TPC adopted a final position?
 - Ms. Fontenot says it would be better to hear Kansas City Southern's thoughts before making a final decision.
 - Mr. Melton asked again who had final decision making, to which Mr. Hollier responded that LaDOTD had final decision making, but still required negotiations.
- Mr. Cardone made a motion to informally recommend the 5G alternative as designed, with some iconic features that need to be presented to TAC that have not been seen yet, but also recognizing wanting to evaluate bike/ped path over the bridge, subject to rail re-alignment, by moving forward with a drawn-up plan that is most efficient and cost effective and present it to Kansas City Southern, seconded by Mr. Melton. Ms. Chair requested a vote on the motion to adopt the recommendation, which passed unanimously.
 - TAC suggested that we not hold up the process but consider making a more formal recommendation after the public meeting, on Thursday, March 25th, 2021.

3. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Fontenot motioned to adjourn the Special TAC meeting, seconded by Mr. Melton.



Stacy Dowden
Chair



Michael Hollier
Executive/MPO Director