

TWIN CITIES AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Policy Committee

Minutes

October 21, 2013

10:30 A.M.

Southwest Michigan Regional Airport

POLICY MEMBERS PRESENT:	Mickey Bennett, Sodus Township Andrea Dewey, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio) Carolyn Fowler, Benton Charter Township Tim Fenderbosch, St. Joseph Charter Township Ron Griffin, St. Joseph Charter Township Jae Guetschow, Village of Stevensville William Hodge, Berrien County Planning Commission Joanne Johnson, Disability Network Southwest Michigan Erin Jolivette, MDOT Coloma TSC Robert Judd, City of St. Joseph John Lanum, MDOT Statewide Planning Tim Lynch, Berrien County Road Commission Debra Panozzo, Berrien County Commission Bill Purvis, TCATA Lee Scherwitz, SW Michigan Regional Airport Dick Stauffer, Lincoln Charter Township Kris Welch, MDOT-Statewide Planning
POLICY MEMBERS ABSENT:	Aaron Anthony, City of Bridgman Thomas Baldwin, Benton Charter Township Bill Brown, Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission (ex officio) John Egelhaaf, SWMPC John Gast, Lake Charter Township John Gruchot/Catherine Montoya, Berrien County Planning Department Darrell Harden, MDOT Southwest Region Nora Jefferson, Benton Charter Township Jason Latham, MDOT Regional Planning Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) John Olson, Village of Shoreham Roger Seely, St. Joseph Charter Township Brad Sharlow, MDOT (ex officio) Terrie Smith, Lincoln Charter Township Jim Soteriou, Royalton Township Darwin Watson, City of Benton Harbor Sarah Woolcock, MDOT Coloma TSC Representative, Cornerstone Alliance
SWMPC STAFF PRESENT:	Suzann Flowers Gautam Mani
OTHERS PRESENT	Matt Kodis, Kinexus Chris Lannert, the Lannert Group

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Judd called the meeting to order at 10:50 and led the group in introductions.

2. MINUTES:

Dewey noted a correction on Page 3 of the NATS-TwinCATS joint MPO meeting minutes from September 30. A cost change equal to **25% of the total project cost** requires MPO approval in the NATS or TwinCATS area, not 20% as previously noted.

- A motion was made by Fenderbosch with support by Scherwitz to approve the minutes of the Joint TAC and Policy Committee Meeting on August 19 and of the Joint NATS-TwinCATS MPO meeting on September 30. **Motion passed.**

3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

4. STAFF REPORT:

▪ **Newsletter: Projects being Constructed in 2014**

Mani said that as part of SWMPC's efforts to do better public outreach, staff is formulating a newsletter dedicated solely to transportation, which will be released on a quarterly basis. The newsletter will have updates as well as an emphasis on different transportation issue areas. As part of the initial newsletter, SWMPC staff wants to be able to inform the public about where they can expect to see construction in 2014. Committee members gave the following preliminary list:

Brown School Road in the Village of Shoreham
Brown School Road in St. Joseph Charter Township
Hollywood Road in St. Joseph Charter Township
Roosevelt Road non-motorized extension in Lincoln Charter Township
Park St. Bridge in the City of St. Joseph (tentatively)

Flowers added that having this table would help keep pressure on elected officials and local entities to fully fund transportation projects.

Panozzo added that a public meeting would be held at Berrien Township Hall on Thursday October 24 at 7 PM to discuss whether or not the County should absorb the Berrien County Road Commission as a department, among other proposals.

▪ **LRP, TIP, and Binder Distribution**

Mani noted that hard copies of the proposed 2013-2040 Long Range Plan and 2014-2017 TIP were now available, and that committee members should pick up one of each. Mani also noted that committee members should pick up binders and binder spines if they hadn't done so already. Flowers and Mani reiterated that committee members were expected to bring these items to meetings.

- **Local Resolutions of Support**

Mani said that all local resolutions of support for TIP projects for FY 2014 were in, save one, which would be on the way shortly. Mani thanked committee members for being timely with these resolutions, and asked that they continue to do so in future years.

- **Greentown Michiana Report Out**

- Mani noted that he had attended Greentown Michiana, a conference in South Bend on sustainability. One key takeaway from the conference was to not just settle for “low-hanging fruit” when making pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Communities should take advantage of all opportunities for cheap fixes that enhance mode choice, but these fixes should be phases as part of a long-term plan to more fully accommodate all users in a safe manner. Mani noted that the conference was attended by almost 500 people, and would be held again in the near future, potentially in Southwest Michigan.

- **MTPA Report Out**

Flowers noted that there were several items of interest at the most recent Michigan Transportation Planning Association (MTPA) meeting. First, the Regional Prosperity Initiative is ongoing. SWMPC, along with the Southcentral Michigan Planning Commission, the Battle Creek Area Transportation Study, and the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study are working on an application, which has to be in by November 1. Flowers advised that if committee members had any questions regarding this initiative, they should contact SWMPC Executive Director John Egelhaaf.

Flowers said that the 2011-2014 S/TIP will continue to be in effect, as the 2014-2017 TIP has not yet been approved. The MPO can process TIP amendments for all years, but can only submit amendments to 2014 projects.

Flowers noted that the MPO would need to make some edits to the FY 2014 UWP based on MDOT guidance. In some cases, the UWP needed to be amended to align with FHWA emphasis areas. These changes would come before the MPO committees in November and/or December, and would go before the full SWMPC board in January

Finally, Flowers noted that some new guidance on CMAQ was received at the meeting. First, a guidance document has been posted to MDOT’s website, where guidance did not exist before. Specifically, an emissions reductions calculator for diesel retrofits had been added to the MDOT website. Flowers said to expect a call for 2015-2019 projects within the next two months.

- **Seasonal Traffic Counts**

Mani said that SWMPC staff is trying to figure out ways to improve the modeling process, so that projections out to 2040 would be more useful. Flowers said that SWMPC is working on potentially incorporating bi-state modeling, to take into account trips to South Bend, Elkhart, Mishawaka, and Michigan City that play a significant role throughout the Southwest region. In addition, Mani noted that SWMPC is working on developing seasonal traffic counts to take into account increased travel during the tourist season. Mani asked that committee members submit to SWMPC areas of their community where they think there are likely huge differences in traffic from summer to winter.

Judd also suggested that SWMPC staff look at the areas around schools during the school year versus during the summer when examining traffic count patterns in more detail.

Flowers said that MDOT staff and SWMPC staff would be meeting again next month to discuss these modeling improvements.

- **State of the Region Report**

Mani said that the State of the Region Report, previously known as the data extract, would be available very shortly after a long wait. Mani is in the final stages of developing the document layout with the graphic designer, and a final version could be days to a couple of weeks away.

- **FHWA Emphasis Areas**

Flowers noted that the FHWA emphasis areas were something that we would need to be paying much closer attention to when taking actions in the future. Some emphasis areas pertain to MPO staff, while others impact committee member decisions. Dewey noted that there were no restrictions on how MPOs chose to address these areas, just that they addressed them in a substantive way. The emphasis areas are:

- Performance Measures
- STIP/TIP Improvements
- Planning and Environmental Linkages
- Freight
- Livability
- Climate

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Walk and Roll**

Mani noted that the Walk and Roll subcommittee had met earlier that morning to discuss how best to move forward with implementation of the Complete Streets Policy and Top Ten priority segments list. Mani said that the subcommittee had requested that SWMPC staff examine 2014-2017 TIP projects thoroughly for compatibility with the Complete Streets policy. Where projects are incompatible, opportunities may still exist to make them compatible prior to obligation, be it through signage or a small amount of paint.

- **Regional Inclusive Community Coalition (RICC)**

None.

- **Berrien County Coordinated Transportation Coalition (BCCTC)**

Panozzo asked committee members what they thought of the consultants’ presentation and prospects for consolidation. Purvis said that creating the countywide authority might be the necessary next step to getting the agencies to work together, as right now each jurisdiction is still very concerned about their own millage and other funding avenues. Purvis noted that TCATA was struggling to match federal dollars right now, and the problem will likely only get worse in the years ahead. Johnson noted that in general throughout Michigan counties, a transit millage is a very small in comparison to a school millage and other mills. Johnson noted that the benefits of the millage were great, as they enhanced individuals’ access to life sustaining services, and also aided economic development by increasing the customer and employment base for businesses.

Griffin and Fenderbosch commented that currently, Medic 1 gets a subsidy from every community it serves to provide door to door service. Activity on Medic 1 will potentially increase with reduced Blue Route service. Griffin also suggested that any new transit authority must answer the question of whether it wants to be a curb-to-curb or door-to-door service for its dial-a-ride function. Either way, the role of different institutions in the transit system will change.

Judd said that some sort of new funding source would be needed, but questioned the need for a new authority. Judd suggested that transit improvements should be based on hard data of where riders live and work now, and what their desired destinations are.

- **Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority (TCATA) Local Advisory Committee (LAC)**

Purvis commented that the TCATA board was now struggling with trying to address the loss of Jobs Access and Reverse Commuting (JARC) funds, especially with ridership continuing to increase. Purvis pointed out that often times, the buses are full, and people with disabilities often cannot get on since they do not have place for their wheelchair or other assisting device. Johnson pointed out that positive public meetings happened regarding the changes to the Blue Route. The Blue Route will now be operating every hour, rather than every half hour due to the loss of JARC funds, and this could be very problematic. In particular, attendees had noted the need for extended hours to allow them to get to work and shopping destinations efficiently.

5. PROJECT UPDATES

Fiscal Year	Job Number	Agency	Project Name	Update Information	Date of last update	Cost Changes	Projected Letting and obligation date

	NA	Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority	Bus shelters	March 2013, still in limbo—bus shelters will be outside Michigan Works and Chemical Bank; May 2013- Proposal for city-operated cameras in shelters still needs to go before TCATA board, locations at Main at 12 th St and Triangle Park; July 2013: Under Construction, done by the end of September; October 2013: Pads poured, should be in place shortly	October 2013		x
2012							
	113585	MDOT	I-94 Red Arrow Highway to Livingston Rd	PE Phase-design; no change	December 2012		x
	103293	MDOT	I-94 at Nickerson Ave in Benton Township (roadside facility)	Scheduled for October letting; returned to region for funding to move forward; no change; March 2013 Moving Forward for January 2013 letting July 2013: On hold	July 2013		x
	110779	MDOT	I-94 EB and WB over Hickory Creek (bridge)	design phase; July 2012: Meeting in Kalamazoo (July) to discuss project design; the bridge was made longer to accommodate a walking path, April 2013 let, and bridge will be replaced in 2014; no change; March 2013: Air Quality Plans 99% complete; submitted for letting; June 2013: Design phase completed. October 2013: Will be constructed in 2014	October 2013		x
		Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority	New expanded hours	July 2012: Continued through 2013 (2014 funding seems less certain);	May 2013		x

				September 2012: Continued Service; 11/2012 after 2013 the state will match buses but nothing else; December 2012-already been awarded; May 2013- Still going			
		Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority	New line haul route	July 2012: Continued through 2013 (2014 funding seems less certain); ; 11/2012 after 2013 the state will match buses but nothing else July 2013: JARC funding cut in half, project will proceed.	July 2013		x
		Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority	Transit vehicle replacement (3 total)	; 11/2012 after 2013 the state will match buses but nothing else	November 2012		x
2013	89085	Benton Harbor	Klock Rd (from North Shore to Paw Paw)-	1/2013- continues to be in limbo due to negotiations with Harbor Shores; no plans yet; 5/2013- Needs to use up EDA funds this year, ultimately Harbor Shores' choice as to whether project moves forward. July 2013: Lawsuit between Harbor Shores and New Products- 1 year left to use funds. August 2013- lawsuit ongoing- probably means that project will not go through. October 2013- no change	October 2013		
	112091	Berrien County	Hollywood Road	1/2013: Pre- engineering complete- need 1.3 million. Depending on availability of STP funds, project will get funding in 2013 and 2014. 2/2013- Project will be a go in 2014, pending project selection process,	October 2013		

				and will be using STP funds in that year; GI package being submitted by May 1; May: GI package ready to submit June 2013: GI meeting has taken place, GI package will be submitted, and there may be possible bid savings. July 2013: Waiting on MDOT approval of administrative modification. October 2013: December 6 letting			
	115751	MDOT	I-94 WB (from I-196 for 0.4 miles to start of 2008 concrete pavement)	2 course HMA over scratch course on existing concrete-PE phase, no change	December 2012		
	113585	MDOT	I-94 WB (On I-94 from Red Arrow Highway for 3.0 miles to Livingston Road)	Mill existing and place 2 HMA overlay-ROW phase; no change	December 2012		
	110779	MDOT	I-94 EW and WB over Hickory Creek	Bridge Replacement-CON phase-AC project; 11/2012 starting in 2013 bridge replacement will be in 2014; no change; CON August –end of September crossover and temporary widening June 2013: Construction will begin in July, end in October—2 lanes will be closed. August 2013 Construction beginning today.	August 2013		
	119786	MDOT	M-63over St. Joseph River in St. Joseph	Bridge Repair			
		Berrien County	Napier and Union	Traffic Signal; July 2013: GI comments, August 23 rd deadline for ROW. October 2013: November 1 letting	October 2013		

		TCATA	Replacement 3 buses CMAQ project	2013 applications are due to the state in December; July 2013 : Waiting for contract approval	July 2013		
		TCATA	Expanded hours-JARC grant				
		TCATA	Mobility manager grant	11/2012 Purvis stated that this will be available for 2013 but not sure if funding will be there for 2012; SWMPC handling this	December 2012		
		TCATA	New line haul to Stevensville	Project is continuing; hoping to get state funds in 2014	January 2013		
		TCATA	Bus operations	Not submit yet			
	116924	SWMPC	Berrien County-Rideshare	In progress			
2014	112087	Benton Harbor	Broadway Avenue Resurfacing	Final plans ready; still need the city's commitment	October 2013		
	121011	Benton Harbor	Pipestone at Empire Traffic Signal Upgrade	Still need resolution from the city	October 2013		
		Berrien County	Date Road Bridge Replacement	GI plans have been submitted	October 2013		
	121002	Berrien County	Roosevelt Road Non-Motorized Extension	Plans will be ready over next few months	October 2013		
		Berrien County	Brown School Road Resurfacing				
		Village of Shoreham	Brown School Road Resurfacing	Construct in June of 2014	October 2013		

▪ **Obligation Authority Stumbling Blocks**

Flowers asked committee members to describe potential stumbling blocks that delay obligation. Mani said that SWMPC staff were trying to get a better understanding of what potential problems there were in the project process so that they could work to better address them. In the TAC meeting many suggestions were made. Cook offered that the design timeline often can be an issue because municipal fiscal years do not coincide with MDOT's fiscal year. Acquiring right of way (ROW) can often slow down the process. In addition, Berndt noted that getting the communities to actually pay the required local match can be very difficult and might delay submittal of GI plans. If permitting is not in order, it could also significantly delay the process. Zebell noted that it would significantly help communities if resolutions of support were due April 1 of the prior fiscal year, as communities would then be towards the front of the line with MDOT Local Agency Programs.

7. OLD BUSINESS:

▪ **Bylaw Review in November**

Mani advised committee members to read through the bylaws, as a comprehensive review would be beginning in November. Specifically, SWMPC staff wants to ensure that representation on the committees is fair and that it represents all relevant interests in the TwinCATS area. However, any other bylaw considerations will also be up for review.

▪ **Joint MPO Meeting Feedback—Next meeting in April. Ideas?**

Mani thanked committee members for attending the joint MPO meeting in September and said that another joint MPO meeting would likely take place in April. Mani said he had received comments that committee members would have liked more time to talk with individuals from the other MPO about what is going on in their communities, and that there would definitely be some more opportunities for that at the next meeting. Mani asked committee members to submit their ideas for learning opportunities and other agenda items to him or Flowers. Zebell had suggested the idea of a learning session about Title VI Requirements.

8. NEW BUSINESS

▪ **Climate Change Final Report**

Mani said that partners from MSU-E and GLISA had delivered the final report on climate change in the TwinCATS region. Mani advised that members who had not already read the report should do so, as it contained a wealth of data. Mani said that while there was still quite a bit of uncertainty and contentiousness regarding the data, some of the recommendations extend beyond adapting to climate change and are actions that we should be taking as an MPO anyway. Mani said that pending committee approval, staff will bring one issue area before the committee each month, and will examine possibilities to incorporate that issue area into TwinCATS planning efforts. Scherwitz commented that the report would be useful for current issues at the airport, and that committee members would be doing themselves a great service by reading it.

▪ **Legislative Updates-Federal and State**

○ **Federal –**

Dewey commented that the furloughs are over and FTA is getting back up to speed. Dewey said that TIGER grants had been awarded, and that the only Michigan recipient was a rail improvement project in Kalamazoo.

○ **State –**

Lanum noted that Kirk Steudle was continuing to press the Michigan House Transportation Committee for \$1 billion in funding, which is required just to maintain the state highway system in its current state.

MDOT is also conducting a pilot project in the UP regarding off-road vehicle access.

There is a House Bill regarding possible changes to billboard laws.

There is a Bill that passed the State Senate to make hospitals eligible for category A economic development funds. There is also a Senate Bill being discussed to deal with utility company access to right of way.

8. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Johnson commented that Easter Seals would be hosting a webinar in December on snow removal.

More information on the webinar can be found at:

<http://www.projectaction.org/News/tabid/727/token/detail/nid/136/Default.aspx>

9. ADJOURNMENT at 11:46 a.m.

- Next meeting is **November 18, 2013 at 10:30 a.m.**

Compiled by: Suzann Flowers and Gautam Mani, Transportation Planners, 2013

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