

NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Policy Committee

MINUTES

August 26, 2014

2:30 P.M.

Niles City Council Chambers

<p>Policy Members Present:</p>	<p>Dawn Bolock, Ontwa Township Richard Cooper, Niles Charter Township Erin Jolivette, MDOT – Coloma TSC Paul Lott, MDOT Planning 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 Statewide Planning Robert Ziliak, Cass County Commissioner</p>
<p>Policy Members Absent:</p>	<p>Jason Auvil, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians Georgia Boggs, City of Niles Pat Bellaire, Village of Edwardsburg 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 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 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>Gautam Mani</p>
<p>Others Present:</p>	<p>Melinda Michael, Four Flags Area Council on Tourism</p>

1. Call to Order & Introductions

Meeting was called to order by Cooper at 2:31 p.m. Personette led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Minutes

A motion by Poehlman with support by Ziliak to approve the Policy Committee Meeting minutes from July 22 with corrections. **Motion passed.**

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Staff Report

- **MTPA Updates**

Mani and Gallagher had a good MTPA annual conference in Port Huron. There was a lot of focus on security and protecting vulnerable transportation assets and the importance of having hazard mitigation plans. There was also great session on visualization and communication. MPO staff are coming back with a lot of ideas of how we can better get information to you in a way that is not difficult to navigate. Darrell Harden, MDOT Region Planner for Southwest Region received the junior planner of the year award, He doesn't make it to TwinCATS very often, but he has still been instrumental in delivering local projects to the area. When you see him, congratulate him! Mani also noted that he was elected MTPA Secretary. Our local MPOs had a strong voice on a statewide level when Suzann Flowers was chair of MTPA, and it will continue to have a strong voice.

- **Public Transit Updates**

Mani said that Gallagher apologized for being unable to make this meeting. Gallagher was busy with TCATA's triennial review meeting, a lot of which focused on whether the transit agency was following MPO procedures for public participation and project selection. Niles Dial A Ride would be having its meeting in September. Gallagher had said that there were no real updates on the transit consolidation study, other than that it is continuing to receive very extensive media coverage in the area.

5. 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	Ribbon Cutting was a major success; currently negotiating with Alcoa to acquire property that would connect trail	August 2014			
	112104	Berrien County	Third St., Portage Rd	Complete	August 2014			
2014	104152	MDOT	M-139 CON phase Bridge replacement	Came in under engineers' estimate; construction in October	August 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			
2015		Berrien County RC	Range Line Road, Lake St and Main St Resurfacing					
		Berrien County RC	Madron Lake, North Main, and Red Bud Trail					
		City of Niles	Broadway Avenue Resurfacing					
		Cass County	Adamsville Road Reconstruct					
		Buchanan Dial-a-Ride	Replacement Bus					
		Niles Dial-A-Ride	Replacement Tires					

Other updates

Mani said that the state had run out of obligation authority, meaning no further funds would be attached to FY 2014 projects. Mani said that there would be some federal redistribution of funds to the states based on their needs. Mani said that one project within the NATS MPO was impacted: the \$43,000 project using TAP funds on a Gumwood Road non-motorized path. Mani said that we would need to wait and see how much obligation authority was available once redistribution occurred, but final plans had been submitted on the project and it is in line for funding.

Jolivette said that the resurfacing project of M-139 from M-140 to the township line is scheduled for an October letting and will be constructed next year. In addition, the M-60 resurfacing project beginning at Barron Lake Road is let this year. This was a Priority Roads Investment Program (PRIP) project, using only state funds.

6. Land Use Updates

None.

7. Old Business

▪ **Officer Elections**

Mani noted that at the last meeting Richard Cooper had been nominated as Chair and Serita Mason as Vice Chair for FYs 2015 and 2016. There had also been a motion to close the nominations.

A motion by Personette with support by Poehlman to elect Cooper and Mason as officers for 2014. **Motion passed unanimously.**

▪ **Mobility Challenge Reportback**

Mani said committee members had another month to participate in the mobility challenge, an exercise SWMPC staff had devised to be able to simulate what life is like for a transit dependent person. Mani suggested that if committee members have questions they contact Kim Gallagher.

8. New Business

▪ **Resolution of Support Reminder**

Mani reminded committee members with FY 2015 projects requiring local match in their jurisdiction that they would need to provide a local resolution of support specifying that their community would provide the required local match in FY 2015. Those resolutions of support were due to Mani by October 1. Otherwise, the MPO reserves the right to reprogram the funds.

▪ **TAP Call for Projects Out**

Mani said that the Transportation Alternatives Call for Projects for 2015-2017 was out, and that all of you should have received an email or mailing with all of the application information. The application process is the same as previous years, and the Call for Projects ends on November 11th. Projects that previously needed to be revised are encouraged to be resubmitted with the necessary revisions. If you have questions about the process, please contact Gautam Mani or MDOT's Transportation Alternatives grant coordinator Matt Wiitala.

▪ **September Presentation by Bill Hamilton of House Fiscal Agency on Transportation Funding**

Mani said that the regularly scheduled NATS meetings for September would be CANCELLED. In lieu of that meeting, we would be having a presentation by Bill Hamilton from the House Fiscal Agency in the state legislature. After his presentation, we will handle any MPO business. Mani noted that rural agencies would be invited as well to attend the presentation, and that this would be a joint meeting with TwinCATS.

The presentation and meeting would take place on Thursday September 25th at 10 AM at Berrien RESA, 711 St. Joseph Avenue, Berrien Springs, MI. Mani apologized for the conflict this posed with county commission meetings.

• **Legislative Updates**

- **Federal-** None.
- **State-** Lott announced that MDOT was realigning its regions so that the MDOT Southwest Region would now be seven counties. Allegan and Barry counties would now be part of the Grand Region. MDOT is making this transition over the next 18 months. The Coloma TSC and the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission region boundaries were unaffected. Lott said that the purpose of these regions was to align with the Prosperity Regions laid out by the Governor. Mani said that the Governor was also looking for improvements in regional transit mobility using these regional boundaries, and that they were reaching out to MPOs and regional planning agencies to identify

service gaps. Of course, Berrien County itself had a key service gaps.

Lott also said that the state had run out of obligation authority in late July, and was waiting to hear whether further federal redistribution would occur. Mani noted that one project within the NATS MPO was impacted: the \$43,000 Gumwood Road project that was using FY 2014 TAP funds. Mani said that we needed to wait to see if the project was eventually obligated.

9. Public Comment

None.

10. Privilege of the Floor

Ryman asked Cooper if he felt the Indiana Michigan River Valley Trail had been successful. Cooper said it had been even more successful than he or others in the township had anticipated.

11. Adjournment at 3:04 p.m.

- The next meeting will be Thursday September 25th at 10 AM at Berrien RESA.

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

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