

MINUTES

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

Naramore, Chair of the Policy Committee, called the November 15, 2023, meeting to order at 9:31 am. Those present introduced themselves to the Committee.

I. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Voting Members Present

Robert Arnoys
Thad Beard
Sue Becker

*Proxy for
Greg Madura*

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

Mark Bennett
Heather Bowden
Karyn Ferrick
Francisco Garcia
Lisa Golder
Wayne Harrall

*Proxy for
Mike DeVries
Proxy for
Mike Burns*

Dennis Kent

Doug LaFave
Josh Naramore, *Chair*
Rob Postema
Darrel Schmalzel
Terry Schweitzer
Rick Sprague

*Proxy for
Kris Pachla*

Justin Stadt
Dan Strikwerda
Rod Weersing
Kevin Wisselink
Cameron Van Wyngarden, *Vice Chair*

Staff and Non-Voting Guests Present

Scott Alsgaard
Clover Brown
Andrea Faber
Mara Gericke
Laurel Joseph
Tyler Kent
George Yang

Hope Network
GVMC
GVMC
GVMC
GVMC
MDOT
GVMC

Voting Members Not Present

Terry Brod

Cannon Township

Mike Burns
 Jerry Byrne
 Michael DeVries
 Adam Elenbaas
 Kevin Green
 Jerry Hale
 Bryan Harrison
 Ken Krombeen
 Matt McConnon
 Tom Noreen
 Kris Pachla
 Casey Ries
 Dean Smith
 Jade Smith
 Julius Suchy
 Jeff Thornton
 Don Tillema
 Blaine Wing
 Member Awaiting Appointment
 Member Awaiting Appointment
 Member Awaiting Appointment

City of Lowell
 Kent County Road Commission
 Grand Rapids Charter Township
 Allendale Charter Township
 Algoma Township
 Lowell Charter Township
 Caledonia Charter Township
 City of Grandville
 Courtland Township
 Nelson Township
 Kent County
 GRFIA
 Jamestown Charter Township
 Cascade Charter Township
 Ada Township
 Village of Caledonia
 Byron Township
 Village of Sparta
 City of Cedar Springs
 Ottawa County
 Village of Sand Lake

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Referring to Item II: Attachment A, Naramore entertained a motion to approve the minutes from the September 20th, 2023, Policy Committee meeting.

MOTION by Harrall, SUPPORT by LaFave, to approve the Policy Committee minutes dated September 20, 2023. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

IV. TIP AMENDMENTS

Referring to Item IV: Attachment A, Joseph 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 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 a 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 increased by \$20 million. MDOT

is pursuing a federal grant for this in partnership with the City of Grand Rapids. He also provided details on the two M-37 projects in Southeastern Kent County.

The Rapid

Staff, on behalf of The Rapid, is requesting approval for the abandonment of the Transit Master Plan project that had Covid Relief funds associated with it that were rescinded. This requires a federal amendment.

KCRC

KCRC is requesting to add Argo Avenue, which is a Sharrow/Sidewalk project that's 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 GVMC has finished a process improvement for the large MPO TAP process. She added that we hopefully won't need to go through MGS for regional TAP projects soon.

MOTION by Schweitzer, SUPPORT by Van Wyngarden, to approve the TIP amendments requested by MDOT, The Rapid, KCRC, GVMC, the City of Grand Rapids, and the City of East Grand Rapids. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

I. 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 11th meeting and the Technical Committee at their November 1st 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.

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 list 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.

Harrall clarified that projects beyond 2026 are illustrative anyways, since we do not know what future funding will be, and since long range plans are updated every 4 years. Faber added that the next TIP will be developed on the heels of the MTP. Discussion ensued.

MOTION by Harrall, SUPPORT by Schmalzel, to recommend approval of the 2050 MTP Investment Strategy and the Project List as recommended by TPSG and the Technical Committee. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

V. 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 (SS4A) 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.

Yang emphasized that these targets are based on model-predicted results and do not imply support for an increase of fatalities and serious injuries.

Joseph added that GVMC has historically accepted these state targets while aspiring to regionally decrease serious injuries and deaths. GVMC has signed the contract with the chosen consultant for the Safety Action Plan, and this plan will require GVMC to commit to aspirational goals of reducing fatalities and serious injuries by a specified percentage by a specified year. The Committee can decide today to support state targets or move this action item to January to give staff time to develop new regional targets. GVMC recommends supporting state targets currently.

Schmalzel asked about the Safety Action Plan timeline and if the Plan will be approved and complete before the Committee is asked to approve these state targets again next year. Joseph answered that the Safety Action Plan and the MDOT state targets are separate things. The targets set by the Board will be a commitment to zero fatalities and serious injuries by a certain year, but unless legislation around the federal performance measures and target setting changes, these targets will still be set in a separate process. GVMC has signed on with consultant Toole Design and Williams & Works, and the next step will be to reconvene the Safety Committee who will be directing and steering the process. The initial kickoff meeting with GVMC and the consultant is this week. Naramore added this Safety Action Plan work could help inform the adoption of local targets that are more aspirational than the state targets next year.

D. Kent added that MDOT agrees, they do not like the idea that deaths and serious injuries will increase. These state targets are a reasonable projection based on what is occurring, as required by the legislative criteria. MDOT also has aspirational goals to reduce fatalities and serious injuries like the GVMC region does. Joseph added that because of this, several years ago GVMC added the last column on the table in the agenda packet which shows as a region GVMC is working to decrease fatalities and serious injuries, regardless of what the model says.

Schweitzer added that he believes one of the key factors in fatalities and serious injuries in traffic crashes is the state's method of determining proper speed limits. He added that until we see a change there, we are going to continue to watch these numbers rise. He believes this should be a facet of what is forwarded on to the state from the local level. Naramore added that Michigan is prohibited by the state

legislature from having automated enforcement, which is a challenge. He added that states and cities that are implementing this are seeing significant reduction in fatality and serious injury crashes. He is hopeful that through the Safe Streets for All grant, we can have a regional conversation about this.

MOTION by M. Bennett, SUPPORT by LaFave, 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.

VI. 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 Van Wyngarden to serve as Chair and LaFave to serve as Vice Chair. Terms will be two years, starting in January of 2024, per GVMC’s committee bylaws.

MOTION by Beard, SUPPORT by Schmalzel, to elect Van Wyngarden as Chair of the Policy Committee. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION by Schweitzer, SUPPORT by Harrall, to elect LaFave as Vice Chair of the Policy Committee. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

Committee Meeting Schedule

Joseph asked the committee for feedback related to the meeting schedule and whether they would prefer if the Technical and Policy Committees meet every other month in 2024, 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.

Schmalzel asked if this would be an issue for TIP amendments. Joseph answered that it shouldn’t be; however, meetings can still be called on the non-meeting months if necessary.

The Committee agreed that this would be a good idea going forward.

MOTION by Schmalzel, SUPPORT by Van Wyngarden, to approve the proposed Committee meeting schedule for 2024. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Complete Streets Update

Joseph gave an update on Complete Streets and provided a handout that was put together by Kimball. She stated that 2.5% of GVMC's FHWA planning funds are required to be used on complete streets. During FY23, a preliminary analysis of the arterials was completed by Kimball, 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.

Naramore asked what the impact would be for cities with vital streets plans/complete streets work already. Joseph answered that Kimball cataloged which locals already have complete streets policies. He also conducted a survey related to gauging interest on complete streets work as well as policy. Joseph added that a regional complete streets policy would not supersede the local ordinances already in place but would be a way to have consistency across jurisdictions.

MDOT Updates

D. 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.

D. 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 (Planning and Environmental Linkages) Update, Survey, & Outreach. An announcement and press release went out two weeks ago, and there is a survey on the MDOT website. Additionally, the public open house last week had a good turnout. MDOT resources for this PEL study can be found on the MDOT website.

Harrall asked if the PEL study is required by FHWA or was it more proactive on behalf of MDOT to go through this process first so that when funding becomes available the process could be quicker. D. Kent answered that it is a tool that FHWA uses. There are federal time frames on environment assessments which require a lot of the pre work of evaluating alternatives to fall into the PEL process. Discussion ensued.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

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