

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

Tuesday March 25, 2025

1:30 pm

In Person: Niles District Library – 620 E Main St, Niles, MI 49120
Lower-Level 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 January 28, 2025 Meeting *Action* pg. 2
5. Staff Report
6. Local Agency Updates
7. Transit Updates
 - Niles DART Safety Targets ([Link](#) - pg. 15) *Action*
 - Niles DART State of Good Repair Targets ([Link](#) - pg. 5) *Action*
8. MDOT Updates pg. 5
9. MDOT Project Amendments pg. 7
10. Approval of 2026-2029 projects for inclusion in the TIP *Action*
 - Niles Dial A Ride Transportation – FTA funding pg. 8
 - MDOT projects pg. 9
11. Privilege of the Floor or Public Comment
12. 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 TRANSPORTATION STUDY

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

January 28, 2025 – Meeting Attendance

Committee Members in Attendance

Representative	NATS Member Organization	TAC	Pol
Rich Murphy	City of Buchanan	X	
Serita Mason	City of Niles		X
Joe Ray	City of Niles Public Works Department	X	
Rick Huff	City of Niles Community Development	X	
Butch Payton	Bertrand Township	X	X
Bill Kazprzak	Howard Charter Township	X	X
Richard Cooper	Niles Charter Township	X	X
Kevin Stack	Berrien County Road Department	X	
Roseann Marchetti	Cass County Board of Commissioners		X
James Lawrence	Cass County Board of Commissioners		X
Roseann Marchetti	Cass County Planning Commission	X	X
Joe Bellina	Cass County Road Commission	X	
Sandra Seanor	Cass County Road Commission		X
Jim Sturdevant	MDOT, Statewide Planning	X	X
Adrain Stroupe	MDOT, Southwest Region	X	X
Fred Featherly (<i>virtual</i>)	MDOT, Office of Passenger Transit	X	
Kim Gallagher	Southwest Michigan Planning Commission	X	X

Others in Attendance

Name	Representing
Brandon Kovnat	Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
Abrial	Federal Highway Administration

Committee Members Absent

Representative	NATS Member Organization	TAC	Pol
Georgia Boggs	City of Niles		X
Dawn Bolock	Village of Edwardsburg	X	X
Lynn Ferris	Buchanan Township	X	X
Doug Fetters	Mason Township	X	X
Susan Flowers	Milton Township	X	X
Meryl Christensen	Ontwa Township	X	X
Sharon Tyler	Berrien County Board of Commissioners		X
<i>Vacant</i>	Berrien County Board of Commissioners		X
Dan Fette	Berrien County Community Development	X	
Vacant	Berrien County Planning Commission		X
Mark Heyliger	Berrien County Road Department		X
Pepper Miller	Niles Dial A Ride Transportation	X	X
Robert Torzynski	Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians	X	X
Jonathon Smith	MDOT, Coloma TSC	X	X
Jon Roberts	MDOT, Transportation Modeling	X	
Evan Gross	FTA	X	X

Minutes

NILES-BUCHANAN-CASS TRANSPORTATION STUDY

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

January 28, 2025 – Niles District Library

Call to Order and Roll Call

Policy Committee Chair, Richard Cooper, called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM and Kim Gallagher took roll call.

Changes to the Agenda

None.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of the Minutes of the Previous NATS Meeting

Motion to approve the minutes from the November 26, 2024 NATS Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee Meeting. Made by Serita Mason and seconded by Butch Payton. **Motion approved.**

Staff Report

Gallagher announced that she has sent agencies an application to request funding for collecting PASER data on non-federal aid roads. She reminded attendees that the funds can cover data collection time, vehicle use, and training. PASER collection on non-federal aid roads can be funded once every three years.

She also mentioned the state announced funding for culvert condition assessments. Requests from SWMPC exceeded the available funds, and Berrien County was awarded \$15,000.

Local Agency Updates

Joe Ray gave update on the City of Niles Sycamore St project stating that it is on track for a March letting.

Kevin Stack gave an update for Berrien County Road Department Bertrand Rd project stating that the GI is approved, and he is targeting the April letting.

Transit Updates

None.

MDOT Updates

See Meeting Packet Page 6 for MDOT project updates.

There was a question about the potential redesign of the US-12 and M-60 intersection from a clover interchange to at grade.

MDOT Project Amendments

See Meeting Packet Page 8 for amendment details.

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the MDOT project amendments to the NATS 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program. Made by Jim Sturdevant and seconded by Kevin Stack. **Motion approved.**

Motion for the Policy Committee to approve the recommendation from the Technical Advisory Committee. Made by Bill Kazprzak and seconded by Sandra Seanor. **Motion approved.**

Approval of 2026-2029 projects for inclusion in the TIP

See Meeting Packet Page 9-10 for the list of proposed 2026-2029 projects.

The proposed 2026-2029 NATS STBG funded projects were presented, along with an overview of the selection process. The fiscally constrained project list was developed by the Project Review Subcommittee on November 26, 2024, based on project scoring criteria, agency priorities, and estimated funding. Projects not selected for 2026-2029 were added to an illustrative list in case additional funding becomes available or another project is canceled.

Three proposed STBG-Rural funding in 2026-2029 were presented. These are Cass County Road Commission projects on roads that are within the NATS planning area but not the South Bend or Elkhart urbanized areas. These projects were approved by the Region 4 Rural Task Force (RTF) on January 15, 2025.

Proposed bus replacements for Niles Dial Ride in 2026-2029 were presented. There will be one bus replaced each year between 2026 to 2029 funded with both federal CMAQ and the NATS Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funds.

The next step in the 2026-2029 TIP development will be the approval of transit projects funded through FTA (5307 and 5539 funding), and MDOT projects, which will occur at the next NATS meeting. The full NATS 2026-2029 TIP document, which includes all federally funded transportation project within the NATS area, will be voted on at the May 2025 NATS meeting. Public comment on proposed projects will remain open until final TIP arrival.

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve adding the projects as contained in the meeting packet to the NATS 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program. Made by Joe Bellina and seconded by Kevin Stack. **Motion approved.**

Motion for the Policy Committee to approve the recommendation from the Technical Advisory Committee. Made by Sandra Seanor and seconded by Serita Mason. **Motion approved.**

Privilege of the Floor or Public Comment

Rich Murphy mentioned that Buchanan had applied for a RAISE grant for continuing the path between Buchanan and Niles along Walton Road.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:12 PM. The next NATS meeting is scheduled for Tuesday February 25, 2025.

Minutes recorded by Brandon Kovnat, SWMPC Transportation Planner

Michigan Department of Transportation Projects

Within the NATS Planning Area

Updated February 27, 2025 by Jon Smith, MDOT Coloma TSC Engineer – smithj29@michigan.gov

Projects Completed in FY 2024

Niles Township

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

Status: Construction complete.

Est Con: Mar. 4, 2024 – Jul. 29, 2024

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 work in 2024 was completed. Landscaping and final punch list work anticipated to start in March.

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

NATS Area

Project: Regionwide signal upgrades (JN209414)

Status: M-139(Lincoln)/Grant and M-51 (5th)/Sycamore are complete. M-60BR(Oak)/13th signals are operational with removals and sidewalk work remaining. M-62/Elkhart and M-62/US-12 poles and wiring are up, awaiting power from AEP which is estimated at 2-3 weeks. M-62/Redfield power startup next week, awaiting arm installation due to parts.

Est Con: Dec. 17, 2023 – TBD (targeting end of April)

Bertrand Township

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

Status: Tree clearing work in progress. Road work begins in April. Detour paving completed in 2024.

Est Con: Aug. 19, 2024 – Sep. 15, 2027

Milton Township

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

Status: Newly installed traffic signals are fully operational. Punch list items in progress.

Est Con: TBD – TBD

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: Work begins in April. Project let and came in 24.65% under Engineer's Estimate.

Est Con: Apr. 28, 2025 – Aug. 27, 2025

Niles Township

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

Status: Work begins in July. Project let and came in 24.65% under Engineer's Estimate.

Est Con: Jul. 08, 2025 – Oct. 10, 2025

Michigan Department of Transportation Projects Within the NATS Planning Area

Updated February 27, 2025 by Jon Smith, MDOT Coloma TSC Engineer – smithj29@michigan.gov

Projects Scheduled for Construction in 2026

Ontwa Township

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

Status: Design in progress. Base plan review completed.

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.

City of Niles and Bertrand Township

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

Status: Design in progress. Targeting 02/06/2026 letting.

Ontwa Township

Project: US-12 from Edwardsburg to Lane Rr & Brady to Five Points Rd– Shoulder widening (JN221615)

Status: Design in progress.

Projects Scheduled for Construction in 2027

City of Niles and Niles Township

Project: M-51 from White St. to Pokagon Hwy. – Shoulder widening (JN221627)

Status: Design will begin soon.

City of Niles and Niles Township

Project: M-51 from Fort Street to North Niles City Limit– Vulnerable Road Users Road Safety Audit (JN218747)

Status: Scheduled to be completed in 2027.

Projects Scheduled for Construction in 2029

City of Niles and Niles Township

Project: M51 – Install pedestrian crosswalk (JN220343)

Status: Design to begin in late-2026.

Milton Township

Project: US-12 at Gumwood Rd. – Construct a Roundabout (JN220408)

Status: Design to begin in late-2026.

Stay up to date with MDOT: news, projects, report a pothole, traffic alerts, five-year plan
<http://www.michigan.gov/drive>

MDOT Amendment Requests

For projects within the NATS Area – March 18, 2025

Fiscal year: 2026 **Phase:** PE & CON **Job Number:** 213342

Project: Special pavement markings on trunkline routes in Southwest Michigan

Amendment: Abandon the project to combine with another pavement marking project (JN213341) for a single regionwide contract.

	Federal HSIP	State	Total
PE	\$49,203	\$5,467	\$54,670
CON	\$1,278	\$142	\$1,420
Total	\$50,481	\$5,609	\$56,090

*Only costs within the NATS area shown above

Fiscal year: 2026 **Phase:** PE & CON **Job Number:** 213341

Project: Special and longitudinal pavement markings on trunkline routes in Southwest Michigan

Amendment: Add Longitudinal pavement markings and increase cost accordingly

	Current		
	Federal HSIP & VRU	State	Total
PE	\$1,278	\$142	\$1,420
CON	\$265,824	\$29,536	\$295,360
Total	\$267,102	\$29,678	\$296,780

	Proposed		
	Federal HSIP & VRU	State	Total
	\$2,556	\$284	\$2,840
	\$388,512	\$43,168	\$431,680
	\$391,068	\$43,452	\$434,520

*Only costs within the TwinCATS area shown above

Fiscal year: 2026 **Phase:** CON **Job Number:** 213371

Project: Pavement marking retroreflectivity on trunkline routes in Southwest Michigan

Amendment: Revise CON budget based on historical bids and anticipated needs.

	Current		
	Federal HSIP	State	Total
CON	\$1,406	\$156	\$1,562

	Proposed		
	Federal HSIP	State	Total
	\$1,917	\$213	\$2,130

*Only costs within the TwinCATS area shown above

Fiscal year: 2026 **Phase:** PE & PES **Job Number:** 215065

Project: Bridge removal and replacement, scour countermeasure, approaches

Location: US-12 Bridge over the St. Joseph River

Amendment: Add design phase

	Federal Bridge - BFP	State	Total
PE	\$23,090	\$5,120	\$28,210
PES	\$3,349,523	\$742,747	\$4,092,270
Design Total	\$3,372,613	\$747,867	\$4,120,480

Niles Dial A Ride Transportation

Proposed 2026-2029 FTA-5307 funded Projects

Niles DART 2026 FTA 5307 Funding

Project	Federal FTA	State CTF	Local Match	Total
Operating	\$180,000	\$108,000	\$72,000	\$360,000
Capital Preventive Maintenance	\$135,000	\$33,750		\$168,750
2026 Total FTA Funding	\$315,000	\$141,750	\$72,000	\$528,750

Niles DART 2027 FTA 5307 Funding

Project	Federal FTA	State CTF	Local Match	Total
Operating	\$183,600	\$110,160	\$73,440	\$367,200
Capital Preventive Maintenance	\$137,700	\$34,425		\$172,125
2027 Total FTA Funding	\$321,300	\$144,585	\$73,440	\$539,325

Niles DART 2028 FTA 5307 Funding

Project	Federal FTA	State CTF	Local Match	Total
Operating	\$187,272	\$112,363	\$74,909	\$374,544
Capital Preventive Maintenance	\$140,454	\$35,114		\$175,568
2028 Total FTA Funding	\$327,726	\$147,477	\$74,909	\$550,112

Niles DART 2029 FTA 5307 Funding

Project	Federal FTA	State CTF	Local Match	Total
Operating	\$191,017	\$114,610	\$76,407	\$382,035
Capital Preventive Maintenance	\$143,263	\$35,816		\$179,079
2029 Total FTA Funding	\$334,281	\$150,426	\$76,407	\$561,114

Michigan Department of Transportation Projects within the NATS Area – 2026-2029

Location: **City of Niles & Bertrand Township** - US-12 @ Redbud, M-139 @ M-139
 Description: Modernize signals to current standards

Year	Phase	Federal STG	State	Total
2022	PE	\$77,240	\$0	\$77,240
2025	ROW	\$0	\$0	\$0
2026	CON	\$573,927	\$0	\$573,927
	Total	\$651,167	\$0	\$651,167

Location: **Mason Township** - US-12 at Beebe Rd and Adamsville Rd intersection
 Description: Addition of left turn lane and passing flare

Year	Phase	Federal HSIP	State	Total
2024	PE	\$229,927	\$25,547	\$255,474
2025	ROW	\$27,000	\$3,000	\$30,000
2026	CON	\$1,233,342	\$137,038	\$1,370,380
	Total	\$1,490,269	\$165,585	\$1,655,854

Location: **Niles Township** - US-12 bridge over the St. Joseph River
 Description: Bridge removal and replacement, scour countermeasure, and approaches

Year	Phase	Federal Bridge	State	Total
2024	2026	PE	\$23,090	\$5,120
2025	2026	PES	\$3,349,523	\$742,747
	Design Total	\$50,481	\$5,609	\$56,090

Location: **Niles Township** - M-51 from White St to Pokagon Hwy
 Description: Shoulder widening for non-motorized use

Year	Phase	Federal CRL	State	Total
2025	PE	\$98,220	\$21,780	\$120,000
2026	CON	\$1,419,279	\$314,721	\$1,734,000
	Total	\$1,517,499	\$336,501	\$1,854,000

Location: **Ontwa Township** - US-12 from Edwardsburg limit to Lane Rd & Brady Rd to Five Points
 Description: Shoulder widening for non-motorized use

Year	Phase	Federal CRL	State	Total
2025	PE	\$532,025	\$117,975	\$650,000
2025	ROW	\$61,388	\$13,613	\$75,001
2026	CON	\$5,299,788	\$1,175,212	\$6,475,000
	Total	\$5,893,201	\$1,306,800	\$7,200,001

STG = Surface Transportation Block Grant; HSIP = Highway Safety Improvement Program; CRL = Carbon Reduction Program

Michigan Department of Transportation Projects within the NATS Area – 2026-2029

Location: **Niles, Milton, Ontwa Townships** - US-31, US-12 and M-62
 Description: Crack Seal, Chip Seal, and Fog Seal

Year	Phase	Federal ST	State	Total
2025	PE	\$93,309	\$20,691	\$114,000
2026	CON	\$2,512,042	\$557,038	\$3,069,080
	Total	\$2,605,351	\$577,729	\$3,183,080

Location: **City of Niles** - M-51 from Fort St to Niles City North Limit
 Description: Vulnerable Road User Road Safety Audit

Year	Phase	Federal VRU	State	Total
2027	EPE	\$22,500	\$2,500	\$25,000

Location: **Niles Township & City of Niles** - M-51
 Description: Installation of pedestrian crosswalk improvements

Year	Phase	Federal VRU	State	Total
2027	PE	\$67,114	\$7,457	\$74,571
2027	ROW	\$6,300	\$700	\$7,000
2029	CON	\$433,768	\$48,196	\$481,964
	Total	\$507,182	\$56,353	\$563,535

Location: **Milton Township** - US-12 at Gumwood Road
 Description: Install a roundabout

Year	Phase	Federal NH	State	Total
2027	PE	\$332,263	\$73,678	\$405,941
2028	ROW	\$24,895	\$5,521	\$30,416
2029	CON	\$2,670,976	\$592,282	\$3,263,258
	Total	\$3,028,134	\$671,481	\$3,699,615

Location: **Bertrand Township** - US-12 from Mayflower Road to M-139
 Description: Mill and two course Hot Mix Asphalt overlay

Year	Phase	Federal NH	State	Total
2028	PE	\$681,401	\$151,099	\$832,500

Location: **Bertrand Township, Niles Township, City of Niles** - M-139 from US-12 to M-140
 Description: Mill and two course Hot Mix Asphalt overlay

Year	Phase	Federal ST	State	Total
2028	PE	\$681,401	\$151,099	\$832,500

ST= Surface Transportation Block Grant; VRU = Vulnerable Road Users; NH = National Highway Program

Michigan Department of Transportation Projects within the NATS Area – 2026-2029

Year	Project	Phae	Federal	Sate	Total
2026	Permanent Pavement Markings on Trunkline routes in the NATS Area	PE	\$2,556	\$284	2,840
		CON	\$388,512	\$43,168	431,680
2026	Pavement Marking Retroreflectivity readings	CON	\$1,917	\$213	2,130
2027	Pavement Marking Retroreflectivity readings	CON	\$1,406	\$156	1,562
2028	Non-Freeway Sign Replacement	CON	\$177,000	\$0	177,000