

NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Technical Advisory Committee

MINUTES

September 22, 2009

Niles City Council Chambers

1:30 P.M.

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| TAC Members Present: | Joe Bellina, Cass County Road Commission Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Paul Boggs, Milton Township Richard Cooper, Niles Charter Township Irving Frost, Howard Township Kelly Getman-Dissette, Niles Dial-A-Ride Darrell Harden, MDOT, Southwest Region Jim Kidwell, Niles Charter Township Joseph Kring, Bertrand Township Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning Joe Ray, City of Niles Paul South, MDOT Coloma TSC Sarah Woolcock, MDOT Coloma TSC |
| TAC Members Absent: | Willie Brown, City of Buchanan Neil Coulston, City of Niles DPW/Airport Fred Featherly, MDOT-Multi-Modal Juan Ganum, City of Niles Planning John Gruchot, Berrien County Community Development Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Jessica Mitchell, MACOG (ex officio) John Monaghan, Village of Edwardsburg Public Works Kimberly O'Haver, Buchanan Dial a Ride 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: | Jason Auvil, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians Melinda Michael, Four Flags Area Council on Tourism Don Ryman, Berrien County Commissioner |

1. Call to Order & Introductions

- Chairman Bellina called the meeting to order at 1:33 P.M.

2. Minutes

- Motion by Berndt, supported by Woolcock, to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2009 TAC meeting, with a correction of "under bid" to "under estimate." Motion approved.*

3. Staff Report

- **ITS Meeting** – Musson announced that he and Rahtz attended a MACOG (Michiana Area Council of Governments) meeting about MACOG's regional Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Plan. In case NATS decides to develop a stand-alone regional ITS plan, it will be informative to attend MACOG's meetings to understand the process of developing such a plan.
- **We Can Healthy Berrien Coalition Meeting**
 - Rahtz announced that she and Musson attended a meeting of the We Can Healthy Berrien Coalition, which SWMPC staff member Suzann Flowers also regularly attends. This was part of an effort to connect to health professionals and forge potential partnerships for complete streets and healthy communities.
- **Training Wheels Workshop**
 - Rahtz announced that she attended a workshop in Grand Rapids about the design of safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities based on AASHTO guidelines, and that she has the workshop materials available.

4. Project Updates

- City of Niles
 - **East Main Street (ARRA)** – Anticipated letting date in December 2009
 - **Lake Street (ARRA)** – Anticipated letting date in December 2009
- MDOT
 - **M-51, over Mckinzie Creek** – Second half under construction
 - **US-31 SB** – Under construction
- Niles Dial-A-Ride
 - **Facility rehabilitation** – Under construction
- Cass County Road Commission
 - **Pine Lake Street** – Completed
 - **Huntly Road** – Completed
 - **Redfield Street** – Moved to FY 2010
 - **Beebe Road and Fir Road** – Completed
 - **Elkhart Road** – Waiting on contract

5. Old Business

By-law change – Musson announced that he had been asked at the previous meeting to look up the procedure for amending the by-laws to include a new voting member. He passed out a handout with the excerpt from the by-laws stating that a motion must be made by a member of the committee to amend the by-laws, and then a written statement must be passed out explaining the proposed amendment. The handout also included the written explanation of the proposed amendment. *A motion was made by Harden, supported by Ray, to propose an amendment to the by-laws of the NATS Technical Advisory Committee to include the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians as a voting member, to be voted on at the October meeting of TAC. Motion was passed.*

6. New Business

- **TIP amendments** – The following administrative modifications to the TIP were discussed:

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

- Modify in FY 2009, the project named Range Line Road. The federal cost changed from \$80,000 to \$68,535. Musson explained that the project came in under estimate, and the remaining funds are being moved to another project (see below).

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

- Modify in FY 2009, the project named Gumwood Road. The year changed from 2009 to 2010. The federal cost changed from \$212,173 to \$223,638. Musson explained that because there was a bid savings on the Range Line Road project (above) and both are ARRA (stimulus) projects, that extra money is being used to move Gumwood Road from the Illustrative Projects list to the TIP.
- **FY 2011-2014 TIP Application and TIP Amendment Application form**
 - Musson went over the new TIP Amendment Application form that he had created to streamline the process of requesting a TIP amendment. The new form is based upon the e-TIP format and can be filled out in Microsoft Excel. Discussion was brought up as to whether this form would be used to amend the TIP to add a new project. To be consistent with the TIP project selection process, new projects should fill out the TIP Project Application form. Lenze reminded the committee that projects in certain programs, such as Safety, Enhancement, and Bridge, do not need to fill out the project application form because they are not competing against the other projects for funding. There was also discussion on whether MDOT should have to complete a new project application form for MDOT projects. *Motion by Getman-Dissette, supported by Harden, to approve the TIP Amendment Application form, on the condition that the rows link to each from the top section to the bottom section to avoid confusion. Motion approved.*
 - Musson went over the new TIP Project Application form that he and Rahtz had created and asked for feedback. The new forms aim to streamline the application process while evaluating the most important aspects of the project according to the Long Range Transportation Plan. There is a new section in the TIP application regarding environmental justice. Musson explained that he had also developed a shorter, simpler form for transit projects because they do not compete against the road projects for funding. He is in the process of developing a longer transit form that evaluates transit projects on criteria comparable with road projects in case it is decided to “flex” highway funding for transit or vice versa.
 - Musson explained the Paired Comparison Chart he had created, which would allow the NATS members and the public to weight various criteria by which the projects would be evaluated, such as Environment, Safety, Environmental Justice, and Public Participation. Concerns were raised as to whether the system was overcomplicated, and also to whether a point scoring system would mislead the public and confuse them if the projects were not selected exactly according to their scores. It was agreed that this would only be one mechanism for evaluating the projects, in addition to the PASER rating and traffic count scores and cost.
 - It was unanimously agreed that several examples were needed to understand how a project would be assigned weighted rankings according to the answers to the questions in the TIP Project Application. It was suggested that the TIP project selection committee meet to go over the project criteria ranking system in more depth, and that more time be given for all NATS TAC members to give feedback on the application form. It will be discussed again at the next TAC meeting.
- **Next Year Calendar**
 - *Motion by Harden, seconded by Woolcock, to approve the 2010 calendar year dates for NATS meetings.*
 - The 2010 NATS meeting dates will be: January 26, February 23, March 23, April 27, May 25, June 22, July 27, August 24, September 28, October 26, November 16, and December 21.

7. Public Comment

8. Privilege of the Floor

- Auvil announced that SWMPC is holding a public input meeting for the 9-county non-motorized map for Cass County. It will be located at the Cass County Road Commission on October 22, 2009.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Woolcock, supported by Gruchot, to dismiss the meeting. Motion approved.

- The meeting was adjourned at 2:43 P.M. The next meeting is October 27, 2009 at 1:30 P.M.

Minutes compiled by: Anna Rahtz and Nickolas Musson, Transportation Planners, 9/23/09