

Working Together Through a Year of Change

Providing Essential Service During the Pandemic and Beyond

Citizen Report Fiscal Year 2020

October 1, 2019–September 30, 2020





“In 2020 we, along with the rest of the world, were faced with many challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The safety of our community and our employees has remained our number one priority. I’m very proud of the team at TheRide for rising to the challenges, continuing to serve our community, and being willing and able to alter our course as needed to provide essential services to the communities we serve. While we had to make tough decisions in 2020, we are proud to have remained in operation for essential workers and those who need us the most. We are financially stable and looking forward to helping our community bounce back in 2021.”

— CEO, Matt Carpenter





COVID-19 Safety

The safety of our riders and our employees has always been TheRide's number one concern. Since learning of the pandemic, we mobilized quickly by introducing safety measures that would ensure we were stopping the spread of COVID-19. In mid-March, before the "Stay at Home" orders were rolled out, any employee who could work from home was asked to do so. We ramped up our already high level of cleaning, ensuring each bus was thoroughly cleaned each night and at the endpoint of each trip. Plexiglass barriers have been installed to separate drivers from riders on the bus. Drivers and riders are required to wear a mask. Signs reminding riders to maintain physical distance from one another remain, along with limiting the number of riders allowed at any time. Early on TheRide even temporarily suspended fares for four months, and has yet to fully open its transit centers.

A dedicated page on [TheRide.org \(TheRide.org/coronavirus\)](https://www.theride.org/coronavirus) keeps our community up to date on the efforts we were taking during the pandemic, and includes rules and guidelines for traveling with TheRide, along with the most updated information on our essential services.

Essential Services for Essential Travel

Temporary Service Plan Introduced during the pandemic:

At the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, Michigan's "Stay at Home" orders drastically reduced the amount that people were traveling. In addition to temporarily suspending fares, we reduced service to focus on essential travel only. Our response has been to focus on serving key corridors and essential locations for those who are unable to work from home, need to get to medical appointments or to get groceries or prescriptions filled. We have been encouraging members of the community and area businesses to help "flatten the rush-hour curve" by traveling during off-peak times.

The Temporary Service Plan includes frequent service, every 30 minutes or less to reduce crowding and a shared shuttle service called FlexRide operates in low ridership areas to allow customers to connect with nearby fixed routes. Since the initial Temporary Service Plan was implemented, TheRide has taken a cautious and measured approach to reintroduce services.





Plans for Service Recovery

TheRide is preparing to restore service levels in August 2021 and is engaging the community to learn their feedback.

Public engagement meetings will be held in March and in June. Learn more at [TheRide.org](https://www.theride.org).

TheRide had to make the difficult decision to lay off 15% of their workforce in May to combat significant financial losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Executive staff voluntarily took pay reductions as well. As more service has been reinstated, many drivers have been brought back.

Ridership Numbers

3,936,589

Total Ridership for 2020

Fixed-Route, Night/Holiday Service, AirRide, D2A2, A-Ride, Express Routes, FlexRide, VanRide and MyRide



3,546,855

fixed route rides



50,120

rides



119

rides



98,626

rides



12,658

rides



320

carpool accounts



193,599

passenger trips



12,479

rides



10,691

rides



11,442

rides

With service levels reduced due to stay at home orders ridership dropped significantly from pre-pandemic levels. Due to the pandemic, many services were temporarily suspended:

D2A2 only operated 16 days before being suspended

NightRide service was suspended between 3/26–8/29/2020

AirRide service was suspended starting 3/16/2020

Express Routes were suspended as of 3/25/2020

MyRide service was suspended as of 3/26/2020

FlexRide expanded its service area and service hours 8/30/2020



Financial Stewardship

“The team at TheRide has done an excellent job in being transparent with the Agency’s finances. On behalf of The Board, we are proud of the organization’s commitment to controlling costs, while offering the fullest complement of services allowable. This year, the organization faced unprecedented challenges, including temporarily suspending fare collection and reduced ridership. Despite the sudden disruptions, TheRide ensured sound financial outlook coupled with the service our community expects.”

— Board Chair, Eric Mahler





FY2020 Financials



Local Property Taxes	43%
State	31%
Federal	12%
Sponsored/Passenger Fares	9%
Other Cities & Townships	4%
Other	1%



Employee Costs	60%
Purchased Transportation	20%
Purchased Services	6%
Materials & Supplies	5%
Fuel & Lubricants	3%
Other	6%

CARES Act Funding

Congress authorized the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act in April 2020. The Act provided \$20.7 million in emergency federal relief funding to AAATA, which is being used to support transit operations, fare revenue losses, cleaning and sanitation, personal protective equipment, and other operating expenses.

www.transit.dot.gov/cares-act





GFOA Budget Award

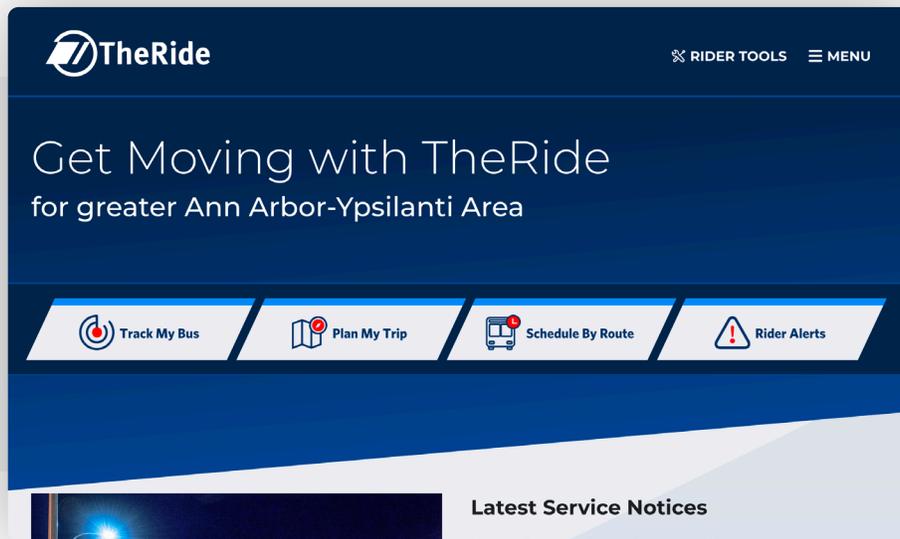
For the third year in a row, TheRide won the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, presented by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

TheRide had to satisfy a number of guidelines to receive the budget award:

- A policy document
- A financial plan
- An operations guide
- A communications device

We are honored to receive this prestigious award and congratulate our team!

Technology Improvements



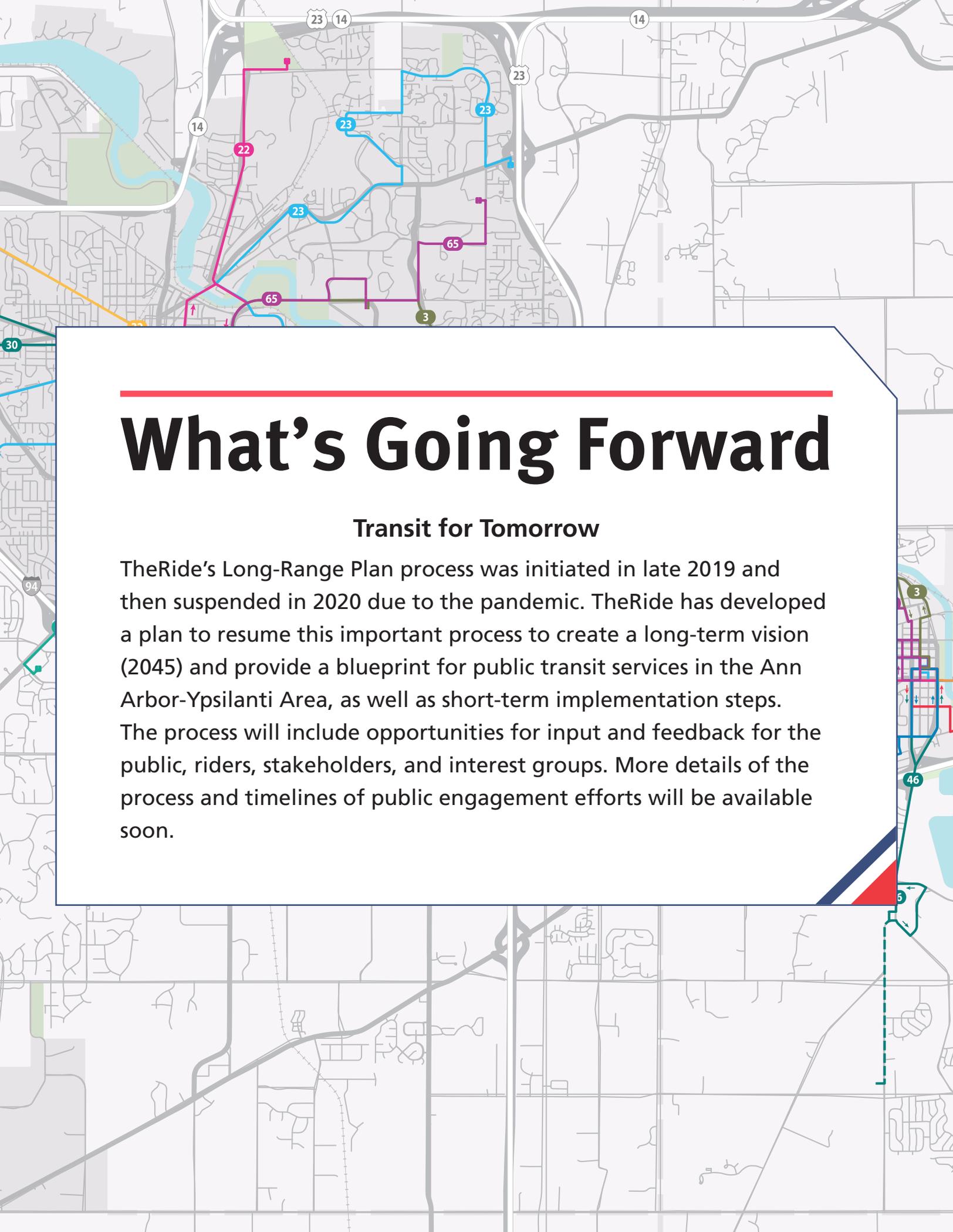
TheRide.org Updates

In July, TheRide refreshed its website, TheRide.org, to make it easier for customers to navigate. The design of the site was modernized, enhancing the user experience to plan trips and find information quicker.



Mobile Ticketing Pilot

TheRide introduced a new contactless mobile ticketing option through EZfare in late 2020 to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to improve the customer experience. The EZfare app allows riders to pay their fare electronically through the app. Mobile ticketing can be used on both fixed-routes and A-Ride.



What's Going Forward

Transit for Tomorrow

TheRide's Long-Range Plan process was initiated in late 2019 and then suspended in 2020 due to the pandemic. TheRide has developed a plan to resume this important process to create a long-term vision (2045) and provide a blueprint for public transit services in the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti Area, as well as short-term implementation steps. The process will include opportunities for input and feedback for the public, riders, stakeholders, and interest groups. More details of the process and timelines of public engagement efforts will be available soon.

Capital Improvements

Look for our new bus design!

TheRide evaluated a new style of bus that will replace buses that have past their useful life, per Federal Transit Administration regulations. The public was given an opportunity to provide feedback last fall. The buses from Nova Bus will have a new design on the outside, a larger front door for easier entry, larger windows, more comfortable seating, and more! You'll begin seeing the new buses on the road soon!



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