

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY POLICY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the September 30, 2020 Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

The September 30, 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
Marsha Drouin, Treasurer	Richland Township
Jeff Franklin	Michigan Department of Transportation, Planning
Jason Gatlin	Wakeshma Township
John Gisler	Kalamazoo County
Libby Heiny-Cogswell, Vice Chair	Oshtemo Township
John Hinkle	Texas Township
Lisa Imus	Village of Lawton
Martin Janssen	Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority
Joanna Johnson	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
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
Randy Thompson, Chair	Comstock Township
Jerry VanderRoest	Charleston Township

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jeff Heppler	Village of Augusta
Carl Keller	Village of Vicksburg
Jeff Sorensen	Cooper Township
Tom Swiat	Prairie Ronde Township
Don Ulsh	Schoolcraft Township

OTHERS PARTICIPATING

Sean McBride
Megan Mickelson
Fred Nagler
Michelle O'Neill
Elizabeth Rumick
Paul Sotherland
Steve Stepek
Ali Townsend

Central County Transportation Authority
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Michigan Department of Transportation, TSC
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
KATS Citizens Advisory Committee
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
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 Britigan, SECOND by Locey, ***“to approve the agenda of the September 30, 2020 Policy Committee Meeting.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were made.

CONSENT AGENDA

- ACCEPTANCE OF THE TREASURER'S REPORT
- ACCEPTANCE OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT (SEPTEMBER 10, 2020)
- ACCEPTANCE OF THE SOUTHCENTRAL MICHIGAN PLANNING COUNCIL REPORT
- APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 26, 2020 MEETING

Steppek noted there are two corrections on the Technical Committee Report, City of Kalamazoo status report. Main Street should say Bank Street referring to the realignment project. The KVRC acronym should be KRVT.

MOTION by Locey, SECOND by Drouin, ***“to accept and approve the items on the Consent Agenda as listed with the Technical Committee Report corrections.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

DRAFT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Referring to the Draft Goals and Objectives for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan enclosed in the meeting packet, Stepek commented the draft was expected to be presented for adoption. However, Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study prefers more comments and feedback. These Goals and Objects include required national performance measures and set the baseline for the KATS Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The draft will be presented next month for adoption. Johnson reiterated the importance of specifying exactly what the goal is and the tools used to measure progress. Stepek explained that the Goals and Objectives for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan are based on federal performance measures. Actual numeric value goals are constantly changing and updated on the website.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PROJECT PRESENTATION

Steppek reported that Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) staff requested an informational presentation from the Michigan Department of Transportation on upcoming large projects. The presentation will be posted on KATS website katsmpo.org.

Pfeiffer of Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Kalamazoo Transportation Service Center began the presentation titled Upcoming 2021 Work. The following three projects will be discussed: M-343 at G Avenue Roundabout, I-94 Widening, and I-94 Van Buren County.

Beginning with the M-343 G Avenue Roundabout project, noting that M-343 is also known as M-43 or Gull Road, Pfeiffer displayed aerial photos of the intersection including an overlay of where the roundabout will be added as well as an artist's rendering of the final design. The roundabout will be northeast of the current intersection. One lane in each direction will be open during this phase of the project. The 27th Street, Gull Road intersection will be moved further northeast. Motorists will be detoured during this portion of the project. The current non-motorized path on the west side of G Avenue remains after this project is complete. M-343 and 28th Street intersection turning lane improvements must be completed prior to the starting of the roundabout project. 28th Street improvements will cost an estimated \$1.25 million. Work is expected to begin in April 2021 and be complete in June 2021. The Roundabout project is expected to begin in June 2021 upon completion of the 28th Street project. The Roundabout project is expected to cost \$3.6 million and be completed in October 2021. Gisler summarized the total project would cost \$4.85 million. Pfeiffer responded this is the current estimate and will be more accurate when the project goes to bid. Leigh inquired how long the detour would last. Pfeiffer responded June through October 2021. Leigh asked for clarification on the exact detour route. O'Neill from MDOT elaborated the detour utilizes Sprinkle Road to East Main over to 33rd Street and then back up to G Avenue. The Eastern Hills Walmart will have ingress and egress. Thompson asked if MDOT has contacted the owner of a new business looking to build in that area. Pfeiffer answered that MDOT has been in contact with the Casey's Convenience Store owner as well as a developer discussing driveway locations. Sotherland discussed that bicyclists traveling east or west on G Avenue would use full lanes to navigate the roundabout. Aardema asked if there is any plan to repave part of the non-motorized path in the project area. Pfeiffer responded the trail vicinity disturbed by the project will be repaved and resurfaced. Although MDOT constructed the trail, maintenance is the responsibility of the local jurisdiction.

The I-94 Reconstruction and Widening project limits are Sprinkle Road on the east end to Love Lane on the west end. Work is currently going on in the area to prepare for the larger project to begin with the 2021 construction season. Preparatory work includes widening bridges westbound over railroads to accept two lanes of traffic in each direction and shoulder repaving to allow traffic from eastbound I-94 to be shifted onto westbound I-94. The estimated project cost is \$77 million and will be more accurate once bids are received. Construction will begin in April 2021 and wrap-up in October 2022. 2021 work will focus on eastbound I-94. 2022 work will be on westbound I-94. The project scope includes turning the current 4 lanes into 6, bridge reconstruction, box culvert replacement, noise wall replacement, removal of the Kilgore Road bridge, and a new interchange design at I-94 and Portage Road. Pfeiffer displayed aerial photos of the current and proposed I-94 and Portage Road interchange. The new interchange will be a single point urban interchange similar to I-94 at Westnedge Avenue. The Kilgore Road bridge over I-94 will be removed and not replaced. Bridge height and maintenance would interfere with airport regulations and take-off and landing airspace. Leigh inquired the route for westbound Kilgore with the bridge removed. Pfeiffer explained westbound Kilgore will use the Kilgore Service Road to Portage Road, travel north and pick-up Kilgore Road westbound. Travel eastbound would be just the opposite. Pfeiffer displayed slides outlining detailed project stages including ramp closures, detour routes, and traffic plans. Aardema questioned the impact this project will have on Metro buses including routes on Portage and Kilgore Roads. Pfeiffer explained extensive coordination is needed with public transit on how they will operate during construction. O'Neill added plans are underway between MDOT and Metro Transit staff to develop rerouting of bus routes impacted by this project. VanderRoest asked if the project is expected to be completed by November

2022 since Charleston Township has a \$0.5 million grant for tree removal in November 2022 in the project area. Pfeiffer answered an October 2022 completion date is anticipated. O'Neill added that if lane closure is needed, tree removal can be done at night so would not conflict with this project if there is a delay.

The last project Pfeiffer is detailing is the I-94 Van Buren County Variable Speed Limit project from Watervliet to Mattawan. The project utilizes signage and technology to advise motorists of safe travel speeds due to changing weather and road conditions. The project is currently in design and has an expected start date of winter 2021-2022. This area of I-94 was targeted because it receives the highest snowfall totals in Southwest Michigan, has a high number of commercial vehicles, and a crash rate 24 percent higher than other 70 mph roadways. Speed differentials play a large role in these crashes. Data shows 65 percent of crashes occurred because motorists are traveling too fast for conditions. Using an image and/or words, Dynamic Message Signs will display a speed advisory and a reason. Gisler asked how many signs would be installed since conditions can change drastically along that 25 mile stretch of I-94 from Exit 41 to Exit 66. Pfeiffer answered the number of signs is being discussed. One sign may be installed at every interchange where motorists would be getting on and off I-94 but the project budget will be a consideration. Pfeiffer's presentation will be emailed to members and posted on the KATS website. Thompson thanked Pfeiffer for the presentation and asked if there is something that could be posted on the township webpages. Pfeiffer stated the presentation can be shared. There will be media outreach including press releases and a construction open house on these projects.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

Aardema from Central County Transportation Authority and Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority reported the downtown Kalamazoo Transportation Center facility where buses congregate, is now open for business. Amtrak, Greyhound or Indian Trail tickets can be purchased there. Due to COVID, the facility is still closed for general public access. Buses continue to have rear entry and fares continue to be free. Metro is working on a plan to have safety and security screens in place between the driver and customers so the fare box can be accessed again. Metro has taken over Western Michigan University (WMU) service and has new routes for the Main, East, and Parkview Campuses. Gisler asked if the arrangement between Metro and WMU is permanent. Aardema stated it is short-term now but the intent is that it will be a long-term multi-year agreement once the COVID environment allows.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Referring to the memo included in the meeting materials, Stepek reminded agencies that the Call for Projects has been released. With the end of the fiscal year here, please submit agency timesheets to Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) as soon as possible.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was brought forth.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were made.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Gisler reported the Kalamazoo County 2021 Budget will be presented for approval at the next meeting and is expected to pass. It is similar to the 2020 Budget but includes lots of guesses for COVID impact and State Revenue Sharing.

Praedel reported the following City of Kalamazoo project updates:

Oakland Drive:

Oakland Drive from Parkview to Howard should be open to traffic by the first full week of October with the project closing out the following week. This project has been a success from the standpoint that it was completed on time, under budget, and benefitting from new water main and road surface condition. Additional improvements to the pedestrian infrastructure will be a benefit to the local area.

Cork Street:

Cork Street water main replacement and road surfacing continues to remain on schedule after the installation of the new box culvert was completed in early September. Project should be complete by mid-November.

Howard Street Pathway:

All project documents have been submitted to MDOT for review. Hoping to be sent out for bid by December.

Portage Street:

Design on schedule and will be sent to MDOT for review soon. Hoping for a January bid letting.

Local Streets:

Paving program has one more street remaining to pave for the year. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, budget concerns, and other emergency projects throughout the year that occurred, the City was able to complete the entire slate of local street projects that was finally set in June.

Traffic Calming:

The City continues to look further into traffic calming methods to be used Citywide in the months and years to come to make streets safer for motorists and pedestrians alike. The recent addition of in-street asphalt speed humps by City crews on Mabel Street were the first of four streets that the City intends to install this year. In addition to the speed humps and chicanes placed earlier this year, the City is looking into the future use of traffic circles and painted bump outs to be coordinated with residents in the area to promote better safer driving practices.

Downtown Streets Study:

The downtown street study consultants have completed focused intersection and traffic impact studies on selected alternatives. The data will be reviewed to select a preferred alternative to move forward with for more detailed design work.

Britigan from the City of Parchment thanked Pfeiffer and the Michigan Department of Transportation team for an outstanding and informative presentation.

Randall asked if the Michigan Department of Transportation Project presentation could be shared with the public. Pfeiffer responded it can be shared.

Leigh stated Kalamazoo Township speed limit increases on Nichols Road and 14th Street were not communicated by the Michigan Department of Transportation. There was chaos and disappointment that the limits were being raised because there are schools and churches on that road. Leigh thanked Pfeiffer for the informative presentation. Johnson corrected that the speed limit change was from the Kalamazoo County Road Commission and the Michigan State Police.

Moyer-Cale thanked all members for support of the Village of Paw Paw Transportation Alternatives Program Application for the downtown project on Michigan Avenue. Paw Paw received conditional commitment for that. The Village also received a Community Development Block Grant for just under

2 million dollars for the project as well. Project construction is expected to begin in early 2021 and will result in a huge benefit to the community.

Johnson reported speed studies that occur throughout the county and can be provided by a resolution of a township, by the Road Commission reviewing a specific project or from the Michigan State Police. The Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) has had recent discussion on a variety of issues and concerns with raising speed limits, but state law is always followed. Next week, the Road Commission will be emailing Draft Neighborhood Management Policies to Township partners to get input on traffic calming measures. The busy construction season is winding down. There are a couple more projects. RCKC continues to monitor the Michigan Transportation Fund revenue and predict what impact it will have on the 2021 budget and Capital Improvement Program.

As an airport board member, Aardema updated that Delta service is back to half of what is normally provided. United will be resuming service in November. American has temporarily suspended service for the month of October. The airport continues on track with national trends.

Heiny-Cogswell reported that Oshtemo Township is appreciative that 8th Street, an important local road in the community, is reopened after a year-and-half.

Thompson thanked Pfeiffer for the excellent presentation.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, Chair Randy Thompson adjourned the September 30, 2020 Policy Committee Meeting at 10:19 a.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 28, 2020 - 9:00 a.m.