

**Background:**

**Original Submission:** Kathy Kremer, February 09

Approved by 2008-2009 Sustainability Committee

Joint Sustainability Committee Ranking, September 09: 4/5

**Proposal:** Aquinas currently subsidizes the cost of students, staff, and faculty who use The Rapid bus system. Normal adult fare is \$1.50 one way, but for Aquinas faculty, staff, and students it is only \$ 0.40 with ID. Aquinas reimburses The Rapid \$ 0.50 for each fare. Other mass transit options are also available from The Rapid to the Aquinas Community, but these are not subsidized by the college. My proposal is to provide a subsidy for students, staff, and faculty who ride to campus in a Rapid Van, thereby encouraging use of this form of transportation just as we do those who ride the bus. Approximately 20 Rapid Vans travel from Lansing, Kalamazoo, Muskegon, and other communities within 60 miles of Grand Rapids. Individuals meet at a Park and Ride lot, and share driving responsibilities on the van. The monthly fee for this is \$83-\$100, depending on the number of van riders. This covers all costs to ride the van - a very desirable situation for commuters. The proposal received a 4 in the Joint Sustainability Committee on September 28th, 2009.

**Financial Benefits:** Primary financial benefits are to faculty, staff, and students who ride a Rapid Van to Aquinas. The monthly fee for a Rapid Van is significantly less than the cost of driving and maintaining a personal vehicle. But having fewer vehicles on campus reduces the impact on the Aquinas infrastructure, and eventual need for financial investment to maintain roads and lots. Parking for faculty and staff can be very challenging on campus, so reducing the number of vehicles on campus is also a benefit.

**Environmental Benefits:** Environmental benefits are obvious - when 6 people share one vehicle the environmental footprint of commuting is substantially reduced. For example, one van from Muskegon reduces vehicle use for those 6 persons by at least 10,000 miles per month.

**Social Benefits:** Only one person drives the van each way - creating 30-60 minutes of extra time for the other five riders each way. This down time has tremendous social impact on the well-being of individuals and their families. In addition, during Michigan winters it is much safer to have a group in the car than to drive alone.

**Anything else you want to tell us?** The amount of subsidy, if calculated on the same basis as the current subsidy for bus riders, would be \$ 0.50 each way x 22 work days per month = \$22.00 in subsidy to the person riding a Rapid Van. This is the same subsidy that a person who rides for 0.40 each way for a full month is already receiving. This would reduce the monthly Rapid Van cost to \$61.33 per month, or just under \$1.40 each trip, making use of the Rapid Van a very desirable form of transportation for the Aquinas Community