

BATTLE CREEK AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Technical Committee

Minutes of March 12, 2025 Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Voting: Skylar Cudney, Max Gierman, Donna Hutchison (for Mallory Avis),
Steve Skalski, Adrian Stroupe (for Josh Grab), and Travis Sullivan
Non-voting: None

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Jeff Franklin

Chair Cudney called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m. in the Springfield City Hall Council Chambers, 601 Avenue A, Springfield MI.

ROLL CALL

Cudney asked all 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 Skalski, supported by Sullivan, to approve the agenda. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Res.
25-05

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was moved by Skalski, supported by Sullivan, to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2025 meeting. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Res.
25-06

COMMUNICATIONS

Franklin shared the following communications:

- Franklin received requests from both City of Battle Creek and Calhoun County Road Department for letters of support for their applications to the MDOT FY27 Local Safety Program and the FY28 Local Bridge Program. Franklin was asked to take the approval for these letters of support to the February Policy Committee.
- Several federal Executive Orders were issued throughout February that impact BCATS.

An EO (2/6) suspended the approval process for the State of Michigan Electric Vehicle Deployment Plan (and other National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure initiatives). The State Deployment Plan can no longer be federally approved for changes to the plan nor additional obligations in funding. This could affect the previously announced charging station at 11 Mile Road and I-94.

An EO (1/27) temporary blocked all funding reimbursements under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act), however, this EO was overturned by a federal court order (2/3). One week later a federal court ruled that the Administration had not fully complied with that previous court order, and reiterated the “immediate restoration of frozen funding” (2/10). The impact is that, to date, BCATS has not received reimbursement from MDOT for the January 2025 consolidated planning grant billing. MDOT advises that reimbursement is still anticipated soon.

An EO had required all USDOT agencies to operate under White House oversight until further notice. FHWA and FTA were required to submit all traditionally independent decisions to a centralized legal counsel. This additional step was required to seek approval of BCATS FY2023-2026 TIP amendments, and the forthcoming FY26 Unified Planning Work Program (UWP). MDOT has since received guidance from FHWA Michigan Division that allows for standard review and planning items to be processed by the local FHWA/FTA divisions as they had previously, this TIP amendments and UWP approvals are back on schedule. However, the forthcoming approval of the BCATS FY2026-2029 TIP (and all statewide TIPs, and the Michigan STIP) was not on the list of standard review and planning items, and will likely require additional steps for Federal approval.

The White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has issued an Interim Final Rule to remove the long-standing regulations guiding how agencies implement the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The result is that agencies like USDOT will have greater flexibility in shaping their own NEPA procedures. This change will likely lead to USDOT making revisions that affect how environmental impacts of transportation projects are assessed.

- The Transportation Authority of Calhoun County voted at their TACC Board meeting of February 25, 2025 to accept BCATS invitation for financially participating membership as outlined in the BCATS Policy Committee bylaws. Erick Stewart, Board Chair of the TACC attended the February BCATS Policy Committee meeting of February 26, 2025.
- Franklin recently responded to two citizen communications: Jacqueline Hansen, commercial investor, seeking traffic count information on North Ave between Goodale and Morgan. Joel Gibbons, airline pilot, with a list of recommendations about traffic operations and traffic flow at many BCATS area intersections. Joel stated he intends to participate in a future BCATS Technical Committee meeting.
- Franklin attended the MDOT Open House for the latest public information on the Marshall Modernization projects.
- Franklin has continued to work with MDOT on the development of the updated BCATS travel demand model.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Technical Committee Bylaws Update

Franklin reviewed a draft update to the Technical Committee Bylaws, in which the Transportation Authority of Calhoun County (TACC) is added as a member of Technical Committee. BCATS Policy Committee had previously updated their BCATS Policy Committee Bylaws to add TACC as a financially supporting member of BCATS, and the TACC Board had previously acted to accept membership to BCATS.

It was moved by Skalski, supported by Cudney, to recommend approval of this update to the Technical Committee Bylaws by the BCATS Policy Committee, as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Res.
25-07**

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).

It was moved by Skalski, supported by Cudney, to recommend approval of the FY2023-2026 TIP Amendment #16 by the BCATS Policy Committee, as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Res.
25-08

C. Preliminary FY2026 Unified Work Program outline

Franklin reviewed an outline of the forthcoming FY2026 Unified Work Program (UWP) and answered questions of members. This was an informational item. The draft FY2026 UWP will be presented at the April meetings.

D. Travel Demand Model Update – Presentation

MDOT travel demand modeler, Sam Hetherington, gave a presentation on the update to the next BCATS' travel demand model, being developed to support the forthcoming BCATS' 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (long-range plan). Sam outlined the review process for the current socio-economic data per traffic analysis zone, using a new GIS website built for easy review. Sam answered questions of members.

COMMENTS

A. Next Meeting

Chair Cudney announced the next meeting of the BCATS Technical Committee is scheduled for April 9, 2025 at 1:30 p.m.

B. Committee Member Comments

Skalski reported on the ongoing Kalamazoo River naturalization study with the USACE, and the possibility that Dickman Road may not be as highly impacted as once thought. Prior earmark funding intended for the realignment of Dickman Road may be repurposed for Fountain Street bridge removal in the area. MDOT and City of Battle Creek will continue to coordinate on this ongoing long-term project.

Stroupe reported that the MDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) group is working with Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to do municipal walkability audits. Stroupe will attend the trainings and report back to BCATS its expected applicability to the Battle Creek area.

C. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:16 p.m.