



ANN ARBOR CONNECTOR FEASIBILITY STUDY

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS SUMMARY

The study team hosted two focus group meetings on March 24, 2010 in the offices of the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The general themes emerging from the meetings were as follows:

Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths

- Existing transit systems are efficient, and vehicle traffic congestion is sporadic.
- The combined Ann Arbor Transportation Authority and University of Michigan transit systems are run well, clean, and operate on time.
- The ridership for the systems is high.
- Transit service in Ann Arbor is better than in most Michigan cities and is cost effective.

Weaknesses

- It is difficult to travel along the north-south routes due to vehicle traffic congestion, especially during peak travel times – there are often long headways.
- University of Michigan buses are overcrowded.
- Connections are needed between Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Detroit.
- The existing right of way is limiting for alternatives.
- Need more coordination between AATA, Greyhound and AMTRAK.
- Additional options for running during the evening hours are needed for downtown employees.

How would you describe the exiting pattern of development in the city?

- Development growth opportunities are limited within the City of Ann Arbor. Travelers need to be able to get into and out of AA via transit.
- There is a need to increase land use density, especially within the city core in order to support transit.
- New development is occurring outside the City of Ann Arbor, due to less expensive property.
- Michigan needs additional tools for making land use decisions due to the lack of regional decision-making and home rule traditions.



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How well does transportation serve the existing developments?

- The North end of Main Street, Huron View Nursing Home, New Center and the Art train need improved service.

How can transportation contribute to/complement new development patterns?

- Fuel prices will drive decision making in funding transit and choosing locations for new development.
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD) should be examined along the US-23 corridor.
- AATA service does not extend east of US-23 and therefore is not able to serve growth in the township.
- There is a concern over the fact that Arborland has refused to allow AATA operate on the mall property.
- Improved transportation infrastructure has the potential to contribute to increased property values and provide the opportunity to add density without sprawl

What are your opinions on alternative forms of transit?

- People are generally supportive of alternative transit systems, until there is a direct impact.
- There is a need to come up with a transit system that does not require an additional lane.
- Transit must be able to be competitive, even provide faster service.
- Elevated structures do not appear promising, because they are too intrusive.
- There is a preference to use electrically powered vehicles due to benefits in noise and clean energy.
- Need to look at technology that has many suppliers in order to keep costs down.

Do you think there is general support in the community for some type of advanced transit?

- There would be more support if improved transit could be run within the existing right-of-way.
- There is a desire to have a 'fun & innovative' transit experience.
- There is a need for cleaner and "greener" transportation alternatives to driving single-occupancy vehicles.