

Minutes  
 Subcommittee of the Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study  
 Wednesday, January 11, 2023  
 Niles City Hall

**Attendance**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Representing</b>
<b>Subcommittee Members</b>	Kevin Stack	Berrien County Road Department
	Joe Ray	City of Niles
	Pepper Miller	Niles Dial A Ride
	Joe Bellina	Cass County Road Commission
	Heather Grace	City of Buchanan
	Richard Cooper	NATS Policy Committee Chair
<b>Others Present</b>	Kim Gallagher	Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
	Brandon Kovnat	Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
	Rich Murphy	City of Buchanan
	Michael Swartz	City of Buchanan
	Peter Agostino	Richard & Patricia Geberth
	Kathleen Agostino	Richard & Patricia Geberth
	Richard Geberth	Richard & Patricia Geberth
	Patricia Geberth	Richard & Patricia Geberth

**Call to Order and Roll Call**

Joe Ray Called the Meeting to Order at 9 am. Kim Gallagher took Roll Call.

**Overview of the Purpose of the Meeting**

Ray announced that for the current Fiscal year of 2023, NATS has unprogrammed STBG funds of \$816,533 and unprogrammed CRP funds of \$78,783. The purpose of the meeting is for the subcommittee to create a recommendation on how to program these funds, which will then be voted on by the NATS Technical Advisory Committee and NATS Policy Committee.

Kevin Stack added that the only project eligible to use the FY 2023 CRP funding is the signal replacement in the City of Buchanan. He suggested that the subcommittee recommend that the \$78,783 be allocated for the signal and that for the rest of the meeting, they only discuss STBG funding.

**Changes to the Agenda**

None.

**Discussion of the Options for Utilizing the Remaining NATS Federal FY 2023 Funds**

Ray asked each agency to briefly describe the projects they were requesting funding for (*project descriptions on included on page 11*).

Joe Bellina, chief engineer for the Cass County Road Commission gave an explanation of Proposed Gumwood Realignment. He said that the current situation at Gumwood Rd. and Redfield Rd. with the two offset intersections is dangerous. In 2014, the Road Commission hired the engineering firm CESO to study options for improving traffic flow and safety at these intersections. Based on the [CESO engineering study](#), the Road Commission chose to realign Gumwood Road and create a single four-way roundabout. The Road Commission received an FY 2023 Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) grant from MDOT, through a statewide competitive process, to build a three-leg roundabout at the eastern intersection of Gumwood and Redfield. Bellina requested as much funding as possible to build the fourth leg of the roundabout, which will complete their plan for the intersection.

Heather Grace, city manager for the City of Buchanan, gave an explanation of the Buchanan Front Street project. Since the original application, the City realized that because they had to remove Front Street and replace the water utilities, this was the perfect opportunity to update the streetscaping as well. The current estimate for the Front Street reconstruction is partially due to inflation and partially due to an underestimation of the work needed when the application was originally submitted in 2018. Grace requested as much funding as possible for the project. Mike Swartz, the engineer from Prein & Newhoff who is designing the project for Buchanan, announced that the Grade Inspection (GI) package was submitted to MDOT earlier in the week.

Kevin Stack, Engineering Supervisor for the Berrien County Road department explained that the estimate for Bertrand Road had increased by about \$50,000 since the initial application was submitted in 2018. The only change to the proposed work is to increase the shoulder width by 1 ft. This would create 5 ft. shoulders that if continued into Cass County would create a non-motorized connection from the Path on Gumwood Road to the Indian Michigan River Valley Trail.

Stack presented several options for dividing the \$816,533 in FY 2023 STBG funding between the City of Buchanan, the Cass County Road Commission, and the Berrien County Road Department (***descriptions of these options are included on pages 12-13***).

### **Public Comment**

Richard Gerbeth introduced himself as the owner of the 50-acre property on the northeast corner of Gumwood & Redfield. The realignment of Gumwood Road would be built through the middle of his property and require taking 15 acres from him. He stated that the project would destroy years' worth of his conservation efforts. By bringing the road traffic closer to their home the project would harm his wife's health, due to her sensitivity to certain pollutants.

Peter Agostino, the attorney representing Richard and Patricia Gerbeth, summarized the points from his written comments, which had asked to be distributed to the subcommittee prior to the meeting (***please see public comments on pages 14- 19 and the [CESO engineering study](#)***).

Richard Murphy discussed the tremendous community support there was in Buchanan for the Front Street project.

### **Privilege of the Floor / Subcommittee Discussion**

Several subcommittee members expressed concerns about the ability of the Gumwood Realignment to receive MDOT approval in FY 2023, and that NATS would lose the funding.

Several subcommittee members agreed with the assessment of the safety issues on Gumwood and said that some type of improvement was crucial. Subcommittee members also asked about the option to build two separate roundabouts as an alternative.

Bellina acknowledged the public comments about the Gumwood project, and he further explained why a single four-way roundabout is the only option the Road Commission is pursuing.

Several subcommittee members brought up the increased costs for the Front Street reconstruction. They noted that the engineers estimate (***estimate is included on pages 20-24***) included what appeared to be unnecessary decorative items. They believe that NATS funding is intended for, and should only be used for, work that is necessary for improving the transportation system; NATS should not fund other utilities or expensive decorative pavers.

**Subcommittee Vote on the Recommendation for FY 2023 funding**

Joe Ray reminded the subcommittee that they were being asked to vote on a recommendation for how to use NATS unprogrammed FY 2023 STBG funds and the FY 2023 CRP funding. This Recommendation will be sent to the NATS Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee, who will vote on it at January 24, 2023, NATS meeting (*descriptions of these options are included on pages 12-13*).

**Motion to recommend Option 3.** Introduced by Kevin Stack. No second. **Motion failed.**

**Motion to recommend Option 6.** Introduced by Joe Bellina, with a second from Richard Cooper.

Name	Representing	Vote
Kevin Stack	Berrien County Road Department	No
Joe Ray	City of Niles	No
Pepper Miller	Niles Dial A Ride	No
Joe Bellina	Cass County Road Commission	Yes
Heather Grace	City of Buchanan	No
Richard Cooper	NATS Policy Committee Chair	Yes

**Motion Failed.**

**Motion to recommend Option 5.** Introduced by Heather Grace. No second. **Motion failed.**

Swartz, on behalf of Buchanan, suggested a new option he named Option 5b. which would be:

Project	Total STBG Funding
Bertrand Rd.	\$485,331
Front St.	\$761,273
Gumwood Rd.	\$173,930

**Motion to recommend Option 5b,** introduced by Heather Grace. No second. **Motion failed.**

**Motion to recommend Option 1.** Introduced by Joe Bellina. No second. **Motion failed.**

**Motion to recommend Option 2.** Introduced by Joe Bellina, with a second by Kevin Stack.

Name	Representing	Vote
Kevin Stack	Berrien County Road Department	Yes
Joe Ray	City of Niles	Yes
Pepper Miller	Niles Dial A Ride	Yes
Joe Bellina	Cass County Road Commission	Yes
Heather Grace	City of Buchanan	No
Richard Cooper	NATS Policy Committee Chair	Yes

**Motion Passed.**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:57 AM.

*Minutes Compiled by Brandon Kovnat, SWMPC Transportation Planner*

# NATS SUBCOMMITTEE

## FY 2023 Funding Discussion

### FY 2023 Local Agency Projects in the NATS TIP – as currently approved by MDOT

Agency	Project	Federal Fund Source	Federal	Local	Total
Buchanan	Front St. Reconstruction	NATS STBG	\$300,000	\$260,747	\$560,747
Berrien CRD	Bertrand Rd. Resurfacing	NATS STBG	\$304,000	\$236,000	\$540,000
Buchanan	Front St Signal	CMAQ	\$287,341	\$81,848	\$369,189
Cass CRC	Gumwood Rd. Roundabout	HSIP	\$581,672	\$145,418	\$727,090

### FY 2023 Funding Balance

	NATS STBG	NATS CRP
FY 2023 Target	\$1,420,553	\$78,873
Currently Programed	\$604,000	\$0
<b>Balance</b>	<b>\$816,553</b>	<b>\$78,873</b>

### Gumwood Realignment

The Cass County Road Commission is requesting NATS STBG funds to realign Gumwood Road. This will create a four-way roundabout at Refiled Road, with the roundabout funded with an approved 2023 HSIP grant.

<u>Cost for realignment</u>	<u>NEPA/SHPO</u>	<u>GI Submittal</u>
\$1,164,000	No	No

### Buchanan Front Street Reconstruction

Full reconstruction of Front Street from Red Bud Trl. To Oak St. The project includes Replacement of the sewer and watermain, Curb and sidewalk upgrades to meet ADA standards, removal and replacement of the storm sewer, replacement of drainage structures, pavement markings, permanent signage, and appurtenances

<u>Revised Cost</u>	<u>NEPA/SHPO</u>	<u>GI Submittal</u>
\$1,611,000	Yes	Mid-January

### Buchanan Front Street Signal

The Buchanan Front Street Signal was awarded \$287,341 in CMAQ in 2019. On November 7, 2022 the Berrien CMAQ Committee voted to use these CMAQ funds for a path along Red Arrow Highway, with an assumption that Buchanan would replace this with NATS CRP and STBG funding.

<u>Revised Cost</u>	<u>NEPA/SHPO</u>	<u>GI Submittal</u>
\$400,000	Yes	Mid-January

### Bertrand Road Resurface

HMA trench and widen, adding shoulders between M-51 to Cass County line.

<u>Revised Cost</u>	<u>NEPA/SHPO</u>	<u>GI Submittal</u>
\$592,952	yes	yes

NATS FY 2023 Funding Options  
 Submitted by Kevin Stack, Berrien County Road Department

Option 1

	Project	Total Estimate	Total STBG	Match	Additional STBG
	<b>Allocation</b>		<b>\$1,420,553</b>		<b>\$816,533</b>
Cass CRC	Gumwood Realignment	\$1,164,000	\$420,176	\$743,824	\$420,176
Buchanan	Front Street	\$1,611,000	\$515,046	\$1,095,954	\$215,046
Berrien CRD	Bertrand Road	\$592,952	\$485,331	\$107,621	\$181,331
	<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,420,553</b>		<b>\$816,533</b>
	<b>Balance</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>

1. Bertrand Rd. Awards the maximum federal based on current estimate (81.85% of \$592,952)
2. Front St. Awards the maximum federal based on the original estimate + 10%
3. Gumwood Rd. Awards the remaining STBG after steps 1 & 2

Option 2

	Project	Total Estimate	Total STBG	Match	Additional STBG
	<b>Allocation</b>		<b>\$1,420,553</b>		<b>\$816,533</b>
Cass CRC	Gumwood Realignment	\$1,164,000	\$339,281	\$824,719	\$339,281
Buchanan	Front Street	\$1,611,000	\$639,282	\$971,718	\$339,282
Berrien CRD	Bertrand Road	\$592,952	\$441,990	\$150,962	\$137,990
	<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,420,553</b>		<b>\$816,533</b>
	<b>Balance</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>

1. Bertrand Rd. Awards the maximum federal based on the original estimate (81.85% of \$540,000)
2. Front St. Awards 50% of the balance after step 1 plus the original STBG of \$300,000
3. Gumwood Rd. Awards 50% of the balance after step 1

Option 3

	Project	Total Estimate	Total STBG	Match	Additional STBG
	<b>Allocation</b>		<b>\$1,420,553</b>		<b>\$816,533</b>
Cass CRC	Gumwood Realignment	\$1,164,000	\$250,000	\$914,000	\$250,000
Buchanan	Front Street	\$1,611,000	\$685,222	\$925,778	\$176,664
Berrien CRD	Bertrand Road	\$592,952	\$485,331	\$107,621	\$181,331
	<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,420,553</b>		<b>\$816,533</b>
	<b>Balance</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>

1. Bertrand Rd. Awards the maximum federal based on the current estimate (81.85% of \$592,952)
2. Gumwood Rd. Awards \$250,000
3. Front St. Award the remaining STBG after steps 1 & 2

NATS FY 2023 Funding Options  
 Submitted by Kevin Stack, Berrien County Road Department

Option 4

	Project	Total Estimate	Total STBG	Match	Additional STBG
	<b>Allocation</b>		<b>\$1,420,553</b>		<b>\$816,533</b>
Cass CRC	Gumwood Realignment	\$1,164,000	\$0	\$1,164,000	\$0
Buchanan	Front Street	\$1,611,000	\$935,222	\$675,778	\$426,664
Berrien CRD	Bertrand Road	\$592,952	\$485,331	\$107,621	\$181,331
	<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,420,553</b>		<b>\$816,533</b>
	<b>Balance</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>

1. Gumwood Rd. **Not funded**
2. Bertrand Rd. Awards the maximum federal based on the current estimate (81.85% of \$592,952)
3. Front St. Award the remaining STBG after step 2

Option 5

	Project	Total Estimate	Total STBG	Match	Additional STBG
	<b>Allocation</b>		<b>\$1,420,553</b>		<b>\$816,533</b>
Cass CRC	Gumwood Realignment	\$1,164,000	\$264,606	\$899,394	\$264,606
Buchanan	Front Street	\$1,611,000	\$851,947	\$759,053	\$551,947
Berrien CRD	Bertrand Road	\$592,952	\$304,000	\$288,952	\$0
	<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,420,553</b>		<b>\$816,533</b>
	<b>Balance</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>

1. Bertrand Rd. No increase (keeps award at \$304,000)
2. Front St. Add \$287,341 to replace the lost CMAQ funds, then add 50% the remaining amt.
3. Gumwood Rd. 50% of the amt after \$287,341 is given to Buchanan

Option 6

	Project	Total Estimate	Total STBG	Match	Additional STBG
	<b>Allocation</b>		<b>\$1,420,553</b>		<b>\$816,533</b>
Cass CRC	Gumwood Realignment	\$1,164,000	\$408,267	\$755,733	\$408,267
Buchanan	Front Street	\$1,611,000	\$708,267	\$902,733	\$408,267
Berrien CRD	Bertrand Road	\$592,952	\$304,000	\$288,952	\$0
	<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,420,553</b>		<b>\$816,533</b>
	<b>Balance</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>

1. Bertrand Rd. No increase (keeps award at \$304,000)
2. Front St. 50% of the \$816,533 initial balance added to the current STBG of \$300,000
3. Gumwood Rd. 50% of the \$816,533 initial balance