



## Legislation Text

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Resolution to Approve a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor Transportation Authority, Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority, and the University of Michigan to Conduct the Ann Arbor Connector Feasibility Study and Appropriate \$80,000.00 from the General Fund for the City Share of the Study (\$80,000.00) **(8 Votes Required)**

The City of Ann Arbor is considering options to enhance transit service in the City. The Ann Arbor Model for Mobility provides a transportation vision for the City based on the principles of congestion mitigation, increased air quality, and positive economic development. Enhanced transit service can improve mobility, provide attractive, time-competitive alternatives to automobile travel, and strengthen the economic competitiveness of the city and region while adding to our sustainability. According to recent analysis conducted as part of the City's Transportation Plan Update, the current roadway and transit systems may not be able to maintain the current mobility and quality of life in the City as we experience growth in employment, residents, and visitors.

A reduction in the quality of life of the City can result if the community does not address transportation systems. The Ann Arbor Connector is intended to provide a rapid-transit linkage between the proposed east-west, Ann Arbor to Detroit, and north-south, Ann Arbor to Howell, regional commuter rail systems, the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (AATA) and University of Michigan (UM) local transit service. It will connect major activity centers in the City to one another. It also supports enhanced accessibility and mobility for bicyclists and pedestrians.

An enhanced local rapid-transit option is a tool providing much needed capacity with the ability to move large volumes of people daily as well as at key times such as during the Ann Arbor Art Fair and Football Saturdays. Effective rapid-transit service can also assist the City in avoiding commitment of valuable land resources to the parking of automobiles in our key business areas. The use of valuable land for parking is likely to occur with the expected growth and in the absence of effective higher capacity transit options. Lastly, it is recognized that higher capacity forms of transit can support the City's development and redevelopment goals and initiatives while maintaining our existing quality of life.

### **Plymouth Road Corridor (Northeast Corridor)**

The Plymouth Road Corridor extends northeasterly from the Downtown to the edge of the City, and beyond. Staff has determined the Plymouth Road Corridor has an average density of 30 jobs and residents per acre, which is ideal for a rapid-transit service. This high activity corridor has a limited number of parallel local roadways; Plymouth Road, Geddes Road, and Fuller Road. All of the roadways are currently experiencing peak hour traffic issues. It is projected that absent an effort to improve travel, the conditions along this corridor will worsen over time. An additional feature of this corridor is that the population over 65 years of age along this corridor is projected to increase 160% by 2030. The population in this age cohort is forecast to exceed 8,000 persons in this time period. This demographic information is important to consider as this age group relies more heavily on transit service for mobility.

The corridor is currently served by both the UM Bus System and the AATA. There are a number of park and ride facilities along this corridor with another one undergoing design at the US23 Interchange with Plymouth Road. It is expected to be constructed in 2009 or 2010. An informal estimate by the UM's Parking and Transportation Services Office estimates that students take between 3.2 and 4.0 million trips per year, using the free UM Bus System to access the UM North Campus along the corridor

### **State Road Corridor (Southern Corridor)**

The State Road Corridor extends from the Downtown to the I-94 interchange area near the Briarwood Mall. It is a corridor with similar conditions to the Northeast Corridor. These conditions include high levels of population, employment and transit ridership with expectation for more land development, economic growth and demand for transit service over time. The Draft Transportation Plan Update identifies this southern corridor as having characteristics and potential land use intensification to sustain a rapid-transit system. The South State Corridor can also accommodate an additional intercept park and ride facility near the I-94 interchange for trips headed north into the City's Downtown and UM campuses including the UM Medical Campus.

### **Procurement Process**

The City of Ann Arbor staff has worked collaboratively with the staff from the AATA, the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority (AADDA) and the UM. The agencies' staff actively supports advancing an analysis to determine the feasibility of implementing a transit service known as the Ann Arbor Connector. It is recognized a study can compare and evaluate the financial, engineering and environmental impacts and the mobility and economic benefits of such an investment as an essential next step.

A proposal for conducting a feasibility study of various alternative transit technologies and their financial, engineering and environmental feasibility has been made to the partners. The proposal was in response to a procurement facilitated by AATA. The procurement process complies with Federal Transit Administration requirements for such process. URS Corporation has been selected as the contractor from the three proposals received. The budget for the study is anticipated at up to \$640,000.00. The four partners, AADDA, AATA, City of Ann Arbor and the UM, agreed to bring this recommendation forward to their respective governing bodies, so each party can formally commit to their share of the project.

Attached to this memorandum is a detailed MOU which will formally link the partners and confirm the commitments to move this effort forward. The current MOU considers a City of Ann Arbor share at \$80,000.00. The funding for the City's share is recommended to be appropriated from the General Fund. The attached resolution appropriates funds and directs the City Administrator to enter into the MOU.

At this time, the AATA and UM have indicated agreement with the MOU and have committed to their respective shares. The DDA held preliminary discussion about this effort this past winter and will consider this item for formal action in April. Once all of the authorizations are made, the project will begin.

### **Products**

The result of the Connector Feasibility Study will include a detailed technical report with recommendations regarding how to proceed. During the study process the community will have an

opportunity to explore various transit technologies and understand how such transit options can serve the community. The study will produce an estimate of ridership at the corridor and station level. The study enables us to gain a better understanding of the relative benefit of the transit investment to the community as a whole as well as the stakeholders. Once completed, this study will provide a basis to explore next steps.

This study is the first step in a multi-year process to determine the viability of this significant investment in transportation. The study will enable the city to move forward into a more detailed design process, if warranted and desired. As the study process evolves, a statement called a "Purpose and Need" document will be developed along with recommendations on how to address those needs. Detailed design work, system development and operations will all need to be addressed and will follow in later stages of effort. . The City Council will be fully informed about progress during the process. The community will be informed by the study efforts and the City and other partners will have a basis to proceed from.

Prepared by: Eli Cooper, A.I.C.P., Transportation Program Manager

Reviewed by: Sue F. McCormick, Public Services Administrator

Approved by: Roger W. Fraser, City Administrator

Whereas, To judge the feasibility of the Ann Arbor Connector, a formal study and analysis of various alternative transit technologies and their financial, engineering and environmental impacts is an essential first step;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor, the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (AATA), the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority (AADDA) and the University of Michigan (UM) found it necessary and desirable to undertake an Ann Arbor Connector Feasibility Study and employ a qualified consulting firm to develop said study and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to engage the qualified consulting firm;

Whereas, URS Corporation has been selected from the pool of the three proposals that were received as part of a procurement by Ann Arbor Transportation Authority, and reviewed by an evaluation team consisting of representatives from the City of Ann Arbor, the AATA, the UM, and the AADDA for the purpose of completing the Ann Arbor Connector Feasibility Study;

Whereas, URS Corporation has demonstrated the required experience personnel and competitive fee schedule to perform the work;

Whereas, The AATA will contribute \$320,000.00, the University of Michigan will contribute \$160,000.00 and AADDA will contribute \$80,000.00 towards the completion of the study; and

Whereas, It is requested the City contribute \$80,000.00 for the purpose of undertaking the study;

RESOLVED, The City Council approve entering an MOU with AATA, AADDA and UM for the completion of the Ann Arbor Connector Feasibility;

RESOLVED, That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized and directed to execute said Memorandum Of Understanding after approval as to form by the City Attorney and approval as to substance by the City Administrator;

RESOLVED, That \$80,000.00 be appropriated to the 2009 Public Service general fund operation

budget for the purposes of undertaking the study, subject to the approval of funds in the stipulated amounts from the named parties ;

RESOLVED, That Council authorize the City Administrator to take the necessary administrative actions to implement this resolution; and

RESOLVED, That the appropriated funds be for the life of the project, to be available until expended without regard to fiscal year.