

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the February 24, 2021 Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

The February 24, 2021 Policy Committee Meeting was called to order remotely in accordance with Public Act 254, by Chair Randy Thompson at 9:00 a.m.

INTRODUCTIONS

Participants in the meeting stated name and location from which he/she is attending the meeting remotely.

ROLL CALL

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

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING

	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Call-In Location</u>
Curtis Aardema	Central County Transportation Authority	City of Portage
Rob Britigan	City of Parchment	Comstock Township
Marsha Drouin, Treasurer	Richland Township	Richland Township
Jeff Franklin	Michigan Department of Transportation, Planning	Drummond Island Township
Jason Gatlin	Wakeshma Township	Wakeshma Township
John Gisler	Kalamazoo County	Pavilion Township
Libby Heiny-Cogswell, Vice Chair	Oshtemo Township	Oshtemo Township
Robert Henderson	Van Buren Public Transit	Van Buren County
Jeff Heppler	Village of Augusta	Village of Augusta
	Village of Lawton	Village of Lawton
Martin Janssen	Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority	Cooper Township
Joanna Johnson	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County	Kalamazoo
Sarah Joshi	City of Galesburg	Galesburg
Greg Kinney	Van Buren County Road Commission	Village of Decatur
Sherine Miller	Kalamazoo Township	Kalamazoo Township
Sarah Moyer-Cale	Village of Paw Paw	Village of Paw Paw
Dennis Olson	Village of Vicksburg	Village of Vicksburg
Pete Pfeiffer	Michigan Department of Transportation, TSC	Otsego Township
Chris Praedel	City of Kalamazoo	City of Kalamazoo
Patricia Randall	City of Portage	City of Portage
Jeff Sorensen	Cooper Township	Cooper Township
Paul Sotherland	KATS Citizens Advisory Committee	Kalamazoo Township
Randy Thompson, Chair	Comstock Township	Kalamazoo
Jerry VanderRoest	Charleston Township	Charleston Township

MEMBERS ABSENT

	<u>Agency</u>
Carol Daly	Village of Mattawan
Lisa Imus	Village of Lawton
Tracy Locey	Brady Township
Nick Loeks	Texas Township
Don Ulsh	Schoolcraft Township

OTHERS PARTICIPATING

	<u>Agency</u>
Megan Mickelson	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Fred Nagler	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Elizabeth Rumick	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Steve Stepek	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Paul Selden	Bike Friendly Kalamazoo
Aaron Stevens	Maner Costerisan
Ali Townsend	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 Heppler, SECOND by Johnson, ***“to approve the agenda of the February 24, 2021 Policy Committee Meeting.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Selden, Chair and President of Bike Friendly Kalamazoo (BFK), invited attendees to the annual BFK Public Planning Meeting on Wednesday March, 24, 2021 from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. via Webex. Western Michigan University Director of Transportation Research Center Jun-Seok Oh, Ph.D., PE, PTOE, and a BFK Advisory Council Member, will present the ten-year bike/auto crash analysis. This analysis will be used to develop an extensive public service safety campaign which will benefit everyone. About half of the accidents are caused by bicyclists’ actions and about half are caused by motorists. Selden thanked attendees for participation with BFK.

CONSENT AGENDA

- ACCEPTANCE OF THE TREASURER’S REPORT
- ACCEPTANCE OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT (DECEMBER 3, 2020)
- ACCEPTANCE OF THE SOUTHCENTRAL MICHIGAN PLANNING COUNCIL REPORT
- APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 16, 2020 MEETING

MOTION by Johnson, SECOND by Heppler, ***“to accept and approve the items on the Consent Agenda.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

FISCAL YEAR 2020-2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENTS

Steppek stated the FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment handout is included in the meeting packet for your consideration. The majority are new additions. They include projects for transit, safety projects, bridge rehabilitation projects, and a railroad crossing project. There is additionally a local East R Avenue rehab project and a regionwide non-highway signing project. KATS Staff and the Technical Committee recommend adoption of the amendments as presented.

MOTION by Gatlin, SECOND by Johnson, ***“to approve the Fiscal Year 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program Amendments.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

TRANSIT SAFETY PLAN AND SAFETY TARGETS

Steppek reported the Central County Transportation Authority’s (Metro) Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan is included in the meeting packet. This plan meets the requirement for transit agencies to establish Safety Performance Targets. To fulfill Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) obligations for Transit Safety Performance Targets, KATS is required to accept the plan and adopt the performance targets established, located on pg. 3 of the Plan and the separate resolution. Metro kept KATS apprised of their progress and had the plan completed before the deadline even though the federal government extended the deadline. KATS Staff and the Technical Committee recommend accepting the Transit Safety Plan from Metro and adoption of the Safety Performance Measures as presented and recommend authorizing the Chair to sign the Resolution on the Committee’s behalf.

MOTION by Johnson, SECOND by Sorensen, ***“to approve the Transit Safety Plan and Safety Targets and approve the Resolution of Support therein.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

BRIDGE CONDITION TARGETS

Included in the meeting materials is the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Established 2018-2022 Bridge Mid-Performance Period Report. Steppek explained, MDOT in cooperation with the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) has established Bridge Performance Management Targets for bridges on the National Highway System (NHS). These measures look at bridge deck area (sq ft) in Good, Fair, and Poor condition. The measures presented today are an adjustment to the 4-year reporting period that ends on December 31, 2021. The targets do not include the entire network, but pertain to only the National Highway System (NHS) which includes M-Routes, and a few major roads such as Sprinkle and Westnedge. For the NHS system, Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) currently has 44% in Good condition, 45% in Fair condition, 11% Poor. More detailed KATS Area Bridge Data was emailed to committee contacts and is summarized in the meeting materials. Kalamazoo area local bridges included in the NHS are all in good condition. However, the MPO area trunkline MDOT bridges are not meeting the statewide goal. Deck condition area is measured by square feet so large bridges can have a dramatic impact on the condition report. KATS Staff and the Technical Committee recommend adoption of the State Adjusted 4-Year National Highway System (NHS) Bridge Condition Targets as presented and recommend authorizing the Chair to sign the Resolution on the Committee’s behalf. Heppler has concerns that the Washington Street Bridge in the Village of Augusta is in critical condition. Augusta has been working with Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study and the state over the past four to five years to try to secure funding to replace the bridge. Twice last month, the M-96 bridge had to be shut down with an inconvenient 23-mile detour put in place. The bridge is an important, busy access road in both

Kalamazoo and Calhoun Counties along with the industrial park area of Fort Custer. Stepek repeated these bridge condition targets relate only to the National Highway System. KATS can explore funding and eligibility requirement alternatives for the Washington Street bridge. Johnson agreed to further discuss the Washington Bridge replacement in the Village of Augusta with Heppler. In 2015, the state budget from the governor included additional local bridge system funding which went into effect in 2017. Johnson added that the state continues to consider increasing funding for the local bridge program. Johnson reported the National Bridge Index added a fourth condition category of 'Severe' in the Transportation Asset Management Report and asked if there was any indication it would be added in this report. Stepek responded this report mirrors federal guidance and only has three categories based on performance measures, but will follow-up. Johnson brought attention to Page 43 which shows the condition data for other MPOs across the state. Johnson opined bridges county-wide especially the local system, have a need for repair and replacement funding.

MOTION by Johnson, SECOND by Heppler, ***“to approve the Bridge Condition Targets and approve the Resolution of Support therein.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

FISCAL YEAR 2020 AUDIT PRESENTATION AND REPORT

The Auditor Governance Letter, Audited Financial Statements and Auditor Presentation are included in the meeting packet. Stepek introduced Aaron Stevens of Maner Costerisan to present the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study financial audit overview and opinion. Stevens highlighted preparation of the financial statements, internal controls and fraud detection is management's responsibility. Based on the audit, Maner expresses the unmodified opinion (highest level of assurance and a clean opinion) that the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study as of and for the years ended September 30, 2020 and 2019 in accordance with Government Auditing Standards. The Current Ratio or ability to meet obligations, at September 30, 2020 was 4.95 up from 2.19 at September 30, 2019. This is strong since the target is over one. The Unrestricted Net Position, or ability to operate without generating additional revenue is 28% or about 3 months, showing sound financial position. Graphs depicted 5-year trends of the Current Ratio and Unrestricted Net Position. Summaries of the Statement of Revenue, Expense and Changes in Net Position were presented along with graphs of 5-year trends of both percentages and dollars. Financial health is strong. Maner did not identify any deficiencies in internal control. There were no audit findings and tests found no instances of non-compliance.

CONTRIBUTED SERVICES YEAR-TO-DATE THROUGH JANUARY 2021

Stepek referred to the year-to-date report of contributed services included in the packet and reminded attendees to continue to fill out timesheets. If agencies have any questions on the process or need training, contact Stepek.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

Aardema reported the gradual opening of the Kalamazoo Transportation Center is successful, in part due to the presence of Kalamazoo County Sheriff staff. Depending on the COVID environment, the Center will continue to open more. The Central County Transportation Authority (Metro) Bronson bus-to-work program was renewed for another year. Bronson purchases bus passes and provides them to their employees to alleviate parking lot space. Since it began in 2016, the successful program has provided just under 50,000 rides through 2020. Metro Connect, the county-wide on-demand bus service gave 94 thousand rides in 2020. Although still significant, it was down 45 percent from 2019 due to COVID. There is a November 2021 millage planned for Kalamazoo County Transportation

Authority for Metro Connect. For the millage, staff will be visiting municipalities or participating in virtual meetings.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Steppek welcomed new members at today's meeting. An email was sent out yesterday on KATS 101 Training. Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) is hosting two virtual "KATS 101" trainings on March 10th. KATS 101 is an introductory look at the Metropolitan Planning Process and the overall function of KATS as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Kalamazoo area. Let Steppek know of any new members or any staff that would like to attend.

KATS recently received a new allocation of Highway Infrastructure Program funding (\$198,729) and Highway Infrastructure Program COVID Relief funding (\$1,358,937). Since some of this funding does not require a match, it creates an opportunity for smaller agencies and small projects that can't get into the match. The KATS Prioritization Subcommittee will be meeting on March 1, 2021 to discuss the new funding and the development schedule of the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program.

NEW BUSINESS

Heppler requested a Resolution of Support for Local Bridge Program Funds for the Village of Augusta Washington Street Bridge Replacement.

MOTION by Sorensen, SECOND by Janssen, ***"to approve a Resolution of Support for Local Bridge Program Funds for the Village of Augusta Washington Street Bridge."*** MOTION APPROVED.

Heppler thanked attendees for the Letter of Support. Heppler reported data from the United States Highway Traffic Safety Administration shows traffic deaths and injuries have soared during the pandemic even with much less traffic on the road. Work needs to be done with traffic enforcement and traffic education to maintain safe roads.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Selden of Bike Friendly Kalamazoo (BFK) highlighted the following virtual presentations that will occur during Bike Week:

- May 11, 2021. The Michigan State Police and the University of Michigan will present a webinar on how to use the crash analysis reporting system and database.
- May 12, 2021. A variety of presentations will be held on local bicycling developments for 2021 and beyond.
- May 13, 2021. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) will present a statewide overview of bicycling.

Selden thanked Pfeiffer and Sanada of MDOT along with everyone that has supported BFK. Selden noted Bike Week is an opportunity for agencies to make unveilings, announcements, or distribute safety literature or maps. Yard signs are also available. Contact Selden for more information.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Praedel stated the City of Kalamazoo has two local agency projects: Bridge Street (major resurfacing) and Howard Street (pedestrian pathway). These projects are in the process of being awarded and will be moving on to preconstruction meetings to begin construction this Spring. The Bank Street realignment project will be bid and begin construction this Spring in conjunction with the Farmers

Market Improvements and the continuation of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail. In 2021, The Foundation for Excellence (FFE) has funded over \$700,000 of sidewalk repair and replacement. This is the third-year FFE has provided funds for sidewalk rehab. The City has applied for Highway Safety Program funds through the Michigan Department of Transportation for three projects: Installation of reflective traffic signal backplates, Pedestrian signal upgrades at over 30 intersections, and Signal timing optimization at two of the busiest intersections. The City also applied and was awarded 375 thousand dollars for State Transportation Economic Development funding, category F grant, for Miller Road. The City plans mill and overlay on 15 local streets this year. This is the second year the City will be doing crack sealing for asphalt preservation.

Britigan of the City of Parchment, thanked Kalamazoo Area Transportation staff for the excellent audit report and thanked Stevens of Maner Costerisan for the presentation. Britigan wondered how many of the increased traffic accidents and deaths involved impaired driving.

Randall, Mayor of Portage, reported President Biden visited Portage and the Pfizer plant last week. It was an honor to meet the President and very positive for Portage. This is the first time a president has visited the community. Pfizer will be doubling COVID vaccine output and hired over 500 employees from the region which they will be retaining. Pfizer shortened the vaccine production time from 100 days to 60 days.

Heiny-Cogswell reported the Oshtemo Township Board approved \$600,000 of 2021 road maintenance projects which is the 50/50 share with the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County and Oshtemo Township. There is an overlay project on Quail Run Drive. In 2021, sidewalks will be constructed on Green Meadow Road, Maple Hill Drive, and Stadium Drive from Quail Run west to 8th Street.

Drouin of Richland Township inquired if Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) members know the status of the traffic signal project at M-96 and 33rd Street in Comstock Township since citizens are asking. Pfeiffer of MDOT answered the project is delayed due to concurrence from Amtrak because of the intersection's proximity to a railroad crossing. There are also ongoing issues with new electrical service to the signal. The project is close to wrapping up. Drouin reminded Pfeiffer and MDOT to include the Township on updates and progress on the Roundabout Project at G Avenue and Gull Road. The Township needs to bring awareness to affected busses and emergency vehicles.

Heppler mentioned the Village of Augusta will be redoing five roads this summer. As part of the Village five-year rolling road improvement program, the contracts were approved and awarded. Augusta has increased traffic enforcement staff to keep the roads as safe as possible. This has resulted in decreased accident rates and slowing drivers down in the Village.

Olson updated the Village of Vicksburg downtown tree removal has begun. Trees will be either cut down or replanted in the Village parks. This is part of Phase 1 of a 12-million-dollar, 2-year sewer project. Spruce Street will be torn up next week. A block of Washington Street by the mill will be closed for about a month while a new culvert is installed there. The Car Show is scheduled for June, 2021. After the show, the downtown area will be torn up, but local businesses and parking will be accessible. The Village Bike Rally and Vicksburg Vintage Market Antique Show are scheduled concurrently in September, 2021. The Frontier Motel on US-131 north of Schoolcraft will be burned down for fire practice training. The training will be a 2-day exercise coordinated with agencies including the Michigan Department of Transportation, Kalamazoo County Sheriff, and the Michigan State Police.

Aardema serving on the Kalamazoo County Aeronautics Board, recognized the nice work the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport staff did last week for the Presidential visit. The visit entailed not only planning for Air Force One, but controlling air traffic before and after the visit, and transportation on local roads. The airport is also doing a nice job operating in the current challenging COVID environment.

Gisler thanked Stevens for the magnificent audit presentation. Kalamazoo County has committed 6.3 million dollars each year for the next 8 years to alleviate homelessness and low-income housing through a millage that was passed in November of 2020. The Kalamazoo County Board conducted a community forum to gather information concerning housing. Approximately 20 citizens attended, offering thoughtful suggestions. More forums will be held. Gisler is optimistic about potential solutions.

Johnson reported the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) seasonal weight restrictions will go into effect on Monday March 1, 2021. Regional partners are apprised and media outlets will be communicating the announcement. The Road Commission is finalizing local road projects with township partners. Thank you to those that already have projects in. Projects are due March 15, 2021. Local road improvements and five-year plans across the county will be available on the RCKC website. On February 2, 2021, the Commission welcomed Keshia Dickason, a new Road Commissioner. Johnson expressed appreciation for Deb Buchholtz 6-year service as outgoing Road Commissioner and outgoing Chair. Commissioner Thom Brennan is the new Chair and David Pawloski is Vice-Chair. There is a virtual Asset Management class for local officials coming up. Contact Johnson if agencies have new staff or board members that would like to attend. The Transportation 101 class will be offered in May 2021 featuring William Hamilton of the Michigan House Fiscal Agency. The Commission Speed Limits program is coming up. This will be an informational session concerning safety of roadways and how speed limits are set across the state. Two Non-Motorized sessions 101 and 102 are planned. Johnson will give information to Britigan on the number of crashes involving impaired driving.

Sotherland communicated feedback received from last week's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting. Concern was expressed that sidewalks are not cleared quickly enough for safe pedestrian travel. The CAC proposes having local municipalities ask and encourage its citizens and businesses to clear snow, particularly at bus stops. The CAC is willing to communicate information in the 2050 Transportation Plan to surrounding agencies. But before doing so, the CAC would like further understanding of how agencies use the plan. Stepek explained Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) draws on all plans submitted through the Transportation Improvement Program. Stepek inquired if agencies other than the Michigan Department of Transportation reference the Metropolitan Transportation Plan when planning projects. If local agencies do not use the plan, KATS is open to making it more user friendly. Email feedback to KATS.

Heppler commented that the Village of Augusta has purchased equipment and clears Village sidewalks due to the challenge of consistently having them cleared. Although this is expensive and difficult, it promotes safety. The Village of Richland has been doing it many years also. Other municipalities should consider clearing sidewalks.

Thompson reported Comstock Township welcomes the new Crusty Crab seafood restaurant opening on Gull Road. Other new businesses are being developed on South 26th Street.

VanderRoest of Charleston Township inquired when the I-94 project between Portage and Sprinkle Roads will begin. Pfeiffer of Michigan Department of Transportation stated a virtual open house on

the project will be held soon where all questions can be answered. Invitations will be distributed to all Policy Committee contacts.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, following a motion by Heiny-Cogswell and a second by Johnson, Chair Thompson adjourned the February 24, 2021 Policy Committee Meeting at 10:18 a.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 31, 2021 - 9:00 a.m.