

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

**MINUTES**

Tuesday, August 23, 2011

3:00 P.M.

Niles City Council Chambers

Policy Members Present:	Jason Auvil, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians 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 Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning Dale Lowe, Cass County Commissioner Zach Perkins, Berrien County Commissioner Jan Personette, Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce Cliff Poehlman, Cass County Road Commission Johnie Rodebush, Cass County Commissioner Don Ryman, City of Buchanan Rachael Tupica, Federal Highway Administration (ex-officio) Tracy Vines, Berrien County Planning Commission
Policy Members Absent:	Georgia Boggs, City of Niles Betty Arndt, City of Niles Pat Bellaire, Village of Edwardsburg John Egelhaaf, SWMPC (ex-officio) Jane Mitchell, Buchanan Township Stewart McKenzie, FTA (ex-officio) Jessica Mitchell, MACOG (ex-officio) Representative, Buchanan Dial-a-Ride Representative, Ontwa Township
SWMPC Staff Present:	Suzann Flowers Trevor Thomas
Others Present:	Sue Kronewitter, Milton Township resident

**1. Call to Order & Introductions**

- LaMore called the meeting to order at 3:00 P.M. Rodebush led the group in saying the Pledge of Allegiance. LaMore asked that the Pledge of Allegiance be placed back on the agenda.

**2. Minutes**

- Auvil noted that he was in attendance at the June 2011 Policy Meeting.
- Collins noted the following changes that needed to be made to the minutes:

- Bullet point #5 under Project Updates needs to be removed since that is only done during the TAC Committee Meeting
- Under Asset Management-change the phrasing on when the ratings will be started for Berrien County and Cass County.
- Under TIP Amendments for MDOT further clarification was need as to the Modification in FY 2011 JN 106876 and what the "concept intend to treat US-12 pavement and produce off the road impacts only at isolated locations" meant. Harden stated the some of the work will be outside the roadway at isolated locations and to include that phrase instead of the former.
- Motion by Vines, seconded by Personette, to approve the June 28, 2011 Policy Committee meeting minutes with the above mentioned changes. **Motion passed.**

### 3. Staff Report

- **Complete Streets Workshop update**

Thomas discussed the workshop that was held in Berrien Springs and was led by Nancy Krupiarz from the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance. The presentation discussed best practices and how to engage and organize citizens.

- **Complete Streets Policy Update**

Darrell Harden from MDOT presented information on Public Acts 134 and 135 (pertaining to state Complete Streets policy), talking specifically about what these acts mean for MDOT. Pursuant to the acts, MDOT must:

1. Adopt a complete streets policy by August of 2012,
2. Develop a model policy for local communities,
3. Prepare a 5 year program for non-motorized programs according to Act 51,
4. Consult with local agencies.

Harden will provide the presentation to SWMPC staff, and SWMPC staff will provide the presentation on the website.

- **Michigan Transportation Planning Association Conference (MTPA)**

Thomas discussed the annual MTPA conference that he and Flowers attended and discussed the major focus areas of the conference which were: Long Range Planning, Performance Measures, Freight Planning, and Asset Management. These topics were timely since SWMPC Staff will soon begin the process of updating the long range plan.

- **Mid America Trails and Greenways Conference**

Flowers discussed the conference, which will be held in Fort Wayne, IN October 2-5, 2011. Handouts for the conference were offered to attendees.

### 4. Old Business

- **Resolution of support for current TwinCATS population threshold**

At the June 2011 Policy Committee Meeting, SWMPC staff were asked to prepare a resolution of support for the current population threshold for MPO designation for the TwinCATS MPO.

- Rodebush discussed why keeping the current population threshold was important for the

TwinCATS region along with the rest of Berrien County.

- Motion by Rodebush and seconded by Poehlman to have the Chairman John LaMore sign the resolution. **Motion passed. MDOT officials abstained from the vote.**
- **Unified Work Program approval**
  - The UWP for 2012 has been approved by the full SWMPC Board and revisions are being made from FHWA and FTA
- **CMAQ John Beers Road**
  - The \$2,000 from the Niles Dial A Ride free fare days has been moved to the John Beers Road sidewalk project which is located in the TwinCATS MPO region

## 5. New Business

### ▪ TIP Amendments MDOT

- FY 2011 MDOT project on M-51 near Pucker St. (job no. 108186) was amended to FY 2012. The total project cost was also amended from \$1,475,000 to \$1,825,000, reflecting costs not included in the federal funds or state match.
- FY 2013 MDOT project on M-139 over the St. Joseph River (job no. 104152) was amended to FY 2014.
  - Vines asked why this project is being moved back a year, given its importance. Harden responded that the actual construction data is staying the same, but that a change in letting date requires that the project be listed in FY 2014 instead of FY 2013.
- FY 2012 MDOT project on US-12 at Gumwood Rd. (job no. 106876) was deleted from the TIP.
  - Kronewitter asked why this project was being abandoned, and Harden replied that the work was still being performed and that it was being included in another project in the TIP (MDOT job no. 90361).

Motion by Vines and seconded by Rhodebush to approve the MDOT TIP amendments. **Motion passed.**

### ▪ Travel Demand Model data

Thomas handed out sheets giving official 2010 base-year housing and population data that, upon approval, will be input to the next Travel Demand Model performed by MDOT for the NATS area. The sheets were split by jurisdiction and contained a front map key and a back table displaying official housing and population totals by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ), as well as preliminary 2010 base-year employment data. Thomas requested that committee members respond with any errors they think might be present in the totals, and to be prepared to vote on approval for the base-year totals during the October 2011 committee meeting.

## 6. Public Comment

None

## 7. Privilege of the Floor

- Don Ryman expressed concern regarding the need to place a 4-way stop sign at the intersection of Red Bud Trail and Bertrand Road. There have been accidents in the past at

this intersection, including a recent fatal accident, and people have expressed some concern over why there was a 4-way stop years ago and why it was removed. Ryman read from a 1995 letter (written in response to another fatal accident) that requested action be taken at the intersection.

- LaMore suggested that Ryman speak with the Road Commission and talk to the Township Supervisor to get more information about traffic counts and why this is such a problem area.
- Collins mentioned that the ability to place stop signs in locations has to do with federal regulation, and that part of the issue with this intersection is the sight distance when people are coming over the hill. He stated that it would be very costly to reconfigure the intersection due to the hill. Some accidents are simply due to human error and that we cannot fix human error.
- Rodebush mentioned a situation that Cass County had many years ago regarding railroad crossings and how hard those were to fix.
- Poehlman mentioned that many intersections in MI near the IN border contain 4-way stops, as these stops are common in IN and drivers are very used to them.
- Rachael Tupica stated that at the end of September the transportation authorization will expire along with the federal gas tax that funds the highway trust fund. She mentioned that if people wanted to inform their congressional leaders of the importance of this funding source that they should contact them directly.

#### **8. Adjournment: 4:24P.M.**

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

The next meeting is **September 27, 2011** at **1:30 P.M.**

*Minutes compiled by: Suzann Flowers and Trevor Thomas, Transportation Planners, 8/29/2011*