

NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Policy Committee

MINUTES

November 25, 2014

2:30 P.M.

Niles City Council Chambers

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

1. Call to Order & Introductions

Meeting was called to order by Cooper at 2:30 p.m and he also led the group in the pledge of allegiance.

2. Minutes

A motion by Poehlman with support by Personette to approve the Policy Committee Meeting minutes from October 28. **Motion passed.**

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Staff Report

▪ Cass County CMAQ Meeting- December 19th

Mani noted to jurisdictions in Cass County that a Cass County Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality meeting would be held on Friday December 19th at 10 AM at the Cass County Road Commission in Cassopolis. The Rural Task Force meeting will take place first beginning at 10 AM, and the CMAQ meeting will follow immediately after. Mani said that the purpose of the CMAQ meeting was to review projects funded in 2015-2017, and program new projects for 2018-2020. Cass County receives approximately \$192,000 in CMAQ funds each year. Mani said that there are a wide range of activities that are eligible for CMAQ funding, provided that they provide an emissions benefit.

▪ NFC Review- December 8th at Coloma TSC at 9am

Mani said that a meeting to review National Functional Classifications would take place at 9 AM on Monday December 8th at the MDOT Coloma TSC (3880 Red Arrow Highway, Benton Harbor, MI 49022). Mani apologized for the location, but said that MDOT needed access to their intranet, and could only access it from an MDOT site. Mani said that Mike Toth from MDOT would be leading the meeting. He would be giving a short presentation on the NFC review process, and then participants would be able to discuss possible changes they want to make to the NFC classifications (i.e. change a "major collector" to a "minor collector")

Mani said that the road commissions in Berrien and Cass Counties, and representatives from the cities and villages in the MPO would need to be in attendance at the meeting. Transit agencies and representatives from sovereign tribal governments are invited as well. Mani said that the meeting would include the NATS MPO and the Dowagiac Small urban area.

5. Public Transit Updates

Mani said that at the previous meeting, Schuh said that the County was still working through articles of incorporation for a new Countywide transit authority. The legal department was still conducting its analysis. Schuh said that hopefully after the legal analysis happens, the County would have multiple public meetings in convenient locations of the County to discuss the framework for a new authority.

Smith said that he understood that at the October NATS meeting there had been some concern about Niles Dial-A-Ride's decision to close on the Friday after Thanksgiving. Smith said that ideally, the system would get all individuals who need it to their destinations every day of the year. However, the ridership numbers on the day after Thanksgiving, specifically compared with normal weekday ridership do not justify Niles Dial-A-Ride staying open, especially when DART's own employees have a paid holiday that day. Smith noted that it is a city holiday as well, so it made sense from a cost perspective to be closed that day as well.

6. Project Updates

Fiscal Year	Job Number	Agency	Project Name	Update Information	Date of last update	Bid Savings	Obligation Month	Bills Submitted
2013	118207	Berrien County	IN-MI River Valley Trail	Have sent a new offer to Alcoa for their property; still a question of who has environmental liability	October 2014			
2014	104152	MDOT	M-139 CON phase Bridge replacement	Came in under engineers' estimate; construction in October	August 2014			
		Niles DAR	Maintenance software					
		Niles DAR	Preventative maintenance					
		Niles DAR	Replacement computers					
		Niles DAR	Replacement bus	A 2- axle bus is on order	November 2014			
		Niles DAR	Operating assistance					
		Cass County RC	Gumwood Road TAP project	Obligated- bidding will take place in two months	November 2014			
2015		Berrien County RC	Range Line Road, Lake St and Main St Resurfacing	Program application will be submitted in December				
		Berrien County RC	Madron Lake, North Main, and Red Bud Trail	Program application will be submitted in December				
		City of Niles	Broadway Avenue Resurfacing	GI Package submitted--only issue was a couple of utility poles. Aiming for December letting	October 2014			
		Cass County	Adamsville Road Reconstruct	Design work underway	November 2014			
		Buchanan Dial-a-Ride	Replacement Bus	Contract probably not coming until next September	October 2014			

		Niles Dial-A-Ride	Replacement Tires					
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7. Land Use Updates

Berrien County has almost completed the update of its master plan.

8. Old Business

▪ Transportation Alternatives

Mani noted that no applications had been received for NATS' allocation of around \$44,000 in Transportation Alternatives funds for FY 2015. Mani said it was getting late in the fiscal year, so those funds would need to be programmed very soon. Mani said that he was still expecting a submittal on behalf of Milton Township prior to the December NATS meeting.

The NATS meeting scheduled for December 16 will continue as scheduled. The Transportation Alternatives subcommittee will meet at 12 noon. Mani said he would not be able to be there, but Kim Gallagher and Kris Martin would handle the meeting.

8. New Business

▪ TIP Amendments

None.

• Legislative Updates

- **Federal-** Mani said that at last week's TwinCATS meeting, Dewey had shared that National Performance Measures Rulemakings were continuing to be released for comment, with further rulemakings being released on asset management and bridges in the months ahead. Most recently, FHWA had received a large number of comments on its rulemakings on metropolitan and statewide planning.
- **State-** Lott said that the Michigan Senate had passed a gas tax increase that is tied to the current wholesale price of gasoline. The tax increase is phased over four years and will effectively double the gas tax, bringing \$1 billion in needed transportation revenue by the fourth year.

9. Public Comment

None.

10. Privilege of the Floor

Mani introduced Kris Martin, Associate Planner, who has been sending emails on behalf of NATS recently and has been with SWMPC for over three years. Martin is now running the US-12 and rideshare programs in addition to other responsibilities.

Martin said that SWMPC had mostly completed a new US 12 Heritage Route Website you can visit the website at: www.us12heritagetrail.org. SWMPC is always looking for additional attractions along US 12. If you have any additional ones that you don't see currently on the website then send them to Kris Martin at kmartin@swmpc.org.

Ziliak raised the issue of road safety during the annual US-12 garage sale in August. Cars suddenly pull off the road, causing confusion for traffic. In addition, pedestrians often step into and out of the road without checking for traffic during the sale. The disorganized flow of vehicles creates problems for trucks, especially when cars ended up parked

partly in a traffic lane.

Personette and Bolock suggested that it might be possible to get some sort of signs to use temporarily for the garage sale, which could then be used in other areas as necessary. Lott suggested that Martin contact MDOT Southwest Region, as they may be able to assist in the procurement of signs.

11. Adjournment at 3:10 p.m.

- The next meeting will be January 27 at 2:30 PM.

Minutes compiled by: Kris Martin and Gautam Mani, Associate Planners, 2014.

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