



GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

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**GVMC
BOARD MEETING AGENDA**

10:30 a.m. March 11, 2013

Prince Conference Center

- 1) Approval of February 2013 Minutes - Attached**

- 2) Public Comments**

- 3) Finance Report - Attached**

- 4) Upcoming Events**
 - a) March 14th Communications Seminar**
 - b) April 8th Street Summit**

- 5) GVMC Board Meeting Schedule – April Meeting**

- 6) Discussion with Congressman Bill Huizenga**

- 7) Adjourn**

GRAND VALLEY METRO COUNCIL

Board Meeting

February 7, 2013

8:30 a.m.

Kent County Commission Chambers
Grand Rapids

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Vice Chair Don Hilton.

Members Present:

Alex Arends	Alpine Township
Ken Bergwerff	Jamestown Township
Tom Butcher	Grand Valley State University
Richard Clanton	City of Kentwood
Daryl Delabbio	Kent County
Mike DeVries	Grand Rapids Township
Brian Donovan	City of East Grand Rapids
Doyle Hayes	At-Large Member
George Heartwell	City of Grand Rapids
Carol Hennessey	Kent County
Don Hilton, Sr.	Gaines Township
Denny Hoemke	Algoma Township
Barb Holt	City of Walker
Jim Holtrop	Ottawa County
John Hoppough	City of Greenville
Mark Howe	City of Lowell
Rebecca Fleury	Village of Middleville
Cindy Janes	Cascade Township
Mark Lemoine	At-Large Member
Elias Lumpkins, Jr.	City of Grand Rapids
Mick McGraw	At-large Member
Brenda McNabb-Stange	City of Hastings
Audrey Nevins-Weiss	Byron Township
Steven Patrick	City of Coopersville
Jack Poll	City of Wyoming
Milt Rohwer	City of Grand Rapids
Al Vanderberg	Ottawa County
Bill VerHulst	City of Wyoming
Patrick Waterman	City of Hudsonville

Members Absent:

Jerry Alkema	Allendale Township
Jim Buck	City of Grandville
Dan Carlton	Georgetown Township
Jason Eppler	City of Ionia
Steve Grimm	Cannon Township
Brian Harrison	Caledonia Township
Cy Moore	Treasurer
Chuck Porter	Courtland Township
Jay Spencer	Plainfield Township
Michael Selden	City of Wayland
Toby VanEss	Tallmadge Township
Jim Saalfeld	Kent County
Roger Wills	City of Belding
Michael Young	City of Rockford

Others Present:

Chris Brown	Grand Valley Metro Council
David Czurak	Grand Rapids Business Journal
George Haga	Ada Township
Abed Itani	Grand Valley Metro Council
Dharmesh Jain	Grand Valley Metro Council / REGIS
Dennis Kaminski	Tyrone Township
Dennis Kent	MDOT
Gayle McCrath	Grand Valley Metro Council
Peter Varga	ITP / The Rapid
John Weiss	Grand Valley Metro Council

2. Minutes

MOTION: To Approve the Minutes of the January 2013 GVMC Board Meeting. MOVE - DeVries. SUPPORT - Hilton. MOTION CARRIED.

3. Public Comment

None

4. Oath of Office

Kent County Clerk Mary Hollinrake administered the Oath of Office to Brenda McNabb-Stange of Hastings and Ken Bergwerff of Jamestown Township. Vice Chair Don Hilton welcomed the new members to the Council. Both stated they were pleased to be a member of the Board of GVMC and looked forward to working with the entire Council.

5. Resignation of John Helmholdt as At-Large Member

John Weiss reported John Helmholdt has reluctantly resigned as an At-Large GVMC Board member as he now has a conflicting meeting at GRPS at the usual date & time of the GVMC Board meetings. John's service has been greatly appreciated and he will continue to help GVMC behind the scenes. We will now start the process to fill the vacant At-Large position.

6. Annual Report and Audit

John Weiss and GVMC staff (Chris Brown, Gayle McCrath, Abed Itani, and Dharmesh Jain) provided a GVMC Annual Report of our departments and activities. This year's report will act as a benchmark to measure future years against. The PowerPoint presentation is available to view on the GVMC website. (see attached presentation)

Peter Haefner of Vredevelde Haefner, LLC reported on the 2011/2012 Financial Audit. It was a clean audit with only one material weakness, that being the inability to prepare their own financial statements due to the cost of having a CPA on staff. This is a very common issue and which is reported in approximately 50% of public entities. It is possible that this weakness may disappear now that GVMC is contracting its financial work through Brown Accounting. The audit and financial report are also available on the GVMC website.

MOTION – To Accept the FY2011/2012 Audit and Financial Statements. MOVE – Delabbio. SUPPORT – Jane. MOTION CARRIED.

7. Other

Reminder the March GVMC Board meeting will be on Monday, March 11, 10:30 a.m. at the Prince Center.

8. Adjournment – 9:45 a.m.

MOTION – To Adjourn. MOVE – Delabbio. SUPPORT – DeVries. MOTION CARRIED.

GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS
January 31, 2013

ASSETS

	General Fund	REGIS	LGROW	REGIS CAPITAL	TOTALS
Assets					
Checking	\$ 582,051.43	\$ 288,536.45	\$ 179,041.49	\$ 16,568.46	\$ 1,066,197.83
Savings and Investments	415,336.57	638,209.67	-	253,237.82	1,306,784.06
Accounts receivable	490,661.77	67,764.50	21,984.00	-	580,410.27
Security Deposit	<u>3,930.61</u>	<u>3,470.99</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,401.60</u>
TOTAL Assets	<u>\$ 1,491,980.38</u>	<u>\$ 997,981.61</u>	<u>\$ 201,025.49</u>	<u>\$ 269,806.28</u>	<u>\$ 2,960,793.76</u>

LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES

Liabilities					
Accounts payable	\$ 262,263.45	\$ (923.80)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 261,339.65
Due to State of MI (overpayment)	55,647.18	-	-	-	55,647.18
Payroll liabilities	34,646.48	17,434.86	-	-	52,081.34
Employee benefits payable	<u>(1,412.49)</u>	<u>1,079.28</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(333.21)</u>
TOTAL Liabilities	<u>351,144.62</u>	<u>17,590.34</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>368,734.96</u>
Fund balances					
Unrestricted	1,140,835.76	-	-	-	1,140,835.76
Restricted for specific fund	<u>-</u>	<u>980,391.27</u>	<u>201,025.49</u>	<u>269,806.28</u>	<u>1,451,223.04</u>
TOTAL Fund Balances	<u>1,140,835.76</u>	<u>980,391.27</u>	<u>201,025.49</u>	<u>269,806.28</u>	<u>2,592,058.80</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES	<u>\$ 1,491,980.38</u>	<u>\$ 997,981.61</u>	<u>\$ 201,025.49</u>	<u>\$ 269,806.28</u>	<u>\$ 2,960,793.76</u>

GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE
For the four months ending January 31, 2013

	General Fund	REGIS	LGROW	REGIS Capital	Total
Revenues					
Federal Grants - transportation	\$ 267,274.68	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	267,274.68
Federal Grants - other	-	-	-	-	-
State and Local Grants	-	-	-	-	-
Membership and project fees	448,493.34	328,142.00	202,442.76	-	979,078.10
Membership recovery fees	-	-	-	-	-
Donations	-	-	-	-	-
Charges for services	8,500.25	38,950.60	-	-	47,450.85
Miscellaneous	9,769.35	-	-	-	9,769.35
Interest income	2,236.07	1,379.57	344.98	399.83	4,360.45
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Revenues	736,273.69	368,472.17	202,787.74	399.83	1,307,933.43
Expenditures					
General					
Salaries	233,077.20	125,850.40	-	-	358,927.60
Fringes	74,012.45	37,687.75	-	-	111,700.20
Contract services	27,156.52	104,803.88	37,066.36	-	169,026.76
Professional fees	26,406.21	4,440.37	-	-	30,846.58
Legal Services	-	-	-	-	-
Audit & Accounting Services	22,278.03	3,180.10	-	-	25,458.13
Advertising	379.24	-	-	-	379.24
Insurance	1,910.86	652.68	-	-	2,563.54
Meeting Expenditures	5,398.29	323.34	-	-	5,721.63
Dues and Subscriptions	410.50	806.00	-	-	1,216.50
Equipment rental	1,673.81	431.61	-	-	2,105.42
Office supplies	1,600.36	2,202.77	-	-	3,803.13
Mileage	1,394.61	196.30	-	-	1,590.91
Postage	166.32	43.99	-	-	210.31
Printing	243.98	230.72	-	-	474.70
Electricity	1,142.90	740.27	-	-	1,883.17
Telephone	3,407.34	2,077.31	-	-	5,484.65
Professional development	-	2,772.68	-	-	2,772.68
Rent	20,815.23	13,452.77	-	-	34,268.00
Equipment	-	89.83	-	-	89.83
Repairs and maintenance	233.06	26.19	-	-	259.25
Vehicle Expense	2,808.08	-	-	-	2,808.08
Miscellaneous	936.82	1,828.86	-	-	2,765.68
Capital Outlay	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL Expenditures	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL Expenditures	\$ 425,451.81	\$ 301,837.82	\$ 37,066.36	\$ -	764,355.99
Revenues over (under) expenditures	310,821.88	66,634.35	165,721.38	399.83	543,577.44
Other financing sources (uses)					
Transfers In	-	-	-	28,500.00	28,500.00
Transfers Out	-	(28,500.00)	-	-	(28,500.00)
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total other financing sources (uses)	-	(28,500.00)	-	28,500.00	-
Net changes in fund balances	310,821.88	38,134.35	165,721.38	28,899.83	543,577.44
Fund balances, beginning of year	830,013.88	942,256.92	35,304.11	240,906.45	2,048,481.36
Fund balances, end of year	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Fund balances, end of year	\$ 1,140,835.76	\$ 980,391.27	\$ 201,025.49	\$ 269,806.28	\$ 2,592,058.80

GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
Comparison to budget
For the four months ending January 31, 2013

	YTD General Fund	Annual Budget General Fund	Difference Over/(Under)	YTD Regis	Annual Budget Regis	Difference Over/(Under)
Revenues						
Federal Grants - transportation	\$ 267,274.68	\$ 1,351,985.00	\$ (1,084,710.32)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Federal Grants - other	-	-	-	-	-	-
State and Local Grants	-	-	-	-	-	-
Membership and project fees	448,493.34	451,655.00	(3,161.66)	328,142.00	656,285.00	(328,143.00)
Membership recovery fees	-	-	-	-	-	-
Donations	-	5,500.00	(5,500.00)	-	-	-
Charges for services	8,500.25	12,400.00	(3,899.75)	38,950.60	87,400.00	(48,449.40)
Miscellaneous	9,769.35	12,100.00	(2,330.65)	-	-	-
Interest income	2,236.07	1,850.00	386.07	1,379.57	5,997.00	(4,617.43)
Total Revenues	736,273.69	1,835,490.00	(1,099,216.31)	368,472.17	749,682.00	(381,209.83)
Expenditures						
General						
Salaries	233,077.20	852,260.32	(619,183.12)	125,850.40	362,130.00	(236,279.60)
Fringes	74,012.45	333,328.45	(259,316.00)	37,687.75	147,889.00	(110,201.25)
Contract services	27,156.52	341,762.00	(314,605.48)	104,803.88	172,590.00	(67,786.12)
Professional fees	26,406.21	3,500.00	22,906.21	4,440.37	17,500.00	(13,059.63)
Legal Services	-	9,000.00	(9,000.00)	-	5,000.00	(5,000.00)
Audit & Accounting Services	22,278.03	34,000.00	(11,721.97)	3,180.10	3,500.00	(319.90)
Advertising	379.24	6,950.00	(6,570.76)	-	1,688.00	(1,688.00)
Insurance	1,910.86	9,100.00	(7,189.14)	652.68	5,500.00	(4,847.32)
Meeting Expenditures	5,398.29	16,500.00	(11,101.71)	323.34	4,000.00	(3,676.66)
Dues and Subscriptions	410.50	4,250.00	(3,839.50)	806.00	2,000.00	(1,194.00)
Equipment rental	1,673.81	6,000.00	(4,326.19)	431.61	2,500.00	(2,068.39)
Office supplies	1,600.36	13,500.00	(11,899.64)	2,202.77	8,768.00	(6,565.23)
Mileage	1,394.61	27,330.00	(25,935.39)	196.30	5,665.00	(5,468.70)
Postage	166.32	-	166.32	43.99	500.00	(456.01)
Printing	243.98	1,900.00	(1,656.02)	230.72	1,545.00	(1,314.28)
Electricity	1,142.90	4,150.00	(3,007.10)	740.27	3,200.00	(2,459.73)
Telephone	3,407.34	12,800.00	(9,392.66)	2,077.31	10,098.00	(8,020.69)
Professional development	-	8,000.00	(8,000.00)	2,772.68	5,000.00	(2,227.32)
Rent	20,815.23	61,200.00	(40,384.77)	13,452.77	42,000.00	(28,547.23)
Equipment	-	-	-	89.83	-	89.83
Repairs and maintenance	233.06	4,350.00	(4,116.94)	26.19	3,478.00	(3,451.81)
Fuel and Oil	2,808.08	48,800.00	(45,991.92)	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	936.82	7,500.00	(6,563.18)	1,828.86	8,000.00	(6,171.14)
Capital Outlay	-	25,000.00	(25,000.00)	28,500.00	33,003.00	(4,503.00)
TOTAL Expenditures	\$ 425,451.81	\$ 1,831,180.77	\$ (1,405,728.96)	\$ 330,337.82	\$ 845,554.00	\$ (515,216.18)
Revenues over (under) expenditures	310,821.88	4,309.23	306,512.65	38,134.35	(95,872.00)	134,006.35

GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Comparison to budget

For the four months ending January 31, 2013

	YTD LGROW	Annual Budget LGROW	Difference Over/(Under)		YTD Regis Cap	Annual Budget Regis Cap	Difference Over/(Under)
Revenues							
Federal Grants - transportation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Federal Grants - other	-	-	-		-	-	-
State and Local Grants	-	-	-		-	-	-
Membership and project fees	202,442.76	7,755.00	194,687.76		-	-	-
Membership recovery fees	-	-	-		-	-	-
Donations	-	25,000.00	(25,000.00)		-	-	-
Charges for services	-	165,261.00	(165,261.00)		-	-	-
Miscellaneous	-	-	-		28,500.00	28,500.00	-
Interest income	344.98	-	344.98		399.83	1,000.00	(600.17)
	<u>202,787.74</u>	<u>198,016.00</u>	<u>4,771.74</u>		<u>28,899.83</u>	<u>29,500.00</u>	<u>(600.17)</u>
Total Revenues	202,787.74	198,016.00	4,771.74		28,899.83	29,500.00	(600.17)
Expenditures							
General							
Salaries	-	11,967.00	(11,967.00)		-	-	-
Fringes	-	1,992.51	(1,992.51)		-	-	-
Contract services	37,066.36	25,160.00	11,906.36		-	-	-
Professional fees	-	165,261.00	(165,261.00)		-	8,000.00	(8,000.00)
Legal Services	-	-	-		-	-	-
Audit & Accounting Services	-	-	-		-	-	-
Advertising	-	-	-		-	-	-
Insurance	-	-	-		-	-	-
Meeting Expenditures	-	600.00	(600.00)		-	-	-
Dues and Subscriptions	-	-	-		-	-	-
Equipment rental	-	-	-		-	-	-
Office supplies	-	-	-		-	-	-
Mileage	-	-	-		-	-	-
Postage	-	-	-		-	-	-
Printing	-	1,000.00	(1,000.00)		-	-	-
Electricity	-	-	-		-	-	-
Telephone	-	-	-		-	-	-
Professional development	-	-	-		-	-	-
Rent	-	-	-		-	-	-
Equipment	-	-	-		-	-	-
Repairs and maintenance	-	-	-		-	-	-
Fuel and Oil	-	-	-		-	-	-
Miscellaneous	-	1,000.00	(1,000.00)		-	2,000.00	(2,000.00)
Capital Outlay	-	-	-		-	32,000.00	(32,000.00)
TOTAL Expenditures	\$ <u>37,066.36</u>	\$ <u>206,980.51</u>	\$ <u>(169,914.15)</u>		\$ <u>-</u>	\$ <u>42,000.00</u>	\$ <u>(42,000.00)</u>
Revenues over (under) expenditures	165,721.38	(8,964.51)	174,685.89		28,899.83	(12,500.00)	41,399.83

'A banner year for potholes'

Advertisement

Freeze-thaw cycle very tough on roads

Updated: Monday, 11 Feb 2013, 6:38 PM EST
Published : Monday, 11 Feb 2013, 5:36 PM EST

- By Ken Kolker

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (WOOD) - Michigan Street goes straight through what is touted as Grand Rapids' future - the Medical Mile. But after a few days of temperatures swings it looks more like Washboard Way.

In 2012, the **Grand Valley Metro Council** labeled that stretch of Michigan Street a 7 on a scale of 10, where 10 is the best rating.

But this year, that rating is likely to fall a lot despite the fresh temporary patches. Local leaders said the early outbreak of potholes throughout West Michigan is in part because road commissions are operating on 1997 funding levels and because of an up-and-down winter.

Freezes then thaws create a lot of jaw-jarring thuds.

Assistant City Manager Eric DeLong described it as "a banner year" for potholes and the road conditions as "a crisis."

"Every year is a difficult year," said John Weiss of the Grand Valley Metro Council. "This year probably will be an extraordinarily difficult year."

DeLong told 24 Hour News 8 that 10 yrs ago, 60% of Grand Rapids' roads were rated in good shape. Now, more than 60% are rated in poor shape.

He said there are "more car repairs, more tires, more alignments."

That's obvious on **Baldwin Street in Georgetown Township, arguably the worst busy street in the area.** Baldwin Street is so bad it's rated a 2 out of 10.

"It's just the weather," **Chris Rillema of the Ottawa County Road Commission** told 24 Hour News 8. "We've been patching 'em up the best we can, and with the cold and the hot, it's all you can do."

He said only the biggest potholes are being filled right now.

"We're trying to get the biggest, you know as far as the deepest and largest holes filled so that, you know, it's as easy as possible on everyone's vehicles."

Snyder town hall: Roads, RTW, economy

Advertisement

Questions from studio audience, social media

Updated: Thursday, 07 Feb 2013, 11:27 PM EST

Published : Thursday, 07 Feb 2013, 7:26 PM EST

- By 24 Hour News 8 staff

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (WOOD) - Calling Michigan "the comeback state," Gov. Rick Snyder answered questions from a studio audience and from social media submissions at the WOOD TV8 studios about all things Michigan hours after he delivered his budget proposals.

Snyder on Thursday unveiled his proposed \$50.9 billion budget to lawmakers who sit on budget committees. Snyder says he supports expanding Medicaid eligibility to hundreds of thousands of residents without insurance under the Obama administration's health care overhaul.

A major piece of the budget includes a call to raise the state gasoline tax from 19 cents a gallon to 33 cents and increase vehicle registration fees to fix ailing roads and bridges.

Snyder proposed giving public schools, universities and community colleges 2% more funding in the next school year.

==Watch the full town hall forum above==

The first question was about improving our roads and the proposed plans involving raising fees, taxes, or a combination to raise the money needed to pay for the roads.

"It's us for us," Snyder said. "That's why we've done the proposal the way we have. The more you use the roads, the more you pay. If you drive a lot, use the roads a lot, you'll pay more."

Many viewers asked the governor via the WOOD TV8 Facebook page why toll roads aren't an option. Snyder told 24 Hour News 8 they aren't feasible in Michigan. As a condition to get federal dollars, states can't turn the freeways into toll roads.

Priority Health's Wayne Wilson asked about the proposed expansion of Medicaid. The governor said the expansion "gets back to the fundamentals of cost, care and access. How do we get people into a primary care relationship rather than the ER? ... The quality of their life goes up dramatically."

The governor said the Affordable Care Act was not the best health option for the country because it "doesn't address wellness and primary care. But it's the law of the land. My view is the best answer is to do the health exchange well, let's do it right."

If done correctly, the plan could save Michigan about \$200 million a year.

Questions on the right-to-work law came from two members of the studio audience, challenging both the premise of the law and the way it came about at the end of December in the lame duck session.

Snyder said even before Michigan was a right-to-work state, the state was hemorrhaging jobs. "So that (right-to-work) was not the key driver," he said. "To put it in a simple context, I did not go looking for this issue. ... It's here, let's make it work and take on other issues. I'm going to take the side of the workers. Right-to-work is between a worker and a union."

He added, "I believe it will bring jobs to Michigan. It's a topic I think we can agree to disagree and we can move

along together."

On jobs, Snyder repeatedly touted **mitalent.org**, a Michigan website that helps match workers with jobs. He talked about a group of companies throughout the state that offer an apprenticeship program for workers to get paid while going to school for a skilled trade, similar to programs in Germany.

Education was a much-discussed topic. Patti Driscoll, an audience member who said her job was "Mom," wanted to know if Snyder was in favor of more year-round schools.

"The schools are the center of the community," he said, noting the Pathways to Potential pilot program underway in West Michigan. "One thing I'd like to do is more and more make the school more of the hub of the community."

Montcalm County Sheriff Barnwell and another self-described Mom, Lauren Peck Tori, asked questions about law enforcement and rehab for people with criminal pasts.

"There are a number of programs we've added that are good," Snyder said. "The Michigan Prisoner Re-entry Program wasn't good enough and we're implementing improvements." He added the entire criminal justice system needs reform, and more needs to be done to help the unemployed and those with a record to stay on the straight path and find a sustainable job.

In a few quick questions, he indicated he is not in support at this time of changing Michigan from a winner-takes-all state to a proportional delegate state in the Electoral College.

He also touched on immigration and food safety.

"You're my customers," he said at the end of the town hall. "This gives me a chance to hear what's on your mind and gives me a chance to give you the full information directly from the horse's mouth -- and I hope you're thinking of the mouth."

The governor slipped in his oft-repeated mantra to keep "relentless positive action" moving forward.

Snyder's discussion of the Electoral College and schools struck a chord with Democratic State Rep. Brandon Dillon of Grand Rapids.

"The governor may have to go back to school himself to try to figure those numbers and how they actually comport with reality because there are a lot of schools, particularly in Grand Rapids, who would tell you they've seen massive cuts over the last two years and

the governor hasn't begun to address that," said Dillon.

After the cameras were off, people cleared the studio. Some left with more insight and some left wanting more.

"It's kind of a tough audience when you're on for an hour live. I think he handled himself pretty well with some very pointed questions and some personal at times," said Sen. Dave Hildenbrand.

"I think the governor was very wishy-washy and refused to answer a couple of really tough questions about some of the divisive things that were done. I wish he would just address those head on and tell people where he stands especially with issues like the Electoral College. I think he would get a lot more cooperation from people on the other side," said Dillon.

GR roads task force: Invest \$9M/year

Advertisement

63% of Grand Rapids roads rated 'poor'

Updated: Wednesday, 13 Feb 2013, 6:51 AM EST
Published : Tuesday, 12 Feb 2013, 5:35 PM EST

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (WOOD) - A task force assigned to look into fixing Grand Rapids streets says the City must act now -- but taxpayers may have to foot the bill.

The Sustainable Streets Task Force says 63% of Grand Rapids streets -- about 300 miles-worth -- are in poor condition. Only about 50 miles of the city's 600 miles of streets are considered in good condition.

"It's really urgent," said Chris Reader, a citizen member of the Grand Rapids task force put together to tackle the ailing roads. "At best, we're racing to catch up."

The City says the current condition of roads is embarrassing, but that it's more than an issue of pride. If left in disrepair, the task force says, 94% of roads will be in poor condition within nine years.

To determine that, the City has turned to the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council. The council has outfitted a truck with laser measuring tools, cameras and GPS to get an idea of road conditions.

"This allows us to check the entire roadway surface for all of Grand Rapids -- all of Kent County," explained Darrell Robinson, transportation planner for the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council.

It helps to catch problems before they're potholes, with cameras that can see the smallest cracks in the roads.

"You can see like a dime on the freeway as you're driving 65 miles an hour down the road," said Robinson.

Michigan Street is a prime example of the problem: A bumpily poor excuse of a red carpet from highways to a fast-growing and booming downtown community.

The City Commission appointed the task force to study road conditions and figure out how to pay for improvements.

The City's final goal is to have 70% of all city roads in a "state of good repair" during the next 15 years. It's estimated that would take a \$22 million investment.

Gov. Rick Snyder said he intends to focus heavily on Michigan roads in the coming years. In his budget, he asked lawmakers to raise the state gas tax from 19 cents per gallon to 33 cents per gallon to fix aging infrastructure.

On top of that, the Grand Rapids task force recommends a new local investment of \$9 million each year.

Task force officials say maintaining the current income tax rate would raise that money.

"No one should see a difference," said Reader.

But to keep income tax at current levels, voters would have to extend the temporary income tax they approved in 2010. Those funds are currently being used to transform public safety and other services into leaner operations.

Acting now is key, the City says: Minor repairs to about 300 miles of not-so-bad roads would cost around \$1 million that the City could scrape together. But if we wait, that million would go to just one mile.

"Go drive around your streets and ask yourselves: Is this the future you want for your city? How will we attract investment in our city without investing ourselves?" said Reader.

The task force is also recommending making sidewalk maintenance a City responsibility. Currently, home and business owners are responsible for the sidewalks in front of their property -- but many can't keep up with repairs. The task force said having the City take over will mean better repairs and ease the financial burden on private owners.

The task force will be seeking community input through focus groups and input session. Dates for those meetings have not yet been announced.



Officials say crumbling West Michigan roads in dire need of Snyder's \$4.6B transportation plan



By [Zane McMillin | zmcmilli@mlive.com](mailto:zmcmilli@mlive.com)

on February 08, 2013 at 6:17 AM, updated February 08, 2013 at 9:59 AM

GRAND RAPIDS, MI — Gov. Rick Snyder's proposed \$4.6 billion transportation budget is being lauded by West Michigan groups hoping to see a substantial state cash infusion to help fix the region's crumbling roads.

Snyder on Thursday unveiled his transportation plan, [part of a \\$50.9 billion proposed state budget for the 2014 fiscal year](#).

The governor's budget proposes spending nearly \$3.7 billion on road and bridge work in 2014 and 2015. The roughly \$900 million extra largely would go toward public transit, debt service and other areas.

Some \$1.2 billion of the road funding would be raised by increasing the state gas tax to 33 cents from 19 cents, and increasing vehicle registration taxes.

"It's been a very, very long time since there's been any increased revenues for road repair," said John Weiss, executive director of the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council, an intergovernmental transportation group.

The gas tax has not changed since 1997 and money generated from its collection has dwindled in part thanks to more fuel-efficient vehicles.

The cost of construction materials like asphalt also have increased over the years, Weiss said.

"I think the governor is definitely courageous in proposing what would bring about some significant revenues to fix the state's road problems," Weiss said.

Budget figures estimate a 33 cent gas tax would raise \$728 million in 2014. The governor would increase light-vehicle registration taxes by 60 percent and heavy vehicle taxes by 25 percent.

That proposal, Snyder estimated, would raise \$508 million in 2014, and cost motorists on average an extra \$120 annually.

Still, Snyder's proposal is liable to run into opposition from members of both political parties who are wary of raising taxes for already-struggling families.

Critics also suggest gas tax revenues are unsustainable in the long run, and Snyder proposed switching to an as-yet unspecified formula for calculating gas taxes in 2016.

Weiss said a gas tax increase likely would lead to a pinch for Michigan families and businesses, but noted local units of government have been feeling a pinch for years.

"Resources have been squeezed so much that you can't just do it with cuts," Weiss said of finding money for road work.

"You reach a point," he said, "where revenues have to deal with the issues."

Whatever the case, Eric DeLong, Grand Rapids' deputy city manager, said the proposed funding levels are encouraging for a city whose 589-mile road network has rapidly deteriorated over the past decade.

How road fixes are funded will be up to Snyder and the Legislature to debate, DeLong said.

"The important thing is to find a way to make the required investments," he said.

Some 60 percent of Grand Rapids' roads are in poor condition, according to city estimates. That's an about-face from a decade ago, when 59 percent of roads were rated in good or fair condition, DeLong said.

The city collects roughly \$12 million annually from gas tax redistribution, and some \$10.5 million of that is used for operations such as salting roads, patching potholes and plowing roads.

That leaves less than \$2 million for much-needed capital expenses like road reconstruction, DeLong said. The city has estimated it needs \$16 million each year for capital projects like street reconstruction, meaning there is roughly a \$14 million funding gap.

To help scrounge, the city has had to break out the paring knife. Employee compensation is down more than 12 percent over two years and staffing has been reduced by 19 percent, among other measures, DeLong said.

This month, [a Sustainable Streets Task Force formed in early 2012](#) will lay out its proposals to tackle the city's roads funding issue.

"It's going to get worse if we can't make the investments," DeLong said of road conditions.

Snyder's proposals now will be picked apart by the Legislature, which in coming months will roll out its own proposals.

Sen. Roger Kahn, R-Saginaw, [already has introduced two possibilities](#) for road funding. One would amend the gas tax using a percentage-based formula and increase vehicle registration fees. The other proposal would eliminate the gas tax altogether and increase the 6-percent state sales tax by 2 percent.

The fact Snyder and the Legislature are all but certain to begin in-depth debate on the road funding issue after years of delay was heartening to the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce.

Andy Johnston, the chamber's vice president of government and corporate affairs, said the chamber agrees with Snyder's sentiment that not paying now means paying more later.

This is coming from a group that, admittedly, is not historically a fan of tax increases.

"We haven't been a fan of tax increases, but I think that's the key point about the roads right now," Johnston said. "The longer we let them deteriorate, the more our roads degrade, the more expensive it's going to be."

And that, said Metro Council's Weiss, should not be a partisan issue.

"This is not a Republican or a Democrat or a private problem," Weiss said, "it's everyone's problem."

Zane McMillin may be reached through [email](#) and [Twitter](#).

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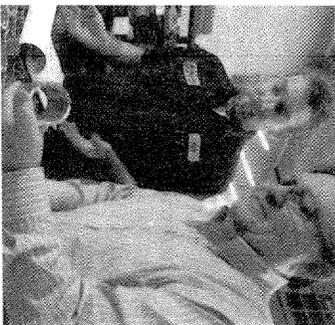
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old-fashioned way.

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1980s and 1990s when everything was just humming along, probably not as much growth as we saw in the 1970s but enough that there was plenty of work," he said. "But in the first of 2000 when the recession hit, it hit Michigan the worst and work slowed down to a snail's pace. Over the past two years, though, it's been ramping back up." Kelly cautioned, however, that people shouldn't celebrate too

WOLVERINE PRESIDENT Mike Kelly, center, and brothers Dennis and Mike Gill visit the Digital Tool & Die construction site. Photo by Johnny Quirin

much even though auto manufacturing has improved and the supplier sector is in a better place than just two years ago. The reason for his caution is

those firms' owners are cautious. "None of them want to add any overhead in bricks and mortar,"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ▶▶

labor costs incurred in the third quarter" at the Holland plant. A division of LG Chem of Korea, the company received a stimulus grant to make advanced batteries for electric vehicles but did not begin production last year as planned. A Grand Rapids television station reported in October that some current and former LG Chem em-

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Metro Council is netting transportation dollars

Final tally reaches \$274M in two-plus years.

David Czurak
Grand Rapids Business Journal

Grand Valley Metro Council Transportation Director Abed Itani said the agency has been able to get a good share of transportation funding over the last two-plus fiscal years.

Itani said the council received \$77 million in federal and state funds in FY11 for 139 projects in the metro planning area GVMC serves. In FY12, he said the funding reached \$101 million for 141 improvement projects. And since October, the start of the agency's current fiscal year, Itani said the council has captured \$96 million that will go to 105 projects. So over the last two-and-a-quarter fiscal years, GVMC has received \$274

million in funding for 385 projects.

The Michigan Department of Transportation has designated \$97 million of that total to the council over that timeframe, including \$26 million so far this fiscal year. Another \$85 million has gone for transit projects by the Interurban Transit Partnership.

"That's what your fees to the Metro Council leads to — about \$100 million in transportation revenue each year," said John Weiss, GVMC executive director, to board members.

Weiss added that every board member has an opportunity to get a project on the council's to-do list. "It's a really democratic process that everybody takes part in. But you need to be present to win," he said.

The council has been working on a four-year transportation plan that would run from 2014 through 2017. The fiscal goal is to raise \$13 million in local funds, which is expected to leverage \$42 million

from the federal government.

"Of course, millions more project dollars were requested by the communities, but by working together, the group was able to prioritize the most critical projects for our region," said Weiss. "There are future meetings scheduled, which will appropriate other federal, state and local dollars."

Gayle McGrath, GVMC's director of human resources and administration, said attendance at and revenue from the council's quarterly luncheon meetings both rose dramatically beginning last April, when former Meijer Inc. President Mark Murray was the guest speaker. Attendance more than doubled from the luncheon a year earlier, with 104 on hand to hear Murray speak. Revenue from Murray's appearance was \$2,288. The previous April luncheon drew 54 and produced \$1,242 in revenue.

In July, Michigan Lt. Gov. Brian Calley drew 173 to the luncheon, up from 54 attendees in July 2011.

GVMC collected \$6,325 in revenue from Calley's appearance, easily topping the \$1,188 the council netted the previous year.

For FY12, the council took in nearly \$9,000 from its four quarterly luncheons. That figure was \$4,454 in FY11. "We weren't meeting our expenses then," said McGrath.

Some of the luncheon revenue comes from event sponsors like Meijer Inc. and Consumers Energy.

GVMC began the current fiscal year with Michigan Attorney General Bill Schutte speaking in October. U.S. Congressman Bill Huizenga is next. He is set to appear March 11 at Calvin College's Prince Conference Center. Tickets are \$25, which includes lunch. Seats and tables can be reserved by contacting McGrath, who said the attendance figure is already at 80.

Lake Michigan Credit Union is sponsoring Huizenga's appearance.



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John Weiss 516933

Grand Valley Metro Council
678 Front Ave NW Ste 200

Grand Rapids MI 49504-5335

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Bad potholes begin proliferating in West Michigan, underscoring region's road funding problem



By [Zane McMillin](#) | zmcmilli@mlive.com

on February 12, 2013 at 1:29 PM, updated February 12, 2013 at 2:24 PM

GRAND RAPIDS, MI — Pockmarked Pearl Street at U.S. 131 in downtown Grand Rapids has made "bumpy ride" an understatement for motorists who dare to drive even a few miles per hour down the treacherous stretch.

The short drag between Front and Mt. Vernon avenues is a prime example of the lashing roads have suffered because of recent wild, wet weather swings that alternate between [frigid](#) and [unseasonably warm](#).

Such conditions are taking a serious toll on area roads, with craters of various size proliferating at places like Pearl Street and U.S. 131, and on thoroughfares throughout West Michigan.

It's the making of a "potentially long pothole season," said Jerry Byrne, director of maintenance and local construction for the Kent County Road Commission.

"We've had a lot of rain and a lot of wet snow, and that means all that water went down and it froze pretty hard," Byrne said. "It's basically like putting a piece of plexiglass down. It can't move, because the water's frozen."

That pressure means cracking roads and car-swallowing potholes, made worse by the hundreds of thousands of motorists who travel daily throughout West Michigan.

Potholes are "out earlier this year than they have been in the past, and they're probably worse this year than they have been because we've had such dramatic differences in temperatures," said John Weiss, executive director of the Grand Valley Metro Council.

That does not bode well for local municipalities that have weathered years of pared-down budgets for road work, Weiss said.

It also underscores and exacerbates the years-old problem.

In Grand Rapids alone, some 60 percent of roads are rated in poor condition. Eric DeLong, Grand Rapids' deputy city manager, has estimated the city faces a \$14 million funding gap for road repairs.

[DeLong told MLive this month](#) the city collects roughly \$12 million each year from gas taxes. More than \$10 million goes toward operations that include salting roads and patching potholes.

There is about \$2 million left for much-needed capital expenses like road reconstruction, and city officials estimate they need to spend \$16 million annually to repair crumbling roads.

Funding woes are, of course, not unique to Grand Rapids. The Kent County Road Commission takes in about \$9 million annually from gas tax collection, and last year received the same amount of revenue it did in 2000.

Not only has there been less money for repairs, the cost of construction materials such as asphalt have risen dramatically over the years, officials said.

The pressing issue was made more timely because of Gov. Rick Snyder's recently unveiled budget. [Snyder proposed billions of dollars for road repairs](#) across the state, paid for through increased vehicle registration fees and upping the gas tax to 33 cents from 19 cents.

Still, that plan is subject to scrutiny and change by a Legislature likely wary of raising taxes on already struggling families and businesses. With negotiations expected to last several months, short-term fixes remain the norm in West Michigan.

Another area where potholes have become prevalent of late is Baldwin Street in Georgetown Township, [which has proved to be a perennial problem](#).

Last year, it was among the worst roads in a [Regional Pavement Condition Survey Report](#) published by Weiss's Metro Council.

The Metro Council, a coalition of 35 West Michigan governmental units that focus on transportation issues, [operates a \\$400,000 van](#) whose sole mission is to seek out pavement problem spots.

Weiss said the van, typically used during the summer, covered 2,400 miles of road in 2012. It will be deployed this year when conditions warm and are more conducive to an accurate picture of how roads fared during the winter.

Because of recent weather swings, Weiss said he would be unsurprised if roads that were rated in good or fair condition in 2012 devolve to poor for this year's survey.

"We've been doing this long enough to see the deterioration of the roads in the region, and it's just exacerbated by these weather conditions," Weiss said.

Both Grand Rapids and the Kent County Road Commission offer various ways to report potholes.

Reports may be submitted on the [road commission's website](#). [Grand Rapids 311](#) is a smartphone app operated by the city that allows users to submit information about problem spots.

Because of strained funds, though, Byrne said local departments must prioritize large, potentially damaging potholes over "nuisance" potholes that do little more than toss drivers about.

Cold weather means most agencies are using what is called a cold patch, a more flexible material that is able to better weather the effects of moisture than the denser, hot patches used during warm weather months.

"You take (a pothole an) inch and a half or less, the material's not going to stick in them," Byrne said. "You need somewhat of a deeper hole that will allow the material to stay in."

Zane McMillin may be reached through [email](#) and [Twitter](#).

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