

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES JUNE 11, 2020 - 9:00 A.M.

CALL TO ORDER

The June 11, 2020 Technical Committee Meeting was called to order remotely at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Kathy Schultz.

ROLL CALL

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

MEMBERS PRESENT

Muhammad Arif	City of Portage
Mickey Bittner	Village of Paw Paw
Kendra Gwin	City of Portage
Jim Hoekstra	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
Joel Hoort	Van Buren County Road Commission
Lotta Jarnefelt	Kalamazoo County
Anthony Ladd	City of Kalamazoo
Iris Luppert	Oshtemo Township
Robert Mafeo	Michigan Department of Transportation, Statewide Urban
Jim Mallery	Village of Vicksburg
Ryan Minkus, Vice-Chair	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
Jesse Okeley	City of Kalamazoo
Michelle O'Neill	Michigan Department of Transportation, TSC
Katie Reilly	City of Kalamazoo
Ryan Russell	Village of Schoolcraft
Brian Sanada	Michigan Department of Transportation, Region
Kathy Schultz, Chair	Central County Transportation Authority
Joe Stark	City of Kalamazoo
Jodi Stefforia	Comstock Township
Nancy Stoddard	City of Parchment
Greg Vliestra	Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority
Mike West	City of Portage
Tim Woodhams	Village of Mattawan

OTHERS PRESENT

Lawrence Hummel	Hubbell, Roth and Clark, Inc.
Megan Mickelson	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Fred Nagler	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Elizabeth Rumick	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Steve Stepek	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study

CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

No changes or additions to the agenda were made.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION by Minkus, SECOND by Mallery, ***“to approve the June 11, 2020 Technical Committee Agenda.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

MINUTES FROM THE MAY 14, 2020 MEETING

MOTION by Stefforia, SECOND by West, ***“to approve the minutes from the May 14, 2020 Technical Committee Meeting.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

Stepek reported the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Policy Committee held a successful online May meeting. Action items included the KATS Consultation Plan, FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program Amendments, FY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program, Michigan Department of Transportation Master Agreement. Items not on the Technical Committee May agenda included a Letter of Support for Western Michigan University (WMU) and the Federal Highway Administration Cost Based Amendment proposal because they were received after the meeting. The Policy Committee authorized Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study to sign the WMU Letter of Support for the Transportation Research Center for Livable Community grant application. The Policy Committee approved all action items and followed all Technical Committee recommendations. Minkus asked for clarification on which agencies within the region were eligible for the grant WMU applied for. Stepek replied only designated Transportation Research Centers were eligible for the grant. WMU is the only Transportation Research Center in the region.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were made.

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION COST BASED AMENDMENT DISCUSSION

Referring to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Cost Based Amendment white paper in the meeting packet, Stepek explained FHWA is proposing changes to the current cost-based amendment of a 25% change (plus or minus) of the total phase cost. After analyzing current practices, FHWA concludes too many amendments result, so propose changes and are soliciting feedback. Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) staff response on the white paper is included in meeting enclosures. Stepek expressed gratitude for additional comments from agencies which will be incorporated into the KATS response. KATS comments on the proposal state the current policy of a 25% change (plus or minus) of the total phase cost is preferred and appropriate. KATS opines the FHWA tiered proposal will create confusion within local agencies and the public. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) can better implement federal regulations by defining cost based STIP/TIP amendments. Stepek gave the example that if the road commission wanted to pave an extra mile with local funds, they would be able to add it on and it would not cause a TIP Amendment. Stepek explained total phase cost is only total eligible cost which excludes water or sewer non-participating costs. City of Portage questioned how water and sewer costs impacted total phase cost. Agencies can add limitless non-participating cost without triggering a TIP Amendment. While Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) shared KATS opinion regarding the FHWA proposed tiered cost amendment, MDOT would not be opposed to a 25 percent additional change to total project cost. Schultz inquired whether this has been discussed with Michigan Transportation Planning Association Agency groups. Stepek responded the majority of MPO's in the state agree with KATS leaving thresholds the same. Minkus shared that statewide MPOs came up with the process and now FHWA states there are too many amendments. Due to data analysis, the number of amendments the process created should have been known before the practices were implemented. Possibly the process is flawed, or it is not being followed, or there is another issue. Stepek agreed noting the improved, streamlined online JobNet process where FHWA and Federal Transit approve amendments within 24 hours. MPO's see no problem with the current amendment process. Schultz expressed concerns with transparency to the public on higher cost projects and accountability for both agencies and the public that monitor where dollars are spent in the community. Stepek pointed out KATS surprise that this is strictly a Federal Highway proposal excluding Federal Transit which goes against standard procedure to involve both Federal partners in decisions. Arif inquired if the public is currently notified and offered a comment period when making a change to a project. Stepek answered yes, it goes through KATS posting processes and comments are solicited. KATS plans to add comments received from MDOT and any

other agencies and will present to the Policy Committee at next month's meeting before submitting to FHWA.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

Schultz reported Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA) increased service hours on June 8, 2020 from 6:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Monday through Saturday. Sunday fixed route service hours will begin June 14, 2020 running 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Metro continues hourly bus service and is not fully operational with fewer staff and vehicles. Four routes are running every half-hour. Ridership is 25 percent of normal daily ridership for the fixed route system. Metro is not receiving complaints from the public. Passengers are required to use sanitizer and wear masks upon boarding the bus. Nightly cleanings of the entire fleet continue. CCTA continues to partner with the county health department monitoring cases and finding areas for improvement. Vliestra added permanent safety barriers for drivers will be installed. Schultz confirmed CCTA approved the purchase of plexiglass driver barriers for all fixed route fleets with estimated install in fall. Fares continue to be free while stressing to the public to ride for essential trips only. Youth Mobility program plans are on hold until Kalamazoo Public Schools decides what service will be offered in the fall. Western Michigan University fall service may also change due to the University's budget shortfall. O'Neill inquired whether Metro has considered sharing the successful Metro driver safety protocol with area school districts for school buses. Schultz responded school districts are unsure of fall plans. O'Neill suggested CCTA contact districts.

STATUS REPORTS

ROADS-

Gwin reported City of Portage Zylman Avenue project wrapped up and will open to traffic June 11, 2020 or June 12, 2020. Paving outside lane leveling courses at the East Centre Avenue project from Portage Road to Sprinkle Road will occur June 11, 2020 with project completion by July 4, 2020. The South Westnedge Avenue project from Trade Center Way to Kilgore Road is progressing with expected completion mid-July. South Westnedge Avenue and Shaver Road – West Centre Avenue to Romence Road project water main replacement is done. Project completion is expected mid-August. In July, traffic signal replacement will begin at Westnedge and Mall and Westnedge and Idaho. Portage is wrapping up plans for next year's East Milham Avenue project from South Westnedge Avenue to Portage Road.

O'Neill reported Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) I-94 widening project between Lovers Lane and Sprinkle started the week of June 8, 2020 with nighttime lane closures. Due to MDOT mandatory furlough days, O'Neill released to members-only, a 24-hour, 7 day-a-week emergency first responder phone number that may be used for immediate response. Normal contact protocol should be followed for non-emergency response.

Ladd updated City of Kalamazoo Cork Street and Oakland Drive projects are progressing. Local street paving has started with minor adjustments due to funding cuts. The radar speed monitoring program is underway. Speeds will be recorded and analyzed at 18 locations throughout the city.

Hoort reported Van Buren County Road Commission Red Arrow project from 26th – 28th will be finished next week, two weeks ahead of schedule. County Road 653 project from I-94 overpass north to Red Arrow Highway will be finished June 12, 2020 one month ahead of schedule.

Stoddard stated City of Parchment Commerce Lane between Mosel and Riverview project work will begin June 12, 2020 with estimated completion June 19, 2020.

Road Commission of Kalamazoo County Non-motorized:

FY	Job No.	Description	Status
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2019	202047	Drake Rd Trail – Green Meadow to W. Main.	Wrapping up.
2020	127385	Drake Rd Trail – KL Ave to Green Meadow	04/30/20 precon, Start date of 06/15/20 pushed back.
2020	205109	KRVT #6 – 35 th St to McCollum	Progressing well, waiting for some relos from Consumers.
2020	206301	Stadium Dr Sidewalk – Quail Run to 11 th St.	Scheduled for July letting.

Road Commission of Kalamazoo County Road Updates:

FY	Job No.	Description	Status
2019	120246	D Ave – Rolling Meadows to Douglas D Ave – 17 th St. to Riverview Dr.	Wrapping up, chip seal done.
2019	202857	8 th St. – S Ave. to R Ave.	06/15/20 tentative start.
2020	202433	Local Bridge Program (29 th St, 35 th St, 9 th St, Portage Rd) Preventive Maintenance	06/15/20 tentative start.
2020	130824	Drake Rd. – Parkview to W. Main	Underway with lane closures.
2020	207248	S Ave. – 34 th to 36 th St.	Anticipated completion end of June.
2020	130143	U Ave. – 29 th St. to 32 nd St.	Anticipated completion end of June.
2020	207188	Systemic Signs	Done.
2020	207249	G Ave. – 2 nd St. to 6 th St.	Started week of June 8, 2020.
2021	206265	Sprinkle Rd. – Milham to N Ave.	Preliminary plan development

RCKC Other Updates:

- Project information meetings happening virtually. Townships were sent notification. Information available on the “Projects” page of the RCKC website.

LAND USE/PLANNING AND ZONING-

Reilly reported the Oakhill Winchell Neighborhood Plan was amended to the Master Plan. Parkview Hills neighborhood plan will be presented to the Planning Commission in July. Downtown zoning amendments will begin the week of June 15, 2020.

West reported the City of Portage Planning Commission approved recommendation for a hotel development on Trade Centre Way with anticipated start in late summer. Portage Road public input sessions regarding corridor reconfiguration and redesign were postponed until summer.

Lotta reported Kalamazoo County is starting to open next week but residents are encouraged to conduct business on-line or over the phone. For in-person service, an appointment is required, and health checks will be performed. The County’s newly hired GIS Technician started June 1, 2020. Lotta reminded attendees to complete the census and the importance of the process. Efforts are underway to improve low census response rates in West Michigan University, Edison, and Southside areas. The census response deadline has been extended to October 31, 2020.

NEW BUSINESS

Steppek stated the July meeting is normally cancelled. Unless a large action item surfaces, plan on cancellation of the July meeting this year as well. The next Technical Committee meeting would be August 13, 2020.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were made.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the June 11, 2020 Technical Committee Meeting was adjourned at 9:38 a.m.

The next meeting of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Technical Committee will be held on Thursday, July 9, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.