

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY POLICY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the September 29, 2021 Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

The September 29, 2021 Policy Committee Meeting was called to order remotely in accordance with Kalamazoo County State of Emergency Declaration, 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 Kalamazoo |
| Rob Britigan | City of Parchment | Comstock Township |
| Kerry DenBraber | Michigan Department of Transportation, TSC | Village of Martin |
| 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 |
| Adam Herringa | City of Portage | City of Portage |
| 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 |
| Tracy Locey | Brady Township | Brady Township |
| 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 |
| Jerry VanderRoest | Charleston Township | Charleston Township |
| Craig Williams | KATS Citizens Advisory Committee | City of Kalamazoo |

MEMBERS ABSENT

| | <u>Agency</u> |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Carol Daly | Village of Mattawan |
| Nick Loeks | Texas Township |
| Sherine Miller | Kalamazoo Township |
| Roman Plaszczyk | Village of Paw Paw |
| Don Ulsh | Schoolcraft Township |

OTHERS PARTICIPATING

| | <u>Agency</u> |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Megan Mickelson | Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study |
| Elizabeth Rumick | Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study |
| Paul Selden | Bike Friendly Kalamazoo |
| Steve Stepek | Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study |
| 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 Sorensen, ***“to approve the agenda of the September 29, 2021 Policy Committee Meeting.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

While displaying the winning banners, Selden of Bike Friendly Kalamazoo (BFK) recognized the three winners of the BFK Nationwide Bike Art Contest noting winner Victoria Zehner is from Kalamazoo. Agencies and businesses can request the banners to use to decorate lamp posts during Bike Week in May of 2022. Kalamazoo Bicycle Club and BFK worked with the cities of Kalamazoo and Portage to bring the first ever Certified League Cycling Instructor Program to the area. The successful program has led to an increase from one to six certified instructors whose skills can be requested during Bike Week 2022. BFK will be distributing \$8,000 of grant funds to municipalities for bike light giveaways as darkness increases during the fall season.

CONSENT AGENDA

- ACCEPTANCE OF THE TREASURER’S REPORT
- ACCEPTANCE OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT (SEPTEMBER 9, 2021)
- ACCEPTANCE OF THE SOUTHCENTRAL MICHIGAN PLANNING COUNCIL REPORT
- APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 25, 2021 MEETING

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

CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN

Steppek referred to the draft Continuity of Operations Plan included in last months and the current months meeting packets, thanking Johnson for feedback. Stepek reiterated the plan, which is a

federal requirement, outlines how Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) would continue operations when faced with an emergency situation. The minor changes mainly relating to revised teleworking, were incorporated into the document.

MOTION by Johnson, SECOND by Janssen, ***“to approve the Continuity of Operations Plan.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

CONTRIBUTED SERVICES FISCAL YEAR-TO-DATE THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2021

Included in the meeting packet, Stepek stated this is the monthly reminder to fill out and turn in timesheets to Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study, which is more important this month with the fiscal year end approaching tomorrow. Time sheets for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2021 are due no later than October 15, 2021. Overall, adequate match was made for fiscal 2021 especially including traffic count contract revenue.

2050 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN DISCUSSION

Stepek reminded attendees to review the chapters that have been posted on the katsmpo.org website and appreciates any comments. The full document is currently being compiled and will be posted on the website by October 1, 2021 which marks the beginning of the two-month open comment period. The full draft document is planned to be presented for approval in November. The 30-year-plan allocates over \$1.5 billion dollars, with an estimated shortfall of \$700 million dollars. The plan excludes any transit expansion or inflation adjustment. Johnson asked for clarification on whether the plan considers meeting performance measure goals and objectives. Stepek confirmed it does. Johnson asked if the online public engagement opportunities on October 13 and 14, 2021 at 1:00pm and 6:00pm are two separate times, for a total of four sessions. Stepek responded they are. A Zoom link and meeting notice will be posted on the website.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

Aardema reported both the Central County Transportation Authority and Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority Boards met and approved the fiscal year 2022-2023 budgets. The budgets are available on the website. New buses have been ordered in accordance with the bus replacement program, where buses are typically 10 to 12 years old and have over 600,000 miles. With students returning to campus, Metro restarted service at Western Michigan University. The Youth Mobility program is back up and running, offering a limited number of free bus passes to Kalamazoo Public High School students. The program began in 2019 but was not used in 2020. Security at the downtown Kalamazoo Transit Center previously monitored by the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department is now provided by Enhanced Private Security Services.

Janssen stated a millage of .3124 for Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (KCTA) to support Metro Connect will be on the Kalamazoo County November ballot. Informative flyers are being mailed to residents and staff is conducting outreach at many municipalities. The Comprehensive Operations Analysis on the entire system has begun. Gisler asked if the millage was a reduction or a continuation of the current millage. Janssen responded that the current millage is .345 so this is a slight reduction. However, as Aardema clarified, the county was levying at a lower amount than what was approved after budget review. Aardema also stated the millage is a reduction from the 2015 rate which was also a reduction from the 2009 rate. Janssen added CARES funding contributed to allowing a lower levy. Referring to the 2019 issues involving physical confrontations at the Kalamazoo Transit Center from high school students obtaining free bus passes through the Youth Mobility Program, Gisler asked for a status update. Aardema explained there were issues when the program initially

began but Kalamazoo Public Schools took the lead to revoke passes as needed. Instead of allowing all students a free pass, the program now requires students to individually request passes which has eliminated problems. The program will continue to be adjusted and amended as necessary while continuing the benefit of offering student transportation. Janssen added students were previously riding Metro busses instead of riding school buses and echoed there are more stringent requirements for obtaining a free pass. Janssen stated just like there is a school bus driver shortage, KCTA is also facing driver shortages. Aardema pointed out the program is not funded by Metro or tax payer dollars, but is fully funded by the Kalamazoo Foundation for Excellence and the City of Kalamazoo.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Steppek reported Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study is reviewing the Congestion Management Process (CMP). The process considers alleviation of congestion within the metropolitan planning organization in the long-range plan project selection. A draft of the CMP is on the katsmpo.org website and will be included in upcoming meeting materials. While there may not be enough funds to widen roads, modal shifts or other options for transit and bike accessibility will be analyzed as possibilities to alleviate congestion. PASER Ratings continue for our Region Contract. Since the Transportation Asset Management Council allowed KATS to carry forward FY 2020 funds KATS plans on distributing a larger amount of reimbursement for local road ratings. Submit local road rating invoices to KATS. Johnson gave a shout out to the region and KATS MPO for capturing all the fiscal 2020 and 2021 Federal Aid road ratings in one year.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was brought forth.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Selden of Bike Friendly Kalamazoo mentioned the Kalamazoo Bike Club ordered and received 250 Five-foot Safe Passing Signs. The signs will be available in local bike shops, the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County offices, other municipalities, and neighborhood associations. Email Selden if your agency would like an article for local newsletters stressing the need for extra vigilance with more darkness during the fall. Kalamazoo Region Bike Route Committee meeting representatives are reviewing regional non-motorized corridors to fill gaps. Contact Selden if you would like to participate in planning these regional routes. Heppler mentioned the need to educate the public on the importance of wearing reflective clothing while biking to prevent tragedies especially when it gets dark earlier. Selden added he has a supply of safety vests available for jurisdictions. Contact Selden if you are interested.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Britigan reported the City of Parchment Glendale watermain project is experiencing slight delays related to a private Consumer Energy gas line but is expected to wrap up in a couple weeks. Local street paving is complete on parts of Park Avenue and Church Street. The Planning Commission has held public meetings and issued a community survey for the new Parks and Recreation Mater Plan.

VanderRoest thanked Aardema for attending the Charleston Township board meeting and discussing Metro concerns. The \$1.2 million dollar project at Exit 92 has been moved back and will begin next spring as opposed to this fall.

Heppler stated the Village of Augusta is working through its 5-year rolling road projects, working on obtaining permits for next year projects, and hoping to be able to add a bridge project next year.

Imus stated the Village of Lawton 5-miles of local chip, seal and fog will be complete in a couple weeks. Imus thanked the Michigan Department of Transportation for partly funding the project through a Transportation Economic Development Fund Category B grant.

Olson reported the Village of Vicksburg first in-person council meeting was held a week ago. On September 25, 2021 the South Kalamazoo County Fire Authority performed a practice burn of the old motel on US-131. The Village hopes to wrap up its ongoing sewer project by November 15, 2021 in time for the Christmas parade.

Joshi reported the City of Galesburg local street water main, repaving, and sidewalk project is ongoing at Washington and Division. The city is in the early stages of addressing continual flooding on Morhouse Drive.

Aardema echoed it was nice to attend the Charleston Township board meeting and thanked Selden for efforts related to bicycle access in the area and on public transit.

Johnson stated the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) is wrapping up projects for the year. The Nichols Road project in Kalamazoo Township is experiencing delays related to utilities and appreciates motorist patience with the long detours. Pavement markings will be performed this week although there have been challenges and delays related to paint supply and staffing shortages. RCKC is preparing for winter by filling the salt shed but does anticipate delays with winter maintenance due to staff shortages. RCKC is hiring CDL drivers.

Williams introduced himself as the Kalamazoo/ Battle Creek International Airport Director and thanked the group for the opportunity to serve as a representative on the KATS Citizens Advisory Committee. The airport entrance road will be redone next year. The \$1.7 million dollar project is expected to be complete next fall. The airport plans to coordinate sidewalk and road improvements with the City of Portage and any other entity as needed. Williams was thanked for his participation. Thompson welcomed any other new members not previously recognized.

Thompson reported Comstock Township construction is ongoing. The township board approved a road millage to allow for more money to spend on roads next year.

ADJOURNMENT

Following a motion by Heppler and a second by Sorensen, chair Thompson adjourned the September 29, 2021 Policy Committee Meeting at 9:47 a.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 27, 2021 - 9:00 a.m.