



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

December 11, 2018

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Mr. Darrel Schmalzel, Chairperson  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
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Mr. David Wresinski, Director  
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425 W. Ottawa St  
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Dear Mr. Schmalzel and Mr. Wresinski:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) completed a review of the transportation planning process in the Grand Rapids metropolitan area in June 2018. The objective was to determine if the planning process meets the federal transportation planning requirements which are prerequisites to the advancement of federal transportation projects in urbanized areas.

We found the process meets the requirements of the federal planning regulations and therefore jointly certify the transportation planning process for the Grand Rapids metropolitan region.

The details of our review and findings are contained in the enclosed report. We look forward to working with your staff to implement the recommendations in the report and continue to improve the planning process.

We sincerely appreciate the cooperation of your staff in assisting us with the review. Please contact Andrea Dewey, Transportation Planner (FHWA) at (517) 702-1823 or [andrea.dewey@dot.gov](mailto:andrea.dewey@dot.gov) and Krishina Welch, Transportation Planner (FTA) at (312) 353-3852 or [krishina.welch@dot.gov](mailto:krishina.welch@dot.gov), if you have any questions concerning this certification report and findings.

Sincerely,

Russell L. Jorgenson, P.E.  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration

Sincerely,

Kelley Brookins  
Regional Administrator  
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JMM

Enclosure: Grand Rapids Certification Report 2018

By e-mail

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Federal Highway  
Administration

Federal Transit  
Administration

# Metropolitan Transportation Planning Certification Review

for the

Grand Rapids, Michigan  
Transportation Management Area

Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
(GVMC)

Final Report Issued  
December 2018

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## Acronyms

CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	MTA	Metropolitan Transit Authority
CMP	Congestion Management Process	MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan
EJ	Environmental Justice	NPRM	Notice of Proposed Rule Making
FAST Act	Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act	PBPP	Performance-Based Planning and Programming
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration	SHSP	Strategic Highway Safety Plan
FTA	Federal Transit Administration	STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
GVMC	Grand Valley Metropolitan Council	SUTA	Statewide Urban Travel Analysis section (MDOT)
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act	TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
MDOT	Michigan Department of Transportation	TMA	Transportation Management Area
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement	TSC	Transportation Service Center (MDOT)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding	UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program
MPA	Metropolitan Planning Area	USC	United States Code (law)
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization –urbanized area with greater than 50,000 population		

## Preface

*“The Secretary shall ensure that the metropolitan planning process of a metropolitan planning organization serving a transportation management area is being carried out in accordance with applicable provisions of Federal law.”*

*[23 U.S.C. 134(k)(5)(A)(i) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k)(5)(A)(i)(e)]*

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in a transportation management area (TMA) at least every four years. In general, the reviews consist of three primary activities: a desk review of planning products (in advance of the on-site review), an on-site review, and creation of a report that summarizes the review and offers findings. The review process is individually tailored to focus on topics of significance in each metropolitan planning area. The certification review is not just a review of the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) staff; rather, it's a review of the planning process conducted by all member agencies—local road agencies, State, and transit operators—charged with cooperatively carrying out the planning process on a daily basis. The review focuses on compliance with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), challenges, successes, and experiences of the cooperative relationship between the MPO, the State, and transit operators as they conduct the metropolitan transportation planning process.

The certification review process is only one of several methods used to assess the quality of a local metropolitan transportation planning process, compliance with applicable statutes and regulations, and the level and type of technical assistance needed to enhance the effectiveness of the planning process. Other intermediate activities provide opportunities for this type of review and comment, including reviewing the unified planning work program (UPWP), the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP), metropolitan transportation improvement program (TIP), air-quality conformity determinations (in nonattainment and maintenance areas), as well as a range of other formal and less formal contact provide both the FHWA and FTA an opportunity to comment on the planning process. The results of these other processes are considered in the certification review process.

# Executive Summary

## *Grand Valley Metropolitan Council 2018 Certification Review*

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly reviewed and evaluated the transportation planning process for the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC) in June 2018 to ensure the planning requirements of 23 U.S.C.134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303 are being satisfactorily achieved. This certification review assessed the transportation planning products and processes conducted by GVMC, the transit agency (ITP—The Rapid), and MDOT. The certification review consisted of a desk audit, a public meeting with a 30-day comment period, an on-site review June 20-21, a discussion with Policy and Technical Committee members, and the development of this certification review report.

Based on FHWA and FTA's routine stewardship and oversight, information collected through public participation, the desk audit, and the on-site visit, the FHWA and the FTA certify the transportation planning process for the Grand Rapids urbanized area meets the requirements of Federal law. This review report identifies:

- 4 commendations,
- 8 recommendations, and
- 0 corrective actions.

These commendations and recommendations are described in the individual topic sections and summarized below.

## **Summary of GVMC 2018 Certification Review Findings**

### **Commendation 1: Performance-Based Planning and Programming**

MDOT is commended for its leadership and coordination with the Michigan MPOs, public transportation providers, and rural areas on PBPP, including interagency work groups, monthly meetings, presentations, and newsletters.

### **Commendation 2: Travel Demand Model**

GVMC is commended for cooperating with MDOT and expanding their regional modeling capabilities, including time-of-day analysis and multiple modes of travel. These improvements will help staff provide more accurate and responsive multi-modal information to the public and their members.

### **Commendation 3: GIS Interactive TIP Project Map**

GVMC is commended for developing an interactive TIP Project Map for public involvement as part of their overall website update. This resource makes it easier for the public, and utilities, to locate and comment upon planned transportation projects.

### **Commendation 4: Accessibility Analysis**

GVMC is commended for undertaking an Accessibility Analysis that is comprehensive and yet simple enough to be replicated by other similarly sized MPOs with geographic information system (GIS) capabilities. GVMC is encouraged to utilize their Accessibility Analysis as part of the EJ analysis during the development of the next MTP.

### **Recommendation 1: Public Participation**

It is recommended GVMC update the public participation planning process to address the following:

- the addition of alternative engagement procedures for the development of major planning products, including reaching out to the public by attending neighborhood meetings and other local events instead of drawing them to traditional public meetings.
- work with the Interurban Transit Partnership (ITP) to mutually enhance the public distribution of information including sharing mail and email lists, expanding social media following by sharing information across websites, advertising at each other's venues, making joint announcements between the two agencies, and holding meetings and outreach events at the Rapid Central Station.
- expand the discussion of EJ outreach strategies to add specific strategies to more effectively and proactively address EJ populations, specifically in the planning process. Accordingly, it would then be beneficial to add a measure of effectiveness that monitors the number of opportunities for engagement provided to EJ populations.
- add the development and amendment of the UPWP as a milestone in the Public Participation Plan.
- consider coordinating with FHWA/FTA on a public participation peer exchange.

### **Recommendation 2: Performance-Based Planning and Programming**

It is recommended GVMC, MDOT, and ITP:

- periodically evaluate the April 3, 2018 memorandum of understanding to ensure the specific written provisions in Article 13 are appropriate, clear, effective, and agreeable.
- continue looking for opportunities to link investment priorities to performance targets through the MPO's deficiency analyses, and project prioritization and selection processes.
- continue looking for opportunities to integrate the goals, objectives, performance measures, and targets described in each agency's transportation plans and processes. Including, but not limited to: the State asset management plan for the National Highway System, Transit Asset Management Plan, Highway Safety Improvement Program, Strategic Highway Safety Plan, Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan, State Freight Plan, and Congestion Management Process.

### **Recommendation 3: Metropolitan Transportation Plan**

It is recommended that GVMC:

- refine the goals and objectives of the next MTP to better align with national performance measures and better relate these goals and objectives to the Policies and Practices for Programming Projects.
- continue exploring new and innovative formatting ideas for the MTP, including a story map.
- encourage staff participation in the upcoming air quality conformity training in January 2019 and work with MDOT for guidance on air quality conformity modeling.
- review the resource agency consultation materials provided by FHWA and MDOT to develop and document a formal consultation process similar in nature to the GVMC Public Participation Plan. Such a document would list the resource agency comment period specifications, how the MPO will review consulting agency plans and programs, and how the MPO will respond to or consider comments received.
- pursue assistance from MDOT in the development of a regional freight plan and participate in the update of the State Long Range Transportation Plan, which will integrate the State Freight Plan and State Freight Investment Plan.

### **Recommendation 4: Congestion Management Process**

It is recommended MDOT reviews and updates the "Regional ITS Architecture and Deployment Plan" as needed.

**Recommendation 5: Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan**

It is recommended GVMC becomes more familiar with the coordinated transit plan and how it is incorporated into the overall transportation planning process.

**Recommendation 6: Transit Performance Targets**

GVMC should continue working with ITP-The Rapid to develop and clearly identify performance targets in planning documents. These targets should tie to the national goals and performance measures established by the USDOT.

**Recommendation 7: Transportation Improvement Program Project Prioritization**

It is recommended GVMC further develop the TIP project prioritization process to include performance measures data and relate investments to MTP goals and objectives.

**Recommendation 8: Environmental Justice and Title VI**

It is recommended GVMC reinstate EJ information included in the 2035 MTP. Specifically, tables documenting projects touching each EJ area, as well as individualized maps for each of the minority groups and low-income areas. It is also recommended GVMC consider incorporating information about the PPP process into the Title VI Plan to link the two documents.



# Introduction

## Purpose

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are required by law to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process for each transportation management area (TMA) at least every four years. The certification review process helps ensure that the planning requirements of 23 U.S.C.134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303 are being satisfactorily achieved.

## Methodology

This certification review consisted of a/an:

- Desk audit, conducted by the federal review team prior to the on-site visit,
- Discussion with Policy and Technical Committee members, conducted June 20th,
- Public meeting conducted June 19th with public comment period open through July 20th,
- On-site review, conducted June 20–21, 2018, and
- Documentation of findings, developed from formal review and routine oversight, in a certification report.

## Scope

A certification review is an assessment of the transportation planning products and processes conducted by the MPO, transit agencies, and MDOT who are charged with cooperatively carrying out the required transportation planning process. Topics covered at this on-site visit were:

- I. Public Participation (PPP),
- II. Performance-Based Planning & Programming (PBPP),
- III. Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP),
- IV. Congestion Management Process (CMP),
- V. Travel Demand Model (TDM),
- VI. Transit Planning,
- VII. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and
- VIII. Environmental Justice (EJ) and Title VI.

## Certification Report and Findings

For each topic reviewed at the on-site review, this report documents the current status, findings, and regulatory basis. Each section of the report contains:

- **Current Status** – Defines what the Transportation Management Area (TMA) is currently doing concerning each planning topic.
- **Findings** – Statements of fact defining the conditions found during FHWA and FTA’s routine stewardship and oversight as well as with information collected through public participation, the desk audit, and the on-site visit provide the primary basis for findings. Findings of the planning process include:
  - **Commendation** – A process or practice demonstrating noteworthy procedures for implementing the planning requirements.
  - **Recommendation** – Ideas for improvement to processes and practices, though there is no Federal mandate.
  - **Corrective Action** – Indicates a serious situation failing to meet one or more requirements of the transportation planning statute and regulations, thus seriously impacting the outcome

of the overall process. The expected outcome is change that brings the metropolitan planning process into compliance with a planning statute or regulation; failure to respond by the identified date will likely result in a more restrictive certification.

- **Regulatory Basis** – Defines where information regarding each planning topic can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

## **I. Public Participation**

### **Current Status**

The GVMC Public Participation Plan (PPP) was adopted in January 2014. The PPP governs how GVMC incorporates public involvement into their transportation planning process and includes specific milestones and procedures for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and PPP updates. The 2040 MTP and 2017–2020 TIP were developed using these guidelines. The GVMC also conducted a public transportation survey for the 2040 MTP to receive public input on important issues and priorities in the region. An evaluation of effectiveness of the public participation process is conducted periodically and the PPP is generally updated by GVMC staff prior to the development of a new MTP.

### **Findings**

The GVMC publishes announcements in two area newspapers—one geared towards Spanish speakers and another geared towards minority readers—for development of the TIP and MTP but not for amendments to these documents. The newly redesigned website features additional functionality to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, however these features have not been reviewed by any local disability groups. Staff also generates a mailing for all new TIP and MTP projects and illustrative projects within one quarter mile of any proposed projects. This equates to a mailing of approximately 6,000 postcards during the development of the TIP or MTP. However, it has become increasingly difficult to draw attendance at TIP and MTP public meetings in recent years. This may be due in part to the location—usually the GVMC office.

GVMC is searching for ways to better engage the public. Staff indicated they will update the PPP late summer 2018 in anticipation of the FY 2020–2023 TIP and 2045 MTP development. As part of this update, GVMC staff are exploring new techniques, including virtual/live streaming of public meetings and a migration to an email distribution list. GVMC has a large public mailing list but a limited social media following.

Staff are considering other venues for public meetings, going to the public at farmers markets, The Rapid Central Station or neighborhood association meetings, and piggy-backing on other events around the area. Based on comments received at the Certification Review public meeting, GVMC staff are also considering changing the location of the monthly Technical and Policy Committee meetings to a more transit-accessible location.

### **Recommendation 1: Public Participation**

It is recommended GVMC update the public participation planning process to address the following issues:

- the addition of alternative engagement procedures for the development of their major planning products, including reaching out to the public by attending neighborhood meetings and other local events instead of drawing them to traditional public meetings.
- work with the Interurban Transit Partnership (ITP) to mutually enhance the public distribution of information including sharing mail and email lists, expanding their social media following by sharing information across websites, advertising at each other's venues, making joint announcements between the two agencies, and holding meetings and outreach events at the Rapid Central Station.
- expand the discussion of EJ outreach strategies to add specific strategies to more effectively and proactively address EJ populations specifically in the planning process. Accordingly, it would then be beneficial to add a measure of effectiveness that monitors the number of opportunities for engagement provided to EJ populations.
- add the development and amendment of the UPWP as a milestone in the Public Participation Plan.
- consider coordinating with FHWA/FTA on a public participation peer exchange.

#### Public Participation Planning Resources:

- Incorporating Qualitative Data in the Planning Process: Improving Project Delivery and Outcomes
- NCHRP Report 710 – Practical Approaches for Involving Traditionally Underserved Populations in Transportation Decision-making
- How to Engage Low-Literacy and Limited-English-Proficiency Populations in Transportation Decision-making

### **Regulatory Basis**

23 CFR 450.316 sets forth the requirements for public involvement. Public involvement is also addressed in connection with the MTP in 450.324(g)(1)(2), (i), and (j) and with the TIP in 450.326(b).

## **II. Performance Based Planning and Programming**

### **Current Status**

The MAP-21 and FAST Acts established a performance management approach to the transportation planning process and require the use of a performance-based approach in statewide, metropolitan, and non-metropolitan transportation planning. GVMC, MDOT, and ITP–The Rapid are working together to carry out a performance-based transportation planning process. MDOT serves a leadership role in coordinating Michigan's MPOs, public transportation providers, and rural areas on PBPP activities. MDOT uses monthly Target Coordination Meetings, interagency work groups, presentations, and newsletters to maintain open lines of communication. GVMC participates in MDOT's interagency work groups and has assigned staff members to each of the performance measure areas: highway safety, pavement condition, bridge condition, travel time reliability, freight reliability, and transit asset management. GVMC staff are working with their Policy and Technical Committees to keep them informed and up-to-date on all PBPP activities.

On January 24, 2018, GVMC and ITP–The Rapid entered into an interagency agreement to specify each organization's roles and procedures for carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. The

agreement defines the lead and supporting roles for performance target coordination and transit asset data collection and storage. On April 3, 2018, GVMC, MDOT, and ITP–The Rapid completed a memorandum of understanding outlining the terms and details of each agency’s requirements and responsibilities for PBPP. Article 13 of the memorandum documents the specific written provisions for all the Federally-required performance measures:

*The MPO will establish performance targets that address the performance measures or standards establish in 23 CFR Part 490, 23 CFR Part 450, and 49 CFR Part 625. The AGENCY, the DEPARTMENT, and the TRANSIT OPERATOR(S) will coordinate in the establishment of state, AGENCY, and TRANSIT OPERATOR(S) performance targets. Coordination efforts will include, but are not limited to, sharing available data related to the Federally-required performance measures (subject to each agencies data sharing policies and procedures), discussing target setting methodology, establishing performance targets, and reporting on performance targets and progress in attaining targets. The AGENCY will plan and program projects that contribute to the achievement of state, AGENCY, and TRANSIT OPERATOR(S) targets as appropriate. The AGENCY will develop a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Performance Plan if required by 23 U.S.C. 149(l).*

For the highway safety performance measures, MDOT coordinated with GVMC prior to establishing the 2018 State targets. Subsequently, GVMC coordinated with MDOT prior to establishing the 2018 MPO targets. GVMC agreed to ultimately support MDOT’s targets and to plan and program projects so they contribute toward the accomplishment of those targets.

<b>Highway Safety Performance Measures</b>	<b>State Baseline through 2016</b>	<b>2018 MDOT Target</b>	<b>2018 GVMC Target</b>
Number of fatalities on all public roads	963.0	1,003.2	Support MDOT Target
Rate of fatalities per 100 million VMT on all public roads	1.00	1.02	Support MDOT Target
Number of serious injuries on all public roads	5,273.4	5,136.4	Support MDOT Target
Rate of serious injuries per 100 million VMT on all public roads	5.47	5.23	Support MDOT Target
Number of non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries on all public roads	721.8	743.6	Support MDOT Target

For the pavement condition, bridge condition, travel time reliability, and freight reliability performance measures, MDOT coordinated with GVMC prior to establishing the 2018 State targets. GVMC is coordinating with MDOT on the 2018 MPO targets and expects to support MDOT’s targets in November 2018.

<b>Pavement Condition Performance Measures</b>	<b>2018 MDOT 2-Year Targets</b>	<b>2018 MDOT 4-Year Targets</b>	<b>2018 GVMC 4-Year Targets</b>
Percent of pavements of the Interstate system in good condition	<i>Not applicable until October 2022</i>	47.8	<i>TBD in November 2018</i>
Percent of pavements of the Interstate system in poor condition	<i>Not applicable until October 2022</i>	10	<i>TBD in November 2018</i>
Percent of pavements of the non-Interstate NHS in good condition	46.7	43.7	<i>TBD in November 2018</i>
Percent of pavements of the non-Interstate NHS in poor condition	21.9	24.9	<i>TBD in November 2018</i>
<b>Bridge Condition Performance Measures</b>	<b>2018 MDOT 2-Year Targets</b>	<b>2018 MDOT 4-Year Targets</b>	<b>2018 GVMC 4-Year Targets</b>
Percent of NHS bridges classified as in good condition	27	26.2	<i>TBD in November 2018</i>
Percent of NHS bridges classified as in poor condition	7	7	<i>TBD in November 2018</i>
<b>Travel Time Reliability Performance Measures</b>	<b>2018 MDOT 2-Year Targets</b>	<b>2018 MDOT 4-Year Targets</b>	<b>2018 GVMC 4-Year Targets</b>
Percent of the person-miles traveled on the Interstate that are reliable	75	75	<i>TBD in November 2018</i>
Percent of the person-miles traveled on the non-Interstate NHS that are reliable	<i>Not applicable until October 2022</i>	70	<i>TBD in November 2018</i>
<b>Freight Reliability Performance Measures</b>	<b>2018 MDOT 2-Year Targets</b>	<b>2018 MDOT 4-Year Targets</b>	<b>2018 GVMC 4-Year Targets</b>
Truck travel time reliability index on the Interstate System	1.75	1.75	<i>TBD in November 2018</i>

For the transit asset management performance measures, ITP–The Rapid coordinated with GVMC prior to establishing the transit targets. Afterwards, GVMC coordinated with ITP–The Rapid prior to establishing the MPO targets.

<b>Transit Asset Management Performance Measures</b>	<b>Asset Class</b>	<b>Sub-Class</b>	<b>GVMC Target</b>
Percent of revenue vehicles within a particular asset class that have either met or exceeded their useful life benchmark	Rolling Stock	Revenue Vehicles: Large Bus	Not more than 15% will meet or exceed FTA ULB
		Revenue Vehicles: Small Bus and Vans	Not more than 10% will meet or exceed FTA ULB
		Revenue Vehicles: Sedan/SUV	
Percent of non-revenue service vehicles that have either met or exceeded their useful life benchmark	Equipment	Service Vehicles	Not more than 20% will meet or exceed FTA ULB
		Maintenance Equipment	Not more than 20% will be below 3.0 on TERM Scale
		Building Subsystems	Not more than 10% will be below 3.0 on TERM Scale
Percent of facilities within an asset class, rated below condition 3 on the Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM) scale	Facilities	All fix facilities	Not more than 10% will be below 3.0 on TERM Scale

On May 16, 2018, GVMC amended the FY 2017–2020 TIP to include the MPO targets for highway safety and transit asset management and describe the anticipated effect of the TIP toward achieving those targets. GVMC will incorporate a system performance report in their next metropolitan transportation plan in April 2019.

## **Findings**

The April 3, 2018 memorandum of understanding among GVMC, MDOT, and ITP–The Rapid reflects the minimum requirements in 23 CFR 450.314(h). GVMC will update its “Policies and Practices for Programming Projects” guidance to supplement the April 3, 2018 memorandum of agreement. The “Policies and Practices for Programming Projects” guidance also informs GVMC’s deficiency analyses and project prioritization and selection processes.

The implementation of performance-based planning and programming is evolving in the metropolitan area transportation planning process and GVMC indicated they will likely support the performance targets established by MDOT before developing their own targets.

GVMC, MDOT, and ITP–The Rapid continue to explore methods to integrate their transportation plans and processes to support a performance-based transportation planning process. The agencies intend to leverage their previous experiences with MDOT’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan and State Freight Plan.

### **Commendation 1: Performance-Based Planning and Programming**

MDOT is commended for its leadership and coordination with the Michigan MPOs, public transportation providers, and rural areas on PBPP, including interagency work groups, monthly meetings, presentations, and newsletters.

### **Recommendation 2: Performance-Based Planning and Programming**

It is recommended GVMC, MDOT, and ITP:

- periodically evaluate the April 3, 2018 memorandum of understanding to ensure the specific written provisions in Article 13 are appropriate, clear, effective, and agreeable.
- continue looking for opportunities to link investment priorities to performance targets through the MPO’s deficiency analyses, and project prioritization and selection processes.
- continue looking for opportunities to integrate the goals, objectives, performance measures, and targets described in each agency’s transportation plans and processes. Including, but not limited to: the State asset management plan for the National Highway System, Transit Asset Management Plan, Highway Safety Improvement Program, Strategic Highway Safety Plan, Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan, State Freight Plan, and Congestion Management Process.

#### Performance Based Planning and Programming Resources:

- [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/performance\\_based\\_planning/](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/performance_based_planning/)
- [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/performance\\_based\\_planning/resources/](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/performance_based_planning/resources/)
- <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/TPM/index.cfm>
- [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tpm/links\\_fhwa.cfm](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tpm/links_fhwa.cfm)
- <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/hsip/spm/>

## **Regulatory Basis**

23 CFR 450.300 sets forth the national policy for MPOs to carry out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive performance-based multimodal transportation planning process.

23 CFR 450.306(d)(1) states that the metropolitan transportation planning process shall provide for the establishment and use of a performance-based approach to transportation decision-making to support the national goals described in 23 U.S.C. 150(b) and the general purposes described in 49 U.S.C. 5301(c).

23 CFR 450.306(d)(2)(i) states that each MPO shall establish performance targets that address the performance measures or standards established under 23 CFR Part 490 (where applicable), 49 U.S.C. 5326(c), and 49 U.S.C. 5329(d) to use in tracking progress toward attainment of critical outcomes for the region of the MPO.

23 CFR 450.306(d)(2)(ii) states that the selection of targets that address performance measures described in 23 U.S.C. 150(c) shall be in accordance with the appropriate target setting framework established at 23 CFR Part 490, and shall be coordinated with the relevant State(s) to ensure consistency, to the maximum extent practicable.

23 CFR 450.306(d)(2)(iii) states that the selection of performance targets that address performance measures described in 49 U.S.C. 5326(c) and 49 U.S.C. 5329(d) shall be coordinated, to the maximum extent practicable, with public transportation providers to ensure consistency with the performance targets that public transportation providers establish under 49 U.S.C. 5326(c) and 49 U.S.C. 5329(d).

23 CFR 450.306(d)(3) states that each MPO shall establish the performance targets under 23 CFR 450.306(d)(2) not later than 180 days after the date on which the relevant State or provider of public transportation establishes the performance targets.

23 CFR 450.306(d)(4) states that each MPO shall integrate in the metropolitan transportation planning process, directly or by reference, the goals, objectives, performance measures, and targets described in other State transportation plans and transportation processes, as well as any plans developed under 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 by providers of public transportation, required as part of a performance-based program including:

- State asset management plan for the National Highway System,
- Transit Asset Management Plan,
- Highway Safety Improvement Program,
- Strategic Highway Safety Plan,
- Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan,
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program Performance Plan,
- State Freight Plan,
- Congestion Management Process,
- Other safety and security planning and review processes, plans, and programs, and
- Other State transportation plans and transportation processes required as part of a performance-based program.

23 CFR 450.314(h)(1) states that the MPO(s), State(s), and the providers of public transportation shall jointly agree upon and develop specific written provisions for cooperatively developing and sharing information related to transportation performance data, the selection of performance targets, the reporting of performance targets, the reporting of performance to be used in tracking progress toward attainment of critical outcomes for the region of the MPO, and the collection of data for the State asset management plan for the NHS for each of the following circumstances:

- When one MPO serves an urbanized area;
- When more than one MPO serves an urbanized area; and

- When an urbanized area that has been designated as a TMA overlaps into an adjacent MPA serving an urbanized area that is not a TMA.

23 CFR 450.314(h)(2) states that these provisions shall be documented either:

- As part of the metropolitan planning agreements required under 23 CFR 450.314, or
- Documented in some other means outside of the metropolitan planning agreements as determined cooperatively by the MPO(s), State(s), and providers of public transportation.

23 CFR 450.324(f)(3) states that the metropolitan transportation plan shall, at a minimum, include a description of the performance measures and performance targets used in assessing the performance of the transportation system in accordance with 23 CFR 450.306(d).

23 CFR 450.324(f)(4) states that the metropolitan transportation plan shall, at a minimum, include a system performance report and subsequent updates evaluating the condition and performance of the transportation system with respect to the performance targets described in 23 CFR 450.306(d), including:

- Progress achieved by the metropolitan planning organization in meeting the performance targets in comparison with system performance recorded in previous reports, including baseline data, and
- For MPOs that voluntarily elect to develop multiple scenarios, an analysis of how the preferred scenario has improved the conditions and performance of the transportation system and how changes in local policies and investments have impacted the costs necessary to achieve the identified performance targets.

23 CFR 450.326(c) states that the TIP shall be designed such that once implemented, it makes progress toward achieving the performance targets established under 23 CFR 450.306(d).

23 CFR 450.326(d) states that the TIP shall include, to the maximum extent practicable, a description of the anticipated effect of the TIP toward achieving the performance targets identified in the metropolitan transportation plan, linking investment priorities to those performance targets.

### **III. Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)**

#### **Current Status**

GVMC adopted the current 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan on April 20, 2015. The 2040 MTP addresses MAP-21 planning requirements. At the time it was drafted, the rulemakings for performance measures had not been finalized.

#### **Findings**

The 2040 MTP format is consistent with previous MTPs. Staff indicated a desire to refine the goals and objectives of the next MTP to be more narrowly focused and related to the federal performance measures. The existing goals and objectives are not used to evaluate projects or measure their success, instead the MPO relied on the Policies and Practices for Programming Projects document to define eligible projects. The Policies and Practices for Programming Projects was commended as part of the 2014 Certification Review as an effective tool to enable both committee members and the public to understand the requirements for programming new projects in the MTP and TIP. At the time of this Certification Review, staff were in the process of updating this document to create programming requirements related to the federal



performance measures. Other improvements discussed for the next MTP included the use of GIS story maps for visualization and public comment purposes.

Staff are participating in an update to the Grand Region Non-Motorized Plan, and as part of the next MTP update they will be initiating a MPO Non-Motorized Plan update. Staff are looking at ways to tie roadwork with non-motorized investments and focus resources on transportation versus recreational route completion. The MPO utilizes the established Transportation Alternatives Program resources within MDOT to review project proposals before recommending a list of projects to committees for programming.

As a result of the *South Coast Air Quality Management District v. EPA* court decision in February 2018, GVMC is required to demonstrate air quality conformity for Ozone for both the TIP and the MTP. In this decision, the Court required “orphan areas,” of which Grand Rapids is one, make conformity determinations for the revoked 1997 ozone standard. MDOT is taking steps to reconvene the Inter-Agency Workgroup and bring air quality conformity training to Michigan. MPO staff indicated they are prepared to conduct the conformity analysis but stated that refreshed software and training would be needed.

GVMC’s MTP consultation process primarily consisted of a 200-piece mailing to resource agencies and an open house. MDOT and the FHWA Division office are jointly developing a resource agency contact list with specifically requested review schedules from each resource agency that will be distributed to the MPOs in the summer 2018.

The MPO has included the development of a Freight Plan in the 2019 Unified Planning Work Program. This plan would inventory truck routes and intermodal facilities and include a bottleneck analysis. GVMC expects to use the newly developed Travel Demand Model to analyze commercial truck traffic. MDOT updated their State Freight Plan in November 2017 and has offered assistance to the MPO as they develop their regional Freight Plan.

### **Recommendation 3: Metropolitan Transportation Plan**

It is recommended that GVMC:

- refine the goals and objectives of the next MTP to better align with national performance measures and better relate these goals and objectives to the Policies and Practices for Programming Projects.
- continue exploring new and innovative formatting ideas for the MTP, including a story map.
- encourage staff participation in the upcoming air quality conformity training in January 2019 and work with MDOT for guidance on air quality conformity modeling.
- review the resource agency consultation materials provided by FHWA and MDOT to develop and document a formal consultation process similar in nature to the GVMC Public Participation Plan. Such a document would list the resource agency comment period specifications, how the MPO will review consulting agency plans and programs, and how the MPO will respond to or consider comments received.
- pursue assistance from MDOT in the development of a regional freight plan and participate in the update of the State Long Range Transportation Plan, which will integrate the State Freight Plan and State Freight Investment Plan.

### MTP Resources:

- MTP Goals and Performance Measures – <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tpm/noteworthy/ohio.pdf>
- Planworks – <https://fhwaapps.fhwa.dot.gov/planworks/DecisionGuide?phaseId=1>
- Scenario Planning – [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/scenario\\_and\\_visualization/scenario\\_planning/index.cfm](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/scenario_and_visualization/scenario_planning/index.cfm)

- Transportation Conformity – [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air\\_quality/conformity/2017\\_guide/](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/conformity/2017_guide/)
- Bike Network Mapping Idea book – [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle\\_pedestrian/publications/bikemap\\_book/](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/publications/bikemap_book/)

### **Regulatory Basis**

23 CFR 450.324 sets forth requirements for the development and content of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), a key product of the metropolitan transportation planning process.

## **IV. Congestion Management Process**

### **Current Status**

A Congestion Management Process (CMP) for the Grand Rapids region was updated in February 2018. The updated CMP is a preliminary step in the GVMC 2045 MTP update process. At the time of the Certification Review, the document was still in draft form, as portions of the CMP will be completed following the update to their regional travel demand forecasting model in September 2018.

GVMC has not pursued a “congestion management plan,” which is optional for TMAs.

### **Findings**

GVMC’s latest CMP incorporates new performance measures consistent with those required in MAP-21 and the FAST Act (level of travel time reliability and truck travel time reliability), in addition to a variety of other mobility and congestion measures. Maps and tables in the “draft” version will be completed once the regional travel demand model is finalized in September 2018. A wide range of strategies are included (highway, access management, ITS, transit, bicycle/pedestrian, land development, TDM). During discussion of the CMP, MDOT staff indicated the “Regional ITS Architecture and Deployment Plan” for the Grand Region was last updated in 2011.

### **Recommendation 4: Congestion Management Process**

It is recommended MDOT reviews and updates the “Regional ITS Architecture and Deployment Plan” as needed.

#### ITS Architecture Resources:

- Regional ITS Architecture Assessment Checklist – [https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/its\\_arch\\_imp/checklist.htm](https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/its_arch_imp/checklist.htm)
- Regional ITS Architecture Maintenance White Paper – [https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/its\\_arch\\_imp/ArchMaintrV5.htm](https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/its_arch_imp/ArchMaintrV5.htm)

### **Regulatory Basis**

23 CFR 450.322 sets forth requirements for the congestion management process (CMP) required of transportation management areas (TMAs). 23 CFR 450.322(h) allows for a TMA to also develop a “congestion management plan.”

## **V. Travel Demand Model**

### **Current Status**

The 2015 GVMC Certification Review Report included one recommendation related to the travel demand forecasting model: “It is recommended that GVMC look into the Travel Model Improvement Program (TMIP) as a resource for technical assistance and training for improving the travel demand model.” Since that time, GVMC staff have made several changes to their regional model for use in the development to their 2045 MTP. These include updating to a base year 2015, the incorporation of household survey results from a 2015 statewide survey effort led by MDOT, updating the traffic analysis zones (TAZs), migrating to a network structure in GIS, a new model interface, and more sophisticated gravity formulation for trip distribution. The new model includes the addition of multiple modes and trip purposes (truck, transit, walk, and bike), and time-of-day assignment. This work is being done by a consultant and is expected to be completed in September 2018.

### **Findings**

The regional travel demand model is used by GVMC staff in support of the CMP and development of the MTP. The update of the regional model has received a significant investment of staff time and resources, in collaboration with MDOT. GVMC and MDOT Statewide and Urban Travel Analysis jointly funded this model update and included provisions in the consultant contract to address training needs for both MPO and MDOT staff.

### **Commendation 2: Travel Demand Model**

GVMC is commended for cooperating with MDOT and expanding their regional modeling capabilities, including time-of-day analysis and multiple modes of travel. These improvements will help staff provide more accurate and responsive multi-modal information to the public and their members.

### **Regulatory Basis**

23 CFR 450.324(f)(1) says the metropolitan transportation plan shall include the current and projected transportation demand of persons and goods in the metropolitan planning area over the period of the transportation plan. However, there are no regulatory requirements for using a particular type of model for forecasting regional travel. Regional-scale models incorporating expected land use changes have become the standard platform for MPOs, as they can incorporate many of the required planning factors into their forecasts (e.g., accessibility, economic vitality, and freight are among the planning factors found in 23 CFR 450.306).

## **VI. Transit Planning**

### **Current Status**

The Interurban Transit Partnership (ITP–The Rapid) is the primary transit provider, providing transit and paratransit service in the Grand Rapids urbanized area. ITP–The Rapid operates traditional fixed-route bus service, demand-response services for low-income, elderly and disabled passengers, and express bus rapid transit service to key communities in the local commuting area. ITP–The Rapid is also the designated recipient for FTA formula funding in the region. ITP–The Rapid continues to improve route and funding gaps by applying for and receiving discretionary funding through the Federal Transit Administration.

ITP–The Rapid has a collaborative working relationship with GVMC, MDOT Office of Passenger Transportation, and other local transit providers within the MPO boundaries. ITP–The Rapid has developed a coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan to identify regional gaps in mobility, particularly for people with limited transportation options such as older adults, individuals with disabilities, and people with lower incomes. The Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan was adopted by the ITP Board in January 2017. ITP–The Rapid is an active member of the GVMC planning process and currently hold seats on the technical committee and programming subcommittees that are directly involved in the development of the MTP and TIP.

### **Findings**

The MPO has developed a cooperative working relationship with ITP–The Rapid, integrating strong transit service and ridership throughout the metropolitan planning area. Transit is integrated into the primary planning documents and processes. ITP–The Rapid is engaged in the planning process, particularly in the development of the MTP and TIP.

### **Recommendation 5: Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan**

It is recommended GVMC becomes more familiar with the coordinated transit plan and how it is incorporated into the overall transportation planning process.

### **Recommendation 6: Transit Performance Targets**

GVMC should continue working with ITP–The Rapid to develop and clearly identify performance targets in planning documents. These targets should tie to the national goals and performance measures established by the USDOT.

### Transit Planning Resources:

- Coordinated Mobility Plan:  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59dce13bb1ffb65b4d405588/t/5b2003ae2b6a28ecc4a668d5/1528824768901/Region+4+Transit+Study+Final+Report.pdf>
- Metropolitan Planning Organization Responsibilities for the Transit Asset Management Rule FAQs to learn more about performance-based planning for transit:  
<https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/transportation-planning/metropolitan-planning-organization-responsibilities>
- Performance-Based Planning Resources:  
<https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/transportation-planning/performance-based-planning-resources>

### **Regulatory Basis**

49 U.S.C. 5303 and 23 U.S.C. 134 require the transportation planning process in metropolitan areas to consider all modes of travel in the development of their plans and programs. Federal regulations cited in 23 CFR 450.314 state that the MPO in cooperation with the State and operators of publicly owned transit services shall be responsible for carrying out the transportation planning process.

## **VII. Transportation Improvement Program**

### **Current Status**

At the time of the on-site review, the FY 2017–2020 TIP had been approved by the FHWA and FTA as part of the STIP in September 2016. The GVMC TIP represents the priorities of the State, counties, cities, and other transportation agencies for implementing the MPO’s 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The TIP lists all transportation projects receiving Federal funding in the MPO area and all regionally significant projects regardless of how they are funded. The FY 2017–2020 TIP is fiscally-constrained with reasonable revenue forecasts cooperatively developed by GVMC, MDOT, FTA and FHWA through the Financial Working Group of the Michigan Transportation Planning Association. The required performance targets to date have been included in the TIP document and were approved by FHWA on July 24, 2018.

GVMC uses a simple TIP project prioritization process. Submitted projects are deemed “deficient” or “not deficient” based on rules agreed upon at the MPO committees. Only “deficient” projects are eligible for MPO funding. There is no project application process. Deficiency rules are documented in the Policies and Practices for Programming Projects, which is included as an appendix to the TIP and MTP. Non-motorized transportation projects using Transportation Alternatives Program funding are scored by MPO staff and selected based on those scores (five criteria, one to five points each).

### **Findings**

The Federal Review team found that GVMC TIP substantially complies with the current requirements of 23 CFR 450.326.

The project prioritization and selection process is being updated in anticipation of the development of the FY 2020–2023 TIP. Staff are reviewing the rules for TIP project prioritization in The Policies and Practices for Programming Projects in response to the introduction of performance measures. Staff are working to relate the deficiency list criteria to each of the performance measures and assemble a menu of project level data that MPO committee members can use to make informed decisions.

MDOT is an active partner during the development of the TIP and there is a strong working relationship between staff at both agencies. In the past, MDOT had informal collaboration with staff to ensure projects were reflected accurately in the e-file TIP project list. With the introduction of JobNet – MDOT’s electronic S/TIP system – this interaction has become more formalized. MDOT participates in the project programming process, especially for CMAQ-funded projects. The MPO is invited to review the MDOT 5-Year Plan to identify potential conflicts with local projects. Moreover, the MPO hosts project construction coordination meetings annually in April or May for all road agencies, to coordinate road closures and detour routes. These meetings go beyond the projects listed in the TIP to include MDOT and local maintenance or other projects that are not federally funded.

MPO staff conceded the public participation during TIP development could be improved and is researching strategies to broaden participation. Reaching Environmental Justice populations has proven to be very difficult and the MPO intends to learn more techniques from partner agencies. Consultation with state and federal agencies has also been challenging; the MPO currently provides resource agencies 20 days to respond with comments on the TIP document and project list.

**Commendation 3: GIS Interactive TIP Project Map**

GVMC is commended for developing an interactive TIP Project Map for public involvement as part of their overall website update. This resource makes it easier for the public, and utilities, to locate and comment upon planned transportation projects.

**Recommendation 7: Transportation Improvement Program Project Prioritization**

It is recommended GVMC further develop the project prioritization process to include performance measure data and relate investments to MTP goals and objectives.

TIP Project Prioritization resource:

- Project Prioritization – <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tpm/noteworthy/hif13023.pdf>

**Regulatory Basis**

23 CFR 450.326 sets forth requirements for the MPO to cooperatively develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that is consistent with the MTP and is financially constrained. The TIP must cover at least a four-year horizon and be updated at least every four years. Additionally, the TIP must list all projects in sufficient detail outlined in the regulations, reflect public involvement. The TIP should identify the criteria and process for prioritizing implementation of transportation plan elements (including multimodal trade-offs) for inclusion in the TIP and any changes in priorities from previous TIPs.

23 CFR 450.326(c-d) sets forth the requirements related to performance measures in the TIP. The TIP must include a description of the anticipated effect of the TIP toward achieving the performance targets of the MTP. The TIP must also be designed such that, once implemented, it makes progress toward achieving the performance targets of the MPO.

23 CFR 450.326(e-k) sets forth the requirements related to financial planning in the TIP. Separate financial plans for the MTP and the TIP demonstrate how the adopted MTP and TIP can be implemented.

**VIII. Environmental Justice and Title VI****Current Status**

The 2040 MTP includes a general discussion of the environmental justices (EJ) activities completed by GVMC. EJ areas were defined by the MPO as any census block group that exceeded the countywide average population percentage for each of the minority groups, and for low income identification, census tracts flagged at or below the poverty line. GVMC made a good faith effort to conduct an EJ analysis as part of the 2040 MTP, but has since made improvements through the introduction of an Accessibility Analysis in 2017.

GVMC uses proximity to environmental justice areas as a factor in the scoring of non-motorized transportation projects. GVMC also calculated the percentage of the population within a reasonable walking distance to an ITP–The Rapid transit route, as well as a comparison of ITP–The Rapid service areas to EJ identified areas, to determine where service improvements could be targeted in the future.

GVMC’s Title VI Plan was updated in February 2018 using a template format provided by MDOT. It was reviewed and approved by MDOT.

## Findings

The 2040 MTP EJ Analysis relies on older methodology, similar to the process MDOT undertakes for their planning documents, to conclude that TIP or MTP projects have no disproportionate impacts on EJ populations. GVMC did not develop maps delineating each of the minority areas and the low-income areas individually and instead aggregated all the race/ethnicity and low-income census tract information into a single map. There is no documented process of how the MPO mitigates impacts to EJ populations specifically.

GVMC responded to a recommendation from the 2014 Certification review, and in 2017 staff conducted an Accessibility Analysis with a special emphasis on Environmental Justice. This analysis was conducted after the 2040 MTP was adopted and used EJ areas originally developed for the 2040 MTP. New sources of data, such as RITIS travel time information and other national data sets, were used to measure accessibility to destinations via walking and biking for all roads and trails, higher education, medical facilities, and employment, as well as access to the roadway and transit network. The analysis documented the percent of EJ areas versus non-EJ areas that had coverage within specific time increments and provided more information about accessibility gaps for the region. This effort earned the MPO a poster presentation spot at the American Planning Association annual meeting. Staff indicated this effort is a first step towards generating a comprehensive accessibility analysis with the intent to use the travel demand model for the next effort.

GVMC's Title VI Plan meets regulatory requirements. To date, GVMC has not received a Title VI complaint. Staff collects Title VI sign-in information at all public meetings and submits an annual report to MDOT.

### **Commendation 4: Accessibility Analysis**

GVMC is commended for undertaking an Accessibility Analysis that is comprehensive and yet simple enough to be replicated by other similarly-sized MPOs with geographic information system (GIS) capabilities. GVMC is encouraged to utilize their Accessibility Analysis as part of the EJ analysis during the development of the next MTP.

### **Recommendation 8: Environmental Justice and Title VI**

It is recommended GVMC reinstate EJ information included in the 2035 MTP, specifically tables documenting projects that touch each EJ area, as well as individualized maps for each of the minority groups and low-income areas. It is also recommended GVMC consider incorporating information about the PPP process into the Title VI Plan to link the two documents.

#### Environmental Justice Resources:

- Environmental Review Toolkit – [https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/projdev/env\\_just.asp](https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/projdev/env_just.asp)
- FHWA EJ Reference Guide – [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/environmental\\_justice/publications/reference\\_guide\\_2015/index.cfm](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/environmental_justice/publications/reference_guide_2015/index.cfm)

## **Regulatory Basis**

Executive Order #12898 directs federal agencies to develop strategies to address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs on minority and low-income populations. In compliance with this Executive Order, USDOT and FHWA issued orders to establish policies and procedures for addressing environmental justice in minority and low-income populations.

23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(vii), requires that the needs of those “traditionally underserved” by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and/or minority households, be sought out and considered.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based upon race, color, and national origin. Specifically, 42 USC 2000d states that “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”



## Appendix A: Certification Review Notification Letter



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

March 8, 2018

Federal Highway Administration  
315 W. Allegan Street, Room 201  
Lansing, MI 48933

Federal Transit Administration  
200 W. Adams Street, Suite 320  
Chicago, IL 60606

Mr. Darrel Schmalzel, Chairperson  
Grand Valley Metro Council  
678 Front Ave, Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504

Mr. David Wresinski, Director  
Bureau of Transportation Planning (B340)  
Michigan Department of Transportation  
425 W Ottawa St  
Lansing, Michigan 48933

Dear Mr. Schmalzel and Mr. Wresinski,

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will be conducting a Certification Review of the transportation planning process for the Grand Rapids metropolitan area on June 20-21, 2018. These dates were selected in consultation with your staff. The review will begin on the morning of June 20, 2018, and will look at the cooperative planning process as conducted by the State, public transportation operators, and the local governments in the area. You and all participants in the planning process are welcome to attend the review.

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST) continues the requirement for Certification of the transportation planning process in urbanized areas over 200,000 in population once every four years. Certification Reviews are conducted with the objective of evaluating the transportation planning process. Consequently, we will not be conducting a pass/fail review, but rather we intend to highlight good practices, exchange information, and identify opportunities for improvement. The Certification process will rely extensively on knowledge gained throughout the year from routine contact with the planning process in the area, as well as the scheduled Certification Review meeting. The specific focal points for the Certification Review meeting include, but are not limited to:

- Status of Recommendations from the previous Certification Review
- Transportation Improvement Program
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Transit planning
- Project Prioritization and Performance Based Planning
- Consideration of Safety, Environmental Justice, and Public Participation

There will be an opportunity for the public, including key MPO committee members and special interest groups, to talk directly with FHWA and FTA in an open public involvement session concerning their views on the transportation planning process being conducted in the metropolitan area. This public listening session is scheduled the afternoon/evening of June 19, 2018. We will also offer the opportunity for any committee members or other local elected officials to meet with us separately if they so desire.


If you have any questions concerning this review, please contact Andrea Dewey, Transportation Planner (FHWA) at [andrea.dewey@dot.gov](mailto:andrea.dewey@dot.gov) or (517) 702-1823 and Krishina Welch, Transportation Planner (FTA) at [krishina.welch@dot.gov](mailto:krishina.welch@dot.gov) or (312) 353-3853.

Sincerely,



Russell L. Jorgenson, P.E.  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration

Sincerely,



Marisol R. Simón  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration

## Appendix B: Public Meeting Notice



U.S. Department  
Of Transportation

**Federal Highway Administration**  
315 W. Allegan Street  
Lansing, MI 48933

**Federal Transit Administration**  
200 W. Adams Street, Suite 320  
Chicago, IL 60606

### PLEASE POST

There is an upcoming opportunity for you to talk directly with the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration in open-house style meeting concerning your views on the transportation planning process in the Grand Rapids area:

**Date:** Tuesday, June 19, 2018  
**Time:** 5:00-6:30 p.m.  
**Place:** Rapid Central Station  
300 Ellsworth Ave SW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Transit access:

- The Rapid ([www.ridetherapid.org](http://www.ridetherapid.org))

GVMC website: <https://www.gvmc.org/>

This public open-house style meeting is part of a review that will assess compliance with Federal regulations pertaining to the transportation planning process conducted by the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC), the Michigan Department of Transportation, and the Interurban Transit Partnership (ITP-The Rapid).

If you are not able to attend the meeting, comments will be accepted until July 20, 2018. Please address your comments to:

Andrea Dewey  
Federal Highway Administration, Michigan Division  
315 West Allegan Street, Room 201  
Lansing, MI 48933  
e-mail: [Andrea.Dewey@dot.gov](mailto:Andrea.Dewey@dot.gov)  
phone: (517) 702-1823

Or

Krishina Welch  
Federal Transit Administration, Region V  
200 West Adams Street, Suite 320  
Chicago, IL 60606  
e-mail: [Krishina.Welch@dot.gov](mailto:Krishina.Welch@dot.gov)  
phone: (312) 353-3853

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids for services should contact GVMC by June 11, 2018 by writing or calling:

Grand Valley Metropolitan Council, 678 Front Ave. NW Suite 200, Grand Rapids, MI 49504  
Phone: (616) 776-3876 Fax: (616) 774-9292 Email: [andrea.faber@gvmc.org](mailto:andrea.faber@gvmc.org)

## **Appendix C: On-Site Review Participants**

### **Federal Review Team**

Corbin Davis – Federal Highway Administration, Headquarters  
Aaron Dawson – Federal Highway Administration, Michigan Division  
Andrea Dewey – Federal Highway Administration, Michigan Division  
Arnita Furgason – Federal Highway Administration, Michigan Division  
Andy Pickard – Federal Highway Administration, Michigan Division  
Krishina Welch – Federal Transit Administration, Region V

### **Grand Valley Metropolitan Council**

Mike Bra Meijer  
Andrea Faber  
Abed Itani  
Laurel Joseph  
Darrell Robinson  
John Weiss  
George Yang  
Mike Zonyk

### **ITP–The Rapid**

Liz Schelling  
Conrad Venema

### **Michigan Department of Transportation**

Mallory Avis  
Andy Brush  
Elisha DeFrain  
Tom Doyle  
Daniela Khavajian  
Dennis Kent  
Tyler Kent  
Robert Maffeo  
Eric Mullen

## Appendix D: Certification Review Agenda

**2018 GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL (GVMC)**  
**TMA CERTIFICATION REVIEW**  
 ON-SITE VISIT AGENDA  
 JUNE 19-21, 2018  
 LOCATION: GVMC OFFICES, 678 FRONT AVE. N.W., GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

<b>Tuesday, June 19, 2018</b>		
<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Review Topic</b>	<b>Discussion leader</b>
5:00-6:30	<b>Public Open House – Rapid Central Station</b> Location: 300 Ellsworth Ave SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503	Federal Review Team
<b>Wednesday, June 20, 2018</b>		
<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Review Topic</b>	<b>Discussion leader</b>
8:30-8:45	<b>Introductions, Purpose, and Overview</b> - Purpose and Overview of the Certification Process - Timeline for issuing the Final Report	Andrea Dewey
8:45-9:15	<b>Public Participation</b>	Andrea Dewey
9:15-9:30	<i>Break</i>	
9:30-10:00	<b>Technical and Policy Committee Opportunity for Comment</b>	MPO Committee members
10:00-11:30	<b>Performance-Based Planning &amp; Programming (PBPP)</b> - Performance-based approach to planning and decision-making - Developing specific written provisions for PBPP - Establishing performance targets - Integrating performance-based plans and processes - System performance report in Metropolitan Transportation Plan - Linking investment priorities to targets in TIP - Describing anticipated performance target achievement in TIP	Corbin Davis Andrea Dewey Aaron Dawson Andy Pickard Kris Welch
11:30-1:00	<i>Lunch (Federal Review Team Meeting)</i>	
1:00-2:30	<b>Metropolitan Transportation Plan</b> - Financial Plan/Project List - Management and Operations - Air Quality - Congestion Management Process - Non-Motorized Planning - Freight Planning	Andrea Dewey Kris Welch Andy Pickard Corbin Davis
2:30-2:45	<i>Break</i>	
2:45-3:15	<b>Travel Demand Model</b>	Andy Pickard
3:15-4:30	<b>Transit Planning</b>	Kris Welch
<b>Thursday, June 21, 2018</b>		
<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Review Topic</b>	<b>Discussion leader</b>
8:30-10:00	<b>Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)</b> - Project programming - Amendment process	Aaron Dawson Kris Welch Andrea Dewey Corbin Davis
10:00-10:15	<i>Break</i>	
10:15-11:15	<b>Environmental Justice &amp; Title VI</b>	Arnita Furgason
11:15-11:30	<b>Closing Remarks</b>	Federal Team

## Appendix E: Summary of 2014 Certification Findings

### GVMC's Response to 2014 Certification Review Recommendations

#### ***Recommendation 1: Transit Representation on GVMC Board***

*It is recommended that the GVMC and ITP, in cooperation with FTA and FHWA, review the finalized MAP-21 Planning CFR, when released, and determine if their membership meets the requirements for transit representation on the MPO board.*

##### *Progress to Date*

We believe GVMC meets the spirit of the transit representation regulations based on the fact that ITP has representation on both the MPO's Policy and Technical Committees and that the GVMC Board approves the MTP and UPWP based on recommendation from these committees. Additionally, seven of ITP's Board members also sit on the GVMC Board, which provides additional representation. Furthermore, State law would have to be changed in order to make it legal for ITP's CEO to sit on the GVMC Board, making that level of representation currently impossible. |

#### ***Recommendation 2: Planning Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)***

*It is recommended that the GVMC, MDOT, and ITP, in cooperation with FTA and FHWA, review the finalized MAP-21 Planning CFR, when released, and work cooperatively to update and adopt a single Planning MOU between all parties to reflect a performance-based planning process, including roles, responsibilities, and timeframes. FHWA and FTA will provide guidance and examples of commendable MOUs under MAP-21 as they are developed.*

##### *Progress to Date*

GVMC and ITP have updated their MOU to reflect a performance-based process. GVMC staff also participated in coordination meetings with MDOT regarding the development of a performance-based MOU between MDOT and the MPO. This updated MOU with MDOT was finalized in April, 2018.

#### ***Recommendation 3: Unified Planning Work Program***

*It is recommended that the GVMC include a schedule that shows target dates for completion of major products. This would better convey the interrelationship of work program activities, such as those that depend on others before they can proceed. The GVMC is also encouraged to continue efforts to improve monitoring and sharing work progress, completion of major work, and the impact of that work within the community. Efforts to keep committee members and public informed and engaged in the transportation planning process, whether through the annual business report, monthly committee reports, or the Final Acceptance Reports demonstrate a transparent, productive planning process.*

##### *Progress to Date*

Starting in the FY 2016 UPWP, GVMC added approximate schedules of completion for products listed in the UPWP for each work area. GVMC staff has also begun publishing a quarterly newsletter, which can be used to share work progress, completion, and impacts within the community to help keep the Committees and public informed. Additionally, staff updates the Committees at their regularly scheduled meetings with status updates on major projects/initiatives, when applicable.

***Recommendation 4: Performance-Based Planning and Programming***

*GVMC should analyze the long- and short-rang planning process for necessary updates to ensure compliance with MAP-21 PBPP requirements. It is recommended that the MPO use the PBPP Self-Assessment Tool that was released December 2014, attend Michigan's PBPP Peer Exchange, scheduled for April 2015, along with any other tool necessary.*

*Progress to Date*

GVMC views implementing performance-based planning as a continuous work in progress to be done in coordination with our local, state, and federal partners. Staff is participating on several committees doing work on PBPP through MTPA, and has participated in monthly target coordination meetings with MDOT and federal partners. Transit and safety targets have been adopted, and staff is working on codifying the process in our Policy and Practices document to develop the MTP and TIP. Staff also attended the FHWA-hosted target setting workshop in 2016 and used the PBPP Self-Assessment Tool.

***Recommendation 5: MTP Environmental Justice Analysis***

*It is recommended that GVMC expand the MTP environmental justice analysis to regional measure such as accessibility to opportunities (e.g. employment, education, health care, etc.). This analysis will give a comparative assessment of the benefits and burdens across the spectrum of populations, assuming implementation of the MTP and TIP. Noting the fact that 57% of the Grand Rapids metropolitan planning area is comprised of EJ defined minority groups, this additional analysis is prudent and necessary. It is also recommended that MPO staff attend FHWA environmental justice training to assist them in completing this recommended next step in a comprehensive EJ systems level approach.*

*Progress to Date*

Staff attended the FHWA EJ training in 2016. Staff has also completed a base EJ accessibility analysis using GIS, and plans to use the updated travel demand model to analyze impacts of build and no-build scenarios during the development of the next MTP and TIP. Link to EJ Analysis on GVMC's website: [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59dce13bb1ffb65b4d405588/t/5a46b22924a694278eb2c03d/1514582575036/20170929\\_Environmental+Justice+and+Transportation+Accessibility+Report.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59dce13bb1ffb65b4d405588/t/5a46b22924a694278eb2c03d/1514582575036/20170929_Environmental+Justice+and+Transportation+Accessibility+Report.pdf)

***Recommendation 6: Transportation Planning Education Campaign***

*During the certification review process, participants from the GVMC Policy Committee as well as the public indicated a desire for a transportation planning education campaign for the Grand Rapids metro planning area. We recommend GVMC staff research this idea (format, topics, etc.) and discuss the research with the Policy Committee and applicable partners.*

*Progress to Date*

GVMC has taken several steps in this area and plans to continue to develop and offer opportunities to educate our Committees and the public about the work we do and the transportation planning processes we follow. The GVMC Board contracted with a consulting firm to perform a communications strategic plan, which covers all specialty areas of the organization, including transportation. The results of this study should provide staff with communication strategies we can implement to increase the regional knowledge surrounding transportation planning. The quarterly transportation planning newsletter is also a vehicle for educational pieces. Our biggest yearly public education campaign is conducted for the Clean Air Action Program. We are planning to piggy-back off these events to do some

additional outreach for our other planning activities. GVMC staff has also hosted and participated in other educational opportunities for our members and beyond, including hosting a Transportation Alternatives Program training, hosting the MTPA conference in 2017, giving a guest lecture at a GVSU transportation planning class, and participating on a panel at the Michigan Bicycle Safety Conference.

***Recommendation 7: Travel Demand Model***

*It is recommended that GVMC look into the Travel Model Improvement Program (TMIP) as a resource for technical assistance and training for improving the travel demand model. If interested, contact for planning representative in the FHWA Michigan Division.*

*Progress to Date*

GVMC, in partnership with MDOT, has engaged the consulting firm Caliper to update the regional travel demand model. New capabilities will include time-of-day analysis, nonmotorized mode choices, transit assignment, comprehensive truck component, and more. It will also provide the opportunity to perform scenario analyses, and more in-depth EJ accessibility analyses.

***Recommendation 8: Transportation Improvement Program***

*It is recommended that GVMC continue to be involved in the Financial Working Group and look for ways to improve financial planning processes, including estimating local revenue and operations, and identifying operations and maintenance costs.*

*Progress to Date*

Staff voiced a recommendation to reinstate the Financial Working Group at the November 2017 MTPA meeting. No action has been taken as of March 2018.

***Recommendation 9: Safety Planning***

*It is recommended that GVMC include more information on safety on the MPO website. GVMC is doing a lot of good work that could be made more accessible to the community. It is also recommended that GVMC explore approaches for addressing safety as a consideration in the project selection process. Finally, we recommend GVMC address safety on all public roads in the MPO study area.*

*Progress to Date*

Staff recently updated the GVMC website, including the safety planning page. Staff has added the West Michigan Traffic Safety Plan to the website, and has contacted local partners to get information about local safety programs and projects. Staff is also adding high crash location information for the last 3-5 years to the webpage, and will be providing safety information for all projects under consideration for programming by the MPO committees during the development of the MTP and TIP.