

# NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

## Policy Committee

### MINUTES

November 26, 2013

2:30 P.M.

Niles City Council Chambers

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

### 1. Call to Order & Introductions

- Cooper called the meeting to order at 3:00p.m. and led the group in introductions.

### 2. Minutes

A motion by Mason with support by Poehlman to approve the Policy Committee Meeting minutes from October 22, 2013. Flowers noted that there is an error in the minutes with the numbering. **Motion passed.**

**3. Public Comment**

No comments were received.

**4. Staff Report**

▪ **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. *Climate Change Presentation by Gautam Mani was done at MTPA in November.*
2. *ACUB review all ACUB's have been reviewed and approved by FHWA.*
3. *Conflict of interest policy with engineering consultants doing work pro-bono...this is not allowed, LAP has a conflict of interest sheet on this and if consultants are doing work for you without a contract this is a problem. For the rules pertaining to this process you can contact Andrea Dewey at Federal Highway Administration or MDOT LAP division.*
4. *General Program Account changes-incorporating GPA in a uniform manner, subcommittee working on this at MTPA.*
5. *Approval of 2014-2017 STIP; thinking that we will make the November 30 schedule at FHWA.*

▪ **Climate Change Presentation**

Mani presented the TwinCATS Climate Change presentation and discussed what was learned from the process and the outcomes that were derived from the research and comments from the members of the public. He stated that there would be information that could be utilized in the NATS area from this study.

▪ **Traffic Count Website**

Mani discussed that the SWMPC's traffic count website is now up and running. The old system that utilized Miovision is no longer being utilized. This system is searchable for new and old counts and also maps each count. Bellina asked if counts from the counties were uploaded and Mani stated that he would need to check into this for years past.

▪ **MPO Handbook Section 2**

Flowers stated that there were copies of the MPO Committee handbook on the table for section 2. Please add this to your notebooks.

▪ **Housing and Transportation Cost Index**

Flowers and Mani walked the membership through a brief overview of the Housing and Transportation Cost Index that shows different housing and transportation variables for communities. They stressed the importance of it being easy to use and easy to see quick information about the community. It is also a valuable tool to see measure the health of the community, through indicators such as how much transportation costs are part of a household budget, the cost of the household, etc.

**5. Project Updates**

Fiscal Year	Job Number	Agency	Project Name	Update Information	Date of last update	Potential Obligation Month
	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;	October 2013	

				presentation in January to the public regarding the project; public input meeting held in Feb...December letting		
<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	
<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; February letting-spring/summer construction	August 2013	May/June
		Buchanan Dial A Ride	Transit operations	Still operating	November 2013	
	112107	Cass County	Elkhart Road	From Redfield to May St. Partial Milling and Total Resurface; design; obligated; let November 4; spring Construction	November 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	November 2013	

				34 mile IN-MI river valley trail project.; combined job numbers on project and was submitted for obligation; continuing to receive donations; matching funds are coming in		
2014	112104	Berrien County RC	Red Bud Trail, Third St., Portage Rd	Plans developed; in process	November 2013	
	104152	MDOT	CON phase Bridge replacement	Let in December, Construct in 2014; not constructing in 2014, will be constructed in 2015	November 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-December meeting needed**

Flowers noted that the subcommittee will be meeting on December 17 at noon to select the projects for FY 2014-2017.

- **Walk and Roll**

- **Survey**-Flowers noted that there will be a survey to held better understand the needs of the members of the public and that if you have suggestions or comments on the survey to send them to Flowers
- **Community stakeholder meetings**  
In addition we will be conducting individual meetings with each community and their council members to better understand where the investments will be made in the future. The meetings will take place January-March to have spring outreach meetings for members of the public.

- **Mason Township Update**

Flowers reported that now the Adjusted Census Urban Boundaries have been approved that the adjustments that the Committee members made to the urban boundaries, that all the areas that we wanted to include are now included. And Mason is considered a part of the MPO. Mr. Sutton reported that he is the representative as of now and that there is every indication that the community will contribute financially to the MPO.

- **Bylaw Review**

Flowers noted that a closer examination of the bylaws is needed to better understand the roles that each agency is to play and to also ensure that Mason Township has a voting seat on the table. Dewey noted that there should be an understanding of the role of the general public and who represents the private sector. Flowers noted that possibly a subcommittee may be of use.

## 7. New Business

- **CMAQ MPO supplemental questions**

The MPO staff wanted to ensure that projects being developed in the MPO were adhering to the LRP goals and objectives and one way in which we could do this is to have questions that pertain to the MPO Plans with supplemental questions for other funding sources that come to the county such as CMAQ. Flowers noted that in the TAC meeting, Joe Bellina asked why there was a long portion dedicated to transit, and Flowers responded that much more attention is being placed on transit not only by the region but by members of the public. We would like to vote on this next month.

- **Redraft of the UWP**

Flowers stated that MPO staff was responding to comments and suggestions from MDOT and FHWA regarding the UWP and that staff will be making those changes and ensuring that there are projects and focus areas that align with the FHWA emphasis areas for 2014. What this means to Committee members is that no funds are changing it is the type of work and projects that the MPO will be focusing on, we will bring the final version to the MPO at the December meeting noting the areas that were changed.

- **Public participation plan review and goals matrix**

Flowers noted that the annual review for the Public Participation Plan and Goals Matrix is underway and that this was not reviewed thoroughly enough in FY 2013. Flowers noted that Dissette stated at the TAC meeting that she had sent Flowers an email adding specific language regarding transit to the plan. This does not have to go back through a formal outreach process but staff will highlight those changes at an upcoming meeting.

- **Targeted transportation presentation ideas**

Flowers and Mani noted that they would like to get additional ideas regarding topics that Committee members would like to learn more about, this could also be good for the joint MPO meeting to be held in April. If there are topics that members would like to learn more about please share those with Mani and Flowers.

- **Implementing the LRP and TIP**

Flowers noted that we need to have a discussion about how we need to implement the TIP and the LRP so that they are not documents that just sit on a shelf. One idea is to have a subcommittee that focuses on implementing these documents another idea is to have presentations by MPO staff

- **Amendments vs. Administrative Modifications Policy**

MPO staff believes that it would be helpful to have a policy that allows staff to make simple changes to the TIP table without full committee review. Flowers noted that at the TAC meeting Dissette noted that a policy does exist and that staff should check into this. Flowers noted that she had looked previously and that this may be the best path to take at this point so that a policy can be a part of the TIP.

- **Legislative Updates-Federal and State**

- **Federal**

Dewey reported that there is guidance from Federal Highway regarding CMAQ guidance, and that there is a 60 day public comment period and this will replace the 2008 guidance.

- **State**

Lott stated that a presentation was made to the State Transportation Commission by Director Steudle and that the presentation can be made available to the MPO Committee.

## **8. Public Comment**

Matt Kodis from Kinexus discussed the cost of living index for Berrien County and that is on their website. Cass and Van Buren County are reviewed by other agencies.

## **9. Privilege of the Floor**

Flowers also noted the several administrative modifications that will be submitted to MDOT, FHWA, and FTA. Those included:

- Amending FY 2014 JN 112864 Cass County Road Commission project Redfield Street to the length of 1.52
- Adding FY 2014 Buchanan Dial A Ride operations assistance for 26K federal, 80K state, and 102K local funds to the TIP.
- Adding FY 2014 Berrien Bus operations assistance for 23,746 federal, and 23,746 states based on the current 13.3 % of the rural area in the census urban area. As a note this formula is being recalculated and at the time of the meeting this was not fully clear on how these funds should be noted.

Seeing that these projects do not alter fiscal constraint they were handled administratively.

Cooper added that the Michigan Township Association in January will be the entire week and that it may be good to move the meeting date. In addition, the United Federal Credit Union will have a regional office on 11<sup>th</sup> Street.

Mason wanted to know what could be done to have veterans ride the buses in the region for free on Veteran's Day. She also noted the great work that was done clearing the sidewalks near a bus stop near her home.

## **10. Adjournment at 4:15 p.m.**

A motion by Cooper with support by Harden to adjourn the meeting.

- The next meeting December 17, 2013 at 1:00p.m.

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