

NILES BUCHANAN CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (NATS)

Joint Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) & Policy Committee Minutes

August 25, 2020, via Zoom

NATS MEMBER ORG./POSITION	MEMBERS (2019)	TAC	POL	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Berrien Co. Board of Commissioners (1)	Michael Majerek		x	P	P		P	P			P				
Berrien Co. Board of Commissioners (2)	(vacant)		x								A				
Berrien Co. Community Dev. Dept.	Evan Smith	x		P	A		A	A			P				
Berrien Co. Planning Commission	Eric Lester, M.D.		x	P	P		A	P			P				
Berrien Co. Road Dept. (Policy)	(vacant)		x					A							
Berrien Co. Road Dept. (TAC)	Kevin Stack	X		P	P		A	A							
Bertrand Township	Butch Payton	x	x	A	A		P	P			P				
Buchanan Dial-A-Ride	Kim O'Haver	x	x	A	P		P	A							
Buchanan Township	Lynn Ferris	x	x	P	P		A	A			A				
Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (1)	Michael Grice		x	P	P		P	P			A				
Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (2)	Roseann Marchetti		x	P	P		P	P			P				
Cass Co. Planning Commission	(vacant)	x						A			A				
Cass Co. Road Comm. (Policy)	Sandra Seanor		x	P	P		A	A			P				
Cass Co. Road Comm. (TAC)	Joe Bellina (TAC Chair)	x		A	P		P	P			P				
City of Buchanan	Don Ryman	x	x	P	P		P	P			A				
City of Niles (1)	Georgia Boggs		x	A	P		A	A			A				
City of Niles (2)	Serita Mason		x	P	A		A	P			P				
City of Niles (3)	Jessica Nelson		x	A	A		P	P			P				
City of Niles Community Dev. Director	(vacant)	x													
City of Niles Dial-A-Ride Transit	Kelly Getman-Dissette	x	x	P	A		P	P			P				
City of Niles Public Works Dir./Airport	Joe Ray	x		P	A		A	A			P				
Howard Township	Bill Kasprzak	x	x	P	P		P	P			P				
Kinexus	(vacant)	x													
Mason Township	Doug Fetters	x	x	A	A		A	A			A				
MDOT - Bureau of Trans. Planning	Jim Sturdevant	x	x	A	P		P	A			P				
MDOT - Southwest Region	Brian Sanada	x	x	P	P		P	A			P				
MDOT - Southwest Region (Alternate)	Amy Lipset	Alt	Alt	A	A		A	A			A				
MDOT - Transportation Service Center	Jonathon Smith	x	x	P	P		P	A			P				
Milton Township	Susan Flowers	x	x	P	P		P	P			A				
Niles Charter Township	Richard Cooper (P. Ch.)	x	x	P	P		P	P			P				
Ontwa Township	Dawn Bolock	x	x	A	P		A	P			P				
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians	(vacant)	x	x												
Village of Edwardsburg	Dennis Peak	x	x	A	A		A	A			A				
Federal Highway Administration	Andy Pickard	NV	NV	A	A		A	A			A				
Federal Transit Administration	Susan Weber	NV	NV	A	A		A	A			A				
EGLE - Air Quality	Breanna Bukowski	NV		A	A		A	A			A				
MDOT - Modeling	Jon Roberts	NV		A	A		A	A			A				
MDOT - Office of Passenger Trans.	(vacant)	NV									A				
Michiana Area Council of Governments	Caitlin Stevens	NV	NV	A	A		A	A			A				
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Kim Gallagher	NV	NV	A	A		P	P			P				
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Brandon Kovnat	NV	NV	P	P		P	P			P				

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

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Technical Advisory Committee Chair Joe Bellina called the meeting to Order at 1:30 pm. Kim Gallagher led roll call.

2. Changes to the Agenda

None.

3. Public comment

None.

4. Approval of the Minutes from the April 21, 2020 NATS Meeting

Motion to approve the minutes from the May 26, 2020 joint Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee meeting. Made by Serita Mason and seconded Roseann Marchetti. **Motion approved.**

5. SWMPC Staff Report

Gallagher gave an update on the US Census response rate of communities in the NATS area. She said that Census workers were conducting fieldwork in Berrien County. Marchetti confirmed that census workers were out in Cass County as well.

Kovnat presented on the financial impacts to transportation funding due to COVID-19. Bellina said that there is a 2-3 month delay between when funds are collected and when they funds are send to local road agencies.

Kovnat explained that he only discussed state funding and not federal funds. Currently congress adds general funds to pay for transportation. How congress will fund road repairs in the future is unknown but there is no indication yet that federal transportation programs will change due to COVID-19.

Kovnat announced that the State was launching a bicycle safety campaign with video and radio ads about the 3-foot passing law.

6. Agency and Project Updates

6.1. Public Transit

Niles Dial A Ride: Kelly Getman-Dissette said that in the spring ridership dropped by 35%. Ridership is now down by 20% compared to the previous couple of years. The office is closed to the public except by appointment. Initially they installed clear shower curtains on buses for protection but they have replaced these with a clear plastic door around drivers. She said Niles Dial A Ride was supposed to have a triennial review but it was pushed back.

Berrien Bus: Evan Smith reminded the committee that Berrien Bus had been contracting with Transportation Management Inc. (TMI) to operate bus service, but TMI has ceased business. Berrien Bus operations are now directly part of Berrien County and the bus drivers are now Berrien County Employees. Berrien Bus has also taken over the service area of Buchanan Dial A Ride.

6.2. Local Road Agencies

City of Niles: Joe Ray said that The Lake Street Bridge project was being delayed by Amtrak. He elaborated that Amtrak had the plans for this project 20 months ago and have finally come back with numerous items, which Ray has responded to. Ray said he was working with Congressman Upton to coordinate with Amtrak. Ray added that the city had paid the \$90,000 fee Amtrak requires to have workers signal trains in the work zone. Yet despite this Amtrak has not yet issue a permit to proceed.

The Project has already been let coming in at approximately \$1 million, which is about \$300,000 above the original programmed amount. The city has the funds in its major street fund to cover the difference.

Cass County Road Commission: Bellina said he bid the Redfield Road safety project twice and did not like the bids so they are converting it to a force account project (road commission employees will do construction directly). The Lake Street project was complete. The environmental review for Barron Lake Road project was accepted.

Berrien county Road Department: No Updates were given.

6.3. MDOT

There was no additional update beyond what is included in the packet.

7. New Business – TIP Amendments

Kovnat presented the 2021 Amendment schedule.

Kovnat briefly explained the proposed amendments to the TIP. *See presentation for full details on the amendments*

Smith explained that there is no explicit cost change for the carpool lot resurfacing but that combing the car pool lot with the freeway reconstruction is much cheaper than bidding a carpool lot resurfacing alone.

Motion for the technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the amendment to the NATS 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program as contained in the meeting packet. Made by Kelly Getman-Dissette and seconded by Bill Kasprzak. **Motion approved.**

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

8. Privilege of the Floor or Public Comment

Sturdevant said that the FY 2021 Unified Work Program was approved by FHWA

Kasprzak said he thought that the Barron Lake road project would continue to Pokagon Highway, not Cook Street as was shown. Bellina said that Barron Lake would indeed be resurface to Pokagon Highway, but the portion from Cook Street to Pokagon Highway would be constructed separately and not use any federal funds and thus is not part of the federally funded project discussed at the meeting.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm. the next meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2020 at 1:30 to be conducted via conference call.

Minutes compiled by Brandon Kovnat, SWMPC Associate Transportation planner