

## Riding the Rapid Reflection Guide

### Mission:

- The Rapid's mission statement is: "to create, offer and continuously improve a flexible network of regional public transportation options and mobility solutions."
  - Why do you think this mission is important for the development of a community?
  - From your experience, how are they doing? Where are they succeeding? Where can they improve?
- The three values in connection with this mission are:
  - 1) Customer service orientation, 2) Customer loyalty, and 3) Employees
  - How are these three values interconnected? Is there a relationship between them?
  - The Rapid sees its employees as the first line of contact with the customer and so emphasizes friendliness and hospitality. What was your interaction with your driver like? Was he/she helpful? Kind? Rude?

### Statistics:

- 2011 Rapid ridership was 10.8 million last year, an increase of 10.7% from 2010
  - What do you think might account for this increase?
  - Does this number surprise you? Did you expect it to be higher? Lower?
  - Part of the Rapid's vision is that public transportation will be an integral part of the life of every citizen in the region. Does this number seem to provide evidence that they are succeeding?
- The first quarter of 2012 saw an on-time percentage of 89.9%
  - Does this number seem consistent with your experience?
  - Why do you think it is important for the Rapid to be committed to being on-time?

### Observations/Reflections:

- Reflect on your interaction with the driver when you boarded the bus.
  - What was your impression of the driver?
  - What emotion would describe his/her disposition (exhausted, overwhelmed, excited)?
  - Did he/she ask or say anything that surprised you? Has he/she been talking to the riders at all?
- Think about your interactions with the other riders.
  - Have you talked to any of them? Why/why not?
  - Some sociologists argue that riding public transportation requires participation in particular rituals, one of them being the ritual of isolating oneself while in close proximity to others. Are you participating in this ritual right now? How about others (on the phone, listening to iPods)?
  - Why do you think we are so good at isolating ourselves, even when we sit right next to each other? What motivates this behavior?

- Consider the identities of your fellow riders.
  - What races, genders, ethnicities, languages, socio-economic statuses, and sexual orientations do you see represented?
  - Do any of them seem to be the majority? If so, why do you think there is a greater representation of these identities than of others?
- Take some time to observe the nature of the neighborhoods you are driving through.
  - What was the area like when you boarded (wealthy, poor, run down, well kept)?
  - How does the character of your surroundings change as you drive?
  - Are there any distinct transitions between neighborhoods with different characters?
  - Take notice of those that board and exit the bus in these particular neighborhoods. Do you notice any patterns regarding who boards/exits where? What might explain the patterns you observe?
- If you are sitting near someone, initiate a conversation. Ask about where they are headed, tell them your name. Afterwards, reflect on how the conversation went.
  - Were they eager to talk?
  - What did you discuss?
  - Did you learn anything new?
  - Did you teach them something they didn't know?
  - What keeps us from having these conversations every time we ride the bus?

If you have any suggestions or comments on what we can improve, please contact us at [slc@calvin.edu](mailto:slc@calvin.edu) or 616-526-6455.



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