



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Peer report shows The Rapid compares favorably among 10 like-sized transit systems for operating efficiency, maintenance and service area

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., January 18, 2010 – *The Rapid* compares favorably in the categories of operating efficiency, maintenance and service area in a peer Transit Review report provided by HDR Engineering for the Transit Master Plan (TMP) project. The report is posted at www.rapidtmp.org.

The peer group consists of 10 U.S. transit systems located in Louisville, KY; Ann Arbor, Flint and Lansing, MI; Akron, Dayton and Toledo, OH; Rochester, NY; Nashville, TN; and Madison, WI.

The peer analysis compares *The Rapid's* fixed-route bus and paratransit (GO!Bus) services to systems similar in size and regional demographic characteristics. Criteria used to select the peers include urban area population and physical size, annual vehicle revenue hours and annual unlinked passenger trips.

In key findings, *The Rapid* is among the most cost effective and cost-efficient systems evaluated. The Rapid's bus system is 23 percent and 18 percent less expensive to operate per bus-hour and bus-mile, respectively, than the peer average. Other items of note:

- In each of the maintenance categories reviewed, The Rapid performed at or above the peer average. Despite logging fewer hours annually, the Rapid's maintenance employees maintain a high standard of vehicle reliability.
- The Rapid's service area coverage per in square miles is well above average, however, when evaluated with respect to population, The Rapid provides less service than the peer average.
- GO!Bus's operations are substantially more cost effective and efficient than the peer average. The average operating cost per passenger trip is \$27.36 compared to the GO!Bus cost per trip of \$19.82. Weekday service productivity is greater than the peer average as well.

"In terms of efficiency, what we are doing works well," said Bob Roth, president of RoMan Manufacturing and leader of *The Rapid's* Metro Mobile 2030 task force. "In the spirit of continuous improvement, we will evaluate service frequency and our service area, as well as the way transit integrates into our community. Part of the Transit Master Plan process is to understand the value people in our community place on transit, how we can enhance that value, and what our community will support. We also want to learn how other cities are funding the improvements to their systems."

"The analysis indicates that our system is doing a good job in terms of managing costs per passenger trip and cost per revenue hour," said Peter Varga, CEO of *The Rapid*. "Our job is to be good stewards of the resources that the community has entrusted to us. These comparisons show we are reaching that goal."

The Transit Master Plan is funded through federal and state planning grants. HDR Engineering of Atlanta and LSL Planning in Grand Rapids are managing the study. Information about the Transit Master Plan project is posted at www.rapidtmp.org.

About *The Rapid*

Operated under the auspices of the Interurban Transit Partnership, *The Rapid* serves East Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids, Grandville, Kentwood, Walker, Wyoming and portions of Alpine, Byron, Cascade and Gaines Townships. Last year, The Rapid provided over 9.3 million rides, an all-time high in public transportation trips in the greater Grand Rapids metro area. Website: www.ridetherapid.org

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