

# NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Policy Committee

## MINUTES

February 23, 2016

2:30 P.M.

Niles City Council Chambers

Policy Members Present:	Pat Bellaire, Village of Edwardsburg Craig Bradfield, Howard Township Georgia Boggs, City of Niles Melinda Cole-Crocker, Buchanan Township Steve Hicks, Bertrand Township Erin Jolivette, MDOT – Coloma TSC Pete Fournier, Cass County Road Commission Serita Mason, City of Niles Jess Minks, Berrien County Road Commission Kim O’Haver, Buchanan Dial A Ride Jan Personette, Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce Don Ryman, City of Buchanan Jim Stover, Niles Charter Township Debbie Sullivan, Mason Township Robert Ziliak, Cass County Board of Commissioners
Policy Members Absent:	Dawn Bolock, Ontwa Township Andrea Dewey, Federal Highway Administration (ex-officio) John Klimek, Berrien County Board of Commissioners David Newell, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians Representative, Buchanan Township Stewart McKenzie, FTA (ex-officio) Brad Sharlow, MDOT Planning (ex-officio) Representative, City of Niles Dial-A-Ride Representative, Southwest Michigan Economic Growth Alliance
SWMPC Staff Present:	Kim Gallagher Gautam Mani

### 1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

Meeting was called to order by Mason at 2:30 p.m. and Minks led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### 2. Minutes

A motion by Bradfield with support by Minks to approve the Policy Committee Meeting minutes from January 26, 2016, as presented, and the minutes of the February 18, 2016 project selection committee meeting, as presented. **Motion passed.**

### 3. Changes to the Posted Agenda

Mani noted that at the request of a committee member, he had listed the recent “Niles Township accident” on the agenda. However, NATS was not the appropriate venue to be discussing the vehicle accident. Mani directed all committee members to direct questions regarding the accident to the Road Commission directly or to the Niles Township police.

#### **4. Public Comment**

None.

#### **5. Staff Report**

None.

#### **6. Public Transit Updates**

- **SWMPC Transit Updates**

None.

- **Agency Updates**

Gallagher reported on the Michigan Public Transit Association Annual Legislative Conference that had occurred last week in Lansing. The conference had discussed many topics, such as transit funding under the FAST Act. Overall, Gallagher said that there was great turnout at the conference,

O'Haver shared that she was pleased to report that Buchanan Dial-A-Ride had received its delivery of three new buses much earlier than expected. They were looking forward to putting these buses out on the road, as there was a need for them.

#### **6. Land Use Updates**

None.

#### **7. Project Updates**

##### **Berrien County Road Commission**

-North Main Street from Reed to Miller sealcoat project has been completed. The Road Commission is checking on whether all funds have been converted

- Preventative Maintenance project on Bertrand Road, Stateline, and Third Sts has been obligated.

-Indiana Michigan River Valley Trail was currently in the midst of an archaeological study to make sure no historic artifacts were being disturbed. Once the study concludes, the grant can be officially awarded for 2017 construction.

##### **Cass County Road Commission**

-Adamsville Road from May St to US-12 Resurfacing. GI plans have been submitted and CCRC anticipates construction in July.

- Fir Road from Redfield St to US-12 resurfacing—GI Plans will be submitted in the next couple of weeks.

- Fir Road from Stateline Road to Redfield Road resurfacing- GI plans will be submitted in the next couple of weeks.

Bellina requested that SWMPC check with MDOT regarding the Gumwood Road Transportation Alternatives project and the design phase of the Edwardsburg Sports Complex Non-Motorized Path CMAQ project. Apparently, there were issues on MDOT's end regarding the year in which those projects are scheduled to proceed.

##### **City of Buchanan**

-The Red Bud Trail resurfacing from the South City limits to Front Street, and Red Bud and Front St traffic signal replacement project have completed their GI submittal and will be obligated within the next few weeks.

##### **MDOT**

-US-12 bridge deck over M-51 restore and rehabilitate is still on track for construction in 2017.

-US-12 from Bakertown Road to the start of the divided section is still on track for 2017 construction.

## **8. Old Business**

None.

## **9. New Business**

### **▪ Project Selection 2017-2020**

Mani gave an overview of the application and selection process for the \$518,608 in Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds that NATS receives as a federal allocation each year between 2017 and 2020. These projects feed the four-year Transportation Improvement Program, a document that NATS develops every three years.

Gallagher noted that at last month's NATS meetings, the Policy Committee had approved a prioritization system for these projects as a guide. Federal, state, and local planning factors had all informed that prioritization system. Gallagher also gave an overview of the timeline for project submittal and selection, and that additional opportunities would be forthcoming for comments on projects. The selection committee had recommended a list of projects to TAC, who in turn recommended projects to the Policy Committee.

Mani shared that \$4 million in federal funds was requested, but only \$2 million in funds were available, so prioritization was needed. A total of 25 projects were submitted by jurisdictions, which is many more than previous calls.

Mani went through the results of the scoring system, and the PASER rating of the various projects.

Mani said that the scoring system had not been used in project prioritization. The NATS project selection committee instead asked each member jurisdiction (city, village, or township) that had submitted a project to pick their top priority project. Once top priority projects for each municipality were identified, the total demand equaled approximately \$2 million. The agencies had to spread it out so that it matched the amount available in each fiscal year. Mani noted that projects already scheduled for 2017 were once again applied for, so the subcommittee decided to proceed with the 2017 funding program as scheduled. However, we were overprogrammed based on available funds in 2017, so NATS needed to reduce funding for projects. In the interest of fairness, the agencies with 2017 projects each agreed to take a 10% cut in order to bring us into constraint.

Each project was discussed in detail. Mani explained that the Mason St project scheduled for 2018 was important to Mason Township in order to accommodate traffic being detoured because of installation of a roundabout at the Five Points intersection. Currently, the pavement condition is very poor and more traffic will only cause further deterioration.

Marx explained that the Red Bud and River Road traffic signal project was a priority for the City of Buchanan because they are anticipating over \$5 million in new economic development in the downtown area, and the signalization upgrade will help to manage increased traffic that will come as a result.

Minks encouraged all committee members to attend future project selection meetings. Minks had attended this one as an observer and found it to be enlightening to understand how projects were selected.

Gallagher pointed out that the TAC Committee had been strongly in favor of a policy that stated that agencies that had not paid their planning match dollars (“dues”) to SWMPC on an annual basis were subject to having any projects in the TIP pulled. SWMPC staff would be working on such a policy in the months ahead. Gallagher also reminded committee members that on the invoices their agencies had been sent to pay those dues, there were also committee member information informs. It was important for every agency to fill out those forms even if they were appointing the same people to the committees once again.

A motion was made by Ziliak with support by Bradfield. A roll call vote was requested by Minks and Bradfield. Mani read out the names of the voting agencies present. All present voted in favor of the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

- **FHWA Updates**

None.

- **MDOT Updates**

None.

- **News Items of Interest**

None.

**10. Public Comment**

None.

**11. Privilege of the Floor**

None.

**12. Adjournment at 3:13 p.m.**

- The next meeting will be March 22 at 2:30 PM.

*Minutes compiled by: Gautam Mani, Associate Planner, 2016*