

# Adopting the Long-Range Plan

## Designing for Vibrant Communities

Corporate Business Plan FY 2023  
(Oct 2022 - Sept 2023)

ANN ARBOR AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

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# Executive Summary

TheRide, also referred to as the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA), is the public transit system for the greater Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area. Our mission is to provide reliable, safe, affordable, and equitable transportation services that are adaptable to the evolving needs of the Communities we serve.

This Corporate Business Plan is a part of TheRide's multi-year strategic planning framework. Its purpose is to increase transparency into what efforts TheRide intends to undertake, and to increase public engagement by inviting feedback on a reader-friendly plan of action that avoids too many details.

After TheRide's Board of Directors identifies key values and outcomes for the agency, the CEO and staff develop a proposed 5-year work plan<sup>1</sup> in line with those expectations. By highlighting the overall plans in a 5-year context, the Business Plan provides an opportunity for the Board, the public, and stakeholders to weigh in on major decisions *before* the details of the budget are developed. This increases transparency and participation, while streamlining the budget process. Effectively, major budget decisions are made early, during the Business Planning process.

A major new factor in 2022 is the development of TheRide's first 25-year plan. Since the Fall of 2019, TheRide has continuously engaged with members of the public and other stakeholders to design the future of transit through what is commonly known as the Long-Range Plan. The Plan provides a vision for the long-term with shorter-term implementation steps for public transit in the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area. It focuses on improving social equity by increasing access to jobs and housing, while also contributing to a cleaner environment and a vibrant economy. Pending funding and staffing capacities, the elements in the Long-Range Plan will inform on this and future Corporate Business Plans.

In addition to the Long-Range Plan, an assessment of internal and external environments helped identify gaps and opportunities that TheRide must address in order to reach desired results in a manner that ensures efficient stewardship of resources. Informed by the Board's policies, the Long-Range plan and the assessments, the initiatives in the 5-year workplan are based on the following priorities.

- attracting and retaining ridership,
- implementing the long-range plan and
- agency-wide continuous improvement.

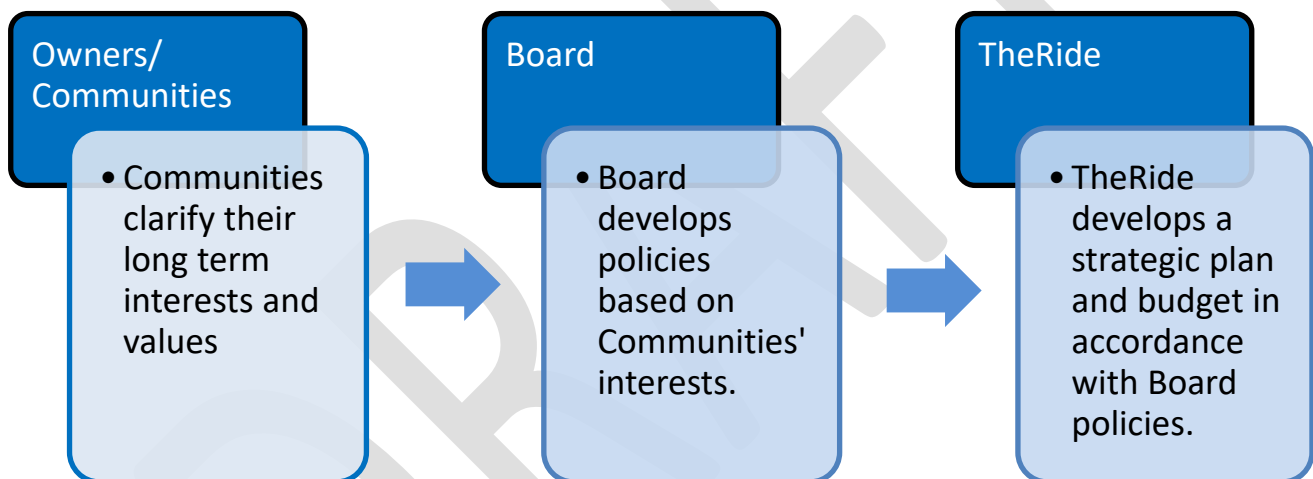
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<sup>1</sup> See page 9-10 for the 5-year work plan.

# Board's Direction and Overall Alignment

TheRide's Board of Directors functions as an informed agent of the public, passengers, and municipalities, including the City of Ann Arbor, City of Ypsilanti, and the Township of Ypsilanti; and residents, visitors, and students of the larger Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area. These groups of people are collectively addressed as the '*Communities we serve*' or simply, '*Communities*' in this document.

The Board translates the values of these Communities into the overall desired outcomes for the agency. These outcomes, known to the Board as Ends Policies, define what TheRide is to achieve; for whom, and at what cost. TheRide then adopts these desired outcomes (End's Policies) as its goals. They become the basis through which all strategic initiatives and all operational activities are derived.



The graphic above shows the relationship between the Communities interests and values, Board policies and agency operations. This relationship clarifies that it is the goal of TheRide to fulfill the interests of the Communities we serve through the direction provided to the agency by the Board.

Below is the set of the current Ends policies as developed by the Board

**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.**

The Board has the right and duty to change the Ends Policies in relation to the owners' interests. This consequently adjusts the strategic trajectory of TheRide.



In addition, the Board has created Executive Limitations Policies, which guide the CEO by outlining practices that would be unacceptable. These limitations empower staff to use their professional judgement when pursuing the Board's stated outcomes through oversight and fiduciary control. One key benefit of this approach is greater speed in achieving the desired outcomes. Examples of key Executive Limitations policies include:

- Ensure passengers and customers are well treated.
- Ensure staff are well treated and that TheRide is an attractive employer.
- Ensure that the Board, riders, and the public have opportunities to shape the future direction of the agency.
- Ensure transparency and accountability.
- Maintain the financial health of the organization. Do not risk fiscal jeopardy.
- Maintain assets of the organization in good condition.
- Compliance with all applicable laws. (Numerous other local, state, and federal laws also enable and constrain what TheRide can do.)



# Strategic Approach

Strategic planning has three main pieces: an envisioned future state, a sound understanding of the current situation, and a plan for how to get from the current state to the desired future state. The Business Plan is a key part of planning how TheRide will sequence its work and organize its resources to achieve the future state. Let's look at each piece separately.



**Envisioning a Future State:** Having consensus on a clear, defined future state gives TheRide a target toward which it can align its efforts, judge options, and measure progress. TheRide future state is a blend of Board policies, feedback from the Communities we serve and staff insight.

**Understanding Current Status:** A shared understanding of the current situation and context allows TheRide to take steady aim at the targeted future. The current state of the organization is organized into strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats/challenges and that information detailed in the SWOT analysis table in Appendix 2A. To determine the position of the agency in relation to the external environment i.e., political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental (PESTLE) aspects, a PESTLE<sup>2</sup> analysis was conducted, and the details documented in Appendix 2B

**Filling in the gap:** A gap analysis<sup>3</sup> identifies opportunities and gaps between the current state and the desired future. It informs on the key drivers for change and the order of prioritizing agency initiatives. Based on that insight, a strategic action plan i.e., the 5-year workplan, is developed to bridge the gap between the current and the desired state.



At each step, there is plenty of room for reasonable people to reasonably disagree with each other. Ultimately, the Board holds the CEO accountable for achieving their vision, so the CEO is empowered to be the final arbiter on the methods used.

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• <sup>3</sup> A gap-analysis for this business plan is provided on Appendix 2C.

# Action Plan

Based on the Gap analysis, the CEO and staff identifies areas of prioritization and a list of prioritized initiatives over the next five years. Below are the three areas of prioritization, also known as thematic buckets.

1. **Retain and attract ridership:** With the pandemic, ridership dramatically dropped. Although it is slowly increasing, TheRide is encouraging ridership by offering contactless payment options, conducting 'rebuild ridership' campaigns, staffing bus routes etc. The Long-Range Plan intends to continue this effort by providing faster services across networks, increase off-peak services, increases frequencies with the intent of increasing ridership by 150%-165% by the year 2045.
2. **Implementing the Long-Range Plan:** Long-Range Plan lays out a shared vision and strategy for TheRide for the next 25 years. It focuses on improving social equity by increasing access to jobs and housing, while contributing to a cleaner environment and a vibrant economy. The result will be a more competitive transit system that will grow ridership, resulting in more sustainable and vibrant Communities.





3. **Agency-wide continuous improvements:** One of TheRide's business principles <sup>4</sup>is 'Excellence' which is defined as continuously renewing our commitment to perform well beyond set standards. TheRide prides itself in being compliant with federal, state, and local regulations but it desires and works on doing and being better. The focus points for FY23-FY27 under this category are:
- a. **Climate change initiatives:** TheRide plans to have a zero emissions fleet by 2038 as part of the Long-Range Plan. Currently studies are underway to determine feasible sustainable zero emissions options for our fleet. Additionally, the CEO plans to conduct research in FY25 to determine what it would take to have zero emissions facilities/buildings. The result of these studies will inform on our progress towards being a zero-emission organization, pending funding and staffing capacities.
  - b. **Social equity:** Prior to designing service plans e.g., routes, TheRide reviews and addresses potential impact on social equity. For years, TheRide has purposely provided socially equitable services and desires to do more. However, it is not currently clear what improved social equity for the traveling public and the staff looks like. The agency therefore intends to do more research in this area in the coming years.
  - c. **Internal upgrades and improvements:** This include proactively safeguarding TheRide's' network operations to deter cyber-criminal activities, upgrading hardware and software systems for better performance, improvement of facilities and existing infrastructure.

To fill in the operational gaps<sup>5</sup>, the CEO collaborated with senior managers to identify an action plan in line with the identified priorities. Many projects were suggested but only some were selected as part of the 5-year workplan based on additional prioritization factors<sup>6</sup> such as risk assessment. The financial needs of all the projects in the 5-year work plan will be addressed in the FY 23 Budget. Projects that go beyond FY 23 will be accounted for in projected annual budgets.

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<sup>4</sup> A list of TheRide's values and business principles is provided in Appendix 1.

<sup>5</sup> See the gap analysis on Appendix 2C.

<sup>6</sup> For a list of prioritization criteria, see Appendix 2D.

## The 5-year work plan

	Major initiatives	Description	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27
Retain & Attract Ridership	Restore & maintain service	Hiring additional staff to keep up with service needs.					
	Campaign to rebuild ridership	Promotional campaigns to rebuild ridership are expected to continue through FY 23					
	Replace aging buses	Maintain service reliability by replacing aging fleet					
	Contactless Payment	Consider buying validations to increase boarding speed					
Implement LRP	Develop legislative agenda	Identify advocacy goals and methods					
	Start millage-related services*	New express routes, longer service hours and increased frequency will provide increased accessibility, equity and encourage ridership.					
	Blake Transit Center (BTC) Expansion	FY23 and FY24 will be used for preliminary planning and design of the BTC.					
	Transit Signal Priority	Transit Signal Priority project will continue and is expected to be completed in FY25					
	Ypsilanti Transit Center (YTC) Upgrade	Planning and designing of the YTC will take place in FY23 and continue to FY25. Construction may commence in FY 25 and progress into FY26					
	Garage Expansion**	The development of bus maintenance and storage facility is expected to begin in FY 23 and continue into FY28.					
	Bus Rapid Transit** (Planning)	Initial planning including equity analysis will take place in FY 23. Public engagement is expected to continue before a final plan is developed and implemented.					

\*-scheduling of project is dependent on millage outcome.

\*\* -Projects are subject to RAISE grant

## 5-year work plan continued

		Major initiatives	Description	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27
Continuous Improvements	Climate Change	Zero emissions fleet	Study options for a zero emissions fleet					
		Zero emissions facilities	TheRide plans to begin a zero emissions building study in 2025.					
		Zero emissions support vehicles	Conduct further studies and implement zero emissions support fleet.					
	Equity	Equity reviews.	TheRide desires to continue finding ways to be equitable internally and externally. Studies are expected to commence in FY23					
	Internal Improvements	Cyber security follow through	Ensure safety of IT assets					
		Upgrade Accounting System	Updating financial accounting system to better serve internal customers.					
		Facility Maintenance (Placeholder)	Maintenance and upgrades of the Dawn Gabay Operations Center in order to maintain a state of good repair.					
		Technology Upgrades (Placeholder)	Review and update technological systems to better serve internal and external customers					

## Major Considerations

The Board of Directors has clearly directed the CEO to operate ‘*at a cost that demonstrates value and efficient stewardship of resources.*’ The CEO considers these resources to include financial, material, and human resources i.e., staff. In developing this 5-year work plan, the CEO was cognizant of the pandemic implications including and not limited to staff burn out and fatigue. Most of the front-line staff had to work overtime due to nation-wide staff shortages. Administrative staff also had to work longer hours in the triage environment. Given the extra duties expected of staff in response to pandemic implications, the CEO made the decision to scale down staff workload and sequence projects in the upcoming years to allow staff time to recuperate. This decision explains why some projects in the workplan above are scheduled to begin in later years.

# Budget Planning

Initiatives in the 5-year work plan sets the stage and context for the annual budget. TheRide's Board of Directors, through written policies, requires that the agency's financial planning and budgeting be developed using:

- sound financial practices,
- incorporate strategic and multi-year planning,
- use practices that meet generally accepted accounting principles,
- comply with federal, state, and local regulations,
- detail practices of handling cash and investments,
- seek Board authorization when adjusting passenger fares, property tax rates, or buying or selling real estate.
- additional Board policies set standards for employee treatment and compensation and require TheRide's assets to be adequately insured and protected against risks.

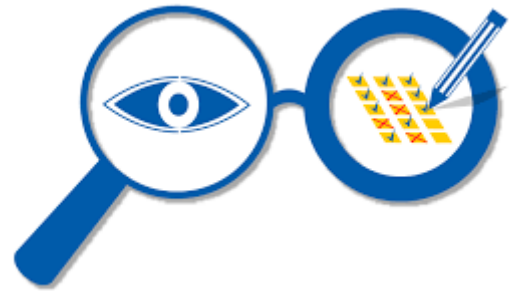


Budget planning will take place in June through August. During this period, a draft budget will be developed, and discussions held at staff and Board level to improve it. The final budget will be ready for Board approval before the end of September 2022.



# Performance Monitoring

To assess the effectiveness of initiatives in the Corporate Business Plan and their alignment to the needs of our Communities through set Board policies, TheRide uses a two-tier method of monitoring progress and operational performance:



**Monitoring Reports** – The Board requires that the CEO report on compliance with every Policy. These “Monitoring Reports” provide detailed interpretations of Board policies and evidence of compliance. These reports are provided at least annually and more frequently at the Board’s request.

**Operational Reports** – The CEO and staff provide a variety of detailed reports on specific aspects of TheRide’s internal workings.

- Quarterly financial reports provide information on the financial health of the authority.
- Quarterly service reports provide specific performance measures on operations.
- Monthly CEO updates provide information on specific projects at the public Board meetings. These updates most often include status updates of the projects identified in this Business Plan.

All of these reports and status updates are available on TheRide.org website.

# Conclusion

TheRide strives to go above and beyond in service to its Communities. Implementing the Long-Range Plan will provide for more faster, reliable connections and consequently improve overall quality of life for our residents. Research on means to provide more socially equitable services and run zero-emissions facilities and fleet are ongoing and will inform on the type of technology the organization choses to implement.

Feedback on this Business Plan can be directed to [TellUs@theride.org](mailto:TellUs@theride.org).



## **Appendix**

# 1. Values and Business Principles

In addition to aligning with the Boards direction, staff at all the agency levels collaboratively developed values and business principles to inform on how they would engage with each other and how they conduct business respectfully. Below are those values and business principles.





## 2. Background Analyses

### A. SWOT Analysis

This analysis provides a current state assessment of the positives and negatives that impact the organization from an internal (within the organization) and external (outside the organization) perspective.

		INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
		<b><u>STRENGTHS</u></b> (Agency Capabilities)	<b><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></b> (External opportunities that the agency can impact)
Helpful		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong credibility &amp; support by the Communities we serve.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong relationships with partners.</li> <li>- History of successful collaborations.</li> <li>- A tradition of excellence in service delivery and business decisions.</li> <li>- High rider satisfaction.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Existing resources &amp; assets in reasonable condition.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing technology allows for effective virtual/hybrid running of business.</li> <li>- Relatively stable funding.</li> <li>- Physical assets and equipment are adequate and in fair shape.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Engaged Board and staff.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong commitment to our Communities, especially underserved populations.</li> <li>- Future-oriented and willing to innovate.</li> <li>- Rapidly modernizing internal processes, clarifying roles, &amp; direction.</li> <li>- Willingness to listen &amp; strive to improve.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Safe working environment               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vehicle and facility sanitization</li> <li>- Improved building and vehicle ventilation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Good interdepartmental coordination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to study environmentally friendly transit options.</li> <li>• Demographics, economic and societal trends are changing.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The population is growing and aging.</li> <li>- Urban areas are growing more compact and need additional mass transit.</li> <li>- Mobility needs are growing in suburban and rural areas as well.</li> <li>- More transit-supportive land development could make accessing destinations easier.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Long-Range Plan will help focus investments to our Communities.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide an exciting vision for the future.</li> <li>- Organize, leverage, and maximize resources and innovative technologies.</li> <li>- Speed up implementation by starting with a realistic plan.</li> <li>- Help communicate the value of public transit.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Potential to expand services and funding.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Could seek additional funding/resources via grants, partnerships, other sources.</li> <li>- Could expand Authority membership/change enabling legislation.</li> <li>- Potential for additional property tax investment.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Advocate for outside decisions that support TheRide's desired outcomes.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Influence outside decision-makers (land development, housing, transportation policy, etc.)</li> <li>- Assume a leadership position in coordinating alternative transportation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

SWOT ANALYSIS continued...

	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
	<b><u>WEAKNESSES</u></b> (Areas of improvement within the organization)	<b><u>THREATS</u></b> (External challenges to agency success)
<b>Weak areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing structural budget deficits</li> <li>Insufficient facility capacity               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The bus fleet cannot grow because the garage is full</li> <li>Space at the terminals is limited.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Reduced fare revenues.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working from home and alternative learning options have led to a decline in ridership.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Limited ability to influence outside decisions (RTA, local land development)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dominant car-culture.</li> <li>Remote working &amp; online learning options may reduce ridership.</li> <li>Constrained funding and resources limit opportunities.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many travel needs lie outside our geographic service area and taxing authority.</li> <li>Resource-constrained partners &amp; a sometimes zero-sum environment.</li> <li>Insufficient facility capacity (garage and terminals) limits service growth.</li> <li>Possible loss of autonomy or funding to the RTA.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Increased operational costs               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growing demand for expensive premium services.</li> <li>Traffic congestion slows buses and makes them less reliable.</li> <li>Labor shortages (technical and professional staff)</li> <li>Increasing construction and fuel costs.</li> <li>Economic inequality, A2/Ypsi disparities and affordability.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Outside pressures/demands can divert TheRide's attention.</li> </ul>

**KEY TAKEAWAYS from the SWOT analysis.**

1. TheRide seeks to provide equitable services to the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area. It has strong credibility and support in the community as well as from within (staff and the Board).
2. Nationwide staffing shortages, existing structural deficits, and insufficient facility (bus garage and terminal) space limit TheRide's capabilities to expand.
3. There is room to study environmentally friendly transit options, seek more funding, and advocate for outside decisions that support TheRide's initiatives
4. The Long-Range Plan will provide a more strategic direction on how to organize, leverage, and maximize resources and innovative technologies in order to provide our Communities with the best transit options.

## B. PESTLE analysis

Awareness of external factors and their impact on the agency allows us to plan realistically. TheRide achieves this by conducting a Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal/Governance and Environmental (PESTLE) analysis. Here is a list of external factors and how they impact TheRide.

Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes at the federal level have led to transit favorable actions.</li> <li>• RTA prioritization has TheRide competing for resources with other agencies.</li> <li>• Politicizing of pandemic safety actions e.g., wearing of masks, may impact the agency's ability to enforce safety practices.</li> </ul>
Economical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional federal funding options have enabled AAATA to continue providing services and plan for capital projects.</li> <li>• The current government may repurpose unused earmarks which in turn provides more funding for transportation infrastructure.</li> <li>• Increased inflation will lead to increased costs</li> <li>• Potential millage win may help take care of structural</li> </ul>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AAATA has a positive public image.</li> <li>• Presence of pro and anti- development cultures in our Communities.</li> <li>• There's disparity in demographics and income in Ypsilanti vs. Ann Arbor</li> <li>• The great resignation era and labor shortages are negatively impacting ability to provide services</li> </ul>
Technological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptation of the public to remote working, virtual commerce, etc., impacts travel patterns and ridership.</li> <li>• Opportunities to advance customer experience and operational efficiency via technology platforms.</li> <li>• Opportunity to improve the remote worker experience.</li> <li>• Remote and hybrid working creates opportunities to increase and sustain cyber-security measures.</li> </ul>
Legal / Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AAATA surpasses ADA compliance requirements except for bus stops.</li> <li>• AAATA complies with Title VI equitable accessibility provisions.</li> <li>• The Board sets governing policies that serve the interest of our Communities.</li> <li>• Compliance to these policies is monitored periodically.</li> <li>• AAATA is currently compliant with laws and regulations governing the transit industry.</li> </ul>
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our Communities are supportive of ecologically conscious decisions.</li> <li>• The federal government is considering funding clean energy transit options.</li> <li>• There is an opportunity to study and implement zero-emissions fleet and facilities</li> </ul>

### KEY TAKEAWAYS from the PESTLE analysis.

1. Additional federal funding options have enabled AAATA to continue providing services and planning for capital projects
2. Remote working, online schooling, virtual commerce, and telemedicine has negatively impacted ridership.
3. There is room to study and implement zero emissions fleet and facilities.

## 4. Gap analysis

TheRide's Board determines the desired results through its ends policies and staff conducts a current state assessment through the SWOT and PESTLE analyses. A comparison of current state and end state identify gaps and inform on how resources can be prioritized to achieve the desired end results.

Desired End State (Policy)	Current State	Gap	Mitigation
<b>Increase ridership (1.0)</b>	-Low ridership (compared to pre-pandemic years) -Labor shortages impact ability to provide services	Low ridership	Implement the Long-Range Plan -Increase frequency, -increase service reliability, -increase connectivity
<b>Ensure efficient stewardship of resources (Policy 1.0)</b>	-Existing structural deficits -Declining fare revenues due to reduced ridership	Insufficient funds to maintain and expand services	Millage increase and make use of all possible grants and funding opportunities
<b>Equitable accessibility (Policy 1.1)</b>	Currently compliant with Title VI requirements and equal employment regulations. However, TheRide would like to go above set guidelines to provide more equitable opportunities and results for customers and the traveling public.	Unclear on opportunities to improve equity within the agency and with customers	Research, understand and implement ways of improving equity opportunities and results for customers and staff.
<b>Positively impact the environment (Policy 1.2)</b>	TheRide is currently studying zero emissions options.	Zero emissions technology is unclear	Understand and implement sustainable zero emissions technology
<b>Increase service frequency and connectivity (Policy 1.3)</b>	Insufficient facility capacity at terminals and garage making it challenging to expand services	Potential to expand space, fleet and consequently services.	Implement the Long-Range Plan -Increase facility capacity, -expand terminal space, -grow fleet size
<b>Increased customer satisfaction (Policy 1.4)</b>	Currently have high customer satisfaction however, due to reduced ridership, TheRide would like to find ways to retain and attract new ridership	Opportunity to attract and retain ridership	Campaign to rebuild ridership, improve service comfort and reliability by replacing aging vehicles, continuing safety practices
<b>Support and credibility in the community (1.5)</b>	TheRide enjoys support from our Communities.	N/A	N/A

### KEY TAKEAWAYS from the GAP analysis.

1. Implementation of the Long-Range Plan will help increase ridership over time.
2. Increased millage will address structural deficits and allow for service expansions.
3. There is room to study and implement sustainable zero emissions technology.
4. There's an opportunity to review and improve equity practices both internally and externally.



## C. Strategic Planning Criteria

The Board's policies outline desired outcomes/goals and operational expectations. It is up to the CEO and staff to recommend initiatives, projects, and expenditures that will make progress in achieving the goals identified by the Board. Staff seeks public and stakeholder input, as well as advice from the Board, as they develop these recommendations. To be effective stewards of resources, TheRide prioritizes initiatives by considering the following.

- **Organizational Alignment:** Does the initiative help to advance the Board's desired outcomes? Does it mesh with what we do, for whom and at what cost? Are we focusing our energy on future goals, or reacting and spreading ourselves too thin? Are they in line with our values and business principles?
- **Roles:** Is the initiative within TheRide's legal mandate, or is it the responsibility of another group? Do we have direct control, or can we only influence others? Is the idea more appropriate for another organization? Is partnering a possibility?
- **Risks:** What risks does the initiative pose now or in the future? Are the risks acceptable?
- **Tradeoffs and Affordability:** Is this a beneficial use of limited funding or time (cost/benefit, ROI, etc.)? What trade-offs are implicit or not immediately obvious?
- **Capacity:** Does TheRide have the expertise or resources to pursue the initiative now or in the future?
- **Sequence and Readiness:** How ready is the initiative to proceed? Do other steps logically need to come first? Is there a risk of proceeding too soon? What are the impacts of deferral? Is this urgent to us and our goals, or someone else?
- **Public Commitment:** Have we committed to this project publicly? Within what timeframe? Are other external stakeholders involved in the execution of this project and to what extent?
- **External impact and influence vs. internal capacity and capabilities:** The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges/Threats (SWOT) analysis detailed in Appendix 2A; and the Political, Environmental, Social, Technological, Legal/Governance and Economical factors (PESTLE) analysis detailed in Appendix 2B Priorities and Initiatives allow the agency to make and prioritize decisions based on a reasonable balance between internal capacity and external influences.