

MINUTES
NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
Technical Advisory Committee

September 23, 2008
Niles City Council Chambers
1:30 P.M.

TAC Members Present:	Joe Bellina, Cass County Road Commission Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Paul Boggs, Milton Township Richard Cooper, Niles Charter Township Neil Coulston, City of Niles DPW/Airport Juan Ganum, City of Niles Planning John Gruchot, Berrien County Community Development Darrell Harden, MDOT, Southwest Region Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning Kimberly O’Haver, Buchanan Dial a Ride John Pleveich, Niles Dial-A-Ride Joe Ray, City of Niles
TAC Members Absent:	Fred Featherly, MDOT-Multi-Modal Sarah Koepke, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio) Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Jessica Mitchell, MACOG (ex officio) Jennifer Osborne, MDOT Robert Rusch, MDEQ Paul South, MDOT Coloma TSC Sharon Tyler, Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance Willie Brown, City of Buchanan John Monaghan, Village of Edwardsburg Public Works Sarah Woolcock, MDOT Coloma TSC William Myers, Niles Charter Township
SWMPC Staff Present:	Nickolas Musson Kelly Getman-Dissette
Others Present:	Don Ryman, Berrien County Commissioner Erin Kercheval, MDOT Coloma TSC

1. Call to Order & Introductions

- Chairman Bellina called the meeting to order at 1:30 P.M.

2. Minutes

- *Motion by Harden, supported by Ray, to approve the minutes of the July 22, 2008 TAC meeting. Motion approved.*

3. Staff Report

- **November 13 Trail Workshop** – SWMPC is organizing a half day trails workshop, to be held on November 13, 2008 from 1-4:00 PM at the Thornapple Township Emergency Services Building. Workshop topics include state/local funding sources, urban/rural trail development, promotion of trails, water trail development, trail maintenance, and trail vision and planning. There will be a Paul Henry walking tour following the workshop.
- **MARP/MWHSRA (rail) meeting** – Musson attended the August 16, 2008 Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers (MARP) meeting, where guest speaker Rich Harnish, Midwest High Speed Rail Association,

presented on high speed rail in the Midwest. Harnish used the high speed rail system in Europe as an example of what Berrien County's rail system could be. Harnish discussed barriers and opportunities to make high speed rail a reality in Berrien County. Some things that NATS could do to help the cause include:

- Advocating for high speed rail and speak with legislators.
- Considering the resulting needs if the number of trains is increased.

4. Project Updates

- **Niles Dial-A-Ride (DAR)** - Pleveich explained that DAR expects a funding shortfall in the coming years, and the City Council has tabled spending until the budget can be balanced. Some changes as a result of the funding situation include the elimination of a fixed route and reduced operating hours. Public hearings regarding the changes will be held in the coming weeks. In addition, Pleveich noted that FY 08 funds have been obligated.
- **Niles-Buchanan Road** – Scheduled for September 5 letting.
- **Front St.**- Design work is complete.
- **Ironwood** – Project should be complete in October.

5. New Business

- **Network Deficiencies** – Getman-Dissette explained that a subcommittee met to review deficiencies (congested areas) that resulted from the travel demand model. Subcommittee members determined whether or not they agreed with the deficiency, what was the likely cause of the deficiency, and what, if anything should be done to resolve the issue. In addition, members discussed whether or not there were deficient areas that were missed by the model. Findings of the subcommittee were distributed. The deficiencies represent 24 hour traffic volume averages and they do not take into account peak hour congestion, which is something that we will likely do for the next model. In addition, the model does not consider problematic intersections. Intersections of interest should be identified and studied separately. Committee members reviewed and discussed the deficiencies, which will be included in the LRP. Committee expressed concern about 3rd St. from US-12 to Bell. There is an intersection problem at US-12.
- **Non-motorized facilities for LRP** - Getman-Dissette distributed the local non-motorized information contained in the 2004 LRP as well as a non-motorized facility update survey. Committee members were asked to begin working on the survey. During the next month, SWMPC staff will follow up with each road agency/local unit of government to obtain updated information for the 2009 LRP. Anyone who would like to meet in person should contact Getman-Dissette.
- **2009 Meeting Dates** - The TAC typically meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 1:30 p.m. at the Niles City Council Chambers. Due to holidays, November and December meetings will be moved to the third Tuesday. *A motion was made by Coulston, supported by Harden, to approve the remaining calendar year 2008 and calendar year 2009 meeting dates. Motion approved.*
- **MDOT Financial Presentation** - Lenze gave a presentation on the federal and state transportation financial difficulties. In addition to the federal insolvency, the state and federal governments are facing funding shortfalls. Even if federal funding levels are corrected, the state will be unable to match federal dollars beginning in 2010. A state Transportation Funding Taskforce was formed to identify solutions to the transportation funding shortfalls, and a report to the legislature is due October 31. In addition, it is important for locals to contact the state Transportation Commission, as well as their state representatives, to explain what transportation funding cuts mean to their communities. At the MPO level, it is important to identify local revenue gaps, identify local projects that are coordinated with trunk line projects, and prioritize local projects. MPOs will be notified of their FY 2009 funding reductions in the coming weeks.

6. Old Business

- None

7. Public Comment

- None

8. Privilege of the Floor

- Lenze requested that two amendments be made to the FY 2008-11 TIP, one involving the US-31 projects, and another to add a project on US-12. Discussion revealed that additional information was needed before adding

the US-12 project. This item will be placed on the NATS agenda at a later date. The US-31 projects (FY 2009 and 2010) have increased slightly in cost, but the primary reason for the amendment is to separate the preliminary engineering (PE) phases from the construction phases because the project costs exceed \$5 million. In addition, both projects will now be completed in the 2009 FY. *A motion was made by Harden, supported by Coulston, to recommend that the FY 2008-2011 TIP be amended to separate the preliminary engineering (PE) phases from the construction phases of the FY 2009 and 2010 US-31 projects (JN 50757 and JN 87343, respectively) because both projects cost more than \$5 million, to adjust the project totals to reflect the latest information from MDOT, and to list all projects in FY 2009. Project totals are adjusted as follows:*

- *US-31 NB, JN 50757, construction phase: \$7,700,000 state BI06 funds and \$7,700,000 total funding*
- *US-31 NB, JN 50757, PE phase: \$700,000 state M funds and \$700,000 total funding*
- *US-31 SB, JN 87343, construction phase: \$5,524,000 federal NHS funds, \$1,165,000 state M funds, and \$6,890,000 total funding*
- *US-31 SB, JN 87343, PE phase: \$480,866 state M funds and \$480,866 total funding*

Motion approved.

- Kercheval announced that Paul South has been deployed to Indiana. He remains the Manager of the Coloma TSC and will be checking e-mail. Questions can also be directed to Sarah Woolcock.

9. Adjournment

- *A motion was made by Pleveich, supported by Bellina to adjourn the TAC meeting at 2:34 p.m. Motion approved.*
- The next meeting is October 28, 2008 at 1:30 P.M.

Minutes compiled by: Nickolas Musson/Kelly Getman-Dissette, Transportation Planners, 09/24/08