

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

May 28, 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 March 26, 2024 Meeting *Action* Pg. 2
5. Staff Report
6. Local Agency Updates
7. Transit Updates
8. MDOT Updates Pg. 5
9. MDOT Amendments *Action* pg. 7
10. Discussion of the 2026-2029 Project Prioritization Criteria pg. 8
11. Approval of the FY 2025 Unified Work Program *Action*
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 March 26th, 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									
Berrien Co. Board of Commissioners (2)	(Vacant)		x												
Berrien Co. Community Dev. Dept.	Dan Fette	x			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									
Bertrand Township	Butch Payton	x	x		P										
Buchanan Township	Lynn Ferris	x	x		A										
Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (1)	Roseann Marchetti		x		P	A									
Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (2)	James Lawrence		x		P	A									
Cass Co. Planning Commission	Roseann Marchetti	x			P	A									
Cass Co. Road Comm. (Policy)	Sandra Seanor		x		P	P									
Cass Co. Road Comm. (TAC)	Joe Bellina (TAC Chair)	x			A	P									
City of Buchanan	Don Ryman		x		A	A									
City of Buchanan	Rich Murphy	x			P	P									
City of Niles (1)	Georgia Boggs		x		A	A									
City of Niles (2)	Serita Mason		x		P	V									
City of Niles (3)	(Vacant)		x												
City of Niles Community Dev. Director	Rick Huff	x				P									
City of Niles Dial-A-Ride Transit	Pepper Miller	x	x		P	P									
City of Niles Public Works Dir./Airport	Joe Ray	x				P									
Howard Township	Bill Kasprzak	x	x		P	P									
Kinexus	(Vacant)	x													
Mason Township	Doug Fetters	x	x		A	A									
MDOT - Bureau of Trans. Planning	Jim Sturdevant	x	x		P	P									
MDOT - Southwest Region	Josh Grab	x	x		V	P									
MDOT - Southwest Region (Alternate)	Adrain Stroupe	Alt	Alt			P									
MDOT - Transportation Service Center	Jonathon Smith	x	x		V	A									
Milton Township	Susan Flowers	x	x		P	P									
Niles Charter Township	Richard Cooper (P. Ch.)	x	x		P	P									
Ontwa Township	Meryl Christensen	x	x		P	P									
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians	Robert Torzynski	x	x		A	A									
Village of Edwardsburg	Dawn Bolock	x	x		P	P									
Federal Highway Administration	Andrew Sibold	NV	NV		A	A									
Federal Transit Administration	Susan Weber	NV	NV		A	A									
EGLE - Air Quality	Breanna Bukowski	NV			A	A									
MDOT - Modeling	Jon Roberts	NV			A	A									
MDOT - Office of Passenger Trans.	Fred Featherly	NV			V	A									
Michiana Area Council of Governments	Caitlin Stevens	NV	NV		A	A									
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Kim Gallagher	x	x		A	P									
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Brandon Kovnat	NV	NV		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, March 26, 2024 – 1:30 pm
Niles District Library, Niles MI

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Policy Committee Chair, Richard Cooper, called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm and Kim Gallagher conducted roll call. Adrian Stroupe introduced himself as a new MDOT Southwest Region planner working with Josh Grab.

2. Changes to the Agenda

None.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of the Minutes from the February 27, 2024, Meeting

Motion to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2024, Joint NATS Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee Meeting. Made by Joe Ray and seconded by Jim Sturdevant. **Motion approved.**

5. Staff Report

Gallagher presented the staff report on the following topics:

2026-2029 TIP Development Timeline: SWMPC will collaborate with NATS to update project selection criteria, with a vote on the revised criteria scheduled for the May NATS meeting.

FHWA's Safe System Approach: This is a new comprehensive approach to traffic safety aimed at reducing fatalities and serious injuries, which considers factors like human error, road design, vehicle safety features, and post-crash care.

Local Road PASER Data Collection Reimbursement: Agencies selected to be reimbursed for collecting PASER data on their local (non-federal aid eligible) roads. The Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) allocated additional funding to SWMPC to allow all agencies which applied for local road ratings to receive funding.

Revision to Speed Limit Law: There was a discussion regarding a revision to the speed limit laws which allows townships flexibility to adjust speed limits, beyond just using the 85th percentile speed study. Several comments were made that the requirements for this will mean that in practice the law will have limited impact and that using the 85th percentile speed will continue to be the way speeds are determined.

Road User Charge Study: MDOT completed a study on funding roads by charging drivers for miles driven instead of a gas tax. Twenty other states have conducted similar studies, due to more efficient vehicles reducing gas tax revenue and the rising construction costs requiring alternative road funding methods.

MDOT Travel Survey: MDOT's will be conducting a travel survey this spring, aiming to understand Michigan residents' travel patterns for use in travel demand models. Randomly selected households will be mailed a request to participate in the survey.

6. Local Agency Updates

City of Buchanan – Rich Murphy gave updates for the following two projects.

- **Buchanan Downtown Street project:** The initial bid for the project was rejected. The project was recently rebid, coming in 9.9% under the estimate.
- **McCoy Creek Tail Extension:** On track for obligation in FY 2024

City of Niles – Wayne Street: Joe Ray said that construction is expected to begin with concrete repairs in the next couple of weeks.

Berrien County Road Department – Bertrand Road: Kevin Stack said that the project was obligated.

Cass County Road Commission – Gumwood Realignment: Joe Bellina said that FHWA was holding up approval of the project, and he has not received any official response from MDOT or FHWA about the exact reasons for this. He suspects that it is due to a disagreement over the interpretation about when an Environmental Assessment is required.

7. Transit Updates

Pepper Miller reported that a Local Agency Committee (LAC) meeting for Niles Dial A Ride had taken place recently. She is collaborating with the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and working with the South Bend Transit Agency, Transpo, to improve route connections. Additionally, NDART is scheduled for its FTA triennial review by this year.

8. MDOT Updates

(see meeting packet page 9-10 for more details)

Joe Ray inquired about the repairs to M-139, which was previously programmed in the NATS TIP but was subsequently removed. He highlighted the poor condition of the road and asked for an explanation for the project's delay.

9. MDOT Amendment

(Details on the Amendments is attached)

There were no questions or comments about the proposed amendment.

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

Motion for the Policy Committee to approve the recommendations from the Technical Advisory Committee. Made by Pepper Miller and seconded by Bill Kasprzak. **Motion passed.**

10. Privilege of the Floor or Public Comment

Bill Kasprzak raised concerns about concrete scaling on pavement within the NATS area. He expressed worry that the same supplier responsible for the concrete scaling was also supplying concrete for roadwork.

11. 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

Michigan Department of Transportation Projects

Within the NATS Planning Area

Updated May 6, 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 in progress, interchange work underway with traffic shifted to US-12EB.

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 in progress.

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.

Est Con: Apr. 1, 2024 – Jun. 28, 2024

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: Design in progress, FPC meeting held March 28, 2024. On track for August 2024 letting.

Niles Township

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

Status: Design in progress, FPC meeting scheduled for May 20, 2024.

City of Niles

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

Status: Design in progress. The locations in Niles will be added to the US-12/M-51 project via contract modification.

A change request will be completed to remove these locations from 218784.

Michigan Department of Transportation Projects Within the NATS Planning Area

Updated May 6, 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 M-62 to Union – Milling & One Course Asphalt Overlay (JN216909)

Status: Design will begin in 2024.

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: Design will begin in 2024 with a Road Safety Audit (RSA).

**NATS Road Project Prioritization System
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

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 High Crash Location (3 points possible)

- 3 points: The project addresses a fatal or serious injury crash within the project limits from the last 5 years
- 1 point: The project addresses any crash other than a fatal or serious injury crash within the project limits from the last 5 years
- 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

Regional Importance (9 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 (3 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

Fixed Route Transit (1 point possible)

1 point if a fixed route transit uses the road.

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 Construct 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.