

MINUTES

**Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
Transportation Division
POLICY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, September 16, 2009
Kent County Road Commission
1500 Scribner NW Grand Rapids, MI**

Varga, Chair of the Policy Committee, called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

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

Peter Varga	<i>(Chair)</i>		The Rapid
Alex Arends			Alpine Township
Dan Carlton			Georgetown Township
Rick DeVries		<i>Proxy for</i>	City of Grand Rapids
		<i>Mark DeClercq</i>	City of Grand Rapids
Jeff Dood			City of Rockford
Don R. Hilton, Sr.			Gaines Township
Jim Holtrop		<i>Proxy for</i>	Ottawa County
		Larry Bruursema	OCRC
Rich Houtteman			City of Kentwood
Ken Krombeen			City of Grandville
Dal McBurrows			MDOT
Jon Rice		<i>Proxy for</i>	KCRC
		<i>Sandi Frost Parrish</i>	Kent County
Darrel Schmalzel			City of Walker
Don VanDoeselaar			City of Hudsonville

Staff and Non-Voting Guests Present

Andrea Dewey	GVMC Staff
Andrea Faber	GVMC Staff
Abed Itani	GVMC Staff
Steve Redmond	MDOT
Darrell Robinson	GVMC Staff
Norm Sevensma	WMEAC-RWBC
Jim Snell	GVMC Staff
Don Stypula	GVMC Staff
Steve Warren	KCRC
George Yang	GVMC Staff

Voting Members Not Present

Jerry Alkema	Allendale Township
Larry Bruursema	OCRC
Christine Burns	City of Cedar Springs
Pat Bush	City of Grand Rapids

Dick Davies
Mark DeClercq
Sharon DeLange
Mike DeVries
Ken Feldt
George Haga
Bryan Harrison
Dennis Hoemke
Bob Homan
Jim Koslosky
Jim Miedema
Audrey Nevins
Sandi Frost Parrish
David Pasquale
Rich Pastoor
Steve Peterson
Jack Poll
Chuck Porter
Toby VanEss

Cannon Township
City of Grand Rapids
Village of Sparta
Grand Rapids Township
City of East Grand Rapids
Ada Township
Caledonia Charter Township
Algoma Township
Plainfield Township
GRFIA
Jamestown Township
Byron Township
Kent County Commissioner
City of Lowell
City of Wyoming
Cascade Township
City of Wyoming
Courtland Township
Tallmadge Township

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Varga entertained a motion to approve of the August 19, 2009 Policy Committee meeting minutes.

MOTION by Rice, SUPPORT by Holtrop, to approve of the August 19, 2009 Policy Committee meeting minutes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Sevensma stated that he had heard on the news that Amtrak funding could possibly be cut by the State legislature. If this were to happen, he wondered if it would hurt Michigan in being a part of the high speed rail initiative. Varga responded that, in his opinion, it would. Discussion ensued.

Stypula updated the committee on the status of the state budget. Discussion ensued.

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

Referring to **Item IV: Attachment A**, Robinson informed the Committee about several FY2008-2011 TIP amendment requests from the City of Kentwood and Staff. The City of Kentwood’s request was to Advance Construct two programmed FY2013 projects in FY2011. The projects are Forest Hills Avenue from Burton Street to I-96 with \$400,000 Federal, \$900,000 Non-Federal and Forest Hills Avenue from I-96 to North City Limits with \$1,411,830 Federal, \$688,170 Non-Federal. This project was to be coordinated with the Kent County Road Commission.

Robinson also explained Staff’s request to amend the FY2010 project list to add a potential \$350,000 Service Development New Technology (SDNT) grant from MDOT (\$280,000 federal, \$35,000 CTF, and \$35,000 local). Dewey added that the SDNT grant request is for a potential Phase II to the current SDNT grant for the Kent County Transit

Needs Assessment study. The project would explore the relationship between transit demand, land use, urban form, housing, and energy use to show what development criteria must be in place for sustainable transit systems of varying types. While the grant has yet to be awarded, the Federal Transit Administration requires TIP inclusion for projects to be considered for funding.

Varga entertained a motion to amend/modify the FY2008-2011 TIP to include these amendment/modification requests, as identified by Staff.

MOTION by DeVries, SUPPORT by Arends, to recommend to the Metro Council Board amending the FY2008-2011 TIP to include the amendment requests from the City of Kentwood and Staff, as identified. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

V. **ARRA PROJECTS UPDATE**

Speaking on **Item V: Attachment A**, Robinson requested that the Committee approve two FY2008-2011 TIP amendments/modifications to move projects from the “B” list of Stimulus (ARRA) projects to the “A” list. He explained that due to the bidding/letting process at MDOT, some of the projects came in under budget, which resulted in leftover ARRA funds. Robinson stated that the Technical Committee selected the Kent County Road Commission’s 6 Mile Road from M-37 to Pine Island Drive resurfacing project to receive the leftover funding. The cost of this project was \$650,000 in Federal funds, which is more than the amount of remaining ARRA funding. If additional ARRA funding is available, Robinson explained that these funds would go toward this project. If additional ARRA funding was not received, the limits of the project would be shortened to fit the available funding.

Robinson stated that there were also leftover funds from the rural ARRA program. The Technical Committee recommended that this funding, which amounted to \$143,761, be given to the Kent County Road Commission for their Cannonsburg Road from Giles Avenue to Ramsdale Drive resurfacing project.

Varga entertained a motion to amend/modify the FY2008-2011 TIP to include these amendment/modification requests.

MOTION by Hilton, SUPPORT by Schmalzel, to recommend to the Metro Council Board amending the FY2008-2011 TIP to include the amendment/modification requests as identified by Staff. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

VI. **OBLIGATION STATUS UPDATE**

Robinson stated that the MPO area was allocated \$7,951,630 in funding for the STP-Urban program. However, to date, over \$8 million in projects have been obligated. Itani explained that this happened because STP-Urban comes from one first come, first served pot of funding. Robinson suspected, and McBurrows confirmed, that MDOT’s obligational authority has been cut off for the year. Robinson stated that the Committee members also did very well this year with EDF-C and CMAQ projects. Discussion, comments, and questions ensued.

VII. PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM UPDATE

Snell distributed a handout to the committee that detailed the roads that Staff has already covered in the van on the federal aid system. Thus far, Staff has covered approximately 1135 miles, which leaves 465 miles left to go. Snell stated that the pavement management survey should be completed by mid or late October, and the data will be available to the Committee members shortly after that. Snell also noted the positive contribution that additional funding, including ARRA funding, has made to the general quality of the roads. Discussion ensued.

Varga stated that Snell's report could be useful information for Metro Council in demonstrating the impact that additional funding has on road quality and added that the TF2 report will be one year old in a few months, but no formal action has been taken on it yet. He also urged Metro Council members to make a point about mentioning the lack of action that has been taken on the findings of the TF2 report to the legislature, especially since ARRA funding will end and was not one of the recommendations in the report.

Itani responded that, due to difficult economic times, there are several communities that do not have the funding necessary to do engineering work on projects. He added that it is an MPO policy not to use federal funds for engineering work for projects, not a federal policy. Itani also explained the possible benefit of urging elected officials to allow for 100% federal funding of projects, even though it would result in less miles of road being improved. He urged the Committee to develop a position on this matter so that it could be brought to Metro Council and then to the elected officials. Discussion ensued.

Warren commented on behalf of the State Asset Management Council, stating that this group had been working with several entities throughout the year, and added that the Council was expected to go before the Michigan senate to talk about the condition of the federal aid system in Michigan. MITA has also been working with the Council on this issue as well. Discussion, comments, and questions ensued.

Varga asked if the Policy Committee should take an official position on 100% federal funding for projects. Stypula urged the Committee to do so. Hilton added that Senators Levin and Stabenow indicated that they were going to push a bill to reduce or eliminate the state match for states that have 10% or higher unemployment. Discussion ensued.

Varga entertained a motion to recommend that the Metro Council Board support 100% funding for road construction projects for donor states.

MOTION by Hilton, SUPPORT by Schmalzel, to recommend to the Metro Council Board that the Board request that the federal legislators look at legislation that would allow local systems from donor states to be able to use 100% federal funds for projects at their option.

McBurrows stated his intent to abstain from a vote on this motion.

Dood questioned if this motion would require changing the TIP, since if this motion were to carry, the committee members would likely lose projects or have to shorten project limits. Warren affirmed that some organizations would lose projects if this motion were to

carry. Itani responded that if this motion were to carry, it would simply give the committee members the opportunity to have projects be fully funded as a local option. Carlton noted that if this motion were to carry, less funding overall would be spent in the MPO-area on roads, and he expressed his concern that this motion would create an incentive to pull out a 20% local match and put that funding towards other uses. Discussion, comments, and questions ensued.

Varga reiterated the motion and returned it to the floor. Schmalzel suggested that whether projects are 100% federally funded should be at the MPOs option, not at the option of individual communities. Krombeen expressed his discomfort in voting on this motion. Itani stated that the Committee can go back and look at this motion at the next Policy Committee meeting.

Varga stated that Hilton and Schmalzel could choose to withdraw their original motion, or amend it and ask instead for Staff to return at an upcoming meeting with more information about this issue. Hilton chose not to amend his original motion. Discussion, comments, and questions ensued.

Varga entertained a motion for GVMC Staff to provide an analysis on this topic at the next Policy Committee meeting.

MOTION by Schmalzel, SUPPORT by Arends, to instruct GVMC staff to bring an analysis of what would occur if the Committee were to request 100% federal funding for projects in a federal bill to the next Policy Committee Meeting. MOTION CARRIED. McBurrows abstained.

Varga entertained an additional motion to table Hilton's motion.

MOTION by Carlton, SUPPORT by Krombeen, to table Hilton's motion that recommended that the Metro Council Board request that the federal legislators look at legislation that would allow local systems from donor states to be able to use 100% federal funds for projects at their option. MOTION CARRIED. McBurrows abstained. Arends opposed this motion.

Varga requested Staff to bring to the Committee a report on the condition of the transportation infrastructure within the MPO area by November. Holtrop expressed his concern about the state of the Highway Trust Fund. Discussion ensued.

McBurrows strongly recommended that a representative from FHWA attend the next Policy Committee meeting. Itani said he would invite a top lieutenant from FHWA.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

None

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Varga adjourned the September 16, 2009 Policy Committee meeting at 10:48 am.