

# CHAPTER 6: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Considering the needs and desires of all populations is critical to the development of a transportation plan that creates access to opportunity for people of all ages, incomes, and abilities. Public engagement lays the foundation for the development and implementation of an integrated multimodal transportation system that supports community development and furthers the region's cultural, environmental, and social goals.

## Equity

Kalamazoo MPO made a concerted effort in this planning process to consider the impacts and benefits of the transportation plan on often-times underserved populations, such as the socioeconomically disadvantaged, people with disabilities, and racial ethnic minorities. Equity is a theme throughout this plan; from setting performance measures that consider the impacts of the transportation system on vulnerable populations to

### SURVEY RESPONSES

The 2050 Transportation Survey was conducted to help inform decisions; the response was strong with over 200 surveys completed.

considering the need of the transportation system to provide mobility options that allow access to affordable housing, healthy foods, jobs, recreation, and social opportunities.

## Voices Heard

The public's input helps guide and direct our vision for the future and brings to life what makes our region unique and the necessity of an effective transportation system to realize that vision. Community outreach activities were held for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan to maximize feedback and participation and to obtain input from a broad cross section of the public. The public involvement process extended from March 2020 through July 2021.

The following public engagement strategies were used to garner input:

- Posted information on the Kalamazoo Area Transportation website
- Conducted online survey – 217 responses
- Included articles and/or announcements for upcoming events in the April, July, October, -and January quarterly KATS newsletters (posted on the KATS website)
- Posted updates on Facebook and Twitter
- Used distribution email lists to send survey, announce upcoming events, and encourage sharing of surveys and events with local constituents
- Held monthly meetings with the Technical and Policy Committees which are open to the public
- Held quarterly meetings with KATS Citizen Advisory Committee which are open to the public
- Hold a public open house at Metro.

## What the People Said

Public outreach helps the Kalamazoo MPO establish priorities, policies, and ultimately investment strategies that meet the vision and needs of the people. Information gathered throughout the public involvement process resulted in several themes as listed below.

**Question 1:** How satisfied are you with the condition of roads and bridges in the planning area? **Responses:** 217

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
2	13	56	17	83	32	14

**Question 2:** Which four components of the region’s transportation system should be the top priorities for improvement over the next 5-10 years? **Reponses:** 217

Pavement and bridge preservation	Safety improvements	Bicycle and pedestrian facilities	Environment	Traffic congestion	Transit improvements	Advanced technology	Freight Movement
179	134	120	81	76	68	53	43

**Question 3:** Which four components of the region’s transportation system should be the top priorities for improvement over the next 1-5 years? **Responses:** 217

Pavement and bridge preservation	Safety improvements	Bicycle and pedestrian facilities	Traffic Congestion	Environment	Transit improvements	Freight Movement	Advanced Technology
182	145	126	89	79	75	41	37

**Question 4:** Rank the following in items of importance with the most important aspect at the top. **Responses:** 217

	1	2	3	Score
Minimizing water pollution	83	93	41	2.19
Minimizing flooding on roads	92	40	85	2.03
Minimizing air pollution	42	84	91	1.71

**Question 5:** How should concerns of safety and mobility for the area’s aging population be addressed? (select one option). **Responses:** 217

Develop innovative mobility services	81
Improve coordination of land use development with transportation planning	63
Improve public transit	59
Other (please specify)	14

**Question 6:** Do you use transit services? **Responses:** 217

Yes	42
No	175

**Question 7:** How satisfied are you with the transit access to jobs and important services, such as healthcare, food and education? (skip if answered “no” to question 6).

**Responses:** 97

Score	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90	91-100
Votes	10	5	10	7	37	9	7	6	2	4

**Question 8:** Which future transportation investments are most important to you? Put the most important investment at the top. **Responses:** 216

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Score
Road conditions	116	49	24	20	5	3	5.12
Traffic safety	33	80	62	28	12	2	4.41

<b>Bike and pedestrian facilities</b>	45	36	45	25	21	45	3.65
<b>Public transit</b>	18	22	32	55	63	27	3.06
<b>Congestion reduction</b>	5	23	44	37	71	37	2.82
<b>Freight movement</b>	0	7	10	52	45	103	1.95

**Question 9:** Which mode of transportation do you use most often? **Responses:** 217

	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>Frequently</b>	<b>Weighted Average</b>
Personal Motor Vehicle	4	2	17	153	3.81
Walking	0	44	64	29	2.89
Bicycle	18	25	59	26	2.73
Rail (Amtrak)	34	64	9	0	1.77
Transit	88	16	6	2	1.3

**Question 10:** How would you prioritize transportation funding for the following? (Put the highest priority at the top (#1)). **Responses:** 216

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Rehabilitation of roads and bridges</b>	122	24	16	18	19	13	4.82
<b>Safety improvements</b>	22	69	40	34	34	13	3.87

<b>Expansion of bicycle facilities</b>	42	37	32	27	23	58	3.54
<b>Expansion of pedestrian facilities</b>	6	43	37	39	69	15	3.2
<b>Enhancing transit</b>	18	21	39	55	35	42	3.08
<b>Technology (traffic signal, pedestrian counters, etc.)</b>	6	19	48	36	27	77	2.64

As a result of the 30-day public review process, Kalamazoo staff received multiple written comments sent via email, website comments and from comment sheets provided during the open houses. The comments were largely in support of the document. A list of those comments and responses to them may be found in Appendix C.