



Planning & Technology Committee Members

Mayor Rosalynn Bliss

Jack Hoffman

Robert Postema

Terry Schweitzer (Chair)

Paul Troost

Citizen Members:

Ryan Anderson

Dave Bulkowski

PLANNING & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, September 13, 2021 – 8:30 a.m.

Rapid Central Station Conference Room (250 Grandville, SW) | Virtual Meeting

AGENDA

	<u>PRESENTER</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1. PUBLIC COMMENT		
2. MINUTES – July 12, 2021	Terry Schweitzer	Review
3. INFORMATION		
a. Laker Line Expanded Scope Update	Nick Monoyios	
b. Division United Update (verbal)	Nick Monoyios	
c. COA Implementation update		
1) Ridership and On-Time Performance Update	Max Dillivan	
2) On-Demand Zones Update (verbal)	Nick Monoyios	
d. Conference Update – MPTA	Deb Prato/Steve Schipper	
e. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Update	Nick Monoyios	
f. Paradigm Shift Discussion	Terry Schweitzer	
4. ADJOURNMENT		

Next meeting: November 15, 2021



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PLANNING & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday, July 12, 2021 – 8:30 a.m.

Rapid Central Station Conference Room (250 Grandville Avenue, SW) | Virtual Meeting

ATTENDANCE:

Committee Members Present:

Mayor Rosalynn Bliss, Dave Bulkowski, Terry Schweitzer, Paul Troost

Committee Members Absent:

Ryan Anderson, Jack Hoffman, Robert Postema

Staff Attendees:

Max Dillivan, Nancy Groendal, Julie Ilbrink, Steve Luther, Linda Medina, Nick Monoyios, James Nguyen, Deb Prato, Jason Prescott, Andy Prokopy, Steve Schipper, Kevin Wisselink

Other Attendees:

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

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were offered.

2. MINUTES – March 8, 2021

The minutes from March 8, 2021, were reviewed. No changes or corrections were submitted.

3. INFORMATION

a. Laker Line Expanded Scope

Mr. Monoyios shared an update on the Laker Line. We received approval from the FTA to use some of the cost savings. Staff went through a list to determine what should be kept or omitted. It was determined the station at Collindale should be omitted. The capital costs from last Fall are being refined to accomplish all the other tasks on the lists. A response will be prepared for the FTA to outline what elements of the expanded scope proposal will utilize the funding.

Mr. Schweitzer asked if the new buses would be articulated. Mr. Monoyios confirmed they would be the same as we have now. This will provide us with additional capacity to extend the line or increase frequency as ridership improves.

Mr. Schweitzer asked about the park-and-ride at Cummings and how it would work with the park-and-ride GVSU has to the east of this location. Mr. Monoyios stated GVSU has started doing some engineering on that site with the hopes that with the extra funds, we can develop the site. It will need to be determined if this will be a primary or secondary park-and-ride.

b. Division United Implementation

Mr. Monoyios shared an update on Division United. The plans have been finalized with the project partners (Grand Rapids, Kentwood and Wyoming). All the documents are on the website (divisionunited.org). The team is working on a marketing video to showcase the value that currently is Division Ave. It includes interviews and drone footage which will make it a lot of fun.

Mr. Monoyios shared Mayor Bliss had requested a legislative document to inform our elected officials. His team is developing this document.

Mr. Schweitzer stated a mention was made in the study process about having a rider's union to advocate for services and communication with the agency. Language has been proven to be a barrier as far as getting feedback. There is a citizen's advisory committee that advocates for senior citizens and the disabled. He wondered if there was a potential to broaden that component. Mr. Monoyios verified that Jason Prescott has included a stronger equity composition of that Committee.

c. Township Policies – External Scenarios

Mr. Monoyios shared updates on township policies. Mayor Kepley had put together an ad hoc committee to dive deeper into the scenarios. Ever since the preferred alternative was adopted by the Board, he has received inquiries into expanding the service outside of the six cities. This includes the Special Olympics center, LMCU Ballpark and Cascade Engineering.

Mr. Monoyios attended an on-site visit with Special Olympics in Byron Township He is working with the CEO of Special Olympics to get data on when people are coming, where they're going to, where they're coming from, etc.

Mr. Monoyios has had conversations with Cascade Engineering. Their human resources department has been receiving a lot of concerns expressed about not being able to get to or home from work for 2nd shift. They would like to further discussions on how The Rapid could help implement solutions

There were also conversations with Mr. Chamberlin of LMCU Ballpark regarding workers that come to the park seasonally, times that staff need to be there and go home, etc. More communication will take place to see if we can work together to meet their needs.

Mayor Bliss shared she is pleased to hear these conversations are taking place. Mayor Bliss shared she has not received an update on Wheels-To-Work since before COVID. She is wondering if they were going to be resuming service, and if not, if this would be an opportunity for The Rapid to step in.

Mr. Bulkowski shared Wheels-To-Work had a serious disruption and is just beginning to come back. He wondered when we would begin testing the on-demand zones. Mr. Monoyios expressed his team is compiling the data which will be shared with this committee as soon as possible. Ms. Prato shared the data is valuable to understand where the riders are coming from, and what we need to do to accommodate their needs.

d. COA Expanded Priorities

Mr. Monoyios shared the revenue hour neutral service recommendation will be implemented in August 2021. He also added that compiled Expanded Priorities is currently being reviewed by the executive leadership. It will be brought to committee once the review is completed.

Mr. Dillivan shared Route 2 needed a boost mid-day; this is now being seen. Ms. Prato added she is hearing requests to get B-shift home and C-shift to work.

Mr. Bulkowski noted he heard information about the COA being broadcast on the bus was in Spanish only. Mr. Dillivan expressed they are on the precipice of launching a full campaign during the middle to end of July. Flyers from the previous round of COA are still on some of the buses. New on-board flyers and announcements will be prepared in English and Spanish and will be put on the buses soon.

e. Ridership Update and Wave Card Customer Appreciation Data

Mr. Dillivan provided an update on ridership and Wave Card Customer Appreciation data. The last report sent to the Board was in May. While there are some changes due to the pandemic, we are on our way towards full recovery. We are seeing better numbers this year as compared to last year. Mr. Dillivan shared the use of Wave Cards increased during this promotional time.

Mr. Troost asked if cash and paper tickets are still accepted. Mr. Dillivan stated cash will always be accepted while the paper tickets are being phased out. The goal is to see Wave Card usage at 80%.

Mr. Bulkowski expressed The Rapid has been doing great work with non-profit partners. It can be difficult for entities to give out Wave Cards, so a paper ticket that has a QR code on it that allows for a single ride has been appreciated. He would like to ensure this continues to be an option.

f. The Future of Transit Demand – Paradigm Shift

Mr. Monoyios shared conversations have taken place around the future of transit demand, and if we are seeing a paradigm shift. Employment and education changes has affected demand as fewer people were coming into the office. People are still needed to get supplies, but more are using delivery services no matter the income level.

Mr. Schweitzer expressed appreciation for the opportunity to discuss. He shared it appears that as a driver in the community, the number of vehicles on the road seems to be back to where we were pre-pandemic. However, this has not carried over to ridership. Mayor Bliss added other transit options such as electric bikes and scooters have become more readily available which allows people to get around more independently. If people cannot afford a car, they have other ways to get around other than public transportation.

Ms. Prato shared conversations have been had about the value transit provides. Historically, the FTA counts heads, and we are awarded for how many heads are on the bus. She shared we are starting to think about ridership differently, looking at the value transit has at the nexus in the community – is there access to jobs, healthcare, crisis facilities, etc. Ms. Prato and the team are looking at what we are doing and asking how it rolls up to the greater community outcomes. While there may be just a few riders on the bus, those people are on the bus because they need us to get where they're going. Ms. Prato expressed Grand Rapids does not have the density or parking problems that other cities do, so we are working to define the value that transportation brings as it relates to the convenience of being able to access a personal vehicle. This thinking helps guide discussions behind where transportation can and should go, and decisions around accessibility.

Mayor Bliss shared conversations have been had about diversifying the fleet as more individual forms of transportation become available. While parking downtown is currently good, there are quite a few

asphalt parking lots that may be developed in the coming years which will reduce parking spots and change how DASH services are provided. Ms. Prato concurred. She expressed this is why it is important for The Rapid to be involved at the beginning of these community discussions.

Mr. Schweitzer shared his observation the e-bikes and scooters are encouraging to see in the city of Walker. While it provides more options for people, it allows expansion of services for those that take public transit to travel further than the end of the route.

Ms. Prato shared public transit has viewed itself as the only form of transportation. Then Uber and Lyft came into being which changed that. Scooters and e-bikes have changed the landscape as well. Our goal is to be a good player in the community. Mr. Bulkowski concurred with Ms. Prato's reflections and is looking forward to what the future holds.

g. Upcoming Conferences

Mr. Monoyios shared upcoming APTA conferences with the committee. There are many conferences available in October in Philadelphia. The Transform Expo is coming up in November in Orlando, FL. Each of these conferences provide great opportunities for board members to attend. Mr. Monoyios also highlighted Rail-Volution which takes a more policy oriented and land-use approach to transportation. The Rail-Volution conference will be held virtually in October 2021.

Mr. Schweitzer expressed appreciation for the opportunity for board members to attend. Ms. Ilbrink will email the Board with the APTA conference registration information.

4. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Ms. Prato shared the Planning team is moving forward with many initiatives. The goal of this group is to show traction and gain results. Data will be important to making decisions. Mr. Schweitzer concurred and expressed his appreciation.

5. AJOURNMENT

This meeting was adjourned at 9:34 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,


Julie Ilbrink, Board Secretary

Date: September 9, 2021
To: Planning & Technology Committee
From: Nicholas Monoyios
Subject: LAKER LINE EXPANDED SCOPE - UPDATE

BACKGROUND

In July 2021, the FTA confirmed a \$5,090,000 budget for implementing Laker Line expanded scope. Staff is actively pursuing refined capital cost estimates for the intended elements of this expanded scope (see Table 1 below) and are also initiating the administrative procedures necessary to proceed.

Table 1 – Laker Line Expanded Scope Elements

LAKER LINE – EXPANDED SCOPE ELEMENTS	
1	Vehicle Safety & Operational Enhancements (Plexi screens, UV lights, ADAS, and wireless stop-request push buttons)
2	Additional CNG Compressor at fueling station
3	Park & Ride Lot at Cummings
4	One (1) Additional BRT Vehicle
5	Wireless Point-to-Point or Fiber Configuration (for seven (7) platforms currently using cellular communications)
6	Landscaping at Standale Trail
7	Bus-Only Lane Designation on Monroe Ave.*

* Pending City of Grand Rapids final approval

PROCEDURAL CONSIDERATIONS

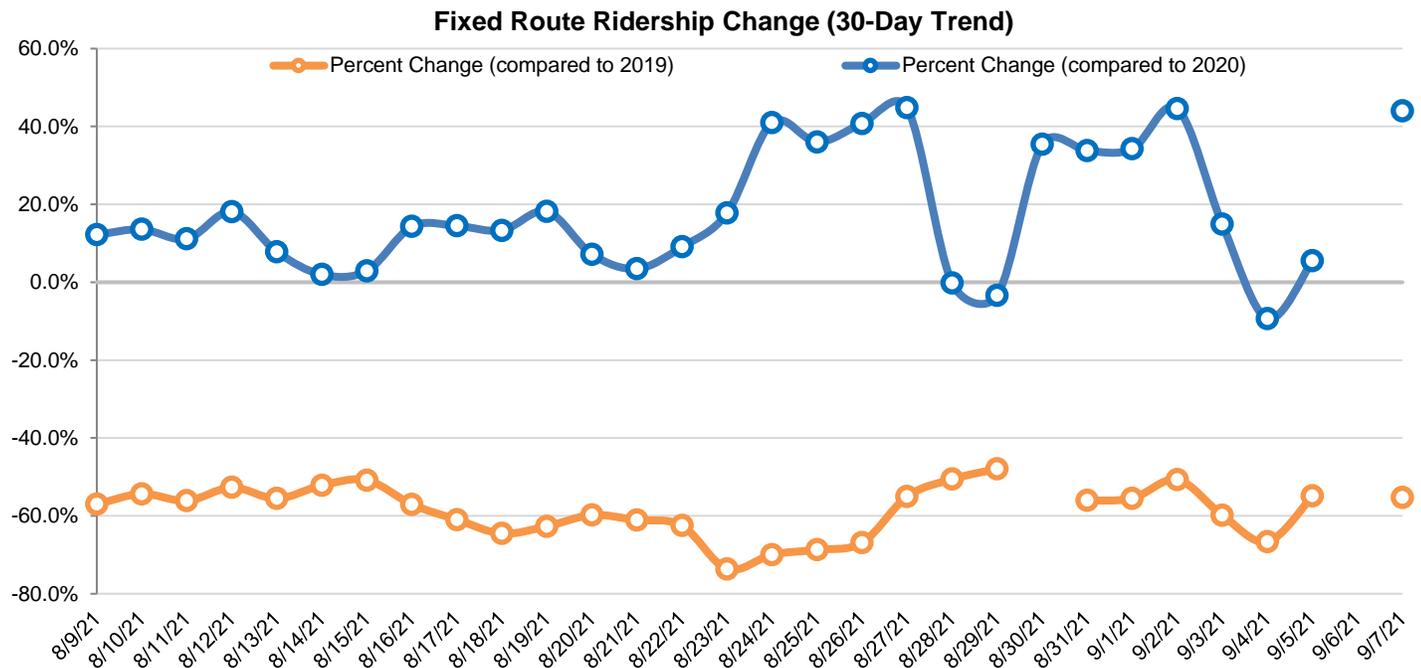
All these items will follow due process as identified in the Project Management Plan related to feasibility, required public outreach, National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) documentation, and any other third-party agreements. Additionally, all items requiring professional services will be included in the estimated costs and would follow appropriate procurement guidelines for authorizing contracts.

While this additional budget is within the existing Board authorized Laker Line expenditure limit, all related contracts and procedural items will be addressed to the Board in the appropriate sequence.

Date: September 9, 2021
To: Planning & Technology Committee
 Present Performance & Service Committee
From: Maxwell Dillivan, AICP – Senior Planner
Subject: FIXED ROUTE RIDERSHIP REPORT – SUMMER 2021

SYSTEMWIDE ANALYSIS

The graph below depicts ridership change compared to 2020 (blue line) and 2019 (orange line). We saw a dramatic increase compared to 2020 as student ridership was virtually non-existent that year. Compared to 2019, we see our dip over the last several weeks return to levels seen over the summer.



Key highlights:

- Ridership recovery over this past summer was approximately 45% compared to 2019. That number began to slip downward due to school beginning a week earlier in 2019 compared to 2021. Since the influx of student ridership beginning last week, our recovery rate is back to around 45%. Essentially, student ridership was a major boon for the system, but the magnitude of student ridership was around 50% of student ridership we experienced in 2019, thus recovery rates have not seen a significant increase.
- Silver Line ridership has increased over 25% from the previous week, likely as former Route 1 riders between Franklin and Burton seem to be transitioning over to Silver Line. However, this trend should be taken with a grain of salt given two days last week were fare free which historically benefits the Silver Line disproportionately compared to other routes in the system.

- Encouragingly, Route 1 ridership saw a 3.3% increase from last week indicating former Route 3 riders are making the transition over.
- The combination of Route 12 and Route 18 into the new Route 12 along with the influx of GRPS ridership has seen average daily ridership on the route increase by over 200% compared to two weeks prior.
- Route 28 and Route 29, since the bifurcation of Route 28 into East 28th and West 28th, appears at this stage to have maintained 28th Street ridership (i.e., the former Route 28) from prior to the service change.
- The new Route 3 ridership is maintaining ridership compared to the former Route 16.
- One of the “instant wins” of the COA appears to be extending Route 11 to Plainfield Meijer along with the frequency increase from 30-minute service during weekdays to 15-minute service. Average daily weekday ridership was previously around 540 rides per day before the service change; currently that figure is around 670 rides per day.

ROUTE BY ROUTE ANALYSIS

Since the pandemic’s effects on system, ridership recovery has varied considerably on a route-by-route basis as the pandemic has hit certain geographic areas and socio-economic classes at various magnitudes. “Recovery” for the purposes of this memo indicates the percentage of ridership currently observed on the system as compared to the same period during the most recent non-pandemic year. The table on the following page illustrates recovery levels by route from June 2021 through September 2021 (to-date) compared to the same month from 2019. Further, the table indicates percentage of service by route in terms of weekly revenue hours comparing September 2021 to February 2020.

Fixed Route	Peak Freq. (mins)	% Service Level vs. Feb. 2020	Ridership Recovery			
			June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	Sept. 2021 (MTD)
Silver Line	15	95.3%	41.0%	42.3%	39.5%	47.0%
Route 1 Division	30	121.7%	46.3%	47.3%	51.3%	51.8%
Route 2 Kalamazoo	15	119.9%	44.8%	47.0%	50.0%	47.7%
Route 3 Madison (defunct)	30	0.0%	41.9%	36.2%	44.1%	0.0%
Route 4 Eastern	15	112.4%	47.2%	51.1%	53.8%	46.7%
Route 5 Wealthy	30	60.3%	38.3%	36.0%	39.7%	34.0%
Route 6 Eastown	30	71.2%	42.5%	42.2%	41.7%	40.8%
Route 7 West Leonard	30	75.2%	41.6%	44.5%	44.1%	41.2%
Route 8 Rivertown	30	85.5%	46.3%	46.0%	47.4%	43.4%
Route 9 Alpine	15 ⁽¹⁾	106.4%	51.0%	50.3%	52.9%	49.3%
Route 10 Clyde Park	30	119.5%	54.6%	53.2%	52.2%	59.7%
Route 11 Plainfield	15	130.0%	44.5%	45.0%	45.1%	55.5%
Route 12 West Fulton (now Westside)	30	82.7%	50.8%	51.6%	50.7%	35.9% ⁽²⁾
Route 13 Michigan Fuller	30	69.2%	49.7%	49.2%	52.2%	52.7%
Route 14 East Fulton	30	80.3%	40.8%	39.4%	42.0%	36.4%
Route 15 East Leonard	30	72.4%	41.3%	44.4%	45.9%	47.5%
Route 16 Wyoming/Metro Health (now Route 3)	30	99.3%	41.9%	44.3%	46.2%	46.7%
Route 17 Woodland/Airport (now Route 27)	30	69.8%	35.0%	41.2%	38.5%	29.7% ⁽³⁾
Route 18 Westside (defunct)	30	0.0%	45.8%	39.0%	43.2%	n/a
Route 19 Michigan Crosstown (defunct)	6	0.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Route 24 Burton	30	96.4%	41.9%	41.9%	42.4%	39.9%
Route 28 West 28th / Route 29 East 28th	15 / 30	106.7%	50.1%	51.3%	50.6%	50.1%
Route 44 44th Street	30	96.8%	41.7%	43.9%	44.6%	47.8%
GRPS	n/a	n/a				
Fixed Route Total		92.1%	42.6%	42.9%	44.3%	43.5%
Contracted Services						
Route 51 DASH West	7	84.4%	35.3%	42.8%	39.9%	35.1%
Route 52 DASH North	8	74.4%	39.0%	38.6%	34.0%	35.3%
Route 60 GRCC Shuttle	12	66.3%	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.6%
Route 45 Laker Line	10	66.6%	95.1%	106.9%	99.0%	65.8%
Route 37 GVSU North Campus	7	102.9%	n/a	n/a	n/a	51.7%
Route 48 GVSU South Campus	5	80.4%	n/a	n/a	n/a	40.3%
Route 85 GVSU Apartment Connector	25	86.3%	n/a	n/a	n/a	6.4%
Route 100 Ferris State	n/a	101.2%	n/a	n/a	n/a	31.9%
Contracted Services Total		75.9%	47.0%	50.9%	38.4%	48.1%
SYSTEM TOTAL		83.8%	45.6%	43.9%	41.1%	45.2%

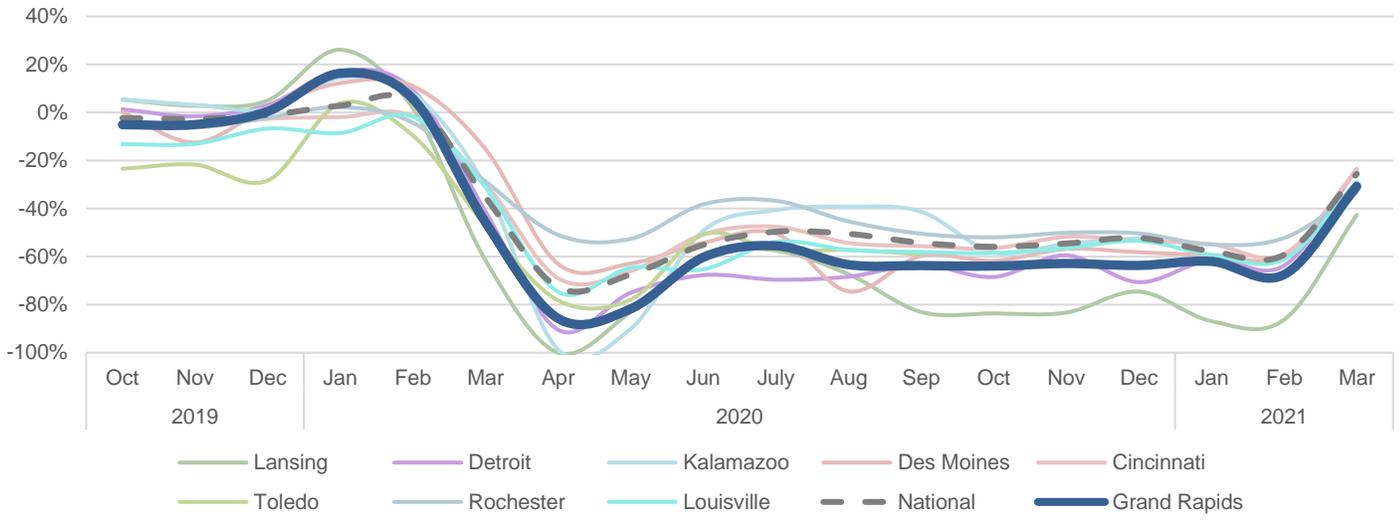
(1) Short pattern to Greenridge Mall; north of Greenridge Mall at 30-minute frequency per service agreement with Alpine Township.

(2) Compared to the combination the former Route 12 West Fulton and Route 18 Westside.

(3) Due to technical issues, we were unable to collect Wave card taps on Route 27.

Peer Agency Comparison

To contextually understand the fixed route system's ridership recovery, a series of peer agency's ridership change over time is plotted on the chart below. The Rapid's ridership recovery trend mirrors that of most peer agencies across the country but remains slightly reduced compared to nation-wide ridership recovery. It is important to note that this dataset is compiled from agencies who volunteer their ridership data to the APTA; several agencies with drastically reduced or suspended fixed route services may not be contributing data.



Date: August 27, 2021
To: ITP Board
From: Maxwell Dillivan, AICP – Senior Planner
Subject: FIXED ROUTE RIDERSHIP AND PRODUCTIVITY REPORT – July 2021

OVERVIEW

Ridership and productivity in July 2021 largely mirrored trends from recent months. Total ridership exceeded 2020 levels for the month; however, productivity measures lag as service levels are considerably greater at this point in 2021 compared to the same month of 2020. Saturday ridership remains lower in 2021 due to the loss of DASH service.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Monthly Ridership

	July 2021	July 2020	% Change
Regular Fixed Route Service (<i>Routes 1–18, 24, 28, 44</i>)	254,880	242,173	↑ 5.2%
Contracted Service (<i>GVSU, DASH, GRCC, and Ferris</i>)	32,370	24,276	↑ 33.0%
Total Monthly Fixed Route Ridership	287,250	266,449	↑ 7.8%

Daily Average Ridership

	July 2021	July 2020	% Change
Weekday Total	11,337	10,246	↑ 10.6%
Weekday Evening	1,651	1,474	↑ 12.0%
Saturday	5,836	6,566	↓ 11.1%
Sunday	2,886	2,930	↓ 1.5%

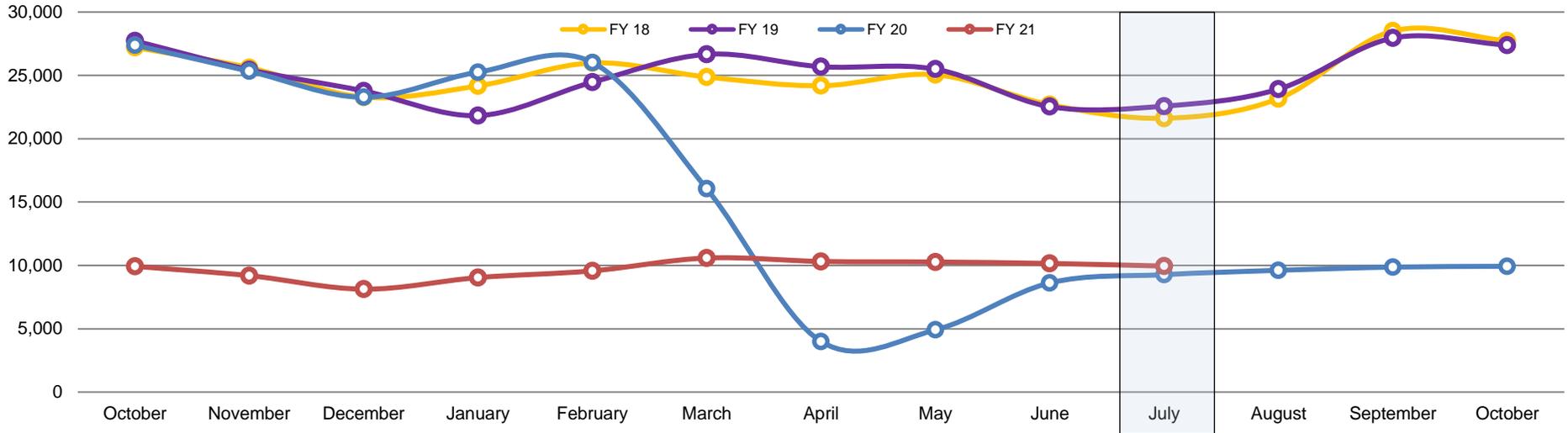
Productivity Summary

	July 2021	July 2020	% Change
Average passengers per hour per route	8.9	9.2	↓ 2.7%
Average passengers per mile per route	0.67	0.70	↓ 4.2%
Average farebox recovery percent per route	9.4%	12.4%	↓ 24.4%

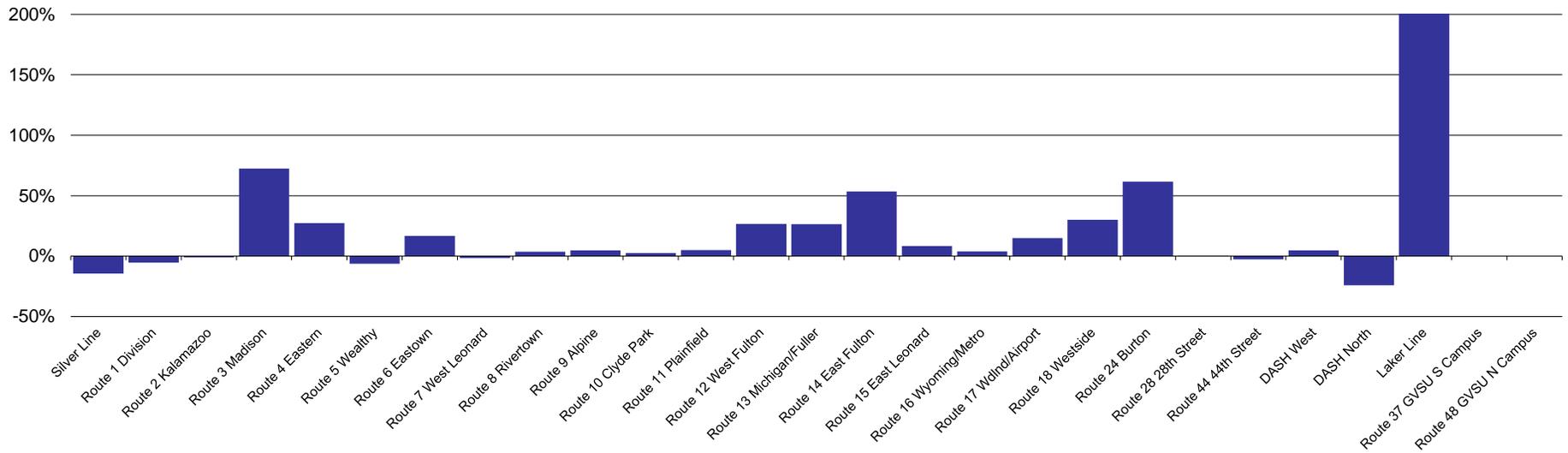
Fiscal Year Ridership

	FY 2021	FY 2020	% Change
Regular Fixed Route Service (<i>Routes 1–18, 24, 28, 44</i>)	3,739,612	4,222,115	↓ 11.3%
Contracted Service (<i>GVSU, DASH, GRCC, and Ferris</i>)	660,977	1,639,608	↓ 59.7%
Total Fixed Route Ridership YTD	4,400,590	5,861,723	↓ 24.9%

Monthly Weekday Average Ridership History



Percent Change by Route: July 2021 compared to July 2020

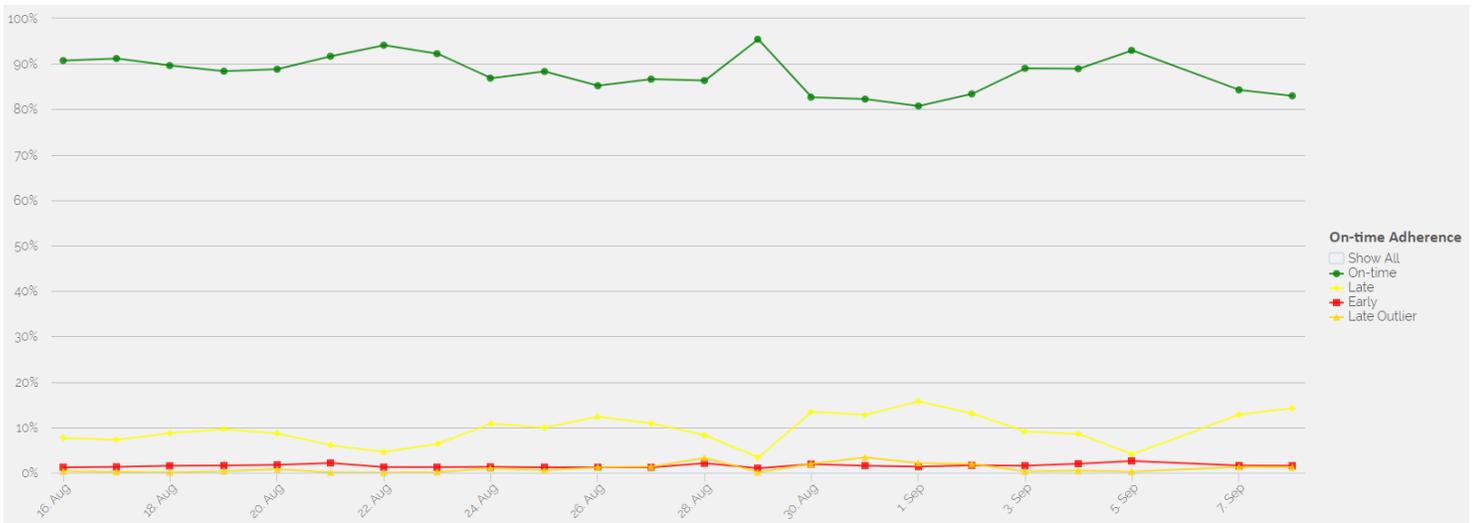


Date: September 9, 2021
To: Planning & Technology Committee
 Present Performance & Service Committee
From: Maxwell Dillivan, AICP – Senior Planner
Subject: FIXED ROUTE ON-TIME PERFORMANCE REPORT – SUMMER 2021

SYSTEMWIDE ANALYSIS

The Rapid considers a bus to be on time if it is anywhere from 0 to 5 minutes late. A bus that arrives before the scheduled time or 5 minutes after the scheduled time is not considered to be on time. Late outliers include buses arriving more than 15 minutes late.

Systemwide Daily On-time Analysis
August 16 through September 8



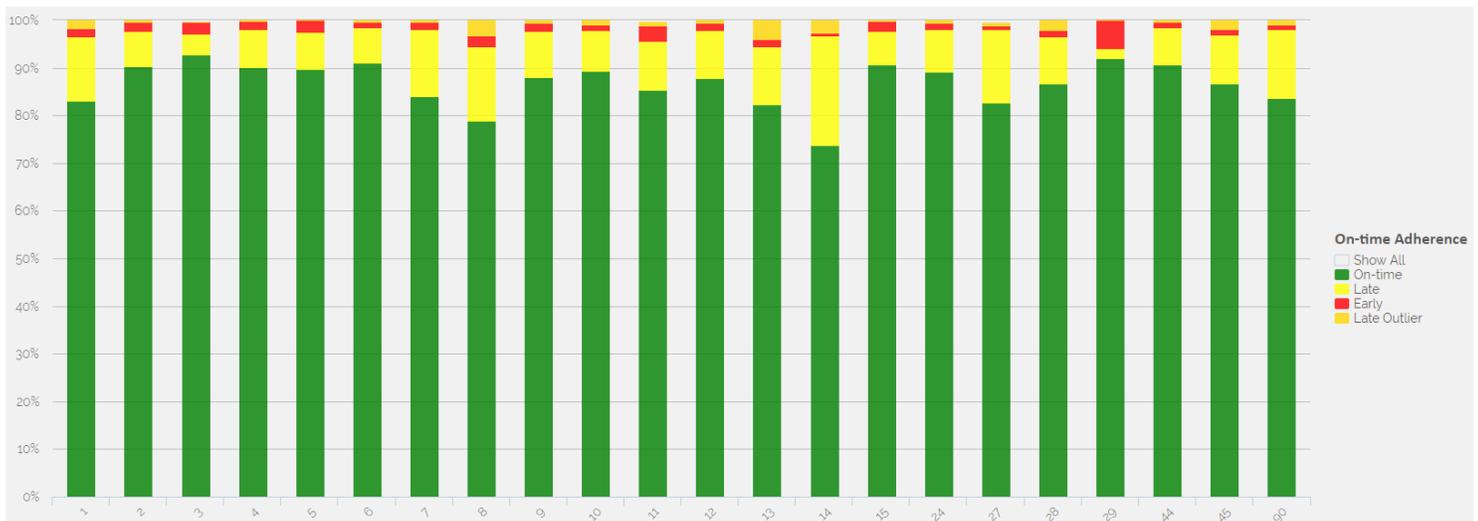
The figure above demonstrates daily on-time performance over the previous three weeks. The system was operating around 90% through the middle of August until the end of the month. Influx of traffic on local streets in conjunction with road construction projects has contributed to the increase of late buses which increased toward the end of the month. Encouragingly, instances of early buses extremely late buses have remained very rare.

ROUTE BY ROUTE ANALYSIS

Since the new service was implemented on August 30th, on-time performance has varied across the system. Certain routes, such as Route 14 East Fulton, has suffered due to multiple detours affecting the route's alignment. Increased traffic along the Michigan Street corridor stemming from the closure of westbound I-196 over the Grand River has negatively impacted routes 11, 13, and Silver Line. The closure of Godfrey Avenue has had significant impacts on Route 8 as well.

Planning continues to monitor on-time performance at a granular level to make necessary minor adjustments to schedules and provide recommendations to address on-time performance issues.

Route by Route On-time Analysis
August 30 through September 8



Date: September 9, 2021
To: Planning & Technology Committee
From: Nicholas Monoyios
Subject: TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM) UPDATE

BACKGROUND

Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC), the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Grand Rapids, MI metropolitan area has initiated an RFP process to secure a firm to develop a regional transportation demand management (TDM) plan.

Encompassing all of Kent County and the eastern portion of Ottawa County, the GVMC MPO area has a current population of about 765,000, a 10% increase in the past 10 years. As our region grows and population increases, we are seeing an increased demand upon our roadways - more than 90% of commuters drive alone to work, while all commuters spend 1.2 million hours in freeway delays annually. Accommodating increasing demand with additional roadway capacity is not a sustainable solution. Therefore, several of the GVMC member agencies are emphasizing the need for a mode shift toward other forms of transportation and TDM strategies to help address this issue.

The Rapid will be involved as a key partner throughout this study process.

TDM GOALS

GVMC has identified regional goals in the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan which supports the tenets of TDM strategies. These goals are:

- Enhance Safety & Reduce Congestion
- Ensure Equity, Access, and Mobility
- Protect and Enhance the Environment
- Identify mode shift opportunities

TDM STRATEGIES

While there are many tools in the TDM toolbox, and while the most appropriate tools for our region will be identified in the study process, a broad range of approaches include:

- Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) – leverage private funding to increase alternative mode usage
- Improving pedestrian-oriented design for development patterns
- Remove parking subsidies – users pay direct costs
- Congestion pricing for parking

- Improve public transportation options
- Increase subsidies for transit costs for employees or residents
- Design bicycle friendly environments
- Intelligent transportation system (ITS) improvements
- Flex-time work schedules
- Active and responsive traffic management tools
- Road space allocation alternatives
- Roadway usage fees – charging drivers when, where, and how much they drive
- High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes