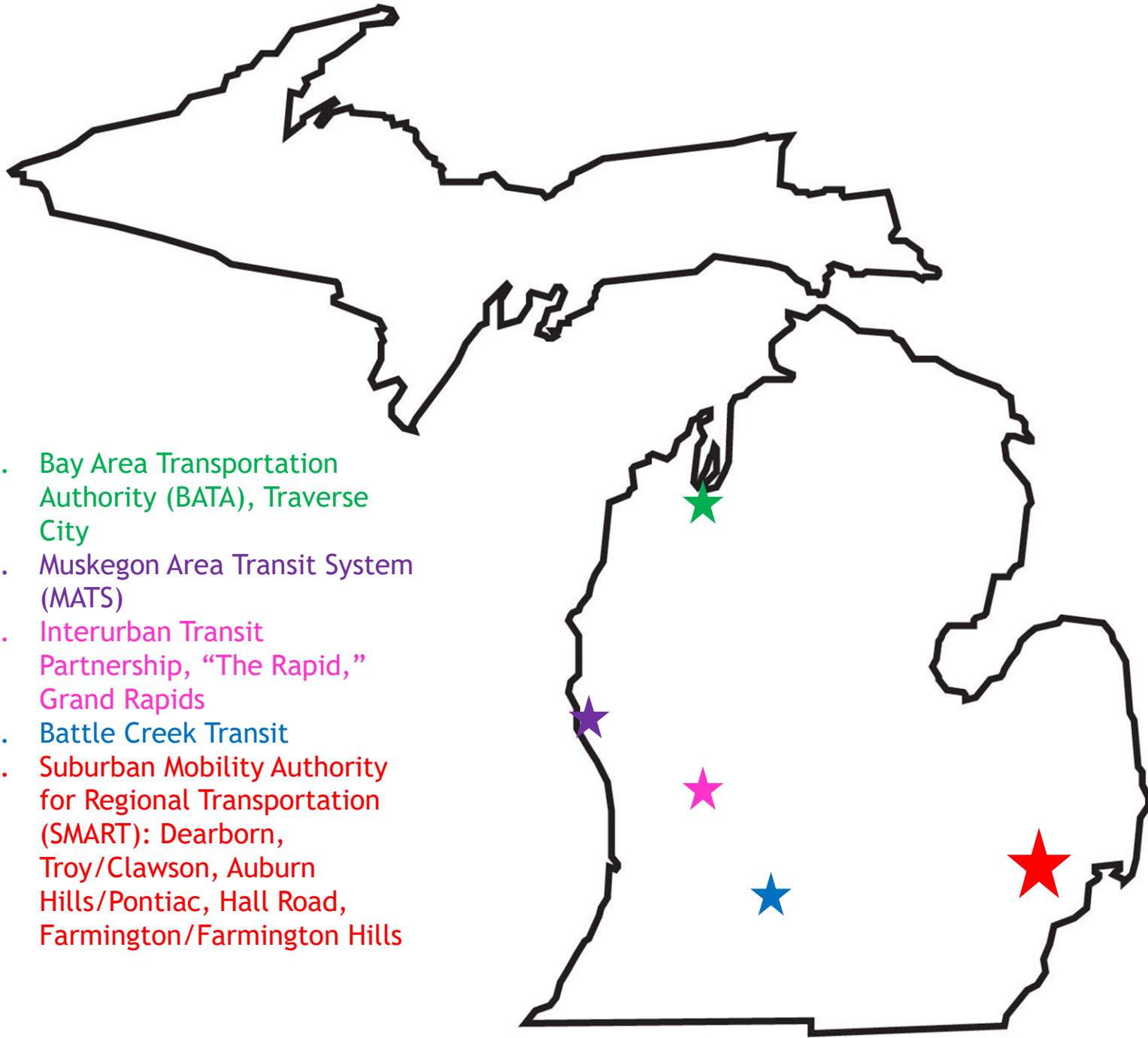


The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue. These shapes are primarily located on the left and right sides of the frame, creating a modern, dynamic feel. The central area is a plain white background where the text is located.

Michigan On Demand Microtransit

1. Bay Area Transportation Authority (BATA), Traverse City
2. Muskegon Area Transit System (MATS)
3. Interurban Transit Partnership, "The Rapid," Grand Rapids
4. Battle Creek Transit
5. Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART): Dearborn, Troy/Clawson, Auburn Hills/Pontiac, Hall Road, Farmington/Farmington Hills





BATA

- SaaS model - started with TransLoc, switching to Via
- Uses regular fleet vehicles, giving them large fleet and lots of flexibility
- Goals:
 - Improve efficiency
 - Reduce no-show/cancellation rate
- Results:
 - Efficiency improved from <2 rides/hour using 5-6 buses to 3+ rides/hour using 3-4 buses
 - No-show/cancellation rate dropped from over 30% to less than 3%

MATS go²

- Turnkey: Operated by River North Transit, subsidiary of Via
- Goals:
 - Control costs: Fixed route service was being cut by 45%, use microtransit to fill gap
 - Modernize operations
- Results:
 - Not only filled the gaps from service reduction, but also able to expand hours of service at lower cost.
 - New technology has been adopted easily by people who like tech and has brought in new users. However, some aspects have been challenging for older riders.
 - Goal was 175 trips/day. Currently doing 180-240 trips/day.
 - Generating more fare revenue than expected.



RAPID CONNECT



- Evolved from \$8 Million Michigan Mobility Challenge pilot project, “Rapid On Demand.” That was turnkey model operated by Via. Only paratransit service in small area. Now using SaaS model from Ecolane.
- Goals:
 - Operational analysis found underserved areas that weren’t dense enough to support fixed route. Wanted to fill gaps in service area.
 - Provide first mile-last mile connections
 - Use underutilized vehicles
- Results:
 - Goals were met, but agency is surprised that more people aren’t using service. Averaging 1 rider/hour - now reaching out beyond “super users” to improve ridership.



- SaaS model, using Liftango
- Has very small fleet of BCGo-branded vans. Exploring partnership with local 5310 agency to use their underutilized vehicles.
- Goal:
 - Test demand for countywide service
- Result:
 - Data generated proves there is demand for countywide service. Agency hopes to transition from city department to countywide authority.





- Turnkey model, using Via
- Operational analysis recommended microtransit. Piloted in three zones: two communities and one corridor.
- 4th zone added for access to COVID vaccines. So successful, it was made permanent.
- 5th zone added to address staff and vehicle shortages - 6 SMART drivers and vehicles could be redeployed to other areas.

Turnkey vs. SaaS

Turnkey pros

- ▶ MATS has found it to be cheaper than providing the service themselves
- ▶ While everyone is experiencing driver shortages, the Michigan agencies with turnkey solutions have found that their provider has been able to provide all the drivers needed to support the demand.
- ▶ Doesn't pull agency staff away from their normal duties.



Turnkey vs. SaaS

Turnkey cons

- ▶ The Rapid found it was prohibitively expensive to continue with the provider in their grant-funded pilot; SaaS was cheaper for them.
- ▶ Call center is located outside the US, often resulting in communication challenges. Operator's staff is less familiar with the local area. Riders, especially older ones booking through a call center, might request a trip to a local landmark using an old name ("I want to go to the Civic Center" rather than "I want to go to Mutual Insurance Showplace") and the agent has no clue what they mean.
- ▶ Riders had a relationship with their agency dispatcher and drivers; now some feel like they've been turned over to strangers and they don't like that.
- ▶ Fewer accessible vehicles (many agencies' fleets are 100% accessible; not true for turnkey providers)



Turnkey vs. SaaS

SaaS pros

- ▶ More control over customer service and quality, scheduling, etc.
- ▶ Riders are comfortable with staff they already know.

SaaS cons

- ▶ May be costly to operate (Example: SMART's cost per hour for their normal paratransit service is \$60+/hour, compared to turnkey OD at \$47.90/hour)
- ▶ Fleet restrictions: May not have enough vehicles to meet demand during peak hours; adding dedicated vehicles can be a large capital cost.

Lessons learned

- ▶ **Higher fares:** Riders have embraced the higher fares. People recognize it's cheaper than a ridehailing service, and riders perceive on-demand as a premium service that they're willing to pay a little more for.
- ▶ **Options:** Riders like flexibility, even when traditional transit service is available. They might take regular paratransit or a demand-response trip to their destination, but use microtransit for the return trip, when their trip's end time is uncertain.
- ▶ **Beware the scammers!** One agency promoted the new service by giving riders their first 10 trips free. But they discovered people were creating multiple accounts to get more free trips. They had to reduce the number of free trips and implement better controls to prevent people from scamming the system.

Lessons learned

- ▶ **A staff-shortage solution:** Turnkey or SaaS, agencies discovered microtransit boosted their pool of drivers.
- ▶ **Equity and accessibility:** You need options for those who don't have smart phones, computers, credit cards, bank accounts.
- ▶ **The human element:** Some riders miss the personal connection they had with agency dispatch/call center staff. Look for new ways to enhance personal connections.
- ▶ **Costs can vary a lot.** Some agencies found a turnkey solution to be the most cost-effective for them, others found SaaS to be better. Lesson: You just have to look at the different options from each vendor and figure out what's best for your service model and area.