

BATTLE CREEK AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
Policy Committee
Minutes of March 23, 2022 Meeting

VOTING MEMBERS PARTICIPATING: Mallory Avis, Jacob Schacht (for Deb Belles), Harry Burdett, Greg Finnila (for Annjanette Kremer), Derek King, Kevin Leiter, John Midgley, Greg Rickmar, and Kara Dougherty (for Bill Scutt)

NON-VOTING MEMBERS PARTICIPATING: None

VOTING MEMBERS NOT PARTICIPATING: Jeff Franklin and Laveta Hardish

NON-VOTING MEMBERS NOT PARTICIPATING: Andrew Sibold (FHWA) and Southcentral Michigan Planning Council

OTHERS PARTICIPATING: Pat Karr and Andrew Tilma

Chair Burdett called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in the Council Room of the Susan L. Anderson Municipal Building (Springfield City Hall), 601 Avenue A, Springfield, MI 49037.

ROLL CALL

All in attendance introduced themselves and their affiliations. There was a quorum of voting members.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

Res.
22-13

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was moved by Midgley, supported by Leiter, to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2022 meeting, as presented, subject to any additions, corrections or changes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Res.
22-14

COMMUNICATIONS

Karr reported the following items of communication:

- At the end of February, BCATS staff completed the first public newsletter for the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program and distributed it, both electronically and in hard copy to promote the new TIP and to publicize the TIP development process.
- At the end of February, BCATS staff completed the documentation for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Transportation Conformity Determination Report and submitted both to MDOT on the February 28th deadline.
- BCATS received information from the City of Battle Creek about a public meeting regarding the gateway design for the Capital Avenue bridge over I-94, for when that bridge is replaced. The hearing was held at a recent City of Battle Creek City Commission meeting. Public Works staff reported that there were no comments offered about the planned design.
- The pre-Unified Work Program (UWP) meeting was held on March 1st. Several MDOT departments have provided input for their own interests to be included in the new UWP.
- BCATS received updated language to include in the FY 2023 UWP from the Transportation Asset Management Council for the Asset Management work item. The Council last updated its work activity narrative that is included in UWP in June 2018.
- BCATS received a letter from Attorney John Macfarlane announcing his upcoming retirement. This is an agenda item for today's meeting.
- BCATS received an interesting report about traffic crash statistics during calendar year 2020 that was prepared by the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI). The bottom line is that although traffic volumes were reduced by 16%, and overall number of crashes reduced by 22% (due to the pandemic) in calendar year 2020, total fatalities for the year increased and the fatal crash rate per vehicle miles traveled was up by 33% for the year. While overall crash totals were down, even for the categories of alcohol-involved, speeding, pedestrian, and motorcycle, the fatality rates in all of those categories were up over the prior year.
- MDOT is changing a traffic signal on M-66/Division Street in downtown Battle Creek to a flash mode for at least 90 days to study the safety and operational effectiveness of not having a full traffic signal operation at the intersection of M-66/Division Street and State Street.
- Amendment #15 to the current FY 2020-2023 TIP was submitted to MDOT for processing.
- BCATS received another request for a letter of support for a local bridge application which is included on the agenda today.
- The City of Battle Creek has received a federal homelessness reduction grant. Housing is one area that metropolitan planning organizations have been encouraged to consider within the transportation planning process. BCATS will be following the outcomes of this grant effort.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

A. FY 2023 Unified Work Program (UWP) Preliminary Issues and Outline

Karr reviewed the one-page summary that was provided in advance for this agenda item. She pointed out the changes in this summary that have been made since last year's document. There is a new federal requirement to utilize a set percentage of the planning funds received for safe and accessible transportation options. This will be reflected in the next UWP. The FY 2023 Unified Work Program will be effective as of October 1, 2022. A draft of the FY 2023 Unified Work Program is to be provided to the BCATS Committees in April. Final approval is sought in May each year to meet MDOT's deadline for submittal of this document to the Department by June 1st.

There was discussion about the Glenn Cross Road extension item listed under the corridors to monitor. This is connected with concerns about traffic volumes on B Drive N.

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

B. Letters of Support for local agency bridge project submittals for FY 2025

Karr indicated that a memo about the planned local bridge project applications was provided in advance of the meeting for the members. An updated memo was posted this morning with the addition of a BCATS area bridge from the Calhoun County Road Department. She explained how this came about with MDOT's plans for a bridge bundling project that will address an out-county bridge previously planned to be submitted for the regular local bridge project funding.

It was moved by King, supported by Leiter, to authorize letters of support for all four of the local bridge projects being prepared for submittal to MDOT by the local road agencies, as presented in the updated memo. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Res.
22-15

C. Letter of Support for local agency safety project submittal for FY 2024

Karr stated that a memo was also prepared for this category of local funding for which a letter of support is being sought. The request came from the Calhoun County Road Department.

It was moved by Avis, supported by Leiter, to authorize a letter of support for the one local safety project being prepared for submittal to MDOT by the Calhoun County Road Department, as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Res.
22-16

D. BCATS Legal Services

Karr noted the letter from Attorney Macfarlane about his retirement that she reported under Communications. She had prepared a memo about this topic that was provided in the advance material. Karr stated that Attorney Christopher Baldwin is expected to assume the governmental clients of Mr. Macfarlane at the same law firm.

Burdett stated that the City of Springfield has decided to continue with Mr. Macfarlane's firm with Christopher Baldwin as their contact.

It was moved by Avis, supported by Rickmar, to approve maintaining legal services with Mumford, Schubel, Macfarlane and Barnett, until such time as there is an identified need to make a change in legal services for BCATS. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Res.
22-17**

E. Study Management Committee Report

1. Annual Review for P. Karr, Executive Director

Burdett reported that many review forms were received this year from the Policy Committee members, who were all requested to provide input for Karr's review. He stated that all of the response was positive. On behalf of the Study Management Committee (SMC), Avis reported that Karr's performance has been excellent. Since Karr is near the top of her salary range, the SMC can recommend only about a 1% salary increase.

It was moved by Avis, supported by Midgley, to approve for Karr either a 1% salary increase or an amount to have her reach the top of the salary range, whichever is greater (effective March 25, 2022). MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Res.
22-18**

COMMENTS**A. Next Meeting**

The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 27, 2022, 1:30 p.m.

B. Committee Member Comments

Finnila reported on MDOT projects, including that work has started again on I-69 north. The I-94 work, including all of the bridge replacements, will be in the 2023-2025 construction seasons. The M-37 project from Dickman Road north to Creekview is scheduled to start in May. It will be bid next week.

Midgley indicated that weight restrictions on the County's roads will be lifted next Monday and that work on the Emmett Township local road project will be starting again shortly. CCRD staff are addressing pot hole issues at present. He added that E Drive N, from Beadle Lake Road west, will be crushed back to gravel until the road can be resurfaced later in the construction year. There will be a delay in resurfacing as a result of a culvert along the road that can't be replaced until after July 1st, due to fish restrictions in the environmental realm.

Avis stated that discussions about countywide transit are ongoing and that she is involved in informational presentations to units of government throughout Calhoun County. Battle Creek Transit will be seeking a fare increase, the first in 18 years. There will be a public hearing on April 19th at the Battle Creek City Commission meeting about this topic. In response to a question from Karr, Avis indicated that four new bus drivers have been hired but there are still several openings to fill within the organization.

Karr thanked the Committee for their support relative to her review.

C. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Burdett adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.