

Capital Area Road and Bridge District Meeting Minutes

Time/Date: 2:00 PM, June 28, 2021

Location: Senate Committee Room E, State Capitol

Members Present: Chairman, Mr. J. H. Campbell, Jr., Governor's Appointee
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
Parish President Clint Cointment, Ascension Parish

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

Minutes:

Minutes from the March 29, 2021 Meeting were approved, on motion made by Mr. Berthelot and seconded by Raiford.

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:

Paul Vaught – DOTD Project Manager

Kara Moree – Project Manager for Atlas Technical Consultants, LLC

- A. Introduction of Representative(s) of Atlas Technical Consultants, LLC.
- B. Comments from Representative(s) of Atlas Technical Consultants, LLC.
- C. Other Bridge Project updates from attending representatives of DOTD.
- D. Comparison of Timelines and Tasks to actual performance by Atlas.
- E. Report on amount of funds expended/disbursed by DOTD to Atlas.

Provided project overview, Project Workflow Part 1

Reports available at www.mrbsouth.com

- Project team members and objective (to construct a new crossing of the Mississippi River in the Greater Baton Rouge area)...Latest Timeline:
 - Part I, Enhanced Planning (July 2020-Summer 2022)
 - Part II, Environmental Evaluation (Summer/Fall 2022 – Summer 2024)
- Study Area (approx. 62 river miles from I-10 bridge to Sunshine Bridge in Donaldsonville)
- Project Workflow (pre-screen - complete, Round 1 screen – Fall 2021, public meetings – Spring 2022, Round 2 screen – Summer 2022)
- Completed Reports (navigation study engineering report; travel demand model {TDM})
- Screening Methodology (plausible & reasonable, avoiding highly sensitive resources, incorporate travel demand information, technical bridge design constraints and considerations)- almost complete.
 - Plan is to go from 32 alternatives (Pre-Screen) to 15 alternatives (Round 1 Screening) before the next meeting of CARB-D in September of 2021, and then to 3 alternatives (Round 2 Screening)
 - Round 1 Screening: 4(f) properties, protected critical species’ habitats, travel demand modeling; matrix table for decision-making

Traffic Demand Model Development & Validation (developed from CRPC’s model with supplementation for this specific project; develop forecasts for “no build” and “build” conditions). Current model should predict current situations and will then be calibrated to accurately predict future traffic models. Information available on the project management website. Everything in the MPO area has to comply and it is built into the process. Nothing in this MPO is built that is contradictive to their model. This is the standard of practice across the country. No build model should be on website in about a week.

- Travel Demand Model Screening (forecast traffic volumes, Average Daily Traffic {ADT}; forecast congestion relief, Vehicle-Hours Traveled {VHT})

Public Involvement - CRISIS presentation; East Iberville Community Advisory Panel; and, on-going as needed. Will start public meetings in Spring of 2022 as information becomes more available.

- Overall progress on Phase I to-date (51% work complete; 49% time elapsed; 28% funds disbursed)

- 3rd Quarter CARB-D meeting (in September) - Refined Purpose and Need; remaining pre-screen and Round 1 reports / screening technical memo, and maps depicting all Round 1 Alignments to be carried into The Round 2 Screening.; and future year build model technical memo.

During the presentation, questions were asked by Commissioners or their Designees about and responses provide by the two presenters :

- What happened to the alternatives that were shown earlier in the process?

Response: We wanted to consider ALL alternatives and not just those originally that were shown.

- Are screening categories equally weighted?

Response: Each of the screening categories are equally weighted, but there are trade-offs when comparing alternatives and those trade-offs need to be examined.

- Where is the project team at with respect to filling-out the matrix?

Response: The team is looking at all of the alternatives during a screening exercise on June 29th, 2021. The results of the screening will then be presented to La. DOTD.

- Can you please explain what CRPC is and what is their role in the traffic modeling?

Response: CRPC is the Capital Region Planning Commission, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (“MPO”) that covers the whole project area and they have developed an initial model that the study team used to look at travel demand implications of the proposed crossing. CRPC’s base model was deemed to be appropriate and reasonable. CRPC has the subject matter expertise to perform modeling as well as the federal endorsement that lends credibility to modeling and funding being done at the local and regional level.

- Do any of the current alignment considerations look as if they might trigger significant delays {e.g. 4(f)}

Response: All of these 4 (f) considerations are being determined during the Round 1 screening which is on-going and many of those project delivery difficulty trigger-points will be identified during the Round 1 screening. Round 2 screening will have even more screening criteria incorporated.

- Does immediate funding availability expedite the environmental review of the project alternatives?

Response: Funding availability does not necessarily accelerate the environmental process or approval but following the environmental review and approval process (e.g. design and construction) may be impacted in subsequent steps with funding availability. La DOTD is not necessarily able to bond out funding without spending it, so it is important that the environmental work and clearances be complete before La DOTD can get more aggressive with project delivery. Funding availability may accelerate a “record of decision” review. The State

must have a “financial plan” in place for projects over \$500M before it can secure a record of decision. Funding, also, often is tied to the “next appropriate phase” of a project. Once funding is secured, DOTD can move forward in an aggressive way after environmental process and approval, but certain clearances must be secured first.

There were no further questions, and the presenters were dismissed with the thanks of the Chairman.

NEW BUSINESS: Chairman Campbell referred to a bill passed by the Louisiana Legislature in their recently concluded 2021 regular session that is currently awaiting the Governor’s signature dealing with infrastructure funding. Chairman Campbell also referred to the federal efforts to pass a new funding package for infrastructure as well. With these multiple legislative instruments, Chairman Campbell expressed his desire to see a dedicated funding stream secured for the Mississippi River Bridge project. Secretary Wilson expressed that this project is a Department (DOTD) priority and may require innovative delivery. Secretary Wilson also spoke to the federal infrastructure funding efforts that are being discussed at this time as well as the fact that the Department is eager to see the final outcome of those efforts.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Chairman Campbell called for public comments. There were none.

ADJOURNMENT: Seeing no public comments, Chairman Campbell called for a motion to adjourn. Motion to adjourn was offered by Mr. Raiford. Without objection, the meeting was deemed adjourned at 2:53pm.

Secretary of CARB-D

Riley Berthelot, President of West Baton Rouge Parish

Attest:

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