



Legislation Text

File #: 24-1012, **Version:** 2

Resolution in Support of Boosting State Investment in Public Transit

Whereas, Thousands of people rely on Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA) buses to get to work, school, and other destinations;

Whereas, Thousands of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County households, including seniors, students, low-income people, and people with disabilities, lack access to a car;

Whereas, Ann Arbor residents have a civil right to public transportation;

Whereas, For over 50 years, Ann Arbor residents have supported public transit through their local property tax dollars, the most recent millage increase passing in 2022 with 61% of the vote;

Whereas, The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) is allocating over \$80 billion to public transit;

Whereas, Congress recently passed the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) Appropriations Act, providing \$20.9 billion dollars to public transit;

Whereas, Every \$1 communities invest in public transportation generates approximately \$5 in economic returns;

Whereas, Accessible public transportation is crucial in mitigating social determinants of health by enhancing mobility, independence, and access to essential services for seniors and individuals with disabilities, thereby supporting their well-being and integration into the community;

Whereas, Reliable and accessible public transportation is essential for enabling people with disabilities to participate in competitive integrated employment, thereby fostering economic independence and contributing to a diverse and inclusive workforce;

Whereas, Investing in public transportation infrastructure and services can significantly reduce accessibility disparities faced by people with disabilities, providing them with equal opportunities to participate in society and access vital resources, thereby promoting inclusivity and equality;

Whereas, The State of Michigan has long supported public transit agencies throughout the state with allocations of funding from the state's Comprehensive Transportation Fund, particularly through Local Bus Operating (LBO) funding, which at one time funded nearly half the costs of running local buses;

Whereas, The State of Michigan allocated \$261 million in LBO funds in FY 2024, including \$45 million in one-time funds;

Whereas, Governor Whitmer's proposed budget allocates only \$221 M in LBO funds for FY 2025

which would result in the lowest state reimbursement rates in decades;

Whereas, According to MDOT, operating costs for public transit agencies increased 9% last year so the State would need to invest \$285M in LBO to not move backwards on transit;

Whereas, Failure to maintain state reimbursement rates to Local Bus Operating funding will imperil future wage and benefit increases to transit operators, mechanics, and customer service personnel who are still leaving for higher paying jobs in freight, school bus transportation, etc.; and

Whereas, This failure to keep up with inflation would threaten to undo the service improvements made by the AAATA in recent years, and potentially force cuts to essential bus service;

RESOLVED, Ann Arbor City Council affirms improved transit service is essential for the health and prosperity of Ann Arbor and its residents;

RESOLVED, Ann Arbor City Council formally urges the Legislature to increase Local Bus Operating funding in the FY2025 state budget to at least \$285 million to maintain state reimbursements levels to AAATA and other transit agencies; and

RESOLVED, Copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor, the Chairpersons of the Michigan House and Michigan Senate Appropriations Committees, and all Washtenaw County members of the Michigan Legislature.

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Ghazi Edwin, Briggs, Akmon and Harrison

As Amended and Approved by Ann Arbor City Council on June 3, 2024.