

Minutes
Twin Cities Area Transportation Study
Technical Advisory and Policy Committees

August 20, 2007
 10:00 A.M.

Southwest Michigan Regional Airport

MEMBERS PRESENT:	<p>Mickey Bennett, Sodus Township Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Bill Brown, NIRPC (ex officio) R.J. Burkholz, Berrien County Road Commission Chris Cook, City of Benton Harbor Ron Griffin, St. Joseph Charter Township Walter Heritz, Berrien Co. Planning Commission Robert Judd, City of St. Joseph Jason Latham, MDOT, Southwest Region Ray Lenze, MDOT, Statewide Planning Larry Merritt, St. Joseph Charter Township Catherine McIlwee, Berrien Co. Planning Dept Bill Purvis, Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority Gary Soper, Benton Charter Township, TAC Chairman Paul South, MDOT/TSC, Coloma Sarah Woolcock, MDOT – Coloma TSC Tim Zebell, City of St. Joseph</p>
MEMBERS ABSENT:	<p>Aaron Anthony, City of Bridgman Todd Gardner, Village of Stevensville John Gast, Lake Charter Township Sarah Koepke, Federal Highway Admin (ex officio) Charles Kormanik, Village of Shoreham Fred Featherly, MDOT - Multi-Modal Services Dwight Pete Mitchell, City of Benton Harbor Debra Panozzo, Berrien County Commission Burt Pearson II, Village of Shoreham Louise Price, Benton Charter Township Representative, Cornerstone Alliance Robert Rusch, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Lee Scherwitz, SW Michigan Regional Airport Brad Sharlow, MDOT Planning Terrie Smith, Lincoln Charter Township Dick Stauffer, Lincoln Charter Township Steve Tilly, Royalton Township Bill Wheeler, Federal Transit Administration Donna Wittl, MDOT Planning</p>
SWMPC STAFF PRESENT:	<p>Kelly Getman-Dissette Rachael Tupica</p>
OTHERS PRESENT:	<p>Rich Vavra-Musser, Whirlpool James E. Darnton, Whirlpool Dan Fette, Berrien County Community Development Joe Schulz, Joe Schulz Consulting</p>

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Judd called the meeting to order at 10:05 A.M. The agenda was re-arranged so that the presentation on high-speed commuter rail could begin first.

2. MINUTES OF JULY 9, 2007:

- Motion by Zebell, seconded by South to approve the minutes of the July 9, 2007 TAC meeting. Motion approved.
- Motion by Lenze, seconded by South, to approve the minutes of the July 9, 2007 Policy meeting. Motion approved.

3. STAFF REPORT:

- **MTPA/MAR Conference** – Tupica and Getman-Dissette attended the annual conference hosted by the Michigan Transportation Planning Association (MTPA) and the Michigan Association of Regions (MAR). There were many helpful sessions on transportation-related topics. In addition, Tupica was chosen as the Junior Planner of the Year by the MTPA, and the SWMPC earned a best practices award from MAR for the 2006 I-94 Business Loop (BL) charette.
- **Construction Site Visits** – Woolcock invited Getman-Dissette and Tupica to visit several MDOT construction sites. The visits took place on August 17 and were a great opportunity to learn more about the construction process.

4. PROJECT UPDATES:

- **MDOT** – South reported that there is a public design open house for the Benton Harbor I-94 BL project scheduled for August 28th from 6-8 pm. There will be brief comments from a few invited speakers, and the public will have an opportunity to review the design and offer comments. Woolcock noted that a change request has been processed for an I-94 project (job 60466). The let date has changed from September 28 to November 15, and the cost is now \$8.9 million, from \$8 million. Lenze notified everyone that 2007 projects must be obligated by September, including CMAQ. He also suggested that each month, the TAC should look through the TIP table project by project so that no updates are missed.
- **City of St. Joseph** – Zebell reported that there was a pre construction meeting for the Ship and State St. project.
- **City of Benton Harbor** – Cook reported that the Arts District project has begun.

5. OLD BUSINESS:

- **SAFETEA-LU Compliance** – Tupica reported that TwinCATS has received a SAFETEA-LU compliant designation from FHWA. Activities can proceed normally and the committees can process TIP amendments.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

- **Rail Presentation** – Joe Schulz offered a presentation on the possibility of developing high-speed commuter rail from Berrien to Chicago. His presentation focused on the economic benefits that commuter rail could provide to Berrien County. Discussion after the presentation centered on the next steps required to move such a project forward. It was agreed that the section on rail in the LRP should be further developed, and Fette will contact SWMPC staff to schedule a meeting.
- **Website Tutorial** – The web tutorial will be moved to the September agenda.
- **MTGA Plan Endorsement** – Getman-Dissette explained that the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance (MTGA) launched the Connecting Michigan effort in 2006. Stakeholders divided into taskforces to cover a range of topics. Each task force developed a set of goals and action steps needed to implement a connected trail system in Michigan. The MTGA is now working to implement the taskforce recommendations, which are outlined in the Connecting Michigan plan. Endorsements of the plan are needed to build momentum for funding, legislative action, and advocacy. Endorsements do not commit groups to monetary support. Endorsing the plan is simply a pledge to support a statewide trail system and to collaborate with partners to achieve the vision of the plan. *A motion was made by Purvis, supported by McIlwee, to endorse the MTGA Connecting Michigan plan. Motion approved.*
- **Bylaws Membership Committee** – There will be a meeting of the bylaws membership subcommittee immediately following the regular meeting.
- **Asset Management** – Tupica announced that PASER data collection for 2007 was complete.
- **Rideshare Website** – Tupica announced that there is a new website, <http://gorideshare.org/>, for the Rideshare program.
- **CMAQ Meeting** – A CMAQ meeting to finalize projects for 2008 and 2009 is scheduled for Tuesday, August 28th at 10:00 am at the Berrien County Road Commission.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- None

8. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

- Burkholz noted that trail efforts take a lot of advance planning and good timing to build the political will to move forward.

9. ADJOURNMENT: 11:42 am

- Next meeting is September 17, 2007

Compiled by: Kelly Getman-Dissette, Transportation Planner, 08/24/07