

MINUTES

Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
Transportation Division
TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMMING STUDY GROUP
Wednesday, August 14, 2013
Grand Valley Metro Council 678 Front Ave NW

Zull called the meeting to order at 9:03 am. The Committee members, staff, and guests present introduced themselves.

I. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Voting Members Present

Chris Zull (<i>Chair</i>)		City of Grand Rapids
Tim Cochran		City of Wyoming
Scott Conners		City of Walker
Rick DeVries		City of Grand Rapids
Ken Feldt		City of East Grand Rapids
Wayne Harrall	<i>Proxy for</i>	County of Kent
	<i>Mike DeVries</i>	Grand Rapids Township
Russ Henckel	<i>Proxy for</i>	City of Wyoming
	<i>Bill Dooley</i>	City of Wyoming
Paul Lott		MDOT
Terry Schweitzer		City of Kentwood
Dan Strikwerda		City of Hudsonville
Phil Vincent		City of Rockford
Steve Warren		KCRC

Staff and Non-Voting Guests Present

Ken Bergwerff	Jamestown Township
Andrea Faber	GVMC Staff
Tim Haagsma	Gaines Township
Abed Itani	GVMC Staff
Travis Mabry	City of Walker
Steve Redmond	MDOT
Darrell Robinson	GVMC Staff
Chad Sosnowski	Cannon Township
John Weiss	GVMC
George Yang	GVMC Staff
Mike Zonyk	GVMC Staff

Voting Members Not Present

Jerry Alkema	Allendale Township
Sandy Ayers	Village of Caledonia
Ron Carr	City of Grandville
Sharon DeLange	Village of Sparta
Mike DeVries	Grand Rapids Township
Bill Dooley	City of Wyoming
Roy Hawkins	GRFIA

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Jan Hoekstra
Mark Howe
Dennis Kent
Brett Laughlin
Tom Stressman

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ITP-The Rapid
City of Lowell
MDOT
OCRC
City of Cedar Springs

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Zull entertained a motion to approve the March 21, 2013 Transportation Programming Study Group (TPSG) meeting minutes.

MOTION by Schweitzer, SUPPORT by Conners, to approve the March 21, 2013 TPSG meeting minutes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

IV. PROGRAMMING OF FY2014 TAP FUNDING

Referring to **Item IV: Attachment A** and a handout, "Projects Identified for FY2014 TAP Funds," Robinson explained that \$38 million in non-motorized projects were submitted following a call for projects. The Non-Motorized Committee met yesterday in order to narrow down this list. The resulting list, presented at today's meeting, totaled just under \$1 million. The task of today's meeting is to continue discussion of this list of projects, to select the appropriate projects, and reduce the dollar amount to match the available funds. Robinson added that some projects on the list have already been submitted to MDOT for review and appear to meet the approval criteria. The remaining four projects will need to be submitted to MDOT for review, and this process may take 3-4 months. Discussion ensued.

Itani added that the list must be financially constrained and that the match for most projects is 60/40. He noted that Cannon Township volunteered to take \$30,000 from their share to help make the list financially constrained, which made the match for their project 52/48. The TAP funding for that project was listed at \$240,000. Itani added that Cannon Township had expressed that they would be happy with \$200,000 in TAP funds for their project. Sosnowski explained and confirmed this. Discussion ensued.

Because the project list was overprogrammed, Feldt offered to move the City of East Grand Rapids' project to the illustrative list and asked that the match amount be 80/20.

Harrall asked if the 3 Mile Road/East Beltline Trail and the Paul Henry Trail projects weren't on this list because they had been submitted for state funding. He noted that the state wouldn't agree to fund the projects until there was certainty they wouldn't be funded with MPO funding. Itani confirmed this and added that, when he spoke to MDOT yesterday, they had indicated that the projects would be funded in FY2014. Discussion ensued.

DeVries asked that all projects submitted for TAP funding be added to the illustrative list in case extra dollars become available. Itani confirmed that all submitted projects would be on the illustrative list. Robinson also suggested that if Committee members have projects in FY2014 that didn't make the short list, that they submit these projects directly to MDOT to

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get them through the review process in case extra state funding becomes available. Itani reiterated this. Discussion ensued.

Harrall noted that, with the removal of the City of East Grand Rapids' project, the project list was financially constrained without cutting Cannon Township's project by an additional \$40,000. The balance would be \$5,000 in available TAP funds. Zull asked if there were any additional projects that could be funded with \$45,000 in TAP funding. Itani suggested the City of Grand Rapids Dean Lake project for \$36,000. Harrall recommended fully funding the Cannon Township project, and it was noted that the project had already been reduced once. Discussion ensued.

DeVries asked for clarification on the Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail Sidewalk project. Harrall provided additional information about the project, noting that it connects to phases of the Musketawa White Pine Connector Trail. Harrall added that it would be preferable if money was available to widen the sidewalks between Alpine and N Park to 10' wide for the last phase of the project, since they are using 5' existing sidewalks there now. Conners also provided additional details.

Zull recapped that it has been suggested that the Cannon Township project be funded at the requested level. This would leave approximately \$5,000 to distribute to other projects. Haagsma suggested that the \$5,000 be added to the Cannon Township project to get it closer to a 60/40 match. Harrall suggested distributing this funding among all the projects. Itani recommended leaving the list underprogrammed by \$5,000, and Robinson concurred. Warren asked for an explanation on leaving the project list underprogrammed. Robinson stated that the actual amount of FY2013 funding was lower than the amount given, and some projects will come in over the estimate, so that funding could be put toward those overages. Warren asked if TAP projects are capped. Itani explained that TAP is different than STP in this regard. Discussion ensued. Conners suggested that, since Cannon Township was willing to be flexible, the remaining funding should be given to them to put them closer to the 60/40 match. Zull asked for and received general concurrence from the Committee to do this.

Zull noted that he didn't want the committee to just consider non-motorized if there were other categories that were eligible for funding and asked if there were any Safe Routes to School projects other than Jamestown Township's. Haagsma noted that there were some on the long list. Discussion ensued.

Robinson noted that the motion to approve the FY2014 TAP project list should include "pending technical review of the projects not yet submitted to MDOT." He explained that the technical review process could significantly increase the cost of a project or determine it to be ineligible. If a project is deemed ineligible, the Committee will need to reconvene to determine a replacement. Discussion ensued.

Harrall asked that the Kent County Parks Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail Sidewalk facility type description be edited to remove "Sidewalk-North Side" and replace it with "Widen Sidewalk." The side for the sidewalk has not yet been determined. Discussion ensued.

Zull entertained a motion to approve the FY2014 TAP project list.

MOTION by Harrall, SUPPORT by Cochran, to recommend to the Technical

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Committee approval of the list of projects identified for FY2014 TAP funds with one edit—removing “Sidewalk-North Side” from the Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail Sidewalk project and replacing it with “Widen Sidewalk”—and pending the projects’ technical review at MDOT. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Robinson announced that the new federal amount for the Cannon Township project is \$245,469, and the new match would be 54/46.

V. **OTHER BUSINESS**

Zonyk explained that the Non-motorized Committee would like to modify the policy on non-motorized projects. The current policy is as follows: *“All non-motorized projects included in the GVMC Long Range Transportation Plan/Non-motorized Transportation Plan are eligible for funding as allowed under applicable federal-aid categories. All non-motorized projects requesting federal funds must be endorsed by the MPO to receive federal funds and be included in the MPO TIP.”*

Zonyk noted that the Non-motorized Committee was requesting to add the following to that policy: *“One-half of the allocated funds to the MPO for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) at a minimum shall be the target for use on bicycle and pedestrian related facility improvements. One-quarter of the allocated funds to the MPO for the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program shall be the target for use on bicycle and pedestrian facility improvements. All CMAQ projects shall be addressed on a case by case basis to prove high use, mode shift, and connectivity and score highly using the scoring criteria set forth in the Non-Motorized Plan. For the use of CMAQ funds all projects must demonstrate emission reduction and alleviate congestion.”*

Zull started the discussion by asking for Committee feedback on the 50% target for TAP funding. Conners noted that almost all of the TAP funding went toward non-motorized projects. Zull stated that he was unsure that this policy was necessary, since it may prevent the Committee from funding a really good project in the future. Itani explained that, when the Non-motorized Plan was developed, there was no funding associated with it. With the new performance-based MAP 21, staff is trying to dedicate funding toward the \$38 million in non-motorized plan projects so that some projects can be built in the next 20 years. He noted that staff didn't recommend using STP funds for non-motorized projects. He also added that ¼ of the CMAQ funding (about \$600,000), combined with half the available TAP funding, would fund \$18-\$19 million in non-motorized projects in the next 20 years. However, Itani cautioned that CMAQ funding is restrictive, and CMAQ projects must demonstrate usage for the facility and reduce congestion. Itani concluded that, while the Non-motorized Committee feels strongly that CMAQ funding should be a funding source, it is up to the Committee as to whether or not they adopt this policy.

DeVries commented that Grand Rapids has used enhancement funds in the past for streetscape projects. However, if 50% of TAP funds are allocated to non-motorized, there will be very little left for streetscape. Warren added that this area prides itself on elevating the best projects through Committee discussions, and therefore, he would hate to see the Committee pass something that restricts them, especially with CMAQ, because it has so many restrictions. Warren noted that he would prefer that the group decide to fund the best projects. However, Warren added that he understood a target of 50% of the TAP funds for non-motorized. Itani clarified that, according to the policy, CMAQ projects would be

addressed on a “case-by-case basis.” Discussion ensued.

After much discussion, Zull stated his concern about reaching a \$600,000 target in CMAQ funds for non-motorized projects and recommended choosing projects based on merit alone. Schweitzer stated that, during the Non-motorized Committee meeting, he had pushed for a target of 50% of CMAQ funds for non-motorized projects. However, he added that an acknowledgement that non-motorized funding is eligible for CMAQ is the basic principle. Itani noted that this policy needs to go forward to the Technical and Policy Committees for action.

Zull entertained a motion to approve this policy, as amended.

MOTION by Warren, SUPPORT by Schweitzer, to recommend approval of the revised non-motorized funding policy with the following edits to be made to the policy: CMAQ program funds are eligible for use on bicycle and pedestrian facility improvements. All CMAQ projects shall be addressed on a case-by-by-case basis and must demonstrate emission reduction.

Conners noted that the Committee will need to look at future years of TAP funding. Itani stated that there will be additional meetings for FY2015-2017 TAP projects.

Itani stated that, while he’s against setting funding targets for communities, he distributed a handout that showed what communities might expect to receive in TAP funding in the future based on population. He noted that many small communities requested \$250,000 - \$500,000 projects in FY2014, which may not be a realistic expectation for the future. Warren reiterated that regional/political equity is important, but stated that population shouldn’t be the only factor in determining funding. He also noted that ACT 51 funds are determined based on a combination of population and miles. Total federal aid road miles could be another factor in determining funding allocation. Itani responded that he used population for this exercise because that’s the greatest single factor in how FHWA determines MPO funding. Redmond cautioned that suballocation is a major red flag for FHWA. Weiss added that, if smaller communities ask what they get for their GVMC membership, examples from townships like Jamestown, who spend less than \$2,000 in dues and receive \$72,000 for a project, show a clear benefit. Discussion ensued.

Robinson informed the Committee that two CMAQ projects didn’t qualify. Once the new TIP is approved, these remaining funds will need to be programmed. One idea is to fund sidewalks on 28th St., which will involve moving projects between years, but details will need to be finalized.

Robinson also asked the four communities who received TAP funding today and have not yet submitted their projects to MDOT to do so as soon as possible since the project reviews can take several months. He also asked jurisdictions that had projects that didn’t receive TAP funding today to still submit them, as there may be some TE funds available.

VI. **ADJOURNMENT**

Zull entertained a motion to adjourn the August 14, 2013 TPSG Committee meeting.

MOTION by DeVries, SUPPORT by Feldt, to adjourn the August 14, 2013 TPSG

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Committee meeting at 10:06 am. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.