

A Rapid change

Allendale Township, the Chamber of Commerce and Grand Valley State University need to move the Rapid routes into Allendale because the benefits would outweigh the expenses of doing so.

There have been recent discussions about possibly extending the Rapid into Allendale Township, and isn't it about time?

After performing an experiment almost two years ago, Allendale Township, the Chamber of Commerce and GVSU decided the project of moving the Rapid into Allendale would be too costly. But the benefits of adding routes into Allendale will not happen overnight, and the experiment should have been given more than a year for the positive effects to take place.

So many students and residents of Allendale are left behind because the Rapid does not travel past 48th Street. Residents in complexes such as Ottawa Creek and Heritage Hill are forced to either drive or walk to any destination because public transportation is not offered to them. But these residents and the apartment complexes would both benefit from this implementation. GVSU students living in these complexes would have alternate transportation to campus and other locations throughout the area, and the apartment complexes can add the bus route as an extra amenity that will attract more residents.

In addition, students and even local residents in general who rely on public transportation will no longer have to take the Rapid to Meijer if Family Fare is the preferred grocery store. Allendale businesses would see a boost in business as students would stay in the area on weekends rather than traveling to downtown Grand Rapids.

With the 2007 \$110,000 Service Development and New Technology Grant still up in the air, discussions include possibly connecting existing transit systems throughout Ottawa County, which include the Muskegon Area Transit, the Holland Area Transit, the Grand Haven Harper Transit and the Rapid in Grand Rapids. Linking the systems throughout the county would connect several different GVSU campuses, which would encourage more students to attend satellite campuses and vice versa.

The costs of linking Ottawa County transit systems together or even moving the Rapid into Allendale in general may be an expense that does not seem to be worth it, but the pay off would be so much more rewarding in the long run.

Community members are continuously heard complaining about the declining economy and its effects on Allendale, but here is the opportunity to change things around. Help GVSU and the overall Allendale communities: Move the Rapid into the direction that would cause a much-needed change.