**Twin Cities Area Transportation Study**

*technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee Combined* *Minutes*

May 21, 2018 9:30 A.M.

Kinexus, Lighthouse Room

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| ***Present*** | ***Committee Representing*** |
| **Name** | **Representing** | **TAC** | **Pol** |
| Alex Little | TCATA | x | x |
| Andrea Dewey | Federal Highway Administration\* | x | x |
| Bill Chickering | Berrien County Commissioner |   | x |
| Bob Lawrence | Village of Shoreham | x | x |
| Brandon Kovnat | SWMPC | Staff |   |
| Brian Berndt | Berrien County Road Department | x |   |
| Brian Sanada | MDOT- Southwest Region | x | x |
| Carolyn Fowler | Benton Charter Township |   | x |
| Chris Cook | City of Benton Harbor | x | x\*\* |
| Denise Cook | St. Joseph Charter Township | x |   |
| Eric Lester | Berrien County Planning Commission |   | x |
| Evan Smith | Berrien County Community Development | x | x |
| Jim Sturdevant | MDOT Statewide Planning | x | x |
| Katie Beck | MDOT SUTA\* | x |   |
| Kim Gallagher | SWMPC | Staff |   |
| Scott Weber | Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission\* | x | x |
| Steve Tilly | Royalton Township | x | x |
| Terrie Smith | Lincoln Charter Township | x |   |
| Vince Desjardins | Southwest Michigan Regional Airport | x | X |
| Jonathan Fisk\*\* | St. Joseph Charter Township |  | x |
| Tom MacDonald\*\* |  | x |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Present*** | ***Committee Representing*** |
| **Name** | **Representing** | **TAC** | **Pol** |
| Calli Berg | Benton Charter Township | x |   |
| Darwin Watson | City of Benton Harbor |   | x |
| Dick Stauffer | Lincoln Charter Township |   | X |
| Gloria Payne | Lake Charter Township | x | x |
| John Hodgson | City of St. Joseph |   | x |
| Jonathon Smith | MDOT Coloma Business Office | x | x |
| Juan Ganum | City of Bridgman | x | x |
| Roger Seeley | St. Joseph Charter Township | x |   |
| Stacey Stephens | Cornerstone Alliance | x | x |
| Terezie Harazinova | Disability Network Southwest Michigan | x |   |
| Tim Zebell | City of St. Joseph | x |   |

\*Non-Voting Member, \*\* Alternate Member

1. **Call to Order/Introductions**

Technical Advisory Committee Chair Brian Berndt called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM and led the group in introductions.

1. **Changes to the Agenda**

Brandon Kovnat asked to remove the MDOT amendments from the agenda.

Brian Sanada said that he had made a mistake in submitting the request. He found out the project was not actually within the TwinCATS planning area.

1. **Public Comment**

None

1. **Approve Minutes**

**Motion** to approve the minutes from the April 16, 2018 combined Technical Advisory and Policy Committee meeting. Made by Chris Cook, second by Steve Tilly. **Motion approved**

1. **Staff Report**

**Long Range Plan Update/Air Quality:** Kim Gallagher explained that the TwinCATS 2045 Long Range Plan was being delayed because MDOT needed time to conduct air quality conformity. Air quality conformity is a requirement to show that the projects within the Long Range Plan will not cause or worsen air quality. This is required because on April 30 the EPA designated Berrien County as non-attainment for the 2015 ozone standards. MDOT is in charge of reviewing the Long Range Plan to determine how it may affect air quality. Since no counties in Michigan were in non-attainment under the 2008 standards MDOT staff has not had to perform a full air quality conformity analysis in several years. With limited MDOT staff, their first job is reviewing projects in the MPO’s TIP for conformity before working on long range plans.

With the new ozone standards, the older 1997 designation would be revoked. A court case, South Shore Air Quality District v. EPA, challenged the overturning of the 1997 ozone standards. They believed that areas in maintenance under the 1997 standards might backslide into non-attainment of air quality conformity is no longer required. The full effects of the case are not know at this time but the main outcome is that agencies that were in nonattainment or maintenance under the 1997 standards will still need to show conformity. This means that MDOT may need to perform two conformity analysis for both the 2015 ozone standards and for the 1997 standards. The case is up for a rehearing so the outcome could change. How this will affect the CMAQ program which funds air quality improvements is unknown. What is known is that since Berrien County is non-attainment they will continue to receive CMAQ funding.

Andrea Dewey explained that moisture and sunlight over Lake Michigan reacts with nitrogen oxides (NOx) and Volatile Organic Commands (VOC), originating mainly in the Chicago area, to produce ozone. This explains why so many counties surrounding Lake Michigan, even those with low populations have higher levels of ozone. Andrea explained the air quality is both a highly scientific technical subject and has a very complex legal component, which is why it can take a long time to fully analyze and incorporate the required elements into the Long Range Plan.

**Survey:** Kim Gallagher presented the results of the transportation survey. These responses will be used in the Long Range Plan. The pedestrian and bicycle survey will also be used with SWMPC’s work on a seven country non-motorized plan. Major takeaways from the survey was that poor pavement condition was present for all users. Drivers said that if they could not drive they would rely on friends and family but would consider the bus if it were quicker. They would also bike more if there were more facilities. Bicyclists indicated that the main reasons they did not bike more was due to not feeling safe, poor pavement, and lack of facilities. Most pedestrians in the survey said they lived within walking distance of parks, schools, and shopping. Most responded that they encounter poorly maintained or missing sidewalks.

**Call for Safety Projects:** Kim Gallagher informed the committees that MDOT had released letters on for the 2020 safety program. This includes the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and the High Risk Rural Roads program (HRRR). This year MDOT sent a letter for HSIP Systemic Streamlined Projects. These are groupings of projects based on similar roadway or intersection features that correlate with particular fatal or serious injury crash types.

In 2020 MDOT has a total of $15 million statewide allocated for the safety projects. There is a maximum of $600,000 per project with a $2 million maximum per agency. Most project require a 20% local match, but projects that address a roadway feature related to a fatal or serious injury crash are funded with a 10% match. Safety funds can be used on any road, including non-federal aid roads. The deadline for application is August 13. Kim said that questions about the program can be sent to Pam Blazo at MDOT (blazop@michigan.gov, 517-335-2224). If agencies need help with filling out applications or need crash data they can contact Brandon Kovnat (kovnatb@swmpc.org).

1. **Airport Updates**

Vince DesJardins said that the airport was getting a self-service fuel tank. Currently you must call for service, which can be very expensive after hours.

1. **Special Studies**

**Napier Corridor Study:** Kim Gallagher informed the committees that an open house meeting for Napier Avenue was happening tonight (May 21). She said that the consultants would be presenting different options for Napier.

**Countywide Transit Study**: The draft service alternatives plan was reviewed by the Connect Berrien Steering Committee.

1. **Community Land Use and Zoning Member Updates**None
2. **Public Transit –** Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority (TCATA)

Alex Little said that TCATA had a slight reduction in ridership, which was consistent with national trends in bus usage. He felt that this might reverse as gas prices rise. He said that a while ago the FTA changed the conditions for replacing buses. TCATA now has older buses that are eligible for replacement. TCATA is still working with the University of Michigan’s SMART group. With the winter academic semester ending the faculty will be able to spend more time assisting with the study.

1. **Agency Project Status**

**Berrien County Road Department**

* Nickerson Avenue: Construction started today (May 21). No road closure.
* Shawnee Road: Estimated to be let in May, with construction occurring in August.

**City of Benton Harbor, Pipestone Traffic Signal**: Construction underway. They are waiting on a mast arm. The company is blaming the delay on steel tariffs.

**City of St. Joseph, Wallace Avenue:** Project was let on February 2. Construction estimated to begin on June 11.

**MDOT**

* **I-196 Overlay**: Plan completion scheduled for June 1, 2018. Letting scheduled for November
* **M-63 Bridge Replacement**: Plan completion scheduled for June 1, 2018. Letting scheduled for November
* **I-94 WB:** Design began on March 22, combined plan review/OEC meeting scheduled for April 23. Final plan will be turned in on May 11 for the July letting**.**
1. **Old Business –**

***Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) between MPO (SWMPC), transit (TCATA), and MDOT***

Kim Gallagher said that staff recommends approval of this MOU. The MOU incorporates performance based planning and it was developed by MDOT with input from FHWA and FTA. FHWA has a deadline of May 27 to receive documents relating to performance based planning, therefore the MOU needs to be signed and sent before this date for TwinCATS and TCATA to remain in compliance.

Andrea Dewey said that likely no TIP amendments of any kind could be made until the MOU was in place. She said that the full implications were unknown but that FTA was still interpreting the regulations.

Alex Little said that during TCATA’s triennial review the FTA had told them that they need a more specific MOU between them and TwinCATS. A two-party MOU was written before the three party performance based planning MOU was sent out by MDOT. Alex said he wants to incorporate language form the two-party MOU into the three-party MOU. He feels the three-party MOU being presented is too broad. He wants to ensure funding for TCATA stays with TCATA.

Kim said the additional language was sent to MDOT for vetting and that it had to go through several reviews including the state attorney general’s office.

Chris Cook asked if the countywide service study would affect the MOU. Kim replied that it should not affect it. The MOU adds new reporting guidelines, requires asset management plans for transit agencies, and coordination data.

Andrea Dewey said that the MOU was essentially just regurgitating the regulations in the FAST Act on performance based planning.

Steve Tilly asked if the committees could approve the MOU as is and then amend it to include the language Alex Little requested once it was approved by MDOT.

Eric Lester said that Benton Harbor is the sole local funder of TCATA and they need to ensure their funds are used by TCATA. He said that if TwinCATS and TCATA cannot handle this issue with the MOU then they would not be able to implement a countywide service plan in the future.

Kim Gallagher noted that TCATA’s receives approximately $180,000 in local millage, but State and federal funding make up the rest of the approximately $2.5 million TCATA budget.

Alex Little stated that he thought the Brownfield Development Authority had reduced TCATA’s millage.

Kim Gallagher noted that if such action were happening it would be illegal.

**Motion** by the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee sign the MOU between TwinCATS, TCATA, and MDOT as is, but to accept and include the additional language submitted by Alex Little upon that language being approved by MDOT and other regulators. Made by Steve Tilly, Second by Evan Smith. **Motion Approved.**

**Motion** by the Policy Committee to sign the MOU between TwinCATS, TCATA, and MDOT as is, but to accept and include the additional language submitted by Alex Little upon the language being approved by MDOT and other regulators. Made by Steve Tilly, Second by Eric Lester. **Motion Approved** and the MOU was signed by Chris Cook, Policy Vice Chair.

Kim Gallagher said that environmental justice (EJ) regulations prohibit the reduction of service in low-income areas such as Benton Harbor in order to increase service in areas of less need. There was no possible way to reduce service for Benton Harbor. Eric Lester said that the EJ is only as good as the enforcement mechanism.

1. **New Business**

**FY 2019 Unified Work Program Approval**: Kim Gallagher presented TwinCATS Fiscal Year 2019 Unified Work Program (UWP). She explained that the UWP includes all of the work items and budget SWMPC staff would undertake for TwinCATS.

Jim Sturdevant said that MDOT was still reviewing the UWP. He said that the approval would need to allow TwinCATS to incorporate any changes required by MDOT.

**Motion** by the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee sign the resolution to approve the FY 2019 Unified Work Program, along with changes as required by MDOT. Made by Jim Sturdevant, second by Alex Little. Motion Approved.

**Motion** by the Policy Committee to sign the resolution to approve the FY 2019 Unified Work Program, along with changes as required by MDOT. Made by Jim Sturdevant, second by Eric Lester. **Motion** was approved and the resolution was signed by Chris Cook, Policy Vice Chair.

**Reaffirmation of the TwinCATS 2040 Long Range Plan:** Kim Gallagher said that due to the need for air quality conformity the TwinCATS 2045 Long range Plan would not be completed by June.

Kim Gallagher stated that the current TwinCATS 2040 long range Plan would expire on June 30, 2018. TwinCATS must reaffirm the 2040 LRP to assure that a valid LRP is in place after June 30, 2018. Kim said that staff reviewed the 2040 LRP and found the analysis and recommendation of the plan are still valid and applicable.

Kim Gallagher presented a resolution for the reaffirmation of the 2040 TwinCATS Long Range Plan. She requested public comment and discussion on the resolution. Seeing none:

**Motion** by the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy committee reaffirm the TwinCATS 2040 Long Range Plan. Made by Jim Sturdevant, second by Steve Tilly. **Motion Approved**.

**Motion** by the Policy Committee to approve the resolution to reaffirm the TwinCATS 2040 Long Range Plan. Made by Denise Cook, second by Steve Tilly. **Motion carried unanimously and the resolution was signed by Chris Cook, Policy Vice Chair.**

**Presentation on the Travel Demand Model:** Katie Beck gave a presentation on the Travel Demand Model including traffic levels in 2015, the base year, and 2045. She showed overall congestion is low but a few segments are at or approaching capacity. These include Nickerson Ave. west of M-139, Niles Ave. Over I-94, and Main Street just west of the Riverview Road. She explained that in the future population was expected to rise slightly but employment would fall. This would lead to a decrease in congestion by 2045. She also showed the difference in traffic if US-31 is extended to I-94. Extending US-31 is expected to slightly reduce congestion.

1. **State and Federal Updates**

Jim Sturdevant said that JobNet Phase 2 was being implemented in July. He said that the next phase would replace the paper efile. Agencies could get read-only access to view project details.

1. **Privilege of the Floor**

None

1. **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 11:15 A.The next TwinCATS meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 18, 2018 @ 9:30 am.