

NATS Non-Motor Subcommittee

Minutes

August 28, 2012

Committee Members Present:

Barbara Cook, Cass County Planning Commission
Richard Cooper, Niles Charter Township
Kelly Getman-Dissette, Niles Dial-A-Ride
Larry Larson, City of Niles
Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning
Serita Ann Mason, City of Niles

SWMPC Staff Present:

Suzann Flowers
Gautam Mani
Trevor Thomas

1. CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS

Flowers called the meeting to order at 12:32 PM.

2. PURPOSE AND GOALS FOR SUBCOMMITTEE:

Flowers reiterated the structure and purpose of the subcommittee:

- a. The purpose is to develop information to be incorporated into the 2013-2040 Long Range Transportation Plan
- b. Design a transportation system that seeks to accommodate all modes of transportation where appropriate

3. TIMELINE:

Mani discussed the timeline of implementation for the various tasks. Mani reiterated that since the Walk & Roll plan acts as a source of information for the Long Range Plan, developing an inventory of existing deficiencies and high priority projects is a major goal. Flowers said that we would be meeting with stakeholders in jurisdictions within NATS between September and December to develop an inventory of high priority areas.

In particular, Flowers stated that developing a complete list of roads that are federal-aid eligible would help determine priorities.

Mani also stated that in developing the calendar, he, Flowers, and Thomas tried to follow the schedule used in the TwinCATS Walk & Roll plan, since that timeframe had generally worked well.

One challenge with the NATS Walk & Roll calendar is that the holiday season arrives right when regional public hearings would take place. Flowers suggested the probable locations of these meetings.

- i. Niles High School

- ii. Niles Library
- iii. Cass County Road Commission

4. DATA SOURCES

Thomas discussed the data used in the TwinCATS Walk and Roll Plan to map out areas with the highest need. Thomas presented the TwinCATS maps:

- 1) Non-motorized route priorities-outlined by member communities, agencies, citizens
- 2) Transit accessibility in the MPO
- 3) Map of car crashes involving bikes/peds in the MPO
- 4) Connecting to the MACOG region-trails, bus routes, major corridors
- 5) Neighborhoods with households without cars
- 6) Population maps with young and older population groups

Thomas also discussed the sources of data. Among these sources were:

- 1) The decennial US Census for basic population information, including age (to determine where seniors and children, two populations less likely to drive, live).
- 2) The American Community Survey for information on income, and access to vehicles.
- 3) LODES data, a Census product that gives employment data at the block level that can be based on both the residence and workplace of workers, as well as home-to-work flows .
- 4) MDOT's database on traffic accidents and incapacitating injuries, as well as local sources of information on pedestrian fatalities.

Getman-Dissette wondered if it was possible to get these data by time of day via MDOT. Lenze and Thomas both suggested that MDOT's database did make this possible.

Flowers asked if any communities present already had a sidewalk inventory. Mason and Cook stated that the City of Niles and Niles Charter Township had these inventories.

Larson raised the concern of school bus contracting and the increased minimum radius outside which children have to live in order to get a bus to school within the MPO. Cook reiterated this concern. Areas where pedestrian infrastructure may not have been a priority prior to the recession may be more important now because children now have to walk within these areas.

Cook stated that involving schools early in the process may yield a rich source of information, especially on where students generally reside. Thomas concurred. Schools, in turn, may appreciate the information on infrastructure deficiencies as they attempt to safely transport students to school. Mason raised the issue of transportation between schools---for example, students at a middle school who went to the high school to take classes during the day.

5. OTHER ISSUES

Cook and Mason both suggested that many areas near schools have sidewalks, but maintenance is poor. Maintenance strategies should enter our consideration, as well as changing funding under MAP-21.

Flowers suggested that the sub-committee keep in mind the new Performance Measure-based system that will come into place under MAP-21, and determine metrics to use in determining the success of projects.

Meeting Adjourned at 1:20 PM.