

**Minutes**  
*Twin Cities Area Transportation Study*  
*Policy Committee Meeting*  
 October 18, 2010  
 10:30 A.M.  
 Southwest Michigan Regional Airport

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| <b>POLICY MEMBERS PRESENT:</b> | Mickey Bennett, Sodus Township<br>Tim Fenderbosch, St. Joseph Charter Township<br>Robert Judd, City of St. Joseph<br>Jason Latham, MDOT Regional Planning<br>Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning<br>Larry Merritt, Berrien County Road Commission<br>Debra Panozzo, Berrien County Commission<br>Roger Seely, St. Joseph Charter Township<br>Jim Soteriou, Royalton Township<br>Paul South, MDOT Coloma TSC<br>Dick Stauffer, Lincoln Charter Township<br>Bruno Trapikas, Village of Shoreham  |
| <b>POLICY MEMBERS ABSENT:</b>  | Aaron Anthony, City of Bridgman<br>Bill Brown, NIRPC (ex officio)<br>Ron Carter, City of Benton Harbor John Egelhaaf, SWMPC<br>Carolyn Fowler, Benton Charter Township<br>John Gast, Lake Charter Township<br>Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio)<br>Bill Purvis, TCATA<br>Representative, Cornerstone Alliance<br>Lee Scherwitz, SW Michigan Regional Airport<br>Donald Schlipp, Village of Stevensville<br>Rachael Tupica, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio)<br>Kevin Wordelman, Berrien County Planning Commission |
| <b>SWMPC STAFF PRESENT:</b>    | Anna Rahtz<br>Trevor Thomas   |
| <b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b>         | Ron Griffin, St. Joseph Charter Township<br>Joanne Johnson, Disability Network SWMI<br>Brad Sharlow, MDOT Planning (ex officio)   |

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

- Chairman Judd called the meeting to order at 10:34 A.M.

**2. MINUTES:**

- *A motion was made by Stauffer, seconded by Bennett, to approve the minutes of the September 20, 2010 Policy Committee meeting. Motion approved unanimously.*

**3. STAFF REPORT:**

- **Rail Update**
  - Rahtz announced that she had attended the MDOT public hearing on the State Rail Plan, held in Grand Rapids on September 29<sup>th</sup>. She had spoken with one of the consultants from HDNP and Larry Karnes from MDOT Multimodal Division, who had said that MDOT has decided to reopen the alternatives study for the Pere Marquette before it ever gets rerouted through Kalamazoo. It is not known how much detail this State Rail Plan will go into regarding the Pere Marquette; MDOT is still working out a system for prioritizing rail investments in the plan. It is a long range plan with proposed rail investments (using different financial scenarios) over the next 25 years.

- There was discussion about whether it is best to stay low under the radar. Judd asked how committed MDOT is to restudying the alternatives of the Pere Marquette. Rahtz responded that they seemed committed to the study but that it would be separate from the plan now being written and it is not known when that study will be done.
  - **US Bicycle Route 35 Public Hearing**
    - Thomas announced that he and several committee members had been in attendance at the public hearing hosted by SWMPC (Suzann Flowers) at Michigan Works! on September 29<sup>th</sup>. There were around 50 attendees, and a lot of constructive feedback had been received on the proposed alignment for the bicycle route.
    - It was asked if there would be a follow-up meeting about the US BR 35 project. Thomas responded that it would be discussed at a trails workshop being cosponsored by SWMPC, which would be mentioned further down on the agenda.
    - Rahtz added that Paul Vandenbosch out of South Haven is heading up the US BR 35 project for Van Buren and Berrien counties, and that his next step will be to propose the route alignments to the counties and to MDOT.
    - It was asked why the project was named Route 35, and Rahtz explained that it was a national numbering system created by AASHTO and the Adventure Cycling Association.
  - **TwinCATS Annual Report**
    - Rahtz announced that the fiscal year 2010 Annual Report for TwinCATS had been completed and will be available on the TwinCATS Documents page on [www.swmpc.org](http://www.swmpc.org).
  - **UWP and TIP**
    - Rahtz announced that the 2011 Unified Work Program was approved by FHWA and is available on the TwinCATS Documents page on [www.swmpc.org](http://www.swmpc.org).
    - Rahtz added that the 2011-14 Transportation Improvement Program is waiting for approval from FHWA, and the current TIP is valid until October 31, 2010.
  - **CMAQ Meeting November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1:00pm, Berrien County Road Commission**
    - Thomas announced that a special CMAQ meeting has been called by St. Joseph and the Berrien County Road Commission for the purpose of discussing the Hilltop Road sidewalk project.
    - Lenze added that because of the new EPA standards, three-quarters of the State of Michigan will qualify for CMAQ funding starting in fiscal year 2012, and so the same amount of CMAQ funding for the State of Michigan will be divided up amongst far more counties.
  - **Final Trails Workshop – “Connecting the Dots”**
    - Thomas announced that the final workshop in the Trails Workshop series will be held at the Van Buren Conference Center on October 27<sup>th</sup> from 8:30am to 12noon. The workshop will cover the Michigan Airline Trail, the US Bike Route System, the Rails-to-Trails program, Safe Routes 2 School, and Complete Streets. He mentioned that Rahtz had registration forms, and there is an online registration form on the SWMPC website.
- 4. OLD BUSINESS:**
- **Benton Harbor Local Match Update**
    - Rahtz stated that she had not been able to check on whether the money had come in yet. Lee Scherwitz had met with Emergency Financial Manager Joseph Harris after the September TwinCATS meeting and had been assured that the payment would be sent.
  - **Walk and Roll update**
    - Cook and Thomas gave an update on the Walk and Roll planning process. Meetings are being set up with municipalities to go over the benefits of non-motorized facilities and the current maps of proposed facilities.
  - **Public Participation member survey**
    - Rahtz went over the results of the survey of TwinCATS members regarding TwinCATS’ progress in fulfilling participation requirements. She noted that the TAC had not moved on any changes to the participation processes.
    - South discussed the necessity of explaining the transportation funding system to one citizen at a

time.

- It was noted that it has been brought up as a concern that daytime meetings are inconvenient for the public. Panozzo stated that the Berrien County Commission holds an evening meeting every year. It was proposed that TwinCATS and NATS partner with the County Commission to hold a Special Policy meeting once a year in the evening.
- It was asked how other MPOs in the state deal with participation and what works best for them. Rahtz and Thomas noted that other MPO staff have told them to hold evening meetings and offer food and daycare. Genosee County instead holds open house-style meetings in the same format that MDOT uses.
- It was noted that even with providing daycare, it would still be difficult to get families to attend evening meetings because there are so many school activities and extra-curricular activities in the evenings.
- Lenze noted that TwinCATS and NATS are the only MPOs in the state that hold the TAC and Policy Committee meetings immediately after one another. Other areas hold the TAC meeting during the day and hold the Policy Committee meeting at the end of the day or in the evening. This gives the public more options of times to attend.
- **Long Range Plan / Socioeconomic Data Update**
  - Thomas reminded the committee members to hand in their revisions to the employment data to him before leaving the meeting, or to make comments electronically on the Google Documents site as soon as possible.

## 5. NEW BUSINESS:

- **State Transportation Budget**
  - Rahtz asked an MDOT representative to give an update on the state transportation budget.
  - South explained that the State had sold around \$50 million worth of bonds in order to make the local match to fund the full state transportation program for fiscal year 2011. He added that this solution had not addressed the bigger concern of a steady revenue stream for transportation.
  - Merritt asked if anyone at the State was considering raising the motor fuel tax. South responded that the legislature does not have the political will to raise taxes in this economic climate. He added that the gas tax revenues are projected to decrease due to increased fuel efficiency in vehicles, as well as increasing use of electric cars.
  - Griffin noted that oil prices already frequently fluctuate by 25 cents, and so a 5 cent increase in the gas tax would hardly be noticeable to the consumer.
  - South responded that even a nickel increase would not be enough to bring in the needed revenue. He added that MDOT is planning to educate the new state legislators on the importance of funding transportation.
- **TIP Amendments**
  - Rahtz noted that all amendments outlined below had been approved by the TAC. She also noted that the applications for new projects were available in case anyone had any questions about the projects.
  - MDOT
    - Add in FY 2011, the project named I-94 for Trunkline Bridge CPM/CSM GPA work, specifically healer/sealer on deck surface. Urban locations are on I-94 EB and WB over Lake Street/Galien River and I-196 NB and SB over I-94 in Coloma TSC area. Construction phase. Federal cost (BHI) is \$168,192 and state cost (M) is \$18,688 within urbanized area. MDOT Job Number 108174. 21.80% of job is in TwinCATS area.
    - Add in FY 2011, the project named I-94 for bridge work, specifically concrete shallow overlay, beam and substructure repair, paint bearings, joints, railing retrofit, and approaches. Urban location is Empire Ave over I-94. Construction phase. Federal cost (IM) is \$481,805 and state cost (M) is \$53,534 within urbanized area. MDOT Job Number 110931. 31.74% of project is in TwinCATS area.

- *Judd noted that this project is an expenditure of half a million dollars to repair a bridge that is designated for replacement as part of the US-31 completion.*
- *South was asked about the status of other future projects on I-94 and responded that he would report on the status of two scoping projects at the next meeting.*
- Add in FY 2011, CPM CSM Bridge Trunkline GPA for Capital Preventive Maintenance and Capital Structural Maintenance on Bridge Trunkline. Limits are regionwide. Construction phase. Federal cost (ST) is \$362,294 and state cost (M) is \$40,255.
- Add in FY 2011, CPM Road Trunkline GPA for Capital Preventive Maintenance on Road Trunkline. Limits are regionwide. Construction phase. Federal cost (ST) is \$1,542,873 and state cost (M) is \$342,127. Comments: MDOT project 109704 moved from 2010 to 2011, moved into GPA.
- Add in FY 2011, Program Development Scoping Trunkline GPA. Limits are regionwide. Phase is Early Preliminary Engineering. Federal cost (ST) is \$39,162 and state cost is \$11,842.
- Add in FY 2012, the project named I-94 for bridge restoration and rehabilitation, specifically deep overlay and railing replacement on EB and WB I-94 over Hickory Creek. Construction phase. Federal cost is \$1,244,452 (IM) and state cost (M) is \$138,274.
- *Stauffer asked for clarification on the railing replacement and South responded that the railing will be replaced with a new concrete railing.*
- *Motion by South, seconded by Merritt, to approve adding the above six MDOT projects into the FY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program. Motion approved unanimously.*
- CMAQ
  - *Rahztz noted that the following projects would be added into the TIP only on the condition that the CMAQ applications are approved by FHWA.*
  - Add in FY 2011, the Berrien County Road Commission project named Napier Ave at Colfax Ave for a traffic signal upgrade at intersection of Napier Ave and Colfax Ave. Construction phase. Federal cost (CMG) is \$200,000.
  - *Griffin commented that this may be a good opportunity to install a siren-sensitive light since this is a major ambulance route. He noted that Brian Berndt would have to be asked to clarify the cost and feasibility.*
  - Add in FY 2011, the Berrien County Road Commission project named John Beers Road for Roadside Facility. Project description is to construct non-motorized paths 6 feet wide along north and south side of John Beers Road from Wyndstone to James St (south side) and from Roosevelt to James St (north side). Construction phase. Federal cost (CM) is \$221,859 and township cost is \$55,465.
  - *Lenze asked Rahztz to clarify the correct primary work type, noting that "New route/structure (capacity increase)" would not be approved for air quality. The correct primary work type is Roadside Facility.*
  - Add in FY 2011, the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission project named Berrien County Rideshare for a standard rideshare program. T-ops phase. Federal cost (CMG) is \$12,000.
  - *Motion by Panozzo, seconded by South, to approve adding the above three CMAQ projects into the FY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program. Motion approved unanimously.*
- City of St. Joseph
  - Modify in FY 2011, 2012, and 2013, the project named S State St and Kingsley Ave for reconstruction of roadway including sanitary and storm sewer construction. Limits changing from "S State St from Granada Ave to Wallace Ave and Kingsley Ave from S State St to 100 feet East of S State St" to "S State St from Granada Ave to Wallace Ave and Kingsley Ave from S State St to 225 feet East of S State St."

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Johnson asked what would happen next with the information presented on public participation. South responded that any changes would normally be proposed by the Technical Advisory Committee, then go to the Policy Committee. Then amendments would potentially have to be made to the Public Participation Plan and the committee By-laws.
- Judd suggested that the staff find committee members interested in sitting on a subcommittee for public participation. The subcommittee could recommend changes to the full committees.

**7. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:**

- Panozzo stated that she had learned about a national event called Park(ing) Day from her son in Ann Arbor, and that the Volunteer Center had decided to participate in the event next year in downtown St. Joseph and downtown Niles in front of the Volunteer Center offices. This would involve turning a parking space into a park by temporarily installing furniture and plantings for a day. The purpose is to raise awareness of the use of public space for other purposes besides cars. She offered to forward out the video from her son for the committee members' interest.
- Merritt stated that the Berrien County Road Commission will not be able to make the local match for the Lincoln Avenue resurfacing project, and asked what had been discussed at the TAC meeting. Rahtz responded that a TIP Project Selection Subcommittee meeting had been scheduled for Monday, October 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am at the St. Joseph City Council Chambers.
- Stauffer noted that Lincoln Township had also voted not to commit the local match funds for the Lincoln Avenue resurfacing project, and that it supports a plan for pavement maintenance. He added that stretch of road had been designated as agricultural land, and that the township is prioritizing paying for subdivision maintenance.

**8. ADJOURNMENT:**

- Meeting adjourned at 11:35 A.M. Next meeting is November 15, 2010 at 10:30 A.M.