

MINUTES
MICHIGAN STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING
June 29, 2006
Lansing, Michigan

Meeting noticed in accordance with Open Meetings Act, Public Act 267 of 1976.

Present: Ted Wahby, Chairman
Linda Miller Atkinson, Vice Chairwoman
James R. Rosendall, Commissioner
Maureen Miller Brosnan, Commissioner
James S. Scalici, Commissioner

Also Present: Kirk Steudle, Director
Jackie Shinn, Chief Deputy Director
Frank E. Kelley, Commission Advisor
Marneta Griffin, Executive Assistant
Jerry Jones, Commission Auditor
Patrick Isom, Attorney General, Transportation Division
John Friend, Bureau Director, Highway Delivery
John Polasek, Bureau Director, Highway Development
Myron Frierson, Finance and Administration
Bill Shreck, Director, Office of Communications
Susan Mortel, Bureau Director, Transportation Planning
Tim Hoeffner, Administrator, Intermodal Policy
Ronald DeCook, Director, Office of Governmental Affairs
Rob Abent, Bureau Director, Aeronautics
Greg Johnson, Metro Region Engineer

Excused: Vincent J. Brennan, Commissioner

A list of those people who attended the meeting is attached to the official minutes.

Chairman Wahby called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the MDOT Bureau of Aeronautics Auditorium in Lansing, Michigan.

I. **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

Commission Minutes

Chairman entertained a motion for approval of the minutes of the State Transportation Commission meeting of May 25, 2006.

Moved by Commissioner Brosnan, with support from Commissioner Atkinson, to approve the minutes of the Commission meeting of May 25, 2006. Motion carried.

Chairman Wahby, on behalf of the Macomb County Board of Commissioners, presented Greg Johnson, Metro Region Engineer, with an unsolicited Resolution honoring Mr. Johnson for his progressive leadership and commitment to a network of non-motorized transportation routes in Macomb County.

II. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT – DIRECTOR STEUDLE**

Director Steudle's report focused on:

50th Anniversary of the Interstate System

Today, June 29, 2006, marks the 50th Anniversary (1956) of the signing by President Dwight D. Eisenhower of the Interstate Bill.

While we are celebrating the 50th Anniversary, Michigan actually completed construction on its portion (1,241 miles) 36 years after the system was designated in 1956. However, if you add on the 14 year head start we had prior to the creation of the interstate system, then the total construction time was 50 years. In its heyday, Michigan was opening one mile of Interstate freeway per day during the construction season. So rapid was the rollout from the late 50s to early 70s that a new state map was often issued twice a year rather than the current rate of once every two years.

Former MDOT Director, John P. Woodford, at one point commented that "There was an air of excitement and expectation running all through the Department. Engineers like to build things, and here we had the opportunity and challenge of building highways on a bigger scale than we had ever known."

Much of the Interstate system and other Michigan highways follow the original Native American trails through Michigan. The map of Michigan's Native American Trails is featured along with an Interstate highway map in a display at the Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing.

1956: Superhighways were financed through a newly established highway trust fund supported mainly by a three-cent-a-gallon federal tax on gasoline.

1957: Opened on August 1st. Michigan's first funded Interstate freeway was a four-mile stretch of what was known as the Brighton-Farmington Expressway – old US-16; extended from US-23 to the east Livingston County line.

1960: Early I-75 nears the Mackinac Bridge, Saginaw and Flint; I-94 becomes the nation's longest continuous stretch of Interstate freeway open to traffic.

1961: All 189 miles of I-96 and I-196 from Detroit to Muskegon open to traffic or under contract.

1963: By the end of 1963, the state had opened nearly 500 miles of Interstate; early I-75 between Sault St. Marie and the Mackinac Bridge, and south of Flint; the beginning of construction of I-196 freeway, connecting I-96 with I-94 between Grand Rapids and St. Joseph.

1964: Last of the construction on I-75 between Grayling and Bay City.

1971: The completion of I-496 through Lansing; sections of I-196 between I-96 near Grand Rapids and I-94 near St. Joseph were constructed.

1973: Michigan's longest highway, the 395-mile I-75, is completed with the opening of the final 28-mile section east of Houghton Lake. The Interstate extends unbroken from the Ohio border near Monroe north to the Canadian border at Sault Ste. Marie.

1974: I-275 and I-96 are under construction. Portions of I-69 are opened from the Indiana border north to Flint.

1975: I-196 is completed between I-96 near Grand Rapids and I-94 near St. Joseph.

1977: A 12-mile section of I-96 extending east from Southfield Freeway in Detroit is opened to traffic, completing the 193-mile freeway connecting Muskegon and the Ambassador Bridge in Detroit. I-275 and I-696 are under construction.

1980s: I-696 and I-275 are completed in Detroit.

1990: I-69 now includes portions east of Lansing and between Flint and Port Huron. The last section of I-69 is under construction between Charlotte and Lansing.

1992: Four miles of I-69 are opened west of Lansing, completing the 203-mile freeway from the Indiana border north and east to the Blue Water Bridge at Port Huron. The opening of I-69 completes Michigan's 1,241-mile Interstate system after 36 years of construction.

Michigan led the nation in the 1960s in building its share of the 41,000-mile nationwide system. The Interstate freeways have had a profound effect on the nation. They have altered the landscape, influenced industrial and urban planning, living patterns and commercial development. The Interstate system in Michigan cost \$4 billion to build. That does not include the Mackinac and International bridges.

Although Michigan has completed its portion of the Interstate system as it was originally envisioned, new links on the system have been proposed, and may someday be constructed. MDOT is dedicated to maintaining the existing system, rebuilding when necessary, expanding capacity when warranted, and developing the tools to actively manage the daily traffic (ITS) so that the system can continue to serve the transportation needs of the state and the nation.

MDOT and FHWA partnered to set up a 50th Anniversary of the Interstate Display for viewing at the Capitol and the Michigan Library and Historical Museum. MDOT created the Michigan Interstate System display and FHWA had a national display. MDOT is also taking their display to the UP State Fair and partnering with Oakland County in having a display at the Woodward Avenue "Dream Cruise". AASHTO organized a convoy to follow the route President Eisenhower drove from California to Washington, DC. MDOT was proud to join the convoy with a snow plow for one day – Monday, June 26. We were able to drive in three states - from Tinsley Park, Illinois, to an event in South Bend, Indiana at the Studebaker Museum (this vehicle holds the transcontinental record of 77 hrs and 40 minutes, 3,302 miles, from New York to San Francisco) and continuing to Akron, Ohio for a media event at the Firestone Headquarters. Merrill Eisenhower Atwater, great-grandson of Dwight D Eisenhower, and Andrew Firestone, great-grandson of Harvey Firestone attended this event.

An I-50 Michigan license plate was presented to John Horsley, AASHTO Executive Director, by MDOT. License plates along the route are being collected and will be put together in a display to be put into a transportation museum.

Mackinac Bridge Ferries

MDOT and the Mackinac Bridge Authority (MBA) held a special ceremony celebrating the release of new coins (tokens) on Friday, June 16th, commemorating the eight state-operated car ferries that helped millions of passengers cross the Straits of Mackinac prior to completion of the Mackinac Bridge in 1957.

Beginning in 1923, the following eight state-operated vessels made their way across the straits: *Ariel* (1923), *Sainte Ignace* (1924), *Mackinaw City* (1924), *Straits of Mackinac* (1928), *City of Cheboygan* (1937), *City of Munising* (1938), *City of Petoskey* (1940), and (pictured) *Vacationland* (1952). Two additional vessels were leased by the state from the Mackinaw Transportation Company. The new car ferry coins are the sixth set in a series of bridge toll coins or tokens.

Local Jobs Today Update

Governor Granholm signed this bill into law on May 22nd. A formal letter was sent on June 9th by CRAM and MML to all Act 51 cities, villages and counties, with details about what they needed to do to provide information and projects back to us. The letter specifically said they needed to have their projects returned to those two agencies by June 19th. These projects are currently being identified by CRAM and MML, who will then generate a list to be reviewed by MDOT. Response has been very favorable.

No questions were forthcoming.

III. **RESOLUTIONS**

Resolution of the State Transportation Commission Authorizing Notice of Revision of a Project List – Myron Frierson

At the State Transportation Commission meeting on May 25, 2006, the Commission approved a resolution entitled “Resolution of the State Transportation Commission of the State of Michigan Indicating the Intention of the State Transportation Commission to Amend the Project List Attached to a Previously Adopted Commission Resolution.” The attached resolution finalizes the changes to the project list. Exhibit X contains the revised project list.

Mr. Frierson asked for questions and a roll call vote approving this authorizing resolution.

No questions were forthcoming.

Chairman Wahby entertained a motion to approve the Resolution of the State Transportation Commission Authorizing Notice of Revision of a Project List. Motion was made by Commissioner Atkinson and supported by Commissioner Rosendall to approve the resolution. Mr. Kelley called the roll; all answers were affirmative. Motion carried on a unanimous roll call vote.

IV. **OVERSIGHT**

Commission Agreements (Exhibit A) – Myron Frierson

Mr. Frierson stated that information on 35 projects/agreements was given for review. Pending any questions, Mr. Frierson asked for approval of Exhibit A.

No questions were forthcoming.

Chairman Wahby entertained a motion. Motion was made by Commissioner Brosnan and supported by Commissioner Rosendall to approve Exhibit A. Motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

Bid Letting Pre-Approvals (Exhibit A-1) – Myron Frierson

Mr. Frierson first gave a brief re-cap of the June letting; 25 state projects with total engineers' estimates of \$20.4 million were let. The low bids announced on these projects totaled \$20.0 million. The average low bid of all 25 state items is \$799.7 thousand. Through June 2006, 373 items with engineers' estimates of \$668.8 million have been let, representing 87.6% of the number of projects and 60.4% of the total dollar amounts projected to be let.

Before the Commission for approval is 75 projects, of which 23 are state items with engineers' estimates totaling \$23.3 million to be let on July 7th. Eleven of these items have warranties. Pending any questions, Mr. Frierson asked for approval of Exhibit A-1.

No questions were forthcoming.

Chairman Wahby entertained a motion. Motion was made by Commissioner Brosnan and supported by Commissioner Scalici to approve the July bid letting. Motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

Letting Exceptions Agenda (Exhibit A-2) – John Polasek

Mr. Polasek reported on 8 projects (2 Aeronautics, 2 State, and 4 local) that were 10% over the estimates which are accompanied by justification memos where necessary. Pending any questions, Mr. Polasek asked for approval of Exhibit A-2.

Commissioner Brosnan asked, when overages are approved, if all these projects remain on course in terms of their intended completion dates.

Mr. Polasek answered yes.

No other questions were forthcoming.

Chairman Wahby entertained a motion. Motion was made by Commissioner Brosnan and supported by Commissioner Atkinson to approve Exhibit A-2. Motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

Contract Adjustments (Exhibit B) – John Friend

Mr. Friend has 10 MDOT projects (7 in Metro Region), as well as a couple local agency projects, before the Commission. With three months left in this fiscal year, we have \$600 million finaled out at about 2% under budget. Pending any questions, Mr. Friend asked for approval of Exhibit B.

No questions were forthcoming.

Chairman Wahby entertained a motion. Motion was made by Commissioner Brosnan and supported by Commissioner Rosendall to approve Exhibit B. Motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

Mackinac Bridge Authority Auditor's Report (Exhibit C) – Jerry Jones

Commissioner Brosnan stated that she has reviewed the report (which covered an extensive period from October 1, 1997 to December 31, 2005), all recommendations have been accepted by the Mackinac Bridge Authority (MBA), and appropriate steps have already been taken to implement the recommendations of the Office of Commission Audit. Commissioner Brosnan then offered this report for the Commissions' acceptance and approval.

Mr. Jones thanked the MBA employees for their cooperation in working with his office and getting the audit completed.

No questions were forthcoming.

Chairman Wahby entertained a motion. Motion was made by Commissioner Brosnan and supported by Commissioner Atkinson to approve Exhibit C. Motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

V. **PRESENTATIONS**

Mr. John H. Daly, III, Ph.D., Manager-Director, Genesee County Road Commission, and Past President, County Road Association of Michigan (CRAM) updated the Commission on the United States Road Assessment Program (USRAP).

The level of safety for motorists on U.S. roads varies widely. Controlled-access freeways, with no at-grade intersections or driveways, provide the highest level of safety among road types. Other safety enhancing features of roadways include medians, roadside clear zones, guardrails, median barriers, and intersection turn lanes. Highway agencies have limited funds for improving the safety features of roadways, so it is important that their investment decisions are made in a way that provides maximum benefits to motorists and to the public at large.

Currently, there is no systematic road assessment program in North America to inform motorists of the level of safety on the roads they travel or to help auto clubs and others provide informed advice to highway agencies on needs for safety improvement. However, such a program does exist in Europe. The European road assessment program (EuroRAP) was developed by European motoring clubs to evaluate the safety of roads using two methods: a synthesis of available crash statistics summarized by crash location and a road safety review based on the design features of specific roadway sections. Under this scheme, road sections are given a rating from one to five stars, with five stars representing the "safest road."

This project involves a "pilot program" to test the technological and political feasibility of instituting a road assessment program in North America. The pilot examines the various technological barriers – Are appropriate data available and how should those data

be aggregated? The pilot also examines political barriers – Will highway agencies cooperate with such a program and can liability concerns be overcome? Midwest Research Institute is managing the project with assistance from the Center for Transportation Research and Education at Iowa State University, and the assistance of an advisory panel of key stakeholders.

To demonstrate the feasibility and utility of such a program, data are being collected in Iowa and Michigan (and perhaps others). This pilot project will focus attention on the need for highway safety improvement and start a national dialogue on the issue. There is concern that crash investigations and road safety data in many jurisdictions are not adequate to support comprehensive analyses of road safety features. The national dialogue should help create public support for higher funding to upgrade data systems and make road safety improvements.

USRAP, to be undertaken as a pilot project, represented a true partnership between AAA Safety Foundation, MDOT, Livingston County Road Commission, Genesee County Road Commission, AASHTO, National Association of County Engineers, Institute of Transportation Engineers, Iowa Department of Transportation, New York State Department of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). FHWA participation was particularly important because, while this was started as a voluntary program, SAFETEA-LU passed. Within SAFETEA-LU is a requirement that you identify 5% of your worst condition roads. At this point it looks like USRAP will be identified at least as one of the ways to satisfy that reporting requirement.

USRAP outputs represent synthesis of available crash data (risk maps), road safety review based on design features (star ratings for safety of roads), and graphical results focus attention on “dangerous” roads.

Risk maps for the state trunkline system utilize the crash data for 2000-2004, road type (i.e., two lane, divided, freeway, etc.), section length, and traffic volume. In Genesee and Livingston counties those pilot studies used the same data sources and included both trunkline and paved county primary roads.

Commissioner Brosnan asked if the purpose of this being presented to the Asset Management Council in July is to get them to adopt this as part of their assessment process.

Mr. Daly answered that the purpose is simply to make them aware that there is a similar effort being undertaken.

Commissioner Brosnan added that, in light of the various areas of input involved (technical and political), it would appear that if we have the Asset Management data combined with the type of accident data that USRAP provides, it ought to mitigate some of that.

Mr. Daly agreed and stated that in Genesee County it has shown to be an excellent tool in defending themselves from litigation due to the fact that people are quick to blame the condition of the roadway for an accident.

Commissioner Brosnan then asked, in looking at the 4-year time span of crash data, if it is typical of the system that was used in Europe.

Mr. Daly responded yes.

Commissioner Brosnan further asked how much specific information can USRAP offer when looking at specific road projects—in particular roundabouts as a way of addressing traffic issues.

Mr. Daly answered one of the things they came to appreciate in working with this was that USRAP it is a meta-data type of thing. All the existing data that was used was pretty much what was already out there. There was not new crash data collected; it was just packaged differently.

Commissioner Atkinson asked if it would be correct to conclude that this data does not provide any basis for extrapolating causal conclusions.

Mr. Daly answered that it would be a fair statement. This identifies some road segments that, based upon previous history, need to be looked at. You cannot stop there; you have to go further beyond that and look into causal factors.

Commissioner Atkinson then asked if it were used to attract attention to particular places.

Mr. Daly answered that they used it to identify places that they need to pay particular attention to. The purpose of this, principally, is to look and see if there are some cost effective safety prevention measures (signage, etc.) that can be used to reduce the level of risk in specific roadway systems.

No other questions were forthcoming.

VI. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairman Wahby asked if any member of the audience wanted to address the Commission.

No comments were forthcoming.

Chairman Wahby asked if any Commissioner wanted to address the Commission.

Commissioner Atkinson commented that those in the Upper Peninsula are looking forward to the Commission holding their September 28th meeting in Marquette. If anyone has a particular request for something they want to see so that they have a good view of the Superior Region to please let her or Randy Van Portfliet (Superior Region Engineer) know.

Chairman Wahby stated that all requests be directed through the Commission Advisor.

No comments were forthcoming.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the Chairman declared the meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

The next full meeting of the Michigan State Transportation Commission will be held on July 27, 2006, in the Bureau of Aeronautics Auditorium in Lansing, Michigan, commencing at the hour of 9:00 a.m.

Frank E. Kelley
Commission Advisor