

**Minutes**  
*Twin Cities Area Transportation Study*  
*Policy Committee Meeting*  
 February 28, 2011  
 10:30 A.M.  
 Southwest Michigan Regional Airport

<b>POLICY MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	Aaron Anthony, City of Bridgman Tim Fenderbosch, St. Joseph Charter Township Ron Griffin, St. Joseph Charter Township Erin Kercheval, MDOT Coloma TSC Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning Larry Merritt, Berrien County Road Commission Bill Purvis, TCATA Lee Scherwitz, SW Michigan Regional Airport Roger Seely, St. Joseph Charter Township Brian Shutts, Village of Shoreham Jim Soteriou, Royalton Township Dick Stauffer, Lincoln Charter Township
<b>POLICY MEMBERS ABSENT:</b>	Mickey Bennett, Sodus Township Bill Brown, Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission (ex officio) John Egelhaaf, SWMPC Carolyn Fowler, Benton Charter Township John Gast, Lake Charter Township Robert Judd, City of St. Joseph Jason Latham, MDOT Regional Planning Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Debra Panozzo, Berrien County Commission Representative, Cornerstone Alliance Rachael Tupica, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio) Darwin Watson, City of Benton Harbor Kevin Wordelman, Berrien County Planning Commission
<b>SWMPC STAFF PRESENT:</b>	Anna Rahtz Trevor Thomas
<b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b>	Wilma Enix, Transportation Advocacy Group James Ivey, Transportation Advocacy Group Joanne Johnson, Disability Network SWMI

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

- Vice-chair Scherwitz called the meeting to order at 10:32 A.M. *Chairman Judd was absent.*

**2. MINUTES:**

- *A motion was made by Fenderbosch, seconded by Soteriou, to approve the minutes of the December 20, 2010 Policy Committee meeting. Motion approved unanimously.*

**3. STAFF REPORT:**

- **Transportation and Environment Presentations – March 22<sup>nd</sup>**
  - Thomas announced that speakers will be brought in to a joint TwinCATS/NATS meeting on March 22<sup>nd</sup> to discuss the intersection between transportation projects and environmental issues. He noted that this is especially important to learn about given the high incidence of flooding on many of the region’s roads. The workshop will cover possible strategies and funding sources for addressing transportation needs and environmental needs together.

- **Transportation Funding 201 workshop – Date TBD**
  - Rahtz stated that the sequel to the Transportation Funding 101 workshop had previously been tentatively scheduled for March 28<sup>th</sup>, but that it is being indefinitely postponed until SWMPC staff confirm a speaker and a date. Most likely someone from the Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association will be presenting the funding options laid out in the TF2 task force report, with a panel discussion including the state legislators about the various funding options.
- **Berrien County Coordinated Transportation Coalition meeting – March 1<sup>st</sup>**
  - Rahtz noted that the BCCTC, which is made up of transit agencies and social service providers from throughout Berrien County, is hosting Care-a-Van to present about non-emergency medical transportation. She encouraged anyone who is interested to attend at 9:00 AM on March 1<sup>st</sup> at Michigan Works!.

#### 4. **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Walk and Roll Update**
  - Thomas presented maps he had prepared, and discussed a methodology that the staff had developed for presenting potential design solutions at the public hearings. The public hearings are scheduled for the week of May 16 through 20. The dates are as follows:
    - May 16 – Lincoln Twp hall
    - May 17 – St. Joseph Public Library
    - May 18 – Michigan Works!, Benton Harbor
    - May 19 – Bridgman Public Library
  - Thomas asked for corrections on the spreadsheets of road segment information for each municipality and passed out the spreadsheets to each community representative. The hard copies had been given to the Technical Advisory Committee representatives but he stated he would email the maps and spreadsheets out as well. Rahtz noted that the TAC representatives would more likely possess detailed data about the road segments, and Thomas responded that he was also looking for corrections on the local priority rankings gathered from the key stakeholder meetings held in December and January.
  - Rahtz mentioned that Suzann Flowers is planning a Bike to Work week of events, which involves compiling and jointly advertising events for that week throughout the three-county region. She also provided a template for a resolution for municipalities to declare Bike to Work week, which several communities are discussing at their next commission meetings. She distributed the template for the resolution. Stauffer asked for the electronic version to fill in with local information, and Rahtz stated that it is uploaded on the webpage with the current meeting materials.
  - Merritt suggested not narrowing down the list of proposed non-motorized projects for the public hearings because participants will most likely be interested in detailed information concerning their neighborhood and looking for the street they live on.
  - Rahtz added that the staff had also talked about clustering the road segments into similar characteristics rather than prioritizing them by need, as a way of streamlining information to show proposed treatments for multiple roads at one time. Thomas agreed that the staff are looking for the best way to illustrate a representative sample of road segments and potential solutions.
  - Griffin stated that there could be an opportunity for an intersection between the Berrien County road millage effort and the Walk and Roll project because a potential millage could be an opportunity to fund some of the projects in the Walk and Roll plan. Rahtz noted that the millage steering committee is planning to allow the millage funds to be used for on-road non-motorized projects, at the discretion of each township. Griffin emphasized that communication should be kept open between the Walk and Roll committee and the road millage committee to ensure that the public realizes the millage could be a way to fund some of the projects proposed in the Walk and Roll plan.
- **Rail Update**
  - Rahtz asked if anyone has any comments on the draft letter to MDOT that was passed out at the

previous meeting. She stated that staff will soon send that letter into MDOT in response to the public comment period for the State Rail Plan update.

- Scherwitz added that the railroad bridge over the Paw Paw River in Benton Harbor will be reconfigured in 2011, which will allow access for recreational boats on the river because the bridge's structure will be higher above the water. Rahtz asked if CSX was funding that project on its own, and Scherwitz responded yes.

- **Officer Elections**

- Fenderbosch stated that the officer nominating committee had chosen to re-nominate the same slate of officers, Judd for Chair and Scherwitz for Vice-chair. Both had agreed to accept the nominations, and no one else had demonstrated interest in taking on an officer role.
- There were no nominations from the floor.
- *Motion by Stauffer, seconded by Merritt, to accept the nominations. Motion approved unanimously.*

## 5. **NEW BUSINESS:**

- **TIP Amendments**

- Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority / Dial-A-Ride
  - Modify in FY 2012, the project named Public Transportation for public transit urban operations. Federal cost is changing from \$640,000 (5307) to \$680,000 (5307), state cost is changing from \$657,584 (CTF) to \$663,725 (CTF), and local cost is changing from \$473,924 to \$444,327.
  - Modify in FY 2012, the project named Transit Vehicle Replacement for replacing three buses with Congestion Mitigation funds. Federal cost is changing from \$180,000 (CM) to \$146,400 (CM) and state cost is changing from \$45,000 (CTF) to \$36,600 (CTF).
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program projects
  - *Rahtz noted that these two CMAQ projects had previously been programmed for 2011 but the years had been pushed back to allow funding for the Hilltop Rd project in 2011. The members of the committee decided to add the projects in FY 2011 after all, since the Hilltop Rd project is not moving forward.*
  - Add in FY 2011, the Berrien County Road Commission named John Beers Rd to construct a 6 foot-wide non-motorized path on the south side of John Beers Rd from Wyndstone to James St and on the north side of John Beers Rd from Roosevelt to James St. Federal cost is \$221,859 (CM), local cost is \$55,465, total phase cost is \$277,324, and total project cost is \$300,000.
  - Add in FY 2011, the Berrien County Road Commission project named Napier & Colfax Signal to upgrade interconnected traffic signal at intersection to include optimization, strain poles, LED signals, and vehicle detection cameras to maximize green time for traffic flow. Federal cost is \$200,000 (CMG) and total project cost is \$220,000.
  - *Motion by Fenderbosch, seconded by Stauffer, to add the above two CMAQ projects in the FY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program. Motion approved unanimously.*
  - *Stauffer asked if Lincoln Township would still be able to provide the match funding for the John Beers project in fiscal year 2012, since they had not set aside the money in their 2011 budget. Lenze responded that that would be fine as long as the MDOT Local Agencies office is informed when the plans are submitted that the project is 2012 construction.*

## 6. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- None

## 7. **PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:**

- Merritt stated that the Berrien County Road Commission had received notice that MDOT Coloma TSC is moving forward with performing deck work in the M-63/Niles Avenue bridge over I-94 in 2013. Because of the narrowness of the bridge, all lanes have to be closed at one time for a period of twelve weeks in April through June. Merritt added that the Berrien County Road Commission will be initiating discussion at

their next board meeting about how to prepare for the detour traffic. Comments on the detour route will have to be provided to MDOT. It was inquired what the proposed detour routes are, noting that there are not a lot of alternative routes in that area and that it already has heavy traffic. Merritt responded that the proposed detour routes are M-139, Washington, Red Arrow Highway, and Hilltop.

- Griffin added that it may be wise to check the community calendar and see if any large events are happening during that time that would be adding even more car traffic. Seely noted that the Blossomtime Parade is in May, and it was also noted by the committee members that there will never be a convenient time to close the bridge for twelve solid weeks. A school bus garage and a UPS distribution center are also located in the vicinity.
- Fenderbosch asked if the Coloma TSC has completed the study for that interchange of I-94, which Woolcock had mentioned about a year ago. Rahtz noted that Erin Kercheval is the contact now for TwinCATS for the MDOT Coloma TSC because Paul South has been deployed to Afghanistan and will be gone for the next 24 months. The office will be co-managed by the manager of the TSC office in Kalamazoo, and the other staff will be taking on additional responsibilities.
- Stauffer and Merritt noted that if the bridge deck is going to be replaced, the traffic needs of that corridor should be considered, including vehicular and non-motorized traffic. Scherwitz added that that had been brought up to Paul South previously, but should be brought up again. Merritt stated that the MDOT project will need to be completed before the Hollywood Rd project is started in 2014, and that Brian Berndt will talk with Sarah Woolcock about it.
- Scherwitz and Lenze added that the committee members should also continue to ask MDOT about the completion of US-31 so that it is not forgotten.
- Merritt stated that the Berrien County Road Commission has convened a steering committee to discuss the possibility of a countywide millage to fund road projects. He added that the committee has brought the majority of municipalities in the county to the meetings and has gone through a consensus building process with all of the local governments. He stated that the steering committee wants to be all-inclusive but has had trouble reaching anyone at the City of Benton Harbor. Scherwitz said he would give him his contact person's information, and added that face-to-face contact works the best. Rahtz noted that Chris Cook, the city's engineer, had been present at one of the road millage meetings. Merritt said that he had talked to Cook about it but wanted to try contacting the City directly.
- Griffin stated that, although the change in the CMAQ funding had already been approved during the TIP amendments, he felt he should explain what had happened with the Hilltop Rd project. He stated that the working group including St. Joseph Township and the City of St. Joseph has continued to encounter obstacles with acquiring easements with the property owners and will not be able to obligate the funds in this fiscal year. Thus, they are recommending giving up the funds (from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program) to other communities to use.
- Griffin added that in the future, if any right-of-way acquisition is acquired for a project, the Township will ensure that the easements are granted first before applying for funding for the project. Stauffer suggested that condemnation may be the most practical way to acquire right-of-way, and Scherwitz noted that it is legally very difficult, based on his experience with it at the airport. Griffin added that the Township does not have funding to provide reparations for condemnation, and the federal CMAQ money is not allowed to be used for those purposes either.
- Scherwitz announced that the American Council of Engineering Companies had given much recognition to Southwest Michigan at their recent awards banquet. Abonmarche Engineering had been given a merit award for the design of the new Silver Beach environment, particularly the Compass Fountain, and the Southwest Michigan Regional Airport had been given an award for the design of the Sand Creek relocation project. Scherwitz added that this project is also being recognized by the Federal Aviation Administration. He noted that over the eight years of working toward approval from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the engineering team had come up with a new acceptable solution for long culvert projects, which would now provide a feasible solution for other engineers in the state.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT: 11:24 A.M.**

- *Motion by Fenderbosch to adjourn. Motion approved unanimously.*

- Next meeting is **\*\*March 22, 2011 at 1:30 P.M. at Andrews University. \*\***

*Compiled by: Anna Rahtz and Trevor Thomas, Transportation Planners, 2/28/11*