

Minutes
Twin Cities Area Transportation Study
Joint TAC and Policy Committee Meeting
 February 22, 2010
 10:00 A.M.
 Southwest Michigan Regional Airport

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| MEMBERS PRESENT: | Aaron Anthony, City of Bridgman Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Izzy DiMaggio, Berrien County Road Commission John Egelhaaf, SWMPC Jason Latham, MDOT Regional Planning Larry Merritt, St. Joseph Charter Township Debra Panozzo, Berrien County Commission Bill Purvis, Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority Thad Rieder, Cornerstone Alliance Lee Scherwitz, Southwest Michigan Regional Airport Roger Seely, St. Joseph Charter Township Don Schlipp, Village of Stevensville Jim Soteriou, Royalton Township Dick Stauffer, Lincoln Charter Township Sarah Woolcock, Michigan Department of Transportation - Coloma TSC Kevin Wordelman, Berrien County Commission Tim Zebell, City of St. Joseph |
| MEMBERS ABSENT: | Mickey Bennett, Sodus Township Bill Brown, Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (ex officio) Ron Carter, City of Benton Harbor Chris Cook, City of Benton Harbor Fred Featherly, MDOT - Multi-Modal Services (ex officio) Tim Fenderbosch, St. Joseph Charter Township Carolyn Fowler, Benton Charter Township John Gast, Lake Charter Township Norah Jefferson, Benton Charter Township Robert Judd, City of St. Joseph Jason Latham, Michigan Department of Transportation, Southwest Region Ray Lenze, Michigan Department of Transportation, Statewide Planning 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) Mark Seaman, Village of Shoreham Brad Sharlow, MDOT Planning (ex officio) Terrie Smith, Lincoln Charter Township Paul South, Michigan Department of Transportation- Coloma TSC Sarah Van Buren, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio) |
| SWMPC STAFF PRESENT: | Nickolas Musson Anna Rahtz |
| OTHERS PRESENT: | Tom Deneau, City of Bridgman Erin Kercheval, MDOT – Coloma TSC Kenton McAndrew, City of Benton Harbor Rich Vavra-Musser, Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers |

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**

- Technical Advisory Committee Chairman and Policy Committee Vice-chair Scherwitz called the meeting to order at 10:01 A.M.
- Introductions were made, and Izzy DiMaggio announced that he will be sitting in for RJ Burkholz as the Policy Representative for the Berrien County Road Commission as long as Mr. Burkholz is in the hospital.

2. **MINUTES:**

- *A motion was made by Berndt, seconded by Zebell, to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2010 TAC meeting. Motion approved by Technical Advisory Committee members.*
A motion was made by Woolcock, seconded by Panozzo, to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2010 Policy Committee meeting. Motion approved by Policy Committee members.

3. **STAFF REPORT:**

- **TCATA Fixed Route Promotion** – Purvis and Rahtz announced that widespread promotion of the TCATA fixed routes is being done, and passed out the finalized bus route brochures and promotional flyers. The schedules and maps are also available at www.gorideshare.org or on the SWMPC website in the Public Transit section.
 - Woolcock asked if TCATA would like a bus stop sign installed at the MDOT Rideshare lot near the Indian Trails station. Purvis explained that there was only time in the schedule for a certain number of fixed stops; the rest, including the Rideshare lot, are “flex stops,” which have to be requested.
 - Seely asked whether the Lakeland medical facility on Hollywood Road is included on the scheduled route. He added that this will be even more critical when the Cancer Care Center is built at that location. Purvis responded that the Hollywood Road facility is currently available as a “flex” stop on the Red Route and as a Dial-a-Ride trip. He said that it has been a schedule burden on TCATA to transport Dial-a-Ride passengers to Hollywood Road for medical trips, and that TCATA and SWMPC are hoping to partner with Lakeland to start a shuttle service from the Lakeland facility on Napier to the Lakeland facility on Hollywood. Rahtz added that she would appreciate any help in reaching someone at Lakeland.
 - A discussion was held about promotion of the routes, and the most effective outlets for promoting them. Rahtz requested help in getting an article published in the Benton Spirit.
 - Vavra-Musser thanked Rahtz for promoting the Red Route to Amtrak passengers so that they could request a flex stop on the Red Route and ride it to hotels along Red Arrow Highway.
- **NATS Survey Results** - Rahtz announced that the survey results had been compiled for NATS, in case anyone was interested in comparing the survey results for the two MPOs. The report or executive summary is available upon request, as well as available online under the NATS section, on the “What’s Important to You in Transportation?” page.

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
 - Hilltop Road – Waiting on ROW and cost share agreement, starting design
 - Hollywood Road – will submit GI plans by January 29th
 - Pipestone Rd ACC – Advanced Construct Conversion
 - Pipestone Rd/Nickerson Ave/Sodus Parkway/Red Arrow Highway – Construction August 1st.
- **City of St. Joseph**
 - Broad Street – March 5th bid letting
- **City of Bridgman**
 - Lake Street – Contract awarded next week
- **City of Benton Harbor**
 - Highland Avenue – GI plans will be submitted next week
- **MDOT**

- I-94, Bridge Replacement (JN 104002) – Start July
- I-94 BL, Expansion of Parking Lot – Parking lot will be closed mid April to May
- I-94, ROW – Design phase in process
- **TIP Amendment and Modification**
 - Amend in FY 2010, the description, federal and local costs for project named Cleveland Avenue. Project description changed from “minor base repair and single microsurface” to “minor base repair, sealcoat and single microsurface. The federal cost changed from \$194,754 to \$260,115 and the local cost changed from \$43,246 to \$57,680. The reason for this change is to use remaining STP funds in 2010.
 - Modified in FY 2010, the project limits and length for project named Highland Avenue. The limits changed from “Wall St to Fair Avenue” to “3rd St to 50 feet west of Fair Avenue” and the length changed from 0.75 to 0.74 miles. This was a clarification of the project limits and length.
 - *Technical Advisory Committee motion by Woolcock, with support from Zebell, to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the above amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program. Motion approved.*
 - *Policy Committee motion by Seely, with support from DiMaggio, to approve the above amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program. Motion approved.*
- **Jobs for Main Street** – Musson announced that at the 2011-2014 TIP project selection meeting on February 19, 2010, an illustrative list had been developed for potential Jobs for Main Street federal economic stimulus funding, on the chance that the bill is passed with transportation funding allocations. He passed out a handout with the illustrative list for road and transit projects.
 - Zebell remarked that, since Jobs for Main Street will be 100% federal funding with no local match needed, the amounts must be changed to reflect the total project cost. The table below reflects the corrected amounts.

| "Jobs for Main Street" STP | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Project Name | Responsible Agency | Total Cost | Project Category | Limits | Rank |
| John Beers Road | Village of Stevensville | \$451,342 | Reconstruction | St. Joseph Ave. to DeMorrow Rd and Red Arrow Highway to I-94 | 1 |
| Lincoln Avenue | BCRC/ Lincoln Twp | \$600,000 | Reconstruction | John Beers Road to Maiden Lane | 2 |
| California Road | BCRC/ Lake Twp | \$90,000 | Resurfacing | City of Bridgman to Red Arrow Highway | 3 |
| Broadway Avenue | City of Benton Harbor | \$300,000 | Mill and Resurface | Pipestone Avenue to Empire Avenue | 4 |
| Kingsley Avenue | City of St. Joseph | \$530,700 | Reconstruction | South State Street to Niles Avenue (M63) | 5 |
| Lake Street | City of St. Joseph | \$445,800 | Reconstruction | Elm Street to Broad Street | 6 |
| Lake Street | City of Bridgman | \$378,300 | Reconstruction | Church Street to Gast Road | 7 |
| Lake Street | City of Bridgman | \$483,200 | Enhancement | Church Street to Gast Road | 8 |

| "Jobs for Main Street" Transit | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Project Name | Responsible Agency | Federal Cost | Project Category | Limits | Rank |
| Facility Improvements | TCATA | \$100,000 | | | 1 |
| Transit Vehicle Replacement | TCATA | \$650,000 | | | 2 |
| Transit Operations | TCATA | \$80,000 | | | 3 |

- It was clarified that the "Rank" column reflects the order in which the projects will receive Jobs for Main Street funding, depending on the total amount that becomes available. Musson added that the projects were selected on "shovel-readiness" because of the tight timelines in the House version of the bill, but that the list could change if the Senate changes the timelines in the legislation.
- *A motion was made by DiMaggio, supported by Purvis, to approve the above list of projects as Illustrative projects for potential economic stimulus funding. Motion approved.*

5. OLD BUSINESS:

- **High Speed Rail Meeting** – Rahtz announced that the meeting about high speed rail would be held on Wednesday, February 24, 2010 at 10:00am in the City of St. Joseph Council Chambers. She introduced SWMPC Director John Egelhaaf to talk about the agenda items for the meeting.
 - Egelhaaf explained that the meeting was being held upon the request of the TwinCATS committees, to converse with Tim Hoeffner from MDOT about the future of the Pere Marquette Amtrak line. This involves two main issues – whether the Pere Marquette subsidy will be cut in the second half of fiscal year 2010, and whether the line will be rerouted away from St. Joseph and Bangor in Phase 5 of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative. Egelhaaf also commented that this meeting will be an opportunity to hear from MDOT as to whether rail is seen as a statewide solution for air quality and energy efficiency.
- **March Joint TwinCATS meeting** – Rahtz reminded the committees that the March meeting will also be a joint meeting starting at 10:00am, because Brad Peterson from MDOT will be presenting on Context Sensitive Solutions.
- **Non-motorized Subcommittee Meeting** – Rahtz announced that the TwinCATS Non-motorized Subcommittee will be meeting at the Abonmarche Office on Main Street in downtown Benton Harbor on Wednesday, February 24, 2010 at 8:00am. This meeting will be a follow-up to the information gathered at the SMART Trails Input Meeting for Berrien County held at Andrews University on February 4, 2010. The purpose of the meeting is to identify priority non-motorized connections that need to be made and action steps toward implementing them.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

- **Benton Harbor Local Match** – Egelhaaf announced that he was present at the meeting to discuss with the committees the fact that the City of Benton Harbor has not paid its local dues for 2008 and 2009, and recently sent a letter stating they it does not plan to pay the dues for 2010 until the City's suspension of non-contractual expenses is lifted. Egelhaaf emphasized that all other TwinCATS members have paid their local contributions; that this issue has never been dealt with before in the history of TwinCATS; and that if the City of Benton Harbor's contribution is not paid the remaining amount will have to be distributed amongst the other members. He also stated that it is necessary to establish a protocol for how this situation will be handled with any community in the future, not only the City of Benton Harbor.
 - Egelhaaf passed out three handouts – one that outlined the conversation between SWMPC and the City of Benton Harbor and the potential scenarios of the consequences of not paying dues; the letter received from City Manager Ron Carter stating that non-contractual expenses were being suspended; and one outlining the percentage distribution of payments between the municipalities (which is based upon population figures).
 - Egelhaaf added that federal legislation dictates that the "central city" of a metropolitan area be "represented" on the MPO committee but does not specify what representation means. He added that other regions throughout Michigan have struggled with this same issue and all have dealt with it in different ways. There are specifics in the legislation to lay out the consequences for not making the local contribution.
 - Woolcock asked what would happen if the total contributions from all of the TwinCATS member agencies were not paid, and Egelhaaf responded that the local contributions are used as a match for the federal planning funds that SWMPC receives; and so the federal amount for which SWMPC is eligible would be reduced. He explained that these planning funds are used to hire the transportation planners and to perform a wide variety of work at the Commission.
 - Egelhaaf and McAndrew explained that they had both had conversations with Mr. Carter since

receiving the letter from him, in which they had explained the importance of TwinCATS and the amount of federal money the City of Benton Harbor receives in transportation project funding because of TwinCATS. McAndrew stated that Mr. Carter now better understands the importance of paying the dues, but has not committed to a timeframe in which they will be paid. He added that Mr. Carter is waiting to see what will happen in a meeting with the State of Michigan on Friday, February 24, 2010.

- Scherwitz commented that he has had numerous conversations with Mr. Carter, and that Mr. Carter is doing the best he can but does not have the ability to pay back the City's many debts since the money simply is not in the City's budget at this time.
- It was agreed that action should not be taken immediately, but that further communication must be made with the City of Benton Harbor before the March TwinCATS meeting. It was added that some type of strong message must be sent to the City stating that it could lose its federal transportation money for future projects if the local contribution is not paid within a certain deadline. It was also agreed that the letter should be carbon copied to each City Council member's home in addition to being sent to Ron Carter, since he does not have total control over the situation.
- It was also suggested that Egelhaaf present the situation at the next City Council meeting. Egelhaaf mentioned that he has discussed the issue informally with two commissioners already, but has not communicated with them in a formal manner.
- Merritt asked why the issue has not been brought up for two years about the 2008 and 2009 dues that went unpaid. Egelhaaf responded that: SWMPC has continually sent notice of due payment to the City since 2007; that previous City Manager Richard Marsh had made the 2006 and 2007 payments; and that this is the first time that the City has put anything in writing that it does not intend to pay. The latter point is why action is being taken at this point.
- *Policy Committee motion by DiMaggio, with support from Seely, to give permission to Egelhaaf to draft a letter to Benton Harbor City Manager Ron Carter (carbon copied to all commissioners) stating that the City could lose its future federal transportation money (with the total amount of the City's future projects stated in the letter) if the local contribution is not paid within a time frame to be decided by Egelhaaf. The letter would be signed by Scherwitz on behalf of the Twin Cities Area Transportation Study Policy Committee. Motion approved.*

7. PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None

8. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

- **Investment Reporting Tool Training** – Musson announced that the Investment Reporting Tool (IRT) Training on February 18th was a success, and that he has the information packets from the training for anyone who is interested and was not able to attend.
- **Trails Workshop Series** – Rahtz passed out invitations for a workshop series that will be co-sponsored by SWMPC in the spring through fall of 2010. The series of four workshops will provide communities with all the information they need to get started on a trails project, find funding, deal with legal issues, and more. The information is also available at <http://swmpc.org/trailsworkshop.asp>.

9. ADJOURNMENT: 11:05 a.m.

- Next meeting is March 15, 2010 at 10:00 a.m.

Compiled by: Nickolas Musson and Anna Rahtz, Transportation Planners, 2/22/10