



**KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
POLICY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 31, 2007**

The October 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. Due to the number of citizens in attendance, introductions were made prior to the start of the meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ron Commissaris (Acting Chair), David Anderson, Richard Atwell, Dennis Berkebile, Gary Cramer, Dan DeGraw, Carol Fricke, Pete Pfeiffer, Lee Philport, Claudette Reid, Susan Richardson, Jeff Sorensen, Tom Swiat, Jr., Don Ulsh, Jack Urban, John VanDyke, and Loren Warfield.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jeff Bither, Alan Bussema, Tim Hudson, Dan Pryson, Phyllis Simmons, Terry Urban, George Weston, and Ron White.

OTHERS PRESENT

Bob Bailey, John Byrnes, Laura Carr, Phil Cole, Jim Cripps, Bernard Denton, Greg Doud, Dale Hein, Marty Landes, Gretchen Lemmer, Michele McGowen, Lara Meeuwse, Jack Mekemson, Greg Thomas, Ken Woolf, Kathy Schultz, Steve Stepek, and Jon Start.

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 19, 2007 MEETING

Motion by the Policy Committee, “*to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2007 Policy Committee meeting as presented.*” Motion approved.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Jon Start reported on the October 11 Technical Committee meeting. The committee received final copies of the FY 2008 - 2011 Transportation Improvement Program and the 2030 Transportation Plan. They discussed the recently adopted truck restrictions in Oshtemo Township and the restriction’s impact to the planning process. Updates were given on the road construction projects and planning activities occurring in Kalamazoo County.

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Citizens Advisory Committee met on September 20th. They received copies of the 2030 Transportation Plan and discussed the new meeting schedule. The next meeting will be held December 20th at 5:00 p.m. at Kalamazoo Metro Transit. They will be meeting quarterly instead of monthly.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS - None

CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Jon Start requested that a nominating committee be established for the selection of the 2008 officers. The Nominating Committee will be discussed under Other New Business.

USE RESTRICTIONS ON ROADS AND IMPACT ON KATS

Dennis Berkebile noted that he would be abstaining from discussions due to a conflict of interest regarding the ordinance.

Jon Start has been discussing the recently passed use restriction ordinance by Oshtemo Township with the Technical Committee and Oshtemo Township officials. He has also been discussing the ordinance with the Kalamazoo County Road Commission and Michigan Department of Transportation officials to determine funding impacts to past and future road improvements. He noted that KATS is responsible for the funding of the federal aid system but that local jurisdictions have the right to restrict use on their roadways. No federal funds have been spent on the roads now designated as restricted in Oshtemo Township. The Technical Committee has set up a subcommittee to refine the selection criteria for federal funded projects with use restrictions being one of the criteria for funding selection. Federal funds can be spent on roads that are restricted.

A number of citizens and business owners were in attendance for the meeting topic. Key items from their comments included:

- The restrictions on selected roads will cause frustrations for local business owners. Some of the roads that trucks are now being forced to use are not suitable for large trucks and include residential neighborhoods and school locations.
- Oshtemo Township officials need to look at the overall impact of the ordinance on the region and not just Oshtemo Township.
- Susan Richardson from MDOT noted that use restrictions are happening more and more throughout the state. She stated that the state can ask for Transportation Economic Development Funds back from jurisdictions since the funds are specifically allocated to projects that promote business development and the building of all-season truck routes.

- The ordinance does not restrict trucks that have a destination on the restricted roadway. Only through trucks will be restricted. The restrictions will help protect residential neighborhoods.
- The National Functional Classification of a roadway is determined based on the usage by the motoring public. KATS works with the state and local road agencies to make changes to the classification of roadways when necessary.

The Policy Committee thanked the number of citizens and business owners who expressed concern about the restrictions and requested that they continue to be involved in the discussions at KATS. The Oshtemo Township Board will be discussing the ordinance further at their November 13th, 2007 meeting, starting at 7:00 p.m.

It was requested that KATS send a letter to Oshtemo Township noting the impacts the use restrictions would have to KATS and future funding. Jon Start will write and send the letter to John VanDyke.

Motion by the Policy Committee, ***“to draft a letter to Oshtemo Township informing them of the impacts use restrictions would have to the county and what KATS role would be in future funding.”*** Motion approved. One abstention.

US-131/US-131BR HIGH PRIORITY FUNDS

The MDOT representatives on the Technical Committee have been researching the use of the High Priority funds. Under the category Early Preliminary Engineering, an environmental impact assessment is an eligible expense. The Technical Committee has been considering conducting an environmental impact assessment of the interchange location to prepare for a defined project if there is future funding to the area. Jon Start recommended that a subcommittee be established to develop a scope for the project. He noted that a local match of 20% will be needed in order to spend the funding on the assessment. At this time, there is no estimate available for the cost of the assessment, other than it could cost more than \$100,000, depending on what is included in the assessment.

Pete Pfeiffer commented that the Michigan Department of Transportation’s focus is on I-94 and the completion of the project to Sprinkle Road. Funding and time is limited for other projects in the area. Jack Mekemson noted, too, that the Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee has identified I-94 as a priority for the county but also wants the US-131/US-131BR interchange improved to assist with business development.

A subcommittee will be developed and any Policy Committee members interested in participating can contact KATS for meeting information.

2030 TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The 2030 Transportation Plan was available for distribution to the Policy Committee. Copies of the chapters are available on-line at www.KATSmipo.org. The document is also available on CD from KATS staff. The document has been submitted to the Michigan Department of Transportation.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The adopted FY 2008 - 2011 Transportation Improvement Program has been submitted to the Michigan Department of Transportation for transmittal to FHWA, FTA, and EPA. Jon Start noted that the document cannot be amended until the 2030 Transportation Plan and the TIP are approved by the federal agencies.

RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR DAN DEGRAW

Jon Start presented a resolution to Dan DeGraw for his service on the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Policy Committee. Dan has been a voting member of the Policy Committee since 2000 and served as Chairperson.

Motion by the Policy Committee, ***“to approve the resolution honoring Dan DeGraw for his service to the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study.”*** Motion approved.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

Richard Atwell reported that the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority voted to partner with the City of Portage to sponsor a holiday trolley in the City of Portage during the holiday season. The trolley will be free and will serve the malls along Westnedge.

Carol Fricke noted that the Transit Authority Board will be awaiting the results of the transit milage vote on Tuesday, November 6. The 1 mil vote is for the City of Kalamazoo residents and will be only for 1 year. In the fall, 2008, all Kalamazoo County residents will be voting on a countywide milage request for the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

The following members volunteered to serve on the Policy Committee Nominating Committee:

Ron Commissaris, Jeff Sorensen, David Anderson

Both Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson positions are open as of January 1, 2008.

Dennis Berkebile reported that the Road Commission as entered into a contract with Joanna Johnson as the new Managing Director. She will be starting on November 26. He thanked John Byrnes for his work as Interim Director since spring, 2007. He also noted that the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners will be acting on the two additional road commissioners at their next meeting. The Kalamazoo County Board of County Road Commissioners will have five voting members, instead of the current three.

Pete Pfeiffer reported that the I-94 project is winding down for the winter. All ramps should be open by the end of November. Construction on the new bridge south of the I-94 interchange will continue through the winter. The 12th Street bridge is scheduled for demolition on November 16th. Updates on the I-94 construction are available by e-mail by contacting him or Jim Woods at MDOT.

Lee Philport asked that representatives of the trucking community, as well as the Aviation Board, be included in the Policy Committee communications. Jon Start noted that a representative from the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek Airport will be reporting to the Policy Committee at the December meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Acting Chairperson Commissaris adjourned the meeting at 10:28 a.m.