

# NILES-BUCHANAN-CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

## TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE and POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

October 24, 2023

1:30 pm

---

**In Person:** Niles District Library – 1st Floor Boardroom  
620 E Main St, Niles, MI 49120

**Web:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/9489277047?pwd=RzkydlFacGFHNkVWeURpak1kSEcxUT09>

**Audio:** Call in Number: 1 (312) 626-6799  
Meeting ID: 948 927 7047  
Passcode: 000619

---

### AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Changes to the Agenda
3. Public Comment
4. Approve Minutes from the September 23, 2023 Meeting *Action* Pg. 2
5. Staff Report
6. Local Agency Updates & Amendments *Action*
  - NATS STBG Funding Reduction Subcommittee Recommendation Pg. 5
  - City of Buchanan Request to use Carbon Reduction Funds Pg. 7
7. Transit Updates & Amendments *Action* Pg. 7
8. MDOT Project Updates & Amendments *Action* Pg. 7
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](mailto: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](mailto:gallagherk@swmpc.org)

# Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study 2023 Meeting Attendance

From September 26, 2023 Meeting

NATS MEMBER ORG./POSITION	MEMBERS (2022)	TAC	POL	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Berrien Co. Board of Commissioners (1)	Michael Majerek		x	A		A		V		A		A			
Berrien Co. Board of Commissioners (2)	(Vacant)		x												
Berrien Co. Community Dev. Dept.	Dan Fette	x		A		A		A		A		A			
Berrien Co. Planning Commission	(Vacant)		x	A		A				A					
Berrien Co. Road Dept. (Policy)	(Vacant)		x	A											
Berrien Co. Road Dept. (TAC)	Kevin Stack	X		P		P		A		P		A			
Bertrand Township	Butch Payton	x	x	A		P		P		P		P			
Buchanan Township	Lynn Ferris	x	x	A		P		P		P		P			
Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (1)	Roseann Marchetti		x	P		P		P		P		P			
Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (2)	James Lawrence		x	P		A		A		P		P			
Cass Co. Planning Commission	Roseann Marchetti	x		P		P		P		P		P			
Cass Co. Road Comm. (Policy)	Sandra Seanor		x	P		P		P		P		P			
Cass Co. Road Comm. (TAC)	Joe Bellina (TAC Chair)	x		P		P		P		P		P			
City of Buchanan	Don Ryman		x	V		P		P		P		A			
City of Buchanan	Rich Murphy	x		A		P		P		P		A			
City of Niles (1)	Georgia Boggs		x	P		A		A		A		A			
City of Niles (2)	Serita Mason		x	V		V		A		P		P			
City of Niles (3)	(Vacant)		x												
City of Niles Community Dev. Director	Ryan Millan	x								P		A			
City of Niles Dial-A-Ride Transit	Pepper Miller	x	x	P		P		P		P		P			
City of Niles Public Works Dir./Airport	Joe Ray	x		P		P		P		A		P			
Howard Township	Bill Kasprzak	x	x	P		P		A		P		P			
Kinexus	(Vacant)	x													
Mason Township	Doug Feters	x	x	A		A		A		A		A			
MDOT - Bureau of Trans. Planning	Jim Sturdevant	x	x	P		P		P		P		A			
MDOT - Southwest Region	Josh Grab	x	x	V		V		P		V		V			
MDOT - Southwest Region (Alternate)	Madee Thorburn	Alt	Alt	A		A		A		p		V			
MDOT - Transportation Service Center	Jonathon Smith	x	x	V		V		V		V		V			
Milton Township	Susan Flowers	x	x	A		P		P		A		A			
Niles Charter Township	Richard Cooper (P. Ch.)	x	x	P		P		A		P		P			
Ontwa Township	Dawn Bolock	x	x	A		A		P		P		P			
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians	Robert Torzynski	x	x					A				A			
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.	Fred Featherly	NV		A		A		V		A		A			
Michiana Area Council of Governments	Caitlin Stevens	NV	NV	A		A		A		A		A			
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Kim Gallagher	x	x	P		P		P		P		A			
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Brandon Kovnat	NV	NV	P		P		A		A		P			

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

Others Present: Bekah Scragg , SWMPC

**Minutes**  
**NILES BUCHANAN CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY**  
**TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE and POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
Tuesday, September 26, 2023 – 1:30 pm  
Niles District Library, Niles MI

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Joe Bellina, Technical Advisory Committee chair, called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. Brandon Kovnat took roll call.

2. Changes to the Agenda

None.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Approve Minutes from the June 27, 2023 Meeting

Roseann Marchetti made a motion to approve the minutes for the July meeting. Joe Ray seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Staff Report

Kovnat presented the Staff Report

**Transportation funding workshop:** on September 12<sup>th</sup>, Bill Hamilton, A Senior House Fiscal analyst gave a presentation about state transportation funding. The event was well attended. For additional information, Hamilton has written several briefs on transportation funding available at <https://www.house.mi.gov/hfa/transportation.asp>

**2020 Urban Boundaries:** SWMPC, MDOT, and local agencies met on September 19, 2023 to make adjustments to the 2020 Census boundaries to create the Adjusted Census Urban Boundary (ACUB). Changes in the urban/rural boundaries from the 2020 Census include the City of Buchanan and its immediate surroundings being designated as a separate Small Urban area. Questions were asked regarding whether Buchanan would still be eligible for funding through the MPO. Kovnat said her will seek more clarification from MDOT about this. The proposed ACUB maps will be available by October 17<sup>th</sup> and NATS will vote on the ACUB at the October 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting. The new boundaries will go into effect in summer 2024.

**Planning Guide:** The FY 2024 Planning Guide is available, which indicates when projects approval milestones need to be met and when the latest an amendment can be made in order to meet a preferred letting date.

**TAP Process:** Kim Gallagher is at an MDOT conference about improvements to the TAP approval process.

6. Local Agency Updates

**FY 2023 Summary:** Kovnat presented a fiscal summary for FY 2023 and gave a preview for FY 2024 projects which include the McCoy Creek Trail Extension, Bertrand Road Resurface project, Cassopolis Road Resurface, and Gumwood Realignment. Joe Bellina said they should have the property acquired for the realignment of gumwood by the end of next week. The roundabout should be opened by the end of next week.

**STBG Funding Update:** Kovnat presented on the reduction in the federal Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding for NATS based on the 2020 census. Additionally, there is a 2.5% statewide penalty in effect for 2025 and 2026, which reallocates 2.5% of statewide STBG funds to the Safety program. Compared to

the projections from November which were based on the 2010 census, the budgets for 2024 have been reduced by 23%, 2025 by 23%, and 2026 by 20%. Most of the funding cut is due to Buchanan being considered a separate urban area and thus its population not being used to calculate the NATS STBG funding.

A subcommittee will meet October 12, 2023 to discuss reduction to the programed STBG funds in and will make a recommendation for the TAC & policy committee to vote on at the October 24<sup>th</sup> NATS meeting.

**Transportation Alternatives Program** Buchanan is using 2022-2024 TAP funding for the 2024 McCoy trail project. There will be \$196,435 in TAP available for projects in 2026. Bellina asked how much of 2024 TAP funding Buchanan was using. Kovnat was unsure but would get an answer for the next meeting.

**Carbon Reduction Program:** One application was submitted which was from the City of Buchanan submitted an application to add the 2024 CRP funds to the Mc Coy Creek Trail Extension. There was a discussion that due to the limited CRP funding, a separate fully CRP funded project was had to justify.

7. Transit Updates

Pepper Miller reported that City of Niles Dial-a-ride received had receive a bus back after AC unit repairs. The new bus on order will not have a VIN number until December and its uncertain when it will arrive. Transit vans have been approved for purchase. In response to a question, Miller mentioned that approximately 4-6 children are being transported to the Howard schools.

8. MDOT Project Updates

Smith said that the US-12 and M-51 project public meeting had gone well.

Ray asked if the asphalt approaches and the US-12 overpass were within the project scope for the US-12 project near the Niles garage. Smith responded that the overpass was included in the project, and the approaches were not but were redone since MDOT was working in the area.

9. MDOT Project Amendments Action

*Refer to packet page 10.* The Amendments were presented with no questions.

**Motion** for the Technical Advisory Committee to recommend that the Policy Committee approve the amendments to the NATS 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program, as included in the meeting packet. 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 Roseann Marchetti and seconded by Sandra Seanor. **Motion approved.**

10. Privilege of the Floor or Public Comment

None.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 PM

*Minutes Compiled by Bekkah Scrag, SWMPC Associate Planner*

# Recommendations for NATS 2024-2026 STBG Funded Projects

From the October 12, 2023 Subcommittee Meeting

The subcommittee approved the following three recommendations.

1. Apply an equal percentage reduction each year for all projects based on the percent budget shortfall.

## Annual NATS STBG Funding Reduction for Each Project.

	Current Federal STBG Programed	STBG Funding Target	Funding Deficit Percent
<b>2024</b>	\$691,000	\$531,000	23.15%
<b>2025</b>	\$608,618	\$542,000	10.90%
<b>2026</b>	\$631,999	\$570,000	9.80%

2. Kevin Stack announced that the total estimated cost for the Bertrand Road Project in 2024 has increased from \$300,000 to \$519,278.
3. Joe Bellina requested to remove the Cassopolis Road Project in 202 and apply the federal funds to the Gumwood Realignment project.

Based on these three items, the Subcommittee's full recommendation for the NATS 2024-2026 STBG funding is shown on the following page.

# Recommendations for NATS 2024-2026 STBG Funded Projects

From the October 12, 2023 Subcommittee Meeting

**FY 2024** - Agencies take a **23.2% reduction** in federal funds

			Currently Programed			Recommended		
JN	Agency	Project	NATS STBG	Match	Total	NATS STBG	Match	Total
216087	Berrien CRD	Bertrand Rd. from US-31 to Portage Rd.	\$222,433	\$77,567	\$300,000	\$170,929	\$348,419	\$519,348
216091	Cass CRC	Cassopolis Rd. from US-12 to Old 205	\$134,053	\$46,747	\$180,800			
218476	Cass CRC	Gumwood Realignment north of Redfield -	\$334,514	830,486*	\$1,165,000	\$360,071	\$804,929*	\$1,165,000

\*The Gumwood match includes Federal RTF funding of \$532,244

**FY 2025** - Agencies take a **10.9% reduction** in federal funds

			Currently Programed			Recommended		
JN	Agency	Project	NATS STBG	Match	Total	NATS STBG	Match	Total
215947	Berrien CRD	Bertrand Rd. from US-31 to Red Bud Trail	\$374,521	\$83,049	\$457,570	\$333,698	\$123,872	\$457,570
216106	Cass CRC	Elkhart Rd. from May Street to Village of Edwardsburg limits	\$100,841	\$22,361	\$123,202	\$89,849	\$33,353	\$123,202
216108	Niles	Sycamore St. from 9th Street to 13th St.	\$133,256	\$29,549	\$162,805	\$118,731	\$44,074	\$162,805

**FY 2026** - Agencies take a **9.8% reduction** in federal funds

			Currently Programed			Recommended		
JN	Agency	Project	NATS STBG	Match	Total	NATS STBG	Match	Total
216111	Berrien CRD	Red Bud Trail from US-12 to Bertrand Rd.	\$378,212	\$121,788	\$500,000	\$341,147	\$158,853	\$500,000
216117	Cass CRC	Redfield St. from County line to Batchelor Rd.	\$122,976	\$27,270	\$150,246	\$110,924	\$39,322	\$150,246
216119	Niles	Pokagon St. from 2nd St. to 5th St.	\$130,811	\$29,007	\$159,818	\$117,992	\$41,826	\$159,818

# City of Buchanan Amendment Request

## McCoy Creek Trail Extension 2024 – JN 214949

The City of Buchanan provided an updated cost estimate for their FY 2024 McCoy Creek Trail Extension project, and requested to add NATS full FY 2024 Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) allocation of \$63,000 to the project:

Fund Source	Currently Programed	Request
Federal Statewide TAP	\$169,885	\$169,885
NAT TAP	\$169,885	\$169,885
NATS CRP	\$0	\$63,000
<b>Total Federal</b>	<b>\$339,770</b>	<b>\$402,770</b>
Local Match	\$256,318	\$900,439
<b>Total Project Estimate</b>	<b>\$596,088</b>	<b>\$1,303,209</b>

## Niles Dial A Ride Amendment Request

Due to increased costs, Niles Dial a Ride is requesting to add funding to the projects in their 2023 FTA Grant. Both jobs are also being moved in the TIP from 2023 to 2024 to use FY 2024 CTF funds for the match

			Currently Programed			Requested		
JN	Project	Fund	FTA/ Federal	CTF	Total	FTA/ Federal	CTF	Total
206699	Bus Replacement	5339	\$68,000	\$17,000	\$85,000	\$85,000	\$21,250	\$106,250
206695	Preventive Maintenance	5307	\$110,000	\$27,500	\$137,500	\$150,000	\$37,250	\$187,250

**Note:** The bus replacement funds will be combined with bus replacement funding from a previous year to fully fund the replacement of a medium Duty cutaway bus

## MDOT Amendment Request

**Project:** Durable all-weather markings with centerline and shoulder corrugations in 2025 – JN 218815

**Location:** M-51 from Harger Street (Niles) (Berrien County) to Indian Lake Road (Cass County), M-51 from Dowagiac to South of Decatur (Cass and Van Buren Counties), M-51 from 75th Avenue to I-94 (Van Buren County), M-40 from M-216 (Cass County) to 950 feet south of 72nd Avenue (Van Buren County)

**Amendment:** An update to the base map caused an automatic recalculation of the project length, which has increased by over 1/2 mile.

Original Length

61.1 miles

Revised Length

62.3 miles