



LOUISIANA STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE
**POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY – Adopted on
November 19, 2015 at the Policy Committee Meeting #6**
June 12, 2015 • 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
Ms. Sherri H. LeBas, PE, Secretary, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (Chair)
Representative Stephen E. Pugh, Louisiana House of Representatives
Mr. Robert T. Scott, President, Public Affairs Research Council
Steven Grissom, Secretary, Louisiana Department of Economic Development

Absent:

Senator John A. Alario, President of the Senate, Louisiana Senate
Representative Charles E. “Chuck” Kleckley, Speaker of the House, LA House of Representatives

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. Randall Withers, PE, Transportation Planning Section, DOTD
Mr. Shawn Wilson, DOTD
Ms. Connie Porter-Betts, Assistant to Secretary for Policy, DOTD
Mr. Don Vary, Consultant, CDM Smith
Mr. Christopher Johns, Alexandria Metropolitan Planning Commission
Mr. Carmack Blackmon, Louisiana Railroads Association

*Additional attendees were present but were not identified.

MEETING AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions
- Adoption of July 9, 2014 Policy Committee Meeting Summary
- Review of previous Policy Committee Meetings
- Brief review of Draft Plan and Proposed changes to the 7/9/14 Draft Plan elements
- Call for Adoption of the Draft Statewide Transportation Plan



- Next Steps – Statewide Transportation Plan Public Involvement Procedures
- 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 July 9, 2014 Policy Committee Meeting Summary

Senator St. Germain moved to adopt the Policy Committee Meeting Summary, second by Representative Pugh and the committee adopted it without comment.

Presentation of Draft Plan Elements, Dr. Eric Kalivoda

Dr. Kalivoda provided an overview of the purpose and intent of the Statewide Transportation Plan, and reviewed the previous policy committee meetings. Dr. Kalivoda then outlined the Department's accomplishments since the adoption of the 2003 Plan. He described the 2015 Plan's funding scenarios and directed the committee's attention to one additional recommendation under the state highway operations and maintenance section: to provide a minimum of \$70 million in state Transportation Trust Fund dollars each year for state highway and bridge sustainability (preservation), to match federal funds. Dr. Kalivoda also provided responses to questions raised at the previous meeting about how DOTD uses its FHWA funds and how other states fund port and waterway improvements.

Senator Adley stated his appreciation for the dedicated highway and bridge funding provision. He described the change from the now-defunct vehicle sales tax provision (VST) that was to have provided \$400 million in additional transportation funding, when excess funds beyond a threshold of \$9.9 billion in VST was predicted to have been attained. The funding was estimated to have become available in 2021. The new provision provides additional funding of \$100 million. Senator Adley asked whether the new provision is considered within the funding scenarios and Dr. Kalivoda affirmed that it was, and that this amount is equivalent to a scenario that would fall somewhere between scenarios one and three. Mr. Adley confirmed that the \$100 million would become available beginning in 2017, following a question from Dr. Kalivoda about the first year that the funding would be available. Current statutes claim all current budget stabilization funding, the eventual source of the \$100 million in new transportation funds, until 2016. The legislature has taken actions to raise additional revenue from the mineral stabilization fund, from \$850 to \$950 million per year, and this will provide the \$100 million for the TTF. Dr. Kalivoda confirmed that the \$70 million floor provision would remain in effect after 2017.

Dr. Kalivoda described the funding scenarios and the mega projects. He also provided a brief update on the status of the TIMED projects and the 2003 mega projects. He described the four tiers of mega projects and noted that the focus of the current plan is on mega projects A and B. He noted that in some cases very little state funding would be applied, such as in the case of adding shoulders to the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway.

In describing the plan's budget sheet, Dr. Kalivoda directed the committee's attention to the 2012 and 2022 budget line items for each of the four scenarios. Roughly \$245 million per year for pavement and \$85 million per year for bridge preservation is expected to be available, which will move DOTD toward scenario three. Bridge needs will become more acute in the future, and the Department will need to focus additional resources for bridge rehabilitation, reconstruction and replacement.



Senator Adley asked about using the term “sustainability” in reference to preservation projects. Dr. Kalivoda responded that FHWA recently introduced this language and that the plan would be updated to reflect this change in language.

Senator Adley and Mr. Scott discussed the Senate’s recent actions including the establishment of the \$70 million funding floor for highways and bridges.

Mr. Scott asked about recent senate actions to increase funding for transportation, specifically, Senator Adley’s bill dealing with stabilization fund, a title fee increase for new car purchases and a sales tax trigger. Mr. Scott inquired about the impact of each of these and asked whether there are additional bills that need to be accounted for.

Senator Adley reviewed the Senate’s actions in the last few days of the 2015 session. The Senator’s goal was to provide at a minimum \$70 million for preservation this year and there was a series of additional bills tied into this year’s budget. The Governor’s budget had allocated \$70 million for state police, but the legislature proposed reducing that amount to \$45 million, with the difference going to transportation uses. A second bill, the collection of past due traffic fines, made part of a proposed raise in state police pay contingent on collecting the fines. The revenue from these collections would be directed towards transportation uses, primarily for preservation. These actions and others in total could raise as much as \$90 million for transportation funding in the current year.

Senator Adley also described a proposed constitutional amendment that could provide additional transportation funding for the Department’s highway and intermodal programs. The constitutional amendment, if approved by voters, would create 2 funds: 1) a continuation of the existing budget stabilization fund, in which funding would be capped at \$500 million per year. Any funds in excess of \$500 million, up to an additional \$500 million would be directed to 2) a transportation stabilization fund. Funds in excess of the additional \$500 million for the transportation stabilization fund would be deposited into the general fund. The source of funding for both stabilization funds is an existing tax on mineral exploration and production.

Representative St. Germain discussed proposed legislation that did not pass, as well as an approved proposal to create a transportation infrastructure bank. Senator Adley noted that the legislature has ended the mobility fund program, which provided funding for toll projects. He also noted that some of the 2017 funds (funding in excess of \$70 million) would be made available for the infrastructure bank.

Dr. Kalivoda responded to Senator Walsworth’s request about how federal funds are spent. He presented excerpts from the budget partition, and noted that about 20 percent of federal highway funding is dedicated for local programs. Turning to the question of how other states fund port and waterway improvements, Dr. Kalivoda described the findings of the Department’s review of 14 Gulf Coast and East Coast states. Six of the 14 states reviewed provide state funds for ports. Florida and Georgia currently support channel deepening projects. The Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2013 made certain channels meeting tonnage criteria eligible for federal funding, including port channels in Louisiana. Some states use transportation trust funds within an established state port program, while others have used one-time funds for special projects.

Dr. Kalivoda also described a Corps of Engineers study on various channel and ecosystem water diversion proposals.



Mr. Scott asked whether state funds for port and waterway improvements can leverage state funds. Dr. Kalivoda explained that there is no federal program in place to support ports currently. He mentioned that the Corps of Engineers does support waterway dredging projects and occasionally, widening channels. The dredging and widening projects require matching funds. He also explained that the Department intends to have funds available to match federal funds if there is an opportunity to advance an important navigation channel project.

Mr. Scott asserted that the state needs to be more competitive to be able to leverage more federal funds, because other states are providing higher match rates to advance their widening and deepening projects.

Dr. Kalivoda described the remaining steps to be taken to complete the plan adoption process. After approval to adopt the Draft Plan, there will be a 45 day public review and comment period. The committee will meet again in October to review the comments received and DOTD's response.

Representative St. Germain moved to accept the change and to adopt the Draft Plan.

Before adoption, Mr. Scott stated that he would like to see additional information about the performance impacts of the recommended projects. He noted the state's pavement ratings, bridge sufficiency ratings and congestion ratings, some of which have been produced by national associations. Dr. Kalivoda agreed to have the information available for the next meeting in October, and noted that there will be a substantial amount of information about mega projects in the plan appendix.

Senator Adley seconded the motion to accept the change and adopt the Draft Plan. Secretary LeBas thanked the group and staff for their efforts.

Representative St. Germain thanked Shawn Wilson for his support during the plan review process.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments registered. Secretary LeBas adjourned the meeting.