

MINUTES
NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
Technical Advisory Committee
 April 24, 2007
 Niles City Council Chambers
 1:30 P.M.

TAC Members Present:	Tim Batton, GNCDC Joe Bellina, Cass County Road Commission Juan Ganum, City of Niles Planning Darrell Harden, MDOT, Southwest Region Ray Lenze, MDOT – Planning John Gruchot, Berrien County Planning Joe Ray, City of Niles
TAC Members Absent:	Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Neil Coulston, City of Niles & DPW/Airport Fred Featherly, MDOT-Multi-Modal Sarah Koepke, Federal Highway Administration Mary Beth McAdams, MACOG (ex officio) John Monaghan, Village of Edwardsburg Public Works Robert Rusch, MI Department of Environmental Quality/Air Quality Division Meg Mullendore, City of Buchanan Paul South, MDOT Coloma TSC Sharon Tyler, Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance/Cass Sarah Woolcock, MDOT Coloma TSC
SWMPC Staff Present:	Kelly Getman-Dissette, SWMPC
Others Present:	Don Ryman, Berrien County Commissioner Chuck Collins, Berrien County Road Commission

1. Call to Order & Introductions

- Chairman Bellina called the meeting to order at 1:33 PM.

2. Minutes

- Motion by Ray, seconded by Ganum, to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2007 TAC meeting. Motion approved.

3. Staff Report

- SE data meetings have begun. Tupica and Getman-Dissette met with St. Joe Charter Township, which is within the TwinCATS boundary, during the week of April 3 to review demographic and employment information. The meeting went well, and all NATS municipalities should expect to be contacted for similar meetings.
- Tupica attended the Highway Program Financing workshop on April 10 and 11. The session covered many aspects of transportation financing, and Tupica felt the information was very valuable.
- Getman-Dissette and Johnnie Rodebush attended the Michigan Transportation Asset Management Conference and Workshop on April 11 and 12. The conference had a variety of interesting speakers, and the workshop offered information about developing local asset management plans. Both were worthwhile and provided useful information.

4. New Business

- **Environmental Mitigation/Consultation Plan** – The draft Environmental mitigation and Consultation Plan was distributed. Due to deaths in the family of Tupica and Jerry Chase (who prepared the maps), the plan is not ready for approval. Getman-Dissette explained that this plan will help to identify environmental issues early, and will provide information about projects that might need additional environmental analysis. It is essential that committee members review the text and maps, double check project and feature locations, and provide comments to Getman-Dissette during the next two weeks so that the plan can be approved at the May meeting.
- **Asset Management** – Communication from MDOT first detailed that PASER data collection would be on hold due to MDOT travel restrictions. Later, John Egelhaaf was notified by Woolcock that MDOT engineers were available to complete PASER ratings in Southwest Michigan during the month of July. However, the most recent communication from MDOT indicates that PASER data collection is indeed on hold until further notice.
- **Project descriptions** – Committee members were asked to be sure to include limits when providing project descriptions. Projects in areas such as “Arts District” should be sure to include street names where work is occurring, as well as limits. Projects involving city limits (CL) should be sure to directional information (i.e., northern CL), and projects involving streets, such as Ironwood, that intersect another street in two locations should specify which road segment is the limit.
- **TIP amendment application** – Tupica has developed a TIP amendment application. In order to ensure that all necessary information is provided, committee members will be asked to use this form when TIP amendments arise. The form will be available online at swmpc.org in Word, and margins will be formatted so that it will fit on most municipal/organizational letterheads. Members should submit the form on letterhead so that there is no doubt about who is submitting the application. Bellina suggested that submitting agencies should be sure to note whether the amended project is replacing a currently listed TIP project. A final copy of the application will be ready for the May meeting.
- **MACOG 2035 LRP projects** – MACOG has released a draft of their 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan and projects. There is an open house April 24th from 3:00-7:00 pm in South Bend. Bellina plans to attend. There are several expansion projects planned near the Michigan State line: Gumwood, Ironwood, and Portage. These projects, currently 2 lanes, are planned for expansion to 4 lanes. There are also a few non-motorized projects that will add paved shoulders or sidewalks to county roads. The entire Transportation Plan is available online at <http://www.macog.com/MACOGHOM/TransportationPlanning/2030TP.HTM>. Getman-Dissette will send a letter to MACOG stating that the committee has reviewed the projects.
- **ITS Stakeholder workshop #2** – MDOT, with the assistance of URS Corporation, is developing an Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture and Deployment Plan for the Southwest Region. Committee members received an invitation to attend the kick-off meeting in February. A second workshop has been scheduled for May 1, 2007 from 9am – 3pm at WMU’s Fetzner Center. The session will provide information on regional ITS architecture and will include break-out sessions for different interest groups. Committee members are welcome to attend, but must RSVP to Marc Start at mdot-architecture-study@urscorp.com.
- **Traffic Counts** – Earlier in April, a letter was sent to each NATS municipality regarding traffic count requests. The deadline for request submittal to SWMPC was April 18, so local units/agencies should submit their requests as soon as possible, if they have not already done so.

5. Old Business

- **Attendance and dues** – A spreadsheet showing FY 2007 meeting attendance was distributed. The page also indicated which local units of government paid their local match in 2006 and 2007. SWMPC staff will follow up with local units that have not paid and whose representatives have not regularly attended meetings. Lenze suggested that this follow-up occur quarterly.

6. Public Comment

- Ryman noted that signs have not been placed to mark the US-12 Heritage Trail. Harden will express Ryman’s concern to the TSC.

- Collins encouraged committee members to follow a senate bill to allow all-terrain or off-road vehicles to travel on county roads. There was some question about whether this law would only apply north of M-46.

7. Privilege of the Floor

- A motion was made by Lenze, supported by Batton, to amend the FY 06-08 TIP so that FY 08 matches FY 08 of the FY 08-11 TIP. Motion approved. Harden will contact Getman-Dissette with MDOT changes.
- Ganum announced that the City of Niles will be completing a Parks and Recreation Plan. As a part of this process, a survey was distributed to city residents. The primary “facility” desired was the expansion of the river front trail. The City Council agrees that this is a priority, so the City will be collaborating with Niles Township, the Berrien County Road Commission, and St. Joseph County (Indiana) to extend the trail to South Bend. However, the City also needs to identify funding sources in order to complete the project. Transportation sources include Enhancement, Act 51, CMAQ, and STP dollars. However, committee members encouraged Ganum to consider DNR Trust Fund and other non-transportation grant sources. Ganum was also encouraged to complete the Recreation plan, as this document will help with any grant application.

8. Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 2:30 PM. Next is meeting May 22, 2007 at 1:30 PM.

Minutes compiled by: Kelly Getman-Dissette, Transportation Planner, 4/25/07