

Minutes
Twin Cities Area Transportation Study
Policy Committee Meeting
 March 15, 2010
 10:30 A.M.
 Southwest Michigan Regional Airport

POLICY MEMBERS PRESENT:	Aaron Anthony, City of Bridgman Mickey Bennett, Sodus Township Izzy DiMaggio, Berrien County Road Commission Tim Fenderbosch, St. Joseph Charter Township Robert Judd, City of St. Joseph Jason Latham, MDOT Regional Planning Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning Debra Panozzo, Berrien County Commission Bill Purvis, TCATA Lee Scherwitz, SW Michigan Regional Airport Roger Seely, St. Joseph Charter Township Bruno Trapikas, Village of Shoreham Sarah Van Buren, FHWA (ex officio) Kevin Wordelman, Berrien County Planning Commission
POLICY MEMBERS ABSENT:	Bill Brown, NIRPC (ex officio) John Egelhaaf, SWMPC Carolyn Fowler, Benton Charter Township John Gast, Lake Charter Township Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Jim Soteriou, Royalton Township Paul South, MDOT Coloma TSC Dick Stauffer, Lincoln Charter Township Representative, Cornerstone Alliance Ron Carter, City of Benton Harbor Sarah Woolcock, MDOT Coloma TSC
SWMPC STAFF PRESENT:	Nickolas Musson Anna Rahtz
OTHERS PRESENT:	Terrie Smith, Lincoln Charter Township

1. CALL TO ORDER:

- Chairman Judd called the meeting to order at 10:30 A.M.
- Chairman Judd announced that Bruno Trapikas is the new representative for the Village of Shoreham and led the group in introductions.

2. MINUTES:

- *A motion was made by Panozzo, seconded by Seely, to approve the minutes of the December 21, 2009 Policy Committee meeting, with one correction of a TIP amendment that says "CMAQ" and should say "ARRA." Motion approved.*

3. STAFF REPORT:

- Nickolas Musson announced that he had accepted a position at an MPO in Wisconsin, and that his last day at SWMPC will be March 26, 2010.

5. OLD BUSINESS:

- **High Speed Rail Meeting**
 - Musson announced that the meeting held at the St. Joseph City Council Chambers on February 24, 2010 got almost 60 attendees. Tim Hoeffner explained that the last planning work on the Midwest

Regional Rail Initiative in Michigan was done in the late 1990s. He plans on reopening discussion of the plan and doing extensive public involvement, once the department finds the funding for such outreach work.

- The focus right now is on the State's budget crisis and continuing the operating subsidy to Amtrak; and increasing the speed of the Detroit – Chicago line. Funding has been secured for fiscal year 2010, which goes through September 2010. Funding must still be secured for fiscal year 2011.
- Minutes are available from the meeting.

- **Non-Motorized / "Walk and Roll" Update**

- Rahtz passed out a summary highlighting what the Non-Motorized Transportation Subcommittee has done so far. It came up with a name, mission statement, and schedule for a non-motorized plan that can be adopted into the TwinCATS long range transportation plan.
- Rahtz passed out a draft outreach plan. She explained that the subcommittee's next major step should be figuring out what the "walk and roll" needs are of the community, and one of the major ways to do that is through outreach. She mentioned that at the TAC meeting there had been discussion about how much outreach should be performed and a concern about the timeline.
- Fenderbosch commented that, while there is a widespread interest in non-motorized transportation projects in the area, coming up with the local match to fund them has been an issue. Rahtz added that suggestions of funding sources would be a component of the Walk and Roll Plan.
- DiMaggio asked about the status of the trail project along the old Penetrator rail line in St. Joseph and St. Joseph Township. Rahtz responded that, as can be seen in the Walk and Roll meeting minutes and summary, there has been a lot of discussion about this project amongst the Walk and Roll subcommittee. Mike Jones from Cycle & Fitness in St. Joseph has been a proponent of this project and has identified funding sources. Fenderbosch and Judd added that the Township and the City have looked in close detail at the project. Thus far, they have been held up by opposing property owners. Smith added that Lincoln Township has similarly encountered property owner opposition to building a trail in the old rail bed.
- Fenderbosch asked about the status of the SMART nine-county non-motorized mapping project. Rahtz responded that the maps are completed, the plan is being written, and a grand finale meeting will be held in July. She clarified that the plan will include the non-motorized facilities that are existing, those that are planned, and those that are desired.
- DiMaggio asked whether a motion was needed to approve the outreach plan. Rahtz responded that since the technical advisory committee made no motion, the Policy Committee could have until the April 19, 2010 TwinCATS meeting to make a motion to approve or disapprove the outreach plan. The next Walk and Roll meeting is scheduled for April 28, 2010.
- Rahtz also announced that the first in the workshop series is March 30, 2010 at the Van Buren ISD. It covers the basics of "how to get started."

- **Benton Harbor Local Match Update**

- Rahtz announced that John Egelhaaf and Lee Scherwitz had not yet approached City Manager Ron Carter because the City is waiting to have its hearing with the State. John Egelhaaf has made contact with the City Manager's office, and the office has developed a letter for TwinCATS members explaining the City's view on the situation, which has not yet been received.
- Scherwitz clarified that since Mr. Carter had originally written the letter stating that the City would not pay the dues, he has come to realize the importance of TwinCATS and has stated that the dues will be paid when the City is able to pay them.
- Rahtz stated that at the TAC meeting, Lenze had explained that a community's projects cannot legally be removed from the TIP (transportation improvement program). She added that not all MPOs (metropolitan planning organizations) use local contributions to supply their local match for federal planning funds – the "local match" can come from other sources. She stated that John Egelhaaf will be meeting further with MDOT and the Federal Highway Administration about this topic.
- Van Buren asked where the money comes from when a community does not pay its dues. Rahtz responded that it comes out of an escrow savings account which is paid into by all of the communities. The escrow account no longer has enough funding to cover SWMPC's local match

for planning funds if a community does not pay its dues.

- Fenderbosch commented that it is important to find out what the other options are for supplying a local match because it is unjust to expect other communities to cover the dues that one community does not pay.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

• TIP Amendment (MDOT)

- Adding in fiscal year 2010 the project named M-63 for resurfacing (including milling, spot repairs, one-course overlay, and full-width shoulder paving) on M-63 from 0.2 miles North of Enterprise Highway to I-196. The federal cost within the MPO boundaries for the Construction phase is \$1,232,279, and the State cost within the MPO boundaries for the Construction phase is \$273,254.
- Musson stated that because this TIP amendment was submitted late, there will still be a public comment period for seven days from the time the press release and public email were sent out (Friday March 12, 2010) before the TIP amendment will be processed.
- DiMaggio asked whether the project would include rumble strips, commenting that he thinks this is a good safety feature. Latham responded that it will not have rumble strips because MDOT has revised the guidelines for where rumble strips should be used to exclude areas that have more than 40 driveways per mile. He added that the guidelines for where rumble strips should be used previously were not refined enough – they had simply stated “any area that is not urban.”
- Several committee members asked whether the project was being done for the purpose of removing the existing rumble strips. Latham explained that resurfacing needs to be done because the condition of the road is so poor that it is no longer eligible for Capital Preventive Maintenance.
- *Motion by Scherwitz, seconded by Fenderbosch, to approve the addition of the above project to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program. Motion approved (with one dissenting vote).*

7. PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None

8. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

- Van Buren announced that because Jim Cramer at the Federal Highway Administration is retiring at the end of May, there will be some shift in responsibilities of the FHWA staff as of June 1, 2010. As of that date, Rachael Tupica will be the FHWA representative for TwinCATS. It is unknown whether this will be a temporary or permanent change.
- Judd announced that the State of Michigan would be holding a Legislative Transportation Committee meeting in Kalamazoo on Monday, March 22, 2010. He stated that the TwinCATS members should be present to support MDOT – Southwest Region and to advocate for transportation-related funding needs for the region.
 - There was a discussion about different types of statewide fuel taxes and fuel sales taxes (flat versus percentage). Scherwitz stated that diesel and airline fuel taxes should be higher – they have not changed since the 1980s.
 - DiMaggio stated that six townships in Berrien County have a local millage for transportation, adding that the Berrien County Commissioners should put a countywide transportation millage on the ballot.
 - Rahtz was asked to send out a reminder email about the meeting. Judd stated that it will be held from 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. at Kalamazoo Valley Community College, at West O Avenue and Ninth Street, Room 4370.

9. ADJOURNMENT: 11:17 A.M.

- Next meeting is April 19, 2010 at 10:30 A.M.

Compiled by: Nickolas Musson and Anna Rahtz, Transportation Planners, 3/15/10