

## TRANSIT MASTER PLAN – STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES

February 12, 2024

### 1. WELCOME AND SALUTATIONS

### 2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Status Update & Past Steering Committee Accomplishments
- Guiding Principles & Goals Review

### 3. ACTIVITY: IDENTIFYING LOCAL VALUE STATEMENTS FOR TMP

**“How do we tell the ‘story’ of the benefits transit provides?”**

Members wrote a value statement and passed the note to the left – the members then added a **‘yes, and...’** statement.

*The intention is to showcase the interrelated nature of values – as a starting point to developing the array of ‘storytelling’ aspects for the Spring 2024 public engagement and into the TMP recommendations.*

VALUE STATEMENT	YES, AND...
More than meets the eye – public transit meets needs and builds community.	<b>Yes, and...</b> with multiple options – bus, bike, etc.
More options for transportation opens up more prosperity across the region, as dollars can be spent elsewhere.	<b>Yes, and...</b> we want to hear ideas and creative solutions to improve. Local connectivity to attract and retain people and businesses.
Growing and sustainable places have excellent connectivity between people, businesses and fun.	<b>Yes, and...</b> this vibrancy lifts up places where people want to live, work, and play.
Changing the culture and perception of public transit.	<b>Yes, and...</b> will need to explain why? Non-riders don’t know why. Expand

Low cost, hassle-free transportation.	the “value” of transit for new audiences. How can riding the rapid to new downtown entertainment options become the easiest, most cost-effective method to get there. This could be non-current riders who gain support for why transit matters. Requires more frequency and seats available.
Community transit system is one of the best ways to impact climate change while saving money and time for yourself.	<b>Yes, and...</b> efficient and effective transportation.
Transportation cost savings	<b>Yes, and...</b> “Need more time? Ride the Rapid!” - Building community connections, reducing the wealth gap, and increasing equity - “Auto insurance too high? Ride the Rapid!”
Tourism / Social Districts	<b>Yes, and...</b> Hotel/Motel tax as a potential revenue source? Make transit the easiest and fastest mode!
Interconnections within society	<b>Yes, and...</b> taking automobiles off the road is good for limiting urban sprawl, safety on the roads, and the environment.
Tell the stories that show how families benefit from efficient and accessible transit	<b>Yes, and...</b> focus on each age group’s perspective within the family.
Best transit system for mass workforce and tertiary option	<b>Yes, and...</b> not either/or with the car – a great option for some of the time
Connectivity for Everyone to Everything across our community.	<b>Yes, and...</b> connecting people to other communities that without transit they would have limited access to.
Community, Careers, and choice	<b>Yes and...</b> The Rapid connects all of these with a transportation method of choice.

Normalize the experience so its clear transit is for all. Share experience of how people use transit for jobs, events, etc.	<b>Yes, and...</b> experiences showing how the Rapid can be a transportation mode of choice
Getting from here to there	<b>Yes, and...</b> community “influencers” taking the bus to events throughout the city/region
Connected, reliable, affordable, and environmentally friendly	<b>Yes, and...</b> accessibility
Public transportation is for everyone	<b>Yes, and...</b> all socioeconomic classes, all ages, all neighborhoods
Public transportation is safe	<b>Yes, and...</b> the people riding the bus are my neighbors. The buses also reduce traffic accidents
Public transportation saves you money	<b>Yes, and...</b> in daily commutes and in long-term expenses, also in climate impacts
Many healthcare institutions are on the public transit map	<b>Yes, and...</b> ensure access to healthcare services to underserved communities and mobility challenged
Public transportation is cool and convenient and makes financial sense	<b>Yes, and...</b> transit should be viewed as a better alternative to driving to community events/festivals in the Downtown Core, especially with parking hassle and expense.
Intentional engagement from key stakeholders from the aspects of community to drive the connectivity of the Grand Rapids Metro.	<b>Yes, and...</b> being purposeful to connect the most needy to economic opportunity.
Identify opportunity to get from here to there	<b>Yes, and...</b> work with social media influencers across the region

#### 4. TECHNICAL UPDATES & FALL 2023 PUBLIC FEEDBACK SUMMARY

#### 5. OPPORTUNITIES DISCUSSION (Slide 40)

- From the opportunities listed here (based on data & public input), what other opportunities should be included?
- Which opportunities are important to you?

Figure 1 – Opportunities Slide



#### DISCUSSION

- Concerned Grand Rapids will not become a dense place. How can we provide transportation modes that connect people to jobs? How are the right modes picked? How do incentive packages get put together for companies to move to Grand Rapids? Michigan is heading like Mississippi because we aren't invested enough in knowledge-based jobs.
- How do we provide service for areas outside the service area?

- Value of transit: Cost benefits of using transit compared to owning a car
- Deductibles from the state for riding the bus more
- Gamify riding transit/fare programs
- THE RAPID: The Importance of partnerships
  - The best transit planning requires the is best land-use & economic development planning
  - Housing informs where transit goes
- Internal workforce - is there a disconnect between right sizing the service for the future of the TMP versus the public feedback regarding rider experience with transit operators (ambassadors to the community). Potentially improving employee morale in addition to the rider experience
  - Also encourage conversations with the City of Wyoming for a hub by Rogers Plaza near the city hall OR by the library (Joint Development) to compliment the other hubs
    - AECOM: Peer assessment shows The Rapid is very efficient but may mean there is an opportunity to address if too efficient (stretched too thin)
  - Joint Development section of TMP can look into additional hubs in our system
- We don't have the TDM pain (parking costs, traffic, etc.) so we need to understand and address the decision factors that cause people to choose other modes (e.g., San Francisco people don't drive)
- Also, funding .... is not sustainable
  - AECOM: Grand Rapids is not going to be Chicago or San Francisco but we can add TDM strategies that fit the scale of Grand Rapids
- Teacher is desperate for mobility services for disability student aging out of the program
- We don't want to be the third best choice for people
- Also, how do we solve for employment by innovating MORE
- Get rid of the main lines? More expensive cost per trip, but it may be more effective. If it's more effective, would people be willing to pay more?

- New app to find the bus better. We need to solve for employment and health care, as long as people get to where they want to get.
- Michigan report about connecting the poor to work. That's a pain point that needs to be addressed.
- Partnership with the parks system for transit hubs? People need access to green space
  - Grand Rapids parks could be something to consider
  - How do we make connections with the markets on the other side of the state (e.g., Illinois and Casinos)
  - Add Kent County and the report to connect transit to green spaces
- We recognize and support getting employees to work. We need to ask the difference between "need to" and "must to"
  - Example in Tuscan, AZ
  - What are we missing? What are we servicing?
  - How do we attract and retain people coming to the area?
  - Some people don't have the option to go downtown and stay downtown to walk around
  - Try to connect social districts using a loop
    - Downtown
    - Grace Street
    - Gives people an opportunity to try riding a bus who normally wouldn't ride the bus
- We're talking about adding a lot of large capacity entertainment venues downtown
  - What if transit was the easiest and fastest way to access the soccer match? If it was their "gateway" to transit and will be more willing to try transit for other trips. Chicago everyone goes to a soccer game on transit.
  - Currently cannot take transit to a concert because transit doesn't run long enough to get home
  - Fredrick Meijer Gardens has a lot of parking and an amphitheater downtown without that parking - we can expect a pain point
- To what extent is The Rapid involved in the other government commissions and meetings? I don't recall The Rapid being



involved. We built venues too small and cannot increase the size. All the previous committees didn't have The Rapid involved in the conversations. Who was (or was not) tying in the movement of people (mass transit) during those conversations.

- This should apply to all governments in the area. All municipalities should be pestered to have The Rapid addition/edition should be incorporated to all project review processes. If a Planning Commission involved The Rapid and make sure they were on the front end.
- THE RAPID: Please amplify those "yes, and..." conversations. Does The Rapid have a seat at the table? It's improving.
  - We can go anywhere that we're building to, but we need funding to make it happen. Fixed funding can only get it so far.
  - It takes density, it is convenience, it's a behavior shift.
  - We do training for operators

## **6. OPPORTUNITIES DISCUSSION (CON'T)**

- Detailed descriptions of each identified opportunity from presentation

## **7. NEXT STEPS**

- WMX Implementation Plan
- Peer Analysis Final Report
- Fall 2023 Public Engagement Final Report
- Upcoming: Spring 2024 Public Engagement
  
- Will be reaching out to the Committee to schedule two (2) more Steering Committee meetings (Spring and Summer 2024)