

MINUTES

**Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
Transportation Division
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, March 7, 2012
Kent County Road Commission
1500 Scribner NW Grand Rapids, MI**

Zull, vice chair of the Technical Committee, called the meeting to order at 9:30 am. The Committee members, staff, and guests present introduced themselves.

I. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Voting Members Present

Alex Arends		Alpine Township
Roger Belknap		City of Cedar Springs
Denny Bishop	<i>Proxy for Dan Carlton</i>	Georgetown Township
		Georgetown Township
Ron Carr		City of Grandville
Timothy Cochran		City of Wyoming
Scott Conners		City of Walker
Rick DeVries		City of Grand Rapids
Ken Feldt		City of East Grand Rapids
Jim Ferro		Ada Township
Russ Henckel	<i>Proxy for Bill Dooley</i>	City of Wyoming
		City of Wyoming
Jan Hoekstra		ITP-The Rapid
Jim Holtrop		Ottawa County
Fred Keena	<i>Proxy for Brett Laughlin</i>	OCRC
		OCRC
Dennis Kent	<i>Proxy for Dan DesJarden</i>	MDOT
		City of Lowell
Ray Lenze		MDOT
Dave Pasquale		Grand Rapids Township
Terry Schweitzer		City of Kentwood
Rick Sprague	<i>Proxy for Steve Warren Wayne Harrall Tim Haagsma</i>	KCRC
		KCRC
		Kent County
		Gaines Charter Township
Dan Strikwerda		City of Hudsonville
Chris Zull		City of Grand Rapids

Staff and Non-Voting Guests Present

Andrea Dewey	GVMC Staff
Andrea Faber	GVMC Staff
Steve Hartman	Hope Network
Abed Itani	GVMC Staff
Erick Kind	MDOT
Joan Konyndyk	Hope Network
Darrell Robinson	GVMC Staff
Norm Sevensma	WMEAC-RWBC

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George Yang
Mike Zonyk

Voting Members Not Present

Jerry Alkema
Dan Carlton
Dick Davies
Jamie Davies
Dan DesJarden
Mike DeVries
Bill Dooley
Tim Haagsma
Wayne Harrall (*Chair*)
Roy Hawkins
Dennis Hoemke
Bob Homan
Brett Laughlin
Jim Miedema
Audrey Nevins Weiss
Steve Peterson
Chuck Porter
Martin Super
Toby VanEss
Steve Warren

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Item II: Attachment A
GVMC Staff
GVMC Staff

Allendale Township
Georgetown Township
Cannon Township
City of Rockford
City of Lowell
Grand Rapids Township
City of Wyoming
Gaines Charter Township
Kent County
GRFIA
Algoma Township
Plainfield Township
OCRC
Jamestown Township
Byron Township
Cascade Charter Township
Courtland Township
Village of Sparta
Tallmadge Township
KCRC

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Zull entertained a motion to approve the January 4, 2012 Technical Committee meeting minutes.

MOTION by Schweitzer, SUPPORT by Carr, to approve the January 4, 2012 Technical Committee meeting minutes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Sevensma commented on the mild spring weather.

IV. FY2011-2014 TIP AMENDMENTS/MODIFICATIONS

Referring to **Item IV: Attachment A**, Robinson explained that MDOT, Hope Network, and Staff were requesting to amend/modify the FY2011-2014 TIP.

MDOT was requesting an administrative modification to the FY2011-2014 TIP for the US 131 Leonard Street to Ann St. project in order to increase the project amount.

The Hope Network requested to add several 5310 funded projects for FY2013 to the FY2011-2014 TIP.

Lastly, Robinson noted that, due to unused obligational authority in FY2011, MDOT is allowing local agencies to convert advance construction projects within the current TIP, among other very limited possibilities. The City of Kentwood has two advance construction projects (built in FY2011) that are scheduled to convert in FY2013 and FY2014. Staff is

asking the Committee to approve Advance Construction Conversion for their two projects in FY2012.

Lenze noted that there are no additional funds available but that Committee members can use up to 100% obligation authority and still be constrained within the dollar amount in the TIP. Itani added that the state has \$54 million in obligational authority, and in order to spend this, it is necessary to have appropriation authority. He noted that GVMC always uses the 100% appropriation amount when programming the TIP. However, over the last few years, many communities haven't moved their projects forward, which means that communities will have three years to use the \$54 million. This allows the City of Kentwood's project to move forward this year and get converted.

Schweitzer noted that, while the project was programmed to use \$2.3 million in federal funds, the bid came in lower, at approximately \$1.8 million. Therefore, roughly \$450,000 is becoming available in FY2013 and FY2014. Lenze noted that bid savings can now be captured instead of being left on the table, as they were in the past. He asked the committee members to contact staff once they know what their bid prices are so that their bid savings can be captured. Robinson explained that, in the past, GVMC has allowed agencies to go over by 10% of the project cost. Unless the Committee decides to cap projects, it will be difficult to come up with a final number on project costs. Itani noted that he is not proposing to cap projects. Discussion ensued.

Zull asked if the Committee should be looking at a practice to recognize bid amounts in conjunction with bid dates in the future. Robinson replied that this would be helpful to capture bid savings in the future. Itani added that currently, by the time that Staff learns that there have been bid savings, it is generally too late to do anything about it. All that Staff can do is ask everyone to get their paperwork to MDOT before March so that there is time to capture bid savings. Lenze added that if a community has a project in the out years of the TIP, and they get the project designed and in to MDOT ahead of time and have it sit on the shelf, they have a good opportunity to get that project moving forward because, come August, additional funding often becomes available because other states don't use all their funds. Lastly, Itani asked Committee members to contact Staff if they have projects in FY2013 or FY2014 that they want to move forward.

Zull entertained a motion to amend the FY2011-FY2014 TIP.

MOTION by Pasquale, SUPPORT by Holtrop, to recommend to the Policy Committee approving the amendments/modifications to the FY2011-2014 TIP requested by MDOT, Hope Network, and Staff. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

V. NATIONAL FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION REVISION

Referring to a handout, Itani explained that the City of Kentwood is requesting an MPO endorsement of removing the NFC classification from the Breton extension and adding the NFC classification to Wing Avenue. The new designation for Wing Avenue is unknown at this point, but will most likely be "urban collector."

Zull entertained a motion to endorse this request.

MOTION by Conners, SUPPORT by DeVries, to approve removing the NFC classification from the Breton extension and adding Wing Avenue. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

VI. FY2014-2017 STIP/TIP DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

Referring to **Item VI: Attachment A**, Robinson explained that Staff will soon begin developing the FY2014-FY2017 TIP. This process will begin in August with deficiencies, and the TPSG Committee will be programming projects from October through December. Staff hopes to submit the TIP to MDOT by July 1st, 2013, for review, since it must be forwarded to FHWA and FTA by August 1st.

Zull asked if there would be any derivations to the development process from the last TIP. Robinson responded that, this time, the consultation process will need to be stronger, as will the financial section of the document, but the development process for the TIP would be largely the same. Itani agreed that the TIP development process likely won't change at this point. However, the next transportation bill could bring about a lot of changes in the process. Discussion, comments and questions ensued.

VII. STATUS UPDATE ON REGIONAL ACCESS TO HIGH SPEED RAIL

Referring to **Item VII: Attachment A**, Dewey informed the Committee that, last Thursday, Amtrak and MDOT came and presented to the Board regarding the City of New Buffalo's application for a TIGER 4 grant of approximately \$56 million. If awarded, the grant would go toward track improvements, including extending the Dowagiac siding to Niles Michigan (14 miles) and about \$800,000 would go towards the design phase for track improvements that join CSX and Amtrak track in New Buffalo. The Pere Marquette used to serve a station in New Buffalo until 2010 when it was discontinued.

Dewey noted that this proposal has implications for the MPO. First, since portions of the Amtrak owned railroad track between New Buffalo and Porter, Indiana, are high speed, connecting the CSX track with Amtrak track would give the Pere Marquette passenger rail service, in its current route alignment, access to a small piece of the high-speed rail corridor. This proposed project, if eventually completed, would also give passengers more of an opportunity to travel both east and west. Dewey noted that the main concern with relation to GVMC supporting this grade separation project had to do with continued investment in the Pere Marquette's current route along the Lake Michigan shoreline. If this project is completed, it is possible that a future passenger rail route between Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo might not occur because the Pere Marquette would already be connected to the high-speed corridor and to destinations both east and west. MDOT has assured GVMC that they will move forward with an EIS for the Holland-Grand Rapids-Kalamazoo route, as specified in the State Rail Plan, and that this proposed project would not affect MDOT plans to make Kalamazoo a HSR hub connecting all three Michigan passenger rail routes. Discussion ensued.

Itani noted that this is an endorsement for an application for a Tiger 4 grant, and if they do not get the grant, nothing will happen. He added that GVMC Staff prefers the Grand Rapids to Kalamazoo upgrade, but wants to make sure that the people in

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Item II: Attachment A

New Buffalo and St. Joseph have an opportunity for their requested upgrade as well. Discussion ensued.

Kent added that he served on the state rail plan team and that, this month, they will begin an environmental impact statement on the high speed rail line from Pontiac to Detroit all the way to Chicago. The focus of this environmental impact statement is to find an alternative route into Chicago. The Kalamazoo connection will be looked at, as will the current route, and depending on how the discussion goes, alternate routes with different purposes and functions could be added. Discussion, comments and questions ensued.

VIII. UPDATE ON TRANSPORTATION FUNDING AND SAFETEA-LU

Itani noted that the senate has a two-year bill for \$109 billion dollars for two years. The House also has a bill for five years for \$260 billion, but the House Republicans shelved it. This bill depends on oil/gas exploration, revenues, royalties, etc., and the streamlining of federal workers' pay system, thereby cutting benefits. The Democrats voted against this bill. Speaker Boehner threatened the Republicans yesterday that if they don't move forward on the bill that he proposed, they will adopt the senate bill. Discussion ensued.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

Kent noted that copies of the Michigan State Rail Plan Summary were available on the back counter. All of this information is available online as well. He also distributed the MDOT 2012 construction map for the Grand Region. The statewide map is not available yet. Lastly, Kent distributed a handout listing the Grand Region's proposed additional road and bridge projects from 2013-2017.

Itani asked for an update on the bypass on the South Beltline. Kent responded that MDOT has an environmental impact statement approved in FY2010 and that this is one of two remaining improve/expand projects in the state at this time. A few others on the books will move forward in the next couple of years. He noted that, with a tight budget, it can be difficult to make a case for large projects like this. But MDOT's position is that this is a committed project, and MDOT will move forward on this project as time permits. Discussion ensued.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Zull entertained a motion to adjourn the March 7, 2012 Technical Committee meeting.

MOTION by Arends, SUPPORT by Belknap, to adjourn the March 7, 2012 Technical Committee meeting at 10:15 am. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.