

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

Policy Committee

**MINUTES**

August 27, 2013

2:30 P.M.

Niles City Council Chambers

Policy Members Present:	Jason Auvil, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians/BC Planning Commission Township Richard Cooper, Niles Charter Township Irving Frost, Howard Township John Gruchot, Berrien County Community Development Joseph Kring, Bertrand Township John Lanum, MDOT Planning Paul Lott, MDOT Planning Dale Lowe, Howard Township Serita Ann Mason, City of Niles 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 Cliff Poehlman, Cass County Road Commission Don Ryman, City of Buchanan Kris Welch, MDOT Planning Robert Ziliak, Cass County Commissioner
Policy Members Absent:	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) Darrell Harden, MDOT, Southwest Region Erin Jolivette, MDOT – Coloma TSC Jason Latham, MDOT-SW Region Larry Larson, City of Niles Bill Marx, City of Buchanan 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**

- Lowe called the meeting to order at 2:45p.m. and led the group in introductions.

**2. Minutes**

A motion by Cooper with support by Frost to approve the Policy Committee Meeting minutes from July 23, 2013.

**Motion passed.**

**3. Public Comment**

No comments were received.

Flowers noted that the MTPA Membership survey will be removed from the staff report.

▪ **Transportation Newsletter**

Flowers noted that in an effort to engage more with communities and others about transportation issues, that the transportation staff will be doing a transportation newsletter quarterly. The SWMPC also has a newsletter that comes out quarterly; the transportation newsletter will come out at different times than the SWMPC agency newsletter.

▪ **CMAQ**

Mani stated that an additional CMAQ meeting was held for Berrien County as there were considerable funds left on the table. He added that the 2014-2017 CMAQ program is now fully programmed and that there were two projects of importance in the MPO area, Buchanan Dial A Ride and City of Buchanan were added to the list of projects. Bellina noted that there is also a need for a discussion about a project in Cass County.

▪ **Traffic Safety Committee**

Flowers noted that on a quarterly basis the transportation staff engages in a traffic safety committee that discusses various issues. This is a good learning opportunity for staff to see what issues police and safety officials are trying to tackle. The focus of this meeting was on bus safety and the new challenges with keeping underage drinking out of the hands of minors.

▪ **Safe Routes to School Training**

Mani stated that staff attended a Safe Routes to School training that focused on how schools can access funds to improve safety around their school properties for students. He stated that currently, applicants to this program do not have to come up with any local match for the project and that you can request up to \$200,000 per school. He also stated that he is working to have schools participate in the International Walk to School Day on Wednesday October 9, 2013. He is obtaining promotional materials and additional items to get this process moving.

▪ **Performance Measures Subcommittee for both MPOs**

Flowers asked the members if they wanted to start working on data collection or concepts to explore on performance measures, even though no guidance had been given from FHWA. It was agreed upon that until guidance is given that the Committee will wait to discuss this in more depth.

▪ **Legislative Tours-Spring/Summer 2014**

Flowers noted that the Grand Rapids MPO has had tremendous success with taking their elected officials on a guided bus tour of where transportation projects have been done and where transportation projects need to be done but cannot because of funding are located. Staff are beginning to work on this and to work with Grand Rapids on how this has been successful for them. Staff plan to do this in the summer of 2014. The idea is to have some targeted presentations by community leaders, take them on a tour, provide lunch and have additional presentations during their lunch.

-Personette stated that she felt a role reversal exercise should be done with legislative representatives so that they can understand the real challenges that citizens' face, Minks seconded this idea and reinforced that with a transit example.

▪ **Resolution of support for FY 2014 projects**

Flowers reminded members that have projects programmed in FY 2014 have the month of October to turn in their resolutions of support. Mani reminded attendees that this also applied to CMAQ and projects using Surface Transportation Program funds.

-Bellina asked what would happen if the project did not get in a resolution and Flowers noted that the policy states that if the resolution is not turned in than the funds may be reprogrammed by motion from the Policy

Committee.

- **Joint September MPO meeting**

Flowers again reminded people about the September meeting and that it would be on Monday September 30, 2013 at the Berrien RESA in Berrien Springs from 1-4:30. Please RSVP to ensure a seat.

- **MPO Committee handbook**

Lastly, Flowers noted that the staff are working on a MPO handbook for Committee members as a reference guide for the MPO. Bellina noted that this was a great idea and that he encouraged staff to make sure that each community has a copy and to include funding information. Flowers noted this and stated that this will be a work in progress and that as things change; items will need to be added and removed from the handbook. Staff hope that this will help people better understand all of the work that the MPO is tasked with.

### 5. Project Updates

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-COMPLETED	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...	March 2013		

2012		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		
	116115	MDOT	US 12 West of Mayflower Road to M-139	2013 construction-in design; Design complete let in September CON begin summer 2013; construction has started ending July 19; in Construction	May 2013		
2013							
	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		

	115699	MDOT	On US 31 from end of freeway at Napier Ave to I-94 CON phase	Overband crack fill- CON phase; construction from May 27-August there are several location; Construction has started			
	112107	Cass County	Elkhart Road	From Redfield to May St. Partial Milling and Total Resurface; design; obligated	August 2013		
	108186	MDOT	Near Pucker St. M-51 widening for 4 ft alignment away from Dowagiac River (CON phase)	CON this year July let CON in August; letting in 2 weeks construction will begin August and be done in August; let in July CON August and completed in August	May 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	August 2013		
	112103	Cass County Road Commission	Redfield	Oak Street to Elkhart Road			

Personette asked about the Main Street bridge project and Harden emailed Paul Lott and stated that the project was still in design.

## 6. Old Business

### ▪ Transportation Alternatives Subcommittee Report

O'Haver discussed that the subcommittee met prior to the meeting and worked out the project selection criteria, reviewed the status of the application that was submitted for TAP funding. O'Haver reviewed the criteria that was selected to review applications and they included the following:

- All applications must be submitted through MDOT's portal. A technical review will be done by Matt Wiitala Grant Coordinator from the MDOT Office of Economic Development after the application has been submitted.
- The proposed project MUST meet MDOT funding requirements as if the project were applying for statewide TAP funds. It will then be up to the NATS TAP Subcommittee to evaluate the projects based upon NATS TAP Project Selection Requirements. In other words, activities that would not be eligible for MDOT activities such as parking lot paving or intersection reconfiguration are not eligible. **Please see the included handouts on eligible activities.**
- Projects must be submitted by fiscal year. Each year's worth of funding request will need to have their own application. For example, if you are applying for funding for 3 years, you will need three

separate funding applications submitted through MDOT's portal.

- In the narrative portion of the MDOT application(s) please be sure to include the following language ["This project will be using the NATS MPO allocation of TAP funds"](#).

### **NATS TAP Eligibility Criteria**

*Please provide a detailed description to each of the questions below and please label the attachment NATS TAP Application Eligibility Criteria attach this to your MDOT application. Please use the heading **NATS TAP Application Eligibility Criteria** at the top of the page.*

1. Please provide a description on how your application demonstrates that the applicant has coordinated with Matt Wiitala Grant Coordinator from the MDOT Office of Economic Development. (A joint effort will strengthen and improve the quality of the application).
2. Does the proposed project fit in with the NATS Long Range Transportation Plan Goals found in the 2013-2040 plan ([http://www.mywaythere.org/downloads/plan\\_5\\_20\\_2013\\_sfte.pdf](http://www.mywaythere.org/downloads/plan_5_20_2013_sfte.pdf)) and the community's Master Plan?
3. Does the proposed project otherwise fit in with local planning efforts? (i.e. initiatives being discussed but not yet formally added to the Master Plan).
4. Please demonstrate stakeholder support by providing copies of meeting minutes, letters of support, and/or survey data with your application that you submit to MDOT.
5. Is the community able to provide more than the minimum 20% match?
6. Demonstrate where additional funds will come from if the requested amount is more than the allocation.

For example:

If your total project cost is \$70,000

The maximum amount of federal funds that you can request are \$57,295

The total local match is \$12,705(based on the 81.85% for federal and 18.15% for local)

The total available federal funds available from TAP are \$42,000

There is a difference of \$15,295 worth of funds

Question: Where will the additional funds come from? Please provide documentation as well.

7. Additional consideration will be given to the continuation of a previously-approved project.

O'Haver stated that the call for projects will be for 2014-2017.

- **Walk and Roll Committee beginning in October**

Mani reminded members that the NATS Walk and Roll subcommittee will begin meeting again in October. The break has been good to give the SWMPC GIS specialist time to finish maps. Please stay tuned.

### **7. New Business**

- **Mason Township Update**

Flowers noted that staff will begin working with Mason Township members to engage them in the MPO process. They will be invited to the September 30 meeting. Members to be invited will include the Supervisor, Clerk and one additional member. While the Township is not officially a member until FHWA approved the adjusted census urban boundaries.

- **By law Review**

Flowers noted that as a new member will be added to the Committees that it may be time to review the membership. For instance, why does the City of Niles have 3 members on Policy? Getman-Dissette noted that while she was at SWMPC that a lot of time was spent on this, and she recommended that the focus should be on how we want the Committee membership to be.

- **TIP Amendment Policy**

Flowers stated that there is now a present need to have a formal TIP amendment versus administrative modification policy in place. There is no policy on what staff are allowed to do without full Committee

approval and therefore all items must come to the full Committee to approve. Lott added that he recommends to have a flexible policy and look at an either or type of language and to think about the total percentages that we may want to apply for small and large projects, such as projects under and over \$100,000 total cost. He continued by adding that we should make this a policy of the TIP.

▪ **Legislative Updates-Federal and State**

- **Federal**-Lott stated that discussion is beginning to happen on reauthorization as the current bill expires at the end of FY 2014.
- **State**-Lott stated that the representatives are back in office and the issue taking the forefront is Medicaid expansion.

**8. Public Comment**

No public comments were received.

**9. Privilege of the Floor**

Ryman commented on the difficulties that some young drivers are having passing the parallel parking portion of their driving test.

Minks reported back on the Regional Prosperity Initiative meeting that took place in Kalamazoo on August 19, 2013. He stated that John Egelhaaf ran the meeting very well and that it was well attended. His sentiment was that he left with more questions than answers and that there were many people that felt the same. There is still a lot to understand and how this impacts people still yet to be explained. Other people attended the meeting and expressed how impressed they were with Egelhaaf and how things were handled.

**10. Adjournment at 3:51p.m.**

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

- The next meeting September 30, 2013 at 1:00-4:30p.m. at Berrien RESA

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