

NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Technical Advisory Committee

MINUTES

December 15, 2009

Niles City Council Chambers

1:30 P.M.

TAC Members Present:	Joe Bellina, Cass County Road Commission Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Paul Boggs, Milton Township 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 Darrell Harden, MDOT, Southwest Region Joseph Kring, Bertrand Township Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning Joe Ray, City of Niles Sarah Woolcock, MDOT Coloma TSC
TAC Members Absent:	Willie Brown, City of Buchanan Richard Cooper, Niles Charter Township Fred Featherly, MDOT-Multi-Modal Jim Kidwell, Niles Charter Township Shelley Klug, Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Jessica Mitchell, MACOG (ex officio) John Monaghan, Village of Edwardsburg Public Works Katie Montoya, Berrien County Planning Kimberly O'Haver, Buchanan Dial a Ride Jennifer Osborne, MDOT Robert Rusch, MDEQ Ron Sather, Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce Paul South, MDOT Coloma TSC Sarah Van Buren, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio)
SWMPC Staff Present:	Nickolas Musson Anna Rahtz
Others Present:	Jason Auvil, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians Melinda Michael, Four Flags Area Council on Tourism Don Ryman, Berrien County Commissioner

1. Call to Order

- Chairman Bellina called the meeting to order at 1:34 P.M.

2. Minutes

- Motion by Berndt, supported by Woolcock, to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2009 TAC meeting. Motion approved.*

3. Staff Report

- **MTPA question regarding distribution of federal funds**
 - Rahtz announced that at the last Michigan Transportation Planning Association (MTPA) meeting, Marsha Small from MDOT (Michigan Department of Transportation) had asked if any local agencies had suggestions for how federal transportation funding could be reformulated and distributed better. Any suggestions will be passed on to Marsha Small.
- **2009 Traffic Counts**
 - Musson gave a summary of the 2009 traffic count activities completed. Musson reported that traffic counts were taken until early December when it began snowing, and will be resumed in March or April. In 2009, 250 traffic counts were submitted, and 191 were completed. 15 HPMS (Highway Performance Monitoring System) counts were also completed. A link to a portal of traffic count information is available on the SWMPC website. The portal has downloadable pdf documents for every traffic count.

4. Project Updates

- **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Updates**
 - Musson and Lenze explained the important dates in the statewide redistribution process for unused stimulus funds.
 - **December 30, 2009** – All projects already approved in the TIP (Transportation Improvement Program) for ARRA funds must have their GI (grade inspection) packages submitted to MDOT.
 - **January 8, 2010** – The remaining ARRA funding within the State of Michigan will be redistributed to the regions.
 - **January 15, 2010** – GI packages must be submitted for any project using the redistributed funds.
 - Any project using the redistributed funds must have a total project cost of at least \$100,000. MPOs (metropolitan planning organizations) must have a prioritized list of projects ready and in the TIP to use the redistributed funds.
 - It was decided that since the Berrien County Road Commission cannot make the local match to utilize its STP (Surface Transportation Program) funds for the resurfacing of Stateline Road and Third Street in fiscal year 2010, this project will be the next in line for ARRA funds if they become available. The total project cost is \$590,000. ARRA funding does not require a local match. *Motion by Woolcock, supported by Bellina, to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the resurfacing of Stateline Road and Third Street as the highest priority project to receive redistributed ARRA funds. Motion approved.*

2009 Projects

- **MDOT**
 - US-31 SB, - Completed
 - US-31 NB, - Completed
 - US-12 BR, Early Preliminary Engineering - Under way
 - US-12, Preliminary Engineering - Active
 - US-12, Right of Way - Obligated
- **Niles Dial-A-Ride**
 - Projects have been obligated
- **Cass County Road Commission**
 - Ironwood AC – Feds are in process of converting funds to State. Monies should be available in January.

2010 Projects

- **Berrien County Road Commission**
 - Stateline Road and Third Street – Waiting to see if extra stimulus funding becomes available.
- **Cass County Road Commission**
 - Redfield – On target
 - Gumwood – Submitting GI plans
- **City of Niles**
 - East Main – February 5th letting
 - Lake Street – February 5th letting
- **MDOT**
 - US-12 BR – Has been let

5. Old Business

- **By-law change**
 - Musson announced that since SWMPC and the Pokagon Band have different population numbers for the tribe (because the tribe has internal data that differs from Census data), the numbers need to be resolved before the proposal is made before the tribal council to add Pokagon as a voting member of NATS. The total population of a jurisdiction goes into a formula to determine its membership dues for the MPO. Musson stated that he would bring the issue back up on the agenda under Old Business at a future meeting when it has been resolved.
- **Transportation importance survey and project ranking system**
 - Rahtz presented the revised survey, along with a display poster, a handout explaining how the survey results can be used to influence TIP project selection, and a public outreach plan/schedule for the implementation of the survey.
 - She mentioned that in the TwinCATS survey results, a lot of respondents had rated every item as the highest possible score, which invalidates their responses (the survey is meant to prioritize the items against one another). It was decided by an informal vote that the NATS survey should be force-ranked 1-8 for both transportation project type and goal area.
 - A question was raised about the mention of Arabic translation in the public outreach plan, and it was decided that for the NATS area Spanish is most likely the only language besides English that needs to be used. There was a discussion on what criterion is used to decide which languages should be used for Limited English Proficiency compliance, and Lenze reported that there is a cutoff around six percent of the population. Rahtz agreed to check the census data for the Niles area to see if any other languages besides Spanish would be necessary.
 - Auvil suggested adding a sentence in the survey display poster in Spanish explaining that the survey is available in Spanish. Rahtz agreed to add it, as well as putting the Spanish version of the survey on the website along with the English version.
 - *Motion by Harden, supported by Woolcock, to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the transportation importance survey, with the alteration from a 1-5 scale to a force-ranking system. Motion approved.*
 - *Motion by Woolcock, supported by Ray, to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the survey display poster, with the addition of a sentence in Spanish explaining that Spanish versions of the survey are available. Motion approved.*
 - *Motion by Bellina, supported by Coulston, to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the project ranking system, with the note that "TwinCATS" at the bottom of the ranking system handout should say "NATS." Motion approved.*
 - *Motion by Harden, supported by Woolcock, to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the public outreach plan/schedule, with two amendments: 1) the survey will be translated into Spanish but not Arabic; 2) the decision of where and when to hold the TIP project selection*

subcommittee meeting will be left up to the subcommittee members. Motion approved.

6. New Business

- **TIP Amendments**

- **Berrien County Road Commission**

- BCRC's amendments are **tabled** until information is received on whether BCRC can use remaining ARRA funding for the resurfacing of Stateline Road and Third Street.
- Bellina asked if there were other projects in line to fill in the funding from the above project in case it does get to use ARRA funding, and it was discussed that the Cass County Road Commission is the only agency with the match funding to utilize STP monies. Bellina agreed to prepare projects by the January meeting.

- **Cass County Road Commission**

- The 2011 project called Gumwood Road, for the resurfacing of Gumwood Road from Bertrand Road to US-12 is being **deleted**. This is no longer a 2011 project because it was already completed. *Motion by Woolcock, supported by Getman-Dissette, to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the amendment to the FY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program to delete the above-named project. Motion approved.*

- **Niles Dial a Ride**

- Niles Dial a Ride became aware that they are allowed to use 10% of ARRA funding for operating costs, which is greatly needed. Thus, the 2009 project called Facility Rehabilitation is being reduced from \$380,402 to \$339,402. Lenze pointed out this cannot be officially changed on the 2009 TIP, since fiscal year 2009 is gone. However, the money can still be used in 2010.
- A 2010 project is being **added** called "Public Transportation Operations" in the amount of \$41,000 (from ARRA funding) for public transportation operations. *Motion by Woolcock, supported by Harden, to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the amendment to the FY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program to add the above-named project. Motion approved.*
- Rahtz pointed out that all new projects being added to the TIP should have a new project application being turned in so that the projects can be run through the proper evaluation before being voted on.

- **CMAQ Call for Projects Meeting**

- Musson announced that the Call for Projects meeting for the 2012-2014 CMAQ projects will be held on February 3, 2010 at 1:00pm at the Berrien County Road Commission. He stated that any new project ideas to reduce congestion and improve air quality are welcome at the meeting.

7. Public Comment

- None

8. Privilege of the Floor

- Ryman commented that he would like to congratulate BCRC for the job well done on Niles-Buchanan Road and Rangeline Road, as well as MDOT for the job well done on the US-31 bypass.

9. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 2:37 P.M. The next meeting is January 26, 2009 at 1:30 P.M.

Minutes compiled by: Anna Rahtz and Nickolas Musson, Transportation Planners, 12/16/09