

BINGHAMTON METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY  
POLICY COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 28, 2007

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 2:35 PM by Chair Carol Sweeney.

Roll call.

Members present:

Carol Sweeney, Chair, Supervisor, Town of Owego

Mayor Harry Lewis, Vice-Chair, Village of Johnson City

Barbara Fiala, Broome County Executive, represented by Deputy Executive Pat Brennan

Mayor Joan Pulse, Village of Endicott

Mayor John Loftus, Village of Owego

Margaret Turna, Supervisor, Town of Chenango

Michael Marinaccio, Supervisor, Town of Dickinson

Peter Andreasen, Supervisor, Town of Vestal

Ron Hayes, New York State DOT

Elaine Jardine, STERPDB

Advisory Members present:

Jack Williams, Secretary, NYSDOT Region 9

Others present:

Steven Gayle, BMTS staff

Cyndi Paddick, BMTS staff

John Sterbentz, BMTS staff

Scott Reigle, BMTS staff

Pam Eshbaugh, NYSDOT Region 9

Douglas Bickford, NYSDOT Region 9

Sharon Martinez

- Approval of minutes of September 28, 2006. Moved Marinaccio, second Brennan.  
Approved by consensus.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

No comment was offered at this time.

ACTION ITEMS: 2007-2008 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

Steven Gayle briefed the committee on the Draft 2007-2008 UPWP. Key content includes:

Long range planning: Front Street Corridor, household travel behavior survey

Short range planning: some transit tasks will carry over due to staffing issue, including downtown loop service evaluation and bus size study. Household transit attitudinal survey to be addressed as UPWP amendment. Neighborhood traffic management, safe routes to school, and update of ITS Regional Architecture are on the FHWA program.

The remainder of the key content is ongoing tasks, including TIP development and monitoring, transportation system data collection, modeling and GIS, and program administration.

Steven Gayle reviewed the FHWA and FTA grant revenue allocations, and the proposed budget. He noted that the FHWA-PL budget would draw down some of our backlog in order to hire a consultant for the household travel survey.

Steven Gayle reviewed the BMST Central Staff staffing plan. He informed the Committee that he was working with Broome County Personnel to align the staff titles more closely with their actual duties. This would free up a senior transportation planner title, which he believes will be easier to fill than the currently vacant traffic engineer title. He noted that when the BMTS Planning Committee approved the Draft UPWP, they passed a motion to empower the Program & Finance Subcommittee to review and accept a revised staffing plan at such time as the Personnel Department proposes an acceptable solution.

- Resolution 2007-01, Approving the 2007-2008 Unified Planning Work Program and associated grant budgets. Moves Brennan, second Marinaccio. Approved by consensus.
- Resolution 2007-02, Approving the 2007-2008 Unified Planning Work Program BMST Central Staff staffing plan. Moved Andreasen, second Turna. Approved by consensus.

#### ACTION ITEM: 2006-2007 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

Steven Gayle explained that a task on the current UPWP, the on-board survey of BC Transit riders, is being conducted by the Binghamton University Department of Public Administration. Because this is being done as a student activity, there is no cost other than printing and postage.

Broome County Executive Barbara Fiala had requested for the new UPWP a household based telephone survey of county residents to determine attitudes about public transit. By amending the 2006-2007 UPWP, taking advantage of the money saved in the on-board survey, this task can be initiated sooner.

Elaine Jardine, speaking on behalf of Tioga County, stated that there was no need to include the Tioga portion of BMTS, since they had a similar survey done in 2002 as part of a transit needs assessment. Carol Sweeney concurred.

- Resolution 2007-03, Approving an amendment to the 2006-2007 Unified Planning Work Program. Moved Marinaccio, second Lewis. Approved by consensus.

#### ACTION ITEM: 2006-2010 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Steven Gayle briefed the Committee on a proposed amendment to the TIP that reflected actions taken by the Planning Committee at both their December and February meetings. The first action would add to the TIP the three Transportation Enhancement Program projects that were awarded in the BMTS area. He noted that five project applications were received, one was determined ineligible, so receiving funding for three of four was a good record. The other part of the amendment was extracting specific projects from already programmed blocks or projects, so no new spending was involved.

Jack Williams spoke to the extraction of "Phase 0" from Phase 1 of the I-81/NY 17 Prospect Mountain project. He stated this would install high mast lighting throughout the interchange area, which would correct current deficiencies, help illuminate the area during construction, and then remain in place. There are significant safety benefits from accelerating this part of the project.

- Resolution 2007-04, Amending the 2006-2010 Transportation Improvement Program. Moved Turna, second Marinaccio. Approved by consensus.

#### ACTION ITEM: BMTS PARTICIPATION PLAN

Steven Gayle informed the Committee that the Federal transportation authorization SAFETEA-LU required that all MPOs revisit public participation and develop an updated plan. BMTS staff began plan preparation last summer, and has sought input from the general public as well as stakeholders in the transportation planning process. The Draft Plan was accepted by the BMTS Planning Committee, and no further public comments have been received.

- Resolution 2007-05 Approving the BMTS Participation Plan. Moved Andreasen, second Lewis. Approved by consensus.

#### DISCUSSION ITEM: NYSDOT UPDATE

Jack Williams provided an update on a number of NYSDOT items.

1. There is a new Acting Commissioner of Transportation, Astrid Glynn, pending Senate confirmation.
2. David Ligeikis has been appointed Director of the NYSDOT Delivery Division, which oversees the Regional offices.
3. They will report on the State budget after Legislative action, next meeting.
4. The shift of Tioga County to Region 9 will be effective April 1. Jack acknowledged this is creating some challenges in the program update. Carol Sweeney inquired about the Owego residency. Jack responded that he residencies and their maintenance activities would be unaffected.
5. The Region is moving on the delivery of all I-86 projects. They have been instructed that those with NYS Transportation Bond funding must be obligated within the five year bond window. The Region has an estimated \$630 million in work. He introduced Doug Bickford for an update on the projects in the BMTS area.
  - a. I-81/NY 17 Interchange Prospect Mountain is in final design. A public hearing will be scheduled pending completion of review by FHWA. A value engineering exercise has been completed, leading to an examination of the feasibility of constructing Phases 1 and 2 as a single project. A May 2009 letting is the current schedule. Michael Marinaccio inquired about detours and congestion. Jack responded that the need to replace the river bridges means traffic will be kept on the old bridges until the new ones are completed; the plan is to keep two lanes open for traffic at all times.
  - b. Binghamton Area Signs. Schedule will relate to FHWA decision on designation as I-86. Many large overhead sign structures will be replaced.
  - c. Western Broome Sign and Guiderail Upgrades, and Exits 67 and 68. Will include a solution for Exit 68; public meetings, and meetings with Town of Vestal officials and fire/EMS have been held. May require geometric improvement to Exit 67. Scheduled for SFY 2011-2012.

## DISCUSSION ITEM: 2008-2012 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Steven Gayle reported that BMTS and NYSDOT Region 9 staff have been working together on the program update, and that it has been very difficult because of financial constraints.

1. SAFETEA-LU, the Federal transportation bill passed in 2005, provided some increase in funding, but this has for the most part been consumed by the rapid inflation in the cost of construction materials.
2. The Governor's budget provides some increases in funding. There is \$660 million in new Federal aid; this is because the previous program, developed prior to the passage of SAFETEA-LU, was based on conservative revenue estimates. There is an additional \$800 million in Federal aid achieved by the fact that FHWA permits advance funding of construction (essentially borrowing ahead on allocated funds). Most of this will be used to keep State-funded project commitments whole, not to add new projects.
3. These funding problems are not unique to New York. Toll and franchise revenue are being looked to across the country.
4. System preservation needs are large, including some previously neglected elements like large culverts.
5. The TIP Subcommittee is considering a recommendation to add annual funding for preventive maintenance of local bridges, especially painting. NYSDOT already does this for State bridges, to extend the life of the asset.

Regarding schedule, the Planning Committee will be meeting on March 8 to approve a Draft TIP for further public review. Final approval by the Policy Committee will be in late May or early June.

## DISCUSSION ITEM: TRANSPORTATION PLANS

Steven Gayle reported that the Main Street Corridor Plan is in final draft form, with copies having been sent to the local governments with jurisdiction for their advance review. Comments have been received from Johnson City and Union. There are three scenarios, including one that focuses on walkability, one on the restoration of a commercial thoroughfare, and the last on technology based safety. Jack Williams asked that when public meetings are held, it be made clear that improvements will have to be cooperatively funded through various state and municipal sources. Steven Gayle concurred.

Steven Gayle reported that the Binghamton Regional Freight Study fell behind schedule because of non-substantive contract issues. The contract has been executed, and the consultants have begun work.

## DISCUSSION ITEM: TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Steven Gayle reported that the Binghamton Intermodal Transit Terminal is moving ahead. After lengthy delays, the FTA finally released the Draft Environmental Assessment for the required 30 day public comment period, which closes March 22. At that point, the County will respond to any substantive comments and return the EA to FTA for a final environmental determination. When that is granted, the County can have the design completed, acquire property, and obligate construction funds.

No City of Binghamton representative was present to report on the Court Street Gateway project.

## BUSINESS OFFERED FROM THE FLOOR/ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Sharon Martinez addressed the Committee regarding an injury that occurred to her while riding BC Transit, and the poor response of BC Transit driver and supervisor. Deputy County Executive Brennan stated he would follow up.

Mayor Loftus reported that the Village of Owego was looking forward to the construction of the Riverwalk project, which will create positive benefit.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 PM.