Board of Director's Retreat Agenda
Meeting Date/Time: August 12, 2021, 1:00-5:00pm

Location: REMOTE – Via Zoom

To join by computer: (You will be able to use your computer audio.)
1.   Click on this link: Zoom (If you are using an iPad, you must download Zoom first.)
2.   You will be prompted to register with your name and e-mail address, then go directly into the meeting.

To join by phone:
1.   Dial any of these numbers: (For higher quality, dial a number based on your current location): 301-715-8592 or 312-626-6799 or 929-205-6099 or 253-215-8782 or 346-248-7799 or 669-900-6833.
     International numbers available: https://theride-org.zoom.us/u/kdHOQElRNM
2.   Enter the Meeting ID: 934 5412 2325

Meeting Chair: Eric Mahler

Agenda Item	Info Type	Details
1. OPENING ITEMS		
1.1 Approve Agenda	D	Mahler
1.2 Public Comment	O	Mahler
1.3 General Announcements	O	Mahler
2. RETREAT		
2.1 Introductions	O	Yang
2.2 Long-Range Plan Project Overview • *Long-Range Plan Presentation Link*	O	LTRT
2.3 Work Completed to Date • *Plan Guidance Report Link* • *What We Hear Report Link*	O	LTRT
2.4 Solution Identification Facilitated exercises to identify solutions for consideration	O	LTRT
2.5 Solution Evaluation Facilitated exercise to inform project evaluation methodology • *Plan Guidance Report Link*	O	LTRT
2.6 Recap and Next Steps	O	LTRT / Yang
3. CLOSING ITEMS		
3.1 Topics for Next Meetings	O	Mahler
3.2 Public Comment	O	Mahler
3.3 Adjournment		Mahler

* M = Monitoring, D = Decision Preparation, O = Other

Long-Range Plan

Board Retreat
August 12, 2021

Retreat Goals and Key Considerations

Retreat Goals:

- Provide updates and context
- Spur discussions
- Get your ideas and feedback

Key Considerations:

- Post-pandemic thinking
- Ends are the goals
- Board policies define the process
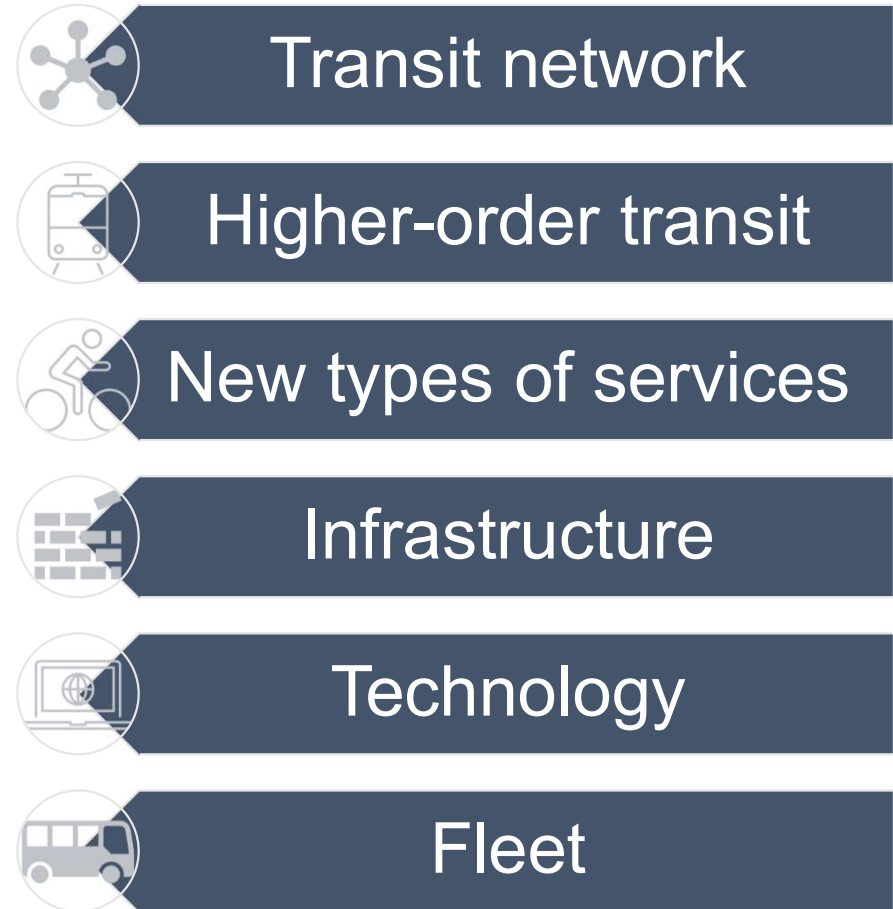- Balance aspirations and realism

Agenda

- Introductions
- Project overview and status update
- What has been done to date
- Solution identification activity
- Solution evaluation activity
- Next steps

Project Overview

TheRide 2045

- A <u>long-range plan</u> that clearly identifies success for the organization
- Guide TheRide to be more focused, efficient and effective in achieving success

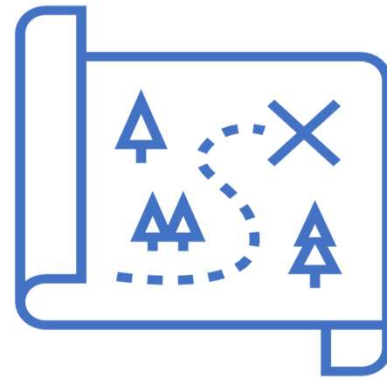| Transit network |
| Higher-order transit |
| New types of services |
| Infrastructure |
| Technology |
| Fleet |

Project Overview

Phase 1:
Guidance
(Feb – Jul)

Phase 2:
Analysis
(Apr – Aug)

Phase 3:
Development
(Jun – Feb '22)

Phase 4:
Finalization
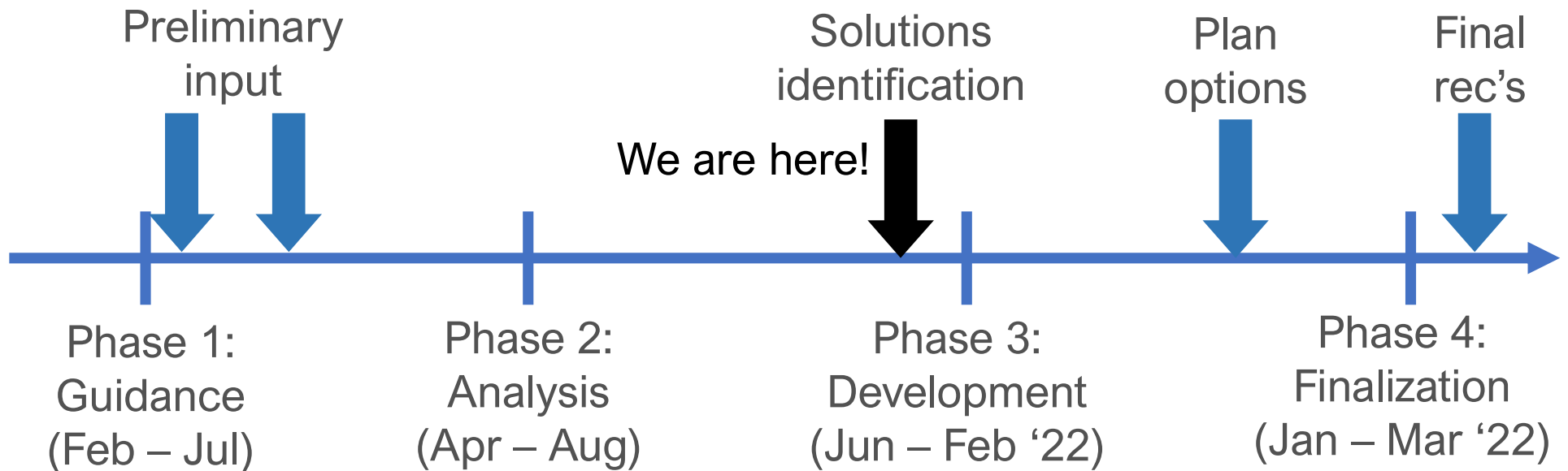(Jan – Mar '22)

We are here!

Opportunities for Board Input

Preliminary input

Solutions identification

Plan options

Final rec's

We are here!

Phase 1: Guidance (Feb – Jul)

Phase 2: Analysis (Apr – Aug)

Phase 3: Development (Jun – Feb '22)

Phase 4: Finalization (Jan – Mar '22)

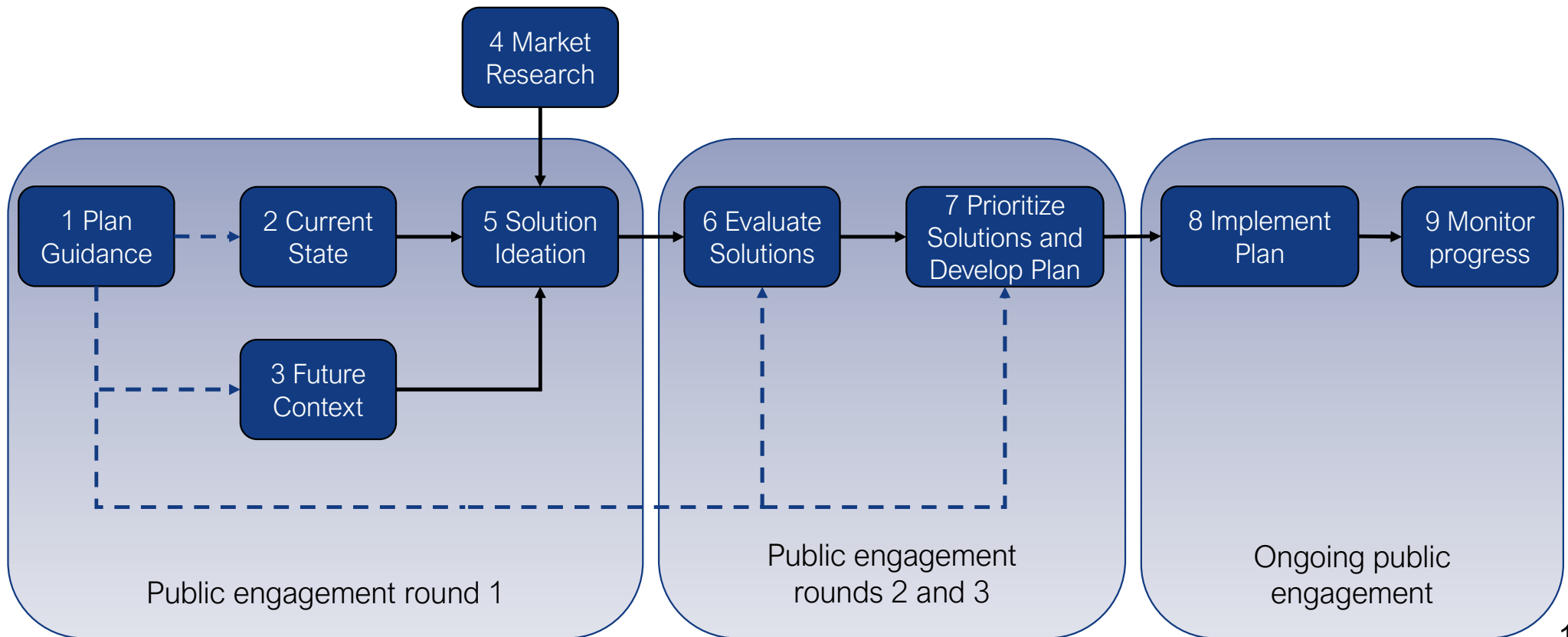TheRide

What Has Been Done to Date

- Plan Guidance Report

- Public and Stakeholder Engagement

- What We Heard Report

- Current State and Future Context Report

Plan Guidance

Plan Guidance

- Strategic framework for entire project – defining how we will identify and evaluate ideas to inform the development of the plan
- Plan development and evaluation according to the Board's policies:
  - **Strategic Framework** (Alignment to the Board's Vision and Ends)
  - **Financial Planning and Stewardship**
  - **Public and Stakeholder Involvement**

Planning Methodology

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

TheRide

ANN ARBOR AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

# Public and Stakeholder Engagement to Date

Public Advisory Group (PAG) Update

- PAG has 12 members
- Three PAG meetings to date
  1. June 9: Feedback on TheRide's current services and future visioning
  2. July 7: Potential solutions workshop
  3. August 11: Refining solutions
- Three more
  4. September: Public engagement
  5. December: Revision of feedback
  6. February 2022: Revision of final implementation package

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TheRide

ANN ARBOR AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Key Issues Identified

Most common comments:

1. Need more night/weekend service

2. Stop/facility related

3. Connectivity

4. Need increased frequency

5. Improve timeliness/ reliability
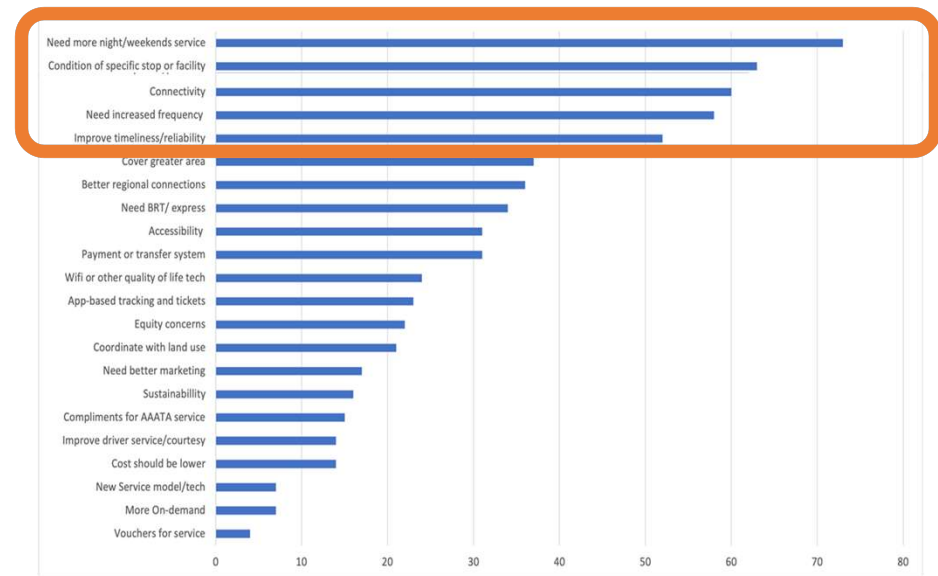
SWOC

Strengths

Excellent range of services for diverse markets

Strong level of service and ridership

Significant corridor demand between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor and between northeast and downtown Ann Arbor

Big university campuses create strong nodes

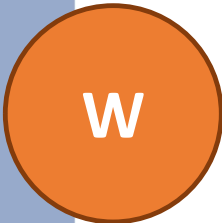Engaged and knowledgeable community

S

Weaknesses

Low schedule reliability

Low productivity for paratransit and NightRide

Lack of facility capacity (terminals and garage)

Lack of integrated planning with U of M bus service
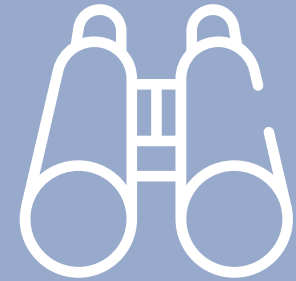
W

Opportunities

O

Transit-supportive development occurring in Ann Arbor and along key corridors

Strong appetite for higher-order transit

Ridership growth potential focused on priority corridors and off-peak periods

Advancements in bus electrification technology and related funding increases anticipated

Growth in Commuter Market

Challenges

Uncertainty over regional transit Future

Funding challenges

Fragmented jurisdictions

Substantial suburban development that is not transit-supportive

Current urban forms

Locations of major destinations (BTC, CCTC and hospital)

Accessibility

C

Questions?

TheRide

Solutions Identification Activity

![TheRide logo]

ANN ARBOR AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

The Activity

We'll use ConceptBoard to explore potential solutions together.

There are six categories and several solutions per category.

For every solution, you can indicate interest in further analysis and brainstorm additional solutions.

🟢 **Yes, this solution is worth considering**

🔴 **No, we should not consider this solution at all**

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Solution categories

- Network elements
- Fleet and facilities
- Technology and fares
- Service design and scheduling
- Delivery models
- External transit-supportive objectives

Are we missing any categories?

Solution Evaluation Activity

Multi-Criteria Analysis

How the potential solutions will be evaluated?

Solution 1

How important are the criteria relative to each other?

Increases ridership	4
Equitable access	2
Positive economic impacts	1

The Activity

11 criteria and sub-criteria

Each Board member will have 30 points to distribute among the criteria based on importance.

Responses will be recorded in Google forms.

The Criteria

1. Organizational Alignment
   a. Increased ridership
   b. Equitable access
   c. Positive environmental impact
   d. Positive economic impact
   e. High customer satisfaction

2. Roles

3. Risks

4. Value and affordability

5. Capacity

6. Sequence and readiness

7. Public commitment

Next Steps

- Outputs of today's retreat will directly influence:
  - Which solutions are considered
  - How solutions are evaluated
- Multi-criteria analysis
- Scenario planning

TheRide 2045
Plan Guidance Report

July 28, 2021

Left Turn Right Turn

ANN ARBOR AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Table of Contents

1 – Introduction

This Plan Guidance Report presents the guiding framework for the development of TheRide 2045, a long-range plan for the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA). The framework outlined here sets out how analysis throughout the project will be framed and how decisions will be made. The development of strategic options and the evaluation of those options will be based on the guidance of this framework.

This Plan Guidance Report is intended to be a living document throughout the project. As new understandings are developed, the guiding framework may be adjusted and refined.

2 – Strategic Framework

2.1 – Board's Vision and Goals

The Board of Directors defines the outcomes/goals that TheRide is supposed to be achieving in the future (i.e. Ends Policies). The "vision" for the plan is to achieve, or make headway on achieving, _**all**_ of these outcomes, at least to some degree. To be clear, the Board has identified _what_ TheRide will achieve, not _how_ the goals should be achieved. It is the role of this planning process to make recommendations about the best way to achieve the Board's goals in consideration of the constraints and situational context TheRide must work within. A challenge for any planning process is to help balance a community's aspirations with what it can realistically accomplish.

The Board seeks public feedback on its outcomes/goals to ensure they accurately reflect the aspirations of the community, residents, and passengers. While public comments to-date tend to focus on attributes of future services and the priorities of various groups, any feedback that suggests a change and update to the Board's goals will be forwarded to the Board for its consideration.

The core geographical scope of evaluation for this plan covers the three member municipalities of TheRide: the City of Ann Arbor, the City of Ypsilanti, and the Township of Ypsilanti. Options will be evaluated based on their ability to achieve the vision and priorities defined in the guiding framework within the member municipalities. However, the scope of analysis will cover adjacent municipalities where the expansion or continuation of services might reasonably enable the following guidance to be better achieved in the member municipalities, or where current residents are already using TheRide's service. This might include the exploration of an expanded service area or member representation within TheRide. Regional connectivity to best accommodate broader travel patterns will also be explored.

The Board establishes its Ends policies within its Vision for public transportation:

A robust public transportation system that adapts to the area's evolving needs, environment, and quality of life.

The Board of Director's Ends (outcomes/goals):

1. AAATA exists so that an increasing proportion of residents, workers, and visitors in the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti Area utilize public transportation options that contribute to the Area's social, environmental and economic vitality at a cost that demonstrates value and efficient stewardship of resources.

1.1. Residents in the area have equitable access to public transportation services that enables full participation in society.
1.1.1. People with economic challenges have affordable public transportation options.
1.1.2. People with disabilities or mobility impairments, seniors, minors, and non-English speakers have equitable access to opportunities and destinations in the area.

1.2. Public transportation positively impacts our environment.
1.2.1. Public transportation options are increasingly chosen over use of a personal car.
1.2.2. Public transportation options minimize energy use and pollution, and conserve natural resources.
1.2.3. Public transportation options produce conditions favorable to more compact and walkable land development.
1.2.4. Relevant public policy is transit supportive.

1.3. Public transportation positively impacts the economic prosperity of the area.
1.3.1. Public transportation facilitates labor mobility.
1.3.2. Students can access education opportunities without need of a personal vehicle.
1.3.3. Visitors use public transportation in the area.
1.3.4. Public transportation connects the area to the Metro Detroit region.

1.4. Passengers are highly satisfied with public transportation services.

1.5. Residents of the area recognize the positive contributions of public transportation to the area's quality of life.

2.2 - Board's Planning Framework

The Board of Directors has also created a planning and governance framework within its governance policies that primarily focus on funding and defining the planning process itself. The key policies are summarized below:

1. **Strategic Framework** As a long-term planning exercise, the process and outcomes of this study must show progress towards the Board's defined Ends. Part of that process includes defining multi-year plans that include the best available information on financial implications, and clear staging plans that will allow staff to recommend changes to the Board based on new information over time. This plan must be prudent and in line with common business practices and must also identify and evaluate risks for staff to manage. [1]

2. **Financial Planning and Stewardship:** In developing a long-term plan, it is always necessary to balance short-term financial constraints with longer-term aspirations. This means that the plan must be financially realistic, even if based on financial resources or funding sources not currently available. This long-term plan should not be constrained by the current financial environment but must be developed with clear assessment of financial requirements, potential funding sources and levels, and consideration of the risk to the plan and its alternatives if additional funding is not secured. Ultimately, the plan must demonstrate value and efficient stewardship of resources, and be based on realistic and transparent financial assumptions.[2]

3. **Public and Stakeholder Involvement:** Public and stakeholder engagement is a cornerstone of the Board's approach, and vital to the development of this long-term plan. The planning process must meaningfully engage riders, residents, stakeholders, partners, and staff. There should be good communication and transparency to the planning process and rely on and develop collaborative partnerships with community stakeholders.[3]

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[1] Board's policy #2.4-2.4.8, 2.10.1.3, 2.0

[2] Board's policy #2.4, 2.4.3, 2.4.5, 2.4.8, 2.5

[3] Board's policy # 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.2.1, 2.9, 2.9.4, 2.9.5

2.3 - Other guiding documents

In addition to complying with and supporting the Board's policy Ends, the plan will also build on previous and current planning studies addressing long-term planning for TheRide. Specifically:

o TheRide's Corporate Business Plan set three medium-term priority areas for the organization:
   - Planning for the future (including developing a long-range plan, advocacy strategy and expanding terminals)
   - Servicing customers (including enhancing fare collection and fare structure and expanding real-time information)
   - Modernizing TheRide (including implementing recommendations from a 2019 paratransit study, reviewing sustainability of bike share, and conducting a propulsion study)

o The 2018 Paratransit Study provides three strategic takeaways for A-Ride and GoldRide:
   - Enhance efficiency
   - Tighten eligibility policies
   - Increase administrative support and focus on paratransit

o The 2018 Fare Study provided a fare structure review that assessed the current state and found it to be too complex but with strong third-party pass programs. Key recommendations include:
   - Establish indicator that initiates fare increase
   - Procure smart card + Mobile ticketing
   - Shift to offboard enforcement
   - Transition to a time-based fare
   - Eliminate or adjust various fare products

3 - Public and Stakeholder Input

The interests and aspirations of the general public and passengers are an important input into the planning process. **Public and stakeholder engagement** was initiated in 2019 and further public and stakeholder engagement has occurred in 2021. The What We Heard (Round 1) Report summarizes the feedback received and further details the engagement process. The timeline of engagement has spanned from prior to the Covid-19 pandemic to during it, resulting in changing priorities for respondents. The pandemic

will leave lingering effects on travel behavior and transit that must be considered in this plan. However, even in the near-term, the post-pandemic conditions will more closely resemble pre-pandemic conditions at TheRide as compared to pandemic conditions. In the 25-year horizon, this is even more so the case.

This Plan Guidance Report attempts to reconcile this reality by focusing predominately on pre-pandemic visions but also attempting to consider what new priorities will linger over the long-term.

Staff too, provide a great deal of knowledge, drawn from years of on-the-ground service and administration of the system. They are able to provide specific insight into challenges and opportunities to help TheRide develop over the next 25 years.

The key considerations reflected by the public, partners, and staff echoed the themes and areas of importance highlighted by the Board's Ends. These will be important to consider in developing the plan. The key considerations include:

- **Be an attractive transportation option**

  The overarching priority for the Board, which was echoed unanimously by customers, stakeholders, and staff alike, is that public transportation be a viable and increasingly selected mode of travel for travelers. Thus, success of the plan will revolve around increasing modal share of TheRide services within the community, and specifically trips per capita. To get people out of cars and choosing public transit, the Plan will have to address customers' service design concerns:

  - More reliable off-peak service including extended service span
  - Enhanced quality of experience including customer amenities
  - Increased service frequency
  - Faster trips
  - More reliable service

- **Be a fully integrated public mobility provider**

  Many stakeholders emphasized the importance of providing a variety of services to meet the diverse travel needs of the community. This desire was also expressed as growth towards becoming a mobility-as-a-service provider for a streamlined user experience and for better planning integration around diverse internal and external services.

- **Organizational sustainability**

  TheRide's stakeholders felt that the organization needed to be financially sustainable over the long-term to ensure it is able to continually operate and support the community. This includes having the finances necessary to grow and develop.

- **Focus on integrating transit infrastructure to surrounding community development**

  Stakeholders specifically voiced desires that fit within a general vision for influential community collaboration. There is a desire to improve external elements that have a significant bearing on transit success such as land use/transportation policy; improved access and maintenance of stops and supporting infrastructure, and better regional collaboration.

- **Enhance regional connections**

  Customers and stakeholders specifically focused on the importance of establishing better regional connections.

- **Contribute to affordable and equitable communities**

  The public and stakeholders expressed a desire to help improve affordability and equity through the provision of affordable and high-value transportation and by working to reduce inequities in transportation along income, racial and ADA-related perspectives.

- **Efficient service provision**

  Public feedback leans toward improved frequency over increased coverage of the service. With fixed resources, that means focusing on improving system efficiency. This focus on service efficiency also captures frequently cited visions for better matching of service to demand, such as on high demand corridors, efficient use of service different modes and a network that meets the travel patterns of current and potential customers.

4 – Planning Methodology

The development of the recommended solutions and initiatives for the TheRide's 25-Year Long-Range Plan will be based on an assessment of the current state of the service and the future context within which service might operate against the Board's Ends. This will include the identification of gaps and opportunities and a staged plan that continuously progresses towards the approved Ends.

The development of the plan will rely on the construction and evaluation of plan options – amalgams of individual solutions and initiatives that together form a comprehensive plan that effectively advance the board's vision. These plan options will vary according to the prioritization of specific gaps or opportunities or themes related to the Board's Ends Policy such as access and equity, environmental sustainability, economic development and transit mode share growth.

The following figure provides an overview of the planning methodology to be employed in developing the plan.
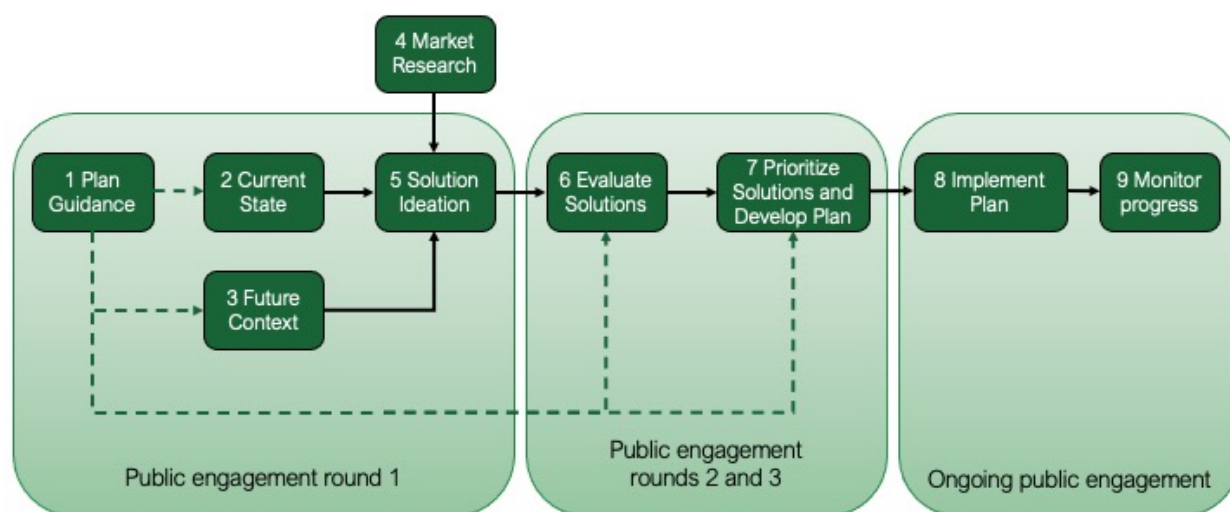

Figure 1 - Overview of Planning Methodology

The Plan Guidance (1) will be the guiding document for the entire project, informing areas of focus for research and analysis and establishing how solutions are evaluated and prioritized. The Current State and Future Context (2, 3) will result in a clear understanding of TheRide's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges (SWOC) currently and in the future. Potential solutions (5) will be generated based on the SWOC analysis, market research, and the first round of public and stakeholder engagement. Evaluation of the solutions (6) and then final selection and prioritization (7)

will be informed by the Plan Guidance and additional public engagement. Following implementation of the plan (8), progress will be monitored and informed by ongoing public engagement.

The following categories of solutions will be considered in Step 5 of this planning project:

Potential Solutions

- **Network elements**, including routes and services, higher-order transit connections, and other regional connections;
- **Fleet and facilities**, considering potential trends in fleet *electrification, autonomous vehicles* and needs for garage and customer facilities including transit terminals and stops.
- **Technology and fares**, including innovations in *fare payment technology*, *customer information*, and *microtransit*;
- **Service Design and Scheduling**, including all non-spatial features of fixed route service provision and scheduling practices
- **Delivery models,** including *family of services*, and *alternative delivery* and *contracting options*;
- **Governance**, including evolving *key partner relationships* and the overall structure of the organization;
- **External transit-supportive objectives**, including collaborative or advocacy strategies in concert with land use and transportation planning processes;

The solutions will be assessed in two stages. First, solutions will be evaluated individually and at a higher level to ascertain the value they bring to the organization.

Next, solutions will be combined to form more comprehensive plan options. Plan options will be clearly defined and characterized to facilitate public review and input – with consistent communication and transparency of evaluation. Each plan option will be comprehensively evaluated against the Board's Ends and will be presented to allow the public and stakeholders to assess the priorities of the progress towards the Board's Ends.

The framework outlined in TheRide's Corporate Business Plan will be employed at both stages as follows:

Evaluation Lens for Step 6	Individual Solutions	Plan Options
Organizational Alignment	• Does this idea help to advance the Board's desired outcomes? To what degree? • Does it mesh with what TheRide does, for whom and at what cost? • Is this focusing energy on future goals, or reactionary? • Does this idea provide an alternative to a different solution that is focused on a different End?	• Does the plan option effectively advance *all* of the Board's desired outcomes? What quantitative and/or qualitative key performance indicators demonstrate this? • Does it mesh with what TheRide does, for whom and at what cost? • Is the plan option moving TheRide forward strategically?
Roles	• Is the idea within TheRide's legal mandate, or is it the responsibility of another group? • Does TheRide have direct control, or can the organization only influence others? • Is this idea more appropriate for another organization? Is partnering a possibility?	• What elements of the plan option are reliant on the support of other organizations? • What level of external support and involvement is required to achieve success?
Risks	• What risks does the idea bring with it, now or in the future? Are those risks acceptable?	• What risks does the plan option carry that may impact achievement of the desired outcomes? • What risks does the plan option introduce to the organization, now or in the future?

Value and Affordability	• What are the funding requirements to implement and support this solution? • Is this a good use of limited funding or time (cost/benefit, ROI, etc.)? • What trade-offs are implicit or not immediately obvious?	• What are the funding requirements to implement and support this plan option? • Is this a good use of limited funding or time (cost/benefit, ROI, etc.)? • Does the plan option demonstrate value and efficient stewardship of resources? • Is the plan option based on realistic and transparent financial assumptions?
Capacity	• Does TheRide have the expertise to pursue this idea now or in the future?	• Does TheRide have the expertise to pursue this plan option now or in the future? • Does TheRide have the capacity of resources to pursue this plan option now or in the future?
Sequence and Readiness	• How ready is the solution to proceed? • Is there a risk of proceeding too soon? • What are the impacts of deferral? • Is this urgent to TheRide and its goals, or someone else?	• To be considered in the development of the implementation plan for the recommended option.
Public Commitment	• What commitments have been made regarding this this solution? Within what timeframe? • Are other external stakeholders involved in the execution of this solution and to what extent?	• Does the plan option deliver on commitments made? • What level of support will the plan option garner?

Document Control

Title:	Plan Guidance Report
Version:	Version 1
File Path:	C:\Users\Kbook\Desktop\Officeatwork\Theride_Report_Template_V3 - KB Officeatwork 3.Docx
Originator/ Author:	Left Turn Right Turn
Approver:	Name of Approver

TheRide 2045

What We Heard
Round 1 Engagement

July 2021

Left Turn Right Turn

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We want to hear from you!

Email: 2045@TheRide.org

Call: 734-794-1882

Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority

c/o TheRide 2045

2700 S. Industrial Highway

Ann Arbor, MI 48104

TheRide

THERIDE 2045 LONG-RANGE PLAN

TheRide 2045 Long-Range Plan is creating a comprehensive and long-term vision for public transit in the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area. Work on TheRide 2045 began with initial public and stakeholder engagement in Fall of 2019. Due to the pandemic, further work on the plan was delayed. Now we are restarting our effort to develop a long-range plan. The project will span from Feb 2021 to Mar 2022 and is primarily planned to be completed over 4 phases:

**Phase 1:
Guidance
(Feb-July, 2021)**

**Phase 2:
Analysis
(Mar-July, 2021)**

**Phase 3:
Development
(July 2021-
Feb, 2022)**

**Phase 4:
Finalization
(Jan-Mar, 2022)**

Public and stakeholder engagement plays a crucial role in guiding the content of the Long-Range Plan. Most of the public engagement will occur in the fall of 2021 and the earlier winter of 2022.

This report summarizes the key findings from the public and stakeholder engagement to date.

MOST COMMON COMMENTS

This is a summary of the most common comments received from all engagement activities to date. While every comment is unique, sorting them like this allows TheRide to see themes at a glance. See section 0 Discussion for more detail on each subject.
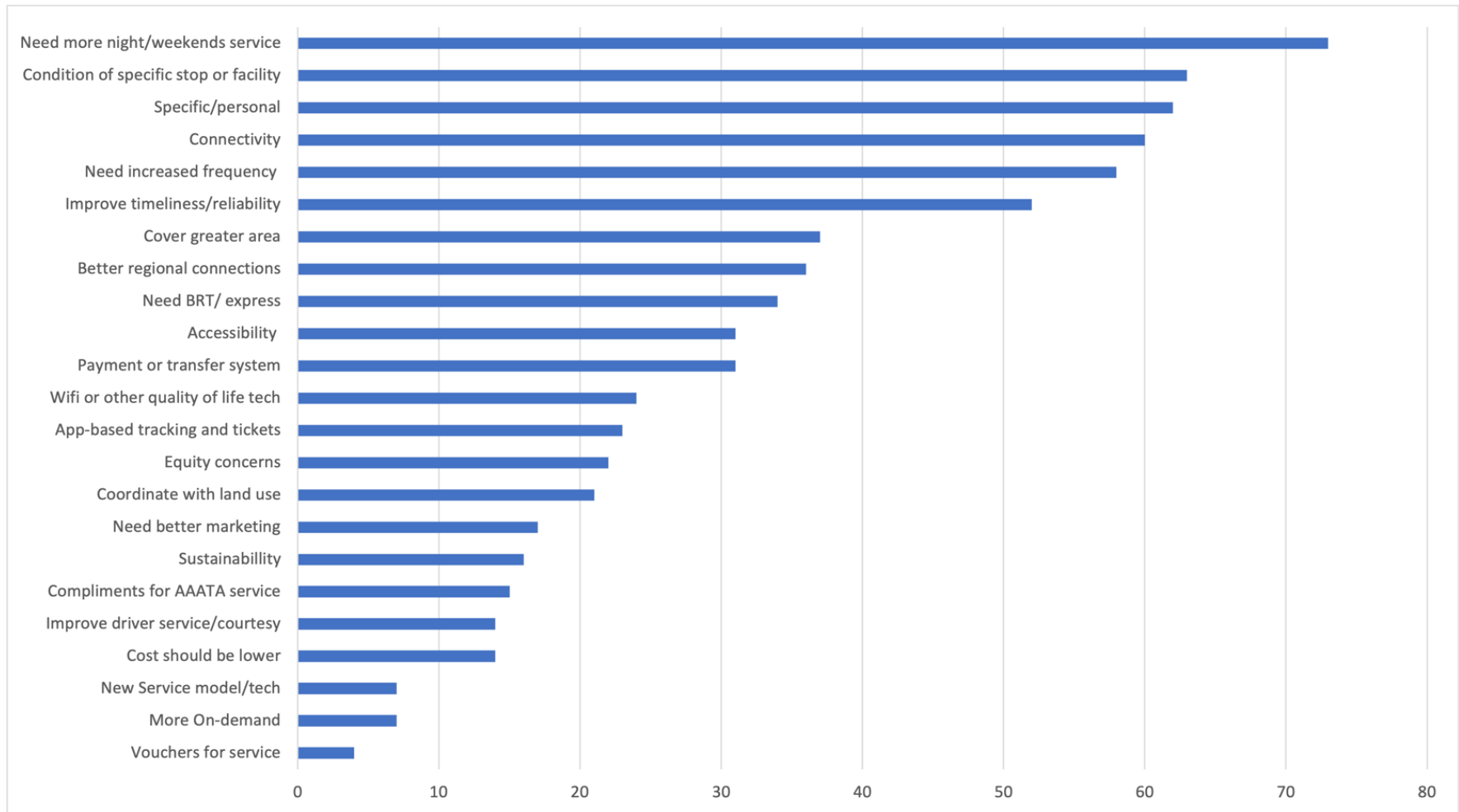
ENGAGEMENT TO DATE

Fall 2019 to Spring 2021

The first round of public and stakeholder engagement draws upon findings from previous public and stakeholder engagement activities held in 2019. Here, we set the stage for TheRide 2045 Long-Range Plan by focusing the engagement on a few key objectives:

1. Create the guiding framework and key measures of success that will guide the development of the Long-Range Plan.
2. Identify challenges and obstacles in using the service as reflected by riders.
3. Identify opportunities to improve customer experience and operational efficiencies.

The public and stakeholder engagement began in 2019 but was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Below is a summary of the key activities from the first round of public and stakeholder engagement process.

Engagement in 2019

This engagement process took pace in the fall of 2019 and included:

1. Public meetings
    - Ypsilanti Library
    - Ann Arbor Library
    - Spark East
    - Ypsilanti Public Hearing
    - Ann Arbor Public Hearing
2. Station Pop Ups
    - Blake Transit Centre
    - Ypsilanti Transit Centre
3. Comments through email and website
    - Over 200 comments received
    - 16 Stakeholder meetings

Engagement in 2021

1. TheRide website comment form (Apr 2021)

   The webpage for TheRide 2045 launched in April 2021, offering a section for visitors to leave general comments regarding the project and to sign up for email updates on its progress. Since its launch, the webpage has received approximately 60 comments from visitors, the findings from these comments are integrated into the themes in the What We Heard section below.

2. External stakeholders (April –June 2021)

   a. Stakeholder Webinar April 21, 2021: Project Introduction

   i. A stakeholder webinar was held in Apr 2021 to familiarize external stakeholders in the area with the project as well as to engage stakeholders in discussion to help develop the vision and guiding principles for the Long-Range Plan. The webinar revolved around discussion questions and gave participants the opportunity to comment on these questions using a virtual engagement tool called ConceptBoard.

   b. Stakeholder survey (Apr 2021)

   i. Prior to the stakeholder webinar, a survey with questions similar to those discussed in the webinar was circulated to the stakeholders with the intent of providing them the opportunity to reflect on these key themes prior to the webinar discussions. Some stakeholders submitted their response before the webinar, while others submitted afterwards.

      1. Please provide a brief description of your organization and the stakeholder group you represent.
      2. What services/features of TheRide best serve the group you represent?
      3. What are comments that you often hear and/or your perceptions about TheRide's service?
      4. What near-term changes would you like to see to improve service?
      5. Are there areas not currently being served by TheRide that you believe should be?
      6. What is your vision for public transportation in the Ann-Arbor-Ypsilanti Area and for TheRide over the next 25 years? (This can be a high-level vision or describe specific features)

7. What things do you think TheRide should be considering in developing a 25-year plan?

8. What does public transportation success in the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Area mean to you?

9. How would you describe your current relationship with TheRide?

10. Describe your ideal relationship with TheRide and how your current relationship can be enhanced?

11. Do you have expectations or desires for the next transit millage?

3. Public Advisory Group Meeting #1, June 9, 2021

The first meeting of the Public Advisory Group (PAG) took place on June 9th, 2021, via Zoom. This meeting included the 12 members selected as part of the PAG. The objective for this first round of engagement was to gain feedback on the current strengths and challenges of the various services offered by TheRide, and the overall vision for Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti's future regarding transit. The PAG will meet 5 more times over the course of the project on the following dates:

a. PAG Meeting #2 Solutions Workshop (July 2021)

b. PAG Meeting #3 Refine Solutions (August 2021)

c. PAG Meeting #4 Public Engagement (September 2021)

d. PAG Meeting #5 Revision of Feedback (December 2021)

e. PAG Meeting #6 Revision of Final Implementation Package (February 2022)

4. Elected Officials Webinars June 22 and 24, 2021:

    a. Webinars were held on June 22 and 24, 2021, with elected officials from the City of Ann Arbor, City of Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township. The webinars were designed to familiarize elected officials representing members of the Authority with the project, as well as to receive initial input to help develop the vision and guiding principles for the Long-Range Plan. The webinars included a series of 4 questions and gave participants the opportunity to comment on these questions using a virtual engagement tool called ConceptBoard. The questions asked were as follows:

        i. What is public transportation success in the Ann Arbor- Ypsilanti Area of the next 25 years?

        ii. What do you see as the current issues with public transportation in the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area?

        iii. What are the future considerations that TheRide needs to account for in developing a 25-year plan?

        iv. What are the transit solutions that you believe should be pursued or evaluated over the next 25- years?

WHAT WE HEARD

Method
Representatives from TheRide collected the comments received from conversations with stakeholders and the public. We looked through every comment and pulled out the key themes. Then, each comment was tagged with the themes that applied. That means that we read all of the specific requests to see the trends out of the large number of comments at the same time.

Measures of Success
Based on our stakeholder engagement in particular, we have identified some measures of success. These are important later in the process so that we can look back to see whether the goals and objectives of the Long-Range Plan are being carried out effectively.

Key Themes
Our public and stakeholder engagement to date has revealed some key themes. By tracking and analyzing the hundreds of comments receive, we can see what people are talking about.

Discussion

Similar themes arose across many stakeholder and public events. This section characterizes the discussions on various topics.

- Need more night/weekends service
  - Many people commented on the need for extended hours on particular routes. While the routes and services differed, the request for extended hours is clear.
- Condition of specific stop or facility
  - These comments all addressed the cleanliness or state of repair of stops, or facilities.
- Improve timeliness/reliability
  - Any comment relating to on-time performance of our services were tagged in this category.
- Need increased frequency
  - There were many comments that indicated the need for more frequent service in certain areas.
- Need BRT/ express
  - BRT means 'Bus Rapid Transit', which is a service model where express buses are given dedicated lanes on major routes. These comments were different from the ones above that requested greater frequency or reliability in that they specifically called out the need for BRT or express buses.
- Cover greater area
  - Many people felt that TheRide should service either a wider area or have more routes within Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti.
- Better regional connections
  - These comments were different from the requests to cover a greater area because they mentioned the need to connect to other locations like the airport or downtown Detroit.
- Payment or transfer system
  - Some customers suggested new modernized fare payment and/or transfer systems.
- App-based tracking and tickets
  - Like reliability, some customers specifically mentioned the ability to use apps to track their buses in real time, or purchase tickets through an app.

TheRide

- Connectivity
    - Many people felt that TheRide should be better integrated with other modes to create a seamless journey. Some examples of comments heard include: connecting with bikeshare, connecting with other services offered by TheRide, connecting with other transit agencies, or transfer between bus routes.
    - Better integration is needed with the University of Michigan.
- Compliments for AAATA service
    - These comments were all complimentary to our services and facilities. We appreciate our customers, and it is nice to know that TheRide is appreciated too.
- Specific/personal complaints
    - There was a wide variety of incidental service complaints or specific requests that did not fit into any other category. While these complaints are handled through TheRide's regular customer service, they still reveal opportunities for us to improve in the future.
- Improve driver service/courtesy
    - Some customers mentioned bad experiences with drivers on our service. While most drivers are great most of the time, we are all human. We hear your concerns and strive to improve.
- Need better marketing
    - Some comments related directly to TheRide's public image or promoting our services.
- Wifi and other quality of life technologies
    - There are many new amenities for a modern world that could be included into TheRide service over the next 25 years. The most frequent request is wifi.
- Cost should be lower
    - A few comments requested that the cost of service be reduced or wholly subsidized.
- Vouchers for service
    - Some customers felt that vouchers for taxis or other services could replace lack of service or service disruptions.
- Accessibility
    - Accessibility means universal access for all people, regardless of ability. Some customers and stakeholders have expressed the need for greater accessibility across our service.

- Equity
  - Some customers feel that transit needs to serve those who need it most. People who are heavily reliant on transit at the edges of the system have significantly less access to jobs. This disproportionately affects already disadvantaged communities.
- Land use
  - High housing costs in Ann Arbor pushes people to low-density, outlying areas that are difficult and expensive to service with transit. Planning for greater housing density along transit routes can ensure that people will live where they can be served by transit.
- Sustainability
  - Customers noted the importance of transit as a more sustainable mode of transportation than cars.
- More on-demand services
  - On-demand services means services like FlexRide, where customers use smartphone apps to summon rides within certain service areas.
- New Service Models and Technologies
  - There are many different ways to offer transit. Some customers have offered creative solutions to use new technologies or infrastructure upgrades to change the way TheRide functions.

USING YOUR FEEDBACK

Feedback that we heard on what transit success means for the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti Area will help to shape the guiding framework for the plan. We also heard from TheRide board and staff, strategic plans, the area's municipalities, and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG). This guiding framework will help shape our priorities when solutions are evaluated throughout the plan's creation.

We have also been using your feedback to inform the "Analysis" phase of TheRide2045 Long-Range Plan. We have been studying the current context by looking at the issues that you identified, like the low frequencies at night or on weekends, schedule reliability, stop conditions, and the travel challenges between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor.

Your feedback is also guiding us to look at industry leading technology and transit trends, emerging types of transportation, and changing travel behavior and living preferences including remote working and a desire for more sustainable and vibrant spaces. We are considering demographic projections and ridership modeling along with local developments and community master plans.

The assessments of the current state and future context will help guide future projects and solutions development for TheRide 2045 Long-Range Plan. The feedback received to date provides suggestions for these solutions and the guiding framework to refine and prioritize the list. Once we have a list of possible solutions, grouped into themes and projects, we hope to hear from you again in the next round of engagement.

NEXT STEPS

This concludes our round 1 engagement. The next rounds will occur in the fall of 2021 and the earlier winter of 2022.

The Round 2 engagement will focus on refining and prioritizing the projects that we propose based on the information that we received from Round 1. The final round of engagement will focus on polishing the projects that were prioritized in Round 2.

Rounds 2 and 3 Engagement will include:

- Public Meetings

- Pop-ups at key station

- Webinar with stakeholders

- Stakeholder Working group meetings

- Online Surveys

Throughout the entire process, there are ongoing opportunities to engage and have your voice heard. **Check out our website at Theride.org for updates, to sign up for our newsletter or leave a comment at any time.**

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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