

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the October 25, 2023 Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

The October 25, 2023 Policy Committee Meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m. at Metro in Kalamazoo, by Chairperson Thompson.

INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were made by all present.

ROLL CALL

Meeting attendance was recorded on the sign-in sheet.

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING

Curt Aardema	Central County Transportation Authority
Cheri Bell	Oshtemo Township
Rob Britigan	City of Parchment
Marsha Drouin	Richland Township
Robert Henderson	Van Buren Public Transit
Jeff Heppler	Village of Augusta
Joanna Johnson	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
Greg Kinney	Van Buren County Road Commission
Judy Lemon	City of Galesburg
Don Martin	Kalamazoo Township
Don Mayle	Michigan Department of Transportation, Planning
Sherine Miller	Kalamazoo Township
Wendy Pheils	Village of Vicksburg
Pete Pfeiffer	Michigan Department of Transportation, TSC
Chris Praedel	City of Kalamazoo
Aditya Rama	Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority
Randy Smith	Brady Township
Jeff Sorensen	Cooper Township
Paul Sotherland	KATS Citizens' Advisory Committee
Randy Thompson, Chair	Comstock Township
Don Ulsh	Schoolcraft Township
Jerry VanderRoest	Charleston Township

MEMBERS ABSENT

John Gisler	Kalamazoo County
Lisa Imus	Village of Lawton
Pat McGinnis	City of Portage

OTHERS PARTICIPATING

Sean McBride	Metro
Megan Mickelson	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Ryan Minkus	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
Elizabeth Rumick	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Steve Stepek	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

Johnson moved, and it was duly seconded by Sorensen, **“to approve the agenda of the October 25, 2023 Policy Committee Meeting.”** MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

CONSENT AGENDA

- ACCEPTANCE OF THE TREASURER REPORT
- ACCEPTANCE OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT
- ACCEPTANCE OF THE SOUTHCENTRAL MICHIGAN PLANNING COUNCIL REPORT
- APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 27, 2023 MEETING

Johnson moved, and it was duly seconded by Smith, **“to accept and approve the items on the Consent Agenda.”** MOTION CARRIED.

DRAFT ADJUSTED CENSUS URBAN BOUNDARY (ACUB) MAPS

Referring to the maps included in the meeting materials, Stepek explained these are same maps that were included in the last meeting packet for review and comments. The maps reflect the new urban adjusted boundaries that were changed in the recent census. In response to Johnson’s question, Stepek responded that the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County and other Act 51 Agencies should not start using the new maps until federal approval is granted. Approval is anticipated in April 2025. At that time, National Functional Classification revisions will begin. The Technical Committee and Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study staff recommend approval of the proposed boundaries.

Johnson moved, and it was duly seconded by Heppler, **“to approve the Adjusted Census Urban Boundary (ACUB) Maps.”** MOTION CARRIED.

DRAFT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN AND DRAFT TITLE VI PLAN

Links were provided to both the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) Public Participation Plan and the KATS Title VI Plan. They are also available on the KATS website at katsmpo.org. Copies of the plans were provided at the meeting. Stepek explained these plans were also on last month’s meeting agenda. KATS Staff will incorporate any comments received including those received at the KATS Certification Review. The finalized draft plans will then be presented for approval.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

Aardema reported Metro remains optimistic that service levels can be added back due to the recent hiring of new drivers. Progress continues for Microtransit, an on-demand service intended to better service areas not fully linked to the fixed route system. McBride added that the target to begin the Microtransit pilot program is April 2024. The pilot program will last one to one-and-a-half years and will run inside the Central County Transportation Authority boundary. McBride introduced Sarah Joshi as the newly hired Deputy Director for On-Demand Services for implementation of Microtransit service. Members welcomed Joshi. The Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA) / Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (KCTA) board continues to be happy with and appreciative of the environment provided by the new private security firm for the Kalamazoo Transportation Center. The CCTA/KCTA board completed a positive performance review of Sean McBride, Metro's Executive Director. Rama added KCTA Metro Connect service reported a 12 percent increase in ridership from last year. Rama agreed to drop off Metro Connect flyers to Drouin at Richland Township. McBride agreed to visit Kalamazoo Township and volunteered to visit any other township, to educate staff on the Metro Connect system and changes with it.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Although the updates are included in the meeting packet, Stepek highlighted the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) financial fiscal year 2023 audit is scheduled for November 6, 2023 through November 8, 2023. The audit will be hybrid with auditors in the KATS office on November 7, 2023 and November 8, 2023. KATS Certification Review went well. A final report will be issued in a few months. Stepek thanked McBride for use of Metro's facilities and the Metro tour. KATS Staff have completed PASER Ratings for the year. With the start of KATS new fiscal year, please continue to email timesheets for contributed service.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was brought forth.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No citizens' comments were made.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Praedel reported this may be his last meeting due to the upcoming election for the City of Kalamazoo on November 7, 2023. Praedel expressed appreciation in serving and connecting with members. Work will continue on Ransom Street as long as the weather allows and then resume next spring. The Whites Road project will wrap up shortly. The next project phase will begin next spring. The Patterson Street bridge will open in the next two to three weeks.

Sotherland of the KATS Citizens Advisory Committee announced the Kalamazoo Bike Club is hosting an opening event called "Le Tour de Lane" for the new bike lanes on Michigan Avenue. The event will be held Saturday November 4, 2023 beginning at 11:00 a.m. at Pedal Bicycles downtown location.

Mayle of Michigan Department of Transportation reported there will be a delay in getting apportionment resources. Jeff Franklin was hired as the Executive Director of the Battle Creek Area Transportation Study effective January 1, 2024. Heather Bowden was confirmed as the Michigan Department of Transportation Planning West Region Supervisor.

Heppler reported that the Village of Augusta water project is nearly complete. In partnership with the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County, chip seal projects on Van Buren Street and Augusta Drive are wrapping up. Plans are underway for 2024 projects including the resurfacing of M-96, and replacement of the Washington Street bridge.

Heppler provided the Kalamazoo County update. The 2024 budget was passed. Improvements for the Sheriff Department, courts, and prosecutor's office are included in the budget.

Britigan stated the City of Parchment was awarded a Transportation Economic Development Fund grant from the Michigan Department of Transportation for local street repaving next year.

Sorensen reminded attendees that this year's Michigan Township Association annual banquet will be held November 9, 2023 at The Fountains in Parchment.

Martin reported the Kalamazoo Township Lake Street project is underway and is going well. There have been delays due to the recent rain. This was a partnership project between the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County, the City of Kalamazoo, and Kalamazoo Township. Johnson added County Parks was another partner in the Lake Street project.

Johnson provided the update for the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC). Gravel road trials are underway. Work is being completed on the KL Avenue trail. A public hearing will be held in November on the RCKC Capital Improvement Plan and Budget. Comments and feedback are welcome either through a written service request or at the public hearing. Winter maintenance preparations are underway. A preliminary report on crash data for the Safe Streets for All program was presented at last night's board meeting. There were no big surprises in the report. RCKC strategizes on prioritizing those high-risk areas. A related presentation will be available on the kalamazooountyroads.com website or on the public media network. Another trial is underway to use scrap tires for roads. Johnson recommended attendees contact their legislators to discuss and address the future gap in funding for transportation due to more electric vehicles. Studies have shown that funding from the gas tax will drastically decrease as more and more electric vehicles are on the roads. This will result in shortcomings in funding roads.

Kinney reported Van Buren County Road Commission finished sealcoating and fog seal for the year.

Bell reported Oshtemo Township litigation related to the sewer project continues. As a result of the sewer expansion project many residents will be getting new roads in 2024 and 2025. The sewer project on West Main and 7th is behind schedule due to this week's rain. The west portion of the trail from Drake Road to the US-131 overpass will be completed before snow flies this year. A path is planned on 9th Street from KL Avenue to Stadium Drive. Six months ago, a moratorium was placed on private street development. The board extended the moratorium for three months. The township's new ordinance will be available after the new year.

Pfeiffer reported the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) I-94 Portage Road interchange is expected to open October 30, 2023. The third lane on I-94 from Lovers Lane to Sprinkle Road is scheduled to open November 4, 2023. The US-131 project from Schoolcraft to Three Rivers will continue through Thanksgiving. MDOT is preparing for winter. Preparatory meetings are being held with snowplow operators, equipment is being outfitted onto trucks, and equipment is getting calibrated. The bridge replacement project on US-131 over KL Avenue and Amtrak originally planned for a November letting will be in a December letting. Work is expected to start in spring of 2024 for

the two-and-a-half-year project. Traffic will be maintained with two lanes in each direction during the construction. In response to Aardema, Pfeiffer stated traffic will most likely be interrupted under US-131 on KL Avenue during the project. In response to Thompson's inquiry, Pfeiffer responded work cannot begin on the 131 Business Loop project because it is still not fully funded. Design work continues and legislators continue to pursue funding for the \$4-to-6-million-dollar gap. In response to Britigan, Pfeiffer explained that a right-of-way acquisition cannot take place until the project is fully funded.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Thompson adjourned the meeting at 9:41 a.m.

*The next meeting of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Policy Committee will be held on
Wednesday, November 29, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.*

Approved 11/29/23 (er)