

BINGHAMTON METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY  
PLANNING COMMITTEE  
September 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 represented by Len Raychel  
George Bagnetto, Broome County Public Transportation  
Elaine Jardine, Tioga County Planning  
Phillip Krey, City of Binghamton Engineer  
Robert Bennett, Village of Johnson City Public Works  
Ed Gent, Town of Chenango  
Debra Preston, Town of Conklin  
Ron Lake, Town of Dickinson  
Debra Standinger, Town of Owego  
Gordon Kniffen, Town of Kirkwood represented by Richard Jones  
Louis Caforio, Town of Union  
Gary Campo, Town of Vestal

Advisory members present:

Stacy Merola, Broome County Environmental Management Council  
Richard Beers, FHWA  
Steven Herz, Broome County Legislature

- Approval of minutes of September 3, 2009. Moved Gent, second Bagnetto. Approved by consensus.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

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

ACTION ITEM: 2008-2012 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Steven Gayle briefed the Committee. NYSDOT requested an amendment to add a new project to the Interstate Maintenance program. The project will fund only the engineering analysis related to the rehabilitation or replacement of 14 bridges (7 pairs) on I-81 south of Binghamton, between the city line and Five Mile Point. Pam Eshbaugh noted that the current TIP included a \$90 million for construction for this purpose in 2012, but that these funds were not really available. Further, because of the traffic volume, the engineering study would look not only at the bridges but also at the roadway work that might be required to ensure that all detours provide two travel lanes. Once the analysis is completed, NYSDOT can develop a logical sequence of projects that can be programmed on a future TIP.

There was no further discussion.

- Resolution 2009-07 Recommending Policy Committee approval of this amendment to the 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program. Moved Preston. Second Gent. Approved by consensus.

## DISCUSSION ITEMS: NYSDOT Capital Program update and TIP update

Steven Gayle provided a briefing on the State and Federal programs, using material he and Jack Williams presented to the BMTS Policy Committee on August 19. He noted the challenges and timing issues associated with the expiration of SAFETEA-LU on Sept 30 and the NYS Transportation Program on March 31, 2010. [The slide set is attached to the minutes.]

The update of the Transportation Improvement Program, having been postponed for one year, will be initiated around October 1. It appears that revenue projections will be flat, at least for the first two years of the program; and that it is likely that the TIP will again contract.

Gayle reviewed the status of all projects on the current TIP (as amended). There has been a poor job of project delivery, as projects, both state and local, continue to slip from one year to the next. This is a major contributor to cost increases resulting from inflation. Phil Krey provided schedule and cost updates for the City of Binghamton projects. It was noted that a cause of delay is the federal right-of-way process, even for temporary easements. The cost of ROW mapping and appraisal far exceeds the payment to the property owner for, as an example, an easement to work on the back of sidewalk line.

Gayle said staff will analyze the consequence of the reported cost and schedule changes. He asked Richard Beers whether FHWA will allow projects that move from FY2009 to FY2010 to carry existing funding with them, rather than require offsets. Mr. Beers will reply after checking.

Gayle restated the importance of rethinking project priorities in anticipation of the upcoming TIP update.

## DISCUSSION ITEM: SAFETEA-LU rescission

Gayle informed the Committee that when SAFETEA-LU was passed in 2005, it included language for a rescission at the end of the bill, which is now coming due. This was required for budget scoring reasons, and amounts to \$8.7 billion nationally. New York's share is approximately \$400 million. This requires the state to return unobligated funds, which are spread across FHWA core programs, including metropolitan planning. States are given little flexibility in applying the rescission.

There is broad advocacy for repeal, and there is some indication the Senate will include such language as part of a SAFETEA-LU extension bill.

## DISCUSSION ITEM: Status of ARRA projects

Cyndi Paddick reported on the status of the ARRA projects on the TIP.

- ♦ City of Binghamton: Main Street paving. Bids opened, award Sept 10. About \$200,000 under estimate
- ♦ Johnson City: Arch Street bridge. Bid opening Sept 10
- ♦ Broome County: Vestal-Endicott bridge painting. Low bid came in \$640,000 over engineer's estimate. Len Raychel reported that if additional funds cannot be found, will likely rebid for 2010 construction season

- ♦ Broome County: Vestal Rd paving. FHWA required “public interest finding” in relation to provision of project element by Town of Vestal. County has submitted finding to NYSDOT for relay to FHWA.
- ♦ Town of Kirkwood: Barlow Rd culvert. Bid opening week of Sept 21.
- ♦ Tioga County: Southside Drive bridge. Bids opened; County Legislature to award contract next week.
- ♦ Village of Endicott: Vestal Ave paving. No update available
- ♦ Town of Vestal: Mason Rd bridge. At design approval stage. Will not be bid until early 2010.
- ♦ Broome County Public Transportation: George Bagnetto reported on the ARRA Transit program funds (\$3.6 million for BC Transit, \$400,000 for rural paratransit). Broome County has obtained contract options from New Orleans Regional Transit Authority for purchase of BAE/Orion hybrids. At \$560,000 per bus, County will purchase 6, unless they can find some additional funds for a seventh.

**DISCUSSION ITEM: Long Range Plan Update**

Steven Gayle informed the Committee that the BMTS long range plan, *TRANSPORTATION TOMORROW 2030~Placemaking for Prosperity*, is due for the required five year update, with a Sept 2010 deadline. He will initiate discussions with the Planning and Policy Committee members in the coming months over the scope of the update. One approach is to do a minor update, given that the current plan was a major effort and conditions have not changed a great deal. What may drive a larger effort is the potential for the national focus on energy, climate change, and land use to translate into new legislated requirements for planning.

BMTS staff is currently reviewing the Draft 2009 State Energy Plan, which will have implications for our work. The proposed House bill for transportation reauthorization includes significant requirements for MPOs to address greenhouse gas emissions.

**BUSINESS OFFERED FROM THE FLOOR**

- Transit stop accessibility. Steven Gayle reported that BMTS employed a student intern through the summer to investigate and map the handicapped accessibility of all BC Transit bus stops. This has been completed and is available in BMTS’ GIS. George Bagnetto concurred that this is useful information. One criterion that can make a handicapped individual eligible to use BC Lift paratransit is the inability to access BC Transit because of barriers on the way to or at a bus stop. The cost of providing a ride on BC Lift far exceeds that of BC Transit. George reported they have had some success in transitioning riders to BC Transit. Gayle also proposed consideration for more bus stop shelters, based on this data. Bagnetto reported that the new program of dealing with vandalism and damage in partnership with municipalities was working. He would be receptive to an FTA funded purchase of shelters if money is available.
- Cyndi Paddick notified municipal members that it was time to submit IPPs for local traffic signal projects; and that they must be realistic about project schedules to avoid slippage as we have seen in the recent past.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 AM.