

NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Technical Advisory Committee

MINUTES

November 25, 2014

1:00 P.M.

Niles City Council Chambers

TAC Members Present:	Jason Auvil, Berrien County Planning Commission Joe Bellina, Cass County Road Commission Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Richard Cooper, Niles Charter Township Danielle Davis, MDOT Statewide Planning John Gruchot, Berrien County Community Development Paul Lott, MDOT Statewide Planning Bill Marx, City of Buchanan Melinda Michael, Four Flags Area Council on Tourism Jan Personette, Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce Don Ryman, City of Buchanan Dennis Schuh, Berrien County Public Transit
TAC Members Absent:	Andrea Dewey, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio) Erin Jolivette, MDOT Coloma TSC Kim O'Haver, Buchanan Dial A Ride Craig Bradfield, Howard Township 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 Darrell Harden, MDOT Southwest Region John Klimek, Berrien County Board of Commissioners Joseph Kring, Bertrand Township Jason Latham, MDOT Southwest Region (Alternate) Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) John Monaghan, Village of Edwardsburg (Alternate) Joe Ray, City of Niles 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 Zach Dripps, MACOG
SWMPC Staff Present:	Kris Martin Gautam Mani

1. Call to Order & Introductions

Meeting was called to order by Bellina at 1:01 p.m and he also led the group in the pledge of allegiance.

2. Minutes

A motion by Auvil with support by Cooper to approve the TAC Committee Meeting minutes from October 28.
Motion passed.

3. Public Comment

None

4. Staff Report

- **Cass County CMAQ Meeting- December 19th**

Mani noted to jurisdictions in Cass County that a Cass County Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality meeting would be held on Friday December 19th at 10 AM at the Cass County Road Commission in Cassopolis. The Rural Task Force meeting will take place first beginning at 10 AM, and the CMAQ meeting will follow immediately after. Mani said that the purpose of the CMAQ meeting was to review projects funded in 2015-2017, and program new projects for 2018-2020. Cass County receives approximately \$192,000 in CMAQ funds each year. Mani said that there are a wide range of activities that are eligible for CMAQ funding, provided that they provide an emissions benefit.

- **NFC Review- December 8th at Coloma TSC at 9 AM**

Mani said that a meeting to review National Functional Classifications would take place at 9 AM on Monday December 8th at the MDOT Coloma TSC (3880 Red Arrow Highway, Benton Harbor, MI 49022). Mani apologized for the location, but said that MDOT needed access to their intranet, and could only access it from an MDOT site. Mani said that Mike Toth from MDOT would be leading the meeting. He would be giving a short presentation on the NFC review process, and then participants would be able to discuss possible changes they want to make to the NFC classifications (i.e. change a "major collector" to a "minor collector")

Mani said that the road commissions in Berrien and Cass Counties, and representatives from the cities and villages in the MPO would need to be in attendance at the meeting. Transit agencies and representatives from sovereign tribal governments are invited as well. Mani said that the meeting would include the NATS MPO and the Dowagiac Small urban area.

5. Public Transit Updates

Schuh said that the County was still working through articles of incorporation for a new Countywide transit authority. The legal department was still conducting its analysis. Schuh said that hopefully after the legal analysis happens, the County would have multiple public meetings in convenient locations of the County to discuss the framework for a new authority. Ryman cautioned that he hoped the authority would not hurt the good existing systems like Buchanan Dial-A-Ride.

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; construction in October	August 2014			
		Niles DAR	Maintenance software					
		Niles DAR	Preventative maintenance					
		Niles DAR	Replacement computers					
		Niles DAR	Replacement bus					
		Niles DAR	Operating assistance					
		Cass County RC	Gumwood Road TAP project	Obligated- bidding will take place in two months	November 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 underway	November 2014			
		Buchanan Dial-a-Ride	Replacement Bus	Contract probably not coming until next September	October 2014			
		Niles Dial-A-Ride	Replacement Tires					

7. Land Use Updates

Auvil said that Berrien County was close to completing its master plan update.

8. Old Business

▪ **Transportation Alternatives**

Mani noted that no applications had been received for NATS' allocation of around \$44,000 in Transportation Alternatives funds for FY 2015. Mani said it was getting late in the fiscal year, so those funds would need to be programmed very soon. Bellina said he was still planning to submit on behalf of Milton Township, and suggested that the NATS meeting in December continue as scheduled since the subcommittee needs to meet and the committees need to make a decision.

Berndt suggested that if NATS could not use those funds, Berrien County might be able to use those funds to repay its CMAQ loan in FY 2015. Bellina said that it might not be possible to use TAP funds to repay CMAQ because the state may not be able to use CMAQ and TAP funds in the same way. Mani suggested that if NATS can use the funds for a project, that would be the ideal situation.

The NATS meeting scheduled for December 16 will continue as scheduled. The Transportation Alternatives subcommittee will meet at 12 noon. Mani said he would not be able to be there, but Kim Gallagher and Kris Martin would handle the meeting.

8. New Business

▪ **TIP Amendments**

None.

• **Legislative Updates**

- **Federal-** Mani said that at last week's TwinCATS meeting, Dewey had shared that National Performance Measures Rulemakings were continuing to be released for comment, with further rulemakings being released on asset management and bridges in the months ahead. Most recently, FHWA had received a large number of comments on its rulemakings on metropolitan and statewide planning.
- **State-** Lott said that the Michigan Senate had passed a gas tax increase that is tied to the current wholesale price of gasoline. The tax increase is phased over four years and will effectively double the gas tax, bringing \$1 billion in needed transportation revenue by the fourth year.

Ryman said he was surprised that so many people are opposed to a gasoline tax increase when it has been almost eighteen years since the last one.

9. Public Comment

None.

10. Privilege of the Floor

Lott said that he wanted to offer some guidance on General Program Accounts, which can list projects together and expedite processing of amendments. Lott did note that because NATS had only a small number of local projects, they may not find the GPA groupings as helpful.

Mani introduced Kris Martin, Associate Planner, who has been sending emails on behalf of NATS recently and has been with SWMPC for over three years. Martin is now running the US-12 and rideshare programs in addition to other responsibilities.

Martin said that SWMPC had mostly completed a new US 12 Heritage Route Website you can visit the website at: www.us12heritage-trail.org. SWMPC is always looking for additional attractions along US 12. If you have any additional ones that you don't see currently on the website then send them to Kris Martin at kmartin@swmpc.org.

Personette asked about the availability of brochures at the Tourism Council. Michael said that she does run through the brochures promoting Niles specifically quite quickly, but she always looks to get more and stock up from the sources that provide them. Mani noted that some of the brochures came directly from the state, such as the 9-County bicycle map.

11. Adjournment at 1:50 p.m.

- The next meeting will be December 16th at 1:00 PM.

Minutes compiled by: Kris Martin and Gautam Mani, Associate Planners, 2014.

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