

**NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY**  
 Technical Advisory Committee

**MINUTES**

March 27, 2012

1:30 P.M.

Niles City Council Chambers

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

**1. Call to Order & Introductions**

- Both Chair and Vice Chair were absent and staff asked Harden to run the meeting. Harden called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m. and led the group in introductions.

**2. Minutes**

Motion by Auvil with support by Frost to approve the February 28, 2012 NATS Technical Committee meeting minutes as is. **Motion passed.**

### 3. Staff Report

#### ▪ **Public Participation Plan Comments and Input Meetings**

Flowers reported that the 45-day public comment period on the plan has ended and that several comments were generated from the public. A copy of the comments were placed on the [www.swmpc.org/participation.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/participation.asp) website and emailed to all members/or mailed to those who receive packets via mail. Flowers read one specific comment regarding the need to have Committee meetings held in the evening at least once or twice a year. Flowers stated that the TwinCATS members by an unofficial vote did not want to change the meeting schedule and encouraged her and Thomas to make a better connection to the members of the Committee and their home community in which they represent. Flowers and Thomas have been working on this table and will make it available and clearly communicate how members of the public can speak to representatives on the MPO Committees by attending community meetings which are normally held in the evening. Flowers also stated that she and Thomas will be looking for final approval of the plan at the April meeting along with a final version to review prior to the next meeting.

#### ▪ **Maps displaying new urbanized area boundaries**

Thomas handed out information displaying new U.S. Census boundaries. Thomas explained that the maps are not the final urbanized area boundaries for MPO consideration but it does depict some changes that we may see. MDOT uses this information to see where urbanized boundaries have increased or decreased. There were some assumptions being made that Berrien Springs may have grown enough to connect into the NATS and TwinCATS MPO areas but that did not occur. Also the New Buffalo area was thought to connect to the Grand Beach and Michiana areas and that did not occur either. Thomas stated that it is possible that Mason Township may be added to the NATS MPO due to the population growth and the expansion of the Elkhart area. Comparison maps showing the 2000 information and 2010 information was handed out to members.

#### ▪ **Michigan Traffic Safety Summit**

Thomas attended the Summit attended by law enforcement, planners, and engineers. He stated that the new Highway Safety Manual would be a good tool for the Committee members to look into more because it used a tool that would better held predict the number of crashes for pedestrians and bicyclists given certain elements of road design.

#### ▪ **Training Opportunities**

Thomas handed out two flyers with trainings being hosted by MDOT.

- Traffic Safety Training for Elected/Appointed Officials-April 23, 24, and 30<sup>th</sup> at different locations around the state. The cost is \$60 but scholarships are being offered to help defer the registration fee. The training would be very beneficial for people who would like to have a basic understand of traffic safety.
- Safety Analysis using the AASHTO Highway Safety Manual-April 3-4 and April 18-19. The fee is \$140 and scholarships are also being offered to help defer costs. This would give attendees an opportunity to understand how to retrieve crash data and other statistics from RoadSoft, hands on experience with the manual, and much more.

Flowers and Thomas will email these training opportunities to Committee members.

### 4. Project Updates

Thomas explained that next month staff will begin using a table to better display and report out on project updates.

- **2010**

- **Michigan Department of Transportation (No representative present)**

- 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 (No representative present)**

- 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-public meeting will happen soon and public will be able to view design options
- 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 (No representative present)**

*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 (No representative present)**

- ~~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.

- **2012**

- **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-contract signed
- Bertrand Rd, Ontario Rd, Fulkerson, and Bell Rd. JN 112086 CON Phase-contract signed
- Bertrand Rd. from Mayflower Rd to Red Bud Trail CON Phase JN 112084-let April 6, 2012

Berndt reported that there will not be any bid amount savings for the West River Rd or Bertrand Rd because those are being done by force account.

- **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 (No representative present)**  
The projects have been assigned grant numbers and the projects should move forward summer 2012. There will be some project changes for the March meeting.
  - Garage equipment
  - Garage maintenance
  - Preventative maintenance
  - Scheduling software
  - Parking lot
- **Cass County (No representative present)**
  - Bertrand Rd from Ironwood Dr. to Batchelor JN 112863 CON Phase-resurface-in design

## 5. Old Business

- NATS Non-motor/pedestrian subcommittee  
At the February 2012 meeting, the Technical committee approved the formation of the subcommittee. The Policy Committee needed an additional month to consider the formation of the Committee.

## 6. New Business

- **Legislative Updates**
  - Federal  
Flowers stated that the Senate version of the transportation bill MAP-21 SB 1813 had passed and that the House bill (HR 7) has stalled out completely. Flowers continued that the federal transportation extension ends on March 31, 2012 and that both chambers will need to come together to pass another extension. That seems the most likely. For the Senate bill there are still provisions which discuss the MPO process and that small MPOs under 200,000 would be considered Tier II MPOs. Lenze added that these small MPOs would be grandfathered in but that we would need to justify to our Governor that we would be meeting all federal requirements and that we would need to be re-classified as a Tier II MPO.
  - State  
Harden stated that MI Senate Bill 351 would change how the sales tax on gas tax would be distributed.

He stated that 2% of the tax would go to the school aid fund, 18% of the remaining 4% would go to the trunkline fund then to the revenue sharing for communities. This would result in less money in the general fund. This has not passed the house at this time.

## 7. Public Comment

Sue Kronewitter thanked MDOT for their great public meeting that they held in Milton Township on the US-12 project. They provided details regarding the project along with providing maps on the project. Over 50 people were in attendance.

## 8. Privilege of the Floor

-Flowers stated that next month Kelly Getman-Dissette from Niles Dial A Ride will be doing a presentation about transit. Flowers also added that Kim O'Haver had contacted her regarding her voting right on the Committees. According to the bylaws, Buchanan Dial A Ride does not have a

voting right on the possibly both Committees. She will check with Bill Marx from the City of Buchanan and get back with Flowers. If the bylaws are to be amended, there will need to be a 30 day notification period for all voting and non-voting members on the Committees. The item will be emailed or mailed accordingly and be on the May agenda for the Committees to take action.

-Kring thanked Flowers for attending the Buchanan Lions Club meeting; the members were thankful for the information and enjoyed learning more about the MPO.

-Lenze stated that MDOT will be updating their Long Range Transportation Plan to meet the 20 year horizon. The current plan will be extended out to year 2035. A full update of the plan will take place after new transportation legislation is passed.

-Harden added that the Michigan Complete Streets Advisory Council will be meeting in April to discuss the policy report created. More information will be given to Committees once the meeting has taken place.

#### **9. Adjournment: 2:08 p.m.**

Motion by Auvil with support by Frost to adjourn the NATS Technical Committee meeting. **Motion passed.**

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

*Minutes compiled by: Suzann Flowers and Trevor Thomas, Transportation Planners, March 2012*