

Houma – Thibodaux  
Metropolitan Planning Organization (HTMPO)

South Central Planning and Development Commission Office  
5058 West Main Street, Gray, LA 70359  
985-851-2900

**M E E T I N G M I N U T E S**

**HTMPO Technical Advisory Committee Meeting**      **Date:** March 8, 2012

**Meeting Location:** SCPDC’s Pelican Room, Gray, LA.

**In Attendance**

<b>Committee:</b>	<p>Director of Planning and Zoning, TPCG – Patrick Gordon, Present          Director of Public Works, TPCG – Greg Bush, Present          Engineering Division, TPCG – Represented by Joan Schexnayder, Present          Operations Manager, Roads and Bridges Division, TPCG – Perry Blanchard, Present          Public Transit Manager, TPCG – Wendell Voisin, Absent          Public Works Director, Lafourche Parish – Represented by Terry Arabie, Present          Planning Department, Lafourche Parish – Pat Matherne, Present          Parish Manager/Public Works Director, Assumption Parish – Represented by Erin Watson, Absent          Public Works Director, City of Thibodaux – Miguel Maggio, Absent          Grants Director, City of Thibodaux – Luci Sposito, Absent          Mayor, Town of Lockport – Richard Champagne, Absent          Office of Planning and Programming, LA DOTD – Dan Broussard, Present          District 02 Traffic Engineer, LA DOTD – Dennis Hebert, Present          District 02 Maintenance Engineer, LA DOTD – Lyle Leblanc, Absent          Public Transportation Administrator, LA DOTD – Donna Lavigne, Absent          Federal Highway Administration – Jamie Setze, Absent</p>
<b>Staff:</b>	<p>Kevin Belanger, SCPDC          Leo Marretta, SCPDC          Joshua Manning, SCPDC          Rudynah Capone, SCPDC          Cassie Parker, SCPDC</p>
<b>Others in Attendance:</b>	<p>Emery Chauvin III, LADOTD          Dawn Sholmire, DOTD          Matt Trahan, LSP Troop C          Danny Babin, TPCG</p>

**Introductions**

Everyone introduced themselves.

L. Marretta announced that Mr. Babin was recently elected to Mr. Clayton Voisin’s old district. When Clayton left, he also vacated the MPO chairman position. Mr. Babin graciously stepped in to direct us at the policy committee level.

L. Marretta reminded everyone that all parishes need to be represented. Attendance must improve over time. Thibodaux, Assumption, and Lockport were not represented.

**Agenda Item # 1**

*LA DOTD Project Update*

J. Manning opened discussions for the LA DOTD Project Update.

Lyle Leblanc, LA DOTD District 02 Maintenance Engineer, is usually depended on for the report; however, he was unable to attend the meeting today. There was no report prepared on the status of Houma-Thibodaux.

J. Manning asked if there was anything statewide that we should be aware of at this time. D. Broussard reported that there were no new updates.

P. Gordon stated that at the Police Jury association, Scott Angele mentioned that natural gas needs to be pressed. There are stations throughout the state, although the locations of all of the stations are not known. P. Gordon then asked if DOTD is working with the department of natural resources on promoting the use of natural gas in the region.

D. Broussard explains that what they are doing is a pilot program. They do not have anything “on the ground” yet, but they are hiring a consultant because they do not have any in-house staff that is familiar with the details of implementing compressed natural gas for the DOT or any other vehicles. They are just starting to get someone hired to look at DOTD fleets, particularly in our district offices, where it would be most appropriate to begin. If not converting, at least start acquiring compressed natural gas vehicles for our DOTC vehicles. That’s why they need someone who is knowledgeable about what is appropriate, whether it is pick-up trucks or light or heavy duty equipment. From DOTD’s understanding, they will start in District 61 (Baton Rouge Area) and see how it goes. Nothing dramatic right now, but they are looking at that. He also stated that he is not aware of any coordination with department of natural resources, maybe at some level, but not at his, though the Deputy Secretary has given them a directive to begin this process.

P. Gordon then stated that Terrebonne Parish purchases vehicles all the time and would like to move forward with compressed natural gas; however, if there are no stations, then there is no ability for us to move forward.

D. Broussard was told that Lafayette has really embraced natural gas technology for their school buses or transit systems. He states that he was told they were in the process of getting stations built, but in the meantime they have the compressed natural gas buses with no stations. They have had to go to Baton Rouge to fuel the buses in the meantime. It seems like it would defeat the purpose, but I’m sure that was just a temporary measure for them to start “rolling”.

P. Gordon then stated that there needs to be an overall statewide initiative, not just certain departments or regions.

L. Marretta states that it seems like there might be willingness on behalf of certain administrations within our jurisdiction that are interested in this. L. Marretta heard from Mike Hollier, and part of why they are making strides with this is because they have “a center of

gravity". They have buses that bring students from the parking lot to the college and the public transit buses---they already have a lot of people on board. A coalition of similar people that would be willing to jump in, should this become available, needs to be created. If DOTD hears anything, certainly let the MPO know. A list of interested parties will be made on our side, so the MPO can be prepared when this sort of thing happens.

P. Gordon informs everyone that Mike Hollier gave a presentation on the buses, but it needs to be taken further.

L. Marretta agreed that the MPO should take it further. Although L. Marretta would rather not create another subcommittee, he would like to get e-mails circulating and compile a list of individuals that are interested in that topic, specifically. The MPO will start with Terrebonne (P. Gordon). He goes further to state that it seems like it would be a natural jump to make because of the local service fleets that we have.

P. Gordon stated that he would support a subcommittee on that.

L. Marretta expressed that South Central Planning and Development Commission (SCPDC) is interested. Then responding to P. Gordon, he stated that maybe instead of a subcommittee, at least a place where information can start being disseminated. L. Marretta goes further to state that if we can disseminate information to a list of people that are interested, instead of the whole group, it may start to get some momentum built up around the issue. An e-mail list, at the very least, is appropriate.

## **Agenda Item # 2**

### *Other Local Project Updates*

J. Manning opens up discussion to the jurisdiction representatives to give any project updates.

### **Lafourche**

T. Arabie gave the project review for Lafourche:

The bid was opened for the third and final phase of the town of Golden Meadow streets. A bid of \$1,894,000 was received, and will be awarded on the project. The project is to finish and complete all of the streets of the town of Golden Meadow.

Lafourche Parish also awarded the contract to Dolphin Services for the Burma Bridge project. This project will begin on April 1, 2012. Approximately \$300,000 came in, so Lafourche Parish will begin to install a new bridge on Burma Bridge.

The plans for Laurel Valley Road is about 75% complete. The parish anticipates to begin taking bids sometime in May. This project is estimated to cost 5,500,000 million dollars.

The relocation of Highway 24 and LA 1 is still in the design phase. Hopefully Lafourche Parish can relocate that road so the gap in it can be closed, which will eliminate the use of sand baskets. This project is estimated at \$1,200,000.

## Terrebonne

J. Schexnayder gave the project update for Terrebonne.

The construction for a turn lane going in at Hollywood and Alma should begin this month.

Terrebonne Parish has another turn lane going in at Corporate and Tunnel Blvd. Hopefully the bid for that will be ready next month.

Valhi extinction from Equity to Savanne is under construction at this time.

The new Dularge Bridge is in the design phase right now.

Terrebonne Parish should be appointing an engineer this month for the replacement of the Falgout Canal Pontoon Bridge.

Terrebonne Parish is just about completed with the Thompson Road embankment. That should be finished this month or next.

The design embankment is at 95 percent for the Bayou Gardens extinction from Coteau Road to Bayou Blue.

J. Manning asked the State Police if they have any project updates. The State Police representative did not have any updates.

L. Marretta asked if the "bicycle folks" had anything to add.

P. Gordon stated that Terrebonne Parish just heard that the contract is in route for the 2010 Trails Grant. So, construction should begin on the on-road/off-road Southdown Trails Project. Nothing has been heard about the 2011 grant. After speaking with "the state," it seems that award letters will be sent out within the next couple of weeks, so maybe that will be funded.

They are also asking for applications for the 2013 fiscal year for trails. Terrebonne Parish is going to apply, probably for a bike trail on the Eastside. There are two bike trails on the Westside that funding has been provided for. Terrebonne now wants to create a bike trail on the Eastside from City Park (airbase) location down 57, hit the crossover road at Bayou Sally, hit 56 and come back up to City Park again. After reviewing that trail, it should be strictly striping and signage.

L. Marretta states, adventure tourism. That is a very scenic route for those who would like to come down and immerse themselves with a bicycle or on foot.

L. Marretta also reminds everyone that the MPO normally has quarterly meetings with the individuals that are interested in the bicycle and pedestrian regional planning effort, which is being done for the six parishes. This quarter's meeting has been cancelled and in lieu of that, what SCPDC is doing is meeting with each jurisdiction, independently, and making sure SCPDC has each parish's information. The MPO is about to come out with a map that depicts what was discussed at each meeting. The next step is to find and prioritize some projects. Once the projects are prioritized and ranked, then, the MPO can go after money to fund certain things

that are within our region, and that will promote bicycles and pedestrians. Get people to and from places without necessarily having to get in a car.

P. Gordon asked if there are there planning funds available in the Transportation Enhancement Program.

L. Marretta explains that the Transportation Enhancement Program is underfunded and there are numerous applicants; however, SCPDC has been successful in the past. R. Capone has a list of the recent funds SCPDC was able to get money from.

L. Marretta responded by explaining that SCPDC has been filling in the gap, gratis, here at South Central Planning because there is not a number to bill it to. Depending upon the expertise available to a particular jurisdiction, SCPDC attempts to fill in the planning part of that and help with the applications. The planning part of that has been absorbed through the MPO and through other sources.

L. Marretta further states that he is unsure if the MPO can get a planning grant for transportation through the Transportation Enhancement Grant.

P. Gordon was told it is an eligible item. He was just wondering how to go about doing that. Terrebonne Parish is looking for planning funds to do other studies and was told that the Transportation Enhancement Grant could be used. It is something worth checking into.

L. Marretta was unaware that planning funds were available through the Transportation Enhancement Grant. He thought it was strictly project based. Planning funds would give momentum.

P. Gordon states that it would be better if more planning was done before the projects are started.

L. Marretta explained that this is the reason for the Regional Bike Plan. This is an effort to jump start that and put some horsepower to it.

P. Gordon's reason for asking is because they are still trying to work on some sidewalks in the greater Houma area. It would be nice to see what areas should be addressed first, after an inventory is done. See what projects can be applied for to get "the biggest bang for our buck" on the interconnectivity of the sidewalks in the greater Houma area.

L. Marretta- Even the inventory, particularly in regards to sidewalks, that is a huge project that The MPO has been trying to get our hands around what it would actually take. A planning grant would certainly help the MPO to facilitate that. That is the missing piece. There are tractors, schools, playgrounds-- We have no idea what the condition of the infrastructure is around there. The MPO must know if there is adequate infrastructure if we want individuals to use that kind of transportation.

L. Marretta asked R. Capone to check The Transportation Enhancement funds to do planning? SCPDC would love to apply to our current bicycle and pedestrian planning efforts. R. Capone will check with Val, DOTD.













