



**KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
POLICY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 28, 2007**

The November 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 from the sign-in sheet. Introductions were made for Linda Kerr, Rob Heasley, and Joanna Johnson. Linda is the new alternate for Ron Commissaris. Rob Heasley is the new mayor of Parchment, and Joanna Johnson is the new Managing Director of the Kalamazoo County Road Commission.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Tim Hudson (Chair), David Anderson, Richard Atwell, Dennis Berkebile, Jeff Bither, Gary Cramer, Rob Heasley, Linda Kerr, Pete Pfeiffer, Lee Philport, Susan Richardson, Jeff Sorensen, Tom Swiat, Jr., Don Ulsh, Terry Urban, John VanDyke, Loren Warfield, and Ron White.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Gary Allan, Alan Bussema, Carol Fricke, Dan Pryson, Phyllis Simmons, and Jack Urban.

OTHERS PRESENT

Dave Bulkowski, Joel Cooper, Bill Deming, Tom Hohm, Joanna Johnson, Lara Meeuwse, Claudette Reid, Bill Schomisch, Ruth Stegeman, Frank Szopo, Bobbi Welke, Kathy Schultz, Steve Stepek, and Jon Start.

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 31, 2007 MEETING

Under the US-131/US-131BR High Priority Funds discussion on page 3, it was noted that the Policy Committee made a motion to form a subcommittee to develop a scope of work for the environmental assessment of the interchange. The motion was not noted in the minutes.

Motion by the Policy Committee, ***“to approve the minutes of the October 31, 2007 Policy Committee meeting as corrected.”*** Motion approved.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Jon Start reported on the November 8th Technical Committee meeting. The committee heard an update on the Oshtemo Township use restrictions and an intersection safety study completed by Wayne State University and the Office of Highway Safety Planning. Support was given to the City of Portage’s Enhancement Grant application for an extension of a trailway in the city. A subcommittee was formed to develop the scope of work for the US-131/US-131BR environmental assessment.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS - None

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Jon Start reported that the FY 2008 - 2011 Transportation Improvement Program was sent to MDOT and the Federal Highway Administration for review and approval. Upon review, FHWA noted that the FY 2008 element of the FY 2008 - 2011 TIP did not match the FY 2008 element of the FY 2006 - 2008 TIP. This needed to occur since the KATS 2030 Transportation Plan has not been found to be SAFETEA-LU compliant and until it is, no amendments can be done to the FY 2006 - 2008 Transportation Improvement Program. The Policy Committee took action at the June 27th meeting to approve the FY 2008 element of the FY 2006 - 2008 TIP. Jon noted that the error in the FY 2008 - 2011 TIP was in applying the inflation factors to the document starting in FY 2008 instead of FY 2009. He requested that the Policy Committee reaffirm the FY 2008 element of the TIP that was approved in June, 2007.

Motion by the Policy Committee, ***“to reaffirm approval of the FY 2008 element of the FY 2006 - 2008 Transportation Improvement Program as approved in June, 2007.”*** Motion approved.

CITY OF PORTAGE ENHANCEMENT GRANT APPLICATION

Bill Deming presented the City of Portage’s summary of the Transportation Enhancement Grant application that was recently sent to MDOT. The trailway addition will add to the Northwest Portage Bikeway to the west and east. The east connection will intersect Crossroads Mall. The total project is \$460,000 with \$200,000 being requested in Transportation Enhancement funds.

Motion by the Policy Committee, ***“to support the City of Portage’s submission of the Transportation Enhancement Grant for an extension of the Northwest Portage Bikeway.”*** Motion approved.

REGIONAL PLANNING PROJECT CONCEPT

Joel Cooper from the Disability Network and Dave Bulkowski from Disability Advocates of Kent County, along with Ruth Stegeman from the Disability Network/Lakeshore, presented a proposed planning project for developing a comprehensive regional transportation network. They hoped to be able to create a plan that increased the capability and operational effectiveness of the multi-modal transportation network, including roads, highways, public transportation and non-motorized, freight and commercial traffic, rail, water and air transportation. They also hoped the plan would identify ways to enhance personal mobility, reduce environmental impacts, and enhance productivity of individuals, organizations, and businesses, along with improving the economy as a whole. The plan development would include the Metropolitan Planning Organizations, federal, state, regional and local partners and the community. The region has been defined as Grand Rapids, Muskegon, Holland, Kalamazoo, and Battle Creek. A consultant would be retained to do scenario planning.

Several of the Policy Committee members requested more information on the proposed planning effort and encouraged Jon Start, Richard Atwell, and Bill Schomisch to attend meetings and be a participant. Jon reported that he will be coming back to the Policy Committee with progress updates as the project moves forward. There was a concern whether this effort was a duplication of efforts.

USE RESTRICTIONS ON ROADS AND IMPACT ON KATS

Jon Start reported that Oshtemo Township received a letter from KATS stating concerns about truck restrictions with the township and their possible impact on future funding. John Van Dyke noted that the township modified the ordinance to affect vehicles with a 5,000 ton carrying capacity. He stated that the board was representing the residents of the township. The sheriff department will be doing the enforcement.

Currently use restrictions are not used in the selection of projects for federal funds. Some members thought the road commission should take a more active role with the townships when developing land use plans to avoid similar issues.

US-131/US131BR HIGH PRIORITY FUNDS

The Technical Committee set up a subcommittee to develop the scope of work for the environmental assessment. Gary Cramer, Rob Heasley, Tom Swiat, and Jeff Sorensen requested attendance on the subcommittee. Jon Start reminded the committee that a local match will be needed in order to spend the High Priority funds.

FY 2008 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

Jon Start reported that KATS has received conditional approval of the FY 2008 Unified Work Program. The Federal Highway Administration has requested additional information on soft match that KATS uses. New information has been transmitted to MDOT.

WAYNE STATE/OFFICE OF HIGHWAY SAFETY PLANNING INTERSECTION STUDY

The intersection safety study was recently presented to several Technical Committee members for review. The engineering staffs will be making comment on the initial report. The report was funded by the Office of Highway Safety Planning, with Wayne State University completing the report. The report focuses on low cost improvements to a number of intersections in Kalamazoo County.

STATUS REPORTS

Public Transportation: Richard Atwell reported that the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (KCTA) will be funding the Portage trolley in December, starting December 10. It will operate from 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. 7 days a week and will go between Southland Mall, Crossroads Mall, Target, and Kmart. The bus used will run on propane. Terry Urban noted that the idea for the trolley came from a Portage council meeting and preparing for the funding and operation of the trolley has occurred quickly.

The KCTA has requested a meeting with the City of Kalamazoo City Manager to discuss the contract with Pride Care for the operation of Care-A-Van. KCTA would like to expand the hours of operation and service for Care-A-Van.

The KCTA and Metro Transit have been meeting with human service agencies to prepare for the development of a human services/public transportation coordinated plan. The plan is expected to be complete by the spring, 2008.

Bill Schomisch thanked the committee for the support of the recently adopted milage. He noted that 7 new Care-A-Van's are on the street as of Monday. Ridership for Metro Transit is up from 1 year ago, despite losing 2 routes to privatization. They are using a ultra low sulfur biodiesel in the fleet due to high diesel costs. He also announced that Metro Van is serving a group home on Barney Road at Nichols.

FY 2007 Audit: The field work for the audit has been completed. The final report will be brought to the Policy Committee at the January meeting.

I-94 Construction: Bobbi Welke reported that the ramps on I-94 at US-131 are open. Three bridges will be built during the winter with some intermittent lane closures. To date, the project is coming in under budget. MDOT is addressing soundwall issues raised by the residents. New sound wall to be constructed near the Lovers Lane bridge will need to be amended into the Transportation Improvement Program once the TIP is approved by the state and federal agencies.

Questions for Airport Director: Jon Start requested that if Policy Committee members have questions for the airport director to send them to KATS prior to the December 19th meeting.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

Jeff Sorensen reported that the Nominating Committee will have a recommendation for the chairperson and vice-chairperson positions at the December meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Hudson adjourned the meeting at 10:42 a.m.