

Capital Area Road and Bridge District Meeting Minutes

Time/Date: 3:00 p.m., March 28, 2022

Location: Senate Committee Room F, State Capitol

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

Member Absent: Parish President Layton Ricks, Livingston Parish

❖ Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Minutes:

Minutes from the December 13, 2021 Meeting were approved, on motion made by Mr. Raiford and seconded by Ourso.

Next on the Agenda, was the 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, absent.

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.

Reports available at www.mrbsouth.com

Kara Moree (Atlas) provided a PowerPoint presentation update on the project. Ms. Moree reviewed the project team, project objectives and project workflow.

Previously, Round 1 screenings had reduced alternative locations or crossings to seventeen with fifteen alternatives being eliminated. However, three alternatives were added back to a total of twenty alternatives based on a reassessment of the required bridge length.

Ms. Moree further discussed where they were in the timeline and the meeting with navigational interests including the River Pilots. Based on these conversations, ten alternatives were eliminated leaving ten alternative sites.

Ms. Moree further highlighted upcoming scheduled public meetings during the end of April and the month of May. She further indicated that the final three (3) alternatives will be selected by the end of May. She also indicated that the start of Phase II of the NEPA process during the Summer of 2022. It was also noted that there is an urgent need for a funding plan in order to secure a Record of Decision

Several Commissioners asked questions or made pointed comments.

Berthelot highlighted how the bridge's funding legislative appropriation is at risk and wondered if three sites could be selected before Mid-May and Ms. Moree indicated that it was possible that the final selections could be determined by then.

Mr. Campbell asked about moving up the dates of the public hearings and was told the meetings were already set at the earliest times.

Mr. Diaz asked about the scoring and its weighting and Ms. Moree indicated each factor would be weighted fairly equally. She indicated public input would be very important. Mr. Diez also asked about assessing the cost of expanding the connector of Highway 30 to Interstate 10 in Ascension Parish. Sec. Wilson said that this matter will be a factor but one that will be easier to determine when a fewer number of crossings alternatives will be considered.

Mr. Raiford highlighted the need for public comment in this process. He expressed concern with the locations in EBR and the potential of using existing roadways in the EBR parish to get bridge traffic to the Interstate 10. He did highlight how EBR wants and needs another bridge and that a bridge is considered necessary.

Mr. Ourso thank Ms. Moree for their work.

Mr. Campbell emphasized the need for the people in the region to not be parochial but to consider what is truly best for the entire Capital Region.

Mr. Raiford highlighted the importance of having some state funding in place to make the bridge more attractive for federal support and funding.

Nest, Mr. Setze of the Capital Region Planning Commission (CRPC) explained the role of CRPC and spoke on how any federal funding for the bridge would come through the CRPC. CRPC has been charged with modeling for the bridge and part of that work occurred four years ago when a move started to make the widening of LA Hwy. 30 as a priority. DOTD is negotiating with consultants to do an environmental review for such widening. CRPC will be applying for the right of way funds for Highway 30. He indicated that it might be challenged by not having an environmental process completed. CRPC will continue work on the LA Hwy 415 to LA Hwy -1 connector. He further referenced and highlighted the importance of the state only sending one project at a time.

Mr. Diaz highlighted the considerable dollar amount of funds being focused on projects announced for Highway 30 and the need to widen Highway 30 as soon as possible. He indicated that the Ascension Parish government is willing to help fund the right of way costs for Highway 30.

Mr. Berthelot inquired about right of way costs compared with the costs of elevating a highway. Mr. Wilson indicated elevations are much more expensive.

Mr. Wilson agreed to work with each local partner as much as possible. He did highlight how setting the final location of the bridge site is the first step in making a more informed conversation on the connectors.

Mr. Campbell inquired about the \$500 million recommended and proposed by the Governor and Mr. Wilson highlighted the need for this money to compete nationally. Sec. Wilson said that the state cannot get a permit for the bridge without a funding plan. He compared this situation to the funding secured for the Hwy 415 and LA 1 connector as a recipe for success.

Then, Senator Ward commented that securing a sufficient appropriation requires money and teamwork. He indicated there was a good opportunity to secure the necessary funding with the support from the Baton Rouge regional legislative delegation. He urged consensus around the selected location and emphasized that this bridge was a statewide needed and necessary project.

Mr. Campbell thanked Senator Ward for forming CARB-D and securing the past seed funding.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Chairman Campbell called for public comments.

Mr. Mayeaux made public comments

Ms. Landry made public comments

Mr. Campbell highlighted how Shreveport made strategic transportation investments decades ago and has benefitted from those decisions. He also responded again to the public comments

that CARB-D is not involved in the Interstate-10 widening project but welcomed citizens to meet with their elected officials and express their concerns to them accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT: Chairman Campbell called for a motion to adjourn. Motion to adjourn was offered by Mr. Berthelot.

Without objection, the meeting was deemed adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Secretary of CARB-D

Riley Berthelot, President of West Baton Rouge Parish

Attest:

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