

NILES BUCHANAN CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (NATS)

Joint Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) & Policy Committee Minutes

September 22, 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	P			
Berrien Co. Board of Commissioners (2)	(vacant)		x								A				
Berrien Co. Community Dev. Dept.	Evan Smith	x		P	A		A	A			P	A			
Berrien Co. Planning Commission	Eric Lester, M.D.		x	P	P		A	P			P	P			
Berrien Co. Road Dept. (Policy)	(vacant)		x					A							
Berrien Co. Road Dept. (TAC)	Kevin Stack	X		P	P		A	A			A	P			
Bertrand Township	Butch Payton	x	x	A	A		P	P			P	A			
Buchanan Dial-A-Ride	Kim O'Haver	x	x	A	P		P	A							
Buchanan Township	Lynn Ferris	x	x	P	P		A	A			A	A			
Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (1)	Michael Grice		x	P	P		P	P			A	P			
Cass Co. Board of Commissioners (2)	Roseann Marchetti		x	P	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	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	A			
City of Niles (1)	Georgia Boggs		x	A	P		A	A			A	P			
City of Niles (2)	Serita Mason		x	P	A		A	P			P	P			
City of Niles (3)	Jessica Nelson		x	A	A		P	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	P			
City of Niles Public Works Dir./Airport	Joe Ray	x		P	A		A	A			P	P			
Howard Township	Bill Kasprzak	x	x	P	P		P	P			P	A			
Kinexus	(vacant)	x													
Mason Township	Doug Feters	x	x	A	A		A	A			A	A			
MDOT - Bureau of Trans. Planning	Jim Sturdevant	x	x	A	P		P	A			P	A			
MDOT - Southwest Region	Brian Sanada	x	x	P	P		P	A			P	A			
MDOT - Southwest Region (Alternate)	Amy Lipset	Alt	Alt	A	A		A	A			A	A			
MDOT - Transportation Service Center	Jonathon Smith	x	x	P	P		P	A			P	P			
Milton Township	Susan Flowers	x	x	P	P		P	P			A	P			
Niles Charter Township	Richard Cooper (P. Ch.)	x	x	P	P		P	P			P	P			
Ontwa Township	Dawn Bolock	x	x	A	P		A	P			P	P			
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians	(vacant)	x	x												
Village of Edwardsburg	Dennis Peak	x	x	A	A		A	A			A	A			
Federal Highway Administration	Andy Pickard	NV	NV	A	A		A	A			A	A			
Federal Transit Administration	Susan Weber	NV	NV	A	A		A	A			A	A			
EGLE - Air Quality	Breanna Bukowski	NV		A	A		A	A			A	A			
MDOT - Modeling	Jon Roberts	NV		A	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	A			
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Kim Gallagher	NV	NV	A	A		P	P			P	A			
Southwest Michigan Planning Comm.	Brandon Kovnat	NV	NV	P	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 Vice Chair Joe Ray called the meeting to Order at 1:30 pm. Brandon Kovnat 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 August 25, 2020 joint Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee meeting. Made by Serita Mason and seconded Michael Majerek. **Motion approved.**

5. SWMPC Staff Report

Kovnat discussed the expiration of the FAST act, the current federal transportation bill. Federal transportation bills are approved for five years; the fast act will expire at the end of the 2020 fiscal year on September 30, 2020. If there is no active transportation bill federally funded transportation project cannot be obligated. In the past congress has authorized temporary extensions of the transportation bill until a replacement bill is approved. The worst case is a week-by-week extension that is costly and delays. MDOT has asked agencies to get projects submitted as soon as possible just in case.

6. Agency and Project Updates

6.1. **Niles Dial A Rid:** Gettman-Dissette said that Niles Dial A Ride for drivers to hire.

6.2. **Local Road Agencies**

City of Niles: Ray Said that not much has happened with the Lake Street Bridge. He said Amtrak had 12 days remaining on its 30 days to comment on the request or a permit. A pre-construction meeting was held with the contractors and the project is still planned for fall construction.

Cass County Road Commission: No Updates were given.

Berrien county Road Department: No Updates were given.

6.3. **MDOT**

Kovnat relayed an update given by Amy Lipped which discussed a planning study, requested by the State legislature, to examine creating toll roads in Michigan. Lipset a statewide tolling study committee member had said an RFP was sent to find a consultant to conduct the study and four interviews were held. This is just a study and the consultant will identify which roads if any make the most sense for tolling.

7. New Business – TIP Amendments

7.1. **US-12 Pedestrian Crossing near Edwardsburg:** Kovnat reminded the committee that the Cass County Road Commission had originally submitted an application to use NATS allocation of Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) funds for a HAWK signal on US-12 across from the Edwardsburg Schools.

After discussions with MDOT, the Road Commission is changing their request to a rapid flashing beacon. In addition, they plan to have MDOT do the design and construction. The Cass County Road Commission will remain as the official grantee, and enter into an agreement with MDOT.

Kovnat added that the cost would be reduced by \$40,000. These funds would be reprogramed later. The goal at this meeting is to ensure MDOT can begin work on the crossing signal as soon as possible.

Sandra Seanor explained that MDOT did not believe that the pedestrian traffic was high enough to warrant a HAWK signal. Due to COVID-19, there were a lack of students crossing. The school had also instructed students to avoid crossing US-12 due to a lack of a safe crossing. Seanor said that the crossing and the Edwardsburg path would not just be used by students but many residents in Edwardsburg walk or bike to the Edwardsburg Sports Complex. The change from a HAWK to a rapid flashing beacon was made with agreement from many parties including Ontwa Township, the Village of Edwardsburg, and the School District. They all agreed that since the HAWK was not currently warranted, the flashing beacon would be better than nothing would, and it could be re-examined in the future based on future usage.

- 7.2. **MDOT work on US-12:** Kovnat reminded the committees on the original proposal MDOT had made for work on US-12. The initial plan was to expand the shoulders on US-12 in 2021 and resurface the road in 2023. Due to drainage issues MDOT, needed to push back the shoulder widening. MDOT also determined that US-12 could not wait until 2023 for repairs.

The new plan is to do a single course of asphalt in 2021 and do another course of asphalt with expanded shoulders in 2023. Kovnat explained that the amendment request was to remove the 2023 Job and to significantly alter the job that was already programed for 2021.

- 7.3. **Payment marking project:** Kovnat said that MDOT was using Highway safety Improvement program (HSIP) funds to improve pavement markings throughout southwest Michigan.

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 Joe Ray and seconded by Kevin Stack. **Motion approved.**

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

8. Privilege of the Floor or Public Comment

None.

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