

**Minutes**  
*Twin Cities Area Transportation Study*  
*Policy Committee*

January 28, 2008  
 10:30 A.M.

Southwest Michigan Regional Airport

<b>POLICY MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	R.J. Burkholz, Berrien County Road Commission Ron Griffin, St. Joseph Charter Township Robert Judd, City of St. Joseph Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning Debra Panozzo, Berrien County Commission Lee Scherwitz, SW Michigan Regional Airport Dick Stauffer, Lincoln Charter Township Walter Heritz, Berrien Co. Planning Commission Louise Price, Benton Charter Township Aaron Anthony, City of Bridgman Brad Sharlow, MDOT Planning Bill Boyd, Royalton Township
<b>POLICY MEMBERS ABSENT:</b>	Aaron Anthony, City of Bridgman Bill Brown, NIRPC (ex officio) Mickey Bennett, Sodus Township Todd Gardner, Village of Stevensville John Gast, Lake Charter Township Sarah Koepke, FHWA (ex officio) Fred Featherly, MDOT Multi-Modal Steward McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration Dwight Pete Mitchell, City of Benton Harbor Burt Pearson II, Village of Shoreham Robert Rusch, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Jim Soteriou, Royalton Township Paul South, MDOT – Coloma TSC Sarah Woolcock, MDOT – Coloma TSC Representative, Cornerstone Alliance Jason Latham, MDOT – Regional Planning Bill Purvis, TCATA
<b>SWMPC STAFF PRESENT:</b>	Nickolas Musson, SWMPC Kim Gallagher, SWMPC Suzann Flowers, SWMPC
<b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b>	

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Judd called the meeting to order at 10:45 A.M.

**2. MINUTES OF December 17, 2007:**

- *Motion by Panozzo, seconded by Scherwitz to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2007 Policy meeting. Motion approved.*

### 3. STAFF REPORT:

- **Transportation Planner – Nick Musson**

Hello, my name is Nickolas Musson and I am excited to be your new transportation planner. I am from central Wisconsin where I was born and raised. I recently graduated from the University Wisconsin Stevens Point with majors in Geography, Public Administration and Philosophy. I have minors in Geographic Information Systems and Environmental Studies. I am a member of Association of American Geographers (AAG) and the Wisconsin Land Information Association (WLIA). It is truly an honor to start my career here and to be of service to you.

- **Asset Management Training Session**

Investment Reporting Tool Training Session

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission is hosting an investment reporting tool training session on Tuesday March 4 in Lawrence at 9:30 am to noon. This training session is open to all participants in the investment reporting process, such as road agencies, MPOs, regional planning agencies, and contractors for the jurisdiction. This training session will focus on version 2.0 of the online investment reporting tool to be released this month. There will be a live demo where participants can input their feed back and suggest any improvements and ask questions. Musson stated that if the location does not work he will give you another prior to the March 4<sup>th</sup> date.

*Discussion on who should attend-*

*Stauffer asked who should attend the Asset Management Training Session. Lenze replied with township, road commission representative and for the villages and towns engineers.*

- **TIP/STIP**

The TIP has been submitted, but needs to be approved. This is because MDOT is trying to solve internal TIP problems. This means that nothing is official until the TIP is approved. It is likely that in February we will be working to integrate all the amendments we have into the approved TIP. Musson will be attending TIP training at the end of this month. The TIP should be approved by January 31, 2008.

### 4. OLD BUSINESS:

- **SE data approval** – The TwinCATS socioeconomic data has been updated and reviewed by Brad Sharlow and waits approval.

During the TAC meeting Chris Cook mentioned that he was going to send updated information and Kormanik had question about accuracy of totals. Sharlow and Karmanik will go over the totals and address any boundary issues.

*A motion was made by Stauffer, supported by Heritz to recommend approval of the socioeconomic data, contingent upon Benton Harbor and Shoreham updated numbers. Motion approved.*

*Discussion on future SE data-*

*Lenze Explained the future SE data will need to be approved by March. Lenze asked Musson to send out the current population projections in the LRP to the members of the committee.*

*Sharlow reported that on February 12, 2008 there will be a presentation on the REMI Forecast for the state of Michigan.*

Griffin questioned the totals for St. Joseph Township. There was an error found in the St. Joseph Township totals and those will be corrected by Sharlow.

### 5. NEW BUSINESS

- **Transit Presentation – Kim Gallagher**

Kim gave an overview of transit in Berrien County. Berrien County is first in child poverty and third in overall poverty based out of counties in Michigan with 65,000 or more. There are 4 public transit systems in Berrien County providing 36,630 trips per month and over 439,568 trips annually. There is no typical public transit system in Berrien County. Two are small urban areas, while two are in rural areas of the county. They all range in sizes from 3

employees at Buchanan Dial A Ride to 31 employees at the Twin Cities Dial Ride in Benton Harbor. Niles Dial A Ride is considering putting in fixed routes with ¼ mile buffers for route deviation. New technology can make the process easier for the customers to understand and easier for the transit systems to manage their data. The use of technology to get to know your customers and their habits can increase efficiency. Coordination has its most substantial impact in communities where transportation efficiency can be improved. 6% of the sales tax on fuel does not go to transportation.

*Discussion on public transit-*

*Lenze- stated that public transportation will never pay for itself.*

*Burkholz- explained that some of these rides can cost 50 dollars and how can poor people pay to get to areas like the business districts on Hollywood Road.*

*Panozzo- the transit system is old and needs to be addressed.*

- **Act 51 Legislative Action: Needs Study**

Transportation Funding Task Force-

A task force is being created in response to the public Act 221 of 2007 to “review the adequacy of surface transportation and aeronautics service provision and finance” in Michigan. This would apply to roads, transit, and aviation.

**Duties of task force**

Review adequacy of surface transportation and aeronautic service provision and finance in Michigan.

Review strategies for maximizing return on transportation investments

Evaluate potential alternative strategies to replace or supplement: State motor fuel taxes, existing and alternative user fees, and nonuser revenues to support economic activity and personal mobility in Michigan.

**The Big Issue Is FUNDING!**

We are encouraged to put forth our views on funding solutions. We should consider putting together some kind of formal action that identifies our needs, wants and where to get the funding. If any individual or you know of an individual that would like to make a contribution they can submit their name on the governor’s website to be part of the citizen advisory committee. The committee is made up of 19 governor appointed citizens comprised of 18 organizations, agencies, associations in transportation, the construction sector and then one member of the general public. Musson will look into prior studies and try to put together discussion topics for the next meeting.

*Comments-*

*Judd- diesel fuel tax is not paying their share.*

**6. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- None

**7. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:**

*Discussion on business loop project-*

*Heritz- questioned the business loop project*

*Lenze- We need to pass the TIP before we can make amendments.*

*Gallagher need to have better marked turn lanes.*

Judd and Heritz will be out of town for the next meeting and Scherwitz will Chair in their place.

**8. ADJOURNMENT: 11:57 am**

- Next meeting is February 25, 2008

Compiled by: Nickolas Musson, Transportation Planner, 1/30/08