

Metro Is Future Focused

Transportation System Looks to Build on Lessons Learned and Input From Public

Providing service through the most challenging of times, Kalamazoo area's public transportation system has a new appreciation for what the future can hold.

"We're stronger now in many ways," says the Chairman of Metro's governing bodies, Greg Rosine. "Our work force is committed. Our technology continues to improve, and our operations have benefited from investments in recent years."

Taken together, Rosine says, the forces of change make this a perfect time to plan for the future.

Metro has launched a comprehensive analysis of operations, with a goal of shaping the future of Metro into the next decade. The detailed study will review ridership on every route and stop, emphasize public input, and take advantage of

Coach Operator's experience. Public input was sought through a survey in November and December 2021 and a public meeting. There will be another chance for public input in the spring of 2022.

"We're open to new approaches to service," adds Metro's Executive Director Sean McBride. "This is the type of analysis we conducted ten years ago that led to service improvements that benefited current riders and brought about new ridership."

In addition to standard planning methods, McBride said, Metro is using a national consultant to "ensure we're aware of trends, innovations and national standards. Historically, we benchmark well against our transit peers in terms of efficiencies, effectiveness, and quality of service, but we can always learn from others."

Keeping the Community Moving

Metro Team Recognized for Their Front-Line Contributions

Metro employee's dedication to serving the community has been emphasized as the pandemic continues. Public transit employees at Metro are essential in keeping our county moving with getting residents to work, school, medical appointments, and essential shopping.

"Our operations are critical to the community infrastructure, and the passengers we transport

are often themselves critical to businesses and organizations that keep things moving," stated Metro's Executive Director Sean McBride. "I couldn't be more proud of the sacrifices our team members have made and continue to make. Our employees have had to deal with the tensions and frustrations associated with the pandemic and have been a dedicated workforce since the beginning."



Improvements Highlight 2021 Metro Performance

More Expected in 2022

With ridership numbers bouncing back from pandemic induced disruptions, Metro bus passengers experienced better, safer, and more convenient stops this past year. They also became more comfortable with existing fare technology.

The culmination of four years of shelter improvements, route adjustments and bus stop locations meant better experiences on many routes. The improvements resulted from partnerships with the cities of Kalamazoo, Portage, and Parchment, Oshtemo Township, the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County, and Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). Newly placed stops have benefited riders by providing inbound and outbound stops that are relatively matched on the street and safer waiting areas.

Continued focus on our passengers made bus stop upgrades possible. Updates included new highly visible bus stop signs and information signs that give passengers information on when the next bus is arriving and what bus routes are accessible from any particular stop.

Several new shelters were placed in the community in 2021. Locations were identified by community support, high ridership, and the ridership generators in the area. The new shelters have amenities that include solar lights, benches, and waste receptacles. State and federal grants made the new shelters possible.

With the approved expansion of the Central County Transportation Authority service area boundary into Oshtemo Township, Metro expanded Route 14 – West Main to provide service to the 9th Street Walmart, Oshtemo

Township Hall and the Oshtemo library. The Walmart stop includes a new shelter.

Technology That Works

Every year, and especially in 2021, more and more passengers download and use the Token Transit app on their phones. The contactless payment method is widespread among transit users, even among those who use the system infrequently. Token Transit can be used both on buses and on Metro Connect vehicles. The free app is available on Apple App Store and Google Play Store.



The Token Transit app and the myStop Mobile app are used together by riders to pay for and track their bus in real time.

This year, Metro is adding a loadable pay card for Metro Connect fares. The TripPass card is scanned when passengers board Metro Connect vehicles and the fare is taken off the card. This allows users of Metro Connect an additional method to pay for transportation. Other ridership efficiencies and amenities are being studied in the 2022 operational analysis (see story on Page 1).



Passenger Boards bus using Token Transit.

System-wide Approach Pays Off for Metro's Three Types of Services

To meet the diverse needs of individuals and organizations throughout greater Kalamazoo, the Metro system has evolved over the past two decades. Two governing boards now oversee a system that has expanded services dramatically in that time.

"The one constant," says Metro Executive Director Sean McBride, "has been the dedication of our transit workers. Their efforts, more than anything, are what allow us to plan for the future."

Public support, in the form of millage approvals and community partnerships, has also been a factor in the growth and evolution of the Metro system. Metro receives operating revenue from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). To receive these funds, Metro needs to have support from Kalamazoo County and Kalamazoo's urban area. This support is shown through the urban and countywide millages as well as passenger fares.

In 2020, voters approved the renewal of .3124 mills to support Metro Connect and Metro Share. The vote was approved with 25,016 (71.8%) yes votes and 9,820 (28.2%) no votes. Out of the 85 voting precincts in the county, 82 voted in support of the millage. Metro Connect provides shared origin-to-destination rides for trips such as medical appointments and groceries. Discounts are available for those with disabilities and users aged 62 and over. Metro Share provides ADA-accessible vans for non-profit agencies that serve seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Once having only served the City of Kalamazoo, Metro's growth now includes an extension of service into suburban and rural townships. Metro Connect, which once operated separately from the bus system, benefits from the planning and oversight of the Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA) and the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (KCTA).

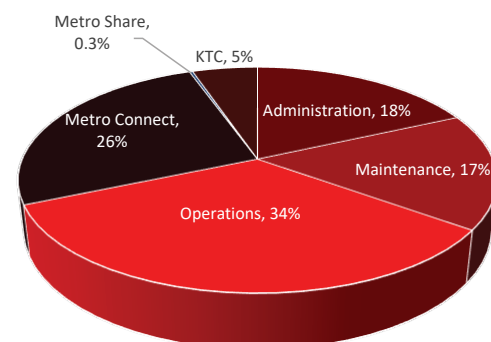
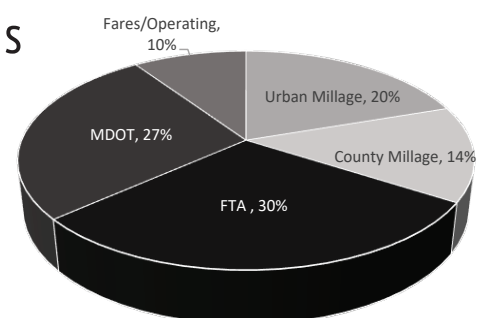
FY 2021 Audited Revenue and Expenses

Operating Revenue - \$20,267,337

MDOT	5,441,456
Urban Millage	4,026,205
FTA	6,000,584
County Millage	2,856,065
Fares/Operating	1,943,027

Operating Expenses - \$17,769,612

Operations	5,992,867
Metro Connect	4,598,689
Administration	3,246,021
Maintenance	2,953,598
Kalamazoo Transportation Center	932,564
Metro Share	45,873





ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Email: ccta@kmetro.com
Customer Service (269) 337 - 8222
Website: www.kmetro.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/metrotransit



530 N. Rose Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49007



www.kmetro.com
(269) 337 - 8222



Our Mission

To improve quality of life in the community by providing public transportation services that are dependable, convenient, safe, efficient, cost effective, and accessible for all.

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