

Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS)
Complete Streets Policy
Approved: Effective: FY 2018 Projects

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1.0 Defined

Complete Streets are roadways designed to safely and comfortably accommodate all users, of all ages and abilities, including but not limited to motorists, bicyclists, wheelchair users, pedestrians, transit users, school bus riders, delivery and service personnel, freight haulers, and emergency responders. In Michigan, Complete Streets are defined in statute (PA 135 of 2010) as “Roadways planned, designed, and constructed to provide appropriate access to all legal users in a manner that promotes safe and efficient movement of people and goods whether by car, truck, transit, assistive device, foot or bicycle.” Within this statute a “Complete Streets Policy” means “a document that provides guidance for the planning, design, and construction of roadways or an interconnected network of transportation facilities being constructed or reconstructed and designated for a transportation purpose that promotes complete streets.” This document represents the Complete Streets Policy for the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study, the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the greater Kalamazoo area.

2.0 Introduction/Justification

Building complete streets provides many benefits to residents, business owners, developers, and the community as a whole. First and foremost, embracing the complete streets concept will help create balanced transportation systems by providing accessible, safe, and efficient connections between destinations. It will bolster economic growth and stability while increasing property values. It will enhance job growth, improve safety, improve public health and fitness, reduce harmful emissions, and reduce the overall demand on our roadways by allowing people to replace motor vehicle trips with active transportation options. Secondly, integrating sidewalks, bike facilities, transit amenities, and safe crossings into the initial design of a project spares the expense and complications of retrofits implemented at a later date. Thirdly, proactively planning for a multimodal transportation system can promote its integration with land use policies to encourage sustainable development.

The KATS has developed this Complete Streets policy in response to (1) comments received through the Metropolitan Transportation Plan planning process, (2) encouragement by the Federal Highway Administration and other stakeholder groups, (3) the adoption of PA 135 of 2010, and (4) all of the safety, health, environmental, and economic reasons stated above.

Below are goals from the KATS 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan relevant to Complete Streets:

- Goal 1: Provide a Surface Transportation System Which Promotes the Efficient Movement of People, Goods, and Services, While Enhancing Economic Development.
- Goal 3: Increase the Accessibility and Mobility Options Available for People, Freight and Services.
- Goal 4: Improve Quality of Life of All Citizens by Protecting and Enhancing the Environment; Promote Sustainability and Livability Through Consistency Between Transportation Improvement and Local Planned Growth, Land Use, and Economic Development Patterns.
- Goal 5: Enhance the Integration and Connectivity of Different Transportation Modes for People and Freight.

The KATS Complete Streets Policy also supports compliance with Federal policy [United States Code, Title 23, Chapter 2, Section 217 (23 USC 217)] requiring consideration for bicycling and walking within transportation infrastructure. FHWA also “encourages transportation agencies to go beyond the minimum requirements, and proactively provide convenient, safe, and context-sensitive facilities that foster increased use by bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities, and utilize universal design characteristics when appropriate. (“US DOT Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations- 2010).” Also understanding the importance of a Complete Street network, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) established policy in 2011 to allow for FTA funding of pedestrian and bicycling improvements near transit, noting that “walking, bicycling, and public transportation are complementary modes of transportation (“Final Policy Statement on the Eligibility of Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements Under Federal Transit Law” Federal Register 76, August 19, 2011 p 52046-52053).”

3.0 Vision & Intent

To create a safe, balanced, and effective transportation system where every user can travel safely and comfortably and where multi-modal transportation options are available to everyone.

The goals of this Complete Streets Policy are:

- 1) To create a comprehensive, integrated, and connected transportation network that supports compact, sustainable development and provides livable communities.

- 2) To enhance safety, ease of use, and ease of transfer between modes for all users of the transportation system.
- 3) To provide flexibility for different types of streets, areas, and travelers to enhance the transportation experience.
- 4) Encourage a proactive and consistent approach to Complete Streets within the KATS area.

4.0 Applicability

4.1 Jurisdiction

The recommendations and requirements within the KATS Complete Streets Policy will apply to all federally funded transportation projects, including (but not limited to); National Highway Performance Program (NHPP), Surface Transportation Program (STP), Congestions Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) projects within the Adjusted Census Urbanized Boundary (ACUB). Projects proposed to improve a corridor that runs along the ACUB will be considered to be within the ACUB. However, it is strongly encouraged that all projects within the KATS Planning Area follow the guiding principles of Complete Streets regardless of the funding source.

Applicable projects include all roadway and/or intersection reconstruction projects, added travel lane(s) projects, new roadways, capital preventive maintenance projects, and new or rehabilitated bridges (including bridge decks reconstructed over the Interstate/US Routes and underpasses under reconstructed/new interchanges).

The KATS recognizes that some municipalities (cities, villages, and townships) and road agencies have adopted their own Complete Streets Policies. When applied to the federally funded projects as listed above, the strictest regulations of any involved Complete Streets policy applicable to a jurisdiction shall apply. Municipalities and road agencies that have not adopted their own policies are strongly encouraged to do so. The KATS will foster partnerships with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), municipalities, road agencies, neighboring counties, and other entities to develop facilities that further the KATS Complete Streets Policy and continue such infrastructure beyond the KATS urbanized area boundary.

4.2 Minimum Network Connectivity

Applicable projects under this policy will be required to include at least:

- A continuous ADA-compliant sidewalk on both sides of the roadway/bridge,
- Or a wide paved shoulder or designated bicycle lanes within the roadway project, if the inclusion of a sidewalk is anticipated to be overly burdensome to the project and therefore infeasible, or
- a shared use path of a sufficient width to accommodate both pedestrian and bicycle travel simultaneously.

Projects located along corridors already served by a continuous sidewalk or multi-use path on at least one side of the roadway are considered to be compliant. Improvements to ensure good condition and ADA compliance are required. If designated bicycle lanes

are included, the design for their width, markings, and treatment at intersections and crossings should follow the most recent design guidance of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

If the planned facility currently has fixed route transit, or is proposed to have fixed route transit in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan or an approved local plan, then the project sponsor shall request comments from the local transit agency (Kalamazoo Metro Transit, Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority) during the project development process to ensure that collaboration occurs with these agencies and that accommodation of transit vehicles and opportunities to access transit facilities are provided. Comments shall be included in funding application requests.

4.3 All Projects and Phases

Every federally funded transportation improvement and project phase should be approached as an opportunity to create safer, more comfortable, more accessible roadways for all users. Project phases include planning, programming, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, construction engineering, reconstruction, and operations as well as any change to transportation facilities within street rights-of-way such as capital improvements, preservation, and major maintenance.

5.0 Design

The Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study has long been a proponent of creating a multimodal, safe, and efficient transportation system that ensures accessibility to all roadway users. In order to increase the number of projects that provide multimodal facilities in the Kalamazoo metropolitan area, KATS has included design guideline references into this Policy. These references recognize the importance of, and encouraged the concept of, complete street development.

5.1 Context Sensitivity

In recognition of context sensitivity, public input and the needs of many users, a flexible, innovative and balanced approach that follows other appropriate design standards may be considered, provided that a comparable level of safety for all users is present.

5.2 Design Guideline References

KATS municipalities and road agencies shall follow accepted or adopted design standards and use the best and latest design standards available, while leveraging the flexibility provided in these documents, according to user needs and community context. Minimum connection requirements of this policy (paragraph 4.2) are not intended to supersede the best practices for design as referenced in this section.

Sources for design guidelines include, but are not limited to:

- American Association for State Highway and Transportation Officials: A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, 6th Edition, 2011 or newer.
- American Association for State Highway and Transportation Officials: Guide for the Planning, Design, Operation of Pedestrian Facilities- July 2004 edition or newer.

- American Association for State Highway and Transportation Officials: Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities- Fourth Edition or newer.

KATS recognizes that, during the course of project development, unforeseeable changes can occur. However, municipalities and road agencies are encouraged to review equitably all elements of a proposed project prior to eliminating components due to budget constraints.

After KATS has committed funding to a project, KATS staff should be notified immediately of significant project scope changes. Projects should be administratively updated in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to ensure that it includes accurate information. Depending on the significance of the change, a TIP amendment may be necessary. KATS staff can advise on this matter.

6.0 Implementation

Due to the flexibility of the policy and the variety of approaches that a municipality or road agency may take to complete a street, KATS staff, as stewards of the Complete Streets Policy, will work with the municipality or road agency throughout the process to find an acceptable solution for both parties.

During project selection, projects will first be evaluated for compliance with this Complete Streets Policy. Projects will then be prioritized according to procedures in place prior to the effective date of this policy. Exception requests will be reviewed either administratively or through the KATS Complete Streets Task Force according to section 6.1 Exception Process of this policy. Projects found not in compliance with this policy, or for which an exception request is denied, will be found ineligible for funding during the applied for funding cycle.

6.1 Exception Process

If a project cannot meet the Complete Streets Policy, the municipality or road agency may request an exception. Exception requests will be initially reviewed and sorted by KATS staff. Administrative Exceptions may be granted or referred to the KATS Complete Streets Task Force by KATS staff. KATS staff reserve the right to abstain from the decision and pass the case on to the KATS Complete Streets Task Force where there may be issues of ambiguity or real or potential public controversy. Municipality or road agency applicants may appeal an Administrative decision to the KATS Complete Streets Task Force. Non-Administrative or appealed Administrative Exception decisions will be made by the KATS Complete Streets Task Force (6.3 KATS Complete Streets Task Force). Projects which propose to diminish, degrade, or remove existing non-motorized facilities will automatically be considered a violation of this policy. Such requests can only proceed as a Non-Administrative Exception to be reviewed by the Complete Streets Task Force.

Exceptions are divided into Administrative Exceptions and Non-Administrative Exceptions as listed below.

Administrative Exceptions. Exceptions may be considered for approval by KATS staff when:

- An affected roadway prohibits, by law, specified users (such as an interstate freeways or pedestrian malls), in which case a greater effort shall be made to accommodate those specified users elsewhere, including on roadways that cross or otherwise intersect with the affected roadway (e.g. bridge decks reconstructed over the Interstate and underpasses under reconstructed/new interchanges).
- The activities are ordinary maintenance activities designed to keep assets in serviceable condition (e.g. spot repair, and surface treatments such as chip seal, or crack seal), which meet MDOT's ADA upgrade exceptions.
- Approved or adopted plans or policies (such as local or regional land use, zoning, connectivity planning), or present and anticipated market conditions indicate an absence of need, including future need, for multimodal facilities such as in instances of existing and anticipated continuance of sparse population.

Non-Administrative Exceptions. Exceptions may be considered for approval by the KATS Complete Streets Task Force when:

- Improvements in compliance with this Complete Streets Policy would be in jeopardy of removal or destruction soon after their installation due to near-future planned projects in same area.
- Applying Complete Streets principles to a project is inappropriate because it would be contrary to public safety or unduly cost prohibitive (e.g. If the addition of facilities for other modes would increase the cost so as to endanger the ability to secure local funds, would result in the significant expansion of a project schedule, or would create significant impacts to environmental, topographical, cultural or historic resources that cannot be reasonably mitigated).
- A county or municipality's zoning ordinance requirements would require the future installation of facilities as development occurs. To clarify, an exception may be considered if, according to location regulations, developers of property zoned for future development along project corridors would be required to install the required sidewalk or multi-use path and coordinate with transit providers. This exception should not be applied piecemeal, creating gaps in service in anticipation of unscheduled future development; it would only apply if the majority of those served by the facility would come from future development on planned or zoned land, unless the project is identified in the KATS non-motorized plan as a priority project.

6.2 Complete Streets Task Force

Non-Administrative or appealed Administrative Exception requests and submitted documentation supporting requests will be reviewed by the Complete Streets Task Force for approval. Such documentation shall be publicly available.

- The Complete Streets Task Force shall be made up of five (5) people who are appointed by the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study's Technical Committee, in accordance with the KATS By-Laws, for two-year terms. Members may be reappointed for successive terms. The voting membership consists of four (4)

technical representatives, representing municipalities and road agencies, and one (1) representative from a transit provider. Two (2) additional technical representatives will be designated as alternates, to serve on the Task Force if a conflict of interest should occur. A single agency shall have no more than one (1) representative. One (1) alternate will represent a municipality, one (1) alternate will represent a road agency. This Task Force shall be supported by one (1) KATS staff member. Task Force members who are unable to attend a meeting may send their alternate, as listed on file with KATS (updated annually).

- The Complete Streets Task Force will meet on an “as needed” basis. KATS staff will review the exception requests initially and provide a report with recommendations to the Task Force in advance of each meeting. The applicant will have the opportunity to review the report and add comments to it prior to its submittal to the Task Force. The KATS website will provide 7-days advance notice of the date of the scheduled Complete Streets Task Force Meeting and it shall be open to both the applicants and the public for review and comment. During each meeting, the Task Force shall discuss and evaluate the request(s), suggest revisions where appropriate, and vote on a recommendation.
- A quorum on the Complete Streets Task Force shall consist of at least three (3) voting members. Members with conflicts of interest on a particular project before the Task Force must recuse themselves from deliberation on that project, and the appropriate alternate will vote in their place. Recusal shall be noted in advance so the appropriate alternate can attend.
- In the event that the municipality or road agency disagrees with the action of the Complete Streets Task Force, the municipality or road agency may appeal to the KATS Policy Committee which may or may not elect to hear the appeal request.
- All exceptions will be kept on record and made publicly available. Notification will be provided to the KATS Policy Committee.

The KATS shall submit semi-annually reports to the KATS Policy Committee summarizing all exceptions granted in the preceding quarter.

6.3 Continuing Support

As a part of implementing this regional Complete Streets policy, the KATS encourages Municipalities to:

- Notify and maintain regular communication with relevant departments, agencies, and committees within their jurisdictions when planning for transportation facilities;
- review current design standards, including subdivision regulations which apply to new roadway construction, to ensure that they reflect the best available design standards and guidelines, and effectively implement the regional Complete Streets policy;

- form, or utilize an existing, local Technical Advisory Committee to discuss potential transportation projects and identify opportunities to include multimodal facilities;
- encourage staff to undergo professional development and training for multi-modal transportation issues by attending conferences, classes, seminars, and workshops;
- promote inter-departmental project coordination among local agency departments with an interest in the activities that occur within the public right-of-way in order to better use fiscal resources;
- include an educational component to ensure that all users of the transportation system understand and can safely utilize Complete Streets project elements; and
- consider the creation of a local Complete Streets policy to apply to all non-KATS supported projects. Local policies established after the effective date of the KATS Complete Streets Policy should strive to equal or exceed the requirements herein.

7.0 Evaluation / Performance Measures

KATS shall, at a minimum, evaluate this policy and the documents associated with it every three years during the Transportation Improvement Program development cycle. This evaluation may include recommendations for amendments to the Complete Streets Policy. Baseline data will be collected the year of the policy's adoption.

KATS staff will report to the Policy Committee on the triennial increase or decrease for each performance measure listed below, compared to the previous year(s), in order to evaluate the success of this Complete Streets policy.

- Total miles of marked bike lanes / shared use pathways built or painted, as a whole or as a percentage of the system
- Linear feet of new, updated, or repaired sidewalk
- Number of new curb ramps installed or upgraded
- Crosswalk and intersection improvements, and other safety elements
- Number of transit stops accessible via sidewalks and curb ramps
- Rate of crashes, injuries, and fatalities by mode
- Number of approved and denied exceptions