

Sustainable Transportation and Calvin College - Action Steps

Commuter Rail – Holland to Grand Rapids Val Horstman

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GEO Dept. - Geography 351 - Urban Planning - Prof. T. Tilma

What is Commuter Rail?

- Connects a central city to neighboring communities within the metropolitan area
- Passenger rail service provided on existing track also used for freight and intercity rail.
- Commonly used for transportation to employment.

What are the Benefits?

For the Community...

- Compact residential and economic development along corridor
- Jobs creation (e.g. construction, operations)
- Stimulus for alternative transportation improvements (e.g. bicycle paths, walkable neighborhoods)
- Reduced highway congestion and maintenance costs

For the Environment...

- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Decreased fossil fuel consumption
- Improved air quality



For the Users...

- Time to read, work, or rest during commute
- Reduced frustration (e.g. from traffic congestion)

For Calvin College...

- Improved connection with surrounding areas (e.g. commuter students and professors, visitors to Calvin)
- Opportunity to study transit operations and design
- Increased access to experiential learning (e.g. field work, educational and service trips)

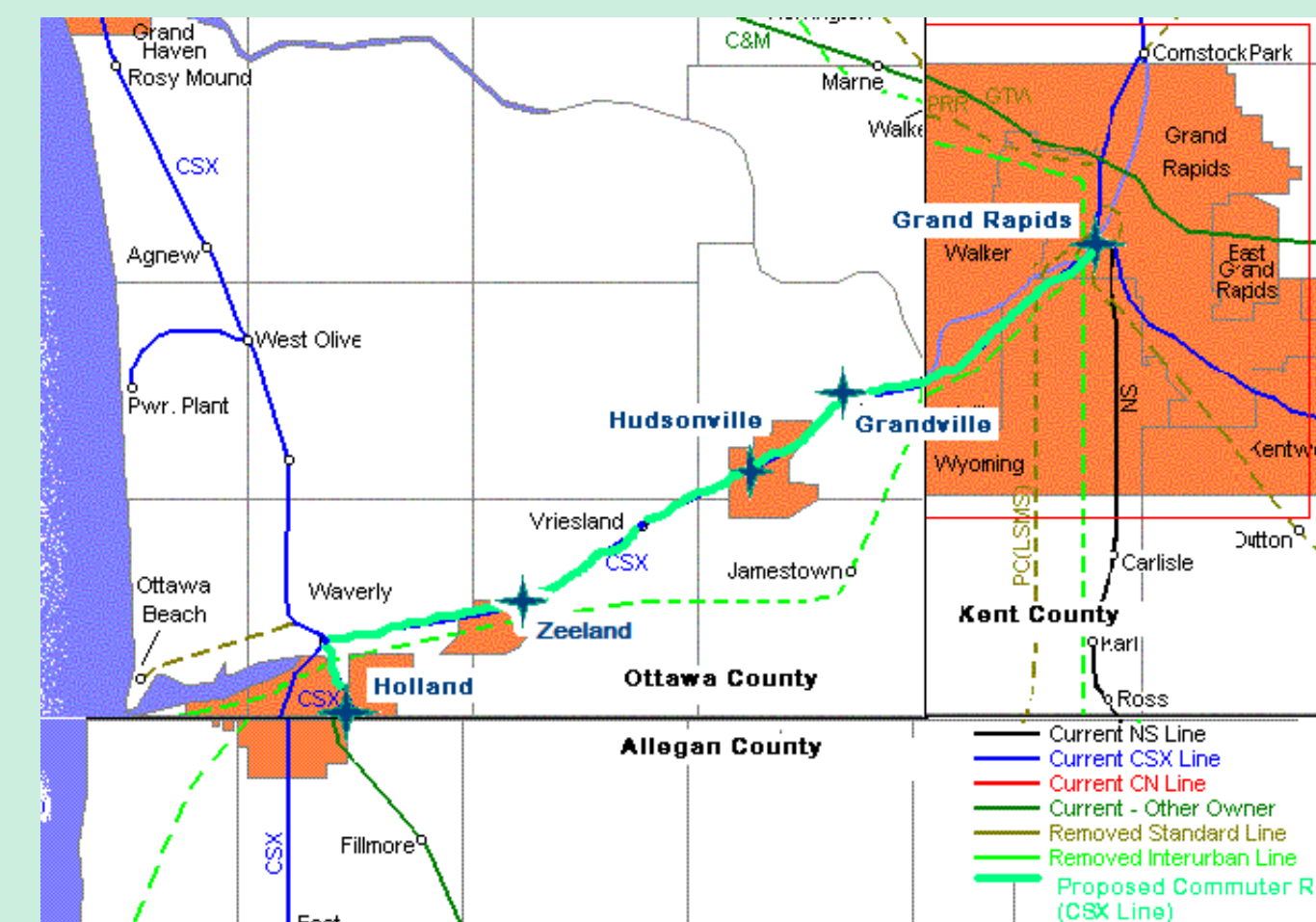
Proposed Network

Holland to Grand Rapids Service

- Use existing CSX-owned track (approx. 25 miles)
- Intermodal connections: Rapid Central Station (Grand Rapids) and Padnos Train/Bus Depot (Holland)
- 6-12 round trips per day (mainly morning and late afternoon)
- Monthly fare passes - \$100-150

Stations

- Holland
- Hudsonville
- Grandville
- Grand Rapids
- Zeeland



Service area (via bus connection)

- East Grand Rapids
- Wyoming
- Kentwood
- Walker

Estimated Costs

Capital Costs: \$1.2-67 million/mile*

Operating Costs: \$0.3-2.4 million/mile*

*based on WALLY and DDAA plans

Estimated Ridership

MDOT traffic counts

- Approx. 17,500 roundtrips between Grand Rapids and Holland

US Census Bureau – 2000 data

- Over 3000 commuters between Holland, Zeeland, Hudsonville, Grandville, and Grand Rapids
- Over 20,000 additional commuters within potential service area (through intermodal connections)



Necessary Actions



- Estimate Ridership and Fares
- Develop Business Plan
- Create Authority to Manage Service and Operations
- Assess Environmental Impact

- Secure Funding

1. Federal Grants (e.g. FHA)
 - Transportation, Community, & System Preservation
 - Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality
2. Michigan Grants (e.g. MDOT)
3. Municipalities in Service Corridor (millage)
4. Private investment (bonds)

- Negotiate Train Schedule

- Depends on current rail carrier schedules (Amtrak, CSX, NS, etc.)
- Work with bus schedules (The Rapid, MAX)

- Construction and Capital Investments

- Track improvements to increase allowable speed
- Warning devices at roadway crossings
- Passenger rail cars (e.g. refurbished from Metra)
- Locomotives (e.g. used from CSX)
- Station improvements (Parking, ADA, aesthetics)

References

« Ann Arbor - Detroit Regional Rail Project. SEMCOG. »
<http://www.semco.org/AADD.aspx>

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Tom Byle, Kent County Road Commission.

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“2007 Average Daily Traffic (ADT) Maps.” MDOT. <http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/>



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