



**Future Planning & Technology Committee Members**

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

**FUTURE PLANNING & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE**

**Thursday, February 20, 2020 – 11 a.m.**

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

**AGENDA**

	<u>PRESENTER</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1. PUBLIC COMMENT		
2. MINUTES – November 4, 2019 Future Planning & Technology Committee Meeting	Terry Schweitzer	Approval
3. DISCUSSION		
a) COA Presentation	Nick Monoyios	Presentation
4. ADJOURNMENT		

Next meeting: May 18, 2020



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**FUTURE PLANNING & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, November 4, 2019 – 8 a.m.**

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

**ATTENDANCE:**

Committee Members Present:

Ryan Anderson, Mayor Rosalynn Bliss, Dave Bulkowski, Jack Hoffman, Rob Postema, Terry Schweitzer, Paul Troost

Committee Members Absent:

Staff Attendees:

Nancy Groendal, Julie Ilbrink, Andrew Johnson, Deron Kippen, Nick Monoyios, Brian Pouget, Jason Prescott, Andy Prokopy, Dina Reed, Steve Schipper, Michael Wieringa, Kevin Wisselink, Lisa Young

Other Attendees:

Laurel Joseph (GWMC)

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Mr. Schweitzer called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

**1. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No comments offered by the attendees

**2. MINUTES – September 9, 2019 Future Planning & Technology Committee Meeting**

A brief summary of the minutes were distributed for the team to review.

**3. DISCUSSION**

**a. Update on Paratransit Program**

Mr. Prescott shared an update on the Paratransit program. They have seen a lot of growth in ridership in the last few months with the implementation of this program. The Go!Bus service map was distributed and shared with the group, covering Leonard to 44<sup>th</sup> street. Mr. Prescott shared feedback on the program where customers shared they felt “normal” with these services. Mr. Prescott shared some of the challenges with the program. Originally they were hoping to have five vehicles per day, however, they are currently averaging 2-3 vehicles per day which means they are not getting the ridership they

initially desired. Mr. Prescott shared the future of the project would be to run five vehicles per day, five days a week. A review of the program will take place later in the year.

Mr. Anderson asked about the reason behind the scale of the project, and the comparison to the on-demand process. Mr. Prescott shared that more riders are using the on-demand service, however, the overall ridership has been down. Mr. Johnson shared that we need to make sure that our program appropriately addresses the need of the community. Mr. Bulkowski shared a concern that having the deadline to call to arrange a ride may impede citizens that need to use the services at the last minute. Mr. Johnson said that the overall cost of the program is being considered as we roll out initiatives.

Mr. Hoffman asked if we are in an area where we expand into suburban ridership. Mr. Bulkowski shared that with Uber and Lyft, all the ownership is on the drivers and their vehicles. While they are waiting around to get a ride, they are not making money, whereas The Rapid would need to pay for drivers to wait around until someone calls for a ride. People tend to use Uber because it is more readily available on demand. If the increased cost is an issue, perhaps we need to take this issue to the voters. Mr. Hoffman asked if individual choices on where to live (suburban or urban) take into consideration transportation availability, and if it is our responsibility to make sure that transportation is provided to all these areas. Mr. Schweitzer asked how much we are receiving on this grant. Mr. Pouget shared that we are receiving \$360,000. Mr. Johnson shared that we have focused on grass roots promotion when rolling out this program. Mr. Schweitzer shared that this is a good starting point to evaluate the program and where we go from here.

Mr. Hoffman asked if a challenge to the on-demand service is hindered by using the cell-phone technology. Mr. Prescott shared that those who have chosen to not use the app tend to call the operators at the service center.

Mr. Schweitzer would like to revisit this topic at the next Future Planning meeting in February.

**b. Express Service to Holland / Hudsonville**

Mr. Johnson shared that things are moving forward with this project. The proposed route along Chicago Drive is being discussed. They are gearing up for what will be employer outreach and organizational outreach with the businesses located along this route. The goal is not to immediately strike up a public/private partnership, but to find out what they would want moving forward. On a state level, new revenue methods are being sought out to help this project move forward. Additional funding for this project will need to be put in place as the project is not taking away from any current funding.

Mr. Monoyios shared that considerations need to be made as to how people get to certain bus stops as parking is not immediately available onsite at each stop location. Through outreach and relationship building, they will discover what the needs and anticipations will be. Mr. Troost asked how it is being decided where the bus stops will be, especially in Hudsonville, Holland or Zeeland. Mr. Monoyios shared that the time required to get a vehicle through the streets and back to Chicago Drive will be used to make that determination. Employer relationship development will be established with manufacturing companies who need to draw ridership from the Grand Rapids area.

Mayor Bliss inquired about the timeline for the roll-out. Mr. Johnson anticipates roll-out in the Fall of 2021.

Mr. Hoffman asked if we were working with Mobility GR on this project. Mr. Johnson affirmed.

Mr. Schweitzer shared that those involved with an Ottawa County affordable housing coalition are trying to attract people to live and work in the Holland/Zeeland area, but are getting jobs downtown Grand Rapids, and then eventually move to Grand Rapids due to transportation issues. Mr. Schweitzer shared that this project could help stabilize the housing efforts. Mr. Monoyios agreed and will pull some data sets in order to gauge what is happening right now, and what the needs are or will be in the future. Mr.

Schweitzer would like to take into consideration how many Wheels to Work users are in this general area, and would like that data included. Mr. Bulkowski suggested that the promotion of the express service should figure in the factor of time saved for the riders, specifically being able to utilize wifi and being able to work while someone else drives. Promote increasing productivity time instead of losing an hour of transportation time.

Mr. Schweitzer would like to revisit this topic at the next meeting.

**c. COA Update**

Mr. Monoyios shared that the COA update was provided at the last Board meeting. The presentation focused on what is happening in the system right now. He shared that at the beginning of the new year, we will begin to seeing more public outreach. These results will be brought back to the Board, which will help us finesse where we need to be in the Spring and Summer of 2020. Mr. Monoyios shared that the data will be compiled over the next few months to help guide the direction of the project. Mr. Johnson shared that this is the point where we are going to bring in all our partners and ask them how they feel about the system along with what our consultants have found. Ms. Bliss requested the City of Grand Rapids' communication team is involved when the roll-out is ready.

Mr. Schweitzer inquired about the list of partners. Mr. Johnson shared Hope Network, Mobility GR, Chambers, Economic Development within the cities and many others in the area will be a part of the partnership.

**d. Wave Card Update**

Mr. Prokopy shared that the process is going well with the utilization and sale of the Wave Cards. On Thursday, November 14, paper tickets will no longer be sold, however they will be accepted on the buses. Programming will be changed to accept bar codes within the first quarter of 2020. They are also working with Meijer and Family Fare stores to sell the Wave cards in their stores. Transfers and change cards will stop being used and issued by Summer of 2020. Mr. Prokopy shared that we have held public meetings regarding these changes. There were a lot of questions asked and answered, and the overall feeling of the meetings was very positive. Overhead announcements, paper flyers and bus driver announcements are being made. Another event will be held on November 14 to reach out to additional people who may have questions. Bus operators, road supervisor and customer service staff have been trained on this change.

Mr. Prokopy shared that we have a distribution area of over 60 stores and service centers that sell the Wave card. This is an increase from where the paper cards were sold. These cards can be reloaded at various store locations and online. Mr. Prokopy shared that various stores are also being taught how to handle the reloading of the cards, as they have found that there was some confusion. Mr. Bulkowski shared there were some concerns expressed about one-trip paper tickets being eliminated, and how that will change with the Wave cards. He requested that Mr. Prokopy be available at their next meeting to share the process of how to working with agencies who have issued one-way paper tickets.

**e. Review past year / Discuss future plans**

Mr. Schweitzer reviewed the document from December 2018 which was a summary for the discussion about future goals and planning for this committee.

**Resolve Route 19**

Mr. Johnson shared that Spectrum Health will be building a new shelter for Route 19 which will help resolve some issues. The buses have also been kept on time by running the short and long trips, allowing for service for staff to get to the parking lots quickly, especially during shift change.

Mr. Monoyios shared that with the new parking ramp being built by Spectrum Health and GVSU, we foresee additional challenges that we will need to work through.

#### Bringing Silver Line to full potential

Mr. Monoyios shared that we were awarded a significant grant from the FTA to do a planning study for the Silver Line. A steering committee with GR, Kentwood, Wyoming and The Rapid is being developed. The key focus will be beyond the planning and drawing pictures of what things will look like; they will also be getting to the resolution of how things need to be handled. Mr. Hoffman shared that he felt we are on a positive track by developing corridors and providing high density service.

#### Expansion of Technology

Ms. Reed expressed the need to think about leveraging technology to create a seamless mobility solution. The Laker Line has new machines installed. They are also looking at what is being utilized around the country, and determining how The Rapid can adapt their services, going beyond the Wave card, linking it to a cell phone app, etc. Ms. Reed shared that an internal app to facilitate communication among The Rapid employees, similar to Facebook, has been developed. She would like to use something like this to communicate externally as well.

#### Develop partnerships with local communities / establish and draw upon current partnerships

Mr. Schweitzer shared it will take private investment to fully realize the development of the transportation initiatives. He shared that we are on the right track, but need to stay focused on the final outcome. Mr. Johnson shared it is important that we work with businesses to take into consideration mobility when developing their building and/or reconstruction projects. He would like to see these conversations taking place earlier in the process. Mr. Bulkowski shared that need to keep in mind the current and future population structure when moving forward with partnerships – student population, economic changes, business development, etc. – we need to look at what actually happened, how it was different than what we anticipated, and what we can anticipate for the future.

#### f. Review committee meeting schedule for 2020

Mr. Schweitzer reviewed the proposed meeting schedule for 2020. The new schedule would involve meetings taking place quarterly, being in alignment with other committee meetings, and allowing for reporting out to be on a more consistent basis. The meetings would move to an 8:30 a.m. start time, allowing for the Ellsworth building to be open for any public involvement in the meetings.

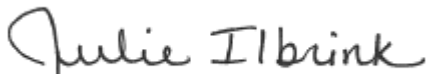
The committee approved the updated meeting schedule for 2020.

#### 4. AJOURNMENT

This meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 17, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Julie Ilbrink, Board Secretary