



# THRIVING

## Steering Committee Meeting

February 12, 2024

**A framework for the future of connectivity.**

# Agenda

## Project Overview

- Status Updates
- Guiding Principles & Goals

## Technical Report Findings: Needs and Opportunities

- Existing and Future Conditions
- Market Assessment
- Peers Analysis
- Fall Public Engagement

## TMP Areas of Focus

- Feedback & Discussion

## Next Steps

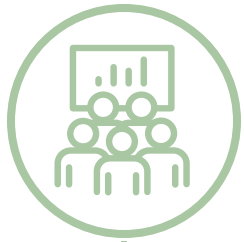


# Project Status

IN PROGRESS

COMPLETE

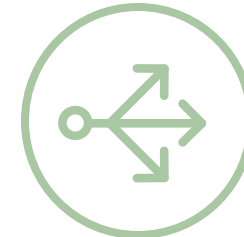
IN PROGRESS



**Public Involvement**  
Building partnerships (throughout the process, public workshops targeted for Fall 2023 and Spring 2024)



**Market Analysis**  
Transit demand, travel patterns, mobility need



**Future Options and Scenarios Analysis**  
Who and where to serve? How?



**Existing and Future Conditions Analysis**  
Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats



**Peer Review**  
Best practices from similar and aspirational mobility providers

COMPLETE

COMPLETE

## Project Status

COMPLETE



### West Michigan Express Planning

Reassess feasibility, develop implementation plan

IN PROGRESS



### Planning Guidelines, Policies and Performance Measures

How to measure and ensure success?

IN PROGRESS



### Administrative and Operational Staffing Evaluation

How to staff?



### Corridor Analysis

Connections to places outside current service area



### Fleet, Facilities and IT Strategy

How to support?

IN PROGRESS

ON DECK

# Project Status

**IN PROGRESS**



## Joint Development Opportunities

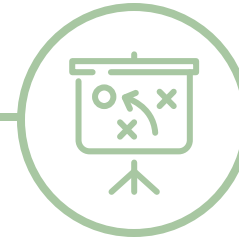
How to shape what happens next to transit?

(Dec 2023-March 2024)



## Phased Implementation Strategy

(March-April 2024)



## Final Transit Master Plan

(April-May 2024)



## Financial and Funding Analysis

How to fund?

(Feb-April 2024)

**ON DECK**

## Past Steering Committee Accomplishments

### March 2023

- Guiding Principles
- Goals Exercise

### June 2023

- Rapid 101
- Value of Transit
- Technical Report Findings
  - Existing and Future Conditions
  - Market Assessment

### September 2023






- Rapid 201
  - Technical Report Findings
    - Peer Analysis
  - Fall Public Engagement Insights: Focus Groups
  - Fall Public Engagement
- ### November 2023
- Fall Public Engagement Insights: Online Survey
  - Joint Development Task Input



# Guiding Principles & Goals

## Guiding Principles

At The Rapid, we are the transportation provider of choice and convenience because...

-  **COMMUNITY | We reflect you and your needs.**
-  **GROWTH | We plan for action.**
-  **CONVENIENCE | We serve for user experience.**
-  **INTERNAL WORKFORCE | We value employee personal growth.**  
(Engaged and prepared to meet our future challenges)
-  **ADAPTABILITY | We're future-flexible.**



# Goals

## Why are we developing Goals?

Goal setting is the second step in developing our Strategic Framework for this project. This activity is meant to build off the Guiding Principles that were previously developed. These guiding principles, goals and objectives relate specifically to the Transit Master Plan.

## Defining Goals

Goal = A measurable outcome that you want to achieve.

Example: The Transit Master Plan will [action] within [timeframe]. This will be achieved by [specific actionable steps].

**S**pecific

**M**easurable

**A**chievable

**R**elevant

**T**ime-bound

## Outcome of Previous Goals Discussion

- Develop a grid transit network
- Introduce a high-capacity service along 131
- Incorporate TOD with the system
- Develop multifamily housing along the transit network



# The Value of Transit

## Quick Fact Sheet

9.9 Million Americans Utilize Public Transit (2019)



Public transportation is a **\$79 billion** industry that employs more than **430,000** people.

### TYPES OF TRANSIT MODES:

- Buses
- Light rail
- Subways
- Commuter trains
- Monorails and tramways
- Cable cars
- Van pool services
- Ferries and water taxis
- Paratransit services
- Streetcars and trolleys

*"... [transit] builds thriving communities, creates jobs, eases traffic congestion and promotes a cleaner environment. Investment in public transportation spurs both local and the national economy."*



## Benefits of Transit

- Safety
- Environment & Sustainability
- Economic Opportunity
- Community

### PUBLIC SAFETY

Traveling by public transportation is **10 times safer** per mile than traveling by automobile.

A person can reduce his or her chance of being in an accident by more than **90%** simply by taking public transit as opposed to commuting by car.

### ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Every **\$1** invested in public transportation generates **\$5** in economic returns.

Home values were up to **24%** higher near public transportation than in other areas.

**87%** of trips on public transit have a direct impact on the local economy.

### ENVIRONMENTAL

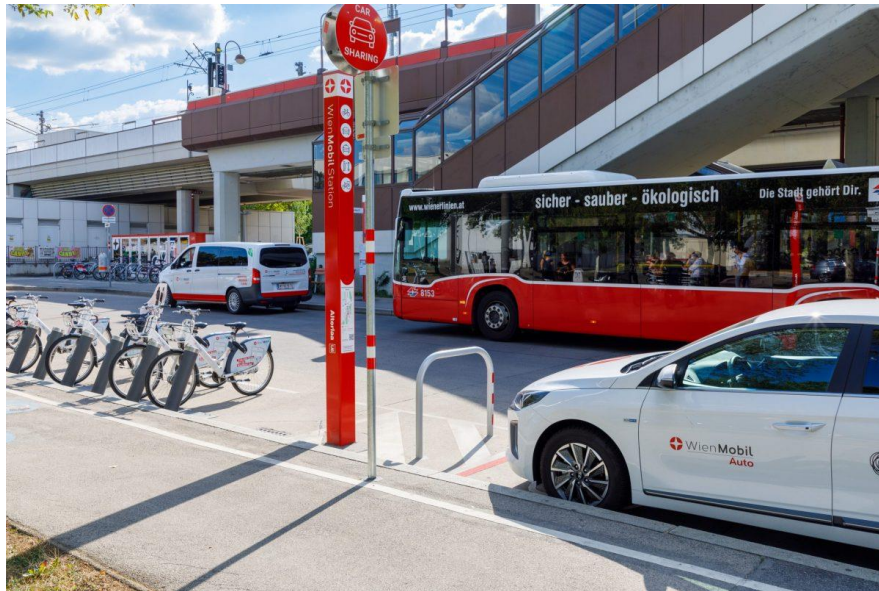
Communities that invest in public transit reduce the nation's carbon emissions by **63 million metric tons** annually.

Public transportation's overall effects save the United States **6 billion gallons** of gasoline annually.

\*Public Transportation Facts - American Public Transportation Association (apta.com)

## How can the TMP provide value for the region?

- What are the benefits to the community?
- How can transit and mobility improvements resonate with the region?





# Needs and Opportunities

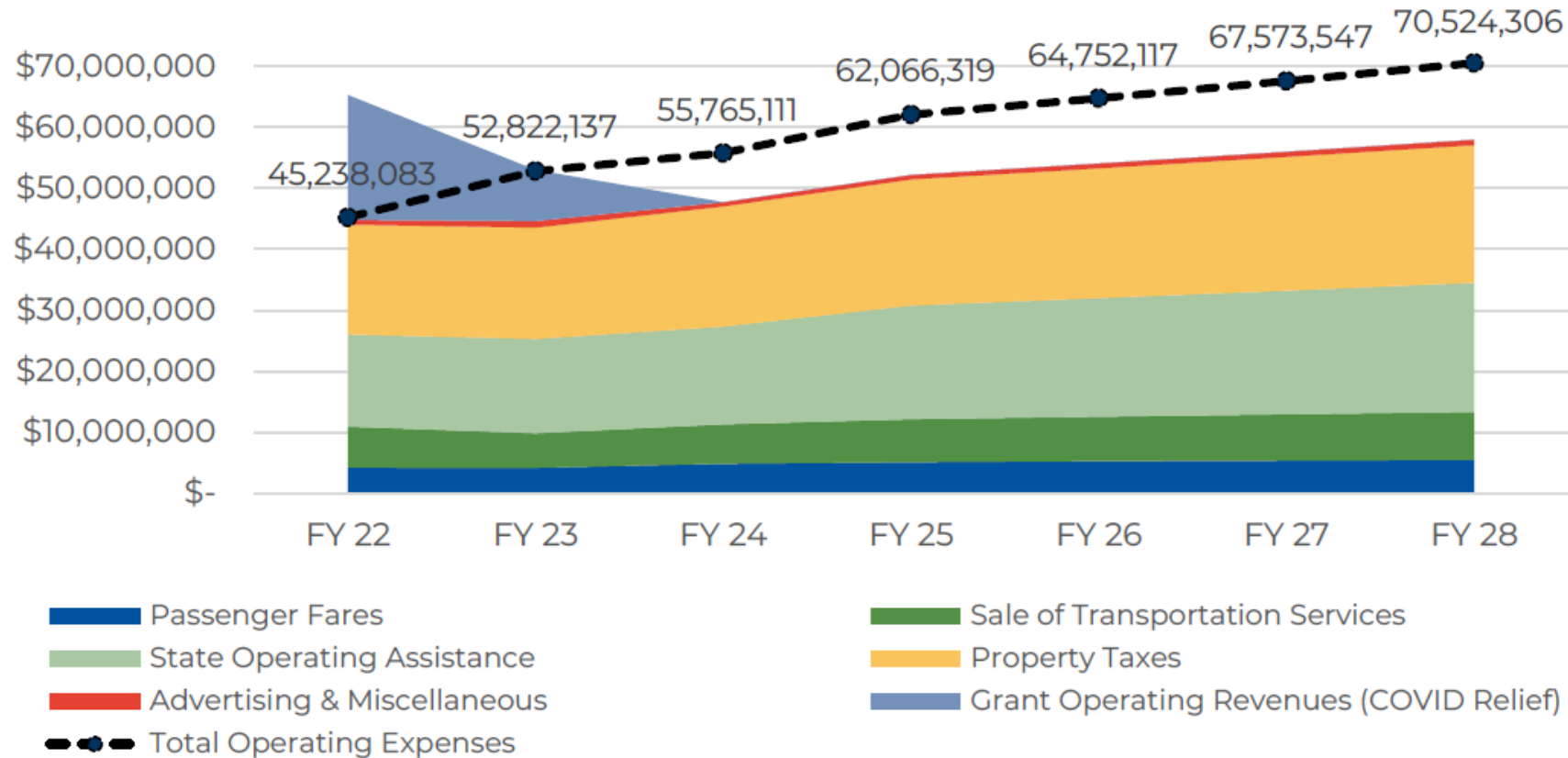
Insights from Technical Tasks

## Existing and Future Conditions Needs

### Agency History, Structure, and Funding & Recent Planning Efforts and Studies

- ✓ **Additional funding** is needed to support existing and expanded transit services
- ✓ **Maintaining and expanding** The Rapid's transit services is broadly supported and a **priority for the region**
- ✓ **Improved transit amenities**, facilities, and technology are needed
- ✓ The Rapid is committed to providing new and **innovate types of service**

**Figure 4: Revenue Composition Relative to System Operating Expense**



Source: The Rapid, 2024 Five-Year Financial Projection





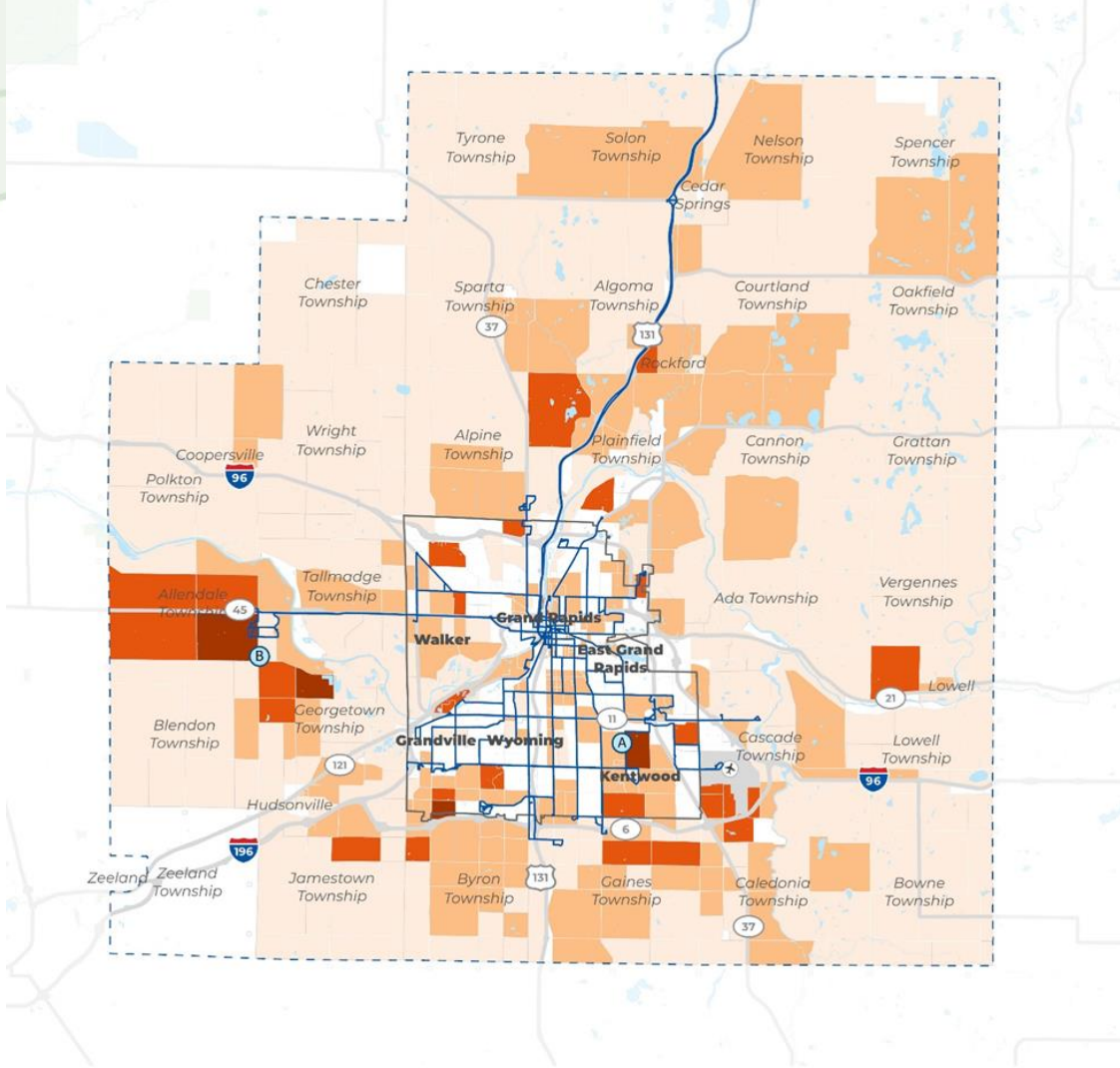
# Existing and Future Conditions Needs

## Demographics and Land Use

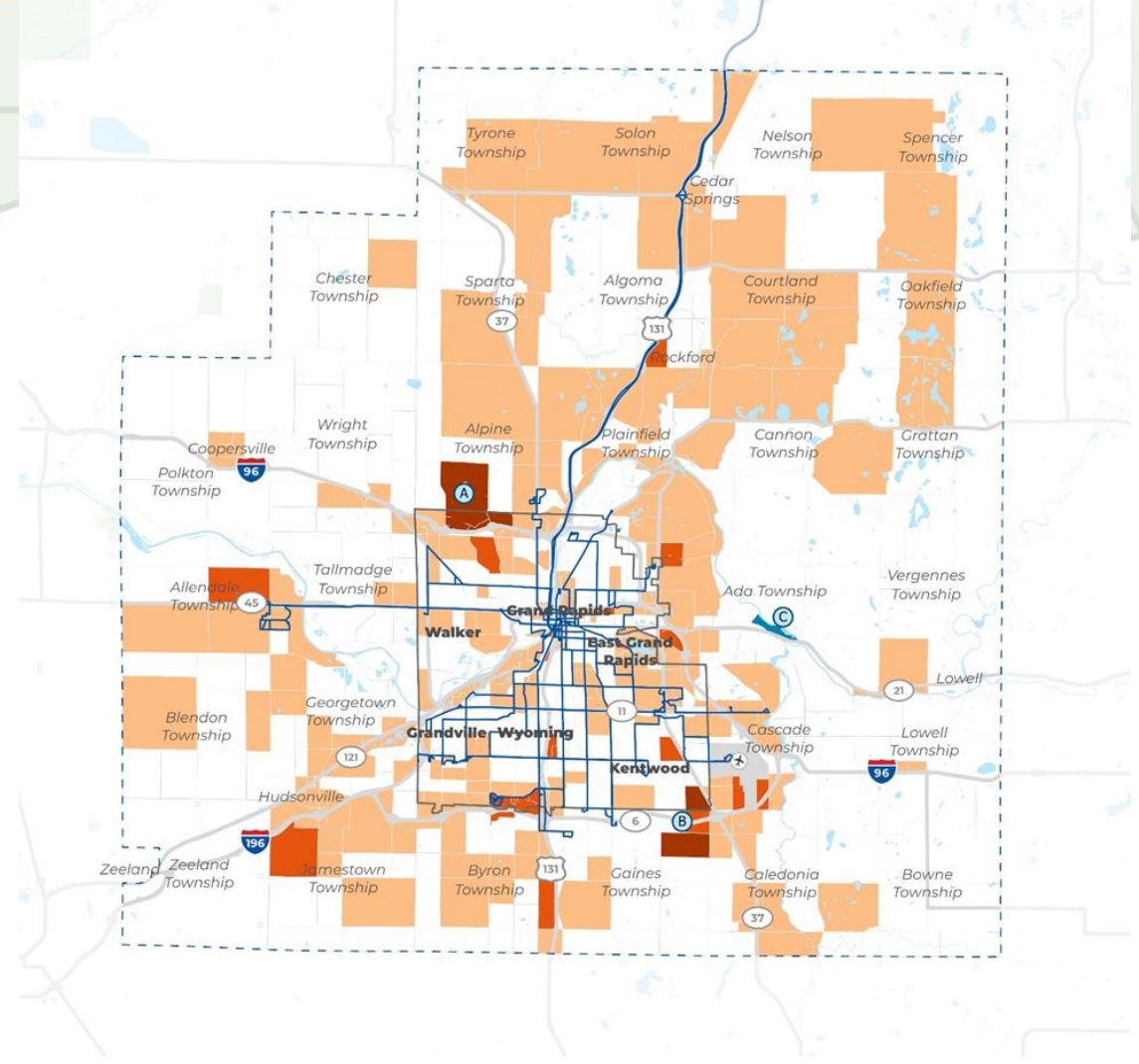
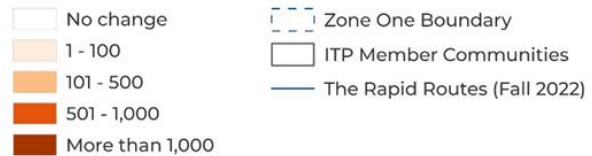
- ✓ Communities **outside the existing service area** are expected to have greater future household and employment growth than the current ITP Member Communities
- ✓ Transit Demand
  - Most of the service area is supportive of **30 minute or better** transit service
  - Downtown Grand Rapids and the West Grand and South East End neighborhoods are supportive of **15 minute or better** service
- ✓ **Unserved communities** with sufficient population and/or employment densities to support fixed route transit service:

Portions of Ada Township  
 Byron Township  
 Gaines Township

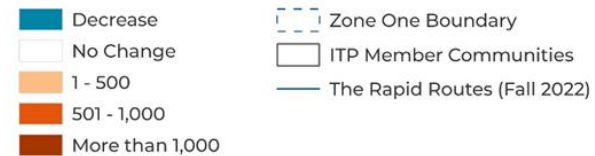
Georgetown Township  
 Hudsonville  
 Plainfield Township



**Household Growth 2015-2045 (Number of Housing Units)**



**Employment Growth 2015-2045 (Number of Jobs)**



# Existing and Future Conditions Needs

## Summary

- ✓ **New and innovative funding** is needed to maintain, improve, and expand the already operationally efficient Rapid transit services
- ✓ **Service expansion** should be considered to prepare for future growth outside the service area and address any gaps within the service area
- ✓ **Service improvements** should be considered to improve ridership by addressing
  - ✓ 30-45 minute transit travel time
  - ✓ Frequency
  - ✓ Transit stops and amenities at high-activity land uses / developments

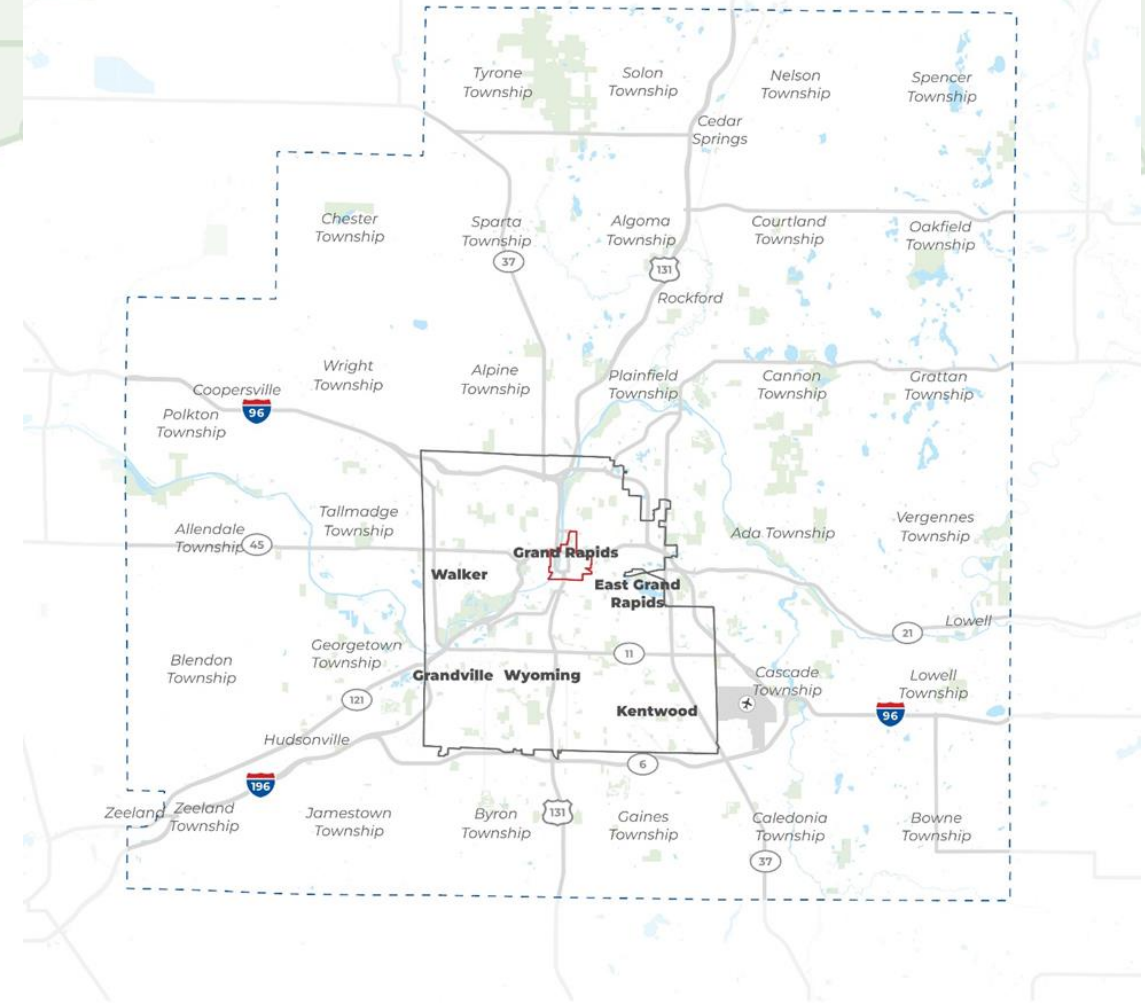
# Market Assessment

Builds upon the *Existing and Future Conditions Report* to identify **travel patterns** and key **travel markets** as well as current gaps in The Rapid's transit network and **areas for potential expansion of services.**

Regional Connectivity Analysis

Market Analysis

Emerging Mobility Options



Regional Connectivity and Market Analysis Study Area

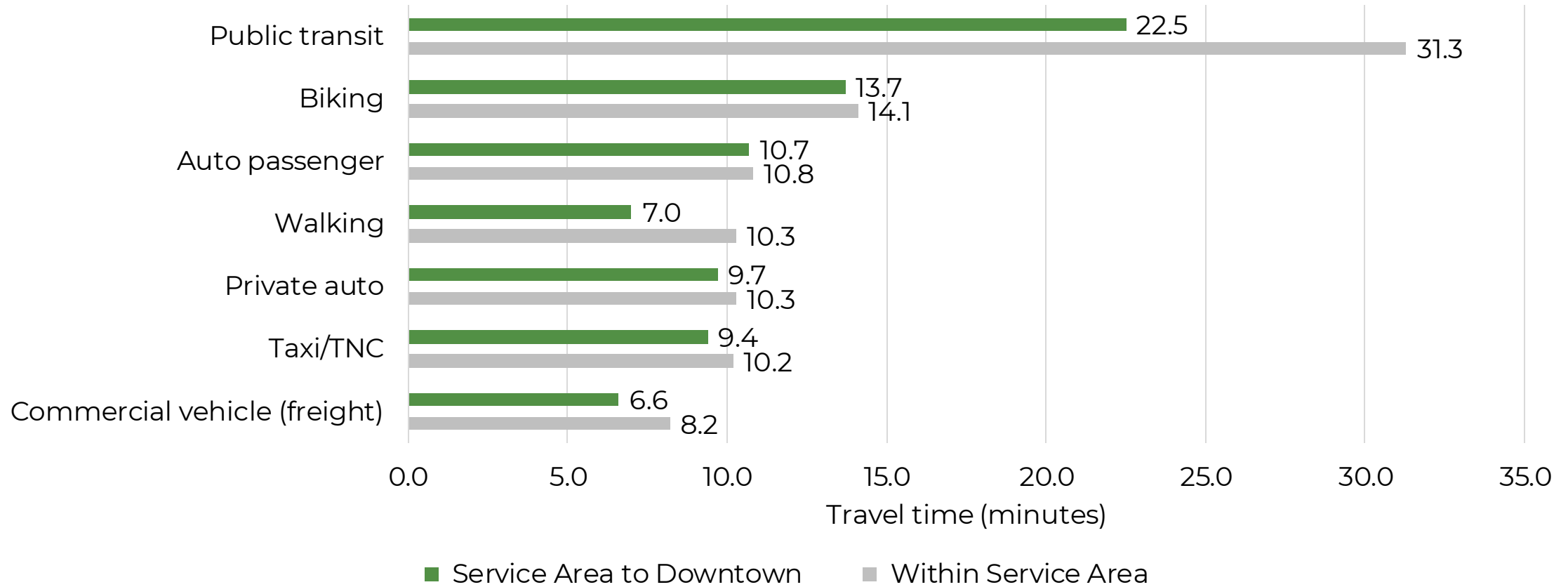
- Zone One Boundary
- ▭ ITP Member Communities
- ▭ Downtown Grand Rapids (CBD)

# Market Assessment Needs

## Regional Connectivity Analysis

- ✓ Strategies to **improve transit mode share** as
  - ✓ More than 2/3 of trips are completed by private automobile
  - ✓ Less than 2% of trips are completed by transit
- ✓ Service improvements to **address transit travel time** as
  - ✓ Most non-transit trips are less than 15-minutes long
  - ✓ Most transit trips are 2-3 times longer than trips by other modes

# Travel Time by Mode



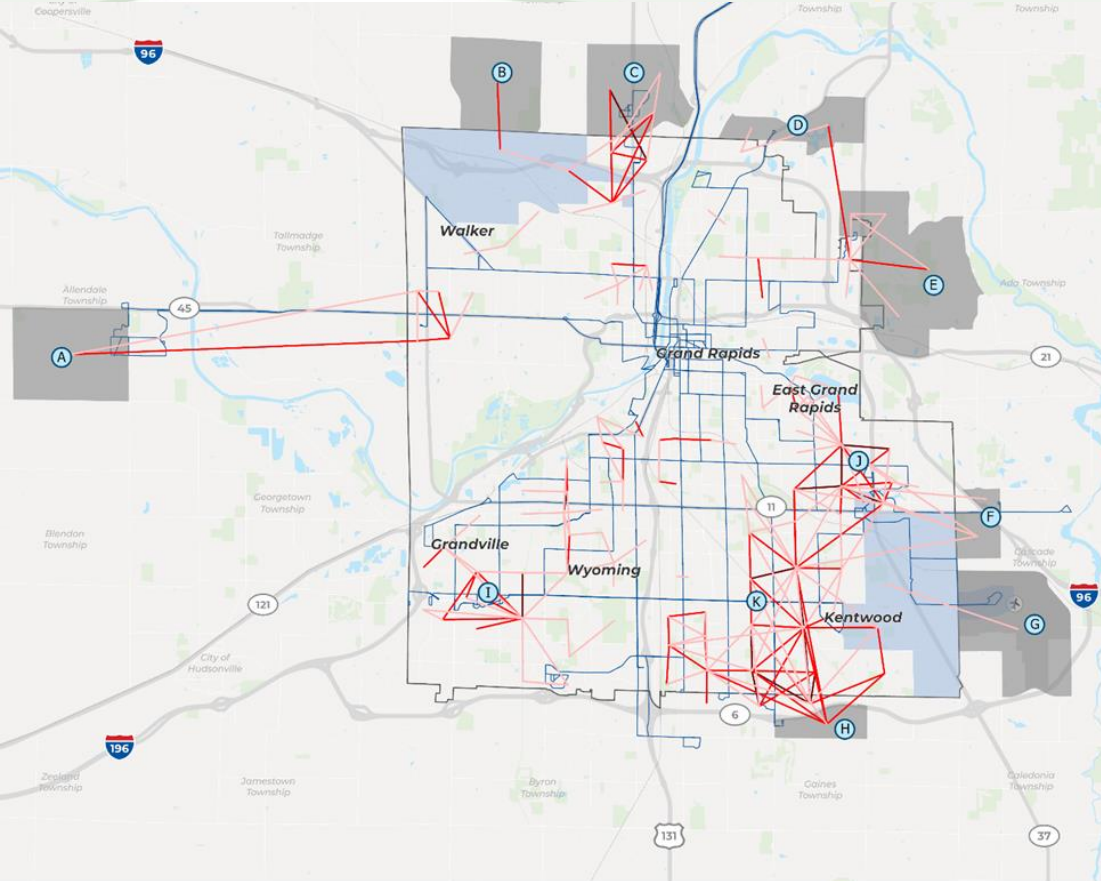
# Market Assessment Needs

## Regional Connectivity Analysis (Cont.)

- ✓ Service improvements to **increase connectivity within** the service area:
  - ✓ The Kalamazoo Avenue corridor between M-11 and M-6
  - ✓ Connections between key destinations such as RiverTown Crossings, Calvin University, Woodland Mall, and their surrounding areas
- ✓ Desire lines with opportunities for **greater connectivity outside** the ITP member communities include:
  - ✓ Connections between the Alpine Meadows mobile home park and Route 33
  - ✓ Plainfield Avenue (M-44) corridor between I-96 and Beltline Avenue
  - ✓ The Beltline Avenue (M-44) corridor between I-96 and 3 Mile Road

## Market Analysis

- ✓ Greatest travel on all modes
  - ✓ Kentwood, East Grand Rapids
  - ✓ Areas between the service area and adjacent communities



**Trips by All Modes Throughout Zone 1**

- 200 - 300 Daily Trips
- 301 - 500 Daily Trips
- 501 - 1,431 Daily Trips
- TAZs Outside ITP Member Communities with Strong Desire Lines
- Zone One Boundary
- ITP Member Communities
- Rapid Connect Service Areas
- The Rapid Routes (Fall 2022)

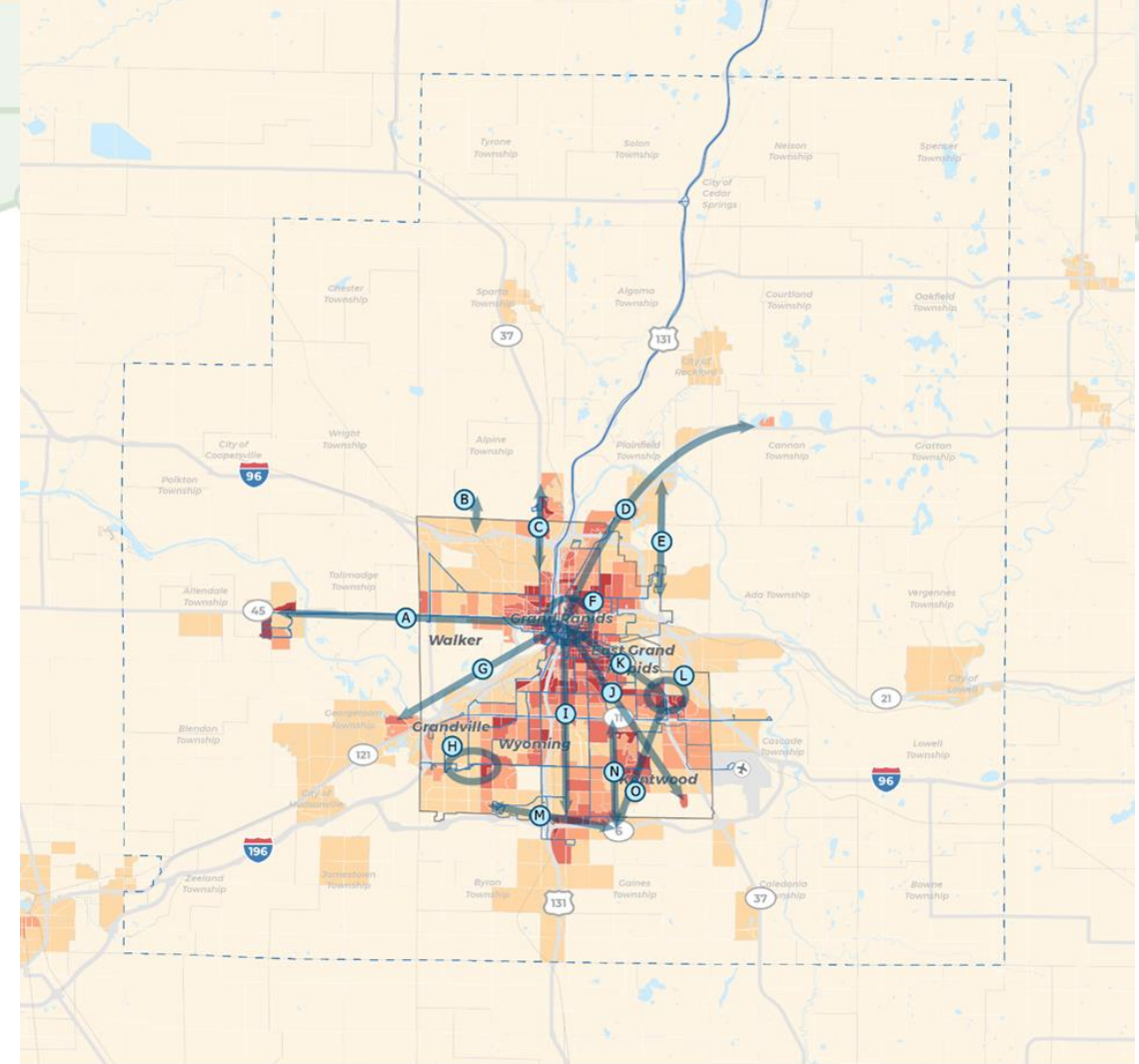




# Market Assessment Needs

## Market Analysis

- ✓ Service expansion opportunities based on
  - ✓ Composite score of transit-supportive markets
  - ✓ Highest volume travel patterns



**Composite Transit Market Score and Top Origin-Destination Desire Lines**



# Market Assessment Needs

## Summary

- ✓ **Service expansion** to strong transit markets outside the service area
- ✓ **Service improvements**
  - ✓ Expand connectivity within the service area
  - ✓ Address longer travel times to make transit a more competitive alternative
  - ✓ Explore innovative mobility technologies to address needs

## Benchmark Peers Analysis

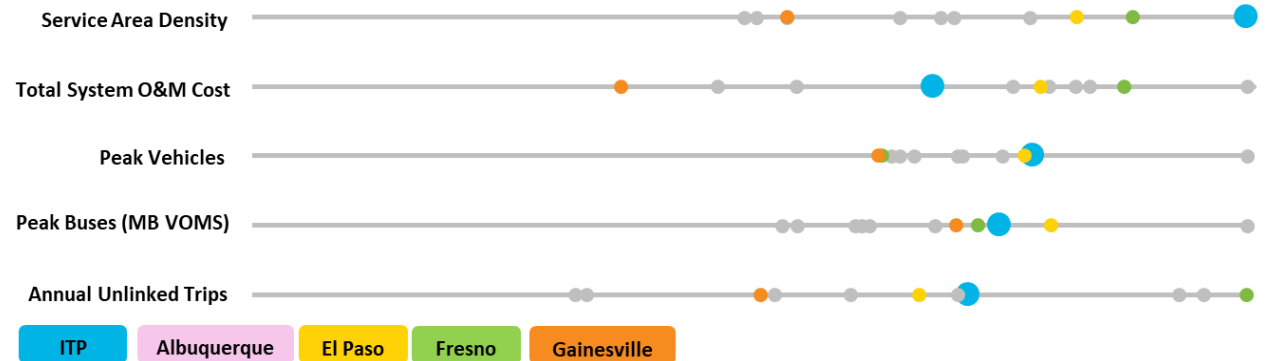
Relative peers based on operational and financial characteristics

Compared by National Transit Database (NTD) data

Service efficiency, service, cost-effectiveness and funding sources

### Peers

- Ann Arbor
- Albuquerque
- Lansing
- Clark County, WA (suburban Portland, OR)
- Des Moines
- El Paso
- Fresno, CA
- Dayton, OH
- Gainesville, FL
- Madison, WI



# Peers Analysis - Aspirational Peers



- **Metro Transit** - Minneapolis-Saint Paul, MN
- **King County** - Seattle, WA
- **The Ride** - Ann Arbor, MI
- **Indygo** - Indianapolis, IN
- **CapMetro** - Austin, TX
- **LA Metro** - Los Angeles, CA

- ✓ Sustainable Funding
- ✓ Successful TOD
- ✓ Innovative Marketing
- ✓ Affordable Housing
- ✓ Medium-Sized City Mode Split
- ✓ Success with Regional Expansion



# Fall Public Engagement Feedback

- ✓ Focus Groups
- ✓ Online Survey
- ✓ Open House



## Focus Group Feedback Needs

### Outreach / Education

- ✓ Language barriers
- ✓ Accessibility (all abilities)
- ✓ Marketing & advertising
- ✓ Information & wayfinding

### Service Needs / Demand

- ✓ A community with transit is desirable for attracting talent (workforce)
- ✓ Transit system's pattern should follow where people are traveling to/from
- ✓ Service to the Airport (tourism/convention center)

### Convenience / Rider Experience

- ✓ Route frequency & reliability
- ✓ Long trip times
- ✓ Service hours (second (& third) shift workers)
- ✓ Accessibility (language and accessibility)
- ✓ Service area
- ✓ Mobility as a service (like Uber or Lyft)
- ✓ Bus Amenities / Improvements

## Online Survey Feedback Needs

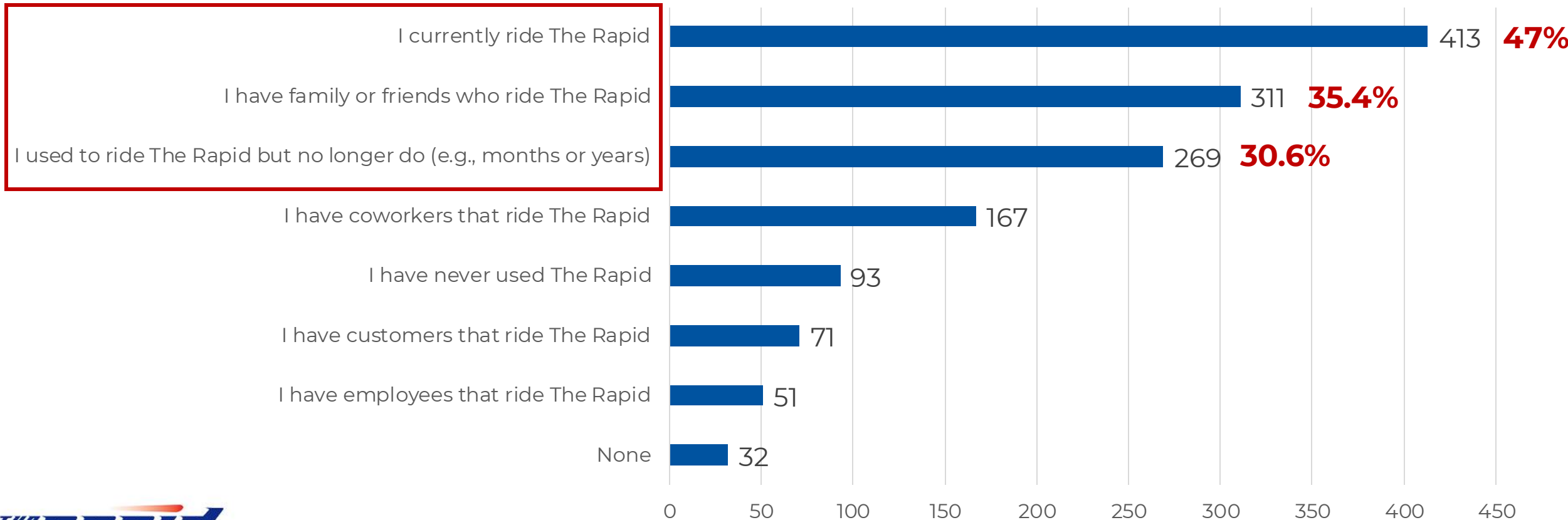
- ✓ Community survey, not just transit riders
- ✓ Over 1,100 surveys completed

### Findings

- ✓ Attract new and returning “choice” riders
- ✓ Improve travel times and bus frequency
- ✓ Accessible and easy to navigate independently
- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Expanded
  - ✓ service area
  - ✓ service frequency
  - ✓ Service hours

# What is your relationship with The Rapid?

Note: **74%** of survey respondents do have access to a vehicle.





# What do you consider to be the most important to improve the current transit system?

*(1 is most important, 5 is least important)*

<b>1</b>	<b>Expanded service areas</b>	<b>2.33</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Higher service frequency (bus comes more often)</b>	<b>2.34</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>More or all routes running on weekends</b>	<b>2.36</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Improve travel time</b>	<b>2.39</b>
5	Longer service hours (day/night)	2.41
6	Increase funding to operate additional transit services	2.43
7	More dense, walkable development near transit services	2.45
8	Better walking/biking access to transit services	2.46
9	System operations efficiency	2.56
10	More affordable housing options near transit services	2.64
11	Information/accessibility (easier to understand how to use the service)	2.79
12	Improved marketing/communications for services provided	2.9
13	Reduce the cost to ride	2.99

*Highest  
Score*

## Fall Open House Feedback Needs

- ✓ Transit should be a reasonable and feasible alternative to driving a car
- ✓ Regional connections outside The Rapid service area (e.g., Lansing and Kalamazoo)
- ✓ Higher-frequency cross-town bus routes (e.g., grid BRT system)
- ✓ Operator demeanor and rider experience (more friendly)
- ✓ Improve sidewalk access to stations/stops
- ✓ Mobility-oriented development
- ✓ Station Amenities
  - ✓ Transit shelters at more stops
  - ✓ Accent lighting (safety)
  - ✓ Benches (accessibility)

## Key takeaways from Public Engagement and Technical Analysis

- ✓ Develop high-frequency network (e.g. 15-minute system)
- ✓ Improve travel times
- ✓ Expand service inside and outside service area
- ✓ Focus on customer experience including bus stop amenities and accessibility



# Opportunities and Areas of Focus

Feedback Activity

# Opportunities



Sustainable Funding



Joint Development/  
Transit-Supportive  
Spaces



Service Expansion



Service  
Improvements



Regional Mobility  
Leadership and  
Partnerships








Internal Workforce  
Development



Innovation

## Guiding Principles

At The Rapid, we are the transportation provider of choice and convenience because...

-  **COMMUNITY | We reflect you and your needs.**
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(Engaged and prepared to meet our future challenges)
-  **ADAPTABILITY | We're future-flexible.**

## Opportunity: Sustainable Funding

**Goal:** Develop a sustainable and dedicated funding source

### Examples:

- Innovative funding sources
  - TIFs, TIRZs
  - Motor vehicle tax, rental car tax, vehicle registration fees
- Sales tax (would require a change to MI legislation)

### Task 5 Future Scenarios



- ✓ **COMMUNITY**
- ✓ **GROWTH**
- ✓ **CONVENIENCE**
- ✓ **INTERNAL WORKFORCE**
- ✓ **ADAPTABILITY**

## Opportunity: Joint Development/ Transit-Supportive Spaces

### Examples:

- Identify Potential sites
- Develop Agreements
- Develop Policies
  - Transit-Oriented Development
  - Streetscape
  - Station Amenities
- Partnerships with municipalities



### Task 11 Joint Development

- ✓ **COMMUNITY**
- ✓ **GROWTH**
- ✓ CONVENIENCE
- ✓ INTERNAL WORKFORCE
- ✓ **ADAPTABILITY**



## Opportunity: Joint Development/ Transit-Supportive Spaces

- Rapid's downtown properties
  - Transit Center
  - Bus Operations Facility
- Kentwood Transit Center
- Walker Park & Ride (Lake Michigan Dr. and Cummings)



## Opportunity: Service Expansion

**Goal:** Build towards county-wide services to prepare for future growth outside the current service area

### Examples:

- Develop options for regional mobility services
  - Express Bus Corridors
  - Micromobility
- Develop Regional Partnerships
  - Airport
  - Townships
- BRT Corridors



**Task 2 Public Involvement**  
**Task 3 Future Conditions**  
**Task 4 Market Analysis**  
**Task 6 Corridor Analysis**  
**Task 7 WMX Express**

- ✓ **COMMUNITY**
- ✓ **GROWTH**
- ✓ **CONVENIENCE**
- ✓ **INTERNAL WORKFORCE**
- ✓ **ADAPTABILITY**

## Opportunity: Service Improvements

**Goal:** Build towards a high-frequency grid system (e.g. 15-minute)

### Examples:

- Improve travel times
- Out of direction travel to downtown transfers
- Build density along existing bus corridors
- Mobility as a Service (MaaS)
  - Customer Service & Experience



**Task 2 Public Involvement**  
**Task 3 Future Conditions**  
**Task 4 Market Analysis**

- ✓ **COMMUNITY**
- ✓ **GROWTH**
- ✓ **CONVENIENCE**
- ✓ INTERNAL WORKFORCE
- ✓ ADAPTABILITY

## Opportunity: Innovation

**Goal:** Leverage technology to improve operational efficiency, sustainability, and customer experience.

### Examples:

- Autonomous Vehicle and Electric Vehicle Readiness
- Mobility as a Service (MaaS)
- Real-Time Information at Station and Stops
- Mobile Apps



**Task 2 Public Involvement**  
**Task 3 Future Conditions**

- ✓ **COMMUNITY**
- ✓ **GROWTH**
- ✓ **CONVENIENCE**
- ✓ INTERNAL WORKFORCE
- ✓ **ADAPTABILITY**

## Next Steps

Upcoming Completed Technical Reports

- WMX – Implementation Plan
- Peer Analysis
- Public Engagement Memo – Fall Outreach

Upcoming Transit Master Plan Events:

- Spring Public Engagement



**THRIVING**

**Thank You!**

**A framework for the future of connectivity.**