

NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
 Technical Advisory Committee

MINUTES

September 28, 2010
 Niles City Council Chambers
 1:30 P.M.

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

1. Call to Order & Introductions

- Vice-chair Ray called the meeting to order at 1:33 P.M.

2. Minutes

- *Motion by Berndt, seconded by Frost, to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2010 TAC meeting. Motion approved unanimously.*

3. Staff Report

- **MDOT Rail Plan Public Comment**
 - Rahtz announced that there is a page about the State Rail Plan on MDOT's website (www.michigan.gov/mirailplan). Public comments are being accepted through Spring 2011.
 - **MDOT Rail Plan Public Meeting**
 - Rahtz added that MDOT is holding four public input meetings across the state for the State Rail Plan. The closest meeting is at Grand Rapids TSC on September 29th at 4:00 pm. She added that anyone interested in carpooling to the meeting could let her know.
- **Asset Management Annual Report**
 - Thomas announced that the Asset Management annual reports for 2010 for Berrien County and Cass County are now available at http://swmpc.org/asset_mgmt_b.asp (Berrien) and http://swmpc.org/asset_mgmt_c.asp (Cass). The road ratings only covered the northern half of Berrien County in 2010, but approximately 30 miles of roads in Milton and Ontwa Townships were assessed in Cass County. The reports show the trends in road conditions over time.
- **Final Trails Workshop – “Connecting the Dots”**
 - Rahtz announced that the final workshop in the Trails Workshop series will be held at the Van Buren Conference Center on October 27th from 8:30am to 12noon. The workshop will cover the Michigan Airline Trail, the US Bike Route System, the Rails-to-Trails program, Safe Routes 2 School, and Complete Streets.
 - Rahtz added that she had registration forms, and there is an online registration form on the SWMPC website.
- **New TIP Amendment Schedule**
 - Rahtz reminded the committee that any TIP amendments on FY 2011 projects must be submitted to her by October 15, 2010. Those amendments will be processed by November 12, 2010; otherwise, any amendments after that will be processed on January 7, 2011.
- **UWP and TIP approval**
 - Rahtz announced that the NATS Unified Work Program (UWP) was approved by MDOT, FHWA, and FTA. She added that the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is still under consideration.
 - Lenze added that the TIP has been extended by FHWA until October 31, 2010. This means that the current FY 2008-2011 TIP is still valid but cannot be changed.

4. Project Updates

- **2010**
 - **Berrien County Road Commission**
 - Niles-Buchanan Rd and Bell Rd – obligated; waiting for sealing in June 2011
 - **Cass County Road Commission**
 - No updates
 - **MDOT**
 - No updates
 - **Niles Dial-a-Ride**
 - Working on RFPs for 2010 projects

5. Old Business

- **Public Participation draft**
 - Rahtz went over additional public comments received on the “How can we involve you?” online survey.
 - Rahtz mentioned that a survey had gone out for the members to respond to prior to the October meeting. This will help the committees assess where they are on participation.
 - Rahtz added that the TwinCATS committees had approved the draft of the plan as is, and she

asked for a motion to approve the final draft of the Transportation Participation Plan, with any needed changes, adding that further changes to the processes could still be made later without being reflected in the plan. The final draft of the plan would go on to the full SWMPC board.

- *Motion by Gruchot, seconded by Auvil, to approve the final draft of the SWMPC Transportation Participation Plan. Motion approved unanimously.*

6. New Business

• Long Range Plan / Socioeconomic Data Update

- Thomas announced that SWMPC is conducting a review of the numbers of employees at locations throughout Berrien County for the Travel Demand Model for the next Long Range Transportation Plan.
- Thomas explained that the staff would like the committee members to review packets with employee numbers for the communities they represent. He passed out the packets and instructions on what the staff are looking for in the review. The purpose is to identify employers that have relocated, closed, opened, laid off, or hired new employees so that the model will accurately capture the commuting patterns of workers.
- Thomas asked the committee members to hand their packets back to him after the meeting. Additional notes can be submitted electronically by October 1, 2010.
- There were several comments that the data seemed highly inaccurate, and that a lot of changes would be needed.

7. Public Comment

- None.

8. Privilege of the Floor

- Auvil announced that he and Berndt had been in attendance at the State and Tribal Transportation Forum last week in Mount Pleasant at the Chippewa Cultural Center. They had learned about what other tribes in the state are doing and discussed transportation issues in Michigan.
- **Fish Passage Project**
 - Berndt stated that he is working with MDNRE to apply for a fish passage grant to replace the culvert under Red Bud Trail at Moccasin Bluff. The total project cost is \$300,000, of which the grant would cover \$150,000. Berndt asked if the committee would be supportive of reducing the scope of the Bertrand Road project to cap the existing pavement instead of doing shoulder work, and move \$150,000 from that project to the Red Bud Trail culvert project.
 - Berndt explained that installing a larger culvert is being encouraged by MDNRE to allow the passage of trout and salmon from one side of the road to another, and it would have the benefit of reducing the heavy flooding on the road which is deteriorating the pavement.
 - Berndt added that he had been working with Lenze to determine whether the federal fish passage grant could be matched with federal STP funds. It appears that it can because the fish passage grant is being considered non-federal.
 - Lenze added that, if the grant is approved, two TIP amendments would be needed, one to change the scope and amount of the Bertrand Road project and one to add the Red Bud Trail project.
 - *Motion by Cook, seconded by Coulston, to support the application. Motion approved unanimously.*

9. Adjournment

- *Meeting adjourned by Vice-chair Ray at 1:57 P.M.*
- The next meeting is **October 26, 2010 at 1:30 P.M.**