

# INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD

OCTOBER 24, 2007

## ATTENDANCE

### Board Members Present

Tom Guinther  
Lisa Haynes  
George Heartwell  
Barbara Holt  
Don Lawless  
Don Mason  
Chris Meyer  
Rick Morris  
Terry Schweitzer  
Rob VerHeulen

### Staff

Robin Crothers  
Mark Fedorowicz  
Jim Fetzer  
Alan Hartley  
Jennifer Kalczuk  
Chris Leighty  
Brian Pouget  
Liz Schelling  
Scott Walsh

### Board Members Absent

Bing Goei  
Steve Maas  
Richard Root  
Carol Sheets  
Jim White

### Others Present

Jeff Ammon, Miller Johnson  
Rob Carter, Passenger  
Rick Eyke, Passenger  
Richard Jackson, Local 836  
Kyla King, Grand Rapids Press  
Dean Peterson, MDOT

**MINUTES OF**  
**INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD**  
**AS RECORDED ON OCTOBER 24, 2007**

Commencing at 4:00p.m., Ms. Holt called the regular meeting of the Interurban Transit Partnership Board to order.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS**

No comments.

1. Minutes of September 26, 2007 Board Meeting:

A motion was made by Lawless, supported by VerHeulen, to approve the minutes of the September 26, 2007 Board meeting as written. Motion passed unanimously.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Heartwell, supported by Guinther, to approve Items 2-6 as Consent Agenda items. Motion passed unanimously.

**REGULAR AGENDA**

7. Consultant for Streetcar Feasibility Study:

Mr. Guinther reported that staff is requesting authorization to execute a contract with DMJM Harris in an amount not to exceed \$359,690 to conduct a Streetcar Feasibility Study for the ITP. He commented that we received a letter from MDOT indicating a lack of available state funds. This has raised concerns regarding whether we should continue with the streetcar study. He questioned the impact this would have on the streetcar project. We should have further discussion before spending the money on the Streetcar Feasibility Study to determine how we would acquire local funding, if needed.

Mr. Fetzer noted that the study requested is a feasibility study, which may or may not prove that a streetcar is desirable in Grand Rapids. If the outcome of the study is favorable for a streetcar system there are other funding sources that we could pursue such as CMAQ, STP, and potential private partnerships. He

mentioned that the state match would be a small component of the funding even if the funds were available.

Mayor Heartwell noted that the Portland, Oregon project was done as a private non-profit initiative, separate but in coordination with the transit system in Portland. This project used no state and federal funding at all. He commented that the downtown streetcar is a localized benefit.

Mr. Morris questioned how the lack of state funding would impact the BRT. Mr. Fetzer noted that this project would also be eligible for other funding sources.

Mr. Lawless believes that over time we have identified legitimate interest in this project and supports the study to determine if the future vision is feasible.

Mr. Mason suggests we table the item until after the Board Retreat where we can have more discussion and get additional information on the actual financing needed. He noted this would help to clarify what comes next if we do approve the feasibility study.

Mayor Heartwell noted that this recommendation is coming to us through the GT2 group who has researched the financing aspect of the project.

Mr. Meyer inquired if we could use the allocated study funds for something else.

Mr. Fetzer noted that \$200,000 is earmarked for this project and is not able to be used in any other capacity and \$150,000 is coming from planning funds, which could be reprogrammed for other planning activities.

Ms. Haynes noted that in order to answer the questions we have, we should move forward with the study to determine if this is the direction we want to go.

Mr. Schweitzer commented that he thought streetcar funding would mostly be private funding so the letter from the state would not have much of an effect on the project.

Mr. Guinther commented that the Board consensus seems to be that construction of this project would be privately funded.

Mayor VerHeulen noted that if we do not authorize the study, we are discontinuing the project. He would like to get the results of the study and use that information to determine the direction we would like to go.

Mr. Morris questioned how the bus would interact with the streetcar system. Mr. Fetzer noted that the study would clarify this.

Mr. Meyer commented that this gives us an opportunity to participate in the public private partnership that will not favor any developer and should result in what is best for the City of Grand Rapids. He feels this is a good use of planning funds.

Mr. Mason noted that as long as we understand that this will be funded in a private and public partnership, he would support the study.

A motion was made by Guinther, supported by Meyer, to approve a contract with DMJM Harris for the Streetcar Feasibility Study. Motion passed unanimously.

#### CEO's REPORT

##### 8. Monthly Report:

Mr. Hartley reported that we celebrated serving more than 8 million riders in FY 2007. This is twice the ridership level we had since *The Rapid* was created. The actual number of rides is 8,192,589.

#### CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Holt noted that she along with Ms. Sheets, Mr. Varga and Mr. Fetzer attended the APTA Annual Meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina earlier in the month.

#### ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

No report.

#### INFORMATION ITEMS:

There was no discussion on the following information items.

- A. Minutes of 10-17-07 Performance Oversight Committee Meeting
- B. Communications

#### PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Rob Carter, passenger, is concerned with the schedule of Route 9. He noted that this route does not accommodate the hourly ridership level. He would also like to see a transfer center at Woodland Mall.

Mr. Fetzer replied that we are looking at the route alignment at Woodland Mall.

#### Board Member Comments

Mr. Meyer mentioned that increased revenues and decreased expenses resulted in a \$600,000 surplus to the original FY 2007 budget, which is great news.

Mayor Heartwell appreciates Mr. Hartley and staff for working with the Bridge Street neighbors and Grand Rapids Public Schools regarding issues with bus stops.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Robin Crothers, ITP Board Secretary