

BATTLE CREEK AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Technical Committee

Minutes of January 12, 2022 Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Voting: Mallory Avis, Susan Cronander, Carl Fedders, Brian Kernstock (for Kristine Parsons), Brian Sanada, and Luke Walters
Non-voting: None

MEMBERS ABSENT: Voting: Chaz Wilkey
Non-voting: Andy Pickard and Southcentral Michigan Planning Council (SMPC)

OTHERS PRESENT: Jarret Geering, Terry Martin, Pat Karr, and Andrew Tilma

Chair Fedders called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. in the Springfield City Hall Council Chambers, 601 Avenue A, Springfield MI.

ROLL CALL

It was determined that a quorum of the voting members were present.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Kernstock, supported by Avis, to approve the agenda. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Res.
22-01

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was moved by Kernstock, supported by Cronander, to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2021 meeting. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Res.
22-02

COMMUNICATIONS

Karr shared the following communications:

- The Obligated Projects Report for FY 2021 was completed at the end of December. The report was posted to the BCATS website, sent to BCATS' e-mail distribution list and hard copies mailed to other agencies and individuals. This report is a federal requirement. Extra hard copies of the report were offered to anyone interested in them.

- The meeting schedule for BCATS Committees was posted at the BCATS office and on the BCATS website after the Policy Committee approved its half of the schedule. The Policy Committee did change the date of the December 2022 meeting to the 14th, now only one week after the Technical Committee meeting date instead of two weeks. The meeting schedule was also sent to all known private transportation providers, as is done every year.
- The public notice for the current TIP Amendment #14 was published in the *Battle Creek Enquirer* last Thursday, January 6th. Tilma will review this amendment later on the agenda.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to come before the Committee at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

A. BCATS FY20-23 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #14

Tilma reviewed the public notice for the current TIP amendment, as published in the *Battle Creek Enquirer* on January 6, 2022. There are nine (9) items included in this amendment. In addition to the material posted in advance of the meeting, Tilma noted that he provided today a copy of the public notice, as it appeared in the newspaper, and a copy of the table showing the projects that was provided to the air quality Interagency Work Group. The air quality requirement was new with the start of the FY 2022 fiscal year and this is the first amendment processed by BCATS requiring this extra step in the amendment process. Tilma added that he also has carried out the Joint Planners Review for this amendment with the necessary MDOT and other agency staff.

It was moved by Kernstock, supported by Cronander, to recommend approval of Amendment #14 to the FY 2020-2023 by the BCATS Policy Committee.

In response to a question from Avis, it was stated that BCATS' air quality status is currently as a Limited Orphan Maintenance Area (LOMA). There was discussion about the level of increase in some of the cost changes. It was noted that the MDOT projects funded with state bond proceeds had very preliminary cost estimates initially that are now being refined and taking into consideration inflation over multi-year projects, thereby resulting in some substantial cost increases.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Res.
22-03**

B. Performance Measures - Battle Creek Transit (BCT) State of Good Repair Targets for 2022

Karr indicated that a draft resolution for this topic was posted for the members. Battle Creek Transit (BCT) provided the updated State of Good Repair Targets for 2022 to BCATS last month. Karr asked Avis about the high level of buses having met or exceeded their useful life benchmark even though BCT received a large grant for bus replacement. Avis indicated that the bus replacement schedule extends until 2028, therefore the figures in the table still reflect the current status of BCT's fleet.

It was moved by Kernstock, supported by Cronander, to recommend that the resolution regarding the Transit State of Good Repair Targets for 2022 be adopted by the BCATS Policy Committee. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Res.
22-04**

C. BCATS 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) - Progress Report and Draft Documentation

Karr began this item by referencing the history of the current schedule for updating the long range plan. The completion schedule for the BCATS 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) was provided to the members at the meeting. This is the schedule that was part of the 2040 MTP reaffirmation packet submitted to MDOT in November. The draft of the Plan for public and Committee reviews is anticipated to be available at the beginning of February. Karr also provided a draft table of contents for the MTP document which notes the chapters that have been completed and the ones still in process. The majority of the update to the Plan has been completed. She noted a new requirement for a System Performance Report (SPR) that relates to the performance-based planning requirements that previously went into effect. This is the first time that BCATS has had to prepare this new report and it will be an appendix to the 2045 MTP document. Once completed, the SPR is to be updated annually separate from the MTP update process. Karr indicated that she hopes to have a draft of the SPR to provide to the members for review maybe yet this week.

In response to Karr's comments about issues in trying to determine federal funding estimates into the future for the financial chapter of the Plan, Walters stated that the final figures for new revenues have not been determined for the new federal legislation. Walters indicated that MDOT has updated figures in JobNet for STP funding and overall is estimating increases to STP and STP flex funding that would total over \$336,000 in the BCATS area for FY 2022. There was extensive discussion of the many issues with trying to program the use of these funds at this point in the fiscal year. Walters added that although there has been an increase in the allocation amounts, there has not been an increase on the obligational authority side of the equation in order to actually utilize the funding. He stated that the obligational authority level at the state level could end up being at only about 70%, in comparison to a normal year of 90%. Fedders stated that this short time line

defeats the goal of planning appropriate and most needed projects. The obligation issue is a Congressional issue. Avis asked if there is a Federal Highway Administration participant in the BCATS process. Karr stated that Andy Pickard of the Michigan Division FHWA office is considered a non-voting member of both BCATS Committees. There was further discussion about possibilities for trying to use this additional FY 2022 funding and what is required for projects to move forward. This will be pursued further by the implementing agencies over the next couple of weeks. Walters indicated that February 8th is the next chance for Congress to work on adjustments to the current path for obligational authority.

Tilma reviewed Chapter 11 and 12 documentation that he distributed to the members that summarizes the socio-economic data process and Travel Demand Model aspects of the MTP update. He noted that MDOT's Statewide Urban Travel Analysis (SUTA) section develops BCATS' model and for this version of the model also provided the socio-economic data that goes into the modeling process. MDOT SUTA staff prepared Chapter 12 text for inclusion in the MTP document. Tilma indicated that he plans to send out to the members an updated Plan project list later this month.

This was an information/discussion item not requiring action at this time.

COMMENTS

A. Next Meeting

Chair Fedders announced that the next meeting of the BCATS Technical Committee is scheduled for February 9, 2022 at 1:30 p.m. The meeting will be dealing with the 2045 MTP approval. Based on discussion earlier in the meeting, there may also be a TIP amendment to consider in February.

B. Committee Member Comments

Avis reported that there are 5310 agencies that did not provide BCATS with the specifics of their projects in order to be in the January amendment. She stated that these projects could also be included in a February amendment.

Kernstock indicated that the Calhoun County Road Department is actively designing transportation projects for the 2023 program. The projects for 2022 are already bid. Other work involves normal winter maintenance.

Sanada noted that MDOT has put out a video about the upcoming I-94 work involving multiple bridges along the portion of I-94 in the BCATS area. It is available to be forwarded to any interested parties. Fedders indicated that the City has promoted the video and the feedback is for three lanes on I-94 and adding the Helmer Road bridge to the project.

Cronander stated that work by the City of Battle Creek Planning Department is going to pick back up on the update of the City's non-motorized plan. Work stalled due to the pandemic and staff turnover. The current 15-year old plan is still considered the approved plan by MDOT. That plan is available on the City's engineering website.

Fedders announced that the City of Battle Creek was not successful in getting TEDF funding for Clark Road. The project has been referred for TIFA funding, but the prospects for that funding source are unknown.

Karr indicated that she has made known to the area state legislators that requiring in-person meetings for public bodies such as BCATS during this current COVID spike is not in the best interest of the participant's health.

Tilma brought up that he received the update in JobNet for the proposed MDOT I-194 planning study just hours after the public notice was approved for publication for the current January amendment. Therefore, if this matter is time sensitive, it would be another candidate for a February amendment. However, he added that due to the almost doubling of the cost and the change in funding source for the study, he would be very interested in feedback from the City of Battle Creek and the Calhoun County Road Department as to how they feel about this study moving forward. Sanada will get further details from Amy Lipset at his office and will provide an update to Tilma about the changes to the study.

C. Public Comments

There were no public comments

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:37 p.m.