

TWIN CITIES AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
Policy Committee

Minutes
November 21, 2011
10:30 A.M.

Southwest Michigan Regional Airport

POLICY MEMBERS PRESENT:	Tim Fenderbosch, St. Joseph Charter Township Carolyn Fowler, Benton Charter Township Robert Judd, City of St. Joseph Erin Kercheval, MDOT Coloma TSC Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning Larry Merritt, Berrien County Road Commission Debra Panozzo, Berrien County Commission Bill Purvis, TCATA Lee Scherwitz, SW Michigan Regional Airport Roger Seely, St. Joseph Charter Township Dick Stauffer, Lincoln Charter Township Bruno Trapikas, Village of Shoreham Darwin Watson, City of Benton Harbor
POLICY MEMBERS ABSENT:	Aaron Anthony, City of Bridgman Mickey Bennett, Sodus Township Bill Brown, Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission (ex officio) John Egelhaaf, SWMPC John Gruchot/Catherine Montoya, Berrien County Planning Department John Gast, Lake Charter Township Darrell Harden, MDOT Southwest Region Jason Latham, MDOT Regional Planning Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Brad Sharlow, MDOT (ex officio) Jim Soteriou, Royalton Township Rachael Tupica, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio) Darwin Watson, Representative, Cornerstone Alliance
SWMPC STAFF PRESENT:	Suzann Flowers Trevor Thomas
OTHERS PRESENT:	Jason Bowen, Intern at Southwest Michigan Regional Airport Mamie Yarbrough, Berrien County Commissioner Charles Yarbrough, TCATA Chairman

1. CALL TO ORDER:

- Judd called the meeting to order at 10:55 a.m.

2. MINUTES:

- A motion was made by Scherwitz, with support by Panozzo, to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2011 Policy Committee Meeting minutes. **Motion passed.**

3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no public comments.

4. STAFF REPORT:

▪ Michigan Rail Summit

Flowers discussed her attendance at the Michigan Rail Summit on October 31 in Lansing. Governor Snyder, Senator Proos, and several people from the Federal Rail Administration and Federal Highway Administration spoke about the advantages of rail service for the state of MI. The Governor was clear that the Chicago to Detroit high speed rail line was a focus along with the building of a new bridge connecting Michigan and Canada. The Wolverine Line gets money from the Federal Rail Administration, the Battle Creek to Port Huron line and Pere Marquette lines get money from the State of Michigan. The Summit focused on the importance of rail as an economic driver for the recovery of the state of Michigan. For southwest Michigan, connecting the South Shore line is very important so that we don't have people drive all the way to South Bend to pick up the train. Attendees discussed the importance of Transit Oriented Development in providing valuable and sustainable connections for our region. We need to think about the multi-modal activities connected to rail stations, such as walking, biking, and transit. Questions that we need to ask of our region: Who were we in the past, who are we now, and who do we aspire to be?

- Scherwitz added that the design of the TOD station's success in Meridian, Mississippi came from using the original design of the station and rehabbing it into a structure that could function with the past and present. He added that we can see the success of redevelopment in the Benton Harbor Arts District and the synergy that has been generated in our region and the synergy that resulted in Mississippi. The Mississippi example had a "build it and they will come" mentality and it worked.

▪ Freight Workshop

Flowers attended a freight workshop in Lansing on November 10, which focused on the role of supply chains in transportation planning and economic development for the state of Michigan. The key speakers were two MSU professors from the Department of Supply Chain Management. The scope of the workshop focused on 6 key areas: an overview of supply chain management, how supply chain management is used to maximize firm profits, private sector opportunities to add value, public sector opportunities to add value, a discussion of the results of research done by the professors, and what the next steps should be. Some key geographic topics that were discussed included the importance of regions, Michigan's connection to Canada, and the interconnected region of the Midwest. Lee Scherwitz from the Southwest Michigan Regional Airport was also in attendance from Southwest Michigan.

- Scherwitz added that the Columbus inland port was a major success in connecting multiple modes of transportation and changing the direction of commerce away from other busier ports. One of the key decisions in facilitating this port was the raising of bridges for double stacked freight trains in OH. He also discussed that his advocacy for the competition of US 31 and the expansion of the Panama Canal will be a great asset to the Midwest.

▪ Officer elections due in 2013

The next cycle of officer elections will be held in 2013 unless any officer resigns, in which case an immediate election will be held at the next regularly scheduled committee meeting.

- **New TIP Calendar (Next process date is January)**

The Michigan Transportation Planning Association has issued the latest version of the Amendment Schedule for the Transportation Improvement Program. Handouts are available and the schedule was posted on the TwinCATS FY 2012 Meeting handouts. Flowers pointed out that there are not only changes on when TIP amendments will be processed, but that each TwinCATS meeting is listed along with when TIP amendments need to be submitted to staff in order to be processed.

Committee Reports

- **Walk and Roll**

Staff will be asking for a vote to amend the TwinCATS Walk and Roll Plan into the 2009-2035 TwinCATS Long Range Plan.

- **Regional Interagency Consumer Committee (RICC) and Transportation Advocacy Group (TAG)**

The Berrien RICC hosted a legislative roundtable with Clay McClausland, Representative Fred Upton's local District Representative. Disability Network TAG Team members were in attendance, and mentioned the importance of transportation for getting to doctor's appointments, jobs and volunteer commitments. RICC and TAG members also addressed investing in community infrastructure to ensure a viable, successful community. Johnson added that the groups had a legislative roundtable with Representative Al Pscholka to discuss the importance of sidewalks and walkable streets for everyone to live independently in southwest Michigan.

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

The Transit Regional Reduced Fare Card Program is up and running! Seniors that are ages 60 years or older and people with disabilities can now apply to receive a regional reduced fare identification card which allows him/her to receive half fares on any public transportation system in the region. Applications are available by mail or by visiting any of the following transportation agencies including Berrien Bus, Buchanan Bus, Dowagiac Dial- A- Ride, Niles Dial- A- Ride, Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority, Van Buren Public Transit, and Cass County Public Transit. Over the past two weeks, over 100 applications were processed and the reduced fare cards were mailed to customers for use immediately. Riders benefit from having the reduced fare card because he/she will no longer need to carry around sensitive documents to verify age or disability. Riders can also use his/her card when traveling throughout the region and to other states. For example, if one wants to visit Chicago and ride the bus system there, a person can use his/her reduced fare card and receive half off the fares. For more information about the Regional Reduced Fare Card program, please contact *Christina Pippen* at 269-925-1137 ext 19 or email pippenc@swmpc.org

- **Mobility Management Project**

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission's (SWMPC) GIS department and Mobility Management are currently analyzing origin and destination data from Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority (TCATA) drivers' logs (10,000 trips) to determine feasibility of new fixed routes in the TCATA service area. Data is also being analyzed to determine how many current dial a ride trips could be captured within the current fixed routes to reduce the wait time

and cost of providing dial a ride trips. A fixed route actual trip cost is \$7.20 while a Dial-a-Ride actual trip cost is \$13.73.

For more information about this route planning project, please contact *Kim Gallagher* at 269-925-1137 ext 18 or email gallagherK@swmpc.org or contact *Christina Pippenc* at 269-925-1137 ext 19 or email pippenc@swmpc.org

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

No report for November, 2011

5. OLD BUSINESS:

- **TIP Project Selection Subcommittee**

Flowers handed out copies of the notes that were compiled after the meeting. Thomas and Flowers explained what took place at the meeting and the process that was put into place for projects that want to be added or moved in the TIP.

Motion by Scherwitz with support by Fowler to approve the TIP Project Selection Subcommittee meeting minutes from November 9, 2011 with the following changes:

- Larry Merritt was at the meeting representing the Berrien County Road Commission
- Under Item #2, Metropolitan and Organization were misspelled

Motion Passed

- **Walk and Roll**

Flowers stated that she received one public comment regarding the Walk and Roll Plan, a request for clarification regarding Plan maps. Thomas discussed incorporation of the Walk and Roll Plan into the current 2009-2035 Long Range Plan, inserting the W & R Plan almost exactly as drafted into the Long Range Plan as Appendix P, and inserting a short paragraph into page 83 of the main LRP text, mentioning the drafting of the plan and pointing to its location in the appendix. Finally, the legal notices will be attached to the Walk and Roll Plan to prove that public outreach was conducted in accordance with the Public Participation Plan. Thomas also explained that since SWMPC staff are currently in the process of creating a new LRP document that will continue to incorporate elements of the TwinCATS Walk and Roll Plan.

Motion by Scherwitz with support by Panozzo to amend the TwinCATS Walk and Roll Plan into the 2009-2035 TwinCATS Long Range Participation Plan as Appendix P. **Motion passed.**

6. NEW BUSINESS:

- **Marquette Woods Road NFC designation change**

Flowers stated that she was contacted by Brian Berndt from the Berrien County Road Commission and Dick Stauffer from Lincoln Township about having Marquette Woods Road national functional classification changed from an urban local road to an urban collector. This action was prompted by the increased traffic that the road is seeing due to the new Meijer and an increase in cross county traffic. Flowers stated that she spoke with Mike Toth at MDOT regarding the change. Toth stated that the change should not be a problem due to the new retail store, installation of new traffic light, and that we were within our limits for the amount of

federal aid eligible roads of this classification in the MPO. Flowers also stated that the full SWMPC Board will need to vote on this at their meeting in January 2012.

Motion by Fenderbosch with support by Panozzo to recommend approving the proposed NFC change on Marquette Woods Road. **Motion passed.**

- **TIP Amendments**

- **City of St. Joseph**

- *Lake Street*

- In FY 2012, amend the Elm St. project into the Lake St. project. This includes sections from Broad to Elm St. (Reconstruction), Elm to Park (Spot Concrete Replacement), and Park St from Lake to Lions Park Dr (Mill and Fill). Total phase cost increases from the local match portion will increase from 210,000 to 240,000.

- *Napier Avenue*

- In FY 2012 and FY 2013 amend the Advance Construct project on Napier Ave. to more clearly reference the sewer work being done on Willa Road.

- **Village of Shoreham**

- *Brown School Road*

- In the Illustrative List, amend Brown School Road project federal cost to \$421,000, local cost to \$99,000, and total phase and total project costs to \$520,000 (these numbers reflect Lenze's suggestion that the project should list 19% local match, with a note in the TIP comments that Shoreham is willing to pay a 40% local match if necessary to move the project forward). Also, project limits are amended.

- **Berrien County Road Commission**

- In FY 2012, amend *East Britain and Highland Avenue* projects to a single project, without changing limits, timing, or cost.

Motion by Scherwitz with support by Merritt to approve the City of St. Joseph, Village of Shoreham and Berrien County Road Commission TIP amendments. **Motion passed.**

- **Asset Management Federal Aid Roads Report**

Thomas handed out a 2 page fact sheet that displayed the results from the Berrien County 2011 Road Ratings. He explained that, since 2008, only 50% of the federal aid eligible roads are rated each year. Thus, in Figure 1, the results from 2008 and 2010 are not directly comparable to the results from 2009 and 2011. He also gave a brief explanation of the meaning of road ratings and the method by which SWMPC collects them.

- **Participation Plan Annual Review**

Flowers discussed that Transportation Public Participation Plan needs to be reviewed each year for effectiveness. Since this is directly tied to the Long Range Transportation Plan that is currently underway, now is a good time to make revisions and address measurable activities.

Flowers provided a handout showing the biggest changes being proposed, including changes to goals, activities and how they can be measured. She encouraged people to review the plan and to send comments to her at any time and that at the December 2011 meeting staff will be looking to the Committees to move the plan out for a public comment period of 45 days.

▪ **Attendance for 2011**

Flowers stated that staff is currently working on the annual review for the TwinCATS area and one of the items to review is attendance. She stated that letters will be going out to make sure that the listed representative is still able to attend meetings and that the person selected has not changed. She also stated how proud she was of the member communalities that attend on a regular basis.

▪ **2013 CMAQ Call for Projects**

Thomas handed out several items related to CMAQ including a CMAQ 2013 Call for Projects letter from MDOT, project list for 2011-2014 Berrien County CMAQ projects, and CMAQ 2013 Funding Amounts table. Thomas explained that due to the slight decrease in population in Berrien County there is a slight decrease in CMAQ funds. The funds available to 2013 are \$528,765 and the project list for desired CMAQ projects is at \$587,099. A meeting needs to be held to discuss 2012-2014 CMAQ projects with a projection of lower funds for each year. He also reported that Rachael Tupica from Federal Highway is reviewing the list of 2012 projects and that he should know the status of those shortly.

Stauffer stated to the group that it was CMAQ funding that helped get sidewalks on John Beers Road.

Panozzo asked what was happening at the intersection of Britain and Riverview Dr. in Benton Harbor. Darwin Watson stated that the signal may be coming down.

A CMAQ meeting date of December 19, 2011 at 8:00a.m. was agreed upon to meet to review this topic. The meeting will be held at the Southwest Michigan Regional Airport, immediately before the next TwinCATS Committee meetings.

Flowers and Thomas will help Berndt advertise and announce a call for projects in the region.

7. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

- Panozzo discussed the St. Joseph/Lincoln Senior Center volunteer drivers and how they only drive folks around until noon and that a further discussion of this issue should begin.

8. ADJOURNMENT: 11:50 a.m.

- Next meeting is **December 19, 2011 at 10:30am**

Compiled by Trevor Thomas and Suzann Flowers, December 2011