

Niles Buchanan Cass Area Transportation Study

JOINT TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, May 23, 2023 – 1:30 PM

Niles District Library, Niles MI

Attendance	Name	Representing	TAC	POL
Committee Members Present	Joe Bellina	Cass County Road Commission	x	
	Butch Payton	Bertrand Township	x	x
	Lynn Ferris	Buchanan Township	x	x
	Roseann Marchetti	Cass County Board of Commissioners		x
	Sandra Seanor	Cass County Road Commission		x
	Don Ryman	City of Buchanan		x
	Rich Murphy	City of Buchanan	x	
	Pepper Miller	Niles Dial A Ride	x	x
	Joe Ray	City of Niles	X	
	Jim Sturdevant	MDOT, Statewide Planning	X	x
	Josh Grab	MDOT, Southwest Region	x	x
	Susan Flowers	Milton Township	x	X
	Dawn Bolock	Ontwa Township	x	x
Staff	Kim Gallagher	SWMPC		
	Brandon Kovnat	SWMPC		
	Jacklyn Alsbro	SWMPC		
Others Present	Ryan Millan	City of Niles		
	Maddy Thorburn	MDOT, Southwest Region		
	Catherine Parker	MDOT, Statewide Planning		
Attending Virtually	Michael Majerek	Berrien County Board of Commissioners		x
	Eric Lester, M.D.			
	Jonathon Smith	MDOT, Coloma TSC	x	
	Fred Featherly	MDOT, Office of Passenger Transportation	x	
	Michael Schwartz	Prien Newhoff for the City of Buchanan		

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

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

2. Changes to the Agenda

Bellina noted that the NATS bylaws state that elections for committee chair and vice chair are supposed to occur in January of odd-numbered years, but that no election was held so far in 2023. He asked to add elections to the agenda before Privilege of the Floor.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approve Minutes from the March 28, 2023, Meeting

Seanor commented on inaccuracies in the membership list. Several representatives have not been updated. Gallagher said she would contact each agency to confirm who their appointed representative is.

Motion to approve the minutes from the March 28, 2023, Joint NATS Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee Meeting. Made by Joe Bellina, and seconded by Susan Flowers. **Motion approved.**

5. Staff Report

Transportation Funding Workshop Gallagher announced that this summer SWMPC would be hosting a regional workshop on transportation funding with Bill Hamilton, a House Fiscal Agency Senior Fiscal Analyst. The exact date and time are being finalized.

2020 Urban Boundaries: Gallagher and Kovnat presented the 2020 Urban Area adjustment process. To make these adjustments, MDOT will schedule a meeting with SWMPC, and local jurisdictions this summer.

Pavement Condition Rating: Gallagher announced that pavement condition ratings would occur for the NATS area this summer. She will email Cass County Road Commission, and Berrien County Road Department next week to schedule the rating dates. Comments were made asking why MDOT no longer participates in the ratings. There was agreement that a three-person crew is safer and more accurate. Gallagher explained that SWMPC receives a budget for pavement condition rating from the Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) which pays for each of the rating crew's time; without MDOT staff participation, the funds could instead be used to pay for additional County or SWMPC staff. The response was that regardless of budget, the County agencies do not have staff to spare.

Berrien County Air Quality Redesignation: Kovnat gave a presentation about Berrien County being redesignated from Marginal nonattainment to Moderate nonattainment for failure to meet the national Ozone standards by the required date. This redesignation has new requirements for emission control from facilities, which could harm the county's economy. The source of the emissions is carryover across Lake Michigan and due to wind patterns, local emissions reductions will likely have limited effects on the county's ozone level. There is no effect on transportation funding due to the redesignation. It is probable based on trends that Berrien County will achieve attainment in the next several years. If this occurs it will cause a reduction for the CMAQ program.

6. Local Agency Updates

Refer to Meeting Packet Page 6

- **Berrien County Road Department:** No representative was present to give an update.
- **City of Buchanan:** Rich Murphy and Michaels Swartz gave an update on the Front Street reconstruction and signal replacement. The review process and bidding for these projects are occurring together. The Complete biddable package was submitted last week. The project could be on the July letting. The total cost for the Front Street Reconstruction has increased due to higher prices. Swartz added that MDOT had also required some of the project areas which had been categorized under "nonparticipating" to be moved to the "participating" budget.
- **Cass County Road Commission:** Joe Bellina gave an update on the Gumwood Roundabout & Realignment projects. The Roundabout for the eastern intersection of Gumwood and Redfield has been added to the June 12023 letting date. The Gumwood Realignment is still under review. Bellina said that the Grade Inspection Meeting was scheduled for _____. He said he has some concerns that the project could not be obligated in 2023 opening up the funding for use in FY 2023

Proposals for utilizing NATS funding: MDOT said there were \$11,849 in Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) funds that needed to be used in 2023 before they expire. Unlike the STBG funds, which do not carryover, past years bid savings from the HIP program could be reprogrammed until they expire at the end

of FY 2023. With the \$339,282 from the Gumwood project and the Hip funds, there is a total of \$351,514 to program in FY 2023.

Bellina explained his proposal to move the Gumwood Realignment to FY 2024 by swapping it with the City of Niles Wayne Street Project. He also requested to use the remaining FY 2024 STBG funds of \$82,000 to keep the NATS funding for Gumwood approximately the same.

Joe Ray gave an update on the Wayne Street project. The Grade inspection package was submitted on May 5th and the GI meeting is scheduled for __. He assured the committee that the project could get obligated by August.

Murphy said that since the Front Street project has already been approved by MDOT it is a safer bet.

There was discussion that Front Street had already received a large amount of NATS funding compared to how much a typical NATS-funded project receives. Committee members expressed a desire to keep the funding for all three projects approximately the same.

Motion For the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve:

For the **Gumwood Reconstruction** (JN 218476)

- 1) Move the project to 2024
- 2) Allocate \$334,514 of FY 2024 NATS STBG, which includes the \$254,514 originally programmed for Wayne Street and the Unprogrammed funds in 2024 of \$82,000

For the **Wayne Street Project** (JN 216092)

- 1) Move Project to 2023
- 2) Approve the increase to the total estimated cost.
- 3) Allocate \$339,282 in FY 2023 NATS STBG and \$11,849 in HIP

For the **Front Street Reconstruction** (JN 206394)

- 1) Approve the changes to the limits and total project cost for the Buchanan Front Street Reconstruction; no change in the NATS FY 2023 STBG funds.

Made Susan Flowers 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 Dawn Bolock. **Motion approved.**

7. Transit Updates

Pepper Miller gave an update for Niles Dial A Ride. Replacement buses have been purchased.

8. MDOT Updates

Refer to Meeting Packet Page 10 – There were no questions or comments on the updates included in the packet.

9. MDOT Amendment Requests

Refer to Meeting Packet Page 10

There were no questions or comments on the MDOT project amendments included in the packet.

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the MDOT project amendments to the NATS 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as presented.

Made by Joe Ray and seconded by Jim Sturdevant. **Motion approved.**

Motion for the Policy Committee to approve the recommendation from the Technical Advisory Committee. Made by Susan Flowers and seconded by Pepper Miller. **Motion approved**

10. CMAQ Performance Targets

Refer to Meeting Packet Page 11

Kovnat presented the CMAQ Performance targets. The emission reduction targets are the statewide total based on all emission reduction estimations from CMAQ-funded projects throughout the state. The Peak Hour Excessive Delay and the Percent Non-Single occupancy Vehicle travel targets are only for the South Bend Urban Area. These were developed through a discussion between INDOT, MDOT, SWMPC, and MACOG based on recent trends and what they agreed was reasonably attainable.

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approved the 2022-2025 CMAQ Performance Targets as included in the meeting packet. Made by Joe Ray and seconded by Jim Sturdevant. **Motion approved.**

Motion for the Policy Committee to approve the recommendation from the Technical Advisory Committee. Made by Susan Flower, and seconded by Pepper Miller. **Motion approved.**

11. FY 2024 Unified Work Program

Gallagher discussed the NATS FY 2024 Unified Work Program, which lists the transportation planning tasks SWMPC staff will conduct for the NATS Area. Most of these are the same every year. The special project for 2024 will be an Electric Vehicle readiness plan, which will focus on the local and regional steps needed for increasing EV adoption. Gallagher presented an EV toolkit that shows EV charger locations in Michigan by jurisdiction. Currently Southwest Michigan has 37 charging locations. Comments were made about the barriers to EVs which include the state of the electrical grid and equipment shortages.

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the NATS FY 2024 Unified Work Program and support the submission of the UWP to the SWMPC Board with any minor changes requested by MDOT. Made by Joe Ray and seconded by Jim Sturdevant.

Motion for the Policy Committee to approve the recommendation from the Technical Advisory Committee. Made by Dawn Bolock and seconded by Susan Flowers. **Motion approved.**

12. Election of Committee Officers

Motion for the Technical Advisory Committee to reelect Joe Bellina to serve as Technical Advisory Committee Chair and Joe Ray to serve as Technical Advisory Committee Vice Chair. Made by Joe Bellina and seconded by Susan Flowers. **Motion approved**

Motion for the Policy Committee to reelect Richard Cooper to serve as Policy Committee Chair and Sandra Seanor to serve as Policy Committee Vice Chair. Made by Dawn Bolock and seconded by Jim Sturdevant. **Motion approved**

13. Privilege of the Floor or Public Comment

None.

14. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 27, 2023.

Minutes compiled by Brandon Kovnat, SWMPC Transportation Planner