

# ***JACTS***

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Transit, Intercity Bus, Taxi

**Introduction**

Public transit is a critical element of any transportation system. It both provides an alternative form of transportation to the traditional use of the automobile and provides mobility options for citizens who lack independent modes of transportation. Transit is a vital tool which can provide the elderly, youth, individuals with disabilities and the economically disadvantaged with comparable access to jobs, shopping, health care services, and recreational activities. By reducing the number of individual vehicles, public transit serves to reduce emissions associated with air pollution and global warming.

The need for transit has become more apparent recently with significant increases in fuel prices. It is likely that these increases will continue to create a demand for more convenient, user friendly transit services that will include access to jobs for low and moderate income households.

As public transit evolves in Michigan, reliable funding resources become critical. The expense of maintaining a viable public transit system can only be maintained with commitments from Federal, State and local jurisdictions. This will be challenging as Michigan continues to move from a manufacturing economy to a more service-oriented economy.

**The Jackson Area Transportation Authority (JATA):**

Public transportation services in the Jackson community have a long and varied history. Dating as far back as the 1890's, streetcar service was provided by the Jackson Street Railway Company. This service continued through 1936 when the first buses were purchased and began operating under the company name "Jackson City Lines." Since then, public transit services have been operated by both private and public entities. In 1986, the existing public transportation system was restructured under Michigan Public Act 196 and renamed the City of Jackson Transportation Authority (JTA). By becoming an authority, JTA was able to levy taxes to the residents within the City of Jackson to sustain both demand-response and fixed-route transit operations. Demand-responsive public transportation services are also provided on a limited basis to the remainder of Jackson County residents on a contractual basis. In 2011, the JTA changes its name to the Jackson Area Transportation Authority (JATA) to reflect the importance of providing more regional service.

The Jackson Area Transportation Authority is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors consisting of four (4) citizens representing the City of Jackson and representatives from the Jackson County Board of Commissioners, Blackman Township, Leoni Township, Summit Township, and two (2) at-large members. The JATA Board meets monthly to oversee the public transportation system. In addition, the Local Transportation Advisory Council (LTAC) assists in the development of services, as required by the

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Plan and subsequent updates; the 10(e)18 Accessibility Plan and updates required under State law; as well as coordination and consolidation issues. The LTAC also reviews and provides recommendations on services provided to both senior citizens and individuals with disabilities. The LTAC reviews all proposed service changes including route modifications and fare increases which affect services provided to seniors and/or the disabled.

**Existing Service Levels.** JATA operates fixed route service on eight (8) individual routes Monday through Friday, from 6:15 AM to 6:15 PM. Saturday service runs from 10:15 AM to 6:15 PM. All fixed route buses are handicapped accessible. In addition, JATA has recently expanded fixed route service in both Blackman and Leoni Townships on a limited basis (five trips per day). JATA also operates demand-responsive, curb-to-curb services for residents of the City of Jackson on a first-come, first-serve basis. City demand-responsive services are operated seven (7) days per week. Weekday service operates from 6:15 AM to 10:15 PM; Saturday service operates from 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM; and Sunday service operates from 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Demand-responsive service outside the City of Jackson is provided by JATA under a contractual agreement with the Jackson County Board of Commissioners. Effective July 1, 2007, service is only offered on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to residents that live outside the City of Jackson.

**Ridership.** Table 8-1 tracks JATA ridership for the years 1991 through 2012. As a small urban area without a major university or other significant trip generator, many of the transit users are what would be termed “transit dependent” rather than a “rider of choice”. The rider of choice is not dependent on public transit, but chooses to use transit as an alternative to other forms of transportation. Given the transit-dependent nature of the majority of JATA ridership, transit service has not had a significant impact on the reduction of the use of private vehicles. Until public transit is widely accepted by the “rider of choice”, transit is likely to continue to serve primarily youth, senior and disabled populations; and low income individuals. However, as fuel prices continue to climb, it is likely that many middle income families will look to public transit as an option to reduce fuel expenditures.

**Existing Vehicle Fleet.** The current (2013) JATA fleet consists of thirteen (13) heavy-duty diesel buses, twenty (20) medium duty 25-foot diesel vehicles, and twenty-five (25) mini-van conversions with model years ranging between 2007 and 2012. All vehicles are handicapped accessible with lifts or ramps and several have additional wheelchair stations that can accommodate up to six (6) wheelchair passengers.

TABLE 8-1

**JACKSON AREA TRANSPORTATION  
AUTHORITY RIDERSHIP  
(Number of Trips Provided)**

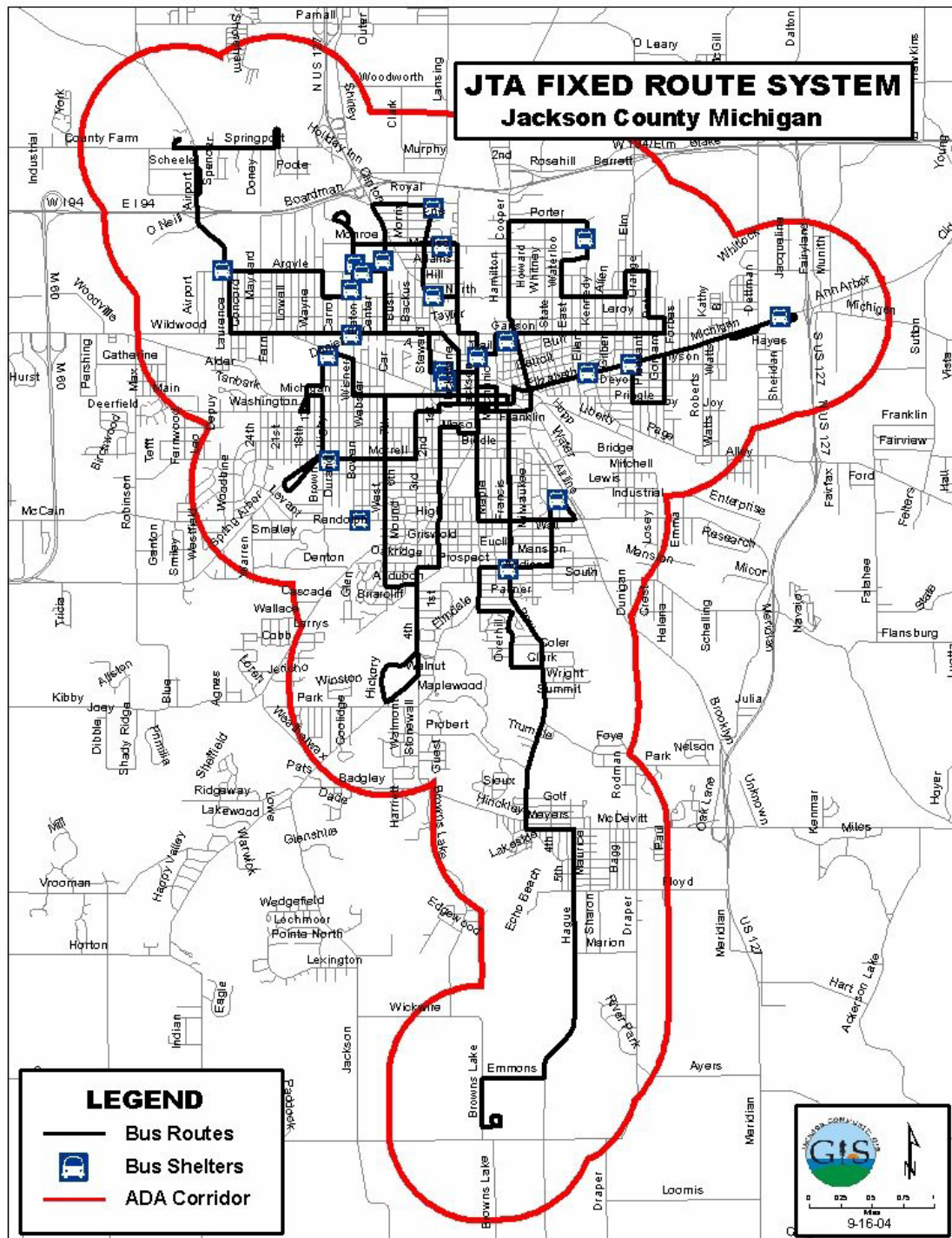
**1991 to 2012**

YEAR	FIXED ROUTE	DEMAND RESPONSE	SEMI-FIXED (contract)	HEAD START (contract)	TOTAL
1991-1992	685,272	49,721	59,287	0	794,280
1992-1993	760,093	53,229	59,458	0	872,780
1993-1994	761,155	63,398	56,049	0	880,602
1994-1995	708,577	68,124	41,294	0	817,995
1995-1996	665,312	66,796	35,835	0	767,943
1996-1997	626,665	66,336	37,128	0	730,129
1997-1998	618,988	73,121	36,051	0	728,160
1998-1999	597,980	80,499	38,499	0	716,978
1999-2000	593,459	96,978	37,967	0	728,404
2000-2001	585,446	119,895	18,030	87,847	811,218
2001-2002	512,621	115,378	1,605	84,948	714,552
2002-2003	516,741	107,790	0	67,584	692,115
2003-2004	495,064	98,625	0	52,418	646,717
2004-2005	513,116	95,533	0	46,189	655,238
2005-2006	559,412	89,637	0	26,292	675,341
2006-2007	480,475	74,551	0	0	555,026
2007-2008	504,390	57,105	0	0	561,356
2008-2009	505,934	52,422	0	0	558,356
2009-2010	557,561	46,444	0	0	604,005
2010-2011	582,512	44,997	0	0	627,509
2011-2012	545,384	41,829	0	0	587,213
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,376,157</b>	<b>1,562,408</b>	<b>421,203</b>	<b>365,278</b>	<b>14,725,046</b>

## Chapter 8

# Transit, Intercity Bus, Taxi

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**FUTURE FORECASTS AND NEEDS**

The Jackson Area Transportation Authority (JATA) is expected to continue providing public transit service to the residents of Jackson County. This will include fixed route and ADA demand-response service to City of Jackson residents and limited demand-response service to the remainder of the county. Transit operations are expected to continue with funding provided by passenger fares, federal and state grants, citywide millage, and service contracts.

Table 8-2 provides a list of JATA's capital and operational funding projects proposed for the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan. The JATA capital program is based on fleet replacement schedules and programs. The only service expansion anticipated is for the purchase and operation of several over-the-road coaches for a possible commuter service between Jackson and Ann Arbor.

The replacement cycles represent the replacement policies, in terms of age and miles, as established by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for specific vehicle types. For the purpose of this Plan, JATA proposes to continue to operate their system at their current level of service. Although the focus of JATA will be to preserve and continue at the current level of service, this is not to imply that JATA will not be exploring service enhancement and delivery changes. However, similar to the road recommendations, only those projects which have an identified funding source are included in the list of projects.

The capital and operating costs and revenue projections used to develop the future projects list were provided by JATA. These operating and capital costs cover the fixed-route system and associated ADA and countywide demand-response operations. Cost projections are based on current (2013) dollars and are inflated by 3 percent each year.

Due to the limited availability of transit service providers in the area, the JATA regularly receives requests for additional transportation services from various organizations and individuals. These requests helped to identify a wide range of transit service deficiencies within Jackson County.

During the next twenty-eight years, it is expected that present commuting patterns from Jackson County to employment centers in Lansing, Ann Arbor, and Battle Creek will continue. Dictated by these commuting activities, regional transit service may become a cost effective option to satisfy the transportation needs of commuters. Within Jackson County, the demand for expanded fixed-route services and demand-response services is anticipated to increase as changing population characteristics generate an ever increasing demand for public transportation services. JATA anticipates increased service requests will continue based upon demographic and socio-economic changes



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**Table 8.2**  
**Jackson Area Transportation Authority**  
**Projected Capital & Operating Expenditures**  
**(FY 2014 – 2040)**

YEAR	PROJECT	EST. COST
2014	Operating Program	\$ 5,800,000
2015	Service Vehicle	\$ 40,000
	Operating Program	5,974,000
2016	Shop Equipment	\$ 10,000
	Tow Truck	100,000
	Operating Program	6,153,000
2017	3 – Vans	\$ 132,000
	2 - 45-ft. Highway Coaches	1,200,000
	Operating Program	6,528,000
2018	3 – Medium Duty Buses	\$ 350,000
	2 – 45-ft Highway Coaches	1,224,000
	CPU Upgrades	100,000
	Operating Program	6,724,000
2019	3 – Medium Duty Buses	\$ 350,000
	3 – Vans	135,000
	2 – 35-ft Buses	740,000
	Maintenance Equipment	100,000
	Operating Program	6,926,000
2020	One 35-ft Bus	\$ 377,400
	Shop Equipment	13,000
	3 – Medium Duty Buses	364,000
	Operating Program	7,134,000

YEAR	PROJECT	EST. COST
2021	One 35-ft Bus	\$ 385,000
	3 – Vans	140,000
	Security Improvements	52,000
	Operating Program	7,348,000
2022	One 35-ft Bus	\$ 393,000
	CPU Upgrades	104,000
	Operating Program	7,568,000
2023	3 – Vans	\$ 143,000
	2 – Service Trucks	94,000
	One 35-ft Bus	400,000
	Security Improvements	56,000
	Operating Program	7,795,000
2024	3 – Medium Duty Buses	\$ 386,000
	Operating Program	7,950,900
2025	One 35-ft Bus	\$ 416,500
	Shop Equipment	18,000
	Operating Program	8,110,000
2026	3 – Vans	\$ 149,000
	One 35-ft Bus	425,000
	Operating Program	8,272,100
2027	CPU Upgrades	\$ 114,400
	Operating Program	8,438,000

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YEAR	PROJECT	EST. COST
<b>2028</b>	3 – Medium Duty Buses	\$ 400,000
	Security Improvements	59,000
	Operating Program	8,606,300
<b>2029</b>	3 – Medium Duty Buses	\$ 405,000
	One 35-ft Bus	450,300
	Shop Equipment	20,000
	Operating Program	8,778,400
<b>2030</b>	One 35-ft Bus	\$ 460,000
	One Service Truck	54,000
	Operating Program	8,954,000
<b>2031</b>	One 35-ft Bus	\$ 478,000
	3 – Vans	166,400
	Operating Program	9,133,000
<b>2032</b>	CPU Upgrades	\$ 125,800
	Security Improvements	63,500
	Operating Program	9,316,000
<b>2033</b>	One 35-ft Bus	\$ 487,000
	3 – Medium Duty Buses	448,000
	Operating Program	9,502,000
<b>2034</b>	2 – 45-ft Highway Coaches	\$ 1,600,000
	One 35-ft Bus	506,000
	Security Improvements	62,700
	Operating Program	9,692,000

YEAR	PROJECT	EST. COST
<b>2035</b>	3 – Vans	\$ 180,000
	2 – 45-ft Highway Coaches	1,600,000
	One 35-ft Bus	516,000
	Operating Program	9,886,000
<b>2036</b>	One 35-ft Bus	\$ 526,500
	One Service Truck	60,000
	Operating Program	10,084,000
<b>2037</b>	One 35-ft Bus	\$ 537,000
	Shop Equipment	23,200
	CPU Upgrades	138,400
	Operating Program	10,285,000
<b>2038</b>	One 35-ft Bus	\$ 548,000
	3 – Medium Duty Buses	493,000
	Operating Program	10,491,000
<b>2039</b>	One 35-ft Bus	\$ 559,000
	3 – Vans	194,000
	Operating Program	10,701,000
<b>2040</b>	Security Improvements	\$ 70,000
	One 35-ft Bus	570,000
	Operating Program	10,915,000
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 246,260,300</b>



As the demand for service increases and the struggle for funding continues, the necessity for both coordination and consolidation of services throughout Jackson and the surrounding counties must be explored. There must be a concerted effort to identify local, state, and federal funding sources. Only with adequate funding can these services be maximized and thereby eliminate duplicated activities and expenses.

Several of the anticipated transit deficiencies and funding requirements to address the deficiencies are as follows:

1. **Present urban and rural transit services are severely deficient.** The existing service (2013) is provided under contract with Jackson County for less than 100 hours per week for residents of Jackson County that live outside of the City of Jackson. The urban and rural areas outside of the City of Jackson need a substantial service enhancement to provide an acceptable level in the quality and quantity of service to the transit-dependent. Employment opportunities, especially for disabled individuals and those individuals who do not have access to their own transportation, are significantly impacted. Current Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) federal funding has helped get workers in the rural area to jobs over the past several years. However, JARC funding will be cut in half in FY 2014 and continuation after that will be decided in a new federal transportation bill.

Human service agencies continue to rely upon public transit services without providing direct funding for additional transportation services for their clients. Public transit is critical for both employment and access to medical appointments for the people they serve. These agencies have adopted a policy of relying upon local public transportation services for their client population. While this is a reasonable and cost effective approach, it does not assist in the increasing costs associated with operating a transit system. With fares accounting for only about 10% of the cost for providing service, other local revenue must be found. Projected funding requirements to provide a reasonable countywide demand-actuated service is estimated at approximately \$400,000 annually (unfunded).

2. **Coordination of transportation services is insufficient.** The coordination of transportation services in Jackson County must be a priority. Human service agencies have eliminated funding for coordinating medical trips. Medically-related transit service and the ability to coordinate and subsidize trips with the transit system and private providers is also dependent upon additional funding sources in addition to fares.

There are several private transportation providers in Jackson. JATA currently utilizes two (2) private providers for non-peak service. JATA will continue to encourage coordination with private providers for public transportation services. These partnerships can be cost effective for both agencies. Funding required to provide coordination of medical trips would be approximately \$50,000 annually.

Coordination and cooperation with local school systems also provides an opportunity to realize cost savings. Maintenance services, shared routing, administrative services, and driver pooling should be encouraged. A coordinated effort to examine a broader effort to coordinate school and public transportation services will require the cooperation of many community partners. Costs may include a comprehensive study for coordinating services (unfunded).

3. **Evening and weekend service is deficient after 6:00 PM.** The transit dependent have needs for transportation service after the current operating hours, which generally end at 6:00 PM daily. Projected funding to provide additional late evening service until 11:00 PM, using fixed-route and demand-responsive vehicles is estimated to be \$750,000 annually (unfunded).
4. **Sunday service is currently rated deficient.** Limited demand-response service is provided Sunday mornings and early afternoon. However, JATA continues to receive requests for expanded service for late afternoon and evening. Projected funding to provide countywide demand-response service from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Sundays using a combination of JATA vehicles and private providers is projected at \$65,000 annually (unfunded).
5. **Current and proposed coordination of services requires a training facility.** The proposed facility will be utilized as a training center for JATA, school bus, and other drivers. This is anticipated to include formal Commercial Driver License (CDL) training and testing, along with passenger assistance and other transit-related and school bus-related training. Cost of project is estimated at approximately \$1,000,000 (unfunded).
6. **Coordinate with City, State and AMTRAK to develop an Inter-Modal Transportation Center.** A study released in 2006 examined the potential of creating an inter-modal transportation center that would include inter-city bus, local transit and rail providers, and commercial development. A grant provided by MDOT provided funding to perform some critical infrastructure repairs until sufficient funding can be found to develop the site. Estimated costs for this development are approximately \$13.9 million (unfunded).

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A summary of the Jackson Area Transportation Authority's Long Range Transportation Plan proposed activities that currently do not have a funding source identified include:

- Continuation of specialized Medical Services.
- Continuation of PET Program.
- Provision of all Human Service Agency transportation in Jackson County:
  - personal and medical trips
  - nutrition sites
  - other specialized services
- Provision of maintenance for non-profit agency vehicles.
- Increased demand responsive service.
- Extension of fixed-route service within the expanding urbanized area including the communities of Michigan Center, Grass Lake, and other satellite centers.
- Provision of corridor service to Lansing, Ann Arbor, and Battle Creek.
- Training facility to accommodate JATA, school, and other agencies.
- Coordination of intercity bus / rail / public transportation operations.
- Develop inter-modal transportation center at the existing Jackson AMTRAK Station.

## **INTERCITY BUS SERVICE**

The Jackson County area is serviced by Greyhound Bus Lines which operates out of the Jackson Area Transportation Authority's downtown Transfer Center. JATA acts as the agent for Greyhound. There are six (6) daily routes that pass through Jackson County primarily serving the I-94 corridor between Detroit and Chicago. There are no north or south options directly out of Jackson.

## **TAXI CABS AND LIMOUSINE SERVICE**

Two (2) taxicab companies operate in the greater Jackson area - Colonial Cab and Dawn to Dusk Cab companies. These services are licensed and must be registered with the City of Jackson in order to operate within the city limits. In addition to transit and taxicab services, there are several limousine services and car rental agencies in the Jackson area.