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## **Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Policy Committee**

### **MINUTES**

**Friday, January 17, 2025 (9:00 AM)**

Government Chambers at Government Plaza  
505 Travis St., Shreveport, LA 71101

#### **Members' Present**

Mayor Tom Arceneaux – City of Shreveport  
Mr. Alan Clarke – MPC City of Shreveport  
Mr. Butch Ford – Bossier Parish  
Mr. Michael Norton – DeSoto Parish  
Mr. Eric England – Port of Caddo-Bossier  
Mrs. Erica Bryant – Caddo Parish  
Mr. David North – LaDOTD District 04  
Mr. Dinero' Washington – SporTran  
Mr. Bruce Blanton – Webster Parish

#### **Members Absent**

Mrs. Carlotta Askew-Brown – MPC City of Bossier City  
Mayor Tommy Chandler – City of Bossier City

#### **Others Present**

Mr. Kent Rogers – NLCOG  
Mr. Chris Petro – NLCOG  
Mrs. Savannah Williams – NLCOG  
Mrs. Heidi Stewart - NLCOG  
Mr. Adam Driskill - NLCOG  
Mrs. Rita Arnold – NLCOG  
Dr. Shelly Barrett – NLCOG  
Mr. Josh Chevallier – NLCOG Legal Council  
Ms. Ellen Soll – ATG (Alliance Transportation Group)

### **Call to Order**

Mr. Ford called the meeting to order. He stated that we generally have an invocation, roll call and a pledge at the beginning of the meeting. Mr. Ford said that he was going to ask Mayor Arceneaux to lead us in prayer and Mrs. Bryant to lead us in the pledge. He asked if those that cared to join them to please stand. Mayor Arceneaux began the invocation followed by Mrs. Bryant, leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Ford asked Mr. Rogers to begin the roll call. Mr. Rogers called roll. A quorum was present.

## Public Comments

Mr. Ford asked if there were any public comments. Mr. Chevallier stated they had one comment and reminded him of the allotted three minutes.

**Mr. Perkins** said, “Good Morning”, and that he was there to speak, as usual, on I-49 through Allendale. Mr. Perkins said that they had met last night for the first time of the year, their twelfth year of meeting together and they had a great meeting. It appears that they’re ready to start building again despite objections of some of their friends in route to begin building houses in Allendale. Community Renewal is still going strong. They’re working together to build the neighborhood up. Mr. Perkins said that it starts this year, so they’re excited to see how that works out. The street that they meet on has cracks in the concrete and he’s not sure if it’s from the repair they were doing for the waterline. It’s on Ford Street, just a couple of blocks away. It’s causing people to drive all over the street just to park. Traffic jams on that residential street deserve some attention too.

Mr. Perkins said that the other thing they were going to begin documenting is the removal of I-345 this year in Dallas. That will be for national distribution and all their time working with their friends in Strong Town to keep information up with what modern cities are doing. Dallas is removing their second interstate while we’re still spending time and money planning to build an old fashioned nineteen fifties elevated highway through a neighborhood. It’s just not done anywhere anymore. They’re going strong this year and he appreciates their time.

## Business

### 1. Approval of Minutes

The next item on the agenda was for approval of the minutes for the December 06, 2024, meeting. Mr. Washington motioned, and Mr. England seconded to approve the minutes as provided. Mr. Ford called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

### 2. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Amendments and Modifications

Mr. Rogers stated there were several things to address under Amendments and Modifications. Under Administrative Modifications they had none. Under Amendments for Introduction for Public Comment there were two. First was the KCS Railroad Overpasses HBI. Second was the Kings Hwy: Healthcare and Development Corridor, which was the RAISE grant the city received. The KCS RR Overpasses HBI is to add the construction phase/funding source for 2025. The Kings Hwy project is adding the engineering in FFY 2025 and construction in FFY 2026 for the RAISE. Both are for the Introduction for Public Comment.

Mr. Rogers said that on the next page were the Amendments for Adoption and were presented at the last meeting. The first is the I-20: Monkhouse to Lakeshore Dr. It’s actually a rename. The original name was Monkhouse to I-49. It’s been scoped down from Monkhouse to Lakeshore. Adding the funding for that and moving the construction phase to 2028, which will remove it from the current TIP. Mr. Rogers said that it doesn’t kill the project, it just removes it from the current TIP.

Next is the US80: KCS Overpass (HBI). Again, moving it out of the current construction phase of the TIP to 2027.

US 71: ICG Railroad Overpass Rehab (HBI) – Construction year moved to FFY 2027, therefore removed from current TIP.

Mr. Rogers said continuing with Amendments for Adoption:

US 71: Market St Bridge over ICG RR (HBI) – Construction phase moved from FFY2025 to FFY2027; therefore, removing it from current TIP.

US 80: Bridges near Minden – Adding the Engineering Design phase to FFY 2025; Construction moved to FFY 2027; therefore, removing it from current TIP.

LA 3008: Bridges near Cotton Valley – Construction moved from FFY 2025 to FFY 2027; therefore, remove from TIP.

From the MPO under the 200k funds, we have no Administrative Modifications in the amendments. And there are no amendments for the Introduction for Public Comments. Mr. Rogers stated there were a few Amendments for Adoption and were introduced at the last meeting. The first two are kind of combined. Adding the Environmental Phase for I-69 Frontage Rd Conn (Stonewall Frierson) to FFY 2025. Because the Construction Phase would fall out of the current TIP cycle, it would be pushing the Construction Phase out of the current TIP. The Environmental Phase covers all three segments of that corridor. The last is the Oil City Shared Use Path. That was a request to remove the project from the City of Oil City.

Mr. Rogers said in terms of Transit Programming, there are no Amendments for Administrative Modifications, for Introduction or Adoption.

Mr. Ford asked if there were any further questions. Having none, Mr. Ford entertained a motion to Approve the Adoption of the Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications and Amendments. Mr. Clarke motioned, and Mr. England seconded. Mr. Ford called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

### **3. Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan – 2025 Update (Adoption)**

Mr. Rogers said the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan – 2025 Update was introduced at the last meeting for Public Comment, and they've received no comments. This is coordination between SporTran, community service agencies, Council on Aging and all the various transit providers within the ten-parish region. Mr. Rogers said that the primary changes within the plan at this time are updating the demographics across the area and updating from the different entities what facilities and equipment they have in place, including what's been retired and what's been brought in new and any changes to their service area.

Mr. Ford asked if there were any further questions. Having none, Mr. Ford entertained a motion to Approve the Adoption of the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan Fiscal Year 2025. Mr. Washington motioned, and Mr. England seconded. Mr. Ford called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

### **4. Regional Active Transportation Plan – ATG - NLCOG Regional Active Transportation Plan (Adoption) - NLCOG Regional Active Transportation Plan Design Guidelines**

Mr. Rogers stated the next item on the agenda was the Regional Active Transportation Plan. It was introduced at the last meeting and is up for adoption today. Ms. Ellen Soll with ATG will be giving the presentation.

Ms. Soll thanked them for the opportunity to come and present to them again on the Regional Active Transportation Plan. Ms. Soll stated that again, her name is Ellen Soll, and she's with Alliance Transportation Group. She will be presenting first on the Regional Active Transportation Plan, which is being considered for adoption today, and then she will also present on the Safe Streets For All Regional Safety Plan.

***(Please see Mrs. Soll's presentation below in the attached documents)***

Ms. Soll stated that last time when she came and presented to them, they opened up the public comment period and for two weeks they did receive ten comments from the public. They looked at each and every one of them to see how the best way was to address them. Mrs. Soll said that she had some notes on the slides about how they addressed them. In most cases they did incorporate the feedback and made some minor changes to the facility recommendation and that they're still in line with the appropriate context. So, they feel that that could be a safe option. They had one situation where they actually had some incorrect assumptions, and they really appreciate people looking at the details there.

Mrs. Soll said they ask for their favorable consideration of adoption of the final plan.

Mr. Ford asked if there were any further questions. Having none, Mr. Ford entertained a motion to Adopt the Regional Active Transportation Plan. Mr. England motioned, and Mr. Washington seconded. Mr. Ford called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

## **5. SS4A Regional Safety Plan – ATG**

### **A. Northwest Louisiana Safe Streets For All Regional Safety Action Plan (Introduction)**

Mrs. Soll stated that now she was going to talk about the Safe Streets For All Plan (SS4A) and they are asking them to open up for the Public Comment period today. She said they're a month behind for this one as compared to the previous plan they just talked about. Again, ATG is the prime consultant, but with a different project team.

***(Please see Mrs. Soll's presentation below in the attached documents)***

Mr. Ford asked if there were any further questions. Having none, Mr. Ford entertained a motion to Introduce the NLCOG Safe Streets For All Regional Active Transportation Plan for Public Comment. Mayor Arceneaux motioned, and Mr. Clarke seconded. Mr. Ford called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

### **B. 2025 Annual Safety Performance Measures Report (Introduction)**

Mr. Rogers said the next thing on the agenda falls right in line with everything they've just gone over. It's part of the DOTD process and the Federal process or thinking and it's the Adoption of Annual Safety Performance Targets. They've seen this before in the past of the different annual performance targets and they're based off of a five-year rolling average. Mr. Rogers said he was going to let Mr. Petro go from here.

Mr. Petro said that the action they're considering today is the Introduction of the 2025 Annual Safety Performance Measures Report. This is for the five safety performance measures that are required by the state, DOTD's, and all MPO's. Mr. Petro stated that the next slide provides the regulations that are required by the FTA, FHWA, State DOTD's, and MPO's to update their safety performance measures on an annual basis. There are five measures: Fatalities, Suspected Serious Injuries, Non-Motorized Fatalities and Suspected Serious

Injuries, the Rates for Fatalities, and the Rates for Suspected Serious Injuries. Mr. Petro stated that this slide represents how they are utilize, through the LSU CARTS program down in Baton Rouge, this tool they put together for all the MPO's in the State of Louisiana. You can tell from this chart that it provides Shreveport specifically on the right-hand side what the trends are for the five-year movement averages for those five respected performance measures and how they compare those against how the state is performing. As you can tell, you can't compare. It's apples to oranges when it comes to raw numbers for fatalities, suspected serious injuries, and non-motorized fatalities. The rates themselves, you can compare the two between the state and our region. The rates are important because it compares vehicle miles travelled. As you can see, when it comes to the fatality rate, they did a little better than the average for the state overall and slightly better when it comes to suspected serious injury rates. With that being said, they're continuing to work alongside Dr. Shelly Barrett with the Safety Coalition and NLCOG. That's why what Mrs. Soll presented with her team of ATG and DCCM is important with the Safe Roads For All plan. Mr. Petro said that they'll be able to utilize that information for infrastructure projects that will attempt to drive these numbers even further down as they go forward. There's an actual target report and they follow what the state has established as far as what our target is. We take a one percent decrease for 2025. This is actually what needs to be considered and what's being introduced today. On the twenty-first of February there will be a final consideration by the MPO board.

Mr. Ford asked if there were any further questions. Having none, Mr. Ford entertained a motion to Introduce the 2025 Annual Safety Performance Measures Report. Mr. Clarke motioned, and Mr. Norton seconded. Mr. Ford called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

#### **6. I-49 ICC – I-49 ICC Project Status Quarterly Update (DOTD & Providence Team)**

Mr. Rogers said that the next item on the agenda was the I-49 ICC Project Status Quarterly Update. Unfortunately, Mrs. Oriol was unable to be here today due to a family emergency. He was going to cover part of the presentation and pass it along between the consultants' team and DOTD for some of the various aspects of the program.

Mr. Rogers stated that the project team includes: FHWA, DOTD, NLCOG, Providence as the lead, Stantec is doing traffic and engineering work, Franklin Associates covers a lot of public outreaches, Bowlby & Associates, Inc. will be initially doing noise and some cultural work, and then Coastal Environmental did most of the cultural resources work. *(Please see the I-49 North Inner-City Connector presentation below in the attached documents)*

Mr. Rogers handed it over to Mr. Steve Wallace from Stantec to give an update on the Context Sensitive Solutions. Mr. Wallace thanked everyone for giving him the opportunity to join them today and update everyone on where they were for this project for CSS (Context Sensitive Solutions). Mr. Wallace stated that the kind of goal for CSS is just that. They integrate the community into the project. There's a ton of benefits from this project from a transportation perspective and they're trying to maximize those benefits to the community in terms of what else could be done through the corridor with the project. This is an effort to try to do that. To gather input from the community, to realize what's available in and around the corridor. A subcommittee was formed based on stakeholders from the Citizens Advisory Committee, as well as additional community representatives. They met back in October of last year and really went through potential improvements that take the transportation side of this project and put it into a true community fabric and what could be done from that perspective. They shared some possibilities that you could see from other projects that have integrated the same thing. Mr. Wallace said they also looked at what they've observed in Shreveport and comments that have been gathered over the last several years of the project. All of that culminated in a survey that was done. They shared that with the committee along with the results. It really helps to understand the prioritization with the community and what they would like to see in and around the corridor. Mr. Wallace said that Ms. Angie Noote from Franklin Associates was going to describe that.

Ms. Noote said, “good morning” and introduced herself and stated she’s with Franklin Associates. She said that Mr. Wallace’s team came back, she’s thinking sometime in August, and they put some boots on the ground, and put together a stakeholder meeting that happened at the end of October. They brought together a subcommittee, as Mr. Wallace said, and put a survey together where respondents were asked to rank several potential features including connectivity, public art and things like that. They shared the survey with attendees and also posted it online for further public input. Ms. Noote stated that it was still open online if anyone goes to [www.i49Shreveport.com](http://www.i49Shreveport.com) and it’s at the top of the website. It’s a community prioritization survey. One of the questions they asked in this survey was: How many years of community involvement do you have? About a week and a half ago, when they prepared this presentation, there was about thirty years of community involvement. People who really care about this and have been invested in the community for a long time are responding. The top priorities included: Transportation and Safety (transportation meaning access to transportation hubs and how people are going to get around); Recreation spaces (places where people can gather and enjoy time together); and Noise Reduction and Environmental Mitigation, that’s another thing that’s very high on everyone’s list. The survey will remain open, and they will share that with the Stantec folks who are putting together the Context Sensitive Solutions opportunities. They are also going to be a couple more of these meetings and expect to have one actually this quarter where state quarters will be able to get together to brainstorm more ideas. They will take the results of this survey and incorporate into those meetings so they can see the direction where people feel the most groundwork should go.

Mr. Wallace stated that transitioning to the more engineering task, traffic is obviously a big deal on the project in making sure they handle the volume of traffic and the congestion that might be there. Part of that is revising traffic volumes from several years ago that were developed for the project and being used in the study. The good news is that it’s being used and developed, submitted to DOTD, DOTD and FHWA both approved that, so they’re able to continue on with that traffic study from the corridor to I-49 and also the interchange access approval standpoint as well. Both of those efforts are underway, and they’ll be working through that at the beginning of this year along with the interchange access approvals as well. Mr. Wallace said that the geographic coverage of that interchange access approval is large because these are two interstates that are coming together at I-20 and I-220, so a lot of interchanges needed to be studied to make sure that each one is handling the traffic and the change in traffic as the project would be built. Mr. Wallace showed the interchanges included in the study.

Mr. Kurt Brauner, from DOTD, was next to speak on “Where we go from here”. ***(Please see the I-49 North Inner-City Connector presentation below in the attached documents)***

Mr. Rogers had one comment to make. The governor and the secretary have been in D.C. this week. They testified before the House of Transportation and Infrastructure committee. Part of the comments in their testimony dealt with, not this specific segment, but I-49 as a whole. Comments were also made by a lot of the Arkansas delegation. A lot of it dealt with streamlining the process and walking them through how the environmental process has gotten. Whether these bigger, broader projects like I-49 or I-69 and how the environmental process is approaching ten or twenty years to get it done is too long. There were some minor specific comments on this corridor itself, but the primary of their testimony was dealing with trying to speed up the process and watch out for some regulations.

***Mayor Arceneaux said that in terms of feedback that he’s gotten from some folks that have been contacted with the environmental deal, their impression was that there was a heavy lean towards Alternative 3A. Alternative 3A creates some really serious economic development issues in distorting historical economic property implementation and he wanted his comment on record that he does not believe that it’s a satisfactory alternative to the other plans that are much more straight forward.***

Mr. Brauner said that he would note that and know that no decision has been made yet. They just received all the information officially for the alternatives in the environmental report. They haven't even met to discuss or make any decisions. But they'll keep that in mind.

## **7. Red River Expressway – Tim James – Project Update**

Mr. Rogers said the next thing they had on the agenda was the Tim James, Red River Expressway, project update. Mr. Tim James is here along with his consultant, Robert Vinet, a KSA Engineer.

Mr. James said it was good to be there and thanked Mr. Rogers for having him today. He wanted to come to update everyone on the Red River Expressway, and Mr. Robert Vinet, his engineer, is with him and he's going to update on the details and the specifics. Mr. James said that, as you know, this has been going on for a while. Sitting back watching this, it takes a long time for infrastructure. They've been at it now three and a half years. He stated he's an Auburn man, so he was going to put it football terms. They've got it on the Alabama thirty and they're headed in the end zone. They're really in the last push for this project this year. They hope to have it under construction in the fall, September of this year. He said to continue to be very excited about it.

Mr. James said that not everyone may know much about his background, so he wanted to touch on that a little. He said they're from Alabama and they're a small infrastructure company. They're a family company that includes his son and two sons-in-law that are involved. What they do, simply put, is find needs in a market, mostly mid-sized markets, like Shreveport and Birmingham, where there's a transportation need in the state or the parishes or the counties, and it's not on their radar nor is it going to be on their radar for a long, long, long time. As we all know, and he knows he's preaching to the choir, there's not enough money to maintain what we have, and new infrastructure is very hard. That's what we do and it's a very simple thing. The young lady that spoke earlier about what was number one on their list was just about getting around. If they can build access that connects two points from A to B, and save people ten, fifteen, twenty or thirty minutes then they'll pay a couple of bucks because time is valuable, and people are kind of impatient anyways. That's their business and that's really how they got there. This project effectively creates sort of, some of the beginnings of the Southern Loop to get traffic from 3132 reaching over to Bossier Parish over on 71. Mr. James turned it over to Mr. Vinet to give more details.

Mr. Vinet said, "Good morning, everybody, Mr. Chair, committee members, staff, it's great to be here today. He's Robert Vinet and he's with KSA Engineers, a Shreveport-based firm. They're doing work all over Northwest Louisiana and this is an exciting project. Mr. Vinet said that he can tell them personally as an engineer, there's two points of excitement. One, as an engineer getting to work on something like this is pretty incredible. Two, as a local citizen who lives in south Shreveport and has a camp on Lake Bistineau, and who's going to Bossier all the time, he's excited about getting this opportunity to get there quicker. Maybe Mr. James will give him a discount on the toll. Probably not. He'll probably double it! It's exciting today and hopefully they'll be able to get into some of the details. Everyone should have received a packet with some of the talking points and maps. He was going to highlight some of the talking points, but he knows they really want to just get into the maps.

Mr. Vinet said that, like Mr. James said, this is going to be effectively like a Southern Loop for southern Caddo and Bossier parishes. On the Caddo side they would continue the proposed project and pick up where 3132 ends at Flournoy Lucas, travel to the west, and there are four proposed crossings at the river. They obviously aren't going to do all four of those. These are the alternatives that they're studying with various approaches. Mr. Vinet said that he would tell them now just for some historical context, Carl's route, which is the most upriver route, was the initial route you might have seen a couple of years ago. Since then, they've looked at potential bridge locations to the south where the river opens up a little and the water gets a little calmer. From a navigation standpoint it's better. They have more approach as they deal with the Union Pacific Railroad, Louisiana One and the Caddo Levee. They're likely going to be the third or fourth crossing as you go down river.

They're calling it the Tim Jr. Route, which is named in honor of Mr. James's son. Then the Elston Ellory route. As they cross the river, they would likely locate the toll plaza maybe on the Bossier side. If they do the Elston Ellory route, the toll plaza would be on the Caddo side. They continue over to Bossier, have a connection with the Bossier Levee, they'd run out to US71 and connect there and also, shoot to the north and tie into where Arthur Ray Teague currently stops. Bossier Parish Police Jury has been working on this for a long time to extend Arthur Ray Teague and they may be a little more far ahead than they are, but whomever gets to this point first we'll collaborate and make sure their improvements tie in with theirs and capture those synergies. Mr. Vinet said that all in all it was about nine miles when you look at the total roadway. He thinks one important thing, this is tolled. But the only thing that tolled is the bridge. Sometimes people lose sight of that. We call this an expressway, it's connected to a toll bridge, but the only thing that's tolled is the actual bridge. That represents a very small portion of the linear footage of this. The rest of the roadway system will be used for free by the travelling public. He thinks that is a very, very important distinction to make here. There are some other solutions that they're going to potentially come across and solve here with some local transportation problems where the travelling public will benefit from those and those will not be tolled. Those will be benefits to the public without any toll.

Mr. Vinet wanted to jump ahead and come back. He stated that when you look at the "Y", Mr. James pointed out that he looks at markets like this when you look at problems of getting from point A to point B. Mr. Vinet showed them another view of the Y and said they were calling this one the "traffic flow friction map". He said what they were seeing were all the crossings, looking at the Caddo side because there's a lot more friction, but all the red dots they were looking at are traffic signals. Those were potential intersections where you're going to stop to get to a bridge crossing. There are some yellow diamonds in there and it may be hard to see from the audience, but those are at-grade rail crossings. There's an incredible amount of friction from a traffic flow standpoint trying to get to one of the current bridges. This project will provide a route if you come up to I-220 here, you get on to 3132, you can tie it in where you'd get on to the Red River Express, cross over the Red River. Or you can travel from the East and come the other way with very little friction. Continuous flow. Mr. Vinet said they're really excited about that, and he hopes it helps with the Y and the need.

Mr. Vinet wanted to go back. He pulled up a zoomed in concept and wanted to stress that. This wasn't design-grade material. This is conceptual engineer work. He said they needed to keep that in mind because this will change and will be refined, but it shows one of those potential solutions that was talking about. Mr. Vinet pointed out where 3132 currently ends at Flournoy Lucas, there's a lot going on here as he's sure everyone in the room knows. The residents of Esplanade are currently accessing Flournoy Lucas with a temporary driveway permit from the DOTD. Their inbound traffic that's exiting 3132 are finding the fastest way in. They've seen situations where they're pulling up on the raised, curved median and making a left hand turn in, that's bad. The state's trying to work to fix that. There's been talk about trying to get the Glenn to collaborate with a shared drive and all that. Mr. Vinet said they feel that their project can solve all of this problem. If you look in the lower right hand corner you can see a little zoomed in area, using a round-about and setting this intersection up into a four-way intersection should handle all of this. They think this will solve the problem. Again, this is conceptual. These are ideas that are still in development, but they feel that this project will provide some sort of solution to an existing problem. Another problem in this area is the left hand turnout of Twelve Oaks onto Flournoy Lucas without a light. The chances of them getting a light are very, very slim. The traffic warrants aren't there, and they've all heard that. They're proposing what they're calling a Twelve Oaks Egress which would be an out lane for them behind their gate. They would cross, there's about ten acres of undeveloped property there, and they could potentially come into the light at Flournoy Lucas. Mr. Vinet said they're excited about some of the solutions that could come about, not just the project as a whole, but some of the local solutions that are having a hard time working themselves out getting solved. Some of the other things to point out, of course the toll will be no toll for first responders, city use, emergency vehicles and things like that. The overall project is estimated from one hundred million to one hundred fifteen million dollars. The bridge represents about a third of that and the other two thirds represents the roadway system. Their plan is to be an embanked roadway as much as they can. They want this to be a dirt job as much as they can. Obviously, there's



going to be places where they'll have to get up on a bridge structure, the Red River of course, but some of the other bayous that they'll be crossing. They are trying to avoid wetlands. In those cases, they may go up or around. The overall solution here with the Southern Loop, it ties in nicely with Caddo and Bossier's growth, the growth they're seeing at the Caddo-Bossier Port, the I-69 Service Road that's going to come about, I-49, I-20 and everything else, this we feel completes the picture.

Mr. Vinet wanted to get to the last part of the talking points. This is where they've been, what they're doing, and what's ahead. Right now, their big focus is figuring out where they're going to cross the Red River. Once that's set, from a design standpoint, that will ripple back out, and they'll be able to finish some of the early concept work and get into the schematics work. They have done about a twelve hundred acre wetland investigation and that's been followed up by about five hundred acres delineated wetland that's currently in the Corps right now. They hope to have that back within the next thirty days or so. The feedback they've been receiving thus far is that everything is trucking along. About seven hundred acres, or eighteen miles of corridor, as we were studying various alternates of a Drone LiDAR survey is completed. They've got a really good model of the ground that they'll use in their line and grade studies. Mr. Vinet said they do have an environmental assessment that's underway right now and wrapping up soon. He probably should have led with this one, but very, very, very productive conversations with most of the governmental bodies they've interacted with. That's really important. Everyone has been very open with their feedback and very transparent in expressing what they'd like to see. They'll start at the Corps. The Vicksburg District has been great to work with. They had heard that there had been a change in their mentality. They're trying to be more friendly to industry and the needs of those they serve, and they're seeing that. They've seen permit times dropping, very assessable to their personal and their feedback. The U.S. Coast Guard, the LA DOTD Headquarters and Local District. Mr. North and his team have been great to visit with. As well as Secretary Donahue and some of his leadership team. They've just received some really great feedback and great guidance from them. And of course, local governments. They appreciate all the feedback they get on the local level. Their next big target, besides identifying the bridge location, is to put in their four zero eight permit. The four zero eight permit is the big one. It's to make sure their project doesn't adversely conflict with an ongoing federal project. Which namely, the Red River Navigation Project, the Caddo Levee and the Bossier Levee. The early conversations they've had with Vicksburg were great and they feel that this will move along nicely and should flow. They're trying to get that permit turned in and they do have boring permits in with the Corps now so that they can start some geotechnical investigation, and they anticipate breaking ground in the Fall of 2025. That's very aggressive and they know that. But that's why they can do this because they're private, they're pushing through this and speeding up a lot of things that take time.

Mr. Ford wanted to thank Mr. James and Mr. Vinet for coming. Mr. James and himself have met numerous times and he's been keeping them up to speed on what's going on. They're hoping for a successful start date later this fall.

Mr. England wanted to comment as well. Mr. England stated that they have a prospect for this site. They've interacted with the company as well and found them to be extraordinarily accommodating to their requests given by the company's planning and the Port's prospects for current and future plans.

## **8. Resolution in Recognition of Mr. Butch Ford's Service**

Mr. Rogers stated that the next thing on the agenda was the Resolution in Recognition and Appreciation of Distinguished Service of Mr. Joe E. "Butch" Ford, Jr. For those of you that don't know, those of you on the committee and in the audience, this is Mr. Ford's last official duty as Administrator from Bossier Parish. Mr. Rogers said he wasn't going to read the entire resolution, but it's a thank you and appreciation for all his work over the years. Not only as Administrator, but also as the Bossier Parish Engineer, and many years ago with the DOTD. From a technical standpoint, all the way through, they all served in these chairs for the MPO in various

aspects with NLCOG over twenty-one years. He knows the staff greatly appreciates the support, guidance and leadership you've provided and he's sure the rest of the board does also.

Mr. Ford said, "Thank you", to Mr. Rogers and that it's been a pleasure to serve with them the last few years on the MPO. He served eighteen years on the Technical Committee. He just hopes that they've made their mark on the transportation system. He knows this work will continue, it's so important, and he's lived here all his life. Looking at the projects that they've built, when he was in high school, Bert Kouns, I-49 coming through town, Mr. Billy Wayne Montgomery coming up with the idea to fund I-49 North. This body has had great responsibilities and it's been his pleasure to serve with them. Mr. Ford said he'll be praying for them in the future. Mr. Ford said that he was going to turn the gavel over to Mrs. Bryant now.

Mayor Arceneaux motioned, and Mrs. Bryant seconded the motion to Adopt the Resolution in Recognition and Appreciation of Distinguished Service of Mr. Joe E. "Butch" Ford Jr. Mrs. Bryant called for questions or comments. Having none, Mrs. Bryant called for a vote and the motion passed.

Mrs. Bryant wanted to tell Mr. Ford, "Thank you for your service. It's been a joy working with him and just getting to know him". She knows that Bossier Parish is in good hands with his replacement, Dr. Ken Ward. Mrs. Bryant said that she's had her experiences with Dr. Ward so she can attest that they're all in good hands. She wanted to wish him the best in his retirement. She knows he'll be around to answer phone calls and questions, but they'll try not to bother him too much. She really wishes him the best.

#### **9. MPO Officers – Promotion of Mrs. Erica Bryant to Chair & Election of new Vice Chair**

Mr. Rogers said that now since Mr. Ford's retirement and changeover, Mrs. Bryant will become their Chair, but they have a vacancy for Vice-Chair. They need a nomination for whom they feel the Vice-Chair should be and to serve out the remainder of this fiscal year. Mr. Rogers said that he did have a recommendation. He would recommend Mr. Blanton. Although Mr. Blanton has served in capacities on the Board of Directors, it's been a while since he has served a similar capacity on the MPO.

Mrs. Bryant asked if there were any further questions. Having none, The Chair will entertain a motion to promote Mrs. Erica Bryant to Chair and Mr. Bruce Blanton as Vice-Chair of the MPO for the remainder of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. Mayor Arceneaux motioned, and Mr. Washington seconded. Mrs. Bryant called for questions or comments. Having none, the Chair called for a vote and the motion passed.

### **Announcements**

Mr. Rogers said that the next regular scheduled MPO meeting is Friday, February 21, 2025.

### **Adjourn**

With no remaining agenda items, Mrs. Bryant entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Washington motioned, and Mr. Clarke seconded, and the meeting was adjourned.



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J. Kent Rogers, Secretary

# PUBLIC COMMENT CARD

*All cards must be returned to the Chair prior to the start of the meeting. Comments will not be accepted during the meeting. You will be called upon at the appropriate time to speak.*

Please print:

Date: Dec 17

Name: John Perking

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (      ) \_\_\_\_\_

I am representing:     myself     business     organization

Name of business / organization: \_\_\_\_\_

## Comment on Agenda Items Only

Briefly describe your comment(s):

Allendale I49

met last night want to  
begin building houses Agri-  
pad side streets need  
Attention

renov I 345 in Dallas

As a reminder, public comment is limited to three (3) minutes per speaker.

Comments relative to any issues that are in active litigation will not be heard in this meeting.

Speakers are to address the Chairman, not each other or the audience, and are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. The use of abusive or profane language shall not be allowed. No debate or argument between speakers and/or members of the audience shall be permitted.



**RESOLUTION IN RECOGNITION  
AND APPRECIATION OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE**

***Joe E. "Butch" Ford, Jr***

WHEREAS, The Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments, Inc. (NLCOG) serves as a regional planning organization for the Parishes of Bossier, Caddo, DeSoto, and Webster and the cities of Bossier City and Shreveport; and

WHEREAS, The NLCOG also serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region designated by the Governor of the State of Louisiana, The Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration; and

WHEREAS, the Bossier Parish Police Jury is represented on the NLCOG Board of Directors and the MPO by their Administrator; and

WHEREAS, Joe E. "Butch" Ford has served as the Administrator for Bossier Parish between January 2021 through January 2025 and as Parish Engineer prior to that, with over 21 years of service to Bossier Parish; and

WHEREAS, Joe E. "Butch" Ford has provided outstanding leadership and guidance on behalf of the Bossier Parish Police Jury to NLCOG's Board of Directors the MPO, and the Technical Coordinating Committee serving in the roles of Chair and Vice Chair; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments formally acknowledges and extends its profound appreciation to Joe E. "Butch" Ford for his many years of service and his lasting contributions to the Board of Directors, the MPO, and its mission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that on this 17th day of January 2025, the NLCOG Board of Directors and MPO did, with due notice and quorum held, affirm this Resolution and acknowledge it be saved in the permanent minutes and a copy of this Resolution is given to Joe E. "Butch" Ford.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
J. Kent Roges, Executive Director  
Secretary to the Board of Directors  
Secretary to the Metropolitan Planning Organization