

MINUTES

**Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
Transportation Division
POLICY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, May 21, 2008
Kent County Road Commission
1500 Scribner NW Grand Rapids, MI**

Varga, Chair of the Policy Committee, called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

Varga welcomed guests Dave Bulkowski and Ruth Stegeman to the committee.

I. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Voting Members Present

Peter Varga	<i>(Chair)</i>	The Rapid
Larry Bruursema		OCRC
Bill Cousins		Cascade Township
Dick Davies		Cannon Township
Rick DeVries		City of Grand Rapids
Jeff Dood		City of Rockford
Don Hilton, Sr.		Gaines Township
Jim Koslosky		GRFIA
Dal McBurrows		MDOT
Sandi Frost Parrish		Kent County Commissioner
Rich Pastoor		City of Wyoming
Jon Rice	Proxy for <i>Bob Homan</i>	KCRC
Darrel Schmalzel		Plainfield Township
Keith VanBeek		City of Walker
Don VanDoeselaar		City of Kentwood
Chris Zull	Proxy for <i>Pat Bush</i>	City of Hudsonville
		City of Grand Rapids
		City of Grand Rapids

Staff and Non-Voting Guests Present

Mike Brameijer	GVMC Staff
Dave Bulkowski	Disability Advocates
Andrea Dewey	GVMC Staff
Andrea Faber	GVMC Staff
Jim Fetzer	The Rapid
Abed Itani	GVMC Staff
Dennis Kent	MDOT
Darrell Robinson	GVMC Staff
Norm Sevensma	RWBC-WMEAC
Ruth Stegeman	Disability Network
George Yang	GVMC Staff
Mike Zonyk	GVMC Staff

Voting Members Not Present

James Beelen		Allendale Township
Marta Brechting	(Vice Chair)	Alpine Township
Christine Burns		City of Cedar Springs
Pat Bush		City of Grand Rapids
Sharon DeLange		Village of Sparta
Mike DeVries		Grand Rapids Township
Ken Feldt		City of East Grand Rapids
George Haga		Ada Township
Bryan Harrison		Caledonia Charter Township
Dennis Hoemke		Algoma Township
Bill Holland		Georgetown Township
Jim Holtrop		Ottawa County
Bob Homan		Plainfield Township
Ken Krombeen		City of Grandville
Jim McIntyre		Courtland Township
Jim Miedema		Jamestown Township
Audrey Nevins		Byron Township
Dave Pasquale		City of Lowell
Jack Poll		City of Wyoming
Bill Wiersma		Tallmadge Township

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Varga entertained a motion to approve of the April 16, 2008 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes.

MOTION by Hilton, SUPPORT by Dood, to approve of the April 16, 2008 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Sevensma informed the committee that May is National Bike Month.

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

Referring to **Item IV: Attachment A and a handout**, Robinson spoke to the committee regarding several FY2008-2011 TIP amendments from MDOT and the City of Grand Rapids.

MDOT was requesting to bring three new projects into the FY2008-2011 TIP. These included a reconstruction project, I-196 from Fuller Avenue to I-96 (JN 45790); deploying various ITS technologies per the GVMC HPP earmark in the Grand Rapids Metro Area (JN 100492); and resurfacing and minor widening for the carpool lot at M-57 and US-131 (JN 87478).

Speaking on the handout that he passed out, Robinson continued, informing the committee regarding several TIP amendments from the City of Grand Rapids for

FY2008 and FY2009. FY2008 TIP amendments included deleting the CMAQ Project *Underground fiber for real time signal management* (JN 102401) and adding funds to the MDOT CMAQ project *ITS Operations* (JN103329). FY2009 TIP Amendments included increasing funds for the City of Grand Rapids CMAQ project *ITS Traffic Signal Communications* (JN 102431) and expanding the scope to include *Traffic Operations Center Upgrades*. FY2009 amendments also included reducing funds from the CMAQ project *ITS Operations* (JN 103331).

Itani clarified that if a project is deleted from the TIP, it requires a TIP amendment. Funding changes above 20% also require an amendment.

Varga entertained a motion to amend the TIP to include the project changes identified by Staff.

MOTION by Pastoor, SUPPORT by Schmalzel, to recommend to the GVMC board approval of amending the FY2008-2011 TIP to include the TIP amendments from MDOT and the City of Grand Rapids, as identified by staff. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Robinson continued, speaking on **Item IV: Attachment B**. He stated that the Kent County Road Commission (KCRC) is also requesting an administrative modification to the FY2008-2011 TIP by switching the 60th and Kalamazoo Avenue CMAQ project in the FY2009 TIP with the Belmont Avenue at 10 Mile Road CMAQ project in the FY2008 TIP. The 60th/Kalamazoo Avenue Project would then move into the FY2008 TIP, while the Belmont Avenue at 10 Mile Road project would move into the FY2009 TIP. The amount of funding available for both projects is similar, but the Belmont Avenue project is \$94,000 more, which means that there will be an extra \$94,000 available for CMAQ funding in FY2008. Robinson stated that the KCRC is asking that the extra funds be added to the Kalamazoo project, but the final decision will be left to the committee.

Varga entertained a motion to modify the FY2008-2011 TIP to include the modifications discussed by Staff.

MOTION by VanBeek, SUPPORT by Hilton, to recommend to the GVMC board approval of modifying the FY2008-2011 TIP to include the project switch discussed by staff.

Schmalzel asked if the Kent County Road Commission automatically receives the extra funds or if they can go to other FY2008 CMAQ projects. Robinson responded that the extra money would go back on the table. Itani added that the policy states that the funds will go back on the table, and it is the committee's responsibility to decide how to spend them. The Technical Committee had decided earlier in the month that the KCRC could keep these funds.

Varga called into question the motion on the floor. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

V. FY2009 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

Referring to **Item V: Attachment A**, Itani updated the committee on the proposed UPWP activities for FY2009. According to Itani, the UPWP needs to achieve 2 things: demonstrate that GVMC is meeting planning requirements under SAFETEA-LU and the recommendations included in Federal Highways' certification report. Itani also stated that next year, GVMC will need to develop the 2010-2013 TIP, which is listed in the work activities, and begin preparing to develop a new Long Range Transportation Plan because new areas will be brought into GVMC. Therefore, the model must be redone.

GVMC will also continue to work on the Ozone Action program, which will be expanded to include particulate matter, the Congestion Management System, the Traffic Count Program, the Pavement Management System, and a transit study. Discussion, comments and questions ensued.

VanBeek asked Itani to name the staff associated with each position listed. Itani discussed several changes in the staffing of GVMC's Transportation Department. He also stated that a full description of work tasks will be on the web site at the end of the month. Additional comments and questions ensued.

VI. REGIONAL PLANNING PROCESS FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Referring to **Item VI: Attachment A**, Bulkowski, a guest representing Disability Advocates of Kent County, and Stegeman, a guest representing Disability Network Lakeshore, presented a proposal for a study for a regional planning process for public transportation to the Committee.

Bulkowski gave an overview of how his organization assists those with disabilities and stated that transportation is often a critical issue for those he works to serve. In the case of this transportation study, Bulkowski is not looking for the disability-only solution, but rather the "community-wide" solution. Bulkowski's proposal to create a community-wide solution for transportation involves looking at how the three West Michigan MPOs connect together and at what other regions are doing around the country in order to develop a comprehensive transportation master plan for West Michigan. He mentioned several letters of support from local companies for this project. Bulkowski stated that this study would be unique in that it would take all the good work that has happened so far and tie it together as a region.

Stegeman added that many local companies and organizations support this project, and stated that in order to move forward, it is important to have all 3 West Michigan MPOs committed to this study. Stegeman asked for the committee's perspective on how they would like to see this study develop, specifically asking if the committee would prefer a "first integration" step versus beginning several projects at once. Stegeman addressed committee concerns regarding how this proposed study is different than the Linkages study. Itani clarified that the Linkages study started as a regional study between many different players to try and investigate a way to transfer people between various hubs. Stegeman stated that other differences between the studies include the fact that the Linkages study has only enough funding to look at beginnings, while

the study that she's proposing will look at more long-term goals, and that this study will include more public involvement.

Itani asked why the study wasn't part of the long-range plan that the state developed. Kent responded that the state long-range plan is primarily a policy document and that there are already a lot of regional studies going on. Itani cautioned Bulkowski and Stegeman against doing a study just for the sake of doing a study and recommended that they look at the feasibility of the results being implemented before they begin. He also stated that this may be an inopportune time for such a study because of lower revenues and a currently deteriorating system that is costing increasingly more to maintain.

Stegeman stated that they had done a survey in the Greater Holland Area recently to see if residents would support a .4 mil increase to their taxes to improve transportation options in their area, and the results were favorable.

Discussion continued. VanBeek reiterated the funding problem again, stating that the City of Kentwood had a BRT stuck in the process because of a lack of funding. He found it difficult to move forward with a new study that will compete for funding with a project that's stalled because of a lack of funding.

Varga described several challenges that Bulkowski and Stegeman will face, including changes in legislation, a lack of funding, and a possibility that this study will be a shelf study. However, Varga did mention some positives that could come out of the study. Itani stated that, in his opinion, GVMC needs to focus on its own MPO area before investing in other areas. Discussion continued.

Varga asked if \$500,000 would be adequate funding, and Fetzer said it would be a good start. Varga added that he believes that the requirement for MPOs to work together would be easily accepted. However, the challenge would be implementing the study under the current legal structure of transportation funding.

Itani said that he is willing to enter into a dialogue. McBurrows stated that MDOT would strongly endorse the MPOs coming together to talk about this. Discussion, comments and questions ensued.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

Dewey stated that she is going to be sending out a letter soon to reconvene the Non-Motorized Committee. The next meeting will take place after the Policy Committee Meeting in June. She asked those with an interest in joining this committee to let her know.

Dewey also provided an update on Rails and Trails. In the new 2010 transportation legislation, Rails and Trails is attempting to pass an earmark program for 2 billion dollars, which would allow 40 communities throughout the United States to receive 50 million dollars for non-motorized programs. In Michigan, Grand Rapids and Ann Arbor have been selected as potential areas to receive this funding, should this earmark be passed with the new legislation. The Non-Motorized Committee will be meeting to assess the non-motorized needs in

GVMC's MPO area and to develop a selection process for projects in case the earmark is approved.

Hilton provided the committee with an update on the Paul Henry Trail and the M-6 Trail.

Varga updated the committee on the Transportation Funding Task Force. He stated that a preliminary report should come out in October and a final report should come out in April. Itani added that there is a significant gap in funding between what there is and what is needed. Discussion, comments and questions ensued.

Varga announced that Fetzer will be leaving ITP-The Rapid at the end of the week. He thanked Fetzer for his service and wished him well in his new position.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Varga adjourned the Policy Committee at 10:58 am.