

TWIN CITIES AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Policy Committee

Minutes

February 23, 2015

10:30 A.M.

Kinexus Anchor Rooms A+B

<p>POLICY MEMBERS PRESENT:</p>	<p>Denise Cook, St. Joseph Charter Township Andrea Dewey, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio) William Hodge, Berrien County Planning Commission John Lanum, MDOT Statewide Planning Tim Lynch, Berrien County Road Commission Debra Panozzo, Berrien County Board of Commissioners Lee Scherwitz, Southwest Michigan Regional Airport Roger Seeley, St. Joseph Charter Township Dick Stauffer, Lincoln Charter Township Kris Welch, MDOT-Statewide Planning</p>
<p>POLICY MEMBERS ABSENT:</p>	<p>Tim Fenderbosch, St. Joseph Charter Township Carolyn Fowler, Benton Charter Township John Gast, Lake Charter Township Aaron Anthony, City of Bridgman Mickey Bennett, Sodus Township Bill Brown, Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission (ex officio) John Egelhaaf, SWMPC Ron Griffin, St. Joseph Charter Township Joanne Johnson, Disability Network Southwest Michigan Erin Jolivette, MDOT Coloma TSC Deb Kavanaugh, Hagar Township Jason Latham, MDOT Southwest Region John Olson, Village of Shoreham, Stevensville, and Royalton Township Bill Purvis, TCATA Donald Schlipp, Village of Stevensville Darrell Harden, MDOT Southwest Region Nora Jefferson, Benton Charter Township Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Brad Sharlow, MDOT (ex officio) Terrie Smith, Lincoln Charter Township Darwin Watson, City of Benton Harbor Representative, Cornerstone Alliance</p>
<p>SWMPC STAFF PRESENT:</p>	<p>Kim Gallagher Gautam Mani Patrice Rose</p>

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Stauffer called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m. and led the group in introductions.

2. MINUTES:

- A motion was made by Scherwitz with support by Lynch to approve the minutes of the January Policy Committee meeting. **Motion passed.**

3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

4. STAFF REPORT

- **Obligation Thermometer**

Mani recapped the obligation thermometer that was introduced at the last meeting. This is a tool that MDOT provides to let local agencies know how much federal obligation authority is left over in the state at any given time. Mani said that as of February 3rd, MDOT had used up 43.3% of its available obligation authority that runs through May 31st. After May 31st, new transportation legislation would be needed in order for obligation authority to continue to be available. Mani said that even if reauthorization of MAP-21 happens right away, there would be a few week lag time in Michigan receiving that obligation authority. Therefore, project applicants that are looking to obligate in June may run into delays. As always, SWMPC encourages its local agencies to obligate early in the fiscal year.

The obligation thermometer is updated monthly and is available at http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9625_25885-339193--,00.html

- **Traffic Count Requests**

Mani noted that it was never too early to get count requests in for the 2015 season. Gallagher added that this was a free service that SWMPC provides to any city, village, or township in our three counties. Mani said that this year, a question had come up regarding how early or late in the year it was possible to do counts. Mani said that if you request that count be done anytime between May and October, you were probably safe. Our count team is usually able to get out into the field in April, and if there is no winter precipitation, they can sometimes do counts in November.

Mani said that this year, agencies may request counts specifically for National Functional Class Reclassification. NFC Reclassification requires current traffic counts. Mani said there was a box on the online form where agencies could mark whether a count was for proposed NFC reclassification. If we have a high number of count requests, those counts that are for NFC reclassification would take high priority.

The count request form may be found at <http://www.swmpc.org/trafficcountform.asp>.

- **Spring Asset Management Conference April 30**

Mani said that the Michigan Transportation Asset Management Council was putting on the Spring Asset Management Conference on April 30 in Grand Rapids. This would be an all day event. Mani said it was an excellent opportunity to learn about the latest in pavement management practices and also emerging practices in gathering data. Mani said that the timing of this conference was also excellent, as it is less than one week before the transportation funding ballot measure is up for a vote. That would almost certainly be a topic on the agenda. Elected officials and municipal engineers are strongly encouraged to attend. Public agency registration fees are deeply discounted.

- **MI Travel Counts Survey**

Mani said that MDOT was conducting a Travel Demand survey throughout the state in 2015, looking at the routes people use to travel, the modes of transportation they use, and the times of day that they travel. MDOT was currently sending out letters to pilot participants. Eventually, they will send out letters to 700,000 households, hoping to get 21,000 to participate. A subset of those households will be asked to fill out a travel diary, recounting all of their trips for one day between April and June. An even smaller subset would be asked to carry around GPS receivers tracking their activities.

Mani said that these data were extremely important for feeding the travel demand model for our MPO area in our long range plan. Mani said he anticipated that committee members might get questions from their residents regarding whether the survey is legitimate and whether their privacy would be protected if they participate. The answer to both questions is yes. Data from the diaries and GPS receivers would go to Westat and be stripped of identifying information before it goes to MDOT. There is also a very small financial incentive involved in participation, so residents should definitely be encouraged to fill out the survey.

Gallagher encouraged committee members to also check out the Facebook page for MI Travel Counts for the latest information.

- **Local Resolutions of Support for FY 2016 due April 30 this year.**

Mani stated that Local Resolutions of Support for projects scheduled for FY 2016 that have a local match component are due at the end of April this year. Gallagher said that reminders would go out to those communities that have projects scheduled for FY 2016.

5. PUBLIC TRANSIT

- **Transit Consolidation Study and Countywide Service Plan Updates**

Gallagher said that the County was still discussing whether to form a new authority as part of the effort at transit consolidation in Berrien County.

Gallagher said that the main report that she had to share was that she had applied for a grant through MDOT to do a countywide service plan that would like at the viability of fixed routes throughout Berrien County. The total grant amount is \$200,000, 20% of which must come from local match. Gallagher said that she had secured commitments for the required local match from the Lakeland Health Foundation, Berrien Bus, and the Berrien County Manufacturers Association. The federal funds would come in the form of section 5304 funds from the Federal Transit Administration.

- **TCATA Updates**

Gallagher distributed an update on TCATA ridership. It is up over 33% on the fixed routes, and there is definitely additional room for fixed routes in Benton Harbor and St. Joseph. Gallagher also discussed that fixed routes have better service than Dial-A-Ride, which is a door-to-door service.

Gallagher noted that an analysis of where passengers are boarding and getting off could be done by examining driver logs.

As a side note, Gallagher discussed snow removal on sidewalks in the area, particularly near schools. She said that SWMPC had developed a template for a municipal sidewalk snow removal plan, and would be happy to share that. Gallagher also said that SWMPC could assist with mapping the number of students that live within a walking radius of the school, so that sidewalks that students actually walk along could be given priority for snow removal. These would be cluster maps, so no individual students would be identified.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

No report.

7. LAND USE AND ZONING UPDATES

Gallagher said that Berrien County Health Department is moving to the former Motor Mall on Napier Avenue near I-94. There is an issue with transit service to this location, since it is in Benton Township. Gallagher said that there were discussions as to whether it could be an additional stop on the bus, since the bus already does service Lake Michigan College. One issue is that the bus to Lake Michigan College is already often overcrowded. SWMPC will be analyzing driver logs to determine feasibility. There would also be a fare increase from \$2 to \$3 each way that could be a cost burden for some users of the Department.

8. PROJECT UPDATES

Fiscal Year	Job Number	Agency	Project Name	Update Information	Date of last update	Cost Changes	Projected Letting and obligation date
2012							
	113585	MDOT	I-94 Red Arrow Highway to Livingston Rd	Plan Review January 20th- still on track for January 2016 construction	January 2015		

	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		
		Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority	New expanded hours	July 2012: Continued through 2013 (2014 funding seems less certain); September 2012: Continued Service; 11/2012 after 2013 the state will match buses but nothing else; December 2012- already been awarded; November 2013: not funded	November 2013		
		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		
		Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority	Transit vehicle replacement (3 total)	July 2014: Buses on the way, with propane conversions	July 2014		
2013	115751	MDOT	I-94 WB (from I-196 for 0.4 miles to start of 2008 concrete pavement)	Suspended project	January 2015		
	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	January 2015: August 2015 Construction Completion	January 2015		

		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/Colfax Avenue Resurfacing	January 2015: Broadway Avenue is completed, Colfax Avenue will done in June 2015	February 2015		
	121011	Benton Harbor	Pipestone at Empire Traffic Signal Upgrade	January 2015: Restoration will take place in Spring	January 2015		
		Village of Shoreham	Brown School Road Resurfacing	Obligated; letting in April or May	February 2015		
2015		Berrien County	Marquette Woods Road Restore and Rehab/Sidewalks	February 2015: Meeting with property owners has concluded; generally high level of enthusiasm	February 2015		
		Berrien County	Napier Avenue at Pipestone St Traffic Signal	February 2015: Submitting for Obligation next month	February 2015		
		City of Benton Harbor	Pipestone St at Britain Avenue Traffic Signal	January 2015: Surveying work completed	January 2015		
		City of St. Joseph	Botham Avenue	January 2015: Project let, bid 6.5% below estimate---making it possible to reuse funds as bid savings.	January 2015		

		City of St. Joseph	Park St. Bridge	January 2015: Came in over bid-- - have received final permission from CSX- will proceed in	January 2015		
		MDOT	I-94 Signing Project from Puetz Road to I-196	January 2015: September 1- October 16	January 2015		
		MDOT	M-63 bridge over Hickory Creek	June 8-July 21	January 2015		
		MDOT	M-63 Resurfacing	This summer	January 2015		

9. OLD BUSINESS:

None.

10. NEW BUSINESS

- **TIP Amendments**

Mani noted that there were two additions this month: the 5304 Countywide Service Planning grant, and a bridge repair project on I-196 under Riverside Road. Both of those are FY 2015 projects.

A motion by Scherwitz with support by Seely to approve the February 2015 TIP Amendments.
Motion passed.

- **FHWA Updates**

Dewey said she does not have much to report, but would like to thank the committee for passing along information about the Mayor’s Challenge for Safer People and Safer Streets at the last meeting.

- **Ballot Initiative Updates and other MDOT Updates**

Mani said that MDOT Finance had released a preliminary revenue estimate of how much each county, city, or village would receive if the ballot measure passes. Mani said it is important to convey to members of the public that while a certain portion of the revenue increase would go towards paying down debt that MDOT has on past transportation projects, the remaining funds would be distributed according to Act 51 formula, as they always have been. Mani said that information had been circulating that funds would be distributed according to some sort of different formula, and that was not the case.

Mani and Gallagher shared useful links on MDOT's website showing photos of current road conditions, a summary of current transportation funding, and documents and infographics related to common myths about transportation funding and MDOT's practices.

All of these links are housed in a central location now at :
<http://www.swmpc.org/transfunding.asp>.

11. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Mani shared a couple of news items: the Berrien County Road Commission has a new smartphone app that allows users to send reports on road conditions directly to the Road Commission. Gallagher raised the issue of whether people would know that they were driving on a Berrien County road when they made the report, and how the Road Commission might pass along information to road agencies in other jurisdictions.

Gallagher also pointed out the Mi-Drive site from MDOT, which is useful in looking at delays on the roads.

Mani also shared that the MDOT Southwest Region has a new engineer. Bobbi Welke had retired and Kimberly Avery would be the new engineer. Lanum said he had met and worked with Avery in the past and that she would be an asset to the region.

12. ADJOURNMENT at 11:25 AM

- Next meeting is March 16 2015 at 9:00 AM in Anchor Rooms A+B at Kinexus (Michigan Works!).

Compiled by: Gautam Mani, SWMPC Transportation Planner, and Patrice Rose, SWMPC Administrative Assistant, 2015.