

**BATTLE CREEK AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY**

**Technical Committee**

**Minutes of October 9, 2019 Meeting**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Voting: Mallory Avis, Terry Blaniar, Carl Fedders (for Chris Dopp), Jeff Franklin, Amy Lipset, and Kristine Parsons  
Non-voting: None

MEMBERS ABSENT: Voting: Christine Zuzga  
Non-voting: Andy Pickard and Southcentral Michigan Planning Council (SMPC)

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

Vice-Chair Parsons called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. in the Council Room of Springfield City Hall, 601 Avenue A, Springfield, MI 49037.

**ROLL CALL**

A quorum was present (see above for voting members present). Introductions were completed for the benefit of all in attendance and to establish a quorum was present.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**It was moved by Blaniar, supported by Fedders, to approve the agenda, as amended. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Res.  
19-30**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**It was moved by Fedders, supported by Blaniar, to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2019 meeting, as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Res.  
19-31**

## COMMUNICATIONS

Karr shared the following communications:

- The FY 2020-2023 TIP has been approved by the federal funding sources and is now in effect. The amendment for the new TIP, Amendment #2, which was approved in September, is in processing this week. The FY 2017-2020 TIP has been officially closed-out and is not longer active within JobNet. The approval letter for the TIP included a federal findings letter for the state that Tilma will report on later on the agenda.
- Copies of the approved FY 2020-2023 TIP are distributed to the members today.
- BCATS' new fiscal year began October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Announcement has been made of upcoming regional Asset Management Summits. The summit for the southwest region is on November 12<sup>th</sup> in the morning at the same Van Buren Conference Center in Lawrence, Michigan that hosted the similar morning summit last June. Copies of the announcement are provided to the members today. The Technical Committee members were encouraged to attend this upcoming summit.
- "Toward Zero Deaths" e-mails come to BCATS on a regular basis. It was reported yesterday that fatalities and serious injuries are both down at this point in the year compared to last year at this time. Deaths are down 73 and serious injuries are down 21.
- BCATS' FHWA representative, Andrea Dewey, has accepted a new position with FHWA's Division Office in Lansing as the Program Implementation Manager, effective next week. Until a new Community Planner is hired in the Division office, Supervisor Andy Pickard will be BCATS' FHWA contact for the Lansing FHWA Division office.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

## NEW BUSINESS

### **A. Base-Year 2016 Socio-Economic Data in Travel Demand Forecast Model for 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)**

Tilma reviewed the additional material which was distributed for this item. The population, housing, and employment data for the base year of 2016 was presented in a combined tabular format. Material for this topic was also presented at the September meeting. The data is assembled by unit of government. A large map showing the numbers of the traffic analysis zones, to which the data is assigned, was also provided to the members.

**It was moved by Fedders, supported by Avis, to recommend that the BCATS Policy Committee approve the Base-Year 2016 Socio-Economic Data for use in the travel demand forecast model in the development of the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), as presented, with the understanding that there may be some changes if inconsistencies are discovered upon further review within the next two weeks.**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Res.  
19-32**

**B. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment Policies and Process**

Tilma discussed the material which he had distributed for this topic. The packet included background from the Michigan Transportation Planning Association regarding the establishment of the 25% threshold for cost changes triggering a TIP amendment. Also included was the “Federal Planning Finding for Michigan,” recently received in conjunction with the approval of the new FY 2020-2023 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). There was discussion about the items included in that document. A copy of the current BCATS definition of what makes a project “Regionally Significant” and the approved TIP amendment schedule for FY 2020 were also part of the distributed material.

Tilma noted that he is serving on a statewide committee dealing with policy issues associated with JobNet and its use within the TIP process. There was considerable discussion about the 25% threshold, what the definition of total cost is within the process, the accounting of preliminary engineering cost for local projects (with local funds), and what are considered to be non-participating costs.

Franklin stated that in his experience with other MPOs, several are moving ahead to use a standard percentage for local preliminary engineering in order to meet the FHWA requirements for total cost.

Avis asked if MDOT Office of Passenger Transportation (OPT) has been involved in this discussion. Tilma stated that transit projects have less of a problem with total project costs. Avis said that sometimes OPT makes changes in JobNet that will cause the need for an amendment and she asked if this will impact other projects, particularly road projects. Karr stated that a lack of prompt Federal Transit Administration (FTA) action on any amendment can delay approval for any other projects in the amendment.

Franklin asked what triggers the addition of local funds to a project. Further discussion ensued. Karr noted that the federal findings also indicate a desire to have state and local projects planned out beyond the TIP time frame.

Tilma indicated that another issue covered in the material which was distributed is the topic of the regionally significant definitions established by each metropolitan planning

organization. A copy of BCATS' current regionally significant definition was included in the distributed material. Tilma noted that BCATS' current definition applies to only projects on federal-aid eligible roads. This is another topic being addressed at the state level. Once that situation is resolved by the state group, it will be possible to again discuss BCATS' regionally significant definition at the Committee level.

Relative to the TIP Amendment Schedule table, Tilma indicated that it is possible that the approval time for the federal agencies may be shortened based on experience into the new fiscal year.

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

**C. FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #3**

Tilma discussed the upcoming amendment for November and indicated that, with the early Technical Committee meeting next month, information for that amendment will need to be provided to BCATS by October 25th, as noted on the amendment schedule which was distributed last month. He reviewed the items planned to be included in the amendment so far. There was discussion about the upcoming changes, including how transit projects for the specialized service agencies are to be included in the TIP and changes to some of the Calhoun County Road Department projects. There was also discussion about the Highway Improvement Program (HIP) funding that has been awarded to the MPOs (\$92,000 for the BCATS area). There is some confusion about the deadline for when the funds need to be expended. The funding can be spent over multiple projects, but it all has to be obligated within the same fiscal year. That funding has yet to be programmed by BCATS. There are also some changes/possible additions proposed for MDOT projects.

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

## COMMENTS

**A. Next Meeting**

Vice-Chair Parsons announced that the next meeting of the BCATS Technical Committee is scheduled for November 6, 2019 at 1:30 p.m. at the same location. Per the adopted meeting schedule, this is one week early due to the Thanksgiving holiday moving up the Policy Committee meeting date as well.

**B. Committee Member Comments**

Franklin announced that he found out during the meeting that BCATS' TIP Amendment #2 has been forwarded to FTA for review and approval as of the present time. After FTA review, it is provided to FHWA for similar action.

Lipset reported that the MDOT SW Region is looking at possible bridge replacements needed along the I-94 corridor through the BCATS area, nine bridges in total. An I-94 corridor review will be conducted in-house by MDOT to review all aspects of this part of the I-94 corridor. After that, the process will be expanded to include other interested parties. There was discussion about the work for these bridges and the need to have the work included in the BCATS 2045 MTP as it is being developed.

Fedders announced an American Public Works Association (APWA) meeting upcoming on October 15<sup>th</sup>. There will be a Michigan Municipal League update at this meeting.

Parsons indicated that there has not been an end to the worker strike at Reith-Riley and therefore one of the CCRD projects outside of the BCATS area will not get completed this year.

Karr informed the Committee that the railroad crossing just south of Avenue A on Helmer Road will be closed for two weeks. The current estimated start date for the project is October 28<sup>th</sup>. This will impact Technical Committee members coming to the November meeting on November 6<sup>th</sup>.

Blaniar stated that part of Harmonia Road will be closed next week for two to three days for utility work. Springfield has been working to complete the paving associated with the state TEDF Category B grant that was awarded to the City.

Avis reported that since the closure of City Cab in Battle Creek, there is a serious lack of transportation for those individuals without access to a personal vehicle. The City of Battle Creek has stepped up at present with a premium service called BC Go, but more Uber and Lyft drivers are needed in the community. Parsons suggested working with the County's communications staff person to get the word out about this service.

Tilma noted that Fedders and Parsons have been added to the list of JobNet users.

### **C. Public Comments**

Khavajian thanked the Committee and BCATS staff for the work so far on the socio-economic data for the travel demand model. She will be working on this project with BCATS for the next year. She asked that any future development information be provided for use in developing the future traffic demand model.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.