

Minutes
Twin Cities Area Transportation Study
TAC Meeting
 July 20, 2009
 9:30 A.M.
 Southwest Michigan Regional Airport

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

1. CALL TO ORDER:

- Scherwitz called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M. Committee chairman and vice chairman were absent.

2. MINUTES:

- *A motion was made by Woolcock, seconded by Merritt, to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2009 TAC meeting. Motion approved.*

3. STAFF REPORT:

- **New Transportation Planner**
 - Anna Rahtz introduced herself, saying that she recently graduated from the University of Cincinnati with a Masters in Community Planning and has a Bachelors of Science in Architecture from Kent State University. While in graduate school, she worked at the Cincinnati Human Relations Commission, and retains an interest in cultural diversity and civic engagement. She has a strong interest in public transportation and non-motorized transportation, and bicycles to work. She has lived in Cincinnati, Ohio; Kent, Ohio; and Florence, Italy.

- **Southwest Michigan Trail Summit**
 - Musson went over a handout summarizing the trail summit that SWMPC held on June 25, 2009. The meeting had over 100 attendees, including planners, elected officials, and residents. The meeting attendees compiled information about existing, planned, and desired routes and trails in the nine-county region and formulated strategies for linking existing routes and trails. More information can be found at www.swmpc.org/smart_plan.asp.
- **Walkability Presentation**
 - Rahtz announced that several SWMPC staff attended a "Discussing Walkability in Benton Harbor" meeting on July 6, 2009, hosted by the Berrien County Health Department. The purpose of the meeting was to address health statistics in Berrien County, particularly the high rates of obesity. A Healthy Berrien Consortium was formed, and is being headed up by Lakeland Regional Health System. The Consortium was awarded a \$50,000 Building Healthy Communities planning grant from the Michigan Department of Community Health, and wants the input of other agencies in the area on what to do with the grant. Suggestions included a rails-to-trails project and hiring a consultant such as Dan Burden to help Benton Harbor develop a walkability plan.
 - The guest speaker at the meeting was Dan Burden of Walkable Communities, Inc. Rahtz went over a handout highlighting the main points of Burden's presentation, including the importance of walkable, healthy communities and some characteristics of walkable community design.
 - South commented that he thought a walkability audit of Benton Harbor had already been done in 2006.
- **Complete Streets Workshop**
 - Rahtz announced that several SWMPC staff also attended a workshop on "Complete Streets" at the Michiana Area Council of Governments meeting on July 8, 2009. The presentation was given by Randy Neufeld of the National Complete Streets Coalition. Rahtz went over a handout summarizing the main points of the presentation and stated that more information can be found at www.completestreets.org. She explained that one of the key discussion points of the workshop was strategies for gaining political support for walkable communities, including coalition building and "cycle street" demonstration days.
- **MTPA Conference**
 - Rahtz announced that several SWMPC staff also attended the annual conference of the Michigan Transportation Planning Association, July 14 through 17, 2009. She passed out a handout listing the workshop topics covered. She explained that a whole day of the conference was dedicated to discussing the importance of freight planning, including assessing the freight needs of the region and building relationships with the private sector in freight. Some of the other topics covered were the Kalamazoo promise, light pollution, wind turbines, the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU, and the transit planning process. The keynote speaker was Mark Fenton, a dynamic speaker on healthy, walkable communities who took session attendees on a "walkabout" of downtown Kalamazoo.

4. **PROJECT UPDATES:**

- Musson announced that, along with project updates, it should be stated whether projects are coming in under bid so that other potential projects can be moved up from the illustrative projects list to use the remaining ARRA funds. These potential projects should be ready to be bid by December 2009 to make the March 2009 deadline for ARRA.
- **Pipestone Road** - Completed
- **Empire Avenue** – Has been let
- **Linco Road** – Scheduled for a grade inspection on July 24, 2009
- **Linco Bridge** – Start July 20, 2009
- **Roosevelt SR2S** – Under construction
- **Glenlord / John Beers Road** – Obligated
- **Pipestone Road / Nickerson Avenue / Sodus** – August 20, 2009 letting
- **Historic Arts District, City of Benton Harbor** – Completed
- **Calvin Britain SR2S** – Under construction, end in August
- **Seelye McCord SR2S** – Under construction, end in August

- **Church Street** - Completed
- **Lake Street** – Plans finished in July
- **Park Street** – Bids are open
- **I-94 BL** – Under construction
- **I-94 BL Streetscape** – Under construction
- **I-94 BL (Main Street)** – Obligated
- **M-139** – Obligated
- **I-94** – Obligated; July 10, 2009 letting

5. **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Amtrak Budget Cut Letter**

- Musson explained that the Policy committee voted at the June 15, 2009 meeting to have SWMPC write a letter to elected officials asking them to reconsider the budget cut to the Amtrak Pere Marquette and Blue Water lines. The letter was written and signed, and it was mailed out on July 20, 2009. Recipients included: State Representatives Proos, Schuitmaker, and Tyler; State Senators Jelinek and Stabenow; Governor Granholm; and Congressman Upton.

6. **NEW BUSINESS:**

- **TIP amendments**

MDOT would like to amend the following FY 2009 & 2010 projects:

- Amended in FY 2009, the project name, limits, length, and federal and state costs of the project named I-94. The name changed to I-94 EB, and the limits changed from "north city limits of Bridgman to west of I-94 BL" to "Red Arrow Highway for 1.6 miles east." The length changed from 5.851 miles to 1.60 miles. The federal cost changed from \$450,000 to \$90,000, and the state cost changed from \$50,000 to \$10,000.
- Amended in FY 2010, the limits, length, and federal and state costs of the project named M-139. The limits changed from "north of US-31 junction" to "from 0.1 miles south of Hinchman Road to 0.3 miles north of the St. Joseph River." The length changed from 3.26 miles to 7.03 miles. The federal cost changed from \$319,000 (ST) to \$1,473,301 (NH), and the state cost changed from \$71,000 (M) to \$326,699 (M).
- Add in FY 2009, project named I-94 to replace bridge under Britain Avenue in Benton Harbor. ROW phase. The federal cost is \$24,300 and the state cost is \$2,700.
- Add in FY 2010, project named I-94 for: concrete deep overlay, beam end repair, full paint, pier repair, and approaches on bridge at Benton Center Road over I-94 and Blue Creek, 3.0 miles east of Benton Harbor. CON phase. Federal cost is \$1,739,662, and state cost is \$193,295.

MDOT would like to amend the following FY 2009 & 2010 projects under the general program accounts:

- Add in FY 2009, the project named M-139 for installation of school speed limit signs with flashing beacons at Mills Academy. Construction phase. The federal cost is \$12,496.
- Add in FY 2009, the project named M-63 for bridge submarine cables repair on M-63 over the St. Joseph River in the City of St. Joseph. Construction phase. The state cost is \$105,000.
- Add in FY 2009, the project named M-63 for bridge electrical work on M-63 over the St. Joseph River in the City of St. Joseph. Construction phase. The state cost is \$482,000.
- Add in FY 2009, project named I-94 Interchange for: consultant scoping for operational improvements with local primary road close to interchange ramps; and investigate alternatives for operational improvements. Early preliminary engineering phase. The state cost is \$100,000.

A motion was made by Berndt, supported by Schlipp, to recommend that the Policy committee amend the FY 2008-2011 TIP to add the previously mentioned MDOT projects.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- **2010 & 2011 Call for CMAQ Projects Meeting**

- Musson announced that a 2010 & 2011 Call for CMAQ Projects Meeting will be held on July 29, 2009 at 1:00pm at the Berrien County Road Commission. This is a call for projects to use the

CMAQ funds that remain because TCATA and Niles Dial-a-Ride were awarded ARRA funding to buy new buses and no longer need the CMAQ funding.

- Musson announced that Lincoln Township was interested in resubmitting their non-motorized project that had previously been rejected and wanted to know if they would have a better chance of being awarded the project if it was resubmitted. Van Buren responded that there are four specific requirements that FHWA uses when reviewing non-motorized CMAQ projects, and stated that the emissions benefits of non-motorized projects are generally very low. If resubmitted, the application would have to include maps that demonstrate a transportation use of the project beyond recreation, such as connecting activity nodes and employment locations; the project also shouldn't use CMAQ funding if there is any other type of funding available.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None

8. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

- Musson introduced Doug Plachcinski, of ENP Associates, who had previously attended a TwinCATS meeting to discuss the Berrien County Master Plan. Plachcinski explained that he had compiled a draft list of goals and objectives for Berrien County, and that after hearing the discussion at the TwinCATS meeting he would alter that list. He said that he would email the list of goals and objectives to the entire TwinCATS email list by the end of the day July 20, 2009, to get feedback on them.
- Scherwitz stated that he had been asked to step in and chair this meeting because there was no longer a committee chair. He asked for nominations for a new chair, and South made a point of order to ask whether the vice chair should step in and become the new chair in light of the chair's resignation. Musson said that he would check the procedure in the by-laws, and the new chair could be voted on at the next meeting.

9. ADJOURNMENT: 10:08 a.m.

- Next meeting is August 17, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.

Compiled by: Nickolas Musson and Anna Rahtz, Transportation Planners, 7/21/09