

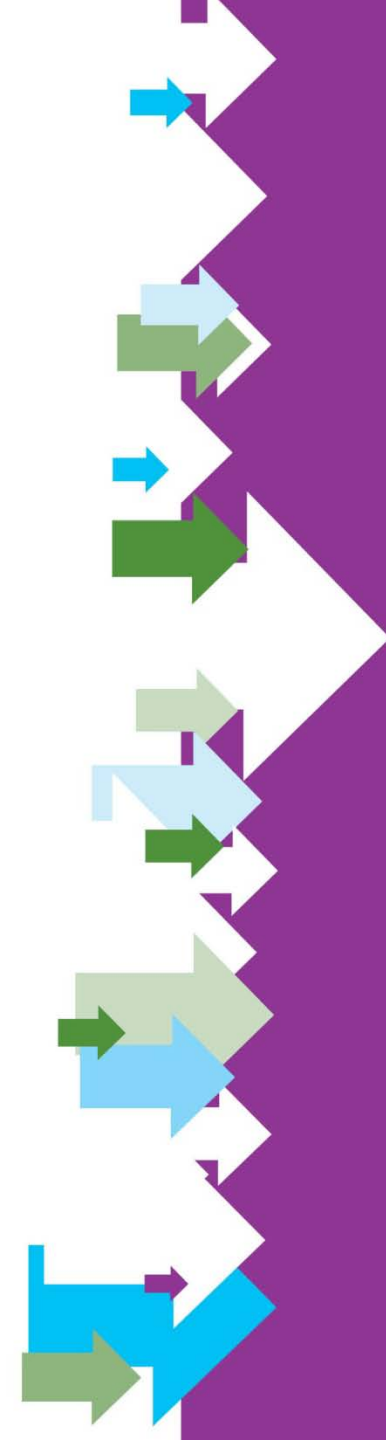


Washtenaw County Transit Master Plan
A Proposal to the Citizens of Washtenaw County

Volume 2
Transit Master Plan Implementation Strategy

April 2011

Draft for Public Review



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Section 1: Introduction

What is the Transit Master Plan?

The Moving You Forward Transit Master Plan for Washtenaw County is a new long range plan which sets out a transit vision for the whole County for the next 30 years.

The Plan is the culmination of nine months of work and three extensive rounds of public outreach that helped identify the challenges and needs and develop options and scenarios to address them.

The Plan provides a robust, feasible and integrated package of transit investments and services, designed to make transit a real transportation choice for everyone in Washtenaw County.

The Plan consists of three documents:

- A Transit Vision for Washtenaw County;
- Transit Master Plan Funding Options*; and
- This document: Transit Master Plan Implementation Strategy.

While the Transit Master Plan sets out what the future will look like and the Funding Options Report will set out how this could be paid for, the Implementation Plan complements these with information on **how** the proposals will be implemented and shows the priorities and timelines for implementation.

The Purpose of the Implementation Plan

In particular, this document provides an outline for starting the Transit Master Plan and beginning the implementation of projects that underpin the Plan.

The Transit Master Plan has been developed to help achieve the Goals and address the Key Needs in the County.

It is imperative that we maintain this focus throughout the implementation of the Plan to ensure that we are delivering transit that will make a real difference to our community.

The Goals and Needs are shown on the right.

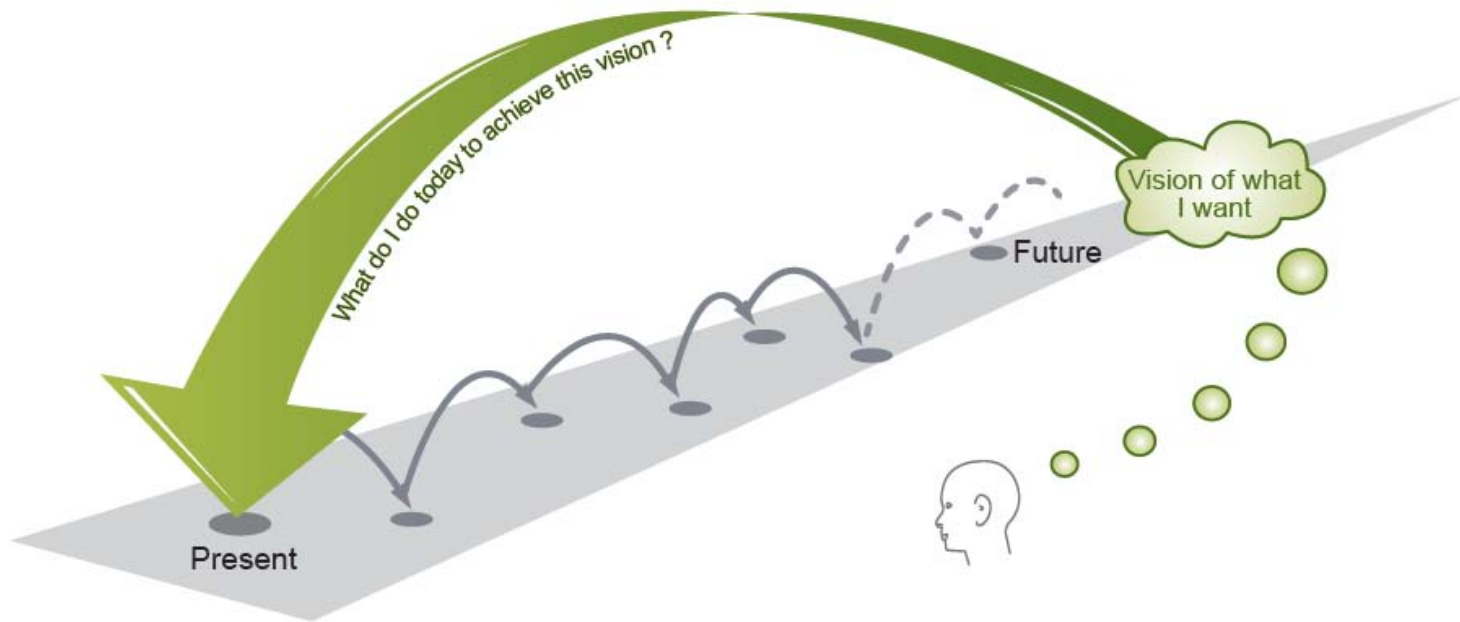
GOALS	
Economy	• Support economic growth in Washtenaw County
Livability	• Promote livability in Washtenaw County
Access	• Improve access for all
Health	• Facilitate a healthier community
Environment	• Protect the environment locally and globally
Safety and Security	• Improve safety and security for all
Land Use	• Shape Land Use and Future Development
NEEDS	
Transit Dependents	• Insufficient access to lifeline destinations
Congestion	• Increasing road congestion across the County
Regional Economy	• Lack of transit connectivity throughout the County
Aging Population	• Increasing mobility needs due to an aging population
Choice Riders	• Transit currently has a limited appeal to choice riders
Youth	• Attracting younger riders and helping Washtenaw keep its youth

* This document is in preparation and will be published at a later date.

Introduction

Backcasting

The Implementation Plan is based on the on the 'backcasting' principle: be 'strategically firm but tactically flexible in each step.' This concept is currently being used by the City of Edmonton in its Implementation Plan.



Source: The Natural Step - Non-Profit Environmental Education Organization
www.naturalstep.org

Section 2: Prioritizing

Overview

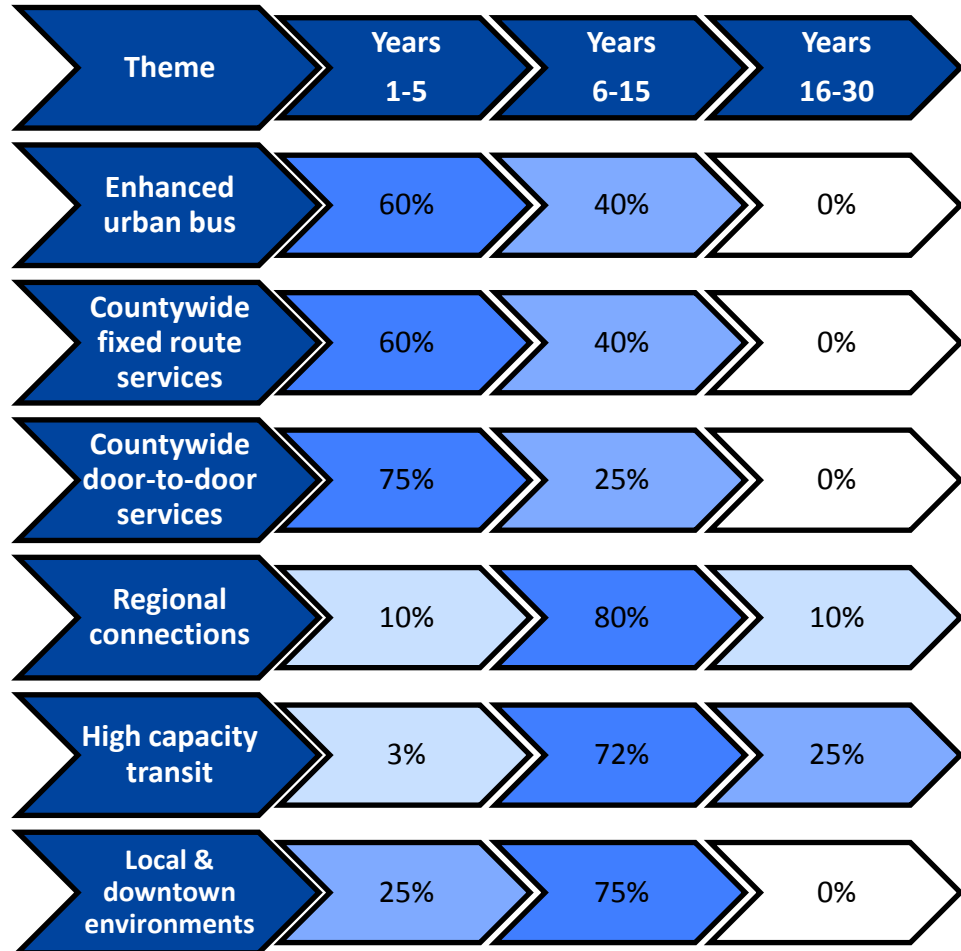
The implementation priorities and funding options have been developed in parallel and in line with the backcasting principle:

- **Strategically Firm** The Transit Master Plan Funding Options report* provides a strategic profile of capital spend, which supports all of the Transit Master Plan proposals; and
- **Flexible Steps** To maintain flexibility in the short term, implementation proposals have been developed for years 1-5 acknowledging that short term flexibility is required.

The prioritization of each theme, as shown in the figure opposite, has been developed considering the future levels of demand, the relationships between different options and the potential profile of future funding.

* This document is in preparation and will be published at a later date.

Strategic Priorities



Prioritizing

Strategically Firm

The Funding Options report provides an initial capital cost breakdown of the projects in the Plan, grouped by theme, for implementation within the next 5, 15 and 30 years respectively. The priorities are shown opposite, according to the proportion of spend allocated in each period.

As shown, the short-term priorities (with capital cost allocations) for the implementation of the Plan are:

- Countywide door-to-door services,
- Countywide fixed route services, and
- Enhanced urban bus.

Flexible Steps

Flexibility in the short term, while still working towards the strategic direction of the Transit Master Plan, provides the opportunity to adapt to changing local circumstances.

For example, if a new large employer or retail unit opens, detailed priorities, such as the extension of weekend operating hours on one service or another, may be altered to accommodate the new land use.



Section 3: Next Steps

Method

The proposals by Theme have been grouped into coherent packages, with linked service delivery, infrastructure and support services and systems.

For each package, the tasks which are required to move from the concept planning, design and specification through to implementation are identified. Allowance has been made for appropriate consultation and feedback into the process.

In the case of services to be provided directly by AATA, the plan includes time for procuring the necessary vehicles, and for recruitment and training of staff.

Where services are to be operated under a concession arrangement, there is provision for developing tender specifications, bid evaluation and a realistic mobilization period.

The launch of new services will require a coordinated marketing campaign to build awareness, encourage trial and ensure rapid ramp-up of demand and revenue.

Coherent Packages

The proposals have been grouped into coherent packages as follows:

- A. Regional Connections – Airport Shuttle
- B. Countywide Fixed Route Services – Enhanced WAVE Service
- C. Countywide Door-to-Door Services – Door-to-Door Countywide and Flex-Ride Service
- D. Countywide Fixed Route Services – Countywide Express Services and Bus Vehicle Improvements
- E. Countywide Door-to-Door and Fixed Route Services – Local Transit Hubs
- F. Countywide Fixed Route Services – Park & Ride Intercept Lots (Phase 1)
- G. Enhanced Urban Bus Phase 1 – Downtown Circulator and Urban Bus Network Enhancements – Extended Hours 1
- H. Enhanced Urban Bus Phase 1 – Urban Bus Network Enhancements: Increased Frequency and Service Changes and Bus Vehicle Improvements
- I. Enhanced Urban Bus – Bus Maintenance and Storage
- J. Enhanced Urban Bus – Stop Quality, Facility Enhancements and Transit Center Upgrades
- K. Enhanced Urban Bus – Bus Priority Measures
- L. Regional Connections – Car/Vanpools
- M. Fares, Ticketing & Advertising, Expanded Mobility Management, Strategic Alliances – Advertising, Integrated Ticketing Products and Fares Strategy, Enhanced Mobility Management, Strategic Alliances
- N. Regional Connections – Regional Rail Services East – West and North – South
- O. High Capacity Transit – Urban Connector and Ann Arbor – Ypsilanti
- P. Local & Downtown Environments – Walking, Biking, Place-making and Parking

Next Steps

Countywide Services

Packages E and F – including Local Transit Hubs and Park & Ride Intercept Lots Phase 1- should start quickly and progressed over a period of time. These measures will support the Countywide services.

Packages B and C – including the Enhanced WAVE, the Countywide Door-to-Door and the Flex-Ride services – should be delivered in the short term largely using existing infrastructure and vehicles (associated with transit or private operators) and delivering benefits across the County.

Package D – Expansion of Countywide Express Services – should follow the implementation of Countywide Door-to-Door and should launch at a similar time to the first phase of Park & Ride Intercept Lots.

Enhanced Urban Bus

The Enhanced Urban Bus Services should be implemented in two phases.

Phase 1: Package G – including the Downtown Circulator and extended service hours - should be introduced with limited additional resources and are a “quick win”.

Phase 2: Package H – including bus network enhancements and wider increase in frequencies - will require more planning and consultation, and additional resources. This package should also include improvements to vehicles.

Packages I, J and K – including bus maintenance and storage, stop quality and facility enhancements, transit center upgrades and bus priority measures – should be progressed alongside service developments.

Regional Connections

Package A – the airport shuttle – is already being progressed by TheRide and should be implemented very quickly.

Package L – car/vanpool – is also already being progressed by TheRide and should follow shortly after the airport shuttle.

Package N – regional rail – is also already underway. Preparation of an RRIF loan application in Year 1 could allow services to commence in Year 2.

Integrated Ticketing and Fares Strategy

Package N – including ticketing and fares strategy, together with mobility management and travel planning programs - will have a significant lead time for systems specification, procurement, testing and training, to ensure the systems are ready to support the introduction of new services.

High Capacity Transit

Planning for development of High Capacity Transit - Package O - is already underway. Completing a preliminary design in Year 3 should lay the ground for a TIFIA loan application and structuring of a P3 package.

Local and Downtown Environments

Package Q – including walking, biking, place-making and parking – is already underway and the timeframes would be led by other partner organizations.

Next Steps

Implementation Program

	THEME	PROPOSAL	TASK	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
A	Regional Connections	Airport Shuttle	Service Planning Contracting Recruit / Training Marketing / Launch	■	■	■	●												
B	Countywide fixed route services	Enhanced WAVE Service	Service Planning Procure Vehicles Recruit / Training Marketing / Launch					■	■	■	■								
C	Countywide door-to-door services	Door-to-door Countywide Flex-Ride Service	Service Specification / issue ITT Concessioning (bid + evaluation) Provider Mobilisation Marketing / Launch					■	■	■	■								
D	Countywide fixed route services	Countywide Express Services - Chelsea / Dexter Countywide Express Services - Saline / Milan / Manch'r Countywide Express Services - Canton / Livonia Bus vehicle improvements	Service Planning Procure Vehicles Recruit / Training Marketing / Launch								■	■	■	■	■				
E	Countywide door-to-door and fixed route services	Local Transit Hubs - support Countywide Express and Door-to-door	Planning/Design Consultation Tendering Construction			■	■	■	■	■									
F	Countywide fixed route services	Park & Ride Intercept Lots (Phase 1)	Planning/Design Consultation Tendering Construction						■	■	■	■	■						
G	Enhanced Urban Bus Phase 1	Downtown Circulator Urban Bus Network Enhancements - Extended Hours 1	Service Planning Recruit / Training Marketing / Launch	■	■	■	●												
H	Enhanced Urban Bus Phase 2	Urban Bus Network Enhancements - New / Altered Services Urban Bus Network Enhancements - Increased Frequency 2 Bus vehicle improvements	Service Planning Consultation Procure Vehicles Recruit / Training Marketing / Launch	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■								

Key

- Countywide Services
- Urban Bus Services
- Infrastructure
- Facilitation/Support Services
- Major Projects - Planning/Funding

Next Steps

Implementation Program (continued)

THEME	PROPOSAL	TASK	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
I	Enhanced Urban Bus	Bus Maintenance and Storage	Construction															
J	Enhanced Urban Bus	Stop Quality and Facility Enhancements Transit Center Upgrades	Specification / issue ITT Concessioning (bid + evaluation) Provider Mobilisation Construction (phased programme)															
K	Enhanced Urban Bus	Bus Priority Measures	Planning/Design Consultation Implementation															
L	Regional Connections	Car/Vanpools	Procurement / Contract Promotion and marketing															
M	Fares, Ticketing & Advertising	Advertising Integrated Ticketing Products Fares strategy	Review and strategy evaluation Consultation Systems specification / issue ITT Systems procurement															
	Expanded Mobility Management Strategic Alliances	Mobility Management / Travel Planning Programs Strategic Alliances	Testing / training Implementation (phased)															
N	Regional Connections	Regional Rail Services - East West Line (AA - Detroit) Regional Rail Services - North South Line (AA - Howell)	Prepare RRIF loan application Service Start															
O	High Capacity Transit	North South Ann Arbor (as per The Connector) Ann Arbor – Ypsilanti (as per Reimagining Washtenaw)	Planning and Project Development Preliminary Design Consultation TIFIA Loan Application P3 Structuring															
Q	Local & Downtown Environments	Place-making Parking Walkability Biking – Expansion of Biking Network	Locally determined				>>>>											

Key

- Countywide Services
- Urban Bus Services
- Infrastructure
- Facilitation/Support Services
- Major Projects - Planning/Funding

Chapter 4: Working Together

Recommendations for Progressing the Plan

TheRide should work together with stakeholders from across the County to take the Transit Master Plan forward and ensure that it is integrated with other community initiatives and projects.

To maintain strong relationships in the community TheRide should:

- continue to reach out to the public regularly to update local people about the Plan's progress and solicit their input;
- continue to work with Partners for Transit to support their role in involving the community in transit;
- maintain and develop the Leadership Group and continue to seek direction and contributions from community leaders;
- continue to brief and lobby the local, state and national elected officials to ensure that transit remains a high priority on the political agenda; and
- maintain an 'open door' culture and welcome regular liaison groups on specific topics such as labor, development, culture, social and healthcare, recreation or education.

Recommendations for Implementing the Plan

TheRide should maintain and develop relationships with the many existing transit and transportation providers and local authorities across the County and look to foster new relationships and opportunities.

Where TheRide is not the most appropriate party to take plans forward it should provide support to and work with other lead parties. This is particularly important in the development of walking and biking initiatives, the development of local transit hubs and local facilities.

Where TheRide is supporting a local operator or implementing services in a new area, TheRide should encourage the local community to take the lead to benefit from the expertise and local knowledge of others.

Overall, in terms of the technical planning and implementing processes, TheRide should:

- maintain and develop the Technical Advisory Team and continue to seek expertise and input from technical experts from across the County;
- work transparently with all stakeholders including public and private operators and local authorities; and
- maintain an 'open door' culture and welcome new ideas and methods of implementation from interested parties.

Working Together

Recommendations for Integrating Land Use and Transportation Planning

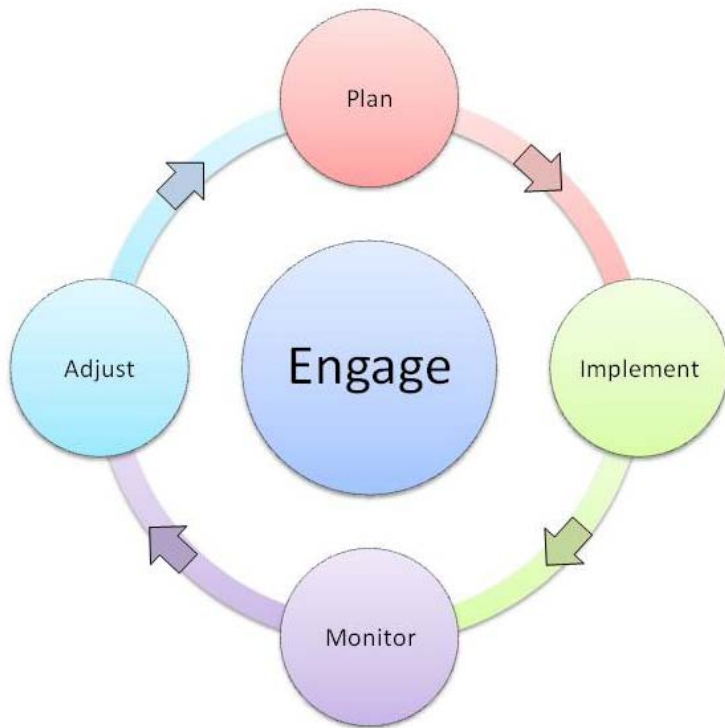
Land Use Planner Dave Betts has been working with TheRide to investigate ways to integrate land use and transportation planning in Washtenaw County.

This work culminated in a document outlining the structure of Land Use Planning in Washtenaw County at both the local and regional level, identification of the responsibilities held and tools used in the planning process, and five recommendations for TheRide to progress land use and transportation planning integration.

The background and supporting information is presented in Appendix A and the five recommendations are:

1. TheRide should build strategic alliances with local authorities with planning responsibilities. Initially the focus should concentrate on areas projected to have population and employment increases. The strategic alliances should be designed to support working relationships with planning staff and consultants serving these local units to coordinate and progress changes in development ordinances and local Master Plan policy. These relationships should involve regular discussions on pending re-zonings, site plans and transportation plans.
2. TheRide should aim to comment during each local community's 5 year Master Plan update and present transit oriented land use policy suggestions. In accordance with the new State notification requirements, TheRide may formally notify each jurisdiction in the County of its interest in coordinating local Master Plan updates with TheRide system plans. Accordingly TheRide should determine each jurisdiction's review timeline and arrange to attend Planning Commission and Board meetings during the local Master Plan public notification process.
3. TheRide should build on current inter-jurisdictional collaborations centered on the communities of Chelsea, Dexter, Saline, Manchester and Milan to communicate regional transit objectives and propose special transit projects. These are initiatives that can best be supported by multi-jurisdictional agreements in which transit oriented land use tools can be employed. Wherever possible TheRide should advocate regional cooperation and communication.
4. TheRide should be aware of local governments' proposals for special grant programs, tax benefit districts, overlay zoning districts and other publicly supported incentives which require the preparation of urban design plans. These plans will contain land use standards in which transit objectives may be advocated.
5. TheRide should link transit service expansion decisions with land use policy changes along new or expanded transit routes, modeling the development objectives envisioned for the Re-Imagining Washtenaw Avenue project and code changes advocated by Smart Growth and Sustainable Community organizations.

Chapter 5: Monitoring & Updating The Plan



TheRide's Continuous Planning Cycle

TheRide's Continuous Planning Cycle

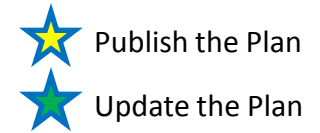
Since 2009, TheRide has developed and implemented its continuous improvement planning cycle across the organization.

The cycle shows how all proposals must be planned, implemented, monitored and adjusted over time to ensure that they are delivering real value to the community.

Robust public engagement is central to the planning process and informs each step.

Like all projects undertaken by TheRide, the final Transit Master Plan will be implemented, monitored and adjusted. This is necessary to ensure that the Plan continues to reflect the priorities of the County and its communities.

Monitoring & Updating The Plan



Recommendations for Monitoring the Plan

As shown in the diagram on the right, the implementation and success of the Plan should be monitored biennially.

The full scope of the monitoring program should be set out in the next six months with details of:

- what will be measured,
- how it will be measured, and
- who will be responsible for undertaking the work.

The monitoring program should identify both:

- measures that are specific to particular proposals or interventions, for example, ridership or cost efficiency, and
- measures to establish the impact of the Plan overall in the context of other related influences in the County, for example, change in congestion levels on key highways.

To provide context, an outline of possible progress measures and targets have been identified overleaf.

Recommendations for Adjusting the Plan

The diagram also shows that the Plan should be adjusted and updated every five years.

This update should take in to account of:

- Developments to the transit network;
- Changing local conditions;
- Changing external factors; and
- Results of monitoring studies.

Recommendations for Involving the Community

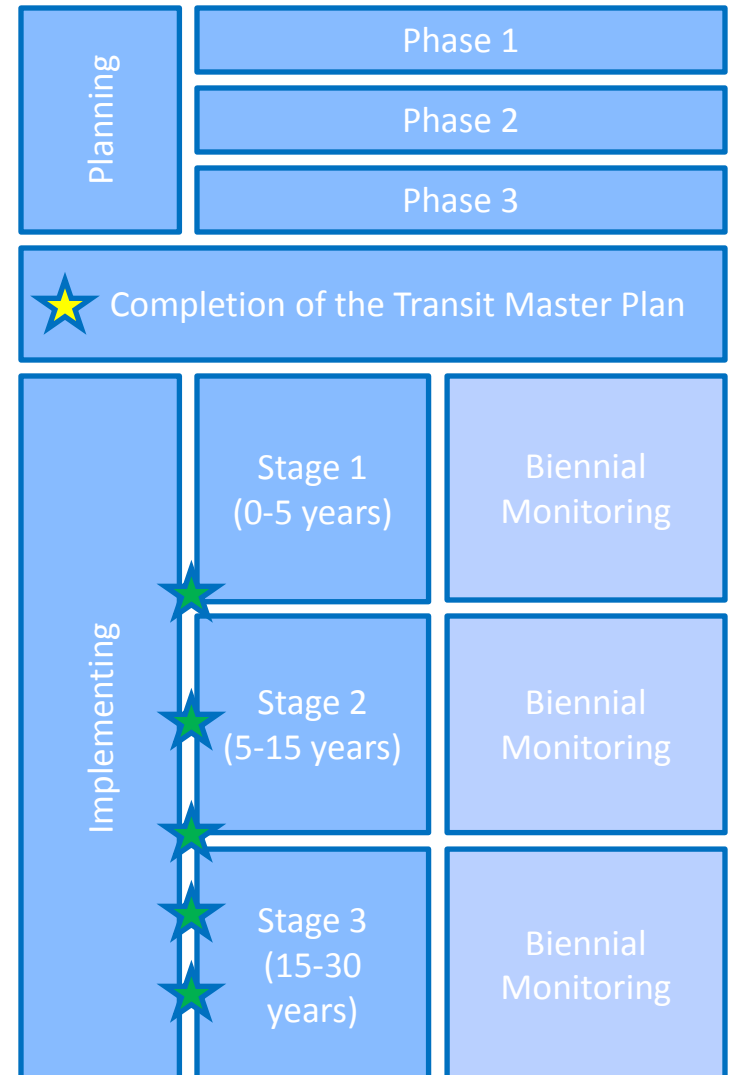
Public Outreach should be undertaken as part of the program of monitoring and updating the Plan. It is important that the Plan continues to accurately reflect the needs and aspirations of the community and that members of the public who have contributed to the development of the Plan so far keep in touch with the process and see the progress made.

Recommendations for Taking Responsibility

Delivering the Plan will require a vast coordinated effort and TheRide should consider who will be responsible for championing, managing and implementing the Plan as a whole, as well as how particular elements will be developed.

Outline Progress Measures and Targets

TheRide will work with other stakeholders to assess how the County's goals are being met and the County's needs are being addressed, as well as monitoring transit ridership and financial performance. The following table provides an outline of some of the indicators that may be considered. Many indicators will require geographic information systems and mapping to deliver useful data.



Outline Progress Measures and Targets

Goals			
Economy	Change in congestion on the road network Change in employment in the County	- 243,370 employees (2010)	WATS Census/SEMCOG
Livability	Change in perception of quality of life	96% very / somewhat satisfied (2009)	TheRide
Access	Change in Countywide transit patronage Change in geographic coverage of transit	12.2 million p.a. (2010) -	TheRide TheRide/WATS
Health	Change in numbers of people walking Change in numbers of people biking	10,656 walking to work / day (2005-09) -	American Communities Survey
Environment	Change in vehicle miles traveled and emissions	14.2 million miles / day (2008) 195 tons of emissions (2008)	WATS TheRide based on WATS
Safety and Security	Change in road accidents Change in on-transit crime levels	9,755 total accidents of which 20% fatal/personal injury (2009) -	MDOT TheRide
Land Use	Change in density in identified areas (both identified as at risk of potential sprawl and as targets for high density development)	-	TheRide with the County and local authorities

Needs			
Transit Dependents	Change in public transit access to libraries, job centers, grocery stores, educational institutions and medical facilities	-	TheRide
Congestion	Change in congestion on the road network	-	WATS
Regional Economy	Change in public transit patronage on countywide and regional services Change in geographic pattern of development related to transit	- -	TheRide / WATS / MDOT
Aging Population	Change in public transit patronage by seniors Change in door-to-door geographic coverage	- -	TheRide TheRide
Choice Riders	Change in perception of transit Change in profile of transit users	72% extremely / very important (2009) -	TheRide TheRide
Youth	Change in public transit patronage by young people (teenagers and twenty-somethings)	-	TheRide

Proposal / Intervention Specific Monitoring			
Ridership	Change in patronage associated with each intervention	-	TheRide
Cost Efficiency	Change in cost efficiency by passenger and / or by vehicle hour Change in revenue recovery rate	32.8 riders/service hour (2009) 18.6% (2010)	TheRide TheRide

Appendix A: Land Use Planning

This appendix provides a summary of Land Use Planning in Washtenaw County to support the recommendations on the integration of Land Use and Transportation Planning included in Section 4.

The text for this Appendix has been included from the Land Use Planning Memorandum (January 5th 2011) by David Betts MA.

Background

The Washtenaw County Transit Master Plan intends to create a “robust, feasible and integrated plan with which to establish county-wide public transportation”. The long term implementation of this vision will be dependent on two land use planning objectives: encouraging increased housing and employment density in appropriate locations along transit corridors; and, promoting a development character that incorporates new transit facilities and mixed use development in urbanized areas. TheRide wishes to identify opportunities to implement these transit objectives within the context of local land use planning considerations and influence local land use policy wherever possible.

Local Planning Decisions

In Michigan, the responsibility for local planning and development is shared by elected legislative bodies and appointed planning commissions. The former are the decision makers; the latter are the advisors.

Planning Commissions typically:

- review development proposals and changes to zoning & subdivision ordinances;
- conduct reviews of site plans and other development proposals;
- prepare and recommend a community Master Plan to the legislative body;
- make recommendations about public works proposals that effect the local Capital Improvements Program (if any);
- educate the public about planning issues; and,
- cooperate with other units of government on planning matters including the review of local Master Plans.

The legislative Boards or Councils generally:

- approve local Master Plans and other planning policy documents;
- adopt zoning and subdivision regulations, approve some site plans and other development proposals recommended by the Planning Commission;
- receive and approve the Planning Commission’s annual work program report and budget; and
- generally support and direct the Planning Commission’s advisory responsibilities.

All of Washtenaw County's townships, villages and cities have 7-member Planning Commissions except for Freedom and Sharon townships which have 5-member commissions. Planning Commissions are supported either by professional planning staff (in the case of the larger jurisdictions) or by planning consultants. Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Chelsea, Dexter, Ypsilanti Township and Pittsfield Township have one or more designated planning staff members. The other units have contracted with one of the planning consulting firms active in the County. These individuals have substantial influence and knowledge regarding local land use policy and politics across the County and can be a valuable contacts for TheRide to support the integration of land use and transportation planning.

Regional Planning Perspective

Local units of government are primarily concerned with planning and development decisions within their own jurisdictions. While residents and businesses are closely involved in development reviews, ordinance changes and policy formation, their decisions may lack a regional perspective except where inter-jurisdictional groups exist or communication between adjacent units of government is required by State law. There is not a single regional planning authority in the County advocating or mandating a broader perspective to local land use planning decisions. But there are notable multi-jurisdictional organizations that provide oversight, assistance and planning studies relative to TheRide's Transit Master Plan intentions. These include the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), representing multiple levels of government and education over the seven county southeast Michigan region; and, the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) representing multiple agencies and local units within the County. Both organizations play a role in the allocation of federal and state funding for local transportation projects and have advocated land use changes in support of public transportation objectives.

The Washtenaw County Planning Advisory Commission supported by the County Planning Department once provided oversight and technical assistance during the preparation of local Master Plans and revisions to local ordinances. The County also maintained a repository of local government plans and ordinances, and helped with special inter-jurisdictional projects and research. These functions were recently relinquished due to budget and other considerations.

Inter-Jurisdictional Planning Projects

Important cooperative efforts by adjoining jurisdictions in area wide land use planning are evident throughout the County and were for a time supported by the County planning staff. These ‘regional’ planning projects indicate the ability and willingness of adjacent governments to cooperate on land use policy and operational issues of mutual interest. Such established relationships may indicate a receptivity for transit oriented development and facility planning collaborations that would support the Washtenaw County Transit Master Plan. They also indicate a receptive forum of community leaders with different geographic perspectives. These inter-jurisdictional planning projects include the following:

- The Manchester Community Joint Planning Commission (MCJPC) was formed in 2007 to develop a regional plan for the Village of Manchester, Manchester Township, Freedom Township and Bridgewater Township. It was formed by the Southwest Washtenaw Council of Governments (SWWCOG) which itself promotes communication and sharing of resources among its participating members: Freedom, Bridgewater, Manchester and Sharon Townships, the Village of Manchester, and Manchester Community Schools.
- The Chelsea Area Planning Team/Dexter Area Regional Team alliance (CAPT/DART) was formed in 2005 to cooperate on regional planning issues such as transportation, the environment and growth. The participating jurisdictions include the City of Chelsea, the Village of Dexter and the Townships of Lyndon, Dexter, Scio, Sylvan, Lima and Webster.
- The Milan Organization for Regional Excellence (MORE) was formed in 2001 to address growth issues of mutual concern. The participants are the City of Milan, the Townships of York and Augusta in Washtenaw County, Milan and London Townships in Monroe County, the Milan Area Chamber of Commerce and Milan Area Schools.
- The Saline Area Sustainability Circle (SSC) was formed in 2001 to develop regional planning guidelines and better communication between the participants on a vision for the area. Participants are the City of Saline, the Townships of Lodi, Pittsfield, Saline and York, the Saline Area Chamber of Commerce and Saline Area Schools.
- The Re-Imagining Washtenaw Avenue project intends to “improve the investment environment and retrofit Washtenaw Avenue to a compact, walkable mixed-use transit corridor”. This cooperative effort involves the Cities of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, and the Townships of Ypsilanti and Pittsfield. Each of the jurisdictions has approved resolutions to form a joint Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) which will implement the Re-Imagining Washtenaw Avenue strategy.

Local Master Plans

This State mandated planning policy tool is perhaps the most comprehensive expression of local land use policy. Michigan legislation requires every jurisdiction with a planning commission to adopt a Master Plan as a guide for local development. This document is the policy anchor for all subsequent actions regarding zoning, infrastructure, transportation, plat subdivision, recreation and potentially many other public actions. The Master Plan covers the physical development of land and infrastructure. It generally contains goals & objectives, demographic and economic data, a future land use map, a zoning plan, a transportation plan and special subarea plans. Among the purposes of a Master Plan stated in the State enabling legislation of relevance to transit objectives are: “(i) a system of transportation to lessen congestion on streets” and “(iv) healthful and convenient distribution of population”. Two new laws (HB5211 & HB5212) require local units to (1) include public transportation provisions in new or “substantially amended” Master Plans, and (2) to involve public transportation agencies in the notification and comment process. Local Master Plans are to be reviewed every 5 years to determine if changes are needed. Coordination and cooperation with other local units in this review is required. Public notices are posted 15 days before public hearings if the Master Plan is amended. In this period of limited budgets and low development activity, few Master Plans are being substantially updated. Never-the-less, the mandatory review period may be an opportunity to provide public input on land use policy, possibly focusing on defining a transit oriented development element for the Master Plan’s Future Land Use Map and Street/Transportation section.

Local Land Use Decisions

TheRide’s ability to express transit system objectives in regard to specific local land use decisions is generally absent. TheRide does not have the legislative authority to review or act upon these actions. It can, however, lobby for the inclusion of transit elements in the standards adopted by each jurisdiction for considering development proposals. These standards may be expressed as ordinances or guidelines based on the policies expressed in the jurisdiction’s Master Plan as noted above. In the event TheRide wishes to become more involved in local development review, the following is an explanation of the public notification process for most land use changes.

- For rezoning changes, the Planning Commission must hold a public hearing and publish a notice in a newspaper of general local circulation not less than 15 days before the hearing. In addition, notice of the rezoning must be sent by mail to property owners and occupants within 300 feet of the rezoning 15 days before the hearing. In townships only, after the public hearing the petition is to be referred to the County planning “review body” for advisory comment within 30 days. (This review may be waived by the county board of commissioners.) Thereafter, the rezoning petition, any Planning Commission recommendations, a report of the public hearing and the County’s review comments if any are referred to the township board. In villages and cities, following the public hearing the Planning Commission sends the petition and its recommendations to the legislative body.

- Site plan review is required as part of a special use permit, or Planned Unit Development, or variance request process. Any other use of this tool would be determined by each jurisdiction's zoning ordinance. Site plan approval may be granted administratively, by the appointed commission or by the legislative body as determined by local ordinance. In any event, a public notice or public hearing is usually not required.
 - Planned Use Development (PUD) is another zoning tool that allows flexible development standards to address special site conditions, permit a mix of uses, clustering of units, retention of open space and placement of streets. A public hearing is required with public notice procedures similar to the rezoning process.
 - Subdivision Regulations are prepared by the local planning commission for approval by the legislative body. Subdivision regulations must take into account arrangement of streets, adequate spaces for traffic, utilities, firefighting access, recreation, light and air, avoidance of congestion, and installation of utility facilities. Prior to recommending such regulations, the planning commission must hold a public hearing preceded by a newspaper notice at least 15 days before the hearing. After regulations are in place and when a Master Plan has been adopted, the planning commission may review and recommend on subdivision plats after a public hearing and 15 days public notice in a local newspaper and mailed to adjoining land owners.
 - Master Plans are prepared by the local unit's Planning Commission. The planning commission first sends a notice of intent to prepare or update the Master Plan to the recipients listed below. After the Master Plan is drafted, it is submitted to the legislative body to approve the distribution of the document to the public. Required recipients of the proposed Master Plan and notice of intent include:
 - municipalities located within or contiguous to the local unit;
 - the county planning commission if one exists;
 - the regional planning commission if there is no county planning commission;
 - the county board of commissioners if there is no county planning commission*;
 - each public utility company, railroad company and public transportation agency owning or operating within the local unit's jurisdiction;
 - the County Road Commission and the State Transportation Department if the proposed Master Plan includes a Street Plan.
- * The county's review comments if any must include a statement whether the proposed Master Plan is consistent with that of any other municipality or regional authority, or the county's own master plan.

Zoning Overlay & Benefit Districts.

Another opportunity for TheRide to offer transit land use objectives is during the occasional designation of an overlay zoning district or special benefit district by local governments. These involve special regulations and development standards imposed on unique areas in the jurisdiction (e.g., a Downtown Development District or a Historic District). Overlay zoning districts may include transit oriented development (TOD) standards such as building density, setbacks, parking requirements, architectural design and uses that apply in addition to existing zoning requirements.

There are other special sub area designations generally known as benefit districts (e.g., Principal Shopping District, Business Improvement District or Corridor Improvement District) that allow local units to fund public facilities and affect development patterns using a variety of local, state and federal resources. An “urban design plan” must first be prepared designating the district and a special oversight board or authority is appointed. If TheRide is aware of a jurisdiction’s intent to use any of these special initiatives, it can offer transit program suggestions during the public input process.

An inventory of these incentive programs is provided in the Re-Imagining Washtenaw Avenue project report and is provided below. (It should be noted that some jurisdictions in the County may not be eligible for these programs. Also note that the Re-Imagining Washtenaw Avenue project is moving forward under a Corridor Improvement Authority structure.)

- Commercial Rehabilitation Act, PA 210
- Corridor Improvement Authority, PA 280
- Rehabilitation Act, PA 344 of 1945
- Municipal Blight Act, PA 27 or 2002
- Brownfield Redevelopment Program, EPA
- Community Development Block Grants, HUD
- Sustainable Communities Initiative , HUD, DOT, EPA
- Transportation and Community and System preservation Pilot , FHWA
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, FHWA
- Transit Enhancements, DOT
- New Small Starts, FTA
- Joint Development Policy And Funding Opportunities, FTA
- The Job Access and Reverse Commute, JARC, FTA

Land Use Models

The following are very general assumptions and observations about local land use concerns gathered from a review of local planning documents, which are intended as background for consideration of the Washtenaw County Transit Master Plan land use objectives:

- Development in the rural areas of the County should be sensitive to the preservation of the agricultural life style and the conservation of environmental resources.
- Continued very low density development in the townships should be supported by appropriate building densities and services in nearby small urban centers.
- New businesses should be recruited into small commercial clusters and town centers rather than along major roadways as strip development.
- Redevelopment of underutilized sites with public services should be favored over greenfield sites that would impact rural resources.
- The resident population will tend to “age in place” where services and infrastructure are supportive.
- “Place- making” to retain educated and talented younger workers/residents is desirable.

These concerns are an opportunity for discussing how transit oriented development models may be applied to appropriate locations in the County, especially town centers with water/sewer, public safety and other services that can support increased population densities. Where there are inter-jurisdictional planning agreements, development may be directed to villages and small towns, reserving the lower density land uses for the rural areas. Outside of the highly developed corridors between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, the outlying communities of Chelsea, Dexter, Manchester, Milan, and Saline should be a focus for TheRide service expansions supported by these new land use models.

There are a number of relevant ordinances and development standards available that local planning commissions may use. Some of the more noteworthy can be found at:

- The EPA Smart Growth site (<http://www.epa.gov/smarthgrowth/>) including information about the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities resources.
- The Smart Growth Network “Smart Growth Online” site (<http://www.smartgrowth.org>) with an extensive resource library.
- The Center for Transit Oriented Development guidebook and other transit/land use tools available at (<http://tinyurl.com/TODTransitPerformanceTool>).
- The American Planning Association publication “Smart Codes: Model Land Development Regulations” (PAS Report 556) available at <http://www.planning.org/>.
- The Home Depot Foundations’ Sustainable Cities Institute (<http://sustainablecitiesinstitute.org>) with a Land Use sections listing model TOD ordinances.
- The American Public Transportation Association (<http://apta.com/resources>) publications including “Building Better Communities – Coordinating Land Use and Transit Planning Sourcebook” 1990, and “Agencies Role in Regional Planning Process” 2009.
- Smart Growth Leadership Institute 2007 Tool Kit includes the means to audit local ordinances as well as links to model codes <http://www.sgli.org/tool-kit/>.
- The Southeast Michigan Council of Government (SEMCOG) Sustainability Framework’s “Land Use Tools & Techniques – A Handbook for Local Communities” 2003 (<http://www.semco.org/Sustainability.aspx>)

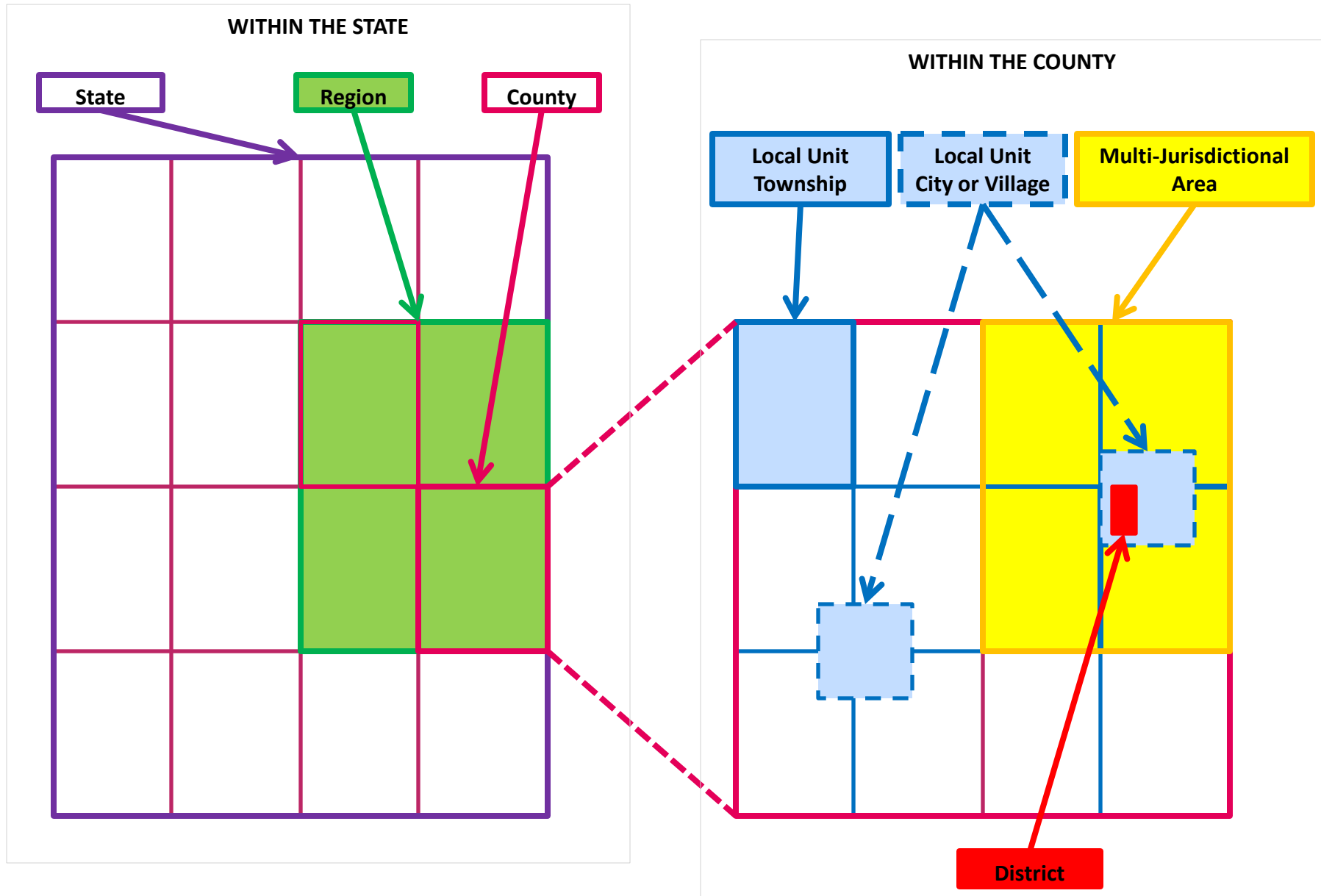
Special Initiatives

Another approach to implementing TheRide’s Transit Master Plan objectives, in parallel with advocating land use change, is initiating special transformational projects that capture the public’s imagination and the market’s attention. Quite often in other communities it is the advent of ground breaking transit programs and facilities that inspire the market driven land use changes needed to sustain an expanded transit system. The Re-Imagining Washtenaw Avenue project offers this kind of opportunity. The planning tools necessary to sustain and guide the desired development density and character are well known and well presented in that project’s documentation.

This table provides a summary of the key organizations involved in local and regional planning in Michigan. The geographical relationships between these organizations are depicted in the accompanying diagram.

Level	Authority	Role	Influence
State	Elected Legislature and Appointed Department of Transportation	Enabling laws and funding authority	Direct and autonomous
Multi-County Region	Membership supported Council of Governments	Advise and assist; planning authority for federal and state funding	Indirect and cooperative
County	Elected Commissioners (and in some Counties an appointed Planning Commission)	Policy oversight for state and federal funding	Indirect and autonomous
Multi-Jurisdictional Area	Membership agreements and joint planning ability	Joint operation and communication	Direct and collaborative
Local Government Unit	Elected Boards and appointed planning commissions	Municipal Corporation – taxing, services and regulations	Direct and autonomous
Special District	Designation by local planning unit(s) with appointed Board of Directors	Implementing subarea redevelopment plans	Indirect and semi-autonomous

This diagram illustrates the spatial relationship between the organizations described.



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