

**TWIN CITIES AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY**

*TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND POLICY COMMITTEE COMBINED MINUTES*

July 19, 2021

<b>TWINCATS MEMBER ORG./POSITION</b>	<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>TAC</b>	<b>POL</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>
Benton Charter Township	Richard Royal	x	x	V		V		V	V						
Berrien Co. Board of Commissioners	Ray Bell		x	A		V		A	A						
Berrien Co. Community Dev. Dept.	Evan Smith	x		A				A	A						
Berrien Co. Planning Commission	Eric Lester, M.D.		x	V		V		V	V						
Berrien Co. Road Dept.	(vacant)		x												
Berrien Co. Road Dept.	Kevin Stack	x		V		V		V	V						
City of Benton Harbor	Ellis Mitchel		x	A		A		A	A						
City of Benton Harbor	Chris Cook (Pol. V. Ch.)	x	Alt	V		V		V	V						
City of Bridgman	Juan Ganum	Alt	x	A		A		A	A						
City of Bridgman	Tim Kading	x	Alt	V		V		A	IP						
City of St. Joseph	John Hodgson		x	V		V		V	V						
City of St. Joseph	Tim Zebell (TAC V. Ch.)	x		V		V		V	IP						
Cornerstone Alliance	Sue Wyman	x	x	A		A		A	A						
Disability Network of SW Mich.	Cindy gray	x		V		A		A	V						
Hagar Township	(vacant)	x	x												
Kinexus	(vacant)	x													
Lake Charter Township	Gloria Payne	x	x	A		A		A	A						
Lincoln Charter Township	Dick Stauffer (Pol. Ch.)		x	V		V		V	IP						
Lincoln Charter Township	Terrie Smith	x		V		V		V	V						
MDOT – Bureau of Trans. Planning	Jim Sturdevant	x	x	V		V		V	V						
MDOT – Southwest Region	Amy Lipset	x	x	V		V		V	IP						
MDOT – Southwest Region	Brian Sanada	Alt	Alt	A		A		A	A						
MDOT – Trans. Service Center	Jonathon Smith	x	x	V		V		V	V						
Royalton Township	Steve Tilly	x	x	A		A		A	A						
Sodus Township	David Chandler	x	x	A		A		A	A						
Southwest Mich. Regional Airport	Vince Desjardins	x	x	A		A		A	A						
St. Joseph Charter Township	Denise Cook		x	V		V		V	V						
St. Joseph Charter Township	Roger Seeley	x		A		A		V	V						
	Ron Griffin	Alt		A		A		A	A						
	Jonathan Fisk	Alt		V		V		V	A						
Twin Cities Area Trans. Authority	Paul Gillespie	x	x	V		V		V	IP						
Village of Grand Beach	(vacant)	x	x												
Village of Shoreham	Mike Schnable	x	x	A		V		V	V						
Village of Stevensville	(vacant)		x	A											
Village of Stevensville	Chris Cook (Pol. V. Ch.)	x	Alt	V		A		V	V						
Federal Highway Administration	Andy Pickard	x	x	A		A		A	A						
Federal Transit Administration	Angelica Salgado	x	x	A		A		A	A						
MDOT - Modeling	Katie Beck	x		A		A		A	A						
MDOT - Passenger Division	Fred Featherly	x		A		A		A	V						
Northwestern Ind. Reg. Plan. Comm.	Scott Weber	x	x	A		A		A	A						
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Kim Gallagher	x	x	V		V		V	IP						
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Brandon Kovnat			V		V		V	IP						

Pol. Ch.- Policy Chair; TAC Ch. - TAC Chair; Alt – Alternate; IP – Present in person; V – Participating remotely; A – Absent; A blank spot means the position is vacant.

Others Present: Anita Boughner, MDOT; Kerry DenBraber, MDOT

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**

Policy Committee Chair, Dick Stauffer, Called the meeting to order at 9:30 am. Kim Gallagher took roll call.

2. **Changes to the Agenda**

None

3. **Public Comment**

None.

4. **Approve Minutes from May 17, 2021 Meeting**

**Motion** to approve the minutes from the May 17, 2021 combined Technical Advisory and Policy Committee meeting. Made by Tim Zebell, and seconded by Paul Gillespie. **Motion approved.**

5. **SWMPC Staff Report**

Gallagher discussed the call for projects which was recently sent out. She explained that SWMPC manages several federal transportation funding sources and explained which ones TwinCATS member communities can apply for. Due dates for the applications are staggered with:

- TwinCATS Surface Transportation Program applications due on September 24, 2021
- Rural Task Force Surface transportation Program applications Due on October 1, 2021
- Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement applications due on October 6, 2021

6. **Agency Updates**

6.1. **Public Transit:** Gillespie said TCATA was responding to FTA's comments on their Triennial Review. He said that he had submitted a grant request, which was denied, to purchase an electric bus. The vehicle is made by Optimal EV a Detroit company, and is one of the first purpose built electric shuttle buses. He said he is still working on other ways to secure funding for electric buses which are currently more than double the cost of the gasoline bus.

6.2. Local Road Agencies

**Berrien County Road Department:** Stack said they held a pre-construction meeting last Friday for the Washington Avenue project. Construction will begin in mid-August. Currently St. Joseph Township is doing water and sewer work in the area and should be done before the road work begins. Stack said that the Napier bridge project was awarded, he is setting up the pre-construction meeting, and construction should begin in Mid-August.

**City of St. Joseph:** Zebell said Langley was almost done with phase 2b which includes paving up to Hillcrest Avenue. He said the goal was to finish the project ahead of schedule.

6.3. **MDOT:** Stauffer said MDOT was out last Wednesday at the BL-94 and Maiden Lane intersection to look at the traffic lights as part of the I-94 Reconstruction project from exit 23 to the St. Joseph River. Stauffer said that he wanted to have a mast pole for the new traffic lights, which work better during storms. MDOT will only pay for replacement of the existing signal (Pole & string configuration). Lipset said that MDOT would require Lincoln Township to pay the difference in cost between replacing the existing signal configuration and the mast signal.

Lipset also discussed I-94 reconstruction. She said that FHWA was requiring a noise analysis. This will delay the environmental clearance but should not affect the construction completion date. Lipset said they place sensors along the corridor to measure decibels. These get put into a noise analysis model. Using predicted future traffic volumes, if the volume is predicted to increase by 5 decibels over the next 20 yrs. they then must look at the number of affected properties. FHWA uses a threshold cost of noise

wall construction per affected property to determine if a noise wall is required. Lipset added that there weren't a lot of affected residents for the project. Lipset added that noise walls are only required when a project would do something that would increase noise, such as increasing capacity or relocating a highway closer to properties. This project will add an auxiliary lane on Eastbound I-94 from Pipestone on ramp to the Napier On ramp.

Stauffer mentioned that residents were concerned about noise on I-94. Lipset said that she would prefer they complete the noise study before she addresses residents comments. Lipset added that if the cost per property doesn't meet the FHWA threshold, MDOT cannot use federal funds to pay for a noise wall and thus is highly unlikely to construct one.

Kerry DenBraber explained more about the variable advisory speed limit system being installed on I-94. They use sensors to measure weather and traffic/speed data to give the speed those drivers should traveling for safety. She added that these are advisory only and posted signs will remain and are the only enforceable speeds.

Lipset gave an update on the US-31 extension project. She said the Westbound I-94 ramp to I-196 will be closed until August for Culvert work. She said MDOT completed the culverts that will carry Ox creek under US-31 and Yellow Creek under I-94. She explained that new culverts are considerably larger than what they replace because they are now required to be able to handle a 100 year flood.

## 7. **New Business**

- 7.1. **Transit Safety Targets:** Gillespie said the safety targets were a part of an overall transit safety plan. These plans are a new requirement by FTA. He explained the four metrics that transit agencies have to track. Gillespie said the safety report would not be directly submitted to FTA but will be included with the next triennial review in 2024. He explained that a system failure was anything that took a bus out of service. Gillespie explained that many of these system failures were due to the propane busses having issues during very hot weather. He worked with the manufacturer to fix the problem and said the busses are no longer breaking down. He added he will have better data next year on how the fix is working and expect to have much better reliability. Gillespie added that they will not purchase anymore propane buses; the gasoline buses are more reliable and his future goal is to purchase electric buses. The Electric buses are going through testing now to determine if they can be certified for use in public transit.

**Motion** for the technical advisory committee to recommend that the Policy Committee adopt the resolution for TwinCATS to support the transit Safety Targets as set by the Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority. Made by Tim Kading, and seconded by Amy Lipset. **Motion Approved.**

**Motion** for the Policy Committee to approve the recommendation from the Technical Advisory Committee. Made by Tim Kading, and seconded by Eric Lester. **Motion Approved.**

- 7.2. **2024-2026 Project Scoring System:** Kovnat said that after the May TwinCATS meeting a subcommittee made up of road agencies met to discuss the project scoring methodology and address the concerns. Zebell said he thought they made the review process a much fairer and simpler process, especially for safety. Zebell said that he had taken the Michigan Infrastructure Council's (MIC) Asset Management Champion training program, which influenced the strategic planning section. He explained that receiving points was not meant to be difficult. Kovnat added that as a way to encourage asset management training and to acknowledge that agencies have to start somewhere, the committee agreed to award a point to agencies who have staff who take an Asset Management training course.

Zebell and Kovnat encouraged all agencies to take the MIC's Asset Management Readiness Assessment (<https://fcm.ca/en/resources/mamp/tool-asset-management-readiness-scale>). Kovnat thanked the subcommittee for their excellent work in helping create the improved scoring system.

**Motion** for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee authorize the 2024-2026 Project Scoring System, as contained in the meeting packet, to be used to evaluate the applications for TwinCATS Surface Transportation Program funded projects. Made by Chris Cook and seconded by Paul Gillespie. **Motion approved.**

**Motion** for the Policy Committee to approve the recommendation from the Technical Advisory Committee. Made by Tim Kading, and seconded by Richard Royal. **Motion Approved.**

8. **Privilege of the Floor or Public Comment**

Cindy Gray thanked the Berrien County Road Department for putting a four way stop at Linco Rd. and Hollywood Rd. to handle the traffic caused by the M-139 detour. She said that this intersection is typically bad but the detour has made it much worse. She said they are not used to the number of semi-trucks along the road. she also thanked the Berrien County Sherriff department for increased enforcements because few drivers were following the posted 45 mph speed limit. Jon Smith said the detour would be in place until the end of September.

9. **Adjournment**

Gallagher said the next meeting location was unknown at this time, but she hoped to be able to use Michigan Works. Gallagher added that there will always be a virtual option in the future. She addressed questions about virtual member voting, stating that the TwinCATS bylaws cannot be changed to allow virtual voting because it is a rule set in the Michigan Open Meetings Act.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:36 am. Next Meeting is scheduled for August 16, 2021 at 9:30 AM.

*Minutes compiled by Brand Kovnat, SWMPC Associate Planner*