

NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Policy Committee

MINUTES

July 22, 2014

2:30 P.M.

Niles City Council Chambers

<p>Policy Members Present:</p>	<p>Jason Auvil, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians Georgia Boggs, City of Niles Dawn Bolock, Ontwa Township Richard Cooper, Niles Charter Township Andrea Dewey, Federal Highway Administration (ex-officio) Erin Jolivette, MDOT – Coloma TSC John Klimek, Berrien County Board of Commissioners Serita Ann Mason, City of Niles 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 Robert Ziliak, Cass County Commissioner</p>
<p>Policy Members Absent:</p>	<p>Pat Bellaire, Village of Edwardsburg Craig Bradfield, Howard Township John Egelhaaf, SWMPC (ex-officio) Representative, Howard Township John Gruchot, Berrien County Community Development Darrell Harden, MDOT, Southwest Region Joseph Kring, Bertrand Township John Lanum, MDOT Planning Jason Latham, MDOT-SW Region Paul Lott, MDOT Planning Bill Marx, City of Buchanan Jess Minks, Berrien County Road Commission 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 Representative, MACOG (ex-officio)</p>
<p>SWMPC Staff Present:</p>	<p>Kim Gallagher Gautam Mani</p>
<p>Others Present:</p>	<p>Matt Kodis, Kinexus</p>

1. Call to Order & Introductions

Meeting was called to order by Cooper at 1:09 p.m, and he also led the group in introductions.

2. Minutes

A motion by Poehlman with support by Harden to approve the Policy Committee Meeting minutes from June 24,

2014. Motion passed.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Staff Report

▪ **MTPA Update- Conference in August**

Mani stated that MTPA had a short meeting in June and no meeting in July, and that therefore there was no information to share with committee members from MTPA. The annual conference will be in Port Huron August 5-8. Mani and Gallagher will both be attending and will bring back relevant information. Any committee members who are interested in attending can go to <http://www.mtpa-mi.org> to register.

▪ **MACOG Update- Livable Communities Workshop Update**

Mani said that he had attended the Michiana Area Council of Governments' annual Livable Communities Workshop, and that the topic was strategies for economic development. Mani said that two Ball State professors had found in their research that communities that spend more on infrastructure, schools, and public health do better in terms of job creation than those communities that rely on business incentives such as tax breaks. Copies of the white paper by the two professors were available at the meeting, and also online at <http://projects.cberdata.org/reports/EconDevtPolicy2013.pdf>.

▪ **Transit Consolidation Updates**

Gallagher said that she had given one additional presentation regarding the transit consolidation study to the SWMPC board. Gallagher noted that one question she had received consistently was whether a countywide millage would be enough without the new countywide authority. Gallagher pointed out that service boundaries tied to federal funds would still create a disconnected system, even with the new millage. With a countywide authority, it would be possible to dissolve those service boundaries and have connected service throughout Berrien County. Gallagher said that she would be presenting to the county commissioners on Thursday, and that she would be willing to come present to local boards upon request. Gallagher said that she would require 10-15 minutes minimum to give an effective presentation to a local board or other agency. Gallagher thanked O'Haver for her online comment on the plan.

Gallagher said that an opportunity had arisen for committee members to imagine what daily life in Southwest Michigan is like for someone who is unable to afford a car or cannot drive. SWMPC staff devised an exercise where each committee member will receive a different scenario and attempt to plan rides as requested by the individuals in the scenario. Gallagher supplied each committee member with resources that might help them figure out the rides. Gallagher requested that committee members treat this as a "Secret Shopper" exercise, and actually test out how well dispatching services and the My Way There website work. Mani said that the committee would look for report back from participating members at next month's meeting.

▪ **Walk and Roll Survey Analysis**

Mani presented the preliminary data from the Walk and Roll Survey. NATS received over 220 responses. Some key highlights:

-Good age distribution among respondents

-Most respondents live in the City of Niles

-Almost half of respondents are transit users.

-Many people walk or bike more than 3 miles on a daily basis or 3-5 times a week, and not all of those walking trips are recreational.

-Biggest comments were the need to shovel snow and the need for longer bus hours on Niles and Buchanan Dial-A-Ride

-The same corridors kept coming up as problematic areas: mainly S 11th St in Niles/Niles Township, and US-12.

Mani said that SWMPC would continue to cross-tabulate data from the surveys and present information at future meetings.

5. Project Updates

Fiscal Year	Job Number	Agency	Project Name	Update Information	Date of last update	Bid Savings	Obligation Month	Bills Submitted
2013	112102	Buchanan	Front St. Red Bud Trail to east city of Buchanan limit	Complete	July 2014		May/June	
	118207	Berrien County	IN-MI River Valley Trail	Final stages of construction— There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony on August 9 at 10 AM—Township looking to pursue additional funding	July 2014			
2014	112104	Berrien County	Third St., Portage Rd	Scheduling Work	July 2014			
	104152	MDOT	M-139 CON phase Bridge replacement	TIP Amendment approved. Letting in October	July 2014			
	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	Scheduling contract	June 2014			
		Cass County RC	Gumwood Road TAP project	GI package turned in this week	June 2014			

Other updates

Jolivette said that the NATS MPO area had one project selected in from the Priority Roads and Investment Program (PRIP). M-60 between Barron Lake Road and Hospital Road would have a completed resurfacing by the end of this year. These projects, like the Roads Risk and Reserve fund, were selected legislatively without local consultation or any discussion with MDOT Statewide Planning, the Regions, or the TSCs. MDOT had to arrange for a special August letting in order to meet the project deadline.

6. Land Use Updates

None.

7. Old Business

None.

8. New Business

- **TIP Amendments**

There were four MDOT additions this month, for resurfacing projects on M-60 and M-139 in the NATS MPO area.

A motion by Mason with support by Harden to approve the July 2014 TIP Amendments. **Motion passed.**

- **Resolution of Support Reminder**

Mani said that communities with projects in FY 2015 that require a local match should plan to have a resolution of support stating that their community will provide that match in FY 2015. Mani suggested that transit agency boards do the same, or submit their grant application materials. Mani said the resolutions were due October 1.

- **TAP Call for Projects Going Out Soon**

Mani said that NATS still needed to program its \$44,000 TAP allocation for each of the FYs 2015, 2016 and 2017. Mani said that outreach materials would go out to each NATS member communities shortly, and communities would have a couple of months to come up with project applications. Mani said that applicants who had previously applied but needed revisions were encouraged to apply again.

- **Officer Nominations**

Mani said that it was time to nominate officers again, as a two year term was about to expire at the end of this fiscal year. Mani said that the committees would be voting for officers in August, and that officers could take as active a role as they wanted in coordinating with MPO staff.

A motion by Poehlman with support by Auvil to nominate Richard Cooper as Chair and Serita Mason as Vice Chair, and close the nominations. **Motion passed.**

- **Legislative Updates**

- **Federal-** Dewey said that the House passed a funding extension of the Highway Trust Fund until May 2015, which will effectively be a reauthorization of MAP-21. Kodis commented that Congress made its first reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act since 1997, and that it would extend funding for a great number of Kinexus programs.
- **State-** Harden said that no revenue package was passed during the House's one day in session during the summer, and that it's possible that they will address transportation during the lame duck session.

9. Public Comment

Kodis announced that this would be his final NATS meeting as a representative of Kinexus, as he had accepted a position as a product forecaster for Whirlpool. He would be remaining in the area. The committee members wished Kodis well.

10. Privilege of the Floor

Boggs said that she needed committee member support on a petition to get county human services back in the south county area.

Mason said that transit passengers need to be more understanding and patient when a bus breaks down. It is frustrating for all, but the drivers and Niles Dial-a-Ride dispatchers do the best they can. Mason did ask that the system find better ways to more quickly send replacement buses, to minimize disruptions to daily routines.

Poehlman said that the Road Commission was revisiting its tree policy. In particular, the commission has run into issues with cutting down trees that are outside the public right of way, but pose a hazard to roads. In addition, property owners often want to cut down their own trees, but they end up falling in the road. It ends up being cheaper for the Road Commission to cut down the tree.

11. Adjournment at 3:27 p.m.

- The next meeting will be August 26, 2014 at 2:30 PM.

Minutes compiled by: Gautam Mani, Transportation Planner, 2014.