

# NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Technical Advisory Committee

## MINUTES

March 22, 2016

1:00 P.M.

Niles City Council Chambers

TAC Members Present:	Pat Bellaire, Village of Edwardsburg Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Malinda Cole-Crocker, Buchanan Township Richard Cooper, Niles Charter Township Andrea Dewey, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio) Pete Fournier, Cass County Road Commission Kelly Getman-Dissette, Niles Dial A Ride Dan Roberts, MDOT Kalamazoo TSC John Lanum, MDOT Statewide Planning Kim O’Haver, Buchanan Dial A Ride Joe Ray, City of Niles Don Ryman, City of Buchanan Evan Smith, Berrien County Community Development/Berrien County Transit
TAC Members Absent:	Joe Bellina, Cass County Road Commission Craig Bradfield, Howard Township Barbara Cook, Cass County Planning Commission Fred Featherly, MDOT-Multi-Modal Steve Hicks, Bertrand Township John Klimek, Berrien County Board of Commissioners Jason Latham, MDOT Southwest Region Bill Marx, City of Buchanan Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Melinda Michael, Four Flags Area Council on Tourism Jan Personette, Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce Jim Stover, Niles Charter Township Debbie Sullivan, Mason Township Representative, Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance Representative, Milton Township
SWMPC Staff Present:	Kim Gallagher Gautam Mani
Others Present:	David Fairchild, MDOT Jess Minks, Berrien County Road Commission

### 1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

Meeting was called to order by Ray at 1:06 p.m. and he led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### 2. Minutes

A motion by Berndt with support by Getman-Dissette to approve the TAC Meeting minutes, as presented, from February 23, 2016. **Motion passed.**

### **3. Changes to the Posted Agenda**

None.

### **4. Public Comment**

None.

### **5. Staff Report**

#### **▪ Upcoming Staffing Changes at SWMPC**

Mani announced that he was leaving SWMPC on May 13th. He had accepted a position with the Federal Highway Administration in Albany, NY. Mani thanked committee members for giving him their support and for an outstanding experience in his first planning job. The committee members wished him well.

Mani said that SWMPC was working hard to fill his position. Resumes had come in and interviews were going to be scheduled shortly. The goal is to have someone in place by the time that he departs.

Mani said that because he would be gone in May and Kim Gallagher would be attending a transit conference the week that the NATS meeting was scheduled, SWMPC staff were requesting that the May NATS meetings be moved from May 24<sup>th</sup> to **May 31<sup>st</sup>**.

A motion by Berndt with support by Cooper to move the NATS TAC meeting from May 24<sup>th</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup>. **Motion passed.**

### **6. Public Transit Updates**

#### **▪ SWMPC Transit Updates**

Gallagher said that the Request for Proposals released online for the countywide service planning study in Berrien County. This study is looking at possibilities for fixed route service throughout the county so that more people can be served by transit, so that the transit agencies can operate more efficiently, and so that Dial-A-Ride service can serve those who absolutely need it. Gallagher said that this study would be useful regardless of if full consolidation occurred. Gallagher said that a phone call had taken place with consultants who were interested to answer questions regarding the study. The proposals were due on April 8<sup>th</sup>. After that date, consultants will be brought in for interviews.

Gallagher said that there were still questions regarding the role of Berrien County elected officials in the consolidation process.

Smith said that the previous Thursday, Berrien County staff had met with the Berrien County Board of Commissioners to continue discussions of forming a new Countywide Transportation Authority. Smith said that the County Board of Commissioners had instructed staff to attempt to conduct meetings in all of the municipalities of Berrien County to understand the level of support for consolidation and for transit, and to discuss what benefits each municipality might receive in terms of services.

Smith said that one of the issues that hurts Berrien Bus' ability to serve the entire county is the lack of any local support for transit. Ray said it was worth local agencies exploring the possibility of contributing to Berrien Bus, with or without consolidation.

Ryman warned that based on his experience with corporate mergers, consolidating transit agencies that were already doing their best to provide service locally would hurt the local service. Ryman said that we should not lose what we already have as a county. Ryman recounted the story of a TCATA driver who he ran into in South Bend who was worried about losing his job if consolidation happened. Getman-Dissette said that the driver ought to feel very secure about his job since there was a shortage of qualified drivers statewide, regardless of whether consolidation proceeds or not.

- **Agency Updates**

Smith shared that Berrien County was continuing to work with senior centers on improving their transportation system. Currently, many senior centers do not have vehicles equipped to transport wheelchairs. O'Haver shared that she was pleased to report that Buchanan Dial-A-Ride had received its three new buses and they were in service. O'Haver also said she had developed a new found respect for anyone who dealt with federal procurements, as it is very challenging.

## **7. Land Use Updates**

None.

## **8. Project Updates**

### **Berrien County Road Commission**

-North Main Street from Reed to Miller sealcoat project has been completed. The Road Commission has applied for Advance Construct Conversion.

- Preventative Maintenance project on Bertrand Road, Stateline, and Third Sts has been obligated and is scheduled for **June construction**.

-Indiana Michigan River Valley Trail was currently in the midst of an archaeological study to make sure no historic artifacts were being disturbed. Once the study concludes, the grant can be officially awarded for construction.

### **Cass County Road Commission**

-Adamsville Road from May St to US-12 Resurfacing-Final plans have been submitted and CCRC anticipates construction in July 5 and July 29th

- Fir Road from Redfield St to US-12 resurfacing- GI Plans were submitted March 2. Construction is slated for the week of August 19.

- Fir Road from Stateline Road to Redfield Road resurfacing- GI plans will be submitted in the next couple of weeks- GI plans were approved March 16<sup>th</sup>. Construction is scheduled for the week of August 19.

-No update on Gumwood Road project.

### **City of Buchanan**

-The Red Bud Trail resurfacing from the South City limits to Front Street has had obligation requested and Red Bud and Front St traffic signal replacement project have completed their GI submittal and will be obligated within the next few weeks.

### **MDOT**

-US-12 bridge deck over M-51 restore and rehabilitate is still on track for construction in 2017, though a study is being done to look at

-US-12 from Bakertown Road to the start of the divided section is still on track for 2017 construction.

## 9. Old Business

None.

## 10. New Business

### ▪ **TIP Amendments to the 2014-2017 TIP**

Mani said that there was an additional \$72,000 that MDOT was spending on signal optimization on the US-31 Business Route. The problem was that this was no longer a designated route in our area, and he was not sure where this project was located on a map. He would work with Dan Roberts of MDOT to find the location and bring it back next month for approval.

### ▪ **2017-2020 Transit and MDOT TIP Projects**

#### *MDOT Projects*

MDOT was proposing the following additions to the 2017-2020 TIP for the Niles Area:

#### **2017**

-Add construction phase of an overlay project on M-139 from Front St to Marmont St for a federal cost of \$229,185 and a state cost of \$50,821.

-Add Overband Crack Fill project on M-60 from Niles City Limits to Cassopolis. This is part of a much larger crack filling (preventative maintenance) project throughout the Southwest Region.

#### **2018**

-Add construction phase of an overlay project on US-12 from the West Village Limits of Edwardsburg to M-62 for a federal cost of \$1,456,930 and a state cost of \$323,070. MDOT is still exploring non-motorized possibilities on this stretch.

Ray said that this was the first he had heard about the M-139 project from Front St to Marmont St that MDOT was proposing. Ray expressed serious concern that if MDOT proceeds with only overlaying the existing roadway, opportunities are being missed for the project to meet the goals of the Niles Smart Streets initiative and the PlacePlans that have been done in conjunction with Michigan Municipal League. The PlacePlans in particular cite the M-139 corridor as critical to the City of Niles. Roberts said that he would work with Ray to see if the planning concerns could be incorporated into the project. Mani said he would let Jason Latham know about the concerns regarding the project as well.

A motion by with support by Berndt with support by Bellaire to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the MDOT projects **on M-60 in 2017 and US-12 in 2018. Motion passed.**

#### *Transit Projects*

Niles Dial A Ride was requesting the following projects:

#### **2017**

- Add Regular Federal Section 5307 operating funds in the amount of \$159,000 federal, \$139,000 state, and \$93,000 local for a total project cost of \$391,000.

- Add Federal Section 5307 Preventative Maintenance Funds in the amount of \$132,000 federal, \$33,000 state for a total project cost of \$165,000. Mani noted that listing specific preventative maintenance in the TIP meant that the project did not have to provide any match from local sources, saving the citizens of Niles dollars.
- Add Federal Section 5339 funding for the purchase of one cutaway bus in the amount of \$56,000 federal, \$14,000 state, for a total project cost of \$70,000.

### **2018**

- Add Regular Federal Section 5307 operating funds in the amount of \$159,000 federal, \$139,000 state, and \$93,000 local for a total project cost of \$391,000.
- Add Federal Section 5307 Preventative Maintenance Funds in the amount of \$132,000 federal, \$33,000 state for a total project cost of \$165,000.
- Add Federal Section 5339 funding for the purchase of one cutaway bus in the amount of \$56,000 federal, \$14,000 state, for a total project cost of \$70,000.

### **2019**

- Add Regular Federal Section 5307 operating funds in the amount of \$159,000 federal, \$139,000 state, and \$93,000 local for a total project cost of \$391,000.
- Add Federal Section 5307 Preventative Maintenance Funds in the amount of \$132,000 federal, \$33,000 state for a total project cost of \$165,000.

### **2020**

- Add Regular Federal Section 5307 operating funds in the amount of \$159,000 federal, \$139,000 state, and \$93,000 local for a total project cost of \$391,000.
- Add Federal Section 5307 Preventative Maintenance Funds in the amount of \$111,000 federal, \$28,000 state for a total project cost of \$138,000.
- Add Federal Section 5339 funding for the purchase of one cutaway bus in the amount of \$56,000 federal, \$14,000 state, for a total project cost of \$70,000.
- Add Federal Section 5307 funding for five new computers in the amount of \$6,400 federal, \$1,600 state, for a total project cost of \$8,000.

Buchanan Dial A Ride was requesting the following projects:

### **2017**

- Add Federal Section 5311 regular operating funds in the amount of \$25,822 federal, \$74,238 state, and \$96,860 in local funds for a total project cost of \$196,860. O’Haver noted that the reason that Buchanan Dial-A-Ride was paying such a high share out of the state and local pots was because it was on a cost allocation plan for this funding based on its rural service area.

## 2018

- Add Federal Section 5311 regular operating funds in the amount of \$26,000 federal, \$75,000 state, and \$96,860 in local funds for a total project cost of \$197,860. O'Haver noted that the reason that Buchanan Dial-A-Ride was paying such a high share out of the state and local pots was because it was on a cost allocation plan for this funding based on its rural service area.
- Add Federal Section 5339 capital funding to purchase three bus cameras to increase safety for passengers and drivers. Costs are \$7,200 in federal funds and \$1,800 in state CTF for a total project cost of \$9,000.

## 2019

- Add Federal Section 5311 regular operating funds in the amount of \$27,000 federal, \$76,000 state, and \$99,000 in local funds for a total project cost of \$202,000. O'Haver noted that the reason that Buchanan Dial-A-Ride was paying such a high share out of the state and local pots was because it was on a cost allocation plan for this funding based on its rural service area.

## 2020

- Add Federal Section 5311 regular operating funds in the amount of \$28,000 federal, \$77,000 state, and \$1000,000 in local funds for a total project cost of \$205,000. O'Haver noted that the reason that Buchanan Dial-A-Ride was paying such a high share out of the state and local pots was because it was on a cost allocation plan for this funding based on its rural service area.

A motion by Berndt with support by Bellaire to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the NATS area public transportation projects for 2017-2020 for inclusion in the TIP and/or S/TIP.

**Motion passed.**

### ▪ **State and Federal Updates**

Lanum said that MDOT had recently had its meeting with SWMPC's director and staff regarding the work program for fiscal year 2017, and it was a very positive meeting. Mani said that Lanum was referring to the Unified Planning Work Program (UWP), which the MPO would be voting on in April and May.

Lanum also introduced David Fairchild, who is a new planner with MDOT Statewide Planning Section. Fairchild will be working closely with the MPOs in West Michigan.

Dewey shared on behalf of FHWA that performance measures rulemakings were continuing to be released. The final rule on safety performance had been released after much public comment, and performance measures had been determined. They are the following:

- 1) Number of fatalities
- 2) Rate of fatalities based on Vehicle Miles Traveled
- 3) Number of serious injuries
- 4) Rate of serious injuries based on Vehicle Miles Traveled
- 5) Number of pedestrian and bicycle injuries and fatalities

Dewey said that the measure of non-motorized injuries and fatalities was added in as a result of comment from transportation professionals and members of the public. Therefore, commenting on

proposed rulemakings can make a difference. These are the measures for which the states will need to set targets.

Roberts reported that from a performance measures standpoint, the MDOT Region offices and TSCs were increasingly under that framework as well. For example, the regions were being asked to spend 65% of all of their funds on the interstate system. The interstate system does need investment, but this would probably also mean disinvestment from the non-interstate trunkline system (like M-139).

### **11. Public Comment**

None.

### **12. Privilege of the Floor**

Bellaire inquired about the status of the Local Safety Initiative for the MPO. Mani and Gallagher said that they had difficulties getting in touch with MDOT's new contact person for the projects, but would try once again. This was a good reminder.

### **13. Adjournment at 2:20 p.m.**

- The next meeting will be April 26 at 1:00 PM.

*Minutes compiled by: Gautam Mani, Associate Planner, 2016*

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