

MINUTES

**Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
Transportation Division
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, March 15, 2023
Rapid Central Station Conference Room
250 Cesar E. Chavez Ave SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503**

Naramore, Chair of the Policy Committee, called the March 15, 2023 meeting to order at 9:33 am. Those present introduced themselves to the Committee.

I. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Voting Members Present

Dan Apkarian
Mark Bennett
Terry Brod
Dennis Durham
Francisco Garcia
Lisa Golder
Dennis Kent

*Proxy for
Mike Burns*

Doug LaFave
Greg Madura
Josh Naramore, *Chair*
Darrel Schmalzel
Terry Schweitzer
Rick Sprague

*Proxy for
Michael DeVries*

Justin Stadt
Julius Suchy
Cameron Van Wyngarden,
Luke Walters

*Vice Chair
Proxy for
Jeff Franklin*

Steve Warren
Rod Weersing
Kevin Wisselink

City of Rockford
Tallmadge Charter Township
Cannon Township
City of Grandville
Ottawa County Road Commission
City of Kentwood
MDOT
City of Lowell
City of East Grand Rapids
Alpine Township
City of Grand Rapids
City of Walker
City of Kentwood
Kent County Road Commission
Grand Rapids Charter Township
Georgetown Charter Township
Ada Township
Plainfield Charter Township
MDOT
MDOT
Kent County Road Commission
Gaines Charter Township
The Rapid

Staff and Non-Voting Guests Present

Scott Alsgaard
Clover Brown
Andrea Faber
Mara Gericke
Jack Hoffman
Laurel Joseph
Peter Kimball
George Yang
Mike Zonyk

Hope Network
GVMC
GVMC
GVMC
The Rapid Board Member
GVMC
GVMC
GVMC
GVMC

Voting Members Not Present

Mike Burns
Michael DeVries
Adam Elenbaas
Karyn Ferrick
Jeff Franklin
Kevin Green
Jerry Hale
Wayne Harrall
Bryan Harrison
Jim Holtvluwer
Matt McConnon
Tom Noreen
Kris Pachla
Rob Postema
Casey Ries
Dean Smith
Dan Strikwerda
Ben Swayze
Jeff Thornton
Don Tillema
Blaine Wing
Mike Womack
Member Awaiting Appointment

City of Lowell
Grand Rapids Charter Township
Allendale Charter Township
City of Grand Rapids
MDOT
Algoma Township
Lowell Charter Township
Grand Rapids Charter Township
Caledonia Charter Township
Ottawa County
Courtland Township
Nelson Township
Kent County
City of Wyoming
GRFIA
Jamestown Charter Township
City of Hudsonville
Cascade Charter Township
Village of Caledonia
Byron Township
Village of Sparta
City of Cedar Springs
Village of Sand Lake

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Referring to Item II: Attachment A, Naramore entertained the following motion:

MOTION by M. Bennett, SUPPORT by Suchy, to approve the November 16, 2022 Policy minutes and the January 18, 2023 joint Technical/Policy minutes
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Jack Hoffman, who is a resident of the City of Grand Rapids and a member of the ITP board and the ITP planning committee, gave a public comment. His purpose in his comments was to elevate the discussion of the opportunity offered by a unified state government. He provided data points to show that Michigan’s long-standing system of transportation funding based on the motor fuel tax requires a new approach. He stated that to keep the roads in Kent County in good repair requires \$280 million state and local funds, and here we spend \$200 million. He added that of the \$200 million we do spend, fuel taxes raise only \$80 million. Commercial vehicles cause 98% of the annual wear and tear on roads but contribute only 18% of the fuel tax. Vehicle miles per gallon go up each year, but the fuel taxes paid per \$1 of wear and tear go down, and the electric vehicles that pay no fuel tax come online. He stated that there is an option that will provide the needed funding without increasing the fuel tax or amending ACT 51. The option is mileage-based user fees for commercial and electric vehicles. He added that for personal electronic vehicles, user fee technology is an add on to the already installed GPS system or personal phone. His hope is that everyone at the meeting and the communities they

represent will participate in this discussion before December 31, 2024, when the current Michigan legislature expires. He said that he talked with Mayor Bliss, and she thinks it is important to amend the state statute by the end of 2023. He closed by saying that if anyone would like to discuss this, he is open to a conversation, and his hope is that GVMC will make a gesture of support to the state by the end of 2023.

IV. TIP AMENDMENTS

Referring to Item IV: Attachment A, Zonyk introduced the amendments to the FY2023-2026 TIP that were described in the agenda package. They are as follows:

MDOT

MDOT is requesting approval for multiple S/TIP line items and two GPA threshold changes. The line item amendments are due to scope changes, added phases, and changes in fiscal year. The M-6/92nd St project is a Wetland Mitigation site ownership transfer to Byron Township and is treated as a new project needing approval. The M-37 project has only State funds but has been added back into the TIP as a regionally significant project requiring an amendment. The two GPA thresholds include the Trunkline Bridge GPA project for I-96 which has had an increase in PE funds requiring a GPA amendment, and the Trunkline Road GPA, which is due to cost increases on Capital Preventative Maintenance Road projects.

Zonyk also added that there has been a minor change to job number 205235, which is an I-96 ITS application project. The federal amendment type description needs to be changed from “moved FY 23 to FY 24” to “FY 24 to FY 23.”

D. Kent added that most of the S/TIP exempt projects are moving out of the current S/TIP cycle largely due to budget reasons. MDOT is also adding a right of way phase for job number 210072, which is a US-131 reconstruction project. This addition went through the Technical Committee on March 1. He added there are a few smaller scope projects as well. The M-37 project will be added to the TIP as a regionally significant project. At some point in the future, the same will most likely be done for the I-96 Fruitridge project, but the money has not shown up yet.

KCRC and OCRC

KCRC and OCRC have been awarded Bridge funds for Crahen Ave. and 12th Ave. bridge rehabilitation projects, triggering a GPA threshold change for Local Bridge.

City of Grand Rapids

Grand Rapids has been awarded Earmark Funds for Cesar Chavez (Clyde Park to Stolpe) in FY23, will advance construct Cesar Chavez (Stolpe St to Hall) using FY24 STU funds, and has moved Cesar Chavez (Hall to Beacon) from FY26 to

FY25. Federal, Local, and Non-Participating changes for these require federal approval.

Joseph added that the City of Grand Rapids received earmark funding for the first stretch and is now proposing to move up the other three phases to utilize the 2023, 2024, and 2025 funding. She assumes there will be a future proposal for what to do with the STP funding that was currently slated for the 2026 phase as well.

Schweizer asked what the Technical Committee's recommendations were for these TIP amendments. Joseph answered that the Technical Committee reviewed many of these; however, there were some changes between the Technical Committee meeting and today's Policy Committee meeting. At the Technical Committee meeting, the final budget for the Cesar Chavez project had not been finalized. The Technical Committee recommended approval of what they reviewed.

MOTION by Schweitzer, SUPPORT by Wisselink, to approve the TIP amendments requested by MDOT, KCRC, OCRC, and the City of Grand Rapids. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

V. 2050 MTP DRAFT VISION STATEMENT, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

Referring to Item V: Attachment A, Faber introduced the discussion on the draft vision statement, goals, and objectives for the 2050 MTP.

Faber noted that GVMC staff met with the MTP Steering Committee in January, and presented the vision statement, goals, and objectives from the 2045 MTP as a starting point for discussion, along with the results of the recent public survey. Staff used recommendations from the meeting, along with the 10 Federal Planning Factors and the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs), to further update the vision statement, goals, and objectives for the 2050 MTP. GVMC sought additional feedback on the revised vision statement, goals, and objectives from the MTP Steering Committee and presented them for discussion at the combined Technical and Policy Committee meeting in January. One change was requested to objective 2e, which is in red on the second page of the Goals and Objectives.

Naramore asked about the change that was added. Faber answered that D. Kent requested the change to align with the state long-range plan. D. Kent answered that he was attempting to capture a discussion that had occurred during a MTP subcommittee meeting that addressed congestion and reliability. He added that it was not limited to just travel demand management, so he wanted to make the change to be as generic as possible.

MOTION by M. Bennett, SUPPORT by LaFave, to approve the 2050 MTP vision statement, goals, and objectives as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

VI. SOCIO-ECONOMIC (SE) DATA APPROVAL

Referring to Item VI: Attachment A, Zonyk presented a summary of results from the SE data meetings held from November 22, 2022 - January 23, 2023, with jurisdictions that needed to allocate household and employment growth for the 2050 MTP. Zonyk noted that MDOT provides the MPO with employment and household data at the community level that needs to be dispersed to our Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ's) so the GVMC transportation model can process these changes to determine potential deficiencies. Zonyk presented a handout which summarizes the findings by county for households and employment, which were within 1% of the state forecast. Zonyk also presented a map application displaying the results by TAZ and jurisdiction. Zonyk thanked the jurisdictions for meeting with GVMC to allocate the growth and noted that Committee approval is needed to move forward with model development for the 2050 MTP.

Schweitzer noted that he appreciated the flexibility of GVMC staff to meet in person or virtually, which helped all the MPO communities.

Joseph thanked the jurisdictions for making the time to meet with GVMC staff for this.

MOTION by Warren, SUPPORT by Schmalzel, to approve the socio-economic data for the 2050 MTP. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

VII. FY2024 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

Referring to Item VII: Attachment A, Joseph introduced the discussion on potential work activities proposed for the FY2024 UPWP.

Joseph stated that staff is requesting Policy Committee review and feedback on the FY2024 UPWP prior to the May meeting when action will be requested. She added that most of the work activities in the FY2023 UPWP will remain in the FY2024 UPWP, but time and staff hours will change with finishing the MTP next year. The work activities in the memo are proposed to stay. Joseph highlighted two of the special studies that are scheduled to be complete by the end of FY2023, which are the Airport Access Study and the TDM plan. A new proposed task for FY2024 is related to the regional safety action plan for the Safe Streets for All grant. Staff is potentially proposing to lump in \$150,000 in STP funding into the \$300,000 that GVMC was awarded for the SS4A grant. Additionally, if strategies come out of the TDM plan that GVMC will be responsible for implementing, Staff will also recommend putting a TDM planning task in the UPWP. Staff will also ask for approval to amend the FY2023 UPWP in May, because GVMC, in partnership with Kent County and many jurisdictions, are applying for the New Services and Technology 5307 grant. This grant will be for the Kent County Area Mobility Study, which will cover the entire MPO service area. The state requested that GVMC put this in their work program rather than Kent County. Joseph added that beginning this year, GVMC is required to have at least 2.5% of the FHWA PL planning funds set aside for safe and accessible options for all complete streets planning. Joseph

asked the Committee for feedback on what they think Staff should do with this money that is set aside.

Wisselink added that The Rapid is proposing to include short-range planning and Rideshare Program tasks to the FY2024 UPWP. Additionally, they will continue work on the Transit Master Plan, the Transit Technology Strategic Plan, and the Fleet Transition Plan. Wisselink added that The Rapid is requesting additional funds to look at implementation and other short-range planning tasks that arise from the Transit Master Plan. These are utilizing 5307 funds, and the Rideshare Program will utilize CMAQ funding.

Regional Safety Action Plan

Regarding the Safety Action Plan, Joseph asked the Committee for their thoughts on lumping the STP urban funding into the awarded \$300,000 for the SS4A grant. The amount requested for the SS4A grant was \$300,000, with 80% coming from federal funding, and GVMC is taking on the match. The \$150,000 in STP funding would be added to this, so the total budget for the Safety Action Plan would be \$487,500.

Naramore added that other MPOs of a similar size applied for significantly larger amounts of money for the SS4A grant, and he thought Staff did a good job on trying to be reasonable with the request. Naramore added that he would like to make sure there is ample scope and budget to be able to support the Staff work on this project. He added that the City of Grand Rapids is willing to contribute additional resources to make sure that this project can be completed because it allows everyone in the region to apply for the implementation funding. Naramore asked the Committee for their thoughts on this project.

Schweitzer added that he agrees and reiterated that there must be a plan in place in order to be able to qualify for the brick and motor work, and having GVMC oversee this is very appropriate. Joseph added that the Safety Action Plan project will be steered by the Safety Committee, which GVMC is forming now. Joseph added that she needs to clarify with the Michigan Division representative for FHWA that it is allowable to start this work in FY 2024 instead of amending this into FY2023. There was general support from the Committee for this.

Transportation Demand Management Planning

Joseph asked the Committee for their thoughts on the TDM management task, which would be a new task under short-range planning. Naramore clarified that this is the implementation of the TDM plan that is to be completed soon.

Schmalzel asked if it should be labeled as "TDM Implementation" instead of "TDM Planning" in the UPWP. Joseph replied that there might be some continuing planning activities in the task, but it can be generalized and changed to implementing the plan.

Naramore added that the recommendations that come out of the Airport Access Study should be added as a short-range planning item.

Complete Streets/Safe and Accessible Options

Joseph asked the Committee for their thoughts on the complete streets or safe accessible options money set aside. Naramore clarified that GVMC is required to set aside the money, but the question is what should be done with those resources. Joseph stated that this year language about it was put in two different places, but the funding was put adjacent to the Nonmotorized planning under long-range planning. Joseph added that a recommendation, and approval of that recommendation at the federal level, is that MPOs do not have to provide match for the money set aside anymore.

Schweitzer commented that the City of Kentwood has not adopted a complete streets policy, but he thinks it would be beneficial to have it. Joseph added that because there are many different types of jurisdictions in the GVMC region, the complete streets policy and guidance would be context sensitive. Naramore suggested the possibility of a toolkit that could also be useful to those who already have complete streets policies, like the City of Grand Rapids.

Kent County Mobility Study

Schweitzer asked a clarifying question about the monies to help fund the Kent County Mobility Study. He thinks it is great that the region has applied for this funding to guide that process because it should fit well with the Transit Master Plan. Joseph added that Kent County was in touch with MDOT the day that the submissions were due for this and were given a month extension. Her understanding is that the grant selection happens in April, and it is looking promising that we will get the grant. At that point, it will have to be amended into the FY 2023 work program, and then the narrative task language will be carried over to FY 2024 when the work will be mostly completed. The proposal for the study itself is \$350,000, and then GVMC added some budget to administer the grant. The funding is 80% federal with 20% state match. Naramore clarified there is no budget impact from this.

Joseph stated that at the May Policy Committee meeting, the Committee will be asked to make a recommendation to approve the FY2024 UPWP to the GVMC Board. There will be an opportunity to make changes to the FY2024 UPWP at the May meeting as well.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

- MDOT Updates

- D. Kent provided updates to the US-131 Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study. The Local Advisory Committee meeting for this is scheduled for March 24, and will meet again in April.
 - D. Kent also noted that MDOT is working on a letter of initiation with FHWA for the environmental assessment for the M-37 project in Caledonia.
 - D. Kent added that the I-96 at Fruitridge interchange project has received state funding and MDOT is working on agreements with Walker on the project contract.
 - MDOT has submitted a grant for the East Beltline bridge replacements over I-96, which will have Nonmotorized components. D. Kent stated that this project will happen with or without the grant, but additional supplementary funding would be helpful.
- Walters noted that regarding Hoffman's public comment, there are ongoing discussions at the statewide level of ways to look at financial forecasting as it relates to gas and weight tax and ACT 51 dollars. He added that there has been discussion at the legislative level, but not movement towards anything.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Naramore adjourned the March 15, 2023, Policy Committee meeting at 10:13 a.m.