

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
Minutes of the May 27, 2020 Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

The May 27, 2020 Policy Committee Meeting was called to order remotely by Chair Randy Thompson at 9: 00 a.m.

INTRODUCTIONS

Participants in the conference call stated name.

ROLL CALL

Remote meeting attendance was recorded on the sign-in sheet.

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING

Curtis Aardema	Central County Transportation Authority
Rob Britigan	City of Parchment
Carol Daly	Village of Mattawan
Marsha Drouin, Treasurer	Richland Township
Libby Heiny-Cogswell, Vice Chair	Oshtemo Township
John Gisler	Kalamazoo County
Martin Janssen	Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority
Joanna Johnson	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
Carl Keller	Village of Vicksburg
Greg Kinney	Van Buren County Road Commission
Nicolette Leigh	Kalamazoo Township
Tracey Locey	Brady Township
Don Mayle	Michigan Department of Transportation, Planning
Sarah Moyer-Cale	Village of Paw Paw
Pete Pfeiffer	Michigan Department of Transportation, TSC
Chris Praedel	City of Kalamazoo
Patricia Randall	City of Portage
Jeff Sorensen	Cooper Township
Paul Sotherland	KATS Citizens Advisory Committee
Randy Thompson, Chair	Comstock Township
Jerry VanderRoest	Charleston Township

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jason Gatlin	Wakeshma Township
Jeff Heppler	Village of Augusta
John Hinkle	Texas Township
Lisa Imus	Village of Lawton
Paul Schincariol	Van Buren County
Tom Swiat	Prairie Ronde Township
Don Ulsh	Schoolcraft Township

OTHERS PARTICIPATING

Max Hornet
Megan Mickelson
Fred Nagler
Paul Selden
Steve Stepek

Disability Network of Southwest Michigan
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Bike Friendly Kalamazoo
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study

CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

No changes or additions to the agenda were requested.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION by Sorensen, SECOND by Drouin, ***“to approve the agenda of the May 27, 2020 Policy Committee Meeting.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Paul Selden, Chair and President of Bike Friendly Kalamazoo thanked all jurisdictions, agencies, individuals and organizations that participated in Kalamazoo Area Bike Week 2020 and those who donated bikes to Ministry With Community (MwC). With public transportation limited due to COVID-19, Ministry with Community’s Social Work Team is working harder than ever to get bikes to people that are essential workers. MwC is currently accepting donations of bikes in good working order, or in need of light repair. For details, see <https://ministrywithcommunity.org/mwcblog>. Selden thanked City of Parchment, City of Portage, Comstock Township, Cooper Township, and Kalamazoo Township for making bike safety literature including tips, brochures, maps, and Information available to citizens. Selden thanked Kalamazoo Silent Observer for continuing the special reward fund for reporting serious crimes against bicyclists and bike theft.

CONSENT AGENDA

- ACCEPTANCE OF THE TREASURER’S REPORT
- TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT (MAY 14, 2020)
- ACCEPTANCE OF THE SOUTHCENTRAL MICHIGAN PLANNING COUNCIL REPORT
- APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 25, 2020 MEETING

Stepek pointed out Kalamazoo Area Transportation added budget versus actual expense information to the Treasurer’s Report. This information will continue to be included in the report. If anyone has questions or comments, let Elizabeth Rumick know.

MOTION by Sorensen, SECOND by Drouin, ***“to accept and approve the items on the Consent Agenda as listed.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

KATS CONSULTATION PLAN

Referring to the plan included in the meeting packet, Stepek stated as part of the federal planning process, Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) is responsible for consulting with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the KATS area. This plan documents outlines the KATS’ process for engaging these agencies. Since agencies received the draft plan in March, KATS has incorporated a few comments from the Citizen Advisory Committee regarding the contact list in Appendix B. The Technical Committee recommended adoption of this plan at their last meeting.

MOTION by Daly, SECOND by Sorensen, ***“to accept and approve the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Consultation Plan.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

FY 2020 – 2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENTS

Steppek referred to the eight proposed project amendments to the FY 2020 – 2023 Transportation Improvement Program enclosed in the meeting packet. The first amendment was programmed incorrectly, the job number changed to 207304, project cost doubled from what the Technical Committee saw. Other amendments include new safety projects, transit program tweaks and Michigan Department of Transportation region-wide project adjustments. These proposed amendments to the FY 2020 – 2023 Transportation Improvement Program were recommended for approval by the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Technical Committee at their May 14, 2020 meeting.

MOTION by Locey, SECOND by Janssen, ***“to approve the FY 2020 – 2023 Transportation Improvement Program Amendments.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

FY 2021 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

Steppek referred to the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) FY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program included in the meeting materials.

The FY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) represents the budget and work activities for the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study for Fiscal Year 2021. The draft UPWP has been out for public comment since April 6th.

Highlights of the FY 2021 UPWP:

- KATS will continue with the use of in-kind contributed services to provide the match necessary for the program.
- KATS will continue the model development work started in FY 2019.
- KATS will continue the partnership with Metro in purchasing transit route planning software.
- Emphasis for the UPWP is concentrated on the development of the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.
- The budget includes the Executive Director’s recommendations for salary adjustments for employees (ranging from 3% to 5.1% increases).

In Michigan, Metropolitan Planning Organizations’ funding levels are one year behind the actual fiscal year. Meaning that KATS is using the FY 2019 allocation for FY 2020. FY 2020 allocation is used for FY 2021. Therefore, if there are any funding changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic, KATS will look to adjust the FY budget in 2022 if necessary. If attendees have any additional questions regarding the budget, please let Steppek know. The Technical Committee recommended adoption of this plan at their last meeting.

Johnson clarified the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County council in conjunction with the Transportation Asset Management Council, is anticipating KATS will allocate some reimbursement for non-federal aid data collection as stated on page 21 of the work program, under the Asset Management work element 400. Steppek responded, yes, KATS plans on it.

MOTION by Sorensen, SECOND by Johnson, ***“to approve the FY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION MASTER AGREEMENT

The master agreement was enclosed in the meeting packet. Stepek reported every three years the Michigan Department of Transportation updates the Master Agreement with the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study. This agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of each agency within the metropolitan planning process. Changes in this Master Agreement from the last agreement include:

- Section 7: Billing/progress report due deadline changed as agreed by CSD and FOD.
- Section 9: Defend added to align with other formats.
- Section 15: Payment language revised to coincide with current practices.
- Section 24.d.: Language changed to indicate which documents need proper credit more specifically.
- Section 25: Language revised to coincide with current practices (all reports contain this language).
- Section 26: Removed as this language is redundant and fundamental work is not defined. Publication restrictions are covered under Section 28.b.

KATS staff recommends the Policy Committee approve this document and authorize the Executive Director sign on Policy Committee behalf. Since Michigan Department of Transportation is using a new, complicated, digital online signature, Stepek is asking to sign on behalf of the Policy Committee. Thompson approves of allowing the Executive Director to sign on Policy Committee behalf.

MOTION by Johnson, SECOND by Sorensen, ***“to approve the Michigan Department of Transportation Master Agreement.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Stepek explained this letter of support was included in the packet. Dr. Oh reached out to Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study regarding this available grant. The Transportation Research Center for Livable Communities at Western Michigan University is applying for research funding through the US Department of Transportation. The grant is available only to designated Transportation Research Centers. They are asking for KATS support in their application for funding. The research topic is “Implication of Accessible Automated Vehicles and Mobility Services for People with Disabilities.” More information on the grant program can be found here:

<https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/us-department-transportation-announces-competitive-grant-solicitation-nearly-5>

KATS Staff recommends supporting the application for research funding for Western Michigan University and the Transportation Research Center for Livable Communities and to authorize the Executive Director to sign the letter on behalf of the Policy Committee.

Stepek reported the previous and current practice is to bring every Letter of Support to the committee for approval. This causes some time constraints on agencies meeting grant deadlines and adds more time to meeting agendas. Stepek noted that for the past 15 years, the committee has approved all Letters of Support presented. Stepek would like comments and discussion on allowing Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) staff discretion on Letters of Support and not waiting for Policy Committee approval.

Sorensen would like to add to the motion allowing KATS staff to respond to Letters of Support without bringing them to the Policy Committee for approval. Heiny-Cogswell agrees but requests all the Letters of Support be included as an enclosure in meeting materials.

MOTION by Heiny-Cogswell, SECOND by Sorensen, ***“to approve the Letter of Support for Western Michigan University and allowing KATS staff discretion with all future Letters of Support.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

CONTRIBUTED SERVICES YEAR TO DATE

Steppek referred to the year to date report of contributed services included in the packet. Overall, KATS is slightly ahead of where it needs to be at this point in the year. However, Stepek reminded agencies to continue to document their time and submit timesheets. Over the last two months, many planned activities have been cancelled or postponed, people are working from home, and the traffic count program is delayed resulting in minimal time sheets submitted to KATS. Traffic counts should be resuming soon which will increase contributed service.

FEDERAL HIGHWAY COST BASED AMENDMENT DISCUSSION

Steppek reported this was brought at a recent association meeting of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This was brought up after the Technical Committee Meeting. Therefore, Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) did not obtain Technical Committee input. The Federal Highway Administration conducted analysis on their amendment process and is proposing changes. The amendment process informs the public regarding the change, per the public involvement plan, and requires Policy Committee approval. Cost is one of many items that KATS considers an amendment for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Currently a cost-based amendment is a 25% change (plus or minus) of the total project cost. The proposed amendment process would either relate to only federal cost change or be on a tiered system. The tiered system is confusing and cumbersome and would be difficult for the public to understand. KATS online system through Jobnet would require substantial reprogramming by Michigan Department of Transportation. If the policy changes, it falls in the middle of the Transportation Improvement Program. Almost all MPOs adopt policies that govern over the life of the TIP. Policies are then reevaluated at the adoption of the next TIP. Changing the policy mid TIP may cause problems when obligating projects. KATS Staff has several concerns regarding the proposals presented when compared to the adopted KATS TIP amendment policy. KATS Staff will prepare a response to FHWA regarding the proposals and share that response with the Policy Committee next month. Let KATS staff know of any comments, questions or points to include in the response. Stepek asked Pfeiffer to share local MDOT perspective with KATS. Pfeiffer agreed. Once FHWA has the responses from MDOT and the Metropolitan Planning Organizations, they will compile that information and bring it back to the Michigan Transportation Planning Association for discussion. Johnson inquired if there would be an opportunity to bring this back to Technical Committee for comment at their June meeting. Stepek agreed and plans to also bring it back to the Policy Committee.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

Janssen praised Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority Metro Connect for service over the last month to month-and-a-half since the line haul stopped running. Metro connect exhibited professionalism, reliability, and durability. No one got COVID. Janssen appreciates the great innovations and effort.

Aardema echoed Janssen’s appreciation and praise for Metro Connect providing the need for essential service required during this challenging time. Metro line haul service stopped a couple weeks into the Stay-at-Home Order. Service was halted due to potential risk to employees and customers, interaction in close quarters, and very low demand. Regular bus route service resumed

May 18, 2020 using safety protocols. Busses continue to be fare free to limit interaction between the driver and customer. Customers may only access the rear bus door to limit touching of surfaces and interaction with the driver. Plastic safety shields have been installed to protect drivers and customers. Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA) faces budget challenges from the impact of no fare coming in, and possible state government funding impact. CCTA was able to receive some federal funding. The Budget Committee will decide how to properly allocate federal funds considering long-term sustainability. Aardema again thanked the community and agencies for strong support and passage of the CCTA millage in March which will assist with system challenges.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Stepak announced the report is part of the meeting packet. KATS Staff continues to operate remotely, following the Governor's executive orders. A few items on the horizon for KATS:

- KATS will be issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for accounting services June 1. Due to the cost of a multi-year renewal, KATS exceeds MDOT's limit (\$25,000) and must go through the RFP process.
- KATS is in contact with MDOT and local road agencies regarding the PASER road rating program. Due to Covid-19, some agencies are concerned about the possible exposure of spending that amount of time in a car with a group of people. KATS will assess everyone's concerns and look at to adjust the federal PASER ratings by possibly doing additional in-house PASER ratings on the local system.
- KATS Staff is willing to hold the KATS 101 education online, as well additional trainings about the Metropolitan Planning Process or transportation topics in general. If people are a new Policy Committee member or are interested, please let us know.
- KATS posted the open Associate Planner position and is receiving resumes through the end of the month.

KATS will be planning a retirement event for Jonathan Start and will communicate once something is planned. Stepek noted KATS is hiring and accepting applications for an Associate Planner through the end of the month. Please see the website for more information.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was brought forth.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Paul Selden citizen of Kalamazoo County and representative of Bike Friendly Kalamazoo (BFK) announced a landmark program for this area modeled after the structure that proved very successful on how Grand Rapids improved public safety and its public education with Michigan Department of Transportation help a number of years ago. The program was successful in reducing fatalities and serious injuries in the Grand Rapids area. Bike Friendly Kalamazoo approved a public charter at the March 26, 2020 meeting. The Bike Program Steering Committee will hold a virtual meeting on June 24, 2020 from 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. The charter will consider matters related to defining and accomplishing named programs and relay non-binding advice to Program Core Teams who will be in charge of implementation. Meetings will be held quarterly with the chief focus on matters that affect more than one jurisdiction, agency, or organization. The Steering Committee's recommendations are non-binding. Participants are named delegates, with preference for participants whose organizations recognize them as delegates. One or two delegates are allowed from any one organization. For details please see BFK's website for Public Strategic Public Planning March Meeting Notes. BFK is attempting to tailor a local Public Safety Messaging Campaign throughout the KATS urban area based

on the Driving Change platform that was successful in Grand Rapids. The main goal of the June 24, 2020 meeting is to update each other on the current status and progress made on bike visibility (bike light giveaway), League Certified Cycling Instructor training, and The Bicycle-Motorist Public Service Announcement Campaign. Selden thanked the City of Kalamazoo, City of Portage, the League of Michigan Bicyclists, the Office of Highway Safety Planning, Western Michigan University, the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club and others for their participation. More jurisdictions/agencies/organizations are welcome. Please contact Paul Selden or use the BFK.org website contact page for more information. About 20 people signed up for the meeting. There is room for about 20 more. Selden thanks all individuals and organizations for their involvement.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Randall thanked Paul Selden Bike Friendly Kalamazoo for all their efforts for cyclist safety, education, and awareness.

VanderRoest mentioned there is lots of construction on the trailway going through the City of Galesburg and Charleston Township. It is expected to continue all summer.

Sorensen thanked Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) for the job well done on D Avenue. D Avenue has never been better in a rain storm, doesn't have a rock on it, and looks great. Sorensen previously thanked Worden on the great job. Johnson stated Worden had passed along the shout-out to RCKC. Johnson appreciated Sorensen's feedback and will share it again with the team.

Heiny-Cogswell reported the Oshtemo Township Board will be considering the Fruit Belt Trail application for the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund in June to acquire two miles of corridor between Texas Township and Mattawan. Ben Clark accepted a job with the City of Kalamazoo. He will continue representation on Technical Committee.

Aardema thanked Selden and Bike Friendly Kalamazoo for noticeable enhancement to cyclist services and facilities in the community in recent years. Aardema stated he serves on the Kalamazoo County Airport Board. Airports have experienced significant changes and challenges with air service in the country, world and locally in Kalamazoo. The new Kalamazoo Airport Board Director Craig Williams is committed to maintaining air service. The Kalamazoo airport is in regular communication with airlines. Current challenges present an opportunity to solicit new air carriers. The Airport Board will hold a meeting later this summer to discuss visions and long-term planning. Pass along any thoughts and comments about the airport.

Gisler inquired if Stepek is officially the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Executive Director or if the position is still in transition from Jonathan Start. Stepek stated he is officially the Executive Director as approved by the Policy Committee during the March meeting. Start's last day was May 6, 2020. Start is enjoying retirement and staff look forward to a retirement celebration in the future.

Johnson thanked the entire Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) team for their efforts. RCKC has continued working as a critical infrastructure business and has a lot of projects in process. RCKC Project Informational Meetings have been held at 12:00 p.m. noon via Zoom as opposed to the traditional in-person meetings. There were two meetings for U Avenue and Drake. Today's meeting is on F Avenue. The recorded meetings can be listened to on the RCKC website Projects page. The Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) will be sending out a letter soon. TAMC hopes to continue to collect data on both the Federal and Non-Federal Aid network. Be creative in ways to collect data safely; it is not necessary to be in a vehicle. Asset Management plans are due in October. RCKC is closely monitoring Michigan Transportation Funds Revenue. RCKC is not using as much gas

which impacts the budget. No projects have been cancelled. Johnson thanked Sorensen for the positive feedback.

Thompson thanks the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County for getting Michigan Avenue open. Thanks to Selden for information on Bike Friendly Kalamazoo. Comstock Township experienced flooding last week.

Stepek mentioned Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study KATS 101 sessions are available and can be done virtually via Microsoft Teams. Let staff know of any interest in learning more about KATS.

Selden thanked Pfeiffer and Michigan Department of Transportation for support throughout Kalamazoo Bike Week, including sponsoring and encouraging attending presentations, and current participation on the Bike Committee Steering Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, Chair Randy Thompson adjourned the May 27, 2020 Policy Committee Meeting at 9:56 a.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 - 9:00 a.m.