

# NILES BUCHANAN CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (NATS)

Joint Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) & Policy Committee Minutes

**May 24 2022, Niles District Library & via Zoom**

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	V	V		V	V							
Berrien Co. Board of Commissioners (2)	(vacant)		x	A											
Berrien Co. Community Dev. Dept.	Dan Fette	x		A	A		A	A							
Berrien Co. Planning Commission	Eric Lester, M.D.		x	V	V		V	V							
Berrien Co. Road Dept. (Policy)	(vacant)		x	A	A										
Berrien Co. Road Dept. (TAC)	Kevin Stack	X		A	A		A	IP							
Bertrand Township	Butch Payton	x	x	V	V		IP	A							
Buchanan Township	Lynn Ferris	x	x	A	A		A	A							
Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (1)	Robert Benjamin		x	A	A		A	IP							
Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (2)	Roseann Marchetti		x	P	IP		IP	IP							
Cass Co. Planning Commission	(vacant)	x													
Cass Co. Road Comm. (Policy)	Sandra Seanor		x	A	V		IP	IP							
Cass Co. Road Comm. (TAC)	Joe Bellina (TAC Chair)	x		A	V		A	IP							
City of Buchanan	Don Ryman		x	A	A		A	IP							
City of Buchanan	Heather Grace	x		A	A		A	A							
City of Niles (1)	Georgia Boggs		x	A	A		A	A							
City of Niles (2)	Serita Mason		x	V	V		V	V							
City of Niles (3)	Jessica Nelson		x	A	A		A	A							
City of Niles Community Dev. Director	(vacant)	x													
City of Niles Dial-A-Ride Transit	Pepper Miller	x	x		V		IP	A							
City of Niles Public Works Dir./Airport	Joe Ray	x		V	V		A	A							
Howard Township	Bill Kasprzak	x	x	P	IP		A	IP							
Kinexus	(vacant)	x													
Mason Township	Doug Fetters	x	x	A	A		A	A							
MDOT - Bureau of Trans. Planning	Jim Sturdevant	x	x	V	V		V	IP							
MDOT - Southwest Region	Brian Sanada	x	x	P	IP		IP	IP							
MDOT - Southwest Region (Alternate)	Amy Lipset	Alt	Alt	A	A		A	A							
MDOT - Transportation Service Center	Jonathon Smith	x	x	V	V		A	V							
Milton Township	Susan Flowers	x	x	A	A		A	A							
Niles Charter Township	Richard Cooper (P. Ch.)	x	x	P	IP		IP	IP							
Ontwa Township	Dawn Bolock	x	x	P	A		A	A							
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians	(vacant)	x	x												
Village of Edwardsburg	Dennis Peak	x	x	A	A		A	A							
Federal Highway Administration	Andy Pickard	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		A	V		A	A							
Michiana Area Council of Governments	Caitlin Stevens	NV	NV	A	A		A	A							
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Kim Gallagher	x	x	P	IP		IP	IP							
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Brandon Kovnat	NV	NV	P	IP		IP	IP							

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

Others in Person: Mike Baker, Clay Weaver and Rich Murphy – City of Buchanan

Others joining via Zoom: Anita Boughner, MDOT Statewide Planning, Steve Carlisle, Wightman & Associates

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

2. Changes to the Agenda

None

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approve Minutes from April 26, 2022 Meeting

**Motion** to approve the minutes from the April 26, 2022 NATS combined Policy and Technical Advisory Committee meeting. Made by Roseann Marchetti and seconded by Bill Kasprzak. **Motion approved.**

5. Staff report

**MDOT Federal Buyout Announcement:** Gallagher discussed a new law that requires MDOT to exchange (purchase) a local agency's federal STBG funds for state funds. The exchange rate will be 90 cents for each federal dollar. MDOT will have limited budget for this program which was set within the law. Requests to MDOT will be first come first serve; this has raised a concern that it might sell out very quickly. To qualify the project must awarded federal funds through the MPOs TIP approval process. The benefit is that the agency will have up to three years to complete the project, unlike the federal funding which must be obligated in the FY and spent within one year. Agencies will be able to skip the MDOT letting process (Local Agency Programs / LAP). Certain other regulations such as federal wage laws, NEPA will still apply. Gallagher encouraged agencies to read the law that was passed and to wait for MDOT's final guidance. Bellina said that exchanging funds has saved up to 25% compared to going through LAP.

**Michigan's 2021 Roads and Bridges Annual Report:** Kovnat gave an overview of the report. It's used as an annual scorecard for the state's road & bridge investments, which TAMC is required to publish. Kovnat added that he had more local data which SWMPC published in reports in June.

6. Project Updates & Amendments

**Local Road Agencies:** Baker explained that Buchanan's FY 2023 Front Street project is the federally funded portion of a much larger Downtown reconstruction project. It will include multiple streets, water, and sewer replacements, and a traffic signal replacement (fund by CMAQ).

Veerland gave an update on the McCoy Creek Trail extension. Buchanan has applied for multiple grants beyond the NATS TAP funding. The trail will connect Buchanan to The River St. Joe Brewery. Additional grants and future plans are to extend the trail along Walton Road to connect to the Indian Michigan River Valley Trail and the City of Niles/

Sanada said that the Ontwa Complete Street project design was almost complete. He said they had a minor right of Way issue on the south side of US-12 they were working on

Bellina said that the paving of Mason Street was scheduled for mid-June.

The roundabout at Gumwood & Redfield is delayed due to a right of way issue. Bellinna has worked with the MDOT safety division to allow the safety grant to be used next year instead. MDOT could use this delay as a factor in scoring future Cass County Road Commission safety applications.

**Niles Dial A Ride:** None.

**MDOT:** Kovnat presented MDOT's Amendment request (See packet). Smith added that the project on US-12 was initially planned to have two separate one course overlays in different years. Last year the plans were altered and a two-course overlay was applied. Therefore, they are able to shift the work type in 2023 to focus on needed shoulder work.

**Motion** for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program as contained in the meeting packet. Made by Brian Sanada, and seconded by Joe Bellina. **Motion approved.**

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

#### 7. New Business

**FY 2023 NATS Unified Work Program:** Gallagher explained that the Unified Work Program (UWP) is the annual listing of work SWMPC staff will undertake on behalf of NATS. The UWP is one of four documents a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is required to produce by law. The UWP contains both federal planning requirements and additional local initiatives. The UWP includes the budget for staff divided among the major work categories. In the past SWMPC has always included extra emphasis on multi modal planning. This year FHWA now requires this to be identified in the UWP, with a budget amount listed. Once the NATS committee approve the UWP, it will be presented to the SWMPC Board for a vote.

**Motion** for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve The NATS FY 2023 Unified Work Program and submit the UWP to the SWMPC board with any minor changes requested by MDOT. Made by Jim Sturdevant, and seconded by Kevin Stack. **Motion approved.**

**Motion** by the Policy Committee to approve the recommendation from the Technical advisory Committee. Made by Bill Kasprzak, and seconded by Sandra Seanor. **Motion approved.**

**FY 2023-2026 NATS Transportation Improvement Program:** Gallagher explain that the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a listing of all federal surface transportation programs within the NATS area. The TIP document includes the project list, explanation of the funding sources, and an analysis of projects and how they will contribute to achieving the federal transportation performance measures. Gallagher said that if the NATS Committees approve the TIP, it will then be posted for public review, before it is then voted on by the SWMPC board on June 21, 2022.

**Motion** for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve The Policy Committee approve opening a public comment period for the NATS FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program and submit the TIP to the SWMPC board for approval at their June 21st meeting along with any minor changes requested by MDOT or the public. Made by Jim Sturtevant and seconded by Bill Kaszpak. **Motion approved.**

**Motion** by the Policy Committee to approve the recommendation from the Technical advisory Committee. Made by Roseann Marchetti, and seconded by Sandra Seanor. **Motion approved**

8. Privilege of the Floor or Public Comment

Kovnat thanked the members of the project review subcommittee for their work on helping reach a consensus for a fiscally constrained project list. Bellina added that he enjoyed working with the NATS group and that they are able to make concessions to focus on the good of the entire region.

9. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 2:35 pm. The Next Meeting is scheduled for June 28, 2022 at 1:30 PM

*Minutes compiled by Brandon Kovnat, SWMPC Associate Planner*