

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES MAY 11, 2023 - 9:30 A.M.

CALL TO ORDER

The May 11, 2023 Technical Committee Meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. at Kalamazoo Metro, by Vice-Chair Stefforia.

ROLL CALL

Meeting attendance was recorded on the sign-in sheet. Introductions were made by all present.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Christina Anderson	City of Kalamazoo
Muhammad Arif	City of Portage
Heather Bowden	Michigan Department of Transportation, Statewide Planning
Brenda Burdick	Michigan Department of Transportation, TSC
Eric Feldt	City of Portage
Josh Grab	Michigan Department of Transportation, Region
Kendra Gwin	City of Portage
Todd Hackenberg	Village of Lawton
Jim Hoekstra	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
Joel Hoort	Van Buren County Road Commission
Anna Horner	Oshtemo Township
Anthony Ladd	City of Kalamazoo
John Lovely	Texas Township
Iris Lubbert	Oshtemo Township
Jesse Okeley	City of Kalamazoo
Ryan Russell	Village of Schoolcraft
Kathy Schultz	Central County Transportation Authority
Paul Sotherland	KATS Citizens Advisory Committee
Jodi Stefforia, Vice-Chair	Comstock Township
Nancy Stoddard	City of Parchment
Greg Vlietstra	Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority
George Waring	City of Kalamazoo

OTHERS PRESENT

Bart Franklin	HRC
Jamie Harmon	City of Portage
Sean McBride	Central County Transportation Authority
Megan Mickelson	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Fred Nagler	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Juan Ruelas	Rathco
Elizabeth Rumick	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study

Hailey Savola
Steve Stepek, AICP
Maddie Thorburn
Ali Townsend

ROWE
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Michigan Department of Transportation
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study

CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Hoekstra moved, and it was duly seconded by Hackenberg, ***“to approve the agenda of the May 11, 2023 Technical Committee Meeting.”*** MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 13, 2023 MEETING

Schultz moved, and it was duly seconded by Hoekstra, ***“to approve the minutes from the April 13, 2023 Technical Committee Meeting.”*** MOTION CARRIED.

POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

Stepek reported the Policy Committee met April 26, 2023. Technical Committee recommended Transportation Improvement Program Amendments and the Fiscal Year 2024 Unified Planning Work Program were approved. Renewal of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) 3-year work agreement with Southcentral Michigan Planning Council was adopted. Curt Aardema was elected Vice-Chair due to Libby Heiny-Cogswell’s retirement.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No citizens’ comments were made.

FY 2023-2026 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENTS

Stepek explained there are Transportation Improvement Program Amendments on the agenda for two months in a row in anticipation of cancelation of the June and July Technical Committee Meetings. The only amendment is a Kalamazoo County road rehab project with additional local cost.

Arif moved, and it was duly seconded by Vlietstra, ***“to recommend the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program Amendments to the Policy Committee for approval.”*** MOTION CARRIED.

DRAFT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE BYLAWS DISCUSSION

The draft Technical Committee Bylaws with the proposed updates are included in the meeting materials. Minkus and KATS Staff met to review and update the bylaws that have been in place for over a decade. Stepek explained that proposed changes to voting rights and membership status based on attendance will align with the Policy Committee Bylaws. The Bylaws are out for comment and will be presented for potential action in August. Stepek noted larger agencies get a larger number of votes, but larger townships such as Oshtemo Township are not taken into account. Changes to the current voting structure can be discussed. Oshtemo Township has a population determined by the census of over 20,000 but is not a PA 51 governmental unit referred to in Appendix A and thereby would not be eligible for additional votes. Lubbert expressed support for amending the voting structure. In response to Arif’s comments regarding the top of page 2, Stepek responded individuals in good standing are those that paid dues and returned a signed contributed service agreement. Further discussion ensued related to attendance, voting, and ability to make a motion. Other revisions to the bylaws were suggested and noted. An updated draft will be presented at the next meeting.

KATS PEDESTRIAN COUNTER PRESENTATION

Townsend presented information on the Non-Motorized Counters. Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) recently purchased two counters from Eco-Counter to count pedestrians and bicyclists within the Kalamazoo Region. One is a pyro-box counter and the other is a multi-mobile counter with smart connect and tubes. The pyro-counter was attached to the coat rack near the door to monitor meeting attendance. Initial testing proved that the location of the counter is very important in the accuracy of the data. Townsend explained the units connect via Bluetooth to the Eco-Counter website. A cell phone app is also used to monitor activity. Data will be gathered for a full week for each count. Townsend displayed graphs available from the Eco-Counter website showing the number of people going in or out by date and time. The next step is for municipalities to contact KATS to complete counts. Anderson asked how accurate the counts would be on a sidewalk with clusters of people walking together. Townsend answered, the counter should count each person. Stepek thanked the City of Portage staff for their help in sharing information about the counters. Stepek responded to Arif's inquiry that tubes will not be used in any areas with potential tripping hazard. Potential liability will be considered. KATS does not intend to have a need for warning signs for use of the tubes and will use the radar counter on trails. Waring asked if the pyro-box counter would erroneously pick up a person in a car through a car window. Further tests will be done to determine this. It was discussed that the counters could pick up wild animals, but they would not be plentiful enough to drastically skew the data. Mickelson added the data will be used for the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan. Harmon pointed out that the counter data is very subjective to the weather. The possibility of vandalism or theft of the counters was discussed. The robust, sealed counters are screwed and locked to a post, with multiple protective layers. Lubbert expressed interest in KATS performing a count in Oshtemo Township. Feldt noted the data will be valuable for downtown planning for businesses owners. Stepek added that KATS budgeted to purchase another counter in fiscal year 2024.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

NON-MOTORIZED SUBCOMMITTEE- Mickelson reported the Non-Motorized Subcommittee met last month. Improvements were made to the interactive map available on the katsmpo.org website. KATS Staff started sidewalk data collection for the season. It is going quicker than last year because it was determined that it can be done while riding in a car instead of walking or biking. By the end of the year, this data will be added to the map.

COMPLETE STREETS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN- Mickelson stated the Complete Streets Implementation Plan Subcommittee met last month. What to use for prioritization and a scoring method were discussed. KATS Staff are creating a mock-up of scoring along with a draft document. The next meeting will be in July or August.

TRAFFIC SIGNAL COORDINATION- Stepek reported the Traffic Signal Coordination Subcommittee met after the last Technical Committee meeting. Projects were discussed. The next meeting will be in August.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

Schultz reported the year and a half long bus stop sign project is complete. Schultz thanked those who assisted with the project and was complimentary of Rathco and Staff. Bus route detours are in place for road construction projects in the area. Schultz formally announced her resignation with her last day being next Friday. Schultz accepted a position with Bloomington Transit in Bloomington, Indiana. After nearly 31 years in Kalamazoo, Schultz expressed appreciation for everyone, and the improvements made in Kalamazoo. Vlietstra expressed the value Schultz brought, and that the community will miss her. Everyone wished her well.

STATUS REPORTS

ROADS-

Hoekstra provided the update for the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC). Full closure of Sprinkle Road will begin Saturday and remain closed through the end of the month. The Parkview Avenue project is ongoing. The Almena Drive project is wrapping up today. The 12th Street and 24th Street projects are both at the gravel stage. The West W Avenue and Douglas Avenue project will be submitted this year with construction planned for next year. Two safety applications were submitted recently. RCKC is proceeding with a new Safe Streets for All action plan. A public survey will be available on the website beginning Monday for two months.

Burdick reported the Michigan Department of Transportation M-96 resurfacing project is underway. The US-131 project south of Schoolcraft is underway with lane closures. The KL Bridge project will be let in August. The I-94 westbound on-ramp at Portage Road opened last Friday. The mainline concrete is done. The soundwall is done but needs painting. Traffic will be switched to westbound lanes at the end of June.

Harmon stated the City of Portage mill and resurfacing on Shaver Road from south of the city limits to Oakland Drive has begun. Beginning Monday, Shaver Road will be closed south of the city to Beethoven for a week-and-a-half for a mill and resurfacing project. The entire project will be wrapped up at the end of the month. The second half of the project, which is water main construction will be completed in 2024. The Portage Road project from Centre Avenue to Romence Road Parkway will begin May 19, 2023. The South Westnedge Avenue project was in the May letting and came in 16 percent over. Traffic safety improvement non-motorized sidewalk replacements will start in July. Several 2024 projects are under design.

Ladd reported the City of Kalamazoo Maple Street mill and overlay project will start next week. The final phase of last year's Stadium Drive project will wrap up this month. The West Michigan Avenue project near downtown will be finished at the end of June. The Patterson Street bridge will be closed through Labor Day. Plans are ongoing for the Whites Road and Westnedge Avenue projects. The city is researching the prepurchase of water pipes for 2024 projects. The remaining portion of North Street will be paved next week. Prep work is underway for the Ransom Street project. The Howard Street preconstruction meeting will be held next week, with an anticipated start in June.

Stoddard reported City of Parchment local roads are being paved.

LAND USE/PLANNING AND ZONING-

Anderson invited attendees to the City of Kalamazoo's first Bike Show at Bronson Park Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. In addition to all styles of bikes, there will be food trucks, and other activities. The first round of public engagement for the Commercial Zoning Code is complete. Edits are being made to the text and maps. Another release of the code is planned at the beginning of June. This will be followed by another round of engagement with plans to bring it to the Planning Commission in August. Plan details for Kalamazoo Avenue will be released later this month. Public engagement is set for May 24, 2023 from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Bells and May 30, 2023 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at 180 East Water. Everyone is encouraged to attend, review the plans, and offer comments.

Lubbert reported Oshtemo Township started its Comprehensive Master Plan Project. The last large review of the Township was in 2011. An open house is planned for May 15, 2023 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Township is preparing Request for Proposals for a consultant. The Township is partnering with the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County to apply for grants.

Grab from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) reminded attendees on behalf of Selden, that Bike Friendly Kalamazoo Bike week is May 13, 2023 to May 20, 2023. Grab brought MDOT Non-Motorized maps. Grab introduced new planner Maddie Thorburn. Thorburn gave her background information.

Stefforia reported Comstock Township completed an in-house Master Plan update. On Monday, the draft will be presented to the Planning Commission for approval. Public Comments will follow.

NEW BUSINESS

Steppek reported Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study has not received final numbers for our allocation based on the new census. Since the state did not update minimum penalties for repeat drunk drivers, Michigan is non-compliant with Federal Highway requirements. Additional money must be shifted to safety. Therefore, our local allocation will also shift. For next fiscal year, there may be a \$150,000 to \$200,000 cut across all programs. Once our allocation is final, the Transportation Improvement Program Subcommittee will meet to determine where to shift money.

Steppek added that there may be additional funding for planning grants this year. Agencies that may not have previously qualified have more potential for funding this year.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Southerland thanked the City of Kalamazoo for recent trees planted along Stadium Drive as it relates to Safe Streets for All. Another Safe Streets for All related project is the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County is installing 500 bike route signs along 150-200 miles of county roads by the end of the year.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

The next meeting of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Technical Committee will be held on Thursday, June 8, 2023 at 9:30 a.m.