



Interurban Transit Partnership

Board Members

Mayor Gary Carey, Chair			Mayor Katie Favale, Vice-Chair	
Charis Austin	Rick Baker	Tracie Coffman	Steven Gilbert	Andy Guy
Renee Hill	Jack Hoffman	Mayor David LaGrand	Mayor Steve Maas	David Moore
	Clarkston Morgan	Tim Mroz	Paul Troost	

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, September 23, 2026 – 4:00 p.m.

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

AGENDA

	<u>PRESENTER</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1. PUBLIC COMMENT		
2. MINUTES REVIEW - August 26, 2026	Mayor Carey	Approval
3. CEO'S REPORT	Deb Prato	Information
4. POLLING ANALYSIS 2027	Deb Prato	Information
5. MILLAGE STRATEGY - PRESENTATION	John Helmholdt	Information
6. ACTION ITEMS		
a. Millage Rate, Ballot Date & Duration	Deb Prato	Approval
b. Contracts w/Truscott Rossman & SeyferthPR	Jeffrey King	Approval
c. Contract with DetailXPerts for Bus Cleaning and Fueling Services	Steve Clapp	Approval
d. Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan 2026 Update	Tim Roseboom	Approval
e. MDOT Master Agreement	Kevin Wisselink	Approval
7. PERFORMANCE REPORTS		
a. Paratransit Route Ridership – Report not available		
b. Fixed Route Ridership	Tim Roseboom	Information
1. August 2026		
c. Finance	Linda Medina	Information
1. Operating Statement – July 2026		
2. Professional Development and Travel Report		
a. July 2026		
3. Grant Statement		
8. CHAIR'S REPORT	Mayor Carey	Information
9. COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS, Minutes not yet prepared		
a. Present Performance & Service Committee, September 15, 2026	Charis Austin	Information
10. ADJOURNMENT		

MISSION: To create, offer and continuously improve a flexible network of public transportation options and mobility solutions.



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 26, 2026 – 4:00 p.m.

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

ATTENDANCE:

Board Members Present:

Charis Austin, Rick Baker, Mayor Carey, Mayor Favale, Andy Guy, Renee Hill, Jack Hoffman, Mayor Maas, David Moore, Clarkston Morgan, Tim Mroz, Paul Troost

Board Members Absent:

Tracie Coffman, Steven Gilbert, Mayor LaGrand

Rapid Attendees:

Josh Brink, Steve Clapp, Brian Coty, Kris Heald, Jeffrey King, Deron Kippen, Linda Medina, Nick Monoyios, Deb Prato, Andy Prokopy, Tim Roseboom, Steve Schipper, Mike Wieringa, Kevin Wisselink

Public Attendees:

Keiran Presland (GR Documenters), Steve Walters

Mayor Carey called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Steve Walters, a Grand Rapids resident and frequent bus rider, addressed the Board regarding a difficulty he experienced with his bus card and asked that his concerns be brought to the attention of leadership at The Rapid.

Mr. Walters explained that he spoke with a representative at the Information Booth and asked for the name of an administrator who could assist him with his concern. He was advised that the representative could not provide the name of an administrator. He then asked whether he could schedule an appointment with someone to discuss the matter in person. He was told that appointments could not be scheduled and was advised that his best opportunity to meet with the appropriate administrator would be to attend a monthly Board meeting.

Mr. Walters expressed concern that this was the recommended course of action for what he considers to be a routine customer service matter. He felt that the process was not sufficiently flexible and that someone should have been available to speak with him directly. He stated that he has ridden The Rapid frequently for approximately 10 years and considers the service extremely important to the City of Grand Rapids. He described himself as a strong supporter and promoter of public transit and said he was bringing the matter to the Board's attention in hopes that the customer-service process could be improved. Mr. Walters also noted that he could not find a directory of administrators, staff members, or job titles on The Rapid's website. He suggested that it would be helpful to have a staff directory or, at minimum, phone numbers and information identifying the appropriate contacts for various concerns.

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Mr. Walters further explained that he visited the building next door, where he found a phone that could be used to reach the appropriate person. However, there was no listing of names, telephone numbers, staff positions, or areas of responsibility. He felt that providing this information would make it easier for riders to identify and contract the appropriate staff member when they need assistance.

2. MINUTES REVIEW – July 22, 2026, Board Budget Workshop

Chairman Mayor Carey entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes from July 22, 2026. Mayor Maas motioned to approve, and Mr. Mroz supported it. The motion passed unanimously.

3. CEO'S REPORT

Ms. Prato began her comments by confirming that the Board received a "Save the Date" for the upcoming rededication of the northbound DeVos Place Platform in honor of Roselynn Bliss and her years of service on The Rapid Board, as well as her exceptional dedication to public transportation in our community. Ms. Prato expressed her hope that all Board members will be able to attend the event.

Ms. Prato then provided a brief overview of the Action Items included on the agenda:

- **Contract with Anlaan:** The contract relates to The Rapid's annual bus stop and bus shelter installation process. Planning begins approximately a year in advance because the work requires NEPA approval before any ground disturbance can occur within the right-of-way. Given the length of the approval process, staff began planning approximately a year and a half ago. The Board will be asked to approve the contract to install the necessary posts and concrete pads.
- **Contracts with SeyferthPR and Truscott Rossman:** Ms. Prato noted that the Board has been anticipating the launch of this marketing and public education effort, which has been discussed for some time. During the previous meeting, she reported that 19 firms submitted proposals, 18 were deemed qualified, and the field was ultimately narrowed to the top three proposers. SeyferthPR and Truscott Rossman each bring unique skill sets to the work, which is why staff are recommending contracts with both firms. Mr. King will provide additional details during his presentation.
- **Contract with FAAC for the Bus Simulator:** The simulator will support the development of The Rapid's training and retraining capabilities. Operators will be able to train in a fully equipped simulated bus and practice responding to a variety of situations, including scenarios involving incidents or accidents, until they are comfortable and proficient. The simulator will be designed to replicate a variety of locations and scenarios throughout the community and along The Rapid's platforms.
- **Update to the PTASP:** The Rapid recently completed its triennial review, during which two deficiencies related to the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) were identified. The proposed updates are being presented to the Board for approval.
- **Proposed 2026/27 Operating Budget:** The proposed Operating Budget, which was discussed with the Board in July, is now ready for Board approval.
- **Appointment to the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC):** Ms. Prato introduced the appointment of Ms. Erica Chapin to the Consumer Advisory Committee. Ms. Chapin will replace Ms. Deb Atwood.

4. ACTION ITEMS

a. Contract with Anlaan Corporation for installation of 81 Concrete Pads for Bus Stops and Shelters, Mr. Nick Monoyios

Mr. Monoyios is requesting Board approval to enter into an agreement with Anlaan Corporation for the installation of 81 new concrete pads for our bus stops and bus shelters.

Ms. Hill asked where the concrete pads would be placed at the bus shelters and expressed concern about ensuring they would not create trip hazards. Mr. Monoyios explained that the concrete pads

would be installed flush with the existing sidewalk and graded appropriately in relation to the curb and sidewalk. He noted that the installations would comply with ADA requirements, including maintaining a maximum slope of 2%, to ensure the pads are level and do not create trip hazards. He further stated that Anlaan Corporation is aware of these requirements and that each installation goes through a vetting process with the applicable jurisdictions responsible for the right-of-way to ensure compliance.

Chairman Mayor Carey entertained a motion to approve the agreement with Anlaan Corporation. Mr. Guy motioned to approve, and Ms. Hill supported it. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Contracts with both SeyferthPR and Truscott Rossman for Public Engagement & Education Services, Mr. Jeffrey King

Mr. King requested Board approval to enter into contracts with SeyferthPR and Truscott Rossman for Public Engagement and Education Services for a nine-month period, from September 2026 through May 2027.

Chairman Mayor Carey noted that he spoke with Mayor LaGrand the previous evening regarding questions that had been raised by Board members. He indicated that he would share his comments but first opened the matter for discussion by the Board. He noted that the proposed arrangement is somewhat different because it involves a partnership approach between two firms, each of which brings different core competencies to the work.

Ms. Prato added that Mr. King and Mr. Wisselink had met with representatives from both firms to discuss how the organizations would work together.

Chairman Mayor Carey stated that he believes the arrangement provides the best of both firms' capabilities.

Mr. Hoffman asked whether The Rapid currently has a contract with Truscott Rossman for state legislative services. Ms. Prato clarified that The Rapid used McAlvey Merchant for lobbying services.

Mr. Mroz asked for clarification regarding how The Rapid would coordinate the work of both firms and who would serve as the internal lead given that The Rapid does not have an internal communications team. Mr. King explained that he, Ms. Prato, and Mr. Monoyios would form the internal team responsible for coordinating the effort. He noted that the lack of a robust internal communications team was one of the reasons staff believed it was important to engage both firms. The firms would provide support with strategic messaging, development of content, and release of materials. Mr. King further explained that both organizations have identified project leaders and developed a detailed work plan outlining roles and responsibilities. The work plan is intended to identify and address potential coordination issues in advance.

Mr. Baker asked whether the amounts presented represented each firm's full proposal and whether both firms would be awarded the entire scope of work or only portions corresponding to their respective strengths.

Mr. King explained that the amounts being requested represent the firm's full monthly retainer fees. The retainers provide access to the full breadth of each firm's team during the nine-month contract period. Additional advertising purchases would be separate and made at The Rapid's discretion as messaging and strategy are developed. He explained that the firm's proposals included a menu of potential services, and staff are recommending the retainer fees and associated legal services necessary to ensure compliance with Michigan election law.

Ms. Prato added that each firm has different commission rates associated with advertising purchases, which would be in addition to the media-buy amounts.

Mr. Baker referenced Truscott Rossman's proposal of approximately \$135,000 for the entire project and asked how that compared with the amount being requested.

Mr. King explained that the \$135,000 represented the firm's proposed base retainer and did not include all of the additional project components that may ultimately be assigned to the firm.

Mr. Baker clarified that his concern was whether The Rapid was effectively paying both firms for the same work after receiving proposals for the entire project. He used the example of hiring one contractor to build a garage but then hiring another contractor to perform part of the work while still paying the original contractor for the entire project.

Ms. Prato explained that The Rapid is purchasing access to staff hours and expertise rather than purchasing a single, fixed project. The intent is to use each firm's particular skill sets for the portions of the work where it is best suited.

Chairman Mayor Carey summarized that the proposed arrangement involves monthly retainers of approximately \$10,000 and \$15,000 over nine months. He also noted that SeyferthPR's amount increased from an earlier base figure and asked about the difference.

Ms. Prato explained that SeyferthPR currently has a contract with The Rapid that is scheduled to conclude at the end of September. She noted that SeyferthPR has not yet completed its communications review and that the transition from that work into an education and outreach campaign could provide continuity.

Mr. Wisselink explained that staff attempted to compare the firm's proposals on an apples-to-apples basis. He noted that the \$125,000 figure associated with SeyferthPR included additional legal fees that were subsequently removed and incorporated into the base retainer. Staff also determined that certain proposed fees should be considered part of the firm's base services. As a result, the amount being recommended is somewhat less than the firm's original base proposal when the adjustments are considered.

Mr. Moore asked whether the amounts presented were the final figures. Ms. Prato confirmed that they were the final retainer amounts but noted that additional advertising purchases and commissions could be incurred separately. She explained that SeyferthPR is expected to conduct many of the media buys because of its expertise in that area, although the specific assignments will depend on the strategy developed.

Mr. Moore also asked why one firm's proposal was significantly more expensive than another's and whether the higher amount represented additional services. Mr. King explained that the firms structured their proposals differently. Some clearly separated hourly rates and individual expenses, while others incorporated more costs into their hourly or retainer rates. Mr. Wisselink added that some firms also proposed significantly more hours.

Mr. Guy noted that two highly capable firms had emerged from the proposal process and stated that both likely have considerable experience estimating the amount of time required for this type of work. He asked about the proposed partnership, specifically whether the two firms had independently proposed working together or whether staff had recommended that they partner. Mr. Prato confirmed that staff recommended the partnership.

Mr. Guy also questioned the proposed nine-month contract period and whether the work was being developed in anticipation of a 2027 millage request. Ms. Prato confirmed that it was. She noted that staff had been discussing a potential millage increase since February 2025 and that polling had included consideration of potential election years.

Chairman Mayor Carey and Mr. Guy discussed whether 2027 or 2028 would be the more appropriate year for a potential millage request. Chairman Mayor Carey noted that there are arguments supporting either year and that election-year circumstances could affect the outcome.

Mr. Guy expressed concern that the Board had not yet formally determined what the proposed ballot question would be, what services or improvements would be associated with it, or when the question would be placed before voters. He stated that, in his view, the proposed contracts could be moving ahead of those decisions and suggested tabling the request until the Board could further consider the underlying proposal.

Chairman Mayor Carey stated that there was a motion to table the item and asked whether there was further discussion. Mr. Hoffman supported the motion.

Ms. Heald conducted a roll-call vote:

Ms. Austin- Yes

Mr. Baker – Yes

Mayor Carey – No

Mayor Favale – No

Mr. Guy – Yes

Ms. Hill – Yes

Mr. Hoffman – Yes

Mayor Maas – Yes

Mr. Moore – Yes

Mr. Morgan – No

Mr. Mroz – Yes

Mr. Troost – Yes

Ms. Heald confirmed the motion passed with nine votes in favor and three opposed.

Chairman Mayor Carey confirmed that the item was tabled until the following month. He encouraged the Board to recognize that, if a 2027 or 2028 millage request is pursued, the timeline will require the Board and staff to move quickly. He noted that current polling results are favorable but that circumstances could change, particularly in a presidential election year.

Mr. Baker asked whether the Board would address the underlying millage question at the following month's meeting or whether formal action would be required.

Chairman Mayor Carey stated that staff would work with Ms. Prato to bring additional information forward. He noted that 2027 has generally been the leading year under consideration but acknowledged that both 2027 and 2028 have been discussed. He emphasized that timing is becoming increasingly important.

Ms. Prato asked whether staff should prepare a formal Board action for the next meeting regarding the proposed election year. She noted that the issue had been discussed at the July Board Budget Meeting, the February Board Retreat, and the prior year's Board Retreat. She also noted that polling had been completed and that the Board had received 18 proposals as part of the consultant-selection process.

Mr. Guy stated that it would be helpful for the Board to understand the specific proposition being proposed, its estimated cost, and the anticipated timing. He noted that the information presented to date had largely focused on the maximum potential millage increase rather than specific service adjustments, enhancements, or changes that would be delivered in exchange for the additional revenue. He stated that the Board should understand what it is asking voters to support, how much it would cost, and what The Rapid intends to deliver to the community.

Ms. Prato explained that staff had discussed a 2.0 mill increase in February but subsequently consulted with legal counsel and determined that a single ballot question could increase the millage by no more than 0.5 mills. She stated that the proposal ballot language had been tested through polling and was included in the information provided to the Board following the polling.

Chairman Mayor Carey asked whether the Board should use the next month as an informational and discussion period, with the goal of making a decision the following month, or whether additional months of analysis would be necessary.

Mr. Guy acknowledged the importance of timing but stated that he believes the Board should have sufficient information and community data to make an informed decision.

Chairman Mayor Carey noted that Competitive Edge had already presented polling information to the Board and stated that he believes the Board has significant information regarding community sentiment. He cautioned against delaying the process through excessive additional analysis while also acknowledging the need for the Board to make the necessary policy decisions. Mr. Guy reiterated that, if the direction is clear, he would like to see the specific proposal brought forward for Board consideration.

Mr. Hoffman agreed with Mr. Guy that the current proposal appears to incorporate several decisions that should ultimately be made by the Board. While acknowledging that the subject has been discussed previously, he stated that the Board should formally consider that decision rather than proceed incrementally and potentially find itself committed to a particular approach. He supported bringing the issues forward for full discussion and requested additional clarification regarding the contract structure, additional fees, and potential advertising purchases.

Ms. Prato noted that, at the July meeting, Mr. Guy had asked about the funds available for election-related services. She stated that approximately \$750,000 has been budgeted for the contracts and advertising purchases.

Mr. Moore asked whether there was anything individual Board members should do to prepare for the next discussion. Chairman Mayor Carey encouraged Board members to review the information in the Board packet and to contact Ms. Prato with questions.

Ms. Prato noted that SeyferthPR had also been expected to identify other millage proposals that could potentially compete for voters' attention during the relevant election years but had not yet provided that information. She stated that staff had also discussed the duration of the proposed millage, how to address rising costs of goods and services and the results of the polling. Ms. Prato stated that staff had generally been operating under the assumption of a 2027 election but stated that, if the Board wants a formal action establishing 2027 or 2028 as the target year and confirming the proposed revenue increase, staff can bring that action forward.

Mr. Moore asked how long the numbers are good for; can we wait a month. Will they increase between now and the next meeting. Ms. Prato did not think the numbers would increase between now and next meeting. One of the things we did that was different was we asked two firms. If we did one firm, it would be Truscott Rossman to go forward in terms of where we would go for a recommendation. She noted the firms selected for consideration were expected to remain available for the nine-month project, although availability could change.

Mr. Baker asked why the proposed public engagement, and education work would conclude in May if the election would not occur until November.

Ms. Prato explained that the public education work would need to be concluded before the period in which a vote-yes campaign could begin because public funds cannot be used to advocate for passage of the millage. She stated that the public education effort would focus on explaining what the millage would fund, what The Rapid's current services are, and the agency's operational realities. Ms. Prato also discussed The Rapid's current fleet limitations. She explained that the agency has limited spare buses available during peak service periods and that additional buses can take approximately 18-24 months to purchase and receive. She noted that The Rapid had requested funding for five additional buses through state transformational funding and expected to hear back in October whether that request would be successful. If approved, those buses could be added to an existing order, but delivery would still take approximately two years.

Ms. Prato stated that additional service would be most feasible during nights and weekends because service frequency is lower during those periods and there are more operators and buses available. During daytime and peak periods, fleet availability is significantly more constrained.

Chairman Mayor Carey noted that even the remaining spare buses are needed for contingencies such as accidents, mechanical failures, preventative maintenance, and other vehicles that may be out of service.

Mr. Hoffman stated that this was the type of information he would like to see at the next meeting, including the issues raised by Board members and staff's responses to those issues.

Ms. Prato offered to distribute the "Rapid Realities" presentation that was provided at the February Board Retreat, which included information regarding expenses and operating revenue. The Board agreed that the information would be helpful.

Chairman Mayor Carey asked whether there was any additional discussion regarding item 4b.

Ms. Hill commented on the polling results and expressed concern regarding the amount of money proposed for public engagement and education and whether some of those funds could be used elsewhere. Ms. Prato explained that approximately 60 percent support in initial polling was considered encouraging, but that the polling also tested different messages to determine what information could change the views of respondents who initially indicated they would not support the proposal. Ms. Prato explained that the purpose of the public education and outreach effort would be to provide information to the community over the nine-month period leading up to the election. She emphasized that the intent is not necessarily to spend the entire \$750,000 budgeted for the effort.

Ms. Hill asked whether The Rapid would use messaging similar to that used by SMART in its recent millage campaign. Ms. Prato explained that each of the six cities served by The Rapid has different priorities and characteristics. The messaging would therefore be developed based on the polling and the issues identified as important in each community rather than simply adopting messaging used elsewhere.

Ms. Prato stated that the goal would be to educate the public about The Rapid's services, the proposed millage, and the agency's needs before the publicly funded education period ends. If the millage is ultimately unsuccessful, the information gathered could also help the agency understand where support was strongest or weakest and what issues or messages may need to be reconsidered in the future.

Chairman Mayor Carey concluded by reiterating that Board members should contact Ms. Prato with questions and use those discussions to obtain factual information as the Board prepares for its next consideration of the matter.

c. Contract with FAAC Incorporated to purchase a Transit Bus Simulator, Mr. Kevin Wisselink

Mr. Wisselink is requesting Board approval to enter into a contract with FAAC Incorporated for the purchase of a Transit Bus Simulator.

Mr. Morgan expressed his support for the simulator and asked whether the proposed system would provide a fully immersive experience or simply consist of a screen in a room. Mr. Wisselink explained that the simulator is a fully enclosed system with a closing door and 360-degree screens, providing a robust and fully immersive training environment.

Ms. Prato added that the simulator includes the same type of bus seat currently used by the organization, an operational bus door, and a farebox. Mr. Wisselink noted that the system is designed to provide an experience as close as possible to operating an actual bus without being on the road. Instructors will be able to monitor various performance metrics and provide operators with detailed feedback. He stated that the simulator will be an excellent tool for both initial and refresher training in a controlled environment.

Mr. Morgan asked whether there are established performance standards for simulator training and how those standards compare to actual on-road operations. Ms. Prato explained that the simulator will initially be used primarily for refresher training, particularly when an additional bus is not available for practice. The simulator will also provide an opportunity for individuals working toward their commercial driver's license to gain additional practice. Operators who feel they need more practice beyond classroom instruction, and behind-the-wheel training will also be able to utilize the simulator.

Mr. Wisselink clarified that the simulator will not replace traditional on-road training but will serve as an effective supplement to the existing training program.

Ms. Hill asked whether the simulator includes physical movement or motion. Mr. Wisselink confirmed that the system provides an immersive experience.

Mr. Mroz asked whether the contract price includes installation. Mr. Wisselink confirmed that installation is included, along with the development of a highly detailed Central Station environment within the simulator.

Chairman Mayor Carey asked whether the contract includes a service agreement. Mr. Wisselink confirmed that the contract includes a fully covered five-year service agreement.

Chairman Mayor Carey also asked whether having the simulator available could potentially have a positive impact on insurance rates. Mr. Wisselink stated that reducing accidents through enhanced training could potentially benefit insurance costs and that the organization could notify its insurance providers that the simulator is now part of its training program.

Chairman Mayor Carey entertained a motion to approve the contract with FAAC Incorporated. Mr. Morgan motioned to approve, and Ms. Austin supported it. The motion passed unanimously.

d. Update to the annual Public Transit Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) and designate the Chief Safety Officer, Mr. Steve Schipper

Mr. Schipper is requesting the Board approve updates to the target areas of the Rapid's annual submission of its Public Transit Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) as required by the Federal Transit Administration.

Chairman Mayor Carey entertained a motion to approve the updates to the PTASP as required by the Federal Transit Administration. Mr. Guy motioned to approve, and Mr. Moore supported it. The motion passed unanimously.

e. Proposed FY 2026/27 Operating Budget, Ms. Linda Medina

Ms. Medina is requesting Board approval for the FY 2026/27 Annual Operating Budget, Five-Year Operating Budget, and Grants Annual Operating Budget.

Chairman Mayor Carey entertained a motion to approve the proposed FY 2026/27 Operating Budget. Mr. Moore motioned to approve, and Mayor Maas supported it. The motion passed

f. Appointment of Erica Chapin to the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities, Ms. Deb Prato

Ms. Prato is requesting approval for the appointment of Erica Chapin to the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC).

Chairman Mayor Carey entertained a motion to approve the appointment of Erica Chapin to the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC).

5. PERFORMANCE REPORTS

- a. Paratransit Route Ridership – Report not available
- b. Fixed Route Ridership – July 2026, Mr. Tim Roseboom

No questions

- c. Financial Reports – June 2026, Ms. Linda Medina

No questions

6. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chairman Mayor Carey yielded the floor.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 p.m.
The next meeting is scheduled for September 23, 2026

Respectfully submitted,



Kris Heald, Board Secretary

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Rapid (Interurban Transit Partnership) Board & Executive Leadership
FROM: John Nienstedt, Competitive Edge
RE: Feasibility of an Odd-Year (2027) Millage Ballot Measure
DATE: Tuesday, September 08, 2026

Competitive Edge's earlier scientific survey tested a potential transit millage increase under November 2026 (35% turnout) and November 2028 (60% turnout) scenarios. Initial support was strong — 61% “yes” in 2026 and 63% in 2028 — and held at similarly high levels after respondents were exposed to detailed measure provisions and arguments on both sides.

Drivers of support: Regression analysis attributes support primarily to a well-constructed measure reflecting a wide range of voter priorities, strong general attitudes toward public transit, and a center-left electorate open to taxation. Secondary factors include a belief that The Rapid has not been fiscally irresponsible, a civic mood that is not sour, and fair to excellent transit service ratings. Opposition is concentrated among lower-income homeowners and voters unfamiliar with The Rapid, two relatively small segments.

2027 feasibility question: The Agency asked us to assess an odd-year (2027) election. Research into the history of Kent County odd-year millage increases in larger jurisdictions since 2003 finds: turnout typically runs about 15% (slightly higher in May or November, lower in August); 83% of millage increases have passed, with none failing after 2009; the three historical losses still averaged 49% “yes”; transit millages have averaged 57% “yes”; and no odd-year November increase has failed.

Revised modeling: Re-running the model at 15% turnout produces no change: 61% “yes” on the initial ballot test and 63% on the informed test. This tracks with the historical pattern above and confirms that turnout reliability does not drive opinion on this measure. Highly reliable voters are older, tend to have been registered for longer, and are more likely to own a home, but they are not significantly less liberal. The core factors identified in our original analysis are not turnout-related, so the measure should pass in a low-turnout 2027 scenario if those factors remain stable. Additionally, though maintaining service satisfaction and campaigning on the measure's provisions will be important, we find no evidence that *adding* a service element will improve the prospects of a millage increase.

Caveats: November 2027 is 14 months out, and campaign dynamics or a shift in civic mood could erode support. Placing the measure on a April or August 2027 ballot would shorten the gap between our initial fieldwork and the election and reduce this uncertainty.

Recommendation: We recommend a survey closer to the filing decision to retest these findings and refine our read of the 2027 electorate before finalizing ballot timing.

The Rapid Millage Strategy and Recommendation

Executive Summary

SeyferthPR was engaged by The Rapid to evaluate potential timing and duration options for a future transit millage and to identify the strategy most likely to achieve voter approval. This assessment considered public opinion research, voter demographics, election timing, stakeholder perspectives, historical voting patterns, and the broader political environment across The Rapid's service area. The objective was to determine the election timing and millage structure that best balances voter support, campaign effectiveness, long-term funding stability, and implementation needs.

Based on this analysis, SeyferthPR developed recommendations regarding both the proposed millage duration and the optimal election date, with a particular focus on maximizing community engagement, voter participation, and the likelihood of a successful outcome.

Millage Timing Recommendation: November 2027 Election

Based on third-party polling conducted by Competitive Edge, stakeholder input, and election timing considerations, November 2027 is the recommended and preferred election date for The Rapid's millage proposal. Among the options evaluated, November 2027 provides the strongest combination of voter participation, voter awareness, campaign readiness, and opportunity for success.

A November 2027 election is expected to attract a broader and more representative electorate than an August election, resulting in a stronger demonstration of community support and greater confidence in the outcome. It also provides additional time for voter education, stakeholder engagement, and community outreach, allowing The Rapid to clearly communicate the value of its services, long-term vision, and funding needs before voters cast their ballots.

While an August 2027 election would place the proposal on a less crowded ballot, it would rely on a smaller electorate and require a substantially greater voter mobilization effort to achieve comparable participation. Conversely, delaying the proposal until November 2028 would extend financial uncertainty by an additional year and place the measure on a high-profile presidential election ballot where local funding issues must compete with statewide and national campaigns for voter attention.

November 2027 represents the optimal balance between turnout and ballot visibility. It provides access to a larger, more representative voting population than August while avoiding the distractions and competing priorities that characterize a presidential-year election. This timing maximizes the opportunity to build broad-based community support, achieve voter approval, and secure the stable funding necessary to advance The Rapid's long-term service, capital, and operational priorities.

For these reasons, November 2027 stands out as the clearest and most strategically advantageous path forward for The Rapid's millage proposal because most contested races will happen in November vs August.

Why we recommend November 2027

- Overall less competition for voter attention and education
- Significantly less costly for voter education campaign
- Half of the communities will have local elections – *all three of which showed solid support in the polling (EGR, Kentwood, and Grandville)*—while avoiding a crowded presidential ballot
- Polling indicates favorable odd-year electorate
- Limited competition from other known ballot initiatives

ELECTION	PROS	CONS
NOVEMBER 2027 SPR RECOMMENDATION ESTIMATED TURNOUT: 35-55% ESTIMATED BUDGET: \$300K-\$400K	• Significantly higher turnout than a typical August election. • More time to educate voters and build awareness. • Stakeholders are back into routines and more connected to community communications. • Greater legitimacy due to broader voter participation.	• Potential competition from local races, municipal issues, and other ballot proposals. • Higher turnout introduces more occasional voters who may be less familiar with transit funding. • Campaign messaging can be harder to break through election-related clutter.
NOVEMBER 2028 ESTIMATED TURNOUT: 65-80% ESTIMATED BUDGET: \$600K-\$1M	• Presidential election year generates the highest voter turnout. • Broad community participation can strengthen legitimacy of the outcome. • Additional time to build awareness and demonstrate successes. • Larger audience for educational communications and community outreach.	• Presidential elections create a crowded and highly political environment. • Transit messages can be overshadowed by national races. • Turnout includes many infrequent local voters with limited knowledge of transit. • Campaign costs and communication efforts will need to be larger to gain attention. • Less or no flexibility if another election is needed.
AUGUST 2027 ESTIMATED TURNOUT: 15-25% ESTIMATED BUDGET: \$250K-300K	• Typically fewer proposals on the ballot, allowing educational campaign to receive greater attention. • Lower turnout means highly engaged supporters can have a larger influence. • Opportunity to avoid competing with presidential or gubernatorial election noise.	• Historically lower voter turnout and overall participation • Requires a significant voter education and turnout effort. • Summer timing can mean stakeholders can be traveling or less engaged.

Electoral Considerations

City Elections

When evaluating November 2027, East Grand Rapids, Kentwood and Grandville have regularly scheduled city commission elections whereas Grand Rapids, Wyoming and Walker do not.

CITY	COMMISSION ELECTION IN NOV 2027?	SEATS UP AND CURRENT OFFICEHOLDERS	MAYOR UP IN 2027?
EAST GRAND RAPIDS	Yes	3 Seats Ward 1: Ryan Burdick Ward 2: Bradley Hunter Ward 3: Abbie Groff-Blaszak	Yes
GRAND RAPIDS	No	None Even-year cycle	No
GRANDVILLE	Yes	3 Seats, At Large Joshua Meringa Tim Steenstra J.R. VanderWall	No
KENTWOOD	Yes	3 Seats Ward 1: Robert Coughlin Ward 2: David Moore II At large: Dustin Moseley.	No
WALKER	No	None Even-year cycle	No
WYOMING	No	None Even-year cycle	No

Age Demographics

Based on the polling, the demographic tables below show where older voters support level is after the informed question.

AGE GROUP	Informed Millage Support by Age Group		
	YES, DEFINITELY	YES, PROBABLY	TOTAL SUPPORT
55-64	29.0%	24.4%	53.5%
65-74	37.0%	25.4%	62.4%
75+	33.0%	19.8%	52.8%
55+ COMBINED	—	—	~56-57% average

Age Demographics Continued

Portion of Electorate that is 55+ Years Old

CITY	55+ SHARE OF ELECTORATE
GRANDVILLE	~62%
WYOMING	~50%
KENTWOOD	~41%
WALKER	~40%
GRAND RAPIDS	~40%
EAST GRAND RAPIDS	~33%

Because odd-year electorates tend to skew older, voter support among those age 55 and older is an important consideration. After receiving additional information, older voters remain generally supportive of the proposal, with support ranging from 53% among voters ages 55-64 to 62% among voters ages 65-74. However, support among the 55-64 and 75+ age groups falls below the preferred 60% threshold, and overall support among voters 55+ averages approximately 57%, indicating an opportunity for targeted outreach and message refinement.

Potential 2027 Ballot Measures

At this time, **there are no publicly identified city-sponsored millage, bond, or charter proposals expected on the 2027 ballots within the six-city service area**, although local ballot activity remains subject to change. School districts may pursue funding proposals in 2027 and should be monitored as the election landscape develops. For planning purposes, a November 2027 election for The Rapid would share the ballot with nine city commission races and the East Grand Rapids mayoral election across three communities.

Millage Duration Recommendation: Longer Term

A longer-term millage is recommended to provide The Rapid with the financial stability and predictability necessary to implement its long-range service and capital improvement plans. Public transit investments often require multi-year planning, procurement, and implementation timelines, making consistent funding essential to achieving promised outcomes and responding to future transportation needs. A longer duration also reduces the frequency and cost of returning to voters for renewal requests, allowing organizational resources to remain focused on delivering service improvements rather than recurring election campaigns. While the recommended duration should remain reasonable and accountable to taxpayers, establishing a longer funding timeline will better position The Rapid to make strategic investments, leverage external funding opportunities, and provide reliable transit service for the community over time.

MILLAGE DURATION	PROS	CONS
LONGER DURATION (10+ YEARS) SPR RECOMMENDATION	• Provides stable, predictable funding for long-term service and capital planning • Aligns with transit asset lifecycles, fleet replacement, and infrastructure investments • Reduces the frequency and cost of renewal elections • Enhances the ability to pursue grants and other funding opportunities that require long-term local commitments	• Requires voters to commit funding for a longer period • Reduces opportunities for voters to reassess priorities through renewal elections • May raise concerns about accountability if performance expectations are not clearly communicated
SHORTER DURATION (< 6 YEARS)	• More frequent voter oversight and accountability • Provides flexibility to adjust funding levels as transit needs evolve • May be more acceptable to voters hesitant about long-term commitments	• Requires more frequent renewal campaigns and election costs • Creates greater funding uncertainty for long-term planning • Can limit the ability to undertake major capital investments or leverage external funding opportunities

While both options present advantages and trade-offs, a longer-duration millage is recommended because it provides the financial stability necessary to support The Rapid's service, capital, and operational goals while reducing the uncertainty and costs associated with more frequent renewal elections. Strong performance reporting and accountability measures can help address concerns associated with a longer authorization period.

Term Consideration Breakdown

CONSIDERATION	SHORTER TERM MILLAGE (<6 YEARS)	LONGER TERM MILLAGE (10+ YEARS)
VOTER ACCOUNTABILITY	Voters have more frequent opportunities to evaluate performance and reconsider support.	Fewer elections mean less frequent voter review, but accountability remains through board oversight, public reporting, and budget processes.
FINANCIAL STABILITY	Shorter planning can create uncertainty regarding future revenues and long-term commitments.	Provides greater financial certainty and a more predictable funding framework for operations and capital investments.
LONG-TERM PLANNING	May limit the ability to confidently plan multi-year capital projects or service expansions.	Supports long-range planning, fleet replacement schedules, infrastructure investments, and service improvements.
ELECTION COSTS	Requires more frequent ballot campaigns and election-related expenses.	Reduces the frequency and cost of future ballot measures.
ADMINISTRATIVE FOCUS	More staff time may be devoted to future renewal efforts and election preparation.	Allows leadership to focus more on service delivery and implementation rather than recurring election cycles.
FLEXIBILITY	Provides more opportunities to adjust funding levels or priorities based on changing circumstances.	Offers stability but may limit the frequency of formal voter reconsideration of funding levels.
CAPITAL INVESTMENTS	May make financing or long-term capital commitments more challenging.	Stronger foundation for major capital investments and long-term financial commitments.
VOTER PERCEPTION	Some voters may prefer shorter commitments because they feel they maintain greater control.	Some voters may prefer the certainty and efficiency of a longer-term funding commitment.
POLLING RESULTS	64% support in the informed ballot test.	65% support in the informed ballot test.
OVERALL RISK	Higher risk of future funding disruptions if renewal efforts are unsuccessful.	Lower risk of funding interruptions and service uncertainty.

Other Considerations

Millage Scope

The statute prohibits the submittal of one ballot question requesting both a millage renewal and an additional millage greater than .5 mill. If Headlee has reduced the millage, the renewal is the reduced amount, and anything above that amount is an additional millage.

For example, if a millage was originally approved for 1.5 mills, but reduced to 1.2 mills with Headlee, the 1.2 mills would be the millage renewal rate, and the restoration and increase would both be considered an additional millage. The most the single question request could be is 1.7 mills (1.2 mills Headlee reduced rate, .3 mill restoration, and .2 mill increase). In this same example, if the goal was 2.0 mills, it would require two questions (1.2 mills Headlee reduced rate, .3 mill restoration, .5 mill increase).

Election Cost Sharing

In Michigan, when a millage proposal or other ballot question appears on a regularly scheduled election ballot, such as the August or November election, the costs of conducting the election are generally absorbed as part of that scheduled election.

However, when a taxing authority requests an election on a date when no election is otherwise scheduled, that entity is typically responsible for the cost of conducting the election. If multiple jurisdictions place proposals on the same stand-alone ballot, election costs are commonly shared among the participating entities based on an agreed-upon allocation method or the costs attributable to each proposal.

Because **East Grand Rapids, Grandville, and Kentwood** are expected to have city elections in November 2027, they would already be conducting an election on that date. As a result, any cost-sharing considerations related to a stand-alone election would primarily affect **Grand Rapids, Walker, and Wyoming**, where no regularly scheduled city election is anticipated.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this assessment, pursuing a November 2027 election with a longer-term millage authorization represents the strongest path forward for The Rapid. This approach aligns with current voter sentiments, provides the greatest opportunity to build broad community support, and offers the financial certainty necessary to support long-term service, capital, and operational investments.

While no election strategy is without risk, November 2027 offers the most favorable combination of voter participation, campaign preparedness, and ballot visibility among the options considered. By pairing a well-defined investment plan with a comprehensive voter education effort, The Rapid can position itself to secure the stable, voter-approved funding needed to continue serving the region's growing transportation needs for years to come.

Date: September 23, 2026

To: ITP Board

From: Deb Prato, Chief Executive Officer
Steven Schipper, Chief Operating Officer
Linda Medina, Director of Finance
Nick Monoyios, Director of Planning
Steven Clapp, Director of Fleet Maintenance

Subject: MILLAGE RATE, BALLOT DATE AND DURATION

BACKGROUND:

At the August 26, 2026, Board of Directors meeting staff brought an action item to approve the award of contracts to two firms; Truscott Rossman and Seyferth PR for the purpose of creating a comprehensive transit strategy, community education and marketing campaign for The Rapid in advance of the expiration of the current November 2017 twelve-year millage authorization; with its last collection in July 2029.

Mr. Guy indicated the action item was unusual in a couple of ways with two firms and the timeframe of 9 months and in sum and substance believed we were getting ahead of ourselves asserting the board had not yet decided the millage question, when it will happen, the amount, and service adjustments or enhancements. Mr. Guy made a motion to table the action. The motion was supported by Mr. Hoffman and approved by a majority of the board by a roll call vote.

Mr. Guy asked staff to outline a recommendation of the proposed proposition, the costs and plan for when to take the proposition forward.

1. ACTION REQUESTED:

The Board is asked to approve the recommendation of staff and Seyferth PR, our currently retained political strategic advisors, for a November 2027 transit ballot initiative for a duration of at least 10 years. Duration can be discussed and formally determined at a future meeting.

2. ACTION REQUESTED:

The Board is asked to approve the maximum amount allowable for a single ballot item for November 2027.

In April 2026 our contracted polling firm, Competitive Edge tested the following proposed language of a single ballot initiative:

“May the Interurban Transit Partnership (The Rapid) levy a tax of [1.88] mills (\$1.88 per \$1,000 in taxable value) for a period of twelve (12) years, 2029 through 2040, inclusive, on all taxable property within The Rapid’s district (consisting of the cities of East Grand Rapids, Grandville, Grand Rapids, Kentwood, Walker and Wyoming) to provide funds for public transportation purposes within such district? This millage would consist of the renewal of that portion of a 1.47 mills authorization previously approved by the electors in 2017 and expiring in 2029 that has been reduced by operation of the Headlee amendment, which was [1.38] mills in [2026], and new additional millage of 0.500 mill. The Rapid estimates that this millage would raise \$32,511,168 when first levied in 2029.

Following the polling in April 2026 and at the same meeting Competitive Edge presented their polling findings the Board approved the Kent County 2026 tax levy maximum of 1.3648 mills after Headlee reductions. As today it stands the maximum amount for a single ballot initiative would be 1.86 mills and will likely be further reduced in May 2027 and May 2028 by Headlee and MCL 211.34 rollback computations.

Service Preservation versus Enhancements:

Staff is not recommending any service expansion. The proposed millage increase would preserve current service levels in the face of rising operating costs and declining state assistance prevents the erosion of reliability, frequency, coverage, and accessibility that riders rely on. When a transit system remains financially stable, customers continue to receive dependable service, employers retain access to a reliable workforce, and the community continues to benefit from the economic and mobility advantages that public transportation provides.

The goal is not simply to avoid cuts; it is to ensure that ITP can continue delivering the service our residents expect today while preserving the flexibility to respond to future needs tomorrow. A sustainable funding model allows us to maintain the quality, reliability, and connectivity of the network without shifting the burden of service reductions onto riders, employers, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and others who depend on transit. If the realities of tomorrow are to cut services, the additional loss of capital formula funding will make any effort to restore sufficient transit a monumental task – especially in a region experiencing exciting growth and prosperity.

Ultimately, the conversation is less about asking the community to pay more – it is about protecting a valuable public asset. By investing at a level that keeps pace with inflationary pressures and changing funding realities, the community is choosing to preserve mobility, access to opportunity, and quality of life. In that sense, maintaining service is not standing still; it is the necessary step that allows the transit system to continue serving the community effectively and to remain positioned for future success.



INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD

RESOLUTION No. 092326-1

Fiscal Year 2026

Moved and supported to adopt the following resolution:

Approval for the maximum millage amount allowable for a single ballot item for November 2027.

BE IT RESOLVED that the ITP CEO is hereby authorized to pursue the maximum millage amount allowable for a single ballot item for November 2027.

CERTIFICATE

The undersigned, duly qualified and acting secretary of the Interurban Transit Partnership Board, certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Interurban Transit Partnership Board.

Kris Heald, Board Secretary

Date



INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD

RESOLUTION No. 092326-1a

Fiscal Year 2026

Moved and supported to adopt the following resolution:

Approval to identify November 2027 as the date for the transit ballot initiative for a duration of at least 10 years. Exact duration will be formally determined at a future Board meeting.

BE IT RESOLVED that the ITP CEO is hereby authorized to establish November 2027 as the date for the millage election for a duration of at least 10 years.

CERTIFICATE

The undersigned, duly qualified and acting secretary of the Interurban Transit Partnership Board, certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Interurban Transit Partnership Board.

Kris Heald, Board Secretary

Date

Date: September 23, 2026
To: ITP Board
From: Jeffrey King, Community Relations Specialist
Subject: PROJECT 2026-40: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION SERVICES

ACTION REQUESTED

Authorization is requested from the ITP Board to enter into contracts with both SeyferthPR and Truscott Rossman for Public Engagement and Education Services for a period of nine months, from September 2026 through May 2027. The SeyferthPR retainer is \$10,000 per month for a total of \$90,000 (\$200/hour) while the Truscott Rossman retainer is \$15,000 per month for a total of \$135,000 (\$200/hour). Additionally, both firms may help with media buys in addition to the base retainer fee as directed by The Rapid during the campaign.

BACKGROUND

The Rapid's current property tax millage is set to expire in 2029 and will need to be renewed at the very least. It is vital that the public understand the purpose of the millage election and what the funds would be used for. The Rapid is seeking partners with the specialized expertise and capacity to lead an education and outreach campaign of this scope, including public outreach, strategic communications, research-informed messaging, community engagement, public sector communications, and ballot education initiatives.

The public outreach and education campaign will:

- Build public understanding of the ballot initiative.
- Deliver a coordinated, strategic communications campaign.
- Develop consistent, research-informed messaging.
- Establish a recognizable and accessible brand identity.
- Expand community reach through multi-channel engagement and partnerships.
- Measure, report, and optimize engagement effectiveness.

Therefore, The Rapid went out to bid to secure the service of one or more firms to coordinate and manage this public education campaign.

PROCUREMENT

The procurement was conducted through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process, as the selection of an outreach firm means analyzing the quality of the proposals received beyond just the cost proposal. In total, 126 firms accessed the RFP, and 18 proposals were submitted. Of these, 17 were deemed responsive and advanced for evaluation based on their proposal, experience, project team and cost.

Firm	Score	Retainer Bid	Proposed Media Buy
Truscott Rossman	81	\$135,000	\$900,000
Seyferth	80	\$120,001	\$874,093
Gud	77.5	\$225,000	\$200,000
Bellweather	66.7	\$90,000	\$375,000
Addis	66.5	\$44,800	Not Included
American Eagle	66.5	\$120,000	\$250,000
Burch	66.5	\$109,875	Not Included
Inverve	62.5	\$154,350	\$76,000
Piper and Gold	60	\$149,413	\$90,000
Byrum	56.5	\$140,000	\$153,000
McClure	53.5	\$503,600	\$350,680
98 Forward	52.3	\$126,000	\$120,000
Hollencamp	51.8	\$139,500	Not Included
Zilo	49.7	\$65,000	Not Included
We US Them	47.5	\$97,850	\$65,000
Atypical	44.8	\$98,000	\$52,000
Impact Kind	36.5	\$154,350	\$145,000

Following the initial evaluation, Gud Marketing, SeyferthPR and Truscott Rossman received the three highest scores and were invited to participate in Round Two interviews. A further breakdown of their initial financial proposals follows; retainer fees are outlined in green:

Seyferth	
Consulting	\$90,000
Legal	\$11,765
Translation Services	\$18,236
Poll	\$29,413
4 Mailers	\$110,191
Postage for 4 Mailers	\$170,357
Website	\$5,883
Video Production	\$22,942
Digital Design	\$10,000
Streaming ad buy	\$264,713
Display ad buy	\$52,354
Meta ads	\$52,354
YouTube Pre-roll	\$28,824
Text Messages	\$75,296
Radio ad buy	\$29,413
Radio production	\$5,883
Miscellaneous Costs	\$16,471
Grand Total	\$994,093

Truscott Rossman	
Consulting	\$135,000
Paid Media Buy	\$900,000
Grand Total	\$1,035,000

Gud Marketing	
Discovery and Research	\$ 15,000
Strategic Communications Planning	\$ 40,000
Content and Asset Production	\$ 75,000
Launch, Engagement & Tracking	\$ 85,000
Final Reporting and Wrap Up	\$ 10,000
Paid Media Placements	\$ 125,000
Printing and Production	\$ 75,000
Grand Total	\$ 425,000

Using the overall retainer fee to estimate the number of proposed hours for each proposal, Seyferth is estimated at 450 hours, Truscott Rossman at 675 hours, and Gud at 1,125 hours.

The review team unanimously ranked Truscott Rossman number one and SeyferthPR number two after the Round Two interviews.

Company	Round Two Ranking
Truscott Rossman	1.0
SeyferthPR	2.0
Gud Marketing	3.0

They both provided excellent proposals and performed very well in the interviews and demonstrated a high level of awareness of The Rapid and its place in the greater Grand Rapids area. Both firms had significant technical expertise that demonstrated their capacity to successfully carry out the required public outreach and education campaign. However, both demonstrated different core strengths, with Truscott Rossman excelling in public education messaging and Seyferth excelling in stakeholder outreach and engagement.

ITP then negotiated Best And Final Offers (BAFOs) with both firms to include what was necessary for implementing this project and created a work plan that clearly laid out roles and

responsibilities for both firms. The BAFO for each limited the award to their basic retainer, as seen below, with the yellow items being included.

Truscott Rossman	
Consulting	\$135,000
Paid Media Buy	\$900,000
Grand Total	\$1,035,000

Seyferth	
Consulting	\$90,000
Legal	\$11,765
Translation Services	\$18,236
Poll	\$29,413
4 Mailers	\$110,191
Postage for 4 Mailers	\$170,357
Website	\$5,883
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YouTube Pre-roll	\$28,824
Text Messages	\$75,296
Radio ad buy	\$29,413
Radio production	\$5,883
Miscellaneous Costs	\$16,471
Grand Total	\$994,093

The work plan ensures their work is carefully coordinated. The firms will operate through a single integrated work plan maintained by The Rapid, with regular coordination between their project leads, and it can be found in its entirety below.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION PROGRAM: DUAL-FIRM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Purpose: The Rapid will engage SeyferthPR and Truscott Rossman as complementary strategic partners to deliver a comprehensive Public Engagement and Education Program. The firms bring distinct strengths that, when intentionally coordinated, provide The Rapid with both the local stakeholder strategy and relationship management needed to navigate the community and the public education, creative, and communications capabilities needed to explain the proposed millage clearly and consistently.

The firms will operate as complementary partners, not competing communications teams. The Rapid will establish overall direction, priorities, and approvals, while each firm will have defined areas of responsibility and accountability.

The central principle governing all work is that the program is public education, not advocacy. All activities, materials, stakeholder engagement, and communications must remain factual, transparent, accessible, and compliant with applicable law.

SeyferthPR: Strategic Stakeholder, Community & Earned Media Lead

Primary Role: SeyferthPR will serve as The Rapid's lead strategic advisor for stakeholder intelligence, constituency engagement, community relationships, earned media, and issues management.

SeyferthPR's role will capitalize on its extensive West Michigan relationships, public-sector communications experience, media relations expertise, and demonstrated experience with transportation and transit millage initiatives.

The firm's proposal emphasizes boots-on-the-ground engagement, stakeholder roundtables, community meetings, partnerships with trusted organizations, and strategic communications across West Michigan. Its senior team also brings substantial experience in media relations, crisis communications, and government/community affairs.

Core Responsibilities

Stakeholder Strategy & Intelligence

- Develop and maintain a comprehensive stakeholder and constituency map across The Rapid's six-city service area.
- Identify and prioritize stakeholders, organizations, community leaders, and constituencies requiring direct engagement.
- Assess stakeholder interests, concerns, relationships, information gaps, and barriers to understanding.
- Provide ongoing intelligence regarding emerging concerns, questions, misinformation, and community sentiment.
- Advise The Rapid on sequencing, timing and appropriate approaches for high-priority stakeholder engagement.

High-Touch Stakeholder & Community Engagement

- Lead strategic outreach to priority community, civic, business, nonprofit, neighborhood, municipal and institutional stakeholders.
- Develop and facilitate stakeholder briefings, roundtables, meetings, and targeted information sessions.
- Coordinate executive and leadership-level engagement where appropriate.
- Identify trusted messengers and community organizations that can help residents access factual information.
- Document stakeholder feedback and translate engagement findings into actionable recommendations.

Constituency-Specific Strategy

- Develop engagement strategies for priority constituencies based on local knowledge and stakeholder intelligence.
- Recommend appropriate messengers, venues, communication channels, and engagement approaches for specific audiences.
- Provide local strategic insight on sensitive or politically complex stakeholder situations.
- Ensure constituency-specific strategies remain within the public education/advocacy boundary.

Media Relations & Earned Media

- Lead The Rapid's earned media and media relations strategy, including proactive outreach to local and regional news organizations.
- Identify opportunities to place factual, educational information in trusted news outlets and prepare The Rapid spokespeople for media interactions.
- Develop media strategies around significant program milestones, public questions, and emerging issues.
- Coordinate media outreach and responses with The Rapid and Truscott Rossman to ensure consistent factual information across earned, owned, and paid channels.
- Leverage SeyferthPR's established West Michigan media relationships and public-sector communications experience to support accurate and credible coverage.

Issues Management & Crisis Communications

- Provide strategic issues-management and crisis communications counsel when significant public concerns, controversies, or unexpected events arise.
- Monitor emerging issues and public sentiment that could affect understanding or perception of the public education program.
- Prepare The Rapid leadership and designated spokespeople for sensitive or high-profile inquiries.
- Develop rapid-response recommendations and coordinate factual media responses when circumstances require.
- Help distinguish legitimate public questions from misinformation, emerging issues, or situations requiring elevated response.

Local Strategic Insight

- Provide local strategic insight to The Rapid regarding community dynamics, stakeholder relationships, media environment, and emerging issues.
- Advise The Rapid leadership on preparation for important stakeholder, community and media conversations.
- Bring local political, public affairs and relationship-management expertise to the overall education strategy without directing or participating in advocacy activity.

SeyferthPR Primary Deliverables

- Stakeholder and constituency map
- Stakeholder prioritization and engagement strategy
- Engagement calendar and outreach plans
- Stakeholder briefing materials and meeting strategies
- Community/stakeholder meeting facilitation
- Stakeholder feedback and community intelligence reports
- Earned media and media relations strategy
- Media outreach and spokesperson preparation

- Issues management and crisis communications counsel
- Emerging issues and community sentiment intelligence
- Constituency-specific engagement recommendations
- Local strategic insight to The Rapid leadership

Truscott Rossman: Public Education, Creative & Paid Communications Lead

Primary Role: Truscott Rossman will serve as the lead firm for public education strategy, message architecture, creative development, content production, digital communications, paid media, and program measurement.

Its role will capitalize on Truscott Rossman's direct experience with millage education, transportation communications, and public education campaigns, combined with its in-house Say More creative capabilities. The proposal specifically assigns the firm responsibility for research and message strategy, branding, FAQs, website content, social content, video, paid media planning and buying, accessibility, partner toolkits, and measurement.

Core Responsibilities

Public Education Strategy

- Translate The Rapid's approved goals, factual information and stakeholder insights into a cohesive public education strategy.
- Develop and maintain the overarching education roadmap, communications calendar, and implementation schedule.
- Establish audience-specific education priorities and information sequences.
- Coordinate communications activities across paid, owned, and partner channels.

Messaging & Educational Content

- Lead development of the core public education messaging architecture.
- Develop and maintain FAQs, fact sheets, talking points, myth/fact materials and standard responses.
- Translate complex financial, operational, and millage information into clear, accessible public education materials.
- Adapt approved factual information for different audiences and communication channels.
- Maintain a consistent "source of truth" for public-facing information.

Creative & Production

- Develop the visual identity, templates, and style standards for the education program.
- Produce print, digital, presentation, video, social and web materials.
- Develop presentation decks and speaker materials for The Rapid staff and community partners.
- Produce English and Spanish materials at minimum and coordinate additional translations as required.
- Ensure materials meet applicable accessibility standards, including WCAG 2.1 AA, ADA, and LEP requirements.

Digital & Social Communications

- Develop digital and social content and provide post-ready materials for The Rapid's channels.

- Develop platform-specific content and short-form video designed to make complex information accessible and understandable.
- Support The Rapid's internal social team with content calendars, creative assets, and recommendations.
- Monitor digital performance and recommend adjustments to improve educational reach and comprehension.

Paid Media Planning & Buying

- Lead paid media strategy, planning, purchasing, trafficking, optimization, and reconciliation.
- Develop a data-informed media plan identifying appropriate channels, audiences, timing, and placement.
- Manage paid social, digital display, streaming/audio, print and out-of-home placements as appropriate.
- Optimize paid media based on performance, audience reach, and campaign objectives.
- Coordinate paid media creative and messaging with the broader public education strategy.
- Maintain clear accountability for paid media expenditures and performance reporting.

Partner Education Infrastructure

- Develop partner/ambassador toolkits, including fact sheets, FAQs, presentation materials, and social assets.
- Support distribution of approved educational information through community organizations and partner networks.
- Coordinate with SeyferthPR to ensure partner materials reflect the needs and priorities identified through stakeholder engagement.

Measurement & Optimization

- Establish measurable communications and education KPIs.
- Track reach, engagement, participation, content performance, and other agreed-upon metrics.
- Provide regular performance reporting and recommendations for optimization.
- Conduct a final evaluation of the public education program.

Truscott Rossman Primary Deliverables

- Public education strategy and implementation roadmap
- Core messaging architecture
- FAQs, fact sheets and educational materials
- Education program visual identity/style guide and templates
- Website and digital content
- Social media content and video
- Presentation and speaker toolkits
- Partner/ambassador education toolkit
- Paid media plan, buying and optimization
- Performance reports and final evaluation

Shared Responsibilities & Coordination

The firms will collaborate where their capabilities intersect, but one firm will lead each function to prevent duplication, conflicting direction, or inconsistent messaging.

Function	Lead	Supporting Firm
Overall stakeholder strategy	SeyferthPR	Truscott Rossman
Stakeholder/constituency mapping	SeyferthPR	Truscott Rossman
High-priority stakeholder engagement	SeyferthPR	Truscott Rossman
Community meetings/roundtables	SeyferthPR	Truscott Rossman
Community intelligence & feedback	SeyferthPR	Truscott Rossman
Earned media & media relations	SeyferthPR	Truscott Rossman
Issues management & crisis communications	SeyferthPR	Truscott Rossman
Public education strategy	Truscott Rossman	SeyferthPR
Core messaging architecture	Truscott Rossman	SeyferthPR
Audience-specific education content	Truscott Rossman	SeyferthPR
Creative/design/video	Truscott Rossman	SeyferthPR
Digital/social content	Truscott Rossman	SeyferthPR
Paid media planning/buying	Truscott Rossman	SeyferthPR
Partner identification/prioritization	SeyferthPR	Truscott Rossman
Partner education materials	Truscott Rossman	SeyferthPR
Performance measurement	Truscott Rossman	SeyferthPR
Education-vs.-advocacy compliance	Shared; The Rapid retains final authority	—
Final approval of public materials	The Rapid	Both advise

Coordination Protocol

The firms will operate through a single integrated work plan maintained by The Rapid, with regular coordination between their respective project leads.

SeyferthPR will bring forward what The Rapid needs to know about the community — including stakeholder priorities, relationships, concerns, emerging issues, and the earned media environment.

Truscott Rossman will translate that intelligence into what the public needs to know and how best to communicate it — through educational content, creative, digital channels, paid media and partner materials.

The Rapid will determine what information is accurate and authorized for release, provide final approvals, and resolve competing priorities.

The firms should maintain a continuous feedback loop:

Community & Stakeholder Intelligence → Strategic Priorities → Public Education Content → Paid/Earned/Owned Distribution → Public Feedback → Updated Intelligence

To maintain clear accountability:

- SeyferthPR will lead earned media and media relations; Truscott Rossman will lead paid media planning and buying.
- SeyferthPR will lead stakeholder and community relationship strategy; Truscott Rossman will lead public education content and communications execution.
- Both firms may provide strategic input on messaging, but Truscott Rossman will maintain the primary public education messaging architecture.
- Both firms will coordinate on misinformation and emerging issues, with SeyferthPR leading issues management, media response, and crisis counsel, and Truscott Rossman leading factual content updates and public-facing educational responses.
- Neither firm should independently establish major public-facing messaging, launch significant stakeholder initiatives, make commitments on behalf of The Rapid, or respond to significant media/issues events without coordination with The Rapid.

The Desired Outcome

The dual-firm model provides The Rapid with two complementary capabilities:

SeyferthPR manages the relationship environment.

Its primary value is understanding the people, organizations, relationships, media environment, and community dynamics that shape how information is received. SeyferthPR brings that local intelligence into stakeholder engagement, earned media, issues management, and strategic insight. Its demonstrated experience includes public-sector communications, community relations, media relations, crisis communications, and multiple successful transit millage efforts.

Truscott Rossman manages the public education environment.

Its primary value is turning complex information and community insights into a cohesive, accessible, and measurable education program across messaging, creative, digital, social, paid media, and partner channels. Its proposal includes direct experience with millage education and a full in-house production and paid-media operation.

Together, the firms should provide The Rapid with a coordinated program that is locally informed, strategically disciplined, creatively strong, broadly accessible, measurable, and firmly grounded in factual public education rather than advocacy.

The Rapid will work with the two firms to ensure SeyferthPR will bring forward what The Rapid needs to know about the community while Truscott Rossman will translate that intelligence, along with approved research and factual information, into what the public needs to know and how best to communicate it. The Rapid will determine what information is accurate and authorized for release, provide final approvals, and resolve competing priorities.

FUNDING

The project is being funded using local operating funds.

INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF DIRECTORS**RESOLUTION No. 092326-2****Fiscal Year: 2025-2026**

Moved and supported to adopt the following resolution:

Approval is requested from the ITP Board to enter into contracts with both SeyferthPR and Truscott Rossman for Public Engagement and Education Services for a period of nine months, from September 2026 through May 2027. The SeyferthPR retainer is \$10,000 per month for a total of \$90,000 while the Truscott Rossman retainer is \$15,000 per month for a total of \$135,000. Additionally, both firms may help with media buys in addition to the base retainer fee as directed by The Rapid during the campaign.

BE IT RESOLVED that the ITP CEO is hereby authorized by the ITP Board to enter into contracts with both SeyferthPR and Truscott Rossman for Public Engagement and Education Services for a period of nine months, from September 2026 through May 2027. The SeyferthPR retainer is \$10,000 per month for a total of \$90,000 while the Truscott Rossman retainer is \$15,000 per month for a total of \$135,000. Additionally, both firms may help with media buys in addition to the base retainer fee as directed by The Rapid during the campaign in accordance with the information presented to the ITP Board on September 23, 2026.

CERTIFICATE

The undersigned, duly qualified and acting secretary of the Interurban Transit Partnership Board, certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Interurban Transit Partnership Board.

Kris Heald, Board Secretary

Date

Date: September 23, 2026

To: ITP Board

From: Steve Clapp, Director of Fleet Maintenance
Kevin Wisselink, Director of Procurement and Capital Planning

Subject: PROJECT 2026-31: BUS CLEANING AND FUELING SERVICES

ACTION REQUESTED

Authorization is requested from the ITP Board to enter into a two-year contract, with three one-year renewal options with DetailXPerts for bus cleaning and fueling services. The proposed contract has an average cost of \$19.74 per bus cleaned, and an estimated annual contract value of \$663,240.

BACKGROUND

Interurban Transit Partnership (ITP) has historically contracted for bus cleaning and fueling services. Under this contract, the selected contractor is responsible for the daily cleaning and fueling of all fixed-route and bus rapid transit (BRT) buses.

The contractor is responsible for providing all labor, supervision, management, personnel, and operational support necessary to perform the required services. ITP establishes and monitors the standards for bus cleanliness and service quality.

The scope of the contract previously included periodic deep cleaning of buses. ITP brought this function in-house two years ago, and it is no longer included in the contracted services.

PROCUREMENT

The current bus cleaning and fueling services contract is expiring and was competitively solicited through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. An RFP was used because the selection of a qualified contractor involves factors beyond cost, including experience, technical approach, staffing, implementation, and the ability to consistently meet ITP's service requirements.

ITP received proposals from five firms, four of which were determined to be responsive. Proposals were evaluated based on firm qualifications, technical approach, project team, implementation plan, and cost.

Company	Round 1 Score	Average Bus Cleaning Cost	Average Annual Contract Value
By Design Consulting	53.8	\$20.67	\$694,346
DetailXperts	85.6	\$19.74	\$663,240
Progressive Building Services	80.0	\$11.38	\$382,411
Enviro Sanitize	63.9	\$24.88	\$835,768

Following the initial evaluation, DetailXperts and Progressive Building Services were invited to participate in interviews to further evaluate their proposals. The evaluation team unanimously ranked DetailXperts as first.

Company	Round 2 Ranking
DetailXPerts	1.0
Progressive Building Services	2.0

The review team selected DetailXperts for several reasons;

First, As the incumbent contractor, DetailXPerts has demonstrated its ability to satisfactorily perform the required services. The company has an experienced and effective on-site supervisor and has reduced employee turnover, resulting in greater consistency and improved quality of service.

Second, DetailXPerts' proposed cost is reasonable and consistent with ITP's current costs for these services. The evaluation team determined that the proposed rate provides an appropriate balance between cost and the ability to recruit and retain qualified staff needed to successfully perform the work.

Third, DetailXperts submitted a comprehensive proposal and provided thorough responses to the evaluation team's questions during the interview. The team demonstrated a clear understanding of ITP's operational requirements and the resources necessary to successfully perform the services.

Progressive Building Services also submitted a thorough proposal and initially offered a significantly lower cost. During the interview process, the evaluation team discussed the proposed cost with Progressive due to concerns regarding the feasibility of performing the full scope of services at that rate. Following the interview and a more detailed review of the project requirements, Progressive Building Services notified ITP that its proposed cost was too low to perform the required work and subsequently withdrew its proposal.

Based on the evaluation of the proposals and interviews, staff recommends awarding the contract for bus cleaning and fueling services to DetailXPerts.

FUNDING

The project is being funded using local operating funds.

INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF DIRECTORS**RESOLUTION No. 092326-3****Fiscal Year: 2025-2026**

Moved and supported to adopt the following resolution:

Approval to enter into a two-year contract, with three one-year renewal options with DetailXPerts for bus cleaning and fueling services.

BE IT RESOLVED that the ITP CEO is hereby authorized to enter into a two-year contract, with three one-year renewal options with DetailXPerts for bus cleaning and fueling services. The proposed contract has an average cost of \$19.74 per bus cleaned, and an estimated annual contract value of \$663,240.in accordance with the information presented to the Board on September 23, 2026.

CERTIFICATE

The undersigned, duly qualified and acting secretary of the Interurban Transit Partnership Board, certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Interurban Transit Partnership Board.

Kris Heald, Board Secretary

Date



Date: September 23, 2026
To: ITP Board
From: Tim Roseboom – Senior Planner
Subject: COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT – HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2026 UPDATE

ACTION REQUESTED

Board adoption of the Kent County Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan.

BACKGROUND

Every three to five years The Rapid updates a Human Services Transportation Plan in conjunction with its partner human services agencies and the public. This is in response to requirements to create such a plan from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

The purpose of this transportation plan is to coordinate public transportation services in Kent County, primarily those relating to human service organizations such as senior transportation, medical transportation, and transportation specific to people with disabilities. The need for coordinating senior transportation services under the RideLink program originated with a prior Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation planning effort. The primary bodies that have overseen these processes are The Rapid's Consumer Advisory Committee for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities (CAC) and the Kent County Essential Needs Task Force (ENTF) Transportation Subcommittee.

Over the last several months ITP staff updated the Human Services Coordination Plan with input from the ENTF Transportation Subcommittee, CAC members and human service agency staff. This plan identifies and evaluates available human service transportation options in the county and prioritizes transportation needs and identifies continuation of existing services, provider coordination, capital investment, and increased operating funding as the highest implementation priorities.

The FTA requires that the ITP Board formally adopt this plan. Once adopted, this plan will be submitted to the FTA, MDOT, and Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC).

The 2026 update adds two non-profit transportation providers: Care Resources and Elder Rides. With adoption of the plan and inclusion in the GVMC regional transportation plans, these providers will become eligible to receive federal transportation funding for services provided to senior and disabled populations in Kent County.



INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD

RESOLUTION No. 092326-4

Fiscal Year 2026

Moved and supported to adopt the following resolution:

Approval of the Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan.

BE IT RESOLVED that the ITP Board formally adopted the Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan for Kent County, in accordance with the information presented to the Board on September 23, 2026.

CERTIFICATE

The undersigned, duly qualified and acting secretary of the Interurban Transit Partnership Board, certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Interurban Transit Partnership Board.

Kris Heald, Board Secretary

Date



**KENT COUNTY COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT – HUMAN SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP

Revised September 2026

**Contact: Tim Roseboom
Senior Planner**

The Rapid (Interurban Transit Partnership)

Email: troseboom@ridetherapid.org

Phone: (616) 774-1159

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SECTION I. OVERVIEW OF THE RAPID

The Interurban Transit Partnership, known as The Rapid, is the public transportation provider for the metropolitan Grand Rapids region. It is organized and operates under Michigan Public Act 196 of 1986. The activities of The Rapid are overseen by a 15-member board of directors that represents the six municipalities in The Rapid's service area: East Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids, Grandville, Kentwood, Walker, and Wyoming.

The Rapid operates 29 fixed routes, a bus rapid transit (BRT) line (Silver Line), and a corridor-based BRT¹ (Laker Line), a demand-response suburban feeder shuttle (PASS), and demand-response paratransit services for people with disabilities and senior citizens. The Rapid participates in the RideLink senior transportation program that is funded through a county-wide senior millage and coordinated by Hope Network. The Rapid has been embarking on an on-going effort to ensure the ADA accessibility of all its fixed route bus stops.

The Rapid's service area includes 155 square miles and a population of 605,666 (Urbanized Area – UZA). The Rapid provided 6.5 million trips in FY 2025 and steadily increased from 4.1 million trips in FY 2021, the first full fiscal year after the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically decreased transit ridership locally as well as nationally.

The Rapid operates primarily in Kent County, Michigan, located in the western portion of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Kent County's 2025 population is estimated to be 675,232 situated over the county's 847 square miles. Kent County has an estimated 112,289 people 65 years or older, equaling 16.6% of the population in the County, up from 92,794 documented in the 2022 plan (US Census Bureau, 2026). The number of individuals aged 65 or older has been steadily increasing in Kent County over the last 20 years. Further, the percentage of persons living with a disability (as defined by the US Census Bureau) in Kent County is 8.0%

¹ The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) defines a corridor-based BRT as an enhanced transit mode without a majority of the route operating on dedicated bus only lanes. The National Transit Database (NTD) does not define the Laker Line as a BRT.

Figure 1 – Rapid System Map – Summer 2026

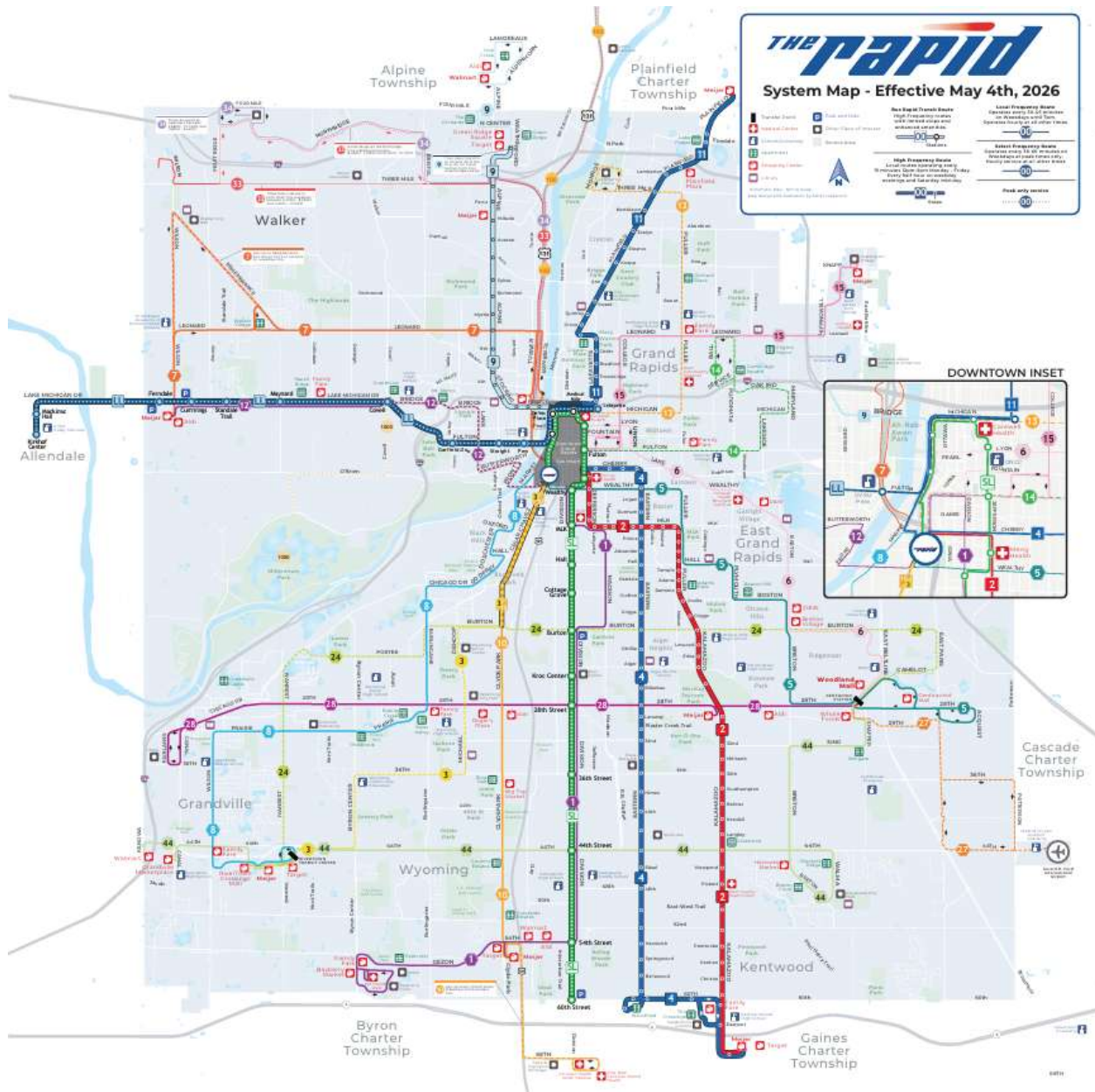
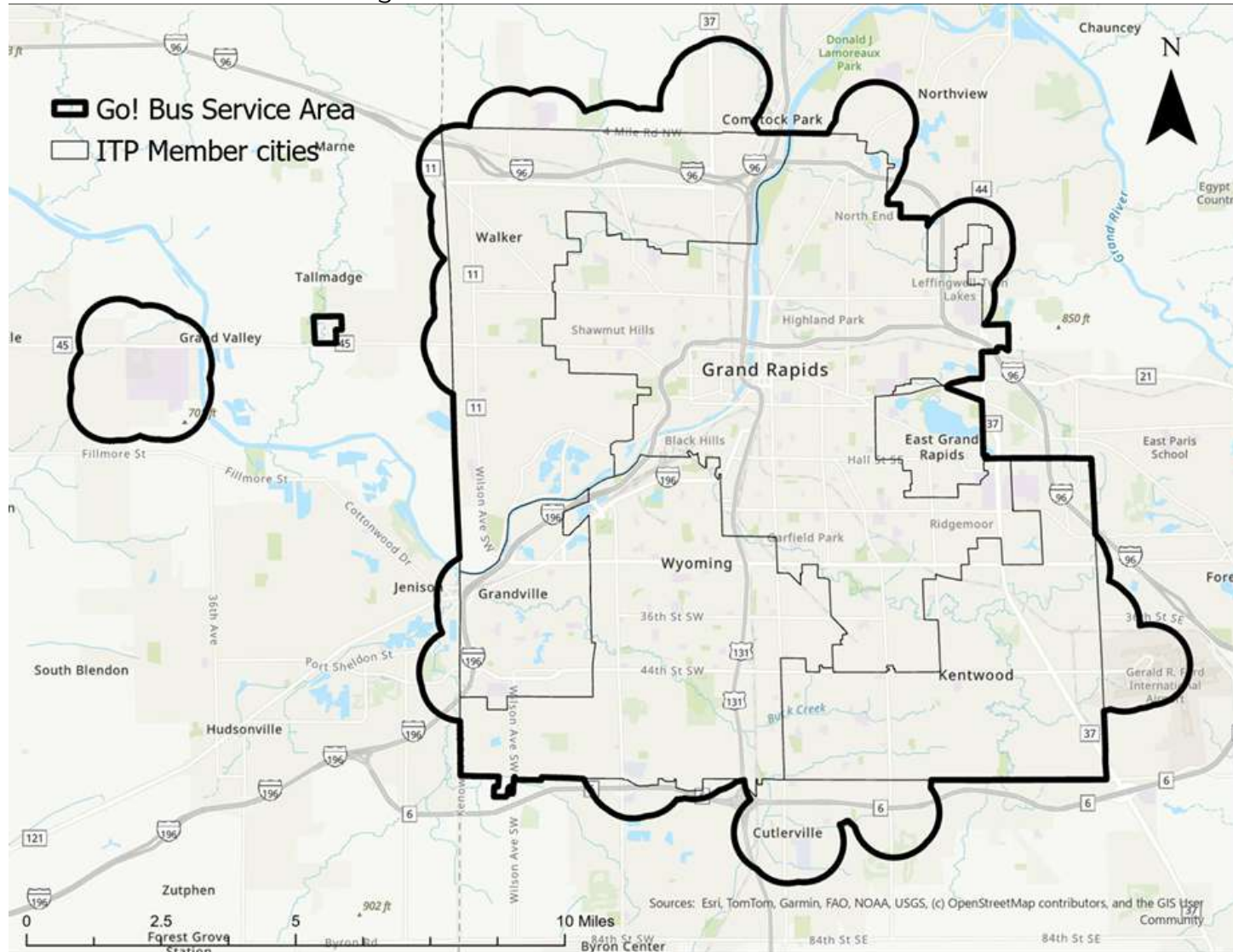


Figure 2 – Go! Bus Service Area – June 2026



SECTION II. OUTREACH EFFORTS

The Rapid engaged community and stakeholder organizations to inform the update of this plan. The plan was presented to the Essential Needs Task Force (ENTF) as discussed later in this document, with additional key stakeholders invited to participate. The Rapid also presented the plan to its Consumer Advisory Committee for Senior and Persons with Disabilities (CAC). This committee includes local transportation providers, human service agency personnel, seniors and individuals with disabilities as well as those representing those consumers, providing representation across Kent County. The Rapid also consulted the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission throughout the update and development process.

In addition, public input obtained during The Rapid's Transit Master Plan (completed in March 2025) and Kent County Mobility Study (completed in October 2025) was incorporated into this planning process to help identify unmet transportation needs and to inform strategies to address existing gaps.

For a list of stakeholders who were invited and participated in this study, please see Appendix A.

SECTION III. ASSESSMENT OF AVAILABLE SERVICES

A. Fixed Route Transportation Services

The primary accessible transportation service in the greater Grand Rapids, Michigan area is The Rapid's fixed route bus system (see attached system map). The Rapid's service area is primarily concentrated within the six cities in southwestern Kent County that are members of the Interurban Transit Partnership.

All Rapid buses are accessible and equipped with ramps, and approximately 94% of The Rapid's fixed route bus stops are accessible with a concrete boarding pad and designated clear boarding area. However, some stops lack connecting sidewalks, which may limit accessibility for pedestrians and customers with mobility limitations from using all bus stops.

The most recent significant expansion of fixed route services occurred in November 2022, when The Rapid's Route 33 was introduced to serve the industrial area of Walker bounded by Three Mile Road, Fruit Ridge Avenue, Northridge Drive, and Bristol Avenue. In August 2023, it was detoured to operate as express service via U.S. 131. In March 2025, Route 34 was created to provide detour service to the Northridge Drive area during the closure of Fruit Ridge for a major bridge reconstruction. The Route 34 detour was successful and continued after the bridge reopening.

In January 2024, The Rapid adjusted service levels and is currently (as of September 2026) operating approximately 97 percent of pre-January 2024 service hours.

The Rapid completed a Transit Master Plan (TMP) in March 2025. The TMP is a 20-year visionary document that guides future development of The Rapid's array of transportation services. The plan identifies improvements to community awareness and education, existing services, future expansion, transit-oriented development (TOD), innovation and technology, and regional partnerships.

Currently, The Rapid's hours of operation are as follows:

- Weekdays: 5:30 A.M. – 11:00 P.M.
- Saturdays: 5:30 A.M. – 10:00 P.M.
- Sundays: 7:00 A.M. – 7:00 P.M.

In the summer of 2026, The Rapid operated event-based service to support the Acrisure amphitheater, which opened on May 15, 2026. The Rapid extended the last evening pulse to 11:20 PM weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays to accommodate employees, concert goers, and other customers on days when events are scheduled at the amphitheater. The additional trips will be built into the operator runs for the May to August schedule period and operated as extra service in September.

Regular fares on The Rapid's fixed route system are set at \$1.75 per ride. Since January 2022, The Rapid has fully transitioned to the use of its electronic fare card system, called the Wave card, and no longer accepts paper tickets and transfer cards, though cash payments are still accepted. The Wave card allows riders to take advantage of a fare-capping system and is categorized by adult cards, youth cards (for those 19 years and younger), reduced (for those 65 or older or who have a qualifying disability), and partner cards (available for qualifying passengers eligible through agreements between partner agencies and The Rapid). The Rapid is currently exploring adding Wave card readers to the GO!Bus fleet. Two wheelchair-accessible vans that were repurposed from the Rapid Connect service to GO!Bus have Wave card readers.

B. ADA-Accessible Paratransit Services

The Rapid's GO!Bus paratransit service provides door-to-door ADA transportation to seniors and people with disabilities who cannot access the fixed route bus service in The Rapid's primary service area. In FY 2025, GO!Bus provided approximately 228,320 rides, which has steadily increased since FY 2021, the first fiscal year after the COVID-19 pandemic when GO!Bus provided 195,000 rides. The Rapid Board oversees GO!Bus, with input from its CAC and members of organizations representing seniors and individuals with disabilities. These members include human service agency representatives, the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan, Senior Neighbors, Hope Network, and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services.

C. Ancillary Rapid Services

The Rapid provides a supplementary service, PASS, a demand response service available to anyone living more than a third of a mile off a bus route, within the designated PASS zones, and within The Rapid's service area. PASS is an acronym for *Passenger Adaptive Suburban Service*. It is operated in coordination with GO! Bus.

D. Contracted Paratransit Services

The Rapid holds a contract with Hope Network, Kent County's Community Mental Health (CMH) agency, to provide trips for CMH clients for whom public transportation is not appropriate or who live outside the Rapid service area or need service outside The Rapid's hours of operation. This contract provides approximately 2,000 trips per month, and service is currently provided by Hope Network of West Michigan. Hope Network used Federal 5310 grant money for capital equipment used for this contract.

E. RideLink

The ENTF is a local committee that examines the accessibility of essential needs in Kent County. The ENTF Transportation Committee meets monthly and lists as partners several human service providers, senior service organizations, advocacy organizations, and transportation and health government agencies.

The ENTF facilitated the creation of RideLink, a local human services transportation coordination effort. In addition to The Rapid, the region's largest human service transportation provider, Hope Network of West Michigan, United Methodist Community House, Senior Neighbors, and Kent County Community Action now coordinate their transportation services under RideLink. The organization is funded primarily through the Kent County Senior Millage and as such the service is reserved for individuals aged 60 and older. The Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan is the contract manager for these funds.

The RideLink call center (housed at Hope Network) is the single point of contact for adults over the age of 60 to arrange countywide transportation. Hope Network, which coordinates and schedules all RideLink trips, uses its trip scheduling software to schedule the best service provider for the trip. This has led to easier access to transportation services for clients, as well leading to efficient use of our region's transportation resources. Ridership has grown overall since the program was implemented and spread amongst all the member agencies.

Table 1 – RideLink Ridership by Partner Agency, 2020-2025

Agency	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
KCCA	6,668	7,702	6,044	8,085	11,348	10,828
Hope Network	13,963	19,311	11,345	13,872	17,338	27,468
Senior Neighbors	13,559	7,934	8,481	11,023	11,925	11,880
United Methodist	5,172	5,505	3,332	4,343	3,263	2,757

The Rapid	9,425	8,207	8,593	8,755	6,559	5,476
Total Trips	48,787	48,659	37,795	46,078	50,433	58,409

Regardless of disability status, RideLink eligibility is restricted to individuals 60 and older. Since there is no “required” fare to ride RideLink (there is a \$3.00 suggested donation per trip) this service is especially helpful to low-income seniors in the county.

F. Ancillary Non-Profit Transportation Services

Hope Network provides a variety of services in Kent County to several communities outside The Rapid’s service area. Hope Network provides a curb-to-curb service for people with disabilities and seniors that provide paratransit service for individuals residing in participating municipalities. The number of one-way trips per month for individuals is capped at 20. Hope Network also provides Community Mental Health trips through a contract with The Rapid and Network 180.

Kent County Community Action’s (KCCA) Way 2 Go! program is separate from RideLink. It is funded through MDOT Specialized Services funding, and it provides transportation for adults 60+ and adults of any age with a disability. The service area for the Way 2 Go! program is specifically *outside* The Rapid’s service area. This program aims to provide options for individuals coming from or going to the outer county areas where The Rapid does not operate. It has a \$3 suggested donation per trip. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday 8 A.M. to 4 P.M.

Another source of transportation services is Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) that either provide or reimburse clients for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) services. Hope Network is an example of an agency that contracts with HMOs to provide some of these rides. However, little is known about the extent of the transportation provided or method by which most of this transportation service is administered.

Care Resources is a Program of All-inclusive Care for Elderly (PACE) which became eligible for 5310 funding in 2024. Kent County residents over age 55 that meet state nursing facility care requirements are eligible. Residents for some zip codes in the counties of Allegan, Barry, Ionia, and Ottawa are also eligible. Transportation services include trips to the adult day center and medical clinic, rides to medical appointments, and transportation back home.

Elder Rides and More is a NEMT provider that serves Kent and surrounding counties in Michigan. It specializes in senior transportation and can assist wheelchair users; however it can provide rides to all regardless of age or disability. Rides are available Monday through Friday from 7 A.M. to 5 P.M. and on Saturday and evenings by appointment. Elder Rides and More receives many requests from northern Kent County residents that do not have access to The Rapid or GO!Bus.

G. City of Grand Rapids Mobility Services

A micromobility pilot in the City of Grand Rapids began in late 2020 and offers bike and scooters options at designated parking zones throughout the city. In 2022, the City Commission approved Lime to operate in a 12-square-mile area of Grand Rapids with 95,000 residents. In 2025, approximately 35,000 trips were taken by over 1,100 riders who took part in a fare free pilot for residents of low-income neighborhoods. In 2026, Veo replaced Lime as the exclusive provider of micromobility in Grand Rapids.

SECTION IV. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT NEEDS

This section details unmet transportation needs and gaps in mobility identified by regional stakeholders, The Rapid's CAC, the ENTF Transportation Subcommittee, public input received during The Rapid's Transit Master Plan study and Kent County Mobility Study, and demographic data obtained from the US Census Bureau.

A list of stakeholders who were invited to participate in this effort is available in Appendix A of this plan.

Presentations were offered to the CAC and ENTF Transportation Subcommittee with the aim of obtaining feedback and insights into unmet mobility needs across Kent County. These two groups include several individuals representing seniors, individuals with disabilities, and representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation providers, human services providers, and other members of the public with a focused interest in mobility and transportation-related issues. Additional individuals and organizations who are not members of the ENTF Transportation Subcommittee were invited to the workshop to capture a broader range of perspectives.

Along with transportation needs identified in previous plans and studies and an analysis of recent demographic data, a series of mobility needs and barriers to transportation in Kent County were developed as contained in this section. The consensus of these groups includes the following:

A. Transit Services

- Not all Kent County residents living in the urbanized area are served by fixed route transit. Options for transportation outside of the urbanized area is limited. The senior and disabled population in Kent County outside ITP service mobility is more limited than the general population.
- A patchwork of transportation services for senior and disabled exists in Kent County with much of it having program eligibility requirements. Both program and non-program related transportation services are limited and often rationed. This variety of transportation services can be difficult for the public to understand.

- Development continues to accelerate in areas beyond the current service area of ITP/The Rapid, leaving major employment clusters, recreation destinations, and residential areas without public transportation.
- Population in Kent County is aging with the over 65 age group increasing which will result in a significant proportion of disabled persons.
- There is no long term, adequate and stable funding source for public transportation outside ITP/The Rapid's service area.
- Some existing transportation options have fares that are cost-prohibitive to low-income and fixed-income customers, particularly those with chronic, treatment-intensive conditions such as dialysis.
- Service capacity limitations, which can take many forms:
 - Limited geographical area served, particularly in rural areas outside The Rapid's service area.
 - Limited days and hours of service, particularly for workforce transportation needs for second and third shift employees.
 - Higher frequency of service on fixed routes (e.g. Michigan Street)
 - Limited number of drivers available.
 - Limited eligibility
 - Increased expenses reduce available services
- Accessibility at bus stops during winter months.
- Some bus stops are spaced too close together (e.g. specific stops on Route 1, 4 within one block from each other)
- Options for transportation to neighboring Counties are very limited.
- Determination of what information is required for each provider/funder in order to make registration and/or the payment process easy for everyone.
- Cost of transportation to the consumer over all modes (ex. GO!Bus service, RideLink, late night taxi service, bus fare, etc.)
- Challenge of providing service in both urban and rural areas within Kent County and the different strategies needed to successfully provide transportation service to these areas.

- Subregional clusters of mobility needs across Kent County (north, central, south) with varying access to urban core, neighboring counties, desired destinations, etc.
- Areas and corridors adjacent to Rapid service area that could support microtransit (i.e. East Beltline, south US-131, north Plainfield Avenue, Cutlerville, etc.) but currently lack density for fixed route service.
- Strong demand between The Rapid service area and eastern Ottawa County, and the cities of Zeeland and Holland.
- Land use patterns that are auto centric and require traversing long distances to access services in the urban core making transit inconvenient compared to travel in personal vehicles.

B. Coordination

- Typically, human service agency-provided trips are only available for agency clients for agency-related trips.
- While significant investments and partnerships have been successfully developed recently, there is a continued need for technology enhancements to not only coordinate trips better among various agencies but in order to:
 - Allow for easier more accurate scheduling of trips.
 - Allow communication with the vehicles (GPS, AVL, etc.) and the driver.
 - Allow call center and/or dispatchers to see where drivers have been and where they are going.
 - Allow better communication on real-time service issues.
- Limited accessible non-motorized paths (sidewalks, curb ramps, paved stop pads, etc.) at core service locations, specifically limiting mobility for seniors and disabled people.
- Limited street side wheelchair accessibility to transit stops limiting mobility for disabled people.
- Limited safe pedestrian crossings, particularly in the suburban areas of the Grand Rapids region and rural parts of Kent County, increasing danger for seniors and people with limited mobility.
- Need for regional coordination of trips as well as discussion forum for transportation needs in context of other priorities and expanded framework to discuss transportation issues.

C. Outreach/Marketing

- Improve information dissemination, particularly for hard-to-reach general public who are not associated with an agency.
- Lack of awareness of available transit services.
- Increase advocacy and general public support for transit, including expansion.
- Develop messaging about the difference between services and the areas served as clients and staff are unsure of different service areas and eligibility.
- Infrequent riders have difficulty using fixed route, specifically multiple riders using the same payment method - desire for a family pass.
- When paying with cash, people don't know how to pay - causes delays. Desire to find way for unbanked people to pay with tap method (e.g. Wave card).
- Not issuing change when paying with cash makes people feel "tricked".
- Better communication, specifically promoting tap to pay.

SECTION V. STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES TO ADDRESS GAPS

The following section includes strategies and/or activities designed to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as the opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery. Projects funded under FTA Section 5310 must address one or more of the specific gaps and implement the corresponding strategies identified in this section.

- Maintain existing transportation services.
- Expand availability of fixed route transportation services within the Grand Rapids urbanized area and countywide transportation services to currently unserved area.
- Increase funding levels for operating and capital expenditures for transportation service providers/agencies.
 - Increased state and local operational funding for additional days/hours/frequency of transit service
 - Additional equipment/maintenance support equipment
 - Computers
 - Tablets

- Global Positioning System (GPS)/Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) equipment
 - Trip scheduling software and invoicing software
- Add additional vehicles, particularly low- or no-emission vehicles
- Add additional vehicles with lifts
- Increase operating dollars to support equipment
- Administering coordination of human service transportation efforts
- Ensuring the existing funding meets the costs of the services being provided
- Consider passing MDOT matching requirements (reimbursement is only \$1.76 per mile for up to 50% of expenses) on to passengers to maintain service
- Continue the development of coordinated efforts
 - Cross market and find solutions with all arms of the ENTF and The Rapid CAC as transportation is a barrier to many essential services and individuals represented by the CAC members
 - Continue operating RideLink as a brokerage service to increase capacity of rides available to persons over 60 in Kent County and reduce costs of providing transportation - a major need identified by multiple providers
 - Expand capacity of the RideLink coordination network
 - Expand RideLink beyond just service for individuals 60 years of age or older and expand its hours of service, specifically nights and weekend service.
 - Expand human service, employment, and health care staff training on human services transportation options.
 - Add new multipurpose transit for general public, not just needs-based services.
 - Coordinate cross-jurisdictional and inter-county trips.
 - Add new demand response services on case-by-case basis using partnerships or municipal operation models.
- Expanded service for individuals with disabilities and seniors

- Add and expand proven technology including automatic technology, such as Automatic Vehicle Locators, GPS capability cell phones or portable vehicle navigators, cameras to better utilize resources in providing rides in Kent County
- Coordinate HMO's non-emergency medical transportation with human service transportation providers and educate the public about HMO transportation availability
- Coordinate publicly funded transportation services with private transportation providers such as AmbuCab, local services, and Clocks Mobility
- Advocate with local elected officials to improve support for public transportation services in Kent County and provide support/policies that encourage accessible transportation (ex. policies that incentivize TOD)
- Continue to research and implement new transportation delivery models based on new development in transportation service delivery with a particular focus on solving first mile/last mile trips. This includes looking at Transportation Network Company models and other Mobility on Demand transportation options.
- Promote accessible, walkable, and bikeable community that work for all modes of transportation.
- Provide more transit services on holidays.
- Expand regional mobility management, implement regional Mobility as a Service (MaaS).
- Increase driver recruitment including volunteer, part time, and training programs.

SECTION VI. PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Expanding capacity of existing transportation systems is a key priority. This includes reducing capacity constraints, improving geographic coverage of transportation services, expanding who is eligible for various transportation services and continuing the coordination effort between private, public and non-profit service providers.

Based on input from the CAC and ENTF as well as written comments on the draft, the following strategies are recommended for high priority:

- Continuation of existing service
- Coordination among providers
- Support for capital needs
- Additional state and local operating funding - advocacy to support

Other strategies that should be considered for high priority based on feedback:

- Larger public or interdepartmental role for winter bus stop clearance
- Expansion of fixed route service: Geographic area, days, frequency, and hours of service
- Expansion of service areas to reach other areas of the community, specifically cited by ENTF as hearing regularly
- Regional Mobility as a Service (Maas), specifically cited by ENTF as hearing regularly

SECTION VII. ADOPTION PROCESS

This section provides a description of the plan's adoption process, including what was approved, how it was approved, etc.

- The final plan will be submitted to The Rapid's CAC as well as the ENTF for these bodies' review and comment.
- The final plan will also be formally approved by the Interurban Transit Partnership's Board.
- The Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan will be sent via e-mail to the participants for electronic approval and then forwarded to the Michigan Department of Transportation.
- The Plan will also be submitted to the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC), the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization, for inclusion in its Long Range Transportation Plan.

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APPENDIX A. PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Name	Organization	Participated	Commented
Charis Austin	Mary Free Bed		
Deb Atwood	Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services		
Gail Mancewicz		X	X
Gerid Adams	Hearing Loss	X	
Jean Marek		X	X
James White			
Kimberly Doyle	Senior Neighbors		
Kristen Kelling	Disability Advocates of Kent County		
Randy Curry		X	X
Sabrina Minarik	Area Agency on Aging	X	X
Laura Madison	The Rapid	X	
Jason Prescott	The Rapid	X	X
Lisa Griffin	TransDev	X	X
Andrea Faber	Grand Valley Metro Council	X	
Annisssa Kebede	City of Grand Rapids	X	
Candice Matthews	LINC UP	X	
Carla Anderson	Answer Health	X	
Clover Brown	Grand Valley Metro Council	X	X
Kade Phoonsiri	City of Grand Rapids	X	
Ken Miguel-Cipriano	City of Grand Rapids	X	X
Kimberly Brown		X	
Lisa Verburg	Blue Cross Blue Shield	X	
Marla Hoekwater	Treetops Collective	X	
Rachel Kunnath	Kent County Health Dept	X	X
Trey Reinhardt	City of Grand Rapids	X	
Jeffrey King	The Rapid	X	
Tim Roseboom	The Rapid	X	
Emily Madsen	ENTF	X	
Megan Halm	ENTF	X	
Wende Randall	ENTF	X	X
Erica Chapin	Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services		X
Jerry Downs	Hope Network	X	X
Kelli Greer	Care Resources, Inc.		X

Date: September 23, 2026
To: ITP Board
From: Kevin Wisselink, Director Procurement and Capital Planning
Subject: MASTER AGREEMENT WITH THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ACTION REQUESTED

ITP Board authorization is requested for the Chief Executive Officer to execute the Master Agreement with the Michigan Department of Transportation.

BACKGROUND

The ITP enters multiple grant contracts with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to fund or match federal and state grant programs. MDOT requires each transit agency to execute an annual Certification and Assurance stating that the agency will comply with applicable federal regulations. The Master Agreement contains all contract requirement clauses regarding federal regulations, eliminating the need to include the clauses and regulations in each individual grant contract. The Master Agreement requires a one-time approval and will cover fiscal years 2027-2031.

This Master Agreement does not eliminate project authorization by the ITP Board. Project authorization identifies the scope of work and amount of funding authorized for each specific grant. Project authorizations are bound by the terms of the Master Agreement. Each transit agency is required to provide a project authorization to execute each grant project under the Master Agreement. The ITP Board will have to provide authorization for each grant application submitted to MDOT in resolutions adopted for each grant project.

INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF DIRECTORS**RESOLUTION No. 092326-5****Fiscal Year: 2025-2026**

THE APPROVED RESOLUTION OF INTENT FOR CERTIFIED SIGNATURE RESOLUTION AND MDOT MASTER AGREEMENT.

WHEREAS, the Interurban Transit Partnership has the authority to contract with the Michigan Department of Transportation for state and/or federal funds for passenger transportation related services; and

WHEREAS the Interurban Transit Partnership does hereby approve Master Agreement Number 2027-0092.

WHEREAS this resolution shall also approve execution of Project Authorizations for any programs designated by the Interurban Transit Partnership and/or Project Authorizations for any amount determined by the Interurban Transit Partnership with the Michigan Department of Transportation which are issued under Master Agreement Number 2027-0092.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Chief Executive Officer of the Interurban Transit Partnership be authorized and directed to execute said agreement for and on behalf of the Interurban Transit Partnership.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chief Executive Officer or designee of the Interurban Transit Partnership is authorized to enter into and execute on behalf of the Interurban Transit Partnership all such Project Authorizations with the Michigan Department of Transportation for passenger transportation related service for the Agreement period.

CERTIFICATE

The undersigned, duly qualified and acting secretary of the Interurban Transit Partnership Board, certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Interurban Transit Partnership Board.

Kris Heald, Board Secretary

Date

2027 MASTER AGREEMENT SUMMARY OF DRAFT CHANGES

MDOT OFFICE OF PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION | 08.13.2026

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Office of Passenger Transportation (OPT) maintains a five-year master agreement with transportation service providers defining terms for authorizing Federal and State grant funds to the service agencies. The current master agreement covers October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2026 (Fiscal Years 2022 – 2026). This document summarizes changes in the forthcoming 2027 Master Agreement, to be effective October 1, 2026 through September 30, 2031 (Fiscal Years 2027 – 2031).

In total, 58 key changes were made across 24 sections. The agreement is also reorganized from 42 sections to 11 subject-based sections with chapters contained within. Changes are listed here according to their section number in the 2022 Master Agreement.

This document is for the purpose of summarization; it is not intended to define or expand any terms from the 2027 Master Agreement.

Change Summary

2022 Sec. #	2022 Sec. Title	2027 Sec. #	Change
Overall			Sections re-sorted as subsections of 11 subject-based sections, to improve document navigation. Updated PTMS references to PTIMS.
0	Table of Contents	0	Linked formatting makes the TOC hyperlinked to each subsection, to improve digital document user experience. Text formatting cleaned up to improve TOC navigation and trim the document's overall size.
1	Definitions		Section removed to be in alignment with other MDOT agreements, with key terms defined at first use.
3	Annual Application	2.A	Title and language adjusted to reflect that some funding programs are not on annual cycles.
4	Conflict of Interest	10.A	Addition of "in writing to MDOT" for Agency disclosure of any potential conflict of interest in it receiving financial assistance through a project authorization.
5	Project Funding	2.C	Replaced "maximum cost" with "maximum reimbursement" in first sentence to clarify that an authorization total is a reimbursement total that may not equal final price.

2022 Sec. #	2022 Sec. Title	2027 Sec. #	Change
			Addition to final sentence: failure to comply with funding award or MDOT requirements may result in MDOT requiring the reimbursement of funds previously disbursed.
6	Eligible Project Costs	2.B	Travel costs updated to MDOT standard language.
			Language added specifying that expenses paid under a project authorization cannot be included in expenses to be reimbursed under the LBO Program.
7	Budget Adjustments, Revisions, and Amendments	4.A	"Budget Adjustments" will henceforth be known as "Administrative Modifications", accounting for the fact that, by definition, they do not involve budgetary changes.
			The definition of Administrative Modification (formerly known as "budget adjustment") is updated to reflect the bounds of a federal award administrative modification as defined in Chapter III of FTA C 5010.1F: "An administrative modification to a project authorization may be used for changes that do not revise the scope of work, authorization amount, or authorization purpose."
			The definition of Revision is updated to reflect the bounds of a federal award amendment as defined in Chapter III of FTA C 5010.1F: "A revision to a project authorization may be used for a proposed change that would add a new line item, change the project authorization amount, change the Federal, State, or local amounts, change the quantity of items, significantly change the scope, or extend the term of the project authorization."
			Revision requests must be received no later than 60 days before an authorization expiration date and must be received by August 1 for changes to be effective by September 30.
			If applicable, revision requests requiring written approval from a local or regional allocation committee need to include subject written committee approval.
			Addition: "Authorizations will not go beyond their Federal grant period of performance. Likewise, authorization changes will match their corresponding Federal grant period of performance. MDOT will not reimburse expenses beyond authorization start and end dates, unless the AGENCY has approved pre-award authority."
			Removal of 5-day requirement on notification to MDOT on "significant event(s)" of significant impact potential on projects.
			Addition of term, "In extraordinary, unforeseen circumstances MDOT reserves the right to make exceptions to deadlines herein."
			Sufficient progress toward the obligation of funds must now be made within six months of receiving a project authorization; a reduction from 12 months.
8	Timely Expenditure of Funds	4.B	Sufficient progress toward the obligation of funds must be made within six months - down from twelve months - of receiving an awarded project authorization or MDOT may cancel the project authorization and the AGENCY will no longer have access to the funds.

2022 Sec. #	2022 Sec. Title	2027 Sec. #	Change
9	Competitive Procurement	3.A	"Competitive" removed from section title.
10	Third-Party Contract Procedures	3.B	Removed reference to Commission policy, and replace with reference to MDOT Procurement Guidelines for Grantees Receiving Federal Transit Administration Funds and/or State Funds via MDOT.
14	Inspection of Project Equipment and Records	9.B	Added reference to 2 CFR 200.332(b)(5).
15	Use and Disposition of Facility/Revenue Vehicles/Equipment	3.E	Removed reference to 49 CFR 18.
			Added reference to MDOT OPT Preventative Maintenance Manual.
			Removed IJIA reference.
			Added term giving MDOT a security interest in non-revenue vehicles priced \$50,000 or more.
			Added term that incidental use of Federal/State-funded revenue vehicles/equipment or facilities for nonpublic transportation use "shall be declared with submission of MDOT's Incidental Use Form".
16	Insurance	3.I	Add clarification: "Insurance payment for loss or damage will be made to MDOT, <i>if an asset has not met its useful life.</i> "
17	Indemnification	7.C	Added "defend" to term that agency "agrees to indemnify, defend, and save harmless the State of Michigan..."
18	Billings and Payments for Capital Programs	3.G	Section title simplified.
			Added term: "a. All requests for payment must be submitted in accordance with the procedures established by MDOT and outlined in the latest applicable program guidance and documentation. MDOT will provide access to current payment procedures, including required forms, formats, and submission methods. The Agency agrees to comply with all such procedures as a condition of reimbursement. MDOT reserves the right to modify payment processes, systems, and requirements, and such modifications shall become effective upon notice without requiring an amendment to this Agreement."
			Budget summary threshold for equipment procurements and facility improvements increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000.
			Updated: "Within one hundred twenty (120) days after costs have been incurred or an invoice received, the AGENCY must submit to MDOT a complete billing to be charged against the project authorization."
			Defined "complete billing" with reference to MDOT External Procedure #70200.
			Added term: "MDOT reserves the right to adjust reimbursement amount according to Section 10b(3)(f) of Act 51, which requires that the State pay not less than two-thirds of the local match required for Federal Transit Administration capital grants to local transit agencies."
			Addition: "As an exception, when an AGENCY has pre-award authority, the one hundred twenty (120) day clock on costs incurred or invoice received shall start at the Federal award date."

2022 Sec. #	2022 Sec. Title	2027 Sec. #	Change
			Removed LBO reference, and moved it to Eligible Project Costs section.
19	Billings and Payments for Operating Programs	3.H	Removed specification for quarterly payments, and replaced with: "Payments will be made according to deadlines and guidance in the MDOT OPT Specialized Services Manual, the State of Michigan Management Plan for Funding Under Sections 5310, 5311, 5339, Section 70, and Other Competitive Programs of the Federal Transit Administration, and applicable MDOT guidance for subsequent designated programs."
			Removed LBO reference, and moved it to Eligible Project Costs section.
20	The Section 5311 Rural Area Operating Program	6.A	Added: "A general ledger for the fiscal year must be submitted with the Reconciled OAR for MDOT to review and sample selected invoices."
			Removed reference to quarterly payments.
			Added: "Payments will be made according to deadlines and guidance in the MDOT OPT Specialized Services Manual, the State of Michigan Management Plan for Funding Under Sections 5310, 5311, 5339, Section 70, and Other Competitive Programs of the Federal Transit Administration, and applicable MDOT guidance for subsequent designated programs. "
			Added: "If a Federal or State law, regulation, or circular referenced in the Audit Guide should become obsolete through a new applicable Federal or State law, regulation, or circular, the latest version shall apply even if the update has not yet been incorporated into the Audit Guide."
			Added regarding audited eligible expenses, compliance with the Revenue and Expense Manual and the Audit Guide.
21	The Specialized Services Program	6.C	Revised "Budget Adjustments" sub-part title to "Transferring Funds from One Recipient to Another:"
			Removed competitive bidding requirements being identified as specific to use of Federal funds; defaults the requirements to be agnostic of fund source.
22	The Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program	6.B	Added Performance Measures Reporting term.
23	Reporting Requirements	5	Added State Management Plan reference to milestone reports sub-part.
			Removed Section 5310 Performance Measures sub-part.
28	Annual CPA Audit Requirements	9.G	Updated Federal Single Audit, State Transit Audit, and No CPA Audit threshold to \$1,000,000.
			Replaced listing of digital ADA compliant formatting attributes with reference to "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Version 2.1, per 28 CFR Part 35".
			Removed paper mail address reflecting current practice of digital submission.

2022 Sec. #	2022 Sec. Title	2027 Sec. #	Change
			Added for federal and no-CPA-audit terms, clarification that if during the time of this agreement responsibility for these audit submissions transitions to a new point of contact, direct notification to the new applicable point of contact designated by the FTA or MDOT.
32	Nondiscrimination and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise	7	Removed \$250K threshold, due to 49 CFR 26.21(a)(2) requiring that all FTA Tier I and Tier II recipients must have a DBE program.
33	Certification	10.B	Added: "The AGENCY's signature on the AUTHORIZATION constitutes the AGENCY's certification..."
37	Interest of Members or Delegates to Congress	10.E	Title simplified.



Date: September 23, 2026

To: ITP Board of Directors

From: Tim Roseboom – Senior Planner

Subject: FIXED ROUTE RIDERSHIP AND PRODUCTIVITY REPORT – AUGUST 2026

OVERVIEW: In August 2026, there was an 11.6% decrease in total monthly route ridership as compared to August 2025. Regular fixed route services increased 3.9%, but contract services decreased 52.4%. DASH Work was eliminated and the DASH Circulators were combined to one consolidated clockwise route on May 4. Also, GVSU was in session the last full week of August 2025 but did not start until August 31 in 2026.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Monthly Ridership

	August 2026	August 2025¹	% Change
Regular Fixed Route Service (<i>Routes 1–44</i>)	356,772	343,477	3.9%
Contracted Service (<i>GVSU, DASH, GRCC, and Ferris</i>)	62,294	130,841	-52.4%
Total Monthly Fixed Route Ridership	419,066	474,318	-11.6%

Daily Average Ridership

	August 2026	August 2025¹	% Change
Weekday Total	16,634	19,150	-13.1%
Weekday Evening	2,825	3,053	-7.5%
Saturday	8,982	9,403	-4.5%
Sunday	4,969	5,032	-1.2%

Productivity Summary

	August 2026	August 2025¹	% Change
Average passengers per hour per route	13.5	13.4	0.5%
Average passengers per mile per route	0.99	0.96	3.3%
Average farebox recovery percent per route	9.1%	10.9%	-16.7%

Fiscal Year Ridership

	FY 2026	FY 2025¹	% Change
Regular Fixed Route Service (<i>Routes 1–44</i>)	3,615,476	3,543,994	2.0%
Contracted Service (<i>GVSU, DASH, GRCC, and Ferris</i>)	1,599,293	1,645,853	-2.8%
Total Fixed Route Ridership YTD	5,214,769	5,189,847	0.5%

¹ Prior-year monthly ridership figures shown in this report may differ from those published in last year's Committee/Board report for the same month due to delayed farebox data retrieval.

COMPARISON OF AUGUST 2026 TO AUGUST 2019

Monthly Ridership

	August 2026	August 2019	% Change
Regular Fixed Route Service (<i>Routes 1–44</i>)	356,772	608,801	-41.4%
Contracted Service (<i>GVSU, DASH, GRCC, and Ferris</i>)	62,294	165,264	-62.3%
Total Monthly Fixed Route Ridership	419,066	774,065	-45.9%

Daily Average Ridership

	August 2026	August 2019	% Change
Weekday Total	16,634	30,866	-46.1%
Weekday Evening	2,825	4,939	-42.8%
Saturday	8,982	13,740	-34.6%
Sunday	4,969	6,577	-24.4%

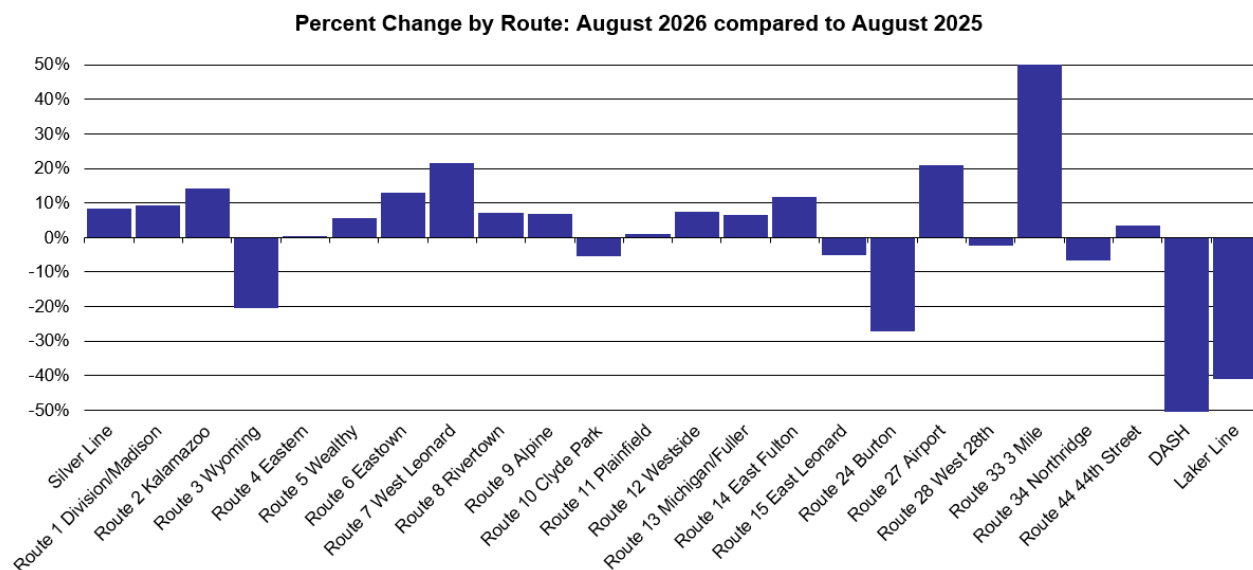
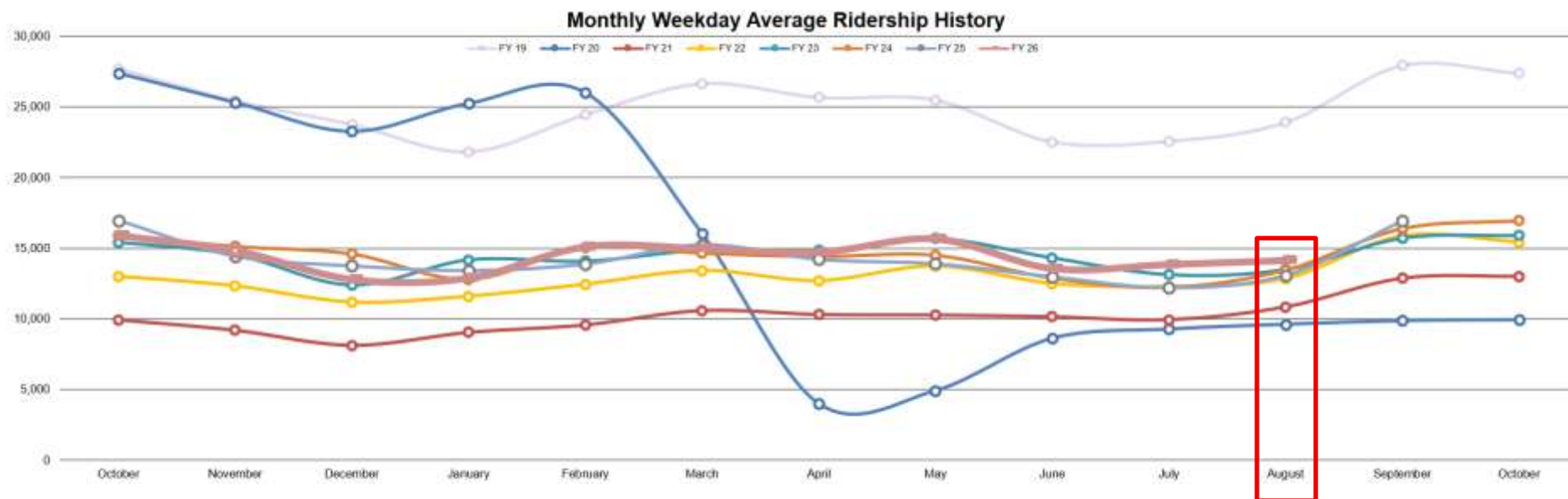
Productivity Summary

	August 2026	August 2019	% Change
Average passengers per hour per route	13.5	19.4	-30.6%
Average passengers per mile per route	0.99	1.54	-35.5%
Average farebox recovery percent per route	9.1%	26.2%	-65.3%

Fiscal Year Ridership

	FY 2026	FY 2019	% Change
Regular Fixed Route Service (<i>Routes 1–44</i>)	3,615,476	6,664,781	-45.8%
Contracted Service (<i>GVSU, DASH, GRCC, and Ferris</i>)	1,599,293	2,470,618	-35.3%
Total Fixed Route Ridership YTD	5,214,769	9,135,399	-42.9%

	Monthly Farebox Recovery	Weekday Farebox Recovery	Saturday Farebox Recovery	Sunday Farebox Recovery
Silver Line	9.93%	9.48%	13.69%	9.80%
Route 1 Division/Madison	9.53%	9.78%	9.59%	7.33%
Route 2 Kalamazoo	9.67%	9.47%	12.56%	8.59%
Route 3 Wyoming/Rivertown	7.46%	7.81%	7.80%	5.25%
Route 4 Eastern	9.86%	9.79%	10.84%	9.02%
Route 5 Wealthy	9.16%	9.08%	9.80%	n/a
Route 6 Eastown	8.15%	7.88%	7.78%	11.58%
Route 7 West Leonard	7.79%	7.61%	8.57%	8.88%
Route 8 Prairie/Rivertown	9.12%	9.64%	8.48%	6.42%
Route 9 Alpine	12.77%	12.07%	16.14%	16.13%
Route 10 Clyde Park	9.76%	9.69%	11.06%	8.11%
Route 11 Plainfield	8.39%	8.07%	9.88%	10.46%
Route 12 Westside	7.78%	8.16%	8.23%	0.00%
Route 13 Michigan/Fuller	7.57%	7.55%	7.69%	n/a
Route 14 East Fulton	8.89%	9.50%	6.22%	n/a
Route 15 East Leonard	10.93%	11.07%	9.39%	11.93%
Route 24 Burton	5.23%	5.33%	4.65%	n/a
Route 27 Airport Industrial	8.90%	8.90%	n/a	n/a
Route 28 West 28th	9.61%	9.56%	10.08%	9.35%
Route 33 Walker Industrial	3.57%	3.57%	n/a	n/a
Route 34 Northridge	2.00%	2.00%	n/a	n/a
Route 44 44th Street	9.20%	9.13%	10.82%	7.88%
Route 0 Express	0.05%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Route 1000 Millenium Park	2.15%	n/a	1.63%	2.71%
Route 71 Central 4A	10.22%	10.22%	n/a	n/a
Route 72 Central 10A	16.33%	16.33%	n/a	n/a
Route 73 Union 3A	47.29%	47.29%	n/a	n/a
Route 74 Union 7A	41.10%	41.10%	n/a	n/a
Route 75 Union 10B	25.78%	25.78%	n/a	n/a
Route 76 Union 12A	49.26%	49.26%	n/a	n/a





Interurban Transit Partnership

Date: September 23, 2026
To: ITP Board of Directors
From: Linda Medina, Director of Finance
Subject: July 2026 Financial Statements

Attached are the July 31, 2026, financial statements for both General Operations and Grants for your review along with the Professional Development and Travel Activity Report for July.

FY 25/26 YTD Operating Statement Analysis

Total revenues and expenses are trending favorably through July 2026. Revenues are 1.1% over budget while expenses are 11.1% under budget before capitalizing operating expenses.

Revenue associated with Community Mental Health (CMH) transportation services is below budget due to lower-than-projected ridership. DASH contract revenue is also below budget due to a reduction in service hours under the DASH Reimagined Pilot Program, which began in May with the opening of Acrisure Amphitheater.

Wages and fringe benefits remain below budget as staffing levels continue to be lower than budgeted. Recruitment efforts continue as the organization works fill to fill vacant positions. Contract services are under budget due to the rebidding of the cleaning contracts, which resulted in lower than anticipated costs compared to the original budget.

Please feel free to reach out to me directly at (616) 774-1149 or lmolina@ridetherapid.org with any additional questions regarding the attached financial reports.

The Rapid
General Operating Statement
Year to Date as of July 31, 2026

	YTD as of July 31, 2026		Variance		Last Year FY 24/25	% Variance to FY 24/25	Current Year FY 25/26
	Budget	Actual	\$	%	YTD Actual	YTD Actual	Annual Budget
Revenues and Operating Assistance							
Passenger Fares	\$ 3,905,747	\$ 3,940,166	\$ 34,419	0.9%	\$ 3,856,806	2%	\$ 4,813,645
Sale of Transportation Services							
CMH Contribution	384,988	331,306	(53,682)	-13.9%	313,325	6%	461,985
Dash Contract	2,084,041	1,801,176	(282,865)	-13.6%	2,173,855	-17%	2,501,834
Grand Valley State University	3,628,222	3,067,607	(560,615)	-15.5%	3,209,392	-4%	4,583,236
Van Pool Transportation	-	-	-	0.0%	-		-
Township Services	170,783	160,308	(10,475)	-6.1%	186,986	-14%	185,918
Other	308,921	289,356	(19,565)	-6.3%	310,116	-7%	360,063
Subtotal Sale of Transportation Services	6,576,955	5,649,753	(927,202)	-14.1%	6,193,675	-9%	8,093,036
State Operating	12,739,642	12,533,969	(205,673)	-1.6%	11,485,266	9%	15,339,950
Property Taxes	18,468,747	19,224,364	755,617	4.1%	17,993,703	7%	22,061,749
Advertising & Miscellaneous	1,849,882	2,656,831	806,949	43.6%	2,460,254	8%	1,660,675
Subtotal Revenues and Operating Assistance	43,540,973	44,005,083	464,110	1.1%	41,989,707	5%	51,969,055
Grant Operating Revenue	-	-	-	0.0%	-		-
Unrestricted Net Reserves	-	-	-	0.0%	-		8,030,753
Total Revenues and Operating Assistance	<u>\$ 43,540,973</u>	<u>\$ 44,005,083</u>	<u>\$ 464,110</u>	<u>1.1%</u>	<u>\$41,989,707</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>\$ 59,999,808</u>
Expenses							
Salaries and Wages							
Administrative	\$ 6,852,907	\$ 5,467,844	\$ (1,385,063)	-20.2%	\$ 4,983,764	10%	\$ 8,113,721
Operators	14,275,426	12,447,739	(1,827,687)	-12.8%	11,442,860	9%	16,870,956
Maintenance	3,272,524	2,857,706	(414,818)	-12.7%	2,191,656	30%	3,879,337
Subtotal Salaries and Wages	24,400,857	20,773,289	(3,627,568)	-14.9%	18,618,280	12%	28,864,014
Benefits	8,097,475	6,942,191	(1,155,284)	-14.3%	6,785,105	2%	10,431,981
Contractual Services	3,992,703	3,571,985	(420,718)	-10.5%	2,599,268	37%	5,538,372
Materials and Supplies				0.0%			-
Fuel and Lubricants	1,565,614	1,500,119	(65,495)	-4.2%	1,524,900	-2%	2,273,730
Other	1,968,633	2,042,660	74,027	3.8%	1,560,786	31%	2,672,063
Subtotal Materials and Supplies	3,534,247	3,542,779	8,532	0.2%	3,085,686	15%	4,945,793
Utilities, Insurance, and Miscellaneous	4,015,268	3,829,522	(185,746)	-4.6%	4,089,873	-6%	5,967,010
Purchased Transportation	7,453,254	7,129,805	(323,449)	-4.3%	7,408,078	-4%	9,252,638
Expenses Before Capitalized Operating	51,493,804	45,789,571	(5,704,233)	-11.1%	42,586,289	8%	64,999,808
Capitalized Operating Expenses	(2,456,648)	(2,373,247)	83,401	-3.4%	(2,354,517)	1%	(5,000,000)
Total Operating Expenses	<u>\$ 49,037,156</u>	<u>\$ 43,416,324</u>	<u>\$ (5,620,832)</u>	<u>-11.5%</u>	<u>\$40,231,772</u>	<u>8%</u>	<u>\$ 59,999,808</u>
Net Surplus/(Deficit) before Net Reserves		\$ 588,759			\$ 1,757,935		

**Interurban Transit Partnership
Grant Revenues & Expenditures
Month Ended 07/31/26**

GL0376

Page 1

	Adopted Budget	Amended Budget	Month To Date	Year To Date	Balance	Percent Target 83%
<u>Grant Revenue</u>						
1. Federal Grant Assistance	19,310,779	24,013,096	882,870	18,353,145	5,659,951	76%
2. State Grant Assistance	4,827,695	6,003,274	220,717	4,588,286	1,414,988	76%
3. Transfer In - Operating Budget	0	0	0	0	0	100%
4. Use of Restricted Net Assets	0	0	0	0	0	100%
5. Other Local	0	0	0	0	0	100%
6. Total Grant Revenue	24,138,474	30,016,370	1,103,587	22,941,431	7,074,939	76%
<u>Labor</u>						
7. Administrative Salaries	40,000	38,900	1,844	13,395	25,505	34%
8. Driver Wages	0	0	0	0	0	100%
9. Temporary Wages	0	0	0	0	0	100%
10. Fringe Benefit Distribution	20,000	20,000	470	4,277	15,723	21%
11. Total Labor	60,000	58,900	2,314	17,672	41,228	30%
<u>Material & Supplies</u>						
12. Tires & Tubes	900,000	900,000	30,493	258,487	641,513	29%
13. Office Supplies	1,000	1,000	0	0	1,000	0%
14. Printing	1,000	4,100	0	0	4,100	0%
15. Total Material & Supplies	902,000	905,100	30,493	258,487	646,613	29%
<u>Purchased Transportation</u>						
16. Purchased Transportation	1,200,000	1,100,000	26,602	26,602	1,073,398	2%
17. Specialized Services	795,474	795,474	0	397,736	397,738	50%
18. Total Purchased Transportation	1,995,474	1,895,474	26,602	424,338	1,471,136	22%
<u>Other Expenses</u>						
19. Dues & Subscriptions	30,000	30,000	0	22,596	7,404	75%
20. Professional Development	30,000	28,000	0	1,111	26,889	4%
21. Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0	0	100%
22. Total Other Expenses	60,000	58,000	0	23,707	34,293	41%
<u>Leases</u>						
23. Office Lease	0	0	0	0	0	100%
24. Transit Center Lease	0	0	0	0	0	100%
25. Storage Space Lease	0	0	0	0	0	100%
26. Total Leases	0	0	0	0	0	100%
<u>Capital</u>						
27. Rolling Stock	10,463,411	14,063,417	0	13,219,476	843,941	94%
28. Facilities	1,208,000	4,339,000	119,033	4,175,340	163,660	96%
29. Equipment	938,843	938,843	2,190	133,378	805,465	14%
30. Other	4,053,116	3,300,006	211,701	2,255,476	1,044,530	68%
31. Total Capital	16,663,370	22,641,266	332,924	19,783,670	2,857,596	87%
32. Planning Services	457,630	457,630	496	60,311	397,319	13%
33. Capitalized Operating	4,000,000	4,000,000	710,758	2,373,246	1,626,754	59%
34. Total Expenditures	24,138,474	30,016,370	1,103,587	22,941,431	7,074,939	76%

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & TRAVEL REPORT
ALL EMPLOYEES
JULY 2026

AMOUNT	PURPOSE	EMPLOYEE (s)	LOCATION
\$ 495.74	APTA Mobility Conference	D. Prato	Salt Lake, UT
\$ 949.00	APTA Tech	J. Hagel	St. Louis, MO
\$ 1,332.00	Transit Vehicle Maintenance	S. Clapp and H. Zelenka	Houghton Lake, MI
\$ 1,850.00	Operator Refresh Training	Operators	Grand Rapids, MI
\$ 231.86	MPTA Annual Meeting	S. Schipper	Thompsonville, MI
\$ 4,858.60			

*This total does not include incidental travel and meeting expenses such as mileage, parking, lunch meetings, etc.