

BATTLE CREEK AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Technical Committee

Minutes of March 10, 2021 Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Voting: Mallory Avis, Carl Fedders, Eric Feldt, Jeff Franklin, Kristine Parsons, Brian Sanada and Chaz Wilkey
Non-voting: None

MEMBERS ABSENT: Voting: None
Non-voting: Andy Pickard and Southcentral Michigan Planning Council (SMPC)

OTHERS PRESENT: Brian Kernstock, Daniela Khavajian, Pat Karr and Andrew Tilma

Chair Parsons called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. via a Zoom virtual meeting format and a call-in for public participation.

ROLL CALL

A roll call was conducted of members and any guests. Members indicated their presence for the purpose of establishing a quorum. It was noted that all members are participating virtually and each member participating virtually identified their physical location, which is included in the minutes, below. It has not been determined if an advisory committee like the Technical Committee needs to follow the same guidelines as decision-making bodies under the Michigan Open Meetings Act Amendment. However, since the Technical Committee bylaws indicate that the Technical Committee will observe the Open Meetings Act, the location information for members is being included in the minutes at this time.

Members participating remotely and location: Avis (City of Battle Creek, MI), Wilkey (City of Springfield, MI), Fedders (City of Battle Creek, MI), Feldt (Comstock Township, MI), Franklin (Drummond Island Township, MI), Parsons (Richland Township, MI), and Sanada (Village of Mattawan, MI).

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

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

**Res.
21-07**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was noted by Franklin that a word needed to be added to a sentence in the first Public Comments section of the January minutes for that sentence to make sense. Karr noted this change which will be made to the final minutes.

It was moved by Fedders supported by Franklin, to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2021 meeting, as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Res.
21-08**

COMMUNICATIONS

Karr shared the following communications:

- BCATS has received correspondence from MDOT about new Highway Improvement Program (HIP) and HIP COVID funds available for programming at the local level. This is being discussed later on the agenda today.
- A public notice was published for this month's amendment to the TIP.
- A special edition of BCATS' newsletter was prepared and distributed which deals with the BCATS updated Metropolitan Transportation Plan.
- BCATS staff met with MDOT and FHWA staff this past Monday for the annual Pre-Unified Work Program (UWP) meeting. This meeting covers work to-date on the current UWP and development of the new FY 2022 UWP.
- BCATS has received early release of information from MDOT regarding the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) program funding for years beyond 2023. There likely will continue to be some funding for the Limited Orphan Maintenance Areas (LOMAs), of which Battle Creek is one, for the new FY 2023-2026 TIP development. Karr asked the local agencies to start considering projects for this category of funding for the new TIP.
- BCATS staff has submitted the 2021 safety and transit state of good repair targets and the adjusted bridge targets to MDOT, as required, after the December and January actions of the BCATS Committees on these topics.
- BCATS staff was provided information about the proposed changes to MSA and urban area designations and will discuss these topics later on the agenda.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

NEW BUSINESS

A. FY 20-23 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) - Amendment #11

Tilma reviewed the four items presented in the public notice for Amendment #11. One is a road project change for the Calhoun County Road Department, one is a bridge project for the City of Battle Creek, one is a MDOT road project change and the other item is preliminary engineering and environmental work for a state rail project in downtown Battle Creek.

The rail project generated additional discussion. Tilma showed a map with the project limits. Tilma and Franklin were able to discuss the nature of the planned project, which does not yet have a year of construction identified. The project is intended to construct a parallel rail segment from Elm Street to Kendall Street to separate passenger rail from freight rail in downtown Battle Creek.

It was moved by Fedders, supported by Avis, to recommend approval of the FY 2020-2023 TIP Amendment #11 by the BCATS Policy Committee, as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Res.
21-09**

B. Draft 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) - Goals

Karr indicated that the listing of Goals and Objectives provided to the members in advance is from the FY 2040 MTP and it is desired to make any changes or updates to this material for use with the current Plan effort. She asked that any input be provided to her before this month's Policy Committee meeting. There were no comments offered at the meeting.

This was an information/discussion item for this Committee.

C. Initial Issues and Outline for FY 2022 Unified Work Program (UWP)

Karr reviewed the Issues and Outline sheet for the FY 2022 Unified Work Program. This is a first step in the development of next year's UWP. Under the Developments, Potential Developments and Issues section Feldt noted a potential housing development in the area of M-66 and Glen Cross Road that would involve 180 new units. The possibility of a large development in Emmett Charter Township on 6 Mile Road was also noted.

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

D. Recent Federal Register Notices re; Census-Based Definition of Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and Urban Conditions

Karr discussed the material posted for the members on these topics. The federal Office of Management and Budget is proposing a change in assigning the designation of Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) to only areas with over 100,000 in population, as compared to the current level of 50,000 population. In addition, the U.S. Census Bureau has published a Federal Register Notice that would dramatically change the process of assigning an area “urban” status. Instead of utilizing population totals and density, the Census Bureau would use total dwelling units and dwelling unit density. Comments are being accepted to both Federal Register notices.

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

E. FY 2021 Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) Fund Announcement and Potential Local Projects

Karr indicated that material on this topic was also provided in advance of the meeting in the form of the memo and material that she had sent to the Committee members back on February 18, 2021. The memo asked for potential project submittals for use of the two categories of HIP funds being allocated to the BCATS area. One proposal was received from Battle Creek Transit for the HIP COVID funds for a shelter replacement project. There are still some unknowns about the “special eligibilities” category in the announcement that may impact how the HIP COVID funds can be expended.

This was an information/discussion item that was not acted upon at this time.

F. Letters of Support for Calhoun County Road Department Bridge Submittals

A memo was prepared for the members in advance of the meeting which outlined the three bridge project applications being prepared by the Calhoun County Road Department for the MDOT call for local bridge submittals.

It was moved by Fedders, supported by Avis, to recommend that the BCATS Policy Committee authorize staff to prepare letters of support for these three projects to be submitted with the Calhoun County Road Department applications.

**Res.
21-10**

COMMENTS

A. Next Meeting

Chair Parsons announced that the next meeting of the BCATS Technical Committee is scheduled for April 14, 2021 at 1:30 p.m. Karr noted that the format for the meeting is unknown at this time. Members will be notified in advance.

B. Committee Member Comments

Parsons reported that the Road Department is moving ahead with Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the Emmett Township local road project this year. Tree trimming work is being done this month for the Capital Avenue project. Construction on the Capital Avenue project and Morgan Road project are expected to start in June.

Avis announced the Calhoun County Mobility pilot project that is operating on an app based platform.

Wilkey indicated that the City of Springfield will be applying for a Category B grant for major and local street work. The City may also apply for a Category F project for improvement of 20th Street.

Fedders discussed some of the work happening in the City of Battle Creek. Of note is the public engagement occurring for the North Avenue/Emmett Street roundabout project.

Sanada stated that a non-motorized project proposed for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) along F Drive N has been delayed due to issues with how the trail would cross I-94.

C. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:43 p.m.