



City of Niles
Dial-A-Ride Transportation
Transit Asset Management Plan

2026-2029

I. Transit Asset Management Plan Statement

In accordance with the Transit Asset Management Rule (49 CFR part 625), the City of Niles Dial-A-Ride Transportation (DART) has developed this Transit Asset Management Plan (TAMP) to aide in: (1) the assessment of the current condition of capital assets; (2) determining what condition and performance of its assets should be (if they are not currently in a state of good repair); (3) identifying the unacceptable risks, including safety risks, in continuing to use an asset that is not in a state of good repair (SGR); and (4) deciding how to best balance and prioritize reasonably anticipated funding in order to improve asset conditions and achieve a sufficient level of performance within those means.

II. Agency Overview

The City of Niles DART is a small, city-owned, public transit agency that has served the City of Niles, Niles Charter Township, City of Buchanan, Buchanan Township and portions of additional surrounding townships since 1974. The DART office is located at 623 North Second Street in Niles, MI and serves as transfer location to and from other area public transit services. DART is funded by federal and state grants, transit millages from the Cities of Niles and Buchanan, and passenger fares. DART is overseen by the Niles City Council.

Niles DART provides both demand response and deviated fixed bus route service to approximately 40,000 passengers each year. The DART inventory of revenue vehicles and capital assets includes the following:

- Ten small buses;
- One facility that includes administration, operation, maintenance, and vehicle storage; and
- One service truck.

The City of Niles is part of the South Bend Urbanized Area. Despite the small size of the transit system, the City is the designated recipient of the Michigan portion of the federal Section 5307 funding, and is a direct Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grantee.

Niles DART is currently operating as an FTA-defined Tier II transit operator in compliance with (49 CFR § 625.45 (b)(1)). Tier II transit providers are those transit agencies that do not operate rail fixed-guideway public transportation systems and have either 100 or fewer vehicles in fixed-route revenue service during peak regular service, or have 100 or fewer vehicles in general demand response service during peak regular service hours.

This TAMP provides a description of how Niles DART will assess, monitor, and report the physical condition of assets utilized in the operation of the public transportation system.

III. TAMP Elements

As a Tier II public transportation provider, Niles DART has developed and implemented a TAMP containing the following elements:

- 1) Asset Inventory: An inventory of the number and type of capital assets (rolling stock, facilities, and equipment).
- 2) Asset Condition Assessment: A condition assessment of those inventoried assets for which DART has direct ownership and capital responsibility.

- 3) Decision Support Tools & Management Approach: A description of the analytical processes and decision-support tools that DART uses to estimate capital investment needs over time, and develop its investment prioritization.
- 4) Investment Prioritization: DART's project-based prioritization of investments, developed in accordance with §625.33.

A. Asset Inventory

Niles DART is a small agency with ownership of nine (10) revenue vehicles, one (1) facility, and one (1) service truck.

Vehicles

The DART revenue vehicles are described in the following table.

Niles DART Vehicle Listing								
Local ID	Vehicle ID Number (VIN)	Type	Year	Make/Model	Body	Fuel	Useful Life	Cost
5	1FDAF5GY5FEC59151	Light Duty Cutaway	2015	Ford F-550	El Dorado	Gas	7 yrs/ 200,000 miles	\$89,488
30	1FDDE4FS7GDC49096	Light Duty Cutaway	2016	Ford E-450	El Dorado	Gas	7 yrs/ 200,000 miles	\$65,967
70	1FDDE4FS3GDC33154	Light Duty Cutaway	2016	Ford E-450	Champion	Gas	7 yrs/ 200,000 miles	
31	1FDDE4FS4JDC27757	Light Duty Cutaway	2018	Ford E-450	El Dorado	Gas	7 yrs/ 200,000 miles	\$70,073
32	1FDDE4FS8KDC27701	Light Duty Cutaway	2019	Ford E-450	El Dorado	Gas	7 yrs/ 200,000 miles	\$65,967
33	1FDDE4FS8KDC45275	Light Duty Cutaway	2019	Ford E-450	El Dorado	Gas	7 yrs/ 200,000 miles	\$70,073
34	1FDDE4FN3PDD37332	Light Duty Cutaway	2023	Ford E-450	Champion	Gas	7 yrs/ 200,000 miles	\$145,216
35	1FDDE4FN8RDD37894	Light Duty Cutaway	2024	Ford E-450	Champion	Gas	7 yrs/ 200,000 miles	\$144,216
36	1FBVU5XG4RKA84114	Mobility Transit Van	2024	Ford Transit Van		Gas	4yrs/100,000 Miles	\$105,592.59
37	1FBVU5XGXRKA84537	Mobility Transit Van	2024	Ford Transit Van		Gas	4yrs/100,000 Miles	\$105,592.59

Facility

Niles DART occupies one facility located at 623 North Second Street in the City of Niles, Michigan. The facility houses administration, operations, maintenance, and enclosed bus parking.

Equipment

Per FTA requirements, equipment to be evaluated includes all non-revenue service vehicles regardless of value and any DART-owned equipment with a cost of over \$50,000 in acquisition value. For DART, this is one item, a service truck described in the table below. DART does not utilize or operate any third-party non-revenue service vehicle equipment assets.

Asset	Name	Make	Model	Owner	Year Purchased	Age (in years)	Useful Life (in years)*	Replacement Cost
Service truck with snow plow	DART 21	Ford	F150	City of Niles	2021	.5	4	\$52,000

B. Asset Condition Assessment

Vehicles

The current DART fleet consists of 8 small cutaway vehicles and 2 transit vans

Vehicle condition is assessed primarily using age. According to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) FY 2025 Local Public Transit Revenue and Expense Manual, the useful life for small buses is 7 years or 200,000 miles. Experience confirms that once vehicles reach the 7-year mark, major systems begin to require attention, repairs become more frequent, and the need for replacement becomes evident.

Dart Buses 4,8, and 9 will be sold in auction in February 2025. Buses 5, 30, 31, and 70 are all meeting their useful life benchmark and will be eligible for replacement. 2 transit vans were delivered October 2024 and replaced Buses 8 and 9. Originally wanted 3 vans but due to price increases since Covid, Dart could only purchase 2.

Facility

A facility condition assessment is completed utilizing the FTA Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM) condition rating assessment scale. This rating scale assigns a numerical value or rank based on the physical condition(s) presented by each individual asset throughout its life cycle. The rating scale is based on numbers 1 to 5, with five being excellent and one being poor. Assets with a rating of 2.5 or higher are considered to be in an SGR.

The TERM rating scale is as follows:

Rating	Condition	Description
Excellent	4.8-5	No visible defects, near new condition
Good	4.0-4.7	Some slightly defective or deteriorated components
Adequate	3.0-3.9	Moderately defective or deteriorated components
Marginal	2.0-2.9	Defective or deteriorated components in need of replacement

Poor	1.0-1.9	Seriously damaged components in need of immediate repair
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For the purpose of developing this plan, DART staff evaluated facility subcomponents including the substructure, exterior/shell, interiors, plumbing, HVAC, electrical system, site (grounds/landscaping), and equipment. Niles DART does not have elevators, elevators, or a fire suppression system. In order to determine a rating for each major facility subcomponent, secondary components such as walls, roofing, floors, finishes, etc. were rated. These ratings were compiled into a spreadsheet, and median scores were used to assign a subcomponent score. The median subcomponent score was then used to determine the overall facility rating of 3.5 (see Appendix B).

Equipment

As previously stated, for the purpose of this TAMP, Niles DART equipment includes one light duty service truck (currently a Ford F-150). This truck is new and was purchased in February 2021 with FY 2020 surface transportation funding received via the Niles Buchanan Cass Area Transportation Study.

Per the MDOT FY 2021 Local Public Transit Revenue and Expense Manual, the useful life for a light duty service vehicle (gross vehicle weight under 13,000 lbs) is 4 years. However, due to the relatively small service area and fleet size, and because DART plows snow at only one facility, the expected useful life for a service truck well exceeds this 4-year useful life.

Performance Targets and Measures

Based upon current conditions and available funding predicted for the near future, the TAM targets in the following table were developed.

Asset Class	Performance Measure	2026 Target	2027 Target	2028 Target	2029 Target
Rolling Stock (revenue vehicles)	Age - % of revenue vehicles that have met or exceeded their Useful Life Benchmark (ULB)	50%	50%	40%	30%
Equipment (non-revenue vehicles, equipment over \$50,000)	Age - % of vehicles that have met or exceeded their Useful Life Benchmark (ULB)	0%	0%	0%	0%
Facilities (buildings, structures, parking lots)	Condition - % of facilities with a condition rating below 3.0 on the FTA Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM) Scale	0%	0%	0%	0%

C. Decision Support Tools

Niles DART is a very small agency with limited funding. Therefore, investments are focused on safety and preventative maintenance. All efforts are made to maintain facilities, vehicles, and equipment in clean, safe, working condition. In order to accomplish this, a number of local tools are utilized:

- Annual Budgeting – The annual budgeting process establishes maintenance, facility, and vehicle budgets for the year.

- Fleet Maintenance – Revenue vehicles are inspected and maintained according to schedules identified in the DART Vehicle Maintenance Plan. Fleet maintenance software, work orders, and a work order spreadsheet are used to track maintenance performed. New revenue vehicles are purchased once an existing vehicle has met its useful life and according to the bus replacement spreadsheet.
- Facility and Equipment – The DART facility and equipment are maintained as described in the Facility and Equipment Maintenance Plan. Annual inspections of the DART facility occur using the TERM scale described above. In addition, assets such as computers, camera systems, two-way radios, garage equipment, etc. are reviewed each year for insurance purposes to assess condition and ensure an accurate inventory.
- Transportation Improvement Plan – Because the City of Niles is part of an urbanized area, staff participates in metropolitan transportation planning as mandated by 23 CFR Part 450. The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study (NATS), which is the Michigan portion of the South Bend UZA. Every two years, the SWMPC prepares a Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), which is a four-year listing of federally funded transportation projects in the NATS area. Funding utilized by DART for operating, maintenance, and capital projects must be included in the TIP.

D. Investment Prioritization

The DART General Manager uses the tools described above along with best judgment and input from the Maintenance Technician and Operations Supervisor to prioritize needs. Consideration is given to funding estimates from all sources that are reasonably expected. Because of funding limitations, all efforts are made to maintain facilities, vehicles, and equipment in good condition.

Revenue vehicles are the primary focus of the agency, and are thus a primary focus for capital investment. DART is generally able to replace one bus per year. A bus replacement spreadsheet identifies each vehicle and the year it is eligible for replacement (see Appendix A).

Beyond the buses, DART staff balances the need for investments in the service itself with the need to maintain and replace assets. Other than basic maintenance of the facility and equipment, the following projects are planned at DART for the next four years:

- 2026 – bus replacement
- 2027 –bus replacement
- 2028 –bus replacement
- 2029-bus replacement

IV. Plan Review

Niles DART will maintain all supporting TAMP records and documents. TAMP records will be made available to the FTA, MDOT, and SWMPC (the MPO) upon request. The TAMP can be considered a “living document” that shall be reviewed regularly and incorporated into the Niles DART capital and budget planning and reporting processes. Beginning in 2018, TAMP data serves as a “baseline” measure of asset performance management. As more data is collected, additional monitoring categories and goals may be included to support condition and reliability-based decision-making.

V. NTD Reporting

TAM Targets are reported to NTD annually as required.

VI. Conclusion

Niles DART believes that by implementing this TAMP, the following SGR indicators will be either maintained or improved upon:

- Limit safety risks;
- Justify investments;
- Increase system reliability and accessibility; and
- Increase system performance.

Appendix A – Bus Replacement Schedule

Niles DART Vehicle Listing and Replacement Worksheet									
Local ID	Vehicle ID Number (VIN)	Type	Year	Make/Model	Body	Fuel	Useful Life	Repl Req	Comments
5	1FDAF5GY5FEC59151	Light Duty Cutaway	2015	Ford F-550	El Dorado	Gas	7 yrs/ 200,000 miles	2022	Can sell in 2022. Funding requested from MDOT but not yet from FTA.
30	1FDDE4FS7GDC49096	Light Duty Cutaway	2016	Ford E-450	El Dorado	Gas	7 yrs/ 200,000 miles	2023	Eligible to sell in 2023. Funding not yet requested.
70	1FDDE4FS3GDC33154	Light Duty Cutaway	2016	Ford E-450	Champion	Gas	7 yrs/ 200,000 miles	2024	Purchased by Buchanan with CMAQ in 2016. Eligible in 2023 for replacement but none was planned. Transferred to Niles in Sept 2021. Applied for FY 2024 CMAQ for replacement.
31	1FDDE4FS4JDC27757	Light Duty Cutaway	2018	Ford E-450	El Dorado	Gas	7 yrs/ 200,000 miles	2025	Eligible to sell in 2025. Funding not yet requested.
32	1FDDE4FS8KDC27701	Light Duty Cutaway	2019	Ford E-450	El Dorado	Gas	7 yrs/ 200,000 miles	2026	Eligible to sell in 2026. Funding not yet requested.
33	1FDDE4FS8KDC45275	Light Duty Cutaway	2019	Ford E-450	El Dorado	Gas	7 yrs/ 200,000 miles	2027	Eligible to sell in 2027. Funding not yet requested.
34	1FDDE4FN3PDD37332	Light Duty Cutaway	2023	Ford E-450	Champion	Gas	7yrs/200,000 miles	2030	Eligible to sell in 2030. Funding not yet requested.
35	1FDDE4FN8RDD37894	Light Duty Cutaway	2024	Ford E-450	Champion	Gas	7yrs/200,000 miles	2031	Eligible to sell in 2031. Funding not yet requested.
36	1FBVU5XG4RKA84114	Mobility Transit Van	2024	Ford Transit Van	Station Wagon	Gas	4yrs/100,000	TBD	
37	1FBVU5XGXRKA84537	Mobility Transit Van	2024	Ford Transit Van	Station Wagon	Gas	4yrs/100,000	TBD	

Appendix B—Facility Condition Assessment

Scale 1-Poor 2-Marginal 3-Adequate 4-Good 5-Excellent

Primary Component Item	Description	Rating
Substructure	Foundations: Walls, columns, pilings other structural components.	3
Shell	Superstructure/ structure frames: columns, pillars, pilings, walls Exterior: Windows, doors, and all finishes (paint, masonry Roof: roof surface, gutters, eaves	3
Interiors	Partitions: walls, interior doors Finishes: materials used on walls, floors, and ceilings. This component covers all interior spaces, regardless of use.	3
Conveyance	Elevators, escalators, and lifts.	None
Plumbing	Fixtures, water distribution, sanitary waste, rain water drainage	3.5
HVAC	Energy supply, heating and cooling systems, vents	2
Fire Protection	Sprinklers, standpipes, and hydrants.	None
Electrical	Electrical service and distribution, lighting and branch wiring (interior and exterior) communication and security	3.5
Equipment	Equipment related to the function of the facility, including maintenance or vehicle service equipment-does not include supplies	3.5
Site	Roadway, driveway, or parking lots and associated signage, markings, and equipment, pedestrian areas, site development, landscaping, site utilities	5
		Overall Facility Rating 3.5