

LOUISIANA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Held on June 24, 2020

At the State Capitol Building

John J. Hainkel, Jr. Room

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Baton Rouge, Louisiana

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1 APPEARANCES:

2 MEMBERS:

3 CHAIRMAN SENATOR RICK WARD, III

4 JASON P. AMATO

5 SENATOR PATRICK P. "PAGE" CORTEZ

6 BARBARA GOODSON

7 CHRISTOPHER MATTHEW JOHNS

8 MANDI D. MITCHELL

9 CHALIN O. "COP" PEREZ, JR.

10 REPRESENTATIVE VINCENT J. PIERRE

11 SHAWN D. WILSON, PH.D

12 ALSO APPEARING:

13 BARRY KEELING, UNDERSECRETARY, DOTD

14 DEIDRE ROBERT, EXECUTIVE COUNSEL, DOTD

15 LESLIE MCDANIEL, SECRETARY, DOTD

16 DOUGLAS WITT, PRESIDENT/CEO, UNITED BRIDGE PARTNERS

17 RYAN DOLAN, UNITED BRIDGE PARTNERS

18 SENATOR BARROW PEACOCK

19 ERIC KALIVODA, DOTD, DEPUTY SECRETARY

20 SENATOR ROBERT MILLS

21

22 Reported by:

23 Kelly S. Perrin, Certified Court Reporter

24

25

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN WARD:

3 All right. Welcome, Everybody. We're
4 going to go ahead and get started. I know a
5 few people are still filtering in, but we're
6 going to go ahead and get moving today.

7 Madam Secretary, if you could call the
8 roll, please?

9 MS. MCDANIEL:

10 Mr. Amato?

11 MR. AMATO:

12 Here.

13 MS. MCDANIEL:

14 Senator Cortez?

15 SENATOR CORTEZ:

16 Here.

17 MS. MCDANIEL:

18 Mr. Dardenne?

19 (No response.)

20 MS. MCDANIEL:

21 Mr. Johns?

22 MR. JOHNS:

23 Here.

24 MS. MCDANIEL:

25 Ms. Mitchell?

1 (No response.)

2 MS. MCDANIEL:

3 Mr. Perez?

4 (No response.)

5 MS. MCDANIEL:

6 Mr. Pierre?

7 MR. PIERRE:

8 Here.

9 MS. MCDANIEL:

10 Senator Ward?

11 CHAIRMAN WARD:

12 Here.

13 MS. MCDANIEL:

14 Mr. Wilson?

15 (No response.)

16 MS. MCDANIEL:

17 We have a quorum.

18 CHAIRMAN WARD:

19 All right. Thank you. Do I have a
20 motion to approve the minutes from the
21 December 13th meeting of 2018? It's been a
22 while.

23 SENATOR CORTEZ:

24 So moved.

25 CHAIRMAN WARD:

1 So moved by President Cortez.

2 Hearing no objection, those minutes are
3 approved.

4 So we'll go right into new business. We
5 have By-laws to go over, that if there are any
6 questions concerning those or we're going to
7 hear some testimony, I believe. So we'll get
8 to that.

9 You can go ahead and introduce
10 yourself --

11 MS. ROBERT:

12 Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN WARD:

14 -- to the Committee.

15 MS. ROBERT:

16 Good morning, Committee Members. Deidre
17 Deculus Robert, Executive Counsel for LDOTD.
18 This morning on our agenda under new business,
19 we have an amendment and update of our
20 by-laws. They originated in 2003. There was
21 an amendment done in 2005. We've undertaken
22 to review and update those, and we've
23 presented them to you all for review and
24 consideration and approval if you choose.

25 CHAIRMAN WARD:

1 Are there any questions on those?

2 Were there any major substantive changes?

3 MS. ROBERT:

4 There were no substantive changes. We
5 went through and made sure that they were in
6 line with the current LTA regulations. A lot
7 of it was just updates from different
8 consideration over the change in the law over
9 the last few years.

10 CHAIRMAN WARD:

11 Chairmen Pierre moves -- oh, we do have a
12 question from --

13 MR. PIERRE:

14 No, I was going to second.

15 CHAIRMAN WARD:

16 Okay. No? That was it. Okay. We have
17 a motion to approve by Chairman Pierre.

18 Hearing no objection, those changes to
19 the by-laws will be approved.

20 MS. ROBERT:

21 Great.

22 CHAIRMAN WARD:

23 Okay. Let me make one announcement
24 before we move on to the next item that if we
25 get to that point, there is an overflow room

1 in Room F. So I just wanted to make sure that
2 was known.

3 All right. The next item is the
4 financial audit update.

5 MS. ROBERT:

6 Yes, sir. That agenda item is going to
7 be covered by Deputy Undersecretary Barry
8 Keeling.

9 CHAIRMAN WARD:

10 And, sir, if you could just identify
11 yourself and you can get started when you're
12 ready.

13 MR. KEELING:

14 Good morning. I am Barry Keeling. I'm
15 the Undersecretary for the Department of
16 Transportation and Development. I do have a
17 brief that could be put up, or I believe
18 everybody has a hard copy. It's titled
19 Legislative Audit and Financial Update.

20 CHAIRMAN WARD:

21 Does everybody have a copy? Okay.

22 All right. You can move forward.

23 MR. KEELING:

24 All right. The agenda, I'll cover the
25 audit update and the scope, findings, and then

1 I'll provide a financial update for the
2 revenue history projections and then the
3 upcoming toll standards. The legislative
4 audit is required by the bond covenants and we
5 do those on an annual basis. And for the last
6 six years, there have been no audit findings.
7 So the purpose is for providing internal
8 controls for the accountability over all of
9 the public funds that flow through the tolling
10 operation.

11 For the financial update, the capital
12 assets and debt obligations have remained
13 constant, so we've had no changes there. Toll
14 revenues, however, have declined in '15
15 through '17. There was an increase in 2018,
16 mainly due to the increase of the toll
17 schedules. And the toll schedules are part of
18 the agreement that was made by LTA back when
19 the bonds were established, and that is part
20 of the bond covenants. So if we're going to
21 change the toll schedule, that would have to
22 be done through the bond process.

23 The FY '20 traffic counts are expected to
24 be down about 40,000 vehicles. And partly due
25 to the COVID, I'm expecting those revenues to

1 be down an additional \$422,000 from what was
2 projected. If you go to the LA1 Revenue and
3 Traffic History, I have the history from 2013.
4 So you can see the increase of the tolls all
5 the way through '15, and then there was a
6 decline starting in '16 and '17, and then a
7 slight increase in '18, which was due to the
8 toll increase. And in '19, there was a
9 continued increase.

10 The projections for '20 are going to be
11 back down. I'm projecting after -- well, with
12 the information that I have right now and
13 based on what we normally have after we do the
14 auditing of the gross revenues that come in,
15 probably around \$4.9 million, maybe \$5 million
16 is what I'm projecting once we get all the
17 data in from through June. So there will be a
18 slight decrease in 2020 from 2019.

19 The traffic count is probably going to be
20 pretty flat with the slight reduction mainly
21 due to the COVID. But if you look through all
22 the months for the last 12 months, there are
23 some months where we've had some decreased
24 traffic counts also outside the COVID
25 response.

1 CHAIRMAN WARD:

2 What was the reason for the decrease from
3 2015 to 2017 in traffic count? Was it -- I
4 mean, any indication of what caused that?

5 MR. KEELING:

6 The only indication we have there is due
7 to the reductions in the oil business out
8 there. So the -- most of that is -- most of
9 the traffic that we are getting revenues off
10 of is through industry, and so it is declined
11 industry revenues.

12 CHAIRMAN WARD:

13 Thank you.

14 MR. KEELING:

15 The toll revenue, the projections that we
16 have, you can see in yellow, those are actual
17 numbers. And what we have in -- and I'll
18 explain the other numbers in our projections
19 down below that. But in 2018 was the first
20 year that the revenues did not cover the bond
21 payments. And based on the bond documents,
22 the State picks up the difference out of State
23 General Funds for any shortfalls in toll
24 revenues.

25 So in 2018 is about \$1.2 million. In

1 2019, that grew to \$2.7 million. And I'm
2 projecting in 2020 for that to be about
3 \$2.93 million. And I've been in contact with
4 the Division of Administration, so they are
5 aware of that and they know that to expect
6 about a \$3 million payment out of State
7 General Funds for the bond payments.

8 CHAIRMAN WARD:

9 Okay. And we have a question from
10 President Cortez.

11 SENATOR CORTEZ:

12 Thank you, Barry. I was under the
13 impression that it was supported by the TTF,
14 but you're telling me it's State General Fund?

15 MR. KEELING:

16 It is State General Funds and the
17 Division of -- Commissioner of the Division of
18 Administration at the time signed the bond
19 documents and did that endorsement to the
20 bonds. So it is backstopped by the State
21 through the State General Funds for this
22 particular bond.

23 SENATOR CORTEZ:

24 And I see that the growth in '20, almost
25 up to 3 million, then it looks like it starts

1 to come back down. Is that a by-product of
2 the lack of visitors during the COVID or lack
3 of traffic?

4 MR. KEELING:

5 It is, sir. I'm expecting, in the month
6 of May, the revenues were down about 40
7 percent; traffic was down about 40 percent.
8 So taking into account the reductions in
9 March, April, and what I've projected in May
10 and in June, that's where I'm coming up with
11 that.

12 SENATOR CORTEZ:

13 And you said primarily, this is -- the
14 revenues are generated by industry; is that
15 correct?

16 MR. KEELING:

17 It is correct.

18 SENATOR CORTEZ:

19 And do you have a percentage?

20 MR. KEELING:

21 I can probably get that, but I don't have
22 that handy right this minute.

23 SENATOR CORTEZ:

24 I know they have it by axle, I think?

25 MR. KEELING:

1 Yes, sir, it is. The tolls are collected
2 by axle, so I could go back and we could get
3 that information.

4 SENATOR CORTEZ:

5 Okay. Thank you. Thank you,
6 Mr. Chairman.

7 CHAIRMAN WARD:

8 Another question from Secretary Wilson.

9 MR. WILSON:

10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to
11 comment, the part that's subsidized by TTF is
12 just the operations, and the actual debt that
13 is associated with what was borrowed for the
14 construction is supported by General Funds.
15 And I just wanted to point those two out
16 because it is -- you are correct that it
17 was -- there was that perception, but it was
18 operations versus the debt service.

19 MR. KEELING:

20 Thank you, sir. I appreciate you
21 pointing that out.

22 CHAIRMAN WARD:

23 All right. Mr. Johns has a question.

24 MR. JOHNS:

25 Secretary or -- I wanted to ask, is there

1 any federal options for any relief since part
2 of this was due to COVID?

3 MR. KEELING:

4 We have submitted a letter to our
5 Congressional Delegation through an effort
6 that several of the associations are working
7 to get some relief because of COVID
8 operations, the TIFIA loan process --

9 MR. JOHNS:

10 Okay.

11 MR. KEELING:

12 -- which would reduce the TIFIA loan debt
13 service, the debt, based on the rates down to
14 the current treasury rates, which would reduce
15 ours down significantly. We're running around
16 3 percent on those loans right now. I think
17 the current rate is about 1.6 percent for the
18 standard TIFIA and about 0.8 percent for the
19 rural portion. And this particular bond is a
20 split between rural and standard.

21 MR. JOHNS:

22 Would that require a motion from this
23 Board or would that just happen automatically
24 if you guys were able to pull it off?

25 MR. KEELING:

1 It depends on how the legislation would
2 come down.

3 MR. JOHNS:

4 Okay.

5 MR. KEELING:

6 If it would require an action on our part
7 to make that happen, it would require some
8 action from the Association -- Authority.

9 MR. JOHNS:

10 Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 MR. KEELING:

12 The FY '20, again, that 2.9 does take
13 into account the reduced \$422,000 from the
14 COVID impact. So that does take that into
15 account. And the 2021, '22, '23, I've only
16 projected a 1 percent increase. And looking
17 back over the last four or five years, we have
18 just been under a 1 percent increase in
19 traffic per year.

20 So in previous briefings, we've used a 2
21 percent, but that's been a little bit
22 optimistic. So I've reduced that down to show
23 something that is probably more realistic on
24 what we can expect based on traffic increases,
25 unless the oil industry does pick up and we

1 start getting some additional traffic down
2 there.

3 In 2023, I'll point out that the toll
4 rate does go back up to the next jump in the
5 tolls. And if we go to the next slide, that
6 will -- is reflected there on what those
7 changes are. So for the -- if we basically
8 went up for the commuter toll would go from
9 225 to 270, and then you can see that there's
10 some significant increases on the commercial
11 side down on that on the axles.

12 CHAIRMAN WARD:

13 And we have a question or comment from
14 Secretary Wilson.

15 MR. WILSON:

16 Thank you. Just for clarification, I
17 think when we prepared this presentation,
18 Members, we did not acknowledge or include the
19 INFRA Grant Award. It's about \$135 million.
20 And so doing one of -- cover two things, one,
21 just publicly thank the Senate President, who
22 was Chairman of the Transportation, Senator
23 Ward and Representative Magee for fostering or
24 ushering 578 through, which made \$150 million
25 available for that project that was

1 instrumental in us getting the largest grant
2 awarded this cycle of about \$135 million.

3 And I wanted to also, since we're talking
4 about the toll schedule, acknowledge that the
5 toll rates will not change when that phase is
6 completed; that the toll rates that you see
7 today was always anticipated to cover the
8 entire corridor when it's constructed. So
9 just as a preventative question, if we get
10 those questions, we don't anticipate any toll
11 rate adjustments other than what's in the
12 bonds that you see here once it's finished.
13 So the public should have some comfort in
14 knowing that there's not going to be an
15 increase in tolls because of the new
16 construction; it's just related to the every
17 five-year increase.

18 CHAIRMAN WARD:

19 Is there any anticipation of any
20 increased traffic?

21 MR. WILSON:

22 It's all industry driven for the most
23 part. I think some folks will take full
24 advantage of the, you know, more efficient
25 route and the safer route once it gets into a

1 flood condition to be able to access their
2 property and businesses down there, but it's
3 all driven on the oil and gas industry, which
4 was part of the initial vision for this
5 project.

6 CHAIRMAN WARD:

7 Thank you.

8 MR. KEELING:

9 So the only other thing that I'd like to
10 point out is that the numbers that I've
11 provided as far as the revenue projections,
12 those are audited numbers. And the -- and the
13 projection I did for FY '20, it would take
14 into account what we normally make,
15 adjustments we make for our audit.

16 There are some briefs later that you'll
17 receive on the tolling operation that talks in
18 gross numbers, and those are going to show a
19 little bit larger numbers than what I am
20 showing the actuals were after all the refunds
21 and violations and all the audit actions were
22 taken.

23 And subject to your questions, that will
24 complete my brief.

25 CHAIRMAN WARD:

1 And, Everyone, we apologize. We are
2 having some technical difficulties in terms of
3 trying to get the power point up, so that's
4 why it's not being shown at this time.

5 President Cortez?

6 SENATOR CORTEZ:

7 Just quickly, I know you go -- you put on
8 your projections in debt service. At what
9 point -- I think you mentioned this, but I
10 didn't catch it. At what point did we go in
11 the negative, in arrears with regards to the
12 toll collections not being able to manage the
13 debt service?

14 MR. KEELING:

15 The first --

16 SENATOR CORTEZ:

17 How long have we been --

18 MR. KEELING:

19 Yeah, that has just recently taken place.
20 So the first year that that happened was in
21 2018.

22 SENATOR CORTEZ:

23 So the one you have on here is the first
24 year?

25 MR. KEELING:

1 That is the first.

2 SENATOR CORTEZ:

3 Prior to that, there was enough revenue
4 to pay all the debt service --

5 MR. KEELING:

6 That is correct.

7 SENATOR CORTEZ:

8 -- every year up to there going back to
9 '08?

10 MR. KEELING:

11 That is correct.

12 SENATOR CORTEZ:

13 Okay. Thank you.

14 MR. KEELING:

15 And part of that was due to an increasing
16 debt service schedule that was established --

17 SENATOR CORTEZ:

18 Right.

19 MR. KEELING:

20 -- when they did the loan.

21 SENATOR CORTEZ:

22 Right.

23 MR. KEELING:

24 The revenues have been relatively
25 consistent throughout the life of the toll

1 collections.

2 SENATOR CORTEZ:

3 And I know at one time, we passed
4 legislation to allow the locals not to pay it,
5 the residents.

6 MR. KEELING:

7 There is an exemption for residents. I
8 believe veterans have an exemption. So there
9 are a few exemptions of people that are
10 residents of that area down there.

11 SENATOR CORTEZ:

12 But subsequent to that, there was -- I
13 mean, everybody else pays the toll. It's just
14 a matter of utilization to get the -- it's
15 either rate or utilization that's going to --

16 MR. KEELING:

17 That's right.

18 SENATOR CORTEZ:

19 -- that's going to get to that number.

20 MR. KEELING:

21 That is correct. So the increase in the
22 revenues that we saw was a direct result of
23 the 2018 increase in revenues based upon the
24 schedule toll increase. And I would expect
25 that in 2023, the revenues will take another

1 jump, unless the industry improves and they
2 have an increased traffic down there.

3 SENATOR CORTEZ:

4 Okay. Very good. Thank you,
5 Mr. Chairman.

6 CHAIRMAN WARD:

7 Okay. We'll move on to the LA1
8 operations update.

9 MR. WILSON:

10 So what we wanted to do was provide an
11 operations update. As I mentioned a minute
12 ago to the Board, the Authority, that the
13 operations piece falls under DOTD and the debt
14 service falls under actual toll collections.
15 So we've got a couple of slides here that
16 highlight where we are with operations.

17 Just as background for new members and
18 the public, we opened this up in 2009. The
19 LA1 toll facility is located in Lafourche
20 Parish, about eight and a half miles north of
21 where the bridge is. We currently have two
22 lanes that is toll operated 24/7. And we have
23 an existing customer service center, which is
24 where folks can come in and purchase tags and
25 put money on their accounts and things of that

1 nature in Golden Meadow.

2 We also have various ITS elements,
3 Intelligent Transportation System elements
4 that are a part of our system. Those are
5 cameras, signage, things that are designed and
6 installed to make it much more efficient of an
7 operation for the public to engage with LA1.

8 The toll collections from Slide 2 come
9 from Non-GeauxPass patrons. We do have
10 GeauxPass revenue, which is the universal tag
11 system. It's called GeauxPass. You have to
12 have a registered license plate and a prepaid
13 account. It's a way for you to establish a
14 system to have a seamless transportation
15 system down there. If you just happen to go
16 with a boat or if you go in a car or if you're
17 going in an 18-wheeler, no matter what axle
18 configuration that you go, the tag that you
19 have will register accordingly. And that's
20 the way we manage that.

21 A big part of toll collections really is
22 the violation system, the Vtoll system. It's
23 collected when patrons inappropriately use or
24 travel through the lanes. An example would be
25 a no GeauxPass account person would have a

1 mismatch with their account and we would tie
2 that to the license plate and/or fine
3 sufficient funds on their account. And we
4 would actually send them a violation.

5 And that violation, if it's a State
6 vehicle, does allow us to go through the
7 system and track them. And we have some
8 reciprocity with neighboring states as well to
9 manage that. And so we have a very good
10 system now that wasn't always that way, but we
11 now have a very good system for tracking
12 violators on our operations account.

13 CHAIRMAN WARD:

14 Is that the reason for the spike? I see
15 in March 2020, there was a 33 percent.

16 MR. WILSON:

17 You're one step ahead of me. So in March
18 2020, you see a spike, but this is a result of
19 an executive decision that we made as a result
20 of COVID to prevent due to the employees from
21 impacting. If you remember at the very
22 beginning, actual person to person contact was
23 uncertain. And so what you're seeing is an
24 actual tracking of folks.

25 We did not suspend collections, but we

1 eliminated the cash collections, forced
2 everyone to go into the electronic lane and we
3 go back and we waived the fees and penalties
4 during that time, which we have the authority
5 to do. So we will collect the tolls, but not
6 necessarily the penalties. And so what you
7 see is a direct result of us being responsive
8 to COVID for that 2020 spike that you're
9 seeing on Slide 5.

10 I skipped over a slide that talks about
11 gross revenue and traffic. And, again, to
12 highlight a point that it's important to note
13 that the more axles you have, the higher your
14 rate. And so the larger share of the dollars
15 that come in are coming from 18-wheelers,
16 which is why it's heavily tied to oil and gas
17 industry operating in the port.

18 And on Slide 5, you can look at the
19 violation and toll rates and how we had gotten
20 it down significantly to the 1 to 3 percent
21 range there. And so we've made tremendous
22 improvements in terms of electronic
23 enforcement working to modify our system and
24 make it more efficient. And then you see that
25 spike, which is a result of COVID.

1 So we have done -- annually, we've done
2 much better from 2014 to the present reducing
3 the number of violators. And that has a lot
4 to do with the public being educated on how to
5 use it, but also the system being more
6 efficient to track and account for those
7 violations.

8 The next slide, Slide 6 shows you that a
9 very small amount of revenue is generated as a
10 result of violations. And so those are
11 statutory in terms of their amounts. But you
12 can see, not a lot of dollars are generated
13 from violations. The vast majority of the
14 funds comes from those folks who are playing
15 by the rules and are paying the tolls. And we
16 like it that way because it's a sign that
17 people are paying attention.

18 But more importantly, we still have a
19 large number of cash transactions down at LA1,
20 which is not the standard for tolling in
21 today's day and age. It's much more
22 beneficial to do electronic tolling. It's a
23 lot more efficient, a lot more affordable than
24 having a warm body there to collect tolls.
25 And so I would suspect some of that may change

1 if we move to all electronic collections at
2 one point on this structure.

3 This last slide, Slide 7 talks about an
4 option for the third party, O&M. As we move
5 forward with the Belle Chasse public private
6 partnership, we had an option as to way to
7 reduce the cost to the TTF by consolidating
8 back office operations. That's the most
9 expensive portion of what we spend at DOTD.
10 It comes to about four an a half million
11 dollars a year that we spend just to operate
12 that structure.

13 And so if there's an opportunity and a
14 successful negotiation to consolidate that
15 back office, which could mean a reduction in
16 some of our staff potentially; but more
17 importantly, it can produce some efficiencies
18 as we would have now more than one toll
19 collection. This is very similar to what we
20 did when we had the Crescent City Connection
21 that we had one consolidated back office. And
22 so we had in that negotiation for the P3 an
23 opportunity to do that to reduce the burdens
24 on the TTF to be able to add additional
25 revenue to other projects and the TTF; that

1 the TTF funds and/or support the projects.

2 So it would be required that they make no
3 changes to the bond covenants and that they
4 would maintain a separate tracking and
5 recording of that, but it is the best practice
6 of our industry to consolidate those offices
7 and not have duplication there. So we are
8 currently in negotiations Plenary to do that
9 and that in no way one of the guiding
10 principles is that it does not affect or
11 negatively affect any of the revenue that's
12 generated on the debt service payments or from
13 the toll collections. This is 100 percent
14 subsidized by the TTF. So it's consistent
15 with us trying to make our resources stretch a
16 little bit further.

17 And so with that, Mr. Chairman, we'll
18 entertain any questions regarding the
19 operations of LA1. And we do have other staff
20 here to be able to answer questions, if
21 necessary.

22 CHAIRMAN WARD:

23 I believe, at this time, the Board is
24 clear. So I guess y'all did a good
25 presentation.

1 MR. WILSON:

2 Quick and easy.

3 CHAIRMAN WARD:

4 All right. Now to the introduction of
5 the unsolicited proposal for the Jimmie Davis
6 Bridge. And just whenever you get settled in,
7 you can introduce yourself and get started.

8 MR. WITT:

9 Sure. Well, good morning. And my name
10 is Doug Witt. I'm President and CEO of United
11 Bridge Partners. And it's a pleasure to be
12 here today and thank you for your time and
13 interest. We're very, very excited about this
14 unsolicited proposal on the Jimmie Davis
15 Bridge.

16 Just so you know as a way of background,
17 we've been pursuing this and identified this
18 literally a year ago, so we've been working
19 and trying to understand this for quite a long
20 time. We understand the need and we -- Ryan
21 Dolan, my colleague will go through this in a
22 little bit more detail. I just wanted to make
23 a couple of comments of what we believe. And
24 we can serve that need quite well.

25 Just a background on United Bridge

1 Partners, we are an operating company. We
2 build bridges and design, build, operate, and
3 then maintain for the long term. We'll do the
4 environmental upfront. We have the capital
5 upfront for the entire ability right upfront
6 now available. We're experienced. We're in
7 four states. We're talking to folks like you
8 in probably 20 states right now.

9 But suffice it to say, Louisiana is a top
10 priority for United Bridge Partners. We
11 believe this is a great fit and we're just
12 thrilled to be here and the possibility is
13 that, you know, we could see a way to deliver
14 a new bridge somewhere in 2024 delivered.
15 We'll do the environmental upfront as well.
16 We'll work with you on a number of different
17 fronts. But, you know, we're about having the
18 capital upfront and we take on the risks,
19 whether it's ADT risks. So if no one goes
20 over the bridge, that's our problem. And we
21 put all of the money upfront.

22 We're -- the construction time frame,
23 that's all ours. The design, the
24 environmental upfront, those are all of our
25 risks. And then the final thing is speed.

1 You know, we can deliver a new structure and
2 work done in several other states in 24, 30
3 months executing.

4 And, again, I want to say one other
5 thing, we are an operating company that
6 happens to have money too. We are here for
7 the long term. We join and enter into the
8 community with you. And, you know, we're
9 about ten years into another bridge in
10 Virginia right now that we continue to service
11 and continue and expect to be part of that
12 community for a long time.

13 So with that, I'm going to turn it over
14 to my colleague, Ryan Dolan.

15 MR. DOLAN:

16 Hi, Everyone. Ryan Dolan, I lead
17 business development efforts for United Bridge
18 Partners and I just want to reiterate what
19 Doug said, we're really excited to be here,
20 humbled to be here and excited to move forward
21 in this with the LTA. So I'll just go through
22 a brief presentation for y'all today.

23 I want to quickly introduce our wider
24 team, Boh Brothers, Fenstermaker, and Modjeski
25 and Masters. I'll summarize the project

1 background, need, timeline, and how our goals
2 really deliver on that project need. Then,
3 I'll actually highlight the high level
4 highlights of our written submission that we
5 made last October, and then summarize the key
6 benefits of our offering before addressing any
7 questions you might have.

8 Okay. So, first, we have put together an
9 outstanding team to deliver this project. We
10 believe it's the best team to deliver this
11 project. We have a lot of experience doing
12 private, public private type projects as
13 United Bridge Partners and then we also have a
14 lot of experience designing and constructing
15 bridges in Louisiana and on behalf of the
16 LADOTD.

17 So, first, United Bridge Partners, we're
18 going to be the main point of contact for the
19 state and for the DOTD. We'll ultimately be
20 responsible for successful delivery of the
21 project and we'll be the counter-party in the
22 comprehensive agreement with the state.

23 So in terms of our responsibility, as
24 Doug mentioned, we'll commit a hundred percent
25 of the project funding upfront. So the

1 project will be fully funded day one. We'll
2 manage delivery of the project. And then on
3 the back end, we'll be responsible for all
4 long term operations, maintenance, back office
5 tolling for the term of the comprehensive
6 agreement.

7 Boh Brothers, they are a Louisiana-based
8 heavy civil contractor. They're going to be
9 our lead construction partner on the project.
10 Obviously, they have a lot of experience in
11 Louisiana in working with the LADOTD and
12 they'll be responsible for all construction
13 activities and management of subcontractors as
14 well.

15 Fenstermaker is also a Louisiana-based
16 company as well. They're going to be our
17 engineer of record on this project. And their
18 scope includes all accurate roadway design, in
19 addition to securing environmental clearance
20 and all project permits.

21 Finally, Modjeski & Masters, they are our
22 structural experts on this project. So
23 they're going to be lead design for all
24 structural components of the project,
25 including the main bridge and approach spans

1 as well as the elevated trail that we have
2 planned in our proposal.

3 And then, finally, Adams & Reese and
4 Butler Snow, they are our legal counsel in
5 government relations both at the state and
6 local Shreveport and Bossier City levels. So
7 a number of members of our team are here
8 today. I just quickly want to recognize them,
9 Robert Boh and Jeff Plauche from Boh Brothers,
10 Rawley Webber and Kimberly McDaniel from
11 FensterMaker, and Cullen Ledet from Modjeski &
12 Masters. So I want to thank them for
13 attending today. And then we also have Chris
14 Kane and Jordan Gleason from Adams & Reese
15 here today.

16 So in terms of project experience, as I
17 mentioned, we have a lot of experience
18 delivering these private types of projects as
19 United Bridge Partners. So we currently have
20 five projects across four states. I'll just
21 mention a few of them here. Number one is our
22 South Norfolk Jordan Bridge in Chesapeake,
23 Virginia. We built that between 2010 and
24 2012, and we've been successfully operating
25 and maintaining that structure for about eight

1 years now. And we've been a good member of
2 the community there.

3 One of our newer projects is the Houbolt
4 Road Extension. We were selected as part of a
5 competitive RFP process to deliver a mile and
6 a half long roadway, a half mile long bridge
7 as the JV with Centerpoint Properties in
8 Joliet, Illinois. So that one is shovel ready
9 and will be getting under construction later
10 this year.

11 And then, obviously, as I mentioned, our
12 broader team has a lot of experience designing
13 and constructing bridges in Louisiana. So I
14 listed a number of examples here and there's
15 more detail within our written proposal on
16 each of these projects.

17 So I want to briefly touch on the project
18 timeline here starting in July 2015. So
19 obviously, this project has been in
20 development for a while now. In July of 2015,
21 the environmental, the original environmental
22 assessment was completed. As part of that
23 assessment, a new two-lane westbound stretcher
24 was selected as the preferred alternative.
25 Part of the reason for that selection was to

1 coincide with the rehabilitation of the
2 current structure for eastbound vehicular
3 lanes. So together, there would be four total
4 travel lanes, two separate bridges as a full
5 delivered project.

6 Later in 2016, the DOTD canceled that
7 project and reopened the environmental
8 assessment to examine and analyze a four-lane
9 fixed span structure instead of two two-lane
10 structures. We believe that that was the
11 right choice. That's actually what we
12 included in our proposal. And so from 2016
13 really up until now, that supplemental and
14 environmental assessment has been underway,
15 and we expect that that will be completed
16 later this year.

17 Finally, in 2019, October of last year,
18 we submitted our proposal, which is to fully
19 finance, design, build, lease, operate and
20 maintain the replacement structure. And I'll
21 go into the details of that proposal later.

22 In terms of the current situation, like I
23 said, the environmental assessment is
24 underway. We understand that the preferred
25 alternative so far is a four-lane structure,

1 so we're in line with that. And in terms of
2 the funding for the bridge, you know, we
3 understand there's currently about \$24 million
4 allocated for the project in various priority
5 levels. So there's still a significant
6 shortfall in funding to fully deliver the
7 project, which is over a hundred million
8 dollars.

9 So there's a number of reasons why this
10 project makes sense to address now and why it
11 makes sense to address our approach as an
12 option to consider. So, number one, on the
13 structural side, it's clear that this bridge
14 needs to be replaced. So, first, there's a
15 need to improve safety.

16 So the bridge is at the end of its useful
17 life. It's over 50 years old. It's not --
18 it's been classified as structurally deficient
19 and functionally obsolete by the FHWA. It's
20 got a rating of 36 out of 100, which is
21 relatively low. And all major bridge
22 components, so the deck, substructure,
23 superstructure are all rated in poor
24 condition.

25 So in addition to that, there's also no

1 pedestrian or bicycle crossing over the
2 bridge, so that's another need. And there's
3 insufficient capacity currently and for future
4 traffic. So it's only a two-lane bridge in a
5 larger lane corridor. So it creates a bit of
6 a bottleneck, which creates congestion and
7 backups and delays, which is a headache for
8 the local communities.

9 In addition, there's noncompliant
10 geometry on the structure. So there's limited
11 shoulders. So if there's ever any -- if
12 there's any breakdowns or accidents, it
13 exacerbates that delay and that traffic
14 congestion. And, finally, there's what I
15 would call outdated bridge access, so there's
16 a need to improve some of the access roadway
17 in the area that lead up to the bridge.

18 So those are the structural concerns that
19 need to be addressed. And then there are
20 external factors that make this project a good
21 fit for our type of approach or public private
22 type of approach. The number one issue is
23 funding, as I mentioned. There's currently a
24 lack of sufficient funding programmed in the
25 state budget to address the project. Like I

1 said, it's over a hundred million dollars at
2 this point.

3 And there's also, you know, mounting
4 infrastructure needs in Louisiana. So I think
5 the latest estimate we saw was about
6 \$15 billion in infrastructure needs in
7 Louisiana that need to be addressed. There's
8 also declining revenue sources. So gas tax
9 revenues, sales tax revenues have been
10 declining. So all of that in total creates a
11 need to identify new funding sources and
12 alternative revenue sources such as ours, such
13 as private funding.

14 In addition to the funding issues,
15 there's also a community desire to accelerate
16 execution of the bridge. So that's another
17 thing that we bring to the table is speed.
18 And there's an opportunity with this project
19 to spur the local economy and create jobs in
20 the area as well.

21 So in terms of our project goals to meet
22 those needs, the first three goals you see
23 here are structure related and they actually
24 align to the goals outlined in the EA as well.
25 So the first is, you know, we'd like to

1 increase capacity level of service and safety
2 of the crossing. So we'll do that by actually
3 replacing the current structure with a new
4 four-lane structure.

5 We'll include a pedestrian and bike path
6 on the new structure as well to achieve the
7 second goal of the bridge being multimodal.
8 And then, the third goal is to extend the
9 useful life of the crossing. So our goal is
10 to provide a minimum useful life of at least
11 75 years on this structure.

12 In addition to the structural goals, we
13 also have a number of other more community
14 related goals and project related goals, and
15 number one being to offer a community friendly
16 lowest toll rate and structure possible.
17 That's our goal on all of our projects to
18 offer the most, the lowest financially
19 feasible toll rate that we can and not
20 overburden the local community with high
21 tolls. So we'll do that on this project as
22 well.

23 And then, finally, deliver the project as
24 safely, quickly, and cost efficiently as
25 possible while limiting disruption of the

1 public. So the current bridge will remain
2 open for the duration of design and
3 construction until the new bridge is open and
4 then offer local economic opportunities and
5 job creation opportunities in the area.

6 So before I go into the high level
7 details of the proposal, I just want to touch
8 briefly on the due diligence and the homework
9 we've done in the community to put our
10 offering together. So in, you know, between
11 July and September of last year, we met with a
12 number of local stakeholders at the city
13 level, at the parish level. We met with local
14 business leaders and economic groups in
15 Shreveport and Bossier City, in addition to
16 the DOTD and Historic Preservation Office.

17 And, really, the vast majority of the
18 feedback we got was; number one, the bridge
19 needs to be replaced and there's a desire to
20 accelerate delivery and replacement of the
21 bridge; number two, this would be good project
22 economically in the area for creating jobs and
23 economic stimulus; and number three, an
24 openness to our approach and a desire for the
25 state to pursue this further as an option to

1 deliver the project. So that really, that
2 really gave us comfort that our approach and
3 this proposal could work in this area.

4 Okay. So what's actually in the written
5 proposal? This is obviously high level
6 detail, but our proposal is to fully finance
7 and fund, design, build, lease, operate, and
8 maintain the new structure. So from a
9 structural perspective, we'll deliver a new
10 four-lane bridge.

11 The new structure will actually include
12 the pedestrian bike path, which differs a
13 little bit from the current preferred
14 alternative in the EA. And we'll also
15 incorporate a lot of the access roadway
16 improvements in Shreveport and Bossier City
17 that will improve safety and efficiency in the
18 area.

19 As you can see from the pictures here, we
20 propose both a concrete and steel option. And
21 we would -- during the actual design phase,
22 we'd work with the DOTD to determine what the
23 best option is for this project. The bridge
24 would have a minimum useful life, as I said,
25 of 75 years. It's generally in line with the

1 ongoing EA and solves a lot of the goals
2 outlined in regional transportation plans as
3 well.

4 So in terms of how we would deliver the
5 project or approach, Doug touched on a lot of
6 these. But, number one, we would provide a
7 hundred percent of the project funding upfront
8 at the execution of the comprehensive
9 agreement. So there wouldn't be any question
10 as to funding availability for the duration of
11 the project. And we wouldn't require any
12 public funding whatsoever or any raising of
13 debt.

14 So, for example, if the state chose to
15 reallocate that \$24 million, it's free to do
16 that. If it wants to instead allocate that to
17 the project, that would just directly benefit
18 the community via lower tolls. And in terms
19 of debt, you know, we use all equity
20 financing. So that's a little bit safer for
21 the state and local community in that we don't
22 have to rely on traffic and revenue to service
23 debt, and so the fault risk is significantly
24 lower.

25 And as Doug mentioned, we also, we assume

1 all risks, so we're a fully at-risk counter
2 party in this agreement. In terms of project
3 delivery, we'll take the responsibility for
4 any environmental clearance amendments,
5 project permits, utility relocations,
6 right-of-way acquisition, scheduled delivery,
7 any cost overruns, we take on that risk.

8 And on the back end, we also take on all
9 traffic and revenue risks, and then any out
10 year major rehabilitation activities,
11 maintenance and operations, we're also
12 responsible for that as well.

13 As Doug mentioned, we have an accelerated
14 delivery schedule. So our proposal calls for
15 a fully delivered bridge in 2024. So within
16 four years of contract execution, we would
17 actually have a new bridge and project open to
18 traffic. And during delivery of the project,
19 as I mentioned, we would limit disruption as
20 much as possible. So we would keep the
21 existing structure open.

22 And then I've touched on the economic
23 stimulus it would provide to the area. FHWA
24 estimates about for every million dollars in
25 project costs or project capital, it creates

1 about ten jobs. So we think this project
2 could create hundreds of jobs in the area and
3 it could provide an economic boost to
4 Shreveport and Bossier City.

5 And then, finally, on the back end, we
6 open a local office. We would move into the
7 community, hiring all local general management
8 and operations team and implement our
9 best-in-class management and tolling back
10 office operation locally. So we would be
11 responsible for all maintenance and operations
12 for the term of the comprehensive agreement.

13 So if I just had to summarize why we
14 think our approach in this project makes
15 sense, I'd summarize it with our solution is
16 right. We have the best team to deliver the
17 project and that our approach is appropriate
18 and the best way of delivering the project.

19 So as I mentioned, it's a four-lane
20 structure, it's got a pedestrian and bike
21 path. Our proposal actually calls for removal
22 of the existing structure. And we've been
23 speaking with SHPO on how to incorporate
24 mitigating actions to do that. Our team, like
25 I said, it's a fully assembled team that's

1 fully dedicated to this project, a lot of
2 experience within Louisiana and with the DOTD.
3 And then our approach, the top three items
4 being we have immediate funding, there's lower
5 risks with our funding, we can accelerate
6 delivery of the project, and we take on all
7 the risks and then integrating the community.

8 So I know I just said a lot. I'll stop
9 there. Thank you again for your time. We're
10 really excited to move forward. And with
11 that, we're free for any questions you have.

12 CHAIRMAN WARD:

13 Yeah. And I know we'll have a handful of
14 questions. I guess my first question is, have
15 y'all done any outreach in the community in
16 terms of how they feel about a toll on
17 replacing an already-existing structure versus
18 just a brand new structure that has never been
19 there before? Do you -- have -- do y'all have
20 any feedback on that?

21 MR. DOLAN:

22 Yeah. There's definitely an openness to
23 considering tolling as an option at this
24 point. You know, I don't think anyone said,
25 please put a toll on the bridge. That's never

1 really the case anywhere you go. But,
2 definitely, there is an openness for the state
3 to pursue this further and consider it as an
4 option to deliver the project.

5 CHAIRMAN WARD:

6 Okay. And any estimate, if it did end up
7 with a toll, what that amount might be?

8 MR. DOLAN:

9 Yeah. So we include an estimate in our
10 proposal.

11 CHAIRMAN WARD:

12 Okay.

13 MR. DOLAN:

14 And I'll say that that remains valid now.
15 And we'll get into that detail later on in the
16 process.

17 CHAIRMAN WARD:

18 Okay. President Cortez for a question.

19 SENATOR CORTEZ:

20 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple
21 of quick questions. You talked about other
22 projects y'all have going in other states,
23 what's the price tags on those and relative to
24 this? What has been y'all experience?

25 MR. DOLAN:

1 Sure. So we tend to specialize or focus
2 on what I would call non-mega projects. So
3 our projects typically range anywhere from a
4 hundred million to three, 400 million. And
5 the projects we've delivered in the past
6 typically fall around the 150 to \$160 million.

7 SENATOR CORTEZ:

8 So why would y'all look to Louisiana?
9 Give me the reasons Louisiana would be on your
10 target as the place to build.

11 MR. WITT:

12 We're -- we're in about 20 states.

13 SENATOR CORTEZ:

14 You'll have to come to the table.

15 CHAIRMAN WARD:

16 Come up to the table if you can, sir.

17 MR. WITT:

18 Hi, Doug Witt. We're in about 25 states
19 right now around the country and with groups
20 like yourselves, and the characteristics of
21 what the bridge offers in terms of the need.
22 The other variable is the traffic. The other
23 variable is kind of cost to deliver. All of
24 those things need to make sense to be able to
25 inject over a hundred million dollars, like

1 writing a check overnight to execute a project
2 that might not make the radar screen right now
3 because of other priorities.

4 And, again, that's just a tradeoff
5 decision, and then do that in a fashion where
6 there is a toll rate that, you know, people,
7 although, they don't want it have to -- would
8 ultimately have to make a tradeoff decision
9 for a new structure. And it hits those
10 characteristics. We look at hundreds of
11 these.

12 I'm on my way to Washington, D.C. next,
13 you know, after this. You know, the USDOTD is
14 asking, you know, how can we help us here in
15 certain states and some of this. So we have a
16 fair amount of experience. There are
17 opportunities that we have actually turned
18 down. And we said, you know what, it's not an
19 exact fit for Reasons A, B, and C. So we'll
20 investigate it up to a point and finally say,
21 you know what, unfortunately, we're going to
22 have to -- you know, this doesn't make sense
23 to pursue.

24 But, you know, some of the -- I think
25 your question earlier was a little bit about

1 kind of like what are the other toll rates in
2 other cities. I don't know if that's what you
3 were thinking about.

4 SENATOR CORTEZ:

5 It was his question, I think.

6 MR. WITT:

7 No, no. Honestly --

8 SENATOR CORTEZ:

9 Mine was more the size of the project and
10 the scope of the project for the purposes of
11 being able to handle a \$100 million project,
12 \$120 million project, is that sort of your
13 sweet spot and what you do or you -- you know,
14 and I think the answer was, we don't deal in
15 the mega projects. We deal in this sort of
16 100 to \$400 million range, which is I think --

17 MR. WITT:

18 Yeah, I think our --

19 SENATOR CORTEZ:

20 -- what --

21 MR. WITT:

22 -- sweet spot has been typically 150/200.
23 We'll go up to 500 if someone asked us. And,
24 quite frankly, there are people in other
25 states asking us for billion dollar projects.

1 SENATOR CORTEZ:

2 And so --

3 MR. WITT:

4 But our sweet spot is right where this
5 project is.

6 SENATOR CORTEZ:

7 And so with that, it kind of segues into
8 may last question, which is I suspect, like
9 most people, there's no bottomless pit to the
10 amount of money that you may have. So to the
11 extent that you have other balls in the air or
12 other lines in the water in other states, do
13 you have other opportunities?

14 And would this -- what would be the
15 timeline with regards to this one before you
16 would say, at some point, sorry, our money is
17 being spent in Florida or Virginia or
18 California?

19 MR. WITT:

20 That's a great question. As I said at
21 the beginning, Louisiana is a top priority.
22 And if you want to do this project, I assure
23 you, you will get the money.

24 SENATOR CORTEZ:

25 All right. Very good. The last

1 question, I think would be for you. I think
2 the Chairman kind of alluded to it, to what
3 extent have you had conversations with the
4 local stakeholders and local elected
5 officials? I know we have some senators here
6 in the audience that represent that area. And
7 so just curious as to what your, you know,
8 conversations have been?

9 MR. DOLAN:

10 Yeah, so we've met with elected officials
11 at the city and parish level mostly. And as I
12 said, the majority of the feedback has been
13 openness to our approach. And so that's
14 really what gave us the comfort of this
15 approach, this proposal to work.

16 MR. WITT:

17 Yeah, I'm going to add, I mean we do this
18 is lot. There is resistance in tolling. I
19 mean, let's just be straight, there is. Not
20 everybody wants -- no one is saying, thank you
21 for tolling us. We have not received that
22 yet.

23 But what we have received is, thank you
24 for putting up this structure that we
25 otherwise probably wouldn't get in 10 to 15

1 years because it's just not going to hit on a
2 priority list. And it's something that we
3 don't want necessarily, but we can absorb,
4 because we get this new structure. And it's a
5 bit of a tradeoff decision.

6 SENATOR CORTEZ:

7 So I would just ask that Senator Peacock
8 and Senator Robert Mills be briefed on it.
9 You know, it's their neck of the woods, so to
10 speak, and there may be alternative funding
11 sources, and so just so that they're clear as
12 to what's going on in their neck of the woods.
13 Thank you.

14 MR. WITT:

15 Absolutely. We're -- as moving forward,
16 we would engage in all of that and make sure
17 people are comfortable and aligned in all of
18 those things is what we do. But we're early
19 on, we're just thankful to have the
20 opportunity to share where we are today. And
21 all of the things you've just described, we
22 would absolutely do.

23 SENATOR CORTEZ:

24 I appreciate y'all being here. Thank
25 you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 CHAIRMAN WARD:

2 Another question from Mr. Amato.

3 MR. AMATO:

4 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hey, Ryan, a
5 quick question. I know Secretary Wilson gave
6 us a few minutes ago about LA1 and how the
7 primary customers there are the oil and gas
8 industry. I'm not familiar with that area.
9 So the primary traffic on that bridge is
10 commercial? Residential? What is it?

11 MR. DOLAN:

12 Yeah, it's both commercial and
13 residential. A lot of the traffic is Bossier
14 City residents going to Shreveport for work
15 and for entertainment. And, you know, what
16 we're actually doing right now is engaging on
17 a Level II study of traffic and revenue to
18 really understand those origin destinations so
19 that we can segment the traffic load a little
20 bit better and understand it.

21 MR. AMATO:

22 Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
23 Chairman.

24 CHAIRMAN WARD:

25 Secretary Wilson?

1 MR. WILSON:

2 Mr. Chairman, just at the appropriate
3 time, I would -- we've got a couple of -- I
4 hit the button. I'm not used to being on this
5 side of the counter.

6 CHAIRMAN WARD:

7 There you go.

8 MR. WILSON:

9 At the appropriate time, we've got a
10 couple of slides and process that I'd go
11 through after we've exhausted the questions,
12 but I just wanted to --

13 CHAIRMAN WARD:

14 I -- it seems to be you're the last
15 question. So we can go through the slides if
16 y'all are ready.

17 MR. WILSON:

18 Okay. So what I'll do is I'll give an
19 introduction to what we've done thus far and
20 then hand off to Executive Counsel for the
21 process that would follow. At the end of last
22 year's legislative session, we received the
23 unsolicited proposal. As a matter of
24 background, this is our second unsolicited
25 proposal and we've actually toyed with the

1 timing of which we would get or be open to
2 receiving unsolicited proposals as a matter of
3 process, but we do not have that in place
4 today.

5 One of the hurdles we had is we had
6 probably less than a month of practical time
7 in between a primary, as well as a runoff
8 election season and then was going straight
9 into having a new legislature. And so some of
10 the delay that you have is a result of that
11 process.

12 The other thing I'd like to do is let you
13 know that our responsibilities as the
14 secretary of sorts for this authority is to go
15 through due diligence before and actually
16 approaches this authority. So we've got a
17 couple of slides that I'd like to present and
18 then hand off to the Executive Counsel for
19 process.

20 So what we have reviewed thus far of the
21 proposal, some of what the public may not
22 understand is there is an established process
23 for solicited and unsolicited proposals;
24 wherein, we get a confidential part of the
25 proposal with some of the details as

1 proprietary to this application and then we
2 get a very public piece. And so what you've
3 seen is really a public view of what's there
4 because of the competitive process that's to
5 follow.

6 But thus far, from a purpose and need
7 perspective, and I apologize if some of this
8 is repetitive, but it's just a few slides
9 here. The purpose and need for this project
10 would be to increase the vehicle capacity to
11 provide improved level of service, as you've
12 just heard, it will provide a safer river
13 crossing with bicycle and pedestrian access
14 and replace or extend the life of the existing
15 bridge contingent upon the final updated
16 environmental piece.

17 As a matter of history, we did a Stage 0
18 Feasibility on this in 2009 as a department.
19 And in 2015, we completed the environmental
20 assessment and we had a FONSI issued. And in
21 2016, rehabilitation project was suspended
22 because of a protected species habitat,
23 something effectively known as barn swallows.
24 And then we began a supplemental process in
25 2017, which is culminating later this year.

1 You should know that as a matter of
2 process, this project has received some
3 Capital Outlay funding initially with the
4 anticipation of delivering the total costs of
5 this project. And so in between that point
6 and where we are today is where we stand. And
7 there are Capital Outlay dollars, as
8 indicated, for either a replacement and/or
9 repair of the existing bridge. And,
10 ultimately, we want to provide the appropriate
11 structure for the citizens of Caddo and
12 Bossier.

13 And so the next couple of slides really
14 speak to the process that this Authority
15 follows; one, as a public education; but, two,
16 to inform this Authority of what actions we
17 have the authority to take as an Authority.
18 Not to use authority too many times, but let
19 me hand it off to Deidre right now to continue
20 with the process slides.

21 MS. ROBERT:

22 Thank you, Secretary Wilson. Deidre
23 Deculus Robert, Executive Counsel for LDOTD.
24 So according to Chapter 3 of the LTA
25 Guidelines, an unsolicited proposal process,

1 there are several steps and factors that have
2 to be checked off while we proceed in the
3 process. It starts, it is initiated by a
4 private entity submitting a proposal for a
5 qualifying transportation facility and a
6 proposal review fee, which Secretary Wilson
7 explained we did receive last year in October
8 of 2019.

9 The DOTD staff reviews the unsolicited
10 proposal for compliance with LTA Guideline
11 3.2. Our staff communicates any compliance
12 determination to the proposer and any
13 questions that may come up in that review.
14 The unsolicited proposal is then provided to
15 LTA for review.

16 Next steps that we have within the
17 Guidelines, LTA has to request DOTD to perform
18 a review of the proposal to determine the
19 benefits to the Authority, meet with the
20 proposer, request clarifications regarding the
21 proposal if necessary is the tasks the DOTD
22 would take. The LTA decides whether to
23 proceed with procurement for transportation
24 facility. In doing so, we would request --
25 they would request approval from DOTD to then

1 move forward with the project.

2 The LTA submits information regarding the
3 proposal to the House and Senate Committees on
4 transportation, highways, and public works for
5 public hearing. The request for competitive
6 proposals is then let an evaluation of any
7 additional proposals. We negotiate terms for
8 the proposal predevelopment agreement or
9 comprehensive agreement; and, therefore, then
10 move on with the execution of predevelopment
11 or the comprehensive agreement.

12 Today, the question posed for LTA is the
13 request for DOTD to perform a review of the
14 United Bridge Partners's unsolicited proposal
15 to determine the benefits or value to LTA.
16 United Bridge Partners has provided an
17 overview of the unsolicited proposal to you
18 all. The next steps would be for DOTD to take
19 the steps, if approved by the Authority, to do
20 a deeper dive into the proposal reviewing the
21 public and private portion.

22 We have a project manager who has been
23 assigned to conduct all the necessary surveys
24 and studies that would go along with it and
25 then come back to the LTA to present that

1 information for your approval. We anticipate
2 that that will take about four to six weeks so
3 that there will be either a July meeting or an
4 early August meeting before the LTA with all
5 of the additional information.

6 MR. WILSON:

7 So just to summarize as a matter of
8 practice, the process does allow for further
9 competition, if in fact this Body felt the
10 need to move forward with the process. And
11 what we've done in the past when we've had
12 these presentations or we had our previous
13 unsolicited proposal at the July meeting, you
14 would get the opportunity to get more detailed
15 information in the project after we've done
16 additional review, if so warranted. The
17 Department does maintain retainer contracts to
18 do that specific service and work with the
19 Department to do that.

20 And that would then render a decision one
21 way or the other in terms of moving forward in
22 the process, not necessarily determining that
23 it's an in fact done decision. So I just
24 wanted to clarify for the public and the
25 members of the LTA.

1 The other thing I did mention, I failed
2 to mention at the very beginning is some of
3 what we had in terms of the delay thus far has
4 been a combination of both COVID-19 as well as
5 orientation for new members who were appointed
6 to this Authority. So I wanted to at least
7 acknowledge that so that they could have the
8 opportunity to understand what their role and
9 function is on this Authority.

10 CHAIRMAN WARD:

11 So, today, essentially what we have in
12 front of us is an approval for y'all to
13 continue to do some more due diligence on the
14 project. We're not approving today that this
15 project move forward. It's to continue the
16 process of looking into whether it's liable or
17 the right fit.

18 MR. WILSON:

19 That's correct. And the first step is
20 just to determine if it's an acceptable
21 proposal, basically, if it checked the box of
22 being an unsolicited proposal that would be
23 acceptable to this Authority. One of the
24 points to note is we've narrowed the focus of
25 unsolicited proposals to Category A and B mega

1 projects in our transportation plan.

2 So if this was to do something that was
3 not in A or B, we wouldn't be at this point
4 today. But because it is, we've identified
5 and determined that it has checked all the
6 boxes, that they've provided their due
7 diligence fees and that the Department is
8 prepared to do further investigation and bring
9 back to this Authority specific questions that
10 you have as well as specific details regarding
11 the proposal, whether it's around rates or
12 around other revenue opportunities that could
13 leverage these dollars and process in time.

14 CHAIRMAN WARD:

15 Okay. Representative Pierre?

16 MR. PIERRE:

17 So is that going to be around July, early
18 August, is that when you would need to make
19 that decision?

20 CHAIRMAN WARD:

21 Hold no. Let me add you here.

22 MR. WILSON:

23 No. We would be tasking our consultants
24 to immediately begin the review in working
25 with internal staff to answer all of the

1 questions. In the interim, we would work with
2 members of this Authority to make sure that we
3 have answered the specific questions that you
4 might have in our subsequent presentation.
5 And that would be in the July or August
6 meeting that we would come back.

7 Typically, there is an executive session
8 at that point to answer some of the
9 confidential details for this Authority. And
10 then we go back into a public setting to make
11 a decision to proceed or not to proceed with
12 the proposal.

13 MR. PIERRE:

14 Okay.

15 MR. WILSON:

16 And following that process, the public is
17 invited to then offer similar proposals based
18 on an outline that we would provide that would
19 protect the confidential merits of this
20 proposal but to provide for a fair and
21 balanced competition.

22 MR. PIERRE:

23 All right. Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN WARD:

25 As of now, the Board is clear, but I do

1 think we have Senator Peacock that would like
2 to speak.

3 SENATOR PEACOCK:

4 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Members. This
5 is in my District. Secretary Wilson, you know
6 how important, President Cortez and Chairman,
7 you all know how important the Jimmie Davis
8 Bridge and that it be replaced and that it is
9 a priority for me. I would ask you to not put
10 a toll on this bridge, not consider a toll.
11 If you do that, it is going to create all
12 sorts of problems.

13 They said they've met with a lot of local
14 people. They said met; they didn't say that
15 they have support. One of their letters that
16 they've have in here that they put their logo
17 on the top of, one of the signatures on here
18 from the office, he doesn't know them. This
19 is, if you read the letter, it's talking about
20 the engineer. It's not talking about United
21 Bridge Partners. Please be careful with this.

22 I know we want to consider our options.
23 But if we spend more of our resources
24 studying, studying, studying, and you're going
25 to spend six weeks going down this way, this

1 is -- this is not the right thing to do.

2 We talked about the bridge down to Grand
3 Isle and Port Fourchon. Residents don't have
4 to pay that toll. This is a residential area
5 in South Bossier that crosses. It's mainly
6 residents who cross this bridge. You will
7 greatly upset the people of Shreveport Bossier
8 if you put a toll bridge where there's an
9 existing crossing. And I beg of you not to
10 consider a toll for the citizens up there.

11 If they wanted to do a new bridge down at
12 the Port of Caddo Bossier where there's not
13 any crossing, that's one thing, but not where
14 there are in excess of 20,000 vehicles a day
15 that cross. And I can't plead of you more, do
16 not consider a toll to do this to the citizens
17 of Shreveport and Bossier.

18 This is important. We need to do it.
19 This has been something I have put tons of
20 resources towards. If you look at this
21 report, a lot of those drawings in there are
22 from DOTD, because I know how much y'all have
23 worked on this and the studies from 2015, the
24 meetings and meetings.

25 But if you do a toll and if you sell

1 basically an existing crossing to a private
2 company and let them take it over and remove a
3 bridge that I've been told by DOTD cannot be
4 removed because it's historic, it's an -- I do
5 not see how the private entities say they can
6 remove something, but State Government says
7 they can't. But I plead of you not to go into
8 a lot of details with this.

9 They did come up and they took me to
10 lunch. I told them right upfront, I'm not for
11 a toll on this bridge. I don't know who else
12 they met, but I do know that Bill Altimas, who
13 is the parish administrator from their
14 lobbyist, he doesn't know them.

15 So, please, if you're going to do this,
16 you better do a lot of due diligence because
17 this -- this does not smell the correct way.
18 So thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman for
19 letting me speak.

20 CHAIRMAN WARD:

21 Okay. Chairman Pierre?

22 MR. PIERRE:

23 Senator Peacock, so if we don't -- so
24 what do we -- how do we build a bridge? What
25 we do we do?

1 SENATOR PEACOCK:

2 Well, I mean, we do have state funding.
3 We do have funding that's been put towards
4 this in Capital Outlay. A lot of the
5 environmental assessments that's been done has
6 been done under the guise of this could be
7 used with federal match. That's why it has
8 the Federal Highway's logo on it.

9 You know, we have a number of bridges and
10 projects around the state. This is a very
11 important one. This could qualify, and that's
12 why the barn swallows were such an issue in
13 that because it's a project that we're doing
14 with Federal Highways to make sure it goes
15 through federal guidelines.

16 MR. PIERRE:

17 Okay. Okay.

18 SENATOR PEACOCK:

19 And, you know, there are a -- we have
20 bridges -- you know, you look at some of the
21 bridges, massive bridges we have in this
22 state, we find a way to pay for them.

23 Do we need more funding for
24 infrastructure? Absolutely. And I have
25 brought legislation two years ago, last year,

1 and this year to try to dedicate part of the
2 sales tax towards infrastructure. I know we
3 need more money for the infrastructure in our
4 state. We've got to address that. We've got
5 to invest.

6 I've spoke with Senator Ward about that,
7 that we've got to do something with that. I
8 get that. But to put a toll on this bridge --
9 and there's a colleague of yours whose no
10 longer a colleague because there was a toll
11 put on a tunnel. And as electives, we need to
12 be very aware of what that will do.

13 And I'll just tell you, if this goes to
14 it, you better look at saying to every
15 resident of Shreveport Bossier doesn't have to
16 pay a toll, and then this doesn't work.
17 Because if you're going to say that the
18 residents of Grand Isle don't need to pay a
19 toll, why would you say the residents of
20 Shreveport Bossier need to pay a toll on a
21 crossing that's existing there now?

22 So I ask, if y'all are going to study
23 this, then you should really do it, but I
24 don't think you should waste much time on this
25 because we need to move forward. And for us

1 to spend six weeks and the resources, the
2 dollars that would be put towards it, I think
3 that's a waste of state resources.

4 CHAIRMAN WARD:

5 We have a question from Senator Cortez.

6 SENATOR CORTEZ:

7 I think this is probably more for
8 Secretary Wilson, but my understanding in the
9 previous public private partnership that we've
10 done, the state resources are not the
11 resources that are being put forward as much
12 as the private resources; is that correct?

13 MR. WILSON:

14 In the previous piece, we did two things;
15 we had some maintenance dollars for the tunnel
16 that we reallocated for the purposes of new
17 construction as well as an INFRA Grant of
18 about \$45 million to deliver the balance that
19 the private sector is going to be paying.

20 SENATOR CORTEZ:

21 That was the buy down basically.

22 MR. WILSON:

23 That was the buy down.

24 SENATOR CORTEZ:

25 But I'm talking about the due diligence

1 that Senator Peacock is talking about.

2 MR. WILSON:

3 So --

4 SENATOR CORTEZ:

5 So on the front end --

6 MR. WILSON:

7 Okay.

8 SENATOR CORTEZ:

9 -- it's my understanding that until such
10 time that this Committee would make a decision
11 to move forward, simply what's in front of us
12 today is for them to go out is my
13 understanding, and I'm going to put it in the
14 form of a question. Is my understanding
15 correct that it would be giving the private
16 company the ability to go out and do their
17 research to deliver to you and the
18 Department --

19 MR. WILSON:

20 Okay. I understand what you're asking.

21 SENATOR CORTEZ:

22 -- expenditures on their end, not so much
23 on state resources at this point in time?
24 There would be a few more hurdles down the
25 road if it made sense. We could get into all

1 the buy downs and all that. But I understand
2 and I hear you loud and clear, Senator
3 Peacock.

4 I'm just trying to make sure that
5 everybody understands that the decision today
6 would not be to move forward with a public
7 private partnership. That's probably three
8 decisions down the road, if not more.

9 MR. WILSON:

10 So you are correct in your final
11 statement. The one thing I would clarify is
12 we have retainer contracts that were designed
13 specifically for these types of reviews and
14 proposals to go along with the due diligence
15 payment that the private sector pays. This
16 would not come from any of the Capital Outlay
17 dollars that the Senator has procured. This
18 would be dollars that have been allocated to
19 contracts for this type of review, both for
20 the Department's costs as well -- when I say
21 Department's costs, meaning staff and
22 operations elements as well as the private
23 sector engineering contract.

24 So and you aren't talking of a major
25 expenditure to go through these reviews in

1 part because of the nature of the proposals as
2 well as what we have on staff. So we won't be
3 spending what we spent to review the bump,
4 which was about a half a million dollars and
5 it was -- it's dollars that are designed
6 specifically for review of unsolicited
7 proposals should they come to us.

8 And the due diligence payment, for a
9 matter of public was, if I'm not mistaken,
10 \$50,000, which is a portion of what will be
11 used for that review, but it is not the full
12 costs of that review. And that's just kind of
13 the standards it's been.

14 SENATOR CORTEZ:

15 Do we gain anything as a state if we were
16 to put resources into it? Would we gain
17 anything as far as information relative to the
18 structure, relative to the maintenance costs
19 that we would -- if we chose not to move in
20 this direction, would we gain anything from
21 it?

22 MR. WILSON:

23 You would gain some value to determine
24 the decision based on best practices that we
25 should proceed or not proceed based on that.

1 The information that we are currently paying
2 for in the environmental update is something
3 that will be of value regardless of how we
4 proceed with this project. And to clarify
5 that, one of the comments or semi questions
6 that Senator made, both the private sector and
7 the Department would be obligated to follow
8 the environmental decision. So with regard to
9 removing the old structure or the existing
10 bridge and/or new is universal.

11 So there's no benefit or opportunity for
12 them to do something that we can. And very
13 much like what Senator Peacock said, we're
14 doing everything in accordance with the
15 federal government to remain eligible as we do
16 for all of our projects for federal funding.
17 SENATOR CORTEZ:

18 And what's the costs at this point in
19 time going forward annually to keep it
20 maintained so that they -- at what point --
21 and then the second question, at what point
22 does it become to this stage where you have to
23 almost have to shut the bridge down because of
24 safety concerns?

25 MR. WILSON:

1 So what I would answer to that, and I
2 would invite Eric to come to the table as well.
3 As he comes, I will tell you that if it's an
4 unsafe bridge, it's a closed bridge. We'd
5 like to clarify that for the public.

6 In terms of operations, we have a daily
7 operations costs, which is the upkeep and
8 maintenance of the structure. And then we do
9 what's called major maintenance, which is what
10 we were proposing to use some of the Capital
11 Outlay dollars for, which is about 20-plus
12 million dollars that would redo some of the
13 pavement conditions as well as update some of
14 the steel, and you would remain with the same
15 capacity structure.

16 So there's a regular routine maintenance
17 and then there's the major maintenance which
18 prevents you from using additional federal
19 dollars down the road. And that maintenance
20 costs, I believe, Eric was 20 or right about
21 \$18 million for the maintenance of the
22 existing structure?

23 MR. KALIVODA:

24 It's probably for the rehab of the
25 existing structure, it's going to be over

1 \$20 million. Eric Kalivoda, Deputy Secretary,
2 excuse me. Just as a little history --

3 SENATOR CORTEZ:

4 It doesn't get us any new capacity?

5 MR. KALIVODA:

6 No, sir. And the -- what the Secretary
7 mentioned earlier about the barn swallow
8 issue, that was not to expand the capacity of
9 the bridge. That was simply to rehabilitate
10 the existing bridge.

11 And so we have two options on this, and
12 our project manager on this, Kathy Maston is
13 here, and she can provide a lot of detail if
14 you want to get into that level of detail.
15 But, basically, what we've looked at is
16 retaining the existing bridge since it has a
17 historic -- it's eligible for a historic
18 designation, and rehabilitating that to
19 provide two lanes and then building a parallel
20 bridge, two-lane bridge. So you would have a
21 four-lane pair there.

22 The other option is to build a brand new
23 four-lane bridge, and that we have come to the
24 conclusion through environmental laws that we
25 cannot remove the existing bridge. So we had

1 an idea of turning it into a pedestrian bike
2 facility, almost like a park, but we don't
3 maintain those kind of things; the Department
4 does not.

5 And so we looked to local government to
6 do that, and they made it very clear they're
7 not going to do that. They don't want the
8 responsibility of trying to secure that at
9 night and things like that.

10 And so this environmental supplement,
11 really we're back heading toward a preferred
12 alternative, rehabilitating the existing
13 two-lane bridge and building a new parallel
14 two-lane bridge. And we have the money for
15 the rehabilitation of the existing bridge. It
16 requires that the bridge be closed while we
17 rehabilitate it, which is going to be a real
18 traffic problem if we cannot find the money to
19 build the new two-lane bridge first, and then
20 shift the traffic while we do the
21 rehabilitation.

22 The new two-lane is going to be somewhere
23 around \$80 million that we would need to build
24 that over and above the costs of
25 rehabilitating the existing bridge.

1 SENATOR CORTEZ:

2 So the total to rehabilitate the current
3 and to build a new one, you're in the hundred,
4 just north of a hundred?

5 MR. KALIVODA:

6 The -- yeah, you would be over a hundred
7 million dollars.

8 SENATOR CORTEZ:

9 Okay. Very good. Thank you.

10 MR. KALIVODA:

11 And let me just clarify one thing too,
12 because you heard that term mega project
13 thrown around by -- I'm sorry, what was your
14 name?

15 MR. WITT:

16 I'm Doug. Doug.

17 MR. KALIVODA:

18 Oh. Mr. Doug here mentioned mega
19 projects and they don't mess with mega
20 projects. You know, we started using the term
21 mega project around the year 2000 in
22 ultimately what became our 2003 plan to
23 describe projects that were probably never
24 going to be funded through the Highway
25 Priority Program. So we used that term to

1 mean those kind of projects, and I think we
2 were probably one of the first states that
3 did. Well, it became common language amongst
4 many states around the country. And, of
5 course, then the federal government has to get
6 involved. They can't resist. They hijack the
7 term. They put a bunch of federal rules on
8 it, definitions on it so they have a federal
9 definition of what a mega project is. And so
10 I just wanted to clarify that.

11 When we refer to mega projects, and the
12 Secretary did, we're talking about things
13 that, projects that are of magnitude in this
14 state that are not likely to get funded
15 through the Highway Priority Program. They're
16 going to require special funding. That's what
17 we mean.

18 SENATOR CORTEZ:

19 You should have said (speaking in French)
20 grand project.

21 MR. WILSON:

22 I don't know how to say mega is relative
23 is French, but mega is relative.

24 SENATOR CORTEZ:

25 Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr.

1 Chairman.

2 CHAIRMAN WARD:

3 All right. And I believe one more order
4 of business, Senator Mills would like to say a
5 few words as well.

6 SENATOR MILLS:

7 Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members. I'm
8 Robert Mills, State Senate District 36. And
9 I've got -- I represent all of Bossier Parish,
10 except for Bossier City, which Senator Peacock
11 has. We've got a common theme in this in that
12 we want the best thing for our constituents as
13 well, but we've got to replace this bridge
14 period. And I'm excited that you have options
15 and I want you to look at the whole menu.

16 But let me stress, this is a residential
17 bridge. I wish there was a lot of commercial
18 traffic on it. But with I20 and I49, you
19 know, the big trucks going to the Port, you
20 know, we're not getting the commercial traffic
21 over this bridge, and because of the condition
22 of the bridge and the wait to get across it
23 some days, you know, parts of the day.

24 This is strictly a residential area, and
25 I'm concerned that a toll on this bridge is

1 going to be, you know, strictly on the
2 residents that are driving across to
3 Shreveport, driving across to Bossier for
4 their jobs, and it's going to be a pretty ugly
5 situation.

6 I would just suggest, and I'd be glad to
7 help raise the money to do it, for just a
8 couple of thousand dollars, we can poll the
9 people in this area and get you, you know, an
10 answer. You probably know what it's going to
11 be already. Nobody wants a toll, but I'm a
12 big boy and I realize we're going to have
13 tolls in our future.

14 This property is not the place to start
15 because of the lack of commercial traffic that
16 you could, from my experience in Florida and
17 other places, you know, you ding the
18 commercial traffic fairly hard and try to go
19 light on the residential traffic, but there's
20 just not enough commercial traffic here in my
21 mind to, you know, support the tolls that I'm
22 very concerned about the public outlash and
23 backlash that you'll get on this. Thank you.
24 CHAIRMAN WARD:

25 All right. The Board is clear. I would

1 just like to say I think it's very important
2 that everybody get the opportunity to say what
3 they feel on the front end; that way, we can
4 work through it with a good mindset where
5 everybody stands and also know that we have to
6 keep all the options on the table as we move
7 forward through the process.

8 So, Senator Cortez?

9 SENATOR CORTEZ:

10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to go
11 ahead and make a motion that we delay action
12 on this until such time that Senator Mills and
13 Senator Peacock can get maybe some information
14 back home because I would hate for the private
15 industry to go spend their money only to know
16 in the end that we're not going to move this
17 forward if the locals are going to adamantly
18 be opposed to it.

19 I just think it's fair for both sides or
20 all sides to find out what the citizens who
21 are going to have to support it, where they
22 are before -- and I think Senator Mills brings
23 up a very good point, and we do this all the
24 time and we try to get the pulse of what the
25 real answer is there before we -- we don't

1 like the federal government jamming things
2 down our throats and we don't like state
3 government jamming it down the locals and so
4 forth.

5 So I'm very hesitant to move forward for
6 you all to have to go spend money when you
7 could be up against a brick wall. So that's
8 my motion is that we delay the action on this
9 at this time.

10 CHAIRMAN WARD:

11 There's no opposition to that motion, so
12 that -- we will -- that motion is moved
13 favorable.

14 And is there any kind of timeline in
15 terms of getting with the local legislators in
16 trying to figure out, you know, get more input
17 from the locals so we can revisit this a
18 little bit down the line here?

19 MR. WILSON:

20 I'd be happy to spend some time with both
21 senators. We've talked about this bridge on
22 many occasions, as Senator Peacock said. And
23 I would -- I would be happy to do that as well
24 as work with United Bridge Partners in that
25 conversation; so that when we do come back to

1 make a decision that we've done it in a
2 unified fashion.

3 So I know they have folks here on the
4 ground in Louisiana. And I would assume once
5 we get out of session, we'll be able to have a
6 healthy conversation collectively with the
7 Department to ensure that there's no
8 inconsistencies on what's being presented.

9 CHAIRMAN WARD:

10 All right. Well, that's it. We'll
11 continue to move forward with the agenda.

12 Is there any -- does anybody need to
13 discuss anything related to Old Business?

14 Hearing none, we'll move on to Item
15 Number 6, Other Business. I'm not sure -- at
16 some point, I believe Senator Mizell had
17 wanted to speak on something. Do you know if
18 she's still available? I don't see her in the
19 room anymore.

20 Okay. All right. I believe that kind of
21 clears out agenda Item Number 6 for Other
22 Business. Any more public comments at this
23 time?

24 All right. Hearing none, motion to
25 adjourn?

1 So moved. We are adjourned.
2 (WHEREUPON, THE MEETING ADJOURNED.)
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1 R E P O R T E R ' S C E R T I F I C A T E

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