

# NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Technical Advisory Committee

## MINUTES

August 26, 2014

1:00 P.M.

Niles City Council Chambers

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

### 1. Call to Order & Introductions

Meeting was called to order by Ray at 1:03 p.m and he also led the group in introductions.

### 2. Minutes

Ray noted that he was listed as neither present or absent in the July TAC minutes, and Ryman noted that he did not arrive at 1:30 PM, but on time. Mani apologized and said that he would make the corrections.

A motion by Berndt with support by Auvil to approve the TAC Committee Meeting minutes from July 22 with corrections. **Motion passed.**

### 3. Public Comment

Auvil apologized for a mistake regarding Joseph Krings. There are two Joseph Krings in the Niles area, and the Joseph Krings who represents Bertrand Township on NATS is alive and well.

### 4. Staff Report

- **MTPA Updates**

Mani and Gallagher had a good MTPA annual conference in Port Huron. There was a lot of focus on security and protecting vulnerable transportation assets and the importance of having hazard mitigation plans. There was also great session on visualization and communication. MPO staff are coming back with a lot of ideas of how we can better get information to you in a way that is not difficult to navigate. Darrell Harden, MDOT Region Planner for Southwest Region received the junior planner of the year award, He doesn't make it to TwinCATS very often, but he has still been instrumental in delivering local projects to the area. When you see him, congratulate him! Mani also noted that he was elected MTPA Secretary. Our local MPOs had a strong voice on a statewide level when Suzann Flowers was chair of MTPA, and it will continue to have a strong voice.

- **Public Transit Updates**

Mani said that Gallagher apologized for being unable to make this meeting. Gallagher was busy with TCATA's triennial review meeting, a lot of which focused on whether the transit agency was following MPO procedures for public participation and project selection. Niles Dial A Ride would be having its meeting in September. Gallagher had said that there were no real updates on the transit consolidation study, other than that it is continuing to receive very extensive media coverage in the area.

Schuh said that county transit officials are continuing to work with the Board of Commissioners on a possible formation of the countywide authority.

### 5. 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	Ribbon Cutting was a major success; currently negotiating with Alcoa to acquire property that would connect trail	August 2014			
	112104	Berrien County	Third St., Portage Rd	Complete	August 2014			
2014	104152	MDOT	M-139 CON phase Bridge replacement	Came in under engineers' estimate; construction in October	August 2014			

	118114	Niles DAR	Free fare days					
		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	Scheduling contract	June 2014			
		Cass County RC	Gumwood Road TAP project	GI package turned in this week	June 2014			
2015		Berrien County RC	Range Line Road, Lake St and Main St Resurfacing					
		Berrien County RC	Madron Lake, North Main, and Red Bud Trail					
		City of Niles	Broadway Avenue Resurfacing					
		Cass County	Adamsville Road Reconstruct					
		Buchanan Dial-a-Ride	Replacement Bus					
		Niles Dial-A-Ride	Replacement Tires					

Mani reminded committee members with FY 2015 projects requiring local match in their jurisdiction that they would need to provide a local resolution of support specifying that their community would provide the required local match in FY 2015. Those resolutions of support were due to Mani by October 1. Otherwise, the MPO reserves the right to reprogram the funds.

**Other updates**

Jolivette said that the resurfacing project of M-139 from M-140 to the township line is scheduled for an October letting and will be constructed next year. In addition, the M-60 resurfacing project beginning at Barron Lake Road is let this year. This was a Priority Roads Investment Program (PRIP) project, using only state funds.

## 6. Land Use Updates

None.

## 7. Old Business

### ▪ Officer Elections

Mani noted that at the last meeting, nominations had been made for Joe Bellina to continue as Chair and Joe Ray to continue as Vice Chair of TAC for another two year term. A motion had also been made to close the nominations.

Ray accepted his nomination, but suggested that it was time for other jurisdictions or individuals to take leadership of TAC. He and Bellina had been leading TAC for quite a while, and it was time to rotate.

A motion by Berndt with support by Gruchot to elect Bellina as Chair and Ray as Vice Chair for another two year term, beginning in October. Ray voted no on the motion, but all others voting members voted yes.

**Motion passed.**

### ▪ Mobility Challenge Reportback

Gruchot and Jolivette reported back on their experiences with the exercise that Gallagher had put together to simulate what it is like for someone without a car to navigate our region. Gruchot's scenario dealt with medical transportation while Jolivette's scenario dealt with limits on a person trying to access education during hours when the bus does not operate. Both realized that getting these individuals to their destinations was cost prohibitive or in some cases impossible.

## 8. New Business

### ▪ TAP Call for Projects Out

Mani said that the Transportation Alternatives Call for Projects for 2015-2017 was out, and that all of you should have received an email or mailing with all of the application information. The application process is the same as previous years, and the Call for Projects ends on November 11<sup>th</sup>. Projects that previously needed to be revised are encouraged to be resubmitted with the necessary revisions. If you have questions about the process, please contact Gautam Mani or MDOT's Transportation Alternatives grant coordinator Matt Wiitala.

### ▪ September Presentation by Bill Hamilton from House Fiscal Agency

Mani said that the regularly scheduled NATS meetings for September would be CANCELLED. In lieu of that meeting, we would be having a presentation by Bill Hamilton from the House Fiscal Agency in the state legislature. After his presentation, we will handle any MPO business. Mani noted that rural agencies would be invited as well to attend the presentation, and that this would be a joint meeting with TwinCATS.

The presentation and meeting would take place on Thursday September 25<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM at Berrien RESA, 711 St. Joseph Avenue, Berrien Springs, MI. Mani apologized for the conflict this posed with county commission meetings.

### • Legislative Updates

- **Federal-** None.
- **State-** Lott announced that MDOT was realigning its regions so that the MDOT Southwest Region would now be seven counties. Allegan and Barry counties would now be part of the Grand Region.

MDOT is making this transition over the next 18 months. The Coloma TSC and the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission region boundaries were unaffected. Lott said that the purpose of these regions was to align with the Prosperity Regions laid out by the Governor. Mani said that the Governor was also looking for improvements in regional transit mobility using these regional boundaries, and that they were reaching out to MPOs and regional planning agencies to identify service gaps. Of course, Berrien County itself had a key service gaps.

Lott also said that the state had run out of obligation authority in late July, and was waiting to hear whether further federal redistribution would occur. Mani noted that one project within the NATS MPO was impacted: the \$43,000 Gumwood Road project that was using FY 2014 TAP funds. Mani said that we needed to wait to see if the project was eventually obligated.

#### **9. Public Comment**

None.

#### **10. Privilege of the Floor**

O’Haver noted that at the MPTA annual conference, she had learned that transit agencies would not be seeing as much of a cut in operating assistance from the state as they had anticipated, so that was good news.

Michael asked about the mowing procedures on US-31, particularly near the “Pure Michigan” sign at the state line. Michael noted that four foot weeds were growing up to it, creating a bad impression as people enter our state. Jolivette said that I-94 is mowed for times a year, but she would check in on US-31.

Jolivette also noted that the Deans Hill Road project using state funds would begin construction in September.

#### **11. Adjournment at 1:43 p.m.**

- The next meeting will be Thursday September 25<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM at Berrien RESA.

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