

NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Technical Advisory Committee

MINUTES

October 28, 2014

1:00 P.M.

Niles City Council Chambers

TAC Members Present:	Jason Auvil, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians Joe Bellina, Cass County Road Commission Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Craig Bradfield, Howard Township Richard Cooper, Niles Charter Township Andrea Dewey, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio) Erin Jolivette, MDOT Coloma TSC Kim O'Haver, Buchanan Dial A Ride Jan Personette, Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce Joe Ray, City of Niles
TAC Members Absent:	Pat Bellaire, Village of Edwardsburg Barbara Cook, Cass County Planning Commission Fred Featherly, MDOT-Multi-Modal Katie Furner, Niles Dial-a-Ride Juan Ganum, City of Niles Community Development John Gruchot, Berrien County Community Development Darrell Harden, MDOT Southwest Region Joseph Kring, Bertrand Township Jason Latham, MDOT Southwest Region (Alternate) Paul Lott, MDOT Statewide Planning Bill Marx, City of Buchanan Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) John Monaghan, Village of Edwardsburg (Alternate) Don Ryman, City of Buchanan Brad Sharlow, MDOT Planning (ex officio) Joe Sobieralski, Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance Bob Sutton, Mason Township Planning Commission Kelly Sweeney, Milton Township Kris Welch, MDOT Statewide Planning
SWMPC Staff Present:	Kim Gallagher Gautam Mani
Others Present	Zach Dripps, MACOG John Klimek, Berrien County Board of Commissioners Melinda Michael, Four Flags Area Council on Tourism Dennis Schuh, Berrien County Public Transit

1. Call to Order & Introductions

Meeting was called to order by Bellina at 1:02 p.m and he also led the group in the pledge of allegiance.

2. Minutes

A motion by Auvil with support by O'Haver to approve the TAC Committee Meeting minutes from August 26. **Motion passed.**

A motion by Auvil with support by O'Haver to approve the Joint MPO meeting minutes from September 25th. **Motion passed.**

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Staff Report

- **Feedback from Transportation Presentation**

Mani said that feedback from Bill Hamilton's presentation on Transportation Funding had generally been good. Mani encouraged committee members to share topics they were interested in learning more about, particularly regarding funding. Bill Hamilton had given an overview of transportation funding, but there were many more specific topics that could be covered, including materials costs.

- **NFC Review Coming Up**

Mani said that a statewide review process of National Functional Classifications was underway, and that the Southwest Region was being asked to review its urban Other Principal Arterials and rural Major Collectors to see if any of these now function as Minor Arterials and Minor Collectors, respectively. This is because the state has certain targets it must hit in terms of mileage in each classification category. Mani noted that changes need to be based on current traffic counts, rather than projections for development or a desire to have more traffic in an area.

Mani said that those meetings would take place sometime in the next 2-3 months, and that there would likely be 2-3 meetings.

- **Local Safety Initiative and Safety Projects**

Mani reminded committee members that in the meeting packets, there was a sheet discussing the Local Safety Initiative (LSI). LSI is a service that MDOT provides to local Act 51 agencies for FREE. MDOT engineers will assess crash data and road design to identify particularly problematic areas for safety in a community. They will propose solutions, many of which will be low cost. Going through this audit process will help your community be competitive for the statewide safety project grant application process, and help gain access to other sources of funding.

Bellina said that Cass County had gone through this process several years ago and that it was worthwhile.

- **Transportation Alternatives Call for Projects 2015-2017- Ends November 11th**

Mani said that the Call for Projects for NATS Transportation Alternatives funds ends. This is the small allocation (around \$45,000) that NATS gets to implement pedestrian and bicycle improvements. A link to the project application information was sent in an email, and is available here:

<http://www.swmpc.org/tapfunds.asp>. SWMPC will be using MDOT's application system. Mani said that provided there was at least one project application, the TAP project selection subcommittee would meet to discuss the application process. Mani said that he would strongly prefer it if projects were proposed for 2015-2017, so that we did not have to reissue a Call for Projects again next year.

Gallagher asked if anyone was thinking of applying. Bellina said that he would need to check with Milton Township as to whether the Township is willing to commit a portion of its future budgets to further phases of the Gumwood Road non-motorized path project.

- **CMAQ Meeting November 13th at Berrien County Road Commission at 1 PM**

Mani said that Berrien County would be holding a CMAQ meeting at the Road Commission on Thursday November 13th at 1 PM. The main purpose of the meeting was to reprogram an unobligated project from FY 2014. However, MDOT's Call for Projects for 2016-2020 has gone out, and Berrien County was looking for ideas to fill 2018-2020. These projects must show an air quality benefit in order to qualify for the funds. Any project application ideas for 2018-2020 are welcome.

Cass County will be holding a CMAQ meeting in December in conjunction with the Rural Task Force program, as is the case annually.

- **MACOG Plan Update**

Dripps noted that MACOG (the regional planning agency to our south) had released a draft of its 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan for public comment. The public comment period ends at 4:00 PM on Monday November 3rd. As part of the plan, MACOG has a long range project list that is worth reviewing. Dripps said that the plan is available at <http://www.macog.com>.

Personette asked whether the Indiana portion of the Indiana-Michigan River Valley Trail was in the Long Range Plan for MACOG. Dripps noted that it was not in the TIP, but it is still listed as a highly desired project that MACOG might fund at some point in the near future.

5. Public Transit Updates

Gallagher shared that the Governor had announced a Regional Mobility Initiative based on the Prosperity Regions. As the Regional Prosperity Initiative applicant, SWMPC had been tasked with assisting with developing an assessment of current regional mobility needs. These needs focused on both intra-county connections (which, as identified in the study, are lacking in Berrien County) and trips between counties. A letter had gone out to SWMPC and there will be a conference call on November 3rd to discuss these items further.

Gallagher also noted that Niles Dial-A-Ride had completed its triennial review with FTA.

Schuh said that proposed Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation had been submitted to Berrien County's legal consul to see whether they would be legally valid and sufficient.

6. 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	Have sent a new offer to Alcoa for their property; still a question of who has environmental liability	October 2014			
2014	104152	MDOT	M-139 CON phase Bridge replacement	Came in under engineers' estimate;	August 2014			

				construction in October				
	118114	Niles DAR	Free fare days	No longer using CMAQ funds for this program	October 2014			
		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	Completed	October 2014			
		Cass County RC	Gumwood Road TAP project	Reprogrammed for 2015	October 2014			
2015		Berrien County RC	Range Line Road, Lake St and Main St Resurfacing	Program application will be submitted in December				
		Berrien County RC	Madron Lake, North Main, and Red Bud Trail	Program application will be submitted in December				
		City of Niles	Broadway Avenue Resurfacing	GI Package submitted--only issue was a couple of utility poles. Aiming for December letting	October 2014			
		Cass County	Adamsville Road Reconstruct	Design work about to begin	October 2014			
		Buchanan Dial-a-Ride	Replacement Bus	Contract probably not coming until next September	October 2014			
		Niles Dial-A-Ride	Replacement Tires					

Other updates

Ray asked whether the City of Niles would be eligible for TAP funds for its portion of the Indiana Michigan River Valley Trail. Mani said they absolutely would, and that the MPO welcomed multiple applications for TAP funds so that projects could truly be judged on their merits. The city had begun some preliminary engineering work.

Jolivette said that the M-139 resurfacing project from M-140 to Fairland would be constructed next June 10- August 27, and the M-60 BR resurfacing would be constructed from August 17th of next year until October 19th. Bellina asked about M-60. Jolivette said that construction was supposed to conclude on October 31.

Bellina said that as long as the asphalt plant was not closed for the winter, it was possible for construction to proceed.

7. Land Use Updates

Auvil said that the City of Niles was revising its master plan, primarily to look at its designated wellhead protection areas and whether they ought to be changed. Auvil said that the City was going to the surrounding townships and trying to delineate where protected areas overlap.

Cooper said that Niles Township was similarly examining its own wellhead protection ordinances to determine whether they adequately protected wells that need to be protected.

Ray said that the City of Niles had rezoned three parcels on S 11th St that could be bundled together as a single site. In addition, they had rezoned a parcel on Wayne St that will be converted to an auto shop.

8. Old Business

▪ Move Gumwood Road Path Project to FY 2015

Mani directed committee members to the memorandum attached in their packets. The Gumwood Road non-motorized path project using the NATS allocation of Transportation Alternatives funds was not obligated in FY 2014. However, Matt Wiitala, our Transportation Alternatives grant coordinator, had agreed to simply roll the project funding into FY 2015, since the Transportation Alternatives program has unspent balances on a state level that it can use. Wiitala just needs the committees' approval to roll that project into 2015. There would not need to be any reprogramming of NATS projects in FY 2015; this was effectively an addition of funds to FY 2015.

A motion by Berndt with support by Auvil to recommend that the Policy Committee move \$43,207 in federal TAP funds for the Gumwood Road Path project to FY 2015. **Motion passed.**

▪ Local Agency Programs Review

Mani said that although NATS did not end up losing any project funding in FY 2014, obligation authority did run out rather abruptly, and so this was a good opportunity to review the timeline for getting a project through Local Agency Programs and the stumbling blocks a community might encounter. Mani reiterated the project schedule and the recommended timeline for Local Agency Programs. It pays to start the application process very early. The presentation can be found here:

http://www.swmpc.org/downloads/local_agency_programs_review.pdf

Gallagher noted that SWMPC staff would be asking for more detailed updates on projects so that the area does not lose federal funds in the future.

Bellina said that part of the issue was MDOT pushing communities to obligate knowing that some projects were submitted under a pro rata system, meaning they can end up obligating more funds than the final

engineer's estimate. In this way, obligation runs out and some MPOs do not get their full allocation. Dewey noted that all of the MPOs she handles for FHWA had at least one project that did not get obligated.

8. New Business

▪ GPA Guidance

Mani said that MDOT-Statewide Planning would need to present this at a future meeting, as they were not in attendance.

• Legislative Updates

- **Federal-** Dewey said that FHWA had received a large number of comments on its proposed rulemakings on performance measures, and particularly on safety. Clearly, safety was a key concern of the respondents. Dewey said to expect further proposed rulemakings on pavement and bridges, and on asset management in the coming months, and CMAQ rulemakings down the road.

O'Haver said that on the subject of safety, the transit agencies were having a safety training in Lansing.

Gallagher noted that there was new guidance on 5311 (rural transit) funding. This new guidance makes it much easier for local agencies to be able to use 5311 funds.

- **State-** None.

9. Public Comment

None.

10. Privilege of the Floor

Michael said that she noted that Riverfest had become a major revitalized event in Niles. Michael also said that she hoped that someone was considering printing up brochures of the Indiana-Michigan River Valley Trail. Those brochures were only available online, and they had not been printed formally. Michael said that those brochures had been in demand during the peak tourist period and would be again next year. In addition, Michael was running low on 9-County Bicycle Maps, and noted that the state was out of them as well.

Ray said that the City of Niles had received its Public Act 242 monies to conduct repair on local roads. The City of Niles had received \$70,000 in the additional allocation for its roads.

11. Adjournment at 2:08 p.m.

- The next meeting will be November 25 at 1:00 PM.

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

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