

MINUTES

Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
Transportation Division
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, July 2, 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. He welcomed Steve Hartman from Hope Network to the meeting.

I. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Voting Members Present

Steve Warren (<i>Chair</i>)	<i>Proxy for</i> Bob Homan	Kent County Road Commission Plainfield Township
Patrick Bush		City of Grand Rapids
Ron Carr		City of Grandville
Sandra M. Cornell-Howe		MDOT
Rick DeVries		City of Grand Rapids
Ken Feldt		City of East Grand Rapids
Tim Haagsma		Gaines Charter Township
Wayne Harrall		Kent County
Russ Henckel	<i>Proxy for</i> Bill Dooley	City of Wyoming
Jan Hoekstra	<i>Proxy for</i> Conrad Venema	City of Wyoming
Dennis Kent	<i>Proxy for</i> Dan DesJarden	ITP-The Rapid
Ken Klomparens		ITP-The Rapid
Brett Laughlin		MDOT
Gerald Mears		City of Lowell
Steve Peterson		GRFIA
Terry Schweitzer		OCRC
		City of Wyoming
		Cascade Charter Township
		City of Kentwood

Staff and Non-Voting Guests Present

Andrea Dewey	GVMC Staff
Andrea Faber	GVMC Staff
Steve Hartman	Hope Network
Abed Itani	GVMC Staff
Sarah Koepke	FHWA
Darrell Robinson	GVMC Staff
Norm Sevensma	WMEAC-RWBC
Don Stypula	GVMC Staff
George Yang	GVMC Staff

Voting Members Not Present

Sandra Ayers
 James Beelen
 Mike Berrevoets
 Marta Brechting
 Scott Connors (Vice Chair)
 Dick Davies
 Sharon DeLange
 Dan DesJarden
 Mike DeVries
 Bill Dooley
 Steve Groenenboom
 Dennis Hoemke
 William Holland
 Jim Holtrop
 Bob Homan
 Dick Johnston
 Jim McIntyre
 Jim Miedema
 Audrey Nevins
 Dan Strikwerda
 Conrad Venema
 Bill Wiersma

Village of Caledonia
 Allendale Township
 City of Cedar Springs
 Alpine Township
 City of Walker
 Cannon Township
 Village of Sparta
 City of Lowell
 Grand Rapids Township
 City of Wyoming
 Ada Township
 Algoma Township
 Georgetown Township
 Ottawa County
 Plainfield Township
 City of Rockford
 Courtland Township
 Jamestown Township
 Byron Township
 City of Hudsonville
 The Rapid
 Tallmadge Township

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Warren entertained a motion to approve the May 7, 2008 Technical Committee Meeting Minutes.

MOTION by Carr, SUPPORT by Laughlin, to approve the May 7, 2008 Technical Committee Meeting Minutes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Sevensma commented that he is noticing more bikes on the road lately, which is timely in light of the 2010 Rails and Trails nonmotorized campaign.

Harrall commented that the first phase of the M-6 trail should be complete by July 3.

IV. FY2008-2011 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT

Referring to **Item IV: Attachments A and B**, Robinson spoke to the committee regarding two amendments to the FY2008-2011 TIP. The first amendment was a request from the Kent County Road Commission to add an awarded enhancement project to FY2008 in the TIP for the construction of the Paul Henry Thornapple Trail. This project was originally awarded a few years ago and was in an older TIP, but needed to be placed in the FY2008-2011 TIP in order for the KCRC to obligate it. Sevensma asked if the trail will stop in Caledonia or go down to the county line. Robinson stated that the trail goes from 100th to 68th Street. Harrall provided an additional explanation of the trail limits. Discussion ensued.

Robinson continued and addressed the second amendment, which was a request from MDOT to add the FY2009 General Program Accounts (GPAs) to the FY2008-2011 TIP. Bush noted that there were extra zeros on the spreadsheet included in **Item IV: Attachment B**. Discussion, comments and questions ensued.

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

MOTION by Bush, SUPPORT by Haagsma, to recommend to the Policy Committee approval of amending the FY2008-2011 TIP to include the TIP amendments requested by the KCRC and MDOT as discussed by Staff. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

V. FY2008 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) REVIEW

Referring to **Item V, Attachment A**, Robinson provided the committee with a brief overview of projects in the TIP that are not yet obligated, taking updates on the projects as they were offered. Robinson strongly encouraged committee members that had projects that were not yet obligated to get them in to MDOT as soon as possible, since it is likely that obligational authority will run out very soon. Discussion, comments and questions ensued.

Robinson concluded by asking committee members to let him know if they had any problems with any of the future FY2009 projects. Discussion, comments and questions ensued.

VI. FY2008 UPWP AMENDMENT

Speaking on **Item VI: Attachment A**, Itani described a requested amendment to the FY2008 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). This amendment is to reflect State Planning and Research (SPR) funds for travel demand modeling activities under work item "2.1" GISPlus/TransCad Model Maintenance & Update. Funding will include \$1,000 for FY2008 and \$14,000 for FY2009. The task is to be carried out during FY2008 and FY2009.

MDOT is providing this funding to GVMC to complete several activities related to the addition of four new townships to GVMC's boundary area that now need to be included in the planning process. Activities, which will be split between MDOT and GVMC, will include, among other things, data collection, completing traffic counts, and recalibrating and validating the model. While these areas are currently not encompassed by an MPO, they will not become members of the Metro Council. Itani clarified that the addition of these townships to the boundary area makes sense for air quality analyses. Lastly, through the addition of these townships, all of West Michigan will be connected through the Travel Demand Model. Mears asked if this boundary area would change in 2010. Itani said that the basic structure will not change based on the new census.

Warren entertained a motion to amend the UPWP for FY2008 and FY2009 to include the amendment discussed by Staff.

MOTION by Schweitzer, SUPPORT by Carr, to amend the UPWP for FY2008 and FY2009 to include the amendment identified by Staff. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

VII. NONMOTORIZED PLAN

Referring to **Item VII: Attachment A**, Dewey updated the committee on the progress of the Rails-to-Trails case statement for the 2010 campaign and the revision of the Nonmotorized portion of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Dewey stated that Rails-to-Trails is currently working to lobby Congress to fund 40 communities across the country with \$50 million each to promote trails, walking and biking for improved mobility. In Michigan, Grand Rapids and Ann Arbor were selected as potential funding recipients. Concurrently, Dewey is working to revise the Nonmotorized portion of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The Nonmotorized Committee worked closely with the West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition and the West Michigan Strategic Alliance to draft a case statement, or a formal request and project list, for Rails-to-Trails to include with the materials that they sent to Congress to lobby for funding. Thus far, the Committee has developed a way to select projects, as well as a 1st and 2nd draft list of nonmotorized projects. The final case statement, along with several maps, was recently submitted to Rails-to-Trails. Dewey encouraged the committee to include a statement of support should Grand Rapids be selected to receive the funding so that it is evident that this is something that the Metro Council supports.

Kent said that unless the gas tax goes up, or another revenue source is identified, this money will come at the expense of roads, CMAQ, and other programs. Itani agreed, but stated that this is how the “game is played” in Washington, and if it is going to happen, we need to do what we can to receive funding. Warren questioned the role of the MPO in this process, stating that in the past, GVMC has been reluctant to support earmarked projects. Itani stated that GVMC’s policy is to support projects as long as they are part of the Long Range Transportation Plan, and the Nonmotorized Transportation Plan is in the LRTP. He also stated that, as an MPO, it is GVMC’s responsibility to plan for all modes of transportation. Warren asked if the MPO is thinking of advocating for an increase in transportation revenue. Stypula commented that, aside from this earmark process, Metro Council does not aggressively advocate for earmark projects because of the agency’s understanding that when money is taken off the top, there is less for other activities. The agency also ensures that there is widespread involvement from the Tech, Policy, and Executive Committees and the GVMC Board. To answer the transportation funding question, Stypula said that GVMC enthusiastically supports any funding sources available, whether it’s the traditional gas tax or other forms being studied by the Transportation Funding Task Force. Warren added that, as the committee considers earmarks, this may be an opportunity to address the funding need for projects that is over and above what is available. Dewey clarified that the two billion dollar earmark is only one percent of the total transportation budget, and even if the funding does not come to the Grand Rapids area, the fact that the communities are working together and thinking about projects is a worthwhile endeavor. Discussion, comments and questions ensued.

VIII. OZONE ACTION! PROGRAM

Referring to **Item VIII: Attachment A**, Faber provided the committee with a brief overview of the activities that she has taken part in over the spring and summer to promote the Ozone Action! program. Activities have included radio advertising, a kickoff event, participation in several public events, rotating the ozone display between agencies, participating in a radio interview, and donating promotional materials to the Kent County Road Commission and the Kent County Health Department. Faber expects to continue radio advertising through August. She also plans to continue to attend public

events and rotate the display between agencies for the duration of the summer.

Faber noted that the Ozone Action! program is going to be changing significantly starting in FY2009 with the addition of PM2.5, another nonattainment pollutant. As of October 1, the program will become a year-round program, thereby keeping the public informed about air quality through every season. Activities to promote PM2.5 awareness are expected to remain similar to ozone at this time.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

Itani clarified that MPO staff do not promote earmark projects per se. Rather, if a community approaches the MPO, the MPO will work for them. However, the MPO does not make the decision, and the Technical and Policy Committees must be involved in the decision-making process.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Warren adjourned the Technical Committee at 10:21 am.