



Interurban Transit Partnership

Planning & Technology Committee Members

Mayor Rosalynn Bliss

Jack Hoffman

Andy Guy

Terry Schweitzer (Chair)

Paul Troost

Citizen Members:

Ryan Anderson

Dave Bulkowski

PLANNING & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, January 8, 2024 – 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 – November 6, 2023	Terry Schweitzer	Review
3. DISCUSSION		
a. TMP Update	Nick Monoyios	
b. 2024 Planning & Technology Calendar	Nick Monoyios	
c. State of Transit	Nick Monoyios	
d. Growing Michigan Together Council Update	Jack Hoffman	
4. ADJOURNMENT		

Next meeting: March 11, 2024



Future Planning & Technology Committee Members

Mayor Rosalynn Bliss

Jack Hoffman
Citizen Members:

Andy Guy
Ryan Anderson

Terry Schweitzer (Chair)
Dave Bulkowski

Paul Troost

PLANNING & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday, November 6, 2023 – 8:30 a.m.

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

ATTENDANCE:

Committee Members Present:

Terry Schweitzer, Jack Hoffman, Ryan Anderson, Paul Troost, Andy Guy

Committee Members Absent:

Mayor Bliss, Dave Bulkowski

Staff Attendees:

Steve Clapp, Kris Heald, Deron Kippen, Linda Medina, Nick Monoyios, James Nguyen, Deb Prato, Jason Prescott, Andy Prokopy, Steve Schipper, Mike Wieringa, Kevin Wisselink

Other Attendees:

Andrew Ittigson, Catherine Osborn, Trent Cerra (Mobile GR), Max Dillivan, Clover Brown (GVMC)

Mr. Schweitzer called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment

2. MINUTES September 11, 2023

Chair Schweitzer asked the committee to approve the September 11, 2023, meeting minutes. The meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

3. DISCUSSION

a. Micromobility 101 – Mobile GR – Mr. Trent Cerra

Mr. Monoyios introduced Mr. Trent Cerra from Mobile GR and his role is Mobility Planning Analyst. He will be giving a short presentation on their Micromobility Project, the scooters and bikes.

Some background on the project:

The idea of a shared micromobility program started in the City of Grand Rapids in 2017/2018 when they were working on their bicycle action plan. There was a lot of community interest for a program like this. The pilot started in 2020 using two (2) vendors. They were seeing positive usage on the pilot and moved to a permanent program with Lime as the main vendor.

How the program works.

Six (6) simple steps. Download the Lime App, Accept the Lime user agreement, find a nearby bike/scooter, Scan the QR Code on the device to unlock it, Ride responsibly obey all traffic and safety regulations, and at the end of the ride, park it in a Designated Parking Zone (DPZ).

The goal for the program was to be accessible to the community and not cost-prohibitive. Lime set up three (3) different pricing models. There are neighborhoods of focus that receive a 30% discount.

How the partnership works with Lime and the City of Grand Rapids.

Neither the City of Grand Rapids nor Lime pay each other any money. They both have a shared responsibility for the investment in the program. The city takes care of the DPZs (Designated Parking Zones). Lime handles the staffing, fleet maintenance, and repairs. They also help with neighborhood events and provide promotions at city events.

How is the Program doing?

It is going very well.

The increase in ridership for 2022/2023 has seen an increase of 157%. The average ride is a mile and takes approximately 15 minutes.

The most popular places to park scooters/bikes are downtown, Rosa Parks Circle, VanAndel Arena, DeVos Place, and on the Westside near Bridge Street Market.

Ridership Trends. Expecting to be well over 400,000 rides by the end of the year. Last year they had approximately 9,000 unique riders who use the service every month; this year that number has doubled.

ArtPrize brought in approximately 25% of all the rides in those two weeks for 2022.

Upcoming work

They plan to do more promotions of Lime access with the colleges to enroll more users.

There will be updates to the bicycle on micromobility ordinances over the winter. Making changes on how it relates to sidewalk riding, general safety, and usage, and working with the Police Department on how to enforce these rules that will be put in place.

After those ordinances are adopted in the spring, they will update the safety messaging.

New Project

Affordability Program Pilot will be done in the spring. Levering the Lime access program to better reach into low-income neighborhoods to incentivize low rides for Lime access users in specific neighborhoods of focus to increase ridership.

Mr. Hoffman was enlightened by the presentation and had an observation. No one rides in the winter.

Mr. Cerra agrees, yes winter ridership drops significantly. In the summer months, the fleet is approximately 1600 bikes and scooters out, (800 of each), and during the winter months, the fleet gets taken down to approximately 100 or less of the total fleet.

Mr. Hoffman had another observation (not directly related to your program but public transit) and asked what does a ride cost, this is a market-based system. And we find out what a self-operated almost non-existent vehicle costs to get people around and they pay for it. Mr. Hoffman finds that to be an interesting metric.

Mr. Schweitzer asked to have this presentation given as he is looking at it from a suburban standpoint. How does this type of service work in a suburban setting compared to an urban setting?

Mr. Cerra replied that the ridership they are seeing in Grand Rapids shows ridership in some of the outskirt residential areas. Many people are using it to get around their neighborhoods. There is a potential for applying this in more urban settings. It is harder in areas that are not inherently friendly

to bicycles and pedestrians. There would need to be a level of comfort the user would require to get around safely.

Mr. Anderson was curious if the demand patterns ever indicate when micromobility may not be the best solution. For example, are you seeing some long routes that should be serviced by other means?

Mr. Cerra said not particularly in their ridership areas. Potential issues would be on higher-speed roadways. Anything over 35 mph.

Mr. Anderson asked if this was going to be financially sustainable for Lime.

Mr. Cerra said that the size of the city and the infrastructure we have in place are very innovative, and Lime talked about Grand Rapids and our parking structure to other markets and cities. Not many cities have a DPZ in place. It has been a good fit.

Mr. Troost inquired about the average age of the user/rider.

Mr. Cerra said you must be 18 or older to use Lime. They would like to know that information as well, however, Lime does not disclose the age of riders. Typical riders are young professionals.

Mr. Troost asked where Lime is headquartered. Mr. Cerra replied, Chicago.

Andy Guy asked about the location of the designated parking zones.

Mr. Cerra said wherever possible the DPZs are located close to a Rapid stop. This works with a bigger vision with mobility hubs and a car share program pilot to make it more seamless. Trying to make it as seamless as possible.

Ms. Prato asked; do you need a smartphone to use the service?

Mr. Cerra said there is a way you can call, and Lime can give access to the device.

b. TMP Update – AECOM Team

Mr. Andrew Ittigson gave a status update on the TMP:

- October was busy with several outreach activities.
- The next focus will be on Joint Development, Corridor Analysis, and Regional Connectivity
- We have started the discussion on defining redefining and updating policy and performance measures. We are currently working through the staffing evaluations as well.

Joint Development Task: This is about TOD and Joint Development. Other Aspirational peers put a great emphasis on TOD. We are focusing on that to see where there are opportunities for The Rapid. This will include looking at existing stations, transit facilities, and other opportunities for joint development and building density around other stations. Also finding land to buy or build on is always a possibility.

Aspirational Peer Interviews:

- This task has been completed. The last two interviews were with Indigo Indianapolis and LA Metro.
- LA Metro: Some best practices and key points for Grand Rapids were sustainable funding, property tax, sales tax, and other fees. LA Metro has a Vehicle Mile Traveled fee, which goes toward building improved transit along those corridors.

Mr. Hoffman wished to clarify the need to mitigate a transit alternative. Does it mean assessing a vehicle mile traveled fee, but part of that fee is going to go to transit to mitigate the road externalities? Mr. Ittigson confirmed Mr. Hoffman's assumption. Mr. Hoffman is very interested in this idea.

The Ambassador Program: These are people hired throughout the service area to be out on the platform, buses, and trains, and they are there to greet passengers and answer questions. After the pilot program was put in place, it was a very positive initiative for the agency.

Indianapolis: This agency had the most similarities to The Rapid. Funding is key. They have an opportunity to diversify, and they are looking to establish a city income tax as one more piece to help with funding. Another big takeaway is that they work a lot with their small nonprofits to help with TOD and affordable housing.

West Michigan Express Status: We are wrapping up the implementation plan. We know the stops. It is Grand Rapids, Hudsonville, Zeeland, and Holland. We have an idea of amenities and infrastructure. To start with we want to do as much as we can with one vehicle and one operator. There are several different service delivery pieces we are working on. Things like, is it something you contract, will it be directly operated by The Rapid, is it both, who owns the vehicle(s)? We will have the report to share through the website shortly.

Public Involvement: October was the big push for public involvement so far. We started the survey on September 11th and the website went live. The survey will continue until December 8th. Following was the public meeting and focus groups on October 19th. We had laptops so people could take the survey live.

October Outreach Highlights: Ms. Catherine Osborn

The online engagement survey is live through December 8, 2023. As of October 27th, we have 879 survey responses, over 40 interactive map reactions, and over 80 comments and ideas.

Key takeaways to date:

- 47% say they do ride The Rapid
- 74% disclosed that they have a car or access to one.
- For those who don't use public transit anymore we asked why. The top 3 responses were: it takes too long to complete a trip, the service is too infrequent, and the routes are not conveniently located.
- Top answers for choosing public transit were reliability of the travel mode, travel time, safety, and accessibility, not needing help to use this mode.
- Top answers to what additional travel time would you be willing to add: 5-10 minutes, 11-20 minutes.
- Top answers for what would be most important to improve transit, expanding the service area, higher frequency, and more routes running on the weekend.

Mr. Schweitzer commented that several routes now are on a 15-minute frequency. He wondered if the respondents were aware of that or not.

Ms. Osborn believes they may not have been aware of that change. As we review the results, we will be making sure the information is available for everyone.

Overview of Open House on October 19th:

Sixty-one (61) people were in attendance. We had focus groups with a variety of diverse community groups, and engagement activities down on the platform. Activities included several fill-in-the-blank comment cards, an existing conditions board, comment cards, and vision boards with very specific questions.

Three (3) media outlets were on site as well.

Open House Feedback: Service expansion. Improve existing hours of operation. Requests for additional stations or facilities. Land use items.

Stakeholder Focus Groups:

Themes: expanding service and hours. Community sustainable workforce. Transit to attract young professionals. Rider experience for ADA folks.

Mr. Ittigson reviewed next steps:

West Michigan Express implementation plan is available, Peer Analysis will be completed this week, and a memo with an overview of the public involvement. In the spring we will have another public involvement event, and we will have concepts and more detailed information. We will be back on January 8, 2024. On March 11, 2024, we will have updates on the technical work and then get the board's input on staffing evaluation, joint development, and performance measures and policies.

c. TDM Study Final Report – Mr. Nick Monoyios

Mr. Monoyios referenced the hyperlink in the packet. The Rapid will be involved in the same TDM strategy study. We will start meeting as a regional working group starting in the new year.

Mr. Anderson commented the idea of a transportation wallet in terms of being able to bridge providers is exciting and perfect for this committee.

d. IT Strategic Plan

Mr. Prokopy gave a brief update on the five-year IT Strategic Plan.

The Rapid is working with a firm called Left Turn, Right Turn. The process was:

Information gathering. A transit review, public engagement. They developed a survey and customer engagement on the platform and transit center. We are still waiting for the results. 125 surveys were completed. Customers are excited about the transit App. WaveCard, open payments – contactless payments. The final phase of the project is operations development. That will conclude mid December. Goal of the project: Is to find where we should be over the next 3-5 years. Increase ridership through new technology.

e. APTA Expo

Mr. Monoyios reported that many of our leadership team attended, and it was very good and beneficial.

Ms. Prato added the common theme on the FTA ATPA side was less competition in the bus manufacturing space. What does that mean, federal money isn't going as far without competition. When we look at our competitive grant, the eleven (11) buses we meant to purchase with those funds only purchased nine (9) buses. It seemed to be a focus at the APTA association.

4. ADJOURNMENT

This meeting was adjourned at 9:44 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2024

Respectfully submitted,



Kris Heald, Board Secretary



3a



THRIVING

Planning and Technology Committee Meeting

January 8, 2024

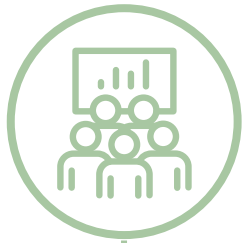
A framework for the future of connectivity.

Project Status

IN PROGRESS

COMPLETE

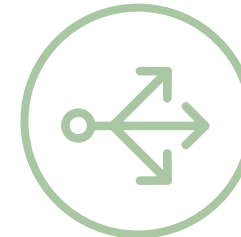
IN PROGRESS



Public Involvement
Building partnerships (throughout the process, public workshops targeted for Fall 2023 and Spring 2024)



Market Analysis
Transit demand, travel patterns, mobility need



Future Options and Scenarios Analysis
Who and where to serve? How?



Existing and Future Conditions Analysis
Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats



Peer Review
Best practices from similar and aspirational mobility providers

COMPLETE

FINAL DRAFT REVIEW

Project Status

FINALIZING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



West Michigan Express Planning

Reassess feasibility, develop implementation plan

IN PROGRESS



Planning Guidelines, Policies and Performance Measures

How to measure and ensure success?

IN PROGRESS



Administrative and Operational Staffing Evaluation

How to staff?



Corridor Analysis

Connections to places outside current service area



Fleet, Facilities and IT Strategy

How to support?
(Dec – Feb 2024)

IN PROGRESS

ON DECK

Project Status

IN PROGRESS



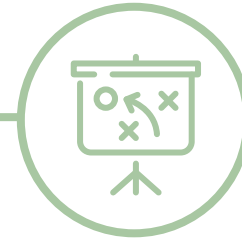
Joint Development Opportunities

How to shape what happens next to transit?
(Dec 2023-Feb 2024)



Phased Implementation Strategy

(Mar – April 2024)



Final Transit Master Plan

(April-May 2024)



Financial and Funding Analysis

How to fund?
(Feb - Apr 2024)

ON DECK

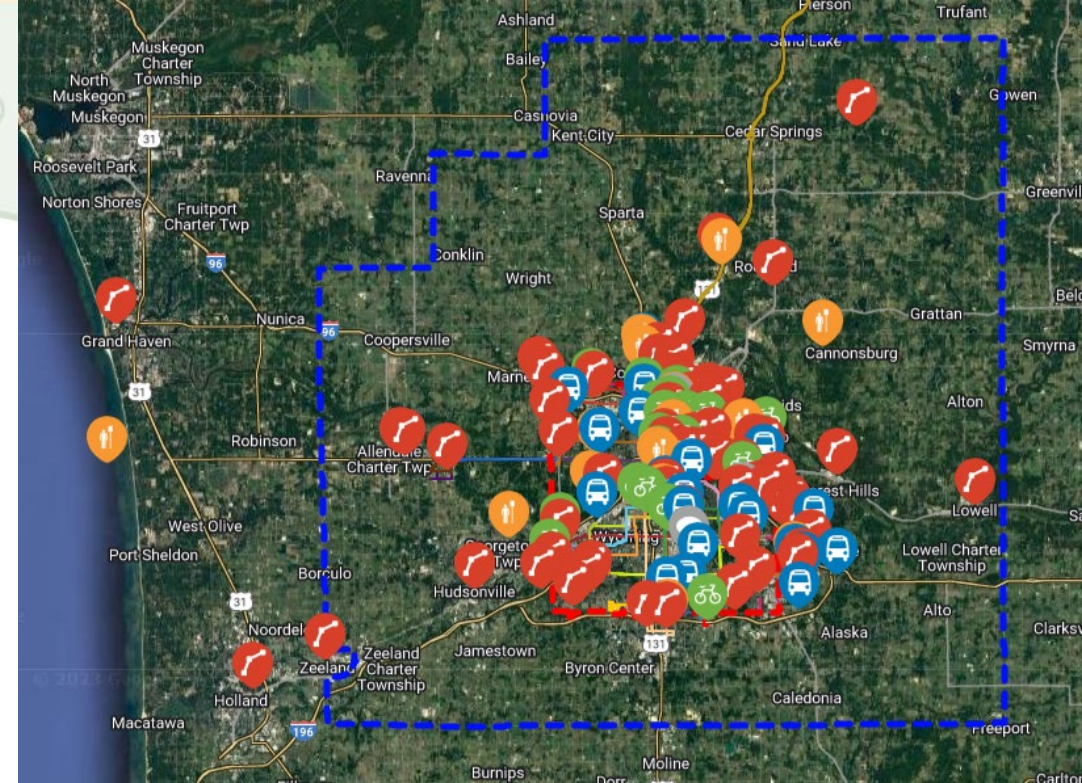
Public Input & 'Roadshow'

Website

- 1,131 Online Surveys Completed
- 134 Map Comments
- 94 Ideas Wall Responses

Roadshow Presentations

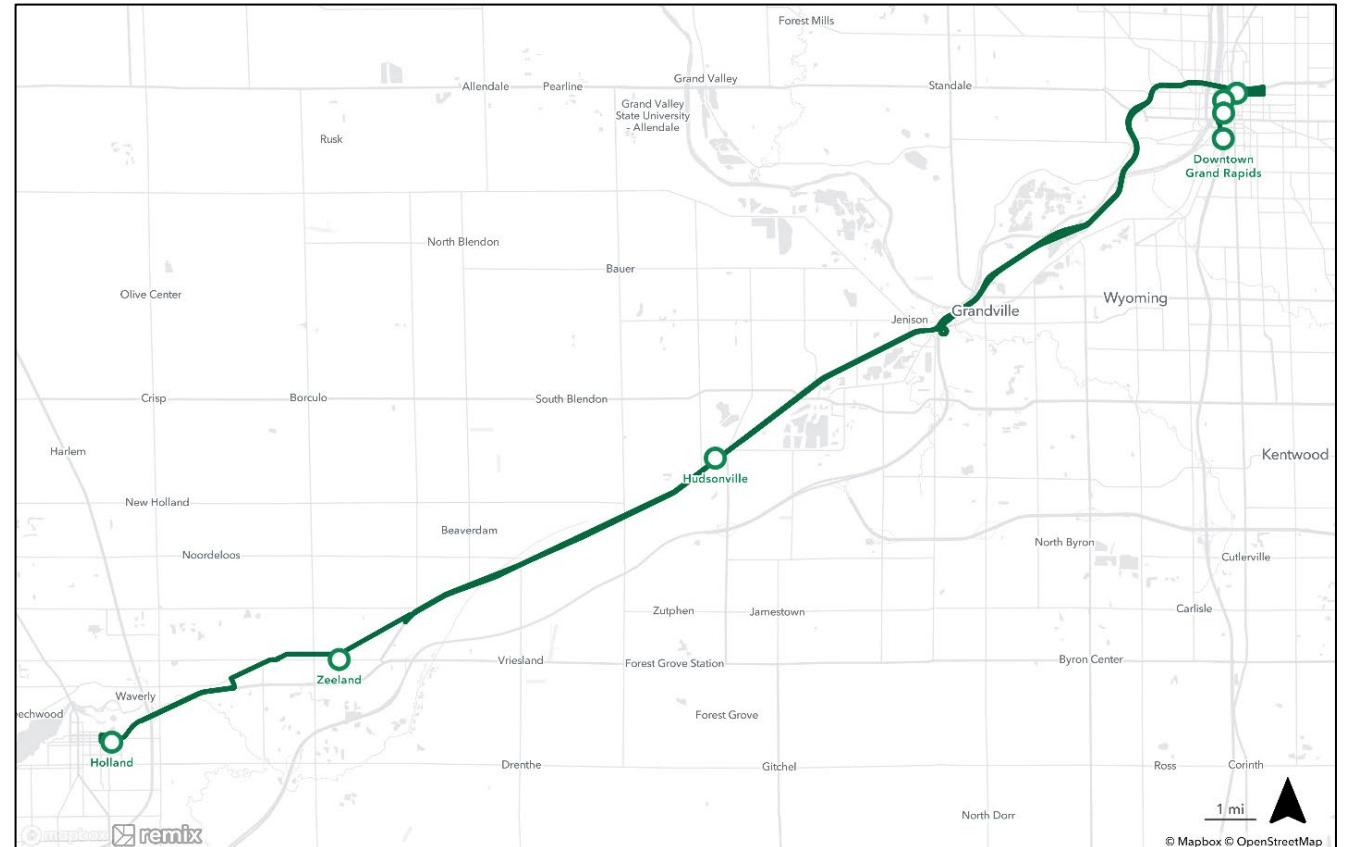
- Non-profits
- Municipal Commissions/Councils
- Newsletters



West Michigan Express – Implementation Plan

Finalizing report with input from WMX Task Force:

- Service Options
- Station Location Selection
- Cost Estimates
- Timeline/Sequence





THRIVING

Thank You!

A framework for the future of connectivity.

2024 PLANNING & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE CALENDAR

3b

	TRANSIT MASTER PLAN	TECHNOLOGY	TDM STUDY	131 PEL STUDY	OTHER
Committee Meeting	Item	Item	Item	Item	Item
1/8/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Status Update WMX Implementation Plan 	-	-	-	-
3/11/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Guidelines, Policies, and Performance Measures Staffing Evaluation Corridor Analysis Joint Development 	IT Strategic Plan Results & CRM RFP Considerations	2024 Roles/Implementation Review	Status Update	Kent County Mobility Study Update
5/13/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fleet, Facilities, and IT Strategy Public Outreach Efforts Financial & Funding Analysis Phased Implementation Strategy 	VoIP Bus Communications Update	-	-	GR Community Master Plan Update
7/15/2024	Final TMP Presentation	-	-	-	Division United Update
9/9/2024	Implementation Strategy Status	Finance System Replacement Considerations	-	-	GVMC MTP 2050 Status Update
11/4/2024	-	-	Annual Recap	Annual Recap	-

2023 CONFERENCES	
Conference	Date
APTA - Marketing, Communications & Customer Experience	2/11 - 2/14 Washington D.C.
APTA - Legislative Conference	4/7 - 4/9 Washington D.C.
APTA - Mobility Conference	4/28 - 5/1 Portland, OR
APTA - Board Members Seminars	7/13 - 7/16 San Jose, CA
APTA - Workforce Summit	8/21 - 8/23 Washington D.C.
APTA - Tech	8/4 - 8/7 Philadelphia, PA
APTA - Sustainability/Operations Planning and Scheduling	8/18 - 8/21 Washington D.C.
APTA - TRANSform	9/29 - 10/2 Philadelphia, PA
Mpact (formerly Railvolution)	10/20 - 10/23 Philadelphia, PA



STATE OF TRANSIT – PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER FUNDING PERCEPTIONS

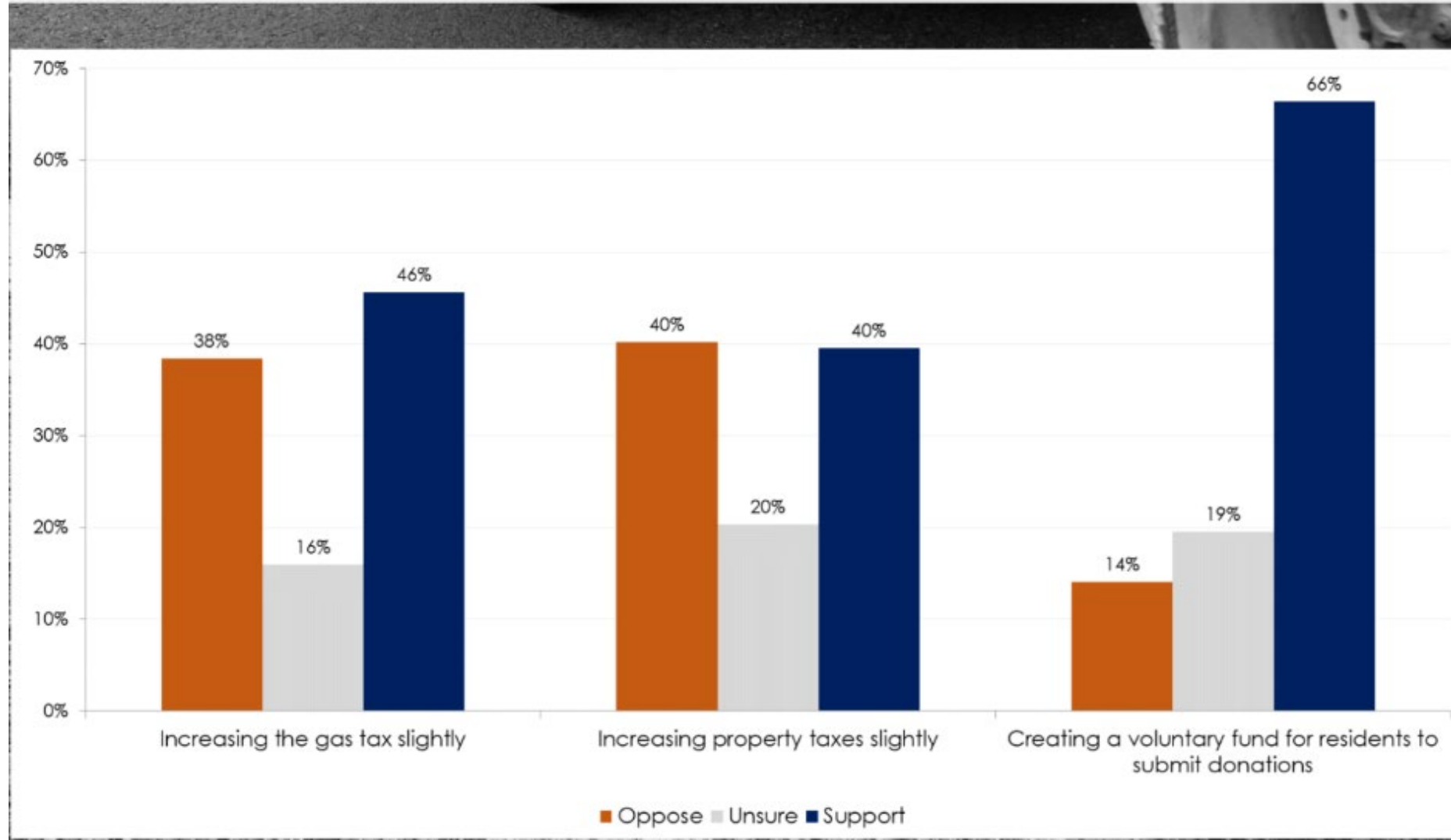
JANUARY 2024 – PLANNING & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Mission Statement

Our mission is to create, offer, and continuously improve a flexible network of regional public transportation options and mobility solutions.

GVMC 2050 MTP SURVEY

To increase funding for transportation improvements,
which actions, if any, would you support?

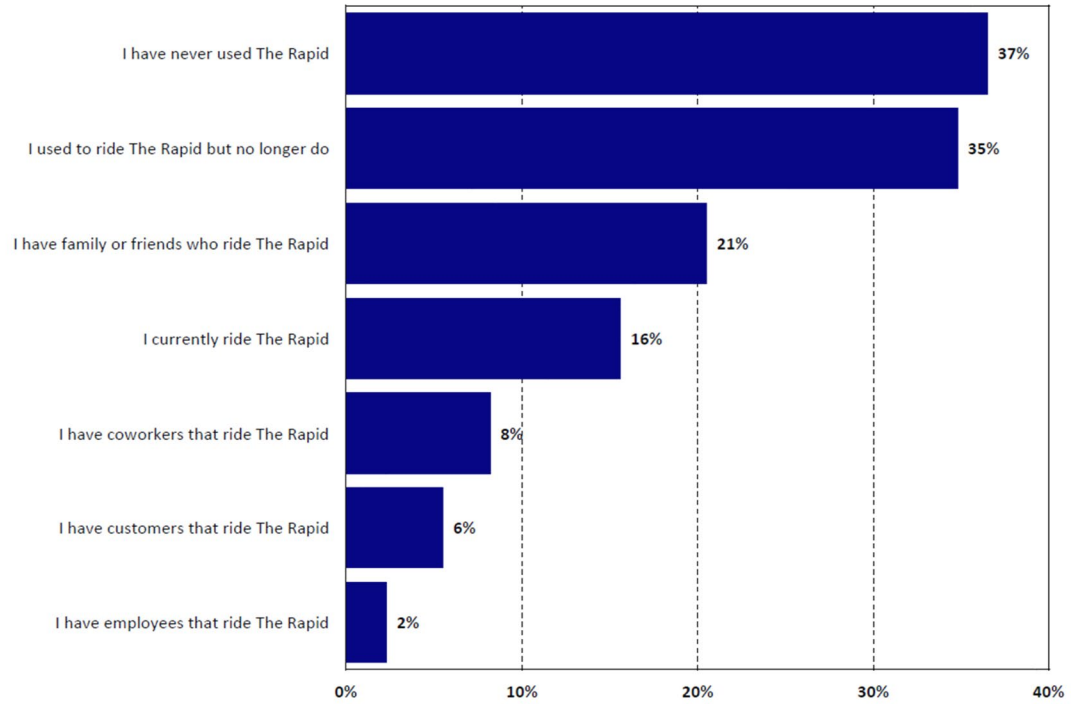


Summer/Fall 2022

2023 COMMUNITY VALUE SURVEY

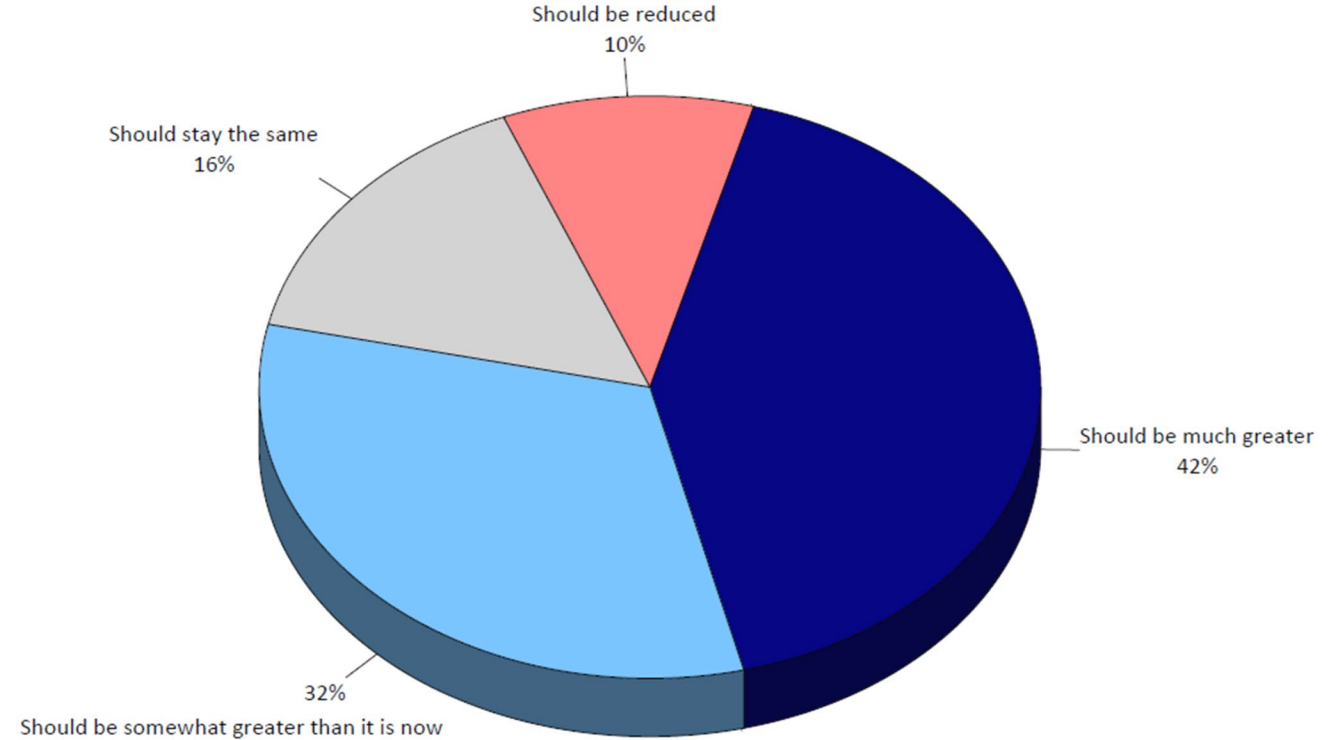
Q3. Please indicate your relationship with The Rapid

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made) (excluding "none selected")



Q12. How do you think the current level of public/government funding for public transportation (e.g., bus, paratransit) in your community should change over the next five years?

by percentage of respondents (excluding "not provided")



2023 TMP SURVEY

+1,000 surveys completed

- **The top 5 public requests will require additional funding \$\$**
- 74% have access to a vehicle
- 68% usually drive
- 46% currently ride
- 29% used to ride
- 12% never used The Rapid

What do you consider to be the most important to improve the current transit system?

		HIGH	NEUTRAL	LOW	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE	
1	Higher service frequency (bus comes more often)	70.93% 759	25.05% 268	4.02% 43	1,070	2.33	\$
4	Longer service hours (day/night)	65.79% 704	28.04% 300	6.17% 66	1,070	2.40	\$
2	More or all routes running on weekends	70.62% 757	23.51% 252	5.88% 63	1,072	2.35	\$
1	Expanded service areas	72.79% 781	20.97% 225	6.24% 67	1,073	2.33	\$
10	Information/accessibility (easier to understand how to use the service)	39.56% 415	44.61% 468	15.82% 166	1,049	2.76	
5	Increase funding to operate additional transit services	65.07% 691	26.84% 285	8.10% 86	1,062	2.43	\$
3	Improve travel time	66.79% 708	28.40% 301	4.81% 51	1,060	2.38	\$
8	System operations efficiency	48.61% 506	44.96% 468	6.44% 67	1,041	2.58	
12	Reduce the cost to ride	25.07% 263	52.43% 550	22.50% 236	1,049	2.97	
6	More dense, walkable development near transit services	63.31% 673	28.32% 301	8.37% 89	1,063	2.45	
9	More affordable housing options near transit services	50.71% 532	34.13% 358	15.16% 159	1,049	2.64	
7	Better walking/biking access to transit services	60.91% 645	31.54% 334	7.55% 80	1,059	2.47	
13	Improved marketing/communications for services provided	33.08% 347	45.57% 478	21.35% 224	1,049	2.88	

2023
REPORT CARD FOR
MICHIGAN'S
INFRASTRUCTURE



MICHIGAN SECTION
OF THE
AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF CIVIL ENGINEERS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021, Michiganders took 32.6 million trips across 88 public transit systems in all 83 counties. The reliability and availability of transit services in many areas is inadequate to meet demand or attract new riders. Existing fleets and facilities are aging. The ability to invest in vehicle procurement, facilities upkeep, and larger capital improvements is constrained due to lack of funding. Over the next 25 years, public transit in Michigan needs \$17.3 billion in investment. Of this total, approximately \$5.9 billion is unmet needs under current revenue forecasts. The state is also experiencing a shortage of qualified bus operators and mechanics to operate and maintain transit fleets, which constrains service and limits growth potential. Greater funding from predictable, dedicated sources – state and local funds to match increased federal dollars – is necessary for Michigan to improve and expand transit services.

Our public transit user rates are in the bottom half of growing peer states and below national rates - *“Reliability and availability of transit services in many areas is inadequate to meet demand or attract new riders.”*



Transit



RECOMMENDATIONS TO RAISE THE GRADE

- **Create new funding tools to support transit operations and capital needs.** Transit reliability, state of good repair on fleet and facilities, and service levels attracting “choice riders” requires a combination of local, state, federal, and private investments. Michigan’s Comprehensive Transportation Fund is not sufficient, and regulatory changes could close the gap. Examples include enabling local transit funding through flexible models such as vehicle registration fees, local sales taxes, Transit Development Districts, dedicated funds from tolled lanes, and transit surcharges on fuel taxes.
- **Follow-through on regional transit vision with state and local matches for federal dollars.** The RTA of Southeast Michigan was established a decade ago to implement a regional vision of bus-rapid transit, local transportation demand management, and eventually frequent light-rail in high-traffic corridors. The 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law including a beefed-up FTA Capital Investment Grant program provides significant funding to accomplish RTA plans but requires state and local matching funds. Financial commitments from the state legislature and regional authorities would super-charge RTA’s efforts to advance corridor projects and make operational improvements to connect and coordinate services. Similar efforts should be pursued in West Michigan and populated communities Up North and in the Upper Peninsula.
- **Intervene and allay transit’s workforce crisis.** Decision makers should pursue comprehensive and sustainable solutions for persistent transit workforce issues through a combination of additional funding and flexible funding to increase wages and sponsored training opportunities to build a 21st century workforce.
- **Modify land-use rules to maximize the value of transit investments.** Successful transit systems depend on ridership from those who need it *and* those who chose it among travel options. Higher-density, mixed-use development patterns and retrofits within walking distance of transit corridors will maximize the potential of investments in greater service. Transit can connect Michiganders to their homes, their offices, their worksites, their schools, their health care facilities, their families, their friends, their recreation at parks, and their entertainment.

Growing Michigan Together Council Report

December 14, 2023



“Michigan’s greatest strength is its people— and we are losing them. Today Michigan is 49th out of 50 in terms of population growth. We’re failing to prepare our people for the jobs of the future and failing to ensure Michigan is the place current and future Michiganders want to call home.”



Executive Summary

Throughout most of the 20th century, groundbreaking innovation in the automotive industry and industrial manufacturing helped build the middle class, create vibrant cities, and provide opportunities for homeownership, a great education, and economic prosperity. Michigan was a place where people from all over the country—and world—wanted to live. But over the last 40 years, we have fallen behind in an ever-changing, globally competitive economy. **Michigan’s greatest strength is its people—and we are losing them. Today Michigan is 49th out of 50 in terms of population growth. We’re failing to prepare our people for the jobs of the future and failing to ensure Michigan is the place current and future Michiganders want to call home.** We’re losing too many of our talented young people and failing to attract others. And when they leave, our communities suffer from lost tax base and wages needed to support our public amenities, schools, roads, transit, and housing and to attract business to our state. The cycle of healthy growth is broken.

No one person or party is to blame—we are all responsible for the apathy that allowed our outcomes to slip so far and the lack of cohesion and shared commitment necessary to build a better Michigan. In the face of our challenges, we have been quick to retreat to

our corners (both geographical and political), ignore the deep problems, and fail to advance solutions that will return Michigan to a place of prominence and growth.

It was in response to this crisis that Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced the creation of the Growing Michigan Together Council (GMTC) earlier this year. The council was charged with setting aside our differences, appointing workgroups of experts and practitioners, engaging the public, and developing recommendations that support Michigan’s population growth through investment in our people, places, and education system. With each meeting, our alignment on a shared vision for Michigan grew stronger and our belief in our work deepened. We specifically chose to dive into the center of Michigan’s challenges in population growth to put forward a new framework for a prosperous state. The government cannot bring this vision into reality on its own, so our vision must engage public, private, and philanthropic institutions that all have a role to play in building a better Michigan. We must commit to this vision and work collaboratively and inclusively to transcend the partisan differences that have contributed to our lack of cohesion, sapped our ability to respond dynamically to problems, and limited our potential.

GROWING
MICHIGAN
TOGETHER

Growing Michigan Together Council Report

December 14, 2023



INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT:

*“...Michiganders from all areas of our state struggle to access job opportunities or explore our unique regions **due to inadequate transit**. Without dynamic, equitable solutions, our communities will continue to struggle.*”

*“Furthering this challenge is **Michigan’s historic reliance on auto mobility** rather than person-centered mobility, which has prevented a more coordinated strategy on complete-street designs and alternative transportation methods that could reduce our reliance on the road network. **We lack a coordinated transit network that allows Michiganders and visitors alike to be able to reliably use it to get from downtowns to suburbs** and to connection points that will take them anywhere in the world.”*”

Growing Michigan Together Council Report

December 14, 2023



STRATEGY THREE

03.

Create thriving, resilient communities that are magnets for young talent

- Develop robust and reliable regional public transit systems across the state
- Develop and revitalize housing stock to meet Michigan's housing demands
- Future proof our infrastructure to ensure Michigan has reliable and resilient infrastructure that serves as an asset to the economy

“Research shows that many young people would prefer to rely on public or nonmotorized transportation.”

“The legislature should authorize the creation of regional transit authorities with the explicit mandate to develop integrated, sustainable, regional multimodal transit networks that provide mobility for all of Michigan.”

From: Jack L. Hoffman

To: Rapid Planning Committee

Date: 1/8/24

Subject: Update on Growing Michigan Together Council Final Report.

Here's my post on the final report:

With regard to transportation funding reform I have been following Governor Whitmer's bipartisan Growing Michigan Together Council. On December 14 the Council approved its final report. The cover letter by the council co-chairs concludes "this report is just the beginning of a long, arduous process." In the area of transportation funding reform I would have preferred the letter to say "this report can be the beginning of a short and simple process leading to the establishment and execution a user fee policy and program for use of state highways by commercial trucks, following the Illinois plan, by July 1, 2025, raising one and a half billion the first year."

The council is pessimistic because it is thinking of a long and arduous process of getting both houses of the legislature to agree on terms for amending the tangled web of constitutional, statutory and regulatory rules which govern the assessment, distribution and use of the motor fuel tax. If that were necessary, that would indeed be grounds for pessimism. But it's not necessary.

A user fee is not a tax. Under Michigan Constitution Article V, Section 28 and the state transportation commission enabling act, the commission and the director have the power to establish and execute policy for state transportation facilities and programs, including mileage and weight based user fees assessed on commercial trucks for use of state highway facilities, along the lines of the Illinois plan which assesses user fees on commercial trucks through the federal logging system and collects the fees through the international registration system. Nor would user fees be subject to the same fossilized web of rules and restrictions that make the motor fuel tax impossible as a solution to contemporary issues.

If the governor continues to appoint transportation commissioners and a commission chair who are open to a policy and program of a sustainable and flexible funding source for the state transportation system of highway facilities and programs, based primarily on market economics, a public service commission model for the commission and department, and mileage and weight based user fees, beginning with commercial trucks, then I believe an initial mileage and weight based user fee on commercial trucks following the Illinois plan could come on line as early as July 1, 2025.

<https://growingmichigan.org/wp-content/uploads/2023-12-14-GMTC-Final-Report-2.pdf>