

Incorporation Process

Frequently Asked Questions

Will the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (TheRide) provide the Five-Year Program improvements, or will a new transit organization be required?

TheRide is moving forward with some improvements now, such as increased service on Route 4 between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti and the new AirRide service to Detroit Metro Airport.

However, the most efficient way to provide countywide transportation service is by creating a new regional transportation authority (an Act 196 Authority). This will ensure that all communities that wish to participate in countywide transportation will have a voice in the decision-making process. TheRide's board of directors would maintain membership on the new authority's board, while expanding that membership to other communities that decide to participate and dedicate funding for transit services.

Who will oversee the new transportation authority?

In preparation for creating a new countywide transit organization, the county has been divided into eight transit districts represented by 15 directors, including the current AATA board. The current list of directors is available at MovingYouForward.org.

Once incorporated, the directors will establish bylaws and determine transit services and locations for transit facilities, funding needs and policies on how and when to provide services within Washtenaw County and outside the new transit authority boundaries.

Transit District Advisory Committees made up of citizens in each of the eight transit districts have been and will continue to advise district board members on local transportation needs.

How were the District Representative selected for the new transit board?

District Representatives were selected by the municipalities in each of the eight transit districts through Act 7 Interlocal agreements and/or by board resolution.

What is the role of the Transit District Advisory Committees?

Each of the eight districts has its own advisory committee. Each committee brings together transit service providers, senior citizen advocates, human service representatives, the business community and other interested citizens to provide advice on the development and implementation of transit improvements in their own local district.

Why do we need Transit District Advisory Committees?

Each community of Washtenaw County has its own transit needs and goals. Each Transit District Advisory Committee's focus will be to make recommendations on how to prioritize transit service improvements, location of bus stops and types of transit amenities for its own unique areas of the

county.

What will you call the new transportation authority?

The District Representatives and Act 55 Board members have tentatively agreed on The Washtenaw Ride as the legal name of the new authority, while each new service will be branded as an extension of the existing brand name “TheRide.” There will be an effort to preserve local identity, while ensuring that all services are clearly understood throughout the county.

Which services will be added first? How did you pick these services?

The Five-Year Transit Program document (available at www.MovingYouForward.org) lists the services to be implemented in Year 1 in Chapter IV, starting on page 95. The selections represent where the need is greatest, where services could be coordinated, and where it is practical with available resources. For instance in the urban area, Year 1 emphasizes implementing longer hours on the fixed route bus network, since this is important and can be done fairly easily with the existing fleet of buses. In the non-urban areas Dial-A-Ride and circulator services can be implemented and improved using existing non-profit provider buses. Other services will be implemented as soon as possible as vehicles are acquired (which can take 6 – 12 months).

Who has opted in/out? Is service expansion assuming all communities will opt in?

The current program assumes every community is still in. After the incorporation period the program will be revised to reflect the participating communities by the board of directors.

What happens if a district doesn’t want to participate but still wants service?

It is advantageous for communities to participate as it ensures board representation and decision-making power on transit services, funding, and implementation. Communities that participate in the new authority will receive board representation, new and expanded services, and participate in an authority-wide funding mechanism.

Communities that do not participate will not be guaranteed service or representation. The new transit authority board will determine the criteria, timing, and cost to communities that do not participate.

What happens when others opt out? Will the board’s composition change depending on who participates?

A single community that opts out will not cause the board membership to change. As stated in the new transit authority Articles of Incorporation, there are limited reasons for the board make-up to change:

- If all communities within a particular district withdraw from the Authority
- After each census to assure appropriate attention to population distribution
- If either the City of Ann Arbor or Ypsilanti reduces or fails to contribute its charter millage
- If another community levies a millage and contributes it to the new transit authority

After incorporation, the board of directors will determine how changes to the board make up will be handled and there will be a focus on maintaining regional balance.

Can an opted-out community ever opt-in at a later date?

Yes, at the discretion of the new transit authority board who will be determining the criteria, timing, and cost to communities that do not initially participate.

Can communities opt out at a later date?

Yes, Act 196 permits political subdivisions that are participating in an authority to opt out at the expiration of voter-approved funding.

How much will the Five-Year Program enhanced services cost?

Overall, it is estimated that the Five-Year Transit Program will require \$59 million in additional capital investments in Washtenaw County's transportation network and an additional \$164 million in operating costs over the next five years. After taking existing local revenue, state and federal funding, and user fees, there is a gap of approximately \$39 million that would need to be covered by local funds and it is estimated that a levy countywide of 0.584 would be sufficient to provide the needed funding for implementing and operating all 5-Year Transit Program services throughout Washtenaw County. The final services and funding needed are ultimately dependent on what communities participate.

What will happen if a millage fails?

Our agreement with the County, Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti specifies that the new authority would have until the end of 2014 to get funding in place. If a millage fails in 2013, the new authority can ask the voters once more in 2014. If no millage passes, then the AATA and the new authority board will work with citizens and local communities on next steps, if any. Note, AATA services will continue to be run by the existing authority until new funding is in place.

What will happen with existing non-profit service providers?

We will provide new and improved transit services in participating communities with voter approved funding, but are committed to maintaining the current levels of service provided by existing service providers. For instance, AATA currently passes through state and federal formula funds to two non-profit transit providers, and will continue to do so for existing services, at their current level only. Note, these funds are subject to change by the state.

Communities can improve and expand local services and receive the benefit of leveraging pass-through funds for expanded services by joining the new transit authority.