
NEWS RELEASE

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TheRide sees surge in ridership

High gas prices, stepped-up outreach efforts cited for increase

ANN ARBOR – According to figures announced by TheRide today, the number of people using public transportation in the Washtenaw County region is on the rise. The 2-Plymouth and 4-Washtenaw routes each added more than 20,000 boardings over the same April through June period last year, while weekday ridership on regular fixed routes increased an average 6.7 percent.

“Commuters are increasingly looking to save on gas money and the hassle of driving to and from their jobs,” said Michael Ford, CEO of TheRide. “We are committed to making TheRide’s services as convenient as possible for all commuters so that this trend and the associated savings can continue.”

Overall ridership on TheRide fixed route services was up 3.1 percent in April, 8.7 percent in May and 8.3 percent in June from the corresponding months a year earlier, an overall average increase of 6.7 percent. Routes with notable increases include:

- #17 Amtrak-Depot St. route: 50 percent increase
- #2 Plymouth route: 14 percent increase
- #4 Washtenaw route: 11 percent increase
- #8 Pauline route: 10 percent increase

Between April and June of this year, the [A2 Express](#) service to Chelsea and Canton surged an average of 34 percent over the same period last year. TheRide’s Manager of Community Relations Mary Stasiak attributes the growth to increased outreach efforts for the new express bus service.

“We’ve been emphasizing the A2 Express in our outreach campaign and how public transportation benefits riders and helps the economy,” said Stasiak. “It’s great to see that message resonating, because we all benefit.”

Stasiak also pointed out the benefit to the riders of the A2 Express, noting that a rider on the Chelsea service who travels on a daily basis can save about \$1,200 a year.

TheRide’s Night Ride service also experienced a 25 percent increase, or 1,022 boardings, from the previous year. An effort to provide better late-night work transportation between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti contributed to this gain. On April 4, the Night Ride service area was

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expanded beyond the Ann Arbor city limits to include the area east from Ann Arbor to Golfside Road between Clark Road on the north and Ellsworth on the south.

The program's success means that Night Ride service will be expanded even farther, to serve more of the Ypsilanti area beginning in the late fall. The expansion is funded by a federal Job Access/Reverse Commute grant with matching funds from the Michigan Department of Transportation.

The late-night transit service is available between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. weeknights, and 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. Saturdays and Sundays, when TheRide's fixed-route buses are not in operation. For more information about Night Ride, please visit <http://theride.org/nightride.asp>.

"There are many workers and residents whose schedules do not fit into our regular fixed route services," said Ford. "The expansion of Night Ride to the Ypsilanti area is another reflection of our commitment to expanding public transportation access to all Washtenaw County residents and ensuring they have a safe way to get to their destination, even late at night."

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The Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (TheRide) was chartered in 1969 by the City of Ann Arbor, Michigan, as a not-for-profit unit of government. AATA operates the local public transit system for the greater Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area, enabling the area's residents to reach their destinations at reasonable cost, and offers the region efficient, environmentally sound transportation alternatives. For more information, please visit www.TheRide.org.

TheRide's Board of Directors has endorsed a 30-year Transit Master Plan for Washtenaw County. Updates on the progress of the plan are available at www.MovingYouForward.org.

E-mail and text message updates on bus routes, schedules, detours and other news from TheRide are available by free subscription to MyRide at www.TheRide.org.

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