

TWIN CITIES AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Technical Advisory Committee

Minutes

November 21, 2011

9:30 A.M.

Southwest Michigan Regional Airport

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT:	Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Chris Cook, City of Benton Harbor Erin Kercheval, MDOT - Coloma TSC Jason Latham, MDOT - Southwest Region Ray Lenze, MDOT - Statewide Planning Catherine Montoya, Berrien County Planning Commission John Olson, Royalton Township Bill Purvis, Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority Lee Scherwitz, Southwest Michigan Regional Airport Brian Shutts, Village of Shoreham Terrie Smith, Lincoln Charter Township Tim Zebell, City of St. Joseph
TAC MEMBERS ABSENT:	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) John Gruchot, Berrien County Community Development Nora Jefferson, Benton Charter Township Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Larry Merritt, Berrien County Road Commission Gloria Payne, Lake Charter Township Thad Rieder, Cornerstone Alliance William Rudman, Berrien County Planning Commission Robert Rusch, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (ex officio) Brad Sharlow, MDOT Planning (ex officio) Alan Smaka, St. Joseph Charter Township and City of Bridgman Joe Sobieralski, Village of Stevensville Rachael Tupica, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio) Sarah Woolcock, MDOT – Coloma TSC
SWMPC STAFF PRESENT:	Suzann Flowers Trevor Thomas
OTHERS PRESENT:	Joanne Johnson, Disability Network of SWMI Jason Bowen, Intern with the Southwest Michigan Regional Airport Steve Carlisle, Wightman & Associates Kim Gallagher, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

1. CALL TO ORDER:

- Scherwitz called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

2. MINUTES:

- A motion was made by Zebell with support by Cook, to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2011 TAC meeting with the following changes:
 - Bill Purvis stated that under Project Updates for 2011 TCATA will be replacing 3 buses.

Motion passed.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comments were received in November.

4. STAFF REPORT:

▪ Michigan Rail Summit

Flowers discussed her attendance at the Michigan Rail Summit on October 31 in Lansing. Governor Snyder, Senator Proos, and several people from the Federal Rail Administration and Federal Highway Administration spoke about the advantages of rail service for the state of MI. The Governor was clear that the Chicago to Detroit high speed rail line was a focus along with the building of the new bridge. There was also increased attention on the MI to Canada connection. The Wolverine Line gets money from the Federal Rail Administration, the Battle Creek to Port Huron line and Pere Marquette lines get money from the State of Michigan. The Summit focused on the importance of rail as an economic driver for the recovery of the state of Michigan. For southwest Michigan, connecting the South Shore line is very important so that we don't have people drive all the way to South Bend to pick up the train. Discussions about the importance of Transit Oriented Development in providing valuable and sustainable connections for our region. We need to think about the multi-modalism activities that must be connected to our rail stations, such as walking, biking, and transit. Questions that we need to ask of our region: Who were we in the past, who are we now, and who do you aspire to be?

○ Scherwitz added that the design of the TOD station in Meridian, Mississippi's success was using the original design of the station and rehabbing into a structure that could function with the past and present. He added that we can see the success of redevelopment in the Benton Harbor Arts District and the synergy that has been generated in our region and the synergy that resulted in Mississippi. The Mississippi example certainly had a build it and they will come mentality and it worked.

▪ Freight Workshop

Flowers attended a freight workshop in Lansing on November 10 and the focus of the workshop to discuss the supply chain role in transportation planning and economic development for the state of Michigan. The key speakers were two MSU professors from the Department of Supply Chain Management. The scope of the workshop focused on 6 key areas: An overview of supply chain management how supply chain management is used to maximize firm profits, private sector opportunities to add value public sector opportunities to add value, discussion of the results of research work done by the professors, and what the next steps should be. One of the key geographic areas that were discussed was the importance of regions, Michigan's connection to Canada, and the interconnected region of the Midwest. Lee Scherwitz from the Southwest Michigan Regional Airport was also in attendance from southwest Michigan.

○ Scherwitz added that the Columbus inland port was a major success in connecting multiple modes of transportation and changing the direction of commerce away from other busier ports. One of the key decisions was the raising of bridges for double stacked freight trains in OH. He also discussed that he made the point for the competition of US 31 and that the expansion of the Panama Canal will be a great asset to the Midwest.

▪ Officer elections due in 2013

The next cycle of officer elections will be held in 2013 unless any officer resigns, then an immediate election will be held at the next regularly scheduled committee meeting.

▪ New TIP Calendar (Next process date is January)

The Michigan Transportation Planning Association has issued the latest version of the Amendment Schedule for the Transportation Improvement Program. Handouts are available and the schedule was posted on the TwinCATS FY 2012 Meeting handouts. Flowers pointed out that there are not only changes on when TIP amendments will be processed but each TwinCATS meeting is listed along with when Staff needs to have TIP amendments submitted to be processed.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

▪ **Walk and Roll**

Staff will be asking for a vote to amend the TwinCATS Walk and Roll Plan into the 2009-2035 TwinCATS Long Range Plan.

▪ **Regional Interagency Consumer Committee (RICC) and Transportation Advocacy Group (TAG)**

The Berrien RICC hosted a legislative roundtable with Clay McClausland, Representative Fred Upton's local District Representative. Disability Network TAG Team members were in attendance, and mentioned the importance of transportation for getting to doctor's appointments, jobs and volunteer commitments. RICC and TAG members also addressed investing in community infrastructure to ensure a viable, successful community. Johnson added that the groups had a legislative roundtable with Representative Al Pscholka to discuss the importance of sidewalks and walkable streets for everyone to live independently in southwest Michigan.

▪ **Berrien County Coordinated Transportation Coalition (BCCTC)**

The Transit Regional Reduced Fare Card Program is up and running! Seniors that are ages 60 years or older and people with disabilities can now apply to receive a regional reduced fare identification card which allows him/her to receive half fares on any public transportation system in the region. Applications are available by mail or by visiting any of the following transportation agencies including Berrien Bus, Buchanan Bus, Dowagiac Dial- A- Ride, Niles Dial- A- Ride, Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority, Van Buren Public Transit, and Cass County Public Transit. Over the past two weeks, over 100 applications were processed and the reduced fare cards were mailed to customers for use immediately. Riders benefit from having the reduced fare card because he/she will no longer need to carry around sensitive documents to verify age or disability. Riders can also use his/her card when traveling throughout the region and to other states. For example, if one wants to visit Chicago and ride the bus system there, a person can use his/her reduced fare card and receive half off the fares. For more information about the Regional Reduced Fare Card program, please contact *Christina Pippen* at 269-925-1137 ext 19 or email pippenc@swmpc.org

▪ **Mobility Management Project:** Southwest Michigan Planning Commission's (SWMPC) GIS department and Mobility Management are currently analyzing origin and destination data from Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority (TCATA) drivers' logs (10,000 trips) to determine feasibility of new fixed routes in the TCATA service area. Data is also being analyzed to determine how many current dial a ride trips could be captured within the current fixed routes to reduce the wait time and cost of providing dial a ride trips. A fixed route actual trip cost is \$7.20 while a Dial-a-Ride actual trip cost is \$13.73.

For more information about this route planning project, please contact *Kim Gallagher* at 269-925-1137 ext 18 or email gallagherK@swmpc.org or contact *Christina Pippen* at 269-925-1137 ext 19 or email pippenc@swmpc.org

▪ **Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority (TCATA) Local Advisory Committee (LAC):**

No report for November, 2011.

6. PROJECT UPDATES

*All MDOT region wide projects do not need to be listed under project updates

▪ **2010 Projects:**

- MDOT

- I-94 EB and WB over Hickory Creek (bridge) JN 110779 CON Phase-design full replacement-project scope changed recently
- I-94 Empire Rd. over I-94, Rural Carmody Rd over I-94 (bridge) JN110931 CON Phase-design moved back to 2013
- I-94 under M-63 (bridge) JN 109093 CON Phase-design-construction 2012
- TCATA/Niles Dial A Ride
 - New expanded hours
 - New line haul route
 - Transit vehicle replacement (3 total)
 - Purvis stated that these 2012 projects may be in jeopardy due to FTA rules

7. OLD BUSINESS:

▪ TIP Project Selection Subcommittee Meeting

Flowers handed out copies of the notes that were compiled after the meeting. Thomas and Flowers explained what took place at the meeting and the process that was put into place for projects that want to be added or moved in the TIP.

Motion by Zebell with support by Olson to have the Policy Committee approve the TIP Project Selection Subcommittee meeting minutes from November 9, 2011 with the following changes:

- Larry Merritt was at the meeting representing the Berrien County Road Commission
- Under Item #2, Metropolitan and Organization were misspelled

Motion Passed

▪ Walk and Roll

Flowers stated that she received one comment from the public regarding the Walk and Roll Plan and that was from a resident who needed some further clarification of what the maps meant in the plan. Thomas discussed that to make the Walk and Roll Plan easy to incorporate into the current 2009-2035 Long Range Plan, that this new amendment would be listed as Appendix P TwinCATS Walk and Roll Plan. The legal notices will be attached to the Walk and Roll Plan to prove that public outreach was conducted in accordance with the Public Participation Plan. In addition, in the section titled Intermodal Consideration (page 83) a short paragraph will be added to the LRP to state the efforts of the Walk and Roll and where the amendment can be viewed. Thomas also explained that since SWMPC staff is currently in the process of creating a new LRP document that will better incorporate the elements of the TwinCATS Walk and Roll Plan.

Motion by Cook with support by Olson to amend the TwinCATS Walk and Roll Plan into the 2009-2035 TwinCATS Long Range Participation Plan as Appendix P. **Motion passed.**

8. NEW BUSINESS:

▪ Marquette Woods Road NFC designation change

Flowers discussed that she was contacted by Brian Berndt from the Berrien County Road Commission and Dick Stauffer from Lincoln Township about having Marquette Woods Road national functional classification changed from an urban local road to an urban collector. This action was prompted by the increased traffic that the road is seeing due to the new Meijer and an increase in cross county traffic. Flowers stated that she spoke with Mike Toth at MDOT regarding the change and he stated that the change should not be a problem due to the new retail store, installation of new traffic light, and that we were within our limits for the amount of federal aid eligible roads of this classification in the MPO. Flowers also stated that the full SWMPC Board will need to vote on this at their meeting in January 2012.

Motion by Smith with support by Zebell to recommend to the Policy Committee so approve the proposed NFC change on Marquette Woods Road. **Motion passed.**

- **TIP Amendments**
 - **City of St. Joseph**
 - **Lake Street**
Amending in FY 2012-Elm St. project into the Lake St. project. Broad to Elm St. Reconstruction, Elm to Park; Spot Concrete Replacement; Park St from Lake to Lions Park Dr Mill and Fill. Total project cost staying the same but the local match portion will increase from 210,000 to 240,000.
 - **Napier Avenue**
Amending in FY 2013 the clarification of the sewer work being done on Willa Road.
 - **Village of Shoreham**
 - **Brown School Road**
Amending in the Illustrative List of the 2011-2014 TIP the project known as Brown School Road, federal costs has increased from \$250,000 to 312,000 and the local costs has increased from 160,000 to 208,000. Total project cost has increased 110,000. Lenze commented that the project should list 19% local match in the comments column and then if more match is needed then it is available.
 - **Berrien County Road Commission**
 - Amending in FY 2012 the projects East Britain and Highland Avenue projects to reflect 1 total project instead of 2 projects. No change in project limits or description.

Motion by Olson with support by Montoya to approve the City of St. Joseph, Village of Shoreham and Berrien County Road Commission TIP amendments. **Motion passed.**

- **Asset Management Federal Aid Roads Report**
Thomas handed out a 2 page fact sheet that displayed the results from the 2011 Road Ratings. He explained that only 50% of the federal aid eligible roads are rated each year. In Figure 1 if you compare the years of 2009 and 2011 those would be the same roads rated and that if people wanted to a full list of the rated roads then they can go online to view those ratings since 2003.
- **Participation Plan Annual Review**
Flowers discussed that Transportation Public Participation Plan needs to be reviewed each year for effectiveness and since this is directly tied to the Long Range Transportation Plan that is currently underway, that this is a good time to make revisions and address measurable activities. Flowers provided a handout that currently shows the biggest changes being proposed which are the goals, activities and how they can be measured. She encouraged people to review the plan and to send comments to her at any time and that at the December 2011 meeting staff will be looking to the Committees to move the plan out for a public comment period of 45 days.
- **Attendance for 2011**
Flowers stated that staff is currently working on the annual review for the TwinCATS area and one of the items to review is attendance. She stated that letters will be going out to make sure that the listed representative is still able to attend meetings and that the person selected has not changed. She also stated how proud she was of the member communalities that attend on a regular basis.
- **2013 CMAQ Call for Projects**
Thomas handed out several items related to CMAQ including a CMAQ 2013 Call for Projects letter from MDOT, project list for 2011-2014 Berrien County CMAQ projects, and CMAQ 2013 Funding Amounts table. Thomas explained that due to the slight decrease in population in Berrien County there is a slight decrease in CMAQ funds. The funds available to 2013 are \$528,765 and the project list for desired CMAQ projects is at \$587,099. A meeting needs to be held to discuss 2012-2014 CMAQ projects with a

projection of lower funds for each year. He also reported that Rachael Tupica from Federal Highway is reviewing the list of 2012 projects and that he should know the status of those shortly.

A meeting date of December 19, 2011 at 8:00a.m. was proposed to meet to review this topic. The meeting will be held at the Southwest Michigan Regional Airport, this is also the same date as the next TwinCATS Committee.

Flowers and Thomas will help Berndt advertise and announce a call for projects in the region.

9. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

- Bill Purvis from Twin Cities Area Transit Authority spoke about the issue that John Gruchot brought up about a client waiting over 1 hour for service. He stated that their ridership has increased by 25% and that for only \$1.50 it is still a reasonable amount of time to wait for such a small fare. He also stated that a door to door service call will have a longer wait time than someone riding the line haul Red or Blue line routes.
- Scherwitz stated that signs on the bus advertising the line haul waits versus the door to door service waits would be a good way to make sure people understand how long they could be waiting for the bus.
- Purvis also stated that the extended service hours may be discontinued due to the fact that TCATS is operating the service without the monies that they are supposed to have for the service. The service will stay in operation until January but after that it is likely to be cancelled.
- Scherwitz also stated that they should prepare their passengers for this change by having media information, signs, flyers, etc ready to hand out to their clients if the change will happen.
- Kim Gallagher from the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission added that the extended route service is offered through Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) funding from the FTA, which allows people to access the blue route from 9am-5pm and also to access entry level jobs at Exit 23 on Red Arrow Highway. The funding issue is tied to Michigan's recent change that public employees have to pay 20% of their health care benefits. This is a federal issue that FTA has to work out with Michigan specifically.
- Gallagher also spoke about the fixed routes (line hauls) are competing with the door to door service for transit trips. On average a door to door service costs about \$13.00 while the fixed route is \$7.00. She stated that we have a transportation crisis because as people use other forms of transportation such as Care-A-Van it can cost them up to \$20.00 for a one way trip.
- Gallagher also spoke about the Berrien County Transit Feasibility Study and that in October 2011, KFH Group, consultant charged with the study, presented information on their findings to date. They presented information on expenses, revenues, etc. KFH Group is and has been meeting with the transit groups in Berrien County.
- Joanne Johnson from Disability Network of Southwest Michigan asked what the public could do to make sure these services are not lost. Purvis responded that he was not sure since this is an issue with FTA and Michigan specifically.

10. ADJOURNMENT at 10:50 a.m. Motion by Smith with support by Cook.

- Next meeting is **December 19, 2011 at 9:30am**

Compiled by: Suzann Flowers and Trevor Thomas, Transportation Planners, November 2011