

MINUTES

Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
Transportation Division
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, November 5, 2008
Kent County Road Commission
1500 Scribner NW Grand Rapids, MI

Warren, chair of the Technical Committee, called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.

I. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Voting Members Present

Steve Warren (<i>Chair</i>)	<i>Proxy for Bob Homan</i>	Kent County Road Commission Plainfield Township
Patrick Bush		City of Grand Rapids
Scott Conners	<i>(Vice Chair)</i>	City of Walker
Sandra M. Cornell-Howe		MDOT
Bill Dooley		City of Wyoming
Ken Feldt		City of East Grand Rapids
Tim Haagsma		Gaines Charter Township
Wayne Harrall		Kent County
Jan Hoekstra	<i>Proxy for Conrad Venema</i>	ITP-The Rapid ITP-The Rapid
Jim Holtrop		Ottawa County
Brett Laughlin		OCRC
Gerald Mears		City of Wyoming
Steve Peterson		Cascade Charter Township
Terry Schweitzer		City of Kentwood
Dan Strikwerda		City of Hudsonville

Staff and Non-Voting Guests Present

Roger Belknap	Kent County Road Commission
Andrea Dewey	GVMC Staff
Andrea Faber	GVMC Staff
Russ Henckel	City of Wyoming
Abed Itani	GVMC Staff
Dennis Kent	MDOT
Erick Kind	MDOT
Sarah Koepke	FHWA
Darrell Robinson	GVMC Staff
Norm Sevensma	WMEAC-RWBC
Don Stypula	GVMC Staff
George Yang	GVMC Staff
Mike Zonyk	GVMC Staff

Voting Members Not Present

Jerry Alkema
Sandra Ayers
Mike Berrevoets
Mike Bouwkamp
Marta Brechting
Ron Carr
Dick Davies
Sharon DeLange
Dan DesJarden
Mike DeVries
Rick DeVries
Steve Groenenboom
Roy Hawkins
Dennis Hoemke
William Holland
Bob Homan
Jim McIntyre
Jim Miedema
Audrey Nevins
Conrad Venema
Bill Wiersma

Allendale Township
Village of Caledonia
City of Cedar Springs
City of Rockford
Alpine Township
City of Grandville
Cannon Township
Village of Sparta
City of Lowell
Grand Rapids Township
City of Grand Rapids
Ada Township
GRFIA
Algoma Township
Georgetown Township
Plainfield Township
Courtland Township
Jamestown Township
Byron Township
The Rapid
Tallmadge Township

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Warren entertained a motion to approve the September 3, 2008 Technical Committee Meeting Minutes.

MOTION by Dooley, SUPPORT by Schweitzer, to approve the September 3, 2008 Technical Committee Meeting Minutes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Sevensma asked the committee if road revenue is going up now that gas prices are decreasing. Stypula stated that he had heard anecdotal evidence indicating that there was little to no change in revenue since the reasons why people curtail driving are still present in the economy. Itani suggested that Sevensma watch reports from credit card companies, as these include information on how much consumers spend on gas purchases and are therefore an indicator of how much the public is driving. Discussion ensued.

IV. FY2008-2011 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENTS/MODIFICATIONS

Speaking on **Item IV: Attachment A**, Robinson informed the committee that three different jurisdictions were requesting to amend or modify the TIP. The first request, from the City of Hudsonville, was to provide Surface Transportation Program Urban (STPU) funding for a previously submitted FY2009 CMAQ project that was determined to be ineligible for CMAQ funding by FHWA and MDOT. The project is located on 32nd Avenue

at the I-196 interchange. The city requested to advance construct the project in FY2009 and be reimbursed (advance construct conversion) in FY2010. Strikwerda provided additional information about the project to the committee and passed around a handout detailing the proposed improvements. The city is aware that they are taking a risk in asking for reimbursement funding in 2010, since there are many unknowns about what funding may be down the line. They may need to wait until 2011 to be reimbursed. Schweitzer asked if this project could be swapped with another FY2009 STPU project that was eligible for CMAQ funding. Itani stated that he had looked at the list and there were no projects that qualified for this. Discussion, comments, and questions ensued.

Warren entertained a motion to amend the FY2008-2011 TIP to include STPU funding for the City of Hudsonville project identified by Staff.

MOTION by Holtrop, SUPPORT by Laughlin, to recommend to the Policy Committee approval of amending the FY2008-2011 TIP to allow the City of Hudsonville to advance construct the 32nd Street at I-196 interchange project in FY2009 with reimbursement to the city in FY2010, if funding is available. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Robinson continued, stating that MDOT requested to modify two projects in the FY2009 TIP, make two cost revisions to existing projects in the TIP, and add four projects to the FY2009 TIP. Kent described the projects in detail. Cornell-Howe stated that the Local Safety Projects item in the amendments section of MDOT's memo should be deleted from the list, as it is included also in Item V on the agenda. Discussion, comments and questions ensued.

Koepke reminded MDOT to work with the air quality division in MDOT when tweaking project descriptions of CMAQ projects to ensure that the appropriate documentation is made. Discussion continued.

Warren entertained a motion to amend the FY2008-2011 TIP to include the projects identified by Staff and MDOT, except for the Local Safety Projects.

MOTION by Bush, SUPPORT by Cornell-Howe, to recommend to the Policy Committee approval of amending the FY2008-2011 TIP to include the projects identified by Staff and MDOT except for the local safety projects listed in MDOT's memo. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Lastly, Robinson spoke to the committee regarding a request from the Kent County Road Commission to add a High Priority Project to the FY2009 TIP. The project is a 10-foot-wide nonmotorized pathway to connect the Musketawa Trail to the White Pine Trail. The earmark project will be implemented in two phases. Phase one will include the design engineering, while the second phase will include construction. Harrall contributed additional information on the project. Sevensma questioned the 10-foot width of the trail, stating that there should be a minimum 12-foot width for multi-use paths. Harrall responded that the issue with widening the trail is fitting it into the right-of-way and the cost. Discussion ensued.

Warren entertained a motion to amend the FY2008-2011 TIP to include the KCRC project identified by Staff.

MOTION by Mears, SUPPORT by Bush, to recommend to the Policy Committee approval of amending the FY2008-2011 TIP to include the KCRC project identified by Staff. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

V. SAFETY PROJECTS

Referring to **Item V: Attachment A**, Robinson reported that MDOT has announced the local STP Safety Projects and High Risk Rural Road Programs selected for the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC) for FY2009. He noted that the Leonard Street at 24th Avenue project is a regular Safety Project, not a High Risk Rural project, as indicated in the attachment. These projects needed to be incorporated into the FY2008-2011 TIP and required an amendment.

Harrall addressed a funding discrepancy, and Cornell-Howe responded that all the numbers are "guesstimates" at this time. Discussion, comments and questions ensued.

Warren entertained a motion to amend the FY2008-2011 TIP to include the projects identified by Staff.

MOTION by Conners, SUPPORT by Dooley, to recommend to the Policy Committee approval of amending the FY2008-2011 TIP to contain the STP Safety Projects, including the Leonard Street Project, and the High Risk Rural Road Project discussed by Staff. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

VI. FY2009 CMAQ PROJECT REPLACEMENT TIP AMENDMENT

Referencing **Item VI: Attachment A**, Robinson recommended that the committee choose a replacement project for a project that was proposed for FY2009 CMAQ funding and later determined to be ineligible. In order for CMAQ projects to be eligible, they must alleviate congestion or improve air quality. Any replacement project(s) must also be ready to be obligated during FY2009. The amount available to program for FY2009 CMAQ is \$323,336. He had asked all jurisdictions eligible to receive CMAQ funds to submit their list of project proposals with a project scope and estimated total project cost to GVMC by Friday, October 17 at 5:00 pm.

From these submissions, Robinson created a project list that included three possible projects. He included the list as an agenda attachment, and passed out an updated list during the meeting, which included revisions to the funding amounts for the OCRC project.

Harrall proposed to fund the Vergennes at Pettis Avenue project with a federal cap of \$85,000 and the 20th Avenue at Baldwin Street project with a cap of \$238,000. He recommended that the totals be adjusted to reflect 80% of the total cost of the project. Discussion, comments and questions ensued.

Warren entertained a motion to amend the FY2008-2011 TIP to include the two projects recommended by the committee.

MOTION by Harrall, SUPPORT by Laughlin, to amend the FY2008-2011 TIP to include the Vergennes at Pettis Avenue project with a federal cap of \$85,000 and

the 20th Avenue at Baldwin Street project with a cap of \$238,000, with the remaining \$336 to be divided appropriately. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

VII. PROPOSED PM_{2.5} NONATTAINMENT AREA FOR KENT AND OTTAWA

Speaking on **Item VII: Attachment A**, Itani provided the committee an update on the status of the nonattainment area designations for PM_{2.5} for West Michigan. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) recommended that only Kent County be included in the nonattainment area for PM_{2.5}. The EPA disagreed with this assessment, stating that the appropriate nonattainment area for this pollutant should be Kent and Ottawa County, since the data clearly showed that Ottawa County was contributing to PM_{2.5} levels in Kent County. Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC) recently provided a letter of support to the EPA for placing both Kent and Ottawa Counties into a two-county nonattainment area for this pollutant. GVMC believes that if Kent County is asked to reduce emissions for this pollutant, they will need the help of Ottawa County in order to do so. The EPA is expected to make final designation decisions by December 18, 2008.

Faber added that, if 2006-2008 data is used instead of 2005-2007 data, there is a chance that the violating Kent County monitor will meet the standard. However, this will depend on what PM_{2.5} levels are through the end of the year. Discussion, comments and questions ensued.

VIII. MDOT 5-YEAR PROGRAM

Kent updated the committee on MDOT's FY2008-2012 5-Year Program, which is in the process of being updated through FY2013. At this point, information on FY2013 is limited, and there are many unknowns about the budget starting in FY2010. Kent stated that when MDOT looked at adjusting projects throughout the region based on cost, they didn't need to change much for GVMC's MPO area. Therefore, projects in the current TIP are not expected to change much, but some may be deferred. Kent provided additional information.

Kent referred to maps for the FY2008-2012 5-Year Program and the Grand Region 2009 construction program. These maps reflected MDOT's best project estimates at this time, and may change in the future. Discussion, comments and questions ensued.

Cornell-Howe asked when the Transportation Funding Task Force would announce their results. Stypula responded that the announcement is expected to take place Monday afternoon in Lansing.

IX. DEVELOPMENT OF THE FY2010-2013 TIP

Referring to **Item IX: Attachment A**, Robinson announced that he is starting the FY2010-2013 STIP/TIP development process. He'll begin with STP-Urban, EDF "C", and CMAQ projects. Robinson is waiting to see if there are unspent balances for FY2009. Itani stated that, since the beginning of the MPO's existence, there is 9 million in unspent balances. Cornell-Howe stated that the hope is that unspent balances can be used for the rescission in FY2009. Discussion, comments and questions ensued.

Robinson stated that the committee members should have received requests from Snell

for construction updates for jurisdictions. Once this information is returned, Robinson will put a draft together of potential projects to program from and send it to Committee members. After this step, he will send to Committee members information on submitting potential projects for the development of the TIP. Discussion, comments and questions continued.

Bush asked when the ad hoc programming committee would meet. Robinson replied that the date is yet to be determined, but that the meeting would take place in December.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

Stypula announced the upcoming retirement of long-standing committee member, Mears, and acknowledged Mears' 26-year career with the City of Wyoming.

Dooley informed the committee that MDOT would be accepting bids for the 44th Street at US-131 interchange project on Friday, November 7.

Itani declared that there is talk in Congress about another stimulus package that would include funding for bridge and road repair projects. This package has the potential to be full of earmarks. Itani encouraged the committee members to look at their Capital Improvement Plan, the TIP, or the Long Range Transportation Plan, and select projects that could move forward. After selection, these projects should be sent to GVMC. This would allow the agency to move forward quickly if this stimulus package passes. He also stated the importance of the committee members following the policy GVMC has in place for earmarked projects to expedite projects through the approval process.

Stypula stated that he would like to have a meeting with Congressman Ehlers and three or four committee members to discuss transportation funding in the near future.

Dewey informed the committee that the Pere Marquette is departing at 6:35 am instead of 7:35 am and that last year, ending in September, ridership was up 6.6%.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Warren adjourned the November 5, 2008 Technical Committee Meeting at 10:43 am.