

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

October 22, 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 August 17, 2024 Meeting *Action* Pg. 2
5. Staff Report
6. Local Agency Updates pg. 5
7. Transit Updates
8. MDOT Updates
 - 8.1. MDOT Project Updates page 9
 - 8.2. MDOT Amendments Requests *Action* page 11
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 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 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

Gumwood Realignment Project Status

Date: 10/07/2024

For: NATS

From: Joe Bellina on behalf of the Cass County Road Commission

Currently Programed Project Information

Fiscal Year:	2024	MDOT Job Number:	218476
Responsible Agency:	Cass County Road Commission		
Project/Road Name:	Gumwood Realignment		
Limits:	North of Redfield intersection		

Programed Project Cost

Work Description: Realign Gumwood Rd. to replace the current two offset intersections with a single 4-way roundabout intersection.

Total Participating Cost:	\$1,165,000
Federal NATS STBG:	\$364,151
Federal HIP	\$23,324
Federal STBG – Rural / RTF	\$532,244
Local Match:	\$245,281

Revised Project Costs

	Amount	Percent change
Total Obligated Amount	\$1,077,559.80	7.5% under the program estimate
Accepted Bid	\$939,227.27	12.9% under Engineer’s Estimate and 19.4% less than the programed amount

Explanation for cost changes: [enter a brief explanation for why the cost has changed such as if it was due to a change in work/scope or due due to revised material/labor estimates]:

Project Status

Project Milestone	Estimated Date	Actual Date Completed	Comments
Submit program application to LAP		5/21/24	Update req. by MDOT
Submit program NEPA form 5323 to LAP		2/10/23	
Receive NEPA Approval		5/21/24	
Receive SHPO Approval		8/1/23	
Submit Grade Inspection packages to LAP		5/5/23	
Grade Inspection meeting date		5/24/23	
Submit Final ROW Certification to LAP		11/6/23	
Submit the Complete Biddable Package to LAP		6/4/24	
Letting Date		7/12/24	
Construction Start		8/14/24	
Construction End	End of Oct.		Must complete by Nov. 29 per contract

Additional Comments on project Status:

Elkhart Road Project Update

Job Number: 216106

Filled out by: Joe Bellina

Date: 10/07/2024

Project Details

Fiscal Year	2025
Responsible Agency	Cass County Road Commission
Project/Road Name	Elkhart Road
Limits	May Street to Village of Edwardsburg limits

Work Description

1.5" HMA Mill and Overlay

Programed Cost

Total Participating Estimate	\$123,202	100%
Federal STBG	\$89,849	72.93%
Local Match	\$33,353	27.07%

Revised Project Costs

	Amount	Percent Increase
Latest Estimate		
Accepted Bid		

Explanation for cost changes: *[enter a brief explanation for why the cost has changed such as if it was due to a change in work/scope or due to revised material/labor estimates]:*

Project Timeline

Project Milestone	Est. Date	Actual Date Completed	Comments
Request ProjectWise folder	10/14/2024		
Submit Sec. 106 Cultural Resources form	10/31/2024		
Submit NEPA form 5323	10/31/2024		
Receive SHPO approval	12/31/2024		
Receive NEPA approval	1/31/2025		
Submit Grade Inspection package	11/15/2024		
Hold Grade Inspection meeting	12/15/2024		
Receive final property acquisition certification	12/15/2024		
Submit complete biddable package	1/31/2025		
Letting date	4/2025		
Construction start	6/2025		
Construction end	8/2025		

Additional Information on project Status:

Bertrand Road Project Update

Job Number: 215947

Filled out by: Kevin Stack

Date: 10/10/2024

Project Details

Fiscal Year	2025
Responsible Agency	Berrien County Road Department
Project/Road Name	Bertrand Rd.
Limits	US-31 to Red Bud Trail

Work Description

HMA trench & widen with overlay

Programed Cost

Total Participating Estimate	\$457,570	100%
Federal STBG	\$333,698	72.93%
Local Match	\$123,872	27.07%

Revised Project Costs

	Amount	Percent Increase
Latest Estimate	\$711,354	+55.5%
Accepted Bid		

Explanation for cost changes: *[enter a brief explanation for why the cost has changed such as if it was due to a change in work/scop or due to revised material/labor estimates]:*

Project Timeline

Project Milestone	Est. Date	Actual Date Completed	Comments
Request ProjectWise folder	09/24	09/24	
Submit Sec. 106 Cultural Resources form	09/24	09/24	
Submit NEPA form 5323	09/24	09/24	
Receive SHPO approval			
Receive NEPA approval			
Submit Grade Inspection package			
Hold Grade Inspection meeting			
Receive final property acquisition certification			
Submit complete biddable package			
Letting date			
Construction start			
Construction end			

Additional Information on project Status: Cost increase will require an amendment at a future NATS meeting

Sycamore Street Project Update

Job Number: 216108

Filled out by: Joe Ray

Date: 10/07/2024

Project Details

Fiscal Year	2025
Responsible Agency	City of Niles
Project/Road Name	Sycamore St.
Limits	9th Street to 13th Street

Work Description

Mill and resurface

Programed Cost

Total Participating Estimate	\$162,805	100%
Federal STBG	\$118,731	72.93%
Local Match	\$44,074	27.07%

Revised Project Costs

	Amount	Percent Increase
Latest Estimate	203,507.00	23%
Accepted Bid		

Explanation for cost changes: *[enter a brief explanation for why the cost has changed such as if it was due to a change in work/scop or due to revised material/labor estimates]:*

Project Timeline

Project Milestone	Est. Date	Actual Date Completed	Comments
Request ProjectWise folder			
Submit Sec. 106 Cultural Resources form			
Submit NEPA form 5323	9/13/24	9/19/23	
Receive SHPO approval			
Receive NEPA approval			
Submit Grade Inspection package	10/7/24		
Hold Grade Inspection meeting	11/6/24		
Receive final property acquisition certification			
Submit complete biddable package			
Letting date	3/7/25		
Construction start	Summer 2025		
Construction end			

Additional Information on project Status:

Michigan Department of Transportation Projects

Within the NATS Planning Area

Updated October 8, 2024 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 is in the final stages. **3rd Street intersection on the south side will close on Oct 14 for 2-3 weeks**, which the County, Township, and City all approved last month. completion date is officially Nov 14.

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

NATS Area

Project: Regionwide signal upgrades (JN209414)

Status: One location left for underground work. Strain poles have been installed in Niles. Sidewalk work in progress.

Est Con: Dec. 17, 2023 – Dec. 03, 2024

Bertrand Township

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

Status: Paving for the detour route will occur in 2024. Mainline US-12 work will occur in 2025.

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

Milton Township

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

Status: Initial construction was delayed; will begin as soon as the contractor schedules the work. Estimated to take 3 days to install the signal.

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: 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: 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 October 8, 2024 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.

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.

Ontwa Township

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

Status: Design will begin soon.

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 Safet 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

MDOT Amendment Requests

For Projects within the NATS Area – October 22, 2024

Fiscal year: PE &ROW-2025 CON-2026 **Phase:** PE, ROW & CON **Job Number:** 221615
Project: Shoulder Widening on US-12
Location: US-12 from the West village limit of Edwardsburg to Lane Rd & Brady Rd to Five Points
Amendment: Add PE, ROW, & CON phases for a new project

Phase	Federal Carbon Reduction program	State	Total
PE	\$532,025	\$117,975	\$650,000
ROW	\$61,388	\$13,613	\$75,000
CON	\$5,299,788	\$1,175,212	\$6,475,000
Total	\$5,893,201	\$1,306,800	\$,7200,000

Fiscal year: PE 2025 – CON 2026 **Phase:** PE & CON **Job Number:** 221627
Project: Shoulder Widening on M-51
Location: M-51 From White St to West of Pokagon Hwy
Amendment: Add PE, CON phases for a new project

Phase	Federal Carbon Reduction program	State	Total
PE	\$98,220	\$314,721	\$120,000
CON	\$1,419,279	\$21,780	\$1,734,000
Total	1,517,499	\$336,501	\$1,854,000