

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES MARCH 14, 2024 - 9:30 A.M.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The March 14, 2024 Technical Committee Meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. at Kalamazoo Metro, by Chairperson Stefforia.

**ROLL CALL**

Meeting attendance was recorded on the sign-in sheet. Introductions were made by all present.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Christina Anderson	City of Kalamazoo
Muhammad Arif	City of Portage
Joe Belka	Michigan Department of Transportation, TSC
Mickey Bittner	Village of Paw Paw
Heather Bowden	Michigan Department of Transportation, Statewide Planning
Eric Feldt	City of Portage
Alexander Franchi	Kalamazoo County
Josh Grab	Michigan Department of Transportation, Region
Todd Hackenberg	Village of Lawton
Jamie Harmon	City of Portage
Leeanna Harris	Oshtemo Township
Robert Henderson	Van Buren Public Transit
Jeff Heppler	Village of Augusta
Jim Hoekstra	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
Joel Hoort	Van Buren County Road Commission
Anna Horner	Oshtemo Township
Sarah Joshi	Central County Transportation Authority
Anthony Ladd	City of Kalamazoo
Ryan Minkus	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
Whitney Pizzala	Village of Mattawan
Dennis Randolph	City of Kalamazoo
Josh Raney	City of Galesburg
Ryan Russell	Village of Schoolcraft
Paul Sotherland	Citizens' Advisory Committee
Jodi Stefforia	Comstock Township
Nancy Stoddard	City of Parchment
Greg Vlietstra	Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority
George Waring	City of Kalamazoo

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Joe Belka	Michigan Department of Transportation, TSC
Phil Doorlag	Wightman
Terry Martin	Carrier and Gable
Lisa McNees	City of Galesburg
Megan Mickelson	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Connie Morrison	Value Engineering
Fred Nagler	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Tom Palumbo	City of Kalamazoo
Lexi Petrella	Alta Planning and Design
Elizabeth Rumick	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Steve Stepek	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Ali Townsend	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study

**CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

Chairperson Stefforia stated she would like to add to the New Business portion of the meeting a discussion on this committee’s officer positions.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Hoekstra moved, and it was duly seconded by Heppler, **“to approve the agenda of the March 14, 2024 Technical Committee Meeting.”** MOTION CARRIED.

**MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 8, 2024 MEETING**

Heppler moved, and it was duly seconded by Hoekstra, **“to approve the minutes from the February 8, 2024 Technical Committee Meeting.”** MOTION CARRIED.

**POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Steppek reported on behalf of the Policy Committee who met at the end of February. Primary discussion focused on anticipated changes in transit resulting from Metro’s Comprehensive Operational Analysis.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Sotherland reported on a non-agenda item. He announced the upcoming Kalamazoo Commuter Challenge program from May 16, 2024 through May 30, 2024. All residents of Kalamazoo County are invited to participate. The program encourages cycling to shop, dine, and commute to work. The Love to Ride app available for download, will be used by participants to record their rides. The app will then create a heat map of routes. Collected data can be shared and used for non-motorized planning.

**TITLE VI PLAN DRAFT**

Referring to the document enclosed in the meeting packet, Steppek explained the draft has been out for comment. Steppek reiterated the plan is updated for the new federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration guidelines that require recipients of federal funds to refer any Title VI complaints to agencies one level up as opposed to self-investigating complaints. Minkus voiced appreciation for the proposed changes being highlighted in yellow and red.

Arif moved, and it was duly seconded by Hackenberg, **“to approve the Title VI Plan and recommend it to the Policy Committee for approval.”** MOTION CARRIED.

## **FY 2023-2026 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENTS**

Referring to the amendments enclosed in the meeting packet, Stepek explained the amendments include some small additions, changes to budget, and transit related projects. The Michigan Department of Transportation Guardrail Garden project is for installation of several types of guardrails so maintenance can practice making repairs.

Minkus moved, and it was duly seconded by Horner, **“to approve the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program Amendments and to recommend them to the Policy Committee for adoption.”** MOTION CARRIED.

## **CONTRIBUTED SERVICES FISCAL YEAR TO DATE**

Stepek explained a summary of the contributed services for the fiscal year-to-date February, 2024 is included in the packet for your review. Please continue to turn in time sheets.

## **MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION RED FLAGGED PROJECT DISCUSSION**

Stepek explained DenBraber of the Michigan Department of Transportation could not attend today's meeting to discuss this. DenBraber also requested more details on projects that were flagged. The initial decision to move this agenda item to next month's meeting was changed to having agencies directly reach out to DenBraber with their questions.

## **FY 2025 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM DISCUSSION**

Stepek stated that Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) fiscal year 2025 Unified Planning Work Program draft will be issued next month. Part of this process includes projecting the contributed service program match. Let KATS know if you have any large planning projects such as master plan updates which are eligible for required program match.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

**NON-MOTORIZED SUBCOMMITTEE-** Townsend reported the subcommittee met February 21, 2024 to discuss edits. Stepek added Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) has developed a great submission tool on our website [katsmpo.org](http://katsmpo.org) to use for non-motorized map edits to avoid difficulty in tracking change requests. Moving forward, KATS will only accept changes submitted using this tool. Townsend presented an example of how to use the tool to submit non-motorized changes through the website. An instructional video will also be made available. Contact Townsend with any questions. Townsend showed the location of non-motorized counts on the [katsmpo.org](http://katsmpo.org) website. Submit non-motorized count requests to Townsend.

**COMPLETE STREETS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN-** Mickelson stated the Complete Streets Implementation Plan Subcommittee met in February. Edits continued on the scoring methodology. A Doodle Poll was sent out to subcommittee members to schedule the next meeting anticipated in a week or two.

**TRAFFIC SIGNAL COORDINATION-** Stepek announced the Traffic Signal Coordination Subcommittee meeting will be held directly after this Technical Committee meeting.

**PRIORITIZATION SUBCOMMITTEE-** Stepek stated review of the prioritization process has begun. Updates will be made to the process this summer before the call for projects begins in the fall. Horner will be added to the subcommittee email distribution list.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES**

Vlietstra reported Metro's new microtransit service pilot program is scheduled to launch April 15, 2024. The name of the service will be Metro Link, and the per ride cost is going to be \$1.50. Joshi has a map of the microtransit zones and how they intersect with fixed bus routes. In response to Stefforia's inquiry, Joshi responded media outreach will begin April 1, 2024. As the launch date gets closer, more detailed information will be released. Microtransit is as an extension of the fixed route, not an Uber. The service can take you from home to a fixed route or a destination within the zone. Direction on the app, downloading it, and using it will be communicated. Notifications of the program will be included in the Comstock Township, City of Portage, and Oshtemo Township newsletters. Stefforia suggested that presentations could be made at these three agencies' meetings since they are televised. Mickelson suggested Joshi forward an announcement to Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study for inclusion in its quarterly newsletter which will go out later this month.

## **STATUS REPORTS**

### **ROADS-**

Belka reported the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) US-131 project in Schoolcraft, the M-40 project in Lawton, and the US-131 KL Avenue project will all start on April 15, 2024.

Heppler reported the Village of Augusta 2024 Washington Street bridge project will begin this season. Mill and fill will be done on M-96 this summer.

Hoekstra reported the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) is working on federal aid tree projects on W Avenue and Squires Road. The MN and Mercury project in Charleston Township will be in the April letting. The Douglas Avenue project will start in April. Schedules and bids are being worked on for the 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Stadium projects. Local and primary paving projects are posted on the [KalamazooCountyRoads.com](http://KalamazooCountyRoads.com) website. Public informational meetings for construction projects are ongoing through the end of April. See the website for more information. Projects are under design for next year. Hoekstra brought flyers and invited attendees to the new RCKC facility open house on March 21, 2024 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Harmon reported the City of Portage Shaver Road project that started last year will be completed this year. It will include milling and resurfacing. The Portage Road project was awarded from the Michigan Department of Transportation. The scheduling plan and preconstruction meeting will be forthcoming. The project is tentatively scheduled to begin April 1, 2024. Project limits are Romence Road to Fairfield Road. The West Milham Avenue project planned for 2025 is in design. The city is looking for an Assistant City Engineer.

Waring reported the City of Kalamazoo Westnedge and Whites Road projects are underway and running smoothly. The Inkster Bridge project will begin March 18, 2024 with demolition of the bridge. Bronson Blvd will be closed. The Ransom Street project from Pitcher to Burdick is underway and will last a couple of months. The Riverview Drive from Gull Road to East Michigan Avenue sidewalk, curb, and gutter work will start April 1, 2024. Lane closures will be in place until resurfacing begins, at which point one half of the road will be closed at a time.

Horner reported Oshtemo Township is partnering with the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County to pave Second Street. This is a resident-initiated project. Oak trees will need to be removed for this project. The Kalamazoo Conservation District has reached out regarding Oak Wilt, a lethal disease of oak. The sewer expansion project is starting up on 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Lane Closures are anticipated in a month on M-43 between North 9<sup>th</sup> Street and North 7<sup>th</sup> Street.

### **LAND USE/PLANNING AND ZONING-**

Stoddard reported the City of Parchment is planning a preconstruction meeting for the former paper mill on the city's north side. The Commerce Lane/Railroad Trestle Restoration Project will offer kayak and canoe access to the river and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Bowden reported a new Statewide Transportation Planner has been hired by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and will start March 18, 2024. They will replace her beginning at the next meeting.

Grab reported a new Southwest Region Transportation Planner has been hired by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) who will replace Grab next month. Grab is working on a jurisdictional transfer for the City of Kalamazoo where West Main Street and Douglas Avenue meet. MDOT is reapplying for a grant to fund the M-40 and I-94 Paw Paw interchange project. It is currently just outside the 5-year plan.

Heppler reported the Village of Augusta comprehensive zoning review is underway.

Feldt reported the City of Portage is experiencing a shift away from traditional subdivisions in their second and third phases. There is a slight increase in demand for rental of detached family homes versus owned homes. Detached rental home builds are a mix of duplex, triplex, quads, or attached dwelling units.

Harris stated Oshtemo Township received three new site development submissions, including a condo development. The board passed the new Mixed-Use Ordinance.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Stefforia stated she will be the new Oshtemo Township Planning Director. Therefore, the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair will be from the same agency. Stepek reported there is nothing in the bylaws that prohibits this. Let Stepek know if you have an issue with this or would like to volunteer for an officer position. Stepek invited attendees to the West Michigan Trails public meeting at Metro on March 20, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. hosted by Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No citizens' comments were made.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

*The next meeting of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Technical Committee will be held on Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 9:30 a.m.*