



***Future Planning & Technology Committee Members***

*Rosalynn Bliss, Jack Hoffman, Robert Postema, Terry Schweitzer (Chair), Paul Troost  
Citizen Members: Ryan Anderson, Dave Bulkowski*

**FUTURE PLANNING & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE**

**Monday, March 4, 2019, 8:00 a.m.**

**Rapid Administrative Office, 300 Ellsworth Avenue, SW**

**AGENDA**

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. MINUTES – January 7, 2018 Committee Meeting
2. DISCUSSION
  - a) Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA)
3. NEXT MEETING – May 6, 2019



**MINUTES OF  
FUTURE PLANNING & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE**

**January 7, 2019**

ATTENDANCE

Committee Members Present: Rosalynn Bliss, Jack Hoffman, Robert Postema, Terry Schweitzer (Chair), Paul Troost, Ryan Anderson (citizen member), Dave Bulkowski (citizen member)

Committee Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Robin Crothers, Andrew Johnson (CEO), Nick Monoyios, Brian Pouget, Dina Reed, Conrad Venema, Mike Wieringa, Kevin Wisselink

Others Present: None

Mr. Schweitzer called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT – no public present

Mr. Schweitzer asked the two new citizen members of the committee – Ryan Anderson and Dave Bulkowski – to introduce themselves and talk briefly about their background and interest in public transit.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the November 6, 2018 committee meeting were approved as written.

2. DISCUSSION

a) Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA)

Mr. Venema stated the draft scope of work for the COA is being provided to this committee and the Present Performance & Service Committee for input and discussion. There will be additional information included in the Request for Proposal but it is boilerplate type language. The committees need to focus on the actual scope of work.

Mr. Venema pointed out the deliverables shown on the first page of the scope of work, specifically noting that a cost-neutral plan was requested to address the immediate mobility needs for the region. Alternative service plans were requested that address The Rapid's priorities for service expansion over the next 1-3 years and 4-6 years along with an implementation plan for each of the proposed service options. The plans would also include operating and capital cost needs as well as facility needs for each of the proposed service plans. The scope also requested non-traditional service options for the region. He briefly reviewed some of the remaining items in the draft scope.

Mayor Bliss stated that she understood the need for a cost-neutral plan but was concerned about an overall larger vision, including the cost and funding mechanisms.

Mr. Johnson commented that the intent of the COA is to look at existing services and lay the groundwork for the future. It will give us options for a mobility model that has the greatest impact on the community now and where to go in the future.

Mayor Bliss asked about capturing any possible expansion outside the current service area. Mr. Johnson responded that the scope includes determining the greatest needs outside the area.

Mr. Schweitzer suggested that item #7-Latent Demand Analysis be made clearer related to going beyond the current service area.

Mr. Wisselink noted that the data collected will identify the needs.

Mr. Monoyios commented that the Board needs to develop the guiding principles which will direct the consultants in their work on the COA.

Mr. Hoffman questioned why the COA is moving so quickly. He would support taking more time to make sure everything is identified before the work begins.

Mr. Venema stated that the funding for the COA is in the FY 2019 capital program. We won't have access to those funds until the end of the fiscal year. Moving on the COA now is not because of a funding timeline issue. We can get pre-award authority to start the project. It is at the Board's discretion to determine when to move forward on the COA. Ultimately, the Board will have to approve awarding a contract to a consultant which could be available for the March 27 meeting.

In response to a question from Mr. Hoffman, Mr. Johnson indicated that the COA does need to be timed in a way that the consultant can see all aspects of service including school time and non-school or anything else that impacts service. He stated that if we need to slow down the process we can certainly do that.



Mr. Bulkowski commented on past discussions regarding countywide service. He felt that the quicker we can get the COA completed, the sooner we can get to the voters and make things happen. The Rapid needs to connect other areas, Gaines and Byron Townships for example, not just downtown Grand Rapids. He stated that residents of the six cities would use service to other areas. He suggested moving forward on the COA faster since it will still take several years for change to happen.

Mr. Hoffman was concerned about potential political consequences in moving to a countywide plan. This would be a reason to slow down the process.

Mr. Bulkowski noted there are a lot of things to consider with countywide service.

Mr. Hoffman questioned if the county was prepared to put a millage before the voters for countywide service.

Mr. Bulkowski stated that the county is already putting \$1.4 million into transportation with the senior millage. People want more but it is unclear how we would fund it.

Mayor Bliss mentioned that we have the Align Study which identified needs that the public feels are currently not being met. Also, ridership has been going down. The COA is the process to supply the necessary information to consider potential changes coming out of the Align Study. She commented that we need the right people at the table for discussion of future transportation options. She believes we also need to get the consultant's COA report first.

Mr. Johnson commented that the Board should look at the COA as getting the current system in shape. We need a more comprehensive system with a good foundation for making improvements. Before we consider going countywide or develop other structural improvements we need to make the current system better and make the best use of our resources.

Mr. Schweitzer noted that key stakeholders need to be identified in order to widen the range of input. He stated that cost-neutral is good but eventually we need more.

Mr. Anderson asked where the COA fell in the areas of refine, redefine or transformation. He noted that it appears that refine has to come first.

Mr. Johnson stated that the system is in a current state of disruption. The COA takes in elements of all three areas. The guiding principles from the Board will direct the COA.

Mayor Bliss hoped there will be some refine and redefine and then work toward transformation. The Rapid has not been able to keep up with advancements.

Mr. Monoyios commented on a COA vs. an updated master plan. The COA is an operational plan. He mentioned that the consultants will have a national network of resources.

In response to a question from Mayor Bliss, Mr. Johnson stated that the COA will need to include elements of an operational plan and an updated master plan. They will determine service efficiency vs. coverage. It will also have elements of non-traditional mobility options. The Rapid needs to catch up with the new ways of providing transportation.

Mr. Anderson asked about information on regional mobility needs aside from the Align Study. Mr. Venema responded that Align is the most recent information. The Rapid's last Transit Master Plan was done in 2010. Mr. Anderson suggested that the transformation work be accomplished by a brief expanded market research, separate from the COA.

Mr. Bulkowski agreed and stated that we need to determine where the market is going and how to get there.

Mr. Johnson mentioned the need for capital planning in order to position ourselves to be ready for more.

Mayor Bliss stated we need a solid vision/plan which should create opportunities to develop new partnerships. Employers need better transportation options for their employees.

Mr. Johnson stated that The Rapid needs to be in on discussions regarding potential transportation issues at the beginning.

Discussion took place regarding the timing of doing a COA and a transformational plan or larger visioning plan.

Mr. Monoyios commented that the COA refines services that are not working well. The COA is then used to move into transformation.

Mr. Anderson concurred that the COA should come first and the transformational phase should be separate. A market analysis could determine what else could be done.

Mr. Troost noted that he understood that the COA lays the foundation in order to eventually get to a transformational phase.

Mr. Schweitzer stated that the Board needs to develop guiding principles for the COA.

Mayor Bliss mentioned that other cities are dealing with the transformational issues and there are consultants who have worked with other systems to address the

challenges. We need a consultant that has experience and is bold and creative. She suggested that we do a market analysis separately.

Mr. Schweitzer asked staff to modify the scope of work based on discussion at today's committee meeting and bring it back to the committee at their March meeting.

Conferences:

Mr. Schweitzer commented on the list of conferences that was sent out that Board members could attend. They should notify Andrew Johnson or Robin Crothers if there is an interest in attending.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 a.m.



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Robin Crothers, Board Secretary

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## COMPREHENSIVE OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS (COA)



Interurban Transit Partnership  
300 Ellsworth Avenue, S.W.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503-4018  
(616) 456-7514

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Issue RFP	XXXXX
Pre-Proposal Meeting	XXXXX
Questions and Answers	XXXXX
Response to Q & A's	XXXXX
Proposals Due	XXXXX
Interviews	XXXXX
Best and Final Offer Due	XXXXX
The Rapid Board Actions	XXXXX
Contract Award	XXXXX

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## **SECTION 1: PUBLIC NOTICE**

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)**

#### **COMPREHENSIVE OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS (COA)**

The Rapid is requesting sealed proposals for the provision of a Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) for its entire fixed route bus system. The Rapid serves a population of more than 569,935 people with 23 bus routes as well as 7 contracted routes. In FY 2018 total ridership on the system was 10,466,464. The Rapid service area is comprised of six cities—Grand Rapids, East Grand Rapids, Kentwood, Wyoming, and Walker—as well as partnering townships.

Sealed proposals will be accepted by the The Rapid's Purchasing Manager until XXXX. A pre-proposal meeting is scheduled for XXXX at The Rapid's administrative offices located at the address listed below.

The Rapid Board reserves the right to postpone, accept or reject any and all proposals in whole or in part, on such basis as The Rapid Board deems to be in its interest to do so, subject to the rules and regulations set forth by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

No proposal may be withdrawn for at least sixty (60) days after the scheduled closing time for receipt of proposals. An original and four (4) copies of the proposal shall be submitted in the format prescribed by the Purchasing Department.

Mark R. Fedorowicz  
Purchasing Manager  
616-456-7514  
Fax: 616-774-1195

The Rapid  
300 Ellsworth Ave S.W.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

## SECTION 2: SCOPE OF WORK

### Background

The Rapid is seeking to contract with a professional planning firm to produce a Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) of the fixed-route bus system. A COA was completed in 2005 that delivered both near-term and longer-term recommendations that have since been implemented. Nevertheless the region has since experienced substantial and continuing growth, demographic changes, and changing ridership patterns. As a result of this growth, areas of employment are increasingly becoming more geographically separate from where people live. The COA must address the increasing geographic separation of home-to-work trips in order for The Rapid to be an effective mobility provider.

In addition, as a result of increasing traffic congestion in the region, a detailed analysis of the on-time performance and reliability of the fixed-route system is required. Lastly, ridership on the system has decreased since the peak in 2014. For these reasons, evaluation of The Rapid's fixed-route system is necessary in order for the transit system to meet the changing mobility needs of the service area.

The COA must consider all mobility options in the process of evaluating the Rapid's fixed-route bus system including an evaluation of the design of a radial pulse system versus a grid system. The COA must recommend route changes designed to improve service efficiency, on-time performance, increase ridership, and the possible reallocation of The Rapid's fixed-route resources. The COA must also leverage the existing (and future) Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) investments including the Silver Line and the Laker Line. The COA will build these recommendations based on extensive data analysis, public outreach, and efforts to inform The Rapid Board of best practices and best use of various types of public transportation modes.

In addition, the COA process must use existing planning documents (such as the Transit Master Plan (TMP), the Align Study, the Walker Latent Demand Study, and the future Transit On Demand (TOD) Study), regional plans, and regional initiatives for guidance and as a basis for the final recommendations for the COA outcomes. **Furthermore, the COA shall consider an entire spectrum of service modifications ranging from entirely 'resetting' the system to minor modifications, based on data analysis, public input, and existing documentation.** The COA shall also consider the analysis and potential implementation of all mobility options and how they can each be best utilized to meet the region's mobility needs. The Rapid's Title VI plan and an environmental justice analysis must be considered in all evaluation of service recommendations. The Grand Rapids metropolitan region has many areas of concentrated social need for transit service—in all forms—which must be addressed in the COA.

Of importance to the COA are the relationships between effective transit and land-use, population and employment patterns, as well as social equity and areas of high transit need. Furthermore, new mobility integration is desired as well as buy-in from major employers and the implementation of Transit Demand Management (TDM) and Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) solutions. Other considerations must include the analysis of the downtown DASH service including the evaluation of a

potential policy of a fare free network. In the end, the COA must consider all options to grow the ridership base and compliment smart growth goals of the service area.

**The primary goals and objectives are as follows:**

- Stakeholder outreach, education and engagement plans;
- Summary of service priorities based on public input, existing plans, as well as cities' and regional initiatives;
- A cost-neutral service plan that addresses the immediate mobility needs for the region;
- Alternate service plan that address The Rapid's priorities for service expansion over the next 3 years;
- Alternate service plan that address The Rapid's priorities for service expansion over the next 4-6 years;
- Implementation plan for each of the proposed service options;
- Operating and capital costs (including facilities needs) requirements to adequately fund each of the proposed service plans;
- Non-traditional service options for the region including the evaluation of the existing PASS service;
- Analysis of infrastructure capacity and functionality to support recommendations for service changes or expansion;
- Truly visionary and innovative approach to the best use of transit resources to best meet the mobility needs of the region;
- Determination of how service options interconnect seamlessly with new mobility options such as car share, bikeshare, WAV on-demand, and TNCs.

In summary the consultant shall focus on providing practical and sustainable recommendations to improve the overall productivity and reliability of The Rapid system, and further enhance The Rapid's image throughout the Grand Rapids metropolitan area in a three-phased approach. The Rapid desires the COA to be completed in 12 months from the start of the study.

The final Work Scope is comprised of the following 12 tasks:

**1.0 Project Management**

**Methodology:** The Consultants project manager will meet with The Rapid staff at the start of the project to discuss the work plan, schedule and relevant issues/concerns. The final work scope will provide the blueprint for which ensuing tasks will be conducted. The consultant will manage and coordinate the work elements, prepare monthly progress reports, and provide a single point of communication and responsibility with The Rapid Project Manager.

**Product/Deliverable:** A final work scope and schedule will be prepared following the kick-off meeting. Monthly progress reports will summarize the project status, outstanding issues, and work planned for next the next month.



## **2.0 The Rapid Board Engagement and Education**

**Methodology:** The consultant team will create and implement a plan of action to engage with and inform The Rapid Board of best industry practices and the most effective use of transit modes based on land-use, demographics, and travel patterns.

**Product/Deliverable:** Presentations, board activities, and general board engagement to determine guiding principles for the COA.

## **3.0 Rapid Staff Engagement**

**Methodology:** The Rapid management will be interviewed to canvass their opinions regarding the current system's operational strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. Interviews will be conducted with operations, bus operators, planning, scheduling, marketing, and customer service departments' management and staff.

**Product/Deliverable:** A report will be generated that summarizes the input received.

## **4.0 Community and Stakeholder Outreach and Education**

**Methodology:** The consultant will meet with key stakeholders when crafting the COA plan alternatives. This will provide the necessary framework in order to present and gain meaningful feedback to the final findings to the public once the final COA recommendations are presented.

**Product/Deliverable:** A report will be generated that summarizes the input received.

## **5.0 Data Collection**

**Methodology:** The Consultant will assemble and review information presently available and to collect new data for a comprehensive analysis of The Rapid current route performance, system operations and procedures. In addition, data collection must include current travel patterns, stop-level boarding and alighting data, transfer analysis, operating costs data, on-time performance metrics, and stop spacing analysis and other data as required. The consultant shall also collect data on regional job and housing locations, employment centers, population, demographics, and regional travel patterns.

Key documents to be collected by the consultant team are daily and monthly route summary reports, productivity and ridership reports, which The Rapid prepares, to determine ridership characteristics of each route. The Rapid plans for future operations and facilities should be consistent with various transportation and land use development plans and policies developed by local and regional governments.

**Product/Deliverable:** A report will be generated that summarizes the input received.

## 6.0 Evaluation of Services

**Methodology:** Route profiles will be prepared that evaluates the overall productivity, efficiency and effectiveness of each route. Segments and time-of-day productivity will be evaluated when developing individual route profiles.

After completion of the individual route profiles, the project team will review the following key operational, service alignment and schedule issues for each of The Rapid's fixed-route services. This is not a comprehensive list and other data points recommended by the consultant are welcome.

- Social economic equity;
- Headways (service frequencies);
- Passenger loads by route segments relative to capacity;
- Route complexity, including deviations and turn backs;
- Locations of transfer centers, opportunities for timed transfers;
- Equipment utilization and assignment by type and time period;
- Directness and redundancy of route alignments;
- Scheduling arrival/departure times at key generators;
- Transfer needs and opportunities;
- Interlining (scheduled through-routes);
- Time point locations (optimal spacing and schedule adherence management);
- Layover and terminal locations and recovery times;
- Bus stop spacing;
- Operating hours, days of service;
- Scheduled adherence/running times;
- Deadhead operations;
- Reverse commuting/bi-directional demand opportunities;
- Evaluation of alternate service options other than traditional fixed route service such as car share, mobility hubs, new shared mobility, and non-motorized options;
- Traffic and bus turning movement considerations;
- Passenger amenities (facility, shelter and bus stop needs);
- Service frequency recommendations; and
- Evaluation of bus fleet requirements and vehicle size needs.

**Product/Deliverable:** A report will be generated that summarizes the input received.

## 7.0 Latent Demand Analysis

**Methodology:** The Consultant must assess the potential of expanded Rapid service in geographic areas where service does not currently exist or is limited. Where possible, this should be identified by latent demand by time of day, origin-destination zones and user group. In addition, the Consultant team must consider alternate mode of transit—other than fixed route—to address the region's mobility needs.



Current census data will be analyzed to identify markets of potential riders that presently have inadequate transit service. The analysis will focus on identifying markets of disadvantaged populations (i.e., those persons who because of age, mobility limitations, or low income would rely on public transportation), and commuter travel markets. This analysis will be corroborated by public service requests, interviews with management and The Rapid Board, as well as data collected in the TMP, the Align Study, the Walker Latent Demand Study and the future TOD Study. This analysis will identify demographic characteristics of areas with high transit ridership, future land-use planning, and will identify areas that are presently underserved by transit. Key trip generators with regional travel patterns will also be identified.

**Product/Deliverable:** A report will be generated that summarizes the input received.

## **8.0 Cost-Neutral Service Plan**

**Methodology:** The cost-neutral service plan will focus on the reallocation of The Rapid's current resources to best meet the changing needs of the Grand Rapids metropolitan region and build upon the investments The Rapid has and will make in the BRT network.

**Product/Deliverable:** The consultant will deliver a cost-neutral service plan that will address the immediate mobility needs of the region.

## **9.0 Near-Term Recommendations (1-3 years)**

**Methodology:** The near-term plan will address new service options, additional service, and expansion opportunities within the metropolitan service area with the understanding that additional funding sources may be required. The near-term plan will build on the recommendations from the cost-neutral plan.

**Product/Deliverable:** The consultant team will deliver a near-term service plan that incorporates the facility needs, operating costs, capital costs, and vehicles needs over this time period.

## **10.0 Short-Term Recommendations (4-6 years)**

**Methodology:** The near-term plan will address new service options, additional service, and expansion opportunities within the metropolitan service area with the understanding that additional funding sources may be required. This plan will build upon the recommendations from the near-term plan.

**Product/Deliverable:** The consultant team will deliver a short-term service plan that incorporates facility needs, operating costs, capital costs, and vehicles needs over this time period.

## **11.0 Presentation of Findings**

**Methodology:** The consultant will present findings of the COA in report, electronic and graphics media and will prepare a Draft COA Report that documents all of the aforementioned work elements, results, and recommendations. After a suitable period of review by Rapid staff, the consultant will prepare the final COA Report, incorporating review comments. The consultant will assist staff in the design and layout of graphic presentation materials, as required. Lastly, the consultant team will present the recommendations of the COA to The Rapid Board of Directors at a regularly scheduled board meeting.

**Product/Deliverable:** The consultant will prepare a final COA Report that documents all of the aforementioned work elements, results, and recommendations.

## **12.0 Implementation Plans**

**Methodology:** The consultant will present findings of the COA service plans and provide an implementation plan for each of the alternate service plans. These plans must include all the elements of implementing the various service plan options including operating and capital costs and facilities needs for the various plans.

**Product/Deliverable:** The consultant team will deliver an implementation plan for each of the service plan options.