

**Minutes**  
*Twin Cities Area Transportation Study*  
*TAC Meeting*  
 January 25, 2010  
 9:30 A.M.  
 Southwest Michigan Regional Airport

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Chris Cook, City of Benton Harbor Ray Lenze, Michigan Department of Transportation, Statewide Planning Bill Purvis, Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority Mark Seaman, Village of Shoreham Lee Scherwitz, Southwest Michigan Regional Airport Donald Schlipp, Village of Stevensville Terrie Smith, Lincoln Charter Township Jim Soteriou, Royalton Township Paul South, Michigan Department of Transportation- Coloma TSC Tim Zebell, City of St. Joseph
<b>MEMBERS ABSENT:</b>	Aaron Anthony, City of Bridgman Mickey Bennett, Sodus Township Bill Brown, Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (ex officio) Fred Featherly, MDOT - Multi-Modal Services (ex officio) Norah Jefferson, Benton Charter Township Mark Seaman, Village of Shoreham Jason Latham, Michigan Department of Transportation, Southwest Region Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Larry Merritt, St. Joseph Charter Township Katie Montoya, Berrien County Community Development Gloria Payne, Lake Charter Township Thad Rieder, Cornerstone Alliance Robert Rusch, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (ex officio) Brad Sharlow, MDOT Planning (ex officio) Sarah Van Buren, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio) Sarah Woolcock, Michigan Department of Transportation - Coloma TSC
<b>SWMPC STAFF PRESENT:</b>	Nickolas Musson Anna Rahtz
<b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b>	Christopher Dingman ( <i>via conference call</i> ), Federal Highway Admin Kenton McAndrew, City of Benton Harbor

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

- Chairman Scherwitz called the meeting to order at 9:33 A.M.

**2. MINUTES:**

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

**3. STAFF REPORT:**

- **CSS Presentation** – Rahtz announced that she had met with Paul South and Brad Peterson from MDOT about the Context Sensitive Solutions presentation, which will happen at the March meeting. It will be a joint meeting. It will cover the basics with an example of BL94 and an interactive activity. Brad Peterson would like to know if any of the committee members have any specific questions or topics they would like

him to cover.

#### **4. PROJECT UPDATES (2010):**

- **Berrien County Road Commission**

- Britain Avenue – Grade inspection (GI) package submitted
- Cleveland Avenue - Grade inspection (GI) package will be submitted by January 29th
- Date Road Bridge – TSL approved; will be submitting GI plans in six weeks
- Hilltop Road – behind schedule because of utility poles, held a diagnostic study team review
- Hollywood Road – will submit GI plans by January 29th
- Pipestone Rd ACC – Advanced Construct Conversion
- Pipestone Rd/Nickerson Ave/Sodus Parkway/Red Arrow Highway – Letting complete, construction August 1<sup>st</sup>.

- **City of St. Joseph**

- Broad Street – Having trouble getting money released from federal treasury on time.

- **City of Benton Harbor**

- Highland Avenue – GI plans will be submitted by end of February

- **MDOT**

- I-94, Bridge Replacement (JN 104002) – Will be let next summer
- I-94 BL, Expansion of Parking Lot – Will be let August 2010
- I-94, ROW – Opening RFPs by February 5th
- I-94, Bridge Replacement (JN107176) – Deleted

#### **5. OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Traffic Count Presentation**

- Musson went over a handout explaining how to access traffic count data online, as well as how to interpret the pdf reports.
- Zebell asked how far back the traffic count data is available. Musson explained that the raw data prior to 2007 was not saved; only the average daily traffic (ADT) number is available. The pdf report online has ADTs going back to 2003.
- Lenze asked if any year-round counts are done in the SWMPC region. Musson responded that no year-round counts are conducted; most are one to two days. The counts are taken for the period of time that they are requested by the local agencies. Lenze pointed out that the annual average daily traffic (AADT) is therefore not a true AADT because it does not provide a picture of the traffic throughout the whole year, only for the point in time for which the count is requested. The software used for SWMPC's traffic count data calculates the AADT using certain seasonal factors, but these factors are not the same in every geographic area. For example, the roads near the beach in St. Joseph have very high traffic in the summer months and very low traffic in the winter months.

- **Regional Rail Update**

- Musson announced that since he and Rahtz had not been able to reach Tim Hoeffner at MDOT, they were working on a persuasive letter with John Egelhaaf, which will be circulated and sent to state and federal elected officials for the Pere Marquette area. John is putting together an advocacy group.
- Lenze commented that taking action regarding the MWRRI is time-sensitive, since it is not known how long it will take to gather the needed funding and implement the plans.

- **Preliminary Freight Needs Assessment**

- Rahtz went over a handout explaining the results of data that had been compiled from 230 interviews conducted by Kim Fedison of Berrien County Economic Development and Pat Moody of the Cornerstone Chamber of Commerce. It shows what Berrien County businesses think of their transportation infrastructure, on four criteria: public transportation, local road network condition, interstate highway system condition, and airports. Overall, there were very high opinions on all aspects except public transportation.
- Scherwitz commented that, related to water freight, it is imperative to keep the harbor dredged in order to bring in the tonnage of goods needed. Increasing the amount of goods that can be brought in through commercial shipping would reduce the need for trucking. The Harbor Authority closely

studies these issues.

- Purvis commented that a countywide transit authority would struggle in this economic climate because the bulk of funding for regional transit seems to go to larger urban areas.
- Scherwitz commented that a large portion of manufacturing businesses in the 49022 zip code area are actually in Benton Township, not in Benton Harbor City. Rahtz responded that she had misspoken in the presentation by saying "Benton Harbor," but that the study had actually been done by zip code area.
- Zebell remarked that in both the preliminary freight study and the survey results study (which would be discussed next), there was a misuse of the word "overrepresented." With such a small sample size, saying that a community has a higher percentage of surveys or interviews returned could simply imply that the other communities may need more surveys or interviews collected, not that the communities with a lot of responses have too many.

- **Transportation Importance Survey Results**

- Rahtz went over a handout explaining the final results of the Transportation Importance Survey. 257 surveys were received from the public. The public and TwinCATS answers came out fairly close, and neither group had a strong preference of one category over another. By any method used to analyze the results, the highest priority category is Safety, and Environment is the lowest ranking.
- There were also open-ended responses, which overwhelmingly wanted regional public transit and non-motorized transportation options to connect the county. Rahtz commented that this indicates the need for public education in certain areas, such as the relationship between environment and transportation; multimodalism; and access to transportation.
- South suggested deleting the recommendation about access to transportation because it is based on a lot of large assumptions. He also commented that there would be more need for public education evidenced in the study if there had been a wide gap between the opinions of the TwinCATS members and the public, which in fact there was not.
- South also remarked that assumptions could not necessarily be drawn from the fact that more members of the public rated public participation as important while more TwinCATS members rated planning coordination as important. He pointed out that this could be because the TwinCATS members are more directly involved with the planning process, and so the public may feel that there is less public participation focus in the process than there really is.
- Rahtz went over another handout illustrating how the survey results will be used to rank the projects according to the method approved by the committees.
- Cook brought up a concern with ranking the projects based on the survey results, and Zebell pointed out that the project ranking is only one small component of the project selection process. Zebell also suggested that the survey design be revisited the next time around and asked when it would be done again. The staff responded that it would be done in line with the next long range transportation plan, in about three years.
- Lenze remarked that the next time around, the survey would be more in line with the long range transportation planning process, and thus would be more usable for what it is intended to be, which is a mechanism for prioritizing the goals of the long range plan.
- Zebell commented that the full report should include definitions of the mathematical calculations used, and that maybe standard deviations could have helped with the accuracy of the results.

- **TIP Applications**

- Musson announced that all TIP new project applications were due January 25, 2010. These would be applications for FY 2014 projects, or any new projects that were not applied for when the FY 2010-2013 TIP was being created.
- He also announced that the TIP project selection meeting will be at Michigan Works! in the Shoreline Room at 2:00pm on Friday, February 19, 2010.
- **"Jobs for Main Street"**
  - Musson also announced that a new economic stimulus package similar to ARRA just passed the US House of Representatives and is headed to the Senate. The same funding levels as ARRA are anticipated. 50 percent of the funds will have to be contracted within 90 days. The funding could be used to cover engineering costs for the projects that are funded after the first

90 days of the legislation.

- Musson emphasized that although it is not known what will happen with this bill, TwinCATS has to be prepared for it, and so an illustrative list of projects needs to be compiled. This will be done at the TIP project selection committee meeting on February 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Dingman commented that the Senate is not expected to pass the legislation until at least March, and that it is unknown whether they will pass it. It only passed the House by four votes. If it does pass Senate, it will then take time for the conference committee to compromise the differences between the House and Senate legislation. With the ARRA legislation, the Senate made the timeframe more flexible, and so they could do that with Jobs for Main Street as well.
- Scherwitz asked whether airport projects would be eligible for Jobs for Main Street funding, and Dingman responded that airports fall under a separate pot of money. Musson commented that transit projects are also in a separate pot of money.
- **Total Cost Column** – Musson announced that, due to a change in the TIP e-file format to conform to federal regulations, he will need the true “total” cost for every project for the 2011-2014 TIP.
- **CMAQ Call for Projects** – Musson reminded the committee that the Call for Projects meeting for 2012-2014 CMAQ projects in Berrien County would be February 3, 2010 at 1:00pm at the Berrien Road Commission.

## 6. NEW BUSINESS:

### • TIP Amendments

#### ○ TCATA

- Modified in FY 2011, project named Public Transportation for operations the Federal cost changed from \$610,104 (5307) to \$704,000, the State cost changed from \$616,896 (CTF) to \$619,000 and the local cost changed from \$405,000 (TRAL) to \$442,000.

#### ○ MDOT

- Deleted in FY 2010, project named I-94 (JN 107176) to construct concrete deep overlay, beam end repair, full paint, pier repair, and approaches to the bridge at Benton Center Road over I-94 and Blue Creek, 3.0 miles east of Benton Harbor. The Federal cost is \$1,739,662 (BHI) and State cost is \$193,295 (M).
- Add in FY 2010, project named I-94 (JN 107161) to construct concrete deep overlay, beam end repair, full paint, pier repair, and approaches to the bridges at 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue (CR 376) over I-196, Benton Center Road over I-94, and 46<sup>th</sup> Street over I-94. The Federal cost is \$1,739,661 (BHI) and the State cost is \$193,296 (M). This is a three bridge project and only one bridge is within the MPO boundaries. The Federal and State cost reflect only the bridge that is located within the MPO boundaries.
- Add in FY 2010, project named EPE/PE/ROW Trunkline GPA for a Federal cost of \$5,990 (ST) and State cost of \$665 (M).
- Add in FY 2010, project named CPM CSM Bridge Trunkline GPA for a Federal cost of \$16,337 (ST) and State cost of \$1,815 (M).
- *Motion by Zebell, with support from South to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the above amendments of MDOT projects in the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program. Motion approved.*

- **Investment Reporting Tool Training** – Musson announced that the Investment Reporting Tool (IRT) Training will take place on February 18th at the Van Buren ISD. Representatives of all municipalities are encouraged to attend.
- **Trails Input Meeting for Berrien County** – Rahtz announced that, as part of SWMPC’s SMART nine-county non-motorized planning project, a public input meeting will be held on Thursday, February 4<sup>th</sup> from 6:30pm to 8:30pm at Andrews University Chan Shun Hall.
- **ADA workshop**
  - Musson stated that MDOT is offering to put on a workshop about ADA design requirements due to the rising number of lawsuits stemming from ADA issues. He asked if local agencies would be interested in attending and paying around \$200 to attend.

- The City of St. Joseph and the City of Benton Harbor expressed an interest.
- **Signal Retiming**
  - Musson stated that at the MTPA meeting a presentation was given by Jason Firman of Congestion and Mobility on signal retiming. MDOT is willing to help local agencies perform technical reviews of optimization projects whether they are funded through safety funds, CMAQ or on their own budget. MDOT will also help find funding for these projects.
- **Safety Projects**
  - Musson announced that MDOT has opened a FY 2012 local safety program call for projects.

**7. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- None

**8. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:**

- None

**9. ADJOURNMENT: 10:42 a.m.**

- Next meeting is February 22, 2010 at 9:30 a.m.

Compiled by: Nickolas Musson and Anna Rahtz, Transportation Planners, 1/27/10