

NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Policy Committee

MINUTES

August 25, 2009

Niles City Council Chambers

3:00 P.M.

Policy Members Present:	Paul Boggs, Milton Township Chuck Collins, Berrien County Road Commission Irving Frost, Howard Township Darrell Harden, MDOT, Southwest Region Debbie Johnson, Cass County Commissioner Joseph Kring, Bertrand Township John LaMore, Berrien County Commissioner Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning Jane Mitchell, Buchanan Township John Pleveich, Niles Dial-A-Ride Cliff Poehlman, Cass County Road Commission Don Ryman, Berrien County Commissioner Paul South, MDOT Coloma TSC Tracy Vines, Berrien County Planning Commission Sarah Woolcock, MDOT Coloma TSC
Policy Members Absent:	Georgia Boggs, Niles City Council Richard Cooper, Niles Township John Egelhaaf, SWMPC (ex-officio) Dick Fintze, Four Flags Chamber Jim Kidwell, Niles Charter Township Stewart McKenzie, FTA (ex-officio) Jessica Mitchell, MACOG (ex-officio) John Monaghan, Village of Edwardsburg Meg Mullendore, City of Buchanan Sandra Naugle, City of Niles Finance Office Helen Parsons, Ontwa Township Johnie Rodebush, Cass County Commissioner Sarah Van Buren, FHWA –Michigan Division (ex-officio)
SWMPC Staff Present:	Nickolas Musson Anna Rahtz
Others Present:	Jason Auvil, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians

1. Call to Order & Introductions

- Vice-chair Lamore called the meeting to order at 3:01 P.M. Chairman Rodebush was absent.

2. Minutes

- *Motion by Poehlman, supported by South, to approve the minutes of the July 28, 2009 Policy meeting, with one attendance correction. Motion approved.*

3. Staff Report

- **Public Participation and TIP Amendment Process**
 - Rahtz announced that the staff are reviewing the Public Participation Plan and currently refining

their procedures to most effectively address public participation and environmental justice outreach. They made a community mailing list for TwinCATS and NATS meeting materials.

- Lamore asked Rahtz to explain the concept of environmental justice (EJ), and she explained that there is federal legislation requiring that all transportation projects be evaluated to ensure they are not negatively impacting minority and low-income populations, and that the SWMPC Public Participation Plan includes EJ maps to illustrate where those populations are located. Lenze added that the legislation is not only to avoid a negative impact on EJ populations but also to ensure that benefits of transportation projects are equitably spread between EJ and non-EJ populations. Harden added that EJ populations include people with limited English proficiency, and that almost every geographical area within the NATS region falls under at least one EJ category.

4. Old Business

- **Freight presentation** – Musson announced that Chris Dingman will most likely be available to give a presentation on the basics of freight planning at the October NATS meeting.

5. New Business

- **TIP amendments** – The following TIP amendments were discussed:

The Cass County Road Commission requested the following modification and amendment to the NATS FY 2008-11 Transportation Improvement Program:

- Modify in FY 2009, the project named Elkhart Road. The federal cost (STUL) changed from \$54,800 to \$51,360. The local cost (\$41,000 – County) will be reduced proportionate to the reduction of the federal cost.
- Delete in FY 2010, the project named Elkhart Road (the same as above project). These funds are no longer needed in 2010 because the project came in under bid and will be completed as a 2009 project.

A motion was made by Vines, supported by Mitchell, to amend the FY 2008-2011 TIP to include the above mentioned modification and amendment. Motion Approved.

- **Complete Streets Legislation**

- Rahtz announced that a letter was received from the Michigan Association of Planning asking for support of a statewide resolution for Complete Streets. MAP is encouraging MPOs and local agencies to pass the resolution as well.
- South stated that TAC had taken no action on this item, and Musson responded that the staff wanted to supply the Policy committee with the information to give them a chance to discuss it.
- Johnson commented that she is in support of the "Complete Streets" idea because more children could walk to school if there were sidewalks in place.
- South commented that Complete Streets legislation is more effective at the local level or as a grassroots effort than statewide. Harden explained that the "Complete Streets" idea should be incorporated into a comprehensive planning process rather than stand-alone legislation.
- Poehlman mentioned that the Cass County Road Commission is willing to work with townships to build more sidewalks, and that anyone interested should let him know.

6. Public Comment

- Ryman commented, relative to the Complete Streets discussion, that many bicyclists are not educated about the rules of the road or about bicycle safety. Rahtz replied that Suzann Flowers, SWMPC Program Assistant, has done work in bicycle safety awareness, including Bicycle Safety days, distributing informational pamphlets, and two "Bike Rodeos" that are planned for October 2009. Ryman also commented that bicyclists frequently do not use proper lights at night.

7. Privilege of the Floor

- South announced that the Canadian National railroad crossing at US-12 will be closed for a two-to-three day emergency fix starting 8/31/09.
- Jason Auvil introduced himself as the new Staff Planner for the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians. He stated that his work will include transportation planning projects in the area, and he will be working closely with NATS. Discussion arose as to whether the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians should have a voting seat on NATS TAC and Policy committees, and the committee members widely agreed that it should because it is a government entity that receives transportation funds and does transportation planning activities. Musson was asked to look up the process in the NATS by-laws for amending the by-laws to include a new member. He said he would report back at the next month's meeting.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Vines, supported by South, to dismiss the meeting. Motion approved.

- The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm. The next meeting is September 22, 2009 at 3:00 P.M.

Minutes compiled by: Anna Rahtz and Nickolas Musson, Transportation Planners, 8/26/09