

Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)  
Technical Advisory Committee Minutes  
September 26, 2007, 9:00 AM

**Pledge of Allegiance**, Kevin Belanger

**Roll Call**

Leo Marretta called roll.

Director of Planning & Zoning, TPCG, Patrick Gordon - Present  
Engineer Department, TPCG, Jeanne Bray - Present  
Roads & Bridges Superintendent, TPCG, Perry Blanchard - Present  
Public Transit Manager, TPCG, Wendell Voisin - Present  
Grants Administrator, City of Thibodaux, Bonnie Lafont - Present  
Public Works Administrator, City of Thibodaux, Kermit Kramer - Present  
Metropolitan Transportation Planning, LADOTD, Dan Broussard - Present  
Maintenance Engineer, Dist 02 of Houma, LADOTD, Paul Lambert – Present  
Traffic Engineer, LADOTD, Lyle Leblanc - Present  
Director of Public Works, TPCG, Al Levron – Absent  
Public Works Director, Lafourche Parish, Ray Cheramie – Absent  
Acting Public Transportation Administrator, LADOTD, Emily Efferson – Absent  
Federal Highway Administration – Jamie Setze - Absent

Others in attendance were:

Kevin Belanger, SCPDC  
Leo Marretta, SCPDC  
Scott Leger, SCPDC  
Joan Schexnayder, Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government  
Pat Matherne, Lafourche Parish Planning Department, *Sitting in for Cullen Curole*  
Leira Foreman, Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government  
Dawn R. Sholmire, LADOTD  
L.P. Ledet, Neel-Schaffer, Inc  
Mark Atzenhoffer, Lafourche Parish Council  
Mike Hollier, Lafayette MPO  
Art Defraites, Jr., GSE Associates  
Michael Ferdinand, TEDA

**Formalization of the Committee**

K. Belanger requested for everyone to look at the formalization of the committee. As time progresses there seem to be more issues needed to be hashed out with Technical Advisory rather than by the Political Advisory. L. Marretta explains the lists of names of the TAC – TIP and the TAC – UPWP. K. Belanger suggests that a member of the state police be added as a member of the TAC. Discussion ensues. Members revoke the suggestion. However, they move for Cullen Curole, Lafourche Parish Administrator be added as a TAC member. It was moved by P. Gordon, seconded by B. Lafont. Motion carried.

## **Louisiana Efficiency Analysis**

K. Belanger introduces the handout on Transportation Efficiency Analysis of Highways Improvements in Louisiana. Over the years there has been an increase of cost with highway projects. Also, there has been an increase in time. It has become a very hard process in which projects are completed. Most MPO's are promoting an initiative we would help sponsor of which we would create an efficiency analysis from an independent third party.

By law the highway department cannot manage any work over \$200,000.00; they are required to bid it out. Thus legislation has literally mandated the highway department contract out all of their work. The scope of the analysis would help increase the demand by examining the past five decades of the increase burden of transportation. Also to examine the time constraints, labor availability, legislative intervention, the economic outlook, and the best management practices.

D. Broussard brings forth funding issues; he explains the four categories of project durations: preservation, operation, safety, and capacity. If the state does not receive any more recurring significant amount of revenue after 2010 they will close down capacity projects, place all money mainly into preservation and continue with operation and safety projects. Discussion ensues.

It was moved by P. Gordon, seconded by W. Voisin to welcome a third party independent analysis of the whole transportation planning process inclusive of MPO's and DOTD. D. Broussard and L. Leblanc abstained from voting. Motion carried.

## **LA MPO Transit Design Studio**

K. Belanger introduced M. Hollier, Lafayette MPO, to discuss the concept of a LA MPO Transit Design Studio. M. Hollier gave an overview on the concept of a LA MPO Transit Design Studio. It is believed the transit design studio can design great improvement to existing to standardize bus designs – transit vehicles. The design studio will help standardize the way in which we purchase the vehicles as well as design them. You will be able to look at all aspects of the vehicle from a door knob to fuel efficiency. The design studio will be able to copyright those features, thus which will benefit all MPO's. M. Hollier is asking each MPO for \$950.00 in order to aide this concept in getting started.

It was moved by P. Gordon, seconded by W. Voisin to take into consideration and fund M. Hollier's concept of a LA MPO Transit Design Studio. Motion carried.

## **Valhi Blvd Extension – Modeling & Analysis Results**

K. Belanger introduced L.P. Ledet of Neel-Schaffer, Inc who has done a study of the Valhi Blvd Extension showing 2025 forecast volumes. L.P. Ledet explains the cause and effect of the model runs included in the packet. It is suggested that extending Valhi Blvd to Hwy 90 will be more beneficial than 4-laning Hwy 311. Discussion ensues.

It was moved by P. Gordon, seconded by J. Bray to recommend to the Policy Committee the support in furthering L.P. Ledet's recommendation and include the Valhi Blvd Extension in the overall master plan. Motion carried.

## **National Ambient Air Quality Standards**

L. Marretta brings to attention the issues of the long-term impact on the community regarding the proposed changes to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Two main points were: the Clean Air Act prohibits the EPA administrator from considering cost impacts in setting a standard. Secondly, it appears to be generally accepted that known and reasonably anticipated technologies will be insufficient to attain the current standards in non-attainment areas. This raises a great deal of issues for the MPO's. Discussion ensues.

K. Belanger asks D. Broussard if it would be wise to voice a letter of concern. It was moved by K. Kermit to follow the same intent as per the letter addressed to Stephen L. Johnson, Administrator of U.S. EPA, from the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and South Carolina. P. Gordon seconded. Motion carried.

## **SAFETEA-LU Compliance Review – Gap Analysis**

D. Broussard gave a prelude as to what was requested by SAFETEA-LU of the requirements sent out. This is an effort to document on how each MPO is complying with the SAFETEA-LU planning regulations. L. Marretta explains how the Houma-Thibodaux MPO is complying with the 16 planning regulations. P. Gordon reminds that the Policy Committee requested a copy of the annual report. Discussion ensues. It is decided no action needed on this issue.

## **LADTOD ITS Center**

L. LeBlanc answers questions posed as to how the LADOTD ITS Center will be manned and the availability of program funds as well as possible funds through the MPO that will help man the ITS Center. He believes the center will not be ready to be manned by full-time technicians until after Phase 3 is completed. The ITS Center is approaching Phase 2 and Phase 3 should be completed by Spring of 2009. Discussion ensues. It is decided no action needed on this issue.

## **Intergovernmental Coordination Efforts – Bayou Gardens Blvd Extension**

K. Belanger introduces Lafourche Parish Councilman, M. Atzenhoffer to the forum. He is concerned with the Bayou Gardens Blvd Extension connecting to Bayou Blue Hwy 316 and possibly realigning the portion on the Terrebonne side further down the road. M. Atzenhoffer's constituents are concerned with the extension on the Terrebonne side dead-ending to a neighborhood on the Lafourche side. M. Atzenhoffer along with K. Belanger feels that it is important to keep the communication open between the two parishes. K. Belanger suggests the possibility of a sub-committee on road alignments between the two parishes. Discussion ensues. It is decided no action needed to be taken on this issue as of yet.

## **Next Meeting Date**

The next Technical Advisory Committee meeting was not decided upon. It was left open for Policy Committee to set date.

**Other Business**

K. Belanger reminds members of the Houma Area Incident Management Team meeting, which will be on October 3, 2007 at 10:00 AM.

**Adjournment**

It was moved by K. Kraemer, seconded by P. Gordon to adjourn. Motion carried.