

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Kalamazoo urbanized area. One of the charges of the Study is to fulfill the Federal, State, and Policy Committee directives to ensure an equitable distribution of transportation funding in Kalamazoo County, as well as plan for the future of the transportation network within financially feasible goals.

Within the federal guidelines of SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users), KATS is responsible for the development of a Transportation Plan. Following those federal requirements, the metropolitan transportation plan shall, at a minimum, include:¹

- (1) The projected transportation demand of persons and goods in the metropolitan planning area over the period of the transportation plan;
- (2) Existing and proposed transportation facilities (including major roadways, transit, multimodal and intermodal facilities, pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities, and intermodal connectors) that should function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system, giving emphasis to those facilities that serve important national and regional transportation functions over the period of the transportation plan. In addition, the locally preferred alternative selected from an Alternatives Analysis under the FTA's Capital Investment Grant program (49 U.S.C. 5309 and 49 CFR part 611) needs to be adopted as part of the metropolitan transportation plan as a condition for funding under 49 U.S.C. 5309;
- (3) Operational and management strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods;
- (4) Consideration of the results of the congestion management process in Transportation Management Areas (TMA) that meet the requirements of this subpart, including the identification of Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV) projects that result from a congestion management process in TMAs that are nonattainment for ozone or carbon monoxide;
- (5) Assessment of capital investment and other strategies to preserve the existing and projected future metropolitan transportation infrastructure and provide for multimodal capacity increases based on regional priorities and needs. The metropolitan transportation plan may consider projects and strategies that address areas or corridors where current or projected congestion threatens the efficient functioning of key elements of the metropolitan area's transportation system;
- (6) Design concept and design scope descriptions of all existing and proposed transportation facilities in sufficient detail, regardless of funding source, in nonattainment and maintenance areas for conformity determinations under the EPA's transportation conformity rule (40 CFR

¹ Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users; 49 CFR Part 613 Title 23 Sec. 450.322

part 93). In all areas (regardless of air quality designation), all proposed improvements shall be described in sufficient detail to develop cost estimates;

- (7) A discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the metropolitan transportation plan. The discussion may focus on policies, programs, or strategies, rather than at the project level. The discussion shall be developed in consultation with Federal, State, and Tribal land management, wildlife, and regulatory agencies. The MPO may establish reasonable timeframes for performing this consultation;
- (8) Pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation facilities in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 217(g);
- (9) Transportation and transit enhancement activities, as appropriate; and
- (10) A financial plan that demonstrates how the adopted transportation plan can be implemented.

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY HISTORY

Planning for systems was always a part of the transportation process, but to varying degrees. It was not until 1962 that there was benchmark federal legislation for urban transportation planning.² In summary, the Act mandated that “. . . after July 1, 1965, the Secretary of Transportation shall not approve . . . any project in any urban area of more than 50,000 population unless he finds such projects are based on a continuing, comprehensive transportation planning process carried on cooperatively by the state and local communities.” Features of the Act emphasized:

- The requirement of creating an intergovernmental committee made up of principal elected officials of general purpose local government to facilitate cooperation and coordination.
- The identification of a formal comprehensive process with inherent flexibility to reflect local issues, goals, and policies.
- All activities be fully coordinated between the State (Michigan Department of Transportation) and local governments to assure proper integration of the respective state and local systems.

In response to the regulations, in 1966, the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Policy Committee was created through agreements by and between local units of government in the Kalamazoo urban area and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).³ This organizational effort was led by MDOT. Although fully vested with responsibility for carrying out the requirements of the legislation, the Policy Committee was not formally designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) until 1978. Parallel to that action, the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Policy Committee acted to incorporate as an “Intermunicipality Committee” under Act 200 of the Public Acts of Michigan of 1957.

² Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962.

³ At that time, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) was officially the Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation (MDSHT).

The Intermunicipality Committee Act provides for the cooperative establishment of a forum (the KATS Policy Committee) by local units of government for the purposes of conducting specifically designated intergovernmental activities in a coordinated manner. KATS continues to be organized under the Intermunicipality Committee Act. In 1993, under the provision of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, the KATS Policy Committee extended its area boundaries to include all of Kalamazoo County within the Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB).

The organization and concept of an Intermunicipality Committee fully supports and addresses the clear intent of the federal legislation's reference to "cooperative." The KATS Policy Committee represents "principal elected officials of general purpose local government" working cooperatively in the transportation decision making process. Actually, KATS is indirectly a part of each local governmental unit that is designed to specifically work on transportation planning, programming, analysis, and studies at their "collective" direction, such direction provided by the Policy Committee. Not only is that concept the basis of how KATS is organized, it is also the basis of how it works. This is in sharp contrast to each agency being a part of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study. It is conceptually the reverse . . . KATS is a part of each agency.

All work and activities of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study are initiated and conducted under the policy direction of the KATS Policy Committee. Activities are conducted cooperatively either working with the Technical Committee or, as appropriate, the individual roadway or public transportation agencies. The intent and direction of KATS direct staff is to provide the organization, scheduling, technical direction, and technical management of these cooperative efforts. Agency staffs work in the cooperative conduct of these activities within this framework. Their efforts are integral, in fact, are critical to the successful conduct of the process.

The following tables indicate representation on both the KATS Policy and Technical Committees. The Policy Committee organizational emphasis is on the representation of the units of general purpose local government. Although they must work in cooperation and coordination with a range of other forums, decision making is the collective responsibility of these elected officials.

The Technical Committee, made up of professional and technical representatives of the transportation responsible agencies, acts both collectively and individually to provide evaluation, analysis, and product for the consideration of the Policy Committee. The individuals and agencies jointly making up the Technical Committee are involved in the Study on a continuing basis. The level of involvement and cooperative interaction with KATS staff may be unique to MPO's in Michigan.

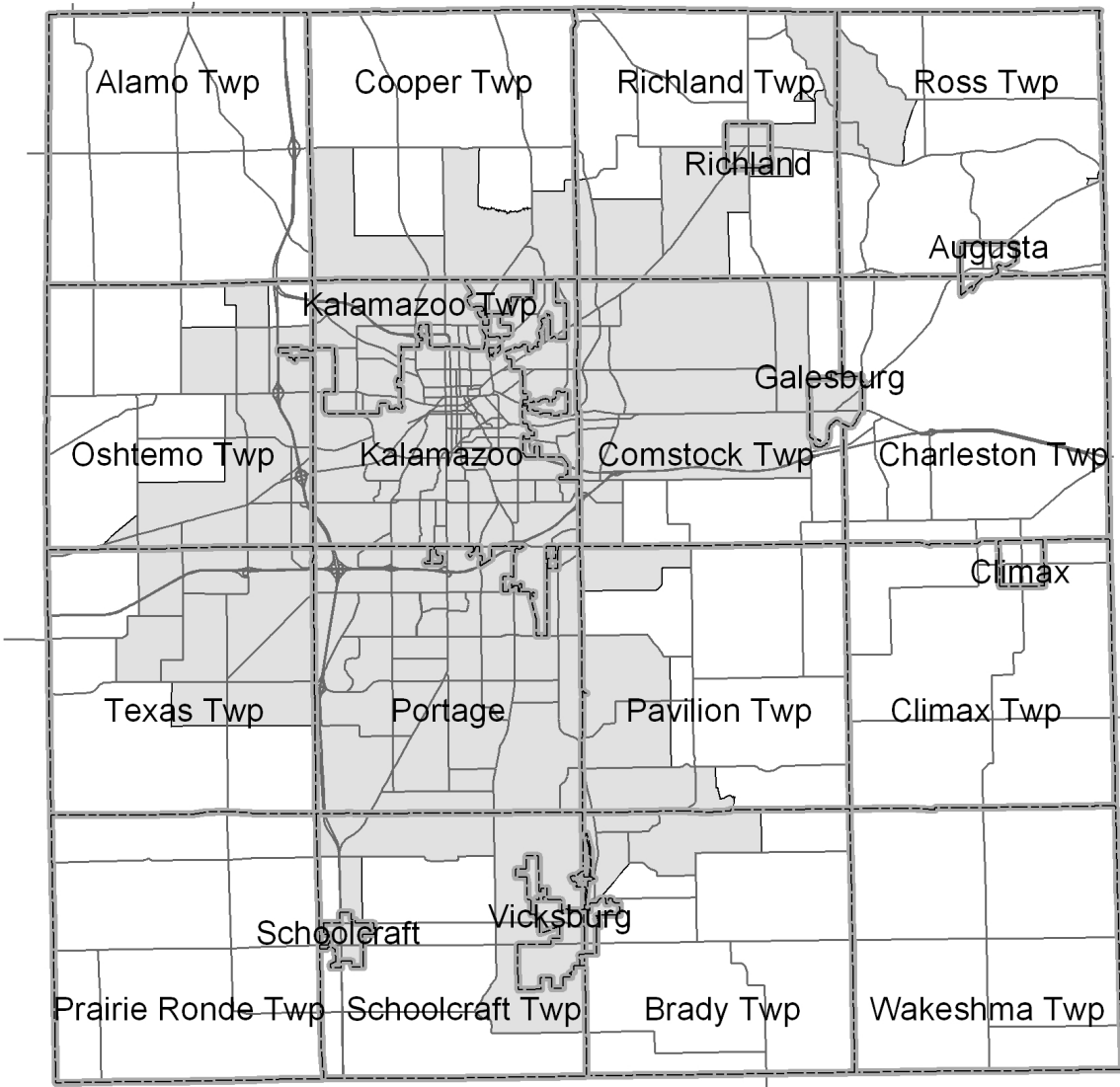
Current membership list of each committee is provided following these tables.

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY STAFF

Jonathan Start, Executive Director
Steven Stepek, Senior Transportation Planner

Kathy Schultz, Office Administrator
Nicole Dalman, Support Services

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY - STUDY AREA



POLICY COMMITTEE VOTING MEMBERSHIP - JANUARY, 2007

Tim Hudson, Supervisor
Policy Committee Chairperson
Comstock Charter Township

Dan Pryson, President
Village of Vicksburg

Jeff Bither, Supervisor
Policy Committee Vice-Chairperson
Ross Township

Susan Richardson, Supervisor
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation

David Anderson, Commissioner
City of Kalamazoo

Jeff Sorensen, Supervisor
Cooper Charter Township

Richard Atwell, Representative
Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority

Thomas Swiat, Jr., Supervisor
Prairie Ronde Township

David Berkebile, Commissioner
Board of County Road Commissioners of
Kalamazoo County

Don Ulsh, Supervisor
Schoolcraft Township

Dean Blanchard, Supervisor
Richland Township

Jack Urban, Commissioner
Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners

Ron Commissaris, Supervisor
Texas Charter Township

Terry Urban, Councilman
City of Portage

Gary Cramer, Supervisor
Kalamazoo Charter Township

John VanDyke, Supervisor
Oshtemo Charter Township

Dan DeGraw, Mayor
City of Parchment

Loren Warfield, President
Village of Schoolcraft

Carol Fricke, Chairperson
Kalamazoo Transit Authority Board

George Weston, Mayor
City of Galesburg

Pete Pfeiffer, Service Center Manager
Kalamazoo Transportation Service Center
Michigan Department of Transportation

Ronald White, Trustee
Pavilion Township

Lee Philport, Supervisor
Brady Township

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE VOTING MEMBERSHIP - JANUARY, 2007

Frank Szopo, City Engineer
Technical Committee Chairperson
Department of Public Services
City of Kalamazoo

Chris Forth, Deputy Director
Community Development
City of Portage

Shahid Abbas, Traffic Engineer
Department of Public Services
City of Kalamazoo

Darrell Harden, Transportation Planner
Southwest Region Office
Michigan Department of Transportation

Muhammad Arif, Traffic Engineer
Transportation and Utilities
City of Portage

Keith Hernandez, City Planner
Department of Economic Development &
Planning
City of Kalamazoo

Chris Barnes, City Engineer
Transportation and Utilities
City of Portage

Lotta Jarnefelt, Director
Planning and Community Development
Kalamazoo County

Michael Bippely, Traffic & Safety Engineer
Southwest Transportation Service Center
Michigan Department of Transportation

Ronald Reid, Managing Director
Kalamazoo County Road Commission

John Byrnes, Traffic Services Manager
Kalamazoo County Road Commission

William Schomisch, Director
Kalamazoo Metro Transit

Ronald Copping, Special Projects
Kalamazoo County Road Commission

John Seelman, Assistant City Engineer
Department of Public Services
City of Kalamazoo

Ronald Fleckenstein, City Manager
City of Parchment

Jodi Stefforia, Planning Director
Oshtemo Township

Rick Fowler, Transportation Planner
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation

Dallas Williams, Director
Transportation and Utilities
City of Portage