

Capital Area Road and Bridge District Meeting Minutes

Time/Date: 2:00 PM, March 29, 2021

Location: Senate Committee Room E, State Capitol

Members Present: Chairman, Mr. J. H. Campbell, Jr., Governor's Appointee
Parish President Clint Cointment, Ascension Parish
Mr. Fred Raiford (representing Mayor-President Sharon Broome), E. B. R. Parish
Parish President Riley Berthelot, West Baton Rouge Parish
Dr. Shawn Wilson, Secretary, DOTD
Mr. Hank Grace (representing Parish President Mitch Ourso), Iberville Parish

Member Absent: Parish President Layton Ricks, Livingston Parish

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

Minutes:

Minutes from the December 14th, 2020 Meeting were approved, on motion made by Raiford and seconded by Berthelot.

Reports from Consultants and DOTD:

Connie Betts presented a report on LA 415 and Highway 30

LA 415:

Currently under design – changes to footprint has prompted an environmental reevaluation that will be finished by March of 2023.

Berthelot says he has met with DOTD, and new route appears better and will avoid a possible economic development project and allow better flow on LA 1.

Sec. Wilson explained original timeline had environmental completed by the end of 2021. New environmental process is required to get federal funds.

Highway 30

Consultant selected for environmental, and contract expected in next 30 days. No schedule on environmental document.

Update on South Bridge Environmental

Next Presenters:

Paul Vaught – DOTD Project Manager

Kara Moree – Project Manager for Atlas

1. They provided project overview - including some results of navigational study, preliminary road, and bridge design, and three traffic components.
2. Currently working on possible corridors based on the preliminary work.
3. Project informational website has been established – <https://www.mrbsouth.com>
4. Public Meetings scheduled for Spring 2022.
5. 36% of Part I work completed.

Berthelot asked if investment grade study would be done – Vaught told him only an intermediate toll study would be done.

Raiford asked about where a bridge could be located given the navigational constraints - Vaught indicated locations were constrained but the navigational analysis done was only preliminary.

Mr. Grace asked if the information could be provided in a more detailed or clear manner and was told much of the material was in a preliminary form and would be provided in more detail when finalized.

Sec. Wilson highlighted how presentation slides were simply for illustrative purposes.

President Cointment asked that presentations be sent to members prior to the meeting and Mrs. Moree agreed to do such.

Mr. Raiford asked about what data was being used for traffic modeling? Mrs. Moree indicated they are using 2019 data.

Mr. Berthelot inquired whether a willing partner would do an investment grade study and Mr. Wilson indicated this was unlikely.

Mr. Campbell inquired about most significant steps since last meeting; Mrs. Moree said screening methodology was most significant accomplishment.

Mr. Campbell inquired about the differences between what has been accomplished now versus the studies over the last 10 years. Mr. Wilson indicated it was not possible to compare the two. Past studies have looked at bigger areas, while this one is just focused on the crossing. This effort is more focused and has some private funding opportunities. Public outreach must also be refreshed.

Mr. Campbell asked if anything has changed to speed up the schedule? Mr. Vaught said they are on schedule, and he does not see much opportunity to move faster but did indicate there may be some opportunity to accelerate the schedule during Part II.

Mr. Campbell brought forth the following resolution:

Whereas, the Capital Area Road and Bridge District (CARB-D) was statutorily created to develop a plan of action and actually take the necessary steps to put into place and motion those regulatory tests, approvals, reviews, analyses, permits, and site location for a new bridge to cross the Mississippi River between Louisiana Highway One (1) on the west side, and Louisiana Highway Thirty (30) on the east side; and

Whereas, the CARB-D was also authorized to consider certain funding mechanisms in order to assist in the funding of the planning and construction of said bridge; and

Whereas, a new bridge across the Mississippi River is greatly needed and wanted by the residents on the Parishes of East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, Ascension, Iberville, and Livingston, and all of the motoring public which currently uses the current Wilkinson Bridge on a regular and routine basis; and

Whereas, the safety and national security interests of the United States of America and the Federal Government, and the quality of life of all users, would also be greatly served and improved by the addition of a new bridge across the Mississippi River as proposed by the statutory authorization of the CARB-D; and

Whereas, recent Federal Legislation over the last several months has authorized the payment and receipt of billions of dollars by the state of Louisiana, which by statute, can be used on infrastructure projects and needs as determined by the state and its Governor and State Legislature;

Whereas, Federal Infrastructure legislation is being considered that may send billions of additional dollars to Louisiana for projects such as a Mississippi River Bridge in the Baton Rouge area;

***Whereas,** State legislation is being considered that may appropriate billions of Federal dollars for infrastructure projects in the state of Louisiana.*

***Therefore,** the Capital Area Road and Bridge District (CARB-D) respectfully requests that the Governor of the State of Louisiana and the Louisiana Legislature appropriate and direct the allocation of sufficient funds such that this bridge can be planned, with specifications, and fully funded so that its construction can occur by the year 2029.*

A motion to approve was made by Mr. Berthelot and second by Mr. Raiford and it was approved unanimously.

There were no public comments.

Meeting adjourned

Secretary of CARB-D

Riley Berthelot, President of West Baton Rouge Parish

Attest:

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