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WASHTENAW AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

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MINUTES OF MEETING

POLICY COMMITTEE

DATE: February 18, 2009

TIME: 9:30 a.m.

PLACE: Scio Township Hall, 827 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Members Present: City of Saline – Gretchen Driskell, Chair
Village of Dexter – Jim Carson, Vice-Chair
Dexter Township/WCPAB – Pat Kelly, Secretary-Treasurer
WCRC- Doug Fuller
Pittsfield Township – Mandy Grewal
City of Chelsea – Ann Feeney
SWWCOG – Ron Mann
Ann Arbor Township – Mike Moran
AATA – Jesse Bernstein
Ypsilanti Township – Brenda Stumbo
City of Ypsilanti – Bill Nickels
Superior Township – Brenda McKinney (for Bill McFarlane)
Northfield Township – Deb Mozurkewich
City of Ann Arbor – Tony Derezinski (for Carsten Hohnke)

Members Absent: Scio Township – Thomas Hanson
MDOT Statewide Planning – Pam Boyd
WCBC – Jessica Ping
EMU – John Donnegan
U of M – Hank Baier

Others Present: MDOT – Kari Martin, Paul Lott, Steve Bower
WATS – Terri Blackmore, Ryan Buck, Eric Bombery, Nick Sapkiewicz
Scio Township Resident – Tom Partridge
SEMCOG – Carmine Palombo
FHWA – Chris Dingman

POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

• CITY OF ANN ARBOR • ANN ARBOR TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY • ANN ARBOR TOWNSHIP • CITY OF CHELSEA • VILLAGE OF DEXTER •
• DEXTER TOWNSHIP • EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY • MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION • NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP • PITTSFIELD TOWNSHIP •
• CITY OF SALINE • SCIO TOWNSHIP • SOUTHWEST WASHTENAW COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS • SUPERIOR TOWNSHIP • UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN •
• WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS • WASHTENAW COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION • CITY OF YPSILANTI • YPSILANTI TOWNSHIP •
• EX OFFICIO: FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION • SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS •

AN INTERMUNICIPALITY COMMITTEE ORGANIZED UNDER ACT 200 OF PUBLIC ACTS OF MICHIGAN (1957)
REPRESENTING WASHTENAW COUNTY

Others Present (continued): Ypsilanti Township – Mike Martin
WCRC – Steve Puuri

1. Call to Order

Chair Driskell called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. She asked those present to introduce themselves.

2. Public Participation

Chair Driskell asked if any members of the public wished to address the Committee. At that time, no members of the public were present and public participation time was closed.

3. Approval of the December 17, 2008 Policy Committee Minutes

Mr. Fuller made a motion to approve the December 17, 2008 Policy Committee minutes. Mr. Mann supported the motion and the minutes were approved as submitted.

4. Communications and Announcements

Ms. Blackmore reported that WATS will be meeting with MDOT University Region Staff on February 23rd at 2:00pm. Ms. Blackmore stated that Policy Committee members are invited to attend.

Ms. Blackmore stated that information is changing quickly regarding the stimulus funding and potential projects from the state but that MDOT has assembled a list of projects to use stimulus funds including two projects in Washtenaw County: I-94 between Freer Road and the West County line and I-94 between Parker Road and Freer Road. Ms. Blackmore stated that MDOT has proposed the US-23 Environmental work for discretionary funding. Ms. Blackmore added that the Governor planned to post a list of projects submitted for stimulus funding online as soon as today.

Ms. Blackmore reported that Washtenaw County is expected to receive slightly over 7 Million dollars in Urban funding from the Stimulus package but pointed out that those numbers were still only estimates. She added that while initially it was thought that some of the funding would need to be obligated within 75 days of the bill being signed, the law allows locals one year to obligate funding but that MDOT will need to obligate its projects within 120 days. She indicated that this change may result in the County's priorities changing but that discussion on that issue would occur later in the meeting.

Ms. Blackmore stated that MDOT plans to have financial estimates to SEMCOG for the Long Range Transportation Plan by the end of the week. She stated that much work has been done in preparation for the long range plan but that not having financial numbers has stalled project development.

Ms. Blackmore explained the handouts at each place, which included:

1. Upcoming meetings
2. FY 2010-2011 Unified Work program

5. Approval of Bills over \$500

Ms. Blackmore reported that there was one bills over \$500 for \$899 for Julie Nixon who is undertaking a major update of the Agency Website. Ms. Blackmore noted that the updated website is expected to be online at the end of February.

Mr. Mann made a motion to approve the bill over \$500. Mr. Fuller supported and the motion passed.

6. Report on WATS Activities

Ms. Blackmore reported that the next WALLY coalition meeting is scheduled for February 23rd at 10:00 am. She added that there has been discussion about the possibility of upgrading the signal system along the rail that would allow the train to travel at a faster average speed.

Ms. Blackmore reported that WATS has requested 2009 Highway Performance Monitoring System counts from local agencies. She added that the City of Ann Arbor informed WATS that the insurance money that was thought to be available to serve as a local match for the federal funds for a pool of traffic counters was not available. The Michigan Department of Transportation Stated that WATS will need to be the agency that purchases the pool counters but that in order to do that, WATS must amend the Unified Work Program to include the project. Ms. Martin suggested WATS contact Dave Schade at MDOT for assistance. Mr. Bombery responded that Mr. Shade had already been involved in discussions.

Ms. Blackmore reported that WATS reviewed the City of Ann Arbor's Land Use Element of the City's Master Plan and submitted it to County Planning. It will be considered by the Planning Advisory Board at the end of the month and will be presented to the Board of Commissioners in March.

Ms. Blackmore reported that the Crash program is wrapping up and will be eliminated at the end of the month. She stated that the accuracy of the State data has improved significantly which was the goal of the program. She added that the Office of Highway Safety Planning has issued a grant to Courts and Law Enforcement Management Information System (CLEMIS) and it is anticipated that as a result of the grant local agencies will be submitting crashes electronically no later than October of this year.

Ms. Blackmore stated that all of the deficiencies for the Long Range Plan have been identified for some time but that WATS has not received financial estimates from SEMCOG. Once those numbers are made available, agencies will receive packets with the deficiencies as well as expected revenue numbers to use in order to program Long Range Plan projects.

7. Old Business

There was no old business.

8. New Business

A. 2nd Quarter Financial Statement - Action

Ms. Blackmore stated that the 2nd Quarter financial statements were included in the meeting packet. Ms. Blackmore reported that Agency is in good financial shape. She stated that the Plan Development category is slightly above 50% of the full year budget due to the 2035 Long Range Plan and Asset Management NT contract.

Ms. Blackmore also stated that due to a family health issue, the agency's auditor has not yet completed the Agency's audit but that when it is complete, it will be distributed to committee members.

Mr. Derezinski asked that the Agency Financial Statements also be included on the Agency's website.

B. FY 2010 and 2011 Safety Project Prioritization - Action

Mr. Bombery stated that SEMCOG issued a call for Safety projects on December 9, 2008. Mr. Bombery reported that safety project applications were due to WATS on January 9, 2009. He also reported that initially, WATS only received one safety project application which was from the WCRC for 2011. That project, on Waters Road in Lodi Township, includes removal of roadside obstacles, mitigation of drainage problem, steep grades and unstable roadbed. Mr. Bombery explained that as long as a project has a cost benefit ration of greater than 1, Washtenaw County will usually be awarded at least one Safety project per year. The City of Ann Arbor was able to submit an application for illuminated street signs in the Main Street, Fifth Avenue and Division Street area for 2010. As there was only one project per year, each project is given top priority by Washtenaw County for its respective year.

Mr. Fuller made a motion to submit the safety projects to SEMCOG as presented. Ms. Kelly supported and the motion passed.

C. FY 2008-2011 TIP Amendments - Action

Mr. Bombery reported that WATS received 23 amendments for amendment to the FY 2008-2011 TIP, including 19 new projects, one deletion and three administrative changes. Of the \$2,990,000 being amended in to the TIP, \$2,073,000 is federal, \$205,000 is state and the remaining 712,000 is local funds. Mr. Bombery pointed out that the additional funds are transit, STP small urban and Safety funding, the TIP will remain fiscally constrained.

Mr. Bombery reported that of the 6 new road projects being amended in, none of them impact Environmental Justice areas. He stated that Environmental Mitigation analysis was performed by SEMCOG, the results were provided in the memo.

Ms. Kelly made a motion to approve the FY 2008-2011 TIP amendments. Ms. Grewal supported and the motion passed.

D. Support for PIRGIM's position on the next Transportation Legislation – Action

Ms. Blackmore stated that she was approached by PIRGIM (Public Interest Research Group in Michigan) about WATS supporting the group's policy position on the need for increased funding for transportation in the next federal reauthorization.

Ms. Feeney expressed concern over how the Agency's name might be tied to the organization and their actions. Specifically, Ms. Feeney did not want WATS to be mentioned as a supporter by a group that would be going door to door asking for donations. Ms. Kelly suggested staff set up a follow up meeting to discuss this and other issues. Ms. Blackmore stated she would look in to having a representative come speak at a meeting and answer questions from the Committee.

Ms. Driskell spoke in favor of supporting the PIRGIM statement as the goals are the same as the WATS Committee.

Ms. Stumbo made a motion to table action on supporting the PIRGIM statement. Ms. Feeney supported and action was tabled.

E. Prioritization of Stimulus Projects and Amended Federal Aid Programs – Action

Ms. Blackmore stated that three separate prioritized stimulus funding lists had been created, one for Urban, one for Rural and one for Transit and included in the meeting packet. Ms. Blackmore noted that the Transit funds would be coming through the Federal Transit Administration and allocated directly to the AATA. Ms. Blackmore stated that the lists were created using the available information about the stimulus package. She noted that when the lists were put together, the expectation was that half the estimated \$6.9 million in Urban and \$700,000 in Rural funds would need to be obligated in the first 75 days, and the remainder within 365 days. The signed piece of legislation changed this so that projects must be obligated within one year. Ms. Blackmore stated that due to this change, some agencies may request changes in the prioritized lists but that any changes would be brought back to the Policy Committee for approval.

Ms. Mozurkewich stated that she had submitted a project for the North Territorial Bridge over US-23 but did not see the project listed anywhere. Ms. Blackmore stated that in addition the lists prioritized by WATS, MDOT and the Governor have separate lists of projects anticipating stimulus funding. Ms. Blackmore pointed out that the North Territorial Bridge project was included in the Governor's list. Ms. Blackmore reminded the Committee that since the Townships are not Act 51 agencies they need to coordinate prospective improvements with the WCRC or MDOT.

Mr. Bower addressed concerns about US-12 not being included in any of the project lists. He stated that because of the 120 day timeline imposed on State stimulus projects that the project was not feasible. Ms. Blackmore asked MDOT to look in to the possibility of applying for national discretionary funds included in the stimulus law. Projects of between 20 and 300 million dollars will be eligible to receive discretionary funds.

Ms. Stumbo made a motion to approve the prioritized Urban Rural and transit Stimulus lists with the understanding that any changes that occur will be brought back to the Policy Committee. Ms. Feeny supported and the motion passed.

Ms. Driskell asked that due of the ever changing funding situation as well as a number of new Committee representatives, Staff establish an orientation presentation to help bring everyone up to speed on transportation planning and the WATS process. Ms. Blackmore indicated she would work on determining a date for the presentation. Mr. Dingman stated that the Federal Highway Administration Michigan Division had a presentation which would likely meet the Committees needs and indicated that he would forward the information to Staff.

Ms. Blackmore indicated that the stimulus funding caused some projects and dollars to move around within the STP Urban, Rural and TEDF-D programs. The Federal Aid Committees met in early February to adjust the programs accordingly.

Mr. Mann made a motion to approve the STP Urban, STP Rural and TEDF-D programs. Mr. Carson supported and the motion passed.

F. FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Changes

Mr. Bombery discussed the three administrative amendments included as part of the Agenda Item 8 C TIP amendments. The administrative changes included a small bus purchase for the Manchester Senior Service, a small bus purchase for the WAVE and an amendment to list AATA as the responsible agency for the WALLY rail project. Mr. Bombery stated that this was for the Committee's information and that no action was required.

G. FY 2010 Unified Work Program – Information (Action in March)

Ms. Blackmore stated that each year, WATS produces a Work Program that outlines the upcoming tasks for the agency as well as the planning activities for the AATA. In order to go through the process of approval with the State and Federal Highway Administration, WATS must complete the UWP approximately 6 months before it takes affect. Ms. Blackmore indicated that a copy of the FY 2010-2011 UWP was at each place. Ms. Blackmore stated that action would be taken to approve the UWP at the March meeting to give Committee members ample time to review the document.

9. Agency Reports

A. City of Ann Arbor

Mr. Derezsinski reported that at the City Council voted 10-1 on the previous night to approve the underground parking structure next to the library. The structure will include 4 below ground levels and add about 600 parking spaces to the downtown. Mr. Derezsinski indicated that the project will be constructed so that structure will have the ability to develop the land above the new structure. Mr. Derezsinski also stated that the wide voting margin showed the strong support for the project, supporting the DDA's work on the project site.

B. AATA

Mr. Bernstein stated that the AATA board will soon be meeting with the search committee to discuss applicants for the Executive Director position at the AATA. He indicated that on March 9th, some applicants will participate in a day long interview.

C. Ann Arbor Township

A representative was not present.

D. City of Chelsea

Ms. Feeney had nothing to report.

E. Dexter Village

Mr. Carson had nothing to report.

F. Dexter Township

Ms. Kelly reported that Dexter Township will be drafting a letter of support for a new trail to be built by the Huron-Clinton Metropark Authority. Ms. Kelly stated that any other agencies supporting the project would be appreciated.

G. Planning Advisory Board

Ms. Blackmore had nothing additional to report.

H. Eastern Michigan University

A representative was not present.

I. FHWA

Mr. Dingman reported that 3% of the stimulus money will go towards Transportation Enhancement projects such as non-motorized improvements and streetscaping. He indicated that his office would be disseminating new information in the near future as more information

becomes available regarding the stimulus package. He reported that FHWA has been given 21 days to make the money available.

J. Northfield Township

Ms. Mozurkewich reported that Northfield Township had approved a 25 acre rezoning that will allow a new development at US-23 and 8 Mile road. She stated that the project would be a Transit Oriented Development and act as a stop on the WALLY line when that service is initiated. Ms. Mozurkewich also stated that the Township will also consider a rezoning request of 50 acres located near the US-23 and North Territorial exit. The proposed rezoning would change the site from Industrial to Highway Commercial.

K. Pittsfield Township

Ms. Grewal had nothing to report.

L. MDOT Planning

A representative was not present.

M. MDOT Region/TSC

Ms. Martin had nothing to report. Ms. Blackmore thanked MDOT for adding chevrons and signage at the I-94 and Kalmbach Rd. curve.

N. City of Saline

Ms. Driskell had nothing to report.

O. SWWCOG

Mr. Mann reported that SWWCOG continues to experience issues from the SHPO office regarding historic trees as they relate to the M-52 planned improvements in the center of the Village of Manchester.

P. SEMCOG

Mr. Palombo stated that work on the Ann Arbor to Detroit Rail project continues and that despite negotiation issues with Canadian National that project leaders are still optimistic about the possibility of service starting in October 2010. Mr. Palombo stated that if Canadian National does not cooperate, that congressional leaders may be called upon to assist in the negotiations.

Mr. Palombo also reported that Governor Granholm would be speaking at the SEMCOG offices on Thursday, February 19 at 1:00 pm to discuss what the State's plan is for the stimulus money.

Q. Scio Township

A representative was not present.

R. Superior Township

Ms. McKinney had nothing to report.

S. University of Michigan

A representative was not present.

T. County Board of Commissioners

A representative was not present.

U. WCRC

Mr. Fuller stated that during March the WCRC will be meeting with Townships to discuss what can be done in each area.

Mr. Puuri stated that the Road Commission is currently working on 18 state and federally funded projects and that the stimulus funding will increase that number. Mr. Puuri stated that bids for the Plymouth Road project came in about 4% below estimates and that the WCRC is hoping to let the Milan-Oakville project in March. Mr. Puuri added that federal funds will be used for maintenance and as a result, the overlay program is likely to increase over past years.

V. Ypsilanti Township

Mr. Martin indicated that he will likely be the Ypsilanti Township representative with Ms. Stumbo acting as the alternate. He thanked the Committee for helping him better understand the process.

W. City of Ypsilanti

Mr. Nickels stated that the City is excited about the meeting to discuss the location of a rail stop along the Ann Arbor to Detroit rail line.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 A.M.