

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 14, 2021 - 9:30 A.M.

CALL TO ORDER

The October 14, 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>
Mickey Bittner	Village of Paw Paw	Allegan, MI
Kerry DenBraber	Michigan Department of Transportation, Statewide Planning	Village of Martin
Eric Feldt	City of Portage	Portage, MI
Jeff Franklin	Michigan Department of Transportation, Statewide Planning	Owosso, MI
Ryan Gladding	Michigan Department of Transportation, Statewide Urban Travel Analysis	Lansing, MI
Rachael Grover	Kalamazoo County	Kalamazoo, MI
Kendra Gwin	City of Portage	Portage, MI
Robert Henderson	Van Buren Public Transit	Bangor, MI
Jeff Heppler	Village of Augusta	Augusta, MI
Joel Hoort	Van Buren County Road Commission	Lawrence, MI
Anna Horner	Oshtemo Township	Oshtemo Township
Robert Maffeo	Michigan Department of Transportation, Statewide Urban Travel Analysis	Meridian Township
Ryan Minkus, Vice-Chair	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County	Acme Township
Sherman Potter	City of Portage	Portage, MI
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	Wayland, MI
Greg Vlietstra	Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority	Kalamazoo, MI
George Waring	City of Kalamazoo	Kalamazoo, MI
Tim Woodhams	Village of Mattawan	Mattawan, MI
Mark Worden	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County	Ludington, MI

OTHERS PRESENT

	<u>Agency</u>
Phil Doorlag	Wightman & Associates
Bart Franklin	Hubbell, Roth and Clark

Larry Hummel
Megan Mickelson
Elizabeth Rumick
Hailey Savola
Paul Selden
Paul Sotherland
Steve Stepek, AICP
Ali Townsend

Hubbell, Roth and Clark
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
ROWE
Bike Friendly Kalamazoo
KATS Citizens Advisory Committee
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study

CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Stepek stated there are some additions to the agenda he will discuss during the New Business section of the meeting including the Non-Motorized Subcommittee, current Senate bills, and the Traffic Count Data Collection Contract.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION by Minkus, SECOND by Heppler, ***“to approve the October 14, 2021 Technical Committee Agenda.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 9, 2021 MEETING

Stepek reported Feldt noted in the Land Use/Planning and Zoning Updates for the City of Portage, Lakeside District Plan should be changed to Lake Center District Plan.

MOTION by Heppler, SECOND by Minkus, ***“to approve the minutes from the September 9, 2021 Technical Committee Meeting, with the correction above.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

Stepek reported the last Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) Policy Committee meeting held in September included updates and discussion on the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Selden representing the Kalamazoo Region Bike Route Committee, announced the committee will be meeting by WebEx Tuesday, October 19, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. to discuss regional bike routes, some of which may connect to municipalities outside the KATS area.

FISCAL YEAR 2020-2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENTS

Chair Schultz stated the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment schedule is included in the meeting packet. Stepek stated one amendment is a Central County Transportation Authority addition, while the other amendments are budget changes. Minkus clarified the Kalamazoo County Douglas Avenue project is shortening the limits. Stepek concurred.

MOTION by Minkus, SECOND by Stoddard, ***“to approve the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program Amendments.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

FY 22 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENT SCHEDULE

Chair Schultz mentioned the TIP Schedule is an enclosure in the meeting materials. Stepek elaborated the schedule is issued annually to assist agencies with amendment deadlines. Stepek highlighted the last opportunity to amend fiscal year 2023 projects until October 1, 2022 is January 28, 2022. Sanada noted one of the deadlines listed as November 26, 2021 is a state holiday due to Thanksgiving and suggested changing the deadline to either Monday, November 29, 2021 or Wednesday, November 24, 2021. Stepek responded KATS is open to changing that date but has some leeway with the deadlines and would accept amendments through the following Monday.

Regarding the November 26, 2021 deadline, Minkus clarified the state would not process the amendment until the following Monday, although KATS would still have Jobnet updated. Stepek concurred and elaborated the deadlines are the Friday before the Thursday of the following week, when the Technical Committee Packet is distributed. Minkus elaborated the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County has been attempting to get fiscal year 2022 projects into the October letting but has been advised by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Local Agency Program (LAP) engineers that it is impossible because allocation is not available. December may be the earliest available possibility. MDOT also now requires a full deposit or full payment up-front, on any advanced construct projects. Stepek added the current Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act Funding Continuing Resolution only goes through October, so another Continuing Resolution will be required through November, and recommended attendees contact their Congress representatives. Schultz questioned why the schedule was an action item. Stepek answered to document all agencies have been made aware of, and agree with, the deadlines.

MOTION by Minkus, SECOND by Heppler, ***“to approve the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment Schedule.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

CALENDAR YEAR 2022 MEETING SCHEDULE

Referring to the meeting schedule included in the packet, Stepek stated the proposed calendar year 2022 meeting schedule is essentially a continuation of the current meeting schedule of monthly meetings the second Thursday of the month.

MOTION by Vlietstra, SECOND by Minkus, ***“to approve the Calendar Year 2022 Meeting Schedule.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS DRAFT

Stepek reported both the Congestion Management Process (CMP) Draft and the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Draft are too large to be included in the packet, so links to the documents are alternatively part of the meeting materials. For both this agenda item and the next, the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Stepek repeated the request for comments and feedback on the drafts by October 27, 2021. KATS appreciates those people that have already submitted comments. Both drafts will be presented for adoption at the November Technical and Policy Committee meetings. Minkus asked how the travel time reliability performance measure is calculated on both Interstate and Non-Interstate NHS. Stepek responded this required federal performance measure is possibly the worst one to try to explain to the public. Travel time reliability measures the chances of reliability and states the road is reliable at what the road congestion level normally is. If a road is always congested, it is reliable that a back-up will be present. Maffeo of Michigan Department of Transportation agreed with Stepek that travel time reliability is difficult to explain and that it is a federal required performance measure. Some of the maps in the CMP are based on travel demand forecasting results which are totally different than reliability results. Maffeo and Stepek offered to send Minkus additional information on how indices and metrics are calculated. Minkus agreed to follow-up with them. Maffeo stated the performance measures are state-wide level targets whereas the results in the CMP are specific for the KATS region. Lastly, Minkus pointed out that the general properties of the documents should be reviewed because the title coming up on the webpage is different.

2050 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN DRAFT

In addition to comments on the MTP under the previous agenda item, Stepek reported there was a good turnout for yesterday's virtual public engagement sessions and invited attendees to one of the two remaining virtual public engagement sessions today at 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Links to the Zoom sessions are posted on the katsmpo.org website. Minkus asked how turnout at the remote public participation sessions compared to previous in-person session turnout. Stepek responded that since the draft was out longer than normal, there were many more written comments received than in the past. However, attendance at the virtual sessions has been very similar to previous open house sessions, with a handful of people attending each.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OFFICER DISCUSSION

Stepak reported elections are coming up since the current officer 2-year terms expire December 31, 2021. As requested last month, enclosed in the meeting packet is a history of past Technical Committee Officers. Traditionally, the Vice-Chair moves up to Chair and a new Vice-Chair is elected at the same time. There is generally rotation between planning and engineering representatives. Anyone is eligible to volunteer or serve. If there are no volunteers by December, someone will be nominated or selected. Minkus suggested establishing a Sub-Committee to recruit a volunteer at the November meeting if no one comes forward. Stefforia volunteered to serve as the next Vice-Chair. Chair Schultz thanked Stefforia and stated the November meeting will include an action item to approve Minkus and Stefforia as the next Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively noting others still have time to volunteer.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

Henderson reported Van Buren Public Transit continues to look for drivers and also a trainer. All job postings are available on the website.

Schultz echoed Metro is similarly down 30 drivers and is actively bringing in new recruits. A class of four has started with other new employees starting in November. Central County Transportation Authority plans to add more service hours in November. Data is being collected for the Comprehensive Operations Analysis which began about 2 weeks ago. Meetings with stakeholders and public outreach will follow. Metro appreciates communication of road and lane closures affecting bus routes but looks forward to November and snow so busses are no longer detoured during construction season. Schultz recently made a presentation on Metro bus stop and shelter updates and thought it may be beneficial to spend five-to-ten minutes during the November meeting for the presentation, highlighting the large number of improvements made in the Transit System over the past two years. In 2014, 7 percent of bus stops were ADA compliant whereas now 35 percent are ADA compliant. A millage election will be on the November 2, 2021 ballot for the Metro Connect system. This service supports the county-wide system for demand response and is available to all Kalamazoo County residents but is primarily used by seniors and those with disabilities.

STATUS REPORTS

ROADS-

Heppler reported the Village of Augusta continues to prepare for winter. Heppler thanked KATS for assistance with the Augusta Drive project grant this year and looks forward to the Washington Street project next year while continuing to look at the 5-year rolling road project plan.

Minkus representing the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) congratulated Schultz on Metro's American Disabilities Act efforts. The Kalamazoo River Valley Trail Extension Six out of Galesburg to 37th Street has been turned in to the Michigan Department of Transportation. Applications for funding have been turned in for the non-motorized KL Avenue project with Oshtemo. Sprinkle Road paving is wrapping up this week, which will be followed by pavement marking. The entire project is expected to be complete by the end of the month. The Nichols/Solon project should be wrapping up mid-November weather permitting. 2022 projects including Sprinkle Road East Main to G and S from 29th to 34th will be turned in for December letting. Barney Road and Mosel Avenue projects will be turned in for January letting. RCKC is working on the 2022 – 2026 Capital Improvement Plan. The plan will be out for public comment later this month. There is a good chance RCKC will have funding for 2022 rubber chip seal trials and is looking to partner with townships for local roads. In preparation for snow, RCKC has begun converting the fleet from summer to winter operation and expects to be ready for any snow by Thanksgiving.

Sanada from the Michigan Department of Transportation reported \$3 million dollars of the US-131 BL project funding is from the approved state budget. An additional \$15 million dollars is from the federal budget which has not yet been approved. The remaining 10 percent of the project will be funded by

local agencies. The Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee meeting originally scheduled for today has been moved to a Microsoft Teams meeting on November 18, 2021 at 1:30 p.m. DenBraber added the US-131 Business Spur project funding explained by Sanada was for project construction. Project design funding is available through economic development funds and has started. The project entails ramp interchange work at US-131 and the US-131 Business Spur. Kilgore Service Road is expected to open to two-way traffic next week. Work is ongoing over the two railroad bridges at I-94 and Portage Road but should be wrapping up in November. Bridge work at Portage Road was delayed due to design revisions. Heppler asked for confirmation that MDOT resurfacing work on M-96 in Augusta from the Kalamazoo River to Armstrong Road will begin next week. DenBraber will check on it and follow-up with Heppler.

Gwin updated the City of Portage East Milham Avenue landscaping is underway with estimated completion in two weeks. The Lovers Lanes Project – East Milham Avenue to East Kilgore Road is on schedule for January, 2022 bid letting. South Westnedge Avenue – Mall Drive to Trade Center Way is awaiting grade inspection. Romence Road – Angling Road to Oakland Drive design is underway with construction scheduled for 2022. Traffic Signal Installation at Portage Road and Forest Drive design is underway. Shaver Road – south city limits to Vanderbilt Avenue design is underway with construction scheduled for 2023. Portage Road – East Centre Avenue to Romence Road Parkway design underway with construction scheduled for 2023.

Waring reported the City of Kalamazoo Miller Road to Emerald Drive project was completed last month. Milling on East Main started today from Charles to Wallace. The Portage Street project is ongoing. The Sun Valley local project is near completion. There will be a late season mill and fill paving project on Angling from Oakland to Sun Valley which may temporarily impact south-bound traffic on Oakland. There is some signal and utility work on-going. The city is planning 2022 projects including a Parkview water main and resurfacing project and a Kilgore resurfacing project from Oakland to Westnedge. Sotherland asked when Angling will be resurfaced from Oakland to Sun Valley, whether or not there are plans for a bike lane. Waring responded there are no plans this year to add a bike lane. In 2022, culvert work will be done on Angling and it can be discussed if non-motorized bike lanes would fit. Sotherland added how beneficial it would be to continue the bike lane from the City of Portage on Angling Road through the City of Kalamazoo to avoid treacherous bike travel on Oakland. Waring thanked Sotherland for input and will ensure this is discussed as a project possibility.

LAND USE/PLANNING AND ZONING-

Stoddard updated the City of Parchment Parks and Recreation Master Plan public input session last month had a good turnout with a diverse age group and good input.

NEW BUSINESS

Steppek reported the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) Traffic Data Collection Request for Proposals was issued. Only one bid was received, and it was from the current consultant. While there was a significant increase in the cost of the guaranteed counts, the cost of add-on counts did not rise significantly. The bid is still less than the second highest bid from 2018. The three agencies agreed to the cost of the bid. Agreements with the agencies will be forthcoming with the contract presented for approval at the November Policy Committee meeting.

Steppek shared Michigan Senate Bills 465 and 466 in the meeting chat and made attendees aware of the proposed Federal Aid Buy-out of local agency projects. The Bills have several issues from a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) perspective. The buyout is offered at a rate of \$0.90 on the \$1.00, so agencies stand to lose \$0.10 per dollar and money is shifted to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). Secondly, the system maintained the federal prevailing wage rate. Additionally, agencies would lose control over project prioritization and selection. Minkus echoed the Rural Task Force has been practicing this for four or five years although it was other Act 51 agencies and not MDOT buying. Steppek agreed and elaborated the KATS MPO runs a capped program where KATS does not use more money than what was planned or programmed. Other

MPOs in the state do not use a capped program. KATS will monitor the Bills as they move forward in the legislature.

Stepek stated the last item of new business is discussing the Non-Motorized Subcommittee. An agency approached KATS and suggested continuing the Subcommittee meetings regularly, possibly quarterly. This may assist with non-motorized related updates and be beneficial to the KATS long-range plan planning. Members would need to decide how formal the meetings would be. The current ad-hoc Subcommittee is not subject to the Open Meetings Act requirements which would apply with a standing committee. Stepek asked attendees to voice thoughts and questions on the Non-Motorized Subcommittee. Schultz inquired whether the meetings would be for dealing with issues or if there would always be agenda items to discuss. Additionally, would representatives be from the Cities and Townships and MDOT to keep the committee a manageable size. Stepek responded it is the Technical Committee's call. Minkus pointed out it would be an opportunity for more conversation and coordination between agencies competing for Transportation Alternative Program funding. Schultz agreed there may be a benefit to meeting on a regular basis such as semi-annually or quarterly but unsure of how formal the committee should be and whether the project prioritization process would be brought into the nonmotorized process. Sotherland said the final decision on the subcommittee should be made by the Technical Committee members. The discussion earlier with Waring from the City of Kalamazoo on nonmotorized development along Angling Road proves that there is a good reason to have people regularly addressing nonmotorized issues, making connections between agencies, and being responsible for the implementation of the KATS Non-Motorized plan. Schultz agrees but still wonders if creating a formal Subcommittee subject to the Open Meetings Act is necessary or having a committee made up of agency representatives and bicycle enthusiasts meet on a regular basis that still make recommendations to the Technical Committee which then makes recommendations to the Policy Committees. Sotherland added he would be interested in the best way to continue making nonmotorized development a priority. Minkus questioned that if nonmotorized is such a priority, should the requirement to comply with the Open Meetings Act be a reason not to formalize the committee. The requirements of the Open Meetings Act should be reviewed. Stepek added, complying with the Open Meetings Act may not necessarily be a hurdle. Traditionally, all KATS Subcommittees have operated as ad hoc committees. If this Subcommittee wants to assign representation and pick a Chair, bylaws and other formalities will be required. Stepek prefers not to go that route noting that other MPO standing subcommittees are operated like the KATS Citizens Advisory Committee. Selden pointed out that the current ad hoc Non-Motorized Subcommittee has been very effective and made tremendous progress without being a formal committee. Selden is in favor of continuing the Non-Motorized Subcommittee work while keeping it as informal as possible. Schultz summarized the discussion by saying Non-Motorized Subcommittee updates will be added to Technical Committee meeting agendas. Stepek concurred.

Minkus asked if there was any update on the urbanized area boundary definition discussed at last month's meeting. Stepek responded he is expecting an update in mid-2022. Franklin with the Michigan Department of Transportation reported the Census Bureau is expecting to release data for the urban area files in May 2022. System monitoring and reporting staff will conduct local agency meetings for approximately one year. The Federal Highway Administration is expected to get data by June 2023. Boundaries are expected to be finalized in October 2023 with MPO boundaries set in fiscal 2025 at the earliest.

Minkus asked for an update on the Inter-Agency Work Group Air Quality Meeting. Stepek answered KATS had the long-range plan Inter-Agency Work Group meeting with Randolph of the City of Kalamazoo where the process for air quality was planned. Since KATS is in a Limited Orphan Maintenance Area (LOMA), KATS goes through the process but is not required to perform air quality conformity modeling.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Selden of Bike Friendly Kalamazoo gave a shout-out to KATS staff, and committee members of the Citizens Advisory and Non-Motorized Subcommittees for the work and progress on nonmotorized

development including buffered and protected bike lanes. Selden applauded MDOT for successful Training Wheels sessions over the last year with hopes they will continue next year.

ADJOURNMENT

Following a motion by Heppler and a second by Vlietstra, Chair Schultz adjourned the October 14, 2021 Technical Committee Meeting at 10:44 a.m.

The next meeting of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Technical Committee will be held on Thursday, November 4, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.