



**KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
POLICY COMMITTEE
MEETING OF APRIL 29, 2009**

The April meeting of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Policy Committee was called to order at 9:00 a.m. at the Kalamazoo County Road Commission lower level conference room. Meeting attendance was recorded on the sign-in sheet.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dennis Berkebile (Chair), Dave Anderson, Jeff Bither, Allan Bussema, Karen Hayward, Rob Heasley, Libby Heiny-Cogswell, Tim Hudson, Don Martin, Pete Pfeiffer, Lee Philport, Susan Richardson, Phyllis Simmons, Jeff Sorensen, Tom Swiat, Jr., Linda Teeter, Don Ulsh, Jack Urban, Bob Vlietstra, and Loren Warfield.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Carol Fricke, Dave Healy, Claudette Reid, and Greg Rosine.

OTHERS PRESENT

John Byrnes, Darrell Harden, Dale Hein, Tom Hohm, Andy Irwin, Joanna Johnson, Jack Mekemson, Bill Schomisch, Jodi Stefforia, Frank Szopo, Bobbi Welke, Kathy Schultz, Jon Start, and Steve Stepek.

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 25, 2009 MEETING

Motion by the Policy Committee, “*to approve the minutes from the March 25, 2009 meeting.*” Motion approved.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Jon Start reported on the April 9th Technical Committee meeting. The committee took action to approve several amendments to the FY 2008 - 2011 Transportation Improvement Program and to support six bridge application resolutions. They discussed the use of lump sum vs. pro rata funding for American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) projects submitted for funding. The committee decided to cap projects that are submitted. The TIP subcommittee reported that there was a decision on the FY 2011 Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds including the River Reach Boulevard project. They are currently discussing and reviewing the 2030 Transportation Plan Goals and Objectives for changes that will be implemented as part of the 2035 Transportation Plan development.

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Jon Start reported that the Citizens Advisory Committee met on April 16th. There was some discussion regarding the FY 2010 - 2013 Transportation Improvement Program development and the 2035 Transportation Plan. Additional discussion was held on the proposed high speed rail projects for the State of Michigan. He noted that attendance has not been good for the meetings and that staff will be looking at ways to increase the number of people attending the meetings.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Jeff Sorensen informed the committee that the Michigan Township Association will be holding a golf outing on June 5 at Crestview. More information is available from him or Cooper Township.

FY 2008 - 2011 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Technical Committee and staff recommended Policy Committee approval of the following amendments to the FY 2009 element of the FY 2008 - 2011 Transportation Improvement Program:

Project Name	Project Description	Federal Cost (\$000)	Federal Fund Source	State Cost (\$000)	State Fund Source	Local Cost (\$000)	Local Fund Source	Total Costs (\$000)
Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway	Riverview Drive/Mosel Avenue to D Avenue; Construction of trailway (10-foot wide path) - PHASE 2	1,766	ARE					1,766
Angling Road/Constitution Boulevard	Angling to McGillicuddy; Constitution to Romence; Construction of trailway (10-foot wide path)	200	ARE			200	CITY	400
Kal-Haven Trail	10th Street to CR-665 (Bloomingdale); Limestone resurfacing and bridge repairs to a portion of the Kal-Haven State Trail (18 miles total; 6 miles Kalamazoo County)	350	ARE					350
I-94	at Norfolk Southern Railroad; Construction oversight	75	AR1					75
I-94	Over Portage Road Bridge; Heat straightening and partial painting			195	MER			195
Highway Safety (Trunkline)	Various locations; Trunkline Highway Safety GPA	250	STG					250
M-43	From 9th Street to Berkley; Signal modernization, optimization, and interconnection at up to 11 locations	625	CMG					625

Motion by the Policy Committee, “***to approve the FY 2009 amendments to the FY 2008 - 2011 Transportation Improvement Program.***” Motion approved.

Jon Start reported that the Technical Committee discussed at their last meeting the use of lump sum funding versus pro rata funding for American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) projects. The lump sum method would cap projects at a dollar amount and any expenditures above that amount would be the responsibility of the local agency. Under pro rata, the project would be funded at whatever the project costs came in at. If a project goes over, the funds would come from the area allocation with a chance of the extra costs impacting other projects. If a project comes in under engineering estimates and if there is money available after close-out, the remaining dollars will stay with KATS and be allocated to another project. This, however, takes time and the agencies will need to act fast in order to capture the remaining dollars.

Motion by the Policy Committee, “***to use the lump sum method for the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) projects.***” Motion approved.

Bobbi Welke noted that MDOT Local Agency Services will be holding meetings this summer regarding the ARRA funding.

Jon Start reported that the Michigan Department of Transportation will not be asking for a FY 2010 - 2013 Transportation Improvement Program but instead a FY 2011 - 2014 TIP next summer. This is due to the recent funding adjustments caused by ARRA projects. More information and a new time frame will be coming to KATS in the next few months. In the mean time, KATS will amend the FY 2010 TIP element of the FY 2008 - 2010 TIP.

LOCAL BRIDGE PROGRAM RESOLUTIONS OF SUPPORT

Six resolutions of support were presented to the Policy Committee for action. The following bridges are being submitted to the Michigan Department of Transportation for Local Bridge Program Funds:

Kalamazoo County Road Commission Bridges:

- 40th Street Bridge over Little Portage Creek: bridge replacement
- River Street bridge over the Kalamazoo River: bridge rehabilitation
- TS Avenue bridge over the Portage River: bridge replacement
- 8th Street bridge over Amtrak Railroad: bridge preventive maintenance
- S Avenue bridge over the Portage River: bridge replacement

City of Portage Bridge:

- Kilgore Road Bridge over the Portage Creek: bridge replacement

Motion by the Policy Committee, “***to support the Local Bridge Program applications being submitted by the Kalamazoo County Road Commission and the City of Portage.***” Motion approved.

US-131/US-131BR

Bobbi Welke presented a PowerPoint presentation on the history of US-131/US-131 Business Route interchange. Key points from her presentation include:

- In March, 1998, the KATS Policy Committee requested US-earmark in federal reauthorization for a study (feasibility and design analysis). In October, 1998, the local earmark was put in the 1998 TEA-21 federal legislation for \$1.5M to cover the study and design of improvements at US-131 and US-131BR (“US-131BR/Industrial Connector”).
- A feasibility study is typically performed prior to the NEPA process to determine if the project meets the benefit/cost factors, is within environmental constraints, has traffic and travel time issues, and if there is safety issues that need to be addressed. Once the feasibility is met, environmental clearance, design, and right-of-way need to be completed before construction can start.
- In 2000/2001, the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study completed a transportation benefit/cost study with the help of MDOT. Nine alternatives were studied with only improvements to Pitcher/Porter having a positive benefit/cost ratio. The next step that was recommended was an Economic Impact Analysis/Study.
- In March, 2001, KATS funded a study using the High Priority Funds to complete an economic benefit cost analysis with the assistance of a consultant. The report was not finalized in February 2003 due to it not showing sufficient benefit to the interchange improvements. It recommended continuation of brownfield remediation and re-packaging parcels in the target area.
- Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, several factors need to be reviewed, including the social and natural environment impacts of a project, the transportation needs of the public, and whether the project is in the best interest of the public. Interagency coordination, public involvement, and the identification of purpose, needs, and alternatives need to be documented.
- Three options are outlined during the processing of NEPA. They include Categorical Exclusion, Environmental Assessment, and Environmental Impact Statement. Significant documentation is required under all three processes, including the impacts to air quality, farmland, and flood plains.
- The US-131/US-131BR interchange is not listed in the 2030 Transportation Plan as a future project. It is identified as illustrative and no other capacity improvements on US-131 are identified.
- Several private development projects have been funded on MDOT facilities in Michigan, including the interchange at I-94 and Vining Road near the Metro Airport and US-23 at Lee Road in Brighton.

Ms. Welke asked the Policy Committee to look at what the problem is they are trying to solve, what are proposed solutions, and what is the feasibility of each solution. She noted that some information in the two studies may help warrant other improvements to the roadways surrounding the interchange. MDOT currently does not have plans to improve the interchange at US-131/US-131BR.

Libby Heiny-Cogswell informed the Policy Committee that Oshtemo Township and Kalamazoo Township have set aside \$5,000 each to examine the interchange and proposed potential improvements along with cost estimates. Staff recommended that the consultant have copies of the two studies for their use.

FHWA responded to the request from KATS for their input in using the High Priority funds. They commented they would prefer that the High Priority Funds should be spent on constructing improvements to US-131 or US-131 Business Route. To spend the remaining funds on anything but a study of the interchange, the funding would have to be redesignated.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

Linda Teeter thanked everyone for their support as the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (KCTA) goes for a millage request on May 5. The .4 mil request will be for three years.

Bill Schomisch handed out a Director's Report dated April 22, 2009. He noted that the funds coming to Kalamazoo as part of the ARRA funds can only be used for capital expenditures and not operating assistance. Metro Transit recently received 7 new buses.

2009 MICHIGAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ASSOCIATION/MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF REGIONS CONFERENCE

The Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study is co-hosting the 2009 Michigan Transportation Planning Association/Michigan Association of Regions conference July 14-17 at the Radisson Hotel in downtown Kalamazoo. Staff reported that funding is available to assist agencies who want to attend the conference. Please contact KATS for more details.

Several topics of interest will be discussed over the 4 days, including freight planning, the Kalamazoo Promise and wind turbine placement. Friday, July 17th will focus on transit and the creation of the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (KCTA).

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Berkebile adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m.