

Moving Our Community Forward

TRANSIT MASTER PLAN

THE RAPID

Scenario C: Improve Existing Rapid Service Above and Beyond Scenario B, Expand Regional Express Bus services and Expand In-town Modern Streetcar network

In our most recent round of public workshops, a strong preference has emerged for Scenario C. Workshop participants generally believed that Scenario C offers transit options, services and amenities that best positions our region for the future, making it a more vibrant, urban community. They further indicated those same features are key in creating a lifestyle that will retain and attract young professionals to the area. However, while many participants preferred the vision of Scenario C, some viewed Scenario B as a more realistic candidate based on perceived support for additional local funding, given the current state of the economy.

The “Preferred” Scenario

Based on the responses from the public and the Mobile Metro 2030 Task Force, the Project Team developed a “Preferred” Scenario that matches the vision of Scenario C but at a cost closer to Scenario B. The “Preferred” Scenario incorporates the span of service improvements from Scenario A, most of the frequency improvements from Scenarios A and B, develops Bus Rapid Transit on *The Rapid’s* two most successful transit corridors and includes the full Regional Express Bus program from Scenario C as well as a Modern Streetcar starter network that would connect the West Side, downtown Grand Rapids and Medical Mile, laying the foundation for future streetcar expansion projects (West Grand, East Grand Rapids). The “Preferred” Scenario would also include improvements to the Go!Bus system including extension of Go!Bus service to new service areas, development of an Accessibility Improvement Plan, and same day booking service (subject to space available). The core improvements in the “Preferred” Scenario are shown on the summary list on the following page. On May 25, 2010, the MMTF recommended the “Preferred” Scenario and forwarded to the Board. The MMTF urged the Board to adopt the “Preferred” Scenario and encouraged them not to lose sight of the vision in Scenario C so that additional projects could be reincorporated at a later date.

Both the annual 2030 operating and maintenance costs and the aggregated FY 2011-2030 capital cost for the “Preferred” Scenario are roughly double today’s costs after adjusting for inflation. Fortunately, the millage would not have to double. Since some of the new services and service improvements would occur outside current Rapid boundaries they would be funded as contracted services. The State of Michigan is also considering an increase in the motor vehicle fuel sales tax, from 19 to 27 cents per gallon, and some of that increase could help supplement local transit funding. Any remaining deficit would need to be funded through local sources, either as millage or as local contributions for the streetcar services. Without these additional contributions though, the “Preferred” Scenario would require an increase in the local millage rate from 1.12 mills to approximately 2.00 mills.