

## KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the August 25, 2021 Meeting

### CALL TO ORDER

The August 25, 2021 Policy Committee Meeting was called to order remotely in accordance with Kalamazoo County State of Emergency Declaration, by Chair Randy Thompson at 9:01 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
Carol Daly	Village of Mattawan	Village of Mattawan
Marsha Drouin, Treasurer	Richland Township	Richland Township
Jeff Franklin	Michigan Department of Transportation, Planning	Owosso, MI
John Gisler	Kalamazoo County	Pavilion Township
Libby Heiny-Cogswell, Vice Chair	Oshtemo Township	Oshtemo Township
Jeff Heppler	Village of Augusta	Village of Augusta
Lisa Imus	Village of Lawton	Village of Lawton
Martin Janssen	Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority	Cooper Township
Joanna Johnson	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County	City of Kalamazoo
Sarah Joshi	City of Galesburg	City of Galesburg
Greg Kinney	Van Buren County Road Commission	Village of Decatur
Judy Lemon	City of Galesburg	City of Galesburg
Amy Lipset	Michigan Department of Transportation, TSC	City of Kalamazoo
Tracy Locey	Brady Township	Brady Township
Sarah Moyer-Cale	Village of Paw Paw	Village of Paw Paw
Dennis Olson	Village of Vicksburg	Village of Vicksburg
Chris Praedel	City of Kalamazoo	City of Kalamazoo
Jeff Sorensen	Cooper Township	Cooper Township
Paul Sotherland	KATS Citizens Advisory Committee	Kalamazoo Township
Randy Thompson, Chair	Comstock Township	Comstock Township
Don Ulsh	Schoolcraft Township	Schoolcraft Township
Jerry VanderRoest	Charleston Township	Charleston Township

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

	<u>Agency</u>
Jason Gatlin	Wakeshma Township
Sherine Miller	Kalamazoo Township
Patricia Randall	City of Portage

**OTHERS PARTICIPATING**

	<u>Agency</u>
Megan Mickelson	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Steve Stepek	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 Sorensen, SECOND by Johnson, ***“to approve the agenda of the August 25, 2021 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 (AUGUST 12, 2021)
- ACCEPTANCE OF THE SOUTHCENTRAL MICHIGAN PLANNING COUNCIL REPORT
- APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 30, 2021 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**

Stepek referred to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments included in the meeting packet. Three of the six amendments have an increase in local cost with federal dollars remaining the same. Stepek thanked Michigan Department of Transportation for assistance in getting the local Village of Lawton Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Award project scheduled. The Village of Schoolcraft project programs the last of the COVID Relief funding. Any remaining COVID funds can be carried forward to next fiscal year. Job 128722 is abandoning a job that was moved out of the current TIP and has been changed and reprogrammed under a different job number. KATS Staff and the Technical Committee recommend approval of the amendments as presented.

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

**2050 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN DISCUSSION**

Steppek reminded attendees that draft chapters of the plan are posted on the katsmpo.org website for review. Staff is working on formatting the plan and incorporating Subcommittee and Certification Review feedback including integrating non-motorized chapters directly in the plan as opposed to having them separate. Public engagement is anticipated for September and October. The full draft document is planned for October with approval in November.

#### **TRAFFIC DATA COLLECTION CONTRACT DISCUSSION**

Steppek reported KATS is issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for traffic data collection services. The current three-year contract is with Traffic Tech Services, and it expires December 31, 2021. After discussions with local agencies and the current consultant, the need to rebid was determined. Let Steppek know of any consultants to contact directly for the RFP.

#### **CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN DRAFT**

Steppek stated there is a federal requirement for KATS to have a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). The plan was refreshed and is included in the meeting materials for your review. Please submit any feedback or comments, including any recommendations to address the ongoing global pandemic to KATS Staff. The COOP will be presented next month for adoption.

#### **CONTRIBUTED SERVICES FISCAL YEAR-TO-DATE THROUGH JULY 31, 2021**

Steppek stated this data is included in the meeting packet for your review with a reminder to fill out and turn in timesheets to KATS.

#### **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES**

Aardema reiterated a millage renewal, with no rate change, for Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (KCTA) will be on the Kalamazoo County November ballot. Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA) and KCTA Staff plan September public engagement for the millage at all area municipalities. CCTA/KCTA Fiscal 2022 budget was approved. A Comprehensive Operations Analysis is beginning. The entire system, using a long-term outlook will be reviewed. Feedback will be solicited. Funded by the Kalamazoo Foundation for Excellence, the Youth Mobility program will be reinstated this fall with school reopening. The program offers free bus passes to Kalamazoo Public High School students. Route adjustments are being proposed for the fixed route system to better serve Kalamazoo Public Schools, and to increase overall system efficiency.

#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Steppek stated in addition to updates included in the meeting packet, census data has been released. The Census Bureau is proposing changes to how urbanized areas are defined. KATS is on the cusp of the urbanized area 200,000 population threshold. This is important because, if our area dips below 200,000 people, we lose local Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding. Other KATS funding will remain functionally the same. KATS continues to follow new releases on the Bureau's revised definition of urbanized area. Aardema asked how the Kalamazoo urbanized area is at risk of a population decrease when the county population has increased. Steppek explained the Census Bureau is looking at adjusting definitions of the urban area. These definitions could impact the total population for the KATS urbanized area. Heiny-Cogswell asked if the population doesn't reach the 200,000 mark, what year would local TAP funding be impacted. Steppek responded we would likely have TAP funding through 2023. Johnson asked what are current funding allocation dollars that would be potentially reduced. Steppek responded that KATS receives approximately \$250,000. Steppek

explained another factor is the potential for the Traverse City area to reach the 50,000-population threshold. Federal legislation would then require Traverse City to become a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which would reduce all state MPO's funding. Johnson asked what impact this may have on neighboring Battle Creek Area Transportation Study (BCATS). Stepek answered their population may drop below the 50,000 threshold which would eliminate the BCATS MPO. Heppler asked about the possibility of Battle Creek or Calhoun County being absorbed into the Kalamazoo urbanized area or vice versa. Stepek speculated it is not expected to occur. Aardema commented that the Battle Creek area was not absorbed into the Kalamazoo urban area because of the federally owned Fort Custer land and the two federal agencies should be able to work together to consider that. Stepek added prior to the 2010 census, the entire perimeter of Gull Lake was absorbed into the Kalamazoo urban area. Every 10 years the census boundaries are changed, and we must adapt and follow them. Drouin asked what our current population is right now. Stepek responded is it over 209,000. Johnson mentioned the new trillion-dollar Infrastructure Package moving through legislation and asked what impact this may have on KATS MPO funding. Upon preliminary review, Stepek anticipates an increase in overall funding, but it is not final yet. Heppler asked if recently submitted projects for the Village of Augusta are part of that package. Stepek responded KATS is working on prioritizing the Call for Projects in conjunction with monitoring the new bill which would change funding levels. The Call for Projects was earlier than normal, so projects are ready and lined up if additional funding is obtained.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

No new business was brought forth.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments were made.

#### **MEMBER COMMENTS**

Franklin from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) announced the fiscal year Unified Planning Work Programs were approved by the Federal Highway and Federal Transit. MDOT will be obligating funds to the fiscal 2022 KATS program in the coming week with a contract expected next month.

Praedel representing the City of Kalamazoo gave a shout-out and thanks to Lipset and the MDOT team. Pradel received compliments from the Millwood Neighborhood Association regarding informative communication from MDOT on the I-94/Portage Road project. The city concluded significant outreach on the Westnedge and Park Street traffic calming project. Community Planning is working on a proposal. The Portage Street project is in progress with expected completion at the end of October. The Howard Street Pedestrian Pathway project should be complete by the Labor Day Holiday. Mill and overlay on Miller and Emerald is in progress and will be followed by East Main. In-house mill and overlay will be done on a total of 15 local streets.

VanderRoest from Charleston Township announced the road millage on the ballot in early August did not pass. VanderRoest thanked Johnson for a productive meeting yesterday. The township is beginning to prepare for next year.

Sorensen of Cooper Township reminded attendees the Michigan Township Association Golf Outing that was cancelled in June due to the rain, is rescheduled for August 27, 2021. Contact

Sorensen if you would like to sign up; there is still room available. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to Officer Ryan Proxmire's family.

Heiny-Cogswell reported Oshtemo Township Board passed a road millage of 1.08 at the end of July. Charter Townships are allowed to do this up to 3 mills. The millage will be used for local roads in 2022. Oshtemo Township republished notice for the USDA Sewer Bond Expansion program which is currently in the 45-day referendum. The program was significantly changed from the original bond issuance and has decreased financial impact on individual residents which was the major complaint of the initial bond.

Drouin announced the Richland Township large federal Roundabout project is complete; but cautioned attendees to use care when driving on it because motorists don't seem to have a good understanding of how to drive through it. Additionally, visibility in the Roundabout at night is very poor because it is not lighted.

Heppler reported the Village of Augusta has completed the replacement of 5 roads this season and is working on its 5-year rolling road replacement project plan. The village is following updates on the M-96 project which has stalled due to issues with Amtrak.

Imus said the Village of Lawton will begin five miles of chip and seal soon.

Moyer-Cale for the Village of Paw Paw, stated this is her last meeting as she will be joining the City of Hastings next month. Moyer-Cale appreciated working with everyone on this committee. Attendees wished Moyer-Cale well.

Olson announced thoughts and prayers are with Deputy Ryan Proxmire's family. The Village of Vicksburg \$12 million-dollar downtown streets and sewer project is ongoing with anticipated completion in November before the Christmas parade, so it doesn't have to be rerouted.

Joshi reported for Lemon, City of Galesburg, an observation that when county road signs get damaged or moved by motorists, hazardous holes remain even when the signs are replaced. Johnson of the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County suggested calling the Road Commission office, or contact them via their website to report a service request. There may be scheduling or mobilization issues, or Miss Dig may be required which may delay service, but it will be addressed.

As a board member at the airport, Aardema reported use of the airport over the last couple months has been strong. The airport received a 1-million-dollar grant to support service to Charlotte, North Carolina and is pursuing an airline to provide service. Craig Williams, the Airport Director of the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport now serves on the KATS Citizens' Advisory Committee.

Gisler reported Kalamazoo County held a special meeting last night devoted to getting citizen input concerning the best way to spend the 51-million-dollars the county will receive from American Rescue Plan funding. Citizens may also comment on the website. The three largest priorities identified were affordable housing, mental health issues, and broadband. Sorensen is leading a committee to develop improved broadband.

Johnson of the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC), echoed thanks to VanderRoest and Charleston Township for a successful joint board meeting last night and sentiments regarding Proxmire. Johnson expressed sympathies to Deputy Ryan Proxmire's family, along with the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office. Chip seal is complete except for one road in Richland Township

with an ongoing culvert project. Fog seal continues. As previously mentioned, sign up to receive construction updates on the Road Commission website. Johnson gave a shout-out to Stepek and KATS Staff for the 2050 Plan and Paul Sotherland's work with the road commission on the non-motorized portion of the plan. Johnson stressed the importance that the non-motorized plan maps follow the maps that have been submitted from the various entities. RCKC will be soliciting feedback through a Communications survey that will be issued after Labor Day; the last was done in 2017. RCKC has some joint meetings left, the next is scheduled with Brady Township. On September 22, 2021, at 9:00 a.m. RCKC will host an in-person session for local officials on Gravel Road Maintenance. Aardema brought up an area of roadway west of 27<sup>th</sup> Street that was chip sealed last year, but currently shows sign of wear and peeling. Aardema asked if this was common and whether it should be expected in other areas. Johnson responded it can be common, although is not something the Road Commission likes to see. There can be some stone loss after application but if there is a skin and deterioration, the Road Commission should look at it for possible repair.

Thompson reported Comstock Township, like Oshtemo Township, approved a 1 mill road millage at the last board meeting. This will give Comstock about 1-million-dollars to spend on roads next season. Thompson echoed condolences to the Proxmire family noting this was a tragic loss for the whole community.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Following a motion by Sorensen and a second by Heiny-Cogswell, chair Thompson adjourned the August 25, 2021 Policy Committee Meeting at 9:54 a.m.

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 29, 2021 - 9:00 a.m.**