

# *Berrien County Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)*

## **Meeting minutes**

November 9, 2021 - 2:00 PM

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

376 West Main St. Suite 130 Benton Harbor, MI 49022

### **Attendance**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Brian Sanada	MDOT Southwest Region
Kevin Stack	Berrien County Road Department
Dan Faulkner	Village of Three Oaks
Tm Drews	Abonmarche Consultants on behalf of Benton Harbor
Jesse Hibler	Village of Berrien Springs
John McCann	Virdis Design Group on behalf of Berrien Springs
Dick Stauffer	Lincoln Township
Kelly Gettman-Disette	Niles Dial A Ride
Dan Fette	Berrien Bus
Paul Gillespie	TCATA
Tony McGee	Abonmarche Consultants on behalf of Three Oaks
Gary Wood	Chikaming Township

### **1. Call to Order and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 PM.

### **2. Overview of CMAQ Program and Project Selection**

Gallagher explained that the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program (CMAQ) is a federal program that funds transportation projects which reduce emissions. CMAQ is allocated to counties which are designed as non-attainment for ozone standards or have been in non-attainment (referred to as in maintenance). Gallagher added that Berrien County is currently designated as non-attainment for ozone and receives increased CMAQ funding due to this.

It was decided that the voting structure would follow a similar structure that was used in the 2020-2023 project selection. Each agency that applied would receive one vote. The committee is comprised of a representative from:

TCATA	City of Benton Harbor
Berrien Bus	Village of Berrien Springs
Niles Dial A Ride	Village of Three Oaks
Lincoln Township	Berrien County Road Department

### **3. Changes or Additions to the Agenda**

None

#### 4. Public Comment

None

#### 5. Review 2022-2023 Projects

Gallagher briefly explained the projects which were selected for 2022 and 2023. She explained that due to the canceling of the Roosevelt Road Non-motorized project, additional funds had become available. These funds were awarded to Oronoko Township for a path along Snow Road.

#### 6. Selection of 2024-2026 Projects

Each Agency gave an overview of their proposed projects

**Niles Dial A Ride:** Gettman-Dissette explained that they receive funding from FTA for operating (5307) and for capital purchases (5339). This has typically been sufficient for replacing buses. Niles Dial A Ride recently took over operations for Buchanan Dial A Ride which does not receive as much funding. She said she needed to use CMAQ to replace the three buses that used to belong to Buchanan Dial A Ride.

**TCATA:** Gillespie said that in 2018 they had purchased propane buses. These buses have reliability issues in warm weather. To use CMAQ funds you must show an air quality improvement, therefore, you cannot replace a lower emission fueled vehicle with a higher emission fueled vehicle such as propane to gasoline. The only option for replacing these buses with CMAQ funds was to purchase electric buses. There have been full sized electric transit buses on the market for a while but not electric cut-away buses. The first electric cut-away buses are currently undergoing testing and should be available for purchase by 2025.

The project is contingent upon TCATA's ability secure funding for charging stations and related infrastructure by 2024. It was also noted that electric vehicles may not be ready for procurement in 2024 through the state of Michigan contract. If chosen the project will be reviewed mid year 2023 for update from TCATA.

**Berrien Bus:** Fette said that as a rural transit agency there are fewer resources available for bus replacements than urban agencies. Historically CMAQ has paid for half of their buses

**Berrien Springs:** Hibler explained that the Lake Chapin Bridge was a key connector for the Indiana Michigan River Valley Trail. If this bridge could be built, he believed it would spur the funding for the remaining portion of the trail. The bridge represents the most direct connection across the St. Joseph River. The alternative route to follow M-139, would cost close to the same amount. The bridge will directly connect the Village of Berrien Springs with Range Line Park across the river.

**Lincoln Township:** The map of Lincoln Township was displayed showing the existing sidewalks. Stauffer explained that there a gap of sidewalks on John Beers from to the Village

of Stevensville. He said adding sidewalks would allow Township residents to walk into Stevensville and allow Village residents access to the library, schools, and parks.

**Three Oaks:** The proposed path would connect a manufactured home park on the Villages western edge to the downtown, including a grocery store and schools. Faulkner said that many of the residents of the park do not own a car. He added that there was plans for additional development along US-12 that would benefit from a path. It was clarified that the path will be 10-ft. on the south side of US-12.

**City of Benton Harbor:** Drews said the current signal was from the 1990s. The new signal will have actuation to speed up traffic flow. He added that this will be part of a plan sync the entire empire corridor.

**Berrien County Road Department:** Stack said that the project would add offsite connectivity to signals allowing remote control. The project will also add synchronization between signals. This will also complete the synchronization and remote control for Napier Avenue.

Stack mentioned that the County has plans for a linear park/path all along Red Arrow Highway. His proposal would continue the path from the Union Pier area northward. He said that he did not need to rely solely on CMAQ funding for this; he can look for alternate grants including the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

Stack said he would remove his Red Arrow path project from the list. He then presented a scenario in which, partial funding could be given to Berrien Springs if all the other agencies added additional local match to their projects. Hibler said that even with partial funding the remaining match would be too much for the village and agreed to remove the Lake Chapin Bridge project.

With these two projects removed, there was a deficit of \$50,611 in 2024, a surplus of \$48,294 in 2025, and a surplus of \$68,294 in 2026.

Stack proposed to use advance construct on his signal project to balance 2024. He will remove \$50,611 from the project in 2024 and be repaid with \$48,294 in 2025. Stack requested to leave the \$68,294 balance in 2026 unprogramed. He believed that these funds will be needed to cover rising costs, especially for buses.

The following funding proposal was presented:

Fiscal Year 2024			
Allocation		\$804,294	
Agency	Project	Federal CMAQ	Match
Berrien County Road Department	Countywide Signal Upgrade	\$159,894	\$100,000
City of Benton Harbor	Empire & Colfax Signal Improvement	\$288,320	\$72,080
Niles Dial A Ride	Replace Three (3), 2016 cutaway buses with 2024 Transit Vans	\$140,000	\$35,000
Village of Three Oaks	US-12 Non-Motorized Path	\$200,080	\$50,020
SWMPC	Rideshare	\$16,000	\$0
Balance		<b>\$0</b>	

Fiscal Year 2025			
Allocation		\$804,294	
Agency	Project	Federal CMAQ	Match
Berrien Bus	Replace three (3), 2018 gasoline buses with 2025 gasoline buses	\$260,000	\$65,000
TCATA	Replace two (2) 2018 propane buses with 2025 electric buses	\$480,000	\$120,000
Berrien County Road Department	Countywide Signal Upgrade (ACC)	\$48,294	NA
SWMPC	Rideshare	\$16,000	\$0
Balance		<b>\$0</b>	

Fiscal Year 2026			
Allocation		\$804,294	
Agency	Project	Federal CMAQ	Match
Berrien Bus	Replace Five (5), 2019 gasoline buses with 2026 gasoline buses	\$320,000	\$80,000
Lincoln Township	John Beers Sidewalk	\$400,000	\$590,000
SWMPC	Rideshare	\$16,000	\$0
Balance		<b>\$68,294</b>	

**Motion** to program Berrien County's 2024, 2025, and 2026 CMAQ funds as presented and to add the two remaining projects to an illustrative list. was made by Dan Fette and Seconded by Dan Faulkner. **Motion Approved unanimously.**

It was agreed that the two projects which were not selected were worthy projects with large support behind them. If further funding becomes available, either additional funds or because another project is canceled, these projects will be considered before a new call for projects is issued.

**7. Public Comment or Privilege of the Floor**

Those present thanked Kevin Stack for his work on presenting various funding scenarios. He was also thanked for the Road Department’s willingness to contribute more than the minimum 20% local match on the signal project.

**8. Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 3:35 PM.

Berrien CMAQ Illustrative list

Agency	Project	Description
Berrien County Road Department	Red Arrow Highway Non-Motorized path	Extend the Red Arrow Linear Path. To be constructed in conjunction a roadway project along Red Arrow Highway. This will allow residents to access small business districts without needing to drive between locations.
Village of Berrien Springs & Berrien Township	Lake Chapin Interurban Non-Motorized Bridge	Non-motorized bridge over Lake Chapin, which will be part of the Indiana-Michigan River Valley Trail connecting Niles to Berrien Springs

*Minutes compiled by Brandon Kovnat, SWMPC Associate Planner*