

NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Technical Advisory Committee

MINUTES

July 27, 2010

Niles City Council Chambers

1:30 P.M.

TAC Members Present:	Jason Auvil, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians Joe Bellina, Cass County Road Commission Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Paul Boggs, Milton Township Willie Brown, City of Buchanan Barbara Cook, Cass County Planning Commission Richard Cooper, Niles Charter Township Neil Coulston, City of Niles DPW/Airport Irving Frost, Howard Township John Gruchot, Berrien County Community Development Darrell Harden, MDOT Southwest Region Joseph Kring, Bertrand Township Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning Kimberly O'Haver, Buchanan Dial a Ride Jan Personette, Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce Joe Ray, City of Niles Paul South, MDOT Coloma TSC
TAC Members Absent:	Pat Bellaire, Village of Edwardsburg Fred Featherly, MDOT-Multi-Modal Juan Ganum, City of Niles Planning Kelly Getman-Dissette, Niles Dial-A-Ride Jim Kidwell, Niles Charter Township Shelley Klug, Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Jessica Mitchell, MACOG (ex officio) Jennifer Osborne, MDOT Robert Rusch, MDEQ Rachael Tupica, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio)
SWMPC Staff Present:	Anna Rahtz Trevor Thomas
Others Present:	Don Burns, MDOT – Coloma TSC Carla Corral, MDOT – Coloma TSC CJ Dodge, MDOT – Coloma TSC Melinda Michael, Four Flags Area Council on Tourism Don Ryman, Berrien County Board of Commissioners Jonathan Warner, MDOT – Coloma TSC

1. Call to Order & Introductions

- Chairman Bellina called the meeting to order at 1:33 P.M.
- Rahtz announced that Personette is now the appointed representative for the Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce.
- Chairman Bellina led the group in introductions, and South announced that he had four student

interns in attendance who participate in the TRAC program for high school students, sponsored by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

2. Minutes

- *Motion by Gruchot, seconded by Personette, to approve the minutes of the June 22, 2010 TAC meeting. Motion approved.*

3. Staff Report

- **Michigan Transportation Planning Association Conference**
 - Thomas gave a summary of the topics that the staff had learned about at the conference, and mentioned that the powerpoints/notes can be made available to anyone who is interested in any of the particular sessions.
- **PASER Rating update**
 - Thomas mentioned that the Cass County and Berrien County road ratings are completed and the Van Buren County rating is in progress July 26-30. The ratings are being done on the federal aid eligible roads in the northern half of each county.
- **TIP & UWP submission**
 - Rahtz announced that the Transportation Improvement Program and Unified Work Program had been approved by the SWMPC Board of Commissioners and submitted to MDOT. She stated that both final documents are available on the Transportation Documents page under the NATS section of the SWMPC website, and that approval by MDOT can be expected by October 1, 2010.

4. Project Updates

- **2010**
 - **Berrien County Road Commission**
 - Stateline Road and Third Street – under construction
 - Lake Street/East Main Street/Galien-Buchanan Road – obligated; under construction
 - Bertrand Road – obligated; under construction
 - **Cass County Road Commission**
 - Redfield Street –construction beginning July 29th
 - Gumwood Road – under construction
 - Ironwood Road – construction beginning July 29th
 - Elkhart Road – recently signed contract and submitted to MDOT
 - Bell Road – in design
 - Lakeshore Drive – recently obligated
 - **MDOT**
 - US-12 BR resurfacing – completed
 - **Niles Dial-a-Ride**
 - No updates

5. Old Business

- None

6. New Business

- **TIP Amendments (to FY 2008-2011 TIP)**
 - **Administrative Modification**
 - Modify in FY 2010, the project named Lakeshore Drive. The federal cost was modified from \$75,200 to \$68,475 and the county cost was modified from \$18,800 to \$17,125 to reflect cost savings.
 - **Project to Use Remaining ARRA and STUL funds**
 - Rahtz explained that there is \$66,000 of ARRA money remaining to be used in the South

Bend urbanized area, as well as \$6,725 of STUL money from bid savings from the above Lakeshore Drive project. She explained that the Berrien County Road Commission and the Cass County Road Commission had each submitted a project to use the entire amount and would like the committee to vote on the project most appropriate for the region.

- The committee discussed the traffic counts, road ratings, and length of both projects. Based on the fact that BCRC had three projects in FY 2010 and CCRC had six (because of projects BCRC had to give up for lack of local match availability), the committee decided the funds should go to BCRC.
 - Add in FY 2010, the project named Pucker St and Dayton Rd to resurface 4.05 miles on Pucker St (Ullery to Niles Twp Line) and Dayton (Buffalo to State Line). Project description is "Seal coat to preserve the pavement." Phase is CON. Federal amount is \$72,993 (\$66,268 ARUL and \$6,725 STUL). County cost is \$1,681, and total cost is \$74,674.
 - *Motion by Auvil, seconded by Gruchot, to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the amendment of the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program to add the above BCRC project. Amendment of the motion by Berndt, seconded by South, to include the condition that if the BCRC project is not eligible for these funds and the CCRC project is eligible, the funds will go to the CCRC project. Motion approved (14-1).*
- **Draft Public Participation Plan**
 - Rahtz stated that the SWMPC Transportation Public Participation Plan has to be revised every four years, and so is due for revision in FY 2010. After the approval of the draft, there is a 45-day public comment period, and once all public comments are taken into consideration, the final draft can be approved by the TAC and Policy committee, and then it goes to the full SWMPC.
 - Rahtz asked if everyone had read the document and if there were any questions about it, and stated that the staff were hoping for a motion to approve the draft document.
 - Gruchot asked what the minimum requirements are for the Transportation Participation Plan, noting that the draft document serves as three different documents – a training manual for members of the public who want to be involved, a set of policies for public involvement in TwinCATS and NATS, and a toolbox of possible techniques for public involvement.
 - Rahtz responded that she would check with Rachael Tupica at FHWA on the requirements for the plan, but that in writing the draft she had kept closely to the format of the 2006 document that Rachael had written while working at SWMPC.
 - *Motion by Gruchot, seconded by Auvil, to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the draft of the Transportation Public Participation Plan. Motion approved.*

7. Public Comment

- None.

8. Privilege of the Floor

• Sign Retroreflectivity Presentation

- Rahtz gave a presentation of the information she had learned at the Michigan's Local Technical Assistance Program training on Sign Retroreflectivity. She stated that the new FHWA requirements for sign retroreflectivity only apply to MDOT, the County, and the cities or villages that own and maintain their own signs. Bellina suggested that it would be good for the other committee members to have a brief overview of the topic to understand what the road agencies will be doing.
- Rahtz explained what retroreflectivity is, why it is important, what the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices mandates for minimum levels of retroreflectivity of signs, and the various methods for complying.
- Bellina added that the cost of a retroreflectometer is \$10,000. He also said that using the retroreflectometer is more time consuming than the other methods for compliance.
- Personette asked if it is known how many signs will need to be replaced. Bellina responded that the CCRC has estimated that 80 percent of their signs will need to be replaced, but that it will be

- phased in; all signs do not have to be in compliance until January 2018.
- South suggested for agencies to include sign replacement in the cost of road projects.
- Personette suggested selling the old noncompliant signs to the public, and Bellina responded that there could be legal liability implications involved with that.
- Ryman noted that a particular sign on Ullery Road is difficult to see at certain times of day because the driver is looking directly into the sun. Rahtz added that, based on the information in the presentation, that could be a safety issue; there are many variables involved with visibility and legibility of signs other than retroreflectivity.
- Bellina added that the Federal Highway Administration has also been looking into setting minimum levels of retroreflectivity for pavement markings. These standards would only be applied to roads for which the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices suggests using pavement markings, which would make the guidelines inconsistent.
- **HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant**
 - Thomas announced that the SWMPC is applying for a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. This grant would allow SWMPC to integrate transportation planning, economic development, and environmental planning while adding new elements like housing, climate change planning, and scenario planning. The staff would like a motion of support from NATS for this grant. The most likely level of involvement would be a letter of commitment from NATS, and the chair or vice-chair of NATS attending quarterly planning meetings throughout the three-year grant cycle. Individual NATS member agencies will be more heavily involved with data gathering and technical expertise.
 - Personette asked if a summary of the grant could be emailed out to the committee, and Thomas said that he would do that within the next couple of days.
 - Gruchot asked if a local match is required for the grant, and Rahtz responded that there is a 20 percent contribution required, cash or in-kind. Other federal funds, including other HUD funds, could be used for that contribution.
 - *Motion by Harden, seconded by Auvil, to request the staff draft a letter of support for the grant on behalf of the committee and have it signed by the chair. Motion approved.*
 - Lenze requested that the letter be made available along with the next month's minutes, and Rahtz responded that she would.

9. Adjournment

- Chairman Bellina adjourned the meeting at 2:28 P.M.
- The next meeting is August 24, 2010 at 1:30 P.M.