

**TWIN CITIES AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY**

Policy Committee

**Minutes**

June 15, 2015

10:30 A.M.

Kinexus Anchor Rooms A+B

<p><b>POLICY MEMBERS PRESENT:</b></p>	<p>Bill Chickering, Berrien County Board of Commissioners                  Andrea Dewey, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio)                  Tim Fenderbosch, St. Joseph Charter Township                  Carolyn Fowler, Benton Charter Township                  Matt Galbraith, MDOT Statewide Planning                  William Hodge, Berrien County Planning Commission                  Richard Lewis, City of St. Joseph                  Tim Lynch, Berrien County Road Commission                  John Olson, Village of Shoreham, Stevensville, and Royalton Township                  Dick Stauffer, Lincoln Charter Township</p>
<p><b>POLICY MEMBERS ABSENT:</b></p>	<p>Denise Cook, St. Joseph Charter Township                  Vince DesJardins, Southwest Michigan Regional Airport                  Teri Freeling, Berrien County Board of Commissioners                  John Gast, Lake Charter Township                  Representative, Sodus Township                  Representative, Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission (ex officio)                  Joanne Johnson, Disability Network Southwest Michigan                  Erin Jolivette, MDOT Coloma TSC                  Deb Kavanaugh, Hagar Township                  John Lanum, MDOT Statewide Planning                  Jason Latham, MDOT Southwest Region                  Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio)                  Bill Purvis, Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority                  Lee Scherwitz, Southwest Michigan Regional Airport                  Brad Sharlow, MDOT (ex officio)                  Darwin Watson, City of Benton Harbor                  Representative, Cornerstone Alliance                  Kris Welch, MDOT-Statewide Planning</p>
<p><b>SWMPC STAFF PRESENT:</b></p>	<p>Kim Gallagher                  Gautam Mani                  Patrice Rose</p>
<p><b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b></p>	<p>Paul Lott, MDOT Statewide Planning</p>

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Stauffer called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and led the group in introductions.

**2. MINUTES:**

A motion was made by Hodge with support by Lynch to approve the minutes of the May 18 Policy Committee meeting. **Motion passed.**

### 3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

### 4. STAFF REPORT

#### ▪ **Traffic Count Updates**

Mani said that a major traffic count effort is underway in the harbor area within the cities of Benton Harbor and St. Joseph. Regardless of the weather, the traffic counters will be out for a full week's worth of work days. The traffic count field team is making good progress on its counts, and those who have requests can probably still request them this summer.

Gallagher said that there is a new procedure in place for traffic counts. When you request a count, the traffic count field team will notify the person who requested the count when they are ready to lay counters down. This step is to ensure that no construction is taking place on the road at the same time that counts are being done. Mani advised MPO members to let him know when they see counters that are damaged or hoses that are cut. Sometimes it is vandalism, but other times hoses get cut due to mowing or other factors that tear them up.

Stauffer asked about a count on Maiden Lane. Gallagher said that the count had been completed and that SWMPC would forward on the count to Lincoln Township and St. Joseph Township so that they could make decisions.

Hodge asked about coordination on counts between SWMPC and the Berrien County Road Commission. Mani acknowledged that SWMPC could do a much better job coordinating.

#### ▪ **Amtrak Exhibit Train Event July 25<sup>th</sup> in Grand Rapids**

Mani reported that the Amtrak Exhibit Train would be in Grand Rapids on July 25<sup>th</sup> from 10 AM-4 PM. The exhibit train, which will be parked at Vernon J. Ehlers station, will feature some information about a history of passenger trains and Amtrak. The event is especially great for young children because it features Chuggington Depot, an area inside the station with train-related activities and giveaways.

In other Amtrak news, a 15% student discount on all Amtrak fares on Michigan trains has been extended until December. This is potentially a good way for students in the area to get home over breaks.

There has also been a change to the Pere Marquette schedule that allows riders a couple of extra hours in Chicago during the day, and the response has been positive. The Pere Marquette has added a half car of business class seats that has been well received. WiFi is now available on all trains.

#### ▪ **Local Road Safety Plan Update and Summer of Safety**

Gallagher presented an update on the Local Roads Safety Plan, for which we are one of two pilot regions along with SEMCOG. The consultants, Opus International, will be returning to the area at the end of June to meet with individuals whom they have not gotten a chance to speak to as yet. Their primary focus will be speaking to individuals working in education and emergency

response. Mani told committee members that they should not be surprised if they get a call from Opus International.

Zebell reported that the City of St. Joseph was taking advantage of the Local Safety Initiative, and safety auditors from the state were coming to the area soon. Gallagher clarified that the Local Safety Initiative is a free service where the state will come in and conduct intersection and segment level safety analysis in your community. The Local Road Safety Plan will look more at systemic issues across the area.

- **Safety Funding for FY 2017**

Gallagher said that MDOT's Call for Safety Projects for 2017 was still out until August 14<sup>th</sup>. Committee members were encouraged to apply and consult with SWMPC if they had an idea they wanted to pursue. Lott shared that MDOT generally favored smaller projects that were packaged together into larger projects. Zebell noted that the City of St. Joseph had gotten safety projects funded in the past, and had come up with some new project ideas.

- **Project Selection Criteria Working Group**

Mani said that staff were looking for volunteers to serve on a working subcommittee to develop project selection criteria for the upcoming 2017-2020 TIP selection. We are one of the few remaining MPOs in the state of Michigan without a formal project selection process. Project selection will take place in November or December of this year. Mani said that the project selection criteria working group would meet two or three times before then. Gallagher said they would try to keep those meetings brief and conduct as much business as possible over the phone. Dick Stauffer, Tim Lynch, and John Olson volunteered to serve on the project selection criteria working group.

## 5. PUBLIC TRANSIT

- **SWMPC Transit Updates**

Gallagher reported that she was working on the RFP for the Berrien County Countywide Service Plan, with the goal of awarding a bid by October 1 of this year and work commencing shortly after that. Work on the RFP and the overall effort is continuing with the Michigan's Great Southwest Strategic Leadership Council.

- **TCATA Updates**

None

## 6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

RICC did not have a member present. Mani reported however that, as mentioned in the email to committee members, the Disability Network of Southwest Michigan was offering a series of events this summer to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A community celebration will take place at the Disability Network on July 24 from 11 am to 1 pm. A statewide celebration will occur at the State Capitol in Lansing on September 17 from 11 am to 2 pm.

▪ **Future Walk and Roll Committee Meeting**

Mani said that it had been a long time since the Walk and Roll committee had gotten together, but it was time to discuss whether non-motorized plans had changed over the last few years, and to help develop project selection criteria based on the Complete Streets Policy. Gallagher said that a doodle poll will be sent out to determine a meeting time, as it was no longer feasible to hold the meeting immediately before TwinCATS.

**7. COMMUNITY LAND USE AND ZONING UPDATES**

Mani reported that New Buffalo community stakeholders have had a preliminary meeting regarding I-94 exits 1 & 4, and ways to improve these corridors that are gateways to Michigan. The planning effort will focus on multiple aspects, including land use, transportation, and environmental conservation. This is a project being undertaken by a consultant, not SWMPC.

**8. PROJECT UPDATES**

- **Obligation Thermometer – Obligation Thermometer** – Galbraith shared that with the two month funding extension that passed Congress in late May, the state of Michigan received about \$43 million in additional obligation authority for local projects. \$29 million will go towards making Advance Construct projects whole. A large portion of the rest of the funding will go towards obligating funds in the PL and transit flex programs. Therefore, any non-Advance Construct projects will likely have to wait for another funding extension in order to be obligated.

Fiscal Year	Job Number	Agency	Project Name	Update Information	Date of last update	Cost Changes	Projected Letting and obligation date
<b>2012</b>							
	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 <b>July 2013: On hold</b>	July 2013		
		Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority	New expanded hours	<b>July 2012:</b> Continued through 2013 (2014 funding seems less certain); <b>September 2012:</b>	November 2013		

				Continued Service; 11/2012 after 2013 the state will match buses but nothing else; <b>December 2012-</b> already been awarded; <b>November 2013:</b> not funded			
		Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority	New line haul route	<b>July 2012:</b> Continued through 2013 (2014 funding seems less certain); ; 11/2012 after 2013 the state will match buses but nothing else <b>July 2013:</b> JARC funding cut in half, project will proceed.	July 2013		
		Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority	Transit vehicle replacement (3 total)	<b>July 2014:</b> 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	<b>January 2015:</b> August 2015 Construction Completion	January 2015		
		TCATA	Replacement 3 buses CMAQ project	2013 applications are due to the state in December; <b>July 2013:</b> 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	January 2013		

				to get state funds in 2014			
		TCATA	Bus operations	Not submit yet			
	116924	SWMPC	Berrien County-Rideshare	In progress			
2014	112087	Benton Harbor	Broadway Avenue/Colfax Avenue Resurfacing	<b>June 2015:</b> Colfax Avenue is back under construction	June 2015		
	121011	Benton Harbor	Pipestone at Empire Traffic Signal Upgrade	<b>June 2015:</b> Complete	June 2015		
		Village of Shoreham	Brown School Road Resurfacing	<b>June 2015:</b> Delayed until the end of July	June 2015		
2015		Berrien County	Marquette Woods Road Rehab/Sidewalks	<b>June 2015:</b> Poles reconnected; schedule proceeding	June 2015		
		Berrien County	Napier Avenue at Pipestone St Traffic Signal	<b>June 2015:</b> Submitted for obligation; awaiting statewide obligation authority	June 2015		
		City of Benton Harbor	Pipestone St at Britain Avenue Traffic Signal	<b>June 2015:</b> LAP is still waiting on post-GI materials	June 2015		
		City of St. Joseph	Botham Avenue	<b>June 2015:</b> Work has begun	June 2015		
		City of St. Joseph	Park St. Bridge	<b>June 2015:</b> Starting after Labor Day	June 2015		
		MDOT	I-94 Signing Project from Puetz Road to I-196	<b>January 2015:</b> September 1-October 16	January 2015		
		MDOT	M-63 bridge over Hickory Creek	<b>June 8-July 21</b>	January 2015		
		MDOT	M-63 Resurfacing	This summer	May 2015		

## 9. OLD BUSINESS:

None

## 10. NEW BUSINESS

### ▪ TIP Amendments

- TCATA is adding projects using 2015 5339 federal transit funds, including the addition of parking spaces; improvements to the administrative area; and new bus shelters and benches.

- MDOT is requesting preservation projects on M-63 and I-94, and a passing flare project on M-139.

See TIP amendment handout for future details.

A motion by Lynch with support by Fowler to approve the June TIP Amendments. **Motion passed unanimously.**

- **Federal Highway Administration Updates**

Andrea Dewey reported that MAP-21 had been extended through July 31. FHWA expects that we might receive a calendar extension through the end of the calendar year after that. Congress is debating several longer-term funding packages. There are currently no public comment periods open on Performance Measures rulemakings, but there will be new ones open soon.

- **MDOT Updates**

Galbraith reported that a 12-bill transportation funding package had passed the Michigan House. The bills would direct more revenue from the general fund towards roads and bridges. The bills would also impose increased registration fees on electric and hybrid vehicles and also bring the diesel fuel tax into parity with the tax on gasoline. Importantly, Galbraith noted that the package does not increase funding for public transit or rail.

Stauffer referred to a recent letter to the editor in the Herald Palladium about roads continuing to deteriorate while signs are being replaced. Lott noted that with the road funding available, only a very small stretch of roadway can be reconstructed while the signs can be maintained at a high standard.

Hodge mentioned the number of new cameras he had seen on I-94. Lott clarified that the cameras can be used in traffic studies, to measure speed, and to help with intelligent transportation systems to help determine travel times. Chickering asked if municipalities can access information from the cameras. Gallagher said that they could and in fact municipalities could direct MDOT to change information on the message boards to reflect changes in condition. Stauffer mentioned that the MiDrive app was very helpful in informing drivers about traffic conditions.

- **News Items of Interest**

None.

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

Mani reminded the committee that the retirement party for Lee Scherwitz and official airport transition would be on Thursday at 11 AM at the Airport. Galbraith said that the official state maps road maps for 2015 had been released and were available on the back table.

## **12. ADJOURNMENT at 11:30 AM.**

Next meeting is July 20, 2015 at 10:30 AM in Anchor Rooms A+B at Kinexus (Michigan Works!).

*Compiled by: Patrice Rose, SWMPC Administrative Assistant, 2015.*

DRAFT