

Minutes

Twin Cities Area Transportation Study

TAC Meeting

December 20, 2010

9:30 A.M.

Southwest Michigan Regional Airport

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT:	Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Chris Cook, City of Benton Harbor Ray Lenze, Michigan Department of Transportation, Statewide Planning Katie Montoya, Berrien County Community Development Derek Perry, City of St. Joseph / Village of Stevensville Bill Purvis, Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority Lee Scherwitz, Southwest Michigan Regional Airport Don Schlipp, Village of Stevensville Mark Seaman, Village of Shoreham Alan Smaka, St. Joseph Charter Township and City of Bridgman Terrie Smith, Lincoln Charter Township Paul South, Michigan Department of Transportation- Coloma TSC Tim Zebell, City of St. Joseph
TAC MEMBERS ABSENT:	Mickey Bennett, Sodus Township Bill Brown, Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (ex officio) Fred Featherly, MDOT - Multi-Modal Services (ex officio) Nora Jefferson, Benton Charter Township Jason Latham, Michigan Department of Transportation, Southwest Region Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) John Olson, Royalton Township Gloria Payne, Lake Charter Township Thad Rieder, Cornerstone Alliance Robert Rusch, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (ex officio) Brad Sharlow, MDOT Planning (ex officio) Rachael Tupica, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio)
SWMPC STAFF PRESENT:	Anna Rahtz Trevor Thomas
OTHERS PRESENT:	Ron Griffin, St. Joseph Charter Township Joanne Johnson, Disability Network SWMI Dennis Schuh, Berrien County Public Transportation

1. CALL TO ORDER:

- Chairman Scherwitz called the meeting to order at 9:34 A.M.

2. MINUTES:

- A motion was made by Berndt, seconded by Cook, to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2010 TAC meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

3. STAFF REPORT:

- **TIP project selection meeting minutes**
 - Thomas passed out the minutes from the TIP (Transportation Improvement Program) project selection subcommittee meeting on October 25, 2010, which had been held to reconsider the prioritization of spending of STP (surface transportation program) funds for 2011 through 2014 for the Twin Cities area. He explained that amendments would be proposed later in this meeting to correspond with the recommendations from the project selection subcommittee meeting.
- **CMAQ meeting minutes**
 - Thomas passed out the minutes from the CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program) meeting on November 10, 2010, which had been held to discuss the Hilltop Rd non-motorized path project and reprioritize the projects for Berrien County for 2011 through 2014. He explained that amendments would be proposed later in this meeting to correspond with the recommendations from the CMAQ committee, contingent upon the status of the Hilltop Rd project.
- **TIP approval**
 - Thomas stated that the fiscal years 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program had been approved by MDOT, FHWA, and FTA, and the most current version is available on the Transportation Documents page of www.swmpc.org. He added that the current TIP table will be uploaded regularly on that same page as well after amendments are approved, so that committee members will be able to easily locate it.
- **Conflict of Interest Letter**
 - Thomas passed out a letter from MDOT, which summarizes a policy that the FHWA is asking MDOT to implement with local agencies in Michigan. The policy has to do with preventing potential conflicts of interest when a local agency hires the same contractor to do design, planning, and/or construction.
 - Cook noted that there are conflicts everywhere, and he and South added that thus far MDOT has not taken any action on this policy.
 - Smaka asked whether this directive applies to state projects, local, or both. South responded that it applies only to local agencies. There were comments that this could affect the ability of local agencies to use a consulting firm as the city engineer.
 - Lenze noted that the policy includes a clause about "adequate oversight" and that as long as agencies have adequate oversight in their contractor selection, then they will be in compliance.
 - Thomas and South noted that a letter was sent to MDOT from the American Council of Engineering Companies noting that adequate oversight is already present statewide.
 - Lenze stated that the intention of the letter from MDOT was only to ensure that local agencies review the policy to ensure that they are in compliance.
- **Transportation Funding 101 workshop update**
 - Rahtz passed out a summary of the workshop that had been held on November 22, 2010. She added that the workshop had been extremely popular, and that a sequel workshop is tentatively being scheduled for Monday March 28, 2011. The sequel workshop will follow up on advanced topics that were briefly mentioned at

the first workshop, as well as allow the legislators to provide an update on their progress with transportation.

- **New board member training?**

- Rahtz explained that she had received feedback from several new committee members that they did not have a clear picture of what a TwinCATS member's responsibilities are or the exact mission or work tasks of the committees. She passed out the committee by-laws and asked if anyone had any other suggestions of what staff should be doing to orient the new committee members.
- Schlipp announced that Steve Slavicek would now be representing the Village of Stevensville at TwinCATS, and Rahtz asked Slavicek to give her his contact information after the meeting.

- **Transit projects update**

- Rahtz announced that the SWMPC office had begun work on two new transit projects:
 - Pokagon Transit Study – a tribal transit feasibility study for the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, which will include an assessment of: the transportation needs of tribal citizens and non-tribal citizens in Berrien, Cass, Van Buren, and St. Joseph (IN) counties; the possibility for coordination between the Tribe and existing transportation providers; the unmet needs; the possibility of tribal transit benefiting non-tribal citizens; and a vision of what tribal transportation could look like. This is expected to be approximately a nine month planning process.
 - Berrien Transit Consolidation Feasibility study – a detailed study that will be conducted by a consultant, which will involve: an alternatives analysis of various levels of coordination that are possible between the four transit agencies in Berrien County, with detailed assessment of each transit agency's finances, operations, current level of service, and projected future levels of service. This will be a three-year planning process.
- South asked which agency had obtained the grant for the tribal transit study, noting that funds distributed through the State of Michigan cannot cross state lines. Rahtz responded that it was a federal grant awarded to the Pokagon Band, which is being contracted out to the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission.

4. PROJECT UPDATES

- **2010 Projects:**

- Berrien County Road Commission
 - Napier Ave west of I-94 – completed
- City of Benton Harbor
 - Highland Avenue – in progress
- MDOT
 - I-94 bridge replacement under Britain Avenue, Benton Harbor (JN 104002, CON phase) – construction is on hold during winter
 - I-94 bridges repair (JN 107161) – construction starting in April
- Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority
 - Purvis announced that Homeland Security had visited his office. They have recently conducted a review of rail facilities and now they are beginning to review bus transit facilities. The representative was satisfied

with the security of the TCATA facility and buses. Scherwitz added that Homeland Security had also been visiting airports.

- Purvis added that the new surveillance system is up and working on all buses. He demonstrated the software system for the committee members, which can play clear audio and video as well as show the GPS location of the bus at any point in time in the video. He was asked whether signs have been posted in the buses to notify riders that they are being recorded, and he responded yes.
 - Purvis showed the new punch cards that are being sold so that riders and agencies can purchase multiple rides at one time in advance.
 - Purvis added that TCATA's overall ridership was up 17 percent from November 2009 to November 2010. It was asked if this had to do with the Red, Green, and Blue routes. He responded that the majority of current ridership is demand-response and that line haul ridership was high in the summer but is down during winter because riders would rather be picked up at their door.
- **2011 Projects:**
 - Rahtz passed out copies of the current TIP. She did not go over projects that are being amended at this meeting.
 - MDOT
 - US-31 freeway signing upgrade – will have second quarter letting
 - I-94 under John Beers Rd bridge paint and joint replacement – was let; part of another project?
 - I-94 carpool lot resurfacing - will have second quarter letting
 - I-94 bridges deck work – construction will start in April 2011
 - City of St. Joseph
 - S. State and Kingsley Ave – will have GI on Wednesday
 - Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority
 - No updates

5. OLD BUSINESS:

- **Walk and Roll update**
 - Thomas gave an update on the Walk and Roll planning process. Meetings have been held with representatives of each municipality to obtain input on the current maps of proposed facilities as well as to begin prioritizing projects for each community. Only two meetings are left to be scheduled, so the process should be finished by February 2011. At that time, the Walk and Roll subcommittee can reconvene and plan the two to three regional public input sessions, which are tentatively being planned for the spring of 2011.
- **State Transportation Budget – Enhancement**
 - Rahtz noted that the guidance for the Transportation Enhancement grants is being revised by spring 2011, to state that communities with complete streets policies will be favorably looked upon for receiving Enhancement grants.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

- **MDOT 5-year Program of Projects**
 - Rahtz noted that MDOT's 5-year program of projects is up for public comment and distributed copies.

- Several committee members noted that MDOT has held listening sessions in the past, which had been seemingly well attended.
- **Proposed 2011 Meeting Dates**
 - Thomas passed out copies of the proposed 2011 meeting dates, based on the same schedule that had been used in past years.
 - Lenze noted that the meetings at which TIP amendments can be approved are every other month beginning with February.
 - Motion by Zebell, seconded by South, to approve the list of calendar dates for the calendar year 2011 TwinCATS Technical Advisory Committee meetings. Motion approved unanimously.
- **Appointment of officer nominating subcommittee**
 - Rahtz asked if there were two volunteers to sit on a subcommittee to nominate the new chair and vice-chair at the January 2011 TwinCATS meeting.
 - Smaka, Scherwitz, and Montoya volunteered to sit on the subcommittee.
 - Scherwitz noted that anyone interested in volunteering for a position could notify him or Rahtz.
- **TIP Amendments**
 - Berrien County Road Commission
 - Amend in FY 2011, the project named Lincoln Ave. Limits change from "John Beers Rd to Maiden Ln" to "Linco Rd to Maiden Ln," and length changes from 2.50 miles to 4.50 miles.
 - Project description changes from "Resurface road" to "hot patching and single seal coat."
 - Federal cost (STUL) changes from \$450,506 to \$76,900, county cost changes from \$99,898 to \$17,052, total phase cost changes from \$550,404 to \$93,952, and total project cost changes from \$660,000 to \$116,000.
 - Add in FY 2011, the project named Benton Center Rd and Red Arrow Hwy, for "hot patching and single seal coat" resurfacing on Benton Center Rd from Napier Ave to Red Arrow Hwy and on Red Arrow Hwy from Benton Center Rd to Euclid Ave. Length is 5.68 miles. Construction phase. Federal cost (STUL) is \$76,900, county cost is \$17,052, total phase cost is \$93,952, and total project cost is \$115,000.
 - Add in FY 2011, the project named Pipestone Rd and River Rd, "hot patching and single seal coat" resurfacing on Pipestone Rd from Naomi Rd to East Sodus Township line and on River Rd from Naomi Rd to Pipestone Rd. Length is 4.68 miles. Construction phase.
 - Federal cost (STUL) is \$76,900, county cost is \$17,052, total phase cost is \$93,952, and total project cost is \$115,000.
 - City of St. Joseph
 - Amend in FY 2011, the project named S. State St and Kingsley Ave. Limits change from "S. State St from Granada Ave to Wallace Ave and Kingsley Ave from S. State St to 225 feet East of S. State St" to "S. State St. from Granada Ave to Wallace Ave and Kingsley Ave from S. State St. to Niles Ave." Length changes from 0.19 miles to 0.30 miles. Federal cost (STUL) changes from \$208,000 to \$403,000, city cost changes from \$683,300 to \$782,000, total phase cost changes from \$891,300 to \$1,185,000, and total project cost changes from \$1,069,500 to

suggestion of "road dieting" Hilltop Rd and building the non-motorized path on the North side of the road where the fourth lane had been. The lane would be reduced only for a 200' stretch of the road in front of the Marathon property, and the "road diet" could be extended along the rest of the road by restriping at a later date. The gutter would have to be moved on that stretch of the road.

- Zebell added that an additional \$20,000 of CMAQ funds had come available, which would help to recoup the additional costs incurred in the project.
- Cook added that the other "workaround" for the problem with the Marathon station could be building the path around the back side of the gas station property, but that solution would be much more costly than the road diet solution.
- Lenze stated that he would have to check on the eligibility of using the CMAQ funds for reducing a lane of the road. He noted that he would need an intersection drawing as soon as possible.
- Lenze added that air quality analysis is required for any lane reduction longer than 0.5 miles, which should be kept in mind both for this project and for the Walk and Roll Plan.
- Griffin discussed the status of gaining easements from four owners on the south side of Hilltop Rd. Griffin is confident that easements can be obtained from the Chase Bank and Martin's Supermarket. The owners of Hilltop Center are looking for a larger tax deduction for their easement than the Township believes reasonable, however, and Leco Company is also holding out in hopes of leveraging a new traffic light on Hilltop and Lakeview. Griffin is expressed frustration at the pace of bargaining, but believes that easements could ultimately be secured.
- Lenze added that not all of the FY 2011 CMAQ applications for Berrien County have yet been approved by the Federal Highway Administration, and if that they are not approved in the next few days the TIP amendments cannot be processed until after the February 2011 meeting (early March). It was noted that the other 2011 CMAQ projects have begun design, and that they will still be able to proceed if the TIP amendments are processed after the February 2011 meeting.
- Lenze added that there may be delays and timing issues with processing any TIP amendments, due to several factors: FHWA will be understaffed until April, MDOT is understaffed with many recent retirements, a new governor is taking office January 1, 2011, and has to grant MDOT the authority to process amendments to the TIP, and it is uncertain whether the federal SAFETEA-LU legislation will be extended or for how long.
- Add in FY 2011, the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission project named Berrien County Rideshare for a standard rideshare program. Primary work type is miscellaneous, and phase is T-ops. Federal cost (CMG) is \$12,000, and total cost is \$12,000.
- Add in FY 2011, the Berrien County Road Commission project named Hilltop Rd for construction of a 6-foot-wide pedestrian walkway along the south side of Hilltop Rd from Washington Ave to Cleveland Ave and then along the north side from Cleveland Ave to Lakeshore Dr for a total

length of 0.95 miles. Primary work type is Roadside facility. Construction phase. Federal cost (CM) is \$370,859, local cost is \$7,141, total phase cost is \$378,000, and total project cost is \$401,000.

- Add in FY 2011, the Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority project named Transit vehicle replacement, for replacement of one bus. Federal cost (CM) is \$51,000, state cost (CTF) is \$13,000, and total phase cost is \$64,000.
- Amend in FY 2011, the Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority project named Transit vehicle replacement. Project description changes from "replacing three buses" to "replacing two buses." Federal cost (5307) changes from \$154,000 to \$102,000, state cost (CTF) changes from \$38,400 to \$26,000, and total phase cost changes from \$192,400 to \$128,000.
- Motion by Zebell, seconded by South, to recommend the approval of the above four amendments in the FY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program, conditional upon the FHWA approval of the 2011 CMAQ applications for Berrien County. Motion approved unanimously.
- Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority
 - Amend in FY 2012, the project named Public Transportation for public transit urban operations. Federal cost (5307) changes from \$710,000 to \$640,000, state cost (CTF) changes from \$615,000 to \$657,584, local cost changes from \$457,619 to \$473,924, and total phase cost changes from \$1,782,619 to \$1,771,508.
 - Add in FY 2012, the project named New Line Haul Route. Primary work type is Transit operations, T-ops phase. Federal cost (5316) is \$88,000, state cost (CTF) is \$88,000, and total phase cost is \$176,000. Comments: continuation of 2010 and 2011 project.
 - Add in FY 2012, the project named New Expanded Hours. Primary work type is Transit operations, T-ops phase. Federal cost (5316) is \$79,000, state cost (CTF) is \$79,000, and total phase cost is \$158,000. Comments: continuation of 2010 and 2011 project.
 - Add in FY 2012, the project named Mobility Manager. Primary work type is Transit operations, T-cap phase. Federal cost (5317) is \$60,000, state cost (CTF) is \$15,000, and total phase cost is \$75,000.
 - Amend in FY 2012, the project named Transit vehicle replacement. Federal cost (CM) changes from \$162,000 to \$180,000, state cost (CTF) changes from \$40,500 to \$45,000, and total phase cost changes from \$202,500 to \$225,000.
 - Motion by Purvis, seconded by Cook, to recommend the approval of the above five amendments in the FY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program. Motion approved unanimously.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Johnson announced that the Disability Network of Southwest Michigan is starting a Transportation Advocacy Group (TAG). The TAGs have been successful in other counties in which the Disability Network works. The purpose is to convene transit riders to advocate for public transit in the region.
- Johnson asked if there is anything the public can do to help with the Hilltop Rd project. Scherwitz asked whether a public hearing needs to be held. Zebell responded that the

issue has been in the newspapers, and several members of the public have expressed their dissatisfaction to the business owners. He added that all that can be done at this point is for interested members of the public to write letters to the property owners advocating the need for the sidewalk.

8. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

- Cook announced that he had recently read that Michigan is leading the nation in the number of communities that have adopted Complete Streets resolutions. Thus, to stay competitive with other areas, he suggested that TwinCATS revisit the idea of a Complete Streets resolution or policy.
- Rahtz added that she wants to find out, once the Enhancement Grant guidance is revised in the spring, what the definition of a Complete Streets policy will be – whether it will be acceptable for the project to be part of a regional plan, a municipal plan, a “resolution,” a “policy with teeth,” etc.
- Rahtz added that Suzann Flowers at SWMPC is working to plan a Complete Streets workshop in the spring to assist local governments in finding out how to get started with writing a Complete Streets policy.
- Berndt announced that the Berrien County Road Commission will be holding its second steering committee meeting to discuss how to fund local road projects in Berrien County, on January 20th at 3:00 P.M. at Andrews University, Chan Shun Hall. The meeting is open to the public and all ideas are welcome.
- Scherwitz announced that as the airport runway expansion project will be completed in 2012, he is thinking about how the local transportation system can tie into future events that are happening in the region, such as the Senior PGA tournament at the Jack Nicklaus golf course at Harbor Shores in 2012, equestrian events that will be held at the new equestrian center on M-139 in 2012, and other upcoming events that will be held at both of these venues. He noted that he will have to close an entire runway to park all of the private jets that will be coming for these events. He added that the completion of US-31 from Napier Ave to the bypass would be key in connecting future visitors in to the I-94 corridor to reach the airport and most of the area’s hotels.
- South responded that MDOT currently does not have the funds or the authority (under the current governor) to complete this project, and that they are slowly acquiring easements over time to keep the project in the TIP.
- Scherwitz added that the local communities should be thinking about what the impact of these new developments will be on their communities, including the transportation impacts and the market potential, such as the growing demand for hotel beds, etc.

9. ADJOURNMENT: 10:37 A.M

- Next meeting is January 24, 2011 at 9:30 A.M.