DeVries, chair of the TPSG Committee, called the meeting to order at 9:30 am. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves and the organization they represented.

I. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Voting Members Present
Wayne Harrall County of Kent
Mike Devries Grand Rapids Township
Scott Conners City of Walker
Conrad Venema ITP-The Rapid
Terry Schweitzer City of Kentwood
Rick Sprague Kent County Road Commission
Chris Zull City of Grand Rapids
Rick Devries (Chair) City of Grand Rapids
Dan Strikwerda City of Hudsonville
David Ducat City of Cedar Springs
Todd Wibright City of Grandville

Staff and Non-Voting Guests Present
Travis Mabry City of Walker
Imelda Martinez City of Grand Rapids
Laurel Joseph GVMC Staff
Amy Matisoff MDOT
Darrell Robinson GVMC Staff
Art Green MDOT
Mike Zonyk GVMC Staff

Voting Members Not Present
Jerry Alkema Allendale Township
Sandy Ayers Village of Caledonia
Mike Burns City of Lowell
Sharon DeLange Village of Sparta
Bill Dooley City of Wyoming
Roy Hawkins GRFIA
Doug LaFave East Grand Rapids
Brett Laughlin Ottawa County Road Commission
Tom Stressman City of Cedar Springs
Phil Vincent City of Rockford
II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Devries entertained a motion to approve the October 24th, 2016 TPSG meeting minutes.

MOTION by Connors, SUPPORT by Harrall, to approve the October 24th, 2016 TPSG meeting minutes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

None

IV. FY2018 TAP PROJECTS-DISCUSSION

Amy Matisof began her discussion by giving an update for the MDOT TAP program. They are no longer taking any applications for 2018 due to time constraints and noting that they were over programmed as is. Over programming occurs so that they can deliver projects to use the money available.

Some over programming and data analysis by MDOT has led to some projects not hitting obligation and conditional commitment. She further began to describe what common problems might be holding the projects up in our area. Site situations and property issues are causing some GVMC projects not hitting their obligation dates. The risk we run is losing federal funding and nobody wants that.

Matisof went on to explain some examples in our MPO area that we are seeing.

- **Jamestown, Riley St Project** – Existing site problems are occurring with landscaping, fencing, substantial trees that need to come down. Public comment had not occurred on the project and that might be an issue moving forward. Amy has spoken with Jamestown about the project to mediate some of these issues.
- **City of Grand Rapids, Covel St Bike Lanes** – Concerns from flow of bike lanes to Sharrow and how the navigation of signage and safety between the two happens. It’s the level of technical review that MDOT gets into regardless of who is submitting the project. Another not was that Obrien Street has higher speeds at the end of where the bike lane was proposed so discussion logistics need to happen on how that transition needs to happen.
- **City of Grand Rapids, 3 Mile** – Similar concerns for removal of large trees being one of the biggest concerns for the evaluation committee. Making sure that the city has done there public awareness campaign is crucial to keeping these projects moving forward. There was also concern to see if replacement trees were going to be put back as well as utility concerns. Avoiding wildlife and wetlands can also be an issue and our applicants need to be aware that the DNR, DEQ and SHPO are also contacted and part of the review process when there are concerns respectively relating to these organization. All projects are required to meet all ASHTO standards with no expectation of design exceptions. Regardless of it being GVMC or TAP project we want to make sure that were hitting all the expectations of the Federal Highway Administration.
- **City of Wyoming, 2015 Interurban Trail** – Easement concerns and property issues hold up projects greatly. Know the reality of the timeline you are going to deliver
- **City of Hudsonville, Buttermilk Creek** – City of Hudsonville has a conditional commitment from GVMC through MDOT. They were original planning on a 2017 project but requested to move it to 2018 and were granted that revision to allow
more time to finalize the route through the high school. Based on some
requirements from the school the path had to be finalized in order. The need of a
more formal letter of commitment from the school is a concern moving forward. If for
some reason the city were not able to work with the school to get an easement we
have committed federal funds to project that doesn’t meet some basic requirements
for TAP funds.

Matisof closed with saying that MDOT is not trying to pick on anyone specific, but these
are the type of things that we need to be asking of the projects so we don’t have to roll
projects over and so that we don’t mess up our budget for future fiscal years.

Robinson stated that we have brought Amy in because we are having complications
and issues bringing a project together with the funding associated with it for the fiscal
year it’s supposed to be using funds for. He further explained that there is no guarantee
that we can keep moving projects forward and that the carryover can go away at any
time. It’s our job as staff to deliver the program and make it work, but many things seem
to keep slowing this process. Robinson gave the example of Consumers Energy with
the Wyoming project and how some things are just out of our control, but we need to
see that we need to have conversations started and we’re leading down the path to
property licensed. Discussion ensued…

Matisof stated that MDOT wants to see that letters have been submitted and property
owners have been notified that this project is being thought about with residents in mind
before the application comes through MDOT. Discussion Ensued…

Harrall pointed out that on some of these projects you know your ideal route, but buying
right of way before you have federal funds is a hard expectation. Most agencies aren’t
doing the advanced engineering to determine if you can fit it in the right of way.
Questions like..do we need a DEQ permit, or do we need boardwalk. Some of these
things are tough expectations. Discussion ensued....

Harrall explained about a project in the 296 right of way that Federal Highways is saying
that the project is a break in limited access because you’re allowing pedestrians in a
right of way that was limited to freeway traffic. However it’s viewed, they’ve had lots of
trails in the right of way but this presents a new problem that will have to be faced.
Harrall stated that the key thing for Federal Highways is, “have you explored all other
options?” Discussion ensued....

Robinson stated again that we don’t need all these things in place, but there needs to
be a show of movement that they are being worked on. We just don’t want surprises
and are not usually prepared for them.

Conners pointed out that we do well on our road projects because we’re working down
our right of way. If we get off on the periphery the projects are just harder and more
expensive.

Mabry stated that we are willing to do a little of the preliminary work to do concept
drawings and public information meetings, but that in itself is hard unless a design is
complete because the public wants information on that project and how it’s going to
impact their property with details. Discussion ensued....
Matisof pointed out the Federal Highways wants to see that we are using the money provided. If we don’t use it they will take it back and assume that we don’t need it. We don’t want to become a target. Getting feedback for process improvement so that we don’t come under fire with the TAP program is a good starting point so that we can find ways to improve the process. We want to solve our issues, but not make it more difficult for jurisdictions. Discussion ensued.

Green asked if it would be helpful to have a separate scoping exercise to view the impact of the project at separate agencies to see the problems. “Is there a time of year that we could come together and address issues and to technical reviews in advance?” People need to know how and what it’s going to take to deliver the project. Offering help and working with Amy to be resources might be helpful. Discussion ensued.

Mike Devries asked how many projects have these types of issues that have been hit upon today. Amy replied saying every project.

Mabry asked if it’s possible to get a 1 page document of what needs to happen for a TAP grant application to have the best success. Amy replied that it is being worked on. Discussion ensued.

Matisof went on to describe the review process internally and during this process no punches are pulled. It does not matter the entity or project that is being submitting, if it’s not realistic they don’t want you to waste your time or energy. Discussion ensued.

Harrall said that it would be helpful if it worked more like the bridge program because we want to spend all the money. Rick agreed and discussion ensued.

Joseph explained that we’d like to see a bucket of projects that are ready to go and flexible enough to use the money we have available. Projects need to be shovel ready.

Mike Devries said we need to be less polite when it comes time to use the money with the understanding that on some projects you can’t do the engineering and some projects and some issues don’t come up until a project is reviewed. Discussion ensued.

Robinson brought up the idea of a checklist. Each year we have an idea of when projects need to be submitted and there is a submittal deadline. We want to have a pool that is first come first basis as backup to what we have programmed in our TAP so that we can hit our obligation amounts.

Matisof stated that she will work with Robinson and Joseph on getting projects in on time and review them, at which point GVMC will work out which ones are selected.

Conners asked if GVMC can reach out with a quarterly update to give them a timeline and a heads up of what’s to come. Discussion ensued.

Rick Devries stated that if there were a fact sheet on things that were eligible that would be helpful. Mabry agreed and stated further that milestone dates and timelines of how long things work would be advantageous.
Matisof will look into the possibility of a Grant workshop to deal with some of these specifics.

V. FY2018 TAP PROJECTS-DISCUSSION

Robinson suggested now that we need to review any projects and make amendments as necessary and to make sure all projects are realistic. Discussion Ensued…

Strikwerda offered to move a project slated for 2019 to the illustrative list that MDOT engineers have concerns of hydrologic engineering. The goal is to have it redesigned and offer a better solution to cross Chicago Drive. Discussion Ensued…

Conners suggested that they want to advance construct a 2020 project and that it would be a good policy to pull up AC projects for when things like this happen. Mabry pointed out that this project is approaching 80% design and just applied for Leonard Street funding yesterday so it is in the system already.

Matisoff said she will talk to Mike Smith about the potential for this project to move up.

Robinson noted that we will have to meet again and need to finalize any project selection for these funds and that it's a good idea for Walker to keep moving forward on their AC project.

Joseph reminded everyone to submit their projects for 2019.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

None

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Rick Devries adjourned the Friday, October 20, 2017 TPSG Committee meeting at 11:15 am.