

# Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study 2024 Meeting Attendance

From the October 22nd, 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			P		V		
Berrien Co. Board of Commissioners (2)	(Vacant)		x								V				
Berrien Co. Community Dev. Dept.	Dan Fette	x			A	A		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			P		P		
Bertrand Township	Butch Payton	x	x		P			P			P		P		
Buchanan Township	Lynn Ferris	x	x		A			A			P		P		
Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (1)	Roseann Marchetti		x		P	A		P			P		P		
Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (2)	James Lawrence		x		P	A		A			A		A		
Cass Co. Planning Commission	Roseann Marchetti	x			P	A		P			P		P		
Cass Co. Road Comm. (Policy)	Sandra Seanor		x		P	P		P			P		P		
Cass Co. Road Comm. (TAC)	Joe Bellina (TAC Chair)	x			A	P		P			P		P		
City of Buchanan	Don Ryman		x		A	A		A			V		A		
City of Buchanan	Rich Murphy	x			P	P		A			P		A		
City of Niles (1)	Georgia Boggs		x		A	A		A			A		A		
City of Niles (2)	Serita Mason		x		P	V		V			P		P		
City of Niles (3)	(Vacant)		x												
City of Niles Community Dev. Director	Rick Huff	x				P		A			P		P		
City of Niles Dial-A-Ride Transit	Pepper Miller	x	x		P	P		P			P		A		
City of Niles Public Works Dir./Airport	Joe Ray	x				P		P			P		P		
Howard Township	Bill Kasprzak	x	x		P	P		S			P		P		
Kinexus	(Vacant)	x													
Mason Township	Doug Fetters	x	x		A	A		S			A		A		
MDOT - Bureau of Trans. Planning	Jim Sturdevant	x	x		P	P		P			P		P		
MDOT - Southwest Region	Josh Grab	x	x		V	P		A			A				
MDOT - Southwest Region (Alternate)	Adrain Stroupe	Alt	Alt			P		P			P		P		
MDOT - Transportation Service Center	Jonathon Smith	x	x		V	A		A			V		V		
Milton Township	Susan Flowers	x	x		P	P		P			V		V		
Niles Charter Township	Richard Cooper (P. Ch.)	x	x		P	P		P			P		A		
Ontwa Township	Meryl Christensen	x	x		P	P		A			A		A		
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians	Robert Torzynski	x	x		A	A		A			A		A		
Village of Edwardsburg	Dawn Bolock	x	x		P	P		A			A		P		
Federal Highway Administration	Andrew Sibold	NV	NV		A	A		A			A		A		
Federal Transit Administration	Susan Weber	NV	NV		A	A		A			A		A		
EGLE - Air Quality	Breanna Bukowski	NV			A	A		A			A		A		
MDOT - Modeling	Jon Roberts	NV			A	A		A			A		A		
MDOT - Office of Passenger Trans.	Fred Featherly	NV			V	A		A			A		A		
Michiana Area Council of Governments	Caitlin Stevens	NV	NV		A	A		A			A		A		
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Kim Gallagher	x	x		A	P		P			A		P		
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Brandon Kovnat	NV	NV		P	P		P			P		P		

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

Guests: Mei Bowers representing State Rep. Brad Piquette (*Virtual*)

Minutes  
NILES BUCHANAN CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE and POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING  
Tuesday, October 22, 2024 – 1:30 pm  
Niles District Library, Niles MI

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Technical Advisory Vice Chair, Joe Ray, called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM and Kim Gallagher took roll call

2. Changes to the Agenda

None.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of the Minutes from August

**Motion:** Approve the minutes from the August 27, 2024 Joint NATS Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee Meeting. Made by Roseann Marchetti and seconded by Dawn Bolock. **Motion approved.**

5. Staff Report

Gallagher presented the timeline for the 2026-2029 project selection. Applications have been received and are currently being reviewed and scored. The project review subcommittee meeting is scheduled for November 26, 2024, at 10:30 AM held at the Niles Library.

6. Local Project Updates

**FY 2024 Projects**

**Joe Bellina presented an update on the Gumwood Realignment Project:** it is about a month ahead of schedule. Waiting for the contractor to do the final surface

**Kevin Stack presented an update on the FY2024 Bertrand Rd Project:** The cost came in about \$30,000 under the estimate. Work will begin November 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Kovnat gave the update on the McCoy Creek Trail Extension:** The project was Let, but with all bids exceeding Buchanan's budget and were rejected. Buchanan is considering removing the boardwalk to reduce costs before rebidding the project. They must start billing a contractor by May 9, 2025, one year from the obligation date.

**FY 2025 Projects**

Joe Bellina announced the removal of the FY 2025 Elhart Project from the project list because it was completed about two years ago using local funds. He proposed relocating the funding to the

City of Niles and the Berrien County Road Commission for their 2025 projects. Discussion about how to split the funding will occur at the 2026-2029 project review subcommittee meeting in November.

**Stack gave an update on the FY 2025 Bertrand Road Project:** He is working with SHPPO to demonstrate that the area is disturbed ground, which would require less review. The project is on track for construction next year.

**Ray gave an update on the Sycamore Street project:** The Grade Inspection package was submitted and is awaiting comments from MDOT.

7. Transit Updates

Gallagher announced that Niles Dial A Ride had completed its Triennial Audit, with very few findings.

8. MDOT Projects Updates:

*See packet Page 9 for additional details on MDOT projects*

Jon Smith provided additional details for the US-12 and Gumwood traffic signal, noting that construction is not yet scheduled but is expected soon, with work anticipated to take three days. Bellina added that the signal installation must be completed before the Gumwood realignment opens to traffic, since it will significantly increase traffic at the US-12 and Gumwood intersection.

Joe Ray pointed out that the project for M-139 from US-12 north to the bridge was missing from the current plans, emphasizing its dire condition. Smith clarified that the project had been programmed previously but was removed due to budget constraints and remains a top priority for MDOT. They are potentially looking considering an interim fix.

9. MDOT Amendment Requests

*See packet Page 11 for details on proposed amendments*

Smith explained that the two proposed projects were using Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funds, and MDOT had done a quick internal call for projects for CRP. These projects will widen shoulders to allow for non-motorized use. Smith said the projects were chosen based on regional non-motorized plans, and where there were gaps.

Joe Ray noted that to get funding a path must provide connection an origin and destination. He asked what the shoulder on M-51 was providing connection for, stating that the was currently no non-motorized facilities at the project's endpoint west of Pokagon Highway.

Ray also expressed concern that adding new pavement for the shoulders would increase future maintenance costs, while MDOT is unable to maintain the existing road network.

Smith mentioned that the CRP funding was statewide, and if these projects aren't funded it unlikely, they would be used elsewhere in the region.

**Motion** for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the amendments to the NATS 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program as contained in the meeting packet. Made by Kevin Stack and seconded by Butch Payton. Joe Ray Dissented, prompting a roll call vote. Joe Ray voted No, while all others voted Yes. **Motion approved.**

**Motion** for the Policy Committee to approve the recommendation from the Technical Advisory committee. Made by Serita Mason and seconded by Dawn Bolock. Rick Huff Dissented prompting a roll call vote. Rick Huff voted No, while all others voted Yes. **Motion approved.**

10. Privilege of the Floor or Public Comment

Adrian Stroupe announced that there was Rural Task Force training occurring October 23, 2024 at the Kalamazoo Road Commission.

Mei Bowers, Legislative Director for State Representative Brad Paquette, stated that she would inform Paquette about the discussions at the meeting and relay the concerns she heard.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 PM. The net meeting is scheduled for Tuesday November 26, 2024 at 1:30 PM.

*Minutes taken by Brandon Kovnat, SWMPC Transportation Planner*