

Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study 2024 Meeting Attendance

From the August 27th, 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				
Berrien Co. Board of Commissioners (2)	(Vacant)		x								V				
Berrien Co. Community Dev. Dept.	Dan Fette	x			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				
Bertrand Township	Butch Payton	x	x		P			P			P				
Buchanan Township	Lynn Ferris	x	x		A			A			P				
Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (1)	Roseann Marchetti		x		P	A		P			P				
Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (2)	James Lawrence		x		P	A		A			A				
Cass Co. Planning Commission	Roseann Marchetti	x			P	A		P			P				
Cass Co. Road Comm. (Policy)	Sandra Seanor		x		P	P		P			P				
Cass Co. Road Comm. (TAC)	Joe Bellina (TAC Chair)	x			A	P		P			P				
City of Buchanan	Don Ryman		x		A	A		A			V				
City of Buchanan	Rich Murphy	x			P	P		A			P				
City of Niles (1)	Georgia Boggs		x		A	A		A			A				
City of Niles (2)	Serita Mason		x		P	V		V			P				
City of Niles (3)	(Vacant)		x												
City of Niles Community Dev. Director	Rick Huff	x				P		A			P				
City of Niles Dial-A-Ride Transit	Pepper Miller	x	x		P	P		P			P				
City of Niles Public Works Dir./Airport	Joe Ray	x				P		P			P				
Howard Township	Bill Kasprzak	x	x		P	P		S			P				
Kinexus	(Vacant)	x													
Mason Township	Doug Fetters	x	x		A	A		S			A				
MDOT - Bureau of Trans. Planning	Jim Sturdevant	x	x		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				
MDOT - Transportation Service Center	Jonathon Smith	x	x		V	A		A			V				
Milton Township	Susan Flowers	x	x		P	P		P			V				
Niles Charter Township	Richard Cooper (P. Ch.)	x	x		P	P		P			P				
Ontwa Township	Meryl Christensen	x	x		P	P		A			A				
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians	Robert Torzynski	x	x		A	A		A			A				
Village of Edwardsburg	Dawn Bolock	x	x		P	P		A			A				
Federal Highway Administration	Andrew Sibold	NV	NV		A	A		A			A				
Federal Transit Administration	Susan Weber	NV	NV		A	A		A			A				
EGLE - Air Quality	Breanna Bukowski	NV			A	A		A			A				
MDOT - Modeling	Jon Roberts	NV			A	A		A			A				
MDOT - Office of Passenger Trans.	Fred Featherly	NV			V	A		A			A				
Michiana Area Council of Governments	Caitlin Stevens	NV	NV		A	A		A			A				
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Kim Gallagher	x	x		A	P		P			A				
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Brandon Kovnat	NV	NV		P	P		P			P				

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

Guests: Brad Piquette.

Minutes
NILES BUCHANAN CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE and POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, August 27, 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 Brandon Kovnat conducted roll call.

2. Changes to the Agenda

None.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of the minutes from the May 28, 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

None.

6. Local Agency Updates

See meeting packet pages 5-7 for additional information.

- **Bertrand Road Project update given by Kevin Stack:** Construction will begin late fall or in early Spring 2025.
- **McCoy Creek Trail Extension updated given by Rich Murphy:** The project was put out for bid, but since the lowest bid came in 44% over the estimate, no bids were accepted. Efforts are underway to amend the design to lower costs. They also hope that rebidding it at a more favorable time will result in lower bids.
- **Gumwood Realignment update given by Joe Bellina:** Construction will begin next week.

7. Transit Updates

Pepper Miller provided an update for Niles Dial A Ride. Starting wages will be increased, and service in Buchanan is performing well. The agency recently completed its FTA triennial review and is currently developing a Transit Asset Management Plan and a Safety Plan. Targets for both plans will be presented to NATS for approval in October.

8. MDOT Updates

see meeting packet pages 8-9 for details on MDOT projects.

Joe Ray asked about the work on M-60, saying that he was not aware of it beforehand. Smith responded that this was part of a routine maintenance project, and he could get more details later if requested.

9. MDOT Amendment

see meeting packet page 10 for amendment details.

There were no questions or comments about the proposed amendments.

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee Approve the Amendments to the NATS 2023-2029 Transportation Improvement Program as included in the meeting packet. Made by Lynn Ferris and seconded by Jim Sturdevant. **Motion approved.**

Motion for the Policy Committee to approve the recommendations from the Technical Advisory Committee. Made by Jim Sturdevant and seconded by Roseann Marchetti. **Motion approved.**

10. Discussion of the 2026-2029 Call for Projects and the Project Prioritization Criteria

Kovnat presented the timeline for the 2026-2029 Call for Projects highlighting that applications for STBG funded projects were due September 27th. He added that the CMAQ and CRP call for projects will be sent out shortly.

Kovnat opened the discussion on the Project Prioritization Criteria, noting that NATS had not approved the criteria in May due to concerns about the wording related to water/sewer coordination.

Ray raised concerns about the use of the term "known water or sewer issues," which he thought was too broad. He explained that almost the entire system could be said to have some type of issue simply due to age, but that doesn't necessarily mean a particular pipe will fail. He added that it was not possible to predict based on current condition which pipes would break.

Stack commented on the "Project Readiness" criteria, pointing out that certain factors, such as the need for right-of-way acquisition, might not be known when submitting an application.

There was consensus on the importance of avoiding tearing up a good road for water repairs ("dig once"). They also agreed that project readiness should be considered during selection. However, it was suggested that these don't work as pass/fail criterion. It was proposed that these topics be discussed at the project review subcommittee meeting but removed from the Project Prioritization Criteria.

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the *NATS Road Project Prioritization Criteria for the 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program* with the removal of both pass/fail criteria: Coordination with Sewer and Water Projects and Project Readiness. Made by Joe Ray and seconded by Pepper Miller. **Motion approved.**

11. Privilege of the Floor or Public Comment

None.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:18 PM. Then the next meeting is scheduled for September 24, 2024.

Minutes compiled by Brandon Kovnat, SWMPC Associate Planner