

NILES BUCHANAN CASSS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE and POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date & Time: Tuesday, October 28, 2025 at 1:30 pm
Location: Niles District Library – 620 E Main St, Niles, MI 49120
Lower-Level Community Room
Zoom Link: [NATS Meeting Zoom Link](#)
Audio: Call in Number: 1 (312) 626-6799
Meeting ID: 921 578 9818
Passcode: 288785

Agenda

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Changes to the Agenda
3. Public Comment
4. Approval of August 26, 2025 Meeting Minutes (*Action*) pg. 4
5. SWMPC Staff Report
6. Local Agency Updates
 - 6.1. Construction Updates
 - 6.2. Planned Projects – Amendments (*Action*) pg. 5
 - 6.3. Community Updates (Developments, Land Use Changes, new Plans, Policies etc.)
7. Niles Dial A Ride Transit Updates
8. MDOT Updates
 - 8.1. Current and Planned MDOT Projects – *Jon Smith* pg. 11
 - 8.2. MDOT Project Amendments (*Action*) pg. 13
 - 8.3. Southwest Region Updates – *Adrain Stroupe*
 - 8.4. Statewide Updates – *Jim Sturdevant/Danniel Brooks*
9. Privilege of the Floor or Public Comment
10. Adjournment

Comments can be sent prior to the meeting to Brandon Kovnat at kovnatb@swmpc.org or 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

NATS Meeting Attendance

August 2024 – August 2025

Representative	Agency	TAC	POL	Aug-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Jan-25	Mar-25	May-25	Aug-25
Rich Murphy	City of Buchanan	x		P			P			
Tony McGhee	City of Buchanan									
Georgia Boggs	City of Niles (1)		x							
Serita Mason	City of Niles (2)		x	P	P		P		P	P
Rick Huff	City of Niles (3)	x		P	P	P	P	P		
Joe Ray	City of Niles Public Works	x		P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Dawn Bolock	Village of Edwardsburg	x	x		P	P			P	P
Butch Payton	Bertrand Township	x	x	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Lynn Ferris	Buchanan Township	x	x	P	P					
Bill Kasprzak	Howard Township	x	x	P	P	P	P	P		P
Doug Feters	Mason Township	x	x			P				
Susan Flowers	Milton Township	x	x	V	V					
Richard Cooper	Niles Charter Township	x	x	P		P	P	P	P	
Meryl Christensen	Ontwa Township	x	x					P	P	
Michael Majerek	Berrien Co. Board of Commissioners (1)		x	P	V					
Sharon Tyler	Berrien Co. Board of Commissioners (1)		x							
(Vacant)	Berrien Co. Board of Commissioners (2)		x							
Dan Fette	Berrien Co. Community Dev. Dept.	x								
Mark Heyliger	Berrien Co. Road Dept. (Policy)		x							
Kevin Stack	Berrien Co. Road Dept. (TAC)	X		P	P		P	P		P
John Humphry	Berrien County Planning Commission		x					P	P	P

P= In person; V = Virtual

NATS Meeting Attendance

August 2024 – August 2025

Representative	Agency	TAC	POL	Aug-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Jan-25	Mar-25	May-25	Aug-25
Roseann Marchetti	Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (1)		x	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
James Lawrence	Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (2)		x				P	P	P	P
Joe Bellina	Cass Co. Road Comm.	x		P	P	V	P		P	P
Sandra Seanor	Cass Co. Road Comm.		x	P	P	P	P			
Pepper Miller	City of Niles Dial-A-Ride Transit	x	x	P				P	P	P
Jim Sturdevant	MDOT - Bureau of Trans. Planning	x	x	P	P		P	V	V	
Josh Grab	MDOT - Southwest Region (A/t)	x	x			V				
Adrain Stroupe	MDOT - Southwest Region	Alt	Alt	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Jonathon Smith	MDOT - Transportation Service Center	x	x	V	V	V		V	V	V
(Vacant)	Kinexus	x								
Robert Torzynski	Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians	x	x							
Kim Gallagher	SWMPC	x	x		P	P	P	P	P	P
Brandon Kovnat	SWMPC	NV	NV	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Jon Roberts	MDOT - Modeling	NV								
Fred Featherly	MDOT - Office of Passenger Trans.	NV					V		V	V
Breanna Bukowski	EGLE - Air Quality	NV								
Christina Nicholaides	Federal Highway Administration	NV	NV			V				
Susan Weber	Federal Transit Administration	NV	NV							
Caitlin Stevens	MACOG	NV	NV							

P= In person; V = Virtual; NV = Non-voting member

NILES-BUCHANAN-CASS TRANSPORTATION STUDY
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND POLICY COMMITTEE
August 26, 2025 – Meeting Attendance

Committee Members in Attendance

Representative	NATS Member Organization	TAC	Pol
Serita Mason	City of Niles (2)		x
Joe Ray	City of Niles Public Works	x	
Dawn Bolock	Village of Edwardsburg	x	x
Butch Payton	Bertrand Township	x	x
Bill Kasprzak	Howard Township	x	x
Richard Cooper	Niles Charter Township	x	x
John Humphry	Berrien County Planning Commission		x
Kevin Stack	Berrien Co. Road Dept. (TAC)	X	
Roseann Marchetti	Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (1)		x
James Lawrence	Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (2)		x
Joe Bellina	Cass Co. Road Comm.	x	
Pepper Miller	City of Niles Dial-A-Ride Transit	x	x
Adrain Stroupe	MDOT - Southwest Region (Alternate)	x	x
Jonathon Smith (<i>virtual</i>)	MDOT - Transportation Service Center	x	x
Fred Featherly (<i>virtual</i>)	MDOT - Office of Passenger Trans.	NV	
Kim Gallagher	SWMPC	x	x
Brandon Kovnat	SWMPC	NV	NV

Others in Attendance: Zack Holt, *City of Niles*; Michelle Zawrucha, *MDOT Local Agency Planning*

Committee Members Absent

Representative	NATS Member Organization	TAC	Pol
Rich Murphy	City of Buchanan	x	
Tony McGhee	City of Buchanan		
Georgia Boggs	City of Niles (1)		x
Rick Huff	City of Niles (3)	x	
Lynn Ferris	Buchanan Township	x	x
Doug Fетters	Mason Township	x	x
Susan Flowers	Milton Township	x	x
Meryl Christensen	Ontwa Township	x	x
Sharon Tyler	Berrien Co. Board of Commissioners (1)		x
Dan Fette	Berrien Co. Community Dev. Dept.	x	
Mark Heyliger	Berrien Co. Road Dept. (Policy)		x
Sandra Seanor	Cass Co. Road Comm.		x
Jim Sturdevant	MDOT - Bureau of Trans. Planning	x	x
Robert Torzynski	Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians	x	x

Minutes
NILES-BUCHANAN-CASS TRANSPORTATION STUDY
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND POLICY COMMITTEE
August 26, 2025 – Niles District Library

Call to Order

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

Joe Ray announced that he had been appointed Deputy City Administrator for the City of Niles and introduced The new Interim Public Works Director, Zack Holt.

Changes to the Agenda

Jon Smith asked to add a vote on an amendment to an MDOT project to the agenda.

Motion to add a vote for an amendment to JN22144 to the agenda. Made by Pepper Miller and seconded by Joe Ray. **Motion approved.**

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes from the May 27, 2025 NATS Meeting

Brandon Kovnat mentioned that he made an error in the minutes on who had made the motions to approve the Unified Work Program.

Motion to approve the minutes from the May 27, 2025 NATS Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee Meeting. Made by Roseann Marchetti and seconded by Pepper Miller. **Motion approved.**

SWMPC Staff Report

Gallagher reminded agencies about the National Functional Classification Review. All road agencies confirmed they will not be submitting any NFC change requests for roads in the NATS area.

Gallagher presented the NATS areas employment data from MDOT which will be used for the 20255 Longe Range Plan's travel demand model. MDOT is requesting committee members review this data to ensure accurate employment figures for all locations in the NATS areas with 80 or more employees.

The FY 2026 proejct planning guide has been released. Michelle Zawrucha encouraged agencies with 2026 projects to request a ProejctWise folder as soon as possible, and to submit NEPA and cultural resources applications early.

Local Agency Updates

see packet page 6-7 for details

Berrien County Road Department – FY 2026 Red Bud Trail, Kevins Stack reported that the proejct is in design, and that NEPA has been submitted.

City of Niles – FY 2026 Pokagon St: Joe Ray reported that the GI was submitted with an estimate of approximately \$270,000. The proejct is currently prograde with \$391,078 in federal funds, but the maximum federal share at the current estimate is \$240,000, leaving \$150,000 that needs to be reprogramed.

Gallagher announced that the TAP funding for 2025-2028 was still available. Unlike other federal programs, the TAP funds can carryover, allowing up to \$309,000 to be used on a single project in FY 2028.

Transit Updates

Pepper Miller discussed Niles Dial a Ride's new route connecting to South Bend's bus system, Transpo, noting that there has been positive feedback and a doubling in ridership. She raised concern over the state budget, which is expected to provide a 24-28% match for federal operating funds, but covered 40% of eligible expenses when it was matching the CARES funds. The City of Niles millage renewal will be on the November ballot for the same rate it is at now.

Gallagher reported that the transit agency for the Benton Harbor Area, TCATA, will lose federal and state funding. Discussions are occurring about forming a new authority which could be countywide.

MDOT Updates

see packet page 8-9 for details

Jon Smith provided additional details on the status for the MDOT proejct currently under construction.

Amendment Request

Jon Smith presented the amendment request for JN22144. This is a FY 2026 preventive maintenance proejct (crack seal, chip seal, & fog seal) with multiple locations in Southwest Michigan. Due to costs being lower than initially expected, MDOT is requesting additional locations be added, totaling approximately 5 miles. Within the NATS are this includes extending limits or adding locations on US-12, M-139, M-51, and M-60. Smith said that he would coordinate with the City of Niles on the locations within the City.

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the amendment to the NATS Transportation Improvement Program, as presented. Made by Joe Ray and seconded by Kevin Stack. **Motion approved.**

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

Privilege of the Floor

Gallagher announced that Jim Sturdevant, the MDOT Statewide Planner serving NATS, is retiring.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:08 PM. The next NATS meeting is scheduled for Tuesday September 23, 2025.

Minutes recorded by Brandon Kovnat, SWMPC Transportation Planner

Pokagon Street

Job Number: 216119

Submitted by: Zach Holt

Date: 10/21/2025

Project Details

Fiscal Year:	2026
Responsible Agency	City of Niles
Project/Road Name	Pokagon St.
Limits	2nd Street to 5th street

Work Description

Mill and resurface

Programmed Project Cost

NATS Carbon Reduction	\$391,078	78.22%
Participating Local Match	\$108,922	21.78%
Total Participating Estimate	\$500,000	100.00%

Revised Project Costs

	Amount	Percent Change	
Engineer's Estimate	\$234,128.00	47%	From Programmed
Accepted Bid			From Estimate

Explanation for any cost changes:

Project Timeline

Project Milestone	Est. Date	Actual	Comments
ProjectWise folder requested		5/27/2025	
NEPA form 5323 Submitted		6/5/2025	
SHPO forms submitted		5/27/2025	
NEPA approval received		9/18/2025	
SHPO approval received		8/8/2025	
Grade Inspection package submitted		7/22/2025	
Grade Inspection meeting date		8/12/2025	
Final ROW Certification submitted		N/A	
Complete Biddable Package submitted		9/19/2025	
Letting Date	Jan/Feb 2026		
Construction Start	May 2026		
Construction End	June 2026		

Red Bud Trail

Job Number: 216111

Submitted by:

Date:

Project Details

Fiscal Year:	2026
Responsible Agency	Berrien County Road Department
Project/Road Name	Red Bud Trail
Limits	US-12 to Bertrand Road

Work Description

HMA Overlay

Programmed Project Cost

NATS STBG	\$167,922	80.06%
Participating Local Match	\$41,828	19.94%
Total Participating Estimate	\$209,750	100%

Revised Project Costs

	Amount	Percent Change	
Engineer's Estimate	\$675,593.06	300	From Programmed
Accepted Bid			From Estimate

Explanation for any cost changes:

Project Timeline

Project Milestone	Est. Date	Actual	Comments
ProjectWise folder requested		9/2025	
NEPA form 5323 Submitted		9/2025	
SHPO forms submitted		9/2025	
NEPA approval received	2/2025		
SHPO approval received	2/2025		
Grade Inspection package submitted		10/2025	
Grade Inspection meeting date	10/2025		
Final ROW Certification submitted			
Complete Biddable Package submitted			
Letting Date	03/2025		
Construction Start	05/2025		
Construction End	10/2025		

NATS Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Amendments

NATS FY 2026 STBG Funding – **Currently Programmed**

JN	Agency / Jurisdiction	Project/ Road Name	Limits	Federal	Local	Total
			Federal Allocation	\$559,085		
216111	Berrien CRD Buchanan Twp.	Red Bud Trl	US-12 to Bertrand Road	\$167,922	\$41,828	\$209,750
216119	City of Niles	Pokagon St	2nd Street to 5th street	\$391,078	\$108,922	\$500,000
			Total Programed	\$559,000		
			Balance	\$85		

NATS FY 2026 STBG Funding – **Proposed**

JN	Agency / Jurisdiction	Project/ Road Name	Limits	Federal	Local	Total
			Federal Allocation	\$559,085		
216111	Berrien CRD Buchanan Twp.	Red Bud Trl	US-12 to Bertrand Road	\$375,950 +\$208,0228	\$299,643 +\$257,815	\$675,593 +\$465,843
216119	City of Niles	Pokagon St	2nd Street to 5th street	\$183,135 -\$207,943	\$50,993 -\$57,929	\$234,1282 -\$265,872
			Total Programed	\$559,085		
			Balance	\$0		

Michigan Department of Transportation Projects

Within the NATS Planning Area

Updated October 17, 2025 by Jon Smith, MDOT Coloma TSC Engineer – smithj29@michigan.gov

Projects Completed

City of Niles and Niles Township

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

Status: Project complete.

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

Bertrand Township

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

Status: Project complete.

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

Bertrand Township and Niles Township

Project: S. US-31 from US-12 to Niles/Berrien Township Line - Concrete repairs and shoulder resurfacing (JN216911)

Status: Project complete.

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

Projects Currently Under Construction

Niles Township

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

Status: Construction in progress.

Est Con: Jul. 08, 2025 – Nov. 07, 2025

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: Project has been turned in for the 12/05/2025 letting.

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 for November turn in targeting 01/09/2026 letting.

City of Niles and Bertrand Township

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

Status: Project has been turned in for the 12/05/2025 letting.

Ontwa Township

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

Status: Design in progress. Targeting 03/06/2026 letting.

Michigan Department of Transportation Projects

Within the NATS Planning Area

Updated October 17, 2025 by Jon Smith, MDOT Coloma TSC Engineer – smithj29@michigan.gov

City of Niles and Niles Township

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

Status: Project has been turned in for the 11/07/2025 letting.

Projects Scheduled for Construction in 2027

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.

Projects in TIP with an Unknown Construction Year

Bertrand Township

Project: US-12 from Mayflower Road to M-139 – Mill and Asphalt Overlay (JN214938)

Status: This project is being delayed further outside of the 5-year program. This section was recently added to JN221444 for a chip seal as part of a recent amendment.

Bertrand Township

Project: M-139 from US-12 to M-140 – Mill and Asphalt Overlay (JN214935)

Status: This project is being delayed further outside of the 5-year program. In its place MDOT has programmed 2 fully state funded projects (224956 M-funded Non-Freeway Resurfacing Program and 224957 M-funded set aside maintenance fund) in its place for a single course mill and resurfacing including sidewalk ramp upgrades.

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 – October 28, 2025

Fiscal year: 2026 **Phase:** PE & CON **Job Number:** 225462
Project: Traffic signing and delineation upgrades at high-risk curves
Location: Multiple locations within the NATS Area on M-51 north of Niles, M-60 in Howard Township, and US-12 just east of Edwardsburg
Amendment: Add PE & CON phases for a new project

Phase	Federal HSIP	State	Total
PE	\$2,082	\$231	\$2,313
CON	\$28,098	\$3,122	\$31,220
Total	\$30,180	\$3,353	\$33,533

Only costs within the NATS area are shown above

Fiscal year: 2028 **Phase:** CON **Job Number:** 202654
Project: Non-freeway sign replacements
Location: Multiple locations within Cass County
Amendment: Cost estimate is being increased based on the prices of other comparable projects

	Current			Proposed		
	Federal STBG	State	Total	Federal STBG	State	Total
CON	\$1,487,500	\$0	\$1,487,500	\$2,300,000	\$0	\$2,300,000

Total costs shown above. Costs with the NATS areas remain the same at \$111,500