



BATA - Local Advisory Council Minutes

The Local Advisory Council Annual VAP Review was called to order on Monday, January 24, 2022, at noon via Zoom. Alan VanderPaas advised Council members that the meeting was being recorded to be posted on our website's LAC page.

Council Members in Attendance:

Dan Buron: Goodwill Northern Michigan
Lana Payne: Commission on Aging
Mandy Joppich / Linda Joppich: Community Representative
April Missias: Leelanau County Senior Services
Amanda Molski: Area Agency on Aging
Demarie Jones: Disability Network No. Michigan
Susan Odgers: Community Representative
Michelle Krumm: Senior Center Network
Mike Trahey: Community Representative

BATA Staff in Attendance:

Kurt Braun
Kelly Dunham
Eric Lingaur
Mary Meredith
Alan VanderPaas

1. Kurt Braun: 2022 Vehicle Accessibility Plan

Kurt reviewed the attached PowerPoint of our current fleet and described the vehicles' sources of energy and their seating capacity. 57% of our fleet are the cutaways (23-24'). We continue our transition to propane fuel due its ecological benefits. Our goals by the end of 2022 would be 46% Propane, 22% Diesel, and 32% Gas.

Due to computer chip shortage, some of our orders have been and may continue to be delayed. Electric buses are expensive (\$250,000) and so are not in our

immediate plans. However, the upcoming BATA facility at LaFranier & Hammond will have electric charging capacity. BATA will then be in a viable position to receive electric buses when feasible.

Kurt detailed the buses that are currently on order. He also reviewed the five-year capital plans which was submitted this month. This plan will be adjusted according to our needs. Annual requests for new buses are a measured equation. A limited number of busses are requested annually so as not to have a disproportionate number of buses being replaced in a single year.

Demarie Jones asked about delays in maintenance of current vehicles. Kurt reports that we are experiencing long delays in getting new motors (3 months or more). However other parts are arriving in a timely manner.

Susan Odgers asked about staffing in the maintenance department and about the Bike-n-Ride bus that is not accessible to some people with disabilities. Kurt reports we are looking into options for an accessible Bike-n-Ride bus. The Bike-n-Ride bus has most of the seats removed to accommodate bicycles, so the current bus loses functionality with accessible adjustments. Currently, BATA continues to use our Village Link service for accessible buses with bike racks for those in need. Regarding staffing, BATA is short-handed in the maintenance department. So far we are able to keep up with repairs due to the reduced number of buses in service.

2. Kelly Dunham: The present state and future hopes of BATA

Kelly welcomed the group and provided an update about the new facility. Progress has been lengthy and complex on the PUD (Planned Unit Development). Many developments in the area are experiencing the same timelines of two years for PUD approval. We are nearing the end and have a tentative agreement to be reviewed by Garfield Township in February with a Public Hearing scheduled for March.

BATA's new facility will replace the current South Airport/Cass station as well as our nearby storage building on Diamond Road. There are large population centers south of Traverse City and this new facility will service these commuters who

work in Traverse City and its outlying areas.

Susan asked about the typical PUD approval process and if the LAC could assist in any way. Kelly noted that one of the biggest challenges is the phases of the complex project proposal. The Township would like the housing component built simultaneously with the BATA facility. The Traverse City Housing Commission (TCHC) does not currently have financing commitments in place.

Dan Buron asked if there are other options for the TCHC. Kelly said she and they have been meeting with our legislators to see if the State could provide partial funding. The avenues for these funds to flow preclude many of the projects in rural areas of Michigan, even though we are not really a rural area anymore. Kelly is pursuing several different angles.

Susan also asked about a recent Letter to the Editor in the *Record Eagle* for MDOT plans for the Grandview Parkway improvement project. Kelly reported we are not heavily involved or included in the planning process. Our lobbyist is with the Michigan Public Transit Association (MPTA).

Susan also asked about Elaine Wood and the BATA Board Retreat. Kelly states her intention was to create a plan that involved board development and team cohesiveness and she feels this initial goal was met. COVID disrupted the process of a Master Transit Plan in part because we could not effectively reach out to the community to gather input other than remotely. The Master Transit Plan effort will be reactivated within the next few months.

Susan Odgers mentioned she recently became Chair of the Traverse Area District Library. The library has recently installed onsite security and wondered if BATA has experienced an increase in incidents. Eric Lingaur said we have had incidents related to the mask mandate for passengers. Overall, in the winter, things tick up more as some people use the buses and shelters to get out of the cold weather.

Alan agreed with Kelly that BATA experiences a seasonal increase and so far is consistent with prior years. Both Alan and Eric sit on the BATA Etiquette Committee that reviews incidents and issues warnings and adjudications for violations of BATA's Code of Conduct.

3. Eric Lingaur: Winter service changes and the advent of ITS technology

Eric reported on the current service hours and how the reduced level of recruited drivers has necessitated cutbacks to the service schedule. BATA is currently operating at 70% of normal staffing levels. We have focused on our transition to Link On-Demand service and this has been favorably received by the riding public. Routes 1 & 2 are now 6am-9pm weekdays with the Village Loops making connections Monday through Friday in the outlying areas. Eric said BATA is tentatively planning to increase service hours on the more popular routes as staffing increases. Demarie asked how many hours a day may a driver be on the road. Kelly said there are no regulations in place but BATA policy is to limit drivers to 10 hours a day / 6 days a week as a maximum.

Susan Odgers has been keeping track of service disruption via our Service Alerts when buses can't drive when the roads are in poor condition due to bad weather and with the Road Commission alerts. She also has observed that the snow shoveling at the bus stops is effective. Susan asked about installing heat in more of the shelters. Eric reports that not all shelters are heated but two more have been added. BATA and TC Light and Power work together to identify more bus stops to connect to the power grid for this purpose. Eric said we continue to use our Adopt-a-Stop (volunteer snow shoveling) Program and that, along with our own staff, has enabled us to keep up with the ice and snow.

Kelly noted that the upcoming Master Transit Plan will hopefully provide increased services for a wider geographic area but with less staff resources. BATA has recruited non-stop in efforts to hire more staff but low employment levels is a global issue that will not be going away in the near future. Therefore, we need to find ways to adjust our services. She also discussed the idea of driverless vehicles, an option that for many reasons is decades away. State of Michigan reports it needs 216,000 residents of working age to move into the State if it were to turn the corner on the low employment issue.

Eric reports that our fare structure has not changed much. However, fares for Link On-Demand have been temporarily reduced from \$6 to \$3 standard fare and \$3 to \$1.50 reduced fare. The Hopthru app for electronic fare payment has been

changed to Passage. Eric reviewed some recent bus stop improvements (heat, light, paved connectors, bike racks, and benches).

Eric also discussed the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technology which will allow us to have real time bus tracking along with better mobile app integration. BATA's recent RFPs have been issued and we received 11 proposals for review. Awards will be made to vendors very soon.

Susan Odgers asked about incomplete signage at bus stops regarding service changes. Eric explained we are making efforts to replace old and missing signage. Our website and customer service center are the best resources to keep up to date. This year will include further route adjustments in May and October. LAC meetings have been scheduled to review and get advisory feedback prior to those decisions.

4. Roundtable Session:

Alan asked for comments regarding service changes or any other issues they have seen in the field. Eric asked for ways in which we could support each other.

April Missias: Thanks BATA for persevering through all the changes these past two years. Consistency is the key for increasing senior ridership in Leelanau County.

Dan Buron: Commented on BATA's support with COVID transportation for Safe Harbor and Goodwill.

Amanda Molski: Sees some trepidation of riders getting out and about due to COVID. Also, self-isolation issues have been relieved by using more bus passes and reminding citizens of BATA's resources.

Lana Payne: BATA has been very responsive to those who are experiencing hardships. Explanations on how routes work have been helpful.

Mandy Joppich: Thank you for your efforts. Appreciated.

Susan Odgers: How has TCAPS affected BATA? Eric said we have no formal



contracts with TCAPS, but we try to be flexible when they close for a few days due to COVID. Eric said we focus on our core services.

Demarie Jones: Dispatchers have been very accommodating in working with riders who need to change transportation schedules.

Alan pointed out the increased reliance on messaging and marketing during the pandemic and would appreciate any feedback to increase its efficacy.

Mike Trahey: "I'm crazy about BATA". He thinks we have been doing a fantastic job. Misses the Ski-n-Ride service. BATA is valuable to our community. Eric noted that Mike was part of the BATA Buddy Program at the Senior Center which has been temporarily suspended during the pandemic.

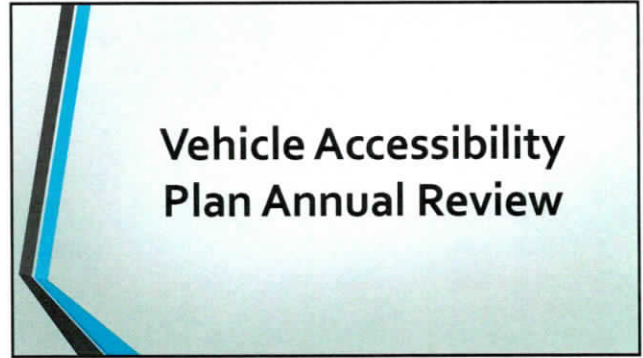
Submitted/Recorded by: Mary Meredith, BATA Administrative Assistant

Approved by:  1/26/2022
Amanda Molski

Distribution: Local Advisory Council
Michigan Department of Transportation
Nichole Thompson / Controller / Bay Area Transportation Authority



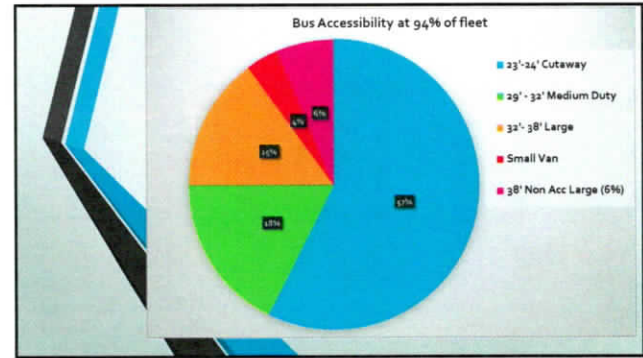
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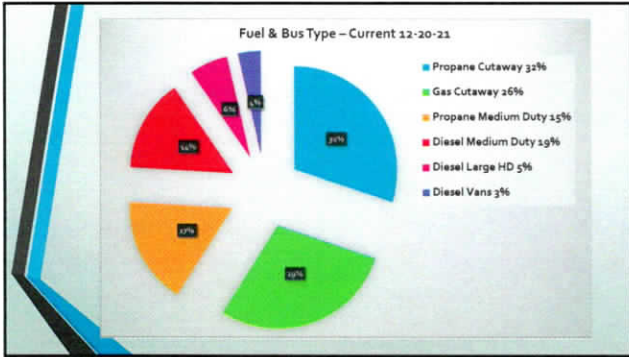
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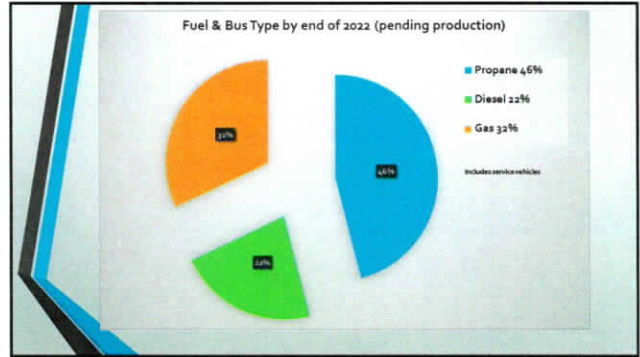
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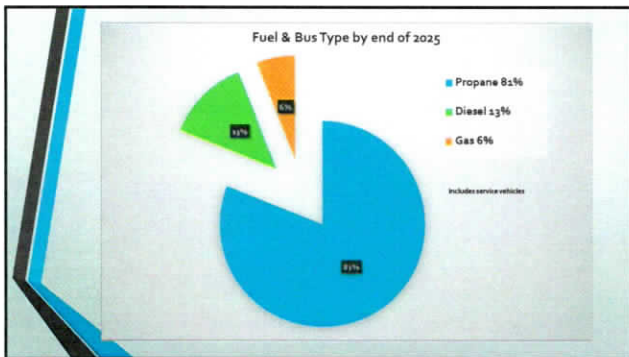
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BATA's current five-year plan –

2021 Buses on order delayed by Micro chip shortages

- 4 – Accessible 24' - E450 Propane Buses (received one)
- 1 – Accessible 29" – F-550 Propane Bus
- 5 – Accessible 32' – International Diesel Buses

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2023 Capital plan submitted Jan 2022–
2023

18 Eligible buses requested this year;

- 12 – Accessible 24' - E450 Propane Buses
- 6 – Accessible 29' – F-550 Propane Buses

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Five-year plan –
2024

5 Eligible buses requested this year;

- 5 – Accessible 24' - E450 Propane Buses

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Five-year plan –
2025

6 Eligible buses requested this year;

- 5 – Accessible 24' - E450 Propane Buses
- 1 – Accessible 29' – F-550 Propane Buses

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Five-year plan –
2026

12 Eligible buses requested this year;

- 4 – Accessible 24' - E450 Propane Buses
- 8 – Accessible 29' – F-550 Propane Buses

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Current Service Hours

- **Bayline**
 - 6 a.m. – 9 p.m. Monday - Friday
- **City Loop**
 - 6 a.m. – 9 p.m. Monday – Friday
- **Link On-Demand**
 - Sunday–Friday: 6 a.m.–10:30 p.m. (last pickup at 10 p.m.)
 - Saturday: 6 a.m.–11:30 p.m. (last pickup at 11 p.m.)
- **Village Loop**
 - 5 a.m. – 9:30 p.m. Monday – Friday
- **Village Link**
 - 5:30 a.m. – 11:30 p.m. Seven days a week (call for details)

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City Loop / Bayline

- **Bayline**
 - 6AM – 9PM (Weekdays only)
 - 20-minute frequency
- **City Loops (1 & 2 only)**
 - 6AM – 9PM (Weekdays only)
 - Color Coded
 - Currently every hour with Routes 4 & 5 suspended
 - Weekend service – temporarily suspended

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Village Loops

- Route 10 : Suttons Bay / Northport
- Route 11 : Glen Arbor* (Seasonal)
- Route 12 : Interlochen / Grawn
- Route 13 : Kingsley / Fife Lake
- Route 14 : Acme / Williamsburg
- Route 16 : Old Mission Peninsula
- **Service every 1-2 hours Weekday**
- **Service 3x on the Weekend (temporarily suspended)**
- **First departures at 5am**

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BATA Fare Structure

- Reduced rates for students, seniors, veterans, active military and people with disabilities (kids 5 and under ride free)
- Zoom card, ZIP ticket, Student Annual pass, Commuter Pass, cash on bus and mobile ticketing

<p>City Loop: Full: \$1.50 Reduced: \$.75</p> <p>Village Loop: Full: \$3.00 Reduced: \$1.50</p> <p>Link On-Demand: Full: \$3.00* Reduced: \$1.50*</p> <p>Commuter Pass: \$40 for 31 days of unlimited Loop rides (reduced available) *Temporary pricing due to reduced service levels</p>	<p>Village Link: Full: \$3.00 Reduced: \$1.50</p>	
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Bus stop improvements

- 2 new heated shelters at the Hagerty Center and at E. Front and Milliken (NMC/Dennos)
- Additional stop improvements on deck for 2022 based on service levels

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Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)

BATA has two RFPs in progress to add or improve the following technologies and make it easier to use public transit:

- Real-time bus tracking
- Continue and expand micro-transit service (Link On-Demand)
- Better mobile technology integration
- Improved driver on-board interface
- Allows for integration and expansion of additional technologies (onboard vehicle announcements, passenger tracking, fare system upgrades, headway signage, etc.)

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Service Adjustments

- BATA traditionally makes route adjustments 2x a year as needed (May & October)
- 2022 Activities on Deck:
 - TBD based on COVID-19 impacts on ridership and resources – hope to bring back suspended services as staffing resources allow
 - Stop improvements Spring / Summer / Fall – based on service levels
 - New technologies implementation