

TWIN CITIES AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
Policy Committee

Minutes

March 19, 2012

10:30 A.M.

Southwest Michigan Regional Airport

POLICY MEMBERS PRESENT:	John Gruchot/Catherine Montoya, Berrien County Planning Department William Hodge, Berrien County Planning Commission Nora Jefferson, 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 Dick Stauffer, Lincoln Charter Township Sarah Woolcock, MDOT Coloma TSC
POLICY MEMBERS ABSENT:	Aaron Anthony, City of Bridgman Mickey Bennett, Sodus Township Bill Brown, Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission (ex officio) John Egelhaaf, SWMPC Tim Fenderbosch, St. Joseph Charter Township Carolyn Fowler, Benton Charter Township 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) Joe Sobieralski, Village of Stevensville Jim Soteriou, Royalton Township Bruno Trapikas, Village of Shoreham 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:	Joanne Johnson, Disability Network Ron Griffin

1. CALL TO ORDER:

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

2. MINUTES:

- A motion was made by Panozzo with support by Scherwitz, to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2012 with the following change:

- Page 5-MDOT new project to TIP, bullet 1 change JN 114935 to 114962.
Motion passed.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

No comments were received.

4. STAFF REPORT:

- **Public Participation Plan**

Flowers reported that the official public comment period, which was 45 days, has officially ended and that the public comments are available on the website. She outlined some of the comments and what changes have been made to accommodate those comments from the public, such as:

- Arranging parts of the plan to be more user friendly
- Adding suggestions to the Performance Measure table
- And reading a specific comment suggesting holding Committee meetings in the evening

Flowers reviewed what was discussed at the TAC meeting and how staff were directed to make the connection for citizens on how they can reach out through their community to members on the MPO Committees.

-Panozzo added that the Berrien County Commissioners added evening meetings and to make sure that citizens know that they are there for them.

-Judd stated that once a year the City of St. Joseph hold precinct meetings and have students deliver flyers in their precinct to inform citizens of what was done last year and what is being planned for in the upcoming year. These are held 1 hour before the City Commission meetings and has been very popular and widely accepted.

- **Bylaw Change-April**

Flowers noted that at the March 2012 TAC and Policy Committee meetings that Joanne Johnson had stated that the Transportation Advocacy Group (TAG) would no longer be meeting.

Scherwitz stated that the bylaws would need to be amended. Flowers stated that the bylaws require a 30 day notification period to the Committee members and that action will need to be taken at the April 2012 Committee meetings.

- **Westrain**

Flowers stated that the Westrain group, which is a group to increase ridership of the Pere Marquette line which runs from Chicago, IL to Grand Rapids, MI will begin holding regular meetings. Additionally the group will discuss topics such as the Tiger 4 grant application for New Buffalo and the proposed new train station concept in Fennville. The group is meeting on March 22, 2012 and Flowers will have more to report back at the April meeting.

5. COMMITTEE REPORT

- **Walk and Roll**

Thomas provided a recap of what staff were to achieve since the past month, come up with a top ten list of projects, review liability information, look for complete streets policies that could be applied to the TwinCATS region. At the meeting today, staff will refine the segments generated, create a complete streets policy for TwinCATS Committee members to review and get the policy out to all TwinCATS members prior to the next meeting.

- **Regional Interagency Consumer Committee (RICC)**

RICC members called Representative Pscholka and Senator Proos and spoke with their staff about transit. The focus of the call revolved around the importance of transit in rural settings as essential tools for economic self-sufficiency and community involvement. Members also pointed out to both offices that rural systems act as connectors to larger urban systems (which are the focus of much legislative attention right now). Other advocates touched on the importance of transit for accessing mental health care and for being more energy efficient

- **Berrien County Coordinated Transportation Coalition (BCCTC)**
There will be a full committee meeting on Tuesday April 10, 2012 from 9:00a.m. to noon. This meeting will be used to update the Coordination Plan, discuss achievements, and develop new goals and objectives in moving the committee forward.
- **Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority (TCATA) Local Advisory Committee (LAC)**
No update was provided.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

None to discuss.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

- **Legislative Updates**
 - Federal
Flowers stated that the Senate version of the transportation bill MAP-21 SB 1813 had passed and that the House bill (HR 7) has stalled out completely. Flowers continued that the federal transportation extension ends on March 31, 2012 and that both chambers will need to come together to pass another extension. That seems the most likely. For the Senate bill there are still provisions which discuss the MPO process and that small MPOs under 200,000 would be considered Tier II MPOs. Lenze added that these small MPOs would be grandfathered in but that we would need to justify to our Governor that we would be meeting all federal requirements and that we would need to be re-classified as a Tier II MPO.
 - State
Merritt provided information regarding HB 5304, which would effectively end the Act 51 funding system and that any current Act 51 agency receiving less than \$50,000 from the fund would have their road functions added to the County Road Commission their funding shifted to the Road Commission as well. He stated that at least 120 communities would be affected by this change. Merritt suggested reviewing the House Fiscal agency reports and review who is testifying and reading the minutes of the House Transportation Committee minutes. Merritt referenced a letter from the City of the Village of Clarkston and how they were concerned about their level of service if this bill were to pass. Merritt suggested that people continue to inform their legislative officials of how this will impact the local communities.
Flowers asked Merritt if he knew more about the Commercial Corridor Fund (CCF). Merritt reported that this is HB 5303 and that any new revenue generated at the state level would go to this pot instead of the MTF fund. The MTF fund would continue until 2019 where it would go to a zero balance and then all funds from the MTF would move to the CCF. Not clear what the corridors would be in the state but according to the bill it would have to do with vehicle miles traveled and the national functional classification. There are many bills being proposed right now and it changes weekly. Woolcock stated that the

transportation money is not just for roads, that it works on all types of infrastructure and the we should encourage the public to get more information about ways they can get involved and voice their opinion.

-Panozzo added that maybe there should be a packed type program to present at service clubs about how roads are funded, the sources of the funds, and what transportation funds are spent on besides roads.

8. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

-Stauffer thanked the Berrien County Road Commission and SWMPC for their efforts in changing the road classification for Marquette Woods Road from a local to primary road.

-Lenze stated that every 10 years the state reviews the road classifications and that it is a good idea to review our roads locally to see if roads need to be upgraded or downgraded.

-Judd reported that one of his email accounts has been hacked and that if you are receiving messages from him please disregard.

9. ADJOURNMENT: 11:32 a.m. Motion by Scherwitz with support from Panozzo to end the meeting. **Motion passed.**

- Next meeting is **scheduled for April 16, 2012 at 10:30 a.m.**

Compiled by Trevor Thomas and Suzann Flowers, March 2012