



LOUISIANA STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY – Adopted
on June 12, 2015 at the Policy Committee Meeting #5

July 9, 2014 • 10:00 AM

State Capitol, House Committee Room 2 • Baton Rouge, LA

MEETING ATTENDEES

Present:

Senator Robert Adley, Louisiana State Senate
Senator Mike Walsworth, Louisiana State Senate
Representative Karen St. Germain, Louisiana House of Representatives
Representative Stephen E. Pugh, Louisiana House of Representatives
Ms. Sherri H. LeBas, PE, Secretary, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (Chair)
Mr. Robert T. Scott, President, Public Affairs Research Council

Absent:

Senator John A. Alario, President of the Senate, Louisiana Senate
Representative Charles E. "Chuck" Kleckley, Speaker of the House, LA House of Representatives
Mr. Stephen Moret, Secretary, Louisiana Department of Economic Development

Other Attendees*:

Dr. Eric Kalivoda, PE, Deputy Secretary, Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD)
Mr. Dennis Decker, PE, Assistant Secretary, Office of Multimodal Planning, DOTD
Ms. Robin Romeo, PE, Transportation Planning Administrator, DOTD
Mr. Dan Broussard, PE, Transportation Planning Section, DOTD
Ms. Dawn Sholmire, PE, Transportation Planning Section, DOTD
Mr. Shawn Wilson, DOTD
Mr. Don Vary, Consultant, CDM Smith
Mr. Butch Babineaux, Consultant, CDM Smith
Mr. Brandon Buckner, FHWA
Ms. Chandra Bondzie, FHWA
Mr. Matthew Johns, Alexandria Metropolitan Planning Commission
Mr. Kevin Durbin, Planning Director, West Baton Rouge Parish
Mr. Joe Accardo, Jr., Ports Association of Louisiana
Mr. Carmack Blackmon, Louisiana Railroads Association
Mr. Mac Wade, Port of Morgan City
Mr. Roy Quezaire, Port of South Louisiana
Mr. Sean Duffy, Big River Coalition
Mr. Anthony Marino, Baton Rouge Airport

*Additional attendees were present but were not identified.

MEETING AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions
- Adoption of May 28, 2014 Policy Committee Meeting Summary
- Review of previous Policy Committee Meetings
- Review of Draft Plan elements:
 - Policy Recommendations
 - Megaprojects
 - Budget Allocation
- Next Steps
- Public Comments
- Next Meeting
- Final Comments; Adjourn

MEETING SUMMARY

Secretary Sherri LeBas welcomed the group and Dr. Eric Kalivoda conducted a roll call.

Adoption of April 24, 2014 Policy Committee Meeting Summary

Senator Walsworth moved to adopt Policy Committee Meeting Summary No. 3. Without objection, the minutes were adopted.

Presentation of Draft Plan Elements, Dr. Eric Kalivoda

Dr. Kalivoda reviewed the previous policy committee meetings. Dr. Kalivoda then described the policy recommendations, the funding scenario budgets and the draft plan elements, while Mr. Decker led the discussion of the megaprojects. A summary of the discussion of draft plan elements follows:

Discussion of Draft Plan Elements

- Senator Adley expressed his concern regarding the plan's proposed funding levels for pavement preservation, relative to the proposed funding of ports and waterways included in Recommendations EC-1 and EC-14. EC-1 and EC-14 recommends maintaining a minimum of \$25m in Priority 2 of the State Capital Outlay Program. Senator Adley recognizes the importance of efficient ports and waterways to the state's economy but believes DOTD should make the funding of highways its highest priority. He believes state funding of highways should increase from the existing \$27m/year to \$70m/year, which is more consistent with the highway preservation funding levels of several years ago. He also noted his concern that approximately \$60m/year of the state's vehicle gas tax was being diverted to the Department of Public Safety and the state was providing \$46m/year to the Parish Road Fund, which is more than the \$30m/year required.
- Senator Walsworth requested a breakdown of how DOTD was using the more than \$600m/year in federal transportation funding at the next Policy Committee meeting.
- Senator Adley noted the need for DOTD to consider different approaches to using state and federal funds to improve the state's transportation system in the near term and not wait for future funding assumed in the Plan's proposed funding scenarios. He cautioned DOTD's assumption regarding the amount of vehicle sales tax that would be available for Funding Scenario 3 as he believes there is a possibility that this funding will be diverted for other purposes in the future.

- Senator Walsworth noted his understanding that there is limited truck access to the Port of Baton Rouge and asked how the Plan was addressing the need for improved access and connections to port facilities in the state. Dr. Kalivoda indicated that the Plan recommends the continuation of the Intermodal Connector Program, which is currently funded at \$10m/year and has been used for access improvements to the Port of Lake Charles, Port of South Louisiana, and other ports. Mr. Scott asked about the allocation of the vehicle sales tax that would be dedicated for port improvements. Dr. Kalivoda explained that 7% of 93% of future vehicle sales tax receipts would be used for the Port Priority Program.
- Representative St. Germain noted the state legislature should consider ways to generate additional revenues to fund needed improvements for all modes of transportation in the state and expressed concern regarding the significant loss in buying power of the current vehicle gas tax as it is not indexed to inflation. She noted that the tax is worth \$0.07 now, down from \$0.16 per gallon when the last increase was approved.
- Senator Adley asked about the funding status of the TIMED program, which was supposed to be funded with 4 cents/gallon of the state's total 20 cents/gallon in vehicle gas tax. Dr. Kalivoda stated the retiring of debt for the TIMED program was requiring about 5 cents/gallon (about \$30m/year) instead of the intended 4 cents. Senator Adley noted consideration should be given to restructuring the financing of the TIMED program using the Capital Outlay Fund as a source so that TIMED could be funded with the intended 4 cents/gallon from the TTF.
- Senator Walsworth asked for clarification regarding the Mississippi River Deepening project included in Priority A of the recommended megaprojects. Dr. Kalivoda noted it included the deepening of the Mississippi River between the Port of Baton Rouge and the Gulf of Mexico from approximately 45 feet to 50 feet and would require a 50% federal/50% state match. Senator Walsworth requested DOTD provide examples of how other states and local entities were participating in funding of port and waterway improvements in their states at the next Policy Committee meeting.
- Senator Adley noted the importance of coordinating the proposed deepening of the Mississippi River with CPRA's diversion project and would like DOTD to report on these coordination efforts at the next Policy Committee meeting.
- Senator Walsworth asked about the funds allocated to parish roads and emphasized his preference that the priority in state funding be the upkeep of the state highway system.
- Representative St. Germain encouraged participation in the Legislative Committee recently established to identify ways to fund transportation improvements. The first meeting will be held in the early fall.
- Mr. Scott asked the committee for a summary of the action items needed for the next Policy Committee meeting. Senator Adley asked for a focus on highway preservation; a reconsideration of using the Vehicle Sales Tax as a critical source of funding (in Scenarios 3 and 4); a reconsideration of the allocations of future funds for local roads; 4) a consideration of alternative future funding to complete the TIMED program, and a consideration of an offset for the state police share of the Transportation Trust Fund.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following persons made public comments regarding the importance of ports and waterways to Louisiana's overall transportation system and economy and expressed their strong support for the state to increase its participation in the funding of needed freight infrastructure.

- Mr. Joe Accardo, Jr., Ports Association of Louisiana
- Mr. Sean Duffy, Big River Coalition
- Mr. Mac Wade, Port of Morgan City



Mr. Roy Quezairre did not speak but completed an “Affirmation in Support” card.

NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that another Policy Committee meeting should be held to further discuss the funding concerns expressed at this meeting and to adopt the Plan before soliciting public comments on the Plan report. It was requested that the next meeting be held on a Friday in September 2014.

ADJOURNMENT

Secretary LeBas adjourned the meeting.