



Dave Askins &lt;homeless.dave@gmail.com&gt;

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**Press Release from Better Transit Now**

1 message

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**Ted Annis** <ted@annis.org>  
To: Ted Annis <ted@annis.org>

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**Press Release**

Ann Arbor, MI

9 April 2014

BETTER TRANSIT NOW supports our bus transit system and seeks to maintain and improve it. This coalition believes the best way to do that is to send a strong message to the AAATA by rejecting their bid in the *Special* May 6 election to raise your transit taxes by 34%.

Here is why we urge you to vote **NO**:

1. Additional bus service hours and improved transit services have been requested of the AAATA. Instead of working hard and efficiently to deliver them, the AAATA is withholding these improvements until they receive more property tax dollars. This is unacceptable; these additional services can be delivered now without a tax increase.

2. How? By refocusing on core services. AAATA does not need 52 “management staff” for 133 bus drivers and 37 support staff. It is not necessary to spend \$577,000 on “community outreach” or \$1.1 million on lavish public relations campaigns. It is estimated that 50% of the “management staff” is redundant and non-essential. Elimination of this excess and stopping the massively expensive public relations campaigns, including this millage campaign, can pay for the service improvements.

3. Better Transit Now values the professionalism and courtesy of our excellent AAATA bus drivers. Our recommendation calls for no reduction in drivers’ pay and benefits.

4. This proposed transit tax is unnecessary and would be a second transit property tax on Ann Arbor property owners and renters, who pay 23 property taxes already. More property taxes make Ann Arbor less affordable for young people, families, and grandparents.

5. Economic comparisons to other Michigan bus systems show just how unconcerned the AAATA is when it comes to managing and spending your tax dollars reasonably. The AAATA spends \$115 per bus service hour whereas Grand Rapids' bus managers spend \$84. With the AAATA's 200,000 annual bus service hours, it is easy to see that greater operating efficiency would generate the same or more funds than the proposed second transit tax.

BETTER TRANSIT NOW is a coalition of Ann Arbor residents. Their web site is [www.bettertransitnow.org](http://www.bettertransitnow.org)