

# Sustainable Transportation and Calvin College - Action Steps

## Connecting Calvin to The Rapid Central Station, the Grand Rapids Amtrak Station, and Gerald R. Ford International Airport

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### Background

While Calvin College is well connected with sustainable alternative transportation within its community, as it sits on the Rapid Bus Routes 6 and 24, accessing alternative regional and national car-less transportation from Calvin is very difficult without a car. Currently, one needs a car to go to the Amtrak station, which offers daily service to Chicago, and needs to take two buses to go to the airport. There have been three plans proposed to help connect Calvin College to the Rapid Central Station, the Amtrak Station, and the Gerald R. Ford International Airport.

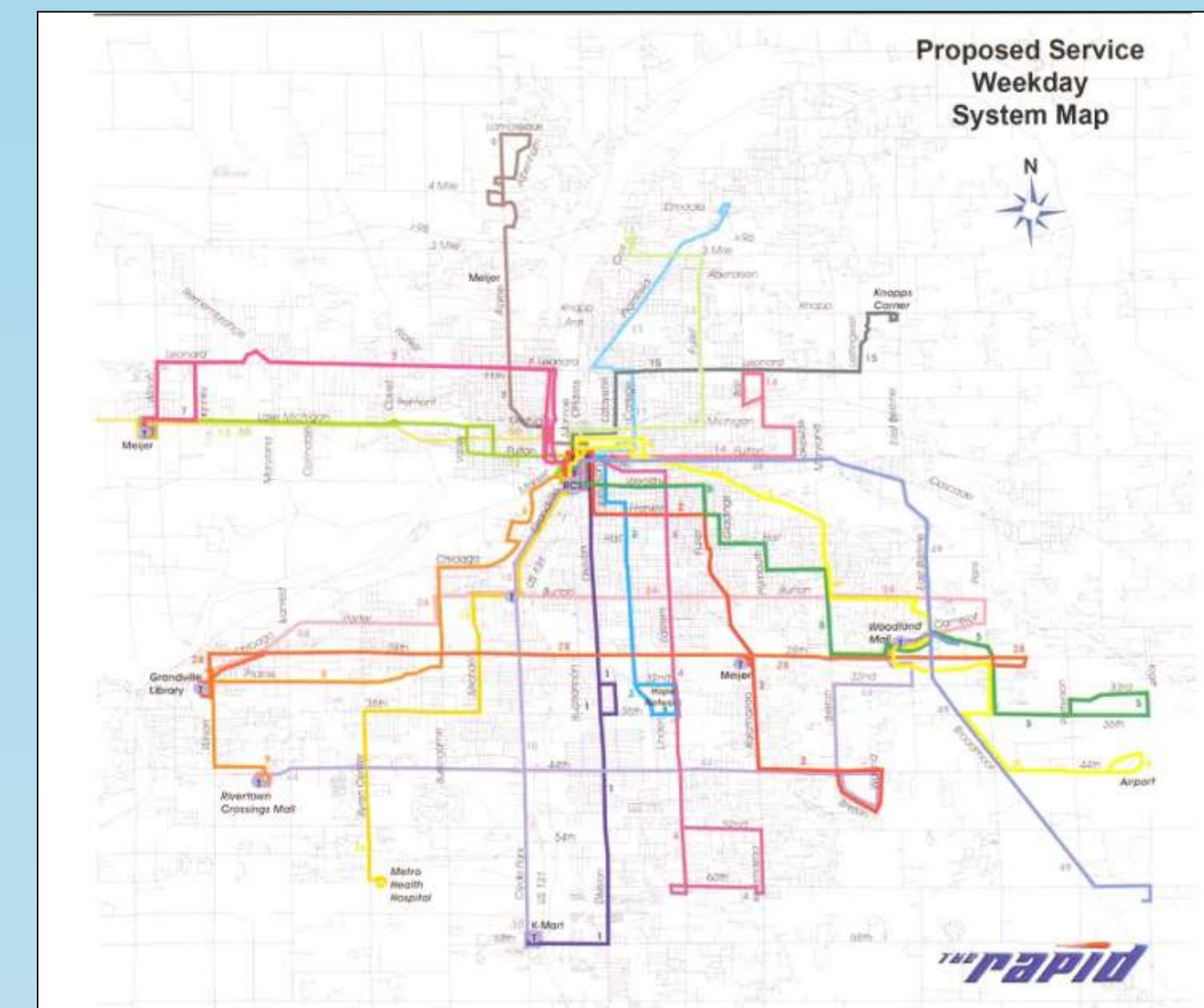


### Bus Rapid Transit

The Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a high speed, high capacity transit system that has recently been approved for Grand Rapids. This bus, which would operate in its own lane allowing for higher speeds using hybrid energy systems. While there were two routes originally proposed, one traveling on S. Division and one traveling through East Town, East Grand Rapids, and past Calvin College to the Gerald R. Ford International Airport. Currently, only the Division Corridor BRT has planned implementation and is awaiting funding. The installation of the East Grand Rapids/Kentwood route would better connect Calvin College both to Grand Rapids and the airport.

### Extension of Route 6

Currently, The Rapid Route 6 begins at the Rapid Central Station and terminates at Woodland mall, while Route 17 begins at Woodland mall and terminates at the the Gerald R. Ford international airport. Extending Route 6 to cover the Route 17 stops would allow for non-transfer access to the airport from downtown and Calvin College at times when the airport is active.



Proposed extension of Route 6

### Moving the Amtrak Station

The Grand Rapids Amtrak Station is currently housed on a small building with a parking lot that cannot accommodate enough cars. While there is a bus that runs past it, the bus does not run in the early morning or late evening, when the train runs. Moving the station to the Rapid Central Station would allow for greater parking capacity, along with bus access while the train is running.

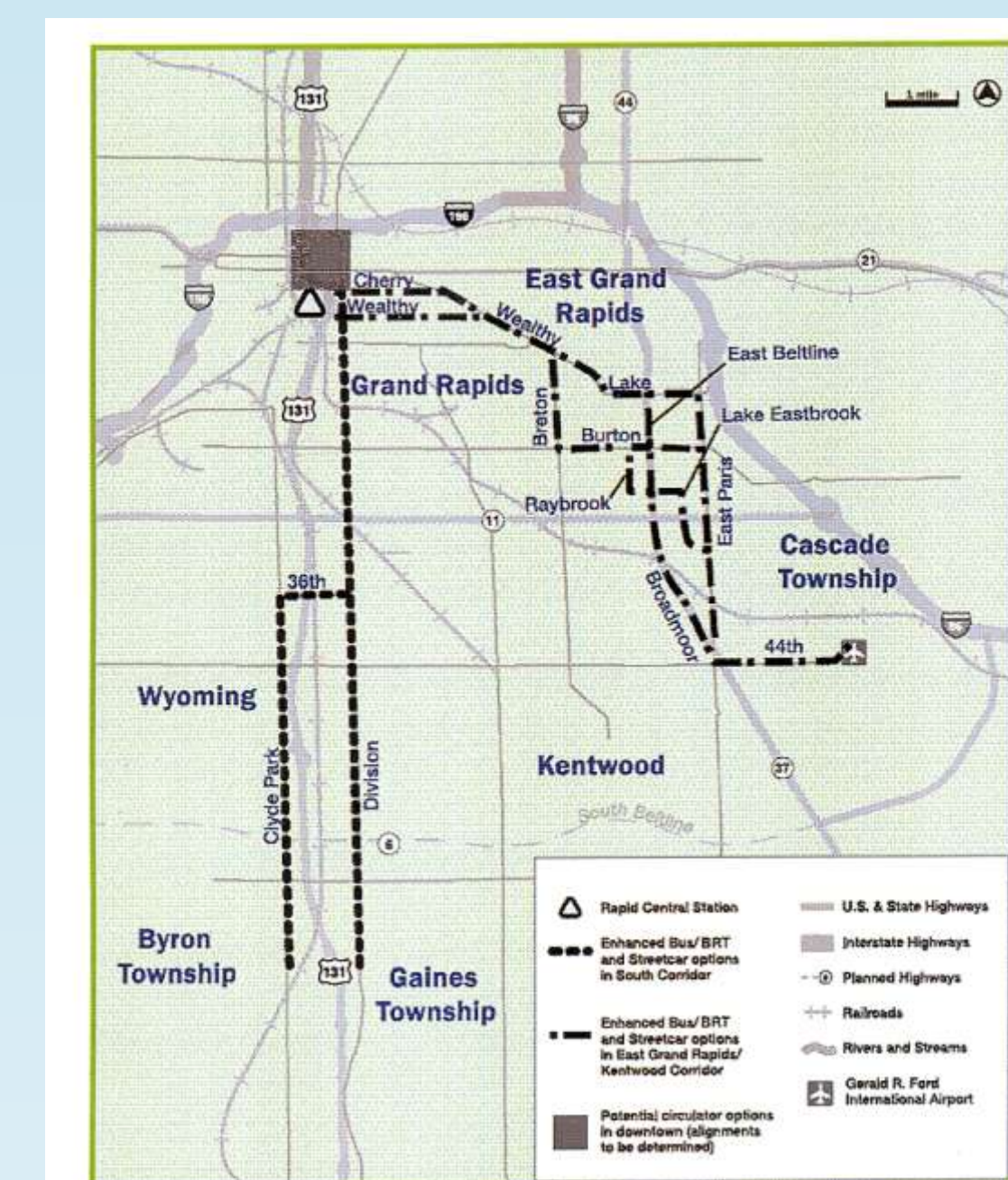
### Benefits

With the right amount of funding, all three of these projects would benefit the Calvin community and greater Grand Rapids in general. The BRT offers high speed, energy efficient transportation that allows for development along its corridors, benefiting both the community and the environment. Extending the Route 6 bus would allow people to easily access the airport without cars. Moving the Amtrak station allows people to take high capacity transportation to Chicago without having to use a car to get to the station.

### Action Steps

While many of the reasons that these projects have not yet been implemented have to do with funding, there are a number of steps the Calvin College community can perform to encourage their developments.

- Calvin staff, such as knowledgeable professors and administration, can lobby the City of Grand Rapids.
- Calvin students and administration should form partnerships with the Cities of Grand Rapids, East Grand Rapids, and Kentwood, along with The Rapid and the Gerald R. Ford International Airport for the implementation of these projects. Communication between Calvin and these other entities would help facilitate cooperation, along with mutually beneficial plans.
- Calvin administration and students can sign a petition to bring a BRT past Calvin.
- As the Calvin College community will be benefiting from the projects, they should offer financial support. This could be in the form of matching a percentage of state funding, or through more usage related means.
- Students could perform studies showing the financial benefits to Calvin, the environment, and to the community to present to city officials.



Proposed BRT routes. The East Grand Rapids/Kentwood route would connect Calvin to downtown and the airport.



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