

# TWIN CITIES AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Technical Advisory Committee

## Minutes

October 19, 2015

9:00 A.M.

Kinexus Anchor Rooms A+B

<b>TAC MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	Matt Galbraith, MDOT Statewide Planning Joanne Johnson, Disability Network Southwest Michigan Erin Jolivette, MDOT - Coloma TSC John Lanum, MDOT Statewide Planning Katie Montoya, Berrien County Community Development Department Bill Purvis, TCATA Terrie Smith, Lincoln Charter Township Tim Zebell, City of St. Joseph
<b>TAC MEMBERS ABSENT:</b>	Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Chris Cook, City of Benton Harbor Andrea Dewey, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio) Vince Desjardins, Southwest Michigan Regional Airport Representative, Sodus Township Fred Featherly, MDOT Passenger Division (ex officio) Representative, Benton Charter Township Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) John Olson, Village of Shoreham and Village of Stevensville Gloria Payne, Lake Charter Township Representative, Cornerstone Alliance Donna Wittl, MDOT Statewide Urban Travel Analysis (ex officio) Representative, City of Bridgman
<b>SWMPC STAFF PRESENT:</b>	Kim Gallagher Gautam Mani
<b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b>	Ron Griffin, St. Joseph Charter Township John Lanum, MDOT Statewide Planning

### 1. CALL TO ORDER:

Berndt called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. and led the group in introductions.

### 2. MINUTES:

- A motion was made by Zebell with support by Smith to approve the minutes of the September TAC meeting. **Motion passed.**

### 3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

#### 4. STAFF REPORT

- **Project Selection Criteria- Points of Agreement**

Mani said that the Project Selection Criteria subcommittee had met in early October in preparation for the next Transportation Improvement Program for 2017-2020. While there was still quite a bit of ground to cover, Mani said that the subcommittee had reached agreement on several key points.

- Projects on the same corridor that cross jurisdictional lines (township to city, etc.) but are bid together as a single project should be rewarded with greater weight in project selection.
- Projects that provide 30-40% match instead of the required 18.15% should receive greater weight in project selection.
- In addition to the current practice of requiring a resolution of support in the fiscal year in which a project is scheduled, a resolution of support would now be required once a project is selected in the TIP stating local commitment to the project.
- Coordination with a planned sewer and water project (as identified in asset management or other plan) will give a project priority in terms of the fiscal year that it needs to go.

- **MPO STP Allocation- Call for Projects Begins Now**

Mani said that a letter would be going out shortly to each city, village, township, transit agency, and road commission, announcing the call for projects for Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for 2017-2020. The Surface Transportation Program funds can be used for a whole host of activities, but was the largest source of funding available to TwinCATS to allocate to road projects of all kinds. Mani said that given the state of legislation, MDOT had advised MPOs to keep their funding targets steady and not project any growth. If there is revenue growth, we can always add additional projects in later. The funding target for TwinCATS will be \$871,925 per year for 2017-2020.

Zebell asked about the TIP Application Form. Mani said that they would likely be reverting to an Excel form or Word document in order to make applications a bit easier.

- **Attendance Reports from FY 2015 will go out shortly**

Mani announced that attendance reports for FY 2015 will be going out to agencies with representation on TwinCATS, in order to ensure that agencies are aware of who their representatives are and that they are taking full advantage of their allotted representatives. The sending of attendance reports is a provision of the committee bylaws.

- **CMAQ Call for Projects Updates**

Mani said that he had heard from MDOT that there would not be a new CMAQ Call for Projects for Local Agencies in 2015. This would not have a huge implication for the MPO since Berrien County had programmed out its funds through 2020. However, projects for 2017-2020 that had not yet submitted an application would need to be added to the Illustrative List and then added to the TIP once CMAQ eligibility was determined.

## 5. PUBLIC TRANSIT

### ▪ **SWMPC Transit Updates**

Gallagher reported that she was working with TCATA on developing a new fixed route to connect some of the housing in northern/western portions of Benton Township with InterCare, where passengers could transfer to the red route. Gallagher also said that TCATA was working on figuring out ways to make the red route linear, so that the bus could stay off the interstate in the winter and also operate more efficiently than a loop route. Johnson said that promotion of the new route and transferability would be a key element, as people would need to know that the new service was available.

Gallagher said that a key challenge to linear route planning currently was M-139/Fair Avenue within the City of Benton Harbor, as the one way pair without crosswalks or pedestrian facilities prevents a linear route. Jolivette said that MDOT had no plans to resurface or reconstruct that segment of M-139 anytime soon, but there was the possibility of safety projects to facilitate better crossing.

Johnson raised the issue of snow removal enforcement and how that would play a role in how effective new fixed routes and any accompanying new pedestrian infrastructure was. Gallagher said that the issue within Benton Harbor was enforcement of existing ordinances to remove snow from sidewalks. Zebell said that many members of TwinCATS had tried individually for a long time to assist Benton Harbor within enforcing its ordinance. Gallagher said that SWMPC had developed a snow removal plan for the City, but the problem was tracking down property owners who were responsible for snow clearance. In addition, sidewalks in front of abandoned properties are very tough to enforce.

Johnson said that the Kalamazoo MPO had taken action regarding snow removal policies. Mani said he would look into what those policies were.

### ▪ **TCATA Updates**

Purvis reported that TCATA is waiting on delivery of two new propane buses.

## 6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### ▪ **Regional Inclusive Community Coalition (RICC)**

No report.

### ▪ **Walk and Roll Report**

No report.

## 7. COMMUNITY LAND USE AND ZONING UPDATES

Gallagher said that there were several updates this month that were pertinent to traffic patterns and travel demand modeling. Whirlpool is undertaking a major expansion on its Benton Harbor campus, and as a result, Riverview Drive is blocked off. The Riverview Campus will house 1,325 employees by 2016.

Gallagher also shared plans for the federal building in Benton Harbor to be a multi-use space with offices and residential lofts. Mani said that this would have a potential impact on traffic patterns as well.

Lastly, Pero Family Farms on Yore Avenue in Benton Township is undertaking a major expansion and will employ 75 new employees over the next three years. 50 employees will move from part time to full time over that time.

## 8. PROJECT UPDATES

- **Obligation Thermometer-** Mani said that obligation authority for 2016 was still available through October 29th, at which point a continuing resolution would be needed to continue funding projects.

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> 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	November 2013		
		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	July 2013		

				the state will match buses but nothing else <b>July 2013:</b> JARC funding cut in half, project will proceed.			
		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	Bus operations	Not submit yet			
	116924	SWMPC	Berrien County-Rideshare	In progress			
2014	112087	Benton Harbor	Broadway Avenue/Colfax Avenue Resurfacing	<b>January 2015:</b> Broadway Avenue is completed, Colfax Avenue will be done in June 2015	March 2015		
	121011	Benton Harbor	Pipestone at Empire Traffic Signal Upgrade	<b>January 2015:</b> Restoration will take place in Spring; fiber optic cable still needs to be run	January 2015		
		Village of Shoreham	Brown School Road Resurfacing	<b>October 2015:</b> Complete	October 2015		
2015		Berrien County	Marquette Woods Road Restore and Rehab/Sidewalks	<b>October 2015:</b> Construction will be done within 4 weeks!	October 2015		
		Berrien County	Napier Avenue at Pipestone St	Construction begins November 2nd	October 2015		

			Traffic Signal				
		City of Benton Harbor	Pipestone St at Britain Avenue Traffic Signal	<b>August 2015:</b> Submitted for Obligation	August 2015		
		City of St. Joseph	Botham Avenue	Complete	October 2015		
		City of St. Joseph	Park St. Bridge	Construction is 50% complete. Will be fully complete by Mid-November	October 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	Completed	September 2015		
		MDOT	M-63 Resurfacing	This summer	May 2015		
2016		City of Benton Harbor	Pipestone at Wall St Traffic Signal	Moving forward	September 2015		
		Berrien County	Pipestone @ Meijer Traffic Signal	CMAQ Eligible	September 2015		
		Berrien County	Shawnee Road from Jericho to Bridgman City limits	Still on track	September 2015		

TCATA reported that the RFQ will finally be completed this month for dispatching software. The painting of the exterior of the facility had been delayed until next year. The bid is out for parking lot sealing, and TCATA just obtained information about administrative flooring.

Jolivette reported that most construction for 2015 was complete within the MPO area. The cable barrier project on I-94, which is slightly outside the MPO area, is continuing. Mani said that MDOT had provided excellent information in the form of a brochure about the benefits of cable barriers in terms of reduced property damage and injuries.

## 9. OLD BUSINESS

- **General Program Accounts Policy**

Mani once again went over the General Program Accounts policy, which is designed to group projects together so that only major changes to the whole group trigger the full TIP amendment process. SWMPC staff had looked over the new guidance on GPAs, and had found that rail safety was simply grouped into a Trunkline Safety GPA. Likewise, there was no pre-construction GPA anymore, as GPAs were grouped by worktype. Mani said that the Policy would only set up GPAs for MDOT projects for now, and would leave the full public participation and TIP amendment process in place for larger scale reconstruction projects from MDOT.

A motion by Zebell with support by Galbraith to recommend that the Policy Committee adopt the General Program Accounts Policy. **Motion passed.**

## 10. NEW BUSINESS

### ▪ **FY 2014-2017 Amendments**

Mani said that there were two amendments to the TIP this month.

1. The Berrien County Road Commission was requesting that its traffic signal project on Pipestone Road at the entrance drive to Meijer using 100% federal CMAQ funds be added to the TIP for FY 2016. This project has a total cost of \$225,000.

2. The Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority (TCATA) is requesting that its JARC funding for 2016 be modified so that instead of being split between state and federal funds, the funds will be entirely from the state share. The state share, and the total cost of the project, is \$386,040. (Note: JARC funding will disappear entirely in 2017).

A motion by Zebell with support by Smith to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the amendments to the FY 2014-2017 TIP. **Motion passed.**

### ▪ **MPO Wide Local Safety Initiative**

Gallagher said that she had the opportunity to speak to Tracy Leix, who until now had been running the Local Safety Initiative, a free MDOT service where engineers come out to your community and examine safety issues with specific roadway segments or intersections and propose low cost solutions. Gallagher said that MDOT supported the entire MPO making a coordinated request for this process, so that MDOT could use its resources most efficiently. Gallagher said that agencies that go through the Local Safety Initiative process will gain extra points when applying for federal safety funds from MDOT. Gallagher said that SWMPC would be seeking the signature of engineers or supervisors from each Act 51 agency in order to make a coordinated request of MDOT.

Zebell said that the City of St. Joseph had already gone through the Local Safety Initiative process in the last few months, but was willing to sign on in the interest of perhaps incorporating the report from the City of St. Joseph into a report for the full MPO.

### ▪ **FY 2016 Possible Remaining Funds- \$90,000**

Zebell told committee members that there was going to be approximately \$90,000 left over in the Advance Construct conversion portion of the Botham Avenue project, and stressed that he wanted to get the project programmed sooner rather than later.

Mani said that although there was not an approved project prioritization procedure in place, the typical procedure within the TwinCATS MPO was to see whether projects already in the TIP could use the funding, and if not, then move to the Illustrative List. Mani said that any project using these funds would need to provide the required local match of about \$19,000.

Mani said SWMPC staff had identified two candidate projects in discussion. The Berrien County Road Commission's Shawnee Road resurfacing project from Jericho Road to the Bridgman City

limits had emerged as one potential candidate project. Berndt said he would extend the limits, but was not sure by how much.

Mani also identified the City of St. Joseph's Lakeview Avenue reconstruction project from Hilltop to Highland that was on the Illustrative List as a possible candidate. Zebell said that the project cost over \$300,000, but the City was willing to provide that increased local match to get the project done. Mani asked if others in the room had candidate projects. Zebell said he was worried about getting a project obligated in time, and was asking for the committees to make a decision this month so that the MPO does not end up losing money again.

Gallagher asked Berndt and Zebell about traffic counts and PASER ratings. Berndt said that the PASER ratings are probably quite similar, but Lakeview definitely has a higher traffic count. Berndt said that he supported allocating the funds to the Lakeview project.

A motion by Jolivette with support by Zebell to recommend to the Policy Committee that the \$90,000 in leftover STP funds from the Botham Avenue project in 2016 go towards the reconstruction project on Lakeview Avenue from Hilltop Road to West Highland. **Motion passed unanimously.**

- **MDOT and FHWA Updates**

Galbraith shared that MAP-21 reauthorization expired on October 29th, so they would need a continuing resolution in order for federal transportation funding to continue. Galbraith also noted that Local Agency Programs had released a guidance document on tree removal as it pertained to bat species in Michigan. Galbraith recommended contacting Mark Harrison with any questions or concerns. The document on tree removal could be found at:  
[http://michigan.gov/documents/mdot/LAP\\_PROCESS\\_TO\\_DETERMINE\\_NLEB\\_\\_INDIANA\\_BAT\\_WITH\\_DECISION\\_TREE\\_FINAL\\_101515\\_503279\\_7.pdf](http://michigan.gov/documents/mdot/LAP_PROCESS_TO_DETERMINE_NLEB__INDIANA_BAT_WITH_DECISION_TREE_FINAL_101515_503279_7.pdf)

Galbraith said that FHWA expected to have its financial management system (FMIS) back up by October 26th.

- **News Items of Interest**

None.

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

Johnson asked about the state of the Request for Proposals for the Countywide Service Plan. Gallagher said that she was still working on the RFP and would be forwarding it on soon to MDOT for comment.

## **12. ADJOURNMENT at 10:21 AM.**

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

*Compiled by: Gautam Mani, SWMPC Associate Planner, 2015.*