

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES SEPTEMBER 14, 2023 - 9:30 A.M.

CALL TO ORDER

The September 14, 2023 Technical Committee Meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. at Kalamazoo Metro, by Chairperson Minkus.

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
Mickey Bittner	Village of Paw Paw
Heather Bowden	Michigan Department of Transportation, Statewide Planning
Kerry DenBraber	Michigan Department of Transportation, TSC
Josh Grab	Michigan Department of Transportation, Region
Rachael Grover	Kalamazoo County
Kendra Gwin	City of Portage
Jamie Harmon	City of Portage
Robert Henderson	Van Buren Public Transit
Jeff Heppler	Village of Augusta
Jim Hoekstra	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
Joel Hoort	Van Buren County Road Commission
Anthony Ladd	City of Kalamazoo
Ryan Minkus	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
Zach Pierson	Oshtemo Township
Dennis Randolph	City of Kalamazoo
Ryan Russell	Village of Schoolcraft
Nancy Stoddard	City of Parchment
Greg Vlietstra	Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority
George Waring	City of Kalamazoo

OTHERS PRESENT

Sean Beckman	Wade Trim
Phil Doorlag	Wightman
Bart Franklin	HRC
Connie Morrison	Value Engineering
Fred Nagler	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Lexi Petrella	Alta Planning & Design
Whitney Pizzala	AR Engineering
Elizabeth Rumick	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study

Hailey Savola
Patrik Sharma
Steve Stepek, AICP
Madee Thorburn
Ali Townsend

ROWE
City of Portage
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 Heppler, ***“to approve the agenda of the September 14, 2023 Technical Committee Meeting.”*** MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 10, 2023 MEETING

Hoekstra moved, and it was duly seconded by Heppler, ***“to approve the minutes from the August 10, 2023 Technical Committee Meeting.”*** MOTION CARRIED.

POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

Steppek reported on behalf of the Policy Committee who met at the end of August. Transportation Improvement Program Amendments and the Technical Committee recommended changes to the Technical Committee Bylaws were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were made.

FY 2023-2026 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENTS

Steppek explained the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment hand out is in the meeting packet. Highlights include an increase in cost in the East Washington Street bridge replacement project in Augusta, a City of Portage abandoned Centre Avenue project, and a cost increase on the US-131 bridge replacement project over Amtrak and KL Avenue. It was clarified that cumulative cost increases over 24% of the *original* project cost require an amendment.

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

DRAFT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Referring to the draft Public Participation Plan in the meeting packet, Stepek explained Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) updates their Public Participation Plan every few years. This draft plan had very few changes. Minkus requested a paragraph detailing the changes made to this version of the document. Please let KATS know of your comments or feedback. The plan will be presented next month for approval.

DRAFT TITLE VI PLAN

Referring to the draft Title VI Plan in the meeting packet, Stepek explained Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) updates their Title VI Plan every few years. Similar to the Public Participation Plan, communicate your feedback and comments to KATS. The plan will be presented next month for approval.

DRAFT ADJUSTED CENSUS URBAN BOUNDARY

Referring to the boundary maps in the meeting packet, Stepek explained these maps have been returned from the Michigan Department of Transportation incorporating the edits of the urban boundaries that resulted from the latest census. Please report any discrepancies to Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

NON-MOTORIZED SUBCOMMITTEE- Townsend reported the Non-Motorized Subcommittee met in August to discuss the new survey Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) staff created to streamline edits to the non-motorized facilities network. The survey is available on the website. If you are unable to fill out the survey, email Townsend at atownsend@katsmpo.org. A few updates to the non-motorized facilities network were brought forward at the meeting and KATS staff is working to make those edits to the interactive map.

COMPLETE STREETS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN- Townsend stated the Complete Streets Implementation Plan Subcommittee met in August to review an initial draft of project prioritization methodology. The subcommittee gave great feedback and staff is working on revisions to bring to the next quarterly meeting.

TRAFFIC SIGNAL COORDINATION- Stepek reminded attendees that the Traffic Signal Coordination Subcommittee will meet immediately following this meeting.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

Vlietstra reported Metro's recruitment for drivers has been very successful. An internal task force was created to focus our organizational recruitment efforts and the steps taken include(d):

- Conducting a Driver Hiring Fair on August 22, 2023. The Fair was well publicized on WWMT and some other mediums.
- Reviewing our advertising on Indeed to make sure the presentation is compelling for potential candidates.
- Established a visual advertising campaign with signs at bus shelters, on buses and at Metro facilities.
- Reeducating employees about the referral bonus program.
- In cooperation with the ATU, establishing a pilot program to rehire retired Coach Operators on a part-time basis.
- Review and update of marketing materials and hiring process.

Metro's Job Fair attracted 29 individuals that successfully initiated the hiring process. Currently, there are 40 applicants moving through the hiring process with up to 20 more in queue to begin the testing process. A class of about 5 will begin training on September 18, 2023 and additional 6 to 8 drivers will start on October 4, 2023. The training process takes about two months. There are several candidates that have Commercial Drivers License (CDL), which will allow some reduction in the training period.

Jason Emig will start on September 18, 2023^h as the Safety and Security Manager. Emig has been a firefighter since 1996 and has worked in safety leadership positions with the Michigan International Speedway. He also worked the past 8 years with the City of Otsego Department of Public Works.

STATUS REPORTS

ROADS-

DenBraber of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) reported the I-94 Portage Road project should be completed by October 18, 2023.

Heppler reported paving is underway in the Village of Augusta on M-96 for the water project. The entire stretch of M-96 is planned to be repaved next year.

Ladd provided the City of Kalamazoo road updates. The Ransom Street project is ongoing. Construction will proceed west to Burdick or Rose by the end of the year. Construction will continue into 2024. The Patterson Street bridge project is nearly complete with an estimated completion date at the end of October. The Howard Street project is complete. The two-year construction project on Whites Road started last month. A water main and road restoration project is underway on Parkview. A pre-construction meeting was held for the Inkster Street bridge project. Construction on the bridge is scheduled for early 2024. Full demolition of the bridge is planned in early March 2024. Anticipated completion is August 2024. Many local projects were completed this year. Sidewalk replacement and repair is still ongoing. Next year's budget is being finalized. Quarterly street update presentations have been posted on the City of Kalamazoo's You Tube channel. The Third-Quarter update was posted earlier this week. Randolph added the changes on Michigan Avenue have resulted in an increased travel time of three-quarters of a minute through downtown. The Stadium Drive reconstruction has resulted in a 33 percent reduction in crashes during August 2023 compared to the previous seven Augusts. Crash severity has also decreased. Randolph is planning a complete presentation on the data for next month's meeting.

Harmon stated the City of Portage safety improvements on South Westnedge Avenue from Melody Avenue to Centre Avenue is almost complete with punch list and material delays remaining. Portage Road from East Centre Avenue to Romence Road Parkway is substantially complete. Portage is waiting on Consumers Energy to complete underground electric and remove poles to finish the project. Shaver Road water main and storm improvements will start Monday, September 18, 2023. There will be a detour for northbound traffic on Shaver Road which is north on Oakland Drive, east on Vanderbilt Avenue and north on Shaver Road. A temporary signal will be located at Vanderbilt Avenue and Shaver Road to facilitate. The contractor's schedule has opened up and it will be beneficial to all parties to complete underground work this fall. Milling and paving will be completed in 2024. Portage is finalizing construction documents on Portage Road from Romence Road Parkway to Fairfield Avenue and anticipating a January bid letting. Portage awarded engineering for design of West Milham Avenue from 12th Street to Oakland Drive for construction in 2025.

Pierson reported an Oshtemo Township trail project was in the recent letting. The contractor came in under engineer's estimates.

Hoekstra provided the update for the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC). The Lake Street project is ahead of schedule with anticipated paving in October and November. Chip seal projects for 2023 are complete. The Douglas Avenue project was bid in September and came in at 5 percent under engineer estimates. The W Avenue project from 42nd to 44th will be in the October bid letting. The MN Avenue and Mercury Drive project in Charleston Township is targeted for the November bid letting. The TU and 23rd fiscal year 2023 project has been moved to fiscal year 2024.

Grab representing the Michigan Department of Transportation, thanked Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) staff for getting the US-131 KL Avenue project on this month's Transportation Improvement Program Amendment schedule.

LAND USE/PLANNING AND ZONING-

Stoddard stated the City of Parchment received a grant award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to remove unused fuel tanks east of the mill property to prepare it for development. Funds will be released October 1, 2023.

Grover reported Kalamazoo County hired its first sustainability coordinator to focus on combating climate change. The position is partially supported with funds from a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant award obtained by Kalamazoo County and the Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition. The

Coalition will develop the Kalamazoo County sustainability plan. A community survey will be released in October.

Anderson reported the City of Kalamazoo Planning Commission approved the Commercial Zoning Code Update last week. Proposed updates will now be presented to the City Commission for approval later this fall. The city has two Request for Proposals related to transportation. One is for downtown parking and the other is for communications and branding for the 2-way conversion on downtown streets.

NEW BUSINESS

Minkus reminded attendees that with the end of year approaching, Technical Committee officer positions will be open. Traditionally the Vice-Chair steps up to the Chair. If there are no volunteers, a subcommittee will be formed to assist with the process. Reach out if you would like to volunteer. Minkus reminded attendees of the Traffic Signal Coordination meeting immediately following this meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were made.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:07 a.m.

The next meeting of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Technical Committee will be held on Thursday, October 12, 2023 at 9:30 a.m.

Approved 10/12/23 (er)