



Long-Range Plan

PRESENTATION SCRIPT

1. A Shared Vision for transit

Hello everyone and thank you for taking the time to watch this video on TheRide 2045, Long-Range Plan's third round of public engagement. This is the same pre-recorded presentation that we are using for our public and stakeholder engagement sessions. We will provide instructions on how to ask your questions or comments at the end of the presentation.

My name is Mitch and I work with the consulting firm Left Turn Right Turn. We are helping TheRide to create this long-range plan for transit in the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area.

2. Agenda

We started the project over a year ago and have come a long way. Today we will start by refreshing you about the planning process. Then, we will go over what we have heard from the public when we shared our ideas with you in the Fall. Next, we will get into the details of the draft final plan itself, like what the network will look like, what other features are being explored and when these enhancements will happen. It is important that we always tie the final plan to our goals, so we will summarize the plan with some key ways to measure success.

Finally, we want to hear your thoughts in a group discussion. Ultimately, we will rely on the feedback of the public, customers, staff, elected officials, and other stakeholders to finalize our plan for the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area.

3. Project Overview

TheRide 2045 is a long-range transit plan for the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area. It considers the transit network (including our bus routes and their frequency), new and better types of transit, new types of services, infrastructure, technology, and vehicles.

Check out our website at TheRide.org to learn more about the work that we have done to date, and how we got to where we are today.

4. Goals for the Plan

The plan has been developed with a few specific goals in mind, which very much mirror many municipal goals. By the year 2045 or over the next 20 or so years, TheRide believes this plan will help to:

Increasing social equity by improving access to jobs, education, and housing

Helping the environment and reducing air pollution

Supporting existing and attracting new businesses

These goals were established based on what we heard from the community, stakeholders, our board, and of course, customers. The goals are important in guiding how decisions are going to be made and the outcomes we hope to achieve. Remember, this plan will benefit everyone, not just people who are already customers today.

5. Timeline

The development of TheRide 2045 takes place over 4 phases:

The first was Guidance, where we developed strategy, including the goals, principles and methodology to guide our decisions along the way. We considered the feedback from the public, our board, and stakeholders. We also established a Public Advisory Group – 12 individuals with different backgrounds to make sure that diverse perspectives are always considered.

The next phase was analysis – we looked at how TheRide currently operates and what is working or what can be improved. Then considered the future – how our community is expected to change in terms of population, demographics and employment over 25 years. We also looked at other plans from municipalities and peer agencies as well as changing technologies.

In the third phase, we created four potential scenarios based on different levels of funding. Last fall we took these scenarios to the public and stakeholders to listen to what you had to say. More details about what we heard are available at TheRide.org.

We are just getting into the last phase, finalization. Based on what we learned from the third phase we have narrowed in on a single, draft plan for transit in the area. We have developed an achievable roadmap that lays out the steps over the next 25 years to build the future transit system that works toward meeting our goals of:

- Increasing social equity by improving access to jobs, education, and housing
- Helping the environment and reducing air pollution
- Supporting existing and attracting new businesses

Now is the time to tell us what you think about this draft plan to enhance transit in our community. There will be a chance to comment at the end of the presentation.

6. Agenda

Now let's talk about what we heard from previous engagements that guide us now.

7. Last Round of Engagement

In the fall of 2021, we engaged with about 1400 people through surveys, online public meetings, in-person public events, stakeholder meetings, direct emails, and social media. The full 'what we heard' report has more details and can be found on our website. Today, let's focus on the big themes that came out of that engagement and how that feedback drives our planning.

Last fall, we presented 4 scenarios based on different levels of funding and people were asked to choose their favorite. The first scenario was to keep things the same with minimal new investment. The second was a minor enhancement that just kept up with the projected growth in population and employment. The third scenario was a modest enhancement with a larger investment in new and better services. Scenario 4 involved making the largest investments to transform the transportation landscape in the Ann Arbor Ypsilanti area.

72% of our survey respondents told us they preferred scenario 4.

8. What We Heard

The resounding response that we heard at meetings and through our survey was a desire not just for small improvements to the same system, but for a deeply transformational change. By greatly improving transit we can fundamentally change the way that everyone, not just current customers, get around the area. That means less car usage, more equitable access to jobs, housing and education, and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. These improvements do have a cost but most of the people we heard from indicated that they are willing to pay for the investments if the benefits are clear.

9. What We Heard

We heard a broad desire for convenience, reliability, and dependability. Transit that is readily available at all times and to get people where they want to go. This means an extensive high-frequency network, with many routes operating at 15 min or better service. It means better off-peak service and faster travel times on key routes using Bus Rapid Transit, priority, and express routes. Better and faster connections across the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area as well as to regional destinations – whether you are traveling downtown or not.

10. What We Heard

We also heard about concerns that we need to consider when making transit better. Any plan we make needs to be collaborative and work together with the universities, municipalities, and the Regional Transportation Authority. We must also keep the costs in mind and be as efficient as possible with our spending so that the people affected by property taxes will see the benefits of their investments. And of course, we need to make sure that our plan is feasible, especially on busy and constrained roadways.

11. Agenda

Again, you can see the whole What We Heard report and the last round of public engagement materials on the project website at TheRide.org.

Now it's time to dive into the details of the plan itself.

12. Using your Feedback

The feedback we received last fall was pivotal to building our final plan.

As we shared earlier, scenario 4 was the clear preference, so we used that as a base. To help manage costs, we made a small reduction in the total service hours and replaced some dedicated bus lanes with other transit priority features.

We are also improving off-peak service in the near-term because we heard that's very important.

We have optimized the network to minimize overall travel times everywhere.

For the service that we plan to build, we are prioritizing areas with lower access to housing, education, employment, and healthcare.

For more information on the feedback from our previous engagements, please check out the round 2 What We Heard Report on our website, theride.org

13. Enhanced Services

Just before we get into the network map, let's take a look at some of the enhanced services that we propose.

Express routes are essentially an express bus service with limited stops that get you quickly from point A to point B.

Priority Service means a conventional bus that operates on a route that is somewhat enhanced by transit priority features, like queue jump lanes and signal priority to help compete with traffic. It will have fewer stops than a regular bus route.

Bus Rapid Transit lite is very similar to a full-scale Bus Rapid Transit. It uses the same large vehicles, but it does not operate on a fully dedicated lane. Instead, it uses transit priority to skip the congested intersections for a more reliable service.

Full Bus Rapid Transit uses a larger vehicle operating in a fully separated lane so that it never has to compete with traffic. Fare payment can happen before boarding so the bus can spend less time at stops.

14. TheRide 2045 Network Map

This network map is how we imagine TheRide could look in 2045. It's a transformational change of our current transit system. All of the routes have been selected to optimize travel times, which ensures that areas with low access to opportunities have access to high-frequency transit. We have two full scale Bus Rapid Transit lines, shown in red, forming the backbone of our system. They will be a combination of full Bus Rapid Transit and Bus Rapid Transit lite, sometimes operating in fully dedicated lanes, creating east-west AND north-south connections

Other main routes are served by priority and express services, shown in dark blue, which have transit priority features and fewer stops to make trips faster.

We have an extensive high-frequency network, shown in light blue, that stretches across the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area, creating better, faster, and reliable connections to get you where you need to go, anywhere in the service area. Waiting and transferring will be improved everywhere, especially at the busiest locations, with upgrades to our existing facilities and new, smaller transit hubs.

15. Features of TheRide 2045

Let's take a glance at the features of this plan and explore a few other key elements.

Firstly, we are providing more off-peak service, which helps people who rely on transit for all their transportation and need it the most. This includes essential and lower waged workers, women, youth/students, and the elderly.

As service is improved across the entire area, we will focus on improving service for the places that need it most.

We've built accessibility into this plan at every level including, our vehicles, bus stops and transit hubs, fare payment, and information systems.

As the whole system is transformed, we are able to ensure better integration and coordinated planning between all our services. This includes opportunities to integrate fixed route services with A-Ride.

We are planning to modernize our fare collection and trip planning systems.

And to diversify our fleet to make sure that we use the right size vehicle for the right service. That will improve the vehicle productivity and efficiency.

There will always be external factors beyond our control, that is why we are planning to expand partnerships with external stakeholders like municipalities, the regional transportation authority, universities and community groups.

Some of these collaborations can help us with first and last mile solutions, getting to and from the bus. Every stop and station may require a different solution, whether it means on-demand services, bike sharing, scooter sharing or better sidewalks and snow clearing at stops. This will make it easier for everyone to use our improved high-frequency network.

And finally, we will explore mixed-use real estate at our new transit hubs and centers, combining transit with work, shopping and housing.

16. Regional Connections

How we connect to the larger region surrounding our service area is critical to our long-term success. While the particulars of those connections depend on partnerships and outside funding, we have identified some key elements to work toward.

On the map, the light green shows general areas where we can add more park n ride lots connected to our service area with express buses, shown in dark blue. That will help to draw riders in from a broader area by providing regional connections all around our normal service area.

All of these elements will help better connect our community to our neighbors like Detroit, Brighton and Western Wayne County and to help commuters coming in to work, shop, or visit the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area.

17. Our Goals in Action

It's important to stop and reflect on how these changes will help us to reach our goals.

Our goals again are:

- Increasing social equity by improving access to jobs, education, and housing
- Helping the environment and reducing air pollution
- Supporting existing and attracting new businesses

The changes that we are recommending ensure a more frequent, efficient, reliable, convenient, and, on average, 39% faster service. That addresses our goals by:

- Doubling service across the network with an emphasis in areas with low access to opportunities
- Reducing transportation emissions by 7-11% with the use of zero-emission buses and reducing 6.9 million annual car trips
- providing a high frequency service to 97% of jobs within [0.7 miles]

18. Agenda

These improvements will not happen all at once. Let's take a look at when these changes will happen over the next 25 years.

19. 2023-2028

Let's start with what can be done in the short-term. This is when we can set the plan in motion. Between 2023 to 2028, our focus will be on the service improvements that require less infrastructure, increase equity and grow ridership.

That includes a pilot express route on Washtenaw Ave and a minimum 30-minute frequency on all routes during the daytime including weekends. The major capital projects that we will undertake in this phase is upgrading the Ypsilanti Transit Center and the Blake Transit Center.

What we heard from the feedback we received was that the people who are most dependent on transit need it at all times of day, so we are focusing our service improvements in this stage on providing earlier and later buses while expanding and enhancing NightRide.

Our regular fixed route service will start to become more accessible, which will allow better integration with A-Ride.

We will be laying the groundwork for future stages while we increase off-peak service.

We will also be starting the design work on a new garage for the larger bus fleet that will be needed, and for the implementation of bus rapid transit, and transit priority features.

20. 2029-2033

Starting in 2029, the second phase of the plan includes significant increases in service with an expanded bus fleet. That will mean increased service in both peak and off-peak service.

We eventually plan to build a full BRT line on Washtenaw Avenue, but that will take time to plan and construct. Between 2029 and 2033, we will enhance the express service on Washtenaw with better stops, queue jump lanes and transit priority features along the route and throughout central Ann Arbor.

We will also introduce an express route on the north-south corridor from Briarwood Mall to the Plymouth Road Park and Ride and create priority service on the Main-Plymouth, and Packard-Ellsworth corridors.

In this stage we will construct the bus garage that we designed in phase one, which will allow for a larger fleet of buses. We will improve evening service to offer 30-minute minimum frequency at all times of day and 7 days a week.

We will construct a new transit hub near Briarwood mall and modernize our fare collection system.

And of course, we will continue to invest in A-Ride to improve our service delivery for people with disabilities.

21. 2034-2038

From 2034 and 2038, larger improvements will be made to the backbone of the network. That means a full Bus Rapid Transit on Washtenaw Ave, a north-south Bus Rapid Transit Lite from Briarwood Mall to the Plymouth Park & Ride, a new express route on I-94 and a priority route on Packard-Eisenhower. These upgrades will be coupled with transit priority enhancements across the service area. Two new transit hubs are planned for Carpenter/Ellsworth, and Jackson/Maple.

To help feed these high order services, we will add more high-frequency routes and expand and improve FlexRide. We will continue to invest in integrating A-Ride and the fixed route network to provide seamless, accessible options for everyone.

22. 2039-2045

In our last phase from 2039 to 2045, we will continue to upgrade the backbone of our network so that we can expand our high-frequency network farther across the entire service area. That means a combination of full BRT and BRT lite on the North-South corridor from Briarwood mall to Plymouth Park n Ride and a BRT lite extension on Huron/Jackson.

We will build a new transit hub at Nixon/Plymouth. By this time, we expect our fleet to be 100% zero-emissions, creating an efficient, convenient, and clean way to get around.

We expect to have regional fare payment system integration so you can go farther, more easily.

And finally, A-Ride will be fully integrated with our fixed-route network with new, accessible facilities and vehicles.

23. Agenda

That was a lot of information. Let's summarize what we just talked about and go over some costs.

24. Transit Improvements

TheRide 2045 draft plan will improve transit in a few key ways:

It will mean an average of 39% faster service across the network, getting you where you need to go faster.

There will be an increase in off-peak services, resulting in minimum 30-minute frequency on all routes at all times.

On average, service will double near residences and will increase by 74% near jobs.

And we will continue to focus investments to innovate and modernize the service.

25. Community Benefits

All of these changes will have real and measurable benefits for the whole community, not just customers.

Our service enhancements will mean more equitable access to high-quality transportation for jobs, education, and housing. That gives more opportunities to those who need it most.

More people using transit will mean more vibrant and walkable communities.

Fewer cars on the road means less pollution and a healthier environment for everyone.

Since transit is a more efficient way to move lots of people, it means a reduction in the overall cost of transportation to the community.

With fewer people driving, we will need less infrastructure dedicated to parking.

And finally, it will also mean reduced traffic congestion for everyone.

26. Budget

No one knows the future, so our plan gives us targets to reach for while allowing us to be flexible as conditions and technologies change. The plan will be updated every 5-10 years.

As our service increases, the cost of providing that service increases too. The day-to-day costs, like employee wages fuel, and bus maintenance are called operating costs. Operating costs are paid from local property taxes, state and federal grants and passenger fares. You can see here how we expect our operating costs to grow by certain percentages over time.

Capital costs refer to new projects, like transit hubs and bus rapid transit. We've talked about a lot of new projects already, and here you can see how much we expect them to cost in each stage.

27. Capital Costs

Let's take a closer look at where our investments will go over the 25-year life of this project. We expect to invest about 20 million dollars into innovation and technology, 45 million in new vehicles, 113 million on new facilities, and 175 million on the exciting bus rapid transit system. We are also expecting 298 million on state of good repair and vehicle replacements, which are the costs to replace vehicles once they are too old to operate, as well as keeping all of our facilities in good working condition.

28. Funding Sources

The funding for these investments will come from difference sources. 6% of the total will come from our own capital reserve.

47% of our funding will come from existing state and federal funding programs that are stable and can be relied on for long-term investments such as this.

We anticipate 31% of the funding will come from discretionary grant opportunities offered by state and federal partners specifically geared toward bus rapid transit and state of good repair.

16% of the funding sources have not yet been identified. That may seem like a lot but remember that over 25 years we expect new and different opportunities to become available on the municipal, state and federal level.

Overall, this financial plan is achievable but also flexible should any surprises arise along the journey.

29. Agenda

That concludes our description of the plan. Now it's time for you to tell us what you think.

30. Thank you!

Thank you for attending! We look forward to hearing your feedback following the presentation.

For more information, visit TheRide.org

To provide feedback, take our online survey and give us your comments by:

- Email: 2045@TheRide.org
- Call: 734-794-1882
- Mail: Planning@TheRide.org

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