

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES MAY 13, 2021 - 9:30 A.M.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The May 13, 2021 Technical Committee Meeting was called to order via a Zoom conference call in accordance with Kalamazoo County State of Emergency Declaration, at 9:30 a.m. by Chair Kathy Schultz.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

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

**ROLL CALL**

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

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Call-in Location</u>
Christina Anderson	City of Kalamazoo	Kalamazoo, MI
Barry Anttila	Van Buren County Road Commission	Lawrence, MI
Muhammad Arif	City of Portage	Hawaii
Mickey Bittner	Village of Paw Paw	Hamilton, MI
Jeff Franklin	Michigan Department of Transportation, Statewide Planning	Drummond Island, MI
Kendra Gwin	City of Portage	Portage, MI
Jamie Harmon	City of Portage	Portage, MI
Robert Henderson	Van Buren Public Transit	Bangor, MI
Jeff Heppler	Village of Augusta	Augusta, MI
Anna Horner	Oshtemo Township	Oshtemo Township
Ryan Minkus, Vice-Chair	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County	Kalamazoo, MI
Kyle Mucha	City of Portage	Portage, MI
Jesse Okeley	City of Kalamazoo	Kalamazoo, MI
Michelle O'Neill	Michigan Department of Transportation, TSC	Texas Township
Dennis Randolph	City of Kalamazoo	Kalamazoo, MI
Ryan Russell	Village of Schoolcraft	Kalamazoo, MI
Brian Sanada	Michigan Department of Transportation, Region	Antwerp Township
Kathy Schultz, Chair	Central County Transportation Authority	Kalamazoo, MI
Jodi Stefforia	Comstock Township	Comstock Township
Nancy Stoddard	City of Parchment	Parchment, MI
Greg Vlietstra	Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority	Kalamazoo, MI
George Waring	City of Kalamazoo	Kalamazoo, MI
Tim Woodhams	Village of Mattawan	Plainwell, MI
Mark Worden	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County	Kalamazoo, MI

**OTHERS PRESENT**

	<u>Agency</u>
Todd Hackenberg	Village of Lawton (Lawton, MI)
Marty Janssen	Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (Grand Rapids, MI)
Peter Lim	City of Kalamazoo Intern (Kalamazoo, MI)
Robert Maffeo	MDOT, Statewide Urban Travel Analysis (Meridian Township)
Megan Mickelson	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Cassie Morgan	Guest (Grand Rapids, MI)

Fred Nagler  
Elizabeth Rumick  
Steve Stepek, AICP  
Ali Townsend

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## **CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

No changes or additions to the agenda were requested.

## **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

MOTION by Heppler, SECOND by Arif, ***“to approve the May 13, 2021 Technical Committee Agenda.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

## **MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 8, 2021 MEETING**

MOTION by Minkus, SECOND by Heppler, ***“to approve the minutes from the April 8, 2021 Technical Committee Meeting.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

## **POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Stepek reported the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) Policy Committee met last month and took action to approve Transportation Improvement Program Amendments and the Fiscal Year 2022 Unified Planning Work Program budget. Freedom of Information Act Procedures and Forms were approved and are now available on the katsmpo.org website.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments were made.

## **PRIORITIZATION PROCESS DISCUSSION**

Stepek stated the KATS Prioritization Subcommittee met several times and agreed on minor tweaks to the process which is why the Plan is included in the meeting materials and is presented here for discussion and comment. Minor verbiage and date modifications make up the majority of the changes. The key amendment is removing:

- 5 bonus points from Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) rating, and
- 5 points from the Project Uses Multiple Federal Funding Sources

These points are now rolled into the Preventative Maintenance or Asset Management category. Points are assigned based on the number of fixes completed on a roadway and how well the local agency maintained the road. Stepek is thankful and appreciative of the Subcommittee participation and effort. Submit any comments to Stepek by May 31, 2021 to allow for them to be incorporated. The Application and Instructions for Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Projects will be presented for adoption next month. The Process is also an agenda item for the May 26, 2021 Policy Committee meeting. The Policy Committee meeting will be held in-person at the Robert Morris Park Pavilion in Comstock Township. All attendees are invited to the meeting which will include Jonathan Start's overdue retirement celebration. For more information, refer to the Policy Committee Meeting packet posted later this month on the katsmpo.org website. The Prioritization Subcommittee also presented recommendations for allocating the COVID Relief funding. Once the Village of Schoolcraft project is finalized, KATS will meet the adopted goals of the Prioritization Process in one TIP cycle. The goals include distribution of funds to smaller agencies. Minkus asked if KATS heard from Augusta on their anticipated project. Stepek responded, the Augusta project is programmed and ready to go. Stepek elaborated the Schoolcraft project exceeds available funding plus the COVID dollars. The consultant is working to decrease the project magnitude. Both the Augusta and Schoolcraft projects are expected to be included in the June TIP Amendment. Schultz asked if it would be worthwhile to define the specific Preventive Maintenance (PM) items within the Prioritization Process since agencies are not consistent in how they identify PM which can lead to sizable discussion. Stepek responded KATS in the past has defined PM as anything short of a multiple inch

overlay. Crack seal or chip seal are examples. Minkus previously shared a list of what the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) considers PM but it is not necessarily all encompassing or flexible. Stepek understands the benefit of identifying PM but if each agency listed its PM, it would become a very long document. Based on the application process, and their own agency policies, the Prioritization Subcommittee has the knowledge to distinguish PM. Minkus echoed Stepek that he shared the MDOT guidance which includes more than the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) does for PM. Minkus stated RCKC is open to what agencies want to do to preserve assets as asset management is the goal as opposed to limiting options available. Stepek stated after this process and revisions to the application, there will be an open-ended fillable field for agencies to describe the fix so the Subcommittee can review it. Schultz added a description of the fix is beneficial for when agencies experience staff turnover.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES**

Henderson from Van Buren Public Transit expressed a struggle to obtain drivers.

Schultz agreed Metro is also struggling to obtain bus drivers. Schultz updated Metro continues free fares, reduced service, rear door bus access only, and bus capacity limits of 20 people. The Plexiglas barriers are expected to be removed toward the end of summer along with the reinstatement of fare collection. The board reapproved the contract starting in September, to provide bus service for Western Michigan University with hopes that students will be returning to campus. Bus stop pad improvements are being completed ahead of schedule using the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds. Thank you to the City of Kalamazoo for providing funding as well. Metro plans to hire a consultant this August to complete a year-long Comprehensive Operations Analysis. The last analysis was done in 2010. The study will review all routes, how they are functioning and propose changes and improvements. The addition of transfer stations throughout the community, hub-and-spoke or a grid system, on-demand transit, and bus rapid transit or express routes are some items that will be included in the analysis. The consultant will also develop cost neutral, short-term, and long-term planning recommendations for Metro. Many agencies will be contacted by the consultant to provide land-use information for future travel system planning.

## **STATUS REPORTS**

### **ROADS-**

Heppler reported the Village of Augusta submitted the application for the Washington Street bridge grant, appreciates member support for the resolution, and hopes to receive funding for the bridge. Road projects in the Village have been approved and are waiting on a contractor.

O'Neill reported the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) will perform I-94 concrete pavement repairs Friday through Sunday toward the Van Buren County line. On Monday, May 17, 2021, concrete pavement repairs will begin on US-131 north of M-43 north to the Kalamazoo/Allegan County line. Work will only be completed at night except on weekends where lane closures will occur to accommodate concrete curing times. Construction has begun on the I-94 Portage Road interchange project. A maintenance crew will be sweeping I-94 and US-131 urban areas at night beginning Sunday, May 16, 2021. Due to the light winter, MDOT plans to utilize winter savings of 2.3 million dollars for two resurfacing projects. One project is on M-96 from Galesburg to the east Kalamazoo/Calhoun County line. This project has an anticipated completion at the end of the summer. The second project is on the I-94 Business Spur from I-94 up to M-96. The projects are expected to be in the June letting which will be turned in tomorrow. Arif mentioned a crash on I-94 and whether or not there is any information on that and whether there was a secondary crash as a result of the initial crash. O'Neill responded there are several crashes on I-94 and is not sure which one is being referred to. With vehicles crossed over on one-bound for construction, it is difficult for first responders to clear the wreckage because of the barrier wall, making traffic tipster notification and crashes more impactful. Towing is part of the MDOT contracted pay. MDOT pays the contractor to have a tow truck readily available to respond rapidly. Michigan State Policy (MSP) assists with work zone speed limit enforcement. MDOT works closely with MSP during stage changes. Heppler

offered assistance and appreciates the news about the M-96 project and asked O'Neill to keep him informed.

Minkus provided the following Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) updates:

Non-Motorized

- South segment of the Drake Trail in Oshtemo is ongoing and has landscaping work remaining
- KRVT 6 Extension grade inspection package will be turned in this week for construction next year

Roads

- Sprinkle Road project bids came in 13% over estimate
- R Avenue project bids came in 13% under estimate
- U Avenue between Oakland and Portage Road paving will be done this week. The project is anticipated being complete by next month.

Other News

- The RCKC mid-year budget adjustment has begun. RCKC is looking to add some Capital Improvement Projects, if agencies are interested. The board meeting will be held May 25, 2021. More information can be found in the meeting packet.
- 119 Chip Seal projects and over 100 miles of roadway are planned for the year. Projects begin May 18, 2021 but pick-up after Memorial Day.
- Project information meetings are done for the year but meeting recordings are available on the KalamazooCountyRoads.com website Projects page, for review.
- RCKC hosted the Setting Realistic Speed Limits informational session with Michigan State Police. A 2-hour recording of the session is available on the Engineering page of the website.
- Minkus is in the process of going through bids for Hot Mix Asphalt and is willing to share bid prices back-and-forth with agencies if interested.

Gwin asked when the U Avenue project was expected to be complete. Minkus answered, the project should be complete toward the end of June, with paving wrapped up by this weekend.

Randolph stated the City of Kalamazoo Howard Street pathway project is underway along with the Portage Street water main and resurfacing project. Howard Street is expected to be complete at the beginning of September. Portage Street is expected to be complete by Halloween. The Bank Street realignment project started last week in conjunction with Farmers Market improvements. The storm water replacement on Oakland Drive is expected to be complete in 2 weeks. This project has restricted traffic to northbound only from Angling to Parkview. Mill and overlay will begin next month and is planned on 15 local streets. A Crack Sealing contract was awarded and will begin in June. Chip sealing will begin next week on 18 local streets. The City has an on-going sidewalk project and another sidewalk project package will be out for bid soon. O'Neill commented that with the closure of Oakland near Angling, motorists traveling south are using 12<sup>th</sup> Street. The Roundabout at 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Milham between the peak hours of 5:00-6:00 p.m. is over capacity and congested. Traffic back-ups stretch all the way to I-94. There is an opportunity for improved communication between agencies and how work impacts other agencies. Schultz added Whites Road is experiencing increased traffic with that construction project as well.

Gwin provided the following status update for the City of Portage:

- East Milham Avenue from South Westnedge Avenue to Portage Road is under construction. The new water main is active and the contractor is installing water services and starting storm sewer replacement. Foundations have been installed for the mast arms at Newport Road.
- Gladys Street and Newport Road are scheduled for milling and resurfacing May 25, 2021-May 27, 2021
- There are lane closures both eastbound and westbound in place on Centre Avenue for the installation of new utility services to the Senior Center. This work is anticipated to be

wrapped up next week, as long as Consumers can move up their gas main abandonment work in that location a week early. Traffic delays during peak hours can be expected.

- A lane closure for northbound South Westnedge Avenue in front of Panda Express north of East Milham Avenue is scheduled to be in place starting next Tuesday, May 18, 2021 for 2-3 days for pavement replacement.

#### **LAND USE/PLANNING AND ZONING-**

Stefforia reported Comstock Township is working on projects and rezoning.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Steppek stated as we move forward in a post-COVID environment, KATS is in discussion with Metro on technology to be able to offer a virtual element along with in-person committee meetings. The June Technical Committee meeting is expected to remain on-line. Metro will test technology at their June board meeting. Schultz echoed Metro is testing technology options.

Minkus voiced concern that the 2050 Non-Motorized Element for the plan available on the katsmpo.org website does not indicate to the public when the public comment period closes, nor is the timeline stated in the meeting packet. Minkus stated we need to be sure we are allowing people enough time for comments, and state when we want comments in, and the closing date for comments. Steppek responded once the rest of the plan is released, KATS defines the comment limit for the entire plan which will likely be in August. It is still very early in the process and KATS tends to receive the most comments on the Non-Motorized Element of the plan. Schultz asked when plan adoption is scheduled. Steppek said by November with hopes it is slightly before November. Some agencies will receive an invitation for the KATS August Inter-agency work group meeting to review projects for the KATS and Battle Creek plans.

Schultz thanked attendees for notifying Metro of road closures on bus routes and reminded members to let Metro know of future road closures that will impact bus routes. Giving as much notice as possible is appreciated. Metro strives to minimize rider disruption and comments from riders who are inconvenienced by closed bus routes.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments were made.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Following a motion by Arif and a second by Heppler, Chair Schultz adjourned the May 13, 2021 Technical Committee Meeting at 10:11 a.m.

*The next meeting of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Technical Committee will be held on Thursday, June 10, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.*