

NILES-BUCHANAN-CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE and POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

August 27, 2024

1:30 pm

In Person: Niles District Library – 620 E Main St, Niles, MI 49120
Basement Community Room

Web: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/9489277047?pwd=RzkydlFacGFHNkVWeURpak1kSEcxUT09>

Audio: Call in Number: 1 (312) 626-6799

Meeting ID: 948 927 7047

Passcode: 000619

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Changes to the Agenda
3. Public Comment
4. Approval of the Minutes from the May 28, 2024 Meeting *Action* Pg. 2
5. Staff Report
6. Local Agency Updates pg. 5
7. Transit Updates
8. MDOT Updates Pg. 8
9. MDOT Amendments *Action* pg. 10
10. Discussion about the 2026-2029 Call for Projects
11. Approval of 2026-2029 Project Prioritization Criteria *Action* pg. 11
12. Privilege of the Floor or Public Comment
13. Adjournment

Comments can be sent prior to the meeting to Brandon Kovnat at kovnatb@swmpc.org or by calling (269) 925-1137 x 1524. For questions about accessibility or to request accommodations, please contact Kim Gallagher at (269) 925-1137 x 1518 or by email at gallagherk@swmpc.org

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 seconded by Roseann Marchetti and 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 April 23, 2024.

Minutes compiled by Brandon Kovnat, SWMPC Associate Planner

Bertrand Road Project Status

Date: 8/20/2024

To: NATS Committee

From: [Name] on behalf of [Act 51 Agency]

Currently Programed Project Information

Fiscal Year:	2024	MDOT Job Number:	216087
Responsible Agency	Berrien County Road Department		
Project/Road Name	W. Bertrand Road		
Limits	US-31 to Portage Rd.		

Programed Project Cost

Work Description: HMA trench & widen with overlay

Total Participating Cost	\$519,348
Federal NATS STBG	\$172,866
NATS HIP:	\$11,072
Total Federal	\$183,938
Local Match:	\$335,410

Revised Project Costs

	Amount	Percent Change
Latest Estimate	<i>If same as programed enter NA</i>	
Accepted Bid	\$486,784.85	6.7% Below programed amount

Explanation for cost changes: *[enter a brief explanation for why the cost has changed such as if it was due to a change in work/scop or due due to revised material/labor estimates]:*

Project Status

Project Milestone	Estimated Date	Actual Date Completed	Comments
Submit program application to LAP			
Submit program NEPA form 5323 to LAP			
Receive NEPA Approval			
Receive SHPO Approval			
Submit Grade Inspection packages to LAP			
Grade Inspection meeting date	11/01/23	11/01/23	
Submit Final ROW Certification to LAP	NA	NA	
Submit the Complete Biddable Package to LAP	11/15/23	11/15/23	
Letting Date	7/12/24	7/12/24	
Construction Start	TBD		

Additional Comments on project Status:

McCoy Creek Trail Extension Project Status

Date: 8/20/2024

To: NATS TAC and Policy Committees

From: [Name] on behalf of the City of Buchanan

Project Details

Fiscal Year:	2024	MDOT Job Number:	214949
Responsible Agency	City of Buchanan		
Project/Road Name	McCoy Creek Trail Extension		
Limits	Existing Trail Head to the River St. Joe Brewery following Schirmer Parkway and Walton Road		

Work Description

Nonmotorized path and sidewalk construction

Programmed Project Cost

Total Participating Cost	\$1,573,417
Statewide TAP	\$726,963
NATS TAP	\$169,885
Carbon Reduction Program	\$62,512
Total Federal	\$959,360
Local Match	\$614,057

Revised Project Costs

	Amount	Percent change
Obligated Amount	\$1,573,617	The final estimate was within .013% of the programed amount
Accepted Bid	NA	

Explanation for cost changes: [enter a brief explanation for why the cost has changed such as if it was due to a change in work/scope or due to revised material/labor estimates]:

Project Timeline

Project Milestone	Estimated Date	Actual Date Completed	Comments
Submit program application to LAP			
Submit program NEPA form 5323 to LAP			
Receive NEPA Approval			
Receive SHPO Approval			
Submit Grade Inspection packages to LAP			
Grade Inspection meeting date			
Submit Final ROW Certification to LAP			
Submit the Complete Biddable Package to LAP	10/1/2024		
Letting Date	1/1/2025		
Construction Start	3/1/2025		

Additional Comments on project Status:

Project was bid and low bid was 44% over the estimate. The bids were rejected and adjustments to the plans and specs are currently being worked on to lower overall costs to meet the estimated cost.

Gumwood Realignment Project Status

Date: 8/19/24

For: NATS

From: Joe Bellina on behalf of the Cass County Road Commission

Currently Programed Project Information

Fiscal Year:	2024	MDOT Job Number:	218476
Responsible Agency:	Cass County Road Commission		
Project/Road Name:	Gumwood Realignment		
Limits:	North of Redfield intersection		

Programed Project Cost

Work Description: Realign Gumwood Rd. to replace the current two offset intersections with a single 4-way roundabout intersection.

Total Participating Cost:	\$1,165,000
Federal NATS STBG:	\$364,151
Federal HIP	\$23,324
Federal STBG – Rural / RTF	\$532,244
Local Match:	\$245,281

Revised Project Costs

	Amount	Percent change
Total Obligated Amount	\$1,077,559.80	7.5% under the program estimate
Accepted Bid	\$939,227.27	12.9% under Engineer’s Estimate and 19.4% less than the programed amount

Explanation for cost changes: *[enter a brief explanation for why the cost has changed such as if it was due to a change in work/scope or due due to revised material/labor estimates]:*

Project Status

Project Milestone	Estimated Date	Actual Date Completed	Comments
Submit program application to LAP		5/21/24	Update req. by MDOT
Submit program NEPA form 5323 to LAP		2/10/23	
Receive NEPA Approval		5/21/24	
Receive SHPO Approval		8/1/23	
Submit Grade Inspection packages to LAP		5/5/23	
Grade Inspection meeting date		5/24/23	
Submit Final ROW Certification to LAP		11/6/23	
Submit the Complete Biddable Package to LAP		6/4/24	
Letting Date		7/12/24	
Construction Start		8/14/24	

Additional Comments on project Status:

Michigan Department of Transportation Projects

Within the NATS Planning Area

Updated August 14, 2024 by Jon Smith, MDOT Coloma TSC Engineer – smithj29@michigan.gov

Projects Currently Under Construction

City of Niles and Niles Township

Project: M-51 from Chestnut Ln. to M-60BR – Interchange reconstruction and asphalt resurfacing (JN202003)

Status: Construction is progressing on both M-51 and US-12, M-51 has one lane open in each direction plus center left turn lane (CLTL) north of Fort Street. On M-60BR the plan revision to add pedestrian safety improvements is underway, this work will be completed concurrently with the M-51 and US-12 work. North 3rd Street closure is completed and reopened on 08/19. Anticipating switching M-51 traffic and US-12 traffic to the next stages following the Labor Day Holiday. US-12 will be switched onto the WB alignment while the M-51 closure will be from Bell road to Brandywine creek, areas outside of that will be in the normal 5 lane configuration.

Est Con: Sep. 25, 2023 – Dec. 30, 2025

NATS Area

Project: Regionwide signal upgrades (JN209414)

Status: Construction in progress.

Est Con: Dec. 17, 2023 – Oct. 31, 2024

Niles Township

Project: M-139 over the Franz and Norton Drain – Culvert repairs (JN209684)

Status: Construction complete.

Est Con: Mar. 4, 2024 – Sep. 27, 2024

Milton Township

Project: US-12 and Gumwood Intersection – Traffic signal installation (JN218477)

Status: Construction will begin soon. Start date not yet scheduled. Anticipated 3 days of work.

Est Con: Apr. 1, 2024 – TBD

Projects Scheduled for Construction in 2024

Bertrand Township

Project: US-12 from Galien Township line to west of Mayflower Rd– Shoulder rehabilitation (JN127449)

Status: Project came in 6.16% under Engineer's estimate. Detour paving will be in 2024, US-12 work will be in 2025.

Est Con: 2024: Aug. 19, 2024 – Oct. 31, 2024. 2025: April 15, 2025 – Sept. 15, 2025

Projects Scheduled for Construction in 2025

Bertrand Township and Niles Township

Project: S. US-31 from US-12 to Niles/Berrien Township Line - Concrete repairs and shoulder resurfacing (JN 216911)

Status: Plans let in August and came in 24.65% under Engineer's estimate. Work planned to start in spring 2025.

Niles Township

Project: US-31 under Niles-Buchanan Rd. – Bridge Capital Preventive maintenance (JN208503)

Status: Plans turned in for the September 2024 letting.

City of Niles

Project: M-51 at 10th St. and 11th St. – Pedestrian crosswalk improvements (JN 218784)

Status: These locations in Niles were added to the US-12/M-51 project via plan revision. See JN202003 update above.

Michigan Department of Transportation Projects Within the NATS Planning Area

Updated August 14, 2024 by Jon Smith, MDOT Coloma TSC Engineer – smithj29@michigan.gov

Projects Scheduled for Construction in 2026

Village of Edwardsburg, Ontwa Township, and Mason Township

Project: US-12 from E. of M-62 to Union – Milling & One Course Asphalt Overlay (JN216909)

Status: Design in progress.

Projects Scheduled for Construction in 2027

City of Niles and Bertrand Township

Project: US-12 @ Redbud and M-139 @ M-139 – Modernize signals (JN211989)

Status: Design in progress.

Ontwa Township

Project: US-12 at Beebe Rd and Adamsville Rd intersection – Addition of Left turn lane and Passing Flare (JN214141)

Status: Road Safety Audit (RSA) exemption in progress. Design alternatives developed and under review.

MDOT Amendment Requests

For Projctes within the NATS Area

Fiscal year: 2025 **Phase:** PE & CON **Job Number:** 209624
Project: Special pavement markings in Southwest region
Location: All trunkline routes in the Southwest Region
Amendment: Abandoning the project to combine longline and special marking projects into one job (JN 209623).

Fiscal year: 2025 **Phase:** PE & CON **Job Number:** 209623
Project: Longitudinal and special pavement marking application on trunklines in Southwest Region
Location: All trunkline routes in the Southwest Region
Amendment: Cost increase to add in the work from JN 209624.

	Current			Proposed		
	Federal HSIP	State	Total	Federal HSIP	State	Total
PE	\$1,278	\$142	\$1,420	\$2,556	\$284	\$2,840
CON	\$253,097	\$28,122	\$281,218	\$347,481	\$38,609	\$386,090
Total	\$254,375	\$28,264	\$282,638	\$350,037	\$38,893	\$388,930

*Costs are for the NATS portion of the project only

Fiscal year: 2025 **Phase:** CON **Job Number:** 209634
Project: Pavement marking retroreflectivity readings in Southwest Region
Location: All Trunkline with Southwest Region
Amendment: Increase cost by 36% based on recent bids

	Current			Proposed		
	Federal HSIP	State	Total	Federal HSIP	State	Total
CON	\$1,406	\$156	\$1,562	\$1,917	\$213	\$2,130

*Costs are for the NATS portion of the project only

NATS Road Project Prioritization Criteria for the 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program.

Draft

System Preservation (8 total points possible)

PASER Rating (5 points possible)

- 5 points: The most recent PASER is 2-3 and the project was applied for previously when the PASER was 4 or higher
- 3 points: The most recent PASER is 2-3 and this is the first application for this project
- 3 points: The most recent PASER is 4
- 1 point: The most recent PASER is 5-6
- 0 Points: The most recent PASER is 7-10

Project Category per MDOT's "Guidelines for Geometrics on Local Agency Project" (3 points possible)

- 3 points: The project follows the MDOT 4R guidelines
- 2 points: The project follows the MDOT 3R guidelines
- 1 point: The project follows the MDOT Preventative Maintenance guidelines

Regional Significance (8 total points possible)

Traffic Volume (5 points possible)

- 5 points: AADT is more than 8,000 vehicles per day
- 4 points: AADT is between 4,500 and 7,999 vehicles per day
- 3 points: AADT between 2,000 and 4,499 vehicles per day

Functional Classification (2 points possible)

- 3 points: The project is located on a Principal Arterial
- 2 points: The project is located on a Minor Arterial
- 1 point: The project is located on a Major Collector

Safety (6 total points possible)

Safety Countermeasures (3 points possible)

- 1 point per traffic safety countermeasure included in the project, up to 3 points maximum

Addressing Specific Crashes (3 points possible)

For the following criteria, use crash data from the most recent five full years for which data is available

- 3 points: The project addresses a fatal or serious injury crash within the project limits
- 1 point: The project addresses any crash other than a fatal or serious injury crash within the project limits
- 0 points: The project does not address any crashes.

Complete Streets (5 total points possible)

Pedestrian and Cycling Facilities (3 Points possible)

- 1 point: The road currently has pedestrian or bicycle facilities and there is a maintenance plan in place
- 2 points: The road currently has pedestrians or bicycle facilities and the project will add additional facilities
- 3 points: The project will add pedestrian or bicycle facilities where none existed previously

Improving Non-motorized Connectivity (2 points possible)

- 2 points: The new pedestrian or bicycle facilities will contribute to regional non-motorized connectivity by connecting to existing pedestrian/bicycle facilities or those expected to be completed before 2029

Strategic Planning & Investment (7 total points possible)

Projects can earn one point for meeting each of the following criteria:

- 1 point: The project is listed in a Pavement Asset Management Plan
- 1 point: There is an asset management plan covering other utilities along the limits of the project
- 1 point: The city, Village or Township has adopted an asset management policy
- 1 point: The project contributes toward achieving a goal identified in another local planning document, such as a master plan or a parks and recreation plan
- 1 point: The project is limits begin or end at a road segment with a PASER of 7 or higher
- 1 point: The agency contributes more than the minimum 18.15% local match
- 1 point: The agency is willing to use an Advance Contract for the project.

Coordination with sewer and water projects (Pass/Fail)

If there are known water or sewer issues, the project must coordinate utility and road fixes.

Project Readiness (No Points Pass/Fail)

If the project requires any of the following, each item must be addressed in the application and indicated on the project schedule: utility relocations, ROW acquisition, environmental sensitivity, or Railroad crossings.

Cross Jurisdictional Coordination (No Points)

The project crosses jurisdictional boundaries (i.e. city to township) and it is arranged in such a way to be bid as a single project.