

# KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the August 30, 2023 Meeting

## CALL TO ORDER

The August 30, 2023 Policy Committee Meeting was called to order at 9:02 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
Heather Bowden	Michigan Department of Transportation, Planning
Rob Britigan	City of Parchment
Marsha Drouin	Richland Township
Tim Frisbie	Village of Vicksburg
John Gisler	Kalamazoo County
Robert Henderson	Van Buren Public Transit
Jeff Heppler	Village of Augusta
Lisa Imus	Village of Lawton
Joanna Johnson	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
Judy Lemon	City of Galesburg
Pat McGinnis	City of Portage
Sherine Miller	Kalamazoo Township
Pete Pfeiffer	Michigan Department of Transportation, TSC
Chris Praedel	City of Kalamazoo
Aditya Rama	Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority
Paul Sotherland	KATS Citizens' Advisory Committee
Randy Thompson, Chair	Comstock Township
Don Ulsh	Schoolcraft Township
Jerry VanderRoest	Charleston Township

## MEMBERS ABSENT

Greg Kinney	Van Buren County Road Commission
Tracey Locey	Brady Township
Jeff Sorensen	Cooper Township

## OTHERS PARTICIPATING

Scot Jefferies	Oshtemo Township
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Fred Nagler  
Elizabeth Rumick  
Jon Start  
Steve Stepek  
Trevor TenBrink  
Ali Townsend

Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study  
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study  
Citizen  
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study  
District Director for Congressman Huizenga  
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 Heppler, **“to approve the agenda of the August 30, 2023 Policy Committee Meeting.”** MOTION CARRIED.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Trevor TenBrink District Director for Congressman Huizenga stated their office in Portage located in the Trestlebridge Office Complex is now open. TenBrink invited attendees to stop in anytime. The office is staffed with case workers who can assist with IRS, Veteran, citizen, customs, immigration, or passport services. Huizenga’s staff can provide letters of support or assist with grant funding. TenBrink explained Congressman Huizenga recently sent a letter of concern to Postmaster General Louis DeJoy questioning the United States Postal Service’s plans for consolidating Southwest Michigan postal operations to a single Sort and Delivery Center. Huizenga detailed how more transparency is needed and requested a meeting to discuss this topic. Members further discussed the matter.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- ACCEPTANCE OF THE TREASURER REPORTS
- ACCEPTANCE OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT
- ACCEPTANCE OF THE SOUTHCENTRAL MICHIGAN PLANNING COUNCIL REPORTS
- APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MAY 31, 2023 MEETING

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

#### **FY 2023 – 2026 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENTS**

Referring to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment included in the meeting packet, Stepek explained it is a long list. Multiple Transit amendments are included. The City of Kalamazoo Michigan Avenue project has been moved from Fiscal Year 2026 to Fiscal Year 2027. The TIP Subcommittee met and selected projects from the adopted prioritized project list to utilize the available funding in FY 2026. The last project, 219277, is a late addition and was not discussed at the Technical Committee. It missed the deadline but needs to be obligated by the end of the Fiscal Year. The project was discussed with the Technical Committee Chair, who didn’t have any issues with including it in the proposed amendments. The project is for capital and marketing in Kalamazoo County for MichiVan. Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Staff recommend approval of the amendments, with the inclusion of Job Number 219277. The KATS Technical Committee did not discuss Job Number 219277, but did recommend approval of all other projects.

McGinnis moved, and it was duly seconded by Praedel, **“to approve the FY 2023 – 2026 Transportation Improvement Program Amendments.”** MOTION CARRIED.

#### **KATS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE BYLAWS**

Steppek explained the draft of the bylaws are included in the meeting packet. They have been out for comment for several months and have not been updated for nearly a decade. The proposed bylaws will more closely align with KATS Policy Committee bylaws. The draft bylaws propose a slight adjustment to voting structure, allowing larger townships (over 20,000 in population) to have an extra representative if wanted. Johnson expressed concern that the “in-kind contributions” be reviewed for the bylaw changes that allowed for additional representation on technical committee.

Johnson moved, and it was duly seconded by Drouin, **“to approve the Technical Committee Bylaws as presented.”** MOTION CARRIED.

#### **CONTRIBUTED SERVICE UPDATE**

Steppek explained a summary of the fiscal year-to-date contributed services for the fiscal year-to-date July 31, 2023 is included in the packet for your review. We have met and well exceeded our required minimum match for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2023.

#### **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES**

Aardema reported the Metro bus routes on Western Michigan University campus are running again with the start of university classes today. Minor service reductions are being implemented due to the continued struggle to find drivers. Metro held a well-attended job fair last week, so remain optimistic that service can be added back. The annual review of the budget is underway. It is a roughly \$22 million dollar budget. Plans are underway to implement Microtransit, one of the most significant recommendations from the recently completed Comprehensive Operational Analysis. Microtransit could be compared to an Uber or Lyft service. Microtransit would allow passengers to reserve a vehicle on shorter notice. Vehicles would stay within an assigned boundary, or zone. Microtransit could also be used to connect a rider to the fixed route system. Metro is in the early stages of planning. Implementation is anticipated sometime next year. Rama added Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA) / Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (KCTA) are in contact with other regions that have implemented Microtransit, in an effort to obtain valuable information. Microtransit is currently being utilized in nearby Grand Rapids and Muskegon. Aardema fielded attendee questions and went into more detail about Microtransit.

#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Steppek stated most updates are included in the meeting packet. Steppek and attendees congratulated Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) Ali Townsend for winning the 2023 Junior Planner of the Year award from the Michigan Transportation Planning Association. KATS Federal Certification Review will be performed in October. The notification letter from the U.S. Department of Transportation is included in the packet. The public involvement portion of the Certification Review will be held in conjunction with KATS October 12, 2023 Technical Committee meeting. A meeting on the adjusted Kalamazoo Urbanized Area Boundary was held. The Village of Mattawan becomes its own small urban area. The Village of Lawton and Schoolcraft Township become rural areas, added to the Rural Task Force.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

No new business was brought forth.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No citizens' comments were made.

## **MEMBER COMMENTS**

Praedel reported the City of Kalamazoo Whites Road project is about to start. The Ransom Street project from North Edwards Street to the east, is underway. The Patterson Street bridge will be opening in October. The improvements done on Howard Street and Stadium Drive resulted in a reduction in crashes, and crashes with injury, of 25 percent and 40 percent, respectively.

Sotherland complimented the improvements made to non-motorized infrastructure in the area. He pointed out connections could be added on the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail (KRVT) near downtown Kalamazoo. Kilgore Road between Westnedge and Lover Lane is an area that could use non-motorized improvements.

Pfeiffer provided the Michigan Department of Transportation update. The project on M-40 between Lawton and Paw Paw is underway. Paving is ongoing in the Village of Lawton. Work will pause and resume there in 2024. Resurfacing of the non-motorized path between G Avenue to south of the village limits will begin Tuesday September 5, 2023. The US-131 project from Schoolcraft to Three Rivers is progressing. Traffic is shifted to the median lanes while outside lane and shoulder work is underway. The I-94 project between Lovers Lane and Sprinkle Road is expected to be completed by the end of September. Paving on Portage Road ramps is planned for mid-to-late September. The project to replace two bridges on US-131 over KL Avenue will be out for bid in November with an anticipated start spring of 2024. Stepek added, a sizeable earmark was received to modify the BR-131 interchange. A shortfall of approximately \$6 million dollars remains.

In response to VanderRoest's inquiry, Johnson agreed to follow-up on when signage at M-343 and North Sprinkle Road will be done.

McGinnis thanked Sotherland for non-motorized input. The City of Portage Westnedge Avenue project is underway. The project south of Centre has been pushed back due to the planned building of a new school. The Portage Road project from Centre to Romence should be complete soon.

Heppler reported that the Village of Augusta water project is underway. Repaving on the south end of the village is planned once this project is complete. Expect delays on M-96 in the village starting next week. The Village of Augusta partnered with the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County to perform chip seal projects.

Gisler reported the new Kalamazoo County Downtown Justice Center opening has been delayed for the fourth time to December 4, 2023. Because of the delay, the County will have to pay rent on its current building. There is expense with notifying witnesses, lawyers, defendants, plaintiffs, and related parties of their venue change. Estimated costs related to the delayed opening could be close to \$1 million dollars. Funds of approximated \$3 million dollars set aside in the project contingency fund will hopefully be able to absorb the additional cost. Gisler has Avelo airline coupons for flights to Orlando through the end of the year. Kalamazoo County should soon be a participant in the property fraud program. Property Fraud Alert is an online subscription service offered to the public

that allows them to have their name monitored in order to track possible fraudulent records that affect their property. Sign up at [propertyfraudalert.com](http://propertyfraudalert.com).

Britigan reported the City of Parchment will host a dedication ceremony for its new Veteran's Memorial on September 11, 2023 and 6:00 p.m.

Frisbie invited attendees to the Village of Vicksburg last Burg Days of Summer Program for the season. It will be held tonight from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Tonight's program includes two bands, a mechanical bull, bounce houses, a climbing wall and more. Repaving of a portion of the non-motorized trail leading north out of the village is planned for next week.

Heather Bowden introduced herself as the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Statewide Program Manager for Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study and Battle Creek Area Transportation Study. Bowden will fill in for Jeff Franklin until a replacement is found. Franklin accepted a new position and is leaving MDOT at the end of September.

Lemon reported the City of Galesburg completed an infrastructure project and is looking for funding for more projects.

Rama mentioned a customer survey is available for Metro Connect. Data will be compiled and a report will be issued.

Thompson reported a sewer project is underway for the new Road Commission of Kalamazoo County building in Comstock Township. Staff got the keys to the new Comstock Township Hall today. Move-in is anticipated at the end of September. An open house will be planned.

As a Comstock Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) board member, Gisler added the Comstock Township DDA is planning a family event for September 23, 2023 with food, and activities.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairperson Thompson adjourned the meeting at 10:02 a.m.

*The next meeting of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Policy Committee will be held on Wednesday, September 27, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.*

*Approved 9/27/23 (er)*