

NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
 Technical Advisory Committee

MINUTES

December 20, 2011

1:30 P.M.

Niles City Council Chambers

TAC Members Present:	Joe Bellina, Cass County Road Commission Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Irving Frost, Howard Township Barbara Cook, Cass County Planning Commission Kelly Getman-Dissette, Niles Dial-A-Ride Transit Darrell Harden, MDOT Southwest Region Erin Kercheval, MDOT Coloma TSC Joseph Kring, Bertrand Township Don Kronewitter, Milton Township Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning Joe Ray, City of Niles Don Ryman, City of Buchanan Rachael Tupica, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio)
TAC Members Absent:	Jason Auvil, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians Pat Bellaire, Village of Edwardsburg Richard Cooper, Niles Charter Township Neil Coulston, City of Niles DPW/Airport Fred Featherly, MDOT-Multi-Modal Juan Ganum, City of Niles Planning John Gruchot, Berrien County Community Development-Representing BC Planning Shelley Klug, Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance Kimberly O'Haver, Buchanan Dial a Ride Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Jan Personette, Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce Robert Rusch, MDEQ Brad Sharlow, MDOT Planning (ex officio) Evan Smith, Niles Dial A Ride Transit Representative, MACOG (ex officio)
SWMPC Staff Present:	Suzann Flowers Trevor Thomas
Others Present:	Sue Kronewitter, Milton Township resident Denelle Clark, Michigan Works

1. Call to Order & Introductions

- Ray called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

2. Minutes

- Motion by Bellina with support by Frost to approve the minutes of the November 22, 2011 TAC Committee Meeting minutes. **Motion passed.**

3. Staff Report

- **Rural Task Force Training**

On December 7, 2011 SWMPC Staff attended training in Lansing regarding the roles that Regional Planning Organizations and MDOT will have in the coordination and administration of the Rural Task Force program. The regional planning commissions will assist MDOT in the administration and management of this process beginning in fiscal year 2012. SWMPC are working with the Rural Task Force Region 4 Chairman, Larry Hummel, on ensuring a smooth and continuous coordination of these duties. More information will be given to the Committee members as progress is made.

- **AARP Aging in Place Webinar**

Thomas stated that he sat in on a webinar hosted by AARP (<http://www.aarp.org/home-garden/livable-communities/info-11-2011/solutions-forum-aging-in-place.html>), which promoted the idea of “aging in place”, looking at how areas can provide transportation, housing, and land use environments that allow older residents to remain independent and live active lives in their own homes. Thomas stated that the TwinCATS population is significantly older than the country as whole, and that the ideas regarding transportation and land use discussed during the AARP event ought to continue to inform the work performed by the committees.

- **PASER Training Dates**

Road Rating training dates have been announced for the upcoming calendar year. This training is necessary if you want to assist in rating roads in your community. Communities can have their roads rated once every three years. Thomas explained that he attended the training and found the information very helpful in understanding how road ratings are done. The training dates are as follows:

February 28, 2012-West Branch, February 29, 2012-Saginaw, March 1, 2012-Grand Rapids, March 27, 2012- Kalamazoo, March 28, 2012-Dearborn, March 29, 2012-Lansing, April 17, 2012-Gaylord, April 18, 2012-Escanaba, April 19, 2012-Ishpeming. Flowers will email the dates and flyer out to the Committee members who receive email.

- **Next Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

The next TIP program update will be in 2013 and would cover 2014-2017. There is a one year overlap to ensure that the program does not lapse and that projects can still get obligated.

4. Project Updates

- **2010**

- **Michigan Department of Transportation**

- M-139 over St. Joseph River Bridge Replacement – in progress with draft hydraulics study, base plan alignment, and traffic plan; will be holding a design charrette in the fall; environmental assessment will be done fall 2011-2014 Construction-design phase
- M-139 over Dowagiac River bridge work – new bridge will be built, 2012 May-October-letting,

- **2011**

- **Michigan Department of Transportation**

- US-31 freeway signing upgrade (jn108921) – Let, construction 2012 April-August
- M-139 (Main St) over St. Joseph River bridge replacement SUB and PE phases (104152) – design phase

- M-51 slope stabilization near Pucker St (108186) –continuing to monitor the slope, consultant hired for base design
- M-60 weigh station at US-12 interchange (110758) –spring 2012 Construction
- US-12 resurfacing from M-60 to Edwardsburg (90361) –let construction 2012 May-October
- M-139 Over Dowagiac River, near N limit of Niles-JN 86785 bridge replacement-2012 Construction
- US-12, .68 miles east of Cassopolis Rd-JN 112819 ROW Phase-MDOT is obtaining culvert right of way
- **Niles Dial-A-Ride**
The grant was just awarded in September 2011 and the projects will be completed in 2012
 - Bike racks-purchase up to 5 bicycle racks and install kits for buses
 - Generator
 - On bus camera system
 - Preventative maintenance
 - Ramp lift
 - Replacement tires-ordered October 2011
 - Landscaping
- **Cass County Road Commission**
 - ~~Pine Lake St. M 60 to Anderson Rd JN 112861 CON Phase resurface done~~
 - ~~Redfield St from Kline Rd to Conrad Rd JN 110361 CON Phase resurface done~~
 - Redfield St. over Christina Creek-JN 109283 bridge replacement CON phase-ROW, let in Feb.
 - ~~Redfield St and Bertrand Rd Berrien County Line to Ironwood Rd JN 107691 CON Phase resurface done~~
 - Redfield St. M-62 to Brande Creek Rd-, JN 114517 CON Phase-construction 2012, let in Jan.
- **Berrien County**
 - Red Bud Trail at Old Bitty Creek JN 114518 CON Phase- design phase
 - West River Rd, Ullery Rd, Pucker St, and Main St. JN 112101 CON Phase-plan submitted
 - Bertrand Rd, Ontario Rd, Fulkerson, and Bell Rd. JN 112086 CON Phase-plan submitted
 - Bertrand Rd. from Mayflower Rd to Red Bud Trail CON Phase JN 112084-in design
- **MDOT**
 - M-51 near Pucker St. JN 108186 CON Phase-restore and rehabilitate-design phase 2013 construction-consultant working on design
 - US-31 Walton Rd over US-31, US-31 NB JN 111239 CON Phase-bridge-let in June 2012 construction
- **Niles Dial A Ride**
Will not have permission to move forward on these projects until August 2012
 - Garage equipment
 - Garage maintenance
 - Preventative maintenance
 - Scheduling software
 - Parking lot
- **Cass County**
 - Bertrand Rd from Ironwood Dr. to Batchelor JN 112863 CON Phase-resurface-in design

5. Old Business

- **2013 CMAQ Call For Projects**

Thomas explained that before the Committee meeting communities met to review and discuss the schedule of CMAQ projects for 2012-2014. Thomas explained that there was a slight reduction in funding for 2013 and 2014 and that in 2013 Berrien Bus modified their project request from 2 new buses to 1 medium bus and 1 small bus to accommodate the funding reductions. A handout was given to those who attended the meeting. Thomas reminded the attendees that the CMAQ program is administered by the county through the Rural Task Force program, but projects in the MPO do come before the committee for approval to include in the TIP.

▪ **NATS TIP Review Meeting**

Flowers presented the draft minutes from the December 13, 2011 NATS TIP meeting and asked for approval of the minutes. A discussion started about what needed to happen next and that there needs to be a clear process for how projects will be selected and moved within the TIP plan.

-Berndt stated that if there are extra funds for instance in FY 2012 that projects from 2013 or 2014 should move first before a new project is added.

-Ray stated that we should spell out in the TIP how this is going to happen so that it is clear to Committee members and members of the public.

-Tupica added that having an Illustrative list could help move projects easily into the TIP if additional funds are given to the MPO so that Staff can act quickly on the need, such as what we saw with ARRA funds

Motion by Harden with support from Getman-Dissette for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend to the Policy Committee to direct staff to develop a Policy to address the movement of projects within the NATS TIP that can be incorporated into the 2011-2014 TIP. **Motion passed.**

▪ **Public Participation Plan**

Flowers discussed that the staff were in the final stages of the preparing the Public Participation Plan for the required 45-day comment period. Flowers asked that the Committee members approve a motion to release the plan for the comment period beginning January 15, 2012. Flowers asked for any suggestions from the attendees.

-Cook suggested that Staff not use Facebook to reach people.

-Denelle Clark suggested that Facebook is another viable method to gain input from a different demographic of the population

-Flowers noted that Staff will utilize a variety of techniques to reach different demographics newspapers will reach some people while Facebook will reach a totally different demographic. The goal is to reach different segments of the population utilizing a variety of techniques.

-Comments were also received regarding the use of a Citizen Advisory Committee as another means for gaining public information to bring to the Committee.

-Cook stated that this could open up the meetings to problems

-Tupica stated that these types of meetings are separate from the regular Committee meetings and that they are a good tool to obtain additional information. She used the Ann Arbor MPO as an example and how the Committee is tasked with looking at specific topics.

-Ray also commented that it could bog down our process to move quickly on action items.

-Sue Kronewitter stated that this type of Committee is a way to engage and involve people in a different way.

Motion by Bellina with support from Harden to place the Public Participation Plan out for the public comment period of 45-days beginning January 15, 2012. **Motion passed.**

6. New Business

▪ NATS Annual Report

MPO Staff are completing the draft NATS Annual report. The draft document is on the website and any comments from the Committee members are encouraged. We will be looking for formal approval to the SWMPC Board at the January 2012 meeting.

7. Public Comment

No public comments were received.

8. Privilege of the Floor

-Lenze discussed the issue of TIP amendments and public outreach given the current NATS meeting schedule. Due to the fact that the TAC and Policy meetings are back to back, it does not allow any changes to be made to the TIP the day of the meeting. Staff must have a 7 day comment period regarding any TIP amendments prior to the Committee meeting to give the public an opportunity to comment on the changes. TwinCATS and NATS meetings are the only MPO in the state to have their meetings on the same day. Other MPOs across the state have their TAC committees early in the month to allow for immediate changes need to the TIP the day of the TAC meeting. Then they will notice out the changes and have their Policy Committee meet 1 or 2 weeks later to approve the changes. The current structure for TwinCATS and NATS has not allowed for public comment for TIP Amendments.

-Bellina stated that we should not need to move meetings if people use the TIP Calendar and meet the deadlines. Harden also agreed that the TIP Amendment Calendar if followed will eliminate this problem.

-Harden also mentioned that the Complete Streets Advisory Council has completed a vision statement that can be found online at www.michigan.gov/completestreets. Also the MDOT SW Region will hold a listening session from 2:30-6pm on December 21, 2011 regarding projects that MDOT will be working on. IF you cannot attend the meeting then you can submit comments at www.michigan.gov/mdot5yearplan.

9. Adjournment: 2:50 p.m.

- The next meeting is January 24, 2012 at 1:30 P.M.**

Minutes compiled by: Suzann Flowers and Trevor Thomas, Transportation Planners, 12/2011