

MINUTES

**Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
Transportation Division
POLICY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, September 16, 2015
Kent County Road Commission
1500 Scribner NW Grand Rapids, MI**

Committee Chair, Krombeen, and Committee Vice Chair, Warren, were unable to attend today's meeting, and in their absence, they nominated the Committee's immediate past Chair, Varga, to serve as Chair. Varga called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.

Varga stated that because he is not the Committee Chair or Vice Chair, he needed to be elected as the temporary chair for today's meeting. Varga then entertained a motion to nominate him to serve in this capacity.

Motion by Holtvluwer, SUPPORT by Kent, to elect Varga as temporary chair of the Policy Committee for today's meeting. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Being that there were no new members in attendance, no introductions were necessary.

I. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Voting Members Present

Peter Varga, Temporary Chair
Gail Altman
Terry Brod
Dave Bulkowski
Mark DeClercq
Tom Ecklund

*Proxy for
Brian Ryks*

Jim Holtvluwer
Dennis Kent

*Proxy for
Mark Howe
John Lanum*

Doug LaFave
Darrel Schmalzel
Terry Schweitzer
Rick Sprague

*Proxy for
Steve Warren*

ITP-The Rapid
Jamestown Township
Cannon Township
Kent County
City of Grand Rapids
GRFIA
GRFIA
Ottawa County
MDOT
City of Lowell
MDOT
City of East Grand Rapids
City of Walker
City of Kentwood
KCRC
KCRC

Staff and Non-Voting Guests Present

Andrea Faber
Abed Itani
Erick Kind
Darrell Robinson
Norm Sevensma

GVMC Staff
GVMC Staff
MDOT
GVMC Staff
WMEAC-RWBC

Voting Members Not Present

Jerry Alkema

Allendale Township

Alex Arends
 Jamie Davies
 Eric DeLong
 Mike DeVries
 George Haga
 Bryan Harrison
 Don R. Hilton, Sr.
 Dennis Hoemke
 Mark Howe
 Ken Krombeen, *Chair*
 Dal McBurrows
 Jim Miedema
 Audrey Nevins-Weiss
 Richard Pastoor
 Jack Poll
 Chuck Porter
 Brian Ryks
 Dan Strikwerda
 Ben Swayze
 Thad Taylor
 Roger Towsley
 Toby VanEss
 Cameron Van Wyngarden
 Steve Warren, Vice Chair
 Rod Weersing

Alpine Township
 City of Rockford
 City of Grand Rapids
 Grand Rapids Township
 Ada Township
 Caledonia Charter Township
 Gaines Township
 Algoma Township
 City of Lowell
 City of Grandville
 MDOT
 OCRC
 Byron Township
 City of Wyoming
 City of Wyoming
 Courtland Township
 GRFIA
 City of Hudsonville
 Cascade Township
 City of Cedar Springs
 Village of Sand Lake
 Tallmadge Township
 Plainfield Township
 KCRC
 Georgetown Township

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Varga entertained a motion to approve the July 15, 2015 Policy Committee minutes.

MOTION by Brod, SUPPORT by Sprague, to approve of the July 15, 2015 Policy Committee meeting minutes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. **OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

IV. **FY2014-2017 TIP AMENDMENTS/MODIFICATIONS**

Referring to **Item IV: Attachment A**, Robinson informed the Committee that the City of Grand Rapids and the City of Walker were requesting to amend/modify the FY2014-2017 TIP. MDOT also provided additional information on GPA updates. Their specific requests included the following:

- MDOT informed the Committee that several FY2015 and 2016 GPA projects within the FY2014-2017 TIP were administratively modified. (This information was provided for informational purposes only.) MDOT also provided the list of projects located within the FY2016 GPA's, as requested by the MPO Committees.
- Grand Rapids requested to substitute a FY2016 project (Leonard Street from Plainfield to Lafayette-constructed with local funds) with Ann Street from Turner to Monroe (an illustrative project). The City also requested to advance construct

an approved FY2017 project in FY2016: Alpine Avenue from Richmond Street to Nason Street.

- The City of Walker requested to add two TED Category A projects to the TIP. The projects would be constructed in FY2016. These projects included Three Mile Road and North Wilson Traffic Signal Upgrade – Plasan Industries/Private Partner for a total project cost of \$180,000, and Fruitridge Avenue Center Turn Lane at Northridge Drive – Irwin Seating/Private Partner for a total project cost of \$800,000.

Referring to the agenda, Robinson noted that some of MDOT's FY2016 GPA projects were highlighted because they were new. These projects included US-131 from White Creek Avenue to North Kent CL in FY2015 and FY2016, and the following projects for FY2016: two WMTOC projects, and GRHV from GRHV Bridge over Lamberton Creek. Robinson explained that these projects are minor in terms of scope and cost.

For the City of Walker's projects, Robinson explained that they need to be included in the current TIP on the illustrative list before they receive final approval from the Economic Development Department. Both projects are currently moving forward. Discussion ensued.

Varga asked for a motion to amend/modify the FY2014-2017 TIP.

MOTION by DeClercq, SUPPORT by Schmalzel, to approve of the requests to amend/modify the FY2014-2017 TIP to include the requests from MDOT, the City of Grand Rapids, and the City of Walker.

DeClercq commented that the City of Grand Rapids has used advance construct funding in order to get some of their projects designed ahead of time and bid them when the bidding climate is most favorable. It also puts them in an excellent position when, or if, more funding becomes available. He noted that advance constructing some of their projects helps keep them on pace with their asset management plan and what the Vital Streets group has asked of them. Itani stated that the MPO is very supportive of advance construction, and also described additional challenges the MPO has faced with obligational authority running out and with continual extensions of transportation funding bills. Kent explained that the GPA list that MDOT uses is also available to the local agencies. Having projects in GPA lists is helpful because any project that's not regionally significant and is under \$5 million can be put in the GPA list and be amended/modified without going through the work of a lengthy approval process. Discussion ensued.

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

V. OTHER BUSINESS

Itani noted that today's meeting would be the last meeting of the fiscal year. The Committee won't be meeting in October, but would be meeting again in November. He added that, this fiscal year, the MPO will spend about 85% of its budget and complete all of the required activities. The GVMC Board, FHWA and MDOT have already approved the budget for the next fiscal year. The MPO also signed the project agreements with MDOT for the next fiscal year a couple of days ago and will have funding in place by October 1st. The next fiscal year will include the development of the FY2017-2020 TIP, which needs to be completed by October 1st, 2016. Staff will also be working on the

safety plan and is working on moving forward with improving our travel demand model.

Kent added that the State Transportation Commission, which is appointed by the governor and is MDOT's oversight policy board, is meeting at the Secchia Center in downtown Grand Rapids at 9:00 am tomorrow, and that meeting is open to the public. He encouraged the Committee members to attend.

Kent also informed the Committee that he is working on the State Long Range Transportation Plan update. This is a policy document that focuses on the direction MDOT is going more than a project document. Kent stated that the document is on the Web and that the Committee can comment on it before the end of September. There will be public meetings about the document coming up.

DeClercq asked Kent for an update on the state transportation funding issue and also noted that the Southeast side of the state (SEMCOG's region) has been doing a lot of construction, and wondered if that has to do with state funding, or if they've passed any local road funding programs that have enabled them to do more road construction. Kent replied that the legislature will be looking into the road funding issue next fall. The latest proposal was for \$400 million from the gas tax, \$400 million for registration fees, and \$400 million from the general fund. Varga added that he expected the legislature to move forward on this issue sooner rather than later, but noted that there is resistance to the idea of increasing registration fees. Itani added that there is a bill in the House of Representatives in Congress that will eliminate the restrictions of exporting oil from the US. If this happens, it will cause an immediate increase in the price of oil, and therefore an increase in gas tax revenue, which would make it almost impossible to increase gas taxes for transportation. He added that the MPO should be against this if it will impede money for transportation.

As for SEMCOG, Kent replied that they are the largest MPO and encompass the largest area in terms of population, road miles, etc., so they receive 50-60% of the state funding. Consequently, there will always be a level of construction. Projects on I-75 and I-94 come up frequently. DeClercq also asked about the status of the US131 corridor study and if it would be put behind the I-75 and I-94 projects. Kent stated that the US-131 study is still in progress, but that it would be behind the projects on I-75 and I-94, since both projects already have dedicated funding and are moving forward. He noted that they don't have an approved alternative for US-131, and described the steps that will need to take place moving forward. Discussion ensued.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Varga adjourned the September 16, 2015 Policy Committee meeting at 9:56 am.