



December 4, 2009

Ann Arbor Transportation Authority
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Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
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theride.org

Mr. Jay Kaiser
AmCap, Inc.
1281 East Main Street
Stamford, CT 06902
(203) 327-2001

RE: Arborland Mall (Ann Arbor, Michigan)

Dear Mr. Kaiser:

As you may be aware, until early September AATA was having communications with Michael Kaiser of your office regarding your property in Ann Arbor, Arborland Mall. Our discussions were the result of Amcap's decision to no longer allow AATA buses to pull onto the mall's site to drop off and pick up passengers – passengers patronizing mall businesses, transferring to other buses, or commuting. AATA had been able to provide passengers with that on-site bus stop for nearly 30 years. Our communications with Mr. Kaiser regarded our desire to find a way for AATA to continue to have that on-site capability. I do not wish to reiterate the details of those communications here, but enclosed is a copy of our correspondence for your review. Some of the highlights, though, are as follows:

- The on-site bus stop is critical to passenger safety. Without the on-site stop, passengers have to board on two sides of Washtenaw Avenue, an extremely busy five-lane road. (Washtenaw Avenue is also a state business route and Arborland is located just west of a major interstate highway exit).
 - Arborland shoppers or employees who use transit to access businesses located in the mall, or who are riders transferring to eastbound and north/south buses must navigate three signal cycles to cross the five-lane road, and then walk a half-block to the bus stop on the south side of the road. This is hazardous and burdensome for even the most agile person, but it is particularly hazardous for those with children or who are elderly or disabled. Navigating this crossing will be near impossible once snow falls.
- Due to the relocation of the bus stops onto Washtenaw Avenue, and in order to continue serving Arborland, there are considerably more traffic back-ups than before, causing not only added difficulty for cars to enter and leave the mall, but also causing backups on the interstate's exit ramps. This congestion is particularly problematic during rush hours, special events at either of the nearby local universities, and during inclement weather.
- Many passengers – particularly the elderly and disabled – have expressed that they will avoid shopping or dining at Arborland due to the relocation of the bus stop.
- Many mall employees and employers have complained that the lack of convenient transit into the mall has made it difficult for many employees to get to work and that some are in danger of losing their jobs due to the change.

In these and earlier communications between AATA and Amcap, we were aware that you had some concerns about where commuters parking at Arborland parked their cars (roughly up to 100 at any time during weekdays). We worked toward making sure that the commuters parked away from the storefront parking spots, and we've been told by the retailers and Finsilver/Friedman that our efforts were effective. We have since expressed interest in further controlling where the commuters parked, but our offers have not been accepted. We noted that many commuters shopped and ate at the mall, as do passengers who made transfers, and that those shoppers have reduced patronizing businesses at Arborland or have found more convenient places to do their shopping and dining.

In our conversations with Amcap, the only issue of concern ever raised as basis or condition for the on-site buses to return has been Amcap's desire to have better options for the mall's currently limited ingress and egress, particularly with respect to cars leaving the mall and heading east on Washtenaw Avenue. Although this issue is certainly not one of AATA's creating, and although AATA is not an agency with jurisdiction over approving or resolving that issue, AATA undertook efforts to facilitate getting the appropriate governmental units to engage in working with Amcap on designs to mitigate the concern raised. Lining up these commitments was no small feat, but it did not appear to have been received by your company with any willingness to engage in further productive discussions. That is regrettable, but AATA still wishes to resolve this matter in a manner that will a) relieve the safety threat caused by Amcap's eviction of the bus stops, b) provide a convenient and safe location for shoppers, employees and commuters to board buses, c) provide service to the mall, which is an asset to its marketability, d) provide Amcap an opportunity to maintain Arborland's reputation as a valued and supportive corporate citizen of our community, and e) provide Amcap with adequate traffic arrangements for Arborland customers to make efficient use of the center.

Indeed, Amcap's refusal to try to constructively work out these issues with us will likely only exacerbate the problems identified. We can pursue working on these problems without your input and cooperation, but we believe that better solutions are possible if we work together.

Without your input and cooperation, I wish to briefly describe one of the scenarios being seriously considered due to our inability to continue to utilize the on-site bus stops as we have for the past decades. We are planning to improve the bus stops on Washtenaw Avenue, including constructing bus pull-off options for east and west bound buses. As a part of this design, the traffic signals would be re-timed and programmed to provide preferred "green lights" as the buses approach, and to provide "red lights" to the traffic along Washtenaw Avenue and specifically at the mall egress location at Pittsfield Blvd. to allow the buses to more easily pull back onto Washtenaw. This will likely add to the length of red lights for those exiting the mall. We understand that the egress is a problem for you. Unfortunately, without having an on-site bus stop option, it appears that your egress problem may worsen. Again – we do not wish for you to be inconvenienced and would prefer to not take this action knowing the concerns you've raised. We will not have a choice, though, if we cannot mutually work out a solution. The safety and flow of traffic in this corridor is a priority.

I am writing this letter now, and to you, with the hope that you will reconsider the company's stance. I am asking that you meet with me so that we can discuss this matter in further detail – before AATA and the City make the investment to alter the traffic-light programming and bus pull-outs. I also ask that we strive to resolve this before the weather worsens. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Time is truly of the essence and I much prefer having the buses stop on-site to be a win for Amcap and

Arborland and its tenants, a win for AATA, a win for Arborland's shoppers, a win for our passengers, and our community as a whole.

Sincerely,



Michael Ford
Chief Executive Officer



John Hieftje
Mayor, City of Ann Arbor

cc: Roger Fraser, Ann Arbor City Administrator
Mary Stasiak, AATA

Enclosures