

Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study 2024 Meeting Attendance

From the May 28th, 2024, Meeting

NATS MEMBER ORG./POSITION	MEMBERS (2022)	TAC	POL	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Berrien Co. Board of Commissioners (1)	Michael Majerek		x		P	V		V							
Berrien Co. Board of Commissioners (2)	(Vacant)		x												
Berrien Co. Community Dev. Dept.	Dan Fette	x			A	A		A							
Berrien Co. Planning Commission	(Vacant)		x												
Berrien Co. Road Dept. (Policy)	(Vacant)		x												
Berrien Co. Road Dept. (TAC)	Kevin Stack	X			A	P		A							
Bertrand Township	Butch Payton	x	x		P			P							
Buchanan Township	Lynn Ferris	x	x		A			A							
Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (1)	Roseann Marchetti		x		P	A		P							
Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (2)	James Lawrence		x		P	A		A							
Cass Co. Planning Commission	Roseann Marchetti	x			P	A		P							
Cass Co. Road Comm. (Policy)	Sandra Seanor		x		P	P		P							
Cass Co. Road Comm. (TAC)	Joe Bellina (TAC Chair)	x			A	P		P							
City of Buchanan	Don Ryman		x		A	A		A							
City of Buchanan	Rich Murphy	x			P	P		A							
City of Niles (1)	Georgia Boggs		x		A	A		A							
City of Niles (2)	Serita Mason		x		P	V		V							
City of Niles (3)	(Vacant)		x												
City of Niles Community Dev. Director	Rick Huff	x				P		A							
City of Niles Dial-A-Ride Transit	Pepper Miller	x	x		P	P		P							
City of Niles Public Works Dir./Airport	Joe Ray	x				P		P							
Howard Township	Bill Kasprzak	x	x		P	P		S							
Kinexus	(Vacant)	x													
Mason Township	Doug Fetters	x	x		A	A		S							
MDOT - Bureau of Trans. Planning	Jim Sturdevant	x	x		P	P		P							
MDOT - Southwest Region	Josh Grab	x	x		V	P		A							
MDOT - Southwest Region (Alternate)	Adrain Stroupe	Alt	Alt			P		P							
MDOT - Transportation Service Center	Jonathon Smith	x	x		V	A		A							
Milton Township	Susan Flowers	x	x		P	P		P							
Niles Charter Township	Richard Cooper (P. Ch.)	x	x		P	P		P							
Ontwa Township	Meryl Christensen	x	x		P	P		A							
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians	Robert Torzynski	x	x		A	A		A							
Village of Edwardsburg	Dawn Bolock	x	x		P	P		A							
Federal Highway Administration	Andrew Sibold	NV	NV		A	A		A							
Federal Transit Administration	Susan Weber	NV	NV		A	A		A							
EGLE - Air Quality	Breanna Bukowski	NV			A	A		A							
MDOT - Modeling	Jon Roberts	NV			A	A		A							
MDOT - Office of Passenger Trans.	Fred Featherly	NV			V	A		A							
Michiana Area Council of Governments	Caitlin Stevens	NV	NV		A	A		A							
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Kim Gallagher	x	x		A	P		P							
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Brandon Kovnat	NV	NV		P	P		P							

P. Ch.: Policy Chair; Alt: Alternate; NV: Non-voting; P: Present in Person; V- Present virtually; A: Absent.

Guests: None

Minutes
NILES BUCHANAN CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE and POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, May 28, 2024 – 1:30 pm
Niles District Library, Niles MI

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Technical Advisory Committee Chair, Joe Bellina, called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm, and Kim Gallagher conducted roll call.

2. Changes to the Agenda

None.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of the minutes from the March 26, 2024 Meeting

Motion to approve the minutes from the March 26, 2024, Joint NATS Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee Meeting. Made by Jim Sturdevant and seconded by Roseann Marchetti.
Motion approved.

5. Staff Report

Gallagher gave a presentation about the Michigan Infrastructure Office (MIO) Technical Assistance Center (TAC). The TAC offers support for Grant identification, Grant Writing, and Match assistance. She highlighted the Safet Streets for All grant, a federal program aimed at reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries. To be awarded funding for safety improvements, agencies will need a safety action plan, which the grant can also fund.

6. Local Agency Updates

City of Niles – Wayne Street: Joe Ray said that construction is underway, and milling of the asphalt will begin in two weeks.

Kovnat announced that all FY 2024 NATS projects had been obligated.

7. Transit Updates

Pepper Miller gave an update for Niles Dial A Ride Transit (NDART). They negotiated the annual split of FTA 5307 funds between NDART and Transpo (South Ben transit agency). The total allocation was approximately 15% higher than in 2023. NDART is working on updating routes to better align with Transpo, which will make trips into Indiana much easier.

8. MDOT Updates

(see meeting packet page 5-6 for more details)

Concerns were raised about the construction on M-51/US-12, which has resulted in the road being one-way. This has caused a significant increase in traffic on Fort Street and Silverbrook Road, as

drivers are using these routes to access 3rd Street, a parallel alternative to M-51. Suggestions included installing temporary stop signs to manage the traffic, though there were warnings that this could lead to significant backups on 3rd Street. The impact on local businesses due to the construction was also discussed.

9. MDOT Amendment

(see meeting packet page 7 for amendment details)

There were no questions or comments about the proposed amendment.

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee Approve the Amendment to the NATS 2023-2029 Transportation Improvement Program as included in the meeting packet. Made by Roseann Marchetti and seconded by Jim Sturdevant. **Motion passed.**

Motion for the Policy Committee to approve the recommendations from the Technical Advisory Committee. Made by Sandra Seanor and seconded by Susan Flowers. **Motion passed.**

10. Discussion of the 2026-2029 Project Prioritization Criteria

Kovnat provided an overview of the changes between the 2023-2026 Project Prioritization Criteria and the draft 2026-2029 Project Prioritization Criteria. The majority of the changes were well received.

There was a suggestion to clarify the safety criteria, which currently states to “use the last five years of crash data”. The concern is that the most recent year's data may not yet be available, and the wording could be interpreted to include incomplete data from the current year. It was recommended to change the criteria to "the last five full years for which crash data is available."

There were concerns raised about the pass/fail criteria for addressing water or sewer issues. Much of the area's water and sewer infrastructure is old and in need of repairs. This would require full reconstruction of the roadways, yet the funding is not sufficient to cover this. The question was whether the criteria, as written, would prevent the funding of surface repairs for roads with old water/sewer infrastructure underneath.

11. Approval of the FY 2025 Unified Work Program

Gallagher gave an overview of the UWP, highlighting the new items for FY 2025. She added that the SPR funds, with MDOT's match, are pass-through funds designated for MACOG. These funds will be used by MACOG to pay a consultant to update the cross-state travel demand model that includes the NATS area.

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the NATS FY 2025 Unified Work Plan. Made by Jim Sturdevant and seconded by Butch Payton.

Motion passed.

Motion for the Policy Committee to approve the recommendations from the Technical Advisory Committee. Made by Roseann Marchetti and seconded by Sandra Seanor. **Motion passed.**

12. Privilege of the Floor or Public Comment

None.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:42 PM. Then the next meeting is scheduled for July 23, 2024.

Minutes compiled by Brandon Kovnat, SWMPC Associate Planner

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