

Appendix J

Prioritization/Programming Process (ITP)

Operating Projects

Services proposed for each five-year service plan are derived from the Long Range Plan. All projects are reviewed for adherence to Environmental Justice procedures and Title VI regulations. Service proposals are published via newspaper and other forms of media, including postings inside of transit vehicles. The proposed services are presented to each of the member cities at public council meetings. Comments from the public and community leaders are taken and brought back to the ITP Board, before a final decision is reached. Additionally, these plans are presented to a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) as well as the Employer Advisory Committee (EAC). These comments are presented to the ITP Service Planning Committee, the ITP Finance Committee, and to the full ITP Board. After consideration of public comment and deliberation by the Board, a five-year plan for service was adopted by the ITP Board on Jan. 13, 2000, and was presented to the GRATA Board, at its public meeting, on Jan. 26, 2000. The service plan was then presented to the Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC) at its monthly public meeting. After adoption and approval by all parties, the proposed services were presented in the form of a millage ballot to be voted upon by the community. The millage was passed by a 65% margin on April 11, 2000. As an Act 196 Authority, the ITP is required to submit a millage proposal for no more than a five-year period.

Annual updates or adjustments are made via the Annual Service Plan. The Annual Service Plan is based on the evaluation of services based on needs identified through the environmental justice review, and route performance figures based on monthly and annual published productivity reports. Once annual adjustments to the five-year plan are formulated, they are taken to the ITP's Route and Service Planning Committee, the Service Planning Committee, Finance Committee and the ITP Board. Notices are posted regarding the proposed adjustments to service; presentations are made at each of the member community city councils at a regularly convened public meeting. If any of the service adjustments fall under the criteria of requiring a public hearing, the ITP Board schedules and advertises for public hearing(s). Comments taken at public hearings are presented to the ITP Board Committees and to the ITP Board at their regularly scheduled public meetings.

Capital Projects

All capital projects are derived from the needs identified in the Long Range and Short Range Operating and Capital Plans. Projects are updated annually based on the needs identified by the Annual Service Plan. The project list is developed and presented to the ITP Board through the Service Planning Committee, Finance Committee, and regular

ITP Board Meeting. Public comments are taken at this time, as well as through the publishing of a Program of Projects in the Grand Rapids Press. Comments are taken prior to moving ahead with the application for federal funds. The lists of projects are forwarded to the staff of the Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC), and are taken through their TIP, TECH and POLICY Committees, and GVMC Board for consideration. After all approvals are received, the application for federal assistance is filed.

Long Range Plan Public Involvement

Public involvement in the planning process at the Interurban Transit Partnership (ITP) is considered to be a critical element of developing an effective and efficient transit system. The ITP employs various means of getting public involvement on projects and in the development of plans. The development of the Mobile Metro 2020 Long Range Plan incorporated the following mechanisms to get the public involved in its development:

- Nine public focus group meetings.
- 1,000 public opinion surveys were gathered expressing peoples' thoughts, ideas, and perceptions of public transportation now and into the next century.
- Over 80 elected officials and community leaders spent four hours discussing community public transportation needs and brainstorming solutions.
- Town Hall Meeting attended by 150 people was broadcasted live on two radio stations.
- Open House attended by 200 people.
- Distribution of "Get in the Driver's Seat" cards. Hundreds were completed and returned.
- Transit Hotline maintained for the timeframe of the Long Range Plan development.
- Distribution of brochure explaining process and how the public could become involved.
- Numerous presentations prior to its adoption by the ITP Board and at GVMC.

The plan was formally adopted by GRATA and GVMC in November 1998.

The plan was updated in cooperation with GVMC during 2001. The plan update was presented to the ITP Board at a public meeting, and was forwarded to GVMC for adoption into the Grand Valley Long Range Plan. The plan was then taken through to public hearings, prior to being adopted by the GVMC Committees and the GVMC Board. Currently, the ITP is working in conjunction with GVMC in the development of and updated 2030 version of the Long Range Plan.