

BATTLE CREEK AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Policy Committee

Minutes of April 24, 2024 Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Voting: Mallory Avis, Richard Bayus, Harry Burdett, Derek King, Kevin Leiter, Dave Neubauer (for Annjanette Kremer), Kristine Parsons, and Steve Skalski

Non-voting: None

MEMBERS ABSENT: Voting: Deb Belles, Laveta Hardish, and Dennis McKinley

Non-voting: Jenny Staroska and Southcentral Michigan Planning Council (SMPC)

OTHERS PRESENT: Jeff Franklin and Andy 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

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 Leiter, supported by Parsons, to approve the agenda. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Res.
24-12**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was moved by Skalski, supported by Parsons, to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2024 meeting. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Res.
24-13**

COMMUNICATIONS

Franklin shared the following communications:

- MDOT informed all Michigan MPOs that the Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction performance measure target setting has been put on hiatus. The US District Court, Northern Texas, opined that FHWA overstepped its authority with the Greenhouse Gas Emissions rules for target setting. The USDOT may elect to further pursue legal action upholding FHWA rulemaking, but that sounds unlikely given FHWA Lansing Division report. For the moment, Michigan MPOs are relieved of any requirement to report targets on Greenhouse Gas Emission reductions. MDOT continues to update its own Greenhouse Gas Emissions methodology based in the MI Climate Plan, should this situation change in the future.
- The MI Travel Counts survey opportunity is live. BCATS has been asked by MDOT to share that MI Travel Counts is a legitimate survey sponsored and funded by MDOT. The current survey timing is in response to Bipartisan Infrastructure Law speaking to overall effectiveness of travel demand forecast modelling. A survey of this type was last done statewide in 2015. The results of the survey on travel behavior are used to update the statewide travel demand forecast models, including our own BCATS area travel demand forecast model. BCATS will see a high invitation rate during this earliest stage of the survey – 31,000 of our total 38,000 households (80%) are to receive an invitation to the survey between 4/12/24 and 5/17/24. MDOT hired RSG as the consultant for the survey. There is an incentive depending on household or individual participation, and mode of participation (website or app reporting), ranging from \$10 per household for simple web reporting of a single day of travel behavior, up to \$20 per adult in a household for app mode reporting of a week's worth of travel behavior, and possibly higher incentive amounts for MDOT interpreted "hard to reach populations".
- BCATS staff will seek a new website as part of Fiscal Year 2025 work. BCATS staff is looking for further feedback about what members would want from a new website. Please contact BCATS staff with feedback.
- Franklin took part in the Beckley Road Walk Audit on the afternoon of 4/9/24. A large group of stakeholders (Franklin counted 22 participants) walked a circuit from Lakeview Square Mall along Beckley Road, Minges Creek Place, Witmark Drive, and the Brickyard Creek trail. The consultant provided audit forms related to pedestrian safety, overall accessibility, and public transit use. The overall score from the group indicated a "mixed bag" vibe on whether or not the walk was safe, accessible, or public transit friendly. Specific comments will be incorporated into the Corridor Redevelopment Plan.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

A. January – March 2024 Quarterly Financial Report

Franklin reviewed the Fiscal Year 2024 Q2 Financial Report covering the January through March 2024 period. Franklin requested a motion to accept and file this Financial Report.

It was moved by King, supported by Parsons, to accept and file the January – March 2024 Quarterly Financial Report, as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Res.
24-14**

B. Fiscal Year 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UWP) Draft

Franklin provided a draft version of the FY25 UWP for review and feedback. Franklin discussed various changes seen in the FY25 UWP versus the current FY24 UWP. This draft version is also under review by MDOT partners. Franklin intends to present the FY25 UWP to the Policy Committee for final local approval in May. This was a discussion item.

C. Staff Attendance at Annual Michigan Transportation Planning Association (MTPA) Conference

Franklin reviewed information concerning the MTPA annual conference. This year's MTPA conference is being held in Muskegon, Michigan at the end of July. Franklin requested that BCATS staff attendance at this conference be approved at a not-to-exceed cost of \$2,800 for the two staff persons. Our annual budget includes costs for this MTPA conference for BCATS staff.

It was moved by Parsons, supported by King, to approve BCATS staff attendance at the annual MTPA conference in Muskegon, MI in July and to authorize expenditures in association with the conference at a not-to-exceed amount of \$2,800. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Res.
24-15**

COMMENTS

A. Next Meeting

Chair Burdett announced that the next meeting of the BCATS Policy Committee is scheduled for May 22, 2024 at 1:30 p.m.

B. Committee Member Comments

Neubauer reported I-94 nighttime paving has commenced between Helmer Road and 6 ½ Mile Road. Heavy maintenance concrete bridge work is underway on the Helmer Road bridge with temporary traffic signals. All four bridges on eastbound I-94 being replaced this summer have been demolished, and construction on the new bridge abutments has begun. Neubauer gave a brief update on Marshall area construction planning, including the activation of stoplights on Michigan Avenue near I-69.

Parsons reported that the N Wattles Road project is nearing completion with asphalt paving underway. The S Wattles Road project will commence thereafter. The North Avenue project, coordinated with City of Battle Creek, will begin later this summer. Countywide pothole patching is also underway.

Burdett reported on a City of Springfield walking audit of 20th Street as part of the City's Master Plan update. Auditors reviewed walkability and safety aspects. The City is considering a possibility of a road diet on 20th Street in coordination with the City of Battle Creek.

Skalski reported that the Capital Avenue roadwork from Rebecca Road to Van Buren Street continues. Skalski discussed the Capital Avenue at Knapp Drive sinkhole investigation project. The City believes an old uncapped sewer line may be the culprit for why a sinkhole continues to form in this area. Larger equipment is being brought in to discover and correct the issue.

Avis reported that the Transportation Authority of Calhoun County (TACC) is the recipient of congressionally directed spending grant. A consultant has been hired to lead the transition of assets and human resources from City of Battle Creek and City of Marshall transit services to the TACC. An educational campaign on the TACC and on the ballot initiative to fund the TACC would be forthcoming too.

Leiter discussed the Consumers Energy large transformer move imminent for the northeast area of City and southwest area of Pennfield Township. The route would follow Emmett to Capital NE to Morgan to East Ave.

King discussed a Northpointe Woods community concern about sidewalk and a pedestrian crossing on North Avenue near Goodale Avenue. There is a missing segment of sidewalk on the east side of North Avenue that prevents pedestrians from easily accessing the existing signalized crosswalk at Roosevelt Avenue and North Avenue. Parsons stated Calhoun County Road Department will investigate the situation. Avis stated that an existing bus stop on North Avenue near Goodale is on the list for ADA improvement, which could be tied to such overall improvements.

Bayus reported that MDOT is currently accepting applications for the Shared Streets and Spaces Grant(s), for shovel-ready projects that can make communities more walkable, bikeable and transit-friendly. Fiscal Year 2024 one-time funding of \$3.5 million is available to local municipalities and transit authorities. The aforementioned North Avenue, Goodale Avenue, Roosevelt Avenue area project sounds like a good potential candidate project for such a grant. Avis posed a question on the Shared Streets and Spaces Grant – if both the City of Battle Creek and Battle Creek Transit could apply separately for different projects. Bayus believed this would be possible, and stated the intent to follow-up.

C. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Burdett adjourned the meeting at 2:07 p.m.