

## Minutes of Meeting

POLICY COMMITTEE

DATE: January 20, 2021

TIME: 9:30 pm

PLACE: ZOOM Virtual Meeting

\* This meeting was held via ZOOM conference call in accordance with the Open Meetings Act due to the coronavirus pandemic.

**Members Present:** City of Saline – Brian Marl, Chair  
Eastern Michigan University - Leigh Greden, Vice Chair  
WCBOC – Jason Morgan, Treasurer  
Ann Arbor Township – Diane O'Connell  
City of Chelsea – Charles Wiseley  
City of Dexter – Shawn Keough  
City of Ypsilanti – Jennifer Symanns  
MDOT Region - Kari Martin  
Northfield Township - Ken Dignan  
Pittsfield Township – Mandy Grewal  
Superior Township – Ken Schwartz  
TheRide – Matt Carpenter  
Washtenaw County Road Commission – Doug Fuller  
Ypsilanti Township – Brenda Stumbo

**Members Absent:** City of Ann Arbor – Erica Briggs  
City of Ann Arbor DDA – Keith Orr  
City of Milan - Dominic Hamden  
Dexter Township - Harley Rider  
Scio Township - Vacant  
SWWCOG – Ron Milkey  
University of Michigan – Hank Baier

**Others Present:** WATS - Ryan Buck, Nick Sapkiewicz, Suzann Flowers, Emily Lake  
MDOT - Max Gierman, Dee Parker  
SEMCOG - Tom Bruff, Christina Ignasiak  
Stantec - Maranda Miller

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### POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

City of Ann Arbor • Ann Arbor DDA • Ann Arbor Township • City of Chelsea • City of Dexter  
Dexter Township • Eastern Michigan University • Michigan Department of Transportation • City of Milan • Northfield Township •  
Pittsfield Township • City of Saline • Scio Township • Southwest Washtenaw Council of Governments • Superior Township • The Ride  
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 •

RTA - Alma Smith, Ned Staebler, Ben Stupka  
TheRide - John Metzinger, Forest Yang, Roger Hewitt  
Stefforia, Petik & Associates - Tim Petik  
WAVE - Jim Carson, Julia Roberts  
City of Saline - Jeff Fordice  
Public - Larry Deck, Jim Mogensen, Jeremy Papuga, Seth Peterson

#### 1. Call to Order/Introductions

Chair Marl called the meeting to order at 9:33am. Introductions were made.

#### 2. Approval of Agenda

**Mr. Fuller made a motion to approve the meeting agenda, Ms. Stumbo supported the motion, motion approved.**

#### 3. Approval of Minutes

**Mr. Morgan made a motion to approve the November 18, 2020 minutes as presented, supported by Mr. Carpenter, motion approved.**

#### 4. Public Participation

Mr. Deck from the Washtenaw Bicycling & Walking Coalition (WBWC) informed the Committee of ongoing discussions for the Packard Street corridor.

- A 2019 WBWC survey identified Packard St as one of the highest priorities for on-road bicycle infrastructure in the County.
- A task force was established of public/private groups to look at opportunities for improvement along Packard Street.
- As the WCRC plans to repave Packard from Carpenter to the City of Ypsilanti limits this year, the WBWC suggests that the existing 11 foot lanes be narrowed to 10 feet to allow more space for bicycles in this urban setting. A document that outlines this option has been shared with WATS and will be forwarded to the Committee.

Mr. Mogensen thanked WATS staff and Committees for approving additional funds to the I-94 non-motorized crossing in Ypsilanti. He stressed the importance of public participation in the RTA discussions and noted the high percentage of Washtenaw County bridges in bad repair per the bridge performance measures.

Chair Marl held a roll call for members to state their name, the municipality, and county they were calling from in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

#### 5. Communications and Announcements

Mr. Buck provided the following updates:

- WATS staff continue to work from home amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The majority of dues have been paid. These local member dues have been reduced 33% from last year.
- The efforts of the WBWC have been great. WATS looks forward to more discussions regarding the Packard St corridor, which runs through multiple jurisdictions.
- Fiscal year 2021 projects are beginning to obligate. Technical staff at implementing agencies are always encouraged to obligate projects as soon as possible.
- Efforts to establish uniform midblock crossings across jurisdictions in Washtenaw County

have made significant progress. Thank you to everyone involved in that effort, which has been led by Nathan Vought at the County. A document with uniform design elements will be forthcoming soon.

- Action will be scheduled for the FY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program at the February 17, 2021 meeting.
- WATS and local agency staff have recently participated in a roundtable discussion about traffic counting. WATS continues the non motorized counting effort. Occasionally, there have been some technical issues with the counting equipment. WATS staff plan to provide short, medium, and long term solutions for counting equipment in the near future.

#### 6. Bills over \$500

Mr. Buck presented the following bills and authorizations:

- \$5,000 to Stefforia, Petik & Associates for the FY 2020 financial audit.

**Ms. Grewal made a motion to approve bills over \$500, supported by Mr. Greden, motion approved.**

#### 7. Old Business

There were no items.

#### 8. New Business

##### **A. Urban-Federal Aid Program Updates**

Ms. Flowers provided the following update:

- The Policy Committee made a recommendation at the November 2020 meeting to ensure funding requests from the City of Ypsilanti and MDOT would be met for three regionally significant projects:
  1. Huron/I-94 non-motorized crossing,
  2. Huron River Dr. project, and
  3. Huron/Hamilton/Washtenaw road diet project.

The FAC-U Committee and the WATS Technical Committee have recommended to address target reductions, funding allocations, and programming of FY 2020 HIPU funds as presented:

1. Wiard Rd. to receive \$37,436 and Plymouth Rd. to receive \$20,530 of the FY 2020 HIPU funds to account for the FY 2021 targets reductions applied to these projects.
2. City of Ypsilanti to receive \$125,000 of FY 2020 HIPU funds to be applied to the Huron/I-94 non-motorized crossing project on MDOT trunkline.
3. City of Ypsilanti to receive \$120,000 of FY 2020 HIPU funds to be applied to the FY 2023 Huron River Dr. project on MDOT trunkline.
4. TheRide to reduce their FY 2022 sidewalk infill project by \$100,000 and to work with the City to use the \$100,000 for the City of Ypsilanti non-motorized improvements associated with the Hamilton/Huron/Washtenaw Rd. diet project on MDOT trunkline.
5. The City of Saline to receive \$15,000 of FY 2020 HIPU funds to be applied to the FY 2023 Clark St. project.

6. The City of Ann Arbor to receive \$37,859 of FY 2020 HIPU funds to be applied to the FY 2022 Platt Rd. project.
  - The program as presented would allow the Committee to:
    - backfill projects that would otherwise see funding reductions.
    - meet all of the requests put forward from the City of Ypsilanti and MDOT regarding regionally significant projects.
    - allocate additional funding to projects in the City of Saline and the City of Ann Arbor.

Mr. Fuller thanked WATS staff for their efforts in making projects whole by backfilling reductions. He noted concern for using Federal Aid funding on MDOT trunkline roads.

Mr. Buck provided background regarding the existing WATS policy for trunkline roads:

- A change at the state level several years ago to reprioritize the freeway system over the non-freeway trunkline system was the impetus for the existing policy to allow up to \$100,000 of local funds to go towards MDOT roads in a local jurisdiction.

Ms. Flowers added that WATS Committees will have an opportunity to review and amend any existing policies during the development of the next TIP.

Mr. Carpenter noted that TheRide is happy to support the City of Ypsilanti and local partners.

**Ms. Symanns made a motion to approve the recommendations from the WATS Technical Committee as presented, supported by Ms. O'Connell, motion approved.**

#### **B. FY 2020 Audit**

Mr. Tim Petik of Stefforia, Petik & Associates provided the following update:

- WATS finances have been managed very effectively within the annual budget. The 33% reduction in local member dues this year is a result of good management of the funds available.
- From a financial standpoint, operations are running normally with staff working from home.

**Ms. Grewal made a motion to approve the FY 2020 financial audit as presented, supported by Ms. Martin, motion approved.**

#### **C. RTA Discussion**

Mr. Stupka, Program Manager for the Regional Transit Authority (RTA), presented on the ongoing RTA master plan process:

- Current regional projects and planning activities include:
  - Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan
  - Mobility Oriented Development Study
  - Ann Arbor-Detroit Technical Study
  - D2A2 Express Bus pilot program
  - Michigan Ride paratransit app
  - Regional mobility management website and call center
- The goal for the new master plan is to organize transit mobility priorities throughout

the region into one comprehensive document. This document will focus on results of prior and ongoing plans throughout the region at local and regional scales to identify common goals and opportunities, and to approach regional transit in a broad sense. The master plan will be a realistically constrained document of regional transit gaps and needs, and strategies for addressing those gaps and needs.

- The RTA has worked with transit providers to develop draft goals and strategies. A briefing book will be forthcoming. This document will outline the general state of transit mobility in the region, where the RTA is with planning projects, what the proposed goals and strategies will be, and will also include some indicators to measure for success such as overall job access in the region from transit. The briefing book will also include a framework for ongoing public engagement.
- Public engagement efforts are scheduled to begin in April 2021. The RTA is in the process of putting together a communications team, which will focus on working with community ambassadors for communication networks. A draft plan is scheduled to be completed by July 2021 and the final plan by September 2021.
- Regional transit goals as they exist today include:
  - expand transit to new places,
  - enhance existing services,
  - develop innovative and adaptable solutions,
  - secure long term transit revenue, and
  - build sustainable partnerships.
- Regional initiatives in Washtenaw County include:
  - flexible solutions for non urbanized areas,
  - ADA and paratransit enhancements expansion,
  - first and last mile solutions,
  - advanced mobility programs,
  - regional fare integration,
  - workforce development, and
  - regional capital enhancements (Park and Ride lots, etc.).
- Network development elements in Washtenaw County include:
  - commuter rail project,
  - Washtenaw BRT,
  - express bus, and
  - local bus enhancements.

Mr. Stupka explained that costs for commuter rail are assumed to be borne by the local funding source, such as a property tax millage, and the state. The project is not considered competitive for federal funding at this time.

Mr. Morgan thanked Mr. Stupka for his presentation. He noted that it will be important for WATS Committees to remain involved in the RTA master plan process in order to develop a plan that represents the needs of the community. He added that with a new representation at the federal level, there might be new opportunities for funding commuter rail infrastructure in the future, and it is important for Washtenaw County to be prepared with options.

Discussions ensued regarding the capital costs of commuter rail, BRT options versus

commuter rail, and the need to assess future job access needs with more people working from home. RTA representatives will be available for further discussion on this matter and the topic is deferred to the next meeting.

10. Adjournment

Chair Marl noted that a quorum is no longer present. The following agenda items will be deferred to the next meeting on February 17, 2021.

D. 2021 State of Good Repair for Rural Transit Targets

E. Bridge Performance Measures

F. FY 2021 First Quarter Financial Statements

Chair Marl adjourned the meeting at 11:00 am.