

NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
 Technical Advisory Committee

MINUTES

August 24, 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 Barbara Cook, Cass County Planning Commission Neil Coulston, City of Niles DPW/Airport Irving Frost, Howard Township Juan Ganum, City of Niles Planning Kelly Getman-Dissette, Niles Dial-A-Ride John Gruchot, Berrien County Community Development Darrell Harden, MDOT Southwest Region Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning Jan Personette, Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce Paul South, MDOT Coloma TSC
TAC Members Absent:	Pat Bellaire, Village of Edwardsburg Willie Brown, City of Buchanan Richard Cooper, Niles Charter Township Fred Featherly, MDOT-Multi-Modal Jim Kidwell, Niles Charter Township Shelley Klug, Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance Joseph Kring, Bertrand Township Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Jessica Mitchell, MACOG (ex officio) Kimberly O’Haver, Buchanan Dial a Ride Jennifer Osborne, MDOT Joe Ray, City of Niles Robert Rusch, MDEQ Rachael Tupica, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio)
SWMPC Staff Present:	Anna Rahtz Trevor Thomas
Others Present:	Melinda Michael, Four Flags Area Council on Tourism Don Ryman, Berrien County Board of Commissioners

1. Call to Order & Introductions

- Chairman Bellina called the meeting to order at 1:32 P.M.

2. Minutes

- *Motion by Berndt, seconded by Personette, to approve the minutes of the July 27, 2010 TAC meeting. Motion approved.*

3. Staff Report

- **HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant**
 - Thomas announced that the SWMPC had been planning to apply for a HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant but had decided to plan for a summer 2011 application timeframe. The SWMPC is working to put together a Consortium of partners for the three-county area of Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren.
- **Complete Streets Laws**
 - Rahtz summarized Public Acts 134 and 135 that had recently been passed by the state legislature and signed into law by Governor Granholm, and noted that she would send out the summary of the legislation via email following the meeting.
 - Public Act 134 is an amendment to Act 51 governing distribution of funding for roads. This amendment requires road agencies to consult with one another on nonmotorized projects affecting each other's jurisdictions and to inform one another when creating a five-year nonmotorized plan. It also creates a statewide Complete Streets Advisory Council to the governor, mandates an MDOT Complete Streets Policy, and states that MDOT will provide technical assistance and expertise to local governments regarding Complete Streets.
 - Public Act 135 is an amendment to the Michigan Planning Enabling Legislation, and it broadens the definition of a street and road improvements to specifically include all users.
 - Rahtz noted that the legislation solidifies the State's policy of Context Sensitive Solutions by requiring government agencies to consult with one another on non-motorized projects.
- **High Speed Rail Status Report**
 - Thomas went over a handout summarizing the progress of making the Chicago-Detroit Amtrak line "higher-speed." He outlined the funding amounts that each state had received from the federal stimulus for high-speed rail, the legislation governing the interaction of private freight rail companies with Amtrak, and the current progress on the line.
 - Lenze added that MDOT is working on updating its statewide rail plan and has tentatively scheduled four public input meetings in September. The locations for the meetings are Grand Rapids, Traverse City, Marquette, and Detroit.
 - Rahtz and Thomas stated that they would send out the information about the input meetings and the website / email address for offering comments on the state rail plan as soon as possible.

4. Project Updates

- Lenze noted that all FY 2010 projects must be obligated by September 15, 2010 to use FY 2010 funds.
- **2009**
 - **Niles Dial-a-Ride**
 - Computer software purchase – purchased the software, have remaining funds available
 - Bus shelters – opened bids, making a decision by September 30, 2010
- **2010**
 - **Berrien County Road Commission**
 - Stateline Road and Third Street – completed
 - Lake Street/East Main Street/Galien-Buchanan Road – completed
 - Bertrand Road – completed
 - **Cass County Road Commission**
 - Redfield Street – completed
 - Gumwood Road – completed
 - Ironwood Road – completed
 - Elkhart Road – starting construction in two weeks
 - Bell Road – in design
 - Lakeshore Drive – waiting for contract authority
 - **MDOT**

- US-31 over St. Joseph River bridge work – in design
- **Niles Dial-a-Ride**
 - AVL System purchase – in progress
 - Transit Development Plan – grant approved, finalizing Request for Proposals
 - Connection to Utilities Building – grant approved

5. Old Business

• **Public Participation draft**

- Rahtz stated that a survey had been put out to the public as a vehicle for gathering public comments during the mandatory 45-day public comment period of the draft Transportation Participation Plan. She went over a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the comments that had been received. She stated that all respondents had found out about the survey through the outreach email list or the SWMPC website, so the responses may be skewed toward the needs of those who have internet access.
- The themes of the public comments included: taking information to where people already are; holding meetings in the evening rather than during the day and in an accessible location for transit riders; providing information both online and in physical locations frequented by large numbers of people such as senior centers, churches, and public libraries; addressing public comments specifically; and informing the public about how their input can actually influence a project.
- Rahtz asked for ideas or discussion from the committee members about how the Transportation Participation Plan could be altered, as well as how the process itself could be altered, to address the issues raised by the public.
- Rahtz noted that the Participation Plan covers the Twin Cities Area Transportation Study and the Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study areas. She summarized the discussions that had been raised at the TwinCATS meetings after the presentation of public comments, as follows:
 - The committee representatives should report back with regional transportation updates at their own offices and their local commission meetings, as well as provide a link on the websites to the SWMPC website, and provide important information about regional transportation in their community newsletters. Staff can provide a template of information to send out.
 - A decision had not been made on changing meeting times or locations. It had been noted that this should be decided on a case-by-case basis depending on the importance of a topic for the public and the target demographic for that topic.
 - The metropolitan planning organizations should be holding an economic dialogue with the public about what can be accomplished with different levels of funding.
- It was noted that Buchanan has a public access cable TV channel, which may be a good outlet for relaying information to the public.

6. New Business

• **TIP Amendments (to FY 2008-2011 TIP)**

- **Administrative Modification**
 - Rahtz noted that in July a new Berrien County Road Commission project had been submitted to use remaining ARRA (stimulus) funds that had been redistributed to the South Bend Urbanized Area. After the July NATS meeting, MDOT had discovered that the project was not eligible for the funds because it was not in the actual South Bend Urbanized Area, rather in the adjusted MPO area in another part of the township.
 - The Berrien County Road Commission had switched the project, the resurfacing of Pucker St and Dayton Rd, with another project that had already been planned for a future year in the TIP, the resurfacing of Niles-Buchanan Rd and Bell Rd. This project will be done in 2010. At the October meeting, the FY 2011-2014 TIP will be amended to reflect the correct years for

BCRC's other projects.

○ **New Project – Cass County Road Commission**

- Add in FY 2010, the project named Huntly Rd, to resurface Huntly Rd from Holly St to Barron Lake Rd. Length is 1.35 miles. Project description is "Existing project limits were sealcoated in 2009 which resulted in the PASER (pavement surface evaluation and rating) rating of 8, prior to sealcoat the PASER rating was 5. Sealcoat did not adhere to the road surface well, estimates are that 35% stone loss may have occurred with some areas completely devoid of new material. This project will mill one inch of material and replace it with a one inch HMA (hot mix asphalt) surface course." Phase is Construction. Advance Construct in 2010 and Advance Construct Conversion in 2012 and 2014. Federal cost (STU) is \$70,300 (\$61,697 in 2012 and \$8,603 in 2014). County cost is \$17,600.
- *Motion by Cook, seconded by South, to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the amendment of the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program to add the above BCRC project.*
- *Discussion:* Lenze noted that it is not likely for the TIP amendment to be processed on time to be obligated in fiscal year 2010 (by September 15, 2010). Bellina added that, since the project is considered urgent by the constituents, it would be worthwhile to attempt to obligate the project in 2010. If it is not approved, then it will be added in fiscal year 2011 at the October meeting (the October meeting will be the first opportunity for amending the FY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program, which will be approved by October 1, 2010).
- *Motion approved unanimously.*

7. Public Comment

- None.

8. Privilege of the Floor

• **TIP Amendment Submittal**

- Rahtz stated that she had recently found out that FHWA representatives would like the MPO meeting minutes submitted along with TIP amendment requests. Rahtz noted that currently rather than sending the minutes, she creates a cover letter and a motion describing the TIP amendments that were approved at the meeting.
- Rahtz added that the only objection to reducing paperwork and submitting the minutes with the TIP amendment request comes from a concern from Lenze that the minutes should not be publicized before they have been approved by the committee. Rahtz added that the draft minutes are currently posted with other meeting materials on a public web page before they are approved at the next meeting, and asked the committee members if they prefer that the minutes not be posted on the website.
- Bellina noted that he had previously raised concerns about the draft minutes being posted on a public website. He also noted that the minutes normally do not need any major changes, and all committee members agreed that they do not have an issue with the draft minutes being posted on the website. It was decided that the staff should follow the policy recommended by Lenze and any policy set by the full SWMPC board.

9. Adjournment

- Motion by South to adjourn the meeting at 2:16 P.M.
- The next meeting is **September 28, 2010 at 1:30 P.M.**