

MINUTES

**Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
Transportation Division
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, August 3, 2011
Kent County Road Commission
1500 Scribner NW Grand Rapids, MI**

Conners, chair of the Technical Committee, called the meeting to order at 9:35 am. The Committee members, staff, and guests present introduced themselves.

I. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Voting Members Present

Scott Conners	<i>(Chair)</i>	City of Walker
Rick DeVries		City of Grand Rapids
Jim Ferro		Ada Township
Wayne Harrall	<i>Proxy for</i>	Kent County
	<i>Mike DeVries</i>	Grand Rapids Township
	<i>Tim Haagsma</i>	Gaines Township
Jim Holtrop	<i>Proxy for</i>	Ottawa County
	<i>Dan Strikwerda</i>	City of Hudsonville
Dennis Kent	<i>Proxy for</i>	MDOT
	<i>Dan DesJarden</i>	City of Lowell
Jack Klein	<i>Proxy for</i>	OCRC
	<i>Brett Laughlin</i>	OCRC
Ray Lenze		MDOT
Steve Peterson		Cascade Charter Township
Terry Schweitzer		City of Kentwood
Rick Sprague	<i>Proxy for</i>	KCRC
	<i>Steve Warren</i>	KCRC
Chris Zull		City of Grand Rapids

Staff and Non-Voting Guests Present

Andrea Dewey	GVMC Staff
Abed Itani	GVMC Staff
Jack Potterack	City of Kentwood
Steve Redmond	MDOT
Darrell Robinson	GVMC Staff
Jim Snell	GVMC Staff
Don Stypula	GVMC Staff
George Yang	GVMC Staff
Mike Zonyk	GVMC Staff

Voting Members Not Present

Jerry Alkema	Allendale Township
Alex Arends	Alpine Township
Roger Belknap	City of Cedar Springs
Dan Carlton	Georgetown Township
Ron Carr	City of Grandville
Timothy Cochran	City of Wyoming

APPROVED

Dick Davies
Jamie Davies
Dan DesJarden
Mike DeVries
Bill Dooley
Ken Feldt
Tim Haagsma
Roy Hawkins
Dennis Hoemke
Bob Homan
Taiwo Jaiyeoba
Brett Laughlin
Jim Miedema
Audrey Nevins
Chuck Porter
Dan Strikwerda
Martin Super
Toby VanEss
Steve Warren

APPROVED
ITEM II: ATTACHMENT A

Cannon Township
City of Rockford
City of Lowell
Grand Rapids Township
City of Wyoming
City of East Grand Rapids
Gaines Charter Township
GRFIA
Algoma Township
Plainfield Township
ITP-The Rapid
OCRC
Jamestown Township
Byron Township
Courtland Township
City of Hudsonville
Village of Sparta
Tallmadge Township
KCRC

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Due to a lack of quorum, the June 1, 2011 Technical Committee minutes could not be approved. No corrections were indicated.

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments.

IV. FY2011-2014 TIP AMENDMENTS/MODIFICATIONS

Referring to **Item IV: Attachment A**, Robinson explained two administrative modifications to the Committee. An updated memo from the City of Grand Rapids, which included updated costs and the removal of some items, was handed out at the meeting.

Rick DeVries, from the City of Grand Rapids, then explained that the letter is in response to a call for projects for Tiger III grant. This grant application is due by October and the included projects must appear in the Illustrative List of the TIP as part of the application process.

DeVries indicated that the application will have a multimodal approach and include requests from ITP/The Rapid for a Medical Bus Rapid Transit system and the “Laker Line” Bus Rapid Transit out to the GVSU Allendale campus.

The request also includes funds for non-motorized projects, in particular the completion of the Grand River Edges walkway on the east side of the Grand River from Wealthy to Ann St, which would connect to the White Pine Trail. Also included is the Grand River Edges Trail on the west side from Butterworth to 6th Street and a Seward Ave non-motorized connection from Kent Trails and the Oxford Street trails all the way to the White Pine Trail.

DeVries indicated that the City of Grand Rapids and FEMA are in discussions over acceptable flood protection and the grant includes floodwalls in conjunction with a walkway

from Fulton Street to West River Drive. The application also includes a request for funds for smart traffic signals on BRT routes.

DeVries pointed out that committee support for this application could free up future TIP and Transportation Enhancement money, as projects the City of Grand Rapids would eventually ask to be included in the TIP could be funded through the TIGER III grant instead.

Robinson stated that these projects would be included in the TIP Illustrative list, and if the grant is awarded, the projects would then need to be moved into the TIP and go through the public involvement process.

Schweitzer asked if any of the non-motorized projects were already in the GVMC Non-motorized Plan. Dewey responded that many are, in particular the Grand River Edges trail.

Itani reiterated to the committee that amendments to the TIP and the LRTP will be required if the grant is awarded. Itani asked DeVries if studies have been done to justify the Medical and Laker BRT projects. DeVries explained that it is his understanding that ITP/The Rapid is going to apply for another small start grant for the Laker Line. The application includes these types of projects to show a striking benefit to the community. He also mentioned that a cost benefit analysis is required as part of the application process. Itani was curious if the new BRT lines could be justified through a FTA process and Kent, MDOT, was curious about the timeline for such BRT development. Kent indicated that if the grant funds for the transit projects would need to be obligated by the middle of 2013, this timeline may not be possible with the EIS requirements. DeVries indicated that the City is not applying for BRT funds directly but that the grant would support reconstructing the streets to accommodate future BRT systems.

Holtrop, Ottawa County, asked if the BRT routes proposed would replace proposed light rail projects downtown. DeVries responded that these systems would be interconnected but not run on the same route as the proposed streetcar system.

MDOT is requesting an administrative modification for a TIP preliminary engineering project. They would like it to be moved from 2012 to 2011.

Harrall, KCRC, asked the committee about a project they would like included in the next TIP. Specifically, he wanted to know if repairs to Cascade Road between Burton and Spaulding this year would mean the project was ineligible for inclusion in the next TIP because of improved conditions. Itani answered that maintaining the road surface should not disqualify it for future federal funds, assuming they are only doing spot repairs and not a total overlay. Harrall indicated that the KCRC will document the road condition before they make repairs.

The Chair, Conners, was pleased with the good debate and consensus regarding the TIP changes, but due to a lack of quorum the Chair indicated that the administrative modifications would be moved forward to the Policy Committee.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

Stypula, GVMC, discussed with the Committee Congressional issues, specifically authority to levy the 18.4 cent federal gasoline tax that expires on September 30, 2011. There is support for renewing the federal gas tax from many groups (US Chamber of Commerce, manufacturing associations, road builders, asphalt and concrete companies) and there is

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ITEM II: ATTACHMENT A

opposition, particularly from a group headed by Grover Norquist. The Tea Party is generally opposed to taxes and they are anticipated to be highly vocal about reauthorization of the gas tax.

Itani, GVMC, discussed the next transportation bill (replacement of SAFETEA-LU) and funding for next year. As of now there are two proposed transportation bills with two different budgets, one from the House of Representatives and one from the President. The House bill proposes to only spend on transportation what the highway trust fund brings in with no supplemental funding from the general fund. This is equivalent to a 20% transportation funding cut. The President's budget, in contrast, increases federal transportation funding (total \$70 billion/year vs. the House's \$32 billion/year). If a House transportation bill/budget is passed, the MPO may need to revisit the TIP to make sure it is financially constrained. Itani also indicated that he is developing a plan to continue operation of the MPO with 20-30% budget cuts. He said that he will keep the committee informed as the deadline approaches.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Conners adjourned the August 3, 2011 Technical Committee meeting at 10:08 am.