

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the March 29, 2023 Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

The March 29, 2023 Policy Committee Meeting was called to order at 9:03 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

Curtis Aardema	Central County Transportation Authority
David Anderson	City of Kalamazoo
Kerry DenBraber	Michigan Department of Transportation, TSC
Marsha Drouin	Richland Township
Jeff Franklin	Michigan Department of Transportation, Planning
John Gisler	Kalamazoo County
Robert Henderson	Van Buren Public Transit
Jeff Heppler	Village of Augusta
Lisa Imus	Village of Lawton
Carl Keller	Village of Vicksburg
Greg Kinney	Van Buren County Road Commission
Tracey Locey	Brady Township
Pat McGinnis	City of Portage
Robin Madaras	City of Parchment
Don Martin	Kalamazoo Township
Paul Sotherland	KATS Citizens' Advisory Committee
Randy Thompson, Chair	Comstock Township
Jerry VanderRoest	Charleston Township
Mark Worden	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County

MEMBERS ABSENT

Martin Janssen	Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority
Sarah Joshi	City of Galesburg
Jeff Sorensen	Cooper Township
Don Ulsh	Schoolcraft Township

OTHERS PARTICIPATING

Anthony Ladd	City of Kalamazoo
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Sean McBride
Megan Mickelson
Ryan Minkus
Dennis Randolph
Elizabeth Rumick
Paul Selden
Steve Stepek
Ali Townsend

Central County Transportation Authority
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
City of Kalamazoo
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Bike Friendly Kalamazoo
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study

CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no changes or additional to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Heppler moved, and it was duly seconded by Aardema, **“to approve the agenda of the March 29, 2023 Policy Committee Meeting.”** MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Selden of Bike Friendly Kalamazoo (BFK) brought samples of bike related literature. Selden encouraged agencies to display the literature or make it available to the public. This year’s annual Bike Week will be held May 13, 2023 through May 20, 2023.

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 FEBRUARY 22, 2023 MEETING

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

FISCAL YEAR 2025 CONTRIBUTED SERVICES INCREASE

Stepek explained the contributed service in-kind match is no longer enough to cover the required match. The Finance and Personnel Subcommittee met and agreed to a uniform 15% increase to the amount in the Contributed Services agreements. The current structure has been in place with no increases since 2014. The spreadsheet included in the meeting packet shows Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) estimated program revenue, corresponding match needed, and detail by agency. KATS will consider use of cash match in the future since it currently operates about 20 percent under budget due to the in-kind match. The contributed service increase will allow KATS to match the future program for several years.

Aardema moved, and it was duly seconded by Drouin, **“to approve the Contributed Services Increase.”** MOTION CARRIED.

DOWNTOWN KALAMAZOO PROJECT UPDATE PRESENTATION

Randolph provided the downtown Kalamazoo project update in a presentation titled “Kalamazoo Street Redesign Benefit-Cost Analysis: FY2023 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity Discretionary Grant Program (February 28, 2023).” The presentation was emailed to committee members. Four major downtown roadways will be converted from one-way to two-way streets. The multi-year project is intended to reduce speeds, increase safety, and provide more multi modal connections in a regrowing downtown area. The City of Kalamazoo received three grants to fund the project:

- RAISE Grant for \$6 million dollars for final planning and engineering design for Michigan Ave., Lovell, South St., and Stadium Dr.
- Safe Streets for All Grant for \$.7 million dollars for safety planning and pilot project implementation
- Reconnecting Communities Grant for \$12.2 million dollars for reconstruction of Kalamazoo Ave., Douglas Ave., Michikal St., and Michigan Ave.

The City of Kalamazoo with the assistance of consultants, performed Benefit Cost Analysis as required for the grants. Graphs depicted results of the analysis, showing that benefits of the project would exceed the cost within 20 years. Equity impact was also assessed. Heppler reiterated the importance of the three E’s: engineering, education, and enforcement to combat traffic safety. McGinnis thanked Randolph for the presentation. In response to McGinnis’s inquiry, Randolph discussed more details about the RAISE Grant. Randolph explained to Sotherland, traffic condition data before and after the project will be gathered and compared. In response to VanderRoest’s inquiry, Randolph stated traffic light optimization will be tweaked. Gisler asked if the city anticipates an increase in the number of bicyclists upon completion of the project. Information on the number of bicyclists currently riding on downtown streets will be gathered over the summer. Aardema provided information that he has seen this type of project have very successful results in small towns all the way up to big cities. Aardema asked if transit accommodations are part of the project. Randolph stated transit will be considered during the design process and will be addressed during public engagement in May. Aardema pointed out the importance of dedicated transit routes from the university to downtown. McBride echoed Aardema that transit routes from Western Michigan University to downtown would be of great significance and value. McBride voiced concern about operating the 30 Metro buses on an hourly basis from 6:00 a.m. to midnight during the construction. McBride pointed out the importance of maintaining Metro’s uninterrupted operation during the project. Drouin asked how increasing the number of cross intersections downtown will increase safety. Randolph explained that roundabouts won’t fit in most intersections downtown unless buildings are torn down. Experimental “Free-For-Alls” where pedestrians have the right-of-way in all directions may be utilized.

DRAFT FISCAL YEAR 2024 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

The FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program is available via the link on the agenda or the katsmpo.org website. Please review and submit any comments to KATS by April 5, 2023.

The Unified Planning Work Program represents the work activities and budget for KATS. Highlights for FY 2024 include:

- Inclusion of funding for a Fare Study for Metro.
- Continued use of Contributed Services for match.
- Continued funding for a pedestrian counter.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

Aardema reported the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) Policy Committee Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (KCTA) representative Martin Janssen has taken a new job out of the state. The board is working on a replacement representative. Metro's Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) final draft plan has been issued. There will be changes to the bus system and an introduction of Microtransit as a result of the COA. The Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA)/KCTA board governance is operating with a new structure to improve overall operation, increase efficiency and productivity of the board. Four subcommittees operate within the joint CCTA/KCTA board. The KCTA board is seeking to fill three seats.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

As Randolph pointed out, Stepek summarized a lot of money is coming into the Kalamazoo area. Funding requests are available from the U.S. Senate Congressionally Directed Spending (the new earmarks). There has been a lot of interest in grant writing from agencies. As a result, Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) has been assisting with grant applications and working on letters of support for multiple agencies so they can apply for additional funds. As reported in the memo, The Michigan Infrastructure Council is hosting regional workshops. There is a link to sign up as well as a public input survey. Let KATS Staff or Chair Thompson know if you are interested in serving as KATS Policy Committee Vice-Chair since Libby Heiny-Cogswell will be retiring. Let Stepek know if you are interested in the KATS 101 Training Course. Anderson asked if the new earmark requests require support from Senator Mark Huizenga. Stepek responded they do not. Stepek agreed we have not gotten a positive response from Huizenga in support of transportation related earmarks. Aardema added the importance of following-up the ensure dialogue continues with Huizenga and his constituents. McBride met recently with Huizenga who said he was not going to participate this year, but to keep an open mind for next year. With Stabenow's retirement, funding may be lost. Members agreed that KATS Staff should extend an invitation to Huizenga or his district representative to visit or attend a meeting. Stepek reminded members that the new Bipartisan Infrastructure law is shifting to more grant money than in the past and it is a long, arduous process.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was brought forth.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Selden of Bike Friendly Kalamazoo applauded the City of Kalamazoo for its effort in making downtown Kalamazoo more walkable, bikeable, and safe. The deadline to submit the application for the Bike Booster Mini-Grant is April 2, 2023. The grant can be used to fund the purchase of bike racks, fix-it stations, bike light, and bike lock giveaways.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Aardema pointed out that Jackson, Michigan successfully converted downtown one-way streets to two-way streets.

Franklin agreed with Aardema's comment on the favorable result of Jackson's street conversion.

McGinnis recently returned from the National Cities Conference in Washington D.C. and spent some time in Huizenga's office. Huizenga's local representatives would entertain an invitation.

Heppler reported the Village of Augusta is now a Trailhead Town. The Village continues to look at linking trails to surrounding areas. A \$2 million dollar water project with corresponding road construction is planned for the summer.

Gisler reported the announcement of plans for a downtown Kalamazoo Event Center on land owned by Kalamazoo County. The center will be entirely privately funded and will pay taxes. Gisler invited attendees to his April 10, 2023 meeting at The Crew Family Restaurant at 3810 East Cork Street from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. Lake Effect Group, a cannabis company, owner Jevin Weyenberg will speak at the meeting.

Worden stated the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) Sprinkle Road project from I-94 to Kilgore Road will begin April 3, 2023. The road will be completely closed to traffic during the two-three weeks of Amtrak Railroad upgrades. The Lake Street project from the Business Loop to Olmstead will begin next week. Check the RCKC website for construction updates and the notice of informational meetings on projects. All meetings are recorded and available on the website.

VanderRoest reported Charleston Township adopted their budget. At least half of the budget is going toward roads.

DenBraber from the Michigan Department of Transportation provided an update on the I-94 at Portage Road project. Paving of westbound I-94 is underway. Portage Road ramps remain closed with no opening date yet. Ramps are being paved now. The south wall is being installed. The project may last through the summer. In response to Heppler's inquiry, DenBraber responded that the M-89 mill and fill project will be done this summer.

Thompson reported a Comstock Township water project on 33rd Street from M-96 to G Avenue is underway. Staff are expected to move into the new Township facility in August.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Thompson adjourned the meeting at 10:32 a.m.

*The next meeting of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Policy Committee will be held on
Wednesday, April 26, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.*

Approved 4/26/23 (er)