

NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Joint Technical Advisory Committee / Policy Committee Meeting

MINUTES

May 25, 2010

Niles City Council Chambers

2:00 P.M.

Members Present:	Jason Auvil, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians Joe Bellina, Cass County Road Commission Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Paul Boggs, Milton Township Chuck Collins, Berrien County Road Commission Juan Ganum, City of Niles Planning Kelly Getman-Dissette, Niles Dial-A-Ride John Gruchot, Berrien County Community Development Darrell Harden, MDOT Southwest Region Debbie Johnson, Cass County Commissioner Jim Kidwell, Niles Charter Township Joseph Kring, Bertrand Township John LaMore, Berrien County Commissioner Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning Cliff Pehlman, Cass County Road Commission Joe Ray, City of Niles Johnie Rodebush, Cass County Commissioner Paul South, MDOT - Coloma TSC Tracy Vines, Berrien County Planning Commission Sarah Woolcock, MDOT Coloma TSC
Members Absent:	Georgia Boggs, Niles City Council Willie Brown, City of Buchanan Richard Cooper, Niles Charter Township Neil Coulston, City of Niles DPW/Airport John Egelhaaf, SWMPC (ex-officio) Fred Featherly, MDOT-Multi-Modal Dick Fintze, Four Flags Chamber Irving Frost, Howard Township Shelley Klug, Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Jane Mitchell, Buchanan Township Jessica Mitchell, MACOG (ex officio) John Monaghan, Village of Edwardsburg Public Works Meg Mullendore, City of Buchanan Sandra Naugle, City of Niles Finance Office Kimberly O'Haver, Buchanan Dial a Ride Jennifer Osborne, MDOT Helen Parsons, Ontwa Township John Pleveich, Niles Dial-A-Ride Robert Rusch, MDEQ Don Ryman, Berrien County Commissioner Ron Sather, Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce Sarah Van Buren, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio)
SWMPC Staff Present:	Anna Rahtz
Others Present:	Jaime Nauta – MDOT - Design Jan Personette Brad Peterson, MDOT – Design

1. Call to Order & Introductions

- Policy Committee Chairman Rodebush called the meeting to order at 1:59 P.M. and led the committees in saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Minutes

- *Motion by Woolcock, supported by Auvil, to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2010 TAC meeting. Motion approved with a change in the project update for the MDOT US 12 BR project from "design under way" to "preliminary engineering / environmental assessment under way."*
- *Motion by Poehlman, supported by Vines, to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2010 Policy Committee meeting. Motion approved.*

3. Staff Report

- Rahtz reported that the new planner Trevor Thomas will be starting in the first week of June and will be present at the June NATS meetings. He recently graduated from the Masters in Urban Planning program at the University of Michigan.

4. Project Updates

- **2009**
 - **MDOT**
 - US-12 BR over St. Joseph River – environmental assessment under way
 - US-12 from M-60 to Edwardsburg (preliminary engineering) – started
 - US-12 from M-60 to Edwardsburg (right-of-way) – not started, may need to be moved to 2010
 - **Niles Dial-a-Ride**
 - Facility projects – mostly completed
 - Trolley repair – in progress, replacing trolley lift
 - Bus replacement – waiting until 2010, combining with another project (may have to be moved in TIP)
- **2010**
 - **Berrien County Road Commission**
 - Stateline Road and Third Street –June 18th letting
 - Lake Street/East Main Street/Galien-Buchanan Road – waiting for authorization
 - Bertrand Road – waiting for authorization
 - **Cass County Road Commission**
 - Redfield Street – obligated; construction beginning July
 - Gumwood Road – let; holding pre-construction meeting in June
 - Ironwood Road – construction starting July 19th
 - Elkhart Road – held grade inspection
 - Bell Road – in design
 - Lakeshore Drive – GI held; not yet obligated
 - **City of Niles**
 - East Main – mostly completed
 - Lake Street – mostly completed
 - **MDOT**
 - US-12 BR resurfacing – under construction
 - M-51 in Niles Township (slope and shoulder repair) – moving to 2011
 - **Niles Dial-a-Ride**
 - AVL system purchase – in progress

5. Old Business

• **MDOT 2011-2014 TIP Draft Projects List**

- Rahtz passed out a handout listing the 2011-2014 MDOT projects (see following page) for the new Transportation Improvement Program being developed. She stated that this is a draft list, and the final TIP document will be presented for approval at the June meetings.
- Lenze commented that the US-31 traffic operations project needs to be broken out into the different rural and urban areas for the different TIPs. It was stated that the final document presented in June will have the correct limits and amount for this project.
- *Motion by Vines, supported by Poehlman, to approve the draft list of MDOT projects for the Fiscal Years 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program. Motion approved.*

6. New Business

• **S/TIP Amendment Schedule**

- Rahtz announced that the potential schedule for MDOT processing of TIP amendments that she had passed out at the April meeting was approved by MDOT, effective October 1, 2010. She stated that she would follow up and get the finalized schedule of dates to the TAC members who submit TIP amendments. She stated that this would affect how long it takes to get a TIP amendment processed after the amendment request is submitted to her, so the amendment requests should be submitted further in advance.
- Bellina asked Lenze what the rationale for this change was. Lenze responded that it is inefficient for MDOT to spend so much time processing TIP amendments, citing the example of a TIP amendment request for a project in the Benton Harbor area being submitted the next day after it had just been amended. Lenze stated that MDOT is the biggest offender of TIP amendment procedures, and that it will be a process of adjusting for everyone. He cited the examples of SEMCOG and other MPOs in Michigan that only process TIP amendments three to six times per year.

• **Local Road Rating**

- Rahtz announced that the Michigan Transportation Asset Management Council has funding available so that the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission can rate locally owned roads that are not federal aid eligible. The eligibility for local road rating is on a three-year cycle, so agencies that were not eligible in 2008 or 2009 are eligible this year. Rahtz stated that communities interested in this should notify her.
- South asked if the dates were set for the rating of federal aid eligible roads and suggested that the local roads could be rated at the same time for efficiency. Woolcock responded that MDOT does not participate in local road rating and cannot lend its vans for that purpose.
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MDOT PROJECTS - REDUCED PROGRAM

2011

County	Project Name	Limits	Length	Project Category	Project Description	Phase	Federal Cost	Total Phase Cost	Job Number
Berrien	US-31	Berrien County	21.166	Traffic Operations	Freeway Signing Upgrade	CON	\$715,000	\$715,000	108921
Berrien	US-31 BR	over Dowagiac River	0.000	Bridge Replacement	Superstructure Replacement	CON	\$1,468,729	\$1,835,911	86785

2012 Illustrative

County	Project Name	Limits	Length	Project Category	Project Description	Phase	Federal Cost	Total Phase Cost	Job Number
Cass	US-12	M-60 to Edwardsburg	7.258	Resurface	Mill and two-course HMA overlay	CON	\$7,857,600	\$9,600,000	90361
Cass	US-12	at Gumwood Road, Milton Township, Cass County	0.334	Widen - Minor	Widen US-12 for left turn lane at Gumwood Road. Install culvert extensions, re-ditching, and infiltration basins to perpetuate area drainage. Acquire ROW on 5 parcels to fit drainage on wider road section.	CON	\$668,700	\$743,000	106876

2013

County	Project Name	Limits	Length	Project Category	Project Description	Phase	Federal Cost	Total Phase Cost	Job Number
Berrien	M-139	(Main Street) over St. Joseph River	0.140	Bridge - Replacement	Bridge replacement	CON	\$4,453,720	\$5,567,150	104152

7. Public Comment

- None.

8. Privilege of the Floor

• Context Sensitive Solutions Presentation

- Brad Peterson from MDOT gave a presentation on Context Sensitive Solutions. He explained that MDOT adopted its Context Sensitive Solutions policy in 2005, and it is now federally required for state DOTs. He explained the importance of having local involvement in project design early in the process, using the example of the M-139 bridge replacement environmental assessment that MDOT is currently conducting in Niles. More information is available at www.contextsensitivesolutions.org (national clearinghouse) or www.michigan.gov/mdot.
- Getman-Dissette remarked that she had received a plain letter about the M-139 bridge open house, and that an eye-catching flyer would have been better to attract meeting attendees. Jamie Nauta responded that Bob Parsons, public hearings officer at MDOT, is responsible for sending out meeting notices, and showed an example of a graphic postcard he had sent out regarding the open house.
- Johnson asked how the public reacted to the project at the open house. South responded that the first open house did not provide specific information other than the need for conducting the environmental assessment. The future meetings will present the preliminary alternative solutions and ask for input on the alternatives.
- Rodebush asked how many people attended the meeting, and Woolcock responded 14.
- Peterson emphasized that now is the most critical time for input on the bridge replacement project, referencing the opportunity curve he had shown in the presentation.
- Personette asked if meeting attendees will be notified of future meeting dates, and Woolcock responded yes.
- Getman-Dissette announced that Niles Dial-a-Ride is holding an open house to view its new facilities on June 2, 2010 from 4:30 P.M. to 6:30 P.M.

9. Adjournment

- *Motion by Vines, supported by Woolcock, to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 3:01 P.M.*
- The next TAC meeting is June 22, 2010 at 1:30 P.M.
- The next Policy Committee meeting is June 22, 2010 at 3:00 P.M.