MICHIGAN GRAND RIVER AVENUE
TRANSPORTATION STUDY

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Exploring Corridor Transportation Options

In order to determine the best long-range alternative for public transportation along the Michigan/Grand River Avenue Corridor, we began by identifying all of the possible options. The project Steering Committee, working with representatives of the four communities involved and the public, identified the entire "universe" of transit options. We started with the conventional bus service that currently runs along the corridor. We then looked at other communities across the country that have addressed transportation system investments along similar high-traffic corridor routes. This comprehensive list of possibilities will help ensure that at the end of this process, we select the best possible transit system investment.

The Universe of Options

Following guidelines of the Federal Transit Administration, we reviewed all options, including continued use of conventional bus transit. The options we identified for consideration included these:

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

BRT is a higher-capacity form of conventional bus transit. BRT improves the speed, reliability and passenger experience of conventional bus service through the use of dedicated bus lanes, but costs less to build and operate than rail-based systems. The vehicles have unique designs that differentiate them from regular buses and can be powered by alternative fuels.

Modern Streetcar

Like light rail, streetcars are powered by overhead wires, but they are smaller-scale vehicles designed to serve higher-density areas with frequent stops. Because they are not designed to travel fast over longer distances, streetcars travel on tracks that are embedded into travel lanes. They often operate as one car, which enables them to mix easily with other traffic if necessary.

Light Rail Transit (LRT)

LRT is a train between one and three cars in length powered by overhead electrical wires. They are operated along dedicated rights-of-way or along a city street using tracks embedded into the pavement. They carry "lighter" or smaller passenger volumes than subway or commuter rail systems, but they provide greater capacity and speed than buses.

Electric Trolley

Electric trolley buses receive power from overhead wires. This technology was originally implemented as an alternative to the streetcar. These buses are distinguished from other buses by electric propulsion only. Otherwise, they are identical in size to diesel buses and can operate in the same environments, if the overhead power source is available. Because they require an overhead wire

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for the power source, electric trolley buses have less route flexibility than conventional buses. You'll find them today in cities like San Francisco.

Commuter Rail

These are passenger trains that are designed to move commuters over long distances into downtown areas. They typically operate on freight railroad tracks.

Heavy Rail

This form of passenger rail transit is powered by an electrified third rail on tracks that are either underground or elevated. The New York Subway and the Chicago El are two examples.

Maglev

Magnetic Levitation is a system that uses electromagnetism to suspend, guide, and propel trains at very high speed. It shows promise for being faster, quieter and smoother over long distances than wheeled vehicles. Maglev trains are currently being used in several countries, but there are no such systems in North America.

Automated Guideway Transit

These are automated, rail-based transit systems that operate without a human driver on guideways that are separated from other modes of transportation. They often run between airport terminals or around downtown areas, like the Detroit People Mover.

For each option, we also looked at how and where a new system would be built. It could be built down the center of the street (center running) or along the curb (side running). The team also considered improvements for pedestrian, bike, car and truck traffic, and how landscaping and other improvements could make the Corridor more attractive.

Evaluating the Options

The Steering Committee, together with project participants, evaluated these options against a number of criteria: cost, ridership, environmental impact, agency and public support, and the ability to complement the plans and policies of the cities involved, as well as those of the tri-county region and the state. The evaluation process is designed to be a part of an eventual application for federal construction funding through the Federal Transit Administration.

Narrowing the Options

The initial "universe" of options will be narrowed down to those that make sense for our region based on specific criteria. To make this decision, the Steering Committee will look at all data, the impacts and benefits of each transportation option being considered, and community input. These results will lead to the identification of a Locally Preferred Alternative by fall 2010.

Your Participation Matters

In the coming years, the Michigan/Grand River Corridor can help our region grow and prosper or it can be a roadblock to success. The decisions we make now are important to everyone who lives and works in our region. For more information on the Study and to make your voice heard, visit the project website at **www.migrtrans.org.**