

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

**MINUTES**

September 28, 2010  
Niles City Council Chambers  
3:00 P.M.

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

**1. Call to Order & Introductions**

- Chairman Rodebush called the meeting to order at 3:00 P.M. and led the group in saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Minutes**

- *Motion by Vines, seconded by Frost, to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2010 Policy Committee meeting. Motion approved.*

**3. Staff Report**

- **MDOT Rail Plan Public Comment**
  - Rahtz announced that there is a page about the State Rail Plan on MDOT’s website ([www.michigan.gov/mirailplan](http://www.michigan.gov/mirailplan)). Public comments are being accepted through Spring 2011.

- **MDOT Rail Plan Public Meeting**
  - Rahtz added that MDOT is holding four public input meetings across the state for the State Rail Plan. The closest meeting is at Grand Rapids TSC on September 29th at 4:00 pm. She added that anyone interested in carpooling to the meeting could let her know.
  - LaMore asked if there was a correlation between these public meetings and the public meeting about rail that had been held at Shadowland Ballroom in St. Joseph. Rahtz responded that that meeting had been part of a grassroots effort by the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers and the Michigan Environmental Council, and that the feedback from that series of rail input meetings would be submitted to MDOT for consideration.
- **Asset Management Annual Report**
  - Thomas announced that the Asset Management annual reports for 2010 for Berrien County and Cass County are now available at [http://swmpc.org/asset\\_mgmt\\_b.asp](http://swmpc.org/asset_mgmt_b.asp) (Berrien) and [http://swmpc.org/asset\\_mgmt\\_c.asp](http://swmpc.org/asset_mgmt_c.asp) (Cass). The road ratings only covered the northern half of Berrien County in 2010, but approximately 30 miles of roads in Milton and Ontwa Townships were assessed in Cass County. The reports show the trends in road conditions over time.
  - Rahtz added that paper copies of the report are available upon request.
- **Final Trails Workshop – “Connecting the Dots”**
  - Rahtz announced that the final workshop in the Trails Workshop series will be held at the Van Buren Conference Center on October 27<sup>th</sup> from 8:30am to 12noon. The workshop will cover the Michigan Airline Trail, the US Bike Route System, the Rails-to-Trails program, Safe Routes 2 School, and Complete Streets.
  - Rahtz added that she had registration forms, and there is an online registration form on the SWMPC website.
- **UWP and TIP approval**
  - Rahtz announced that the NATS Unified Work Program (UWP) was approved by MDOT, FHWA, and FTA. She added that the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is still under consideration.
  - Rahtz added that the TIP has been extended by FHWA until October 31, 2010. This means that the current FY 2008-2011 TIP is still valid but cannot be changed.

#### 4. Old Business

- **Public Participation draft**
  - Rahtz went over additional public comments received on the “How can we involve you?” online survey.
  - Rahtz mentioned that a survey had gone out for the members to respond to prior to the October meeting. This will help the committees assess where they are on participation.
  - Rahtz added that the TwinCATS committees and the NATS Technical Advisory Committee had approved the draft of the plan as is, and she asked for a motion to approve the final draft of the Transportation Participation Plan, with any needed changes, adding that further changes to the processes could still be made later without being reflected in the plan. The final draft of the plan would go on to the full SWMPC board.
  - *Motion by Auvil, seconded by LaMore, to approve the final draft of the SWMPC Transportation Participation Plan. Motion approved unanimously.*

#### 5. New Business

- **Long Range Plan / Socioeconomic Data Update**
  - Thomas announced that SWMPC is conducting a review of the numbers of employees at locations throughout Berrien County for the Travel Demand Model for the next Long Range Transportation Plan.

- Thomas explained that the staff would like the committee members to review packets with employee numbers for the communities they represent. He passed out the packets and instructions on what the staff are looking for in the review. The purpose is to identify employers that have relocated, closed, opened, laid off, or hired new employees so that the model will accurately capture the commuting patterns of workers.
- Thomas asked the committee members to hand their packets back to him after the meeting. Additional notes can be submitted electronically by October 1, 2010.

## 6. Public Comment

- None.

## 7. Privilege of the Floor

### • State and Tribal Transportation Forum

- Auvil announced that he and Berndt had been in attendance at the State and Tribal Transportation Forum last week in Mount Pleasant at the Chippewa Cultural Center. They had learned about what other tribes in the state are doing and discussed transportation issues in Michigan.
- Auvil added that he would be presenting the Bureau of Indian Affairs Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at a future meeting so that the tribe and NATS could figure out how to partner to best leverage their available funds. He added that tribal funds, although technically federal, can be used as a local match for other federal funds. Rodebush clarified that the Sink Road project in Cass County was an example of this kind of partnership.
- Auvil added that tribal funds can be carried over from one year to another (unlike the Surface Transportation funds used in the NATS TIP).

### • Fish Passage Project

- Berndt stated that he is working with MDNRE to apply for a fish passage grant to replace the culvert under Red Bud Trail at Moccasin Bluff. The total project cost is \$300,000, of which the grant would cover \$150,000. Berndt asked if the committee would be supportive of reducing the scope of the Bertrand Road project to cap the existing pavement instead of doing shoulder work, and move \$150,000 from that project to the Red Bud Trail culvert project.
- Berndt explained that installing a larger culvert is being encouraged by MDNRE to allow the passage of trout and salmon from one side of the road to another, and it would have the benefit of reducing the heavy flooding on the road which is deteriorating the pavement.
- Berndt added that he had been working with Lenze to determine whether the federal fish passage grant could be matched with federal STP funds. It appears that it can because the fish passage grant is being considered non-federal.
- Berndt added that the Technical Advisory Committee had passed a motion in support of the project.
- *Motion by Ryman, seconded by Poehlman, to support the application. Motion approved unanimously.*

## 8. Adjournment

- *Motion by Frost to adjourn the meeting at 3:22 P.M.*
- The next meeting is **October 26, 2010 at 3:00 P.M.**