MINUTES

Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
Transportation Division
TECH/POLICY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, August 18, 2010
Kent County Road Commission
1500 Scribner NW Grand Rapids, MI

Koslosky, Chair of the Policy Committee, called the meeting to order at 9:36 am.

I. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Voting Members Present

Jim Koslosky (*Chair)*		GRFIA
Alex Arends		Alpine Township
Dan Carlton		Georgetown Township
Eric DeLong		City of Grand Rapids
Mike DeVries		Grand Rapids Township
George Haga		Ada Township
Don R. Hilton, Sr.		Gaines Township
Jim Holtrop		Ottawa County
Rich Houtteman		City of Kentwood
Dal McBurrows		MDOT
David Pasquale		City of Lowell
Steve Peterson		Cascade Township
Jon Rice	*Proxy for*	KCRC
	Dick Bulkowski	Kent County Commissioner
Darrel Schmalzel		City of Walker
Dan Strikwerda	*Proxy for*	City of Hudsonville
	Don VanDoeselaar	City of Hudsonville
Peter Varga		The Rapid

Staff and Non-Voting Guests Present

Tim Cochran	City of Wyoming
Scott Conners	City of Walker
Rick DeVries	City of Grand Rapids
Andrea Dewey	GVMC Staff
Andrea Faber	GVMC Staff
Tim Haagsma	Gaines Township
Wayne Harrall	Kent County
Roy Hawkins	GRFIA
Abed Itani	GVMC Staff
Dennis Kent	MDOT
Darrell Robinson	GVMC Staff
Terry Schweitzer	City of Kentwood
Norm Sevensma	WMEAC-RWBC
Jim Snell	GVMC Staff
Steve Warren	KCRC
George Yang	GVMC Staff
Mike Zonyk	GVMC Staff
Chris Zull	City of Grand Rapids

Voting Members Not Present

Jerry Alkema	Allendale Township
Larry Bruursema	OCRC
Dick Bulkowski	Kent County Commissioner
Christine Burns	City of Cedar Springs
Dick Davies	Cannon Township
Mark DeClercq	City of Grand Rapids
Sharon DeLange	Village of Sparta
Jeff Dood	City of Rockford
Ken Feldt	City of East Grand Rapids
Bryan Harrison	Caledonia Charter Township
Dennis Hoemke	Algoma Township
Bob Homan	Plainfield Township
Ken Krombeen	City of Grandville
Jim Miedema	Jamestown Township
Audrey Nevins	Byron Township
Richard Pastoor	City of Wyoming
Jack Poll	City of Wyoming
Chuck Porter	Courtland Township
Don VanDoeselaar	City of Hudsonville
Toby VanEss	Tallmadge Township

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Koslosky noted one change to the July 21, 2010 minutes and entertained a motion to approve the minutes, as corrected.

MOTION by Varga, SUPPORT by Holtrop, to approve of the July 21, 2010 Policy Committee meeting minutes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Sevensma asked that the Committee consider funding non-motorized projects with CMAQ funding. Schweitzer responded that the City of Kentwood has used CMAQ funding for non-motorized projects. Conners added that the Tech Committee, in the past, has used CMAQ to fund non-motorized projects on a case-by-case basis. Discussion ensued.

IV. FY2008-2011 TIP AMENDMENT

Referring to **Item IV: Attachment A**, Kent informed the Committee of MDOT's request to amend/modify FY2010 of the FY2008-2011 TIP by adding the following project: I-196 under Fuller Avenue, bridge replacement and interchange improvements, at a total cost of $7,800,000. The funding source for the project is federal ARRA. However, Kent explained that if the available ARRA funding is not adequate, it may need to be supplemented with regional funds.

Koslosky entertained a motion to amend/modify the FY2008-2011 TIP, per MDOT's request.

MOTION by DeVries, SUPPORT by Varga, to amend FY2010 of the FY2008-2011 TIP by adding MDOT's I-196 under Fuller Avenue project, as identified.

Koslosky asked how this project would impact freeway access. Kent responded that work will not begin on the project until Diamond is reopened. MDOT is currently planning on a November letting for the project.

Koslosky called the motion to question. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Koslosky noted that because this is an ARRA project, it does not need to be brought before the Metro Council Board for approval.

V. 2035 LRTP SUBCOMMITTEE NEEDS ASSESSMENTS & INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Referring to **Item V: Attachment A**, Dewey informed the Committee that, in order to assist with the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan, six subcommittees have been meeting to develop needs assessments for various modes of transportation. Dewey and Snell provided an overview of the needs and recommendations determined by all six subcommittees.

Intermodalism, Freight, Rail & Air (aka "Freight"): Dewey explained that the Freight Committee had a difficult time determining a needs list. However, the Freight Committee did determine two recommendations. The first recommendation is to conduct a comprehensive freight study that would be used to determine desired routes, specific system deficiencies, commercial safety issues, and the potential for enhanced intermodalism in the freight community. The second recommendation is to develop and maintain a sustainable freight network for the MPO area. For the purposes of the Long Range Transportation Plan currently under development, there are no costs associated with the development of and improvements to a designated freight network.

Koslosky asked if any of the 6 subcommittees had reviewed the TF2 study documents. Dewey did not believe that they had. Koslosky added that the reason for his question was two-fold. First, he stated that some level of needs assessment had been done at a macro-level statewide, and second, he wanted to ensure congruity between the Committee's needs identification efforts, the State system plan, and TF2's efforts so that a unified message is brought to the legislature. Discussion ensued.

Non-Motorized Committee: Dewey stated that the Non-Motorized Committee members worked specifically on revisions to the Policies and Practices for Programming Projects sections pertaining to non-motorized transportation in order to reflect the current practices of the MPO. The revised section allows for the expenditure of federal funds, in addition to Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds, on non-motorized projects, lists the types of non-motorized facilities recognized by the MPO, and sets two fundamental criteria for non-motorized project consideration – connectivity and demonstration of mode shift. The Committee also made revisions to the "needs" lists, discussed a project selection methodology, and is continuing to revise prioritization criteria for non-motorized projects in order to systematically address the development of a non-motorized transportation network.

The total need, as developed by the Committee for the next 25 years, is approximately $93 million. It was the recommendation of the Committee to expend $1 million in federal funds annually (in addition to any TE awards) for non-motorized projects, as identified in the LRTP. The region currently receives approximately $1 million in TE funds annually.

Varga asked how Complete Streets legislation could impact the non-motorized project needs identified by the Committee. Dewey explained that Complete Streets legislation

suggests how projects can occur concurrently with other projects.

Kent asked that “rehabilitation” be added to “General Facility Maintenance” in the project listing.

Rice expressed his concern over the expense of the sidewalk projects of the list and questioned how they became a priority. Dewey responded that these projects were suggested by members of the Non-Motorized Committee. Schweitzer added that the list will be reduced once the projects go through the evaluation/prioritization process. DeVries suggested that the nonmotorized projects be prioritized by region, with the region to pursue enhancement funds for these projects. Itani stated his preference not to discuss the dollar-amount recommendations from each sub-committee at this point. He added that for the next step, project prioritization, staff will take the needs lists identified by the 6 subcommittees to create GIS layers that show which segments address which problems. Discussion ensued.

Transit and Passenger Rail: Dewey explained that while this Committee found it difficult to determine needs, they did discuss challenges to transit and passenger rail. These challenges included (1) improved transit links to other modes (airport, Amtrak, Greyhound/Indian Trails), particularly for students, including a potential rail link between the Gerald R. Ford International Airport and Rapid Central Station; (2) one additional daily departure on the *Pere Marquette;* (3) improved connections between land use decisions and transit development to enhance the quality/maintenance of bus stops and address ADA accessibility issues and convenience to destinations; (4) development of a Rapid Bus Rapid Transit route to the Allendale GVSU campus (“Laker Line”); (5) operations and maintenance challenges for small transit service providers; and (6) overwhelming service demands on paratransit services. The demand for transit service in the rural area is currently being researched as part of the Kent County Transit Needs Assessment, for which GVMC is the lead agency. Dewey noted that the most quantifiable need is for operations and maintenance support for the smaller transit providers. The total cost to operate and maintain them annually, with inflation, is $7,080,118.

DeLong asked if a high speed rail connection with Kalamazoo was discussed. Dewey stated that this is a possibility down the line, and that this connection is part of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative Plan. Discussion ensued.

Schmalzel noted that the operation and maintenance costs were substantial. He asked if the smaller transit agencies work together at all or have tried to scale their operations to reduce cost. Dewey responded that there is cooperation in terms of dispatching and that GVMC is currently facilitating the Kent County Transit Needs Assessment to analyze the capacity of current countywide transit service.

Segment Capacity (Congestion Management): Snell discussed with the Committee the three areas of recommendation from the Congestion Management Committee—Recurring Congestion, Corridor Progression/Operations, and Non-Recurring Congestion.

The first objective (recurring congestion) seeks to improve the transportation system productivity by addressing capacity deficient miles on the federal aid system and emphasizes the reduction of deficient miles on the federal aid system. To implement the solutions for the identified congested corridors, the cost would be $70 million.

The second objective (corridor progression/operations) seeks to enhance mobility by

reducing overall travel times and delays along “corridors of significance” and emphasizes an operations approach to reducing delay by using technology to improve traffic flow along corridors of significance. The second recommendation is to create a regional inventory of all signalized intersections. The third recommendation is to allocate funding for geometric and technological upgrades at many intersections with identified capacity need. Cost for corridor progression/operations solutions would be $38,251,220 over the next 25 years.

The third objective (non-recurring congestion), seeks to increase the reliability of the transportation system and reduce travel delay caused by incidents by continuing enhancement of real time automated incident detection technologies and working toward improved response protocol when incidents are identified. The fourth recommendation is to maintain and moderately expand to completion the regional ITS network. The fifth and final recommendation is to allocate funding toward the development and operation of a freeway service patrol to remove broken down vehicles during peak travel hours. The cost of non-recurring solutions is $54,750,000 long term.

Kent noted that the recurring congestion solution doesn’t include MDOT projects and asked if it would be helpful to indicate MDOT’s committed projects. Snell stated that the list does include MDOT projects.

DeLong stated that the demographic information has changed. While population was once expected to increase, leading to expected capacity and congestion problems, this is no longer the case. In light of this, he asked what the best expenditure of funds would be. Snell explained the Committee’s three objectives and that control totals from the State were used to determine where growth was expected to be. Discussion ensued.

Safety & Operations: Snell reported the needs determined by the Safety and Operations Committee, which are outlined below.

The first itemized need determined by the Committee included a Drunk/Distracted Driver Awareness Program at a cost of $25,000/year.

The second need was to analyze intersection safety. The Committee’s recommendation was to develop an intersection safety improvement program that included three tasks: (1) dedicate funding every three years to complete a small intersection safety study on key locations in the region and funding for the improvements determined to be needed as a result of the study, (2) carry out the intersection safety study, and (3) complete the improvements identified in the study. This would be a three-year rolling project with 6-8 intersections selected per phase. The cost would be $200,000 per study, for a total of $600,000 for three studies, and $250,000 per intersection, for a total cost of $5,000,000.

The third itemized need was corridor safety. The Committee recommended that GVMC incorporate a policy into its procedures to allow for the addition of center turn lanes using EDFC funding even when the facility does not qualify for these funds because of GVMC capacity policy, when the addition of the center turn lane can be shown to produce a positive return on investment over the expected life of the pavement. Possible federal investment would be $1,800,000/year.

The fourth need was determined to be senior mobility and safety. The Committee recommended that GVMC consider making funding available for federally required sign improvements. In addition, consideration should be given to implementing a regional sign program and perhaps standardizing signage to help eliminate confusion between

jurisdictions. Total cost will be $75,000 per year, or $375,000 for FY2013-2017.
The fifth need was determined to be Bike and Pedestrian Safety. The Committee recommended that GVMC work in coordination with representatives from WMTSC to supplement, where possible, efforts to promote localized awareness activities. Possible federal investment would be $25,000/year.

The sixth need was identified as Car/Deer Crashes. For this item, the Committee recommended that GVMC work with WMTSC or the Michigan Deer Crash Coalition (MDCC) to supplement, where possible, efforts to promote localized awareness activities. Possible federal investment was determined to be $25,000/year.

The investment for all 6 needs over 10 years would be $24,725,000.

Rice noted that nationally, 62% of fatalities are on rural roads. He questioned if rural roads could be addressed as a need. Snell replied that the group focused on hot spots but could certainly add additional corridors to the needs list. Discussion ensued.

Pavement Asset Management: Snell explained that to maintain the system at its current state, current investment in the system will need to double. Because fixes will become more costly as more time passes, Snell recommended that the region do all it can to protect its transportation network. Also, without a sound transportation infrastructure, none of the goals of the Long Range Plan will be attainable. Discussion ensued.

Koslosky said that he recently met with senators and representatives who expressed concern about raising taxes to pay for transportation because their constituents are against raising taxes. He added that the general public needs to be educated more about this. Varga stated that local legislators also don't fully understand the severity of the transportation funding problem. Discussion ensued.

Koslosky entertained a motion to adopt the needs assessment with the comments received today for inclusion in the LRTP.

MOTION by Holtrop, SUPPORT by Varga, to adopt the needs assessment with the comments received today for inclusion in the LRTP.

Itani clarified that the Committee is only adopting the level of needs. Rice requested to modify the motion to not include funding recommendations, and the motion was revised:

MOTION by Holtrop, SUPPORT by Varga, to adopt the needs assessment without funding recommendations, along with the comments received today, for inclusion in the LRTP. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Dewey proposed a prioritization strategy whereby staff would use GIS layers to create maps that demonstrated segments where several needs would be met simultaneously. Projects would then be "bundled" together, and projects that satisfy more than one program area would be given a higher priority. Itani provided additional clarification.

Rice stated that the Committee will need time to think about this, since bundling could significantly reduce the number of overall projects that are completed. Itani stated that the goal of this methodology would be to leverage as much as possible and keep the cost of the project at a minimum, and would not mean that just one or two projects would utilize all of the available funding. Koslosky suggested that the Technical and TPSG Committees

review this and report back to the Committee, thereby deferring this item for future action. Discussion ensued.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

- **ADA training opportunity:** Dewey announced that GVMC is working with MDOT and the City of Walker to provide an ADA training opportunity for all of its members on September 30th. She asked interested Committee members to sign up to attend.
- **New TIP amendment schedule:** Robinson explained the new TIP amendment schedule. August 23rd is the deadline for amendments to the FY2011-2014 TIP.
- **State/Federal legislative update:** Itani stated that the House and Senate have passed a transportation bill. However, the bills still need to be reconciled due to differences.

Koslosky asked Varga to chair the September Policy Meeting, due to his absence.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Koslosky adjourned the August 18, 2010 Policy Committee meeting at 11:33 am.