



Interurban Transit Partnership

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, May 8, 2023 – 8:30 a.m.

Rapid Central Station Conference Room (250 Cesar Chavez Avenue, SW)

AGENDA

	<u>PRESENTER</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1. PUBLIC COMMENT		
2. MINUTES REVIEW – March 13, 2023	Terry Schweitzer	Review
3. DISCUSSION		
a. Transit Master Plan (TMP) 20-Year Goals Activity	Monoyios/AECOM Team	
b. TMP Update	AECOM Team	
c. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Study Status	Nick Monoyios	
d. 131 Planning & Environmental Linkage (PEL) Study Status	Nick Monoyios	
e. Grand Rapids Community Master Plan Status	Nick Monoyios	
f. Contactless Fare Payment	Andy Prokopy	
g. APTA Transit Board Members Conference	Nick Monoyios	
4. ADJOURNMENT		

Next meeting: July 17, 2023



Future Planning & Technology Committee Members

Mayor Rosalynn Bliss

Jack Hoffman
Citizen Members:

Robert Postema
Ryan Anderson

Terry Schweitzer (Chair)
Dave Bulkowski

Paul Troost

PLANNING & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 13, 2023 – 8:30 a.m.

Rapid Central Station Conference Room (250 Cesar E Chavez Avenue, SW)

ATTENDANCE:

Committee Members Present:

Terry Schweitzer, Jack Hoffman, Paul Troost, Mayor Bliss

Committee Members Absent:

Ryan Anderson, Dave Bulkowski, Rob Postema

Staff Attendees:

Mike Wieringa, Linda Medina, Jason Prescott, Kevin Wisselink, Max Dillivan, Deron Kippen, James Nguyen, Steve Clapp, Kris Heald, Andy Prokopy

Other Attendees:

Clover Brown (GVMC), Michael Williams (Disability Advocates), Jeromie Winsor (AECOM), Natalie Kollig (AECOM), Sarah Lagpacan (AECOM), AnnMarie Kerby (MKSK)

Mr. Schweitzer called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment offered

2. MINUTES January 9, 2023

Chair Schweitzer asked for any changes or corrections to the meeting minutes of January 9, 2023. There were none. The meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

3. Information

a. TMP Goals & Objectives Exercise

Mr. Monoyios introduced Ms. Natalie Kollig (AECOM). She started with the preparation for the goals exercise and then shared a progress update on the Guiding Principles, which is part of the whole Transit Master Plan (TMP).

The Update: At the last Planning & Technology Committee meeting we had word choice selection edits from the January 9th session. Ms. Kollig shared a few of the word choice edits which include; for the Prioritize Statement, rather than a previous phrase we had at the beginning; Conduct for the inclusive engagement process, there were also conversations around item number three where we shifted the word Convenience for Dependability. Other notes include Workforce as highlighted as

delivering our customer experience, and lastly the convenience factor we serve for user experience which previously was we are dependable.

Ms. Kollig thanked those for their time and attention during the board member one-on-one meetings. There will be a final look at the input and then shared at the next meeting.

Ms. Kollig moved to the next item; Goals: Goal setting is the second step in developing the Strategic Framework for this project.

Ms. Bliss (AECOM) noted to the group that they are to think about what is important with each of these guiding principles and how to take them a step further for the goals.

**Ten (10) minutes were given to the Board members to populate the five (5) guiding principles of the TMP. **

Ms. Bliss (AECOM) read the comments from the board members, and some of the themes for each guiding principle were:

Community; making sure every voice is heard, different partnerships to get the word out about the TMP i.e., TV ads, places of worship, UBER, taxis

Growth; making changes to ACT 51, alternative funding sources, employer contributions, joint development of Rapid properties, and other partnerships.

Ms. Kollig added that the retail sale of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and vehicle user fees were also suggestions that popped up with Adaptability as well.

Convenience; expanding service options (24 hours/day, 7 days/week), also expanding weekend options.

Workforce; seeing a lot of partnerships and collaborations with GRCC, focusing on employee development.

Adaptability; looking for a different fueling system and energy sources, a wide range of services provided by a variety of agencies outside of current service areas, adjacent MPOs, Wheels to Work, Transportation on Demand management tools,

b. TMP Progress Report – Public Involvement – Ms. Sarah Lagpacan (AECOM)

Ms. Lagpacan (AECOM) is happy to report that we have a completed public involvement plan. The main item we are waiting on is the branding of the project. Once the branding is in place, we will be developing a project website.

Mr. Schweitzer stated that the Faith Community has participated in focus groups in past efforts to promote transit services and millage requests. Will they be represented in these outreach groups?

Ms. Lagpacan answered that we have committees that have been developed. There is a Steering Committee (SC) and a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and in addition to those groups, we have focus groups that will include those individuals. We need to identify stakeholders so everyone will be represented.

Mr. Monoyios interjected that the plan is to meet the community where they are and meet them when it is convenient for them.

Ms. Lagpacan pointed out that in the same spirit for public workshops specifically, we want to make sure the group is representative of the community.

Engagement Schedules

Ms. Lagpacan stated that today we have a meeting with the Steering Committee, and we will be touching base with this group as regularly as with the Planning and Technology Committee. The AECOM team will also be having meetings with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) monthly.

Existing and Future Conditions

Ms. Lagpacan reported that they have completed the review of recent planning efforts and studies which include land use plans from the communities, and understanding population and employment growth for the future. They will also be looking at the demographics of the community both within the current service area and beyond in the outlying areas to see land use planned for development and what areas are growing rapidly. The AECOM Team is also looking at Transit Network Conditions and Service Quality. This will be a look at the COA that was completed and implemented a couple of years ago. The COA was a short-term focus, and now we are looking at a long view look to understand how it was implemented and to see how COVID impacted ridership and service quality metrics. The COA developed a 'wish list' of things that could be implemented if future funding became available and it is being re-evaluated whether that list can be carried forward. The AECOM Team will pull all these pieces together to summarize what they see both in the service area and surrounding into Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. (SWOT)

Market Analysis

One of the key pieces to this will be looking at travel patterns, as we have access to a database that tracks cell phone usage to learn where people are traveling to and from, and what modes they are using, this will help us understand where there are opportunities to shift from certain modes to transit.

Peer Review

Transit Agency Peers are currently being identified.

Benchmark Peers – these are peers that are like The Rapid in terms of service area density, operating, and maintenance cost, their fleet and vehicles, and the number of passenger trips. The Rapid will be compared to this group for a benchmark of where we stand today.

Aspirational Peers – these peers may not be like The Rapid in service area or the number of vehicles, but they have specific practices The Rapid would like to model such as TOD, Joint Development practices, Funding, and other sources they are drawing from especially for operating costs, and if they have been successful in shifting folks from cars to transit.

Future Options and Scenarios for The Rapid–

This includes both service that The Rapid could implement in the future expansions to current areas that are not inside the service area, also the funding and financial options that will help feed different things.

Mr. Hoffman said in his opinion we need a total paradigm funding change for transit in order to be anywhere near our goals. The whole Michigan system based on the fuel tax is broken.

Ms. Lagpacan agrees that we have heard this both today and in the guiding principles exercise and we will focus our thinking on future funding and financial scenarios for how The Rapid can partner with other agencies.

Mayor Bliss appreciates Mr. Hoffman's comments. She feels now is the opportune time to have the conversation, and she hopes The Rapid steps up and joins with others to make recommendations for the changes we want to see and find some allies in Lansing. Mayor Bliss also stated that other mayors and cities are talking about having significant issues around funding and also about the need to make changes to ACT 51. Mayor Bliss feels we need to step into this space and really lead and look at what resources we are currently spending around lobbying and developing those relationships, and we don't have a year to wait to see that.

Mr. Hoffman added that he did suggest on his timeline, if you say the time is now, I support it.

Mayor Bliss added with the current leaders in Lansing there is an opportunity, and with next year being an election year she feels it will be getting very challenging.

Mr. Schweitzer said Mr. Anderson has said one of the challenges is getting feedback involvement of those that are currently not using the service. Do you have any ideas on how to address that?

Ms. Lagpacan feels that those folks will mostly be targeted in the public workshops and in our online engagement outreach as a main strategy. We will also be pushing out surveys on social media and other outlets.

Mr. Monoyios added that there is an entire Public Relations (PR) team that will be established. The storytelling will be coming up over the next few months. There is a way to get non-riders to support transit.

Ms. Lagpacan informed the board we are reassessing West Michigan Express. There have been a few studies conducted on this initiative in previous years, and we are taking another look at the data especially since those studies were done pre-Covid. We will assess the data to understand the travel patterns today, the ridership potential, and how feasible is this service. Based on travel patterns and the demographic analysis we will come up with recommendations for stop alignment that may tweak what was developed before and in addition land on some operating characteristics. It will include items such as what is the schedule, how often it stops, and where.

Mayor Bliss asked whom we partnered with. Mr. Monoyios replied it was the City of Hudsonville, Patrick Waterman. Deputy of Ottawa County. May be worthwhile for some of the mayors on this committee to get together to have a conversation with the City of Hudsonville.

Ms. Lagpacan continued with the next steps in the process. AECOM will be meeting with TAC next month, and the Steering Committee meeting is happening at noon today. The near-term deliverables you can expect to see are the existing and future conditions and market analysis memos and the work we are pulling together for West Michigan Express. After that, we will head into the peer review and arrive at future options and scenarios.

Mr. Schweitzer added that another initiative GVMC is leading, and The Rapid is taking part in, is the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) where does it fit in?

Ms. Lagpacan replied that they came up with some goals and objectives in a similar exercise as this one so we will be incorporating those into this plan.

Mr. Monoyios added that we are keeping the consultant team abreast of others' work is complementary to our TMP process.

c. AVAIL Bus Upgrades

Mr. Prokopy reported on a couple of items.

Avail Communications upgrade. Just over a year ago, we completed our project with Avail which upgraded all the hardware on the buses. One item we did not upgrade was the communications. This upgrade means we will be moving off regular radio to VoIP which is network communications. This will provide better quality, better coverage, and better reliability. Some DASH buses will require this upgrade as well. Moving avail services out to the cloud. We will present it to the Board in April. The cost for this upgrade is approximately \$830,000.

Mr. Hoffman asked if this is a Federal Capital expense. Mr. Prokopy answered, "Yes. It is a general ITS money that we use. Mr. Hoffman asked if we get a state match on this. Mr. Prokopy replied yes.

Mr. Schweitzer asked if this also includes GO!Bus. Mr. Prokopy answered no. Go!Bus operates through Ecolane where they have tablets to communicate.

Mr. Schweitzer asked about the timetable.

Mr. Prokopy replied in the Spring of 2023 and the upgrade will take approximately one (1) month to complete.

d. IT Strategic Assessment

IT Strategic Assessment

This is a customer-focused assessment to look at the technology on the buses, transit centers, our mobile app, and all customer-facing technology. It is important to note that there is no overlap with any other studies. This strategic assessment study will include five (5) different tasks which include information gathering, peer industry review, a needs assessment and gap analysis, technology matrix of options and they will help us build specifications for timelines and budget. We went out for RFP and received three (3) responses. We have two (2) clear finalists. If time permits, we will bring it to the board at the end of March. Timelines to start in the spring through 2023.

Mr. Hoffman asked what pot of money this would come from. Mr. Prokopy replied we went out for a specific planning grant study last year that we were awarded.

Mayor Bliss inquired if the ultimate intent is to improve customer service. How are these two (2) companies going to work with potential customers to get real-time feedback?

Mr. Prokopy answered that will be asked when we meet with them to see how they will get feedback from our customers.

e. Division United

Mr. Monoyios reported that the Division United team is getting back together and will start meeting again on a quarterly basis. The Rapid, the City of Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming. There are many grant opportunities now showcasing the work that has been done on Division United will be extremely beneficial to attracting as many grant dollars as possible.

f. DASH 3.0

Mr. Monoyios reported by working with Mobile GR, they did an outstanding job getting feedback from the downtown stakeholders. He presented a map of existing DASH, North and West. What has been proposed is a peek only west of 131, then a bi-directional loop. 15 min frequency. Visitor experience. Downtown health is strong. May 8th is when this will go live.

Mayor Bliss added that we are excited about this!

g. Discussion of Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Wisselink highlighted the UPWP. This is something The Rapid works with Grand Valley Metro Council puts together every year, and we will bring it to the board at the end of the month. Mr. Wisselink asked if there are any other planning efforts we should look at. There will be a proposal for a short-range plan coming and the opportunity to add more.

Mr. Hoffman asked in Metro Council how is The Rapid's share of the pie determined. Do the Feds say this is transit capital?

Mr. Wisselink replied that most of the funds are Transit funds. Some funds can be flexed.

Mr. Schweitzer commented that funding considerations are supportive of transit services in the last ten (10 to fifteen (15) years.

4. ADJOURNMENT

This meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 17, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.






Respectfully submitted,



Kris Heald, Board Secretary

Draft 3: Guiding Principles

At The Rapid, we are the transportation provider of choice and convenience because...

-  **COMMUNITY | We reflect you and your needs.**
-  **GROWTH | We plan for action.**
-  **CONVENIENCE | We serve for user experience.**
-  **INTERNAL WORKFORCE | We value employee personal growth.**
(Engaged and prepared to meet our future challenges)
-  **ADAPTABILITY | We're future-flexible.**

Guiding Principles – 20 Year Goals Examples



COMMUNITY | We reflect you and your needs.

- 24/7 consistent schedules
- Frequent service to everyone in the system within a 10-minute walk
- Optimize The Rapid 'storytelling' for how it benefits the community
- Offer a variety of modes and interconnectivity across the service area
- Culture/perception shift in support of transit
- Align TMP with Grand Rapids CMP
- Multimodal is normalized

Guiding Principles – 20 Year Goals Examples



GROWTH | We plan for action.

- Diversified local operating funding to ensure ample resources to provide all services recommended in TMP
- Achieve mode split greater than comparable regions
- TOD joint development
- Influence land-use decision making
- Light rail on 131 corridor
- The community recognizes the value to transit
- Sustainable funding

Guiding Principles – 20 Year Goals Examples



CONVENIENCE | We serve for user experience.

- Frequent grid system – so frequent one doesn't need a schedule
- Dedicated lanes for all modes
- Transit travel times comparable to auto
- Single platform app linking all mobility options
- Multimodal is valued throughout the county
- Viable transit option for everyone in service area
- Real time information at all bus stops (solar wifi)

Guiding Principles – 20 Year Goals Examples



INTERNAL WORKFORCE | We value employee personal growth.

(Engaged and prepared to meet our future challenges)

- Departmental composition adequately staffed for all TMP implementation elements - with redundancy
- Employer of choice with a path for advancement
- The Rapid is a recognized organization where people want to get a job
- Create an environment of ownership

Guiding Principles – 20 Year Goals Examples



ADAPTABILITY | We're future-flexible.

- Continuous improvement is part of the culture
- Plan for financial cycles
- Integrated modes - mobility as a service (MaaS)
- Use real time dynamic data to inform decision making
- Proactive contingency planning
- Culture to embrace change and modern-day innovation