

BATTLE CREEK AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Policy Committee

Minutes of March 26, 2025 Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Voting: Mallory Avis, Richard Bayus, Barry Beamish, Harry Burdett, Garrett Gresly (for Tracy Myers), Annjanette Kremer, Kevin Leiter, Steve Skalski, and Erick Stewart
Non-voting: None

MEMBERS ABSENT: Voting: Laveta Hardish, Derek King, and Kristine Parsons
Non-voting: Jenny Staroska and Southcentral Michigan Planning Council (SMPC)

OTHERS PRESENT: Doug Ferrall and Jeff Franklin

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

Burdett asked all members and staff in attendance to introduce themselves. It was determined that a quorum of the voting members was present.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

**Res.
25-16**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Doug Ferrall introduced himself as the Assistant Calhoun County Administrator.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was moved by Skalski, supported by Kremer, to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2025 meeting. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Res.
25-17**

COMMUNICATIONS

Franklin shared the following communications:

- The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), the investigative arm of Congress, is currently surveying all MPOs nationwide on how vehicle use, transit, and housing may have changed in urbanized areas since 2019 and whether or not telework changes contributed to any changes. GAO hopes to inform Congress on how telework altered urbanized areas (if at all) and what actions MPOs took in response (if any), which might affect how USDOT provides funding to MPO areas.
- MDOT is asking for public feedback on the M-89 (Washington Ave) bridge project scheduled for construction in 2026.
- The BCATS 2025 Traffic Count Program(s) have been put together and distributed to the City of Battle Creek (which includes City of Springfield locations) and the Calhoun County Road Department.
- The two most alarming federal Executive Orders issued in February with impacts to BCATS have seen a resolution in March. The EO that had blocked all funding reimbursements under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law had resulted in delayed processing of BCATS reimbursements for both January and February. MDOT was able to make both consolidated planning grant payments to BCATS on March 19th. An EO that required all USDOT agencies to operate under White House oversight until further notice, and required FHWA/FTA to submit traditionally independent decisions to a centralized legal counsel has been resolved, in that FHWA Michigan Division and FTA Region V (Chicago) are once again taking independent planning actions on Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendment, UWP review and approvals, and approval of the forthcoming FY2026-2029 TIP. The January TIP amendments finally saw Federal Approval on March 14th. Today's March amendments should see typical approval timeframe. The draft FY26 UWP and draft FY26-29 TIP documents should see timely approval over the summer in time for FY26 start (October 1st).

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Technical Committee Bylaws Update

Franklin reviewed changes to the Technical Committee Bylaws, adding the Transportation Authority of Calhoun County (TACC) as a member of the BCATS Technical Committee. BCATS Technical Committee recommends this change to their Bylaws, however, Policy Committee must approve changes to the BCATS Technical Committee Bylaws.

It was moved by Skalski, supported by Kremer, to approve the change to the BCATS Technical Committee Bylaws, as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Res.
25-18**

B. FY2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #16

Franklin discussed the proposed Amendment #16 to the BCATS' current FY2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Franklin highlighted the FY25 addition to the TIP of the \$1.5 million Congressionally Directed Spending grant for Battle Creek Transit/Transportation Authority of Calhoun County for startup investment costs identified by the TACC and detailed in the amendment listing. It was clarified that the CDS is federal funding with State match, procured locally by Battle Creek Transit through Senator Peters office.

It was moved by Avis, supported by Kremer, to approve the FY2023-2026 TIP Amendment #16, as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Res.
25-19**

C. Preliminary FY2026 Unified Work Program outline

Franklin outlined the expected FY2026 Unified Work Program. The draft document will come to members for feedback at the April meetings, with local approval needed at the May meetings. This was an information item only.

D. Report from Study Management Committee – Recruitment of BCATS Finance Director

Skalski reported that Study Management Committee interview panel had performed several interviews. One particular candidate, Brandy A. Standler, stood out as fitting the needs of the BCATS Finance Director position incredibly well. The Study Management Committee recommends an appointment be made for the candidate Brandy Standler as BCATS Finance Director, and asks for Policy Committee approval of the appointment.

It was moved by Skalski, supported by Stewart, to accept the recommendation of SMC and to have BCATS Executive Director offer the position of BCATS Finance Director to Brandy A. Standler, as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Res.
25-20**

COMMENTS

A. Next Meeting

Chair Burdett announced that the next meeting of the BCATS Policy Committee is scheduled for April 23, 2025 at 1:30 p.m.

B. Committee Member Comments

Kremer reported that the Marshall Modernization project has started just east of the BCATS area with tree cutting work. The Columbia Avenue bridge over I-194 will be rehabbed this summer. Michigan Avenue (I-94BL) on the east side of town will be resurfaced with ADA upgrades. The Battle Creek Rest Area rebuilding project is well underway with an estimated reopening in June 2025. The Turkeyville Rest Area outside of the BCATS area (I-69 just north of I-94) will be closed this summer to replace the lagoons. Kremer announced that April 21st through 25th is National Work Zone Awareness Week, with statewide participation encouraged on Wednesday April 23rd by wearing orange. The goal is to recognize road construction worker safety in Work Zones and keeping them safe.

Skalski reported that the resurfacing of Ridgmoor/Goodale between Michigan Avenue and North Street is in the MDOT June letting.

Avis reported that after talking with FTA, there is an issue with HIP funds and Carbon Reduction Program funds awarded through BCATS (HIP from FY21/FY22 and CRP from FY22/FY24). FTA looks to resolve the issues and may need BCATS to reprogram/make modifications as needed.

Bayus reported that MDOT is continuing to do an environmental justice analysis despite the rescission of the executive orders requiring environmental justice analysis.

Franklin reported that the forthcoming FY26-29 TIP document will be completed without an environmental justice analysis, however, none of the preservation projects proposed in the forthcoming FY26-29 TIP document would disproportionately affect environmental justice populations, making such an analysis likely moot, if it were still required.

C. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Burdett adjourned the meeting at 2:05 p.m.