

TRANSIT MASTER PLAN – STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES

November 6, 2023

1. Welcome and salutations
2. Project Schedule/Technical Updates
 - a. Peer Interview Takeaways
 - b. West Michigan Express Implementation Planning
3. Public Involvement
 - a. Fall Outreach Highlights
 - b. Focus Group Feedback
4. Small Group Breakout Discussions – big thinking visioning exercise

Below are the questions used to stimulate the small group discussions. *Note – these were ‘icebreaking’ and introductory questions. The groups were encouraged to identify their own statements and visionary declarations.*

- How can/should mobility, land use, and infrastructure work in tandem to meet our 20-year needs?
- Describe what you envision the future of The Rapid’s transit system to be?
- What will a transformative public transportation headline read in 2030 & 2040?
- What does The Rapid community need to do now to prepare?

RESPONSES & NOTES:

TOP THEMES FROM SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS:

- **Cultivating stronger partnerships with developments/developers and jurisdictional land use decision making**
- **More regional mobility hubs to provide connections outside of the Grand Rapids core (similar to Kentwood Station at Woodland Mall)**

THEMES:

- Transit is more than just moving people; it can also be part of successful placemaking
- Be mindful of the market interest in Transit Oriented Development (TOD) before pursuing any joint development projects (developers will only go for it if it works with their proforma and if the lenders like it)
- Transit needs should be incorporated in development review processes
 - Including asking developers to help construct transit amenities (e.g., stop shelters)
 - Explore the idea of development impact fees that go towards transit
 - New developments should consider last mile connections/mobility solutions
- Break down silos (within and across organizations) to meet and implement mobility solutions
 - Partner with cities and economic development groups to implement transit vision
 - Collaborate with other regional transit providers to create a unified “mobility as a service” approach to transit
- Refocus transit connectivity to provide links between high-activity mobility hubs (e.g., Meijer parking lots)
- Set up a framework to implement appropriate transit solutions as development occurs (e.g., meet expected suburban growth with content-sensitive solutions)
- Offer loyalty benefits to frequent riders

Q: How can transit and land use work together to meet future mobility needs?

- What visibility does transit have into determining prospective land use?
- What does our regional urban planning look like?
- Consider public transportation/mobility potential when approving city developments and projects
- Economic Development partnerships and incentives
- Policies with municipalities/planning commissions
- Change perceptions of surrounding cities and suburbs with hubs
- Create transit express lanes on freeways
- Including land use policy requirements that support transit
- Economic development policies should partner with transit for implementation
- Ask developers how they can partner with The Rapid to construct bus stops (E.g., university example)

Q: What can an exciting public transportation headline be?

- “Grand Rapids was proactive and turned into a model city for public transportation”
- “The Rapid: Driving force in community development”
- “The Rapid brings our community together”
- “10 new mobility hubs spur \$10B in development”
- “20-minute city”
- “Get anywhere within +10% duration of an equivalent single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) trip”
- “Kent County and The Rapid partner for county-wide service”

Q: What does The Rapid (& our community) need to do now to prepare?

- Get ahead of the narrative/any negative perception
- Teach people how to plan to ride
- Help transit become part of people’s routines
- Consider interactive experiences while riding
- Explore with all municipal planning departments to understand what the state allows and what would need to change at the municipal level
- Form partnerships with cities to change policy around development
- Work with outer cities to change perceptions of transit as taboo/unpleasant
- Partner with private companies to increase reach (service area/impact)
- Remove barriers to collaborate, currently too many silos
- Form policies and partnerships
- Transit should be involved in the land use review process (e.g., waive number of required parking spaces if the development is transit supportive)
- Provide riders with interactive experiences on the bus (e.g., real-time feedback surveys that are specific to each bus/route)
- Offer loyalty benefits to frequent riders (something like gamification)
- Break down interdisciplinary silos between and within served jurisdictions
- Connect activity hubs with transit (identify common destinations and connect via transit/mobility hubs, similar to Meijer bus stops)
- Have apartments/businesses provide last-mile solutions
- We cannot prevent suburban growth, but we can prepare for it and meet it with appropriate transit solutions
- Funding source: development impact fees that goes towards transit
- Align different mobility services/providers across the county (“mobility mesh”)