



GVMC Regional Transportation Demand Management Plan

Existing Conditions Report

September 2022



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Introduction

This Existing Conditions Report is intended to lay the foundation for the GVMC Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan. It summarizes regional travel conditions; identifies state, regional, and local plans and policies that are relevant to TDM; and describes existing TDM programs and services implemented by public and private entities across the GVMC transportation management area (TMA).

Report Overview

This report is organized into the following sections:

- **Background** – A summary of the goals and objectives informing this study, and the TDM and related conditions selected for inclusion in this report.
- **Regional Travel Conditions** – A snapshot of current transportation conditions – transportation infrastructure, land use patterns, and travel behavior – with a particular focus on travel-condition measures that function as key performance indicators for advancing the goals and objectives listed above for the GVMC Regional TDM Plan.
- **TDM Plans and Policies** – Plans and policies that advocate for or enable key TDM initiatives.
- **TDM Programs and Services** – Programs and services from across the region, including information on lead agencies and other program initiators/administrators, funding sources, goals and objectives, and available information on performance to date.

The report's contents were compiled through a series of study tasks, as outlined below:

Background Document Review

- MI Healthy Climate Plan
- MDOT 2022-2026 Five Year Transportation Plan
GVMC 2040 and 2045 MTP
- GVMC Congestion Management Plan
- Grand Rapids Vital Streets Plan
- Grand Rapids Bicycle Action Plan

Review of Regional Travel Data

- US Census 2015-19 5 Year ACS
- 2017 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD)
- 2019 LEHD
- REGIS
- OpenStreetMap
- Replica
- Walk Bike Grand Rapids

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- The Rapid
- Muskegon Area Transit System (MATS)
- Harbor Transit
- Macatawa Area Express (MAX)
- Michigan GIS Open Data

Stakeholder Interviews

Table 1 Stakeholder Interview; Organizations and Interviewees

Stakeholder Interviews	Conducted (Date)	Interviewee
The Rapid	April 2022	Nick Monoyios, Director of Planning; Max Dillivan, Senior Planner
West Michigan Rideshare	April 2022	Whitney Ehresman, Commute Programs Administrator
Spectrum Health	May 2022	Kevin Judd, Manager, Fleet Safety, Parking Facilities, Traffic Access
Grand Valley State University	May 2022	Chris Swank, Manager of Parking, Transportation, and Services
Mobile GR	June 2022	Josh Naramore, Director; Jennifer Kasper, Assistant Director; Erin Evenhouse, Transportation Planning Supervisor; and Max Gilles, Communications Specialist
West Michigan Express Task Force	June 2022	Patrick Waterman, City Manager, City of Hudsonville
Hope Network: Wheels to Work	June 2022	Debbi Coleman, Business Development Transportation

Background

GVMC has identified the following as key to guiding the development of a regional TDM program.

Addressing Congestion: Now and in the Future

The GVMC Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area is a designated Transportation Management Area (TMA) that includes Kent County and the eastern portion of Ottawa County. The area has about 765,000 people – a 10% increase over the past ten years. This growth has put increased pressure on regional roadways and has increased congested-related delays for commuters. More than 90% of commuters drive alone to work. Many of the region’s busiest

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roads are constrained by buildings or other landmarks and cannot accommodate additional vehicle traffic. Since 2004, GVMC has maintained a no new roads policy in the greater Grand Rapids area. Most importantly, studies have consistently shown that congestion relief provided by capacity expansions tends to be short-lived, as improved traffic-flow conditions attract more drivers who fill the excess capacity. Several GVMC member communities and agencies identified the need for a regional TDM Plan to shift more commute modes toward non-driving options.

Supporting Transit Investments

The Rapid provides fixed-route, paratransit, and rideshare services in Grand Rapids, Kentwood, Walker, Wyoming, Grandville, East Grand Rapids, and the surrounding region. Recently, the agency completed an 18-month comprehensive operational analysis titled *Mobility for All* (2021). *Mobility for All* recommends service changes like increasing frequency and reliability, improving connections in the service area, and increasing access to employment and underserved areas – providing an additional 136,000 residents and 67,000 jobs with quarter-mile access to 15-minute all-day weekday service. A regional TDM Plan presents a pivotal opportunity to realize these service improvements' full potential and inform The Rapid's pending transit master plan.

Supporting the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) prepared by GVMC identifies the importance of enhancing and expanding TDM strategies to support several of its goals, objectives, and recommendations, including the following:

- MTP Goal 3: Enhance Safety and Reduce Congestion
 - Objective 3a: Promote services, such as Rideshare, that increase vehicle occupancy rates
 - Objective 3b: Reduce the reliance on single occupancy vehicles (SOVs) by developing policies that encourage the use or development of active modes of transportation
 - Objective 3c: Employ the Congestion Management Process to systematically monitor, measure, diagnose, and recommend travel management alternatives for current and future congestion on our region's multimodal transportation system
 - Objective 3d: Promote travel demand management practices to manage future traffic growth, improve system efficiency, mitigate congestion, and spread travel demand evenly to other times of the day, where feasible
- MTP Goal 4: Strengthen Land Use and Transportation Policies
 - Objective 4a: Link transportation and land use policies to encourage people and businesses to live and work in a manner that improves equitable access to the entire system for all users and streamlines numbers and length of trips when possible
 - Objective 4b: Coordinate land use decisions with transportation plans to increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight
- MTP Goal 6: Ensure Equity, Access, and Mobility
 - Objective 6a: provide access to employment, education, medical facilities, housing, services, neighborhoods, recreation, and fresh food for all people, regardless of age, ability, or economic status

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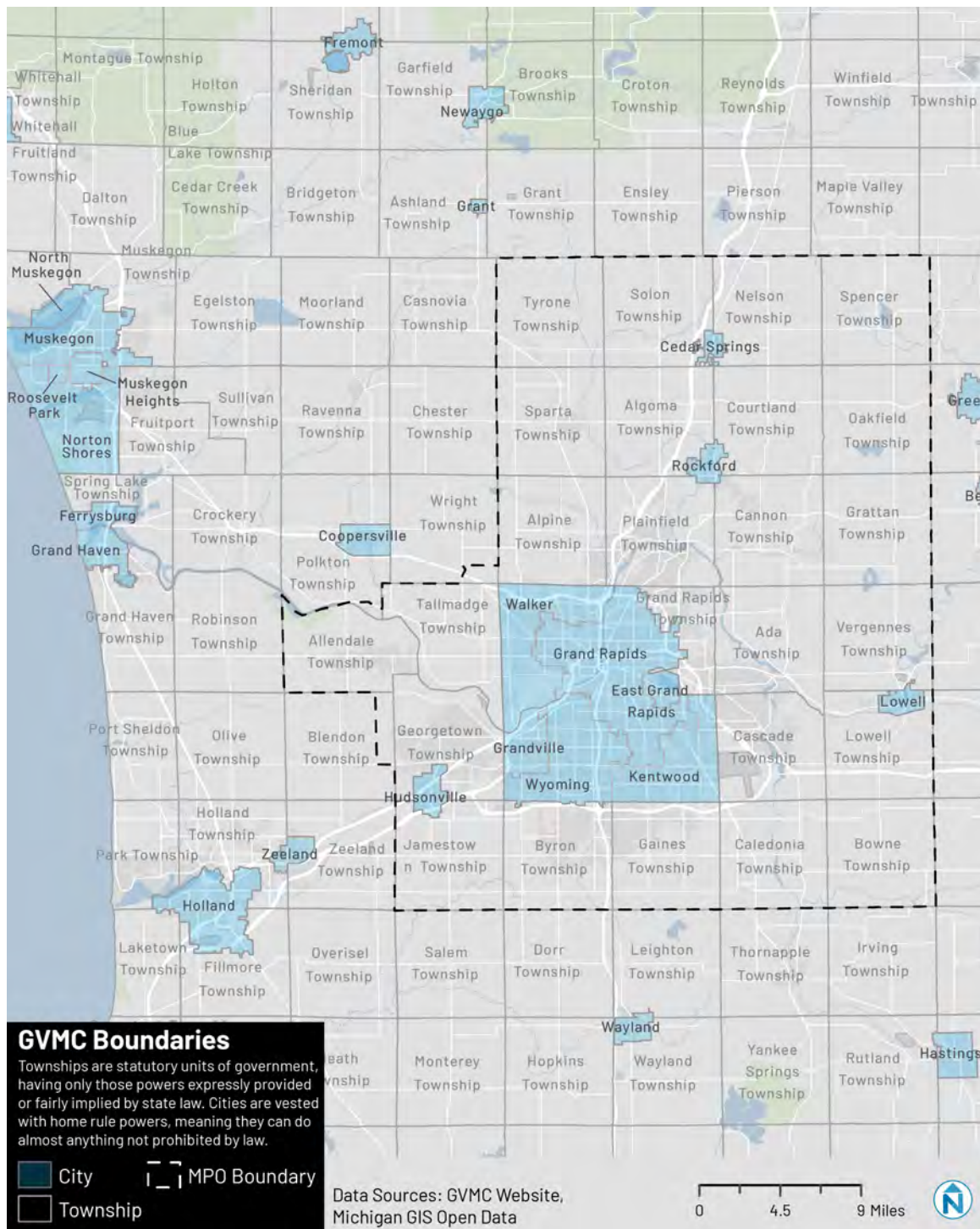
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- Objective 6c: Implement improvements for all transportation system users that foster increased accessibility, econ development, and vitality
- MTP Goal 7: Protect and Enhance the Environment
 - Objective 7a: Promote energy conservation and improve air quality by encouraging active modes of transportation that reduce emissions and improve quality of life and public health
- MTP Recommendation 4: Work to create a mode shift from single occupancy vehicles to more active forms of transportation.

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Figure 1 GVMC and Jurisdictional Boundaries – Reference Map



The GVMC boundary encompasses Kent County and portions of Ottawa County. As shown in Figure 1, townships more than two dozen townships are within the MPO's boundary.

Travel Conditions

The following section provides an overview of existing travel conditions within the boundaries of the MPO – summarizing existing roadway network patterns, the transit network, and active transportation routes.

Roadway Network

Grand Rapids is served primarily by two interstate highways, one U.S. highway, one state highway, and a network of primary and secondary arterials. The table below provides an overview of the key interstates and freeways in the Greater Grand Rapids area.

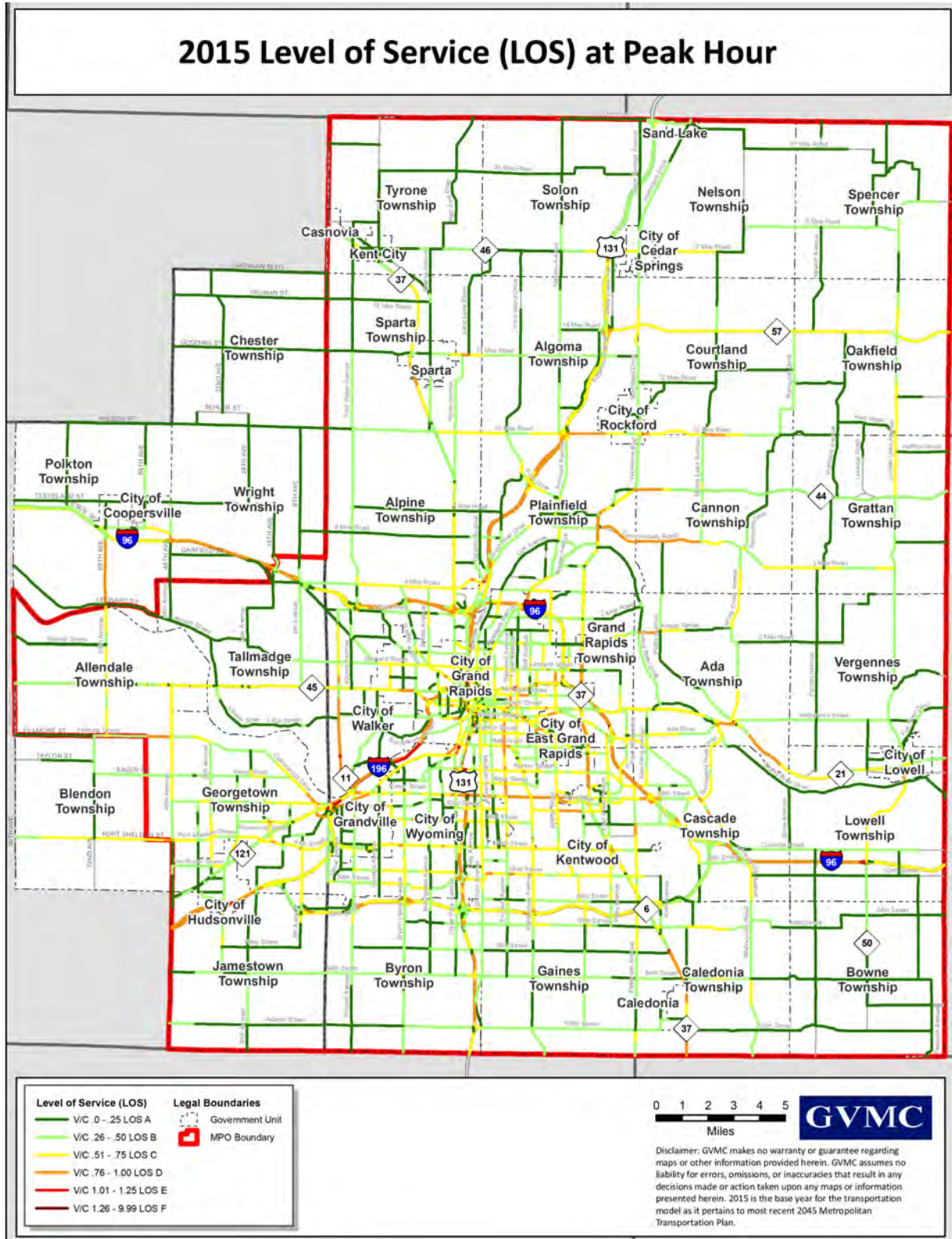
Table 2 Key Interstates and Freeways in the Greater Grand Rapids Area

Roadway	Description	Throughput (ADT)
Interstate 96	Interstate running East-west from Muskegon, MI to Detroit, MI	Over 47,000 vehicles at the I-196 junction
Interstate 196	Interstate running East-West from Grand Rapids, MI to Holland, MI, and North-south from Holland MI, to Benton Harbor, MI	Over 37,000 vehicles through downtown Grand Rapids
U.S. Highway 131	U.S. Highway running North-south from the Indiana/Michigan Border to Petoskey, MI	Over 58,000 vehicles through downtown Grand Rapids
Michigan Highway 6	State Highway running East-west between I-96 and I-196 through the southern region of Grand Rapids, MI	Over 27,000 vehicles at the US 131 junction

Figure 2 shows the congested corridors. During peak periods, Level of Service (LOS) C or better is most typical according to 2015 counts. There are limited corridors with LOS D, primary along major interstates and arterials in and out of the city. I-196 heading northeast towards downtown Grand Rapids between 28th St SW and Buttersworth Street achieves LOS E.

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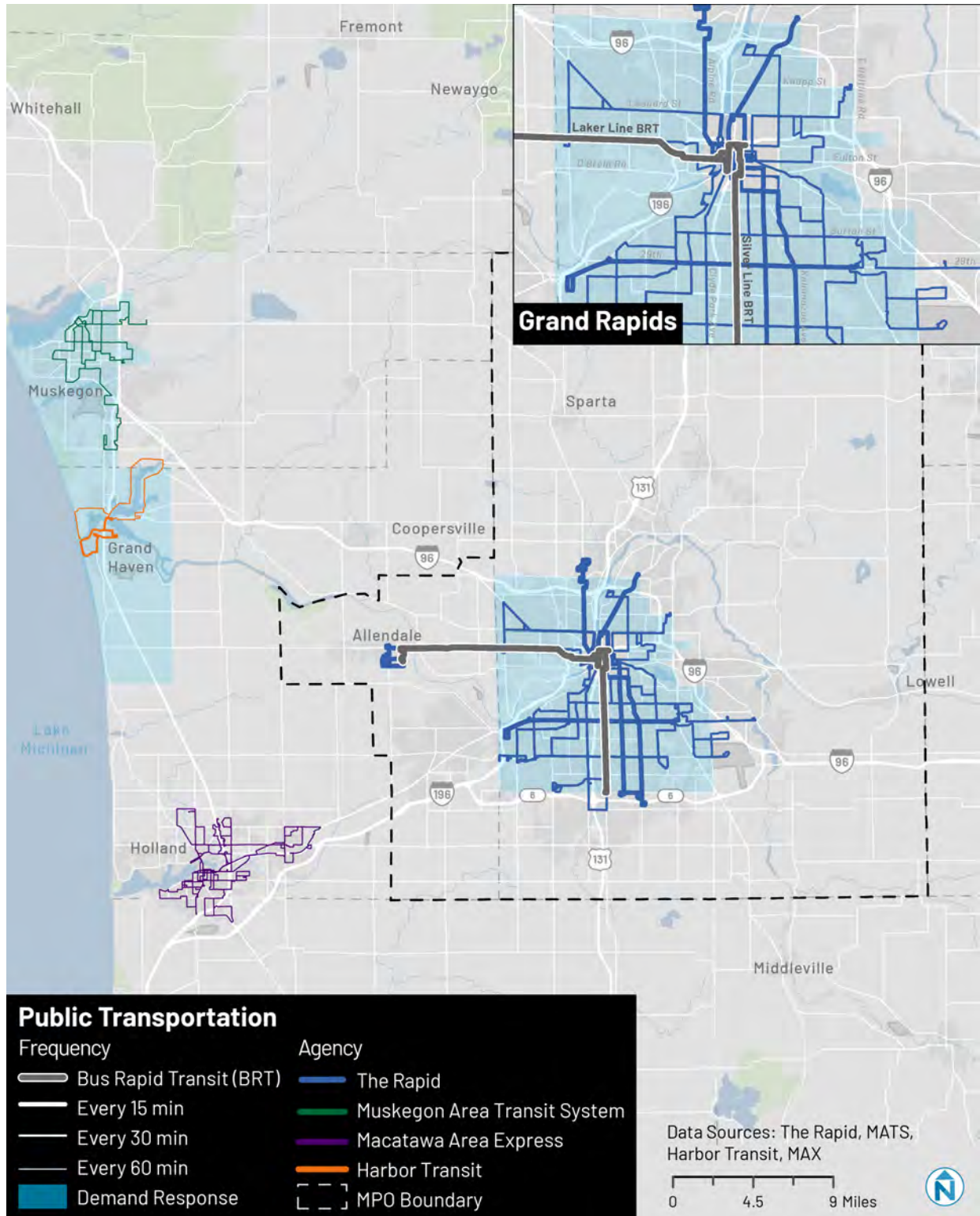
Figure 2 Areas of Peak Congestion (GVMC, 2015)



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Transit Network

Figure 3 Public Transportation around Grand Rapids



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Four transit operators serve the broader region – The Rapid, Muskegon Area Transit System (MATS), Macatawa Area Express (MAE), and Harbor Transit (HT). The Rapid is the largest operator in the region and the only operator within the GVMC TMA. The agency runs both standard bus routes and two Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes. As of 2019, on average, 37,000 people use The Rapid per weekday.

Table 3 provides ridership and fare information by operator.

Table 3 Ridership and Fare, by Operator

Operator	Annual Ridership (2019)	Base Fare
The Rapid Standard Bus Routes Bus Rapid Transit Adaptive Suburban Services Downtown Area Shuttle (DASH) GO! Bus (ADA Paratransit)	10,472,095	\$1.75
Muskegon Area Transit System (MATS) Standard Bus Routes Demand Response	480,253	\$1.25
Macatawa Area Express (MAX) Standard Bus Routes Reserve-A-MAX (ADA Paratransit)	412,143	\$1.15
Harbor Transit Deviated Fixed Route Trolley Seasonal Express Services Demand Response	235,102	\$1.25 (Temporarily Suspended)

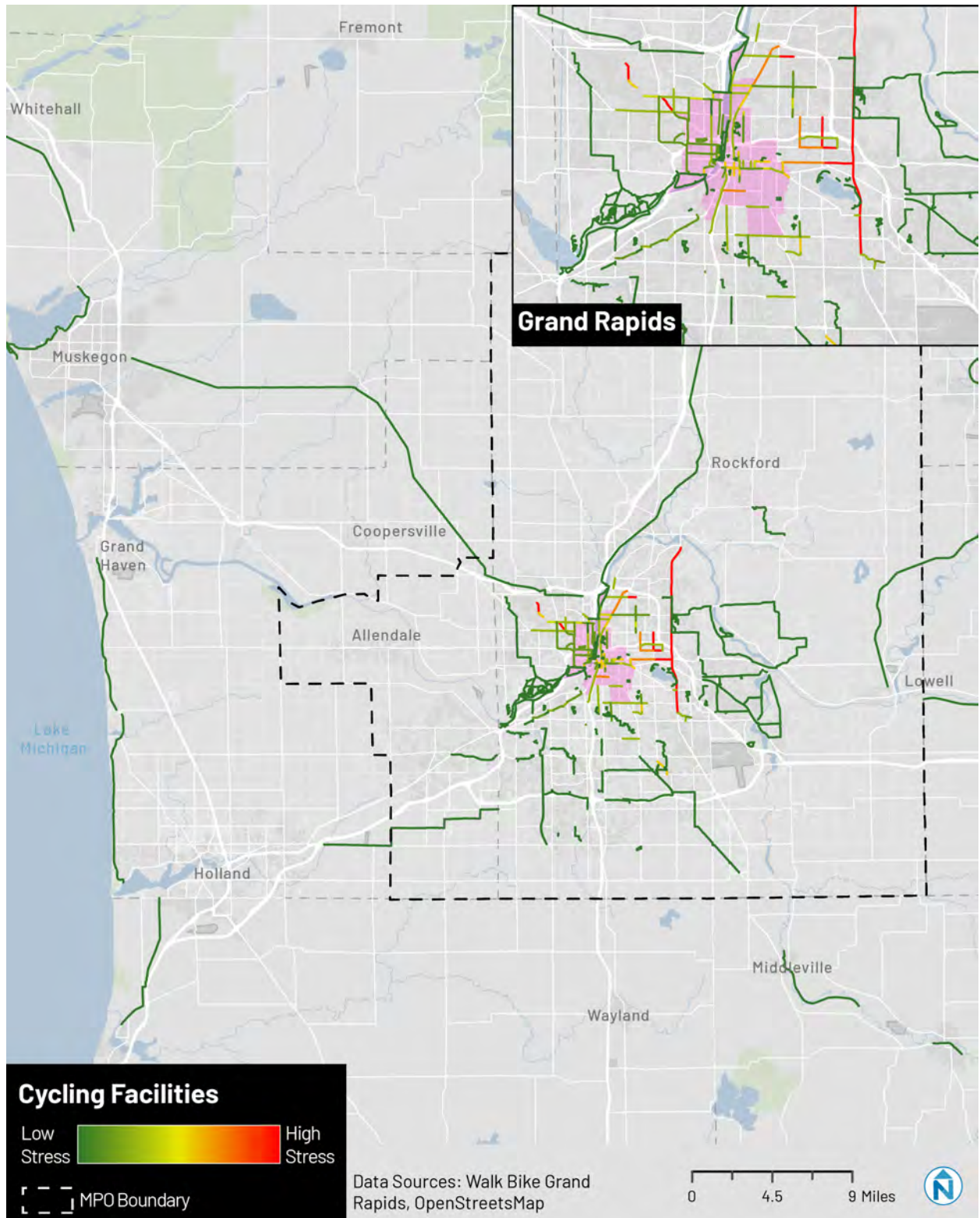
Active Transportation Network

Bicycle Infrastructure and Ease of Travel

Within Grand Rapids, bicycle routes are concentrated near the central business district and are primarily unprotected bike lanes and shared lane markings. Notable exceptions include the two-way, parking-protected cycleway along Monroe Ave NE between N Park Street NE & Guild Street NE, the White Pine Trail, and the Grand River Edges Trail. Most of the cycling infrastructure outside of Grand Rapids consists of recreational trails, including the Musketawa Trail between Muskegon and Grand Rapids. Figure 4 shows the region's existing bicycle infrastructure by the level of stress: off-street routes, like recreational paths, are considered to be the lowest stress routes, providing the highest level of safety and rider comfort. Unprotected on-street routes with high vehicle traffic volumes are considered the highest stress routes. Figures 5 and 6 show examples of different bicycle infrastructure types in the region.

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Figure 4 Bicycle Routes and Relative Stress-Level



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Figure 5 Two-way cycle track on GVSU's Allendale Campus with adjacent pedestrian path



Figure 6 Unprotected bike lane along Mt. Vernon Ave NW in Downtown Grand Rapids



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Secondary Bicycle Infrastructure

The project team used OpenStreetMap (OSM) data to assess the location and availability of bike parking in the region, as well as bike shops and standalone bike repair stations.¹

In the city of Grand Rapids, there are over 200 bike parking locations with the capacity to store over 2,000 bikes. However, the majority are in the central business district. Bike racks and bike stands make up the bulk of these storage locations, but there are a few covered bike corrals with the capacity for several bikes to be stored. For example, on Grand Valley State University's (GVSU) Pew Campus, there is a covered bike corral accommodating 80 bikes. Outside of the city of Grand Rapids, there is limited bike parking, as suggested by OSM.

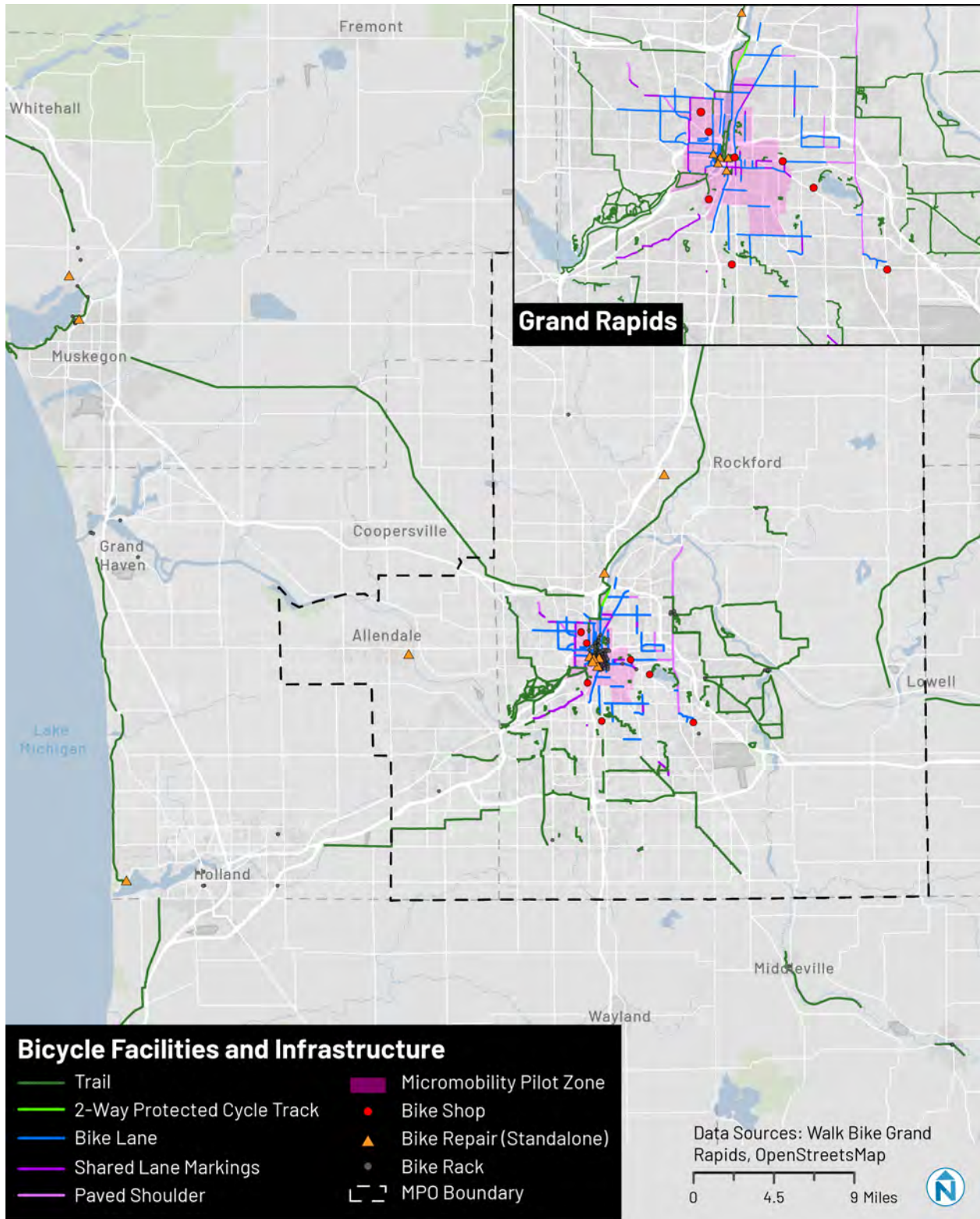
Most bike shops are in Grand Rapids, but standalone bike repair stations with tools to help bicyclists make minor repairs to their bikes are located around the region, particularly at trailheads.

Figure 7 shows all types of bicycle facilities and infrastructure in the region.

¹ OpenStreetMap is an open-source mapping portal that allows anyone to submit geographic data in an effort to have a complete, global database. The advantage to this is that the data collection is not restricted to political boundaries, but the drawback is that the accuracy and completeness of the data cannot be verified.

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Figure 7 Bicycle Facilities and Infrastructure



Land use & Travel Patterns

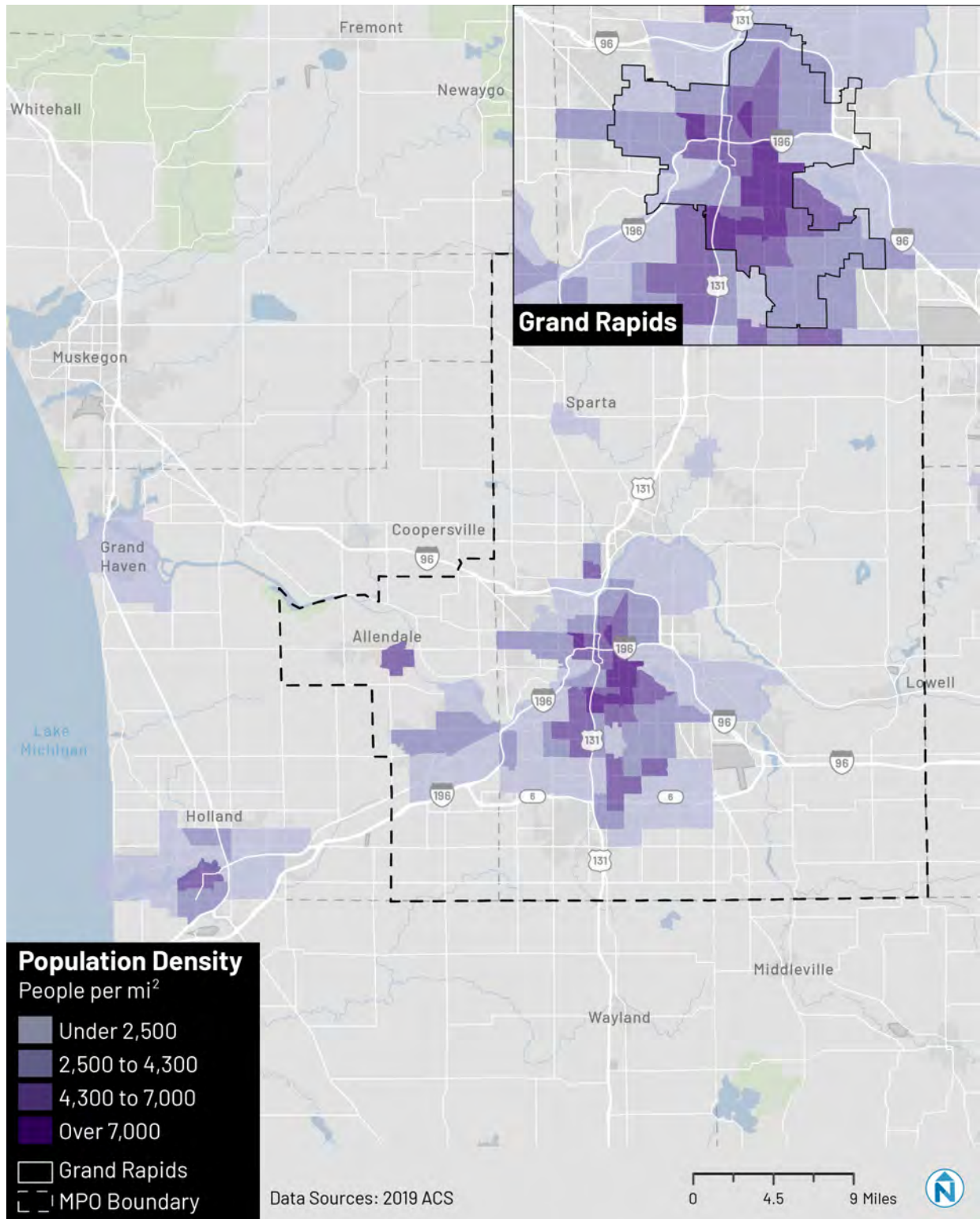
Population Distribution

Figure 4 shows how population densities are distributed around the region according to the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS). Within the city of Grand Rapids, population densities are highest south and east of downtown, with densities of roughly 11,000 people per mi², comparable to Chicago, IL. Notably, despite its mixed-use (residential or commercial) zoning, population densities in downtown Grand Rapids are only around 4,800 people per mi², comparable to Cleveland, OH. Outside of Grand Rapids, population densities in Allendale where GVSU's main campus is located, are around 4,400 people per mi², comparable to Grand Rapids as a whole. There are additional pockets of higher densities in Downtown Holland, MI, which lies outside the GVMC planning area.

Population densities for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) populations follow similar patterns as the general population, with densities highest south and east of downtown Grand Rapids. However, unlike overall population densities, the BIPOC population density is very clustered in these areas, with limited spillover. No areas with relatively high BIPOC population densities exist outside the Grand Rapids metropolitan area. See Figure 9.

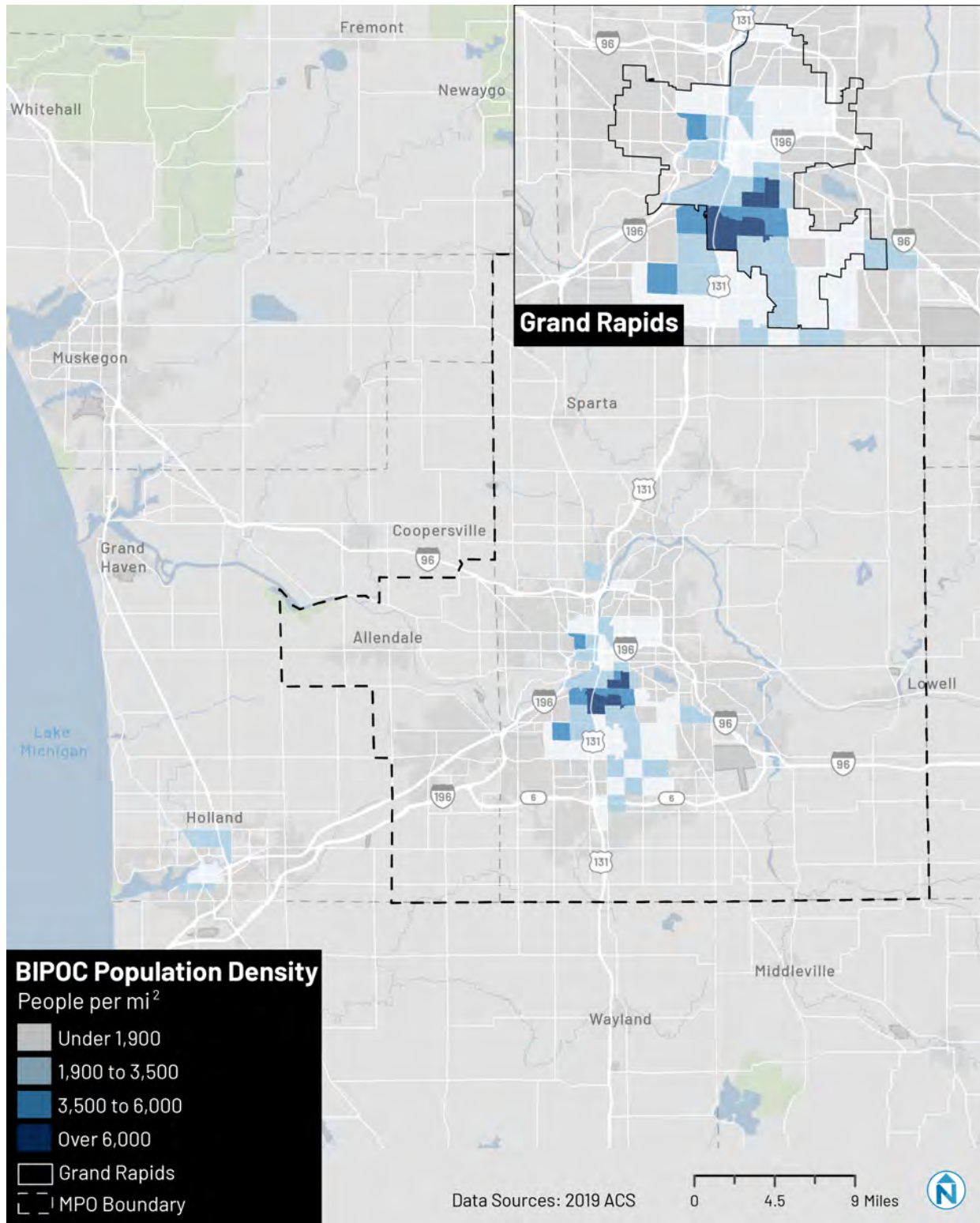
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Figure 4 Population Density of the Greater Grand Rapids Area (2019)



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Figure 5 BIPOC Population Densities in the Area



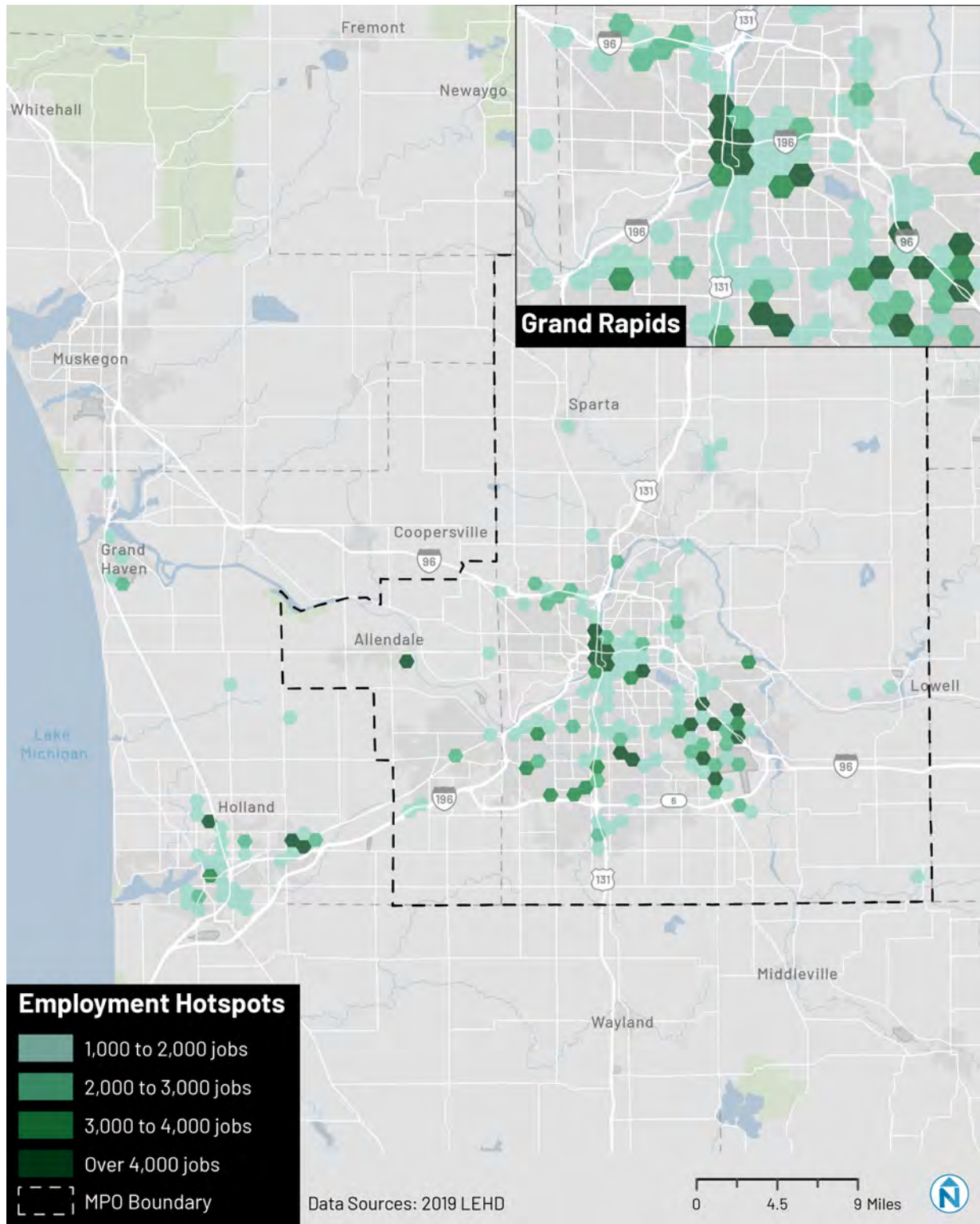
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Major Employment Centers

Grand Rapid's downtown continues to grow and expand as a prominent civic, cultural, and employment destination. Major health institutions are downtown along the Michigan Street Corridor, including Spectrum Health Butterworth Hospital and the Michigan State University (MSU) and GVSU campuses. Scarcely a block away is Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC), and a mile west, across the river, is the major urban campus of GVSU in Allendale. St. Mary's Health Care and Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital is just a mile south of Michigan Street. Figure 6 illustrates the concentration of employment sites across the area, including in downtown Grand Rapids, the City of Walker, the City of Kentwood, Grandville, Hudsonville, and areas near Gerald R. Ford International Airport.

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Figure 6 Employment Hotspots across the Great Grand Rapids Area



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Transit Accessibility

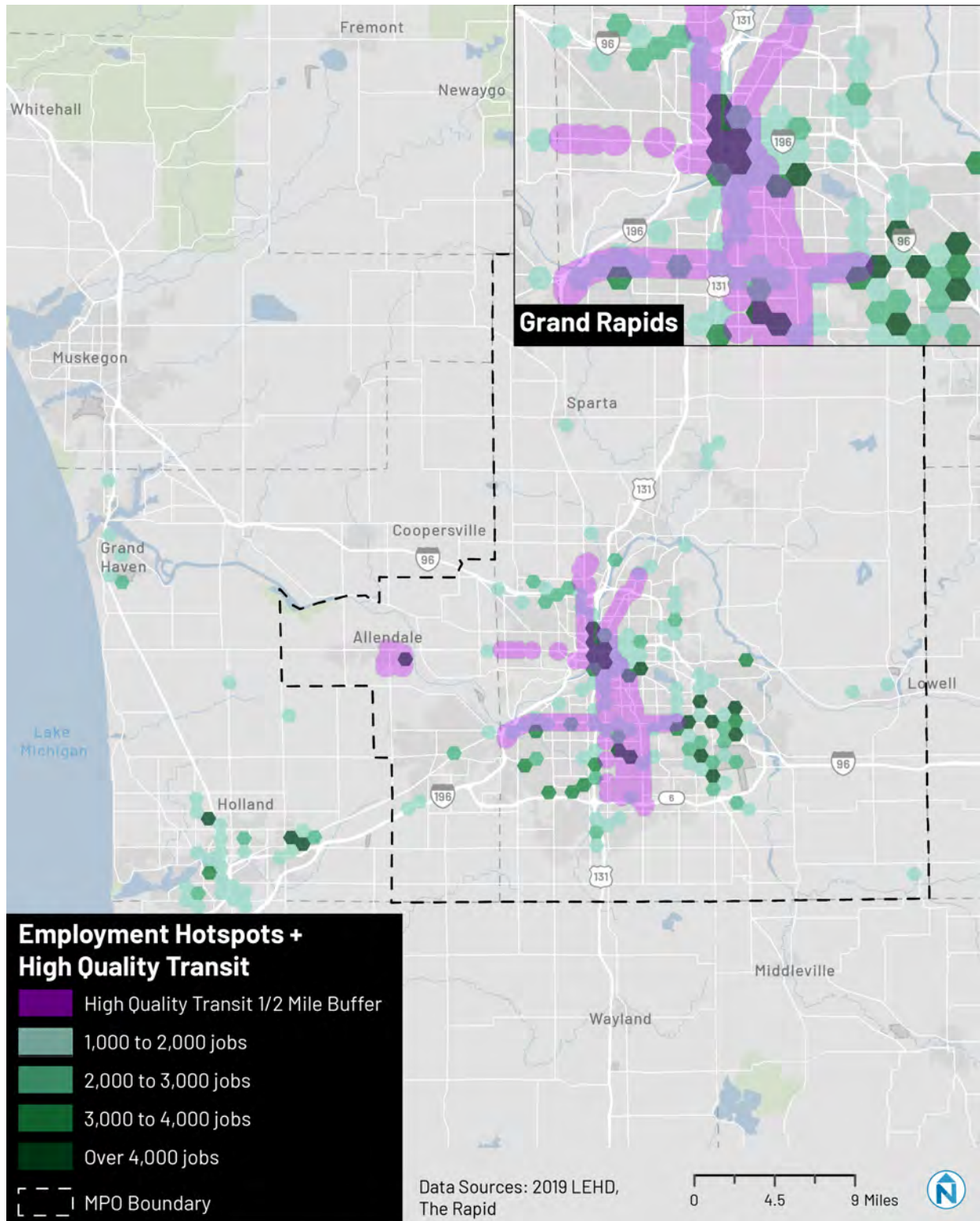
Figure 11 and Figure 12 display the transit accessibility of jobs in the regions in two ways. The “Employment Hotspots + High-Quality Transit” map visualizes employment hotspots in the region and shows how they overlap with high-quality transit. High quality includes all BRT routes and any standard routes that operate every 15 minutes or better. The “Jobs Accessible by Transit in 30 min” map shows how many jobs can be reached in 30 minutes or less via transit and walking starting from the center of each block group in the region.

The largest concentration of jobs in the region, located in Downtown Grand Rapids, is well served by transit. Several job clusters around Gerald R. Ford International Airport are not served by high-quality transit, though most have lower-frequency transit services. Outside of Grand Rapids, there are job clusters in Allendale, MI, Zeeland, MI, and just north of Holland, MI. The hotspot in Allendale is GVSU’s main campus and is served by the Laker Line BRT, which runs every 15 minutes. The hotspots in Zeeland and Holland are industrial jobs clusters and are served by infrequent (every 60 minutes) transit service.

People living in the urban core of Grand Rapids have a higher number of jobs accessible to them by transit compared to those living farther out because of how transit service is organized. There is an exception in and around Gerald R. Ford International Airport. Many homes have decent transit access to jobs in this area, despite modest levels of transit service, due to the proximity and the sheer number of jobs.

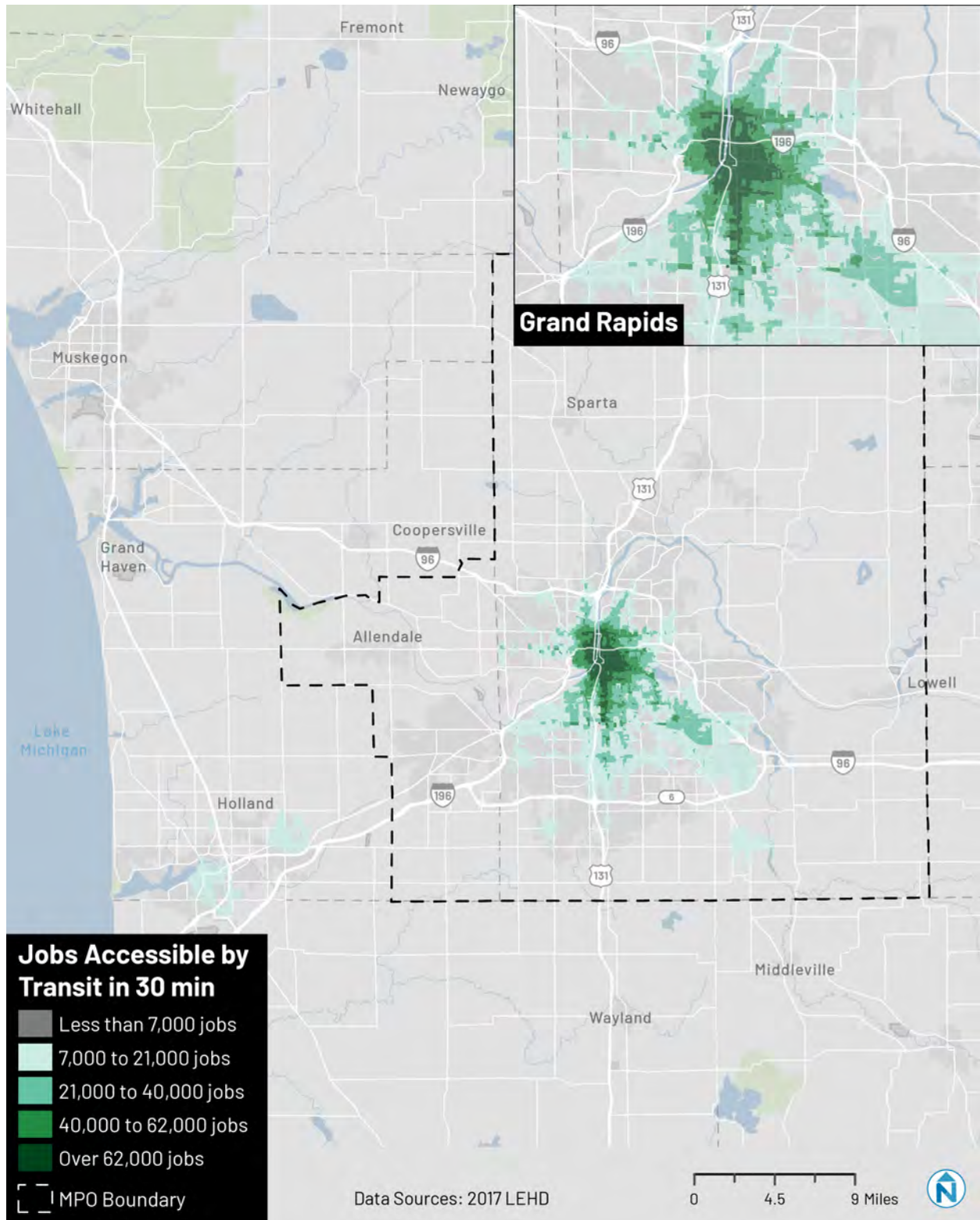
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Figure 7 Employment Hotspots and High-Quality Transit in the Greater Grand Rapids Area



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Figure 12 Job Access to Transit



Travel Behavior

The chart to the right shows a travel mode share for all trip types (commute and non-commute across the region, not inclusive of freight trips.² Of the over 2.4 million trips taken, over 68% are by private automobile. When 'trips taken as a passenger' and 'trips taken in a Taxi or TNC service' are included, the share grows to just over 86%. Only about 14% of trips are by non-driving options, with walking being the most common. The following section reviews how mode split fluctuates among different demographic groups: age, household income, race/ethnicity, and private vehicle ownership status.

Mode Split by Age

Looking at the mode split by age shows that, in general, older people (65+) are more likely to drive in a private car and less likely to walk than younger people. Additionally, people in the region between the ages of 12 to 17 who cannot drive typically travel as passengers in private vehicles. This demographic also bikes the most, at 3%.

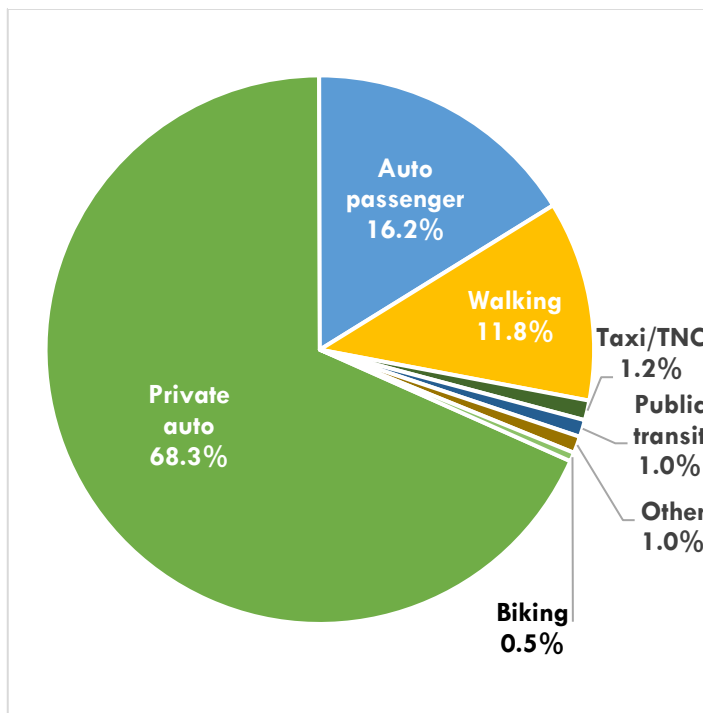
Mode Split by Household Income

The mode split is relatively consistent across income levels. There is a slight increase in driving a private car and a slight decrease in walking as income levels increase, but both trends are very gradual. Although the likelihood of taking transit declines with rising income levels, even the lowest income households take transit at low rates, with just 1.3% of households making \$15k to \$25k taking transit.

Mode Split by Race/Ethnicity

Looking at mode split by race/ethnicity yields a few interesting trends. Hispanic people and those identifying as more than one race are significantly less likely than the general population to drive a private automobile to get around and more likely to walk and ride as a passenger. Across all populations except Asian people, public transit's share is about 1%. For Asian people, the share is less than 1%

Figure 8 Mode Share, All Trips (Replica 2019, Mode Share of All Trips within GVMC Boundary)



² Based on Fall (September – November) 2019 Replica location-based services data and includes all trips beginning and ending in Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, and Ottawa counties.

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Mode Split by Vehicle Ownership

Looking at mode split by private vehicle ownership status provides insight into how people without access to a personal vehicle manage to get around. Zero vehicle households use the same top three modes (Private Auto, Auto Passenger, Walking) as the general population, albeit at significantly lower levels. After these three, public transit is the most common mode, suggesting that vehicle access is one of the more significant predictors of transit usage in the region.

TDM Plans and Policies

The following is an overview of plans and policies from the state, regional, and local level that support TDM. Statewide plans focus on increasing transportation options and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, while regional and local plans suggest specific programs and policies to promote non-driving trips.

Table 4 Summary of Plans and Policies (State, Regional, and Local ((Grand Rapids))

Policies and Plans	Objective
<i>Statewide</i>	
MI Healthy Climate Plan	15% increase per year in access to clean transportation options
MDOT 2022-2026 Five Year Transportation Plan	Emphasis on Complete Streets and increased transportation options to support climate resiliency
<i>Regional</i>	
GVMC 2045 MTP	Manage future traffic growth, improve system efficiency, mitigate congestion, and spread travel demand to non-critical times of day
GVMC Congestion Management Plan	Reduce the region’s reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and promote TDM practices
<i>Local (Grand Rapids)</i>	
Parking Requirements	Parking requirements are defined by land use
Vital Streets Plan	Reduce SOV commute rate from 95% to 45%, ensure the availability of equitable transportation options, and reduce transportation related emissions
Bicycle Action Plan	Incorporate bicycling-related transportation information, programming, and services in TDM elements of the city’s Equitable Economic Development and Mobility (EEDM) Strategic Plan

Statewide Plans and Policies

There are no policies or plans at the state level that specify TDM as a strategy or recommended action; however, there several plans underscore the importance of transportation options in support of Complete Streets and reducing greenhouse gas emissions related to transportation. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Department of Environment and Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) have adopted plans with goals and recommendations supportive of TDM.

MI Healthy Climate Plan

The Michigan Department of Environment and Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) released the MI Healthy Climate Plan in April 2022, which recommends actions for how Michigan can be carbon neutral by 2050. The plan outlines incentives and initiatives for public transit and diverse transportation options and calls for an annual increase of 15% in access to clean transportation options. Options include electric vehicles and investment increase in more efficient public transit systems, bike paths, walking trails, and other similar infrastructure.³

MDOT 2022-2026 Five-Year Transportation Program

MDOT's Five-Year Transportation Program calls for more Complete Streets and increased transportation options to support climate resiliency related to highway projects. It also speaks to Mobility as a Service (MaaS)⁴ and contactless fare systems for transit agencies to make it simpler for people to combine trips and travel modes.⁵

Regional Plans and Policies

The Grand Rapids region identifies TDM as a strategy in its most recent long-term planning efforts (2040 and 2045 MTP), as well as its Congestion Management Plan, as required by the FHWA, though there are no regionwide TDM requirements.

GVMC 2040 MTP and GVMC 2045 MTP

As part of the Accessibility, Mobility, Inter-modalism, and Efficiency Goal, the GVMC 2040 Plan MTP and GVMC 2045 MTP seek to implement TDM strategies to manage future traffic growth and improve system efficiency, mitigate congestion, and spread the travel demand to non-critical times of the day. Moreover, as part of the land use section, the plan recommends evaluating development plans to consider all mobility options and operational strategies, including TDM, in addition to or in coordination with adding capacity for general purpose lanes

³ Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy. "MI Healthy Climate Plan." April 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.michigan.gov/egle/-/media/Project/Websites/egle/Documents/Offices/OCE/MI-Healthy-Climite-Plan.pdf?rev=d13f4adc2b1d45909bd708cafccbffa&hash=99437BF2709B9B3471D16FC1EC692588>.

⁴ Mobility as a Service, or MaaS, integrates transportation-related services to create a comprehensive platform for mobility, with the aim of shifting away from single-occupancy vehicles by making it easier for users to book and pay for alternate modes.

⁵ Michigan Department of Transportation. "2022-2026 Five-Year Transportation Program." November 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/-/media/Project/Websites/MDOT/Programs/Planning/Five-Year-Transportation-Program/2022-2026-5YTP.pdf?rev=8ef2374ed19f448da12fe281746f4d63&hash=4E7137B593C995EDA77ABAC50DA3F652>.

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or building new facilities. Both the GVMC 2040 MTP released in 2015 and the 2045 MTP released in 2020 specified TDM strategies.

GVMC Congestion Management Plan

The GVMC Congestion Management Plan (CMP) identifies TDM Measures as one of seven strategies to help manage congestion. CMP objectives include reducing the region's reliance on single-occupancy vehicles by implementing policies that require developers to build-out modes of transportation and promote TDM practices. Since 2004, GVMC has maintained a no new roads policy in the greater Grand Rapids area, following the completion of the M-6/South Beltline.

Local Plans and Policies

As the largest and most populated city in the region, Grand Rapids has the greatest share of plans, policies, and programs promoting TDM. Grand Rapids has strategic parking-requirement adjustments and transportation impact studies to analyze changes. The city has also recently released a Vital Streets Plan and Bicycle Action Plan to promote active equitable transportation options. Other cities and townships in the GVMC jurisdiction do not have as strong an emphasis on TDM. However, a review of recent master plans for East Grand Rapids, the City of Kentwood, Walker City, and the City of Wyoming indicates an interest in transportation systems supporting economic development and equitable access to employment (Wyoming), on- and off-street parking management strategies (East Grand Rapids), and commitments to Complete Streets (Kentwood). In most cases, however, system performance is focused on efficient vehicle travel and vehicle volume to roadway capacity.

Parking Requirements

In 2017, Grand Rapids shifted away from standard minimum parking requirements. Instead, off-street requirements are determined by use category, and the Planning Director has the discretion to set a lower parking rate on a per-project basis. Existing requirements state that parking cannot exceed the required number of parking spaces by more than 20% unless approved by the Planning Commission. Developers have an opportunity to reduce parking supply by up to 50% if specific parameters are met, such as shared parking agreements, on-site bicycle parking, or proximity to existing transit. Grand Rapids encourages shared parking agreements for mixed-use developments and has a policy to address changes in use or ownership. Other municipalities in the Grand Rapids region have minimum parking requirements (e.g., Wyoming, Kentwood, Walker).

Development Requirements

In the City of Grand Rapids, developers are not required to contribute to capital improvements associated with new development but may do so voluntarily. However, developers must provide pedestrian connections to existing public sidewalks and paved walkways through off-street parking lots. Developers are not required to provide access to existing or planned transit stops.⁶

⁶ Order of the City Commission. "Code of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan." Section 5.10.08. August 2022. Retrieved from https://library.municode.com/mi/grand_rapids/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TITV--ZONING_PLANNING_CH61Z00R_ART10TRMO_S5.10.09TRACAM.

City of Grand Rapids Vital Streets Plan

The Vital Streets Plan is a framework for Grand Rapids Street design and investments in the right-of-way. The plan sets ambitious goals related to TDM for mode share, equity, and climate.

- Mode share – Reduce SOV commute rate from 95% to 45% by 2035 by “providing efficient transit corridors, safe walking and bicycle facilities, and smart solutions for ridesharing to achieve a mode split of 20% transit, 12% walking, 5% biking, and 20% ridesharing.”
- Equity – Ensure transportation options are “available, affordable, and reliable for all people to meet their travel needs regardless of age, ability, race, ethnicity, or economic status.”
- Climate Change – Reduce “transportation-related emissions by reducing VMT through the increased use of transit, shared vehicles, and non-motorized transportation.”

City of Grand Rapids Bicycle Action Plan

The Grand Rapids Bicycle Action Plan includes TDM in recommendations incorporating bicycle-related information, programming, and services, including a connected network, secure bike parking, and increased access to bikes and necessary equipment. One of the plan's goals is to incorporate bike-related information in the TDM elements of the city's forthcoming Equitable Economic Development and Mobility Strategic Plan. The plan also aims for the city and other partners engaging in TDM efforts, such as The Rapid/Interurban Transit Partnership, colleges, and local businesses, to include bicycling incentives in targeted TDM marketing campaigns and digital multi-modal commuter tracking platforms.

TDM Programs and Services

Existing TDM programs and services are highlighted below, broken down by state, regional, and local services, focused on Grand Rapids at the local level. This document spotlights vital programs and services to consider their replication and scalability. Appendix A includes all existing programs.

Statewide Programs and Services

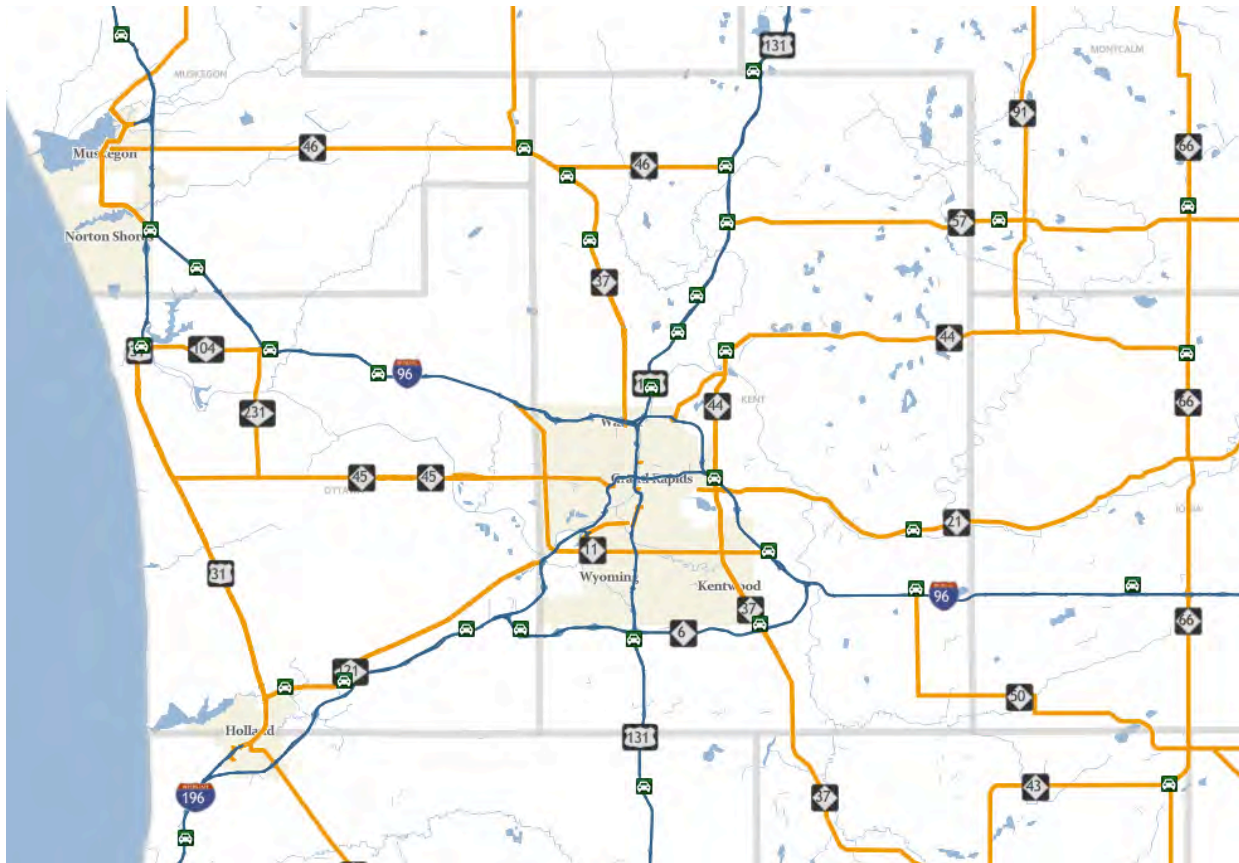
Michigan has several long-standing transit services and vanpool programs across the state. These include privately managed bus and rail services in the southern part of the lower peninsula and state-sponsored vanpool services in communities across the lower and upper peninsula that coordinate with the regional services provided by The Rapid's West Michigan Rideshare program.

Park and Ride Lots

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) operates 243 MDOT-owned carpool parking lots and an additional 17 locations at Meijer stores across Michigan. More than a dozen lots are in the GVMC transportation management area. The MDOT managed lots are in addition to seven Park and Ride lots managed by The Rapid and Mobile GR and serving The Rapid riders.

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Figure 14 MDOT Park and Ride Lots



Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School is an international movement and federal program that encourages walking and biking to school by facilitating the planning and implementation of street infrastructure to improve safety and reduce traffic. The Michigan Department of Transportation manages the Michigan Safe Routes to School program in the Grand Rapids region, with support from the Michigan Fitness Foundation.

The Michigan Fitness Foundation has previously supported efforts to implement Safe Routes to School in the Grand Rapids region. The Foundation hosted regional trainings to share best practices, provide information on conducting a meaningful walking audit, assist with navigating the Michigan Grant System application site, share how to sustain a districtwide SRTS project, and other information.

Safe Routes Partnership, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing safety for students traveling to school, has also created a handbook in 2017 to support MPOs across the country in fulfilling federal requirements for bicycle and pedestrian plans, including the implementation of Safe Routes to School program.⁷

⁷ Safe Routes to School (2021). Retrieved from <https://saferoutesmichigan.org/additional-resources/>

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Mobility Wallet Challenge

The Michigan Department of Transportation and the Office of Future Mobility and Electrification (OFME) launched a Mobility Wallet Challenge in 2022 to explore a program that aims to increase access to various mobility services throughout the state. A mobility wallet seeks to simplify the transit payment process by allowing riders or third-party stakeholders to add funds to a single platform, creating a streamlined fare payment and collection mechanism. Regional organizations can submit proposals for funding, and MDOT is encouraging organizations and businesses to partner on a proposed solution.⁸

Regional Programs and Services

The primary regional programs and services operate under The Rapid, with fixed route buses and bus rapid transit routes, as well as shuttles, on-demand service, rideshare, and paratransit. The Rapid also offers transit pass programs for employers, education providers, and social service organizations, described in more detail in the Transit Benefit Spotlight on page 35. In addition to The Rapid's services, the region has existing and proposed supplemental programs and transit connections through Wheels to Work and the West Michigan Express; both spotlighted below.

GVMC

The transportation department of the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC) is responsible for the metropolitan planning organization's (MPO) short- and long-term planning processes for all modes (e.g., freight, rail, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, highways, and aviation). As the designated Transportation Management Area, GVMC serves as the liaison between local communities and the Michigan Departments of Transportation, directing how state and federal dollars support systemwide transportation improvements. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) has a three-year horizon, and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is a 20–25 year plan. GVMC's planning processes involve congestion management, traffic counts, safety, pavement, and asset management. Via the TIP, GVMC has been providing federal and state funding to The Rapid to operate West Michigan Rideshare (ranging from \$143,000 to \$206,207 per year during the last five years) and to offer free rides on Clean Air Action Days (ranging from \$20,000 to \$100,000 per year during the last five years).

GVMC's boundaries include all of Kent County and the eastern portion of Ottawa Counties. Members include each County and its Road Commission, 17 Townships, ten cities, two villages, The Rapid, and the Michigan Department of Transportation. The MPO has not historically managed TDM programs or services but coordinates with members on land use policies and transportation investments to refine the inputs for regional travel demand models.

The Rapid

The Rapid operates 20 routes in and around Grand Rapids. Most run every 15 to 30 minutes on weekdays and every 30 to 60 minutes on weekends. Service is open to the public at \$1.75 per trip. Since 2014, The Rapid has continued to increase service levels in terms of annual revenue hours and annual revenue miles; however, annual passenger trips have decreased. Despite providing more service, The Rapid has been unsuccessful in generating new ridership, similar to

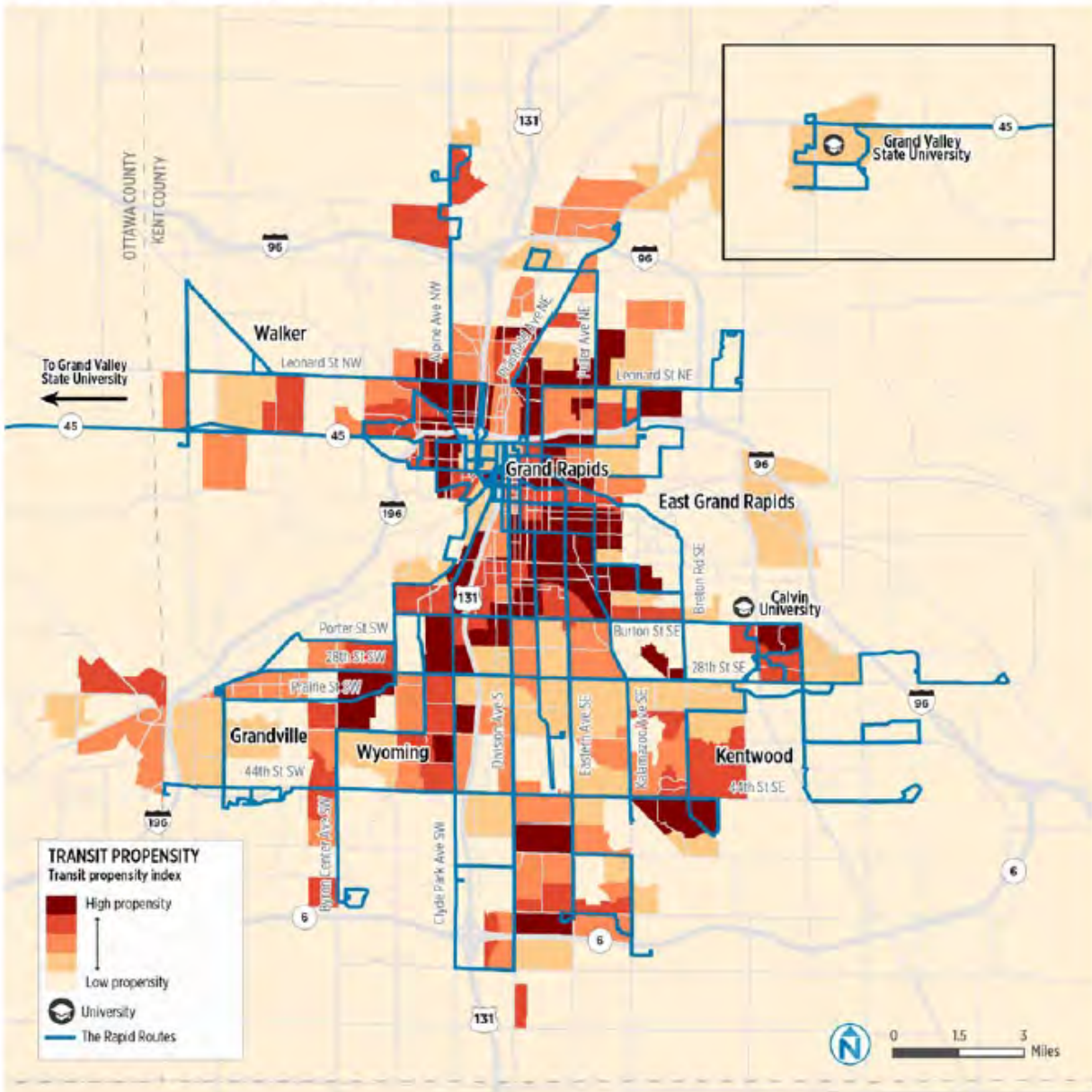
⁸ Michigan DOT (2022). *Mobility Wallet Challenge*. Retrieved from <https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/travel/mobility/initiatives/mobility-wallet-challenge>

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other transit systems across the country. Various external factors, including low gasoline prices, increased use of Transportation Network Company (TNC) services (Uber/Lyft), and general economic trends, have contributed to declining transit ridership trends.

In 2019, The Rapid initiated a Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) to look at the ridership market, operating characteristics, ridership, and growth opportunities. The most market potential exists within the City of Grand Rapids boundaries; however, pockets of high transit propensity exist in Walker, Wyoming, Grandville, and Kentwood.

Figure 9 Comprehensive Operational Analysis of the Rapid (2019)



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West Michigan Clean Air Coalition

GVMC is part of a coalition of government agencies, businesses, institutions, and non-profit organizations in Kent, Ottawa, Muskegon, and Kalamazoo counties. The coalition's mission is to educate the public about ozone and fine particulate matter PM 2.5 pollution and promote voluntary emission reduction activities. Among other actions, the coalition promotes the use of transit, carpooling, walking, and biking, particularly on clean air action days – days on which the forecasted air pollution meets a threshold that warrants action. The coalition communicates clean air action day advisories a day in advance through weather channels on TV and radio, apps, and websites, social media, and email distribution with TV and radio reaching the broadest audience.

Primary funding for this program comes from CMAQ funds dedicated by participating MPOs with additional funding coming from sponsorships and small corporate donations. GVMC has dedicated funds through the TIP process for The Rapid to offer free transit to riders on clean air action days. On those days, The Rapid sees a significant increase in ridership.

The Coalition conducts a regional survey every five years to gauge public awareness and participation in clean air action days. There appears to be high awareness of clean air action days and which actions can help improve air quality. However, the percentage of respondents taking action is lower and directly correlated with how important environmental issues and air quality concerns are to respondents.

Local Programs and Services

At the local level, particularly in Grand Rapids, several organizations are implementing events and marketing campaigns to encourage employees and residents to travel by non-driving modes. Below is an overview of existing outreach efforts.

Travel Options Information & Marketing

The City of Grand Rapids, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Grand Rapids Inc., West Michigan Rideshare, and The Rapid each develop messaging and materials to promote transportation options to travelers. They encourage private employers to offer parking cash-outs, free or subsidized transit passes, bicycle parking, and transit-supportive amenities. Much of the messaging connect transportation to sustainability goals, safe and affordable access to employment, and high quality of life. Currently, marketing schemes focus on Grand Rapids residents and employees and rarely reach the greater region. Refer to Appendix B for marketing examples.

Events

Every June, the Greater Grand Rapids Bicycle Coalition (GGRBC) and the City of Grand Rapids host Active Commute Week, the primary commute options event in the region. More than 40 employees participated in the first event in 2011, and 70 people logged trips on just the first day of Active Commute Week in 2021. The week-long community initiative, sponsored by the City of Grand Rapids/Mobile GR and West Michigan Rideshare, encourages the widespread use of alternative transportation modes. Events and activities throughout the week include pitstops in different parts of the city for the morning commute, raffles, a "Mode of the Day" to highlight alternative transportation, and a happy hour. There is an employer challenge where employers can sign up to measure the collective impacts of their employees, and commuters can

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individually log their trips to qualify for prizes. The GGRBC provides bicycle Lunch and Learns at local companies throughout the week.

A dedicated social media account shares information on the event under the handle "acwgr," and representatives from participating organizations such as The Rapid and West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum have shared information about the event through local news media outlets.

There are also several bike-related events. The city hosts an MSU Grand Fondo bicycle ride, the Beer City Bike Festival, Pedal GR, the Annual Ride of Silence, and She Rides (Her Own Way).

Employer-Provided Resources

Several major regional employers in the Grand Rapids region provide TDM programs, including unlimited transit service to their affiliates, private shuttle services, carpool matching, and other mobility options and amenities. However, the shift towards remote and hybrid work and virtual learning due to the pandemic has caused program offerings to pause or decrease. Table 5 highlights TDM programs that a sample of major employers offer.

Table 5 Employer-Based Transportation Resources

Employer	Transportation Resources
Spectrum Health – Grand Rapids	<p>Snapshot: 27,000 employees</p> <p>Parking: There are >10,000 parking spaces within a 2-mile radius of the medical center and ~1,300 staff park off-site. Spectrum previously offered a cash stipend in lieu of parking for a leased building downtown.</p> <p>Transit: Spectrum Health contracts with The Rapid to provide free passes to employees, and 26% of Spectrum employees live within ¼-mile of a bus route, though many staff do not use the program.⁹ Spectrum operates free shuttles for staff between the Medical Center and Blodgett Hospital.</p> <p>Rideshare: Spectrum previously participated in West Michigan Rideshare programs with ~400 staff members but has not renewed since the platform transition to RidePro in 2019.</p> <p>Showers: Spectrum provides a shower facility for cyclists and is adding bike lockers and bike parking.</p>

⁹ The Rapid and Spectrum Health staff-provided data, April 2022.

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Grand Valley State University	<p>Snapshot: 1,760 Academic Staff, 24,406 Students</p> <p>Transit: GVSU has contracted with The Rapid for ~20 years and has four dedicated routes serving its students/campus, including the Laker Line BRT connecting downtown with the Allendale campus. All GVSU faculty, staff, and students can ride any Rapid bus route for free with their GVSU ID.</p> <p>Parking: GVSU offers semester parking permits to students living off-campus for \$240 and daily permits for \$10. Active faculty and staff receive free parking permits.</p> <p>Rideshare: GVSU pays dues to participate in West Michigan Rideshare including an internal carpooling website.</p> <p>Shared Mobility: GVSU started a car sharing program in 2012 (Zipcar) and offers bike rentals to students on an annual basis.</p>
Grand Rapids Community College	<p>Snapshot: # 640 Employee and, 15,767 Students</p> <p>Parking: GRCC has limited parking downtown and charges students a daily fee of \$3.50. Employees have access to discounted monthly rates paid with pre-tax dollars, ranging from \$5 to \$15 per month.</p> <p>Transit: GRCC contracts with The Rapid to reserve DASH parking spaces and DASH shuttle service to campus. The Silver Line BRT has a stop on campus at 60th Street.</p> <p>TDM</p> <p>Rideshare: GRCC participates in a West Michigan Rideshare advertised on the DASH and GRCC websites.</p> <p>Bike Parking: GRCC has a large amount of bike parking on campus and offers secure bike storage at the Bostwick parking ramp.</p>

Other employers, such as St. Mary’s Health Center have contracted with The Rapid in the past but currently do not.

The following businesses in the GVMC region are recognized as Bike Friendly Businesses, a designation that is awarded to organizations for supporting bicycling at their worksite and beyond, including offering bike parking, conducting bike challenges and participating in bike events, and advocating for bike improvements in their jurisdictions:

- Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital (offers an adaptive bicycle program for people with disabilities)^{10, 11}
- Cascade Engineering

¹⁰ Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital. “Mary Free Bed recognized as a Bicycle Friendly Business.” May 1, 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.maryfreebed.com/mary-free-bed-recognized-as-a-bicycle-friendly-business/>.

¹¹ The League's Bicycle Friendly America. “Current Bicycle Friendly Businesses through Spring 2021.” June 8, 2021. Retrieved from https://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/BFB_Full_List_through_Spring_2021.pdf.

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- Steelcase Inc.
- Velocity USA
- GR Bicycle Company
- Rockford Construction
- YMCA
- Brewery Vivant

Spotlight Programs

Regional Service Spotlight: Hope Network Wheels to Work

Wheels to Work, is provided by Hope Network, an organization that helps people overcome challenges to be healthy and included in day-to-day life. In collaboration with area organizations, it operates a supplemental ride-to-work transit program that connects workers to jobs throughout Michigan. The program currently operates in seven counties: Kent, Muskegon, Ionia, Newaygo, Allegan, and Ottawa. Riders enroll through a participating employer and the cost is shared between the rider and the employer. Neighborhood-based hubs serve as pick up and drop off points for the vans.

COVID-19 Impacts

Before the pandemic, Wheels to Work had 12,467 rides per month, compared to the current average of 3,500, representing a loss of 8,967 rides. Fewer people commuting during the pandemic impacted the program's revenue, and Wheels to Work lost 50 companies during the pandemic after having to increase pricing to cover losses.

Funding

The program initially started through grant funding, but its goal is to be self-sustaining. Wheels to Work currently operates with 5310 funds, and the Hope Network Foundation covers the funding gaps. Wheels to Work did not receive federal funding during the pandemic, such as through the CARES Act. The program is exploring opportunities for first-mile/last-mile partnerships to complement existing fixed route transit.

Figure 16 Wheels to Work Van



Proposed Service Spotlight: West Michigan Express

The West Michigan Express (WMX) is a proposed transit connection that would link five cities along the Chicago Drive corridor, connecting the communities of Holland, Zeeland, Hudsonville, Grandville, and Grand Rapids. A West Michigan Express Task Force comprised of cities, townships, and service providers along the corridor spearheaded a study to gauge interest in future service. Before the pandemic, **the corridor between Holland and Grand Rapids saw more than 27,000 commuters per day**, with about 18,000 traveling into Grand Rapids and 9,300 traveling west to Holland and Zeeland, making it the most traveled commuting corridor.

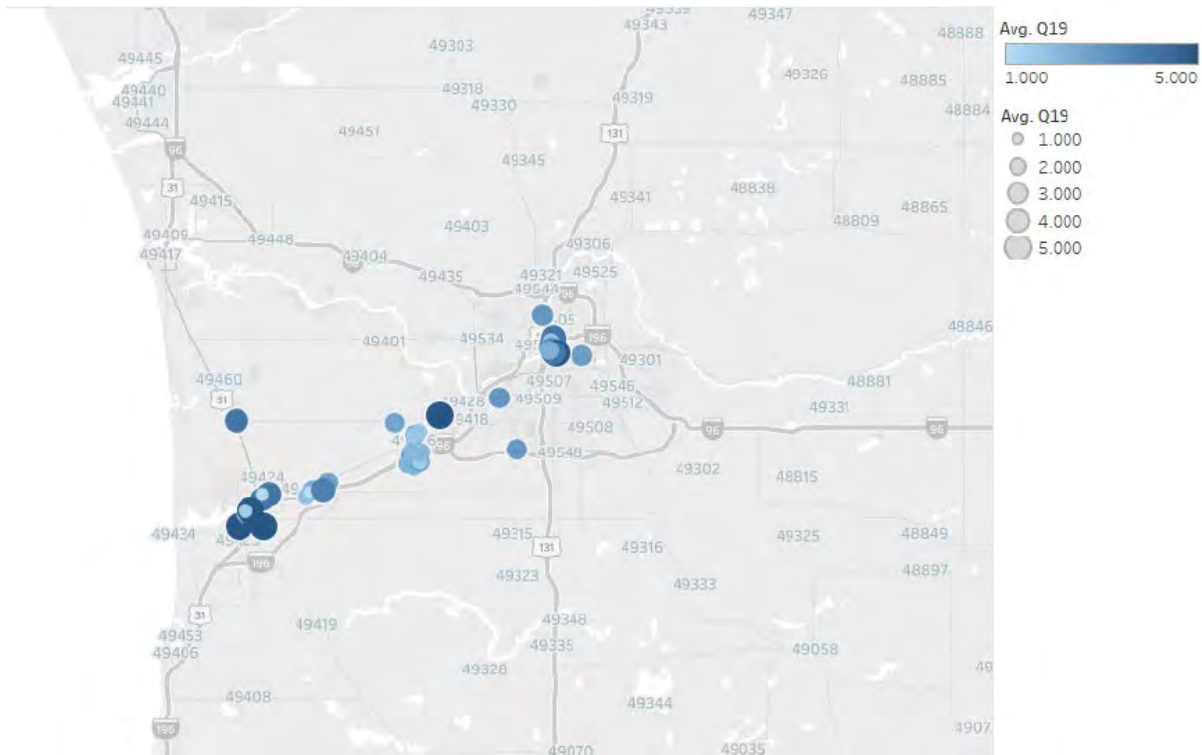
Based on a survey the Frost Research Center at Hope College conducted in 2018, employees working at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital, Suburban Inns, and Spectrum Health were the

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most interested in this potential commuter service. More than nine out of 10 survey respondents reported driving to work alone, varying little from this mode due to time savings; **38% of respondents reported being somewhat likely or very likely to use the planned express commuter service.**

The survey determined that this service would attract sufficient ridership based on the number of respondents who reported commuting to work along the Chicago Drive corridor. Further geographic analysis can help planners establish optimal routes, and discussions with employers and employees can give more insight.

Figure 17 Employee Interest by Employer Locations (WMX Task Force 2019 Employee Survey Report)



Transit Benefit Programs Spotlight: The Rapid’s Transit Pass Program

The Rapid offers bulk passes at a discount to employers and social service organizations to encourage transit ridership. There are 114 partner accounts, with some organizations having been on board for more than 20 years. Most partners are non-profits, education, or healthcare organizations; there are less than ten private employers or residential partners.¹² Partner organizations have negotiated discounts, and some contract with The Rapid directly for transit service in exchange for unlimited access for their affiliates. Since The Rapid transitioned to the Wave Card, partner accounts typically use the cards outlined in Table 6.

Table 6 Wave Card Passes and Fares

Pass Type	Fares		
	Ride	Day	Month
Adult Card	\$1.75	\$3.50	\$47.00
Youth Card	\$1.25	\$2.50	\$33.75
Reduced Card *Eligibility requirements	\$0.85	\$2.25	\$30.00
Partner Card (Adult)	\$1.75	\$3.50	\$47.00
Partner Card (Youth)	\$1.25	\$2.50	\$33.75
ADA Card *Eligibility requirements	Free		

Some institutions have Specialized Partner Cards, meaning their Wave Card or transit pass is integrated into existing student- or employer-ID cards (e.g., Calvin University, Spectrum Health, and GRPS High Schools). There are also 10-ride cards, Ultralight cards, and single-ride barcode cards that social service organizations often purchase in bulk. Some of the largest accounts The Rapid has had over the years include GVSU, GRCC, Spectrum Health, and St. Mary’s Hospital. However, participation among the healthcare institutions has waned in recent years.

¹² Private and residential transit pass partners include Samaritas, Samaritas New Americans, Restaurant Partners, ResourceMFG, Interface Consultation Services, Helix Steel, and Factorial Restaurant Holdings.

Rideshare Spotlight: West Michigan Rideshare (WMR)

The West Michigan Rideshare program¹³ is operated by The Rapid. The informative online platform helps commuters in Kent, Ottawa, and Allegan counties find and manage carpools, vanpools, and guaranteed ride home services.

The program has two primary components. The first offers online trip planning, online carpool matching, and guaranteed rides home for individual commuters in case of an emergency. To be eligible for the \$60 GRH reimbursement, commuters must log a non-drive-alone trip once a week. Staff report the program is highly underutilized.

The second component is a customized commute program for employers. Through its online platform, which started in 2004 as Greenride and has been provided by RidePro since 2019, employers can offer challenges and carpool and vanpool matching specific to the employer. The program can be tailored to the needs and goals of the employer, such as decreasing parking supply pressure and reducing up to half of the employees' commute costs. Program staff has received feedback from users that the program would be more attractive if it offered dynamic/hybrid carpooling.

Figure 18 West Michigan Rideshare Website



COVID-19 Impacts

The program experienced a decline in employer participation during the pandemic and currently has eight unique employers for vanpools representing healthcare, administrative, and industrial/manufacturing industries. Routes connect from Grand Rapids to Muskegon, Greenville/Howard City, Big Rapids, Holland/Benton Harbor, and Cascade Township. While there are over 8,000 registered users in RidePro, roughly 200-300 users use carpool matching each month. Since the pandemic, West Michigan Rideshare staff find that employees prefer to rideshare with their colleagues or people they know. Spectrum Health in Holland and Grand

¹³ The Rapid. "West Michigan Rideshare." n.d. Retrieved from <https://www.wmrideshare.org/>.

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Rapids is one of the most engaged employers and promotes the carpooling service at employee transportation fairs.

Benefits

The Rapid views its Rideshare service as a commitment to sustainability, and this messaging is effective with employers that have similar sustainability goals. However, the organization recognizes that behavior change for employees is more closely tied to cost savings and convenience.

Equity Spotlight: West Michigan Rideshare and Knape & Vogt

One of the ways employers can leverage transportation options programs is through employer-sponsored vanpool programs. **Knape & Vogt** is a manufacturing company based in Grand Rapids that experienced a labor shortage amidst the pandemic. In late 2021, Knape & Vogt enlisted the H2B program that allows nonimmigrants¹⁴ to be hired for temporary non-agricultural labor or services.¹⁵ They were able to hire 48 new employees and provide them with transportation by using six of the Rapid Van program's vehicles. In this case, the benefit provided by the vanpool service was less about shifting travel modes among an existing set of commuters and more about allowing a marginalized, car-less population to secure and maintain meaningful employment. This is an important demonstration of how more and more accessible HOV commute options can make the region's economic growth more equitable.

¹⁴ The U.S. government uses the term nonimmigrant to refer to foreign nationals who are admitted to the United States temporarily for a specific purpose, distinct from those who wish to come to the United States permanently.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Labor. "H-2B Program." n.d. Retrieved from <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/immigration/h2b>.

Municipal Program Spotlight: Mobile GR

Mobile GR operates the city-owned parking systems in Grand Rapids and aims to expand mobility choices by making it easier to access public transit, walk, bike, carpool or drive alone. Mobile GR has multiple current initiatives:

Shared Mobility Pilot – Mobile GR launched a bike and e-scooter pilot in September 2020 after promising results from a 2017 feasibility study. The service area covered a 12-mile zone, including 74% of Grand Rapids' underserved neighborhoods. The pilot was highly successful, initially launching with service from SPIN, then adding a fleet of 150 electric-assist bicycles and 300 e-scooters from Lime in June 2021¹⁶. Throughout the two-year pilot, users completed roughly 555,842 e-scooter trips and 31,591 e-assist bike trips for a total of 917,133 miles traveled. The average trip distance was 1.53 miles, and average daily rides ranged from 579 trips per day in winter and more than 3,500 trips per day in summer.¹⁷

In August 2022, the Grand Rapids City Commission voted to make the program permanent and selected Lime as the sole provider of micromobility vehicles in Grand Rapids. The company has plans to further expand its fleet to about 800 scooters and 800 bikes. Lime holds workshops in the community to introduce users to the technology in a safe and controlled environment. Lime also offers an automatic 30% discount on all rides beginning in one of their designated Equity Zones, concentrated in Grand Rapids Neighborhoods of Focus, with no burden on the user to demonstrate need.

The city provides designated parking zones for bikes and scooters at select destinations. The program aims to improve access to public transportation and enhance the Grand Rapids resident and visitor experience. Mobile GR is also exploring a car share program to place electric vehicles in Neighborhoods of Focus where car ownership rates are low.

Transportation Census: Starting in 2017, Mobile GR began conducting a transportation survey every few years (also completed in 2021). The survey targets respondents in the Grand Rapids region within a 100-mile radius and gathers information about transportation behaviors, attitudes, and awareness of services.

The 2021 survey received almost 10,000 responses from workers who regularly commute into downtown Grand Rapids. Major takeaways from the survey results are as follows:

- Respondents commented on the difficulty of finding on-street parking and the cost of off-street parking. Respondents also called for more parking and did not like using an app or other technology to pay for parking.
- 42% of respondents reported that they do not use DASH, many of whom said that having a personal vehicle or access to parking at work disincentivized using the DASH.
- Those who use the DASH tend to do so during peak commute times on weekday mornings and evenings.

Equity Pass Program: Mobile GR is spearheading a mobility wallet program designed to provide eligible low-income residents with a program that provides subsidized access to multiple

¹⁶ Ehren Wynder. "Grand Rapids Grows Micromobility Pilot with More e-Scooters, Bikes." *Grand Rapids Business Journal*, 10 June 2021, [grbj.com/news/transportation/grand-rapids-grows-micromobility-pilot-with-more-e-scooters-bikes/](https://www.grbj.com/news/transportation/grand-rapids-grows-micromobility-pilot-with-more-e-scooters-bikes/).

¹⁷ Kransz, Michael. "Hundreds of Scooters, e-Bikes to Stay on Grand Rapids Streets." *MLive*, 11 Aug. 2022, <https://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/2022/08/hundreds-of-scooters-e-bikes-to-stay-on-grand-rapids-streets.html>.

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transportation options, including transit and shared mobility services. The program will partner with social service organizations.

Other programs within Mobile GR include:

[Grand Rapids Autonomous Vehicle Initiative \(AVGR\)](#) – Mobile GR recently completed a pilot program that brought four electric self-driving shuttles to downtown streets in Grand Rapids.

[Bicycle Action Plan](#) – Approved in 2019, the plan includes recommendations for policies and programming that would support year-round biking and for connected, high-quality bike facilities.

[Residential Parking Permit Program](#) – A residential parking permit program from Mobile GR that focuses on resident parking needs, especially in growing business districts.

[Mobile GR Commission](#) – A citizen board in Grand Rapids focused on mobility, including cars, bikes, public transit, and pedestrians.

Key Takeaways

Key takeaways have been identified based on the consultant team's review of existing conditions and a review of the abovementioned plans, policies, and programs.

Opportunity to update and build upon West Michigan Rideshare program

Opportunities may include rebranding to avoid using "rideshare" in the name, which is likely limiting the public's perception of the organization's service offerings. Additional services, as part of consolidating TDM services and programs either within WMR or migrated over to the MPO.

Opportunity to improve existing transit routes.

Transit in Grand Rapids is effective, with many routes running every 15-minutes. The system has good bones, which creates opportunities to enhance existing routes and identify ways to increase ridership through incentives and subsidies. The Transit Master Plan study, expected to begin later this year, presents an opportunity to advance these successes and improve/expand non-driving travel options across the region, including into areas of Ottawa County.

The costs of increasing commute distances are growing but underacknowledged.

The region has a significant spatial mismatch. Commute distances are expanding as more employment centers are created and expanded outside established population centers – and often beyond the Rapid's most effective service areas. Residents do not live where they work, and many households with good transit access are being priced out of these locations as regional growth continues. More recently, employers are moving to areas where land is more affordable but less accessible. However, employers opting to move away from high-quality public transportation hurts employee retention. TDM efforts to address this can begin with educational campaigns on how longer car-dependent commutes undermine employee recruitment and retention. Such campaigns can leverage case studies from regional employers who have effectively invested in smart land use choices and commute programs.

Employers are essential partners.

Some key employers are committed to reducing vehicle trips. Conversations with Spectrum Health and Grand Rapids Community College make that clear. However, many of the employee-based programs are underutilized. It's important to learn why people are hesitant to participate in existing programs and to support employers with tools and resources.

Lack of protected bicycle infrastructure throughout the region.

There are apparent gaps in the existing bicycle network. While the City of Grand Rapids has defined routes, most routes are unprotected, which dissuades potential riders. Existing bicycle routes weave through the city and turn into recreational paths that may not serve daily commuters. Additionally, conversations with stakeholders and on-the-ground observations suggest an unmet demand for bicycle facilities, but more quantitative data is needed to verify these anecdotes.

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The gap between park-and-ride demand and available facilities could be significant.

Downtown Grand Rapids benefits from being at the center of a first-class public transit system that is complemented by free local shuttles, multiple micro-mobility options, walkable urban densities, and strategic parking management. However, this creates a stark contrast in mobility cultures between downtown and the rest of the region. This contrast is navigated daily by tens of thousands of regional commuters. A comprehensive regional park-and-ride strategy could help manage this contrast by accommodating mode shifts at natural intersection points – existing parking facilities in established commercial centers/corridors located on the periphery of the Rapid's core service area. A regional entity can help outline the benefits to parking lot owners, commuters, and employers while working with The Rapid to identify strategic parking locations that enhance connecting transit service and provide opportunities for carpooling and vanpooling.

Appendix A

Table 7 A Comprehensive Matrix of TDM Program and Services, by Geography

Program or Service Name	Description	Links or Resources
Statewide Programs and Services		
Amtrak	Amtrak passenger rail provides three train lines for service throughout Michigan and connections to Chicago from Grand Rapids, Port Huron, and Detroit. The Pere Marquette connects Grand Rapids to Chicago, with stops in Holland, Bangor, and St. Joseph-Benton Harbor. The Blue Water line connects Port Huron and Chicago, making stops in Lapeer, Flint, Durand, East Lansing, Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, Dowagiac, Niles, and New Buffalo. The Wolverine route passes Lake Michigan between Detroit and Chicago, with stops in Dearborn, Ann Arbor, Jackson, Albion, Battle Creek, and Kalamazoo.	Michigan Services
Greyhound Bus	Greyhound bus service also operates throughout the region. Greyhound routes operate primarily out of Detroit, with trips west to Chicago and south to Toledo. Greyhound does not directly service Grand Rapids but connecting partners provide service to points north, east, and south from the Grand Rapids Amtrak Station. South from Grand Rapids are connections to Kalamazoo, where Greyhound buses are available east to Detroit, with stops in Jackson and Ann Arbor, and west to Chicago, with stops in Benton Harbor and Gary, Indiana. Bus service north from Grand Rapids includes service to Traverse City and to the Upper Peninsula for connections to points west. Greyhound partner buses also provide service to east to Lansing and Flint, with additional north/south connections available at both.	Greyhound Stations in Grand Rapids
Indian Trails	Indian Trails offers inter-city bus service throughout the state of Michigan, operating 80 vehicles that include motorcoaches, mid-coaches, transit buses, and mini-buses. Service operates from terminals in Owosso, Kalamazoo, and Metro Detroit. More than 1.7 million passengers travel annually via chartered trips, daily scheduled service, and contract shuttles. Two Indian Trails routes serve the GVMC region: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kalamazoo–Grand Rapids–Lansing–Flint–Detroit – 1482 • Grand Rapids–Cadillac–Traverse City–St. Ignace – 1484 	Indian Trails

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Program or Service Name	Description	Links or Resources
MichiVan Commuter Vanpools	MichiVan Commuter Vanpools is a ridesharing program sponsored by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and operated by Enterprise Rideshare. Five to 15 commuters share a van on an established route, with riders paying a monthly fee based on mileage and the size of the van. Commuters usually meet the vanpool at a centralized location, such as a carpool lot or store. There are Local Rideshare Offices (LRO) in some parts of the state, where local transportation agencies operate carpool and vanpooling programs, including Western Michigan Rideshare operated by The Rapid, but counties not served by an LRO offer MichiVan service for groups of five or more.	MichiVan Commuter Vanpools
Michigan Park and Ride	Michigan's Carpool Parking Lot Program (Park and Ride) is comprised of 260 lots. 243 are owned by MDOT and 17 are marked carpool parking spaces at Meijer stores across the state.	Michigan Carpool Parking Lot Program
Mobility Wallet Challenge	The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Office of Future Mobility and Electrification (OFME) are launching a Mobility Wallet Challenge to make different transit services more seamless and integrate payments. ¹⁸ This pilot effort is the result of a collaboration between multiple state agencies, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), and the National Park Service.	Mobility Wallet Challenge Website
Regional Programs and Services		
The Rapid	<p>Bus Rapid Transit</p> <p>The Silver Line and Laker Line are The Rapid's two enhanced bus routes featuring premium vehicles and stations that operate in and around Grand Rapids every 10 to 15 minutes on weekdays and every 30 to 45 minutes on weekends. Service is open to the general public at a cost of \$1.75 per trip.</p>	Silver Line Laker Line

¹⁸ Michigan Department of Transportation. "State of Michigan announces Mobility Wallet Challenge to improve access to transportation services statewide." July 28, 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/news-outreach/pressreleases/2022/07/28/mobility-wallet-challenge-to-improve-access-to-transportation-services-statewide>.

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Program or Service Name	Description	Links or Resources
	<p>Fixed Route Service</p> <p>The Rapid provides 28 fixed routes, with 149 fixed-route buses. Most routes operate every 15 to 30 minutes on weekdays and every 30 to 60 minutes on weekends, and service costs users \$1.75 per trip. The cost per passenger for The Rapid's fixed-route bus is \$3.17, compared with \$5.03 in similar service areas among peer systems.</p>	
	<p>GO!Bus</p> <p>The Rapid's GO!Bus service is a shared-ride, advanced-reservation, paratransit service for disabled and non-disabled seniors aged 65 and older. It is intended to provide a comparable level of transportation to that which is provided by a fixed-route bus. GO!Bus riders share trips if they are generally traveling in the same direction at the same time. Trips are scheduled regardless of trip purpose.</p>	GO!Bus
	<p>Passenger Adaptive Suburban Service (PASS)</p> <p>The Rapid's Passenger Adaptive Suburban Service (PASS) is a suburban feeder shuttle that transports passengers from their curb to the fixed-route system. People who live more than one-third of a mile off a bus line are eligible for this service. The one-way fare of \$3.50 includes a transfer to the fixed-route bus.</p>	PASS
	<p>Rapid Connect</p> <p>Rapid Connect is an on-demand service accessible through a phone app that allows customers to request rides connecting to The Rapid's regular bus system. The Rapid launched this new mobility service in January 2022 in Walker and Kentwood, providing a public transit option near the 3 Mile Road and Broadmoor Avenue areas. Service is available in specified geographic zones and all vehicles are ADA compliant.</p>	Rapid Connect
	<p>TheRapid DASH</p> <p>The Downtown Area Shuttle (DASH) is a free circulator that accesses many healthcare, education, cultural, and entertainment points of interest. Two bus routes run every 8 minutes between Monday and Saturday and connect key downtown Grand Rapids locations to peripheral parking facilities. The facilities are low-cost, flat rate paid parking intended to provide</p>	DASH

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Program or Service Name	Description	Links or Resources
	residents, workers, and visitors convenient connections. This service is made possible by the City of Grand Rapids and operated by The Rapid ¹⁹	
West Michigan Rideshare	West Michigan Rideshare program ²⁰ is operated by The Rapid and available to residents of Kent, Ottawa, and Allegan counties. The program is focused on carpooling, vanpooling and any alternative transportation modes that result in fewer vehicles on the road. The program uses online platform by RidePro since 2019 and was started in 2004 as Greenride.	West Michigan Rideshare
Vanpool: Rapid Van	The Rapid's vanpool service is available to pools of at least four commuters, through participating employers. The Rapid provides the van, maintenance, fuel, insurance, and roadside assistance. Designated drivers participate free of charge, with riders paying fees of between \$100 to \$200 per month per person. The Rapid's vanpools transport workers in Kent, Ottawa, and Allegan counties and the rest of the state operates vanpools through the MichiVan program.	Vanpool: Rapid Van MichiVan Program
Travel Training	The Rapid offers Travel Training programs to help individuals with disabilities, senior citizens, and refugees relocating to the area, though it is primarily for people with disabilities.	Travel Training
RideLink	The RideLink is a collaboration between five agencies to provide low-cost shared rides to seniors. Partner agencies include Hope Network Transportation, Senior Neighbors, Kent County Community Action, United Methodist Community House and The Rapid.	RideLink
Hope Network Wheels to Work	Wheels to Work, provided by Hope Network in collaboration with area organizations, is a supplemental ride-to-work transit program that connects workers to jobs throughout Michigan. The program currently operates in seven counties: Kent, Muskegon, Ionia, Newaygo, Allegan, and Ottawa. Riders enroll through a participating employer and the cost is shared between the rider and the employer. Neighborhood-based hubs serve as pick up and drop off points, and the program has potential for first-mile/last-mile partnerships.	Wheels to Work Hope Network – Transportation

¹⁹ City of Grand Rapids. "DASH the Downtown Area Shuttle." n.d. Retrieved from <https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Departments/Mobile-GR/DASH-the-Downtown-Area-Shuttle>.

²⁰ The Rapid. "West Michigan Rideshare." n.d. Retrieved from <https://www.wmridesare.org/>.

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Program or Service Name	Description	Links or Resources
The Right Place	The Right Place is an economic development organization in West Michigan since 1985, helping companies invest in new jobs throughout the region. The organization uses research and demographic and workforce data to encourage employers to consider where to locate. The organization also facilitates conversations with employers about commute cost calculations. The Right Place is a trusted resource to drive business growth and opportunities for residents throughout Greater Grand Rapids.	The Right Place
Local Programs and Services		
City of Grand Rapids – Mobile GR	Mobile GR operates the city-owned parking systems in Grand Rapids and has multiple initiatives to provide diverse transportation options and encourage active transportation by making it easier to walk and bike.	
	Equity Pass Program Mobile GR is organizing a mobility wallet program for eligible low-income residents to provide subsidized access to transportation options, including shared mobility and transit services.	Mobile GR
	Shared Mobility Pilot Mobile GR spearheaded a bike and scooter share pilot in 2020, covering a 12-mile area and including both electric standing and seated scooters and e-bicycles. The pilot intended to connect with other transportation services throughout the city, especially in aiding pandemic recovery. The neighborhoods chosen consisted of census tracts with higher poverty than other parts of the city and user fees are 50% of the standard fees for those meeting specific income requirements.	Bike and Scooter Share Pilot
	Transportation Census Mobile GR started conducting a transportation census in 2017 to take place every few years, targeting respondents within a 100-mile radius of the Grand Rapids region. The goal is to gather data on transportation behaviors, attitudes, and awareness of services.	

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Program or Service Name	Description	Links or Resources
Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI)	<p>Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI), established in 2013, is the organization responsible for place management in downtown Grand Rapids, serving as the management entity for the Downtown Development Authority, the Downtown Improvement District, and the Monroe North Tax Increment Finance Authority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing a Transit Bulb – GSRI piloted new bus stops in December 2019 in an effort to speed up transit service and improve the streetscape, as well as minimize traffic congestion. The bulbs aim to decrease the amount of time lost when buses pull over and merge back into traffic, helping to prevent traffic back-ups. • Piloting a Better Bikeway – Downtown Grand Rapids and GSRI is actively building the city’s bike infrastructure, enhancing bike lanes to connect the Downtown, Monroe North, and Creston neighborhoods. 	
Active Commute Week	<p>West Michigan Rideshare organizes Active Commute Week as a community-wide initiative to encourage the use of alternative transportation modes. Taking place every year since 2011 for a week in June, the program allows employers to sign up to encourage their employees to participate, measuring the collective impact and reduction in carbon footprint.</p>	Active Commute Week


Appendix B

Figure 19 Rider tools and links to West Michigan Rideshare on The Rapid's website




Mobile Website

Bookmark m.ridetherapid.org on your mobile device browser for responsive display of all the information on our full website formatted for a smaller screen size.



Cost-to-Drive Calculator

Use our helpful [cost-to-drive calculator tool](#) to calculate your savings when you ride The Rapid.



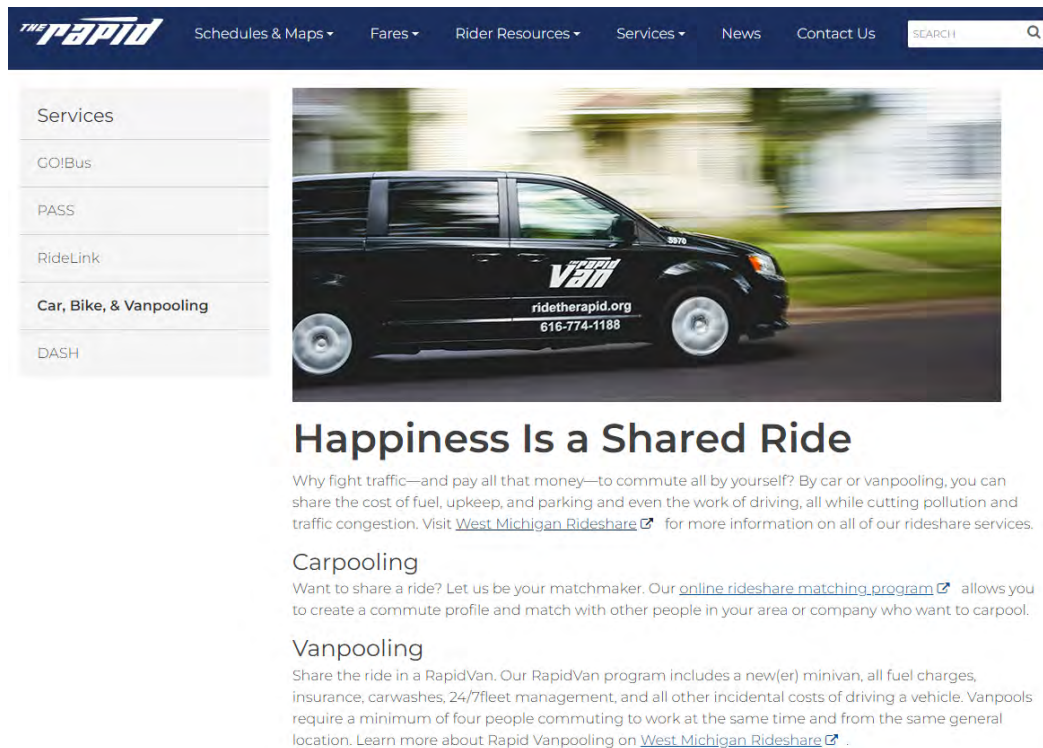
Third-Party Apps To Track Your Bus

myStop® Mobile
You can find the same real-time information as [The Rapid System Map](#) in the myStop® Mobile app found in the [iOS App Store](#) and the [Google Play Store](#).

Transit
Plan your trip, set reminders, and get notifications with the [Transit app](#), available for iOS and Android.

Moovit
[Moovit](#) is your free, local transit planner. Available for iOS, Android, and Windows phones.

Figure 20 Vanpool and Rideshare Information on The Rapid's website



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of The Rapid website with links for Schedules & Maps, Fares, Rider Resources, Services, News, and Contact Us. A search bar is also present. On the left, a sidebar menu lists services: GO!Bus, PASS, RideLink, Car, Bike, & Vanpooling, and DASH. The main content area features a photograph of a black RapidVan with 'THE RAPID VAN' branding and contact information (ridetherapid.org, 616-774-1188). Below the photo is the heading 'Happiness Is a Shared Ride' and introductory text about vanpooling and carpooling. The text explains that vanpooling allows users to share the cost of fuel, upkeep, and parking while cutting pollution and traffic congestion. It also mentions an online rideshare matching program for carpooling. The vanpooling section details that the program includes a new(er) minivan, fuel charges, insurance, carwashes, 24/7 fleet management, and other incidental costs, requiring a minimum of four people commuting to work at the same time and from the same general location.

Figure 21 Grand Rapid's Parking Guide

Downtown Mobility and Parking Guide

Parking

Mobile GR offers many parking options in Grand Rapids, including surface lots, ramps, and metered parking. There are varying price points throughout the city to accommodate budgets of all types. Our streets, lots, and ramps are conveniently located, accessible, and well-lit, so you can find parking quickly and get where you're going safely.

[View Parking Info](#)



FREE Downtown Transit (DASH Guide)

Free transportation and minimal waiting await you in Grand Rapids. Sit back and let our DASH buses and autonomous vehicles do the work for you! With fast frequency and convenient routes, Mobile GR partners to provide FREE public transit between many points downtown with the DASH bus lines. Avoid parking costs with transit!

[View FREE Downtown Transit Info](#)

Paid Transit (Ride the Rapid)

Make your way to and from work more comfortably than you ever imagined. Hop onto a bus, get some peace of mind, and stop spending time dealing with traffic congestion. Mobile GR partners with The Rapid to provide transit systems throughout the city of Grand Rapids. Learn more and start riding today!

[View Paid Transit Info](#)

Scoot, Carpool, Bike or Walk

What better way to explore the city than with a friend? Mobile GR partners to provide alternative transportation services and initiatives that get you where you need to go without spending too much time or money. These travel options are more efficient and have a smaller footprint, so it's good for everyone!

[View Alternative Transportation Info](#)