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Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Policy Committee

MINUTES

Friday, May 16, 2025 (9:00 AM)

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

Members' Present

Mayor Tom Arceneaux – City of Shreveport
Mrs. Carlotta Askew-Brown – MPC City of Bossier City
Mr. Alan Clarke – MPC City of Shreveport
Dr. Ken Ward – Bossier Parish
Mrs. Erica Bryant – Caddo Parish
Mr. David North – LaDOTD District 04
Mr. Bruce Blanton – Webster Parish
Mr. Eric England – Port of Caddo-Bossier
Mr. Dinero' Washington – SporTran

Members Absent

Mayor Tommy Chandler – City of Bossier City
Mr. Michael Norton – DeSoto Parish

Others Present

Mr. Kent Rogers – NLCOG
Mr. Chris Petro – NLCOG
Mrs. Rita Arnold - NLCOG
Mrs. Heidi Stewart – NLCOG
Mrs. Savannah Williams – NLCOG
Mr. Adam Driskill - NLCOG
Mr. Josh Chevallier – NLCOG Legal Council

Call to Order

Mrs. Bryant called the meeting to order. She stated that we generally have the invocation, roll call and a pledge at the beginning of the meeting. Mrs. Bryant asked Mayor Arceneaux to lead us in prayer and Mr. Washington to lead us on the pledge. She asked if those that cared to join them to please stand. Mayor Arceneaux led us in prayer followed by Mr. Washington leading us in the pledge. Mrs. Bryant asked Mr. Rogers to begin roll call. Mr. Rogers called roll. A quorum was present.

Public Comments

Mrs. Bryant asked if there were any public comments. Mr. Chevallier stated they had received two comments.

Mr. David Hackney was the first to comment. Mr. Hackney said, “good morning” and stated his name and address. Mr. Hackney said that he was making a comment on the minutes from April, which he believed were going to be approved. He was surprised last month that the Caddo Parish Commission, the new CEA or the revised CEA, Tim James, was not discussed. The question he has is, “Did Tim James also renegotiate or redo their CEA with Bossier, so are the two documents coordinated”? Mr. Hackney said that was all he had to say.

Mr. Robert Mills said, “Thank you, and good morning”. Mr. Mills stated his name, address, and said he was representing as a member of the Shreveport/Bossier Committee 100 to express their support for the continued work of the I-49 Inner City Corridor and their suggested route of 1-A. He knows it’s been pushed off the calendar a bit with the state, but it’s something they need to keep talking about. In public they talk about it and people seem to forget that it’s still a project. A very important project. Mr. Mills said the same goes for the 3132 Extension and route B-1 that they’ve talked about for around a decade or more now. The public seems to not know about that. Mr. Mills said that he knows the NLCOG group thinks they put all this out for public consumption, but they just don’t hear it or see it. Every day they say they never knew. He knows it’s an improved route and an improved project, the best he can recall, but somehow, they need to get better public information out so homeowners, as well as interested parties, know that that’s a project and it’s very possible that it’s going to happen in the future. Mr. Mills said, “Thank you very much”.

Mr. Chevallier said they did receive one additional comment from Ms. Linda Bernacki.

Ms. Linda Biernacki said, “Thank you”. She stated her name and said that she’s representing the Committee 100 for the I-49 ICC. Ms. Biernacki said that there are several questions that they have. They met last month with the Economic Development Committee and there were a lot of questions regarding the multiple delays that they’ve incurred. Ms. Biernacki asked, “Why do they continue to have these community input meetings when they don’t make a difference”? Committee 100 would like a report back in detail from NLCOG of why the citizens of this region continue to not have a voice. They have support letters that they’ve sent to Mr. Rogers from Lt. Governor Nungesser. Last year it was sent on October 17, 2024. They have letters as far back as May 31, 2019, from then Representative Mike Johnson, supporting the interstate and connector and what the status was. Ms. Bernacki said that the Committee of 100 put together a support letter and had over two hundred, more like three hundred of not only community leaders, but also Senators and Congressmen including Kennedy, Cassidy, Mike Johnson and every single congressional representative. This is all signed support. The Mayor of Monroe, Mayor of Alexandria, Chamber of Monroe, Chamber of Alexandria, the Chambers, of course, Shreveport and Bossier, and the Mayor of Shreveport. That was in 2019. Ms. Biernacki said that it’s just unfathomable as to why they can’t get such a critical infrastructure that has already been determined to bring over three hundred million dollars annually into the community with the connection of Arkansas down to New Orleans. It’s a critical, critical project and it seems to not have any energy to move forward. That’s from our leaders. That’s from every single one of you.

Ms. Biernacki said that back in April, she sent an email to Mr. Rogers asking for the status. His response was on April 23rd. “There’s nothing substantial to report. DOTD, FHWA Division Office, and the Consulting team are finalizing the Draft to submit to the USDOTD in D.C. for legal review”. Ms. Biernacki said that according to the schedule, it was delayed for two years from January 2023 going off the information they received from Providence Engineering. Then, June 28, 2024, they got a brand new schedule, and it pushed it back another two years. They keep kicking this can down the road and the Committee 100 and the Chamber as well need a detailed report as to why they keep getting these delays.

Mr. John Perkins asked if he could make a comment on behalf of Allendale Strong.

Mrs. Bryant said that if he would like to come up and make a comment then he would need to fill out a card. He shouldn’t be addressing members of the audience.

Mr. Perkins said that he would fill out the card after he speaks so the meeting could keep going.

Mr. Rogers had just a couple of comments. Based on the schedule that was developed by the Secretary of the DOTD and the team that has been continuously presented, they are still on that schedule. The department and the consulting team are scheduled for their quarterly update within the next few meetings. Again, they are still within that timeline.

Mrs. Bryant said that just to express from this board, they'd like to stay on that timeline. They do their share of frustration, a lot of this is not in their control, but they hope they can stay on the current timeline right now.

Mr. John Perkins was last to comment. He said "hello" to the board. He stated his name, address and said that he's been working with Allendale Strong to oppose this project which breaks federal law. A reminder that the last time they were in this room a few years ago, a Baton Rouge consultant drove up with a ROD (Record of Decision) from FHWA and that decision was NO BUILD. That threw it back out there for more discussion and more research and more millions of dollars to research what's wrong with it. Mr. Perkins said it breaks federal law. The 1965 Transportation Act of Congress and the 1966 National Environmental Protection Act. All of the routes so far have been against the law so that's why they keep sending back a NO BUILD decision, which apparently is hard for some of their friends on Committee 100 to understand what NO BUILD means. When that's the decision, that's the decision. To keep throwing more money at it seems wasteful. You can study it again, but it still breaks two federal laws and won't get approved by FHWA and Washington, D.C. no matter how many trips you take up there and visit with them, they're still going to tell you that it's against the federal law. It's exactly what they tell them when they ask for an official understanding of what NO BUILD means.

Business

1. Approval of Minutes

The next item on the agenda was for approval of the minutes for the April 25, 2025, meeting. Mr. Blanton motioned, and Mr. Clarke seconded to approve the minutes as provided. Mrs. Bryant 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 they had one last amendment, over a series of last minute TIP Amendments, provided by Mr. Washington. Part of it is an update from the first line item of the 5339a Bus and Bus Facilities Program. It was the actual numbers that came in for 2024, he asked Mr. Washington to correct him if he was wrong, the initial numbers for the FY2025 appropriations and the 5310 is the purchase of twelve on demand vehicles. Mr. Washington said that was correct. They got initial funding based on the ridership from last year.

Mrs. Bryant asked if there were any further questions. Having none, Mrs. Bryant entertained a motion to Approve the Adoption of the Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications and Amendments. 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.

3. Fiscal Year 2026 Unified Planning Work Program – Fiscal Year 2026 UPWP (to be adopted June 13, 2025)

Mr. Rogers said just for a quick update. They provided the initial one to them prior to the last meeting with an outline and they've been emailed full copies of the work program to date. Mr. Rogers wanted to give them a couple of quick updates and highlights from that. For Task A, there are two big items including the MTP Update (Metropolitan Transportation Plan) and the development of a new TIP (Transportation Improvement Plan) for

Fiscal Years 2027 to 2030. With Task 3-A, they've done those Freight Studies for I-49 for the full length and I-20 throughout the area. They'll also be working on I-220 throughout the area and the inner loop will be weighing some of that for the I-20 project to be completed so they can make some comparisons. As they deal with the others, they had some pre-Covid, Covid and post-Covid numbers. They have to wait a while, post-construction timeframe, making sure they're not hitting a timeline when the I-20 construction was going on, delaying all traffic around. Within the Public Transit Planning and Coordination, Task B, again with the MTP, they're going to be looking at some potential bus transit corridors and some potential reverend to some rural urban connections within that program. Task C they've scheduled for another flight to be done. That flight will be done somewhere between the end of December and early March when the leaves are off, clear skies and all that good stuff. Also, to continue the migration of the data to the web for the access portal. Tasks E and F are the typical general administration parts. The Regional Safety Planning sections will be for implementation of the adopted SS4A Plan. Under the Special Projects are the I-49 Inner City Connector and Watershed. With the I-49 they should have EIS and ROD within that timeframe.

Mr. Rogers said that included in with this is the general budget. You can see the income from local and federal sources and also the expenses that include salaries and whatnot. Other details listed include Overhead. The reason they give more details for Overhead is to show the large cost for a couple of those computer software packages. As a requirement from FHWA and FTA, they have to detail out those expenses in those five Task items. Mr. Rogers said that again, the formal public comment period timeframe will begin May 18, 2025, and run through May 31, 2025, for final adoption on June 13, 2025.

4. Metropolitan Transportation Plan – Presentations by Consultants

Mr. Rogers said they had two teams to present for the MTP update. Alliance Transportation's Group and Neel-Schaffer's team. Within their packets he's given them a copy of what was the overall average score that they received from technical members and staff members. As they can see from looking at those, it's a dead tie! Presentations are going to mean a lot. They also have the comments section, which was given for each team by the evaluators. He didn't mark who said what. He just listed as all comments received from all the different evaluators. With that, the first team to present is Alliance Transportation Group and Mr. J.D. Allen will be leading them.

Alliance Transportation Group (ATG/DCCM) – *Please click the attached link for presentation slides.*

Following the presentation, Mrs. Bryant asked if there were any questions or comments from the members.

Mr. Washington asked what ATG plans to do to enlighten the public and to be more innovative.

Mr. Ed Elam, Project Manager, said that's a good question. He said they've actually used pop-ups as an opportunity to go to festivals and events, and they found that to be very successful or going out to existing galleries. They did one in the Rio Grande Valley where two thousand students appeared, and they actually got their input on multi-modal connectivity. Mr. Elam said they can also take a look at existing efforts that happened and harvest that information to find key talking points and things that may form some input from the public, but they're also planning on web presence, and they understand that not everyone has access to the web. They plan on making the materials available in a variety of locations and formats so they can also empower their partners, whom they see as everyone there at the podium, to also give them directions as to where they need to be with certain groups. They've identified key stakeholders, and they know who they are, but they realize the horizon has changed, and they'd like to go ahead and incorporate that input as well for key folks that they need to be talking to. Mr. Elam said that one other thing, they do intend to tabulate, collate and present the information they gather from the public process as a stand-alone document to help with federal compliance, to show the public where their comments have been heard and where they've been incorporated into the process. That way they'll

have that as a deliverable coming of the process.

Mr. Rogers said that the next team that will be presenting will be Neel-Schaffer, and their principal will be Mr. Vijay Kunada.

Neel-Schaffer – *Please click the attached link for presentation slides.*

Following the presentation, Mrs. Bryant asked if there were any questions or comments from the members.

Mr. Washington said he did have one question. He said, “He really appreciates their public outreach approach, but the one thing that’s a little worrisome to him is their effective outreach method, especially around public transit and the things they’ll identify when they go out and be more engaging”. Mr. Washington says that he sees less than ten percent of public transit riders at these events. “How would you be more effective in getting public transit involved in that input to make sure that those riding the system is something they would want?”

Mr. Kunada said the items they have listed are just a sample of what they have for the festivals. Their approach actually includes going to the transit station and talking to the people where they are. They’ll be going to the main central station and talking to the people there and some of their folks will be riding the buses and handing out the papers to get their input there. Mr. Kunada said their approach is to each and everyone.

Mrs. Bryant asked Mr. Rogers if he had any comments.

Mr. Rogers stated that both teams are very well qualified, and he feels that either one of them would do a great job. As they saw the scores from the technical and staff members from their proposals, he knows they emailed those out to everyone. Mr. Rogers said proposal wise it’s dead even. At some point down the line, when they advertise for another study or something, it may get to the point of other teams thinking “why apply when the same people get it every time”.

Mr. Washington wanted to ask Mr. Rogers a question. “We’ve been focusing heavily on passenger rail for this area. Nowhere in these proposals are documents that we’ve discussed the passenger rail in our 2050 Plan. Why is that?”

Mr. Rogers said that neither one of them highlighted it within their proposals. As we go through this process with either one of them, we can make sure that it is incorporated and made part of the process.

Mrs. Bryant said to make a note of that whichever firm they choose; it will also consist of the passenger rail.

Mrs. Bryant asked if there were any further questions, comments or needed discussion.

Mr. Washington said his recommendation was to Select the Team of Neel-Schaffer. Mr. Washington said he’s open to discussing it more if they’d like, but he’s heard what Mr. Rogers had to say and he’s been there for a while now. Every time they seem to go with the same firms and maybe this time it’s time to get a different approach. Mr. Washington thinks both teams are incredible, but based on the data presented to him today, one team had a lot more detail about what they were planning to do versus the other and that’s why he made his recommendation.

Mrs. Bryant said that it does seem that Neel-Schaffer had more detail in their proposal and gave a comprehensive overview of how they perform outreach. They also gave powerful feedback of Mr. Washington’s concern of public transit and answered that question satisfactory. Mrs. Bryant said that she also agrees with Neel-Schaffer.

Mrs. Bryant called for questions or comments. Having none, the chair called for a vote. Mr. Washington motioned to Select the Team of Neel-Schaffer and Mayor Arceneaux seconded. The votes comprised of eight Yea's and one Nea. The motion to Select the Team of Neel-Schaffer passed. Mrs. Bryant instructed the Executive Director to begin scope and cost negotiations with the Select Team of Neel-Schaffer.

Announcements

Mr. Rogers said that the next regular scheduled MPO meeting is on Friday, June 13, 2025, in the Government Chambers at 9:00 am.

Mrs. Askew-Brown said for the last year, Bossier City and Barksdale Air Force Base has been working on their new AICUZ Plan, which is an Air Installations Compatible Use Zone. Last time they updated that plan was in 2008 and it's really past due. Now that they have B-52's here it's time to re-evaluate that plan based on highway uses within that flight path. Mrs. Askew-Brown said they will be here on Thursday, May 29, 2025, at the Bossier Central Library from 5-7 and she wanted to invite them all to come out and hear what they've come up with. It's a very progressive plan. She believes they would love to hear it.

Mr. Rogers said that one thing is that does make a major impact on where some roadway developments can stop and go. If you notice while driving around Bossier, on I-20 there seems to be a long gap, and that's based on those flight lines from the Air Force Base. So, that does have an impact on our transportation system and travel pattern.

Mrs. Askew-Brown said it will also analyze the noise sounds as well. A lot of developers, the ones located in that area, choose not to be based on the decibel level. They will highlight one of those points and give an informational session for everyone.

Adjourn

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



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: May 16

Name: David Hackney

Address: 9660 Railyback

E-mail: davehackney@gmail

Phone: (318) 210-1475

I am representing: ☒ myself ☐ business ☐ organization

Name of business / organization: _____

Comment on Agenda Items Only

Briefly describe your comment(s):

MPO Agenda from April

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.

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Please print:

Date: 5/16/25

Name: Robert Mills

Address: 609 Enchanted Lane, BC 71111

E-mail: Robert@ARWproperties

Phone: (318) 469-1191

I am representing: ☐ myself ☐ business ☒ organization

Name of business / organization: S-B Committee 6, 100

Comment on Agenda Items Only

Briefly describe your comment(s):

Support Item 1.1A

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So I'm here on  behalf of C100
to ask the **THE WHITLEY** following
ATLANTA BUCKHEAD

- Why do we continue to have these community input meetings? When they don't make a difference
~~We~~ We would like a report back from NLGOG in detail why ~~are~~ the Citizens in this region continues to not have a voice. We have support letters from Lt Governor Nungesser last year it was sent to Kent Rogers Oct 17, 2024, Rep Mike Johnson May 31, 2019, over 200 community leaders signed + sent support letter in 2019 including our Senators + Congressmen.
-

Linda Biehnacki's public
comment May 16, 2025

PUBLIC COMMENT CARD

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Please print:

Date: MAY 16 2025

Name: Linda Bieracki

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: () _____

I am representing: ☐ myself ☐ business ☐ organization

Name of business / organization: _____

Comment on Agenda Items Only

Briefly describe your comment(s):

149-ICC

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Please print:

Date: May 16-2025

Name: Dorote John Perkins

Address: 310 Gentilly Circle Spout, LA

E-mail: Perkwrites@gmail.com

Phone: (504) 393-0759

I am representing: ☐ myself ☐ business ☒ organization

Name of business / organization: Allenette Strong

Comment on Agenda Items Only

Briefly describe your comment(s):

explain the FHWA "No build"
decision on I49 extension project
and the waste of money to "study"
options

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