

The Rapid: Improving Public Transportation for Tomorrow

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Background

Currently, proposals are up for establishing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes through Division Ave. and East Grand Rapids/Kentwood corridors. The establishment of a BRT route in East Grand Rapids/Kentwood would allow Calvin students to ride from Rapid Central Station or Calvin's campus directly to the airport. Also, passengers on *The Rapid* must transfer buses if they desire to get from downtown to the airport. The consolidation of a route directly from downtown to the airport would also allow Calvin students and other passengers a direct route to the airport. Finally, relocation of the Amtrak station to the Rapid Central Station would allow passengers traveling by train to board a bus bound for Calvin's campus and via the same bus travel to the airport.

Proposition

In recognition of the benefits associated with the establishment of a BRT serviced East Grand Rapids/Kentwood corridor it is important that the leadership at Calvin be encouraged to advocate for this particular route. Calvin needs to actively petition *The Rapid* for the route establishment as well as engage the students on Calvin's campus to become involved.

Another contributor to sustainable transit to Calvin's campus is The Rapids' newly approved route 6/17 with service to Gerald R. Ford International Airport. It is important that Calvin promote this new transit option for students traveling to and from the airport starting in mid 2007.

Furthermore, the future relocation of the Amtrak station to the Rapid Central Station would allow students and visitors to travel by train to the station and board a bus bound for campus. Calvin should also petition and raise awareness about this new option for transit.

Supporting arguments

- Demand for the establishment of a BRT route has already been ascertained through a series of methods from the *Great Transit, Grand Tomorrows* (GT2) study. This included extensive surveys and community meeting throughout the Grand Rapids Metro area. The study concluded that establishment of a Division Ave. and East Grand Rapids/Kentwood corridor would be most well received and feasible.
- The consolidation of *The Rapid's* route 6 has been approved and will go into effect by May of 2007. The current route 6 will combine with route 17 to provide continuous service from Rapid Central Station to the Airport.
- The relocation of the Amtrak station to Rapid Central station is supported by the Michigan Department of Transportation and the City Of Grand Rapids. Currently funding is the only thing needed to see this project to fruition.

Visual example of change

FIG 1.

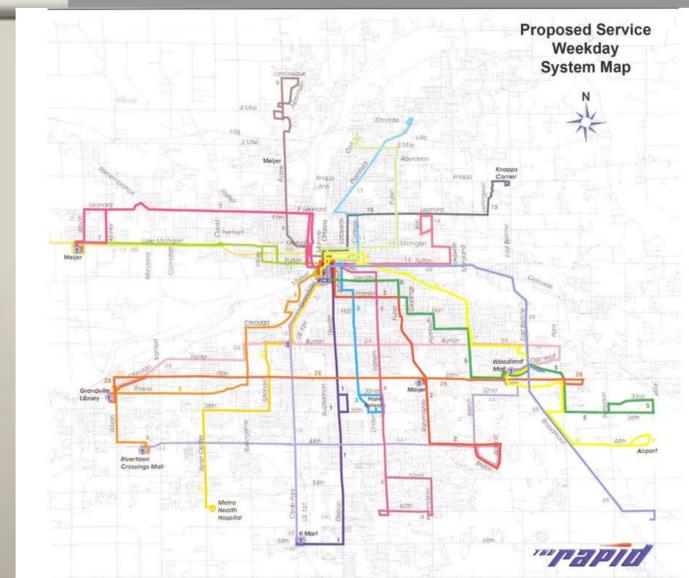


Fig. 1. Graphic of route changes to be implemented May of 2007. Note extension of Route 6 (Yellow) from Woodland Mall to Gerald R. Ford International Airport.

FIG 2.

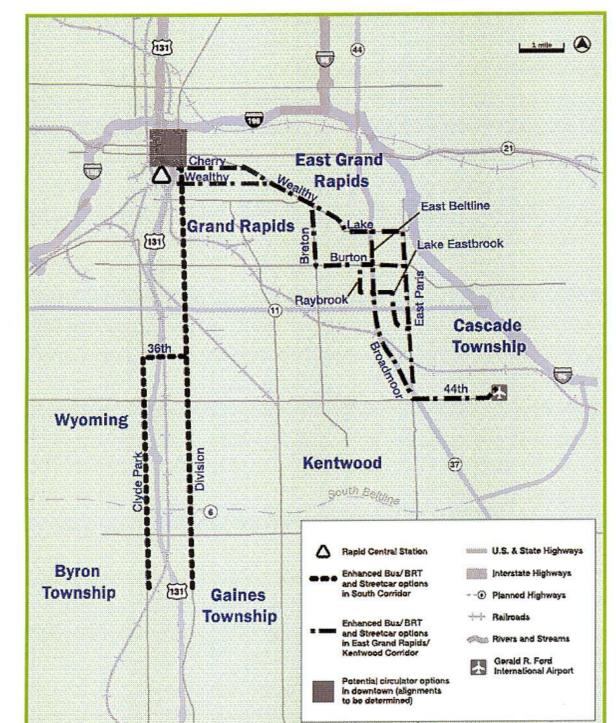


Fig. 2. Graphic of proposed BRT routes. The Division Ave. corridor will be established in 2007. The East Grand Rapids/Kentwood corridor may be established if such a plan proves to be economically feasible.

Conclusions

The proposed changes in transit, including the establishment of a BRT route throughout the East Grand Rapids/Kentwood corridor, a consolidation of bus routes for a single route going from Rapid Central Station to the airport, and also the relocation of the Amtrak station to Rapid Central Station would contribute greatly to the sustainability of Calvin's campus and modes of transportation to and from it. Specifically, in the case for BRT, Calvin should strongly support the Division Ave. route to ensure its success, should increase use of *The Rapid's* route 6, and actively use the new extension from Woodland Mall to the airport to ensure the establishment of a subsequent BRT route in the East Grand Rapids/Kentwood corridor. It is imperative that Calvin College, as an obvious benefactor of the projects, play an active role in seeing that they are implemented not only in a manner in which they may benefit Calvin directly, but also in a way that they will benefit the community and further the benefits of sustainable transportation.

