

MINUTES

OCTOBER 25, 2017, 9 – 11 AM, SEED CENTER, 2ND FLOOR BOARDROOM, LAKE CHARLES, LA,

MEMBERS PRESENT (QUORUM)

Mayor Chris Duncan (City of Sulphur) (Chair)
Mayor Nic Hunter (City of Lake Charles) (Vice Chair)
Mayor Bob Hardey (City of Westlake)
Wes Crain (Calcasieu Parish)
Don Duberville (City of Sulphur Public Works)

LCMPO STAFF

Cheri Soileau (LCMPO Director)
Walter Council (Transportation Planner III)
Benjamin Magallon (Transportation Planner II)

GUESTS

Carol Ponthieux (Mayor of Iowa)
Butch Babineaux (Fenstermaker & Associates)
Mike Huber (City of Lake Charles)
Mr. Vijay Kunada (Neel Schaffer)

1. OPENING

A. Roll Call

- Mayor Chris Duncan called the meeting to order. Mr. Walter Council stated there was a quorum.

B. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting (September 28, 2017)

- Mr. John Cardone called to approve, Mr. Michael Daigle seconded.

C. Agenda Addendum

- Information on the status of the 2045 MTP Plan update. Mayor Bob Hardey motioned to add to agenda, seconded by Mayor Nic Hunter
- Discussion to actively invite DeQuincy, Iowa, Vinton, and Cameron Parish officials to attend regular meetings. Mayor Hardey motioned to add to agenda, seconded by Mayor Hunter.
- Discussion to have a training session for TAC and TPC members. Mr. Wes Crain motioned to add to agenda, seconded by Mayor Hardey.

D. Opportunity for Public Comments or Questions

- There were no public comments or questions.

2. OLD BUSINESS

A. FOR INFORMATION: LaDOTD District 7 Legislative Public Hearing for FY 2018-19 Road Show

- Ms. Cheri Soileau and Mr. Ben Magallon gave a general overview of the Road Show. It was noted that most of the TPC was in attendance.
- The most reiterated point was the I-10 bridge preliminary alternatives.
- Mayor Hardey recapped the I-10 Bridge discussion, noting the request from Westlake to reconsider the Sub-alternative F allowing Westlake a direct interchange.
- Mayor Hunter and Mayor Hardey also expressed interest in more information on the height of the bridge, and if it can be lowered to decrease costs. Mr. Don Duberville noted that the Friend Ship Unlimited ship is in negotiations to potentially move ship to different location, which is one aspect that could lower the bridge height. There was also a question about what height would the U.S. Coast Guard necessitate.
- Mr. Crain mentioned that bridge should be iconic, aesthetically pleasing, functional without being inexpensive.
- Ms. Soileau stated that the bridge, using design-build format, can be something iconic without “breaking the bank”.
- Ms. Soileau mentioned that staff was reaching out to Lake Charles North, since Sub-Alternatives A – E, would be designed as an extension of Sulphur Avenue in Westlake, across the Calcasieu River, into Lake Charles North. It is important to contact all potentially impacted stakeholders, so that any final plan is not stalled by public complaints of not being properly informed. Mayor Duncan inquired if HNTB can inform on what is required to lower the bridge, and then have Westlake and Lake Charles Council offer resolutions in support. Mr. Crain agreed since the details are the most crucial aspect of this type of mega-project.

B. FOR DISCUSSION: I-10 Bridge Preliminary Alternatives: Southwest Louisiana Toll Commission

- Ms. Soileau stated that is was a working title, “Southwest Louisiana Toll Commission”. Any bridge built could potentially be a design-build concessionaire tollway, meaning the entire process design, construction, and operations would be conducted by a single entity. People are likely to pay for the convenience.
- Ms. Soileau mentioned that U.S. DOT Secretary Elaine Chou reiterated for communities to not anticipate an abundance of federal infrastructure funds, especially tax reform being a major issue on Capitol Hill.
- TPC will meet with LaDOTD on the concept on November 17, 2017.

- Mr. Crain inquired about slowing down traffic from manned toll booths. Mr. Butch Babineaux explained that it will likely be unmanned booths, camera enabled with ID tag on car windshield. Ms. Soileau also mentioned cameras and toll tags. Drivers that don't have toll tags would receive bill in the mail, and if fees have become exorbitant for individual car owner, likely handled by other means.
- Ms. Soileau added that toll credits should be examined to see if they can be used to offset federal match, and keep money in the Southwest Louisiana. Mayor Hunter concurred that all options are on the table, including tolls. Mayor Hunter inquired if staff could identify firms that could perform a sketch analysis, providing an estimate of how much money would be generated from I-10, as well as impact of drivers diverting to I-210. Also requested staff to look at other bridges, such as new cable-stayed bridge in Charleston, SC.
- Mayor Hardey believed that there would not be a funding split scenario with local entities paying 80% and federal government 20%.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. FOR ACTION: I-210 Bridge Regional Traffic Study Update

- Mr. Vijay Kunada gave a presentation of the preliminary modeling results of the alternatives for lane closures on the I-210 re-decking project.
- The alternative scenarios were:
 - I-210 closed (completely)
 - Open one lane each direction
 - Open east bound lanes only
 - Open west bound lanes only
- The presentation explained volume increases and travel time delays on major roadways for each alternative scenario.
- Mr. Kunada requested, after TAC recommendation of Alternative B as the preferred alternative on 10/19/17, TPC final action. After the TPC's final action, Neel Schaffer could zoom in on strategies for mitigating impacts on the selected scenario.
- Mr. Kunada was asked by Mr. Crain about how final results would be displayed for the public. Mr. Kunada replied that presenting how travel times would be felt by drivers from major destinations was most effective means to communicate to public on these alternatives.
- Mr. Kunada recommended Alternative B, based on much lower comparable traffic impact.
- Mr. Kunada noted that a final public meeting would be in early December. It would be opportunity to present recommendations and

selected alternative, and get public feedback. Also, would be time to consider improvements, such as turning lanes.

- Alternative B (one lane in each direction) was deemed the preferred alternative to recommend to the TPC, given the following conditions:
 - Expected peak hour volumes and travel delay times be made available to the public in the final report.
 - Draft final report should be conveyed directly back to the focused stakeholder groups, especially emergency responders.
 - Specific coordination should be made with major employers and emergency services once final report is compiled.
 - Corridor improvements at most impacted intersections are noted to relevant stakeholders.
- Mayor Hardey motioned to accept Alternative B as the preferred alternative with aforementioned conditions, Duberville seconded. Motion carried unopposed.

B. FOR INFORMATION: Preparation for Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) FY 2019-22

- Mr. Magallon gave a briefing on the development of the TIP and the importance of LPA's submitting the stage 0 applications for projects to DOTD.
- Each municipality has to have a Responsible Charge that has taken LPA class. This person fills out the Responsible Charge form. Just needs to be anyone who can do a checklist and keep up with a schedule.
- Municipalities were still strongly encouraged to submit project applications to follow DOTD review process and to get a project number for inclusion in the TIP.

C. FOR INFORMATION: MTP 2045 Long Range Plan Update

- Ms. Soileau shared that there is an attorney examining the Stantec contract. The scope of the contract has been refined to include an assessment of toll financing. The revised contract should be sent to LaDOTD by December 2017.

D. FOR DISCUSSION: Invite Neighboring Jurisdictions to Regular TPC Meetings

- Ms. Soileau assessed that with the 2020 census approaching, finalizing population results by 2021, it would be appropriate to begin inviting some of the nearby town officials that may be part of an expanded Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) to regular TPC meetings. Ms. Soileau added that it would be an opportunity to identify shared impacts as well.
- Mayor Hardey and Mr. Crain had no opposition to the idea.

- Mr. Crain noted that new developments in places like Iowa, LA would like push them to merge with Lake Charles Urbanized Area.

E. FOR DISCUSSION: MPO Training for TAC and TPC Members


- Ms. Soileau suggested that the TAC and TPC members do a 3-hour training on the fundamentals of the committee by a recognized MPO Trainer from Florida. It would be good opportunity to reenergized and engage both committees.
- Ms. Soileau stressed that the TPC funds project. The TAC vets and recommends projects.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Hunter motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mayor Hardey.



Mayor Chris Duncan
Chair



Cheri Soileau
Executive/MPO Director