

NILES BUCHANAN CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (NATS)

Special Virtual Meeting of the Technical Advisory and Policy Committee

April 13, 2021, via Zoom

Attendance

Agency	TAC	POL	Representative
Berrien County Planning Commission		X	Eric Lester, M.D.
Berrien County Road Department	X		Kevin Stack
Cass County board of Commissioners		X	Roseann Marchetti
Cass County Road Commission	X		Joe Bellina
City of Niles	X		Joe Ray
City of Niles		X	Serita Mason
City of Niles		X	Jessica Nelson
Niles Dial A Ride	X	X	Kelly Getman-Dissette
MDOT, Statewide Planning	X	X	Jim Sturdevant
Milton Township	X	X	Susan Flowers
Ontwa Township	X	X	Dawn Bolock
Niles Charter Township	X	X	Richard Cooper
Wightman & Associates			Suzannah Deneau
MDOT, Statewide Planning			Anita Boughner
SWMPC - Staff			Brandon Kovnat

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Technical Advisory Chair, Joe Bellina, called the meeting to Order at 2 PM. Brandon Kovnat took roll call.

2. Changes to the Agenda

Kovnat asked to remove the staff report from the agenda.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of the March 23 NATS Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from the March 23, 2021 joint Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee meeting. Made by Serita Mason and seconded by Jessica Nelson. Motion approved.

Marchetti said she believed that minutes of a regular meeting should only be approved at the next regular meeting, not at a special meeting. Kovnat responded that he added the approval of the March 23, 2021 meeting minutes because business from that meeting directly relates to the business of this meeting.

5. New Business – Discussion of the Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP)

Joe Ray said that projects that are on the illustrative list, at least for the City of Niles, are ready to go. He added that opening a new call for projects, is a large task, especially if it is only for \$269,000.

Ray said that it was possible to split the funding between the illustrative projects in the city of Niles and the City of Buchanan if each agency contributes a 30% match. Ray advocated for a larger illustrative list in the future. He said he thought there would be more funding from the infrastructure bill and additional funding for municipalities for COVID relief. Therefore, he wanted NATS to be prepared for sudden funding increases in the future.

There was a concern about whether Buchanan was able to fund their illustrative project with a 30% match. Ray commented that since there was no response by email and there was no representation from Buchanan at the special meeting, he would propose funding the Lake Street Project in Niles utilizing \$147,549 in HIP funding and opening a call for the remaining \$122,049 amount in HIP funding.

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee award \$147,549 in HIP to be used to fund 100% of the Lake Street project in the City of Niles. A call for projects will be issued for the remaining \$122,049 in HIP funds. Made by Joe Ray and seconded by Dawn Bolock. **Motion approved unanimously by a roll call vote.**

Motion for the Policy Committee to approve the recommendation from the Technical Advisory Committee. Made by Serita Mason and seconded by Roseann Marchetti. **Motion approved unanimously by a roll call vote.**

Boughner said that to add a project to the TIP another motion should be made that specifies that there would be a TIP amendment.

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee to approve an amendment to the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program to add the Lake Street Project funded with 100% Highway Infrastructure Program funds. Made by Kelly Getman-Disette and seconded by Dawn Bolock. **Motion approved.**

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

Kovnat went through the timeline for the call for projects. Bellina recommended that the project review committee should be the same as the previous one that met in 2018 for the 2020-2023 project review. Kovnat mentioned that one of the members in 2018, Doug Feters, was no longer a NATS committee member. Bellina asked if another township representative would like to volunteer to join the committee. Since no one volunteered, it was agreed that a five-member committee would be sufficient.

There was a question about if this call for projects would be used to create a new enlarged Illustrative list. Kovnat replied that the NATS 2023-2026 call for projects would be sent in June 2021 and this would be a better opportunity to get a revised illustrative list. It would also allow agencies a longer time to review their needs and make decisions about future projects.

6. **Privilege of the Floor or Public Comment**

None.

7. **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 2:40 PM.

Minutes compiled by Brandon Kovnat, SWMPC Associate Planner