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Approved Minutes

June 8, 2016

Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority Board of Directors

Ann Arbor District Library, 343 South Fifth Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 6:30 p.m.

Board: Mike Allemang, Jack Bernard, Gillian Ream Gainsley, Sue Gott, Prashanth Gururaja, Larry Krieg, Eric Mahler (Chair), Stephen Wade

Absent with Notice: Eli Cooper

Staff: Michael Benham, Matt Carpenter, Ron Copeland, Joel Grimm, Sarah Pressprich Gryniowicz, Dawn Gabay, Mary Stasiak, Phil Webb

Guests: Michael Ford, Liz Gerber, Alma Wheeler Smith, Ben Stupka

Recording Secretary: Karen Wheeler

Chairman Eric Mahler declared that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. Mr. Mahler announced the purpose of the special board meeting; to hear a presentation from the Regional Transit Authority on their Regional Master Transit Plan.

Michael Ford, Chief Executive Officer of the Regional Transit Authority (RTA), introduced Alma Wheeler Smith and Liz Gerber, RTA board members who represent Washtenaw County, and Ben Stupka, RTA's Manager of Planning and Financial Analysis.

Ms. Gerber introduced herself. Ms. Gerber is a Washtenaw County resident and University of Michigan Professor. Ms. Gerber is optimistic about the Regional Master Transit Plan (RMTP) and putting forward a successful plan that meets the needs of interests in the region both in Washtenaw County and the metro Detroit region. Ms. Gerber pledged her commitment to make sure that Washtenaw County benefits from the RTA through promoting and protecting Washtenaw County within the region. Ms. Gerber encouraged board members to reach out to her with questions.

Ms. Wheeler Smith introduced herself. Ms. Wheeler Smith is a former state senator and representative. Ms. Wheeler Smith believes the current legislation is a sound law for guidance through a regional operation. Ms. Wheeler Smith stated that the RTA board wants to work collaboratively with all partners. Ms. Wheeler Smith is looking forward to a closer relationship with the AAATA board to answer questions and address concerns.

Mr. Ford reported that the RTA's focus is on providing regional transportation through connecting with service providers. Mr. Ford thanked Mr. Carpenter and the AAATA staff for working with the RTA. The RMTP is the culmination of 14 months of outreach, engagement and

data analysis; a service plan for Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and Washtenaw Counties and the City of Detroit to build on the foundation established by providers, coordinate current service and introduce premium new rapid transit options.

Mr. Ford reported on public meetings to be held in the coming month, and announced that the RTA board will vote on the final Plan at their July 21 meeting.

## 1.0 Board and Staff Reports

### 1.1 Presentation on Regional Transit Authority Plan

Mr. Stupka made a [presentation](#) on the Regional Master Transit Plan (RMTP). The RMTP was developed in building blocks of different transit demands throughout the region to build a family of services to meet demands. The foundation block is the existing network of the local service providers. Mr. Stupka reported on working with partnership providers to review and develop the plan. A good portion of the plan relies on service providers being the provider of note.

The financial projections include looking at state and federal sources that support the providers to ensure that current funding keeps track with the providers. While the RTA would be growing, the intent is to hold the providers steady as local systems are needed to make a regional system work.

Mr. Stupka distributed a document illustrating the [RTA Service Implementation Timeline](#).

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is the next building block. BRT is planned to be operated in dedicated rights-of-way with traffic signal priority, level boarding at stations and stations spaced one-half to one mile apart. There are four major BRT projects: Woodward Avenue, Gratiot Avenue, Michigan Avenue, and Washtenaw Avenue (Ann Arbor to Ypsilanti; scheduled for implementation in 2026).

RTA has worked with partners in Washtenaw County, including AAATA, on the Washtenaw Avenue project to mirror what was developed in the ReImagine Washtenaw project. The project is a mixed traffic BRT with limited stops, queue jumps and traffic signal priority; focused on the best implementation given the constrained traffic situation.

Express Services are planned on Woodward and Gratiot, and Michigan/Washtenaw that would be implemented in the first or second year following the RTA's millage. The Woodward and Gratiot projects are underway and coordinated with SMART and DDOT. The Michigan/Washtenaw project is proposed to connect Ann Arbor and Detroit using express buses or other appropriate service to close the large gap in service as soon as possible.

Regional Rail between Ann Arbor and Detroit is scheduled for implementation in 2022 with stops in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Wayne, Dearborn and Detroit (New Center). The service connects to M1 Rail and Detroit Metropolitan Airport from Wayne. Dedicated feeder services are included between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor to get people in those communities to regional rail stations and people arriving on rail circulated throughout the community.

There are a series of ten corridors with Cross-County Connectors, mostly in the eastern portion of the region. Mr. Stupka explained that most mid-day, evening and weekend bus service in the corridors requires a transfer. The Cross-County Connectors, operated in partnership with SMART and DDOT, would eliminate the need for passengers to transfer.

Mr. Stupka referred to the full [RMTP Draft Plan](#) which includes a chapter detailing the policy actions needed to get to implementation including: releasing requests for proposals, developing governmental agreements with partners, design and environmental clearance.

There are four Commuter Express routes: M-59, I-75, Ann Arbor to Canton (2018 implementation) and Ann Arbor to Plymouth (2018 implementation). The Canton route assumes that RTA would take over and double the express service currently provided by AAATA.

Local Service routes are planned to provide new service with 30-60 minute headways. This includes Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor feeder connectors to the regional rail system. Mr. Stupka reported that the feeder service is conceptual. This includes a route in Ypsilanti that connects to BRT service at the eastern edge of Wayne; local route that would operate in express mode to Canton. This would allow people to travel to either end of the corridor.

Airport Express service is modeled after AAATA's AirRide service, includes five routes and RTA proposes to take over AirRide service in 2017 and incorporate regional service and other routes. Connecting service is proposed to downtown Detroit, Wayne, Novi, Oakland and Macomb. Stop locations would be limited in express-style service fashion, and consideration is being given for a stop in Ypsilanti.

M1 "Q" Line service opens in 2017 with RTA management scheduled for 2024. The specifics of Paratransit and Mobility Management are still being worked through. Expansion of the paratransit network to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and providing access to new services in the region are included in the plan. RTA will be working with existing providers to identify regional administrative duties that the RTA could take on such as coordinated ADA eligibility run by the RTA and a central call center to arrange rides throughout the network.

RTA is planning an Innovative Mobility Pilot Program where future mobility is considered; expanding beyond bus and rail services, extending mobility to lower density areas of the region and providing services later in the evening. This would also include partnering with BikeShare, large campuses, employers, and shuttle programs to solve first and last mile problems.

RTA is working on a Coordinated Fare System with one card to get on all systems in the region. Mobile application technology is being explored including integration of payment via Quick Response “QR” Code and bank card. Mr. Stupka noted the importance of maintaining equity of fare payment options.

Mr. Stupka reported that RTA legislation requires that 85% of the millage generated in each county be returned to that county of origin. The RTA will ask for 1.2Mils for a 20-year program. Mr. Stupka added that a 20-year program is necessary to compete for federal funding for long-term projects such as BRT.

## 2.0 Question Time

Mr. Mahler opened the floor for questions. The content below is intended to capture the essence of questions and suggestions from AAATA board members and corresponding responses from RTA representatives.

Mr. Gururaja commented on the early implementation of commuter express and airport express service.

Mr. Gururaja: Is there a way to get people going between the cities in a rapid or an efficient way before the rail would start to get an idea of how many people want to ride it and get people used to the idea that this service exists and fills the gap?

Mr. Stupka: Absolutely. There is an unfortunate circumstance of the idea coming after printing. What looks like the Michigan service would focus on the Ann Arbor to Detroit connection. Yes, it is our intention to work on a commuter or an express bus style service to connect Ann Arbor and Detroit early in 2018.

Mr. Gururaja: And that would be on Michigan Avenue and local surface streets and not the freeway?

Mr. Stupka: Completely up for discussion with this board and other partners that we have worked with along the corridor.

Mr. Wade: What does “up for discussion” mean? Where does the AAATA board fit into the policy conversation? What ability does the board have over whether BRT happens in 2016 or 2020? It’s important to know who makes those decisions and how.

Mr. Stupka: Each one of the major projects that require any kind of partnership would come with a starting intergovernmental agreement. If AAATA is the operator of record, RTA would work with AAATA to partner and develop an agreement that the AAATA and RTA boards would negotiate and adopt to lay out the terms of the partnership. In terms of the BRT implementation, we did have a robust planning process around those projects and have a locally preferred alternative adopted by the RTA board. The implementation of the projects has been set up purposefully. The schedules are in the middle of conservative and aggressive. We are already talking about how to develop a transparent and purposeful reporting process in terms of what property tax revenues look like every year, how the program is being delivered and being able to have constant communication about that.

Mr. Ford: We recognize the need for checks and balances, being able to be transparent and working with you to have those infrastructures built into those types of issues for each of the providers that we are working with.

Mr. Bernard noted the order of events and the contribution that the board's constituency is going to be making, noting the board's fiduciary to the Authority and not all of Washtenaw County.

Mr. Bernard: How are we prioritizing things? One of the first things that affects the Authority is the Airport Ride; we are already doing that well. Why is that one of the first hallmarks of a process going forward? Assuming what the public is going to see about the plan, where do you think the public is going to be most critical of what the plan brings forward in Washtenaw County, and how should we be talking with them about those elements that they think are most important?

Mr. Stupka: By and large the most requested item is the Regional Rail project. The idea with the larger projects is to deliver something to each one of the spokes in the region within first six years. These are large and complex capital projects. We've tried to prioritize that project and bring it forward on the same track for example as Woodward BRT. The Airport Express service is up for discussion. If you wanted to keep it, we could bring on something else. We are looking at the two most dynamic markets and where it makes sense for us to start making that connection and help take over as a regional provider. There was nothing else than that. The Washtenaw BRT project is a little bit later in the program, by design, because we are bringing other projects forward and trying to time them out with the federal processes that we have to go through.

Mr. Bernard: When you think about how the public is going to react, what things do you think people in this constituency are going to be most concerned about with the RTA? What information do I need to have in order to be able to respond to them?

Ms. Gerber: One of the ways we can talk about the benefit of the RTA to people within TheRide's constituency in particular is that we are bringing more transit resources to the region. You folks are doing outstanding work providing transportation. I'm positive that you have additional work you would like to do. You will have resources freed up to be

able to begin to address some of those additional needs and new transit opportunities that your current budget environment does not allow you to do. From the perspective of folks within Washtenaw County and the AAATA service area that's the strongest case in favor of why this is good for your constituencies. The flip side of that is there are plenty of folks in this region who don't personally use transit. It's the same battle that you face, it's the same battle that we face; transit is "used by some, needed by all". But not everybody understands that and believes that. There are plenty of folks who will not receive direct personal benefits in the sense of their mobility changes. We all face the challenge of making the case for the broader community benefits of transit, even to individuals who are not personally going to ride, but who are going to benefit from having a more robust, richer transit system within our region.

Mr. Bernard noted Ms. Gerber's comment that the RTA would free up resources locally.

Mr. Bernard: Could you talk about that with some specificity?

Ms. Gerber: There are a number of transit needs being met by the RTA in the region. Additional service on route 4 is a continuing and growing area of transit demand. A lot of resources go to that route. By adding BRT on that route, we're not trying to take away from what you're doing, but it does allow you to reallocate resources currently being used on that route. Likewise, if a decision is made that AirRide makes more sense to couple together with other airport service and get economies of scale that RTA could find by having five AirRide services rather than one, that would also free up resources. And all of the local connectors are not only going to be serving people who are riding the commuter rail, but others moving about the region also. It's a dense system. We're not trying to take away service, revenues or the good work AAATA is doing. RTA has different resources than you do and by adding them to the pot, the AAATA board will have to have a discussion about what you do with those additional resources. We see ourselves as partners and collaborators in that, but some of that is a local problem.

Mr. Krieg commented on discussing the RMTP with leadership from Ypsilanti Township and some discouragement about what voters in Ypsilanti Township may see in terms of what is being offered. Mr. Krieg noted that Ypsilanti Township is the second largest municipality in the county. Mr. Krieg commented on the map with one station for the train and one station for BRT potentially located in Ypsilanti Township, and maybe some express service, but the bulk of the township has nothing. Mr. Krieg referred to a study about housing disparity which identified a problem in eastern Washtenaw County. The study recommended that better transit needs to be provided. Mr. Krieg noted that there is currently no way to get to job centers east in Wayne County. Mr. Krieg is hoping that the RTA can make stronger connections to Livonia. Ypsilanti Township leadership also expressed concern about the amount of time people would be paying the tax without seeing any major return of their funding. Mr. Krieg suggested that there needs to be a good response to this concern.

Ms. Gainsley commented on the Ypsilanti Connector which comes online in 2018 and connects Washtenaw County to Wayne County noting that the service connects people

in Willow Run to jobs east. Ms. Gainsley suggested thinking about the name “Ypsilanti Connector” since the route gets people from Ypsilanti into Wayne and to BRT. Ms. Gainsley raised a concern that some of the routes require going to Ann Arbor in order to get somewhere which can be unattractive from Ypsilanti.

Ms. Gainsley: What is the actual timeline for the Ypsilanti Connector local? How long would it take an airport shuttle bus to get from Ypsilanti to Wayne?

Mr. Stupka: The service is planned for 30 minute headways with an express feel.

Ms. Gainsley commented on the [RTA Service Implementation Timeline](#) and Michigan BRT scheduled for 2026. Ms. Gainsley suggested finding a different way to present the information graphically, as some connector service is planned for 2018.

Ms. Gainsley: Is it the intention that Washtenaw BRT would be operated by AAATA?

Mr. Stupka: Yes, and conversations are underway with AAATA.

Mr. Stupka commented on regional rail coming online in 2022 noting that RTA plans for four years of work to develop the service.

Ms. Gainsley suggested that the RTA has potential to add value to airport service by expanding service from Ann Arbor to the airport to Detroit and back.

Ms. Gainsley: Is that part of the intention? What are the intentions with the Lansing piece?

Mr. Stupka: RTA wants to look at both services to see a way to get the airport service and a commuter service to work together from a financial standpoint. RTA has the ability to control fares for different types of riders, especially given the economy of scale with five routes. This might need to be tested out. RTA does not assume taking on the Lansing piece.

Ms. Gott noted that the brochure describes BRT on Washtenaw as being in dedicated lanes, but Mr. Stupka’s presentation indicated that it would be in mixed traffic. Mr. Stupka confirmed that the service on Washtenaw would be in mixed traffic. Ms. Gott suggested that be made clear in Washtenaw County discussions to ward off false perceptions.

Ms. Gott: Can you help strengthen the direct and most significant benefits to Washtenaw County and articulate those in a way (simple talking points) that can be understood for the community whether it’s the direct or the indirect?

Ms. Gott noted the earlier reference to resource allocation but suggested a perception of simply a shift in expenditures vs. net new benefits.

Ms. Gott: Is the Ann Arbor Connector in the plan, but not a funded component?

Mr. Stupka: That's correct.

Ms. Gott: Is this the list [Implementation Time] of what the funded components of the plan are, but you have additional elements to the plan not listed because they are not part of the funding strategy?

Mr. Stupka: Yes.

Ms. Gott suggested that it might be helpful to be clear between the distinction of the funded and non-funded elements that are in coordination with the plan.

Mr. Stupka: Sure. We have a section in the plan that lays that out.

Mr. Allemang asked about a source to obtain more detail than provided in the presentation. Mr. Stupka referred Mr. Allemang to the full [RMTP Draft Plan](#) and outlined the areas detailed in the plan including outreach, market analysis, survey research, all plan elements in the presentation described in detail, financial analysis, capital planning assumptions, a separate planning process for each corridor, and a five-year implementation plan.

Mr. Allemang: Can all of the services in the plan be funded through the millage and not dependent on other major sources?

Mr. Stupka: There are state and federal assumptions for capital and operating. Steps were taken to ensure that Local Bus Operating (LBO) that supports AAATA and the other providers maintains at the current level and captures growth with inflation. Anything over and above that, RTA would take to support their services. The bulk of federal discretionary funding is associated with large projects, Small Starts and New Starts funding that does not currently come to the region. State capital funds are similar to the amounts that CATA in Lansing and TheRapid in Grand Rapids have been able to secure for their BRT projects.

Mr. Allemang: Does the plan include what proportion of the tax revenue will go this particular service?

Mr. Stupka: On an agency level. When RTA agrees to work with AAATA to deliver commuter express service, a subsidy is assigned to AAATA and included in the master plan.

Ms. Gerber (to Ms. Gott's earlier question): There is a Washtenaw County brochure on the website listing specific improvements to Washtenaw County and region-wide benefits. We've tried to articulate that in a number of ways so that depending on who we are talking to, some of the talking points will be useful. The Washtenaw County



benefits page isn't just about the dollars being spent in Washtenaw County but also how the regional system is going to link people to jobs in Washtenaw County.

Mr. Wade posed a hypothetical funding/decision making question.

Mr. Wade: If AAATA decided not to join in regional AirRide service and wanted to implement the Ypsilanti Connector before AirRide, could AAATA do that and still get the funding?

Mr. Stupka: RTA is in a public outreach period so there is time to adjust the plan, if you have certain concepts or ideas. The assumption is that RTA still has to meet 85% goals in the county. RTA would like to hear sooner than later, but will be reporting on a regular basis so that adjustments can be made.

Mr. Wade (to Mr. Carpenter): With regard to the financial assumptions and implications of the plan, is AAATA staff comfortable with the financial levels, and are there some things we should be concerned about? Any implications of funding streams AAATA might not have access to?

Mr. Carpenter: We have enjoyed an open relationship and dialogue with the RTA staff for some time. The question of financial implications to Washtenaw County and to this agency have been discussed. I'd like to bounce that question to colleagues at the podium to speak about financial implications of the RTA's planning efforts to this agency and to tradeoffs and have it on the table so everyone understands what those are.

Mr. Stupka: Let me break this into categories: formula funding sources where we may be competing with each other; Local Bus Operating (LBO) from the state and formula 5307 funding that comes from the Ann Arbor urbanized area. RTA assumes that AAATA is held at the current level of funding for both of those and tie that to inflation going forward. We don't assume that we are touching any of that money. We do have some growth assumptions built into the LBO and 5307 as outlined in the plan. We assume if there is new money coming to the RTA region as a whole beyond what goes to support the agencies with inflation, RTA does take that. Broadly, AAATA is reimbursed approximately 30% from LBO. We ensure that stays in a similar category. The RTA never goes above 12-13%. By state law, RTA cannot apply for reimbursement for any BRT projects. 5307 funds – similarly RTA assumes a light level of growth where RTA brings on large levels of revenue miles, assuming 1% growth, RTA assumes taking that growth on, and holding AAATA steady with inflation. By and large a lot of services RTA is looking at funding in partnership with AAATA, if the RTA is taking in money, we're giving it back to you to subsidize the service. Over and above that, RTA assumes that there will be millage dollars to support any new services such as the Ypsilanti Connector, that would be 100% funded by the RTA with brand new money. If RTA took over commuter express in Canton, that would allow for savings on route #4 because of BRT. RTA would work in partnership with feeder routes, or perhaps invest that in local routes and make those the feeders. There are lots of pieces of partnership already being worked on that

will create some savings for the agency, and that's a local decision as to how to deploy those resources.

Mr. Bernard commented on the RTA providing services for people who have disabilities suggesting that it would be useful to reframe how that is discussed. Mr. Bernard suggested that the message to the constituency of people who have disabilities should not be that we are doing just what the law requires; there should be a real investment in people who have disabilities, and people in other circumstances who rely on public transit, to be able to travel in the area of the transit authority.

Mr. Bernard requested that Mr. Stupka expand on the kinds of services the RTA is envisioning providing and what RTA will be doing to help that constituency.

Mr. Stupka: RTA is focused on being able to provide one-seat rides for people with disabilities throughout the region. The other piece is figuring out how to partner with smaller providers in outlying areas to allow for people using those services today to have a better direct connection into the regional services, and develop local service in areas where there is no service, with a focus on trying to connect into the regional service.

Mr. Bernard: What is RTA's orientation towards environmental responsibility?

Mr. Stupka: RTA is looking at developing levels of service by putting the right service in the right community to get people out of their cars and onto transit. RTA is doing some ridership modeling to look at what can be done to lower vehicle miles traveled. RTA is looking at different types of bus technology and partnerships around BRT stations to do anything alternative energy-wise.

Mr. Gururaja: Given the 85% return on investment, what is the return of the tax revenues for the communities in this service district? Because the services are mostly coming back to the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti urban core, what is that number?

Mr. Stupka: I don't have the number off the top of my head. We look at it on a county-by-county basis. It's something that could be pulled together and shared through staff.

Mr. Gururaja commented on issues with trust among governmental entities. Mr. Gururaja indicated that while AAATA seems to be financially sound, he has concerns about the trajectory of the agency.

Mr. Gururaja: Should we trust that this plan can be sustained financially over a long period of time with budgeting for capital replacement? You mentioned reliance on federal and state funds for capital and operating. What is the confidence that those funds will come through and if they don't, why not, and what is the backup plan?

Mr. Stupka: I believe we have a solid and sustainable plan and will take great pains to make sure that the capital projects have large contingencies. We also looked at

developing operating and maintenance costs that were accurate to the inflationary time, and looked at the historic growth of transit costs in the region over the last 20 years. I feel confident that we've done as much as we can to ensure that this is going to be a sustainable plan. On the operating side we don't assume a lot of federal and state resources; it's a small amount of the overall program. On the capital side we assume that we would compete for Small Starts and New Starts and are going through a quick evaluation process and believe RTA will be competitive for all of the projects. We will be working with FTA to ensure that we can pull funding down for all projects. It's a difficult process and that is why the timelines are conservative.

Ms. Gainsley commented on ADA service in the plan noting that a lot of it is taking off of what TheRide is doing. Ms. Gainsley noted that the AAATA hears monthly that AAATA could be doing a better job on mobility services. Ms. Gainsley suggested that combining those services across the region is both an opportunity and a risk. There are good economies of scale like dispatching to get people connected to their rides more quickly.

Ms. Gainsley: If there is an issue, how do we as an agency, trying to serve our constituents, respond to that? What kind of control do we have assuming that this is a regionalized dispatching? How do we respond to those constituents effectively and make changes and address problems with regional systems?

Mr. Stupka: We would work with all the providers to develop intergovernmental agreements to be able to respond to the process through which you would do that. We would have to weigh the regional need vs. the local need and work on it together. One of the things we want to establish and identify in the master plan is a mobility management task force that comprises a group of providers and other nonprofit mobility managers throughout the region and that would be a sustained task force that keeps us on track and communicating on a regular basis.

Ms. Gainsley: If this agency has extra money and decides to invest in mobility services, it seems like there are some area where that could create a discrepancy. We want to make sure AAATA would have the freedom to invest further, go above and beyond for our constituents, and that wouldn't be prevented in any way.

Mr. Stupka: I don't think it's our intention to prevent that.

Mr. Stupka commented on an area he forgot to mention earlier. An independent financial task force went through the model and detailed assumptions and helped vet numbers included in the plan.

Mr. Mahler referred to the intergovernmental agreements, relationships between RTA and local providers and who has the operational and administrative control.

Mr. Mahler: Who is the contractor and who is the contractee?

Mr. Stupka: RTA is the contractor and AAATA is the contractee (vendor).

Mr. Mahler: To the extent you are going to rely on local providers to provide services, when we have issues on routes, will we have administrative control when we have complaints? What is the process for us to fix the problems on the spot and what is the charge-back mechanism so when we incur costs we can get that back from the RTA?

Mr. Stupka: It's something we would identify through the intergovernmental agreement and how the process would work. So if there is a breakdown on a shared service, AAATA is the vendor and RTA is the administrator we would have to figure out how that works. The operating and maintenance costs we have for all the services does cover standard operating and maintenance for all vehicles and services.

Mr. Mahler: When you say "standard operating and maintenance" one of my concerns is financial impact. What I did not hear you account for is taking AAATA staff and using it to provide RTA services, which is not in our budget and to the extent I don't hear you saying is, "We're going to provide the money to you". If we get more staff to administer these programs, that would be a strain on our budget. Can you speak to that and assure the board that's not going to restrain staff and the budget?

Mr. Stupka: The RTA uses the NTD [National Transit Database] fully allocated cost model also used by AAATA that includes: vehicle operations (staff to operate the buses), vehicle maintenance, non-vehicle maintenance, administration and there is a separate fuel category. The master plan leaves out local bus service assigned to AAATA

Mr. Mahler: Would the RTA have operations staff to interface with AAATA staff on the provision of these services for maintenance schedules, operation of equipment and capital expenses, or is that AAATA providing that information to RTA? Which way is the information going to flow? Will RTA say, "Here's the schedule", or is it up to us to give that information to you?

Mr. Stupka: It will be a little bit of a two-way street. As the operator/vendor of record you'd be working to integrate the schedule with your other schedules, blocking and facility needs. RTA would have more of an administrative role. We're not going to say, "You need to run this bus every 15 minutes and the time points are X, Y, Z". We'll say, "We're providing you funding to operate a bus with this frequency". How do we work with you to make sure that it fits in with everything else you're doing? Does that help?

Mr. Mahler: If we are the contractee, I would like to know what the contractor's responsibility is. I'm happy to have control over it, and would probably want that, because Matt and staff are the experts. I'm also interested to see how the warranties and indemnification work from a legal point of view. This is probably for Liz or Alma, when the RTA board goes forward with discharging its duties, how do you see your role in terms of interfacing with this board? In this process we have not felt totally in the loop on a lot of the plan going forward and want to make sure that we don't get edicts from a centralized power saying, "This is what the vision is going forward". The vision of the RTA is going to impact our vision and our own planning process. How does the RTA

board plan to interface with this board to make sure to not only keep us abreast of what is going on, but we have meaningful input?

Ms. Wheeler Smith: We've offered to be in constant contact with you as you see the need to communicate with us. As board members we represent Washtenaw County's interests on the board. We have to hear from you to know what you need us to bring forward. We're opening a channel tonight that we hope to sustain for the next three or four years that I'm in service to the RTA. It is certainly my intention that we talk frequently. If it means asking for a session with the executive committee of your board or 15-20 minutes at each of your board meetings so we can keep you apprised of what's going on and you can certainly tell us where you think we're missing the boat. This is an opportunity for us to step up and be your representatives and to answer questions.

Mr. Mahler: This is crucial for not only the first couple of months but through the implementation, and into the first four or five years; this is a 20-year plan. If we don't have a liaison to your board and us, it's going to be difficult. We have had a lot of board members who have RTA involvement. I think we need to hear from you on what's being said.

Ms. Wheeler Smith: Again, we're really happy to come, and between the two of us we can make any board meeting. We can make a meeting with your executive team as you're shaping up your agenda, if that's where you would prefer to interface with us. That has to be your decision.

Ms. Gerber: The board and the board meetings are not the only way for board members to interact with RTA people.

Ms. Gerber complimented Ms. Grynowicz and Ms. Stasiak being leaders among the providers.

Ms. Gerber: There are lots of ways that information flows. I totally agree that at this level, board-to-board, now that we have a plan, that we need to talk about it. It's critical to have board-to-board discussions, but there are so many other ways.

Ms. Gerber noted that Mr. Gururaja is a current member of the CAC [Citizens Advisory Committee] and Mr. Krieg has been a long-time member of that committee. There are other conversations going on as well. Not to downplay the board to board but to say we agree, and all the other stuff needs to keep going too. A plan is a plan. It's not a contract. It's a living document that necessarily is going to have to evolve over time. The staff has made thoughtful and conservative assumptions about ways we think the world might change, but we can't anticipate all of it. When the plan passes, we need to continue that conversation. Not only in the operationalization, but also in the conceptual work. The board is always available. We invite you to come to us, but we will also invite ourselves to come to you to be sure that we can continue that conversation. I do hope that we also recognize that all these other conversations are going on as well.

Ms. Gerber: This month is critical. The planning process and the discussions will continue after, but this is a critical point to get any direct input into the plan that will be considered by the RTA board in July.

Ms. Wheeler Smith: This is your chance to make changes.

Ms. Gerber announced three upcoming public meetings in Washtenaw County noting that the meetings are opportunities to get input from the collective constituencies.

Ms. Gott: Looking forward, do you imagine other engagement with us and/or county communication in order to assess Washtenaw County support/input? I think it was mentioned earlier that one of the struggles for us is that we don't represent all of Washtenaw County. We want to be respectful, but there are many other folks in the county that are not within our service area. We would like to understand how our involvement is integrated with your other countywide effort.

Ms. Wheeler Smith: We really have understood the concern that you as a board and that Matt has indicated that AAATA does not speak for Washtenaw County. We've reached out to WATS [Washtenaw Area Transportation Study] to work with them on outreach not only to the out-county, but also to Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Pittsfield; the groups that you already represent. That's a new direction for us within the last four weeks. We will solidify how that works with the RTA board and RTA management so that we have a smooth path. They will be including you in the discussions for all of Washtenaw. We're not going to say that we're only dealing with the out county with WATS. We're also going to have an interactive process for entire county. You've been instrumental in how RTA has come into being.

Mr. Krieg: I have been thinking about getting beyond "if" to "when". As I do so I look at the map and see that there really is nothing west of Ann Arbor or south. I'm a little concerned because even though those areas appear to have lower population, I think they do have some pretty influential people.

Mr. Krieg made three suggestions: 1. Consider supplementing the WAVE (Western Washtenaw Area Value Express) and allowing it to provide more robust service that doesn't end at the boundary of Scio Township so that people have to change buses; 2. In conjunction with the initiation of regional rail, that there be a bus that connects the regional rail station with Saline. Saline has a number of people who if they felt they were not really getting anything, they might make a significant push in the wrong direction as we look at the forthcoming campaign; 3. Folks in Dexter and Chelsea have been hoping for regional rail service. At one point that was being contemplated. It's not on the map now. Would it be possible to put it on as a tentative second phase so that there won't be a sense of complete letdown and disappointment to everybody who lives west of Ann Arbor?

Mr. Stupka: The partnership with WAVE is on our radar. The Saline connecting bus is a new concept so we'll take that as a comment and take it back with everything else. The extension westward is a little bit difficult because we've created a plan that lives within itself. If "maybe" phase 2 elements are added, it gets a little bit off what we're trying to do. We are trying to contemplate ways to add needs and projects like that to a supplemental document to the plan that indicates that if resources come in better, we will add items. That may not be in this version, but a phase 2.

Mr. Bernard: Thanks again for all the hard work. This is an opportunity for more transit and the opportunity to interact with other transit agencies where we don't have that opportunity right now. It's fantastic when we see the vision through which is the easy part. Looking at the plan with the idea that plans don't go as planned, have you given thought to where, in the published plan, is the "give" when something goes wrong?

Mr. Stupka: Are you looking for what would I cut first?

Mr. Bernard: Right. Trying to be pragmatic. You still need momentum over time. You have lots of agencies to work with. In so many ways it's all up-side, but in the end we're about to be doing this work ourselves. When looking at priorities, when push comes to shove, how will we prioritize when the priorities planned for don't get to be the way we wanted to be?

Mr. Stupka: Not having a perfect strategy for that as of yet, certainly we are governed by the 85% rule. We have to look at that first. We would have to look at an equitable way to pull back services to delay them to ensure that we still met our 85% goal. There is a lot of give on levels of service; being able to maybe introduce service at a lower frequency or more limited span. There are a lot of assumptions as to types and style of service and what that looks like. That could be adjusted, if needed. We could look at the timing of when we bring things online but have to look at 85% to ensure there is financial equity in the plan.

Mr. Bernard: There are all these agencies collaborating. Relationships occasionally collide. Has RTA given thought to places where there might be disharmony at some point in the future with AAATA?

Mr. Stupka: By and large we have had great interactions with the AAATA staff. We have talked in great detail about things and are on similar pages with things of minute detail. I don't know if we need commuter feeder services that are as robust as staff feels they need to be. I think we can make adjustments to local services when they connect to regional rail. That's a discussion we'll have to figure out.

Mr. Bernard: It's interesting for us to hear and would want to invite fellow board members to chime in, if you can think of things.

Mr. Mahler: Where we're going to have friction is bargaining power. We're going to be operating under intergovernmental agreements. If the millage passes, we're obliged to

provide service. And we are going to be operating via intergovernmental agreements. Who is going to set the terms of those? It's not going to be us; it's going to be them. What ability do we have to say we don't like those terms and therefore we're not going to provide service? That's where legal counsel comes in. What meaningful input do we have? Our choices are don't provide the service, or accept what they do. That's why I was trying to get to as much detail as possible. It will be interesting when we get the first draft to see what it's all about.

Mr. Ford: For all this to work, we have to be able to work together. I understand that there are rubs. It is in the RTA's best interest for all providers to do well. We have to raise ourselves up and work together. We come at it with that intent. This survives and makes progress when we are all on this path together. We will be working with you on those contracts for the betterment of the people we need to serve. We're not losing sight of that. That may not answer the specific contract questions or language; we will get to that.

Mr. Bernard: I agree with you, but you're uniquely situated here to anticipated places where those infelicities will emerge, and I'm wondering if you've given thought to where are the places you are likely to get pushback?

Mr. Ford: I'm sure there will be pushback in different places. I think it's how we respond to the pushback; how we adapt to the changes. We've come this far in the process and there have been things we didn't anticipate. We have had to adjust, relook at the situation, work through issues and get through hurdles.

Ms. Gerber: I think that it is instructive to look at how the RTA and providers have managed the master agreement process because it is sort of the same thing we are talking about. The legislation was vague about what the relationship between the RTA and providers needed to be. It gave the RTA powers we have chosen not to exercise like taking a lot of LBO money for example, because we need strong providers. We can't do this work without the providers being as strong as possible. The work with providers through the master agreement demonstrates the intention to continue that process. The process is collaborative and recognizes mutual need to get the benefit of RTA in the region. We have established a track record at RTA of working collaboratively and openly with the providers. That is our orientation and approach. The details of what comes up and how we deal with it are the content of what those discussions need to be going forward.

Ms. Gott: One opportunity that we have is to develop a strong tool for monitoring because part of the opportunity to be successful is to have good disclosure. Collaboration is one thing, but you can have a tool that helps expose schedule delays. Being able to track, understand have some opportunities to have some boundaries on what becomes acceptable or how we address from what we think is in the plan to what might evolve that becomes a change in the plan. It would be helpful to start developing a tool now to make clear some of the detail so that tool can be shared and fleshed out.



Mr. Ford: I appreciate the comment. We have been talking about checks and balances and how we bring folks together and show transparency and accountability in working with each other. I have been on the other side of the equation and have a unique understanding of some of the concerns that are being brought up from providers, and how we want to move forward and work with folks. That is part of our deliberation when we meet and converse. We have some perspective there too.

### 3.0 Public Time

Jim Mogensen appeared before the Board. Mr. Mogensen noted that the existing service maps in the master plan for AAATA have the old maps and don't have the May service changes. Mr. Mogensen noted that he does not, and others don't have a credit card which prevents some online and other types of transactions. Mr. Mogensen suggested that sometimes planning makes assumptions. Mr. Mogensen suggested that low income people don't get multi day passes because they don't have the cash flow. Mr. Mogensen commented on taking public transit to work in Silver Springs, Maryland even though he had a car. Mr. Mogensen commented on a situation when a regional group was upset because there were buses following where the Metro was going. There were people who would not take the Metro because it was more expensive. Mr. Mogensen expressed concern about the RTA's plan and a focus on commuter lines, and not on buses and people getting around. Mr. Mogensen suggested that some of the disconnects are not a technical problem, but a social problem.

### 4.0 Adjourn

Mr. Bernard moved to adjourn the meeting with support from Ms. Gainsley. The passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen Wade, Secretary