

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

### **General Public Participation Process**

The success of any effort to develop plans for the maintenance and improvement of the transportation system in southwestern Michigan is directly related to the general public support given to the system goals, objectives, and alternatives. Groups and individuals must be given the opportunity to put their beliefs, opinions, and values into the overall plan. As representative bodies, the SWMPC and the TwinCATS committees must actively solicit the ideas and comments of the people they serve.

Public participation in transportation planning is governed by federal legislation. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), compared to previous transportation legislation, placed greater emphasis on public participation in the transportation planning and decision making process by requiring a formalized public participation process. The most recent legislation, SAFETEA-LU, continues this emphasis by requiring MPOs to develop and utilize a participation plan.

The SWMPC approved its Public Participation Plan in July of 2006. This document is available online (<http://www.swmpc.org/participation.asp>) or by contacting SWMPC staff for a hard copy (contact information is found below). The Public Participation Plan outlines the methods staff will use to publicize activities and to seek input on all the major transportation documents, including the LRTP, TIP, UWP, and the Public Participation Plan itself. The following is a partial list of those means:

- Regular Technical Advisory and Policy Committee meetings
- County Planning Commission meetings
- Other local government meetings
- Special meetings
- SWMPC meetings
- SWMPC website
- Presentations to local organizations
- Newspaper advertisements and articles
- Direct mailings
- Radio broadcasts

In general, the TwinCATS transportation planning process is designed to be open to the public. Each month, on the third Monday, the TAC and Policy Committee meet at 9:30 and 10:30 a.m., respectively, to discuss projects and other items related to transportation in the region. Both committees meet at the Southwest Michigan Regional Airport in Benton Harbor, and the meetings are always open to the public.

Agenda packets and announcements for regularly-scheduled TwinCATS meetings are distributed to all members approximately seven calendar days before the meeting.

Meeting information is also posted on the SWMPC website at

<http://www.swmpc.org/twincats.asp> or by contacting the SWMPC at:

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

185 East Main Street, Suite 701

Benton Harbor, Michigan 49022

(269) 925-1137

In the event that a member of the public is unable to attend meetings, the transportation staff at the SWMPC is available to discuss transportation issues by e-mail, letter, telephone, or in person.

Other general outreach activities include sending announcements and notices of proposed local transportation actions, MDOT public meetings, and other transportation-related events to local governments, local media, libraries, and town halls and posting them on the SWMPC website. In addition, the SWMPC publishes a quarterly newsletter (e-mailed and mailed to over 900 contacts) that includes TwinCATS news.

Transportation staff members are also available to speak at community organization meetings or related functions. Environmental justice regulations ensure the inclusion of a number of partners in touch with under-represented populations, and these efforts are further described in the environmental justice section of this document.

### **L RTP Public Participation Process**

A LRTP is a long-term look at the priorities and objectives for the region, and is updated every four years in non-attainment and maintenance areas (such as TwinCATS).

According to the 2006 Public Participation Plan, the SWMPC must obtain public input on

the list of goals and objectives, on the list of proposed priority projects, and on the draft document as a whole. Efforts to acquire this input are described below.

### **L RTP Goals and Objectives**

Two weeks prior to July 21, 2008, notices indicating a public comment period for the L RTP goals and objectives were sent via e-mail and postal mail (see Appendix F) for copy of notices) to local media, local governments, schools, human service organizations, some general public from SWMPC database. The listed the six L RTP goals; notified the public of where to obtain a full listing of goals, objectives, and strategic actions; detailed the date, times, and locations of two meetings at which public comment on the goals would be accepted; and described how to comment on the goals if meeting attendance was not an option.

The first public comment opportunity was held at the regular July TwinCATS TAC meeting, July 21, 2008 at 9:30 a.m. at the Southwest Michigan Regional Airport (SWMRA). One member of the public was present, but offered no comment.

The second opportunity also occurred on July 21, 2008 at the City of St. Joseph City Hall at 6:00 p.m. SWMPC staff gave a brief presentation on the TwinCATS committees and the process to develop the goals and objectives and offered handouts to those present. Approximately 42 people were in attendance, including the City of St. Joseph City Council and selected staff members. Council members asked questions about the conditions of Michigan roads and opportunities to improve transit service. There were no comments from the Council or the general public regarding the goals and objectives. Staff explained that there would be additional opportunities to comment on the draft L RTP, specifically when the list of projects is developed and when the draft document, in its entirety, is released.

### **L RTP Projects**

Notices indicating a public comment period for the L RTP projects were sent via e-mail and postal mail (see Appendix F for copy of notices) to local media, local governments, schools, human service organizations, some general public from SWMPC database. The formal comment period began January 21st, 2009 and ended on February 4th, 2009. The notice to the public contained detailed date, times, and locations of the meeting at which public comment on the L RTP projects would be accepted; and described how to

comment on the LRTP projects if meeting attendance was not an option. The public had the opportunity to comment in person at the regular TwinCATS TAC meeting on January 26th, 2009 at 9:30 a.m. at the SWMRA or submitted in writing using the contact information:

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 Southwest Michigan Planning Commission  
 185 E. Main, Suite 701  
 Benton Harbor, MI 49085  
 Fax: 269.925.0288  
 E-mail: [mussonn@swmpc.org](mailto:mussonn@swmpc.org)

No one from the public attended the meeting or submitted written comments on the LRTP projects. The following is the list of LRTP projects and a Map representation.

<b>TwinCATS 2035 Long Range Plan Proposed List of Projects</b>						
<b>Name</b>	<b>Limits</b>	<b>Work</b>	<b>Project Year</b>	<b>Distance Miles</b>	<b>Approximate Total Cost (\$1000s)</b>	<b>Agency</b>
Empire Ave	City of BH to Crystal	Resurface	2009	0.99	180	BCRC
Linco Rd	Red Arrow to Date	Resurface	2009	0.77	301	BCRC
Linco Road Bridge	Over Keelo Creek	Bridge replacement	2009	0.11	400	BCRC
I-94 BL	Fair to River	Reconstruct	2009	1.76	13,986	MDOT
I-94 BL (Main St)	I-94 BL at Broad St.	Traffic operations	2009		259	MDOT
M-139	M-139 at Fairplain	Traffic operations	2009	0.1	330	MDOT
Pipestone Road	Yore to Townline	Advance Construct Conversion	2010		230	BCRC
Church Street	South CL to North CL	Advance Construct Conversion	2010		20	City of Bridgman
Graham Avenue Extension	End of existing Graham Ave. to Riverview/Whitman Drive	New route/structure (capacity increase)	2010	0.27	2,521	City of Benton Harbor
Klock Road	Widen/Reconstruct M-63 to North Shore Dr. and extend from North Shore to Paw Paw	New route/structure (capacity increase)	2010	0.62	2,286	City of Benton Harbor
Hollywood Rd	M-63 to Glenlord	Restore and Resurface	2010	0.91	383	BCRC
Highland Ave	Wall to Fair	Resurface	2010	0.81	194	City of Benton Harbor

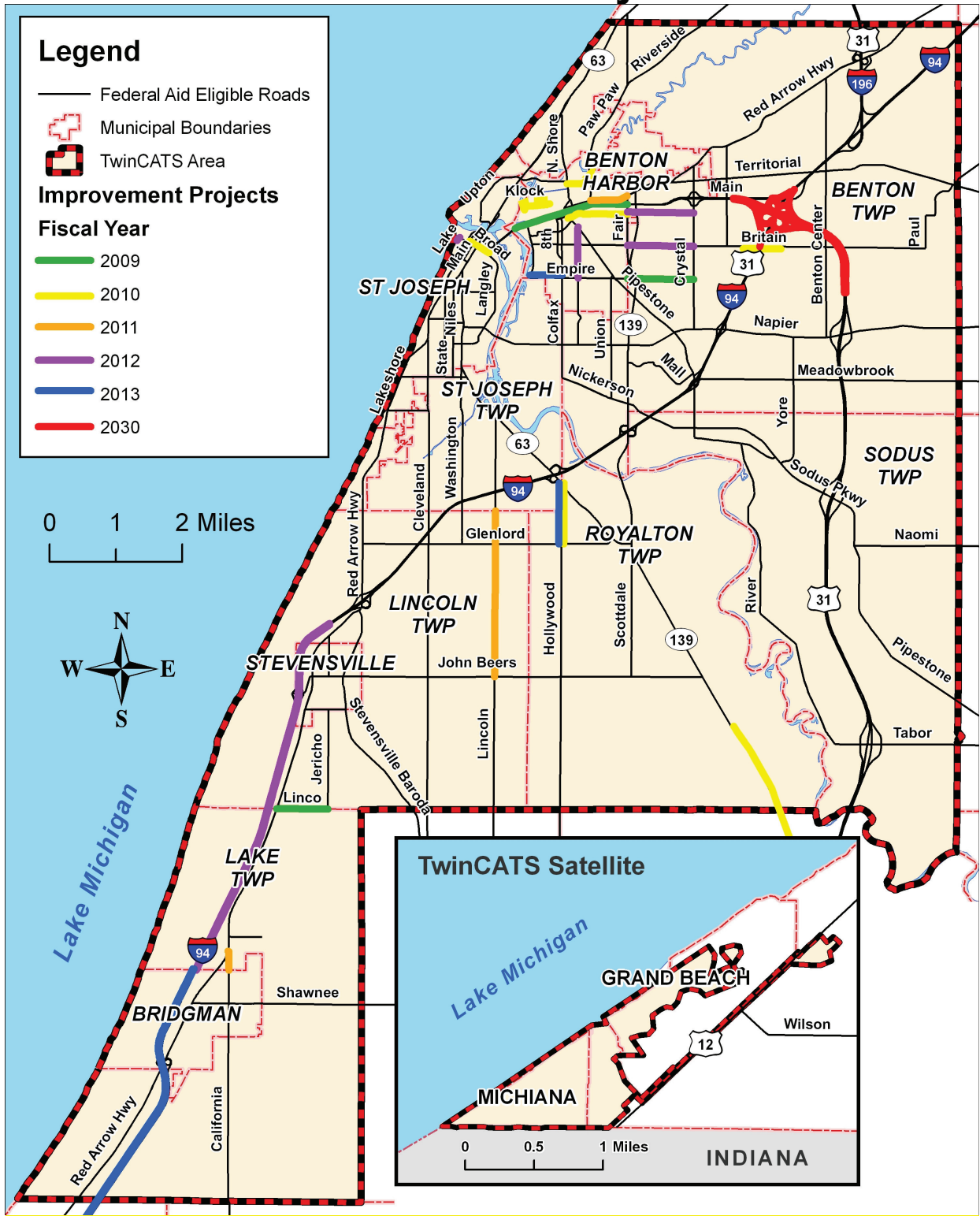
Twin Cities Area Transportation Study 2009-2035 Long Range Transportation Plan

Broad Street	Lake Blvd to State St. & Main St. (I94BL) to Wayne St.	Resurface	2010	0.27	220	City of St. Joseph
Britain Ave	Over I-94	Bridge replacement	2010	0.552	6,097	MDOT
I-94 BL	at I-94 in Stevensville	Roadside facility	2010	0.01	79	MDOT
I-94	from US-12 to I-94 BL	Roadside facility	2010	19.34	3,816	MDOT
M-139	North of US-31 junction	Resurface	2010	3.255	390	MDOT
California Rd	City of Bridgman to Red Arrow	Resurface	2011	0.29	73	BCRC
South State Street	Granada Avenue to Wallace Avenue	Reconstruct/AC	2011	0.17	208	City of St. Joseph
Lincoln Ave	John Beers to Maiden Lane	Resurface	2011	2.5	486	BCRC
Territorial Rd	Paw Paw to Fair	Resurface	2011	0.59	280	City of Benton Harbor
Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority (TCATA)	Bus operation	Operation	2011		1,850	TCATA
TCATA	Purchase Two buses	Capital	2011		125	TCATA
TCATA	Purchase Two buses	Capital	2011		125	TCATA
TCATA	Facility improvements	Capital	2011		50	TCATA
South State Street	Granada Avenue to Wallace Avenue	Advance Construct Conversion	2012	0.17	191	City of St. Joseph
Britain Rd	City of BH to Crystal	Resurface	2012	1	186	BCRC
Highland Ave	City of BH to Crystal	Resurface	2012	1	227	BCRC
Broadway Avenue	Pipestone Avenue to Empire Avenue	Resurface	2012	0.9	240	City of Benton Harbor
Lake Street	Elm Street to Broad Street	Resurface	2012	0.1	236	City of St. Joseph
I-94	North city limits of Bridgman to west of I-94 BL	Resurface	2012	5.851	18,000	MDOT
I-94	At Nickerson Road, M-40 at M-43, and I-94 at M-40	Resurface Carpool lots	2012	0.011	27	MDOT
I-94	Under John Beers Road	Full Pain, Joint Replacement	2012	0.247	402	MDOT
South State Street	Granada Avenue to Wallace Avenue	Advance Construct Conversion	2013	0.17	173	City of St. Joseph
TCATA	Bus operation	Operation	2012		1,880	TCATA
TCATA	Purchase Two buses	Capital	2012		140	TCATA
TCATA	Purchase Two buses	Capital	2012		140	TCATA
TCATA	Bus operation	Operation	2013		1,900	TCATA
TCATA	Purchase one bus	Capital	2013		70	TCATA
TCATA	Purchase three buses	Capital	2013		210	TCATA

*Twin Cities Area Transportation Study 2009-2035 Long Range Transportation Plan*

Hollywood Rd	Partial reconstruct of M-63 to 500 feet South of Glenlord Road	Partial Reconstruct	2013		782	BCRC
East Empire	Riverview Drive to Colfax Avenue	Resurface	2013	0.61	160	City of Benton Harbor
I-94	Sawyer Road to north city limit of Bridgman	Mill and Resurface	2013	5	16,450	MDOT
Hollywood Rd	Partial reconstruct of M-63 to 500 feet South of Glenlord Road	Partial Reconstruct	2014		622	BCRC
Hollywood Rd	Partial reconstruct of M-63 to 500 feet South of Glenlord Road	Partial Reconstruct	2015		622	BCRC
US 31	Napier Ave to I-94	New route/structure (capacity increase)	2030		132,00	MDOT

## TwinCATS LRTP Projects



**L RTP Draft**

Notices indicating a public comment period for the LRTP draft were sent via e-mail and postal mail (see Appendix G for copy of notices) to local media, local governments, schools, human service organizations, some general public from SWMPC database. The formal comment period began March 2, 2009 and ended on March 16th, 2009. The notice to the public contained detailed date, times, and locations of the meeting at which public comment on the LRTP draft would be accepted; and described how to comment on the LRTP draft if meeting attendance was not an option. The public had the opportunity to comment in person at the regular TwinCATS TAC meeting on March 16th, 2009 at 9:30 a.m. at the SWMRA or submitted in writing to:

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