



Present Performance & Service Committee Members

Charis Austin, David Bilardello (Chair), Tracie Coffman, Mark Huizenga, Andy Guy

PRESENT PERFORMANCE & SERVICE COMMITTEE

Monday, November 5, 2018, 4:00 p.m.

Rapid Administrative Office, 300 Ellsworth Avenue, SW

AGENDA

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. MINUTES – October 9, 2018 Committee Meeting
2. DISCUSSION ITEMS
 - a) Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA)
3. OTHER
 - a) Meeting Schedule for 2019 - Time, Day and Frequency



**MINUTES OF
PRESENT PERFORMANCE & SERVICE COMMITTEE**

October 9, 2018

ATTENDANCE

Committee Members Present: Charis Austin, David Bilardello (Chair), Tracie Coffman, Andy Guy

Committee Members Absent: Mark Huizenga

Staff Present: Robin Crothers, Andrew Johnson (CEO), Brian Pouget, Mike Wieringa

Others Present: Watchdog Miller

Mr. Bilardello called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Watchdog Miller commented that the committee should be reviewing ridership for the last four years. Last year Routes 1, 3 and 4 had ridership decreases of 6%. There are more parking ramps because The Rapid's performance is down. There are no bus lanes. They need to review Route 19 and the Laker Line. Do staffers use The Rapid services? Route 14 no longer connects with Route 19. It should be routed differently. He asked if Board members received a copy of his federal filing that he filed on August 13. The Rapid is moving too many bus stops.

Mr. Bilardello asked Mr. Miller for clarification on his statement about parking ramps. He asked him if he meant that if The Rapid was doing better we wouldn't need as many parking ramps. Mr. Miller stated that is what he meant.

1. MINUTES

There were no minutes since this was the first meeting of the committee.

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. Bilardello stated that he would ask committee members to talk about their areas of focus for this committee at the end of the meeting. He noted that on-time performance is a top priority for him.

a) Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA)

Mr. Pouget stated that a Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) is budgeted in FY 2019. The COA provides a detailed look at all current services. A consultant will be hired and should be onboard by early 2019.

Mr. Johnson informed the committee that the process starts after the scope of the project is defined. The consultant will work with the Board and staff to develop guiding principles. The COA will be an agenda item for this committee and the Future Planning & Technology Committee.

He indicated that the COA will assist The Rapid in identifying opportunities to transition to mobility coordinator/provider. There will be a major public outreach effort to obtain input from riders and non-riders.

Ms. Coffman mentioned that she was concerned about any potential confusion in the community between the Align Study and the COA.

Mr. Johnson stated that the Align Study is visionary and aspirational. The COA and Align are very different projects and will feed into each other.

Ms. Coffman asked why we need both the Align Study and a COA. Mr. Johnson responded that both the Align Study and the COA have value and work together. The COA is more detailed and focuses on how the current system functions, quality of life issues and how it could work better.

Mr. Pouget stated that the COA is more "nuts and bolts" and the Align Study is more about the future and what we could add at some point if a revenue source is identified.

Mr. Johnson noted that the Align Study gives the COA consultant somewhat of a head start.

Mr. Guy was interested in what happened in Houston when they revamped their entire system.

Mr. Johnson indicated that there are reasons to do a clean sheet redesign of a transit system. If the route system is generally not working then everything needs to change. Much of The Rapid's system works now but we need to develop solutions for congestion and work more with major employers. There may be some revamping of our system. The guiding principles are critical.

Mr. Pouget commented that the Houston system was broken in a major way. The Rapid does not need that level of change.

Mr. Guy inquired about Board involvement with the previous COA. Mr. Pouget responded that The Rapid had a COA in 2005. The Board was not involved in that process. There were no major changes as a result of that COA. There was more refinement. We did add service to Metro Hospital as a result of the 2005 analysis.

Mr. Bilardello concurred with Mr. Pouget's statement that The Rapid does not need the level of change that was implemented in Houston. He felt that discussion should be held at the Board level to clarify.

Mr. Johnson mentioned that a consultant would probably not recommend that The Rapid go through a change like what happened in Houston.

Ms. Austin was concerned that the COA will be completed and nothing will be done with it.

Mr. Johnson indicated that there will be outcomes from the COA based on significant public input. The Align Study will feed into the COA. He noted that everything in the Align Study will not happen.

Mr. Pouget stated that the Walker Latent Demand Study will come up during the COA as well as service to the new Amazon facility in Gaines Township.

In response to a question from Mr. Guy, Mr. Johnson stated that staff will work on the proposal to engage a consultant. Mr. Guy recommended that it include a strong messaging/public relations component regarding clarification between Align and the COA.

b) Route 19 Update

Mr. Pouget reported that a revised system was put in place on Route 19 with 15-minute frequencies on the west end and 7-8 minutes on the east end to the Spectrum parking lot. On-time performance has been much better. Rapid staff will continue to monitor the service.

Mr. Bilardello asked about ridership on Route 19. Mr. Pouget stated that there have been approximately 1,100 rides per day compared to 54 when it was a much more limited service.

Mr. Guy commented that the bus should have priority on the Michigan corridor. Buses move so slowly due to the congestion that people are choosing to use their cars. He stated that the congestion will only get worse.

Mr. Johnson agreed that congestion is creating backups and buses can't get through. We have moved some stops and there will be signal changes with the City of Grand Rapids.

Ms. Coffman commented that this experience may help when we start talking more about mobility and not just large buses.

Mr. Guy believes that the City of Grand Rapids wants to understand what The Rapid needs to make service more successful.

Mr. Bilardello mentioned that there should be more partnerships in the future.

c) DASH Update

Mr. Pouget informed the Committee that the North DASH is running very well. West DASH is having some issues. The Rapid has met with the City of Grand Rapids to determine how to resolve the problems with West DASH. A fourth bus is being added in the morning to help avoid buses bunching up. Dispatch is keeping a close eye on the service and making adjustments as needed. Staff will continue to work on getting West DASH to operate more effectively.

Mr. Johnson commented that The Rapid is working to resolve the issues which are the worst at peak times. The Rapid and the city want the service to be a value to the community.

d) Grandville Transit Station

Mr. Johnson stated that the Grandville transit station is proposed near the Grandville Library. There is a small piece of land owned by Chase Bank that needs an easement in order to complete this project. After considerable effort, we have finally received a response from Chase Bank through the attorneys. We hope to have this resolved by the end of November 2018.

Mr. Pouget commented that locating the transit station near the Grandville Library keeps the bus off the side streets which was a safety concern.

Mr. Johnson noted that he recently met with Mayor Steve Maas who offered to assist with getting the easement if necessary.

In response to a question from Ms. Austin, Mr. Pouget stated that the Grandville Transit Station will be completely accessible.

3. OTHER

a) Conference Schedule

Mr. Bilardello noted that a list of conferences that Board members might be interested in was emailed by Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson stated that the APTA Leadership Summit is November 27-30, 2018 in Washington DC. The Transit Board Member workshop is part of that conference. He will be scheduling Hill visits and asked that Board members decide soon on whether they want to attend the conference.

b) Meeting Schedule – Time, Day and Frequency

Mr. Bilardello commented that the Committee needs to determine when and how often it needs to meet. Ms. Coffman stated that she would prefer either first thing in the morning or last thing in the afternoon. Mr. Guy concurred.

The next meeting of the Present Performance & Service Committee will be held on Tuesday, January 8, 2019, at 4:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Guy supports on-time performance and asked about targets and performance metrics. He stated it is worth revisiting performance metrics that we currently use. We need to emphasize mobility in 2019.

Ms. Coffman wanted to review the reports we currently have related to performance. We need to talk about how to implement recommendations. Congestion in Grand Rapids will increase and we need to determine how to deal with those issues. She commented on changing the culture of what it means to use public transit. We need a culture shift with the growth in the area and what is The Rapid's role in that effort.

Ms. Austin mentioned that she is mostly connected with paratransit. She would like to see more timely and efficient paratransit service. Mr. Bilardello stated that the COA will be looking at paratransit service. Ms. Austin noted that some rides on paratransit are longer than they need to be. People get frustrated. She has asked people to let The Rapid know. We need to figure out how to resolve these issues.

Mr. Pouget inquired if people are looking for same day service. Ms. Austin responded that some people are but some medical facilities that people need to go to are outside of our boundaries which is also a problem.

Mr. Johnson clarified that paratransit is looked at as part of The Rapid's entire mobility system. It is not just large buses.

Mr. Bilardello agreed with the need for a culture shift toward public transit.

Mr. Guy acknowledged that public transit is not for everybody but could be right for a lot more people than currently use it.

Ms. Coffman stated that people don't have to use it every day. DASH is public transit and services and Uber are becoming more popular.

Mr. Johnson commented that The Rapid needs to continually work to improve service to the community and provide the service that people want.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:09 p.m.



Robin Crothers, Board Secretary



Date: October 26, 2018
To: The Rapid Board
From: Conrad Venema – Manager of Planning
Subject: ALIGN STUDY AND COMPREHENSIVE OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS (COA)

BACKGROUND

The goals and objectives for the Align study reflect The Rapid's priorities in planning for the system's future. Ridership has leveled off since 2015 and identifying ways to attract riders is a main driver of Align. Potential opportunities to increase ridership include adding new enhanced transit services, increasing service in areas with a high density of potential users, and implementing new technology to help optimize existing operations. In addition, Align addresses ways to increase access to transit in areas of the region that are typically underserved. Finally, all of the improvements recommended as a part of this plan need to be supported by the community. Having broad community support is a great way to encourage those same community members to use the services.

The five goals and related objectives for Align are as follows:

Goal 1: Provide enhanced transit service options to grow ridership and improve reliability

Goal 2: Improve equitable access to transit services

Goal 3: Prioritize future transit enhancement projects that maximize positive regional impact

Goal 4: Foster transit supportive land use policies and encourage economic development

Goal 5: Develop and select implementable investments that have community support

METHODOLOGY

The Align Study combined both qualitative and quantitative data to determine priority projects through a two-phased approach. The first phase included a high-level evaluation of all the data collected. The second phase included a detailed evaluation of these potential projects that resulted in the final recommendations presented in the Align Study. In addition to an analysis of hard data throughout the study process, a wide variety of engagement methods were utilized in order to reach The Rapid's diverse and geographically-large service area. Both digital and in-person engagement efforts gathered the concerns, ideas, and aspirations of transit riders and non-riders alike. As a result of combining the qualitative and quantitative data, the final report includes various project categories that have been identified as priorities for The Rapid moving forward.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

To ensure that the recommended projects will benefit the region, it is important that there are projects that can be implemented in the near-term. The Align Study does offer a list of priority projects. Some examples of these projects are as follows:

- Potential Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects
- Bus stop amenity improvements
- Mobility hubs
- Super stops

- Pedestrian intersection improvements
- Dedicated bus lanes
- Transit Signal Priority (TSP)
- Queue jumps at signals
- Bus bulbs
- Express bus
- Stop consolidation
- Crosstown routes
- System-wide service enhancements
- Expansion opportunities

NEXT STEPS

A Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) is scheduled for FY 2019. While the Align Study serves as a guiding document that identifies priority projects, the COA will strive to bring the recommended near-term and longer-term projects to fruition. The COA will study the system as well as the region in order to make recommendations for a variety of service options/modifications such as reallocating resources to better serve mobility needs over the next few years. Longer term recommendations may include structural changes to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the system, adding community value and to increase ridership.

In order for the COA to be successful, however, the Rapid Board, staff, and the consultant team will need to adopt guiding principles, develop a phasing plan, and introduce the region to some new ways of thinking in order to make sure that the project identified in the Align Study are realized at their full potential. As part of the COA process, the Align findings will be folded into the overall system plan. In order to assist with this process, the Align Study recommends the following general areas of focus:

- ***Leverage investment in the existing BRT corridors.***
- ***Invest in amenities and service upgrades in the high-ridership, high-frequency network.***
- ***Move toward and strengthen the core system based around more of an all day / all week service model.***
- ***Provide new connections and service types to key growing travel markets, including expansion areas.***
- ***Explore Mobility on Demand services.***
- ***Work with partnering jurisdictions to make regional land use more transit friendly.***
- ***Encourage partnership-based implementation.***

There is an entire spectrum of possible outcomes from a COA ranging from minor adjustments to an entire system reboot. Nevertheless, the COA will analyze current resources and recommend actions based on the availability of those resources. In addition, the COA will provide alternative service plans if more resources are identified or become available. Some examples of particular focus of the COA are as follows:

- Increase system ridership
- Improve system on-time performance
- Improve system reliability
- Address demand for additional or more frequent service
- Explore alternative services
- Evaluate bus stop placement/spacing
- Explore route optimization and/or redesign



DRAFT - 2019 MEETING SCHEDULE

RAPID BOARD

Wednesday, 4:00pm

Rapid Central Station Conference Room

- January 30 – Annual Meeting
- March 27
- May 15
- June 26
- August 28
- September 25
- October 30
- December 4

RAPID BOARD SPECIAL MEETINGS

Board Retreat

Monday, January 21, 8:30am-4:30pm
Location to be determined

Board Planning Meeting

Wednesday, May 15, 1:30pm
Rapid Central Station Conference Room

Board Budget Meeting

Wednesday, July 31, 3:00pm
Rapid Central Station Conference Room

PRESENT PERFORMANCE & SERVICE COMMITTEE, day/time??

Rapid Ellsworth Conference Room

January 8

FUTURE PLANNING & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE, day/time??

Rapid Ellsworth Conference Room

FINANCE COMMITTEE

day/time??

Rapid Ellsworth Conference Room

Consumer Advisory Committee for Seniors & Persons with Disabilities

Tuesday, 3:00 p.m.

Rapid Ellsworth Conference Room

- January 22
- March 19
- May 7
- June 18

- August 20
- September 17
- October 22
- November 26

MEETING LOCATIONS:

Rapid Central Station Conference Room, 250 Grandville Ave SW, Grand Rapids MI 49503

Rapid Ellsworth Conference Room, 300 Ellsworth Ave SW, Grand Rapids MI 49503

The Rapid reserves the right to move the location of the meetings above between these two locations if that is deemed to be necessary.