

MINUTES

NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Technical Advisory Committee

Tuesday, October 24, 2006

TAC Members Present:	Tim Batton, GNCCDC Joe Bellina, Cass County Road Commission Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Neil Coulston, City of Niles & DPW/Airport Juan Ganum, City of Niles Planning Ray Lenze, MDOT – Planning Mary Beth McAdams, MACOG (ex officio) Joe Ray, City of Niles Kristi Ross, Niles Dial-A-Ride Sarah Woolcock, MDOT Coloma TSC
TAC Members Absent:	Darrell Harden, MDOT, Southwest Region Sarah Koepke, Federal Highway Administration Elaine Lou, MDOT-Multi-Modal Kate McIlwee, Berrien County Planning John Monaghan, Village of Edwardsburg Public Works Robert Rusch, MI Department of Environmental Quality/Air Quality Division Rick Smigielski, City of Buchanan Paul South, MDOT Coloma TSC Sharon Tyler, Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance/Cass
Others Present:	Rachael Tupica, SWMPC Kelly Getman-Disette, SWMPC Don Ryman John Gruchot, Berrien County Community Development (for Katie McIlwee)

1. Call to Order & Introductions

- Chairman Juan Ganum called the meeting to order at 1:35 PM.

2. Minutes

- Motion by Joe Bellina, seconded by Brian Berndt: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE September 26, 2006 TAC MEETING. Motion passed.

3. Staff Report

- Kelly Getman-Disette started at the SWMPC as the new Transportation Planner in October. Kelly received her bachelor's degree in Sociology and Spanish at Hope College and her masters in Sociology from Western Michigan University. While working on her master's degree, she worked for social research centers at both WMU and Hope College. Part of that work included community surveys and master planning, which led to her interest in Planning as a career. She was able to pursue that interest through her position as a Community Development Educator with MSU Extension in Van Buren County. As a Community Development Educator, she was responsible for land use planning and zoning education, trail development, housing grants, and the county farmland preservation program. She came to the SWMPC after her position at MSUE was cut. We are glad to have her on board. Welcome Kelly!

- The new SWMPC website is live, though it's not yet 100% complete. Meeting agendas, minutes, and a lot of other data are now available on the website. If you have an idea of something to go on the website that is not currently there, please let the SWMPC know. If you go to the old website, it will direct you to the new site. Please update your bookmarks to reflect the new address of <http://www.swmpc.org>.
- Email addresses of staff at the SWMPC are changing from @swmicomm.org to @swmpc.org to reflect the name change to the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission. Please make these changes in your address book.
- Rachael and Kelly will soon begin working on updating employment data as part of our Long Range Plan update. This will be done, largely, in-house by Rachael and Kelly. The Committee will start reviewing data in January or February. A subcommittee may need to be formed to review the data. Subcommittee members may be individuals that are not currently on the TAC Committee but maybe someone that you feel are more fitting to review employment locations and number of employees. More information will follow in early 2007. Household and population data collection/review will begin around April for the Committee to review later in 2007.

4. New Business

- There are many training opportunities in the next few months. Handouts were given for 5 upcoming trainings:
 1. Context Sensitive Solutions, November 9th in Battle Creek, offered free by MDOT
 2. Designing Healthy Livable Communities Conference, November 13th in East Lansing
 3. Pavement Management Class, November 15th and 16th in Lansing
 4. Roundabout Design Workshop, December 13th and 14th in Indianapolis, IN
 5. Alternative Practices for Highway Stormwater Management: Design, Construction, and Maintenance – FREE 2 part telecast
- A proposal to change the date (and possibly time) of the monthly meeting to the 2nd week of the month is requested by the SWMPC to help address the issue of time conflicts with the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission quarterly meetings. If the NATS Committees met the 2nd week of the month, it would give SWMPC staff time to make edits to or complete documents that need the approval of the SWMPC, which is the designated MPO. Dates and times discussed are the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 9:30 for TAC and 10:30 for Policy as there is a conflict in the afternoon for Berrien County Commissioners meetings. The Policy Committee will be addressed on this issue and an email will be sent out to try and coordinate a date that can be agreed upon at the November meetings. This change would not start until January 2007.
- Juan Ganum announced that the City of Niles is writing a grant application for Enhancement funds to do streetscape on Front Street from Sycamore to just north of the YMCA. Sarah Woolcock said that as part of their FY08 Front Street project they are also working in funds for streetscape. Motion by Ray Lenze, seconded by Tim Batton: TO RECOMMEND TO THE POLICY COMMITTEE TO SUPPORT THE SUBMISSION OF THE ENHANCEMENT GRANT FOR FRONT STREET STREETSCAPE. Motion passed.
- City of Niles Dial-A-Ride presented a change to their funds for FY06. A motion by Ray Lenze, seconded by Sarah Woolcock: TO RECOMMEND TO THE POLICY COMMITTEE TO REMOVE THE THREE CAPITAL PROJECTS (PURCHASE THREE (3) 10+2 REPLACEMENT BUSES, PURCHASE REPLACEMENT COPIER, AND FUELING STATION PARKING) AND REPLACE WITH THREE NEW PROJECTS THAT INCLUDE FIXED ROUTE REPLACEMENT, MAINTENANCE REHAB, AND 2 REPLACEMENT CUTWAYS. Motion passed.

- Concerns of the safety of Third Street at Bell Road, due to high truck traffic, were sent to the SWMPC to be addressed at the NATS Committee meeting. The Berrien County Road Commission announced they were in the process of doing a study of this intersection but it currently does not seem to meet the warrants of putting in stop signs.
- At last month's meeting, a MDOT TIP amendment was on the agenda, but not ready to be brought in front of the Committee. This will be completed for the next meeting.

5. Public Comment

- None

6. Privilege of the Floor

- Joe Bellina asked the City of Niles if they have anything going on next summer that they should know about before closing of Barron Lake Road, as they will be doing some work on it next summer for about 3 weeks and it will need to be closed. The City did not know of anything.
- Ray Lenze announced that the appropriations bill has not been passed yet for next year. Because of this, if you have sensitive timing for projects, you need to get them in so they can be obligated as soon as possible.

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 PM

Minutes compiled by:

Rachael Tupica, Associate Planner 10/25/06