

TWIN CITIES AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND POLICY COMMITTEE
Monday, October 21, 2024
Attendance

TwinCATS Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Committee Members Attending in Person

Name	Representing	TAC	POL
Tim Zebell	City of St. Joseph		X
Alex Austin	City of St. Joseph	X	
Kacey Dominguez	Village of Stevensville		X
Tim Drews	Village of Stevensville	X	
Dick Stauffer (Policy. Ch.)	Lincoln Charter Township		X
Denise Cook	St. Joseph Charter Township		X
Roger Seeley	St. Joseph Charter Township	X	
Mark Heyliger	Berrien County Road Department		X
Jim Sturdevant	MDOT – Bureau of Trans. Planning	X	X
Adrian Stroupe	MDOT – Southwest Region	X	X
Cindy Gray	Disability Network of SW Mich.	X	
Kim Gallagher	Southwest Michigan Planning Commission	X	X

Others Attending In Person:

Name	Representing	TAC	POL
Branon Kovnat	Southwest Michigan Planning Commission		
Jonathon Fisk	St. Joseph Charter Township		
Melanie Stange	Wightman & Associates On behalf of Bridgman		
Terrie Martin	Carrier & Gable, Inc.		
Brandon Miras	Williams & Works On behalf of Lincoln Twp		

Others Attending Virtually:

Name	Representing	TAC	POL
Richard Royal	Benton Charter Township	x	x
Juan Ganum	City of Bridgman	x	x
Jonathon Smith	MDOT, Coloma TSC	X	x
Kevin Stack	Berrien County Road Department	x	
Mike Allard	Village of Shoreham	x	x

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Monday, October 21, 2024
Meeting Minutes

Call to Order and Roll Call

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

Tim Zebell announced his appointment as Assistant City Manager for St. Joseph, adding that he will continue to also serve as City Engineer. Due to this he will no longer serve on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and will now be the City's alternate representative on the Policy Committee (POL), with City Manager Emily Hackworth as the primary representative. Zebell stated that Alex Austin will represent the City on the TAC, with the City's Director of Public Works Greg Grothous serving as the alternate.

Changes to the Agenda

None.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of July 15, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes from the July 15, 2024 TwinCATS combined Policy and Technical Advisory Committee meeting. Made by Roger Seeley and seconded by Dick Stauffer. **Motion approved.**

SWMPC Staff Report

Gallagher presented the timeline for the 2026-2029 project selection. Applications have been received and are currently being reviewed and scored. The project review subcommittee meeting is scheduled for November 18, 2024, at 1:30 PM at the SWMPC office.

Gallagher announced that surveys for the EV Readiness Plan had been distributed to establish a baseline of where the region is at for EV charging for the plan.

Local Road Agency Updates

Kevin Stack gave an update on Berrien County Road Department 2024 Projects

- **Lincoln Ave:** The project is nearly complete, with minor restoration work by contractor remaining.

- **Signal upgrades:** Pre-construction meeting held, and they are awaiting the schedule from the contractor who needs to confirm their timeline for component delivery. . Construction will begin in winter and conclude in spring.
- **Empire Ave Shoulder widening:** The project is complete, with stripping being done this morning.

Miras gave the update for the John Beers Path Project

- The project is on the November letting. The Township is using ARPA funds for the local match, which requires a construction contract by Dec. 31 2024. This means MDOT LAP will need to get the contract with the accepted bidder promptly after the letting, potentially requiring an expedited award.

Tim Drews gave an update on the City of Benton Harbor's 2024 Projects

- **Colfax Ave Reconstruction:** Project was obligated just in time to avoid losing the 2024 funds. Due to Tribal consultation the project requires an Inadvertent Discovery Plan. Targeting the December letting with construction in the Spring.
- **Signal Replacement at Empire Ave & Colfax Ave:** Construction set to start soon, beginning with underground work.
- **Jefferson St Rehabilitation:** Project completed.

Tim Zebell presented updates for the City of St. Joseph's FY 2025 projects

- **Botham Ave:** Targeting a January letting. Working on the EGLE permit for the water main. Applied for DWS funding but were not selected.
- **Cleveland Ave:** Working with Abonmarche on the design. Targeting a June letting with construction occurring in late summer 2025.

FY 2025 Carbon Reduction Program and Amendment Requests

Tim Drews presented updates on the Lakeshore Trail project: NEPA approval is taking a long time. The property acquisition process is changing often, with a property hung up on appraisal. But the project is still on track for funding in 2025.

Dick Stauffer presented updates on the Roosevelt Path: The project began in 2017 but bids came in higher than the Township had budgeted. Since the project was shovel ready, about a year ago Congressman Tim Walberg awarded the Township 1.5 million in FY 2025 earmark funds,. This leaves a local match for the Township of \$665,000 which is 30%

FY 2025 CRP Funding Proposal

The committee reviewed the proposed split FY 2025 CRP funding between the Lakeshore Trail and a Roosevelt Path, which would bring the federal funding for the Lakeshore Trail to 80%, with the remaining CRP allocated to the Roosevelt Path (**see packet page 13 for details**).

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the allocation of FY 2025 Carbon Reduction Program funding as presented. Made by Tim Drews and seconded by Roger Seeley. **Motion approved.**

Motion for the Policy Committee to approve the recommendation from the Technical Advisory committee. Made by Jim Sturdevant and seconded by Denice Cook. Motion approved.

Discussion about an NFC Request from the City of Bridgman

Gallagher led a discussion about the upcoming review of the National Functional Classification, which occurs every 10 years with the updated Census Urban area boundaries. This process will identify local roads which may now meet the qualifications to be reclassified as federal aid eligible.

Melanie Stange discussed two streets in Bridgman that the city believes should be reclassified.

Transit Updates

Kim Gallagher reported that Twin City Area Transportation Authority (TCATA) will lose its insurance on November 30, effectively halting operations. The Michigan Transit Pool, which insures TCATA, voted to end coverage due to multiple accidents and lawsuits. Without insurance, TCATA cannot operate, posing a significant disruption to local transit services.

Gallagher mentioned that a third-party provider could potentially take over TCATA’s operations, but federal procurement requirements may complicate this approach, and no solution is confirmed. Discussions with state representatives are ongoing.

She suggested this might be a good time to have a broader discussion about expanding transit services, since currently, only 48% of the urban area in Berrien County is served, with areas such as St. Joseph Township, Royalton Township, Lincoln Township, the Village of Stevensville, and the City of Bridgman lacking transit coverage.

MDOT Project Updates

See packet Page 11 for additional details on MDOT projects
Jon Smith presented a detailed update on the I-94 reconstruction.

MDOT Amendment Requests

See packet Page 13 for details on proposed amendments
The amendments requests were presented with no questions or comments

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the MDOT project amendments to the TwinCATS 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program as contained in the meeting packet. Made by Roger Seeley and seconded by Jim Sturdevant. **Motion approved.**

Motion for the Policy Committee to approve the recommendation from the Technical Advisory committee. Made by Kacey Dominguez and seconded by Mark Heyliger. Motion approved.

Privilege of the Floor or Public Comment

Jim Sturdevant gave an update on items he was working on for TwinCATS.

Adrain Stroupe discussed the proposed Traffic Signal on Red Arrow Hwy/US-12 at Grand Beach Rd.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 AM. The next TwinCATS meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 18, 2024, at 9:30 AM.

Minutes Compiled by Brandon Kovnat, SWMPC Associate Planner