



**THE RAPID**  
**General Manager/Chief Executive Officer**

**Position Description**

- Position Title:** General Manager/Chief Executive Officer (GM/CEO)
- Reports to:** The Rapid, Board of Directors
- Location:** Grand Rapids, Michigan
- The Company:** The Rapid

**Introduction:**

The Interurban Transit Partnership (“The Rapid”) was formed in 2000 to operate a public transportation system for the Grand Rapids metropolitan area and surrounding communities. Based in the City of Grand Rapids, The Rapid also provides transportation service to the cities of East Grand Rapids, Grandville, Kentwood, Walker and Wyoming.

The Rapid is a highly regarded mid-sized transit agency. The Rapid’s services are a cornerstone of the Grand Rapids community, providing a safe, reliable transportation network that its customers depend on to get to work and stay connected to the community. Only four years after its creation, The Rapid received the 2004 “Outstanding Public Transportation Systems Award” from the American Public Transportation Association. The Rapid repeated this feat in 2013 and has continued to stand out as a gold standard in the industry.

The Rapid is vital to supporting the region’s economy and community. The Agency’s values and beliefs align with those of the community which include fostering inclusivity, growth, and opportunity. Grand Rapids sits on the Grand River and is Michigan’s second-largest city. Historically known as a manufacturing hub, Grand Rapids now boasts a vibrant community of sports, arts, tourism and industry while maintaining its small city feel. Grand Rapids is one of the best walking cities nationwide with its scenic views and thriving downtown scene. In light of COVID-19, Grand Rapids has transformed its downtown area by creating 4 outdoor, socially distanced zones where residents and visitors can safely enjoy over 170 restaurants, breweries, shopping destinations, live music, and more.

Grand Rapids’ Calder Plaza is home to the annual Festival of the Arts, a three-day celebration featuring visual arts displays, live performances, and a range of activities for children and families. This world-renowned festival draws in nearly half a million visitors, both locally and from across the country, and is

the nation's largest all-volunteer event of its kind. The festival celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> year in 2019 and has continued its reputation as an exciting way to engage in culture, the arts, and the community.

Grand Rapids is home to excellent outdoor recreation options, including parks, golf resorts, water sports and boating, sculpture gardens, and family-friendly destinations. Lakefront beaches, including Lake Michigan, are within a 45-minute drive and the surrounding area is also a great place for mountain biking, fishing, and hiking. These public beaches are top ranked for their scenery and idyllic feel. With the breadth of activities available to residents and visitors, Grand Rapids offers something for everyone, no matter the season.

Grand Rapids is also an excellent place for families and young professionals alike. The city is highly ranked for its public schools and affordable housing. Grand Rapids is a vibrant, exciting city and is an excellent place to live, work, and play.

In 2019, The Rapid provided 10 million trips to its customers. In addition to its 28 fixed bus routes, The Rapid also provides demand response services for people with disabilities, as well as car and vanpooling programs for community members living outside its fixed-route service area. The Rapid also operates the only two Bus Rapid Transit routes in the State of Michigan, the second opening just recently in August of 2020. This new BRT line, known as the Laker Line, is expected to bring development to the area between Grand Valley State University and downtown Grand Rapids in addition to improving traffic congestion and increasing customer service.

The Rapid is governed by a 15-member Board of Directors and operates under Michigan Public Act 196. The Board of Directors is comprised of representatives from the six municipalities, including five from Grand Rapids and two each from East Grand Rapids, Grandville, Kentwood, Walker and Wyoming.

## **SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The General Manager/Chief Executive Officer ("GM/CEO") is responsible for overseeing The Rapid's daily operations and for shaping and leading The Rapid's strategic long-term vision as well as any planned expansions. The Rapid and its Board of Directors are committed to ensuring that the organization is planning to meet future needs of the community by providing increased transportation options while maintaining the quality of service currently being delivered on a daily basis. The ideal candidate will have a proven track record of successfully managing a large, complex, and diverse organization that operates to provide the highest quality of service to its employees and customers. The GM/CEO must possess outstanding leadership and business skills as well as strong financial management, strategic planning, public relations, community relations and governmental relations skills.

The Rapid's GM/CEO will be an integral leader in enhancing transportation options in the Grand Rapids region. Elected officials, businesses, residents and other stakeholders expect the next GM/CEO to lead a team of transit professionals who are capable of identifying and launching innovative transportation

solutions to improve mobility and in turn lead to greater access across the region for all residents, smart growth, environmental sustainability, increased business opportunities, jobs and economic development. It will also provide greater access to existing jobs that are not currently transit accessible.

- The GM/CEO will have management responsibility for overseeing The Rapid's core business service by: managing a customer-centric, publicly-financed quasi-public organization that provides year-round transit service to its customers on a daily basis with an emphasis on safety, security, customer service, reliability, cost, and on-time performance.
- Creating additional sustainable revenue streams including public-private partnerships for business operations, sustained maintenance, and planned growth and expansion.
- Oversee and direct transit-oriented capital projects and executing system-wide expansion programs that are on-time and on-budget.
- Provide sound oversight and management of daily transit operations, maintenance and short- and long-term capital projects.

The ideal candidate will have demonstrated a background and ability as grouped in the following areas:

### **GENERAL MANAGEMENT**

- Strong financial management skills overseeing large and complex budgets and an ability to offer creative solutions to run the organization more efficiently and effectively.
- Prepare an annual operating budget and any budget amendments for Board review and approval
- Administer all services and activities within the budget adopted by the Board.
- Develop and implement a service plan that is consistent with Board and stakeholder priorities and report periodically to the Board on the status of service relative to the service plan and the adopted budget.
- Develop relationships with businesses and other organizations to create public-private partnership opportunities which lessen the reliance on taxpayer dollars, grants, farebox revenues and other sources of public funding.
- Oversee and implement effective cost-control measures and ensure that they are in place at all levels of the agency.

- Oversee an effective marketing plan to advance a positive culture and strong public image that promotes the agency, its services, and increases ridership.

## **INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS**

- Challenge the executive management team and their departments to think “outside the box” and offer customer-centric solutions that are innovative and incorporate technology solutions that advance customer service.
- Develop and promote a “yes we can” culture across the organization that allows employees to feel safe to think creatively and try to deliver mobility solutions that may not follow the traditional way in which transit agencies or The Rapid has always operated.
- Challenge members of the senior management and their teams to be industry trendsetters by taking calculated risks and increasing the use of technology and outside partnerships when appropriate.
- Motivate staff members to set priorities for their departments, accelerate decision making, and communicate and collaborate with other agency departments to ensure greater communication, identify solutions to challenges, and make sure that these solutions are being implemented as quickly and efficiently as possible without putting the organization at risk.
- Ability to evaluate, develop, mentor, and hire a senior executive management team that will ensure the agency is providing exceptional service that is timely, safe, and affordable and also meeting the expectations of the community.
- Provide strategic vision and guidance to ensure that the agency has successful succession and employee development plans in place and provide leadership to encourage employees to take initiative and develop within the organization.
- Delegate responsibilities and empower senior management and employees to lead their departments, take action and functions effectively and efficiently.
- Establish and maintain a healthy working relationship with the collective bargaining units and all employees across the organization.
- Treat all employees (represented and non-represented) fairly and provide an open, collaborative, positive, professional, and safe work environment for all employees and contractors of The Rapid.

## **EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS**

- Serve as a thought leader for increased mobility across the region.
- Regularly attend, participate, and engage with local leaders and the public by providing creative ideas, solutions and approaches to address the mobility challenges facing the Grand Rapids region.
- Engage and work effectively and persuasively with elected officials, local, state and federal agencies, the business community, faith-based community, disability community, organized labor, public constituencies, NGOs, educational and health leaders, the press, and other stakeholders.
- Interact and communicate regularly with employees, customers, the public, elected officials, the press, and all other stakeholders to provide transparency and insight into the agency's implementation of policies and agendas.
- Maintain on-going and effective communication with governmental agencies and elected officials (state, local, and federal) to assure maximum cooperation and to achieve the best possible transportation system for the region.
- Provide a non-partisan outreach program that addresses the needs of all community members and identifies common objectives and goals which The Rapid can work towards delivering.
- Work creatively with constituent groups to address their concerns and generate new programs and instruments that accommodate their needs.
- Meet, speak with, and listen to stakeholders in the community to generate new ideas and approaches to enhance not just The Rapid, but also mobility around the region.
- Listen, respond, and address all community needs regardless of the origin in a fair, open, transparent, honest, sincere and committed manner.

## **BOARD INTERACTION**

- Develop a strong working relationship with the 15-member Board and Board Chair, including having effective two-way communication.
- Keep the Board informed and assist the Board in its policymaking duties and decisions including furnishing information and support.

- Implement Board policy via actionable management plans and provide strategic direction to senior management that will enable the effective execution of these policies.
- Assist and advise the Board in generating and achieving the Board's short- and long-term transit objectives.
- Advise, inform and keep the Board aware of The Rapid's engagement and efforts at a local, state and national level to address its state of operations, capital needs, financial state and funding needs.
- Engage and partner with Board members to advocate on The Rapid's behalf with elected officials at a local, state and national level to ensure that The Rapid continues to demonstrate its commitment to quality service, increased mobility, regional growth and sustainable development.

**PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES:**

The candidate should possess the following attributes:

- Professional and executive presence, mature, honest, even-tempered, intelligent, trusting, confident, charismatic, and personable.
- Politically savvy, persuasive, open-minded, and fair but firm manager.
- Adaptable to change quickly and often.
- Inspiring visionary who is passionate about transit and can be a champion of The Rapid.
- High energy level, sense of humor, gravitas, integrity and ethics above reproach.
- Innovative, compassionate, transparent, inclusive in his/her decision-making process and willing to delegate responsibility.
- Excellent interpersonal, communication, presentation and writing skills.
- Ability to speak to large and small groups alike.
- Commitment to respond to communication in a timely and accurate manner.
- Results-oriented individual with a dedication to accuracy, sense of urgency, efficiency and on-time delivery.
- Willing to accept, embrace and adjust to criticism and make suggestions for change.
- Ability to communicate with and treat all stakeholders equal and with respect.
- Ability to facilitate, negotiate and provide realistic and strategic solutions to problems and comfortable mediating difficult situations and building consensus.
- Strategic leader, open-minded communicator and critical thinker who is unwilling to let challenges prevent success, but rather looks at challenges as opportunities for success.

- Ability to unify teams, communities and people during complicated times.
- Strong mentor and teacher who is approachable, open-minded and treats all employees with respect and dignity.
- Executive leader who embraces diversity and inclusion and has the ability to attract talent.
- Effective manager who listens and encourages employees, teams and stakeholders to debate and challenge ideas.
- Strong manager and leader with team building skills and excellent problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.
- Creative approach to problem-solving with a proven track record of implementing innovative initiatives in complex organizations.
- Experience developing and implementing metrics used to evaluate individual and company performance, budgets, cost effectiveness and returns on investments to increase the bottom-line and operational performance.
- A leader who has a strong financial orientation and who can identify inefficiencies and areas of potential cost reduction.
- Demonstrated track record of success during varying economic and business cycles.

**EXPERIENCE REQUIRED:**

The successful candidate will have a minimum of 10 years' executive management experience with a large complex operating organization, transit agency or another public or private entity of comparable nature, complexity and size to The Rapid. While transit experience may be beneficial, candidates with experience from other industries will be given serious consideration. A Bachelor's degree in business administration/management or equivalent or a degree in transportation/transportation management is required. An equivalent combination of education and experience consistent with the required qualifications will also be considered.

**For additional information or to submit a cover letter and resume, please contact Gregg A. Moser at [gmoser@kapartners.com](mailto:gmoser@kapartners.com).**