

**MINUTES**

**Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
Transportation Division  
POLICY COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, September 18, 2013  
Kent County Road Commission  
1500 Scribner NW      Grand Rapids, MI**

Varga, chair of the Policy Committee, called the meeting to order at 9:30 am. Nelson, a Cannon Township trustee, introduced himself as their new representative.

**I. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS****Voting Members Present**

Peter Varga, <i>Chair</i>		ITP-The Rapid
Alex Arends		Alpine Township
Dave Bulkowski		Kent County Commissioner
Dan Carlton		Georgetown Township
Mike DeVries		Grand Rapids Township
Rick DeVries	<i>Proxy for</i>	City of Grand Rapids
	<i>Eric DeLong</i>	City of Grand Rapids
	<i>Mark DeClercq</i>	City of Grand Rapids
Tim Griffhorst		OCRC
George Haga		Ada Township
Don R. Hilton, Sr.		Gaines Township
Jim Holtrop		Ottawa County
Mark Howe		City of Lowell
Ken Krombeen, <i>Vice Chair</i>		City of Grandville
John Lanum	<i>Proxy for</i>	MDOT
	<i>Dal McBurrows</i>	MDOT
Tim Nelson		Cannon Township
Darrel Schmalzel		City of Walker
Terry Schweitzer	<i>Proxy for</i>	City of Kentwood
	<i>Rich Houtteman</i>	City of Kentwood
Ben Swayze		Cascade Township
Phil Vincent	<i>Proxy for</i>	City of Rockford
	<i>Jamie Davies</i>	City of Rockford
Steve Warren		KCRC

**Staff and Non-Voting Guests Present**

Andrea Faber	GVMC Staff
Abed Itani	GVMC Staff
Dennis Kent	MDOT-Grand Region
Erick Kind	MDOT
Josh Lungert	GR Chamber
Darrell Robinson	GVMC Staff
Norm Sevensma	WMEAC-RWBC

**Voting Members Not Present**

Jerry Alkema	Allendale Township
--------------	--------------------

Jamie Davies  
 Mark DeClercq  
 Eric DeLong  
 Ken Feldt  
 Bryan Harrison  
 Dennis Hoemke  
 Rich Houtteman  
 Dal McBurrows  
 Audrey Nevins-Weiss  
 Janet Oskin  
 Richard Pastoor  
 Jack Poll  
 Chuck Porter  
 Brian Ryks  
 Dan Strikwerda  
 Thad Taylor  
 Toby VanEss  
 Member Awaiting Appointment

City of Rockford  
 City of Grand Rapids  
 City of Grand Rapids  
 City of East Grand Rapids  
 Caledonia Charter Township  
 Algoma Township  
 City of Kentwood  
 MDOT  
 Byron Township  
 Jamestown Township  
 City of Wyoming  
 City of Wyoming  
 Courtland Township  
 GRFIA  
 City of Hudsonville  
 City of Cedar Springs  
 Tallmadge Township  
 Plainfield Township

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Varga entertained a motion to approve the July 17, 2013 minutes.

**MOTION by Schmalzel, SUPPORT by Krombeen, to approve of the July 17, 2013 Policy Committee meeting minutes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**IV. FY2014 TAP FUNDED PROJECTS (RECOMMENDED BY THE NON-MOTORIZED, TPSG AND TECH COMMITTEES) AND CMAQ PROJECT CHANGES**

Referring to **Item IV: Attachment A**, Robinson informed the Committee that he was requesting approval of the list of FY2014 projects recommended for TAP funding. Robinson noted that the list stemmed out of two different meetings. First, the Non-Motorized Committee met following a call for projects on August 13<sup>th</sup> to collaborate and provide the TPSG Committee a shortlist of possible projects for use of TAP funds in FY2014. They narrowed down a list of \$38 million in overall need to just under \$1 million based on project quality, value, and readiness for use of funds. The TPSG Committee then met on Wednesday, August 14<sup>th</sup> to evaluate this list, select the appropriate projects, and reduce the dollar amount to match the available funds. Robinson thanked the City of East Grand Rapids for volunteering to remove their project from the list. The Technical Committee recommends that the project list being proposed be approved, with the projects not selected for FY2014 funding to be added to a pool of projects for possible future funding. Robinson also stated that the projects need to be submitted to the state of Michigan and recommended for review.

Varga entertained a motion to approve the proposed FY2014 list of TAP projects.

**MOTION by Warren, SUPPORT by Holtrop, to approve the list of projects proposed**

**for FY2014 TAP funding.**

Schweitzer asked for an update on the projects that had been submitted for technical review already. Robinson stated that two or three projects had already had technical reviews, but they were submitted for consideration for statewide funding. He was still awaiting responses about them. Discussion ensued.

Being that there were no additional questions or comments, Varga called the motion to question. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Robinson added that MDOT/GVMC staff would like to request approval on a plan to fund sidewalks on 28<sup>th</sup> St. from Patterson Avenue to Breton Avenue with local FY2014 CMAQ funding. Robinson noted that this had been discussed at past committee meetings, but MDOT was requesting a formal motion. The 20% match would be split between the Cities of Kentwood and Grand Rapids, and Kentwood is the sponsoring agency. This plan will be accomplished by moving an ITP bus purchase project from FY2014 to FY2016. There was a project proposed in FY2016 sponsored by the KCRC that was found to be ineligible for CMAQ funds. The KCRC supports the proposal so long as the Committee agrees to fund the Belmont project if additional funds become available in the future. MDOT will add sidewalks on 28<sup>th</sup> St. from Breton Avenue to Kalamazoo Avenue using their own funding.

Arends asked for clarification on the agreement to fund the Belmont project in the future. Robinson stated that his understanding was that funding would not automatically be given to the Belmont project. Warren responded that his understanding was that funding would automatically be given to the Belmont project if it did become available. Arends stated that, while he generally supports the KCRC, there might be projects that come up that are more beneficial than Belmont for funding. Warren stated that the KCRC recognized this, but noted that the project was already deemed a high enough priority by the Committee to receive CMAQ funds. It was state and federal officials that deemed it ineligible. However, any project that moves forward is weighed against other priorities, and Belmont is no different. Itani noted that the project may qualify for EDFC funds in addition to STP. Discussion ensued.

Varga entertained a motion to approve the plan to fund sidewalks on 28<sup>th</sup> St.

**MOTION by Bulkowski, SUPPORT by Schweitzer, to approve the 28<sup>th</sup> St. sidewalk project as identified. To fund this project, an ITP bus project in FY2014 would move to FY2016 and utilize the funds from the KCRC's Belmont project. The Belmont project would be recognized as a high priority for funding in the future. The Cities of Kentwood and Grand Rapids would fund the 28<sup>th</sup> St. sidewalk from Patterson to Breton, with MDOT funding 28<sup>th</sup> St. sidewalk from Breton to Kalamazoo.**

Bulkowski asked for additional information on the Belmont project. Warren described the project in detail.

Swayze noted that Cascade Township had committed to funding 100% of the cost of adding sidewalks along 28<sup>th</sup> St. from Patterson to the 96 interchange, believing that sidewalks were ineligible for federal funding. He noted that they later discovered that other segments of the 28<sup>th</sup> St. sidewalk would be funded through CMAQ and MDOT

funds and asked how this happened. Kent explained that this was a moment of opportunity, and that when Cascade Township was given their information, it was correct at the time. He noted that if this option was available earlier, the Cascade portion would likely have been included. Discussion ensued.

Swayze asked for an explanation of how to tap into CMAQ funds in the future. Itani responded that, in the past, the Committee has addressed needs on a case-by-case basis. The 28<sup>th</sup> St. sidewalk project was a special case because they were doing reconstruction and because a CMAQ project was determined to be ineligible.

Schweitzer added that the transit piece of this project is important as well. He noted that the sidewalk will provide better connectivity for pedestrians in the corridor to get to transit stops, and there will be transit stops along the sidewalk. Discussion ensued.

Howe asked if this project was given priority over other CMAQ projects and if other projects were considered. Itani responded that there are many project needs, but whether it has more or less priority than other projects was not addressed. However, he noted that the process the Committee adheres to when they select the CMAQ list is cooperative and collaborative. This list is not prioritized, but any project that's selected is from a needs list. Discussion ensued.

Varga noted that this is a complex issue and recognized Cascade Township for contributing to the whole project by providing connectivity. Discussion ensued. Swayze added that he feels somewhat taken aback that Cascade Township paid 100% of the cost of their sidewalks, but stated that he supported the project. DeVries noted that when the Committee deviates from a Policy, it can create some angst. He added that he supports the sidewalk project as long as the Committee makes it clear as to why they deviated from the previous policy. Discussion ensued. Itani stated that, when Staff develops the TIP, they send invitations to everyone, and there is nothing secretive about the process in place. He added that if Cascade Township wanted sidewalks, they should come to the MPO, and staff will bend over backwards to help members receive funds. Itani also added that staff did not change its criteria for this project. He noted that the current policy states that non-motorized facilities qualify for federal funding. However, it has been the general policy of the MPO to not fund non-motorized facilities.

Varga once again recognized Cascade Township for building sidewalks and connections within the system, and added that he also recognized the safety issues of the KCRC's Belmont project. Varga then called the motion to question. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **V. NON-MOTORIZED PLAN FUNDING POLICY**

Referring to **Item V: Attachment A**, Itani stated that the Non-Motorized Committee has requested to update the current Non-Motorized Plan funding policy as it relates to Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and CMAQ funding in order for there to be additional funding to implement the plan. There is currently a proposal to allocate 50% of TAP funds to help implement projects from the Non-Motorized Plan and identify CMAQ as an additional option for this type of improvement on a case-by-case basis. This would yield approximately \$30 million to implement the \$55 million in non-motorized project need in the Non-Motorized Plan. The TPSG and Technical Committees have reviewed this request and recommended the policy be changed to read as follows:

*All non-motorized projects included in the GVMC Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Non-Motorized Transportation Plan are eligible for funding as allowed under applicable federal-aid categories. 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. The allocated funds to the MPO for the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program shall also be eligible and considered for use on bicycle and pedestrian facility improvements. All CMAQ funded non-motorized projects shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis to prove high use, mode shift, and connectivity and score well 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.*

*All non-motorized projects requesting federal funds must be endorsed by the MPO to receive federal funds and be included in the MPO TIP.*

Varga entertained a motion to approve this revised policy.

**MOTION by Arends, SUPPORT by Howe, to approve of the revisions to the Non-Motorized project funding policy, as identified.**

Warren asked if the 50% of TAP funds was a goal or suballocation. Itani stated that it would be a 50% minimum. Warren stated that he thought that allocating 50% of TAP funds was too restrictive and asked if the Committee could express this as a goal to allow for more flexibility. Itani responded that, at the last TAP programming meeting, the Committee used 100% of TAP funds for non-motorized projects. Schweitzer noted that Safe Routes to School projects are also eligible for TAP funding. Krombeen suggested removing “at a minimum” from the language of the policy. Howe clarified that the Committee was recommending that “at a minimum” be removed from the policy in order to make it clearer that the 50% of TAP funds was a target not a goal. He stated that, as the seconder of the motion, he supported this change.

Arends was agreeable to amending the motion as well, and Varga asked him to restate the motion:

**MOTION by Arends, SUPPORT by Howe, to approve of the revisions to the Non-Motorized project funding policy, with one additional change—removing the phrase “at a minimum” from the following sentence of the 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.***

Swayze asked if TAP and CMAQ are the only two federal funding categories for non-motorized projects. Itani clarified that there are other programs, such as STP-Urban, but that the Committee decided not to fund non-motorized projects with other funding categories because there are so many other needs in the system. Swayze recommended that the policy be clarified to state that only TAP and CMAQ funding would be used for non-motorized projects—with no other funding sources being considered. Itani cautioned that this might restrict the Committee in the future. Varga asked if this Committee had approved any other policies relating to spending federal funding from other categories on non-motorized projects. Itani responded that he didn’t believe so, but that staff can come back and look at the policies that are in existence.

Discussion ensued.

Warren suggested that the policy be more simply stated to say that it's the goal of GVMC, supported by the Non-Motorized Committee, that non-motorized projects be funded with a combination of TAP and CMAQ funds. He noted that this would clarify that only TAP and CMAQ funds were being targeted.

Arends stated that he would **withdraw his motion**, which would thereby table this item until the next Policy Committee meeting. Itani clarified that the first sentence of the policy will be reworded to say that non-motorized projects included in the GVMC Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Non-Motorized Plan are eligible for CMAQ and TAP federal funding. He stated that this would be a general statement acknowledging that non-motorized projects are eligible for federal funds.

Varga entertained a motion to table this item until the next Policy Committee meeting.

**MOTION by Haga, SUPPORT by Howe, to postpone action on the approval of the revised non-motorized funding policy until the next Policy Committee meeting. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### VI. **OTHER BUSINESS**

- FY2013 Project Obligation Status  
Itani stated that there won't likely be any additional obligational authority for FY2014.

Robinson stated that, for FY2013, all projects are in and obligated. He thanked the Committee members' technical staffs for getting this work done.

Warren asked if staff had heard any updates on what might happen with the \$150 million in legislatively identified projects. Itani responded that Staff has heard nothing new about this. Kent stated that he heard that a list was going to be put together by Labor Day, but that he has not yet received notification that state or local projects have been selected. Discussion ensued.

Itani explained the Regional Prosperity Initiative and encouraged the Committee members to become involved in it.

Arends informed the Committee that Alpine Township is laying down approximately one mile of 5' sidewalks funded by the township.

#### VII. **ADJOURNMENT**

Varga adjourned the September 18, 2013 Policy Committee meeting at 10:39 am.