



April 30, 2014

Ann Arbor Transportation Authority
2700 South Industrial Highway
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
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theride.org

Kristin Schuster, Manager
Environmental Services Section
Bureau of Development
Michigan Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Ms. Schuster:

Thank you for your letter of April 7, requesting input regarding the Environmental Assessment for proposed improvements to the US -23 Corridor.

TheRide's interest in this project stems from the fact that the US-23 project limits include certain areas that are currently in our service area, and other areas that TheRide may serve in the future. Among the most important of these potential future services are those listed in our 30-Year Transit Master Plan entitled "A Transit Vision for Washtenaw County" adopted in 2012 by the then-AATA Board, and since adopted by the Regional Transportation Authority of SE Michigan. Those services include: express bus service to Whitmore Lake, express bus service to Livonia, and commuter rail service to the City of Howell. Our plan also outlines proposals for park and ride services and paratransit services for seniors and people with disabilities within the project limits.

TheRide appreciates the Department's desire to improve the operating environment for US-23, and supports the project to the extent it does not adversely impact the ability of our 30-Year Transit Master Plan to promote the broader goals of Washtenaw County, as well as neighboring jurisdictions. Those goals are:

- Support economic growth in Washtenaw County
- Promote livability in Washtenaw County
- Protect the environment
- Improve safety and security for all
- Promote efficient land use and development patterns

We believe that the US-23 project can be designed in a way that enhances transit's ability to promote these goals.

With that in mind, we offer the following recommendations for the project that we believe ought to be considered in the project design, and which would help contribute to a finding of no significant impact:

- 1) Establishment of any and all additional lanes of traffic created by the project as "high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes", that is lanes that can only be used by buses, and private vehicles with three or more occupants;
- 2) Creation of interceptor park and ride lots in conjunction with such HOV lanes, in locations designed and sized to minimize total vehicle miles travelled on US-23; and
- 3) Inclusion of commuter rail services in the corridor, a) during project construction, to mitigate the effects of project construction and to achieve project objectives to limit travel disruption

and, b) after project completion, to assist in achieving project objectives of relieving traffic congestion, improving safety, and ensuring overall transportation sustainability.

TheRide will be happy to assist in on-going project development, consistent with our recommendations above, and thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Ford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue ink color.

Michael G. Ford
Chief Executive Officer
Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority