

**MINUTES**

**Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
Transportation Division  
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
Wednesday, November 1, 2023  
Rapid Central Station Conference Room  
250 Cesar E. Chavez Ave SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503**

The Committee selected Harrall to serve as Temporary Chair of the Technical Committee for the November 1 meeting. Because both the Chair and Vice-Chair were absent, a motion was needed to temporarily elect a Committee Member to Chair the November 1 Technical Committee meeting.

**MOTION by LaFave, SUPPORT by Sundblad, to elect Harrall as the temporary Chair of the Technical Committee for the November 1, 2023 meeting.**

Harrall called the November 1, 2023, Technical Committee meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. Those present introduced themselves to the Committee.

**I. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Sue Becker		Alpine Township
Kristin Bennett		City of Grand Rapids
Rick DeVries		City of Grand Rapids
Wayne Harrall	<i>Proxy for</i>	Kent County
	<i>Mike DeVries</i>	Grand Rapids Charter Township
Fred Keena	<i>Proxy for</i>	Ottawa County Road Commission
	<i>Brett Laughlin and</i>	Ottawa County Road Commission
	<i>Mark Bennett</i>	Tallmadge Charter Township
Tyler Kent	<i>Proxy for</i>	MDOT
	<i>Mike Burns and</i>	City of Lowell
	<i>Scott Connors</i>	City of Walker
Jim Kirkwood		City of Kentwood
Doug LaFave		City of East Grand Rapids
Robert Miller		City of Hudsonville
Jeff Oonk	<i>Proxy for</i>	City of Wyoming
	<i>Russ Henckel</i>	City of Wyoming
Rick Sprague	<i>Proxy for</i>	Kent County Road Commission
	<i>Clint Nemeth</i>	GRFIA
Charlie Sundblad		City of Grandville
Luke Walters		MDOT
Kevin Wisselink		ITP - The Rapid
<b>Staff and Non-Voting Guests Present</b>		
Scott Alsgaard		Hope Network
Clover Brown		GVMC Staff
Andrea Faber		GVMC Staff
Mara Gericke		GVMC Staff
Laurel Joseph		GVMC Staff

Peter Kimball  
Terry Martin

GVMC Staff  
Carrier and Gable

**Voting Members Not Present**

Mark Bennett  
Tim Bradshaw (*Chair*)  
Terry Brod  
Mike Burns  
Scott Conners  
Mike DeVries  
Adam Elenbaas  
Shay Gallagher  
Kevin Green  
Tim Haagsma  
Jerry Hale  
Russ Henckel  
Nicole Hofert  
Jim Holtvluwer  
Bill LaRose  
Brett Laughlin  
Matt McConnon  
Clint Nemeth  
Tom Noreen  
Jeff Oonk  
John Said  
Dean Smith  
Jade Smith  
Rick Solle  
Justin Stadt  
Jeff Thornton  
Don Tillema  
Phil Vincent  
Blaine Wing  
Member Awaiting Appointment

Tallmadge Charter Township  
Caledonia Charter Township  
Cannon Township  
City of Lowell  
City of Walker  
Grand Rapids Charter Township  
Allendale Charter Township  
City of Kentwood  
Algoma Township  
Gaines Charter Township  
Lowell Charter Township  
City of Wyoming  
City of Wyoming  
Ottawa County  
City of Cedar Springs  
Ottawa County Road Commission  
Courtland Township  
Gerald R. Ford Intl. Airport  
Nelson Township  
City of Wyoming  
Ada Township  
Jamestown Charter Township  
Cascade Charter Township  
Plainfield Charter Township  
Georgetown Charter Township  
Village of Caledonia  
Byron Township  
City of Rockford  
Village of Sparta  
Village of Sand Lake

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Referring to Item II: Attachment A**, Harrall entertained a motion to approve the minutes from the September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Technical Committee meeting.

**MOTION by Sprague, SUPPORT by Oonk, to approve the September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Technical Committee meeting minutes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**IV. TIP AMENDMENTS**

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

MDOT

MDOT is requesting approval for changes in fiscal year, funding sources, and a delayed project as identified in the attached table. The advanced obligation of their M-37 project in FY2024 is also causing a need for GPA amendment for Trunkline Traffic Operations & Safety. Additionally, there are some bridge projects that have updated costs initiating a GPA amendment for Trunkline Bridge.

T. Kent provided additional details for some projects on the S/TIP exempt list. The MLK over US-131 bridge replacement project has gone up 20 million dollars, which MDOT is pursuing a federal grant for in partnership with the City of Grand Rapids. T. Kent also provided details on the two M-37 projects in Southeastern Kent County. He added that MDOT is doing maintenance work on US-131 over Plaster Creek, which will result in the closure of US-131 for each bound in the spring of 2024.

KCRC

KCRC is requesting to add Argo Avenue which is a Sharrow/Sidewalk project that has gone through the MDOT Grant System (MGS) and needs to be added to the TIP. This is triggering an amendment for the Local Livability and Sustainability GPA.

City of Grand Rapids

The City of Grand Rapids has requested to remove federal funding for their Wealthy Street project and utilize these funds for Cesar E. Chavez in FY2025 to provide flexibility with issues on timing for materials. Wealthy will be completed with local funds. This requires an amendment.

City of East Grand Rapids

The City of East Grand Rapids has a sidewalk project along Robinson Road that's gone through MGS and needs to be added to the TIP.

Joseph added that there has been a TAP process improvement exercise for larger MPOs, and once those changes are implemented, this kind of TIP amendment process will no longer be necessary.

Harrall asked about updates on the Crahen Valley Park Trail. Joseph stated that this project still has not received grant approval in MGS, but she will follow up on this.

**MOTION by Sundblad, SUPPORT by Becker, to approve the TIP amendments/modifications as recommended by MDOT, KCRC, the City of Grand Rapids, and the City of East Grand Rapids. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**V. 2050 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP) INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND PROJECT LIST**

**Referring to Item V: Attachment A**, Faber presented the investment strategy and project list recommended by the TPSG Subcommittee at their October 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Faber explained that the 2050 MTP investment strategy was developed by the MTP Steering Committee, and then revised and approved by TPSG. The tiered ranking system below took into consideration data from the public survey, the vision statement, goals and objectives for the plan, the needs and deficiencies analysis, the financial analysis, and the investment priorities from the previous MTP:

**Tier 1**

- Improving Safety (by Reducing Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes)
- Improving Operations for All Modes

**Tier 2**

- Maintaining the System in a State of Good Repair

**Tier 3**

- Improving Active Transportation Options
- Improving Transit

**Tier 4**

- Exploring, Evaluating, and Coordinating New Transportation Technology

She explained that overall, this investment strategy highlights the shortfall between needs and federal funding that is available.

Harrall added that TPSG worked through this at the October 11<sup>th</sup> meeting and that is also probably where some of the projects have been updated, added, or removed from previous lists.

Faber then introduced the project list for the 2050 MTP. The project list for the first years of the MTP will come directly from the TIP. For later years of the MTP, the TPSG Committee discussed if they would like to include projects in the document or if they would prefer to program percentages of federal fund sources to meet projected needs. Only expand/improve (“widening”) projects were considered for inclusion in the project list because of their air quality non-exempt status. TPSG elected to leave federal funds unprogrammed for local projects since the greatest needs in the later band years of the MTP are unknown at this time. The local projects are listed in band years as eligible projects TBD and will be programmed based on requirements per each fund source. The official project lists for the MTP,

then, contains only transit and MDOT projects. Illustrative lists for local projects, MDOT, ITP, and active transportation are also included in the agenda packet.

Joseph explained that the reason for historically putting named projects in the illustrative list is because it is undetermined which band year they will fall in.

Harrall noted that some of the projects on the illustrative list for KCRC are major bridge crossings that have anticipated trail crossings as well. Discussion ensued.

**MOTION by Kent, SUPPORT by LaFave, to recommend approval of the 2050 MTP Investment Strategy and the Project List as recommended by TPSG. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **VI. 2024 SAFETY TARGETS**

**Referring to Item VI: Attachment A,** Yang presented the 2024 MDOT safety targets for the 5 designated safety performance measures. Yang explained that GVMC has also established a regional safety goal to decrease all five performance measures.

Yang explained that MPOs are required to establish safety targets no later than 180 days after MDOT establishes state safety targets. GVMC has been collaborating with regional partners and encouraging safety improvements in all transportation projects and promoting safety through the Safety Education Outreach program and PSAs. Additionally, GVMC has been awarded the federal Safe Streets for All grant to develop a regional Safety Action Plan. This plan will identify regional safety projects and strategies to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries in the GVMC region.

Joseph added additional information about the Safety Action Plan. GVMC has received approval from FHWA to execute the contract for the Safety Action Plan with the chosen consultant and the Safety Committee will meet to begin this planning development process. Joseph explained that the state safety targets are required to use data to inform them and cannot be aspirational. However, with the Safety Action Plan, GVMC will be required to commit to reducing fatalities and serious injuries by a specified percentage by a specified year. She explained that the required state safety targets and the aspirational vision zero goal inherently do not go together well. GVMC has historically supported state targets with the intent as a region to work to decrease fatalities and serious injuries through implementing safety projects and improvements. The Committee can decide today to support state targets or move this action item to January to give staff time to develop new targets.

K. Bennett asked what the timeline for the Safety Action Plan contract is. Joseph answered that she wouldn't recommend using the Safety Action Plan process to develop the regional targets for the federal measures because that is not within the

scope of that particular plan. Joseph added that if there is a desire by Tech and Policy for staff to develop regional targets before the deadline instead of supporting state targets, there is time before the deadline in February.

Harrall suggested taking action today to support MDOT targets with the intent through the safety action plan to help reduce fatalities and serious injuries.

T. Kent commented that increased targets are based on the last 5 years rolling average which include the pandemic and other different driving behaviors.

K. Bennett asked for clarification regarding the state targets, and if these targets are rather forecasted predictions of what will happen instead of what we are hoping to achieve. T. Kent clarified that the forecast is what you might see based on the predicted number of crashes based on the model. Joseph added that the state targets are informed by the 5-year running average, and cannot be aspirational, so they are not targets we want to see, but rather predictions of what we could see based on the data. K. Bennett suggested making it clearer with the language that this target is just what is being predicted, because it might come across that the Committee is supporting more crashes, which is not the case. Joseph agreed that it is confusing, and a part of that is also an issue related to the language of the regulations.

Harrall suggested adding “based on recent trends” to the motion of supporting state targets.

K. Bennett added that safety is a priority for many City of Grand Rapids residents, and she does not want it to appear that this Committee supports more injuries and death, because we don’t; it is just a model of what we can expect to happen in the future.

**MOTION by Becker, SUPPORT by Sprague, to support the 2024 State Safety Targets based on recent trends, while working as a region toward regional goals to improve safety. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**VII. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The two-year terms for the Committee’s chair and vice chair will expire at the end of the year, so the Committee will need to elect a new chair and vice chair. Joseph explained that typically the current vice-chair is nominated to become the chair and then a new vice chair is nominated.

The Committee selected Rick Sprague for Vice Chair, and Scott Conners for Chair.

**MOTION by LaFave, SUPPORT by Sundblad, to recommend Scott Conners for Chair and Rick Sprague for Vice Chair for the Technical Committee. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**VIII. OTHER BUSINESS**Committee Meeting Schedule

- Joseph asked the committee for feedback related to the meeting schedule and whether they would prefer it if the Technical Committee meet every other month next year, with the option to call additional meetings if necessary. Currently the meetings are set to occur monthly with cancellations typically every other month. This new meeting schedule would open the other months for advisory committee meetings, or additional meetings. Joseph asked for the Committee's thoughts on this, and she will bring this up at the upcoming Policy meeting as well. The Committee agreed that this would be a good idea going forward.

Safety Action Plan

- Joseph announced that GVMC received approval to move forward with the Safety Action Plan.

Complete Streets Update

- Kimball gave an update on Complete Streets and provided a handout. During FY23, a preliminary analysis of the arterials was completed, and there is now a page on the GVMC website along with a report on land use. The FY24 task is to work with planning partners to develop context sensitive complete streets policies, guidance, and tools for the MPO with the goal of increasing safe and accessible options for multiple travel modes and people of all ages/abilities. Kimball will be sending out an email to gauge interest for those who will serve on the Complete Streets Committee. He added that 2.5% of GVMC's FHWA planning funds are required to be used on complete streets.

MDOT Updates

- T. Kent noted that the public meeting for the M-37 Environmental Assessment was well attended. The Environmental Assessment is expected to have a public hearing in February and transmittal to FHWA in May.
- T. Kent noted the Fruitridge Ave. at I-96 interchange access change request has been submitted, and MDOT is waiting for comments back from FHWA.
- T. Kent gave a presentation on the US-131 PEL Update, Survey, & Outreach. An announcement and press release will be going out today, and there is a survey on the MDOT website. He will send graphics and language out so they can be shared with the Committee for promotion.

Harrall asked when the next TIP development would begin. Joseph answered that for the current TIP, updates to the policy and practices document were discussed in

July, then staff completed the deficiency analysis. The call for projects will likely be early 2025.

Walters gave an update to the federal buyout program. The 2025 call for projects is being delayed. The concern for FY25 is that MDOT may not have enough state funds to cover the federal aid, and MDOT will be hearing more in the coming months.

K. Bennett announced the City of Grand Rapids received notice that they received HSIP grants, and this will be coming through the TIP amendment process soon.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Harrall adjourned the November 1, 2023, Technical Committee meeting at 10:30 a.m.