

AATA MEMORANDUM

To: Performance Management - External
Relations Committee

From: Christopher White

Re: Proposed Service Expansion on #5 Packard Route

Date: November 6, 2012



The AATA has proposed an expansion of weekday peak-hour service on the #5 Packard route. The proposed service would increase the number of buses on the route from 5 to 7 during both the morning and afternoon peak hours. This route has two branches:

- Between downtown Ann Arbor and downtown Ypsilanti
- Between downtown Ann Arbor and Meijer on Carpenter Road.

Currently service alternates between the two branches with service on each branch every 30 minutes, which provides service every 15 minutes for the trunk route shared by the two branches.

The proposed expansion would increase the number of trips to 6 per hour on the trunk route. All of the added service is on the latter branch that operates primarily in Ann Arbor. But this additional service would permit us to operate a more direct, “express” route between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti in the peak direction (to AA in the morning and from AA in the afternoon).

The added service is not included in the adopted budget. The total additional cost of this change for FY 2013 is \$156,700. The additional local funds required for FY 2013 after accounting for the additional fares and state share is \$90,700. For a full year, an additional \$139,300 in local funds will be required.

This service expansion is intended to provide:

- More reliable service (better on-time performance)
- Less crowded trips
- More direct and faster service for riders to and from downtown and UM campus originating from east of Platt Rd.
- An increase from 4 to 6 trips per hour for the portion of the route between downtown Ann Arbor and Packard/Stone School Rd.

Ridership on Route 5 is the fourth highest ridership among all of TheRide routes, with 621,269 riders in FY 2012. This was a 3.7% decline from FY 2011, after ridership had grown 35% in the previous 8 years. During 2012, we identified problems with crowded buses with on-time performance suffering as a result. On-time performance has declined with 89% of trips completed on-time in the a.m. peak period and to 63% in the p.m. peak period.

The AATA solicited and collected public input on the proposed change for more than 30 days. More than 30 people provided input by email, telephone, and in-person. Two 2-hour drop-in sessions were held at the Bryant Community Center and the Michigan Union. The input was overwhelmingly positive. A copy of the input is attached for your review.

After considering the public input, staff did not make any changes to the proposal. A copy of the proposed map and schedule is attached.

A Title VI, Environmental Justice, and Limited English Proficiency Analysis for major service changes is in preparation. The #5 route serves census tracts with higher than average minority and low-income populations. Our preliminary analysis is that this is a positive change, but AATA will complete the analysis to insure that service changes do not inadvertently disadvantage protected populations.

The added cost of this service increase is a serious concern at a time when the budget is very tight. Staff recommends deferring a decision on implementation for now, and including this service change in the evaluation that is beginning to determine sustainable services after the demise of the Act 196 authority.