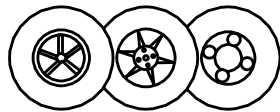


Guide to Citizen Involvement with the Battle Creek Area Transportation Study

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
for the
greater Battle Creek, Michigan area



BCATS

JANUARY 2017



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Springfield, Michigan 49037
(269) 963-1158 Fax (269) 963-4951
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**January, 2017
Summary/Acknowledgements**

This brochure details the ways available to the general public for becoming involved in, and keeping updated on, the projects, plans and programs of the Battle Creek Area Transportation Study, referred to as "BCATS." BCATS is the metropolitan planning organization for the greater Battle Creek, Michigan urban area.

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This document partially fulfills work item 3.0000 (Public Involvement and Education) of the BCATS Unified Work Program for 2017.

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An Overview of BCATS

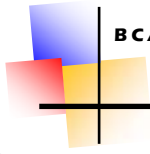
Originally formed in May, 1974, the Battle Creek Area Transportation Study (BCATS) was re-organized in 1981 as an “Intermunicipality Committee” under MI Public Act 200 of 1957. This “Committee” is a forum of local elected and appointed officials who come together to jointly plan the future direction of transportation improvements in the Battle Creek metropolitan area. Also in 1981, BCATS was designated as the “Metropolitan Planning Organization” (called a “MPO” for short) for the greater Battle Creek area. Federal transportation legislation (most recently the “Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)) requires a “continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process” within areas of population greater than 50,000. This process is carried out by the MPO. The Battle Creek urban area met this population threshold for the formation of a MPO after the 1970 U.S. Census. BCATS was formed in 1974.

The overall BCATS “goal” in transportation planning, as stated in its policies, is to “assist in the development and preservation of a safe, effective, well-maintained, efficient, and economical transportation system for the Battle Creek metropolitan area which minimizes its negative impacts on the physical and social environments and related land use.”



The BCATS planning process has additional, more specific goals related to carrying out its plans and programs and those goals are listed in a long range planning document for the area.

The BCATS organization is structured with a Policy Committee as its governing and decision-making body. There are eleven (11) voting members on the Policy Committee and two (2) ex-officio non-voting members. The membership includes representatives of two (2) cities, four (4) townships, two (2) county agencies, two (2) state agencies, one (1) regional agency, and one (1) federal agency. The Policy Committee is supported by a Technical Committee (comprised of appointed persons with expertise in the operation and maintenance of the transportation system) and a hired staff. Both Committees operate under adopted by-laws.



What Does BCATS Do?

The Battle Creek Area Transportation Study (BCATS) is a “single purpose” agency for transportation planning activities. This planning for the betterment of the transportation system takes many forms and involves many different types of activities. It is an on-going process and function. It is not a single “study” effort at one point in time.

The BCATS planning area includes the Cities of Battle Creek and Springfield, the Charter Townships of Bedford, Emmett, and Pennfield, as well as Leroy and Newton Townships.

The principal activities of BCATS include:

Planning - development of a twenty-year long range transportation plan for the BCATS area which includes discussion of all modes of transportation and a time-line and financial prospects for proposed future projects

Programming - a short-term document, the four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is developed to program and implement the improvements outlined in the long range plan

Data - to support the planning documents noted above, BCATS collects, organizes, and reports a wide variety of data items such as: traffic counts, housing starts and demolitions, auto registrations, transit ridership, employment information, and vehicle crash statistics

Other Related Studies - undertake other types of related studies as needed on topics such as: freight and truck routes, access management, air quality, and transit

Education Outreach - safety is the first listed goal of the BCATS' mission and safety considerations are included in all aspects of the BCATS process; therefore, BCATS participates on a multi-county traffic safety committee, promotes nationally recognized safety promotions with other local governments, and carries out other safety education activities as they become available.

How to Impact the Process

We all have our own perspective about the transportation system. Either there is so much construction we can't get anywhere, or there are too many potholes on our streets not getting fixed or the transit system doesn't provide buses at the times or locations we need, or maybe we think that it's providing too much service for too few riders? Whatever your opinion, the BCATS organization provides a forum for airing of concerns about transportation issues. You can get answers to questions about future and planned projects as well.

In order to encourage and solicit public input into its process, BCATS has identified many public involvement mechanisms available to the general public. This brochure describes these mechanisms.

Committee Forums

BCATS maintains two standing committees to conduct its business as noted in the "Overview" section of this brochure. They are the Policy and Technical Committees. These Committees meet on a regular basis. The meetings are open to the public and are held at an accessible site. The Committee meeting schedules are posted at the BCATS office, and at the front of the City of Springfield Municipal Building (where the meetings are held). The listing of meeting dates is also available on the BCATS' website. Each Committee's monthly agenda includes two opportunities for "Public Comments", once before the scheduled agenda items, and again after the business items have been addressed.

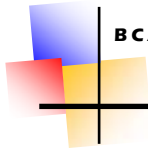
Newsletters



BCATS publishes an agency newsletter titled "The Signal" periodically to provide news of BCATS' activities, upcoming meetings, and the implementation of projects. About 700 copies of the newsletter are distributed at each printing, most through electronic means. The newsletters are also viewable on the BCATS' website.

Website

BCATS has a website where information about BCATS, its plans and programs, committee meetings, public notices, etc. can be viewed at any time by the public. The site is www.bcatsmpo.org.



Public Informational Meetings or Hearings

Depending upon the nature of the action or activity, at times BCATS holds public informational meetings or formal public hearings in the development process of its plans and programs.

The format of the meetings varies according to the needs of the specific topic. However, all meetings are open to the public and held in accessible facilities. Any individual requiring accessibility aids to participate in such a meeting should notify the BCATS office at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting date.



General Circulation and Other Local Newspapers

BCATS utilizes the “*Battle Creek Enquirer*”, the local general circulation newspaper, to publicize public involvement and public hearing notices. BCATS also uses the weekly free publication, “*The Battle Creek Shopper News*” (delivered to every home and business) on an occasional basis to publicize such things as an annual report on the implementation of transportation projects and to report on the development and outcomes of the long range plan effort. Efforts have been made to utilize local bilingual, Spanish/English, publications to advise the community when these resources are available in the BCATS area.

Solicitation of Comments Directly from the Public

In an effort to include even more comments on BCATS’ plans and programs from all of the groups specified in the federal regulations, BCATS has expanded its participation and consultation lists over the past few years to include numerous potentially interested parties and now maintains an extensive e-mail list of those parties. General public comments are also welcomed at any time by contacting BCATS’ through e-mail at bcats@bcatsmpo.org.

It is anticipated that having a variety of means available for expressing comments will provide ample opportunity for those interested in the BCATS process. Comments requiring a response will be addressed appropriately, and in a timely manner.



Who to Contact ???

To provide Comments or ask questions regarding the BCATS program, please use any of the following means:

mail: BCATS
601 Avenue A, Springfield, MI 49037
phone: (269) 963-1158
fax: (269) 963-4951
e-mail: bcats@bcatsmpo.org

Specific questions or comments about State, County (non-state roads in area townships), City roads, or Public Transit can be addressed to the following offices:

State: Michigan Department of Transportation
Transportation Service Group
15300 W. Michigan Avenue, Marshall, MI 49068
(269) 789-0592 fax (269) 789-0936
toll free - 1-800-324-6368



County: Calhoun County Road Department
13300 15 Mile Road, Marshall, MI 49068
(269) 781-9841 fax (269) 781-6101
e-mail: rdinfo@calhouncountymi.gov

City of Battle Creek: Department of Public Works, City of Battle Creek
150 S. Kendall Street, Battle Creek, MI 49015
(269) 966-3343 fax (269) 966-3482
e-mail: cjdopp@battlecreekmi.gov



City of Springfield: Department of Public Works, City of Springfield
601 Avenue A, Springfield, MI 49037
(269) 964-2354 fax (269) 965-0114
e-mail: tblanar@springfieldmich.com



Transit: Manager, Battle Creek Transit
339 W. Michigan Avenue, Battle Creek, MI 49017
(269) 966-3474 fax (269) 966-3652
e-mail: rwwerner@battlecreekmi.gov

The Committees and staff of the Battle Creek Area Transportation Study, as of January 1, 2017:

POLICY COMMITTEE

Voting Members

Angela Kline (Chair), County Engineer, Calhoun County Road Department
Rich Werner (Vice-Chair) (City Commissioner Mark Behnke's permanent alternate), City of Battle Creek
Steve Buller (Sec-Tres.) (Supervisor Tim Hill's permanent alternate), Charter Township of Emmett
Harry Burdett, Mayor, City of Springfield
Mark Dionise, Manager, MDOT Marshall Transportation Service Center
Steve Frisbie, County Commissioner, Calhoun County Board of Commissioners
Laveta Hardish, Supervisor, Leroy Township
Adam Heikkila, Supervisor, Charter Township of Bedford
John Lanum, Unit Supervisor, Michigan Department of Transportation
Dave Morgan, Supervisor, Charter Township of Pennfield
Deb Owens (Mayor Dave Walters' permanent alternate), City of Battle Creek

Non-Voting Members

Andy Pickard, Federal Highway Administration-Lansing
Chairperson, Southcentral Michigan Planning Council

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Voting Members

Chris Dopp (Chair), Director of Public Works, City of Battle Creek
Angela Kline (Vice-Chair), County Engineer, Calhoun County Road Department
Terry Blaniar, Public Works Director, City of Springfield
Rick Fowler, Transportation Planner, Michigan Department of Transportation (Lansing)
Jason Latham, Transportation Planner, Michigan Department of Transportation (SW Region)
Rich Werner, Transit Manager, Battle Creek Transit
Christine Zuzga/Glenn Perian, Planning Department, City of Battle Creek

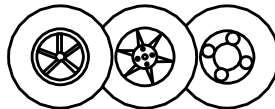
Non-Voting Members

Andy Pickard, Federal Highway Administration-Lansing
Lee Adams, Director, Southcentral Michigan Planning Council

STAFF

Patricia Karr, Executive Director
Andrew Tilma, Principal Planner

BCATS



BCATS PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GUIDE - JANUARY, 2017