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TOP STORY

TwinCATS to decide on road funding

22 road projects to vie for available funds

By JOHN MATUSZAK - HP Staff Writer Dec 26, 2018

BENTON HARBOR — Federal funding for nine area road projects will be approved at the the Twin Cities Area Transportation Study review committee meeting at 9:20 a.m. Monday on Jan. 14, 2019 at Kinexus at Main St. and Riverview Drive in Benton Harbor.

Projects have been proposed by the Berrien County Road Department, Benton Harbor, St. Joseph, Bridgman and Stevensville. Residents can comment online on the projects as they are reviewed.

Over the next four years TwinCATS will receive around \$3.9 million in Federal Surface Transportation Block Grant funding to award to road or transit agencies within its boundaries. The funds must be used on federal aid eligible roads or for transit capital projects, and require local matching funds.

There were 22 applications submitted with a total funding request of approximately \$8.7 million. The review committee was appointed by TwinCATS and is made of engineers, elected officials, a transit agency director, and an economic development agency.

Proposed projects include:

Berrien County Road Department

- John Beers Road, Cleveland Ave. to Stevensville city limits, \$516,000.
- John Beers Road, Eidson to M-139, \$280,000.
- Napier Avenue, Broadway Avenue to within 3,700 feet east of St. Joseph River, \$320,000.

- Napier Avenue, Broadway Avenue to within 500 feet of Milton Avenue, \$420,000.
- Napier Avenue, from I-94 0.8 miles west, \$575,000.
- Napier Avenue, Plaza Drive to 4,300 feet of West Plaza Drive, \$250,000.
- Pipestone Road, Nickerson Avenue to Sodus Parkway, \$305,000.
- Marquette Woods Road, S. Roosevelt to Cleveland Avenue, \$1.2 million, (Lincoln Township \$100,000 match, BC Road Dept. \$279,000, \$375,000 grant).
- Washington Avenue, from M-63 to Maiden Lane, \$800,000.

Benton Harbor

- Empire Avenue, Pipestone Road to east city limits, \$562,000.
- Broadway Avenue, from city limits to May Street, \$258,000.

Bridgman

- Lake Street, Church Street to Gast Road, \$551,000.

St. Joseph

- Langley Avenue, Pearl Street to Napier Avenue, reconstruction and utilities replacement, \$5.9 million.
- Upton Drive, Virginia Court to city limits, reconstruction and underground utilities, \$2.8 million.
- Broad Street, Main Street to Pearl, \$584,000.
- Water Street, S. State Street to Vine Street, \$1.2 million (includes rebuilding retaining wall).
- Botham Avenue, from S. State Street to Niles Avenue, \$993,500.
- Lake Boulevard, Ship Street to Sutherland Avenue, \$590,000.

Stevensville

- Red Arrow Highway, from John Beers Road to north of Peutz Road, \$504,360.

- Red Arrow Highway, John Beers Road to south of Johnson Road, \$802,375.
- John Beers Road, St. Joseph Avenue to Red Arrow Highway, \$967,902.
- John Beers Road, Red Arrow Highway to Notre Dame Avenue, \$593,525.

The TwinCATS Policy committee approved a scoring system for projects which included the following criteria: road condition, traffic volume, the expected useful life of the project, complete streets elements and safety improvements. Points were also awarded for local agencies' planning process including if the agency has an asset management plan and if they are coordinating road work with sewer, water or utility work.

Langley Road in the city of St. Joseph scored high because of the city's asset management planning, which is coordinating road work with storm and sanitary sewer upgrades. The projects will include bike lanes or a non-motorized path to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians. There will also be safety improvements.

Marquette Woods Road (From South Roosevelt to Cleveland) in Lincoln Township scored high because of the 6 foot wide shoulders being added to accommodate bicyclists which will connect to the existing facilities on Marquette Woods and the Roosevelt Road Path.

Certain projects that scored poorly were still chosen as a local priority project. Napier Avenue was a low scoring project (due to a lack of non-motorized features), but was identified as a local priority by the Berrien County Road Department.

Once selected, further analysis will continue until May. The public is encouraged to comment on any of the proposed projects any time between now and May 15, though immediate review of projects prior to the Jan. 14 meeting is encouraged.

Proposed projects can be found on the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission website at <https://www.swmpc.org/twincatstip.asp>.

The online comment form will be available beginning Thursday.

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