

Division Avenue BRT

Grand Rapids, Michigan

(November 2009)

The Interurban Transit Partnership (*The Rapid*) is proposing to implement a 9.8-mile street-running bus rapid transit (BRT) line along Division Avenue from the Grand Rapids central business district (CBD) to 60th Street/Division Avenue. The project includes 19 new stations with a real-time passenger information system, signal priority, off-board fare collection and the purchase of ten hybrid-fueled low-floor branded vehicles. An existing bus maintenance facility would also be expanded to accommodate the BRT vehicles. The proposed service would operate with ten-minute headways during peak periods and 15-minute headways during weekday off-peak periods.

The project will reduce travel time and improve reliability for existing and new transit riders from residential areas in the Division Avenue Corridor to major employment and educational centers in the CBD. The existing local route on Division Avenue is the busiest non-university route in *The Rapid's* system. Travel times from 54th Street to Wealthy Street would be reduced from approximately 25 minutes during peak periods today, to only 20 minutes with implementation of the project.

Summary Description

Proposed Project:	Bus Rapid Transit
	9.8 Miles
	19 Stations
Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):	\$36.68 Million (Includes \$1.0 million in finance charges)
Section 5309 Small Starts Share (\$YOE):	\$29.35 Million (80.0%)
Annual Operating Cost (\$YOE):	\$2.40 Million
Opening Year Ridership Forecast (2012):	7,200 Average Weekday Boardings
	1,300 Daily New Riders
FY 2011 Local Financial Commitment Rating:	Medium
FY 2011 Project Justification Rating:	Medium
FY 2011 Overall Project Rating:	Medium

There have been no significant changes to the scope, cost, or ridership estimates since the project was approved into project development in December 2007. Thus, no new information was submitted to FTA. However, FTA's process for rating project justification has changed since that time. This profile reflects the new process.

Project Development History and Current Status

In January 2007 *The Rapid* completed an alternatives analysis study that identified BRT as the locally preferred alternative (LPA) in the South Corridor. The LPA was included in the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council's (local metropolitan planning organization) long-range transportation plan in April 2007. FTA approved the Division Avenue BRT (formerly known as the South Corridor BRT) into project development as a Very Small Start in December 2007. An Environmental Assessment is currently underway.

Significant Changes Since FY 2010 Evaluation (November 2008)

A referendum for a millage increase in May 2009 was defeated. As a result, the project schedule was extended assuming passage of the millage ballot in November 2010, receipt of a Project Construction Grant Agreement in 2011, and start of revenue operations in summer 2013.

Project Justification Rating: Medium

The project justification rating is based on the weighted average of the ratings assigned to each of the following criteria: the cost-effectiveness criterion is weighted 33 percent; the transit supportive land use criterion is weighted 33 percent and the economic development criterion is weighted 33 percent.

Cost Effectiveness Rating: Medium

The Division Avenue BRT project qualifies as a Very Small Start. The project includes low-cost elements such as service branding, low-floor buses operating at higher frequencies, transit stations with real-time passenger information, off-board fare collection and traffic signal priority to speed service, all of which FTA has determined to be cost-effective by their very nature, and therefore, the project receives a *Medium* rating for cost effectiveness.

Transit-Supportive Land Use and Economic Development Ratings: Medium

FTA considers Very Small Starts projects that meet the minimum existing ridership threshold of 3,000 daily boardings/benefiting riders to be, by definition, in corridors with transit-supportive land use appropriate to the proposed level of investment; and therefore, FTA has assigned these projects a *Medium* rating for transit-supportive land use and economic development.

Local Financial Commitment Rating: Medium

The local financial commitment rating is based on *The Rapid's* acceptable financial condition and a reasonable plan for funding the non-Small Starts share of capital costs. The operating cost of the project exceeds the five percent of the systemwide operating and maintenance cost threshold which would qualify the project for a streamlined financial review. Therefore, FTA performed additional reviews to determine the sufficiency of the project's local financial commitment. While acceptable for the purposes of advancing into project development, *The Rapid* must establish a consistent stream of operating revenues before the project can be considered for a Project Construction Grant Agreement.

Locally Proposed Financial Plan		
Source of Funds	Total Funds (\$million)	Percent of Total
Federal:		
Section 5309 Small Starts	\$29.35	80.0%
State:		
Comprehensive Transportation Fund Appropriation	\$7.33	20.0%
Total:	\$36.68	100.0%

NOTE: The financial plan reflected in this table has been developed by the project sponsor and does not reflect a commitment by DOT or FTA. The sum of figures may differ from total as listed due to rounding.

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