

Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System

Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2004

PRESENT:	Bill Reed, Chair	Sue Morse, BACTS
	John Perry, FHWA	Susan Lessard, Hampden
	Bob Osborne, Hampden	Stan Moses, Bangor
	Frank Higgins, Brewer	Linda Johns, Brewer
	Kate Weber, Bangor	Rob Kenerson, BACTS
	Don Cooper, BACTS	Jim Ring, Bangor
	John Lord, Old Town	Catherine Conlow, Orono
	Sarah Dubay, BACTS	

The Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System Policy Committee met Tuesday, January 20, 2003 at 9:30am in the EMDC Boardroom, One Cumberland Place, Bangor, Maine.

Bill Reed, Policy Committee Chair, called the meeting to order. Jim Ring made a motion to approve the November 18, 2003 Policy Committee meeting minutes. Kate Weber seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved unanimously. Introductions of the committee were made.

General Status Report

The BACTS staff will now be including a General Status Report in their mailings to the Policy Committee. The Status Report will comprise of a quick update on what the staff has been working on. Rob Kenerson reported that updating the Long Range Plan has been taking up to 75% of staff time. There was no discussion on the General Status Report.

Ratings Criteria

Jim Ring, Technical Committee Chair, led a discussion about the proposed project rating criteria that the Technical Committee has been rewriting over the past year. The Technical Committee looked at BACTS' past system and the rating systems of other MPOs to devise the new system. He thanked the Technical Committee for their hard work over the past year revising the rating criteria. Rob Kenerson reviewed significant changes to the criteria. They are as follows:

- A past weakness has been the scope of projects. The new set of criteria added a pre-screening process with the goal of submitting more quality projects to MDOT that have a regionally consistent perspective. It is also the plan of the Technical Committee to meet as group during the pre-screening process and view each municipality's submitted projects.
- Changes have been made to the project scoring process. Rob viewed how projects would be scored and the weighting given to the different factors.

A table was given to the committee showing how projects submitted for the last BTIP would score using the new criteria. John Perry asked if a comparison was made between the scoring using the old criteria versus the new criteria. Jim Ring commented that a comparison had been done and there was not a lot of difference. The new criteria seem to be a good tool – very balanced. However, the true test will be to see how it holds up during the scoring of the next set of BTIP projects.

Motion: Kate Weber made a motion to accept the new project rating criteria as written. Linda Johns seconded the motion. This motion was approved.

Discussion on the motion:

- If project rating criteria is accepted by the Policy Committee, it must be put out for a 45-day comment period
- Stan Moses asked if under the category of “new construction” whether or not there should be criteria for future development.
 - Rob Kenerson said that when this category was discussed, it was decided to use the trips model to determine projected volume as there is no other way to consider future development. This type of project would be rare and do not occur very often. If a new construction project did arise, it would probably not be funded through the BTIP.
 - Jim Ring said that it makes good sense to consider future needs and capacity for development. These types of projects are usually conditional and should dovetail development. New construction projects should be studied and planned for as future capacity would need to be considered.
- Rob Kenerson commented that it is important to remember that the Policy Committee has the final vote on projects. The list that is recommended by the Technical Committee according to the criteria will be finalized by the Policy Committee.
- Frank Higgins echoed Jim Ring’s statement about the hard work the Technical Committee has done on the rating criteria.
- Rob Kenerson told the committee that municipalities should have their projects ready to submit after the 45-day comment period.

Amendment to motion: John Lord made a motion that the Policy Committee give tentative approval on the project rating criteria and vote for final approval after the 45-day comment period. This motion was seconded by Kate Weber. The motion passed unanimously.

BTIP SCOPE CHANGES

- 1.) **Hampden:** “The Town of Hampden formally request that the scope of FY 2004-2006 BTIP project PIN 11577.00 be changed. The project on Route 1A in Hampden was scoped to begin at Wheeldon Heights and end at Route 9 with a shoulder widening and overlay. Due mainly to major utility issues, the Town would like to request that the project begin by matching the PIN 8593 project and going as far as MDOT determines that construction can go for the \$936,000 earmarked for this project. The new scope would be similar to the PIN 8593 project.”

Susan Lessard, town manager of Hampden, explained the basis for Hampden’s request. Significant sections of Route 1A in Hampden need new utilities. The impact of the current BTIP project is dramatic on the town of Hampden and their water district. The roadway and the utilities along the highway need more than a 10-12 year fix. Also, Hampden will pay for the installation of sidewalks and may also be able to come up with additional funds for the project.

Motion: John Lord made a motion to amend the scope of BTIP project PIN 11577.00 Jim Ring seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion on the motion:

- Stan Moses asked how far the re-scoped project will go. Susan Lessard replied that the new project would be from Wheeldon Heights to Daisy Lane.
- Jim Ring asked how much of the original scoped project is left. Susan answered that one-half of the project is left.
- Stan Moses asked where the amended project would start. Susan said that the new project would start back 500 feet from Wheeldon Heights – as decided by MDOT and the

town of Hampden – need to do this so the whole community would stay consistent utility-wise and sidewalk-wise. Also, Hampden feels it is important to fix this section of roadway properly due to safety concerns as Route 1A gets a great deal of heavy truck traffic.

- Stan Moses asked how the amended project would have scored as compared to other BTIP projects when the Policy Committee was deciding in December 2002. Jim Ring answered that Route 1A has been recognized as a high priority by the Policy Committee for quite some time, so even the amended project would have ranked very high.
- Frank Higgins asked about the timeframe of when the second half of the Route 1A project (the part that is not included in the amended project) would need to be reconstructed. Susan Lessard answered that in the first phase (Wheeldon Heights to Daisy Lane) the roadway would be reconstructed as soon as the new utilities are in place. In the second phase (Daisy Lane to Route 9), the town will do as much utility work as possible before the roadway is reconstructed – minimal paving will need to be done along this section and the installation of new utilities will not tear up any new paving. All utility installations will be completed in five years.
- Frank Higgins clarified if above question asking if the town of Hampden would be willing to assume the cost of the overlay on the second half of Route 1A until utility work is done? Susan Lessard answered that the town of Hampden understands the consequences of asking for a scope change. She obviously can not make a commitment for the town, but she can answer that the town will make the road passable and will contribute to the project as it is important to the town and is a council priority that the reconstruction of Route 1A is done right.

- 2.) **Brewer:** “The City of Brewer wishes to reallocate the current BTIP funding for PIN 11576.00 (Eastern Avenue Level 2 Resurfacing) in the amount of \$642,000 for the purpose of partially funding the continuation of the widening of Wilson Street to 5 lanes in the area between Bartlett Street and the Wal-Mart entrance. This project is expected to cost approximately \$1,200,000 and the City expects to fund the balance of \$558,000. The City will also fund improvements to Eastern Avenue in its FY05 CIP Budget consisting of the following: The area from State to Oak Grove to Pierce will be shimmed and overlaid. We feel that this change better addresses current regional needs and priorities given the limited available State and Federal funding.”

Frank Higgins, Brewer City Engineer, explained the basis for Brewer’s request. The City of Brewer is asking that monies from the Eastern Avenue project be reallocated to the widening of one-half mile of Wilson Street. Brewer is willing to assume the costs of reconstructing Eastern Avenue. Brewer expects that the improvements made to Eastern Avenue will last six to eight years and understands that they will not come back to BACTS for improvements on Eastern Avenue until that time period expires. The Wilson Street project is estimated at \$1.2 million, so the reallocation of monies from Eastern Avenue would fund approximately half of the project.

Stan Moses asked what the impact on traffic has been since the opening of Wal-Mart. Frank Higgins responded that counts have not been done yet, but Brewer has seen a dramatic increase in traffic. John Lord stated that he did not think this should be a “change of scope”, since it is more of a project substitution. Procedurally, he did not believe the Policy Committee had ever made such a substitution before – we have never taken money from one BTIP project to fund another project that was not in the BTIP. Any changes have been moved from one BTIP approved project to another BTIP approved project. John Lord stated he thought this was a perilous precedence to set. Frank Higgins answered that Bangor had made such a substitution a month ago. Staff retrieved previous minutes.

Motion: Linda Johns made a motion to reallocate funds per the City of Brewer's request. The motion was seconded by Stan Moses.

Discussion:

- Jim Ring stated that he understood Brewer's desire and reasoning but he questioned whether or not the traffic studies for Wal-Mart or Eastern Maine Healthcare had required five-lanes in that area. Frank Higgins answered that the studies had not required five lanes on Wilson Street, however there are other projects before the planning board but nothing that would trigger a traffic study or that would require the developer to construct the additional lane.
 - Rob Kenerson commented that sometimes you have background traffic that does not meet the state's permitting requirement for a traffic study, but it does increase traffic volume. John Lord agreed with this statement.
- A brief discussion about a proposed parallel service road and its intend purpose. Stan Moses asked if the study on the parallel service road showed that it would relieve traffic on Wilson Street. Frank Higgins answered that when permitting for the parallel service road it was studied as if there were five lanes along Wilson Street.
- Stan Moses asked where Brewer would find funding for all of the proposed projects. Frank Higgins answered that \$642,000 from the Eastern Avenue project would fund half of the Wilson Street widening and Brewer would pay for the other half. Brewer would pay for the resurfacing of Eastern Avenue (\$180,000-\$200,000). The funding for the parallel service road has been put out to bond.

Vote: The motion was called to a vote. Voting – 2 for (Linda Johns and Stan Moses) and 5 against (Jim Ring, John Lord, Bob Osborne, Bill Reed, Kate Weber).

- 3.) **Transit:** When the new service was instituted in Brewer, a new bus was purchased. The new bus was purchased at a lower cost than planned causing a surplus in capital funds. Don Cooper asked that the Policy Committee approve the transfer of the surplus capitals funds to operating costs. Stan Moses asked if we make this transfer does it imply that we do not need as much capital funds. Don Cooper answered that no, this money was from a full-matching grant.

Motion: Bob Osborne made a motion that \$15,875 be transferred from capital funds to operating funds. Kate Weber seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

New By-Laws

Rob Kenerson reviewed the necessary changes that will need to be made to the By-Laws and approved by the Policy Committee. There are three new changes: (1) Add four new communities – each new community is required to receive at least one vote on the Policy Committee and one vote on the technical committee (federal minimum); (2) Adding more modes to Technical Committee – Public Transit now currently exists, do we want to include freight; (3) Question of do we need the BACTS executive committee.

Discussion on new by-laws:

1. New communities:
 - Weighted system based on mileage and population factors – for every 6,000 people, you would receive 1 vote
 - Rob Kenerson believes that using recent population factors Bangor would receive four votes; Brewer, Old Town, and Orono would receive two votes; the rest of the communities would receive one vote.
 - He also feels that mileage would be about the same in each community, so that would not influence the number of votes per community.

2. Adding modes:
 - As there is a growing interest in freight at the national level, the Policy Committee supports adding a freight representative to the Technical Committee.
3. Executive Committee:
 - Can the executive committee be eliminated and various tasks be reassigned?

Action: Policy Committee requested that BACTS staff re-draft the by-laws for approval. Also, the Policy Committee would like BACTS staff to determine according to population and mileage how many votes each community would receive before deciding how the new communities will be allowed to vote.

Storm water Education Funding

Jim Ring explained the state's new storm water regulations and educational program for the Policy Committee. He is asking for BACTS to help fund the new Storm Water Education program the state is proposing. The estimated amount needed from the BACTS area is \$17,204. If the funding does not come from BACTS, the municipalities will have to pay locally. He explained that we would get statewide exposure for our investment and the municipalities involved would get a five-year credit for participating. John Lord inquired where the money to fund this program would come from in the BACTS budget. Rob Kenerson handed out FY04-05 UPWP BACTS Budget. John Lord also asked why BACTS was being asked to fund this program. Jim Ring answered that the municipalities would have to fund the program at the local level, however if BACTS pays then 80% would come from the federal government. Some committee members commented if it would be possible to pay only a percentage as transportation is not the only cause of storm water pollution. The Policy Committee has two months to decide if they would like to be part of the state program, the members decided to return to this issue at the next meeting.

Truck Weight

Rob Kenerson wrote a BACTS resolve to support increasing the truck weight limit on I-95 and needs Policy Committee approval to officially adopt the document. Also, he will present the resolve at the next EMDC Board meeting and ask them to support this resolve also.

Motion: John Lord made a motion to approve the resolve as written. The motion was seconded by Jim Ring and passed unanimously.

EMDC/BACTS Contract

Motion: John Lord made motion to renew the EMDC/BACTS Contract. Kate Weber seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

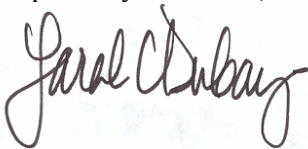
Director's Review/Contract

Motion: John Lord made a motion that the Policy Committee move into Executive Session to discuss the matter. The motion was seconded by Bill Reed and passed unanimously.

There was no discussion on the matter during the Executive Session due to lack of quorum.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Sarah Dubay

BACTS, Administrative Assistant