

NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
Policy Committee

MINUTES

Tuesday, June 28, 2011

3:00 P.M.

Niles City Council Chambers

Policy Members Present:	Jason Auvil, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians Georgia Boggs, City of Niles Chuck Collins, Berrien County Road Commission Richard Cooper, Niles Charter Township Irving Frost, Howard Township Darrell Harden, MDOT, Southwest Region Erin Kercheval, MDOT – Coloma TSC Joseph Kring, Bertrand Township Don Kronewitter, Milton Township John LaMore, Berrien County Commissioner Dale Lowe, Cass County Commissioner Jane Mitchell, Buchanan Township Zach Perkins, Berrien County Commissioner John Plevich, Niles Dial-A-Ride Cliff Poehlman, Cass County Road Commission Johnie Rodebush, Cass County Commissioner Don Ryman, City of Buchanan Tracy Vines, Berrien County Planning Commission
Policy Members Absent:	Betty Arndt, City of Niles Pat Bellaire, Village of Edwardsburg John Egelhaaf, SWMPC (ex-officio) Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning Jan Personette, Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce Stewart McKenzie, FTA (ex-officio) Jessica Mitchell, MACOG (ex-officio) Rachael Tupica, Federal Highway Administration (ex-officio) Representative, Buchanan Dial-a-Ride Representative, Ontwa Township
SWMPC Staff Present:	Suzann Flowers Anna Rahtz Trevor Thomas
Others Present:	Sue Kronewitter, Milton Township resident

1. Call to Order & Introductions

- Chairman LaMore called the meeting to order at 3:02 P.M. and led the group in saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Minutes

- *Motion by Vines, seconded by Rodebush, to approve the minutes of the April 26, 2011 Policy Committee meeting with a change needing to be made on page 4, sixth bullet point to state "axle". Motion approved unanimously.*

3. Staff Report

- **Transit Consolidation Feasibility Study update**
 - Rahtz gave a summary of the kickoff meeting with the consultants, which was held on June 1st at Michigan Works! Benton Harbor. Around 55 people were in attendance, representing social service agencies, government agencies, transportation providers, citizens, riders, people with disabilities, and a variety of other groups.
- Anna informed the group that this would be her last NATS meeting and that she was headed for a job in California. The group wished her good luck. LaMore presented Rahtz with a gift and card from the Committee members. Rahtz stated that Suzann Flowers would take her place as transportation planner for the MPO.
- **Asset Management Update**
 - Thomas stated that the Berrien County PASER ratings will be starting July 18 and that Cass County ratings will be starting August 15. Thomas stated that ½ of federal aid eligible roads in Berrien and Cass Counties will be rated. Cities and villages are welcome to ride along during this rating. Thomas also mentioned that SWMPC will be conducting a number of local road ratings in Berrien County this year. Municipalities are eligible to be reimbursed for rating local roads every three years, but at least one road rater must have gone through the PASER training process in order to be eligible for direct reimbursement from TAMC. Collins suggested that we need to rate roads and show a list of those priorities for the millage request.
- **Complete Streets Workshop**
 - Flowers stated that a Complete Streets workshop will be held at Andrews University on June 30th, 2011 from 6:30-8:30pm. She added that, in contrast to the Complete Streets workshop held by MSU-Extension on May 3rd, this workshop will be free. The focus of the workshop will be to promote and foster citizen advocacy, as well as to provide information about the Michigan Complete Streets legislation and how local governments can get started with writing Complete Streets policies. 45 people have signed up for the training.
 - Darrell Harden stated that Complete Streets is not a cookie cutter approach to road designs. That each road is different and not all roads need sidewalks and bicycle lanes. It depends on the conditions of the road such as speed and amount of traffic.
- **Rail Update**
 - Rahtz stated that MDOT will still be taking comments on the draft statewide rail plan until July 1, 2011. The draft plan is online at www.michigan.gov/mirailplan.
- **Plug-In Vehicle Conference**
 - Thomas discussed his attendance at a conference on electric vehicles on the Western

Michigan University campus, June 15. He gave an overview of the panelists present and the material they presented. This material included considerations of battery quality and the range of electric vehicles, the cost of these vehicles, considerations of the enablement and provision of charging stations, and the likely future prevalence of electric cars. The Committee subsequently discussed issues related to their knowledge of battery cost and reliability, car range, and the logistics of charging costs.

4. Old Business

- **Unified Work Program approval**

- Rahtz passed out copies of the draft NATS FY 2012 Unified Work Program.
- *Motion by Rodebush, seconded by Vines, to recommend that the SWMPC board approve the FY 2012 UWP, on the condition that changes are made based on suggestions from committee members. Motion approved unanimously.*
- LaMore questioned the MPO population threshold item on the agenda and Thomas explained that language from a draft of the new transportation bill discussed raising the population threshold to 200,000 but that NATS would not be affected by this due to the population within the Michiana area, northern Indiana. LaMore suggested a letter of support be drafted for support of the TwinCATS MPO.

5. New Business

- **TIP Amendments**

- **Cass County Road Commission**
 - Add in FY 2011 the project named Redfield St from M-62 to Brande Creek Road. Federal cost is \$182,913 (STU) and county cost is \$40,560.
 - Add in FY 2011 the project named Redfield St over Christiana Creek. Federal cost is \$924,800 (BRT), state cost is \$174,400, and local cost is \$57,800.
 - Remove in FY 2012 the project named Redfield St from M-62 to Ridgewood Dr. Federal cost is \$76,800 (STU) and local cost is \$19,200.
 - Remove in FY 2012 the project named Redfield St from State Line Rd to Oak St. Federal cost is \$76,800 (STU), and local cost is \$19,200.
 - *Motion by Poehlman, seconded by Harden, to approve the modification of the above Cass County projects in the FY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program. Motion approved unanimously.*
- **Berrien Bus**
 - Add in FY 2012 the applicable portion of 5311 Rural Operating Funds, totaling \$21,110
- **Berrien County Road Commission**
 - Add in FY 2012 the project named Red Bud Trail at Old Bitty Creek. Federal cost is \$150,000 (STU), and local cost is \$150,000 (from fish passage grant).
 - *Motion by Harden, seconded by Mitchell, to approve the modification of the above Berrien Bus and Berrien County Road Commission projects in the FY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program. Motion approved unanimously.*
- **Michigan Department of Transportation**
 - Add in FY 2011 the project named Pre-Construction Phases GPA (region wide), with federal cost of \$65,841 (ST) and local cost of \$21,110
 - Modify in FY 2011 the project named US-12 from M-60 to Edwardsburg, changing

the project description to "Mill and two-course HMA overlay. Pave 7-foot shoulders. Isolated drainage improvement determined by need. Gumwood Road intersection improvement (JN 106876) to center left turn lanes and right turn lanes each leg of US-12. Guardrail upgrade as determined by condition and road treatment. ROW sought to own and maintain culvert ends outside existing 33' ROW. With work outside the roadway at isolated locations.

- *LaMore asked about the nature of the above overlay. Harden speculates that the epoxy overlay is likely to be confined to the bridge superstructure and not the deck.*
- Add in FY 2012 the project named CPM CSM Bridge Trunkline GPA, with federal cost of \$663,020 (ST) and state cost of \$165,755.
- Add in FY 2012 the project named US-12 at Gumwood Road, with federal cost of \$668,700 (STH) and state cost of \$74,300.
- Add to illustrative list in FY 2012 the project named US-31 (NB over St. Joseph River). Federal cost is \$663,020 (BHN), and state cost is \$165,755.
- Modify in FY 2013 the project named M-139 over St. Joseph River, changing the federal cost from \$4,531,200 (BRT) to \$0 and changing state costs from \$1,132,800 to \$5,664,000.
- *Motion by Vines, seconded by Rodebush, to approve the modification of the above Michigan Department of Transportation projects in the FY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program. Motion approved unanimously.*
- Administratively delete from FY 2011 the project named US-31BR over Dowagiac River, as it is duplicated in the FY 2011-2014 TIP.
- *Motion by Vines, seconded by Harden, to approve the administrative modification of the above Michigan Department of Transportation project in the FY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program. Motion approved unanimously.*
- *Harden raised question of why Committee approval is needed for above administrative change, as the need for approval seems counter to the purpose of making changes administratively.*

- **Travel Demand Model data**

- Thomas stated that he is working with Brad Sharlow on finalizing the socioeconomic data for the travel demand model for the next long range transportation plan. The base year for the data is 2010. He will make the draft data available electronically and on paper as soon as possible so that the committees could approve the data at the August meeting.

6. Public Comment

- None

7. Privilege of the Floor

- It was brought up that at the TAC meeting that Getman-Dissette stated that \$2,000 of CMAQ funds will not be used by Niles DAR. She asked that it be allocated to another project. Harden asked the reason why the funds would not be used and there was an issue about not receiving a flex letter. Berndt asked that the money be moved to the John Beers Road project in the TwinCATS MPO. Harden asked if SWMPC could utilize their administrative action authority to make this change.

- Poehlman discussed the intersection of M-62 and Daily Rd and how he would appreciate Kercheval looking into what could be done, before Paul South was deployed he was looking into this issue as well. Frost discussed having a warning light flash on M-62.
- LaMore discussed the flooding issue at Redfield and Gumwood and the dissatisfaction that he has with the engineering company that did this work.
- Pleveich stated that this would also be his last NATS meeting and that he was heading to Texas for a new position. The Committee members wished him well.
- Collins discussed the US12 and Mayflower intersection issue and asked MDOT to look into this.
- Vines encouraged people to look at the Pure Michigan campaign spoofs on potholes, she stated that it was quite funny.
- Boggs indicated that the US 12 and Gumwood still has a sign up showing no passing and that it should be removed since it now has a double yellow line.

8. Adjournment: 4:07 P.M.

- *Motion by Rodebush, seconded by Vines, to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved unanimously.*

The next meeting is **August 23, 2011** at **1:30 P.M.**

Minutes compiled by: Suzann Flowers and Trevor Thomas, Transportation Planners, 6/29/11