

# NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Technical Advisory Committee

## MINUTES

July 28, 2009

Niles City Council Chambers

1:30 P.M.

TAC Members Present:	Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Paul Boggs, Milton Township Neil Coulston, City of Niles DPW/Airport Juan Ganum, City of Niles Planning Kelly Getman-Dissette, Niles Dial-A-Ride John Gruchot, Berrien County Community Development Jim Kidwell, Niles Charter Township Joseph Kring, Bertrand Township Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning Kimberly O'Haver, Buchanan Dial a Ride Joe Ray, City of Niles Paul South, MDOT Coloma TSC Sarah Woolcock, MDOT Coloma TSC
TAC Members Absent:	Joe Bellina, Cass County Road Commission Willie Brown, City of Buchanan Fred Featherly, MDOT-Multi-Modal Darrell Harden, MDOT, Southwest Region Irving Frost, Howard Township Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Jessica Mitchell, MACOG (ex officio) John Monaghan, Village of Edwardsburg Public Works Jennifer Osborne, MDOT Shelley Klug, Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance Robert Rusch, MDEQ Ron Sather, Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce Sarah Van Buren, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio)
SWMPC Staff Present:	Nickolas Musson Anna Rahtz
Others Present:	Don Ryman, Berrien County Commissioner

### 1. Call to Order & Introductions

- Vice-Chair Ray called the meeting to order at 1:37 P.M. Chairman Bellina was absent.

### 2. Minutes

- *Motion by Berndt, supported by Getman-Dissette, to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2009 TAC meeting. Motion approved.*

### 3. Staff Report

- **New Transportation Planner**
  - Anna Rahtz introduced herself, saying that she recently graduated from the University of Cincinnati with a Masters in Community Planning and has a Bachelors of Science in Architecture from Kent State University. While in graduate school, she worked at the Cincinnati Human

Relations Commission, and retains an interest in cultural diversity and civic engagement. She has a strong interest in public transportation and non-motorized transportation, and bicycles to work. She has lived in Cincinnati, Ohio; Kent, Ohio; and Florence, Italy.

- **Southwest Michigan Trail Summit**
  - Musson went over a handout summarizing the trail summit that SWMPC held on June 25, 2009. The meeting had over 100 attendees, including planners, elected officials, and residents. The meeting attendees compiled information about existing, planned, and desired routes and trails in the nine-county region and formulated strategies for linking existing routes and trails. More information can be found at [www.swmpc.org/smart\\_plan.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/smart_plan.asp).
- **Walkability Presentation**
  - Rahtz announced that several SWMPC staff attended a "Discussing Walkability in Benton Harbor" meeting on July 6, 2009.
  - The guest speaker at the meeting was Dan Burden of Walkable Communities, Inc. Rahtz went over a handout highlighting the main points of Burden's presentation, including the importance of walkable, healthy communities and some characteristics of walkable community design.
- **Complete Streets Workshop**
  - Rahtz announced that several SWMPC staff also attended a workshop on "Complete Streets" at the Michiana Area Council of Governments meeting on July 8, 2009. The presentation was given by Randy Neufeld of the National Complete Streets Coalition. Rahtz went over a handout summarizing the main points of the presentation and stated that more information can be found at [www.completestreets.org](http://www.completestreets.org). She explained that one of the key discussion points of the workshop was strategies for gaining political support for walkable communities, including coalition building and "cycle street" demonstration days.
- **MTPA Conference**
  - Rahtz announced that several SWMPC staff also attended the annual conference of the Michigan Transportation Planning Association, July 14 through 17, 2009. She passed out a handout listing the workshop topics covered. She explained that a whole day of the conference was dedicated to discussing the importance of freight planning, including assessing the freight needs of the region and building relationships with the private sector in freight. Some of the other topics covered were the Kalamazoo promise, light pollution, wind turbines, the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU, and the transit planning process. The keynote speaker was Mark Fenton, a dynamic speaker on healthy, walkable communities who took session attendees on a "walkabout" of downtown Kalamazoo.
  - Rahtz mentioned that out of the discussion of freight planning at the TwinCATS meeting there was an interest in having Christopher Dingman from the Federal Highway Administration give a presentation on freight planning. Rahtz stated that Mr. Dingman would be available to come to the August TwinCATS meeting but not the August NATS meeting. Several committee members suggested having Mr. Dingman come present at the September NATS meeting, as it may be logistically difficult to have NATS members drive to a TwinCATS meeting for a presentation.

#### 4. Project Updates

- Musson announced that, along with project updates, it should be stated whether projects are coming in under bid so that other potential projects can be moved up from the illustrative projects list to use the remaining ARRA funds. These potential projects should be ready to be bid by December 2009 to make the March 2010 deadline for ARRA.
- Berrien County Road Commission
  - **Range Line Road** – Obligated
- City of Niles
  - **East Main Street (ARRA)** – Submitted to Lansing
  - **Lake Street (ARRA)** – Submitted to Lansing

- MDOT
  - **M-51, over Mckinzie Creek** – Half done
  - **US-31 NB** – Started paving
  - **US-31 SB** – Construction will begin after Labor Day
  - **US-12 Traffic operations** - Complete
- Niles Dial-A-Ride
  - **Facility rehabilitation** – docs available for general contractor; opening 8/11/09

## 5. Old Business

- None

## 6. New Business

- **TIP amendments** – Musson announced that all requests for TIP amendments must be submitted to SWMPC 10 days prior to the meeting date. Lenze stated that MDOT would hold SWMPC to the 10-day requirement because of the public notice requirement for TIP amendments.

The following TIP amendments were discussed:

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

- Change the year of the project named Ironwood Road for resurfacing from Bertrand Road to US-12. The year changed from 2009 to 2010.

MDOT requested the following amendments to the NATS FY 2008-11 Transportation Improvement Program:

- Add in FY 2009, the project named M-51 for traffic operations at Chestnut Drive. The federal cost is \$68,000.
- Amend in FY 2009, the project named US-12 BR for environmental assessment for a bridge replacement over the St. Joseph River. The federal cost changed from \$53,000 to \$298,753, and the state cost changed from \$12,000 to \$66,247.
  - Ryman asked whether the historical character of the bridge was being taken into consideration, and MDOT representatives responded that the cost of the environmental assessment phase was increasing to take into account the multiple assessments that need to be done for environmental and historical considerations. There will be a thorough process of public participation involved.

*A motion was made by Berndt, supported by Getman-Dissette, to recommend that the Policy committee amend the FY 2008-2011 TIP to include the above mentioned amendments. Motion Approved.*

- **2010 & 2011 Call for CMAQ Projects Meeting**

- Musson announced that a 2010 & 2011 Call for CMAQ Projects Meeting will be held on July 29, 2009 at 1:00pm at the Berrien County Road Commission. This is a call for projects to use the CMAQ funds that remain because TCATA and Niles Dial-a-Ride no longer need the CMAQ funding.

## 7. Public Comment

- None

## 8. Privilege of the Floor

- None

## 9. Adjournment

*Motion by South to dismiss the meeting. Motion approved.*

- The meeting was adjourned at 2:04 pm. The next meeting is August 25, 2009 at 1:30 P.M.

Minutes compiled by: Nickolas Musson and Anna Rahtz, Transportation Planners, 7/29/09

Revised 8/25/09