

TWIN CITIES AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
Policy Committee

Minutes

December 19, 2011

10:30 A.M.

Southwest Michigan Regional Airport

POLICY MEMBERS PRESENT:	Tim Fenderbosch, St. Joseph 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 Jim Soteriou, Royalton Township Bruno Trapikas, Village of Shoreham
POLICY MEMBERS ABSENT:	Aaron Anthony, City of Bridgman Mickey Bennett, Sodus Township Bill Brown, Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission (ex officio) John Egelhaaf, SWMPC Carolyn Fowler, Benton Charter Township 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) Roger Seely, St. Joseph Charter Township Brad Sharlow, MDOT (ex officio) Dick Stauffer, Lincoln Charter Township Rachael Tupica, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio) Darwin Watson, City of Benton Harbor Representative, Cornerstone Alliance
SWMPC STAFF PRESENT:	Suzann Flowers Trevor Thomas
OTHERS PRESENT:	Jason Bowen, Intern at Southwest Michigan Regional Airport Joanne Johnson, Disability Network Ron Griffin, St. Joseph Charter Township Christina Phippen, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

1. CALL TO ORDER:

- Judd called the meeting to order at 10:36 a.m.

2. MINUTES:

- A motion was made by Scherwitz, with support by Fenderbosch, to approve the minutes of the November 21, 2011 Policy Committee Meeting minutes. **Motion passed.**

3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no public comments received.

4. STAFF REPORT:

▪ Rural Task Force Training

On December 7, 2011 SWMPC Staff attended training in Lansing regarding the roles that Regional Planning Organizations and MDOT will have in the coordination and administration of the Rural Task Force program. The regional planning commissions will assist MDOT in the administration and management of this process beginning in fiscal year 2012. SWMPC are working with the Rural Task Force Region 4 Chairman, Larry Hummel, on ensuring a smooth and continuous coordination of these duties. More information will be given to the Committee members as progress is made.

▪ AARP Aging in Place Webinar

Thomas stated that he sat in on a webinar hosted by AARP (<http://www.aarp.org/home-garden/livable-communities/info-11-2011/solutions-forum-aging-in-place.html>), which promoted the idea of “aging in place”, looking at how areas can provide transportation, housing, and land use environments that allow older residents to remain independent and live active lives in their own homes. Thomas stated that the TwinCATS population is significantly older than the country as whole, and that the ideas regarding transportation and land use discussed during the AARP event ought to continue to inform the work performed by the committees.

▪ PASER Training Dates

Road Rating training dates have been announced for the upcoming calendar year. This training is necessary if you want to assist in rating roads in your community. Communities can have their roads rated once every three years. Thomas explained that he attended the training and found the information very helpful in understanding how road ratings are done. The training dates are as follows: February 28, 2012-West Branch, February 29, 2012-Saginaw, March 1, 2012-Grand Rapids, March 27, 2012- Kalamazoo, March 28, 2012-Dearborn, March 29, 2012-Lansing, April 17, 2012-Gaylord, April 18, 2012-Escanaba, April 19, 2012-Ishpeming. Flowers will email the dates and flyer out to the Committee members who receive email.

▪ Next Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The next TIP program update will be in 2013 and would cover 2014-2017. There is a one year overlap to ensure that the program does not lapse and that projects can still get obligated.

5. COMMITTEE REPORT

▪ Walk and Roll

Flowers asked that since the Walk and Roll plan if the subcommittee needed to meet any more. The Committee members discussed that it is important for the subcommittee to stay active to implement the plan. The following items were discussed:

- The Walk and Roll Plan should be incorporated into the selection of TIP projects
- Incorporated into the design of the project
- The plan demonstrates a priority list of non-motorized facilities that should be built
- Include Walk and Roll elements in the TIP project application
- Develop a top ten list of projects for the region
- Develop benchmarking for the region (establish goals and timeframes) for getting these projects developed

Lenze added that staff needs to develop the application long before the TIP call for projects begins and to bring it through the committees for approval. Staff will formulate an agenda and call a meeting of the subcommittee to develop an action strategy.

- **Regional Interagency Consumer Committee (RICC) and Transportation Advocacy Group (TAG)**
No report for the month of December.
- **Berrien County Coordinated Transportation Coalition (BCCTC)**
Nothing to report for the month of December
- **Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority (TCATA) Local Advisory Committee (LAC)**
TCATA's Local Advisory Committee (LAC) meeting was scheduled on Friday, November 18th. Due to a lack of quorum, the meeting was immediately canceled. Unaware of the cancellation, a public citizen arrived at the meeting location; China Buffet in Benton Township, using the Dial-A-Ride Service. He stated that he was eager to attend the LAC meeting to provide input about the services and also wanted to demonstrate that members of the public are interested in public transit! He stated that there could be more involvement if the public were properly informed of the meeting times and locations. The public citizen stated that the meeting cancellation without any notification (that he was aware of), was a huge inconvenience for him and potentially other members of the public.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

- **2013 CMAQ Call for Projects**
Thomas explained that before the Committee meeting communities met to review and discuss the schedule of CMAQ projects for 2012-2014. Thomas explained that there was a slight reduction in funding for 2013 and 2014 and that in 2013 Berrien Bus modified their project request from 2 new buses to 1 medium bus and 1 small bus to accommodate the funding reductions. A handout was given to those who attended the meeting. Thomas reminded the attendees that the CMAQ program is administered by the county through the Rural Task Force program, but projects in the MPO do come before the committee for approval to include in the TIP.
- **Public Participation Plan and Survey**
Flowers discussed that the staff were in the final stages of the preparing the Public Participation Plan for the required 45-day comment period. Flowers asked that the Committee members approve a motion to release the plan for the comment period beginning January 15, 2012. Flowers asked for any suggestions from the attendees.
-One comment expressed those public participation methods that are successful with the MPO should be shared with municipalities throughout the region and that we should seek out the successful methods from municipalities to incorporate into our participation strategy.

Motion by Merritt with support from Purvis to place the Public Participation Plan out for the public comment period of 45-days beginning January 15, 2012. **Motion passed.**

- **Membership Letters**
Flowers discussed that membership letters have been sent to all of the member communities. Those municipalities that need appointments or are allowed to appoint an additional member to

the committee will be contacted via phone to ensure that proper representation is received from member communities.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

▪ **TwinCATS Annual Report**

MPO Staff are completing the draft TwinCATS Annual report. The draft document is on the website and any comments from the Committee members are encouraged. We will be looking for formal approval from the Committee at the January meeting and for approval from the SWMPC Board at their January 31, 2012 meeting.

▪ **TIP Amendments**

○ **MDOT**

- Amending in FY 2012 project I-94 JN 110779, moving project from FY 2012 to FY 2013, primary work type changing to bridge replacement with federal cost increasing to \$5,862,000 and state cost increasing to \$651,000 for a total phase cost of \$6,513,000 and a total project cost of \$6,939,000.
- Amending in FY 2012 project I-94 JN 110931, moving project from FY 2012 to FY 2014.
- Adding in FY 2012 project I-94 JN 115206 trunk line preconstruction general program account, federal cost of \$409,000 and state cost of \$91,000 for a total phase and project cost of \$500,000.

Motion by Berndt with support by Zebell to approve the three MDOT TIP amendments for the 2011-2014 TwinCATS TIP. **Motion passed.**

▪ **Gast Road NFC Request**

Flowers stated that the City of Bridgman has made an inquiry to change the National Functional Classification (NFC) of Gast Road from Lake St to Lemon Creek Rd. Steve Carlisle and Aaron Anthony are collecting additional data for this request. This request may be on the January 2012 agenda.

Tupica stated that in the spring of 2012 the US Census will be reviewing urban boundaries, such as the TwinCATS and NATS urbanized areas. MDOT will also be conducting a state wide review of road classifications and that applications of this nature may be put on hold. Tupica explained that urban boundaries are reviewed every 10 years due to a newly completed census.

8. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

-Lenze discussed the issue of TIP amendments and public outreach given the current TwinCATS meeting schedule. Due to the fact that the TAC and Policy meetings are back to back, it does not allow any changes to be made to the TIP the day of the meeting. Staff must have a 7 day comment period regarding any TIP amendments prior to the Committee meeting to give the public an opportunity to comment on the changes. TwinCATS and NATS meetings are the only MPO in the state to have their meetings on the same day. Other MPOs across the state have their TAC committees early in the month to allow for immediate changes need to the TIP the day of the TAC meeting. Then they will notice out the changes and have their Policy Committee meet 1 or 2 weeks later to approve the changes. The current structure for TwinCATS and NATS has not allowed for public comment for TIP Amendments.

-Schervitz stated that these committees have met on the same time and date for many years and that people have these meetings set to schedule other meetings around. He suggested maybe keeping the Policy Committee on the same day and moving the TAC meetings early in the month.

-Judd stated that he believes that the meetings should stay the same and that people should get their amendments to staff in a timely manner.

-Schervitz stated the funding issue that the aviation officials are facing, that the aviation fuel tax has not been changed since 1929 at \$0.03.

- Merritt stated that the Berrien County Board will put on their November 2012 ballot a road millage for citizens to vote on. The Road Commission is working on education and getting information from the state regarding funding levels. Merritt also discussed having a meeting for interested citizens on the direction of MDOT and having speakers from the Governor's office, MDOT and County Road Association of MI (CRAM) speak on the topic.

-It will be important to educate voters on the funds needed to maintain our roadways, where the current sources are from, how much they generate, who is using the roads, and who should pay

-Lenze stated that the Governor proposed an additional registration fee but that it is up to the legislature to make those decisions

-Panozzo stated that we need to get and keep our elected officials up to speed on this subject and how important it is for them to understand the complexity of the issue

-Tupica stated that the Governor used statewide Asset Management data to highlight the current conditions of roads and the funding gap and what it will take to maintain our network

-Merritt stated that it will be important for everyone to think of different ways we can come up with this money

-Panozzo stated that the farmers use roads every day and that they are getting pressure from the Farm Bureau to not approve additional taxes

-Our elected officials specifically John Proos and Al Pscholka should be notified of the issues facing the region

9. ADJOURNMENT: 11:40 a.m.

- Next meeting is **January 23, 2012 at 10:30 a.m.**

Compiled by Trevor Thomas and Suzann Flowers, January 2012