

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

July 20, 2009  
 10:30 A.M.

Southwest Michigan Regional Airport

<b>POLICY MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	Mickey Bennett, Sodus Township Wendy Dant Chesser, Cornerstone Alliance Tim Fenderbosch, St. Joseph Charter Township Robert Judd, City of St. Joseph Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning Debra Panozzo, Berrien County Commission Bill Purvis, TCATA Lee Scherwitz, SW Michigan Regional Airport Roger Seely, St. Joseph Charter Township Paul South, MDOT Coloma TSC Sarah Van Buren, FHWA (ex officio) Sarah Woolcock, MDOT Coloma TSC
<b>POLICY MEMBERS ABSENT:</b>	Aaron Anthony, City of Bridgman Bill Brown, NIRPC (ex officio) Bob Burkholz, Berrien County Road Commission John Gast, Lake Charter Township Jason Latham, MDOT Regional Planning Richard Marsh, City of Benton Harbor Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Mark Seaman, Village of Shoreham Jim Soteriou, Royalton Township Dick Stauffer, Lincoln Charter Township Kevin Wordelman, Berrien County Commission
<b>SWMPC STAFF PRESENT:</b>	Nickolas Musson Anna Rahtz
<b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b>	

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

- Chairman Judd called the meeting to order at 10:33 a.m.

**2. MINUTES:**

- *A motion was made by Woolcock, seconded by Seely, to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2009 Policy meeting. Motion approved.*

**3. STAFF REPORT:**

- **New Transportation Planner**
  - Anna Rahtz introduced herself, saying that she recently graduated from the University of Cincinnati with a Masters in Community Planning and has a Bachelors of Science in Architecture from Kent State University. While in graduate school, she worked at the Cincinnati Human Relations Commission, and retains an interest in cultural diversity and civic engagement. She has a strong interest in public transportation and non-motorized transportation, and bicycles to work. She has lived in Cincinnati, Ohio; Kent, Ohio; and Florence, Italy.

- **Southwest Michigan Trail Summit**
  - Musson went over a handout summarizing the trail summit that SWMPC held on June 25, 2009. The meeting had over 100 attendees, including planners, elected officials, and residents. The meeting attendees compiled information about existing, planned, and desired routes and trails in the nine-county region and formulated strategies for linking existing routes and trails. More information can be found at [www.swmpc.org/smart\\_plan.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/smart_plan.asp).
- **Walkability Presentation**
  - Rahtz announced that several SWMPC staff attended a "Discussing Walkability in Benton Harbor" meeting on July 6, 2009, hosted by the Berrien County Health Department. The purpose of the meeting was to address health statistics in Berrien County, particularly the high rates of obesity. A Healthy Berrien Consortium was formed, and is being headed up by Lakeland Regional Health System. The Consortium was awarded a \$50,000 Building Healthy Communities planning grant from the Michigan Department of Community Health, and wants the input of other agencies in the area on what to do with the grant. Suggestions included a rails-to-trails project and hiring a consultant such as Dan Burden to help Benton Harbor develop a walkability plan.
  - The guest speaker at the meeting was Dan Burden of Walkable Communities, Inc. Rahtz went over a handout highlighting the main points of Burden's presentation, including the importance of walkable, healthy communities and some characteristics of walkable community design.
  - South commented that he thought a walkability audit of Benton Harbor had already been done in 2006.
- **Complete Streets Workshop**
  - Rahtz announced that several SWMPC staff also attended a workshop on "Complete Streets" at the Michiana Area Council of Governments meeting on July 8, 2009. The presentation was given by Randy Neufeld of the National Complete Streets Coalition. Rahtz went over a handout summarizing the main points of the presentation and stated that more information can be found at [www.completestreets.org](http://www.completestreets.org). She explained that one of the key discussion points of the workshop was strategies for gaining political support for walkable communities, including coalition building and "cycle street" demonstration days.
- **MTPA Conference**
  - Rahtz announced that several SWMPC staff also attended the annual conference of the Michigan Transportation Planning Association, July 14 through 17, 2009. She passed out a handout listing the workshop topics covered. She explained that a whole day of the conference was dedicated to discussing the importance of freight planning, including assessing the freight needs of the region and building relationships with the private sector in freight. Some of the other topics covered were the Kalamazoo promise, light pollution, wind turbines, the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU, and the transit planning process. The keynote speaker was Mark Fenton, a dynamic speaker on healthy, walkable communities who took session attendees on a "walkabout" of downtown Kalamazoo.
  - Chairman Judd commented that it would be good to get the support of the private sector with regards to M-31. Van Buren remarked that other metropolitan planning agencies have freight committees that do surveys of freight providers in their communities. Panozzo asked who will be taking the lead on freight planning for TwinCATS, and mentioned that the Harbor Authority would be a key partner for freight planning. Woolcock asked what action items were included in the 2010 Unified Work Program regarding freight planning, and Nick responded that they were general, and included: traffic counting; building partnerships with the freight industry; and working with elected officials to monitor freight movement in the region. Van Buren suggested having Chris Dingman from the Federal Highway Administration come and give a presentation on freight planning, and several committee members suggested putting together a joint TwinCATS/NATS TAC/Policy meeting to listen to Chris Dingman's presentation and discuss freight planning.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Amtrak Budget Cut Letter**

- Musson explained that the Policy committee voted at the June 15, 2009 meeting to have SWMPC write a letter to elected officials asking them to reconsider the budget cut to the Amtrak Pere Marquette and Blue Water lines. The letter was written and signed, and it was mailed out on July 20, 2009. Recipients included: State Representatives Proos, Schuitmaker, and Tyler; State Senators Jelinek and Stabenow; Governor Granholm; and Congressman Upton.

**5. NEW BUSINESS:**

- **TIP amendments**

MDOT would like to amend the following FY 2009 & 2010 projects:

- Amended in FY 2009, the project name, limits, length, and federal and state costs of the project named I-94. The name changed to I-94 EB, and the limits changed from "north city limits of Bridgman to west of I-94 BL" to "Red Arrow Highway for 1.6 miles east." The length changed from 5.851 miles to 1.60 miles. The federal cost changed from \$450,000 to \$90,000, and the state cost changed from \$50,000 to \$10,000.
- Amended in FY 2010, the limits, length, and federal and state costs of the project named M-139. The limits changed from "north of US-31 junction" to "from 0.1 miles south of Hinchman Road to 0.3 miles north of the St. Joseph River." The length changed from 3.26 miles to 7.03 miles. The federal cost changed from \$319,000 (ST) to \$1,473,301 (NH), and the state cost changed from \$71,000 (M) to \$326,699 (M).
- Add in FY 2009, project named I-94 to replace bridge under Britain Avenue in Benton Harbor. ROW phase. The federal cost is \$24,300 and the state cost is \$2,700.
- Add in FY 2010, project named I-94 for: concrete deep overlay, beam end repair, full paint, pier repair, and approaches on bridge at Benton Center Road over I-94 and Blue Creek, 3.0 miles east of Benton Harbor. CON phase. Federal cost is \$1,739,662, and state cost is \$193,295.

MDOT would like to amend the following FY 2009 & 2010 projects under the general program accounts:

- Add in FY 2009, the project named M-139 for installation of school speed limit signs with flashing beacons at Mills Academy. Construction phase. The federal cost is \$12,496.
- Add in FY 2009, the project named M-63 for bridge submarine cables repair on M-63 over the St. Joseph River in the City of St. Joseph. Construction phase. The state cost is \$105,000.
- Add in FY 2009, the project named M-63 for bridge electrical work on M-63 over the St. Joseph River in the City of St. Joseph. Construction phase. The state cost is \$482,000.
- Add in FY 2009, project named I-94 Interchange for: consultant scoping for operational improvements with local primary road close to interchange ramps; and investigate alternatives for operational improvements. Early preliminary engineering phase. The state cost is \$100,000.

*A motion was made by Fenderbosch, supported by South, to amend the FY 2008-2011 TIP to add the previously mentioned MDOT projects.*

*MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

- **2010 & 2011 Call for CMAQ Projects Meeting**

- Musson announced that a 2010 & 2011 Call for CMAQ Projects Meeting will be held on July 29, 2009 at 1:00pm at the Berrien County Road Commission. This is a call for projects to use the CMAQ funds that remain because TCATA and Niles Dial-a-Ride were awarded ARRA funding to buy new buses and no longer need the CMAQ funding.

**6. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- None

**7. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:**

- Musson announced that Doug Plachcinski of ENP Associates had attended the TwinCATS TAC meeting immediately preceding this meeting. Plachcinski had previously attended a TwinCATS meeting to discuss the Berrien County Master Plan. Musson explained that Plachcinski would email the list of goals and objectives to the entire TwinCATS email list by the end of the day July 20, 2009 to get their feedback.

**8. ADJOURNMENT: 11:10 a.m.**

- Next meeting is August 17, 2009 at 10:30 a.m.

Compiled by: Nickolas Musson and Anna Rahtz, Transportation Planners, 7/21/09