

Transcript of recorded statement by Michael Ford at the AATA Board Meeting of November 15, 2012

Emphasis has been added.

Access to public transportation throughout Washtenaw County is a high priority for our region's economic vitality and growth. This is evidenced through the record ridership and the deep and passionate public support we have experienced from our residents. It is critical to Washtenaw County's quality of life that we put together the talent and resources to deliver a public transit system that residents have demanded of us. In my opinion, doing nothing is not an option. We respect the opinions of our elected officials who have chosen to withdraw their participation in the proposed transit authority in favor of **moving forward with a different process and a more compact authority**. We welcome all communities to participate in a future public transportation model. We are focused on planning for expanded service with elected officials and representatives from Washtenaw County's urban core communities. These communities have indicated a strong interest in developing an expanded transit network despite Ann Arbor City Council's actions to withdraw from the new transit authority. **These communities include the cities of Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Saline and the townships of Pittsfield, Ypsilanti and the Village of Dexter**. We will also continue to work with our communities who have purchase of services agreements such as Superior Township. In our review of services we will continue to ensure that AATA's history of strong fiscal stewardship is maintained. We will work with the PMER committees to review the feasibility of continuing to provide services initiated as part of our initial investment under the 5-year transit program. These services have produced successful results within months of their introduction but may no longer be sustainable without additional funding.

In December we will present current costs and some useful information and recommended evaluation process to PMER. With board's concurrence in January we will discuss the continuation of these services and funding with our various partners and riders. In February we will bring recommendations to the Board for adoption with the implementation to occur in April, depending on the decisions you have made at that time.

The services include doubling the frequency of our weekday service on Washtenaw Route 4. This improvement improved (static) ridership improved on-time performance. Express service routes between Canton and Chelsea have experienced ridership increases of 29% and 14% percent respectively. Expanded NightRide service to East Ypsilanti the number of riders increased by 31% over the first year. And AirRide, a public-private partnership with Michigan Flyer that runs between Ann Arbor and Detroit Metro airport - the AirRide providing more than 1000 trips per week and fares in the last month, October, paid for the local contribution. We will also approach and readdress the service as part of this process. In addition I know that we have another item placed on the agenda for action. In addition to reviewing these services we recommend deferring the plan for Route 5 Packard service but obviously that is up for discussion tonight. We understand these services enjoy widespread popularity with AATA passengers. We hope to avoid reduction or elimination of AATA operations. One of the ways for us to preserve AATA standards of service excellence is to continue to inform officials about the importance of expanded public transportation. We also need citizens to share their desires for expanded and improved services to their local elected leaders.