

TWIN CITIES AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Policy Committee

Minutes

April 18, 2016

10:30 A.M.

St. Joseph City Commission Chambers

<p>POLICY MEMBERS PRESENT:</p>	<p>Denise Cook, St. Joseph Charter Township Andrea Dewey, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio) Carolyn Fowler, Benton Charter Township William Hodge, Berrien County Planning Commission John Hodgson, City of St. Joseph Deb Kavanaugh-Frank, Hagar Township Jason Latham, MDOT Southwest Region Roger Seely, St. Joseph Charter Township Jonathon Smith, MDOT Coloma Office Dick Stauffer, Lincoln Charter Township Steve Tilly, Royalton Township</p>
<p>POLICY MEMBERS ABSENT:</p>	<p>Bill Chickering, Berrien County Board of Commissioners Vince DesJardins, Southwest Michigan Regional Airport John Gast, Lake Charter Township Juan Ganum, City of Bridgman Dave Chandler, Sodus Township John Lanum, MDOT Statewide Planning Tim Lynch, Berrien County Road Commission Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Brad Sharlow, MDOT (ex officio) Darwin Watson, City of Benton Harbor Cathy Tilley, Cornerstone Alliance</p>
<p>SWMPC STAFF PRESENT:</p>	<p>Kim Gallagher Gautam Mani</p>
<p>OTHERS PRESENT:</p>	<p>Debbie Boothby, Benton Charter Township Heather Cole, Be Healthy Berrien Carolyn Phillips, Benton Charter Township</p>

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Stauffer called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m. and led the group in introductions.

2. CHANGES TO THE POSTED AGENDA

None.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Heather Cole, the Director of Be Healthy Berrien, commented that Be Healthy Berrien encouraged the TwinCATS Policy Committee to adopt safe bicycle and pedestrian solutions as part of resurfacing efforts on Napier Avenue from the St. Joseph River and M-139. The lack of safe facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists on this corridor is a serious issue for people trying to access employment, education, healthcare, and healthy food. A substantial portion of the population in the neighborhoods that border Napier Avenue does not have access to automobiles. Sidewalks and

bicycle lanes on Napier Avenue can help increase the vitality of residents and businesses along the corridor. Over 71% of adults in Berrien County are either obese or overweight. Safe places to walk or bike are critical to increasing activity and reducing rates of childhood and adult obesity. Be Healthy Berrien recommended that TwinCATS TAC and Policy Committees follow the Complete Streets Policy they adopted and work with the townships to install full bicycle and pedestrian facilities in conjunction with the Napier Avenue resurfacing projects in 2019 and 2020.

Carolyn Phillips also spoke on behalf of Benton Charter Township and said that the Township looked forward to continuing conversations on how to move forward with non-motorized improvements on Napier Avenue. The Townships recognizes the current safety issues posed by a lack of non-motorized facilities, as well as the TwinCATS Complete Streets. However, the Township wanted to state its support for the resurfacing project on Napier Avenue from I-94 to 4300 feet west as it is currently programmed.

Stauffer requested that letters from both Benton Township and the Berrien County Health Department regarding Napier Avenue be entered into the TwinCATS record.

4. MINUTES:

- A motion was made by Tilly with support by Purvis to approve the minutes of the March 21 Policy Committee meeting as presented. **Motion passed.**

5. STAFF REPORT

- **Discussion of I-94 Interchange at Exit 33**

Mani said that it had come to the attention of SWMPC staff that MDOT had programmed and planned for phases of a project to complete the cloverleaf interchange on I-94. Pre-engineering, SUB and ROW phases are currently planned for 2018 and 2019, with construction set for 2020. Currently, heading eastbound, it is impossible to exit directly on to BL-94. The total project cost is \$76 million. This project would correct that, in addition to taking a major step towards the completion of the US-31 freeway. This is a rare "capacity expansion" project for our area, and SWMPC staff thought that committee members would have some questions about it.

Latham shared that the Region was spending a portion of its region budget dedicated to the maintenance of I-94. MDOT had been searching for the correct opportunity to relocate the I-94 bridge over BL-94, and the relocation is now essential to maintenance because the bridge has fallen into poor condition and needs replacement. Latham said that there would be some impacts to collection and distribution of traffic and turning movements, and that MDOT looked forward to continuing to work with the MPO and Benton Township officials on discussing those traffic impacts. This project would certainly also have impacts on Crystal Avenue and Napier Avenue.

- **Performance Measures Updates**

Mani said that it had been some time since the TwinCATS MPO had been updated on the state of national performance measures, which had been in the works since the previous legislation, MAP-21 was passed in 2012. The FAST Act continued MAP-21's performance-based planning framework. Mani said that rulemakings to set performance measures were starting to be released, and others were still being released for a public comment period. Mani reported that the final rule on safety performance measures had been released. The five performance measures chosen at the federal level were:

- Number of fatalities

- Rate of fatalities based on Vehicle Miles Traveled
- Number of serious injuries
- Rate of serious injuries based on Vehicle Miles Traveled
- Number of non-motorized serious injuries and crashes

Mani reported that the performance measures on non-motorized crashes were added in after much public comment. The state now has until August 31, 2017 to set targets for reducing fatalities and serious injuries, and the MPOs must establish targets within 180 days after the state sets its targets. Dewey noted that if a state failed to meet its target, than it would eventually perhaps have to divert funds from other spending areas towards safety funding.

An overview of the status of other performance measures rulemakings, including congestion mitigation, system performance, and pavement and bridge asset management, were provided in the meeting packet. In addition, information was provided about the status of performance measures related to public transit asset management and safety. Mani said that this section would serve as the Performance Measures section in the 2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Program.

- **2017-2020 TIP Development Update**

Mani said that development of the 2017-2020 TIP was well underway, and that TwinCATS could anticipate further sections of the TIP being brought forward in May for approval in June. In particular, the consultation list was being developed and the environmental justice analysis of projects proposed in the 2017-2020 TIP was taking place.

- **2017 Unified Planning Work Program (UWP) Update**

Mani reported that TwinCATS committee members would see a draft of the UWP for committee approval at the May meeting. SWMPC staff had been working on a new introduction section that addressed current TwinCATS issues, and would be modifying the work activities based on what the MPO intended to complete in 2017.

6. PUBLIC TRANSIT

- **SWMPC Transit Updates**

Gallagher said that responses had come in to the request for proposals (RFP) for the Countywide Service Plan. There were a total of three proposals. The evaluation team, made up of stakeholders from throughout Berrien County, would be evaluating the proposals in the weeks ahead based on overall strength and the ability of each respondent to complete each of the work tasks. One or two respondents would be invited in for an interview. Gallagher said that SWMPC hoped to have a contract in place by late May. The RFP had originally been sent out to twenty-two clients but was open to all firms to apply.

- **TCATA Updates**

Purvis reported that the hardware had been installed for the new dispatching system, and the software would be installed shortly. New radios had been installed and were functioning well. Purvis noted that TCATA was involved in conversations with the Michigan Public Transit Association to change the distribution formula so that agencies were not necessarily rewarded for simply spending more

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Regional Inclusive Community Coalition (RICC)**
No report.
- **Walk and Roll Report**
No report.

8. COMMUNITY LAND USE AND ZONING UPDATES

Seely reported that as part of its ongoing expansion plans, LECO had put in a request for rezoning with St. Joseph Township. The Township Planning Commission would be voting on the request at its next meeting.

9. PROJECT UPDATES

City of Benton Harbor

2016 Pipestone at Wall Street Traffic Signal replacement project- Grade Inspection plans have been submitted. The City anticipates a May project letting and a summer construction.

City of St. Joseph

2016 Lakeview Avenue from Hilltop to Highland Avenue reconstruct- Project will be let on May 6th, with construction taking place just after school lets out.

Berrien County Road Commission

2016 Shawnee Road from the Bridgman city limits to Jericho Road- bid savings available for TwinCATS to use. Construction is anticipated on July 11th.

2016 Pipestone Traffic Signal at Entrance to Meijer- June letting anticipated.

2016 Napier at Pipestone traffic signal- finishing ADA ramps and repair of manhole covers in the road.

2017 Hilltop Road resurfacing between M-63 and I-94- Design work is in progress; materials have been submitted to the consultant.

MDOT

No updates.

TCATA

No additional updates.

10. OLD BUSINESS

- **Napier Avenue**
- Mani noted that discussions were continuing regarding Napier Avenue and the possibilities for non-motorized facilities to be included in the planned resurfacing projects in 2019 and 2020. Gallagher said that SWMPC had met with the Road Commission and Benton Township to discuss possibilities for non-motorized infrastructure and the Township's concerns. Gallagher

said that the township had brought up some very real concerns about the cost of maintaining sidewalks, and right of way issues with property owners in the corridor. Mani said that a corridor study would look at specific costs of different non-motorized solutions that are appropriate to each segment of the corridor, and would provide a guide for implementation. We know the costs will be significant to install and maintain sidewalks and bicycle lanes, but we do not have an idea of exactly how much it could cost for both townships involved.

Cook said that she understood the concerns of the committees, but reiterated that St. Joseph Charter Township, and probably Benton Charter Township as well, was concerned with the need to take property in order to build sidewalks or bicycle lanes. It might be a challenge to justify those takings to some property owners.

Gallagher said that was a very real possibility, so it was important for a corridor study to determine exactly where the public right of way is as it exists now, and what would have to be added in to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists.

11. NEW BUSINESS

▪ **Resolutions of Support for 5303 Competitive Funds**

Mani said that one grant opportunity to do planning studies may be coming through a competitive statewide process for 5303 transit planning funds. The state has accrued a balance of approximately \$6 million in these planning funds that went unused by MPOs, and it is opening up this balance for projects. Many activities are eligible, but they must relate to transit planning.

SWMPC is proposing two projects to use these funds. It is possible that both projects are funded, that one is funded, or that neither is funded.

- The corridor study of non-motorized facilities on Napier Avenue, and the opportunities that better pedestrian and bicycle connections on the corridor would provide for future fixed route transit service in an efficient manner.
- An update of Berrien County's Coordination Human Services Plan. This was a requirement imposed under President George W. Bush that in order for an agency to use FTA funds, it needs to have a plan for coordinating travel needs with human services. The Berrien County plan requires an update.

Applications are due May 6th, and SWMPC still has work to do in terms of . Per state guidelines, a resolution of support from the affected MPO is required. Mani said that staff were seeking two separate motions for the Policy Committee approve the resolutions of support.

A motion by Tilly with support by Purvis to approve a resolution of support for the application of 5303 funds for the Napier Avenue Corridor Improvement Study. **Motion passed.**

A motion by Tilly with support by Seely to approve a resolution of support for the application of 5303 funds for the Berrien County Coordinated Human Services Plan update. **Motion passed.**

- **Amendments to the 2014-2017 TIP**

There were several amendments proposed to the 2014-2017 TIP.

TCATA- TCATA requested modifying its regular 5307 operating funding costs so that the amounts are \$732,002 in federal funds, \$644,294 in state funds, and local match of \$396,664.

Berrien County Road Commission- The Berrien County Road Commission is proposing, due to bid savings, a reduction in the federal and local amounts for its 2016 Shawnee Road reconstruction project. This leaves a federal cost of \$323,049 and a local cost of \$71,635. This is purely for fiscal constraint since the project is already let.

Village of Shoreham- The Village is proposing to use bid savings from the Shawnee Road project to close out its federal Advance Construct Conversion of the Brown School Road project. It will use \$27,762 in additional federal funding in 2016 instead of 2017.

City of Benton Harbor- The City is proposing using the remainder of the bid savings from Shawnee Road project to redo pavement markings on Various Federal Aid Routes, including Pipestone Road. The project will use \$22,847 in federal funds and \$5,067 in local match.

A motion by Hodge with support by Tilly to approve the amendments to the 2014-2017 TIP.
Motion passed.

- **State and Federal Updates**

None.

12. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Mani reminded the committees that this was his last TwinCATS meeting. Mani thanked the committee members for a great experience, and for helping him learn the transportation planning process. Mani said that once in New York, he would be focused on assisting the MPOs there, but welcomed committee members to contact him there if he could ever be of assistance to them in the future . The committee members wished him well.

13. ADJOURNMENT at 11:25 AM.

Next meeting is May 16, 2016 at 10:30 AM at Kinexus/Michigan Works! Anchor Rooms A+B.

Compiled by: Gautam Mani, SWMPC Associate Planner, 2016.