

SPECIAL TPC I-10 BRIDGE MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 26, 2021, 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM, SEED CENTER, 2ND FLOOR, WILLIS NOLAN ROOM,
4310 RYAN ST, LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA OR VIRTUAL CONFERENCE CALL

TPC MEMBERS PRESENT (QUORUM)

Wes Crain (Calcasieu Parish) (Chair)
Mayor Mike Bob Hardey (City of Westlake)
Mayor Nic Hunter (City of Lake Charles)
Mayor Mike Danahay (City of Sulphur)
Don Duberville (LaDOTD District 7) (Proxy was Seth Woods)

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Seth Woods

LCMPO STAFF

Michael Hollier (Executive/MPO Director)
Walter Council (Planner III)
Jamie Gaines (Special Projects Manager)
Michael Bernard (GIS Manager)

GUESTS

John Pohorelsky (Alliance I-10 Bridge Task Force)
George Swift (Alliance I010 Bridge Task Force)
Keith DeRousseau (Alliance I-10 Bridge Task Force)

1. OPENING

A. Welcome

B. Roll Call

Mr. Wes Crain called the meeting to order. Mr. Mike Hollier stated there was a quorum.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS/DISCUSSION

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

Staff shared Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommendations on alternative design and approaches proposed for the new I-10 Bridge across the Calcasieu River and associated costs. A decision will not be made at this TPC meeting. Instead, this is a discussion in preparation for a recommendation in a subsequent meeting is the purpose.

Ms. Jamie Gaines shared some of the previous TAC discussion:

- Alternate 3E with its Sampson Street exit.
- There is an issue of egress onto Sampson needing that a Kansas City Southern (KCS) rail spur be removed. Two proposals considered to mitigate that friction point.
 - KCS expressed they do not usually sell property but wanted to see elevation diagrams above the tracks.
 - There is some understanding that the rail spur has relatively minimal traffic, with the movement of only a couple of trains per year.
 - Furthermore, the tracks are within a proposed City of Westlake waterfront development. Currently, it appears that FHWA is supporting the City of Westlake's waterfront proposal.
 - Accordingly, the issue is being assessed by relevant parties with LaDOTD's Joe Umeozulu, the Project Manager for the I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge project.
- Staff requested to HNTB, on behalf of TAC, information on iconic features, including but not limited to LED lighting and/or an iconic bridge. Mr. Crain had expressed in previous meetings about an iconic element of this type. Ms. Gaines shared examples of functional and decorative cable-stayed bridge from HNTB.
 - A functional cable-stayed bridge is a complete support system through the cables but double cost of the bridge.
 - HNTB shared that less expensive non-functional decorative cable-stayed effects/features as a potential option. The decorative cable-stayed feature would provide the effects, without the functional support. The Tilikum Bridge in Portland, OR, was the example.
 - Also, HNTB shared that a feature added to bridges now has LED lighting, which can change colors or patterns with the seasons.
- Once HNTB diagrams have been approved by LaDOTD they will send LCMPO the illustrations.
- Mr. Crain expressed support for the decorative cable-stayed effect, calling it "very iconic".
- Mr. Crain opened up the meeting for discussion. He expressed appreciation to the TAC for their recommendations.
 - Mayor Hunter expressed that KCS' reluctance to sell their rail property at this point could be mitigated via expropriation, noting examples in other areas.
 - Ms. Gaines believes they will be able to negotiate with them.
 - Mr. Hollier noted that it was indicated that there were 4 local governments with interests in the bridge, via the MPO. When you have these iconic or decorative features, LaDOTD does not like to be responsible for the maintenance of those elements. Hence, it would

need to be established which of the 4 local MPO jurisdictions would be responsible, especially for maintaining the LED lighting? It would need to be an agreement between local government how they would maintain those type of elements.

- Mayor Hardey inquired about cost estimates for LED lighting, which would be available when HNTB provides diagrams to LaDOTD for review.
- Mr. Crain inquired when LCMPO could anticipate seeing renderings in elevation form to see how this would appear. Ms. Gaines suggested that the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would not be completed until the end of year or first part of 2022, which includes a railroad spur and an iconic feature assessment. Mr. Hollier suggested contracts may be discussed in 2022.
- Ms. Gaines shared that the Public Private Partnership (PPP) is part of this process. Mayor Hunter asked for elaboration on the PPP, which Ms. Gaines shared was non-contractual Canadian firm that had been on calls, but stressing it was not contractual.
- John Pohorelsky, expressed concern about that, which Mr. Hollier explained that LaDOTD is in discussion and has not signed or agreed to select any private investor at this time. Ms. Gaines added that they were only assessing feasibility. It is anticipated that third party investors would be considered during the PPP selection process. He further clarified there is interest from a Canadian firm, but no committed investor. Mr. Pohorelsky expressed that, the Alliance I-10 Task Force that he represents, felt that the PPP bidding process was very significant because they should be encouraged to provide those iconic feature concepts being discussed in their proposals. If a company was selected without a bidding process, the community would lose that leverage. He mentioned bridges around the country being built with PPP, saying that those bidders would add iconic features if the community desired it. He further expressed that he would appreciate having the Task Force be part of the on-going conversation, since he felt it had proven ability to be effective.
- Mayor Hunter asked if an RFP had been selected, which Mr. Seth Woods stated had not occurred.

B. Alliance I-10 Bridge Task Force

Alliance I-10 Bridge Task Force shared their opinions on the bridge:

Mr. Crain requested Mr. George Swift share Alliance I-10 Bridge Task Force information. Mr. Swift yielded to Mr. Keith DeRousseau.

- Mr. DeRousseau shared that during the Task Force's evaluation across the country of how PPP deliveries are implemented, they learned about elements like programmable LED lighting, aesthetic features, and bike/ped paths. These elements help the developer continue to generate interest over the long-term, plus softens shock of having a toll instead of free pathway. He further clarifies that these elements have many upsides, including quality of life, economic development, tourism, and bringing new opportunities to area on both sides of the bridge that have stagnated.
 - By examining similar sized communities, the research seemed to indicate that a tollway could competently finance these other elements, along with the main vehicular span.
- Mr. Crain expressed that all the main elements that the TPC and Task Force wanted to see had been noted in the meeting.

Bart Yakupzack, another Task Force member, requested that the TAC/TPC consider a motion to add a "shared use" bike/ped path. Hence, these amenities have many benefits, including softening the shock of a tollway:

- At a previous TAC meeting, he understood that the price of a bike lane or was basically 10% of a total estimated cost. So, if total estimated cost was \$1 billion for the I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge, then \$100 million would go to a feature like a bike/ped share use path.
- Usually cantilevered off edge of the bridge just for bike/ped mobility.
- He believes the amenities provide synergy for Westlake economic waterfront redevelopment, Lake Charles waterfront and downtown opportunities and along the I-10 corridor in the city. It would be a huge loss to the community to not pursue these amenities.
- He cited a recent bridge example from Charleston, SC, the Ravenel Bridge, designed to hold cyclist and pedestrians, which originally wasn't very popular, but a grassroots effort began to advocate for a shared use path, and was successful. They are now having 50,000 person races on the bridge.
- There are about 2 dozen of interstate bridges with shared use paths, some cantilevered, others in the median.
- Mr. DeRousseau asked the local Louisiana state delegation to talk with LaDOTD about making sure an old Louisiana statute that preventing bike/ped on interstate roadways is not interpreted in a way that prevents these desired amenities/elements.
- Mr. Hollier agreed that there were about 24 interstate bridges with bike/ped infrastructure on them. The cost of the bike/ped element

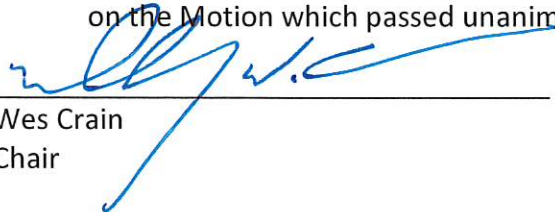
can be incorporated in the total cost of the bridge. It is not a separate item for local government to fund. The main concern from the TAC appeared to be additional cost a bike/ped path would have on the toll, not element itself. Whatever LCMPO and LaDOTD can agree on is relevant and can be incorporated into the total estimated cost.


- Mayor Hunter inquired about funding for the Ravenel Bridge. Mr. DaRousseau mentioned various funding mechanisms, including sales tax. If he recalled it had a sunset mechanism to help with cost.
- Mayor Hardey agreed that a shared use path could be very beneficial but was not sure if there would be enough movement across the bridge to support it. He also mentioned connecting a potential path with discussion on bike/ped on nearby pipeline right-of-way.
- Mr. Crain expressed it may be somewhat premature to eliminate these amenities, since still in conceptual phase and cost may not be available. We don't know what may happen in the next 30 – 50 years, with regards to economic development that City of Westlake and City of Lake Charles are trying to develop is very important.
- Mr. Carlos McCloud, from FHWA, offered a 2012 Tiger Grant example from Memphis, TN. An old railway bridge was retrofitted for bike/ped use from Arkansas into downtown Memphis, at a total cost of \$30 million grant (including other matches), which included 12 miles of utility, surface streets, and drainage improvements. It is very popular focal point as an overlook.
- Mr. Hollier mentioned example with brand new park, Gathering Place, featuring a new bike/ped bridge crossing from Tulsa, OK. Cost decreased from \$50 million to \$30 million. Still need to determine funding source.
- Mr. DeRousseau suggested a grassroots effort to support these amenities, I-10 Calcasieu Bridge corridor would help enhance a vastly different looking than it does today.

Mr. Crain inquired informally if they wanted to pursue the bike/ped element as an alternative. Mayor Hunter, Mayor Danahay, and Mr. Hardey all expressed support for a draft motion for TPC to consider at next meeting.

3. ADJOURNMENT

A Motion was made by Mayor Hunter to adjourn the Joint Meeting of the Lake Charles MPO committee. The Motion was seconded by Mr. Woods. The Chair called for a vote on the Motion which passed unanimously.


Wes Crain
Chair


Michael Hollier
Executive/MPO Director