

Minutes
Twin Cities Area Transportation Study
TAC Meeting
 September 20, 2010
 9:30 A.M.
 Southwest Michigan Regional Airport

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Chris Cook, City of Benton Harbor Jason Latham, Michigan Department of Transportation, Southwest Region Ray Lenze, Michigan Department of Transportation, Statewide Planning John Olson, Royalton Township Derek Perry, Village of Stevensville Bill Purvis, Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority Thad Rieder, Cornerstone Alliance Lee Scherwitz, Southwest Michigan Regional Airport Alan Smaka, St. Joseph Charter Township Terrie Smith, Lincoln Charter Township Paul South, Michigan Department of Transportation- Coloma TSC Tim Zebell, City of St. Joseph
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Aaron Anthony, City of Bridgman 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 Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Katie Montoya, Berrien County Community Development Gloria Payne, Lake Charter Township Robert Rusch, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (ex officio) Mark Seaman, Village of Shoreham Brad Sharlow, MDOT Planning (ex officio) Rachael Tupica, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio)
SWMPC STAFF PRESENT:	Christina Pippen Anna Rahtz Trevor Thomas
OTHERS PRESENT:	Ron Griffin, St. Joseph Charter Township Jess Minks Michael Ringler

1. CALL TO ORDER:

- Chairman Scherwitz called the meeting to order at 9:31 A.M.

2. MINUTES:

- *A motion was made by Cook, seconded by Smaka, to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2010 TAC meeting. Motion approved unanimously.*

3. STAFF REPORT:

- **Rail Update**

- **MARP/MEC meeting recap**

- Thomas announced that SWMPC had been a partner in the meeting sponsored by the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers and the Michigan Environmental Council at the Shadowland Ballroom in St. Joseph on September 8th. Around 60 people had been in attendance, including representatives from county and township governments, TCATA, and other organizations. The attendees had drawn maps of their ideal passenger rail service in Michigan, which MARP and MEC plans to transmit to MDOT for consideration in their State Rail Plan.
 - Purvis added that the map drawing exercise had been interesting for showing the rail connections that residents want to see across the state. Although developed separately, the maps from each table ended up very similar to each other.

- **MDOT Rail Plan Public Comment**

- Rahtz announced that MDOT is updating its state rail plan for passenger and freight rail. There is a page about the State Rail Plan on MDOT's website (www.michigan.gov/mirailplan). Public comments are being accepted through Spring 2011.

- **MDOT Rail Plan Public Meeting**

- Rahtz added that MDOT is holding four public input meetings across the state for the State Rail Plan. The closest meeting is at Grand Rapids TSC on September 29th at 4:00 pm. She added that anyone interested in carpooling to the meeting could let her know. Rahtz emphasized that this meeting may be the best opportunity to discuss with MDOT the concern about rerouting the Pere Marquette line through Kalamazoo.
 - Rahtz noted that the SWMPC staff had begun compiling a list of comments for TwinCATS to submit to MDOT. She added that the staff would like feedback from the committee on what arguments to make.

- **Walk & Roll update**

- **Walk & Roll status**

- Cook announced that he and the staff had met with the TAC officers to come up with a strategy for obtaining input on the draft Walk & Roll maps. They will meet with representatives from each municipality, starting with the TAC representative. The approach for each municipality will be tailored according to what the planning/technical staff see as appropriate. Following input from each community, at least two large public meetings will be held.
 - *Motion by Cook, seconded by Zebell, to approve the outreach process for input on the draft Walk & Roll maps, as outlined above. Motion approved unanimously.*

- **US Bicycle Route 35 Public Hearing**

- Rahtz announced that a public hearing will be held on September 29th at MI Works! at 6:30 pm. A draft route has been developed for placing signs denoting a "US 35 Bicycle Route" as part of a national initiative by AASHTO and the Adventure Cycling Association. The steering committee was led by Paul Vandenbosch in South Haven, with representatives from each area including John Hodgson for the St. Joseph – Benton Harbor area. After gathering public comments on the route, the steering committee will be turning in the draft route to the counties and MDOT for final approval.
 - Cook mentioned that the widened shoulders on M-63 fit perfectly with the US BR 35 project, but the shoulder still need built on a 1.2 mile stretch in Hagar Township owned by the Berrien County Road Commission. The shoulder widening for that stretch would cost \$250,000.

- **Asset Management Annual Report** – Thomas announced that the Asset Management annual report for 2010 for Berrien County is now available at http://swmpc.org/asset_mgmt_b.asp. He went through a PowerPoint presentation showing the trends in the pavement condition in the TwinCATS area and Berrien County overall.

4. **PROJECT UPDATES**

- **2010 Projects:**
 - Berrien County Road Commission
 - Britain Avenue – seal coat complete, except for white paint
 - Cleveland Avenue – complete, except for white paint
 - Hilltop Road sidewalk –project cancelled due to right of way problem with one property owner; looking into other options to continue project
 - Hollywood Road – complete, except for white paint
 - Pipestone Rd/Nickerson Ave/Sodus Parkway/Red Arrow Highway – complete, except for white paint
 - Napier Ave west of I-94 – October 1st letting
 - City of Benton Harbor
 - Highland Avenue – soon ready to begin construction
 - Bicycle Rack CMAQ project – Rahtz announced that this project had not been approved in full by FHWA, and due to time constraints with processing TIP amendments the project had not been amended into the TIP.
 - City of Bridgman
 - Lake Street – complete except signal at Lake and Red Arrow Highway
 - MDOT
 - I-94 bridge replacement under Britain Avenue, Benton Harbor (JN 104002, CON phase) – under construction
 - I-94 BL resurfacing (JN 109704) – in design
 - M-139 resurfacing (JN 103173) – completed
 - I-94 bridges repair (JN 107161) – has been let
 - Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority
 - Surveillance cameras –need additional cable for one camera; training drivers on how to use them
 - Rahtz asked Purvis and Pippen to give an update on mobility management. Pippen announced that a Berrien Coordinated Transportation Coalition meeting would be held on Tuesday, September 21, 2010 with the four transit agencies and several social service agencies.

5. **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Benton Harbor Local Match Update**
 - No action.
 - Scherwitz added that he would have a meeting following this meeting with the emergency financial manager at the City of Benton Harbor, Joseph Harris.
- **Public Participation Plan draft**
 - **Additional public comments**
 - Rahtz went over additional public comments received on the “How can we involve you?” online survey.
 - **Member discussion**
 - Rahtz summarized the discussion that had been held by the TwinCATS and NATS committee members. This included:
 - It is not possible, or expected, for staff to reach out to every single resident in Berrien County about transportation. Additionally, certain techniques suggested by the survey

participants are not financially feasible. However, it is possible to distribute information through the member agencies and through partner agencies, such as social service agencies, libraries, senior centers, etc.

- An economic dialogue needs to be held with the public about how much could be accomplished with varying levels of funding, and to make the public aware of the current situation with transportation funding.
- There was uncertainty about who the target population is for transportation information.
- There were comments that legal notices are sometimes effective for bringing attendees to public hearings.
- **Member survey**
 - Rahtz noted that she had sent out a member survey to gauge where TwinCATS is on meeting participation legislation, but had not received enough responses.
 - Zebell asked if the committee could have more time to fill out the survey, and Rahtz responded that it could be filled out by the October meeting.
- **Suggested changes**
 - Rahtz went over several suggestions the staff have for improving the participation processes for TwinCATS and NATS. She asked for a motion to approve the final draft of the Transportation Participation Plan, with any needed changes, adding that further changes to the processes could still be made later without being reflected in the plan. The final draft of the plan would go on to the full SWMPC board.
 - South noted that it seemed circular for the plan to be approved without changes after Rahtz had argued that changes were needed in consideration of the public comments, including developing a system for considering and responding to public comments.
 - Rahtz pointed out that the committee members had not proposed any changes, and that the staff could not write procedures into the plan if they would not actually be implemented. However, she and Thomas had made some minor revisions to the plan to take into account some more tools that could be used, per the conversation at NATS in August.
 - It was discussed whether the approval of the plan could be delayed until after the survey had been done in October. Rahtz and Lenze noted that the plan was legally supposed to be revised in fiscal year 2010 (by the end of September 2010) and that if it was not approved by the committees until October it could not be approved by the full SWMPC board until February or March of 2011.
 - There was debate over how much more would be accomplished at the October meeting, and Scherwitz noted that the current plan is flexible. He emphasized that it is a working document. Rahtz added that certain details of implementation, such as meeting dates and times, do not have to appear in the plan. Those things can still be altered later.
 - *Motion by Cook, seconded by Zebell, to approve the final draft of the SWMPC Transportation Participation Plan. Motion approved unanimously.*

6. NEW BUSINESS:

- **Long Range Plan / Socioeconomic Data Update**
 - Thomas announced that SWMPC is conducting a review of the numbers of employees at locations throughout Berrien County for the Travel Demand Model for the next Long Range Transportation Plan.
 - Thomas explained that the staff would like the committee members to review packets with employee numbers for the communities they represent. He passed out the packets and instructions on what the staff are looking for in the review. The purpose is to identify employers that have relocated, closed, opened, laid off, or hired new employees so that the model will accurately capture the commuting patterns of workers.
 - Additional notes can be submitted electronically by October 1, 2010.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None

8. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

- None

9. ADJOURNMENT:

- Meeting adjourned at 10:15 A.M. Next meeting is October 18, 2010 at 9:30 A.M.