



## Interurban Transit Partnership

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### Planning & Technology Committee Members

Rick Baker

Andy Guy

Jack Hoffman

Terry Schweitzer (Chair)

Paul Troost

Citizen Members:

Dave Bulkowski

## FUTURE PLANNING AND INNOVATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, March 10, 2025 – 8:30 a.m.

Rapid Central Station Conference Room (250 Cesar Chavez Avenue, SW)

### AGENDA

	<u>PRESENTER</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1. PUBLIC COMMENT		
2. MINUTES REVIEW – November 4, 2024 (January 6 Canceled)	Terry Schweitzer	Review
3. DISCUSSION		
a. TMP Near-Term Recommendation Prioritization Discussion	Nick Monoyios	Discussion
4. ADJOURNMENT		

Next meeting: May 12, 2025



## Future Planning & Technology Committee Members

Mayor Rosalynn Bliss

Jack Hoffman  
Citizen Members:

Andy Guy  
Ryan Anderson

Terry Schweitzer (Chair)  
Dave Bulkowski

Paul Troost

## PLANNING & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday, November 4, 2024 – 8:30 a.m.

Rapid Central Station Conference Room (250 Cesar E Chavez Avenue, SW)

### ATTENDANCE:

#### Committee Members Present:

Terry Schweitzer, Jack Hoffman, Andy Guy, Dave Bulkowski, Paul Troost

#### Committee Members Absent:

Ryan Anderson, Mayor Bliss

#### Rapid Attendees:

Steve Clapp, Kris Heald, Deron Kippen, Linda Medina, Nick Monoyios, James Nguyen, Deb Prato, Jason Prescott, Andy Prokopy, Tim Roseboom, Steve Schipper, Mike Wieringa, Kevin Wisselink

#### Public Attendees:

Max Dillivan (Mobile GR),  
Virtual Attendee's: Catherine Osborn (AECOM), Rebecca Lee (AECOM)

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Mr. Schweitzer called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

### 1. PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comments

### 2. MINUTES – September 9, 2024

Chair Schweitzer called for any comments or corrections to the meeting minutes from September 9, 2024. The meeting minutes were accepted as written and submitted.

### 3. DISCUSSION

#### a. TMP Final Update, Mr. Nick Monoyios & Ms. Catherine Osborn

Mr. Monoyios welcomed Ms. Catherine Osborn from the AECOM Project Team, who is attending virtually. She will be guiding us through this last presentation in which we finalize the process of the TMP.

Ms. Osborn began her presentation by emphasizing the key near-term strategies in the Transit Master Plan (TMP) that can be quickly implemented without extra staffing or funding. She encouraged committee members to share their feedback on which strategies they view as priorities. She reviewed previous discussions on various technical tasks such as Joint Development, Inter-County Corridor considerations, Fleet Facility updates, IT advancements, and funding tools, setting the stage for today's focus on the implementation roadmap as the final TMP report nears completion.

Highlighting the collaborative efforts that shaped the draft TMP, Ms. Osborn noted the integration of community feedback and best practices. She outlined the next steps, which include developing a comprehensive implementation plan detailing funding mechanisms, strategic phases, and actionable items to ensure the recommendations transition from concepts to reality.

Ms. Osborn briefly reviewed the six recommendations Concept Categories that we presented previously for the near term. Included are the six recommendation concepts: Community Awareness and Education, Existing Service Improvements, Future Service Expansion, Transit Oriented Development, Innovation & Technology, Regional Partnerships. Plus, Sustainable Funding and Internal Workforce Development.

Ms. Osborn noted that we are in the process of developing a series of one-pagers for all the near-term strategies. Included are:

- Strategy Description outlining its goals and objectives.
- Context to provide background information on the relevance of the strategy and explain why it is important to pursue.
- Expected Impacts of implementing the strategy that will be detailed, highlighting the benefits it offers to stakeholders and the broader community.
- Implementation Considerations.

Ms. Osborn noted different funding situations will be evaluated including:

- Existing Funding. Can it be implemented with current resources.
- Cost Neutral. Strategies that require no additional funds.
- Discretionary Funding. Initiatives that could secure one-time or additional funding.
- Sustainable Funding. Strategies needing long-term financial commitment.

Other considerations are staffing needs:

- Existing Staff. The ability of current personnel to implement the strategy.
- External Assistance. Partnering with local organizations or hiring consultants.
- Long-Term Staffing. Identifying the necessity for recruiting additional staff over time.

Next Steps:

A roadmap for rollout will be established, breaking down strategies into actionable steps over the next three years to facilitate effective implementation

The following Four Strategies outline an effective framework for the successful implementation of the Transit Master Plan (TMP).

1. Develop a TMP Implementation Stakeholder Committee. Establish a dedicated committee that brings a diverse group of stakeholders, including technical advisors, champions and advocates for transit.
2. Additional Funding Mechanism. Identify and create new funding sources to support the TMP. Explore grants, public-private partnerships, local taxes, or other innovative financing options.
3. Identification of Staffing Needs. Conduct a thorough analysis of current staffing capabilities and identify gaps related to TMP implementation.
4. Periodic Review and Evaluation of TMP Outcomes. Establish a system for regularly reviewing and evaluating the outcomes of the TMP based on defined performance measures. The TMP is a living document that evolves through feedback and results.

Implementing these strategies will ensure that the TMP is not only effectively executed but also continuously refined to meet the changing needs of the community.

Mr. Bulkowski is interested in having revenue estimates represented with actual dollar amounts rather than just percentages. He requested a chart that displays both the dollar amounts and their percentages relative to the total budget for better understanding.

Ms. Osborn acknowledged the feedback from Mr. Bulkowski, and she expressed her willingness to include the requested percentages in the peer comparison categories. She explained that the potential revenue estimates are represented as percentages, indicating various impacts based on the funding source status.

Mr. Schweitzer asked Ms. Prato whether the transit funding discussions within the coalition of agencies in Michigan involve any specific initiatives or proposals that are currently being considered or discussed.

Ms. Prato indicated that the coalition has not yet integrated specific proposals regarding promoting transit funding. She mentioned that they are currently focused on the SOAR package that is expected to be discussed following the lame-duck session of the state legislature.

Mr. Schweitzer feels it will be helpful to note the current millage rate expires in 2029.

Mr. Hoffman pointed out that the local funding sources proposed include several options requiring legislative action. He noted that there is also a separate category for other state sources needing legislation, indicating that there isn't a qualitative distinction between the two. He expressed optimism about pursuing both avenues for funding.

Mr. Monoyios mentioned that the finance committee had already been briefed on this information, highlighting the discussions occurring within that group.

Ms. Prato shared that there are currently 18 ballot initiatives across the nation, and she noted that we will be monitoring it closely to see their outcomes, which may impact local funding initiatives.

Mr. Bulkowski inquired about the potential for allocating a portion of the hotel/motel tax toward transportation services. Ms. Osborn responded that she would investigate this possibility and include it in the discussion if it was overlooked.

In response to Mr. Bulkowski's question about using those funds to support The Rapid services for accessing various venues downtown, Ms. Prato acknowledged that she had previously raised similar questions but noted that, at this point, our organization is not included in those discussions. She assured him that we would continue to advocate for this connection.

Ms. Osborn outlined a structured approach to assess the TMP's progress over time. This involves reviewing implemented strategies, evaluating performance, and engaging with the community for feedback. The goal is to recalibrate strategies based on emerging conditions, such as demographic shifts and corporate moves. She noted the TMP will be reassessed every five years, with years one and two focusing on the initial implementation strategies and stakeholder engagement, while years six to ten will continue pilot programs and service analyses.

#### Strategy Implementation Prioritization

Ms. Osborn mentioned a previous survey showed that community interest leans heavily toward existing service improvements and future service expansion, particularly around increasing frequency and improving service accessibility. The committee emphasized the importance of providing quality amenities at bus stops and addressing first/last mile challenges through new transit modes like micro transit.

The most requested improvement strategies were:

Increasing frequency, existing service improvements, extending service hours, providing service extension outside the service area, bus stop amenities, and community outreach education programs. The challenge with a lot of what the public is most interested in will require additional resources to implement.

Ms. Osborn paused to emphasize the significance of the existing service improvement category and asked committee members to share their thoughts on effective first steps and priorities.

Mr. Hoffman expressed concern that while the category is restricted to strategies that don't require additional funding, they must avoid spreading their resources too thin across all areas, as they lack the planning capacity to manage everything. He inquired about the resource consumption associated with these strategies and how they might affect personnel.

Mr. Monoyios acknowledged the validity of Mr. Hoffman's concerns, noting that while bandwidth and staffing capacity will be considered, there is still potential to coordinate with various stakeholders to help advance these initiatives.

Mr. Schweitzer highlighted micro transit as a promising first step, pointing out that it is already operational in Grand Rapids. He raised the possibility of expanding this service into suburban communities, particularly for first mile/last-mile connections, while noting potential challenges in winter months.

Mr. Hoffman found value in Mr. Schweitzer's comments but pointed out that they are currently working within existing constraints. He questioned whether they were maximizing their strategies from past initiatives and asked if there were new opportunities emerging in transportation modes.

Mr. Troost concurred with Mr. Schweitzer on the importance of first mile/last-mile solutions and noted that there are more potential options available than before. He also mentioned that in some areas, the visibility of bus stops is limited and suggested that enhancing the aesthetics of these stops could improve ridership by creating a more inviting presence.

Mr. Guy agreed with the ongoing discussion, particularly the focus on prioritizing the second item. He questioned the level of interest in providing service outside the Grand Rapids zone and connected this idea to the need for micro mobility services to extend into other areas. He emphasized the necessity for designated parking and the establishment of micro hubs to facilitate transfers to larger transit options.

Mr. Bulkowski raised concerns about the challenges of providing transportation in suburban areas, noting the high costs involved and the common reluctance to fund such initiatives. He questioned the master plan for downtown Grandville, specifically whether it anticipates an increase in residents and the establishment of micromobility hub to facilitate local travel and occasional trips to downtown Grand Rapids for events. He emphasized the importance of assessing the cost of increasing service frequency and how that may not result in proportional increases in ridership. Mr. Bulkowski also highlighted the need to optimize existing transportation services and questioned whether bus stops are not only modern but also practical and protective for users waiting for the bus. In terms of priorities, he expressed support for focusing on micro transit and improving service accessibility and existing amenities.

Ms. Osborn stated she appreciates all the great feedback. She is hearing the top priorities from the committee are:

1. Providing quality amenities to improve the experience of existing riders (i.e., design bus stop amenities)
2. Fill gaps in the existing service area and solve the first/last mile challenge for existing riders through various new mobility technologies, such as micro transit and micromobility. Based on this feedback, the first few years of Existing Service Improvement TMP recommendations should focus on those two objectives, with some overlap with similar recommendation concept categories.

#### Future Service Expansion

This category relates to the micromobility/micro transit last mile issue the committee was just discussing. It includes some of these intercounty service concepts. The two items we deem will be most supportive through this implementation, the stakeholder committee and through all our other networking relationships in the region are starting to cultivate opportunities outside the service area and just establish those relationships. When we hear there is an interest from the public, we want service extension we've set up an identification of exactly what those could look like, so that when we have the funding and resources to do it, we can. That includes evaluating the feasibility of some of the service concepts that came out of the Kent County Corridor Analysis, including the West Michigan Express and a few other corridors such as Allendale, and the North/South highway US131.

Mr. Guy stated in the near term we should talk about and explore opportunities in participating in Kent County. He noted the point Mr. Bulkowski made about solidifying and supporting our current ridership.

Opportunities for inter-county services were identified by Mr. Troost, suggesting exploring connections to places like Georgetown Township and potential collaboration with Kent County.

Ms. Osborn will add one of the service concepts that came out of the intercounty corridor analysis included a connection to Georgetown township. There could be additional opportunities outside West Michigan Express to connect that area with the rest of the service network.

The following categories are feasible for the short term:

Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

Design guidelines

Innovation and Technology

Community Awareness and Education

TMP Implementation Stakeholder Community

Ms. Osborn sought insight into who could advocate for transit initiatives, with Mr. Hoffman suggesting environmental groups as key allies in promoting sustainable transit solutions. He feels, for many people, the Green Grand Rapids programs will crystallize their views of transit. He also feels that will be the fundamental support phase for what transit can offer as an alternative to the environmentally disastrous transportation policies we've been following since 1950.

Mr. Guy emphasized the need to involve knowledgeable transit users who can provide realistic perspectives on transit operations and requirements. Their insight could be valuable for keeping the group focused on practical solutions.

Mr. Bulkowski raises a question about how to effectively engage steering committee members. He acknowledges that while there is business support for transit initiatives, there is a need for a strong leader or 'champion' to rally support and drive the agenda forward.

Mr. Schweitzer highlights the importance of engaging in different sectors, such as industrial and retail employers, especially regarding geographic considerations and their ability to connect with service areas outside the immediate community.

Mr. Bulkowski points out that while businesses contribute significantly to the tax base, a substantial portion of the residential property tax is carried by voters. This raises questions about the balance of interests between businesses and residents, and how to communicate the value of transit to both groups.

Mr. Hoffman expressed frustration over employers who develop new sites in remote areas without considering workforce accessibility. His remarks suggest a disconnect between business development and transit planning, underscoring the need for proactive strategies to ensure workers can reach their jobs.

Lastly, Mr. Bulkowski notes that transit tends to be overlooked until it becomes a necessity for individuals. This indicates a need for greater awareness and understanding of transit's importance in the community, which could be addressed through outreach and education.

Ms. Osborn appreciates all the input.

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

This meeting was adjourned at 9:36 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 6, 2025

Respectfully submitted,



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Kris Heald, Board Secretary



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**THRIVING**

## **Near-Term Strategy Prioritization Discussion**

March 10, 2025

**A framework for the future of connectivity.**



# COMMUNITY AWARENESS & EDUCATION



Strategies	Funding Options	Staffing Options
<b>Underway</b>		
Active participation with GVMC's TDM Mobility Manager program to advance outcomes of the <b>Regional TDM Plan</b> .	Cost-Neutral Sustainable	Existing
<b>Near Term (&lt;5 years)</b>		
<p>Explore additional ITP <b>community marketing and/or outreach</b> strategies and programming. Examples of such programs include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community "adopt-a-stop"</li> <li>• Youth education program (with schools)</li> <li>• Community transit ambassador</li> <li>• New stop placement and design coordination with local stakeholders to promote placemaking</li> </ul>	Cost-Neutral One-Time Sustainable	Existing External Additional
Partner with external stakeholders to increase <b>advertising and marketing</b> opportunities that promote transit use.	Cost-Neutral Sustainable	Existing External
Engage <b>tourism and visitors'</b> organizations to promote transit services to tourists, visitors, and to special events.	Cost-Neutral Sustainable	Existing External

*\*Required for long-term implementation and/or program expansion*



# EXISTING SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS



Strategies	Funding Options	Staffing Options
<b>Near Term (&lt;5 years)</b>		
Examine and identify options to improve the effectiveness of <b>microtransit</b> .	Cost-Neutral One-Time Sustainable*	Existing External
Review feasibility of implementing <b>first-mile / last-mile</b> mobility solutions (e.g., micromobility) to ITP member communities.	Cost-Neutral One-Time Sustainable*	Existing External Additional
Continue to invest in existing productive routes with above-average ridership by increasing <b>service efficiency, frequency, and on-time performance</b> (OTP).	Sustainable	Existing
Explore tools and resources to support <b>expanded service hours</b> , such as earlier or later weekday service, and extended service on weekends.	Sustainable*	Additional
Perform a route network design study which incorporates additional <b>mobility hubs/transfer centers</b> within the ITP service area, in tandem with joint development and mobility hub strategies.	Cost-Neutral Sustainable*	External Additional



# EXISTING SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS



Strategies	Funding Options	Staffing Options
<b>Near Term (&lt;5 years)</b>		
Explore opportunities to coordinate <b>fares and technology</b> with regional multi-modal providers. Examples of opportunities include implementation of the West Michigan Express pilot and development of a mobility wallet.	Cost-Neutral Sustainable*	Existing External
Establish on-board customer convenience standards to improve the <b>on-board customer experience</b> .	Cost-Neutral Sustainable*	Existing
Examine and upgrade <b>customer facing technology</b> (such as websites, apps, and/or dynamic signage) in alignment with the ITP Strategic Technology Plan and in support of goals towards the development of a multi-modal mobility wallet.	Cost-Neutral Sustainable*	Existing External
Establish <b>bus stop design</b> guidelines (i.e. right-of-way accommodations for stop locations).	Cost-Neutral Sustainable*	Existing External



# FUTURE SERVICE EXPANSION



## Strategies

## Funding Options

## Staffing Options

### Near Term (<5 years)

Cultivate opportunities & relationships (outside of ITP service area) to provide **service area extensions** or other context-relevant services to non-ITP member jurisdictions. Advance opportunities with private sector employers and institutions for providing contracted last-mile service connections within and outside the ITP service area.

Cost-Neutral  
One-Time  
Sustainable

Existing Staff

Execute the **West Michigan Express pilot** express bus implementation plan along Chicago Dr corridor, including a guaranteed ride home program.

One-Time  
Sustainable\*

Existing  
External  
Additional

Review feasibility of **top recommended intercounty service concepts** in partnership with regional stakeholders, following the West Michigan Express feasibility review and implementation planning process as a model. Intercounty service concepts for review are as follows:

One-Time  
Sustainable\*

Existing  
External  
Additional

- Alpine Ave: Extension of route 9 and/or new Alpine Rapid Connect Zone
- Walker Ave: New bus service and/or realignment of the Walker Rapid Connect Zone
- Beltline Ave/Broadmoor Ave: Express bus between Grand Rapids and the airport.
- Plainfield Ave: Extension of route 11 and/or new Plainfield Rapid Connect Zone
- Barry St/54th Ave: New bus service between Grandville and the Airport
- US-131: Express or limited bus service between Wayland and Grand Rapids with park and rides in Wayland, Moline, Cutlerville, and Kentwood



# TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT



Strategies	Funding Options	Staffing Options
<b>Near Term (&lt;5 years)</b>		
Broaden transit-supportive <b>streetscape and roadway</b> design guidelines.	Cost-Neutral One-Time	Existing External
Establish <b>mobility hub</b> standards and policies.	Cost-Neutral One-Time	Existing External
Establish TOD and development <b>design guidelines</b> .	Cost-Neutral One-Time	Existing External
Leverage redevelopment potential of Rapid-owned real estate, such as The <b>Rapid Central Station</b> , by executing joint development strategies.	Cost-Neutral One-Time Sustainable*	Existing Additional



# INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY



Strategies	Funding Options	Staffing Options
<b>Near Term (&lt;5 years)</b>		
Consolidate wayfinding and fare payment apps into a <b>mobility wallet</b> and/or Mobility as a Service (MaaS) platform by coordinating with regional stakeholders and continuing to evaluate emerging technology. Examples include the developing Mobile GR Mobility Wallet and ongoing technology innovations, such as predictive AI.	Cost-Neutral One-Time Sustainable*	Existing External Additional
Explore dynamic and emerging <b>wayfinding and passenger information technologies</b> at stops and stations, including real-time information displays.	Cost-Neutral One-Time Sustainable*	Existing External
Explore and evaluate <b>microtransit and paratransit operational / scheduling software</b> to improve coordination and efficiencies between the two services.	Cost-Neutral One-Time Sustainable*	Existing External
Refine the <b>ZEB (EV/Hydrogen) Transition</b> Plan to incorporate new service options and technology improvements through periodic updates.	Cost-Neutral One-Time Sustainable*	External



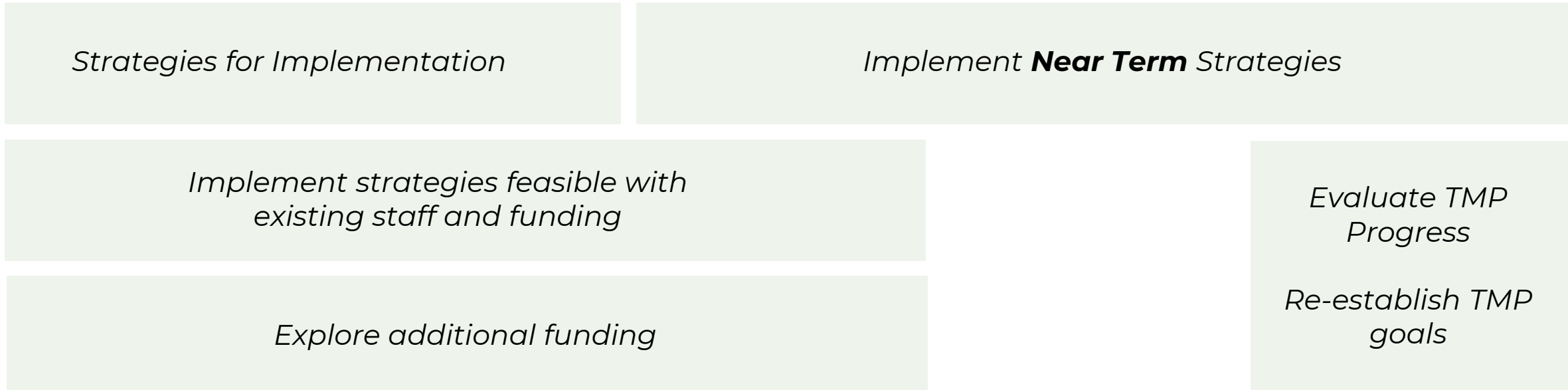
# REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS



Strategies	Funding Options	Staffing Options
<b>Near Term (&lt;5 years)</b>		
<p><b>Transit-Oriented Development:</b> Engage with local stakeholders to evaluate mobility and land use needs and opportunities within key redevelopment areas, especially in the context of The Rapid TOD/Joint Development strategies and ITP Member Communities' Master Plans.</p>	<p>Cost-Neutral One-Time Sustainable*</p>	<p>Existing External</p>
<p><b>Service Expansion:</b> Engage with local communities to establish service agreement standards that allow service extensions, or other context-relevant service expansion, in non-ITP member jurisdictions.</p>	<p>Cost-Neutral Sustainable*</p>	<p>Existing</p>
<p><b>Regional Coordination:</b> Endorse the GVMC's efforts to align regional mobility services by contributing to the GVMC TDM working groups and by engaging with jurisdictions to implement TDM strategies.</p>	<p>Cost-Neutral One-Time Sustainable*</p>	<p>Existing</p>
<p><b>Mobility Hubs:</b> Collaborate with local governments to select and develop future mobility hub sites.</p>	<p>Cost-Neutral One-Time* Sustainable*</p>	<p>Existing</p>
<p><b>Discretionary Funding:</b> Support regional transit and mobility initiatives by pursuing discretionary funding opportunities in partnership with GVMC and member jurisdictions.</p>	<p>Cost-Neutral</p>	<p>Existing External Existing</p>
<p><b>Regional Growth:</b> Collaborate with regional economic development corporations to align mobility solutions and regional growth needs, such as marketing contracted services and last-mile solutions to private sector employers and institutions.</p>	<p>Cost-Neutral</p>	<p>Existing External</p>

\*Required for long-term implementation and/or program expansion

## TMP Roadmap – Near Term (<5 years)



# TMP Implementation Stakeholder Committee

## Who could help champion the implementation of the TMP?

- Business Leaders
- City Staff / Elected Officials
- Rapid Board Members
- Regional and County Agencies
- Community Leaders / Transit Advocates
- Educational / Health Institutions
- Entertainment and Leisure