

Kick-Off Meeting

Monday, August 18, 2014

NLCOG Office

Attendees: Tyler Comeaux, Wade Himel, Paul Waidhas, BKI; Xingwen Chen, ABCD GIS Mapping; Perry Franklin, Risa Mueller, Franklin Associates; Phil Ullman, HDR; Steve Melvin, Tanita Baker, EJES; J. Kent Rogers, Lisa Frazier, Heidi Stewart, NLCOG; Connie Betts, Dan Broussard, Jan G. (call in), David North, DOTD; Michael Larkin, Larkin Development Corp; Robert Westerman, City of Shreveport; Roy Jambor, Shreveport MPC and Eric England, Caddo Bossier Port.

Meeting had just begun.

Paul - We'll look at the scope. As we do that we'll talk about some of these elements that you see listed here in the agenda. The alternatives, purpose and need, SOV etc. I encourage you to stop and ask questions. Coming out of this meeting you'll see several products that will begin to happen immediately. We think we do have everyone from the consultant team here that's needed, so if you do have a question, please go ahead and with that, I'll just start with the scope of services. Everyone should have a copy of the Scope of Services in their handout packet. This is the Scope of Services that is copied from the contract and it's actually a more detailed work plan. It's an explosion of the Scope of Services that you saw in the advertisement. So this actually details the task and the products, the deliverables. We are having the Project Initiation meeting today. That is Task 1-A. One of the next things that we're going to is a Project Management Plan. This is actually a short technical memorandum which will detail such exciting things like how we're going to handle our bills. We can utilize our standard DOTD or invoices from other MPO's. If you have a standard for a lump-sum contract, an example of you want to read back the previous invoice Kent - we have a standard template; I'll get Rita to get one to y'all. Paul - What we usually do is submit the % complete and there's always a progress report both from us and from each of our subs that indicates what was done in the preceding month etc. So if you have any questions, you should be able to ask them pretty easily. Every month we will also be submitting a schedule so we'll see what progress was scheduled and what was actually accomplished. So if we start to slip or we're a little bit ahead, you'll be able to see that as well.

Data collection, you're gonna see that we have separate item on base information down here. We would like to begin acquiring our base data just as soon as possible and we have three big items. Kent and I have already talked about the aerial photography. Xingwen Chen is going to be acquiring that and he is going to be responsible for assembling the GIS data base for the project creating layers and doing some of the special overlay analysis. And can you all report on the status of the Auto Cad or Micro Station layers etc? Connie said yes, I made that request for them on Friday and they will be getting that to me by the end of the week. I will follow up with them and get a more specific date if you will let me know what the easiest way to get that back is.

Paul - I guess it's all gonna get back to the file size and I can get our Baton Rouge office, for example, maybe drop off a portable hard drive and download it in that fashion. There were some other—Risa, I believe you had an interest in the Stage 0. Public involvement documentation from the Stage 0. I'm not sure if Connie has a request for that work but that piece, all the attendees... said all of that information is in the document. I don't know if all those if they posted on the website or not. Hard copy is in here. Otherwise I can make sure you can get a copy of it.

Paul said the project area base maps are going to fall right out of that. So there's really not much to discuss there. The Solicitation of Views, that's a thing that we want to jump to as quickly as possible. We'd like to be able to prepare a draft SOV and get that out to everybody that we can. We'd like to get your standard NLCOG SOV list for projects and the same, anything that you all have from the previous project and updated, that would be appreciated.

Jan (on the phone) said I suggest mostly using DOTD's standard list to make sure everyone who normally gets and SOV from here gets one. Paul said will do. Jan asked, have the logical termini been approved yet? That's something we normally do first before anything else is sent out. Paul said that will be a work ahead. We'll get on that right away. I think the logical termini are fairly well documented and known. But Jan's correct. We do need to make a formal submittal and request.

Kent - I think in the past we've had both the, for the local projects, both the study area and then one that was called the federal action area or area of federal action. It was more narrowed down. The larger study area was primarily for the traffic analysis type stuff. But knowing that the traffic was done under Stage 0 do we need to skip that? Would we need the broader area since traffic was done under Stage 0 or would we need a broader area? Paul said what we are going to prepare is a project area map that mimics what was in Stage 0, that broader area and that's just for everyone's information. If nothing else, it provides some context. It does show you regional connections to roadways like I-20. If nothing else, it serves that purpose really well. The primary impact area is much smaller and the termini will fall within that. And our logical termini will be not firmly established, but we're connecting Flournoy Lucas Road, the existing 3132 with either LA 1 or the extension of I-69. It'll be stated as such. Any questions?

Roy Jambor – But the Alternative C, does that require some kind of special wording where you actually back up beyond. Paul said remember Roy, we're not talking about alternatives necessarily at this point for logical termini. What we want to do is define the end points and what we're trying to connect. The reason we need to do this right now before we actually send out the SOV is we want to state that in the SOV. Our purpose here is to connect Point A and Point B. Roy – Right. Kent - In generalities. Paul – right. But in this one. Roy – But does it really mean existing 3132 regardless of where it initiates. Do you follow me? Roy said yeah, because it really starts beyond Flournoy. I'm talking about the semantics. Paul said you're absolutely correct. We do have an alternative which does not end and start at the prior terminals. Kent said and the other two would be generalities but we don't know exactly where yet. Roy – All of this is going to get so much scrutiny. Might as well be very careful about that sort of thing.

Paul – The Project Advisory Committee, Kent is working on forming that. I believe the agency reps that we have here probably will form the heart of that. Once we have the results of the SOV back in house so that we can summarize those and present them, we will have an Agency Scoping Meeting and that should include FHWA as well as DOTD in order to make sure that we are indeed covering everything that we need to in our project scope. At that point, we will review, revise and finalize the purpose and need. You'll notice in your packet I passed out the Need Statement from the Stage 0 report. What I would ask you all to do is look over that over the next few days and please provide any comments that you would have to Kent and/or us. We'll keep each other copied because what we want to do is develop a good basic Purpose and Need statement to include in the SOV. That would be revised potentially with any comments we have coming back to us. That would then allow us to finalize that P and N and move forward.

Jan said please keep in mind that the Purpose and Need can be revised with public input also. Paul said correct. Jan said keep that in mind.

Paul – Talk a little bit about the Public Participation Plan and if you have any questions, we have Risa and Perry here so they can dive into the how and why on any of these items. They are going to develop a Public Participation Plan which is based on the scope that will sketch out these items. Again that plan will be in the form of a technical memorandum. One of their first charges is develop a data base that does include all of the names, addresses, contact information etc. from the previous efforts. There are various phases of the projects and I'm not going to go through all the details but there'll be a stakeholder meeting with the constituency groups. We may have an editorial board meeting. Most importantly they are going to create a website and update it and maintain it so that on a monthly basis there'll be fresh information that will be made available to the public. It will be an interactive website so if you are a

member of the public and you have a comment or a question, you can email it in. You can contact that website. What I will request is that if someone has a question or a comment, they provide their personal contact information so that we can verify the authenticity. There will be three public meetings. There will be a public information and input meeting which will occur after the existing Stage 0 Alternatives have been tweaked. We are going to further develop them and there will be an evaluation of that. Prior to us making any decisions, there will be a public meeting and at this public information meeting, the public will be able to tell us what they think. We'll then go back and incorporate the input from that meeting into our evaluation process. It's important to note that this is really a three step project development process we have here. We want to identify the most feasible and most responsible alternatives early on and get them to those two alternatives that best address the purpose and need and provide the transportation improvement that we have at the lowest possible impact. Those will then be further developed. We will then have an update and status meeting because in an eighteen month project, the time between the public meeting and the public hearing is sometimes quite long. If you're not comfortable with going to Perry's developed website or you don't want to read the monthly email blasts, you can come to the meeting and talk to an engineer or a planner face to face. We'll tell you where we are and you'll be able to see the progress that we're doing on the alternatives development. Once we get down to two, then we again let people see what we are doing. We will again incorporate public input and all of the technical analysis and then the agencies will get together and make a decision on a Preferred alternative. That would then be the subject of a public hearing which would be the decision point and the final public input opportunity. So that's in general the project development process, the steps, how we step them and through the number of alternatives and the major public involvement opportunities and you'll notice that's all outlined there in the Public Participation Plan and we also have exciting stuff in there about how he's going to prepare legal notices etc. But we won't go through any of that. Are there any questions on Public Participation Plan and how it fits in to that overall project?

Alternatives Updating and Screening – Paul said again I mentioned to you that since the Stage 0 developed the alternatives at a very high level of detail or a higher level of detail that is normally done in the Stage 0, we are going to incorporate all of that information. We will have a limited screening in development of Alternatives. HDR is going to be leading that effort. Why are we doing this? Just for example in this area, if you think about it, the biggest thing that's going on is fracking. For example, we would want to know if someone has put a well pad down in the middle of one of our alignments. We want to look at development in the area particularly on the major roadways. So it's that kind of thing where we want to see what is changed since completion of the Stage 0 and we also want to look at our new GIS information regarding the alignments, elevation. Can we incorporate wide R's so we'll want to take a look at all of our X,Y and Z information. Again, not to repeat but we're going to have that screening process to go down to 2 Alternatives. You'll see that Public Information Meeting is integrated in the Task II there.

That gets us down to the Alternatives Study and Impact Evaluation. This is traditional environmental assessment language here where we divided into the existing conditions for the human environment and for the natural environment. Again this is going to be developed in both a narrative or tabular format and a GIS format. The GIS format allows us to overlay data variables so that helps us in the evaluation if we want to assign numeric values ranking etc., that makes life a little bit easier. The data base is yours once we complete it obviously.

EJES is going to perform an Environmental Site Assessment and in a lot of this, because of that three-stage development process, what you will see is there will be an area wide analysis for things like threatened endangered species, wetlands, environmental sites etc. And then when we get down to the preferred Alternative, there will be a very detailed analysis where, for example, in the cultural resources survey, there will be a shovel test. HDR will go out on the preferred Alternative and do shovel tests. There will be a detailed wetland evaluation. So we'll move from the very general from our GIS data base, the NWI maps, the hydric soils maps etc. for the entire area. When we look at wetlands, we'll get right down and going out in the field on that preferred Alternative.

I am not going to go through each one of the probably 50 independent variables that go into that man-made and natural environmental process there but again, please stop me if you have any questions. Those environmental studies, Phase 1 that I mentioned, historical and cultural resources, threatened endangered species. There is a Traffic Noise Analysis which will be done per DOTD on that preferred Alternative. Each one of these results in a separate stand-alone report which will be an appendix in the document with the exception of the threatened and the cultural resources. By federal standard we are not allowed to disclose any findings; we can summarize it in the report but we are not allowed to divulge any specific locations of endangered species or cultural resources that we find in the field.

All of this base information allows us to then do the Impact Evaluation. We will do a relocation, a Conceptual Stage Relocation Study on the two Alternatives before we get down to a preferred and that will be incorporated into the evaluation. So the number of direct impacts to the human environment in terms of potential relocation are factored in.

HDR is going to be doing a supplemental traffic study. There was quite a detailed traffic study that was done as part of the Stage 0 so they will be supplementing that with traffic counts as needed. I should point out that there are two things that were not developed fully in the Stage 0 that we are going to bring up to a part level of development and analysis. On Leonard Road it is very likely that Alternatives B1 and B2, for example, would not be able to be constructed in their entirety. There may be a need—there probably would be a need to construct the project in phases just as it has been constructed in phases up to now because of the cost of the project. The project in its entirety must be considered in the EA but it can be constructed in phases so that if the project would have to stop at Leonard Road for a couple of years, obviously Leonard Road would receive much more traffic than it currently experiences. So we're going to look at improving Leonard Road and the crossing of the UP Railroad in the intersection with LA 1 simply because it would receive more traffic over the long term future whether or not it connects down to I-69. So that's one thing that would be developed.

In Alternative A and C the project interchanges with LA 1. And one of the concepts that was developed in the Stage 0 was that LA 1 would become a limited access roadway all the way down to the new interchange with the future I-69. If this happens, there would be a need for a service road or a manifold roadway either on the Port property or immediately adjacent to it so that the Port could enjoy access and, Eric correct me if I am wrong, but there are several properties which are actually industrial but not part of the Port which take all access from LA 1 right now. Eric said correct. Paul said so we need to figure out under that Alternative how that's accomplished, what those impacts are and what those costs would be. So those, Leonard Road and that Port manifold roadway, are two of the things that we will be developing. Are there any questions about those? Robert Westmoreland, COS - It would be limited access and not controlled access? Paul said I guess I'll defer. Paul - Were both discussed or just one? Connie (DOTD) said I believe just the limited access. I don't believe we talked about controlled access for LA 1. Kent – Correct. I think it just turned into limited at that point. I think part of it was the distance that would be between these two, technically by the standards we couldn't do.

Paul said again this is something just like with Alternative B1 and B2 that may need to be developed in phases. If it were selected as the preferred Alternative, it could be cleared in its entirety but it could be constructed in phases. So just always keep that in mind and I think that may be an item that we want to consider in our evaluation matrix.

Robert - Question, Alternative B1 and B2 currently terminates at Leonard Road with the phasing construction, are we going to be sitting back in this room again in so many years talking about going from Leonard Road down to potentially I-69 with the same problems that we're looking at right now? Kent - That all depends. Robert - Or will we look at identifying a corridor and identifying right-of-way needs on B1 or B2 as the study indicates? Paul - That would allow you to go ahead and acquire. Robert – Okay. That's the idea. Roy? - He raises a question on my mind during the Stage 0 was that if C necessarily exclusive from B1 or B2? It could be a part of a different alignment if you would. Therein in theory, isn't there one at B1 or B2 that doesn't

necessarily have to include an interchange at Leonard? Do you follow me? Its own complication as Robert was alluding to, that may be the most complicated thing dealing with that issue. Paul said in our evaluation again as we go through this, we can break these into segments. Roy - But you end up....Paul - You do end up with some potential geometry problems here. We'd have to straighten out some of the geometry because obviously A would not in its current alignment could not intersect smoothly with B, okay because you're.....Robert, right, minor adjustments. Paul said minor adjustments. So think about it that way and that's something that may be open for discussion. Roy - because I think Robert is alluding to what may be the biggest issue and that's acquiring right-of-way to preserve the corridor, maybe more so than constructing it, at least currently. Paul said in the DOTD project development process I am sure you all have seen this diagram numerous times, but once we get to a FONSI that then allows us to get our funding in place to find phasing. And once you get the permits, go ahead and acquire the property. Kent - Or establish some setbacks or things like that. Kent - As long as you've cleared it environmentally, cleared it through federal highways, have a record decision of FONSI following whichever and you do something within that first three year time frame, the NEPA rules say that within every three years they can come back and review. They determine what that level of review is. If you've moved and taken progress to do things, as long as you are doing something, that document stays live.

Paul - the question I didn't ask and just want to make sure everybody is on the same page. This project, the extension, is in your long-range transportation plan? Kent - Correct. Paul - so we're in the documentation process, we have backup, we have precedent. We just need to keep moving forward. Okay I think we have covered the Traffic Study. Once we evaluate those two Alternatives, develop them more fully and evaluate them, we will present the technical results. That's where we're going to have that update meeting and again, take input, match that up with the technical analysis and this will allow the NLCOG and DOTD to go forward with the discussion of and selection of a preferred Alternative.

From that, really the big outcome is that's where that final line of grade study comes in where we would develop a line and grade study to DOTD's specifications for the preferred Alternative, prepare the cost estimates etc. Now we're developing additional line and grade work for the two Alternatives before that, so when you look at the line and grade scope, just it's, the schedule is one thing and I'm trying to frame this up within the general schedule, but the line and grade study occurs at three different levels of specificity. We have that general development of all Alternatives, we have a more detailed of the two survivors and then we have a fuller detail on the preferred Alternative with the idea being that at each step they are developed at the same level of detail or specificity.

There is a Construction/ Maintenance of Traffic Plan that is included in the scope so that as we, for example, if an Alternative is selected where we would develop the interchange and improve Leonard Road, we would develop a Construction/ Maintenance Traffic Plan for that. If we develop one that would impact the Port, we would develop a Construction/ Maintenance and Traffic Plan for the Port so that all of the tenants would be able to enjoy access etc. That's the quick overview. Are there any questions or comments?

Jan - I have a quick question. I am looking at the Exhibits that I have and they are labeled A, B, C and AB. Where is B1 and B2? Kent - they should be the purple and green that go from Leonard down to the proposed I-69. They may have pulled that out. Paul - well I think I probably copied those from the draft Stage 0 and that was one of the things they revised. There was a mislabel there because B1 and B2 are exactly what Kent just described. They go from the interchange at Leonard Road down and B1 dives further to the southwest and interchanges with the future I-69 a little bit further to the south than does B-2. Jan - is that one of the handouts that y'all have at the meeting there? Kent - Yes. A printed 8 ½ x 11 of it. - I'm trying to see what the. I think that's how the confusion comes in. They're correctly labeled here on the handout. Yeah, they're correctly labeled on the handout. Kent - Sorry Jan, we'll correct it and get it to you. She said alright.

Jan – another question. We started with four, four Alternatives narrowing that down to two and then to the preferred? Paul – yes. Jan, okay. What are the parameters for going from the four to the two? How is that decision going to be made? Paul – what we’re going to be doing is two things. All of the Alternatives are going to be reviewed and updated based on current what we see in the field and how our data base matches up with it. So we’ll be doing things like making sure the assumptions on elevation etc. are correct with the new aerial photography, LIDAR information, anything in the data base. It will also do a field review and an aerial photo review to make sure that we don’t have any new developments that are in the middle of these routes or that might be clipped by them. Again the thing we are most concerned with are the gas wells that are out there because they are like popcorn. We’re also going to be looking at any new structures that may have been built and just updating that. We will then create an evaluation matrix and the agencies and the PAC will be part of that. We’ll develop it in draft format, pass that by the PAC and then we’ll push the Alternatives through that. We will go to a public meeting and present all of that information and take public input. The public input is going to be then input into the final iteration where we’ll evaluate the four and get down to two. Jan – and then the two, you still not going to do all of the field work for; that’s just going to be for the preferred. That’s what you were saying? Paul – Yes. Yeah there’s quite a few oil wells out there now. There’s basically a grid of wells down there. Jan, what Kent has just pulled up is his current aerial photography and that’s what I noticed even on Google Earth was a nice geometric layout of—it looks like they almost did them on a grid. At the edge of that section too.

You had a question?

Roy – I was just gonna say and I don’t remember what the basis for the different geometry between B1 and B2 was. Does anybody recall? Like you said, it’s not so much,...Kent - The purple one was the exact geometry based on because of where the urban/rural designation came together and to make sense it would be a controlled or limited access highway, what those standards are for rural versus urban are two different things. We told them we need to look at this as if it is urban. Roy - And they were going to need whatever you call the variance. Kent - And that’s what the other one was was some automatic variances or design exceptions. We still think there’s a few others that should be granted and let that Interchange slide up a little farther on the... Roy - And so the green one was simply assuming that the design exceptions would be granted? Kent – Correct.

Eric – Paul you had a---I know what we were talking about I thought was three opportunities for the public earlier in your talk and I see on the Project Schedule the public information meeting under II and the Public Hearing and then there was talk about updating a Status Meeting. Paul – it was not in the schedule; that’s my bad; that’s an omission. Eric said it’ll be in between the two. Paul – Yes. Perry – After the two Alternatives have been processed and worked and it’s a fluid date now; there should be a line item for it. Eric – And, if I’m hearing you correctly, it’ll be after you sought public input from what was presented in the Stage 0 as you get it closer down to two routes? Paul - Yes, when we’re ready to present the results of the two. Eric said thank you. Kent - It will be somewhere in the middle of April? Tyler - April, May Spring 2015.

Jan – I have another question whenever y’all are ready. Back to the preferred Alternative, I’m looking at the schedule and it says that there will be the Draft EA, Public Hearing and Comments and then identify the Preferred Alternative. I note there will Federal Highways be okay with that approach and that y’all have talked to them already about that. I don’t know. But normally a Preferred it has been identified in the document going into the Public Hearing and not after. Paul – No, that was fully our intent because the Preferred Alternative should be in that revised Draft EA that is available for 30 days or more for public review. Jan said okay. Tyler said I guess she’s asking it’s not finalized until after the meeting. Is that what you’re insinuating? Is that correct, Paul? Paul said what she’s saying and what we fully intended to do what we always do is the Preferred Alternative is identified in that revised draft that has been checked and rechecked by NLCOG, by DOTD and by FHWA. Jan - and the one that’s actually approved by Federal Highways for distribution for the public hearing usually has the Preferred identified? Paul – yes. Jan - And the one that’s approved for the public distribution and then

from there one that's selected. If that's the intent that's fine. It's just from here it just seems like the Preferred going to identification is going to be after the public hearing, that's all. That's what's normally been selected. Paul – What Tyler is pointing out is that we may have a semantics issue between the schedule and the work plan so what we'll do internally is look at that, make sure that our documentation is consistent with the way you're saying it. Cause that is....Jan said unless you have something worked out with Federal Highway, that's. Paul said no, no, that's fully what we intend to do. Jan – All right.

Paul – Any further questions or comments?

Kent - It looks like that 2nd public meeting would be somewhere like in July of 2015? Paul said yes, that's what we're looking at.

Kent – You have the initial one sometime in the November/December time frame? We've gotten some heat if it falls like after December 10th, somewhere like after December 10th or before the New Year. We've been getting a lot of heat whenever we do meetings during that time frame. Paul – okay, then I would suggest that simply if for no other reason that we still don't have our base information and sheets and this is something that HDR and BKI in particular really want to see the engineering plans to make sure that we know what we have, then I would suggest that we move that to January. And we will try and catch up there.

Paul – one of the schedule elements that I would like to talk about is how long do the agencies need for review and I realize we don't have a PAC right now and we can't poll the numbers of that to see how long they would like to have to consider reviewing and provide comments. For example, you can tell from our work plan we've tried to break it down to where we provide discreet deliverables when a task is complete in the form of a technical memorandum that we can then take and incorporate into the environmental document as we go. And that's ---Jan, if you want to weigh in how long it would take the environmental division, that would be helpful in making a better schedule. Tyler - One thing that we roughly put about a month on each of these submittals. Jan - That's a reasonable timeframe for environmental. Kent - Jan, will you be the point person or are you going to assign this to somebody? Jan said I'm sorry, am I going to be the point person... Kent - Or will you be assigning this to someone? Jan said I am assigning it to someone. As far as I know I'm continue to be the point person on this. If it is reassigned to someone else, it will be spring, but as of right now I'm the point person. There will be someone from the Project Management group as well.

Dan Broussard - There was a meeting Friday where discussion of people at DOTD could be involved and as Connie - Ed W 's group is going to have a person. Who that is, I don't know . Jan - Then we will also need others from Traffic Engineering, Section Road Design and Bridge Design. We really should have those sections on the project team to make sure we get a good review of the Traffic Study and the line and grade as well as the environmental, EA as well as the ES. Paul – yeah, we had listed most of those and some others as being possible attendees at this meeting. I would hope that we're able to involve FHWA as well and I'll call Bob Mahoney and just see where he's at on that and where he'd like to plug in and just see what his management might think about all of that.

Eric (asking Kent) – With regard to the Project Advisory Committee, I saw the organizations that were listed in the initial draft. Where it mentions other major civic organizations as needed, what's been your history on those? What are those organizations been in the past for projects like this and do you have any recommendations for this one at this point? Kent - I can go back and look at who we had on there. Typically what it's been is if there was someone and again, we pretty much Tim will have a representative here and Pesnell was invited to participate as a representative from the Coalition. We'll make sure that the two of them are included. Typically if there is like if some of the 49 North stuff we had the North Shreveport Development group. Let's look and see if there is any big regional type things in that area. I don't remember who all is down there. Do you have someone you want us to include, let us know. Eric said can they be industry? Does it have to be a civic, for example you have the Manufacturer's Manager's Council in this area that's very interested in the project. I

was focusing on civic and I was wondering because we have industry groups as well perhaps Louisiana Motor Transport Association representing some of those. But those will undergo further bedding I'm sure. I just wanted to get your initial thoughts on that and I appreciate it. Paul - Generally, just from a consultant perspective working with these groups, you want a good cross section. You want to make sure you have all the agencies that make the decisions and will own the road etc. and understand the process and good local representation that kind of provides that local perspective from different viewpoints but you don't want a group of 24/25 people because that then becomes unwieldy. But everything we've have talked about here, I think it's well within reason.

Perry - And at a minimum, we would like to get those contacts and put in our data base too and receive the regular information and I think some announcements and invitations.

Eric - One other question and I believe I may direct it towards Kent, he was here for the Stage 0, as I see and I think I understand these public meetings---I'm going back to these public meetings, these will be opportunities for what I would call an interchange, not just a presentation from BKI and/or NLCOG, or will they be an opportunity for two way exchange of communication? I read 2B has receive comments from the public and I take that...Roy - Are you asking between the Public Hearing, the Public Meeting? Eric said that's what I'm getting at is because there was some issue with that with Stage 0, if I recall correctly. Kent - They were expecting a Public Forum. Kent - They were expecting a formal Public Hearing where they get on a microphone and do the blah, blah, blah, blah, but it's a different between a Public Hearing and a Public Hearing. The interesting thing was the same ones that complained about us trying to do the format for '49 at the early Stage 0 meetings. When they attended the '49 meetings which were set up exactly the same, they were saying this is exactly what we want. This is exactly how it should be done which was what we were trying to do. Paul - We have, and I'll defer to Perry and Risa on this, but in a Public Hearing, a formal public hearing, there would be a presentation which would focus on the Preferred Alternative and there would be public comments. There are no formal responses from the agency where the consultant had that final point. All of the input is centered but there's not that discourse. That's not what occurs at those two public meetings. There are two different formats that we could employ and I think we're open to either one and if you all want to talk a little bit about that and the advantages and disadvantages, this would be a good time to do it.

Typically we found that the Open House format which was utilized at the final meeting of the Stage 0 whereby you have informational stations and the citizens have more of an opportunity to sort of interact with the engineer who did the design, the engineer who did the bridge design or the engineer who did whatever, we find that those are a little bit more productive because it minimizes the ability for someone to take the meeting out of context or to steer it down a wrong path and the majority of the people have a little bit more time. It does take a little bit more time to go to the various stations but we found that it's a little bit more productive so in this strategy, the PTP has not been written yet so there's still time for us to sort of consider alternatives but that's the Open House format that we're considering at this point at meetings 1 and 2 and a more formal Public Hearing with a presentation and sort of the microphone opportunity.

Paul - if anyone here wants to weigh in on that if you want to go back and poll anybody and see what do y'all think your experience is on other projects, like I-49, I-69. If that's the most productive, then we'll do that.

Perry - It's a little bit more informal, allowing people who don't get off from work at 5, they can still get there at 6:30 and still get the same information, we find. It's not like trying to get everyone there at one time to hear some grand presentation. One thing we've done sort of a middle ground of that is maybe have a small presentation at some point of the meeting. We have also done that where people felt like we all are hearing the same thing. Then there are some people who come in and say you're telling me this thing; you're telling that person this thing. And so it minimizes that level of skepticism but the Open House format we've found to be more productive.

Paul – for example, what he’s talking about that hybrid sort of thing, what we will do is we have the boards up around the room, we have the stations that Perry’s talking about and then we have one station that just a continuous loop power point that gives an overview of everything that we’re presenting at once. If you can sit or stand there for 15 minutes, you can get the whole thing and then you go to your station that you’re most interested in, the one that shows where your house is visavis, the Alternatives which is usually what people want to see. That’s just an example of how that could work.

Roy - A website can function as a Public Hearing that’s in every respect, shape and form but with one thing. The guy’s don’t have an audience and that’s what they don’t like about it. And that’s the reality and may be what the discussion’s about. The failure to have a large audience which may be what some folks are looking for.

Eric – What I am looking for is partially an answer because I’m asked the question quite a bit in my role when I’m approached from citizens in this area, what is it that the citizen, the ordinary citizen can do. And of course we want to inform them of where we are in this process. We want to make sure we are answering those citizens that contact us. They call the Port; they interact with us in meetings, civic groups, whatever the case may be, and based what I am hearing at this meeting is to make sure that they know about a portal for which they can sign up to be notified so they can be contacted for Solicitation of Views, if they want to be on a list for input. Just like you were saying, for example, an industry group, if you want to get them involved in a data base, can an ordinary citizen sign up?

Perry, Oh sure. Oh absolutely. Eric said so that’s one way and the second way is through these meetings. I think that’s what I am hearing you say? Kent - Now one thing that we proposed at the MPO meeting Friday was that there will be a section at the beginning of each meeting from here at each of our MPO meetings from here on out that’s a project update thing that will have an update on this project; it will have an update on the transit study. All of those five major pieces of work that we have going on right now, there will be a separate section at the very beginning of each meeting that will give an update to everyone. It will give an update on the long range planning, give an update on the transit plan; give an update on each one of those during that timeframe and those are public meetings so there’s that opportunity also.

Risa – Will we get that feedback back to the public. So just to be clear, every single public meeting whether it’s public meeting or public hearing, will have an opportunity for input. It will never be just a one way channel. They’ll always have an opportunity for the public to provide whether it’s verbal comment, filling out a particular card, whatever it might be at that particular meeting there’s always a _____ at our meetings.

Eric said for example, Perry, just to confirm, for example when Benteler chose Louisiana as the site of their steel mill, folks were very interested. If they wanted to receive any updates on the projects, there was a website that was set up, Benteler Jobs in Louisiana. They sign up and anytime there’s an update about the project in terms of hiring, they automatically got some sort of communicated message. Is that what you’re saying? Perry – We’re going to send out a monthly email update and so if you’ve given us your name and email address, you’ll be in that data base and receive it. Eric said that’s very important. And I just say from our point of view that the amount of contact we’ve received on this is going to be very helpful.

Tyler – And there’ll be a, before any Public Meeting, once the website is up there’ll be a space so people can sign up on the website. Perry -- And whatever was presented in the three public meetings will then be entered on the website. The majority of the people don’t come out any more to Public Meetings, but they do anticipate that information to be uploaded on the website, so the next morning that information will be uploaded on the website as well. Eric said very well. Thank you.

Jan – I have another question please. Will there be a data base (I think I heard that there will be) but just wanted to double check with you, will there be a data base of attendees of people who want to be on the mailing list for those who may not have easy computer access or may

not want to or don't have any access to a website, or will there be some sort of one big or update of people who are interested in the public involvement and notices sent out to them?

Perry – I guess we can do that. Kent - By mail rather than email, non electronic. Jan – said not everyone has access to or easy access to computers. Some still prefer mail.

Perry – One of the things that we've done in areas we felt there was a digital divide is that we'll create a 1-800 number and sometimes we'll just pre-record whatever it is to talk about meeting announcements or something of that nature if we find that this area has similar needs.

Roy - I-49, yes. This area, No, the demographics of this area....

Perry – as of this point, we have not spec'd that.

Tyler – they can always attend the public meetings and public hearings if they have questions.

Roy - These are bloggers.

Eric – I think Perry said it best. Where there's a digital divide; that's a good way of putting it.

Perry – It's easy to call a number and listen to the message and we change the outgoing message. That's our perception at this point.

Paul – Jan I think the majority opinion here at the table is that this is not one of those areas. This is very much a digital age kind of group and that they'd be plugged in and we'll catch em this way. But we'd be open that if it looks like it's a need we'll do it.

Jan – if someone would rather gather a written notice or something like that, getting it direct instead of an email. Also a comment about whichever format y'all choose to have was public meetings and hearings that will be stations for that open house. There should be a common table or station for people to make verbal comments directly in front of recorder or to a court reporter, whatever y'all have decided and also hand and written comments. That will be for both formats so the formal public hearing they take the comments, they're addressing those environmental documents which they will be anyway. The open house format allows that conversation discussion to take place if they want to make a formal comment. I just wanted to throw that out there.

Perry – Yes, that'll be included. Jan said both formats have advantages and disadvantages. Either way the comments that people make, either verbal or in writing, will be part of the document record in the draft of the document.

Perry – That is correct. That methodology will be detailed in the Public Participation Plan. Jan said okay.

Paul – Are there any other discussion points? If not, let me kind of close out with the necessary follow up actions. We're looking to acquire the data just as soon as possible for the Plan Sheets and the GIS. We are going to prepare a draft logical termini sections and begin framing up the SOV. I would request that everyone and anyone here, any of the agencies represented, please take a look at the Need Statement that I passed out. If you have any ideas or comments for further specifying the purpose and need, let me know or let Kent know and I think as of right now, Kent is the Point of Contact for the project. I ask that you at least copy him on all communications and in terms of before we put public information out, Kent is the person who needs to review it or he will assign someone to review it before we put it out just so we have a consistent message of somebody's made a decision over here and somebody else over there doesn't know about it. We got one person who knows everything or most everything. If y'all can get back to us with any comments on that Purpose and Needs, we will appreciate it. We will be getting drafts back to you all as soon as possible. We will revise the schedule and I believe that kind of closes out those immediate follow up items.

Tyler - I – just want to make sure everybody’s email is right here. Paul said I have Jan’s email and that’s not a problem.

Jan – I appreciate y’all letting me call in. Please send me the draft; please send me the that was distributed at the table.

Kent – Okay I’ll scan it in and get it to you.