

Capital Area Road and Bridge District Meeting Minutes

Time/Date: 2:00 p.m., March 31, 2025

Location: Louisiana State Capital
Senate Committee Room “E”

Members Present: Chairman, Mr. J. H. Campbell, Jr., Governor’s Appointee
Mr. Fred Raiford (representing East BR Parish Mayor/President Sid Edwards)
Mr. Daniel Helms (representing Parish President Clint Cointment), Ascension Parish
Mr. Wally Avara (representing Parish President Randy Delatte), Livingston Parish
Secretary Joe Donahue, DOTD
Parish President Chris Daigle, Iberville Parish

Member Absent: No Representative from the Parish of West Baton Rouge was in attendance.

❖ Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Minutes:

Minutes from the December 16, 2024, were approved, on motion made by Mr. Raiford and seconded by President Daigle.

Next on the Agenda, there was an update on the progress being made by DOTD and Atlas Technical Consultants, LLC., since the last meeting, on the Bridge Project, and its identified tasks and timelines.

- A. Introduction of Representative(s) of DOTD – Ms. Christina Brignac.
- B. Comments from Representative(s) of DOTD.
- C. Other Bridge Project updates from attending representatives of DOTD.
- D. Comparison of Timelines and Tasks to actual performance by Atlas.
- E. Further updates on the three remaining alternatives for potential Bridge location.
- F. Report on amount of funds expended/disbursed by DOTD to Atlas.
- G. Status of Phase II.

Reports available at www.mrbsouth.com

Christina Brignac, the Project Manager, of DOTD reported on the bridge project along with Kara Moree of Atlas Technical as follows:

1. Pre-NEPA field work, Wetlands Report, and the Cultural Resources field report have been completed.
2. NEPA is anticipated to start in April of 2025.
3. Public Meetings will be held in the Third Quarter of 2025.
4. The final Geotech Report including investigations of soil testing, landowner access, deep borings, and weather conditions would be submitted in Quarter 2 of 2025.
5. Traffic submittals and Phase I Environmental Site Assessment are under review by DOTD, and the tolling analysis is being finalized.
6. NEPA completion is anticipated in the Spring of 2026.

It was stated that the preferred alternative would be selected and public meetings held before the end of the calendar year 2025.

Campbell asked if public meeting locations have been identified and was told that they have not, but likely there would be 4 public meetings.

Once the preferred alternative is selected, there would be a public hearing.

President Daigle asked about when the cost estimates will be made public and was told they would be available at the public meetings along with a conceptual design of the bridge.

Campbell asked about what has been done in past 6 months; Ms. Moree responded Geotech work, topographic survey, subsurface utility analysis, cultural resource investigations, wetlands field investigation, traffic analyses, toll analysis, conceptual design and cost estimates.

Mr. Helms inquired about whether this project will move forward as an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement. Sec. Donahue said the federal government makes that determination and to date the federal government agency has indicated this should qualify as an environmental assessment.

Mr. Campbell inquired about the idea of going ahead and dropping an alternative and Sec. Donahue highlighted why the full analysis needs to be completed with the current three alternatives in order to decide on a preferred alternative, but he indicated DOTD is closely coordinating with FHWA on a final decision.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Chairman Campbell called for public comments. He reminded all in attendance that the **Capital Area Road and Bridge District (CARB-D)** does not make any decision about the actual location of the site where the Bridge would make its crossing. He reminded all in attendance that the CARB-D was created as a Taxing District, and the entities involved in the site selection process were the DOTD, and their Contract Consultant, Atlas Technical and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Campbell asked if there was any opposition to any of the proposed crossings other than **Location E-11-(IV)**.

All Public Comments were received only on **Location E-11-(IV)**, as follows:

Speaking in **Opposition** to **Location E-11-(IV)** were:

Carrie Causey Blaize, Bob Causey, Clifford Comeau; Laura Comeau; Lydia Haydel; and Philip LeBlanc

Opposition views covered such areas as the impact on drainage and the Cypress Forest and its 300–400-year-old trees being removed or damaged. One concern was about saving Plaquemine Point, and the location of the bridge greatly affecting the lives of various species of animals.

All landowners wanted to receive notice of any and all meetings of the public. Again, it was noted that such Cypress trees are allegedly protected by state laws.

The Corps of Engineers has jurisdiction over wetlands determinations. Sec. Donahue also noted that the Federal Government makes the decision about whether an EA or an EIS is required. Sec. Donahue reminded all that the FHWA makes the final decision on the preferred bridge site alternative.

ADJOURNMENT: Chairman Campbell called for a motion to adjourn. Motion to adjourn was offered by President Daigle.

Without objection, the meeting was deemed adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Secretary of CARB-D

President Chris Daigle, Iberville Parish

Attest:

J.H. Campbell, Jr. Chairman of CARB-D