

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES NOVEMBER 4, 2021 - 9:30 A.M.

CALL TO ORDER

The November 4, 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
Muhammad Arif	City of Portage	Portage, MI
Mickey Bittner	Village of Paw Paw	Allegan, MI
Kerry DenBraber	Michigan Department of Transportation, Statewide Planning	Martin, MI
Eric Feldt	City of Portage	Portage, MI
Rachael Grover	Kalamazoo County	Kalamazoo, MI
Kendra Gwin	City of Portage	Portage, MI
Anna Horner	Oshtemo Township	Oshtemo Township
Anthony Ladd	City of Kalamazoo	Kalamazoo, MI
Ryan Minkus, Vice-Chair	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County	Kalamazoo, MI
Dennis Randolph	City of Kalamazoo	Kalamazoo, MI
Brian Sanada	Michigan Department of Transportation, Region	Antwerp Township
Kathy Schultz, Chair	Central County Transportation Authority	Kalamazoo, MI
Jodi Stefforia	Comstock Township	Detroit, MI
Nancy Stoddard	City of Parchment	Parchment, MI
Greg Vlietstra	Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority	Kalamazoo, MI
Luke Walters	Michigan Department of Transportation, Statewide Planning	Delton Township
George Waring	City of Kalamazoo	Kalamazoo, MI
Mark Worden	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County	Kalamazoo, MI

OTHERS PRESENT

	<u>Agency</u>
Lindsey Dowswell	MDOT, Statewide Planning
Jamie Harmon	City of Portage
Robert Maffeo	MDOT, Statewide Urban Travel Analysis
Megan Mickelson	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Elizabeth Rumick	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Paul Selden	Bike Friendly Kalamazoo
Paul Sotherland	KATS Citizens Advisory Committee
Steve Stepek, AICP	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Ali Townsend	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study

CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION by Minkus, SECOND by Gwin, ***“to approve the November 4, 2021 Technical Committee Agenda.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 14, 2021 MEETING

MOTION by Minkus, SECOND by Arif, ***“to approve the minutes from the October 14, 2021 Technical Committee Meeting.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

Stepek reported the last Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) Policy Committee meeting held in October included approval of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments which were then approved last night and included a Road Commission of Kalamazoo County project. The Policy Committee also approved the 2022 TIP Amendment Schedule. Minkus thanked Stepek and others who assisted with the Road Commission project approval.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Selden representing Bike Friendly Kalamazoo and the Kalamazoo Region Bike Route Committee, thanked members of the Non-motorized Subcommittee for efforts on the nonmotorized chapter of the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Selden asked if the map legend items in the 2050 MTP would be hot linked. Selden also wondered if the last sentence in the second paragraph on page 56 of the Plan could be rewritten to mirror the last sentence of the first paragraph on page 56. Chair Schultz recommended waiting until the 2050 MTP agenda item to make comments on the Plan. Vice-Chair Minkus concurred.

CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS DRAFT

Schultz stated a link to the document is included in the meeting materials. Stepek reiterated the Congestion Management Process (CMP) Draft has been out for comment for several months. The Process addresses how traffic congestion is considered during project planning. Minimal comments were received. Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Staff recommends the Technical Committee recommend adoption of the document by the Policy Committee.

MOTION by Sanada, SECOND by Feldt, ***“to recommend the Congestion Management Process Document for Policy Committee approval.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

2050 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN DRAFT

Stepek reiterated the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Draft has been out for comment for several months and represents nearly two years' worth of efforts. The Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) greatly appreciates the nearly 100 pages of comments that have been received and are included in the appendix. Feedback has been incorporated into the document including an additional layer in the nonmotorized map which separates the Kalamazoo County Road Commission version from the public version. Stepek answered Selden's previous questions by stating the nonmotorized map will not be hot linked, but a link on the katsmpo.org website will allow users to access the ArcGIS map for detailed information. KATS revised verbiage to explain there are two nonmotorized routing versions, one is based on local agency routes while the other is based on public submissions. Stepek stressed that although nonmotorized is a hot-button issue with the plan, it is important to remember this is still a long-range plan going out to 2050, and it not set in stone, The plan is updated and adopted every five years. From an overall planning perspective, very limited comments were received on the over a \$1 billion-dollar plan of transit and road improvements

compared to the numerous comments received on bike routing and nonmotorized infrastructure. It is important to consider the perspective that the overall plan is significant in scope.

MOTION by Minkus, “to postpone action on the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Draft.”

Stepek clarified KATS is operating under a plan extension from Federal Highway and due to the timeline, any delay in plan approval could freeze the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) including a delay in the December TIP Amendments. Gwin asked if the Committee could open a hearing with the possibility of approving the Plan with amendments. Chair Schultz summarized there is a motion already on the table to postpone action and asked if there was support.

The MOTION by Minkus “to postpone action on the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Draft” was SUPPORTED by Worden.

Arif stated the action item should be discussed before the Committee makes a motion. Stepek and Minkus requested discussion. Minkus explained as a member of the Non-motorized Subcommittee, consensus reached by the Subcommittee members related to the nonmotorized element is not represented in the MTP as currently presented. Minkus therefore recommends sending the MTP back to the Non-motorized Subcommittee, with plans to be presented to the Technical Committee in December. Minkus highlighted the issue after a request by Stepek that consensus was not reached by the Non-motorized Subcommittee on inclusion of all the previous 2045 Long-Range Plan Map 7 regional routes which are now shown on Map 17 of the 2050 Plan. Stepek disagreed that the Non-motorized Subcommittee supported inclusion of the routes which resulted in KATS showing the two-layers of the map, as previously explained. Stepek referenced changes KATS made to the plan after recent discussions, reading an excerpt from page 81:

“The proposed bike routing shown on Map 17 and Map 17A is a combination of agency submitted plans and additional routes gathered through the KATS public engagement process. The proposed routing is intended to continue the work originally shown on Map 7 of the KATS 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Interested citizens and advocacy groups, including Bike Friendly Kalamazoo (Bike Friendly Kalamazoo's website), have proposed different networks for routing. Ultimately, changes in proposed routing, facility type, location, and local priority will change as proposed projects move towards implementation through their local agencies.”

Worden explained that people previously stated the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County is required to follow the map routes since they are in the long-range plan. Minkus and Worden both said the Road Commission submitted a nonmotorized map for the plan which included engineering and safety considerations, which is not reflected. Stepek responded the routes are included in the agency submitted layer. Schultz opined the routes are not set in stone in the plan per this excerpt from page 82 of the plan alongside Map 17:

“The proposed facilities represent a high level planning guide for project implementation and their inclusion does not guarantee funding. Their purpose is to help the MPO identify regionally significant priority projects and to enhance the cooperation and coordination between jurisdictions for facility development. Changes in routing, facility type, location, and local priority will change as proposed projects move towards implementation.”

Minkus stated this above paragraph was carried over from 2045 plan. Worden provided further information that the 2045 MTP reached the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) board level with people demanding the nonmotorized map routes be implemented. Worden expressed the need for a tool and visual to represent the road agencies which is not currently reflected in the 2050 MTP. Engineering and safety considerations were included. Minkus added some comments submitted could not be located in the document. Stepek reported Minkus' comments can be found on page 276. Stepek pointed out the Non-motorized Subcommittee meetings were ongoing for a year and KATS Staff and other agencies felt we had consensus. Stepek stated there were no comments brought to KATS outside those included prior to the public comment deadline. At the request of RCKC, KATS made amendments to the plan after public comment ended. KATS operates cooperatively, including all comments and feedback. To exclude public generated routing in maps or

public comment in the plan is counterintuitive to the Metropolitan Planning Organization's cooperative process. Feldt asked how quickly changes would need to be made to meet the deadlines and whether we could schedule a special meeting. Stepek responded the deadline is the end of November when the current plan expires and it would be difficult to schedule a special meeting due to the Thanksgiving holiday. Schultz further discussed timing and it was determined that a Technical Committee meeting prior to November 10, 2021 would be necessary. Horner asked if members could vote via email. Stepek responded that would not be an option due to the Open Meetings Act. Stepek favors adopting the plan as presented with the recommendation that the Non-motorized Subcommittee meet in December 2021, and propose an amendment to the MTP in January 2022. That way TIP Amendments and projects are not delayed. Worden expressed support of removing the dark blue proposed regional routes from both 17 Maps. Sotherland asked how the numerous pages of public comments are addressed. Secondly, Sotherland doesn't remember discussion of the RCKC nonmotorized map at the Non-Motorized Subcommittee meetings. Lastly, Sotherland suggested including verbiage in the plan about the decision to maintain the Non-Motorized Subcommittee meetings on a regular basis. Stepek responded comments are incorporated into the plan by KATS Staff review considering any required policies and procedures. Secondly, the Non-Motorized Subcommittee thoroughly discussed the nonmotorized map. Lastly, since this MTP is a planning document, it is not the appropriate place to set the Subcommittee meeting structure. Gwin suggested separating the maps between what was submitted by the agencies and what was submitted by the community. Stepek responded that is an option but the Subcommittee wanted them combined. Minkus added the RCKC nonmotorized map was presented to the Non-Motorized Subcommittee but not directly to the Technical Committee. Minkus added RCKC has further refined routes based on safety, engineering, and corridor level assessments. Arif said the issue needed to be discussed at the Subcommittee level and the majority censuses at that level reigns. Minority opinion cannot then be introduced subsequent to that Subcommittee consensus which becomes part of the document. Stepek added KATS Staff is happy to make amendments to the plan, which is a living document.

After discussion, Chair Schultz reiterated there is a motion with support on the floor **"to postpone action on the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Draft."** MOTION FAILED with 13 against, 3 in favor, and 1 abstention.

MOTION by Stefforia SECOND by Ladd, **"that the Technical Committee recommend to the Policy Committee that the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan be adopted with the directive to the Technical Committee and the Non-motorized Subcommittee to meet the first quarter of 2022 to discuss concerns of the Road Commission."** MOTION PASSED with 15 in favor, and 2 against.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OFFICER ELECTION

Schultz provided explanation that traditionally the Vice-Chair moves up to Chair and a new Vice-Chair volunteers or is nominated. Last month Stefforia volunteered to serve as the next Vice-Chair. The current Vice-Chair Minkus would become Chair. Officer terms are two-years beginning January 1, 2022. There were no other volunteers or nominations.

MOTION by Vlietstra, SECOND by Gwin, **"to approve the Technical Committee Chair and Vice-Chair as Minkus and Stefforia respectively, for a two-year term beginning January 1, 2022."** MOTION APPROVED.

METRO PRESENTATION

Due to a prior commitment, Chair Schultz appointed Vice-Chair Minkus to lead the rest of the meeting and postponed the Metro presentation.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

Vlietstra reported the Kalamazoo County-wide Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (KCTA) proposed millage passed at the November 2, 2021 election with 72 percent in favor and 82 of the 85 precincts reporting. Candidates will be interviewed this week for the KCTA Director of Operations position.

STATUS REPORTS

ROADS-

DenBraber updated the Michigan Department of Transportation M-96 project near Augusta is complete except for the second pavement marking application. The I-94 at Portage Road project Kilgore Service Road is expected to open to two-way traffic in two weeks. Although material and health delays are impactful, the project is progressing.

Ladd reported the City of Kalamazoo Portage Street project is wrapping up for the year and will continue next spring. The second round of sidewalk repair and replacement is complete. A total of 5 miles of sidewalks were repaired in the city this year, with more planned for next year. The Sun Valley water main replacement and resurfacing project is wrapping up. The city is planning 2022 projects including a Stadium Drive culvert replacement project that will be bid, awarded, and constructed before the Stadium Drive resurfacing project from Howard to Lovell can begin.

Minkus stated the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) Nichols Road project should be wrapping up in the next couple weeks. Most other projects are wrapped up for the year. RCKC is in the process of turning in 2022 projects for obligation and letting.

LAND USE/PLANNING AND ZONING-

Anderson reported the final version of the City of Kalamazoo Street Design Manual will be out next week.

Feldt stated the City of Portage City Council approved another phase of the planned residential development off Osterhout that will add 26 new duplexes for a total of 52 new dwelling units. Nonmotorized pedestrian improvements are also planned to accommodate the development.

Stefforia reached out to the Redwin Apartments to consider a Comstock Township development. The project was presented to the Planning Commission and will be passed along to the Township Board to recommend conditionally rezoning the G Avenue and Gull Road area for 189 dwelling units.

Horner reported the Oshtemo Township Board voted last month to initiate a housing study so results can be incorporated into the Master Plan update in 2022. The Oshtemo sewer project is moving forward which would cover 17 miles of the total 77 miles of local roads in the township and take approximately 2-3 years to complete.

NEW BUSINESS

Steppek reported we are operating under another continuing resolution making it even more important to submit 2022 Transportation Improvement Program Amendments or changes to 2022 projects as soon as possible including the impact of the accelerated schedule due to the holidays. In response to Minkus' inquiry, Stepek and Walters responded the continuing resolution goes through early December.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Selden of Bike Friendly Kalamazoo congratulated Minkus and Stefforia for election as officers to the committee. Selden announced next year's bike art competition will entail putting murals in public places expressing the joy of bicycling. Contact the Kalamazoo County Public Art Commission or Selden with potential mural building locations.

Sotherland of Citizens Advisory Committee opined everyone should take pride in the importance placed on nonmotorized infrastructure in the region and the long chapter 7 dedicated to it in the MTP. Sotherland appreciates everyone's efforts related to nonmotorized development to continue making it a key part of the region's focus and looks forward to future progress from the Non-motorized Subcommittee.

ADJOURNMENT

Following a motion by Arif and a second by Stefforia, Vice-Chair Minkus adjourned the November 4, 2021 Technical Committee Meeting at 10:47 a.m.

The next meeting of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Technical Committee will be held on Thursday, December 2, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.