



Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

376 West Main Street, Suite 130 • Benton Harbor, MI 49022-3651

TWIN CITIES AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY TECHNICAL ADVISORY and POLICY COMMITTEES **COMBINED** MEETING

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kim Gallagher, *Transportation Planner*

(269) 925-1137 x 1518

Brandon Kovnat, *Transportation Planner*

(269) 925-1137 x1524

DATE: Monday, February 10, 2020 (second Monday)

TIME: 9:30AM

PLACE: Kinexus (Michigan Works!) **Lighthouse Room**

499 W Main St, Benton Harbor, MI 49022

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Introductions
2. Changes to the Agenda
3. Public Comment
4. Approve Minutes from January 13, 2020 Meeting (*Enclosed*) **Action**
5. Staff Report
6. Berrien Bus Pilot Program Presentation by Evan Smith
7. Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority Updates
8. MDOT Project Amendment (*Enclosed*) **Action**
9. State and Federal Updates
10. Privilege of the Floor or Public Comment
11. Adjournment

TWIN CITIES AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND POLICY COMMITTEE COMBINED MINUTES

January 13, 2019 – Kinexus, Lighthouse Room, and 499 W Main St, Benton Harbor, MI 49022

TWINCATS MEMBER ORG./POSITION	MEMBERS (2019)	TAC	POL	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Benton Charter Township	(Vacant)														
Berrien Co. Board of Commissioners	Bill Chickering		x	P											
Berrien Co. Community Dev. Dept.	Evan Smith	x		A											
Berrien Co. Planning Commission	Eric Lester, M.D.		x	P											
Berrien Co. Road Dept.	(vacant)		x												
Berrien Co. Road Dept.	Kevin Stack	x		P											
City of Benton Harbor	Ellis Mitchel		x	A											
City of Benton Harbor	Chris Cook (Pol. V. Ch.)	x	Alt	P											
City of Bridgman	Juan Ganum	Alt	x	A											
City of Bridgman	Tim Kading	x	Alt	P											
City of St. Joseph	John Hodgson		x	P											
City of St. Joseph	Tim Zebell (TAC V. Ch.)	x		P											
	Tom McDonald	Alt		A											
Cornerstone Alliance	Sue Wyman	x	x	A											
Disability Network of SW Mich.	(vacant)	x													
Hagar Township	(vacant)	x	x												
Kinexus	(vacant)	x													
Lake Charter Township	Gloria Payne	x	x	A											
Lincoln Charter Township	Dick Stauffer (Pol. Ch.)		x	P											
Lincoln Charter Township	Terrie Smith	x		P											
MDOT – Bureau of Trans. Planning	Jim Sturdevant	x	x	A											
MDOT – Southwest Region	Amy Lipset	x	x	P											
MDOT – Southwest Region	Brian Sanada	Alt	Alt	A											
MDOT – Trans. Service Center	Jonathon Smith	x	x	P											
Royalton Township	Steve Tilly	x	x	P											
Sodus Township	David Chandler	x	x	A											
Southwest Mich. Regional Airport	Vince Desjardins	x	x	A											
St. Joseph Charter Township	Denise Cook		x	P											
St. Joseph Charter Township	Roger Seeley	x		A											
	Ron Griffin	Alt		A											
	Jonathan Fisk	Alt		P											
Twin Cities Area Trans. Authority	Paul Gillespie	x	x	P											
Village of Grand Beach	(vacant)	x	x												
Village of Shoreham	Stephanie Clarke	x	x	P											
Village of Stevensville	(vacant)		x												
Village of Stevensville	Chris Cook (Pol. V. Ch.)	x	Alt	P											
Federal Highway Administration	Andy Pickard	x	x	A											
Federal Transit Administration	Angelica Salgado	x	x	A											
EGLE - Air Quality	Breanna Bukowski	x		A											
MDOT - Modeling	Katie Beck	x		A											
MDOT - Passenger Division	Fred Featherly	x		A											
Northwestern Ind. Reg. Plan. Comm.	Scott Weber	x	x	P											
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Kim Gallagher	x	x	P											
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Brandon Kovnat			p											

Pol. Ch.- Policy Chair; TAC Ch. - TAC Chair; Alt - Alternate
P - Present; A- Absent; A blank spot means the position is vacant.

1. **Call to Order / Introductions**

Policy Committee chair, Dick Stauffer, called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM and led the group in introductions.

Stauffer Requested a moment of silence for Carolyn Fowler, the long-standing representative from Benton Charter Township, who passed away in November.

Stephanie Clarke introduced herself as the new representative for the Village of Shoreham.

2. **Changes to the Agenda**

None.

3. **Public Comment**

None.

4. **Approve Minutes**

Motion to approve the minutes from the November 18, 2019 combined Technical Advisory and Policy Committee meeting. Made by Steve Tilly and seconded by Denise Cook. **Motion approved.**

5. **Staff Report**

Gallagher discussed the flooding in Benton Harbor. She said that MDOT had hired the firm Wade Trim to design a solution for flooding on I-94 BL/main Street.

Stauffer said that there was a major issue with erosion in Lincoln Township. Currently, property owners who can afford it are building sea walls.

Lipset said that shoreline erosion is a statewide issue. Many roads throughout the state are affected by shoreline erosion including MDOT roads. MDOT has formed a committee in Lansing to discuss the issue.

6. **Transit Updates**

Gillespie talked about the Yellow Route, which will open on January 15 and will cover northern Benton Harbor. Gillespie said that this fixed route will be more cost effective than running demand response to the same area. In addition, the fixed route will be more reliable and reduce wait times for riders. The route will have one bus and use two drivers. It is being funded with TCATA's current funding using federal, state, and local funds.

Gillespie said that all TCATA buses had adopted tablet-based dispatch. He said that prior to this, drivers had to remember a lot of details and record ridership by paper. The new system will make dispatch easier and greatly improve data collection.

7. **Locally Maintained Road Project Updates**

The only updates for Berrien County relate to the two projects being amended.

8. **Berrien County Road Department TIP Amendments**

Kovnat presented a cost increase for Napier Avenue, which was submitted by the Berrien County Road Department. Kovnat explained that asphalt prices have risen significantly causing a large increase in road construction costs.

Kovnat presented a scope change for Marquette woods bridge, which was submitted by the Berrien County Road Department. Upon inspection of the bridge it was determined that the bridge would not need to be replaced. To accommodate pedestrian traffic, a separate pedestrian bridges will be built on each side of the road. The project will also include the replacement of a culvert on Marquette Woods

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the amendment as submitted by Berrien County Road Department. Made by Terrie Smith and seconded by Amy Lipset. Motion approved.

Motion for the Policy committee to approve the recommendation from the Technical Advisory Committee. Made by Steve Tilly and seconded by Chris Cook. **Motion approved.**

9. **MDOT**

Smith provided the following updates:

- The I-94BL from I-94 to Glendlord resurfacing was bid 8% under the estimate
- The I-94BL from the St. Joseph River to Fair Avenue resurfacing was bid 14% over the estimate
- The Culvert replacement on -139 is currently in design.

10. **MDOT amendment**

Jonathon Smith presented a cost increase for the signal replacement at M-63 & Washington Avenue. He also presented the PE phase for a new signal replacement project at the I-94 off ramp at M-139.

Lipset discussed the cost increase for the I-94 Interchange reconstruction. She said that the primary reason for the cost increase was higher prices for asphalt. Lipset explained that in 2017 asphalt cost \$90/ton but now costs \$160/ton. The initial cost estimate was made several years ago based on the cost of asphalt in 2016. She also said that the cost estimate at the time did not include any of the work along I-94 BL/Main Street.

Zebell asked whether MDOT reevaluated the lifecycle costs of the project using asphalt versus concrete. Lipset said that she would take that question back to the engineering staff.

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the amendments from MDOT as submitted. Made by Steve Tilly and seconded by Johnathon Fisk.

Motion for the Policy committee to approve the recommendation from the Technical Advisory Committee. Made by Denise Cook and seconded by Steve Tilly.

11. **US-31/I-94 Interchange Updates**

Lipset said that tree removal was still awaiting FWS approval. She remained that committees that cutting could only occur between October and March 21 to avoid disturbing the endangered Indian bat nesting. This approval is six weeks behind when it was expected.

Smith said that some work could begin without tree removal. it is not known exactly how much or if this will delay the entire project.

Lipset explained that MDOT's original plan included a bridge for Empire to cross US-31. , the current proposal does not include construction of a bridge, and instead proposes having Empire avenue dead end at US-31 on both sides. Lipset explained that Empire Avenue has low traffic volumes and the bridge on Britain Avenue will be ½ mile north of empire. It did not make sense to build two bridges over US-31 so close together. They will save a large sum of money by not constructing the empire bridge and avoid the long-term maintenance commitment.

12. **State and Federal Updates**

Gallagher said she had attended a TAP meeting in Lansing where the issue of failing infrastructure due to erosion was discussed. MDOT said that TAP funds will only be used for new construction and that they can't fund replacement or repairs to all the facilities damaged due to erosion.

Stauffer said that Lincoln Township applied for TAP funding for the Roosevelt Road path; they should know in February whether or not they received the grant.

13. **Privilege of the floor**

Tilly said that the sign at the M-139 exit on I-94 is written as “M-139/Scottsdale.” This has caused a misuse of the road name. Some business are saying that their address is on Scottsdale while the official name is M-139. This causes confusion for the Township and could be a potential issue for first responders.

Gillespie asked about TwinCATS representation from Benton Charter Township and from the City of Benton Harbor. He said that because both jurisdictions are the biggest users of transit it would be beneficial for representatives to be present at TwinCATS meetings.

14. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 AM. The next meeting is scheduled for January 13, 2019 at 9:30 AM.

Minutes compiled by Brandon Kovnat, SWMPC Associate planner

DRAFT

MDOT TIP Amendment Request

For the February 10, 2020 TwinCATS TAC & Policy Meeting

Background: During the “State of the State” address, Governor Whitmer introduced a bonding plan for MDOT. On Thursday, January 30, 2020 the State Transportation Commission passed a resolution supporting this bonding plan of up to \$3.5 billion. Using the bond certain projects identified in the MDOT 5-yr. Plan will be now be constructed sooner than originally programmed by using 100% state funds. Within the TwinCATS area, the following projects will be funded with the bond:

I-94 Reconstruction from exit 23 to the St. Joseph River – JN132824

This project was programed in the MDOT 5-yr. plan for 2024 using 90% federal funds. Using the bond financing the project will now be constructed in 2022, using 100% state funds.

	Programed in 5-yr. Plan	Proposed
Year	2024	2022
Federal Cost	\$73,308,600	\$0
State Cost	\$8,145,400	\$81,454,00
Total Cost	\$81,454,00	\$81,454,00

REBUILDING MICHIGAN

In her State of the State address, Governor Whitmer will announce Rebuilding Michigan, a road bonding plan, to ensure the safety of Michigan drivers. We simply cannot afford to wait.

THE PROBLEM

Michigan has the worst roads in the nation. Our roads are dangerous, and the longer we wait to fix them, the more expensive it gets. But Republican legislators keep putting up roadblocks to road repairs, and drivers are paying the price.



THE GOVERNOR'S PLAN:

Rebuilding Michigan, the governor's bonding program, is a fiscally responsible plan that will add and expand 122 major new projects and nearly double the amount available to fix state trunklines and freeway/over the next five years and fix them right - with the right mix and materials. No politics. No tax increase. Just action.

This plan will:

- **Add and expand 122 major new projects over the next five years:** The governor's Rebuilding Michigan plan will add an additional \$3.5 billion in road funding, which means we'll add and expand 122 major new road projects and nearly double the amount available to fix roads over the next five years than if we wait.
- **Keep drivers safe:** If this isn't done now, many Michigan bridges and overpasses are at risk of collapses that could close roads and hurt or kill people.
- **Save money in the long run:** Funding roads and infrastructure now will save money in the long run by cutting down the need for more costly repairs later.
- **Get us to work now:** This plan means roads will start being fixed immediately rather than waiting for the legislature to act.
- **No increase at the pump:** The Rebuilding Michigan plan is financed without an increase at the gas pump.

What is bonding?

Bonding means the state Department of Treasury will sell state transportation bonds, which will be financed with existing gas tax revenue. This works like a long-term, low-interest loan to raise money now so we can get to work and start fixing Michigan's state roads.

What does the financing look like?

Financing depends primarily on actors in the bond market. Fortunately for Michigan, bonds are considered safe investments and MDOT's credit rating and bond capacity will be seen as attractive by investors.

Has anyone done this before?

Yes, governors from both parties have issued bonds to raise funds for road construction, including Governor Blanchard, Governor Engler, and Governor Granholm.