
Board of Director's Meeting Notes

Meeting Date/Time: February 17, 6:30-9:00pm
Rescheduled Date/Time: February 24, 6:30-9:00pm

Members: Eric Mahler (Chair), Mike Allemang (Treasurer), Jesse Miller (Secretary), Rich Chang, Raymond Hess, Roger Hewitt, Ryan Hunter, Kathleen Mozak, Susan Pollay, Kyra Sims

AAATA Staff Attendees:

Location: Ann Arbor District Library
Virtual attendance available [via Zoom](#) Passcode: 983308

Chair Eric Mahler called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

Agenda Item
1. OPENING ITEMS
1.1 Approve Agenda
Mr. Chang moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Miller.
In support of the motion:
Mr. Mike Allemang: Yes (attending virtually)
Mr. Rich Chang: Yes
Mr. Raymond Hess: Yes
Mr. Roger Hewitt: Yes
Mr. Ryan Hunter: Yes
Mr. Jesse Miller: Yes
Ms. Mozak: Yes
Ms. Pollay: Yes
Ms. Kyra Sims: Yes
Chairman Mahler: Yes
The motion passed unanimously.
1.2 Public Comment
Robert Pawloski shared with the board his thoughts on resuming full-service connections and expanding fixed routes.
Jim Mogensen shared with the board that there is confusion in the community regarding the millage and long-range planning. He also shared concerns regarding the propulsion study.

1.3 General Announcements

Mr. Carpenter reminded the board that with the cancellation of the February 17, 2022 board meeting (due to weather), there had been minor changes to the board packet. An updated agenda with the corrected board date had been added, the resolutions had updated dates, but no other additions were made. Hard copies of the packets were not reprinted for the board.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

2.1 Board Meeting Minutes December 16, 2021

2.2 Committee Meeting Summaries (January & February)

2.3 Transportation Commission Delegates

2.4 FY 2023 State Application Resolution

Chairman Mahler introduced the Consent Agenda that included items 2.1 – 2.4.
Mr. Hewitt moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Hunter.

In support of the motion:

Mr. Allemang: Yes (attending virtually)

Mr. Chang: Yes

Mr. Hess: Yes

Mr. Hewitt: Yes

Mr. Hunter: Yes

Mr. Miller: Yes

Ms. Mozak: Yes

Ms. Pollay: Yes

Ms. Sims: Yes

Chairman Mahler: Yes

The Consent Agenda was accepted as presented.

3. STRATEGY & OPERATIONAL UPDATES: CEO

3.1 Y-Lot Update

Mr. Yang introduced Jennifer Hall (Deputy Director, Ann Arbor Housing Commission), Jeff Kahan (City Planner, City of Ann Arbor) and Michael Johnson (Consultant, Smith Group). He and Ms. Hall shared a presentation for YLot development (450 S. Fifth) that will soon go before the Ann Arbor City Council. The YLot development plan will provide affordable housing and expansion of the Blake Transit Center and TheRide is being asked to support it through collaborative planning and a commitment to partnership. Potential shared costs would include bus lane/staging construction, building reconfiguration and annual maintenance.

Mr. Chang asked for clarification on operational costs and Mr. Yang, Ms. Hall and Mr. Carpenter outlined that those projected costs would be yearly maintenance costs.

Mr. Miller asked if this project meant that the Blake Center would be locked in to its current footprint and no further expansion would be possible one development occurred around it. Mr. Carpenter shared that Blake expansion was important and the YLot development plan was a way to utilize an otherwise empty parcel when downtown space is limited.

Mr. Miller followed up with asking if contribution was going to be financial or another project participation. Mr. Yang confirmed that while TheRide is not leading the project, there will be collaboration and partnership throughout the process.

Mr. Hewitt asked if both Phase I and II were for affordable housing. Ms. Hall responded that Phase I was intended to be all affordable housing and Phase II was intended to be for both affordable and market rate housing.

Ms. Mozak asked if the Blake Center structure was able to build upward if there is future development. Mr. Carpenter said that is a decision that can be addressed in the future should the need arise.

Ms. Pollay asked Mr. Johnson about the specifics of trash and service lanes for the building and he referenced back to the presentation outlines to show the location of those lanes. More specific designing will occur as the project details are finalized.

Mr. Allemang asked how many additional buses the Blake would be able to accommodate with this expansion. Mr. Yang shared that 3-4 additional bus bays could be added with additional expansion. With more frequent bus services projected, the need for a dedicated bus bay for individual buses will be reduced.

Mr. Mahler asked Mr. Carpenter about funding sources. Mr. Carpenter shared that the YLot is a more complex property development and would be a more challenging to utilize federal funding. Capital reserve, local, and state funding options are being investigated.

Mr. Mahler introduced the Resolution for board support of the YLot development planning and the ability of the CEO to investigate funding resources.

Ms. Pollay moved to accept the resolution and Ms. Mozak seconded that motion.

In support of the resolution:

Mr. Allemang: Yes (attending virtually)

Mr. Chang: Yes

Mr. Hess: Yes

Mr. Hewitt: Yes

Mr. Hunter: Yes

Mr. Miller: Yes

Ms. Mozak: Yes

Ms. Pollay: Yes

Ms. Sims: Yes

Chairman Mahler: Yes

The board unanimously passed the resolution.

3.2 CEO Report

Mr. Carpenter noted his CEO report was two pages and had no new additions to add to what he had written.

Mr. Allemang asked Mr. Carpenter for specifics and clarifications on the AirRide notations within the report.

Mr. Carpenter shared that AirRide program had been a private service from East Lansing to Ann Arbor that provides service to Detroit Metro. TheRide had financially supported it in the early years, but ridership had dwindled in the past few years. Service has recently been reactivated with funding found through the state – the contract with TheRide expired. TheRide continues to have a working relationship with them.

Ms. Pollay noted she had understood that AirRide needed to be associated with TheRide to follow airport policies on transportation access. She was concerned about raised fees for the public.

Mr. Carpenter shared that their transportation status had been settled through MDOT and they are considered a transportation service.

4. POLICY MONITORING & DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Monitoring 1.0 Ends

Mr. Carpenter shared with the board that the report had been delayed due to the cyber-attack last fall. He also noted that the report includes 12 full months of the pandemic though the 2021 fiscal cycle and reflects a low point during the pandemic. The report shows non-compliance due to two items – one was related to D2A2 service which had been suspended due to the pandemic. Service restored a month after the monitoring period ended – so it is back in compliance. The second is a result of the partial compliance of many items in the report due to the depressed ridership during this period. Only one month out of the 12 had full service. He noted excellent questions in the board survey and discussion around the interpretations of the report. One question from a board member had been regarding accessibility with closed captioning of board meetings – Mr. Carpenter shared that the February board meeting was the first to start using closed captioning and thanked Mr. Blackston and IT for their work getting that option running through zoom.

Mr. Mahler turned to guest Cheryl Weber to share LAC Ownership Feedback before opening up discussion on the Ends Report.

4.1.1 LAC Ownership Feedback (Verbal)

Ms. Weber shared overall positive feedback / comments that the LAC likes the job TheRide is doing. They feel processes and systems in place meet criteria for federal ADA. There are areas of improvement in the way of signage and language accessibility and improving accessibility for those who are unable to afford paratransit. There was also a concern shared about accessibility for students who may need to utilize public transportation because they aren't eligible for school bus transportation.

Ms. Mozak shared that she had attended the LAC meeting and realized that much of the focus on disability accessibility compliance in policies was related to physical mobility limitations and there was discussion related to those who are sight impaired and how "disability" is a much broader spectrum. She shared an example that sight impaired people utilizing a pull string on transportation and with new busses, the string has been replaced with a button which can cause challenges.

Mr. Carpenter responded that there are times when new mechanical ideas are introduced but when customer feedback doesn't support the change, they return to what works best for the customer. He agreed with her assessment of seeing disability more broadly and encouraged the exploration of new language for policies in the policy taskforce group.

Mr. Allemang commended Mr. Carpenter on the report he provided. He did disagree with the interpretation of 1.3.3 regarding the measurement of visitors using public transportation. He inquired as to whether there is a survey to gather better data.

Mr. Carpenter shared that there is a survey that may be done every few years, but that visitor ridership data is more challenging to gather.

Mr. Miller asked if the electronic fare system might be used to pull data.

After a discussion on what data might be gathered or used to better support this portion of the policy, Mr. Carpenter stated that the data collection is limited and after the recent cyber-attack, collecting in-depth data and securely storing would not be cost effective when it is only used for policy monitoring. He agreed to look further into EZ Fare to see if additional data might be utilized.

Mr. Allemang and Mr. Mahler discussed that language revision might be needed for this policy.

Ms. Pollay noted that football shuttles are not included and that might be added as a data point for this policy item.

Mr. Hewitt agreed that data is an effective method of proving compliance and without adequate means of collecting, a revision to the policy should be considered.

Mr. Chang challenged the interpretation of 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 as it doesn't adequately cover those who are economically challenged *and* disabled. He also challenged the conclusion to 1.2.1 as it may be tougher to interpret due to covid. He questioned the data used as it seemed inconclusive that driving decreases were due to increased public transportation usage when more people in the area are working from home.

Mr. Carpenter shared that with 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 there is no comparable discount for on-demand or paratransit services per standard industry practice. He said for clarification he should have added that the interpretation did not apply to paratransit. For the second comment from Mr. Chang he responded that he used RTA data.

Mr. Chang made an additional note that 1.1.1 might need to be factored into the Long-Range Planning as the state population is aging and more adults are on fixed incomes.

Mr. Carpenter said that Mr. Yang will be presenting a detailed Long-Range plan at the March board meeting. It was agreed upon that he should investigate further into population demographics as they related to the Long-Range Plan.

Mr. Hewitt asked if there were pre-pandemic reports to use for comparison and Mr. Carpenter directed him to the online policies page for reference.

With no further discussion from the board, Mr. Miller proposed the motion that the board adopt the policy as in compliance except for the items noted that 1.3.3 cannot be determined. Mr. Chang seconded that motion.

In support of the resolution:

Mr. Allemang: Yes (attending virtually)

Mr. Chang: Yes

Mr. Hess: Yes

Mr. Hewitt: Yes

Mr. Hunter: Yes

Mr. Miller: Yes

Ms. Mozak: Yes

Ms. Pollay: Yes

Ms. Sims: Yes

Chairman Mahler: Yes

The board unanimously passed the motion to accept.

5. EMERGENT ITEMS

4.2 4.0-4.4 Board Management Delegation Policies Survey

Mr. Mahler noted that the board survey results were very favorable.

Mr. Miller commented that some interpretations might have been skewed by how board members communicate with Deputy CEO's.

Mr. Mahler stated that Mr. Carpenter offers full access at his discretion and the board shouldn't bypass without his knowledge.

Ms. Mozak shared that she feels that there are times when the Deputy CEO's invite direct feedback and she has felt open to communicate without involving Mr. Carpenter.

Mr. Carpenter stated that his interpretation is that there is a chain of command within the organization yet not all communication from the board needs to go through him. He feels the board has not circumvented his authority and he is comfortable with the current processes. He noted that the policy was focused on official communication.

Ms. Mozak stated that she answered the survey based upon how meetings are conducted and based on what she sees but she isn't always certain of how people conduct themselves outside of that.

Mr. Hess brought up the policy task force and how it can be applied to the current discussion regarding the policy and survey. He is hopefully that the interpretation vs. ends vs. means can be clarified better for the entire board with policy monitoring processes.

Mr. Mahler noted that this also a reminder that when deficiencies are noted, they need to be followed up on.

Mr. Allemang briefly mentioned 4.2.2 and how this seems to contradict itself.

Mr. Mahler agreed that there is room for contradiction or misinterpretation. He outlined the original drafting intent was that opinions could be expressed outside of the normal evaluation process for Mr. Carpenter. This may be policy wording that needs to be evaluated and clarified.

4.3 Monitoring Streamlining (Verbal)

Mr. Allemang reiterated what Mr. Hess had shared in his previous comments. The task force has met several times and has a list of priorities – of which is developing new and better procedures, and procedures for tracking compliance. The next meeting is in March and by April the task force hopes to have specific recommendations to bring before the board. He also shared that Mr. Chang needed to step away from the task force due to other obligations and welcomed additional board members to participate if they were able.

6. CLOSING ITEMS

6.1 Topics for Next Meetings

Audit
Monitoring Report 2.5 Financial Conditions
Millage
LRP

6.2 Public Comment

Robert Pawlowski thanked the board for their work for their work in the community through economic development support.

Michelle Barney commented that she's had several issues in the last month with calling and making a reservation and there were errors in pickup times. She also commented that she feels TheRide is one of the safest transit systems and offered her support if there is an upcoming millage.

6.3 Closed Session (Pursuant to 8(c) of OMA)

Mr. Mahler took a roll call to vote to go into closed session for strategy connected with negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement pursuant to Section 8(c) of the Open Meetings Act.

Vote to go into closed session

Mr. Allemang – Yes (Participating virtually)
Mr. Chang - Yes
Mr. Hess – Yes
Mr. Hewitt: Yes
Mr. Hunter - Yes
Mr. Miller - Yes
Ms. Mozak - Yes
Ms. Pollay - Yes
Ms. Sims - Yes
Chairman Mahler – Yes

Board voted unanimously to go into closed session.

Mr. Mahler motioned to go out of closed session, seconded by Mr. Hewitt.

Vote to leave closed session at 9:50pm.

Mr. Allemang - Yes
Mr. Chang - Yes
Mr. Hess – Yes
Mr. Hewitt: Yes
Mr. Hunter -
Mr. Miller - Yes
Ms. Mozak - Yes
Ms. Pollay - Yes
Ms. Sims - Yes
Chairman Mahler – Yes

6.3 Adjournment

Move to Adjourn motion made by Mr. Allemang and seconded by Mr. Miller.

Mr. Allemang – Yes
Mr. Chang – Yes
Mr. Hess – Yes
Mr. Hewitt: Yes
Mr. Miller - Yes
Ms. Mozak – Yes
Ms. Pollay– Yes
Ms. Sims – Yes
Chairman Mahler – Yes

Meeting adjourned at 9:55pm.

Attachment 1: MDOT Resolution

Resolution 1/2022

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OF THE

ANN ARBOR AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

**INTENT TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023 UNDER
ACT 51 OF THE PUBLIC ACTS OF 1951, AS AMENDED**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Act 51 of the Public Acts of 1951, as amended (Act 51), it is necessary for the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (TheRide) established under Act 55 of 1955 to provide a local transportation program for the state fiscal year of 2023 and, therefore, apply for state financial assistance under provisions of Act 51; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the TheRide, to name an official representative for all public transportation matters, who is authorized to provide such information as deemed necessary by the State Transportation Commission or department for its administration of Act 51; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to certify that no changes in eligibility documentation have occurred during the past state fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, the performance indicators for this agency have been reviewed and approved by the AAATA; and

WHEREAS, the TheRide, has reviewed and approved the proposed balanced budget and funding sources of estimated federal funds \$42,489,949, estimated state funds \$21,640,924, estimated local funds \$22,439,785, estimated farebox funds \$5,811,855, and estimated other funds \$2,329,565, with total estimated capital and operating expenses of \$81,915,737 and a capital reserve transfer of \$12,796,341.

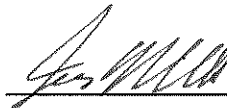
NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that TheRide hereby makes its intentions known to provide public transportation services and to apply for state financial assistance with this annual plan, in accordance with Act 51; and

HEREBY, appoints Matthew Carpenter as the Transportation Coordinator, for all public transportation matters, who is authorized to provide such information as deemed necessary by the State Transportation Commission or department for its administration of Act 51 for 2023. .



Eric A. Mahler, Chair

February 24, 2022



Jesse Miller, Secretary

February 24, 2022

Attachment 2: Proposed Resolution Language

Resolution 2/2022

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE
ANN ARBOR AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
350 S FIFTH AVENUE DEVELOPMENT**

WHEREAS, The Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (TheRide) sees a need for more bus bays at the Blake Transit Center to improve passenger transfers and provide room for growth; and

WHEREAS, The City of Ann Arbor owns 350 S Fifth Ave (adjacent to the Blake Transit Center) and has directed the Ann Arbor Housing Commission and City staff to entitle the property for a development that includes Affordable Housing; and

WHEREAS, Commission and City staff have worked cooperatively with the Authority's staff to develop and present plans for affordable housing to the community and City Council which also include a dedicated bus lane to expand the capacity of Blake Transit Center as a public purpose for this site; and

WHEREAS, The Planning Commission approved a PUD Area Plan and Supplemental Regulations on January 20, 2022 that includes a 30-foot dedicated Transit lane and 4 sawtooth bus bays; and

WHEREAS, The PUD Area Plan and Supplemental Regulations will be on City Council agenda for approval on March 7, 2022 for a first reading and public hearing and on April 4, 2022 for a second reading and vote; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of TheRide supports the continued partnership with the City of Ann Arbor, Downtown Development Authority, and the Ann Arbor Housing Commission to incorporate expanded transit capacity as part of the development project on 350 S Fifth Ave; and

RESOLVED, The Board supports the conceptual site design as presented; and

RESOLVED, The Board directs the CEO to investigate the funding resource for this project and provide a recommendation as part of the FY2023 Budget.



Eric A. Mahler, Chair

February 24, 2022



Jesse Miller, Secretary

February 24, 2022