

Consultation Plan

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October 2019

Grand Valley Metropolitan Council

GVMC



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Contact GVMC Transportation Division

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Introduction

Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC) is an alliance of governmental units in the Grand Rapids, Michigan, metropolitan area appointed to plan for growth and development, improve the quality of life in communities, and coordinate governmental services. The GVMC is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Kent and eastern Ottawa County, including the City of Hudsonville and the townships of Allendale, Georgetown, Jamestown, and Tallmadge. As the MPO, GVMC is responsible for carrying out all transportation-related planning activities, including the preparation of two planning documents:

- The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), our short-range planning document that describes transportation projects over a four-year cycle
- The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), our visionary, long-range planning document that discusses transportation projects, priorities, and investment strategies for the next 20+ years

When developing current and future transportation plans for our area, GVMC is required to adhere to the regulations set forth in our current transportation bill, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

Transportation Planning Consultation Procedures

According to 23 CFR 450.316 in the FAST ACT, when developing both the TIP and the MTP, "The MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA¹ that are affected by transportation." It is suggested that representatives from state, local, tribal governments, and private agencies responsible for the following areas be contacted:

- Economic growth and development
- Environmental protection
- Airport operators
- Freight movement
- Land use management
- Natural resources
- Conservation
- Historical preservation
- Human service transportation providers



As a location of freight movement, the Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GRFIA) is included on our list of consultation agencies

¹ Metropolitan Planning Area

GVMC recognizes its responsibility to include representatives from these organizations throughout the planning process. GVMC refers to these agencies as “consultation organizations.”

The FAST Act also states that MPOs should coordinate their planning process with the planning activities of these organizations to the maximum extent practicable by considering related planning activities within the MPO area. The overarching goal of the consultation process is to eliminate or minimize conflicts with other agencies’ plans, programs, or policies as they relate to the TIP or the MTP. For example, by consulting with tribal governments or land use management agencies during the development of these documents, these organizations, in collaboration with GVMC, can compare the proposed project lists and maps with other natural or historic resource inventories or with other current or future plans to ensure there are no conflicts.

Consultation List

GVMC’s consultation list is maintained in Mailchimp. It is continuously updated to assure that the most relevant organizations are contacted as part of the GVMC consultation process and currently includes 273 individuals representing 188 unique agencies. The complete list of organizations on GVMC’s consultation list is included in Appendix B on page 11. If you wish to be added to our consultation list, please contact Andrea Faber by email at andrea.faber@gvmc.org or call (616) 776.7603.

Outreach Tools

GVMC currently uses the following methods to engage our consultation organizations:

- (1) **Email.** Up until 2018, GVMC relied on direct mail to correspond with consultation agencies. However, during the fall of that year, GVMC staff converted the long-standing direct mail list into an email format which is maintained in Mailchimp. Sending correspondence over email allows us to more easily start and maintain a two-way dialogue with consultation organizations and make relevant resources, such as maps, more easily accessible through links to our website.
- (2) **Website.** GVMC posts information emailed to our consultation organizations on our website, along with supporting links and additional information.
- (3) **Social Media.** GVMC posts notices emailed to our consultation organizations on social media, including posts on Facebook and tweets on Twitter. These posts and tweets include links back to the website.
- (4) **Optional: Open Houses/Meetings.** Historically, we have invited our consultation organizations to meet with GVMC staff one-on-one or with several staff to compare their plans with the draft project list for our TIP and MTP in an open house format. We also offer

opportunities for the consultation organizations to meet with staff at a time of their choosing.

Maintaining and Evaluating the Effectiveness of our Outreach Tools

Below is the criteria for maintaining and evaluating the effectiveness of our outreach tools.

Consultation List: GVMC staff continually reviews and updates the GVMC consultation list to ensure that contacts are up-to-date and all necessary organizations are represented. GVMC is able to manage this list efficiently through Mailchimp. When emails are sent out, staff receives responses, such as out of office replies, which often indicate when individuals are no longer employed at specific organizations. Staff also receives notifications when emails aren't able to be delivered and can follow up with impacted organizations to ensure that a new contact is added to the list.

Website: GVMC frequently updates our website so that it includes the latest information—especially during the development of the TIP and MTP. We are able to evaluate the effectiveness of our website by viewing analytics through Squarespace, which show page views, visits, and unique visitors, as well as the device used to visit our website.

Social Media: GVMC maintains a social media presence on Facebook and Twitter with continual posts, shares, and updates. Facebook allows GVMC to view the number of post engagements, such as likes and shares, as well as people reached. Staff can also view impressions and total engagements from Tweets on Twitter to gauge effectiveness and the total number of people reached.

Open Houses/Meetings: In spite of our best efforts, open houses/meetings have not generated the responses from the consultation organizations that we had hoped. Therefore, open houses/meetings are considered an optional outreach strategy for consultation and may be eliminated in the future if they are determined to be ineffective.

Special Requests

Several organizations on our consultation list have made special requests to receive various project lists or documents during the planning process for the TIP or the MTP. For instance, one consultation organization has asked that staff flag safety projects on the draft project list. GVMC accommodates such special requests on an as-needed basis and works directly with the organization making the request to ensure they receive the information they need in a timely manner. Consultation agencies that wish to make a special request should contact Andrea Faber by email at andrea.faber@gvmc.org or call 616.776.7603.

Partnerships

In order to bolster our public involvement efforts, GVMC has entered into partnerships with three of our consultation organizations: ITP-The Rapid, our area transportation authority; LINC Up, a nonprofit community development corporation; and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). We often hold public involvement meetings at the Rapid or LINC UP and are frequently in contact with these organizations. Working through the Rapid and LINC UP has allowed GVMC to increase our reach to additional population groups as well as additional organizations. We work with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to ensure the contacts on our list are up-to-date and have partnered with MDOT in some of our public involvement efforts as well to expand our outreach. GVMC recognizes the benefit partnerships with such organizations can bring to both the public involvement and consultation efforts of our organization and plans to work toward expanding our list of partner organizations in the future.

Responses to Comments Received

GVMC staff reviews all feedback received during the consultation process for the TIP and the MTP and responds to comments based on the method in which they were submitted. For instance, comments emailed to staff will receive a reply by email. Detailed responses may not always be possible, and in these cases, acknowledgement that staff received the comment(s) may suffice, and input may be forwarded to jurisdictions responsible for the projects for a more thorough response. Please note that not all comments, such as short posts on social media, warrant responses. Staff will reply to all comments requiring a response in a timely manner. Comments that are relevant to specific jurisdictions will be shared with them.

Incorporation of Feedback

Comments and responses from consultation organizations will be kept on file, be available for public review, and will be made part of the document as adopted. Summaries of comments and responses will also be given to the Technical and Policy Committees as well as the jurisdiction(s) directly responsible for the project for review. Comments will be responded to before decisions are made or plans or programs are adopted. Responses will be made in a timely manner so that they can be considered during the next phase of the plan or program development. Please see the consultation feedback loop diagram on the next page for a visual representation of the process for submitting, reviewing, and incorporating comments received during the consultation process.

Figure 1 Consultation Feedback Loop



Staff also ensures that consultation starts before the public involvement process on project lists so that issues identified during the consultation process have an opportunity to be addressed before the public is invited to comment. When this happens, changes to the project lists are immediately reflected on the website. To allow for additional time for review, it is possible for the consultation and public involvement comment periods to overlap.

Consultation and Major Documents

GVMC currently consults with consultation agencies when developing our short-range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and our long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The procedures for contacting consultation agencies, the milestones when they are contacted, as well as the notification date and length of the consultation period, are outlined below.

It is important to note that, while the consultation process is separate and distinct from the public involvement process, the consultation list is included as a smaller sub-list of GVMC's larger Public Participation email list, so GVMC's consultation organizations receive every notification that is sent to the public. Milestones of when the public is contacted during the development of the TIP and MTP are located in [GVMC's Public Participation Plan](#).

Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the list of road, transit and non-motorized projects that communities and agencies plan to implement over a four-year period within GVMC's MPO area. (Please see Appendix A on page 11 for a map of GVMC's MPO area.) The table below describes the consultation procedure for the development of the TIP document.

Milestone	Consultation Procedure	Public Notification Date	Length of Consultation Period (minimum)
<p>1. Draft project lists developed</p>	<p>Once the draft TIP project list has been developed and approved by the Technical and Policy Committees, GVMC will notify the consultation agencies in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email • Notices/relevant information posted on website • Social media <p>The following tools may be used on an optional basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open House/Meetings <p>*Note: Organizations that have asked to receive certain subsets of the project list will have their requests accommodated over email.</p>	<p>The first day of the consultation period</p>	<p>30 minimum; 45 preferred</p>
<p>2. Draft document complete</p>	<p>Once the draft TIP document is complete, GVMC will notify consultation organizations who have specifically requested to be contacted at this point, or requested to review specific chapters, in the following way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email <p>*Note: This will take place concurrently with public involvement efforts that occur at this milestone.</p>	<p>The first day of the consultation period</p>	<p>14 days</p>

Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The purpose of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is to ensure that transportation investments in GVMC’s MPO area enhance the movement of people and freight efficiently, effectively, and safely over the next 20+ years. (Please see Appendix A on page 11 for a map of GVMC’s MPO area.) The table below describes the consultation procedure for the development of the MTP document.

Milestone	Consultation Procedure	Public Notification Date	Length of Consultation Period (minimum)
<p>1. Draft project lists developed</p>	<p>Once the draft MTP project list has been developed and approved by the Technical and Policy Committees, GVMC will notify the consultation agencies in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email • Notices/relevant information posted on website • Social media <p>The following tools may be used on an optional basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open House/Meetings <p>*Note: Organizations that have asked to receive subsets of the project list (such as safety projects) will have their requests accommodated over email.</p>	<p>The first day of the consultation period</p>	<p>30 minimum; 45 preferred</p>
<p>2. Draft document complete</p>	<p>Once the draft MTP document is complete, GVMC will notify consultation organizations who have specifically requested to be contacted at this point, or requested to review specific chapters or projects, in the following way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email <p>*Note: This will take place concurrently with public involvement efforts that occur at this milestone.</p>	<p>The first day of the consultation period</p>	<p>14 days</p>

Updating the Consultation Plan

It is necessary to update the Consultation Plan periodically to ensure that it remains relevant and that the outreach tools and methodology remain effective. GVMC will review the Consultation Plan prior to the beginning of the MTP development cycle and update the plan if necessary. The table below describes the consultation procedure for updating the Consultation Plan.

Milestone	Consultation Procedure	Public Notification Date	Length of Consultation Period (minimum)
1. Draft consultation plan available for comment	Once the draft consultation plan has been reviewed and updated, GVMC will notify consultation agencies in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Email• Notices/relevant information posted on website• Social media	The first day of the consultation period	30 minimum; 45 preferred

Once the draft Consultation Plan has completed the consultation period, GVMC will bring the document to the Technical and Policy Committees for approval. Meeting agendas for Technical and Policy Committee meetings are posted at gvmc.org, and both meetings are open to the public. An appendix that details the consultation outreach efforts during the update process, including comments received, will be included in an appendix of the document.



Kayakers on the Grand River. Rivers are one of the important environmental resources in West Michigan.

Other Resources

For more information, please consult the resources below. All documents are available on GVMC's website. Hard copies are available at GVMC's office or upon request.

GVMC's Public Participation Plan—outlines how and when GVMC solicits feedback from the public during the development of our four major documents: the TIP, the MTP, the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and the Public Participation Plan (PPP). The document also describes how the public can submit comments and the process that GVMC staff uses to respond to them. A copy of the document can be found here: www.gvmc.org/public-involvement.

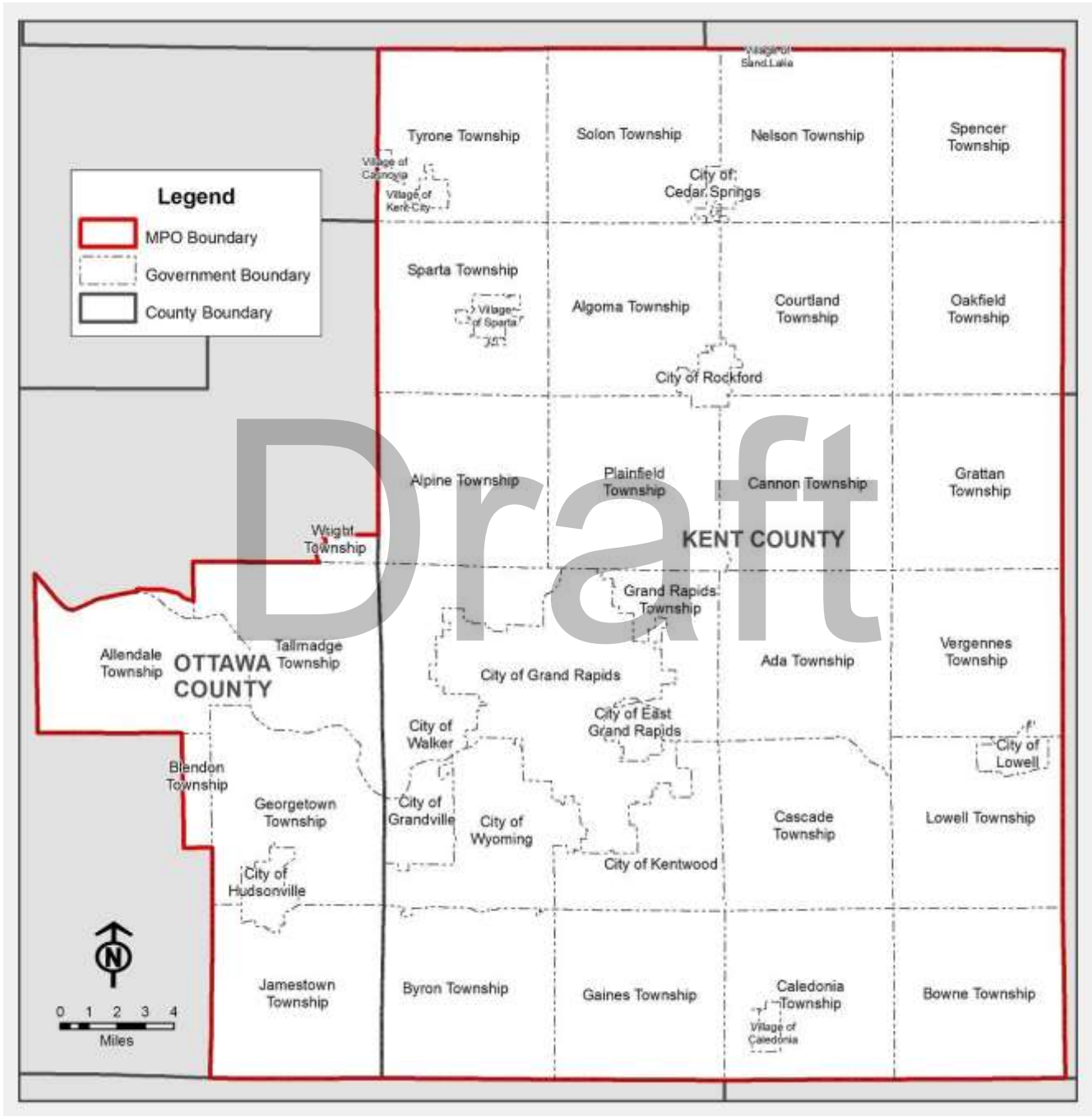
GVMC's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)—discusses transportation projects, priorities, vision, and investment strategies for the transportation system for the next 20+ years. A copy of the document, which includes detailed information about the consultation process, as well as project lists and relevant appendices, can be found here: www.gvmc.org/mtp.

GVMC's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)—describes transportation projects for the next four years. A copy of the document, which includes detailed information about the consultation process, as well as project lists and relevant appendices, can be found here: www.gvmc.org/tip.

GVMC's Title VI Plan—explains GVMC's non-discrimination policy statement and assurances, as well as the process for how an individual can file a complaint if they believe they have experienced discrimination. A copy of the plan can be found on the home page of www.gvmc.org.

GVMC's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan—reviews how GVMC accommodates and includes those with limited English proficiency in the transportation planning process. A copy of the plan can be found on the home page of www.gvmc.org.

Appendix A: MPO Map



Appendix B: Consultation Organizations

GVMC's list of consultation organizations is below. If you wish to be added to our consultation list, please contact Andrea Faber by email at andrea.faber@gvmc.org or call (616) 776.7603.

ACSET-Latin American Services Program
Aero Med-Air Medical Transport
Alger Heights Neighborhood Assn.
Allendale Township
Allendale Township DDA
American Medical Response
American Red Cross of Greater Grand Rapids
Amtrak
Annis Water Resources Institute
Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan
Assn. for the Blind & Visually Impaired
Auburn Hills Neighborhood Assn.
Baxter Neighborhood Association
Bay Mills Indian Community
Bay Mills Indian Community; Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Belknap Lookout Association
Black Hills Neighborhood Assn.
Blandford Nature Center
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Byron Township DDA
Calder City Taxi
Cascade Charter Township
City of Grand Rapids
City of Grand Rapids Economic Development
City of Grandville DDA
City of Hudsonville DDA
City of Rockford DDA
Columbian Logistics
Compass Coach Inc
Comstock Park DDA
Creston Neighborhood Assn.
CSX
Cutlerville-Gaines Chamber of Commerce
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Department of Health and Human Services

Department of Natural Resources
Disability Advocates
Disability Advocates of Kent County
Dwelling Place
East Hills Council of Neighbors
Eastgate Neighborhood Assn.
Eastown Neighborhood Assn.
Environmental Protection Agency - Region 5
Federal Aviation Administration - Great Lakes Region
Federal Transit Administration
FHWA, MI Division
Fish and Wildlife Service
Forward Air, Inc.
Friends of the White Pine Trail
Fuller Avenue Neighborhood Assn.
Fulton Heights Neighborhood Assn.
Garfield Park Neighborhood Assn.
Genesis Non-Profit Housing Corp.
Georgetown Seniors
Grand Elk Railroad
Grand Rapids Air Pollution Control
Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
Grand Rapids Area Coalition to End Homelessness
Grand Rapids Audubon Club
Grand Rapids Convention and Visitors Bureau
Grand Rapids Downtown Development Authority
Grand Rapids Greyhound
Grand Rapids Pride Center
Grand Rapids Sierra Club
Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians
Grassmid Transport
Greater Grand Rapids Bicycle Coalition
Greyhound Bus Lines
GRFIA
GROW

Habitat for Humanity
Hannahville Potawatomi Indian Community
Health Care Associates
Heartside Neighborhood Association
Heritage Hill Neighborhood Assn.
Highland Park Neighborhood Association
Hispanic Center of West Michigan
Historic Preservation
Hope Network
Hope Network-Go Lux
Indian Trails Motorcoach
Inner City Christian Federation
ITP - The Rapid
Izaak Walton League - Dwight Lydell Chapter
John Ball Park Neighborhood Assn.
John Ball Zoo
Kent Conservation District
Kent County
Kent County Community Action
Kent County Dept. of Public Works
Kent County Drain Commission
Kent County Farm Service Agency
Kent County Health Department
Kent County Home Repair Services
Kent County Parks Department
Kent Intermediate School District
Kent Michigan State University Extension
Keweenaw Bay Indian Community
Knight Transportation
Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior
Chippewa Indians
Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior
Chippewa Indians; Tribal Historic Preservation
Office
Lakeshore Advantage
Land Conservancy of West Michigan
LGROW
Life EMS
Little River Band of Ottawa Indians
Madison Area Neighborhood Assn.
MARP
Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of
Pottawatomi Indians
MDOT
MDOT Office of Economic Development
Mercy Ambulance Service

MI Housing Development Authority
MI United Conservation Club
Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Michigan Department of Transportation
Michigan Dept. of Agriculture and Rural
Development
Michigan Economic Development Corporation
Michigan History Center
Michigan Land Use Institute
Michigan Oaks Neighborhood Assn.
Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Michigan State Police
Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Inc.
Mid-Michigan Railroad Co.
Midtown Neighborhood Association
National Park Service
Natural Resources Conservation Service
North Country Trails Association
North East Citizen Action Assn.
Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi
Oakdale Neighbors Information
Ottawa Conservation District
Ottawa County Drain Commission
Ottawa County Farm Bureau
Ottawa County Parks & Recreation
Ottawa Hills Neighborhood Assn.
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians; Tribal
Historic Preservation Office
Ready Ride Transportation, Inc.
Rental Property Owners Assn.
Ridgemoor Neighborhood Assn.
Right Place Program
Riverview Aviation
Rockford Chamber of Commerce
Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association
Sierra Club
Sierra Club, Mackinac Chapter
South Hill Neighborhood Association
South West Area Neighbors
Spectrum Health
Standale DDA
State Historic Preservation Office

State Housing Development Authority
The ARC Kent County
The Nature Conservancy-Michigan Field Office
The Rapid Wheelmen
The Right Place
The TLC Group, Inc.
Thornapple Trail Assn.
U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Dept. of Commerce - National Oceanic &
Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development
U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development,
Detroit Office
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5,
E-19J
United in Christ Ministries
United Methodist Community House
US Environmental Protection Agency
US Fish and Wildlife Service
US Forest Service
USDA-Michigan State Office
USGS - Lansing District Office
Village of Sparta DDA
Water Resources Division, MDEQ
Water Resources Institute

West Grand Neighborhood Association
West MI Environmental Action Council
West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
West Michigan Mountain Biking Association
West Michigan Regional Planning Commission
West Michigan Trails & Greenways Coalition
Westside Connection
Wyoming - Kentwood Chamber Of Commerce
XPO Logistics
YRC Freight

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Appendix C: Sample Consultation Email

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Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC) is seeking your organization's input on the Fiscal Year 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in order to foster cooperation while promoting communication within Federal, State, Tribal and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation.

Projects in the TIP include road resurfacing, road reconstruction, bridge replacement, intersection improvements, intelligent transportation system upgrades, as well as transit-related projects. Please note that while the TIP lists the priority transportation projects in Kent and eastern Ottawa County, the inclusion of a specific project does not guarantee construction.

We are asking you to look over the [proposed project lists](#) and the [corresponding map](#) and compare them with any projects or planned projects that your organization may be undertaking. (For example, using inventories of natural or historic resources, please note if there are transportation projects that will interact or interfere with your organization's future policies or programs.) Then, we ask that you provide your analysis of the information provided, including your opinion of how well the information was presented and the mitigation strategies you would offer to limit the impact of proposed transportation projects on the environment, your organization's plans, or people that you serve.

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We are asking you to complete this analysis and submit your comments to Andrea Faber, Transportation Planner, by Friday, March 8, 2019. Comments can be mailed to the address below, submitted over the phone (616.776.7603), by email (andrea.faber@gvmc.org), or online. GVMC staff is also available to meet with you to compare your future plans with our draft project lists or to address your concerns on Wednesday, February 13 from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm at our office, located at:

678 Front Avenue NW; Suite 200

Grand Rapids, MI 49504

If you are unable to attend this meeting but would still like to meet with GVMC staff in person, please contact Andrea Faber at 616.776.7603 to schedule an appointment.

In the event you do not have any input to provide, please be sure to send us a letter to that effect by the deadline. Regardless of how much or how little input you would like to provide, we are requesting to hear back from you.

Your comments are an important part of the transportation planning process.

Without appropriate feedback, it is difficult for GVMC to foresee potential issues.

Lack of comment on your part will be viewed as endorsement of the proposed project lists and the TIP document. Thank you for your participation in this effort.

We greatly appreciate your participation and suggestions during this evaluation process. Working together, we can create meaningful change within our communities.

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