

Robert Guenzel
1703 Morton
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

February 29, 2012

Michael Ford
Chief Executive Officer
Ann Arbor Transportation Authority
2700 South Industrial
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Dear Mr. Ford:

As Co-Chair of the Transit Master Plan Financial Task Force, I am writing to recognize the important accomplishments and recommendations of the group.

First, let me say that I am proud to facilitate the work of some of the most astute financial and public policy experts in the region. The Task Force – consisting of local business and not-for-profit leaders – has done a great job of delving into the very important and complex issue of public transit finance. With the support of these community leaders, I believe we will arrive at a funding strategy for transit that will meet with the high level of approval from ALL the County's citizens.

The Task Force has worked diligently with Transit Master Plan staff to examine the project budget, and the program of proposed services, and made many suggestions for prioritizing services and improving the program. As a result of these efforts, the initial funding 'gap', was reduced by about half.

In addition to trimming funding requirements, the Task Force offered suggestions for prioritizing services in a way that strengthens the appeal of the proposed transit program to citizens throughout Washtenaw County.

As the result of the Task Force's efforts, the goal of countywide transit is increasingly realistic, with the result of enhanced mobility for our citizens, a stronger regional economy, and a healthier environment.

While the Task Force has demonstrated that a 5-Year Transit Program can be realistically funded out of a .5 mil tax levy, I believe it is prudent to heed their advice and wait to make a final recommendation until we see if recently introduced legislation offers a superior alternative. Therefore, I would recommend that the Task Force reconvene at the appropriate time to evaluate whether to move forward with a millage recommendation.

In the meantime, I recommend to the AATA and the many countywide transit stakeholders that you continue to forge ahead with your plans for bringing transit services to all of Washtenaw County.

Thanks to Task Force Co-Chair Albert Berriz who, among other contributions, persuaded several high profile business executives to lend their considerable expertise to this group.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve on this important effort!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Guenzel', written in a cursive style.

Robert Guenzel