



**KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES OF DECEMBER 1, 2005**

The December meeting of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Technical Committee was called to order at 9:30 a.m. at the Kalamazoo County Road Commission lower level conference room. Meeting attendance was recorded on the sign-in sheet.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Muhammad Arif (Chair), Brian Burlingham, John Byrnes, Ron Copping, Ron Fleckenstein, Chris Forth, Rick Fowler, Darrell Harden, Ron Reid, Bill Schomisch, Richard Skalski, Jodi Stefforia, John Sych, Frank Szopo, and Dallas Williams.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Matt Crawford, Keith Hernandez, and Cheri Lutz.

OTHERS PRESENT

Chris Barnes, Marty Dodge, Allan Galicia, Tom Hohm, Laura Wise, Kathy Carrier, and Jon Start.

MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 3, 2005 MEETING

Motion by the Technical Committee, “*to approve the minutes of the November 3, 2005 Technical Committee meeting.*” Motion approved.

POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

No action was taken at the November 23rd Policy Committee meeting due to a lack of quorum. The committee will be discussing the Pass Through Agreement for the hiring of a consultant to assist Metro Transit with a route study at their December meeting. The Project Prioritization Subcommittee met and requested that KATS staff develop a draft prioritization process for the next meeting using several examples from other agencies around the state. They also requested a resolution to show the committee’s support of the continued review of improvements to US-131 in St. Joseph County.

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Kathy Carrier reported that the committee discussed the status of the Care-A-Van merger with Metro Transit and the creation of the Transit Authority Board. The County Board recently approved the creation of the countywide Transit Authority Board. Their next meeting is December 15 at 5:00 p.m. at Kalamazoo Metro Transit.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS - None

2006 MEETING SCHEDULE APPROVAL

Motion by the Technical Committee, ***“to approve the 2006 Technical Committee meeting schedule.”***
Motion approved.

ADDITIONAL 2006 SAFETY PROJECT

The 2007 call for MDOT Local Safety applications was released recently with applications due in March. The letter from MDOT indicated that additional 2006 funds were available for the program. The Kalamazoo County Road Commission requested the Technical Committee's consideration of an additional 2006 safety project, with the project being improvements to Stadium Drive at Parkview Avenue. The intersection would be realigned and several driveways closed to improve movements. Currently the intersection is controlled by a stop sign. A new signal would be installed and integrated with the signal at Stadium Drive and 9th Street. No right-of-way will be needed. The Road Commission is currently working on contacting the business owners about the project to gain support. Ron Reid noted that if the project does not receive safety funds for 2006, the Road Commission would submit it as a candidate for 2007 funding. It was noted that Oshtemo Township will be hiring a consultant to review the Stadium Drive/9th Street corridors for traffic improvements as part of their downtown development plan.

There was discussion on whether the project would move forward if the driveways could not be eliminated due to property owner objections. Ron Reid noted that the Road Commission will work with the property owners and consolidate as needed to ensure that the safety improvements are made at the intersection.

Motion by the Technical Committee, ***“to recommend Policy Committee support of the Stadium Drive/Parkview Avenue Intersection Safety Application for additional 2006 Local Safety Program funds.”*** Motion approved.

I-94 PROJECT STATUS

MDOT has elected to focus on the improvements at US-131 at I-94 and along I-94 from 12th Street to east of Oakland Drive as the starting point for the I-94 widening project. The Oakland Drive bridge over I-94 will also be reconstructed. The improvements are expected to cost \$78.4 million dollars. The project is currently not in the KATS 2025 Transportation Plan or the FY 2006 - 2008 Transportation Improvement Program. It will need to be tested for air quality conformity and a public hearing held to add it to the documents. Darrell Harden noted that MDOT would like to start construction in 2006 with the project being let in August. He also noted that FHWA has informed MDOT that amendments after December 31 may be difficult. KATS needs to follow the public involvement process which states that at least 30 days needs be available for a public comment on an amendment to the Transportation Plan. Jon Start commented that the soonest KATS could amend the Plan would be February, 2006. The MDOT modeling unit is working on the update of the model to run the air quality test. The construction of the project is expected to last until October, 2008.

2030 TRANSPORTATION PLAN

A meeting will be scheduled to further discuss the identification of alternatives for the 2030 Transportation Plan.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

The Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners adopted the creation of a Transit Authority Board in November. The new authority board will include nine members from the community, with the appointments to the board being made in January. Bill Schomisch noted that the new members will have to work quickly to become familiar with the process of the authority and help develop ballot language and a millage rate request for the November 2006 election. He noted that the current Transit Authority Board is in place until November 2007. He also noted that should the millage fail for the countywide transit system, Care-A-Van may have services cut due to budget constraints.

US-131 IMPROVEMENTS TO INDIANA LINE

The Policy Committee discussed MDOT's decision to not improve US-131 in St. Joseph County. They are asking KATS staff to develop a resolution encouraging the continued review of the needed improvements. It will be adopted at the December 14 meeting. An information meeting was held in Three Rivers last night with MDOT staff and state legislators to discuss the future of the project.

STATUS REPORTS

The 2006 CMAQ applications need to be submitted to KATS. The Technical Committee will be acting on the 2006 projects at the January meeting.

Jon Start noted that Congressman Upton was unsuccessful in getting the High Priority Funds for US-131/US-131BR moved to surface street improvements in the 2006 apportionment. He will be trying again to get the funds moved.

Bill Schomisch noted that KATS is working with Metro Transit on a route restructuring study set to start this spring. It will assist Metro Transit staff in laying out the new routing due to the new downtown transfer center on Kalamazoo and Rose/Burdick streets. He also noted that the Holly Jolly Trolley will be running through Christmas downtown to provide free service to local businesses.

Jon Start reported that he is working on getting a commitment from the local agencies for STP funds prior to hiring the third staff member. The planning funds that were paid back to MDOT would be used initially to pay for the position. After the funds run out, STP funds would be needed to sustain the position.

David Anderson and Barb Hamilton will be the new voting and alternate members for the City of Kalamazoo on the Policy Committee. They replace Hannah McKinney.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Arif adjourned the meeting at 11:19 a.m.