

**MINUTES
OF THE
TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, August 18, 2009 ~ 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Bluebonnet Regional Library ~ Bluebonnet Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA**

Transportation Policy Committee Members present:

Hon. Melvin "Kip" Holden (TPC - Chair, Mayor-President-EBRP), Hon. Riley "Pee Wee" Berthelot (Vice-Chairman, President-WBRP), Hon. Barney Arceneaux (Mayor-City of Gonzales), Hon. Jimmy Durbin (Mayor-Denham Springs), Hon. Mike Grimmer, (President - Livingston Parish), Hon. Henry Martinez (Mayor-City of Zachary), Hon. Tommy Martinez (President – Ascension Parish), Hon. Harold Rideau (Mayor-City of Baker, Roy Schmidt (LA DOTD) and Jamie Setze (FHWA) .

The meeting was also attended by:

Ara Arman (GEC), Jackie Baumann (Ascension Parish), Jim Brewer (Brewer Group, LLC), Dan Broussard (LA DOTD), Mike Bruce (ABMB), Dr. Olin Dart (TAC-Chairman), Aaron Dupont (LA DOTD), Brandon Ellzey (Livingston Parish), John Fu (LA DOTD), R.J. Goebel (CRPC), Melissa Guilbeau (EBR-DPW), Bryan Harmon (EBR-DPW), Sherri Lebas (LA DOTD), Tingting Ma (CRPC), Yash Maheswarapu (CRPC), Don Neisler (CRPC), Yvonne Norwood (CRPC), Tom Pearce (SJB), Brad Ponder (CSRS), Don Powers (Powers Brewer, LLC), Laura Riggs (LA DOTD), Robin Romeo (LA DOTD), Karl Rothermel (AECOM), Dawn R. Sholmire (LA DOTD), Clay Stafford (City of Gonzales), Mary Stringfellow (FHWA), Gregroy Trahan (AECOM), Mike Vosburg (LA DOTD) and Yasoob Zia (LA DEQ).

1. INTRODUCTIONS

- Hon. Kip Holden - Chairman
 - The meeting was called the meeting to order and everyone was asked to identify themselves.

2. MPO ACTIVITY UPDATE

- Huey P. Dugas - CRPC
 - Mr. Dugas received a telephone call from an attorney in Austin, TX regarding CRPC's website, mainly the certification portion. She is under contract with some the MPO's in Texas to assist them with their certifications and stated that CRPC's website was one of the best that she'd seen. Mr. Dugas advised the attorney that he designed the website, but a former CRPC engineer actually developed it. In turn, Mr. Dugas forwarded that engineer's contact information to the inquiring attorney.
 - About a week ago, a meeting was held at DOTD and one of the concerns was the Eden Church Road Project in Livingston Parish as an ARRA Project. The complaint was dealing with the design as it would need right of way. Therefore, this project would never make the deadline. DOTD offered to substitute a project that is ready to go; which is LA 1024 in Livingston Parish. Mr. Dugas asked Ms. Labas to explain the LA 1024 project to the committee in more detail.

**Motion made by Hon. Mike Grimmer and Seconded by Hon. Barney Arceneaux to substitute the Eden Church Road Project with the LA 1024 Project in the TIP.
(Unanimous in favor)**

- There is a ramp being proposed on I-12 at Millerville Road in the westbound direction. This project is being designed and built by private developers; therefore it does not have to be advertised. This item needs to be included in the TIP.

Motion was made by Hon. Melvin Kip Holden and Seconded by Hon. Barney Arceneaux to add the ramp on I-12 at Millerville Road, westbound direction, to the TIP as it is being funded and built by private developers.

(Unanimous in favor)

- Mr. Dugas received a letter from FHWA stating that the Long Range Plan and the TIP are in conformity for air quality. They have been cleared by both EPA and FHWA. There is no reason for any project to be delayed.
- Mr. Dugas updated the committee on DOTD projects that are currently under construction; which can also be viewed on their website.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP) - (For Public Hearing and Adoption)

➤ R.J. Goebel - CRPC

- This document is a requirement of the federal regulations. It outlines the actions that CRPC will take towards community outreach and it complies with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- The plan has undergone the required 45 day comment period, which expired on July 28, 2009.
- Mr. Goebel opened the floor for an official public hearing, any additional comments and requested a motion for adoption.

Motion was made by Hon. Riley Berthelot and Seconded by Hon. Henry Martinez to adopt the Public Participation Plan (PPP).

(Unanimous in favor)

4. I-10 CORRIDOR PROJECT

➤ Mike Vosburg, P.E. - DOTD

- This project will widen I-10 from four lanes to six lanes from the 10/12 split to approximately 1500 feet past the Siegen lane overpass. It will encompass previous work that was completed during the I-10 Picardy Interchange project that widened a portion of the I-10 between Bluebonnet and Siegen. It will include a new bridge over Essen Lane that will be wider than the current structure.
- DOTD will also rebuild the bridge over Ward Creek between Essen Lane and Bluebonnet Boulevard. The new bridge will be approximately two feet higher than the current bridge and allow additional clearance in preparation for higher water levels in the creek due to increased run-off caused by future development in the area.
- Austin Bridge and Road is the contractor.
- It is a 950 calendar day project, it has a completion date in the fall of 2011 and the cost is \$86 million dollars.
- The project is currently in Phase I, Stage II, which means it is 8.3 percent complete and 19 percent of the time has elapsed.
- Pictures were shown of the construction area.

5. I-12 CORRIDOR PROJECT

➤ Aaron Dupont, P.E., James Construction

- This project widens I-12 from two lanes to three lanes eastbound from the west side of the O'Neal Lane overpass to just east of Pete's Highway and eastbound from just westbound of 4H Club Road to the west side of the O'Neal Lane overpass. Included in the widening will be a 12-foot inside and outside shoulders and a complete replacement of the eastbound and westbound bridges over the Amite River.
- James Construction Group is the contractor.
- This project has a completion date in November of 2011 and the cost is \$100 million dollars.
- To date, the project is 20 percent complete.
- Pictures were shown of the construction area.

6. MPO CERTIFICATION UPDATE

➤ Jamie Setze, Planning & Research Engineer - FHWA

- According to federal law, if a city has a population greater than 200, 000 people, a review must be performed every 4 years.
- The certification review dates were January 6, 7 & 8, 2009.
- Four to six months after the review, a summary is generated with the status which could be one of the following four:
 - Certified
 - Certified with conditions
 - Certified with conditions and restrictions
 - Decertified
- All of the corrective action items were overviewed along with the status of this MPO, which is certified with conditions and restrictions. There are 2 crucial timeline dates in which many of the items are due; September 1, 2009 and February 1, 2010. If all items have been completed by the required dates, the conditions and restrictions will not be outlined. However, if the items fail to make the deadline dates, the conditions and restrictions will be outlined.
- FHWA has been having by-weekly meetings with CRPC in order to overview the actions to date.
- After the review in February 2010, CRPC will be reevaluated and upgraded to certified.
- Mr. Dugas updated the committee on the progress of the corrective actions.
- A new congestion mitigation air quality of CMAQ project selection process is required. DOTD agreed to take the lead on this process as they would come up with a statewide CMAQ project selection process.
- Mayor-President Holden made the statement, “Do you see any problems with the “one size fits all” approach?”
- In response, Mr. Setze stated that the CMAQ program monies would be spent on the highest bang for the buck return and it issues air quality benefits to non-attainment or maintenance regions. The US Department of Transportation, EPA and FTA have jointly issued guidance on the types of projects that they like to see.
- Historically within the state of Louisiana, there were two non-attainment areas; Baton Rouge and Lake Charles. The monies, in the past, had been split by a population formula.
- Rather than going to a regular formula base system, DOTD would like to manage the CMAQ program on a statewide basis as Ms. Romeo stated there are other non-attainment areas within the state that also qualify for the CMAQ funds.
- Mayor-President Holden stated that this process weakens the system and he feels that a discussion is in order to allow all the bodies involved, an opportunity to outline the pros and cons of this process. Once that is done, a meeting should be held to consider the recommendations.
- Ms. Stringfellow stated in the past, other MPO’s in the state were not eligible for the CMAQ funding. However, those MPO’s are aware of the law and have come directly to FHWA regarding their share as they are now eligible.

7. DISCUSSION OF THE MPO PROCESS FOR FUNDING PROJECTS

- Nothing further was to be discussed.

8. ADJOURNMENT

- Hon. Melvin “Kip” Holden motioned to adjourn, seconded by Hon. Riley Berthelot