

BINGHAMTON METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY  
PLANNING COMMITTEE  
December 3, 2009  
MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Chair Luke Day at 10:00 AM.

ROLL CALL

Members present:

Luke Day, Chair, City of Binghamton

Pamela Eshbaugh, NYSDOT Region 9

Pat Brennan, Broome County Public Works

George Bagnetto, Broome County Public Transportation

Rita Petkash, Broome County Planning represented by Frank Evangelisti

Ken DelBianco, Tioga County Public Works

Phillip Krey, City of Binghamton Engineer

Kent Rapp, Village of Endicott Public Works

Robert Bennett, Village of Johnson City Public Works

Ed Gent, Town of Chenango Engineer

Gordon Kniffen, Town of Kirkwood represented by Richard Jones

Louis Caforio, Town of Union Public Works

Richard Biery, Northern Tier RPDC represented by Brian Baker

Advisory members present:

Stacy Merola, Broome County Environmental Management Council

Robert Augenstern, STERPDB

- Approval of minutes of September 3, 2009. Richard Jones offered a correction on the letting date for the Barlow Road culvert project. Moved Gent, second Bennett. Approved by consensus.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chair opened the floor for comment. None was offered.

ACTION ITEM: LONG RANGE PLAN 2035

Gayle briefed the Committee on the topic. He explained that federal law requires that the long range plan be updated no less frequently than five years; the current plan was adopted in September 2005, so it is now time to initiate the update. Because the current plan was such a major effort, and little has been implemented, it may not be necessary to do a major rewrite. He had met with the Program & Finance Subcommittee to discuss the magnitude of the update; there was general agreement that the only facet that should be significantly updated is a sustainability element. The Ithaca MPO has a final draft of their Plan, and has included a significant focus on sustainability and greenhouse gas emissions. Gayle noted that federal climate change legislation may require that we do this type of planning. He distributed the "first cut" goals and objectives for discussion, noting that the Sustainability section was new, the Mobility section reflected some sustainability issues, and the System Preservation and Safety sections were essentially the same as the current plan.

Discussion followed. Regarding issue of encouraging compact land use, Gayle indicated that Broome County may be doing a new comprehensive plan, which would be the preferred vehicle for addressing land use. GHG emissions will be addressed in greater part by clean

vehicle and fuel technology, but that BMTS can address vehicle miles of travel and improved system and vehicle operations that have a bigger impact in the short term. There was a suggestion that language in the objectives be modified from “invest in” to “encourage or promote”. Gayle pointed out that ultimately the Plan guides BMTS investment decisions.

Gayle briefed the Committee on the financial plan. Federal law requires that NYSDOT and the transit operator cooperate in the development of revenue forecasts. He met with George Bagnetto and agreed on a transit forecast. DOT had not provided anything specific. A methodology similar to the last Plan update was used to forecast highway revenue, based on historic trends, the current TIP, and the current regional allocations. There is general agreement that forecasting revenue over a 25 year period is entirely uncertain. Gayle presented two revenue scenarios, based on somewhat different growth assumptions. They differ by about \$100 million over the Plan period.

Pam Eshbaugh expressed concern that even the lower growth scenario was high, based on current revenue levels. It was generally agreed that there has to be an expectation of growth over 25 years at least equal to growth over the past 20.

Gayle proposed that the financial plan could present a “base case”, the more modest forecast; and a “growth case” under which the Plan can specify additional actions. The Committee agreed with that approach.

- Resolution 2009-08, Accepting the Draft Statement of Goals and Objectives for the 2035 Long Range Plan for public review. Moved Bagnetto, second Gent. Approved by consensus.
- Resolution 2009-09, Recommending Policy Committee approval of the Draft Financial Plan (as modified) for the 2035 Long Range Plan. Moved Bagnetto, second Gent. Approved by consensus.

#### ACTION ITEM: 2008-2012 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Gayle explained to the Committee that NYSDOT had requested two amendments to the TIP. Pam Eshbaugh presented the amendments. The first is NY38B over Crocker Creek; it was programmed as a rehabilitation at a construction cost of \$850,000, but has become a bridge replacement at a construction cost of \$4.5 million, project cost \$4.959 million. This will be funded with additional Federal Bridge money, Federal safety money, and State Dedicated Fund. The second amendment is for NY 434/Rano/Sycamore. Like all projects, only a small amount of right-of-way money was programmed, but ROW costs are now nearly \$900,000. Offsets for the funding increases come from projects outside the BMTS area, and from the Region’s paving block.

Gayle stated that the TIP Subcommittee agreed that the practice of using a small amount of money, typically \$13,000, as a ROW placeholder, was no longer acceptable. IPPs would now have to include a realistic cost estimate for ROW.

Ken DelBianco asked about using money from the paving block. Pam explained that the Region is forced to do far less paving.

- Resolution 2009-10, Amending the 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program. Moved DelBianco, second Brennan. Approved by consensus.

#### DISCUSSION ITEM: 2011-2015 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Gayle briefed the Committee on the following topics:

Congressional action: There remains no federal transportation authorization; in fact USDOT is running on a Continuing Resolution only until Dec. 18. Only positive news is discussion of a two year transportation bill as a jobs bill.

Allocations: NYSDOT Main Office last week provided FHWA allocations to the Regions, much later than promised. No FTA allocations yet. The allocations are substantially less than those provided previously, especially in NHS.

Commitments: Gayle reviewed status of projects on the current TIP that have not yet been let. He noted that both local sponsors and NYSDOT have been doing a poor job at delivering projects. Projects are routinely slipping as much as three years from programmed let date. This makes managing the program nearly impossible, as money needs to be found in the new year for letting. He distributed tables for each federal aid fund source showing all current project commitments, year of expected letting, and current cost estimate. In some cases, the funding requirements exceeds the total Regional allocation.

ARRA projects: Gayle noted that all ARRA projects have been obligated, most have been bid. Binghamton's Main St paving, and Johnson City's Arch St bridge repairs have been completed. The rest will be 2010 construction season.

Candidate projects: The TIP Subcommittee had authorized a call letter for candidate projects, even if it was unlikely that new projects could be programmed. Received 12 projects; all but one are bridge projects, indicating local governments are in line with NYSDOT by focusing on bridges as highest priority. Have not received any candidate IPPs from NYSDOT. Pam Eshbaugh indicated their candidate projects are included in their capital program printout.

Prospect Mountain: Gayle stated Jack Williams suggested that as the detour route analysis identifies problems and bottlenecks, they should be considered for programming. Eshbaugh agreed there was little if any funding flexibility to do so. It had already been suggested that Prospect St be reconstructed as part of the project because of the additional traffic load that would result from the new interchange. That had been rejected.

Staff will continue to work with NYSDOT and the TIP Subcommittee to develop a fiscally constrained Draft 2011-2015 TIP in time for public review prior to the March Planning Committee meeting.

#### DISCUSSION ITEM: 2010-2011 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

Gayle briefed the Committee. NYSDOT has not yet provided allocations to the MPOs for metropolitan planning funds. Unlike a multi-year program, where assumptions can be made, this program reflects the current federal fiscal year. Without Congressional action on an authorization or extension, this becomes problematic at best.

In response to the call letter, only the Town of Chenango had submitted a request. The UPWP will include substantial work on the long range plan. We are likely to initiate an update of the BMTS Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, which is 12 years old. This will likely be progressed as two separate plans, since it has become clear that needs of pedestrians and cyclists are very different.

#### DISCUSSION ITEM: STAFF BRIEFINGS

- ♦ Broome Tioga Greenride. Scott Reigle briefed the Committee. Greenride registrations have grown slowly. BMTS is doing more marketing, including displays on BC Transit buses and upcoming "sticky note" on the Sunday Dec 6 Press & Sun-Bulletin. Also working with major employers; Lourdes Hospital and UHS will both be kicking off employer portals to the Greenride website in January. Have a positive response from Binghamton University, will be back in touch about setting up an employer portal.

- ♦ BC Transit~OCC-T Consolidation. Jennifer Yonkoski briefed the Committee. The study is proceeding; OCC-T has not been very cooperative in providing information, but the BU administration is very interested in proceeding because of the extent to which they provide funding. Waiting for BC Transit to provide information including operating costs and peak load times on duplicated routes. Committed to having a report by end of year.
- ♦ BC Transit On-Board Survey. Jennifer provided this briefing as well. For the second time, the survey is being conducted by Binghamton University MPA graduate class. Surveys have all been completed, analysis will be presented soon, final report in January. This is very useful to Broome County Dept of Public Transportation, to know demographics and opinions of their customers. This survey will begin to provide time series information.
- ♦ Binghamton Southside Safety Assessment. Cyndi Paddick briefed the Committee. This is the second safety assessment that BMTS has completed. It covered Vestal Avenue from Mary to Pennsylvania. The assessment technique utilizes a multi-disciplinary team, including police, transit, and others. Having this kind of group actually walk the street and observe results in conclusions that would not come from an engineering perspective alone. Final report will be done soon. Often identifies low cost improvements like signs and pavement markings, signal adjustments. Gayle noted that we can accommodate two or three such assessments each year, and asked municipal representatives to submit locations for the 2010-2011 UPWP.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:25 AM.