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## WASHTENAW AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

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### MINUTES OF MEETING

#### POLICY COMMITTEE

DATE: March 18, 2009

TIME: 9:30 a.m.

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

Members Present: Village of Dexter – Jim Carson, Vice-Chair  
WCRC- Doug Fuller  
Pittsfield Township – Mandy Grewal  
SWWCOG – Ron Mann  
Ann Arbor Township – Mike Moran  
AATA – Jesse Bernstein  
City of Chelsea – Jason Lindauer (for Ann Feeney)  
MDOT Statewide Planning – Pam Boyd  
Scio Township – Thomas Hanson  
WCBC– Wes Prater  
U of M – Hank Baier  
Ypsilanti Township – Brenda Stumbo  
City of Ypsilanti – Bill Nickels  
Superior Township – Bill McFarlane  
City of Ann Arbor – Carsten Hohnke

Members Absent: City of Saline – Gretchen Driskell, Chair  
Dexter Township/WCPAB – Pat Kelly, Secretary-Treasurer  
Northfield Township – Deb Mozurkewich  
EMU – John Donnegan

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

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#### 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  
Pittsfield Township – Barb Fuller

1. Call to Order

Vice-Chair Carson called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. He asked those present to introduce themselves.

2. Public Participation

Vice-Chair Carson asked if any members of the public wished to address the Committee. Mr. Tom Partridge of Scio Township addressed the Committee offering the following comments.

Mr. Partridge is a Democrat from Scio Township who advocates for County and Regional Public Transportation. Mr. Partridge works with groups such as WATS, the AATA, Scio Township, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners and newly elected Representative Mark Schauer to call to the attention the need to amend budgets, WATS plans, reviews, and coordinates. To his knowledge there has not been money allocated for AATA to expand to a Countywide Authority.

Mr. Partridge added that AATA Commissioned a \$70,000 study by the Rossman Consulting firm which included surveys of the area about transforming AATA to a Countywide Authority and voting for tax revenues to support an expanded system.

Mr. Partridge stated that the results of the surveys are at the AATA offices on S. Industrial Highway. He added that the AATA board meets the third Wednesday of each month and that the board, under the leadership of Mr. Nacht has endorsed the concept of transforming AATA to a Countywide Authority.

Mr. Partridge asked for the Committee's support in bringing a countywide public transportation system to fruition as soon as possible.

3. Approval of the February 18, 2009 Policy Committee Minutes

Mr. Prater made a motion to approve the February 18, 2009 Policy Committee minutes. Mr. Mann supported the motion and the minutes were approved as submitted.

4. Communications and Announcements

Ms. Blackmore reported that WATS met with MDOT University Region Staff on February 23<sup>rd</sup> about involving WATS and locals more in the MDOT project selection process. Ms. Blackmore stated that the meeting went well and that MDOT has agreed to request WATS Committees' comments on future MDOT project selection.

Ms. Blackmore stated that MDOT is moving forward with using 70% of the Stimulus funds to match the Act 51 distributions but has agreed to fund projects within each of the Urban Areas. MDOT has proposed two projects on I-94 from Freer to the West County Line and from Parker to Freer. Additionally, MDOT is using 5% of the Stimulus funding allocated to the Ann Arbor Urbanized area and will spend it on improvements to the Belleville and Haggerty ramps at I-94.

Ms. Blackmore reported that based on newly established rules, the Technical Committee made several revisions to the Stimulus list for Washtenaw County which will be discussed and voted on by the Policy Committee later in the meeting. The Technical Committee is suggesting that projects be capped to ensure each agency their full share of the stimulus funding. Ms. Blackmore added that there is 1.5 billion dollars in a discretionary fund administered by the United States Secretary of Transportation. She stated that when more information becomes available about those funds notification will be provided to the Committees.

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

1. Upcoming meetings
  2. FY 2007 and FY 2008 Audit
  3. Updated Stimulus List for Transit Projects
5. Approval of Bills over \$500

Ms. Blackmore reported that there was one bill over \$500 for \$1007.50 for Julie Nixon who upgraded the Agency's website. Ms. Blackmore noted that the new website is up and requested that any suggested recommendations or comments be provided to her.

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

6. Report on WATS Activities

Ms. Blackmore reported that WATS has requested 2009 Highway Performance Monitoring System counts from local agencies. 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. Blackmore stated that the Committee would be acting on a FY 2009 UWP amendment to allow this purchase later in the meeting.

Ms. Blackmore reported that WATS reviewed a Freedom Township Master Plan and has submitted the comments to the Planning Advisory Board.

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 all financial estimates from SEMCOG. Once those numbers are made available, agencies will receive packets with the deficiencies as well as revenue budgets to use in order to program Long Range Plan projects. Ms. Blackmore stated that the Long Range Plan is behind schedule because of delays in WATS receiving financial estimates. However, the six types of deficiencies that WATS defines are available in both list and map format on the

Agency's updated website. Ms. Blackmore stated that in June and July WATS will be having Long Range Plan meetings to discuss the Draft Plan. Ms. Blackmore stated that WATS holds meeting at various times throughout the day all across the County for both local Governments and interested residential and community groups. She stated that in general, the meetings will be held from 2-4pm or 6-8pm. Ms. Blackmore asked that those members interested in having WATS come to present information on the Long Range Plan contact Mr. Sapkiewicz.

7. Old Business

A. FY 2010 and FY 2011 Safety Prioritization – Action

Mr. Bombery reported that several additional Safety project applications came into WATS after the Policy Committee approved the list at the February meeting but prior to the SEMCOG deadline. Due to a new mandate, the WCRC must upgrade signs to a new retro-reflective standard. For FY 2011, the WCRC proposed sign improvements on Carpenter, North Territorial, Jackson and Old-US-12 Roads. Mr. Bombery reported that the Technical Committee recommends prioritizing the projects according to cost/benefit ratio.

Mr. Fuller made a motion to prioritize the Safety projects by cost/benefit ratio as recommended by the Technical Committee. Mr. Lindauer supported and the motion passed.

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

Ms. Blackmore reported that rules changes regarding the amount and timing of the Stimulus funds resulted in the list of Stimulus projects being changed. Ms. Blackmore reported that FHWA and MDOT agreed to allow WATS to program two times the 2008 allocation of STPU dollars for stimulus funding. This amount was slightly more than the 6.45 million dollars figure provided by MDOT to WATS for the initial prioritization. As a result the Technical Committee created; List A, which shows projects that will be funded with available stimulus funds, List B which shows projects that may be funded following the redistribution of funds from States unable to spend the first 50% of their Stimulus funding within 120 days. Ms. Blackmore noted that in addition to List A and List B there was an unfunded list that would be used if more funding becomes available. Ms. Blackmore also stated that the Technical Committee is recommending each project be capped to ensure each agency receives its fair share of stimulus funding.

Ms. Blackmore also informed the Committee that a change might be needed to move the Rural money that has been flexed to Transit to another project and replace the Transit funding from another source as there is a chance that rural money flexed to a transit agency may be lost.

Ms. Stumbo inquired as to how to bring a project forward for inclusion in the unfunded list. She wished to add Tuttle Hill from Textile to Huron River Drive to the unfunded list. Ms. Grewal asked what the proper protocol was for adding a project to the unfunded list. Mr. Puuri responded that the best time for Townships to convey their needs to the Road Commission is when the Road Commission solicits input from them in June.

Mr. Palombo stated that if the money can't be spent on a project by March of 2010, it doesn't matter which list it is on because the funding will no longer be available because all local stimulus funding must be obligated by March of 2010.

Ms. Blackmore reported that in addition to the changes in road improvement stimulus projects, the transit list has also changed. Funding levels for transit from the stimulus are less than initially expected and as a result the AATA bus pullout and Corridor feasibility study have been removed from the transit stimulus list.

Ms. Blackmore stated that the change in Stimulus projects necessitated a change in the Urban, Rural, and TEDF-D programs which also need to be approved. Ms. Blackmore discussed the changes to each of the programs.

Ms. Boyd made a motion to approve the Technical Committee's recommendation on Stimulus list A and Stimulus list B as well as the unfunded list with the addition of Tuttle Hill from Textile to Huron River Drive and to approve the changes to the Urban, Rural and TEDF-D programs and to cap the stimulus projects to ensure each agency's fair share of stimulus funding. Mr. Lindauer supported and the motion passed.

Ms. Blackmore added that WATS committees would continue to evaluate the STP programs several times per year, and when reauthorization occurs may initiate a call for new projects.

8. New Business

A. FY 2010 Unified Work Program - Action

Ms. Blackmore stated that the UWP was distributed at the previous meeting. She stated that the UWP lists the planning activities of both WATS and AATA and lists what tasks the agency will be undertaking during FY 2010. Ms. Blackmore stated that this document allows the local dollars to be matched with federal dollars to fund planning activities, meetings, documents and everything listed within the UWP itself. Ms. Boyd added that the UWP is a federal requirement. Mr. Mann made a motion to approve the FY 2010 UWP. Ms. Boyd supported and the motion passed.

B. FY 2007 and FY 2008 Audits - Action

Ms. Blackmore reported that the FY 2007 and 2008 audits are complete and that the Statement of Condition, a Financial Statement and letter from the Auditor were included in information provided to Committee members at their place. She also stated that the audit will be available on the WATS website.

Mr. Baier asked what the short term investments included. Ms. Blackmore stated that they were all FDIC insured Certificates of Deposit.

Mr. Martin asked why the accounting firm was from Livingston County and not from Washtenaw. Ms. Blackmore responded that due to the details involved in an agency such as WATS and the minimal dollars available for an audit that there were very few firms willing to perform the audit.

Mr. Nickels made a motion to approve the Audit. Mr. McFarlane supported and the motion passed.

C. FY 2009 Unified Work Program Amendment - Action

Ms. Blackmore stated that in order to allow STP dollars to be spent to purchase replacement traffic counters for local agencies, the project and funding must be added to the current WATS UWP.

Mr. Fuller asked from whom the traffic counters would be purchased. Ms. Blackmore stated that because the project uses federal funds, the project will be bid out. Ms. Blackmore added that the local share of the cost will be paid by the local agencies that receive the counters.

Mr. Fuller made a motion to approve the WATS FY 2009 UWP amendment. Ms. Boyd supported and the motion passed.

9. Agency Reports

A. City of Ann Arbor

Mr. Hohnke reported that the Ann Arbor Planning Commission voted unanimously to approve the City's Transportation Plan update with three changes. Mr. Hohnke added that comments from WATS were considered and several revisions were made to the plan document.

B. AATA

Mr. Bernstein stated that the AATA board has narrowed the field of candidates to fill the Executive Director position to two. An open meeting will be held to interview the final two candidates on Thursday, March 26. Mr. Bernstein stated that the AATA is learning a lot about the ramifications and intricacies of reorganizing as a countywide service provider.

Mr. Bernstein stated that the Ann Arbor DDA is assisting in funding an expansion of Zip cars in the City. Mr. Bernstein explained that zip cars are vehicles that can be rented by the hour. The program has been successful for the University of Michigan and this will guarantee four zip cars in the downtown area.

C. Ann Arbor Township

Mr. Moran reported that the Township prevailed in a lawsuit by Dominoes Farms over a 32 acre commercial development near US-23 and Plymouth. Mr. Moran stated that the Township is expecting an appeal to the decision. Mr. Moran added that there is some uncertainty over

the ownership of a parcel of land needed for the new AATA Park and Ride lot at Plymouth and US-23 but that it appears the project will continue on schedule.

D. City of Chelsea

Ms. Lindauer had nothing to report.

E. Dexter Village

Mr. Carson reported that the Main St. Bridge project will soon pick up where it left off and that the WCRC estimates about two more months of work on the project.

F. Dexter Township

A representative was not present.

G. Eastern Michigan University

A representative was not present.

H. FHWA

A representative was not present.

I. Northfield Township

A representative was not present.

J. Pittsfield Township

Ms. Grewal asked that the Committee convene a task force to discuss the use of Federal Funds for Environmental Assessments, Preliminary Engineering and to discuss whether or not the 10% of allocated funds which is to be spent on non-motorized improvements should be a set aside.

Mr. Prater noted that it was important to keep this task force separate from the by-laws task force that will also be convened in May.

K. MDOT Planning

Ms. Boyd reminded the Committee that despite all the work that has gone into the Stimulus program, the law itself is only a month old and is being carried out in addition to regular workload. She stated that Local Agency Programs is requesting that all project applications be submitted to their office by December of 2009 to ensure they get processed on schedule. Ms. Boyd stated that a CMAQ call for projects went out in February and that it appears that funding levels for the CMAQ program will not be impacted in 2010.

Ms. Boyd reported on two additional requirements for stimulus projects, each project will need to be certified by the Governor's Office as well as be listed on the website [www.recovery.org](http://www.recovery.org).

Ms. Boyd also reported on several staff changes at MDOT, including several senior officials. She reported that the MDOT 5 year plan, which is a list of committed projects is available on the MDOT website.

L. MDOT Region/TSC

Ms. Martin stated that she would bring information to the next meeting about MDOT's call for projects.

M. City of Saline

A representative was not present.

N. SWWCOG

Mr. Mann had nothing to report.

O. SEMCOG

Mr. Palombo stated that local agencies will be receiving an email later today from SEMCOG urging them to contact their congressional representatives and let them know how important it is to appropriate the funds from the stimulus package to projects that have gone through the planning process and are ready to build. Mr. Palombo added that work continues to progress on the Ann Arbor to Detroit Rail project and that a recent meeting with Canadian National railway was favorable. Mr. Palombo stated that project coordinators are still hoping for an October 2010 start to the service.

Mr. Palombo added that SEMCOG has selected a firm to come help make the rail project a reality adding that the firm has a history of seeing projects through to fruition.

P. Scio Township

Mr. Hanson had nothing to report.

Q. Superior Township

Mr. McFarlane had nothing to report.

R. University of Michigan

Mr. Baier had nothing to report.

S. County Board of Commissioners

Mr. Prater stated that the County Board is looking at the 2010 budget in terms of mandated and un-mandated services and will look at prioritizing each of them separately.

T. WCRC

Mr. Puuri stated that the Road Commission is about 75% complete with its Township meetings to discuss potential projects. He added that the winter maintenance costs have come back in line with estimates following several months in which the costs far exceeded the expectations. Mr. Puuri added that there is still approximately 1.5 million dollars for County Road resurfacing that does not have specific limits yet.

Mr. Puuri stated that the Road Commission is moving towards an asset management approach for not just roads and bridges but signs, vehicles and buildings as well. The WCRC has performed data collection on most of the local road system including all of the subdivision roads and anticipates completing that dataset this year.

Mr. Fuller added that an MDOT official explained to him the dire financial situation with MDOT and mentioned that if funding levels do not increase, the Road Commission may receive instruction to not plow some MDOT roads, such as M-52, unless there is six inches of snow. Mr. Fuller encouraged everyone to contact the state legislature to reiterate the need for increased funding for transportation.

U. Ypsilanti Township

Ms. Stumbo had nothing to report.

V. City of Ypsilanti

Mr. Nickels had nothing to report.

10. Adjournment

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