

**NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY**

Policy Committee

**MINUTES**

October 22, 2013

2:30 P.M.

Niles City Council Chambers

Policy Members Present:	Richard Cooper, Niles Charter Township Irving Frost, Howard Township Erin Jolivette, MDOT – Coloma TSC Joseph Kring, Bertrand Township Paul Lott, MDOT Planning Serita Ann Mason, City of Niles Cliff Poehlman, Cass County Road Commission Don Ryman, City of Buchanan Kris Welch, MDOT Planning Robert Ziliak, Cass County Commissioner
Policy Members Absent:	Jason Auvil, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians/BC Planning Commission Township Pat Bellaire, Village of Edwardsburg Georgia Boggs, City of Niles Dawn Bolock, Ontwa Township Andrea Dewey, Federal Highway Administration (ex-officio) John Egelhaaf, SWMPC (ex-officio) John Gruchot, Berrien County Community Development Darrell Harden, MDOT, Southwest Region John Lanum, MDOT Planning Jason Latham, MDOT-SW Region Dale Lowe, Howard Township Bill Marx, City of Buchanan Jess Minks, Berrien County Road Commission Jane Mitchell, Buchanan Township Kim O’Haver, Buchanan Dial A Ride Jan Personette, Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce Stewart McKenzie, FTA (ex-officio) Evan Smith, Niles Dial A Ride Brad Sharlow, MDOT Planning (ex-officio) Joe Sobieralski, Southwest Michigan Economic Growth Alliance Kelly Sweeney, Milton Township Representative, MACOG (ex-officio)
SWMPC Staff Present:	Suzann Flowers Gautam Mani
Others Present:	Matt Kodis, Michigan Works Bill Meeks, MDOT Coloma TSC

**4. Call to Order & Introductions**

- Cooper called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m. and led the group in introductions.

**2. Minutes**

A motion by Poehlman with support by Kring to approve the Policy Committee Meeting minutes from August 27, 2013. **Motion passed.**

A motion by Mason with support by Poehlman to approve the joint TAC and Policy Committee Meeting minutes from September 30, 2013, with the following correction on page 3, the bullet noting that project changes that require an amendment are at 25% not 20% as the MPO does not have a policy addressing these specific items yet. **Motion passed.**

### 3. Public Comment

No comments were received.

### 4. Staff Report

#### ▪ **Transportation Newsletter**

Flowers noted that the final piece of the transportation newsletter is almost done and that she is compiling a list of transportation projects that will be on the ground in the 2014 calendar year. Flowers will get with all the specific agencies to obtain the information.

#### ▪ **MTPA Report Out**

A new item on the staff report will be a reporting out on the items discussed at the Michigan Transportation Planning Association monthly meetings.

1. *Regional Prosperity Initiative*-Flowers stated that the applications are due November 1, 2013. If people have questions they should speak to John Egelhaaf, Director of the SWMPC.
2. *STIP/TIP Extension*
  - a. If you have changes to 2014 fiscal year MPO staff can process as normal.
  - b. Cannot do anything beyond fy 2014 since we do not have an approved FY 2014-2017 TIP yet
  - c. Transit projects right now can be handled by SWMPC but until FTA is no longer furloughed no action there
3. *UWP*
  - a. Will be looking to amend our FY 2014 UWP in November
  - b. Targeting areas that need to be addressed from FHWA, specifically the FHWA emphasis areas.
  - c. Making some structural changes by MPO staff and ensuring that we are covering the areas and tasks as required.
4. *CMAQ*
  - a. Obligate early do not wait-obligation has run out and may continue to do so. Harden added that he is advising local agencies to obligate by July earlier is possible.
  - b. Transit agencies that need information about emissions calculations can now use the EPA Diesel Emissions Quantifier.
5. *Climate Change*
  - a. Gautam presenting to MTPA next month

#### ▪ **FY 2014 Resolutions of Support**

Flowers stated that all local resolutions of support for FY 2014 projects have been received and thanked the members for getting them in so quickly. At the TwinCATS MPO committee meeting on Monday, members at that meeting mentioned that having them six months in advance may help convince local communities to come up with the local share of the project cost sooner to move forward with the project submission cycle.

▪ **Climate Change Report**

Flowers stated that the TwinCATS MPO climate change grant report is completed and that Mani would like to do a presentation to the NATS MPO Committee. The group was very receptive to having this presentation done for them. MPO staff will get this on the agenda.

▪ **FHWA Emphasis Areas**

Flowers wanted to bring to the attention of Committee members that each year as part of the unified planning work program (UWP) emphasis areas are given to each MPO and the focus areas from FHWA for FY 2014 are as follows. Flowers did note that FTA does not have these types of emphasis areas.

- **Performance Measures**
- **STIP/TIP Improvements**
- **Planning and Environmental Linkages**
- **Freight**
- **Livability**
- **Climate change-MDOT’s vulnerability study**

These areas will be addressed in the annual work program through the tasks and projects that the MPO staff will accomplish during the fiscal year.

**5. Project Updates**

**Obligation of projects-why wait?**

Flowers noted that in an effort to better understand how local agencies go through the MDOT LAP process they asked the question as to why agencies may be forced to wait on obligation. One reason that was discussed is that obtaining local match can be an issue, along with right of way acquisition, and others. This is just an effort to better understand the engineers’ perspective in the MPO process.

Fiscal Year	Job Number	Agency	Project Name	Update Information	Date of last update	Bid Savings	Potential Obligation Month
2011		Niles Dial A Ride	On bus camera system	The grant was just awarded in September 2011 and the projects will be completed in 2013; going out for bid; July 8 contract-installed in August; installed and the drivers and riders are not happy- <b>COMPLETED</b>	August 2013		
		Niles Dial A Ride	Preventative maintenance	The grant was just awarded in September 2011 and the projects will be completed in 2013; ongoing	July 2013		

	104152	MDOT	M-139 (Main St) over St. Joseph River bridge replacement SUB and PE phases	Design phase-public meeting will happen soon and public will be able to view design options; public comment process is underway, December 2013 letting; presentation in January to the public regarding the project; public input meeting held in Feb...December letting	October 2013		
<b>2012</b>		Niles Dial A Ride	Preventative maintenance	The projects have been assigned grant numbers and the projects should move forward summer 2012. There will be some project changes for the March meeting, need last approved TIP letter; ongoing	July 2013		
		Niles Dial A Ride	Free fare days-CMAQ project	Extended to summer 2013; happening in the summer; ongoing	July 2013		
		Niles Dial A Ride	Parking lot	Spring of 2013; done in the summer of 2013; getting quotes	August 2013		
<b>2013</b>							
	112102	Buchanan	Front St. Red Bud Trail to east city of Buchanan limit	Resurface, sidewalks, streetscaping, non-motorized path; working with consultant Wightman and Assoc to move this project along; TA grant, but need to coordinate funds—without coordination, letting could be delayed; will be submitting GI package in the next month; letting in August or Sept; update from discussion with consultant and project had GI meeting a week ago, will obligate by end of Aug; submitted for obligation	August 2013		May/June

		Buchanan Dial A Ride	Transit operations	Still operating	March 2013		
	112107	Cass County	Elkhart Road	From Redfield to May St. Partial Milling and Total Resurface; design; obligated; let November 4	October 2013		
	118207	Berrien County	IN-MI River Valley Trail	Construction of four miles of separated 10' nonmotorized pathway and improvements to two trailheads. Part of 34 mile IN-MI river valley trail project.; combined job numbers on project and was submitted for obligation; continuing to receive donations	August 2013		
<b>2014</b>	112104	Berrien County RC	Red Bud Trail, Third St., Portage Rd	Plans developed	October 2013		
	104152	MDOT	CON phase Bridge replacement	Let in December, Construct in 2014	October 2013		
	112105	Niles	17 <sup>th</sup> Street	GI submitted, January letting	October 2013		
	118114	Niles DAR	Free fare days				
		Niles DAR	Maintenance software				
		Niles DAR	Preventative maintenance				
		Niles DAR	Replacement computers				
		Niles DAR	Replacement bus				
		Niles DAR	Operating assistance				
		Cass County RC	Bertrand Rd (Batchelor road to Gumwood) - Resurface	Plans in development	October 2013		

		Cass County RC	Redfield (Fir to Kline) -Resurface	Plans in development	October 2013		
		Cass County RC	Elkhart (From Redfield to May)-Resurface	Submitted for reimbursement	October 2013		

## 6. Old Business

- **Transportation Alternatives Reminder**  
Flowers reminded folks that the applications for these funds are due December 1, 2013. She noted that she had not received any questions or comments about the applications.
- **Walk and Roll-November**  
Flowers stated that now the LRP and TIP have been completed and are awaiting approval, that she and Mani will be getting back to the Walk and Roll process. Mani stated that we will be conducting meetings with each municipality and also showing maps of where data has been collected.
- **Mason Township Update**  
Flowers noted that a presentation was done by John Egelhaaf for Mason Township and now they are in the process of discussing what they will need to make their final decision. Bob Sutton again introduced himself and explained where the Township was in their decision making process in regards to their participation with the MPO.
- **Bylaw Review-November**  
Flowers noted that a review of the bylaws will begin to take place and discussed at the Committee meetings over the next several months, this will be to prepare for the addition of Mason Township and making some overall changes to membership and voting authority.

## 7. New Business

- **Joint NATS and TwinCATS in April**  
Flowers and Mani asked people what they thought about the joint meeting. There was general agreement that it went well and the topics were good. They asked if there were other topics that should be discussed. Mani noted that there was a desire for members to share what is going on in their community, maybe an opportunity to meet and greet people as well. Comments from the members including more information about freight and railroads.
- **Legislative Updates-Federal and State**
  - **Federal**  
No federal updates were given.
  - **State-** Lott provided an update on several items happening at the state:
    - MDOT Director Steudle will be speaking at the House Transportation Committee to request additional funding for state roads of \$1 billion dollars.
    - There is an effort to increase the speed limit for both trucks and passenger vehicles; MDOT and the state police have serious issues with a blanket speed increase without careful consideration.
    - There are also Senate Bills for utility companies to do work in the state right of way.
    - SB 344 would add hospitals as a target industry for economic development funds in MI.
    - There is a test case happening in the Upper Peninsula regarding allowing off road vehicles in the MDOT right of way.
    - Harden added that SB 89 and HB 4234 would discontinue the sales tax on trade in vehicles and boats. He mentioned that this would impact the comprehensive transportation funds as a decline in funds would happen with the removal of this tax.

**8. Public Comment**

No public comments were received.

**9. Privilege of the Floor**

None were received.

**10. Adjournment at 3:05 p.m.**

A motion by Frost with support by Mason to adjourn the meeting.

- The next meeting November 26, 2013 at 1:30p.m.

*Minutes compiled by: Suzann Flowers and Gautam Mani, Transportation Planners, 2013*