

NILES-BUCHANAN-CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE and POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday August 26, 2025

1:30 pm

In Person: Niles District Library – 620 E Main St, Niles, MI 49120
Lower-Level Community Room

Web: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85290704945?pwd=Z9eLcfERh3nuFWNkr5DlAQcDGige1o.1>

Audio: Call in Number: 1 (312) 626-6799
Meeting ID: 852 9070 4945
Passcode: 273032

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Changes to the Agenda
3. Public Comment
4. Approval of the Minutes from the May 27, 2025 Meeting *Action* pg. x
5. SWMPC Staff Report - Travel Demand Model Employment Data
6. Local Agency Updates pg. x
7. Transit Updates
8. MDOT Updates pg. x
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 TRANSPORTATION STUDY
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND POLICY COMMITTEE
 May 27, 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 Department	X	
Dawn Bollock	Village of Edwardsburg	X	X
Butch Payton	Bertrand Township	X	X
Richard Cooper	Niles Charter Township	X	X
Meryl Christensen	Ontwa Township	X	X
John Humphry	Berrien County Planning Commission		
Roseann Marchetti	Cass County Board of Commissioners (1)		X
James Lawrence	Cass County Board of Commissioners (2)		X
Roseann Marchetti	Cass County Planning Commission		X
Joe Bellina	Cass County Road Commission	X	
Pepper Miller	Niles Dial A Ride Transit	X	X
Jonathon Smith <i>(Virtual)</i>	MDOT, Coloma TSC	X	X
Fred Featherly <i>(Virtual)</i>	MDOT, Office of Passenger Transit	X	
Adrain Stroupe	MDOT, Southwest Region	X	X
Jim Sturdevant <i>(Virtual)</i>	MDOT, Statewide Planning	X	X
Kim Gallagher	SWMPC	X	X

Others in Attendance: Brandon Kovnat, *SWMPC*; Reese, *MDOT Engineering Intern*

Committee Members Absent

Representative	NATS Member Organization	TAC	Pol
Rich Murphy or Tony McGhee	City of Buchanan	X	X
Georgia Boggs	City of Niles		X
Ric Huff	City of Niles		X
Lynn Ferris	Buchanan Township	X	X
Bill Kazprzak	Howard Charter Township	X	X
Doug Feters	Mason Township	X	X
Susan Flowers	Milton Township	X	X
Sharon Tyler	Berrien County Board of Commissioners (1)		X
Dan Fette	Berrien County Community Development Department	X	
Mark Heyliger	Berrien County Road Department	X	X
Kevin Stack	Berrien County Road Department	X	
Sandra Seanor	Cass County Road Commission		X
Jon Roberts	MDOT, Transportation Modeling	X	
Andy Pickard	FHWA, Michigan Division	X	X
Cecilia Crenshaw	FTA	X	X
Caitlyn Stevens	Michiana Area Council of Governments	X	X
Robert Torzynski	Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians	X	X

Minutes
NILES-BUCHANAN-CASS TRANSPORTATION STUDY
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND POLICY COMMITTEE
May 27, 2025 – Niles District Library

Call to Order and Roll Call

Policy Committee Chair, Richard Cooper, called the meeting to order at 1:32 PM and Kim Gallagher took roll call.

Changes to the Agenda

None.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of the Minutes from the March 25, 2025 Meeting

There was an error in the meeting attendance record which will be corrected.

Motion to approve the minutes from the March 25, 2025 NATS Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee Meeting with corrections. Made by Joe Ray and seconded by Roseann Marchetti. **Motion approved.**

Staff Report

Gallagher reported that PASER data collection on federal-aid roads will take place this summer in the southern half of Berrien and Cass counties. Funding for PASER collection on non-federal-aid roads was awarded to the cities of Bridgman and Buchanan, as well as the Van Buren County Road Commission.

NATS FY 2026 Unified Work Program

Gallagher gave an overview of the Unified Work Program (UWP), which outlines the work SWMPC staff will complete for NATS in FY 2026. She mentioned that 81.85% of funding comes from FHWA, with the 18.15% match provided by jurisdiction with the Twi CATS area based on population.

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the TwinCATS FY 2026 Unified Work Program (UWP) including any minor changes requested by MDOT. Made by Roger Seeley and seconded by Terrie Smith. **Motion approved.**

Motion for the Policy Committee to approve the recommendation from the Technical Advisory committee. Made by John Humphry and seconded by Tim Drews. **Motion approved.**

Local Agency Updates

Joe Ray reported that the City of Niles' 2025 Sycamore Street project is scheduled to begin on June 9.

Brandon Kovnat noted that the Berrien County Road Department's 2025 Bertrand Road project was let on April 4, with the low bid coming in 16% under the programmed amount.

Kovnat announced that the City of Niles was awarded funding for 2027 to repair the Broadway/Grant Street bridge over the St. Joseph River.

Transit Updates

Pepper Miller reported that Niles DART has partnered with Transpo, South Bend's transit provider, to improve regional connections. Beginning June 2, a coordinated transfer will allow for 3–4 daily trips between Niles and South Bend, enabling same-day round trips for the first time. Riders will be able to access key destinations such as the airport, hospital, mall, Amtrak, and the South Shore Line to Chicago.

She also noted that ongoing construction on Red Bud Trail is making it difficult to reach many homes, creating challenges for riders.

MDOT Updates

See Meeting Packet Page 6-7 for MDOT project updates.

There were no questions about the MDOT projects.

Bridge and Pavement Performance Measures Targets

See packet page 8-11 for details on the performance targets

Kovnat presented the adjusted transportation performance targets for bridge and pavement conditions.

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the policy committee approve the resolution for NATS to adopt and support the statewide adjusted 4-year performance targets set by MDOT for the Percentage of Pavements of the Interstate in Good Condition (PCM), Percentage of Pavements of the Non-Interstate NHS in Good Condition (PCM), and Percentage of NHS Bridges in Poor Condition. Made by Jim Lawrence Smith and seconded by Butch Payton.

Motion approved.

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.**

2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Gallagher gave a brief overview of the NATS 2026–2029 TIP, explaining the development process and highlighting its anticipated impact. The TIP is currently under MDOT review, and minor revisions may be requested. Once approved by NATS, the TIP will go to the SWMPC board for approval on June 17 before being submitted to FHWA.

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee adopt the NATS FY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), including any minor changes requested by MDOT or the public, and submit the TIP to the SWMPC board for approval at their June 17 meeting. Made by Joe Ray and seconded by Pepper Miller. **Motion approved.**

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.**

Privilege of the Floor or Public Comment

Adrian Stroupe shared that there was a new pilot program under the Transportation alternatives program which will focus on broader community benefits including financial and health impacts. Seven communities were selected for the pilot, one from each MDOT region. The Village of Bronson was selected for Southwest Michigan, due to its poor health rankings. The project will identify gaps in their non-motorized network focusing on access to healthcare.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:27 PM. The next NATS meeting is scheduled for Tuesday June 24, 2025.

Minutes recorded by Brandon Kovnat, SWMPC Transportation Planner

Sycamore Street Project Update

Job Number: 216108

Filled out by: Joe Ray

Date: 08/18/2025

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	236,542.50	16.48%

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			
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	3/7/25	Project come in 16.48% over
Construction start	Spring/Summer 2025	6/9/25	
Construction end	Summer 2025		Punchlist not complete

Additional Information on project Status: A few items on the punch list have yet to be completed.

Bertrand Road Project Update

Job Number: 215947

Filled out by: Kevin Stack

Date: 08/19/2025

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
Engineer's Estimate	\$711,354	+55.5% Above Programed
Accepted Bid	\$597,354.50	16% Below Engineer's Estimate

Explanation for cost changes:

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	01/25	01/25	
Receive NEPA approval	01/25	01/25	
Submit Grade Inspection package	12/24	12/24	
Hold Grade Inspection meeting	12/24	12/24	
Receive final property acquisition certification	NA	NA	
Submit complete biddable package	12/24	12/24	
Letting date	5/25	5/25	
Construction start	5/25	5/25	
Construction end	6/25	6/25	

Additional Information on project Status

Michigan Department of Transportation Projects

Within the NATS Planning Area

Updated August 10, 2025 by Jon Smith, MDOT Coloma TSC Engineer – smithj29@michigan.gov

Projects Completed in 2025

Milton Township

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

Status: Newly installed traffic signals are fully operational. Punch list items in progress.

Est Con: TBD – TBD

NATS Area

Project: Regionwide signal upgrades (JN209414)

Status: Signals are complete and fully operational. Punch list items in progress.

Est Con: Dec. 17, 2023 – TBD (targeting end of April)

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: Some punch list items are in progress.

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: Construction in progress. Detour implemented from Gardner Road to Bakertown Road for culvert work. Detour anticipated to be in place through the end of August.

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 (JN 216911)

Status: Construction in progress, concrete pavement repair work completed..

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

Niles Township

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

Status: Construction in progress.

Est Con: Jul. 08, 2025 – Oct. 10, 2025

Michigan Department of Transportation Projects

Within the NATS Planning Area

Updated August 10, 2025 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. Final project coordination review completed. Targeting 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. Final project coordination review completed. Targeting 01/09/2026 letting.

City of Niles and Bertrand Township

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

Status: Design in progress. Targeting 02/06/2026 letting.

Ontwa Township

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

Status: Design in progress. Targeting 01/09/2026 letting.

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 in progress.

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.

Stay up to date with MDOT: news, projects, report a pothole, traffic alerts, five-year plan

<http://www.michigan.gov/drive>