

**Minutes**  
*Twin Cities Area Transportation Study*  
*TAC Meeting*  
 March 15, 2010  
 9:30 A.M.  
 Southwest Michigan Regional Airport

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

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

- Chairman Scherwitz called the meeting to order at 9:31 A.M.

**2. MINUTES:**

- *A motion was made by Cook, seconded by Purvis, to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2010 Joint TAC / Policy Committee meeting. 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.

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

- **Berrien County Road Commission**
  - Britain Avenue – Grade inspection (GI) package submitted

- Cleveland Avenue - Grade inspection (GI) package submitted
- Date Road Bridge – Will be submitting GI plans this week
- Hilltop Road – Waiting on ROW and cost share agreement, starting design
- Hollywood Road – submitted GI plans
- Pipestone Rd ACC – Advanced Construct Conversion
- Pipestone Rd/Nickerson Ave/Sodus Parkway/Red Arrow Highway – Construction August 1<sup>st</sup>
- **City of St. Joseph**
  - Broad Street – pre-construction March 30<sup>th</sup>/mid April construction will start
- **City of Bridgman**
  - Lake Street – Contract awarded
- **City of Benton Harbor**
  - Highland Avenue – GI plans will be submitted this week
- **MDOT**
  - I-94, Bridge Replacement (JN 104002) – Start July
  - I-94 BL, Expansion of Parking Lot – Advertised
  - I-94, ROW – Design phase in process

## 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.
  - Scherwitz suggested that Rahtz present about the "Walk and Roll" effort to local volunteer groups such as the Rotary Club. Several committee members agreed that local organizations or volunteer groups would be an appropriate vehicle for doing outreach to get input on the Walk and Roll Plan.
  - Merritt noted that there currently is not a local advocacy group working on non-motorized issues within the TwinCATS area.
  - Cook stated that Mike Jones from the Cycle & Fitness shop in St. Joseph had attended the Walk and Roll meetings and had been a good source of information about cycling in the area.
  - Cook asked the committee for feedback about the direction the Walk and Roll subcommittee should be heading in. He brought up a concern about the amount of time the outreach would take and who should be doing it.
  - Scherwitz suggested that the committee members need more time to read over the outreach plan. The committee members agreed to give more specific suggestions for the direction of the subcommittee by the April TwinCATS meeting on April 19, 2010. Walk and Roll will be meeting after that, on 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.

- Cook 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.
- Scherwitz noted that he will be out of town from March 25 through April 25, 2010.
- Panozzo asked if the handout from the February TwinCATS meeting could be put back up on the website as a handout. It illustrated the possible scenarios that could happen when a community decides not to pay its local match.
- Lenze noted that not all of the scenarios shown on the sheet are legally viable. He stated that there is no specific guidance from FHWA or MDOT about how to handle such situations, but that he does not believe a community's projects can be removed from the TIP (transportation improvement program). He 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.
- Van Buren added that Grand Rapids had an issue with a county wanting to entirely pull out of the MPO. The MPO had resolved the issue by threatening to consider the county's projects as the lowest priority in TIP project selection.

## **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.
- Lenze commented to Latham that all agencies within the MPO have to give TIP amendment requests to the MPO staff at least 10 days prior to the meeting. Musson stated that because this was turned in 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.
- Scherwitz asked whether the project would include rumble strips, commenting that this would be the only point of public controversy for this project. 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.
- *Motion by Berndt, seconded by Cook, to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the addition of the above project to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program. Motion approved.*

## **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.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT: 10:15 A.M.**

- Next meeting is April 19, 2010 at 9:30 A.M., chaired by Zebell.

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