

MINUTES  
BAY-LAKE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
TECHNICAL AND POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEES JOINT MEETING  
FOR SHEBOYGAN MPO  
October 26, 2023  
(In-Person and Virtual)

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Vernon Koch, Policy Advisory Committee Chairperson, Presiding

Policy Advisory Committee:

- Tom Holtan for Daniel Hein (Town of Sheboygan)
- Charles Born (Town of Lima)
- George Marthenze (Town of Herman)
- Heather Cleaveland (Transit Committee)

Technical Advisory Committee:

- David Biebel (City of Sheboygan Department of Public Works)
- Janet Duellman (City of Sheboygan)
- Aaron Brault (Sheboygan County Planning and Conservation Department)
- Mike Kitzerow (Village of Kohler)
- Jerry Benzschawel (City of Sheboygan Falls Department of Public Works)
- Nick Weber for Tom Buchholz (WisDOT Northeast Region, Green Bay)
- Karl Buck (FHWA)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

- Emily Stewert (Sheboygan County, Department of Transportation)
- Derek Muench (Shoreline Metro)
- David Smith (Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Advocate)

OTHERS PRESENT:

- Nathaniel Darling
- Edward Procek

STAFF PRESENT:

Heena Bhatt (Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission)

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Policy Advisory Committee Chairperson Vernon Koch.

Members of both committees and staff introduced themselves for the benefit of everyone participating in the meeting.

Members of both committees and staff participating in the meeting noted committee members who had asked to be excused from the meeting.

2. The meeting Agenda for the October 26, 2023, joint Technical Advisory Committee/Policy Advisory Committee meeting was approved.

**Moved** by David Biebel and seconded by Aaron Brault

3. The Draft meeting minutes for September 7, 2023, joint Technical Advisory Committee/Policy Advisory Committee meeting was approved.

**Moved** by Aaron Brault and seconded by David Biebel

4. Policy Advisory Committee Chairperson Vernon Koch asked if there was any public input.

There were two members of the public present, Nathaniel Darling provided a few comments on the 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as follows:

Mr. Darling thanked the members of the committee for the opportunity to provide comments on the TIP. Mr. Darling had a few recommendations on a few upcoming projects. First, the Taylor Drive project reconstruction from Union Ave to Erie Avenue, Mr. Darling was wondering if there is any plan on adding a bike lane, currently the bike path leads bicyclists to go through the festival foods parking lot as well as other business's. Mr. Darling wants the infrastructure to be safe for the people who would be biking while towing their kids behind their bikes. Current infrastructure is not feasible for younger kids and individuals towing their kids on bike and once we shift to this mindset it would encourage a lot of families to use the infrastructure.

Mr. Darling also wanted to know the timeline of the Regional Bike and Ped plan (Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan for Sheboygan MPO). There is a disconnect on current infrastructure, as an example on Erie Avenue there are some segments missing which disconnects the current bike infrastructure.

To reply to a few comments, Heena Bhatt mentioned that the MPO has initiated working on a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan for the Sheboygan MPA, the timeline has pushed back due to the shortage of staff, however the plan is scheduled to be completed by end of 2024. The MPO is helping the City of Sheboygan in its efforts to adopt the Complete Streets Policy as well as a Safety Action Plan through federal discretionary funding of Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant.

David Bible mentioned that FHWA will announce the announce the results of SS4A grant in a few weeks.

Aaron Brault mentioned that the County looked into adding a bike lane on Taylor Drive when they were building a trail along Taylor Drive, multiple factors were considered however, it turned out to be cost prohibitive.

5. Members of both committees reviewed Draft *Sheboygan Metropolitan Planning Area Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): Calendar Years 2024 – 2027*.

Heena Bhatt presented and reviewed 2024 – 2027 TIP on the shared screen and went through the different elements and Project in the TIP.

There were a few discussion points while going through the various tables of the TIP. Regarding Table 5: Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects, the swing bridge project over Sheboygan River is scheduled for construction in 2027. David Biebel mentioned that the Request for Proposal is coming out shortly for the design of the bridge and a consultant will be selected in a few weeks.

In terms of Table 6: the Street and Highway Improvement Projects, regarding Fond du Lac Ave from Main Street to Oak Street, the design is planned to be completed in 2025 and the City is applying for STBG funding for the construction of the project. Charles Born mentioned that there is a discussion going on regarding weather to have a round about or a three way stop. They have many pedestrians walking through there and the city wants to make the intersection safer for pedestrian crossing. Jerry Benzschawel commented that when they held public informational meeting there was a lot of push back from the public for the round about so the city decided to add a 3 way stop and monitor the intersection. The city is also in the process of doing a traffic study and will share the results of the study with the committee.

Heather Cleaveland asked if the illustrative Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects were eligible for Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funding. Heena Bhatt mentioned that CRP funds are eligible for a variety of projects as well as capital projects (electric garbage trucks or busses etc.). Karl Buck mentioned that the Bike lanes/bike paths would be eligible for CRP funding. Heena Bhatt mentioned she will reach out to the local communities and counties for potential project application for the next cycle.

As a part of the public hearing Edward Procek mentioned that it is very helpful for the citizens to see the cost involved in road construction and maintenance and realize the financial impact of road work.

Mr Procek strongly suggests Amtrack or the agency working on the expansion of rail services in Wisconsin, should seriously consider the ability to share existing freight rail lines and passenger service north from Milwaukee, along the Lake Michigan shoreline, throughout Sheboygan continuing north into Green Bay, Door County, and the Upper Peninsula.

Mr. Procek also suggests adding an exit only ramp off of I-43 near the Art Preserve of John Michael Kohler. He understands that there might not be enough space for an entrance ramp there at this point. He advocated that this ramp might provide a positive economic impact due to direct access to the Blue Harbor Resort, the Sheboygan Riverfront, and along Indiana Ave to the east. It may also provide better access to the Kohler Company's many amenities to the west. It may also prove beneficial to the City of Sheboygan Falls.

In terms of Bike and Ped Projects Mr. Procek discussed illustrative Bike/Ped project, Union Pacific Railway path from Pennsylvania Ave Union Avenue, Mr. Procek suggested joining Mead Ave with the existing sidewalk. This extension would help bicyclists and pedestrians go off-road and not have a need to cross over South Business Drive to proceed.

David Biebel commented on highway 23 intersection with county highway TT, the current planning includes a J turn, however the committee in the past have advocated that there is a need of full interchange instead of a J turn due to various reasons. Carles Born agreed to the comment, however, he mentioned having a full interchange would push the project back for many year due to various elements and expensive funding involved.

Heena Bhatt also went through the written comments that were received for the TIP. One of them was from the member present in the meeting, Nathaniel Darling. Ms. Heena also mentioned a few comments received for Conformity Assessment for the 2050 Sheboygan Area Transportation Plan and 2024-2027 TIP from Federal Highway Administration and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

**Moved** by Charles Born and seconded by Aaron Brault that both committees recommend the approval of the *Sheboygan Metropolitan Planning Area Transportation Improvement Program: Calendar Years 2024 – 2027*.

6. Members of both committees reviewed the *2024 Sheboygan Metropolitan Planning Area Transportation Planning Work Program*.

Heena Bhatt presented the 2024 Work Program and went through the various work elements and budget for 2024. The work program was discussed in a meeting with WisDOT and FHWA on September 9<sup>th</sup>. There were no questions or comments from members of either committee regarding the 2024 Work Program.

**Moved** by Aaron Brault and seconded by Mike Kitzerow, that both committees recommend approval of the *2024 Sheboygan Metropolitan Planning Area Transportation Planning Work Program*.

7. Heena Bhatt presented and briefly reviewed the *Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) 2024 Performance Targets* for the Sheboygan Metropolitan Planning Area.

Heena Bhatt stated that the Sheboygan Metropolitan Planning Area continues to be below statewide averages for four of the five performance measures (the exception being average annual non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries), so MPO staff is recommending support of WisDOT's safety performance targets for 2024.

Charles Born mentioned that non- motorized fatalities usually involve motorized people. Aaron Brault asked if the MPO staff has looked into the reason for the non-motorized crashes. Ms. Bhatt mentioned that the reasons for crashes would be a part of the Performance Indicators report that would be discussed in January. Mr. Brault stated that he read over 60% of the non-motorized crashes in the county involved bad weather and alcohol related issues. It is not necessary that the reason is unsafe infrastructure. There was no further discussion by the members of the committee.

**Moved** by Aaron Brault and seconded by Charles Born, both committees recommend approval of the *Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) 2024 Performance Targets*.

8. Nick Weber gave an update on the available funding opportunities and deadlines including TAP and STP and Local bridges. He also mentioned the statewide 2050 Active Transportation Plan is on track for completion for 2024.

Heena Bhatt gave an update on the MPO activities and mentioned that they the annual WisDOT/MPO/RPC conference in the second week of October. The evaluation committee met and selected Toole Design for the Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress Analysis for the Sheboygan MPA and Bay-Lake RPC signed a contract with Toole Design. The Analysis is estimated to be completed in March 2024.

MPO staff attended a conformity workgroup meeting and discussed the Conformity analysis for the 2024-2027 TIP, the commission received conformity determination letter from USDOT, FHWA and FTA.

The deadline for CMAQ project was September 1<sup>st</sup> and there were no applications received from Sheboygan region. The deadline for TAP is on October 27<sup>th</sup> and there have not been any applications for TAP either. Ms. Bhatt highly encourages the committee members to look into potential projects applications for the next cycle of TAP, CMAQ and CRP.

Ms. Bhatt also mentioned their efforts to hire another staff to help out with the MPO activities, they have been conducting interviews and there have been a couple interviews lined up for next week.

9. Next meeting date is December 7, 2023 at 1:00 pm.
10. **Moved** by George Marthenez and seconded by Aaron Brault that the joint meeting of the Sheboygan MPO Technical and Policy Advisory Committees be adjourned. Motion carried, with all voting aye on a voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 2:22 p.m.

Recording secretary,

Heena Bhatt