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The Rapid announces new Chief Executive Officer

First female CEO will begin her tenure on March 8

GRAND RAPIDS, MI – The Rapid finalized the official hiring of Deborah Prato as its new Chief Executive Officer this week. The Rapid’s Board of Directors formalized the contract with Ms. Prato on Wednesday as part of their regular January meeting.

Prato will bring over 30 years of public sector experience to the role, including 10 years of executive team experience in public transportation. Her expertise in local government and public transit in the northeast positions her to hit the ground running at The Rapid as the agency continues its work to support pandemic recovery and growth in the region.

Stephen Kepley, Mayor of Kentwood and Chair of The Rapid’s Board of Directors, expressed optimism as The Rapid completed its search and hiring process. “Deborah Prato brings the necessary leadership experience and skills to guide and implement The Rapid’s planned services for meeting the needs of West Michigan for years to come,” stated Mayor Kepley. “The ITP Board members look forward to working with Deborah and welcome her to the community.”

Prato will officially begin her role as CEO on Monday, March 8, 2021.

“I am honored and humbled to be appointed CEO of The Rapid,” said Prato. “Together and alongside all of the dedicated employees at The Rapid, we have the talent to continue to deliver exceptional service to our customers and create extraordinary value by connecting our communities.”

The Rapid started the CEO search process in July 2020, at which time Win Irwin was hired to serve as Interim CEO. Irwin will be working with The Rapid’s Board of Directors, staff, and Prato to assist with the transition.

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About The Rapid: *The Rapid was established in 2000 and provides public transportation services for the Grand Rapids metro area and beyond. In 2019, The Rapid provided 10.5 million rides. Beyond its fixed routes, The Rapid also operates demand-response services for people with disabilities, rideshare programs, and other programs that keep West Michigan moving forward. Stay informed by following The Rapid at ridetherapid.org, facebook.com/therapid, twitter.com/therapid, and Instagram.com/ridetherapid.*