

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES DECEMBER 2, 2021 - 9:30 A.M.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The December 2, 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>
Chris Bessert	Kalamazoo County	Kalamazoo, MI
Mickey Bittner	Village of Paw Paw	Paw Paw, MI
Kerry DenBraber	Michigan Department of Transportation, Statewide Planning	Kalamazoo, MI
Eric Feldt	City of Portage	Portage, MI
Kendra Gwin	City of Portage	Portage, MI
Robert Henderson	Van Buren Public Transit	Bangor, MI
Jeff Heppler	Village of Augusta	Augusta, 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	Kalamazoo, MI
Jim Mallery	Village of Vicksburg	Vicksburg, 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	Comstock Township
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
Mark Worden	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County	Cooper Township

**OTHERS PRESENT**

	<u>Agency</u>
Curt Aardema	Central County Transportation Authority
Phil Doorlag	Wightman & Associates
Bart Franklin	Hubbell, Roth and Clark
Iris Luppert	Oshtemo Township
Jamie Harmon	City of Portage
Kathleen Hoyle	City of Portage
Robert Maffeo	MDOT, Statewide Urban Travel Analysis
Megan Mickelson	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study

Sarah Phillips  
Elizabeth Rumick  
Paul Selden  
Paul Sotherland  
Steve Stepek, AICP  
Ali Townsend

Road Commission of Kalamazoo County  
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study  
Bike Friendly Kalamazoo  
KATS Citizens Advisory Committee  
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study  
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 Heppler, SECOND by Minkus, ***“to approve the December 2, 2021 Technical Committee Agenda.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

## **MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 4, 2021 MEETING**

Minkus requested “Kalamazoo County Road Commission” on pages 2 and 3 of the minutes be corrected to “Road Commission of Kalamazoo County.” Stoddard said she was present at the November meeting but was not included in the “Members Present” section. Gwin reported Muhammad Arif’s name is misspelled as “Mohammad Arif.”

MOTION by Heppler, SECOND by Minkus, ***“to approve the minutes from the November 4, 2021 Technical Committee Meeting with the corrections listed above.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

## **POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Steppek reported the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) Policy Committee approved everything on the agenda including the Congestion Management Plan and the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan with the directive that the Non-Motorized Subcommittee would meet in the first quarter of 2022 regarding the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County concerns. The Policy Committee also approved the Traffic Collection Contract covering the calendar years 2022 to 2024.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Selden speaking as the Chair of the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Kalamazoo Bike Week that will be held May 7, 2022 through May 14, 2022, plans to reach out to agencies in the coming month or two so that by the end of January, Bike Week speakers will be determined. Contact Selden directly if you are interested or follow the [KalamazooBikeWeek.org](http://KalamazooBikeWeek.org) website for information on their January meeting.

Aardema stated as a member of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Policy Committee representing the Central County Transportation Authority, he is participating in today’s meeting because of interest in membership on the Non-Motorized Subcommittee which is an agenda item for this meeting.

## **TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENTS**

After Schultz pointed out that the amendments are an enclosure in the meeting materials, Stepek provided information on the amendments that three are additions related to 2023 safety grants that were awarded and two are budget increases. Schultz asked Minkus if the mini-roundabout project on Parkview Avenue at 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Street is one or two roundabouts and what defines a mini roundabout. Minkus explained it is two roundabouts. The mini designation means the entire circle will fit in the inner diameter of a standard roundabout and is designed for a 66-foot right-of-way intersection with 3 inch versus standard 6 inch curb height with the intention that large vehicles will drive over the center islands. Schultz noted this will impact a bus route in the area and will pass along the information to bus drivers. Minkus will follow-up with Schultz when the project concept progresses

and plans outreach to impacted parties and property owners. Heppler expressed first responder fire truck vehicles may have difficulty navigating the mini roundabout impeding rescue operations.

MOTION by Minkus, SECOND by Heppler, ***“to approve the Fiscal Year 2020 – 2023 Transportation Improvement Program Amendments.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

### **STATE SAFETY TARGETS**

Schultz stated the State Safety Targets, data, and supporting documentation is included in the meeting packet. Stepek elaborated that this is the annual state's 2022 calendar year target. The state uses the baseline condition for 5 years, up through 2020, to predict the State Safety Targets for 2022. As shown by the graphs from 2016 to 2020, the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) region is at a downward trend for bicyclist and pedestrian serious injuries, flat for serious injuries, and on a downward trend for fatalities with the exception in the uptick in 2020. KATS has traditionally supported state targets. If KATS develops its own safety targets, it must support both its own and the states. KATS Staff recommend supporting State Safety Targets. Heppler added that the increase in last year's fatalities and serious injuries was nation-wide. Traffic safety consists of the following three items: Engineering, Educating the public, and Enforcement of laws. Minkus echoed agreement with Heppler's "three E's": Engineering, Education, and Enforcement, and thanked KATS Staff for local data versus just state-wide trends.

MOTION by Heppler, SECOND by Mallery, ***“to approve the State Safety Targets.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

### **LOMA OZONE CONFORMITY REPORT**

Schultz noted the report is included in the meeting packet. Stepek explained this is the first time Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) along with Battle Creek Area Transportation Study (BCATS) are considered a Limited Orphan Maintenance Area (LOMA) for ozone conformity. Conformity is based on fiscal constraint. KATS Staff recommend approval of the report and submission with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan to the Michigan Department of Transportation. Schultz asked why KATS is considered Orphan status. Stepek responded it is a federal designation which can cause confusion.

MOTION by Sanada, SECOND by Heppler, ***“to approve the LOMA Ozone Conformity Report.”*** MOTION APPROVED.

### **METRO PRESENTATION**

Schultz presented a PowerPoint presentation titled Bus Stop and Shelter Update for informational purposes and to give kudos for successful partnerships with local agencies. Metro is striving toward getting Bus Stops up to ADA Standards. ADA requirements include slope less than 2%, connection to sidewalk, street, or path, and a minimum of five feet wide and eight feet long. The next slide was a map identifying all Bus Stops, with those in red being updated stops. 250 of the over 750 stops are in compliance. Another map displayed the location of system-wide Bus Shelters. The 2014 Bus Stop Study showed only 7 percent of Metro Bus Stops to be ADA compliant. In 2021, 35 percent of Bus Stops are ADA compliant. A 2018 Bus Stop Study performed by Nelson Nygaard led to recommendations to remove stops and add others. Before and after pictures were shown as an example of safety and ADA upgrades at the Drake Road at Calvary Bible Church Bus Stop. Before and after pictures were shown of a new Bus Stop pad at Kilgore Service Road at Portage Road. HUD Funding was utilized in partnership with the City of Kalamazoo to install 37 new Bus Stop locations. Schultz showed before and after pictures of correcting slope over 2 percent at the Ransom and Church Street Bus Stop. This project was partially funded by the Foundation for Excellence. The recent Bus Stop Sign review identified stops to keep, stops to relocate, and the addition of new stops on undersigned routes. Bus Stop spacing was also considered to potentially improve on-time performance. The new Bus Stop Sign project with Rathco began in Fall of 2019, was divided into six phases, and cost of approximately \$110,000. The next slide showed a picture of a newly installed bench at Park Street and Crosstown Pond for an example of improved passenger comfort. New Bus

Stop Shelters were installed in 8 locations during 2021 including a pictured new bus stop pad at Gull Road and Nazareth. Metro has partnered with nearby agencies such as the City of Portage, for many improvement projects. The next slide listed transit system challenges that include lack of sidewalk connections, placement of Bus Stop in the right-of-way not easily obtained, limited space for shelter or bench, and business/community support. Bus Shelter Locations are identified by the number of boardings. Metro also focuses on maintenance of shelters. Metro Utility Staff routinely cleans shelters of trash, power washes them, and removes snow. Minkus asked if Metro has experienced better on-time performance with the updates made. Schultz responded new data has not yet been determined, but compliments from bus drivers were received for the removal of stops that were very close together. Stoddard thanked staff for working with the City of Parchment for the new ADA compliant Bus Stop and Shelter. Hoyle asked if the addition of bike racks was discussed as part of the Bus Stop improvement plan. Schultz responded there are plans to install some bike racks, noting that larger concrete pads are required to accommodate them. Stefforia thanked Schultz for the presentation and asked if Arif's concerns about the City of Portage ridership have been addressed. Schultz said it takes time for people to recognize there is a Bus Stop sign and to understand which bus comes through and how often. Metro's ongoing Comprehensive Operations Analysis will study how areas can be better serviced. Schultz will get Arif data. Selden thanked Schultz for the presentation.

### **NON-MOTORIZED SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP DISCUSSION**

As previously discussed, Stepek reiterated the Non-Motorized Subcommittee will have regularly occurring meetings. Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) has always used open forum which can continue to be used for this Subcommittee. The Subcommittee will reach consensus to bring proposals to the Technical Committee which will then bring proposals to the Policy Committee. More well-rounded plans will result if the Subcommittee has more than just Technical Committee members and includes other advocates such as Parks Departments. The next Non-Motorized Subcommittee meeting will most likely be held in January of 2022. Heppler asked if meeting information will be posted. Stepek responded it can be posted. Luppert expressed support of the Non-Motorized Subcommittee plan and interest in membership. Minkus asked the goal or purpose of this Subcommittee for attendees and documentation in the minutes. Stepek responded the Subcommittee will review the Metropolitan Transportation Plan nonmotorized map and chapter items per the directive from the Technical and Policy Committees. Then the Subcommittee will continue data development, project development and project coordination of the nonmotorized plan. By meeting regularly to discuss projects there is opportunity to better coordinate and collaborate projects between municipalities and more frequently update KATS nonmotorized data. As Schultz's last meeting as Chair, she requests the new Chair include on the Technical Committee agendas a Non-Motorized Subcommittee report when they meet. Harmon from the City of Portage asked if this Subcommittee will be working on the nonmotorized virtual map previously discussed. Mickelson of KATS stated the virtual nonmotorized map will be on the katsmpo.org website by the end of business today. Stepek added continually updating the nonmotorized map will make the process more accurate and smoother. Sotherland thanked KATS for the interactive map. Schultz summarized to contact Stepek if you are interested in participating in the Non-Motorized Subcommittee.

### **FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORIZATION AND CENSUS URBANIZED AREA UPDATE**

Stepek updated the committee that the recently received timeline is included in meeting materials. The importance is that the urbanized area determines funding. Based on comments that were received on proposed changes, it is sounding good overall. Federal Transportation Authorization funding has not yet been determined. The current federal authorization goes through the end of this week. After authorization is passed, the federal government must perform a separate appropriation of funding. Heppler asked if the recently passed federal Transportation Act will allow money to trickle down. Stepek clarified the federal government has to appropriate dollars in that Transportation Authorization in order to get funding.

## **FISCAL YEAR 2024 – 2026 PROJECT LIST**

Referring to the enclosure in the meeting packet, Stepek explained this is the master project list for roads and flex money for transit. The list is presented for local agency feedback, public engagement, and will be mailed to outside consultation agencies. It is also posted on the katsmpo.org website. Although Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) has already scored the projects, scoring is excluded so the scoring methodology process does not influence public opinion. The Subcommittee will start assigning dollars to projects in early 2022. Schultz asked if KATS would provide a map. Stepek responded there will be a link to a map in the letter that is mailed for consultation. Stepek elaborated after this month of engagement, the master list will be presented for action next month. Minkus asked if Michigan Department of Transportation projects could be overlaid on the KATS map to prevent issues. Stepek responded the data can be exported from JobNet and added.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES**

Schultz reported Metro's Comprehensive Operations Analysis is in process. Stakeholder meetings and public virtual meetings are being scheduled for the week of December 13, 2021. Current transportation in Kalamazoo County and future transportation will be discussed along with solicitation of recommendations. Vlietstra elaborated on the unfortunate news story of an active shooter incident on Saturday November 27, 2021. Three people were shot. The media reports that the event took place all on one bus were incorrect. The event took place throughout the Kalamazoo Transportation Center Area. Kalamazoo Public Safety arrived within two minutes and shot and killed the shooter. The three people that were shot do not have life threatening injuries. The incident has made the bus driver shortage worse. Metro's security contract with the Kalamazoo County Sheriff ended due to Sheriff staffing shortages. Metro continues to examine safety and security. Schultz complimented bus drivers and dispatchers for their response during the situation. Metro practiced active shooter drills and it most likely prevented a worse situation.

## **STATUS REPORTS**

### **ROADS-**

Heppler from the Village of Augusta announced the exciting news that the Michigan Department of Transportation selected the Village's Washington Street bridge to be replaced and gave the Village a \$830,000 grant. The Augusta Drive project will be bid in the next one to two months.

Minkus added the Village of Augusta has been trying to obtain funding for the Washington Street bridge replacement for years. Minkus reported the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) was notified of funding for bridges preventative maintenance. Minkus introduced the Road Commission new staff including Sarah Phillips, Communications Administrator, and Kim Bodnar, Assistant Finance Director. RCKC continues to look for drivers. The Nichols Road project is done. Sprinkle Road will have rolling closures for punch list items. All other projects are done for the year. Design for 2023 projects is underway. Design of 2022 projects is complete and cost of 2022 projects has been turned into the Michigan Department of Transportation. Trucks are set up for plowing and sand and salt inventory has been delivered.

Mallery reported the Village of Vicksburg downtown project is ongoing with asphalt and sidewalk work. Streetlights are planned to be installed next week. Traffic signals should be up by the end of December. Twenty percent of the project will remain and be completed next spring.

Stoddard reported the Glendale water main project is complete.

Randolph stated the City of Kalamazoo Portage Road project will continue in spring but is back open to traffic. Studies have shown an impactful 2 mile-an-hour speed reduction in areas of recent traffic calming projects. Next year's projects are being designed and bid.

DenBraber echoed that the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is hiring CDL drivers in the Southwest Region and encourages people to apply at [Michigan.gov](http://Michigan.gov). Portage Road at I-94 will be closed the weekend of December 11, 2021 for bridge beam installation. The MDOT US-131 Village of Schoolcraft project amendment budget increase resulted because the letting got pushed to Fiscal 2023 due to environmental concerns and the project was rebundled with other projects along the corridor. Survey work and design has begun on the US-131 Business Spur project to add a ramp from northbound 131 to eastbound on the Business Spur. Gwin asked what the detour route is for the Portage Road Closure. Schultz echoed the question due to a bus route there. After reviewing the [midrive.com](http://midrive.com) website, Denbraber answered the detour is Milham to Westnedge to Kilgore.

Harmon reported the City of Portage Lovers Lane Reconstruction and South Westnedge Avenue Microsurfacing projects are scheduled for February bid lettings. Romence Road from Angling Road to Oakland Drive is under design for construction during summer of 2022. Shaver Road Reconstruction from South City Limits to Vanderbilt Avenue including water main replacement is under design for 2023 construction. Portage Road Reconstruction from East Centre Avenue to Romence Road including traffic signal upgrades at Romence Road and the addition of island boulevards is under design for 2023 construction. Forest Drive Traffic Signal at Portage Road is under design.

### **LAND USE/PLANNING AND ZONING-**

Bessert reported Kalamazoo County signed a contract for county-wide aeriels to be flown in spring of 2022. 2019 and 2020 MiSAIL imagery is available. The County is in the process of putting together parcel data for this year. The County continues working with 911 Central Dispatch to update addresses. The Kalamazoo County GIS server is back up and running which will allow partner jurisdictions to not only access the data 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year but allow them to make direct edits. Noting the Pictometry data is updated once a year, Stefforia asked if Kalamazoo County will be coordinating with Frizzo at Prein and Newhoff to update data more often. Bessert responded the County has discussed and is aware of interest in more frequent updates, but budget constraints create limits.

Feldt representing the City of Portage announced Chris Forth, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services will be retiring in January, 2022 after multiple decades with the City. Applications to fill the open position are available on the [portagemi.gov](http://portagemi.gov) and Michigan Association of Planning websites.

Stoddard reported the City of Parchment Parks and Recreation Master Plan is going out for public comment through the end of the month and will be online later today.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Minkus announced the Rural Task Force #3 meeting will be held on December 8, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. There is a link to the meeting on the [katsmpo.org](http://katsmpo.org) website. On November 22, 2021 the United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) published a four-page document outlining what the infrastructure law will deliver for Michigan. It is available online for further detail. The US DOT will also be hosting webinars to discuss more detailed aspects of the law and how it will impact specific groups.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Selden reported the community-wide Bike Program Steering Community met yesterday. Results of the bike and pedestrian safety enforcement conducted by the Office of Highway Safety and Planning and the Michigan State Police were presented. Selden will post their press release of the data on the Bike Friendly Kalamazoo (BFK) Facebook page and the BFK website. At the meeting, Captain Jeff Christensen of the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office announced booster funding will be used to add another traffic enforcement officer to rural roads. Plans are underway for the spring Kalamazoo Bike Week with continued efforts planned for fall of 2022.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Schultz passed the gavel to Minkus who will be serving as Chair beginning with the January meeting with Stefforia as Vice-Chair. Schultz expressed appreciation and pleasure serving as Vice-Chair and Chair of the Technical Committee the past four years. Members thanked Schultz for service.

Following a motion by Minkus and a second by Heppler, Chair Schultz adjourned the December 2, 2021 Technical Committee Meeting at 10:56 a.m.

*The next meeting of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Technical Committee will be held on Thursday, January 13, 2022 at 9:30 a.m.*

*Approved 2/10/22 (er)*