



**MAX Transportation Authority Board Meeting Agenda
Monday, September 22, 2008
3:30 PM
*** Holland City Hall Council Chambers ***
270 South River Avenue
Holland, MI 49423**

- 1. Approval of the Board minutes: August 25, 2008**
- 2. Opportunity for Public Comment**
- 3. Public hearing on Proposed Fare Increase**
- 4. Marketing Committee**
- 5. Executive Committee:**
 - a) Proposed Fare Increase**
 - b) Visioning Session Continues – Verbal Report - Information**
 - c) Ridership Report – August, 2008 – For Review Only**
 - d) Financial Report – August, 2008 – For Review Only**
 - e) Expenditure Report – August, 2008 – For Review Only**
- 6. Other Business**
 - a) West Michigan Transit Linkages – Verbal Report**
 - b) Eastern Ottawa Transit Project – Verbal Report**
 - c) Safety & Security – Verbal Report**
- 7. Adjournment**

If you cannot attend the meeting, please contact Kathie VandenBand at (616) 928-2476.

**Next meeting is October 27, 2008 at 3:30 pm at
MAX Administrative Office Board Room**



Macatawa Area Express Transportation
Authority Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 22, 2008

The Macatawa Area Express Transportation Authority met at 3:30 pm at the City of Holland City Hall Council Chambers.

Members Present: Chair Polly Diehl, Vice Chair Russ TeSlaa, Board Members Joe Baumann, Steve Bulthuis, Mike DeVries, Ex-Officio Al Dannenburg

Members Absent: Nancy Burkitt, Secretary/Treasurer Bob VandeVusse

Staff Present: Jodi Syens, Linda LeFebre, Sherri Betz, Tim Vagle and Kathie VandenBand

Others Present: Kathryn Gillen, Disability Network/Lakeshore, Katie Driesenga, General Manager, MV Transportation, Steve Bailey, Operations Manager, MV Transportation, Andrea Goodell, The Holland Sentinel, Myron Kukla, The Grand Rapids Press, City of Holland residents Charles and Elizabeth Manning and MAX drivers Laurie Barry and Kimberlee Hof, Holland Township resident and MAX driver, Christine Cross and City of Zeeland City Manager, Tim Klunder

08.09.1 **Minutes Approved:**
A motion was made by TeSlaa and supported by DeVries to approve the August 25, 2008 Board meeting minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

08.09.2 **Opportunity for Public Comment**
There was no public comment

08.09.3 **Public hearing on Proposed Fare Increase:**

08.09.3a **Introduction:**
Diehl summarized the proposed fare increase. The proposed fare increase was considered by the Board in response to higher fuel costs and decreasing State operating assistance. The Board also reviewed the fares of neighboring transit systems. MAX has among the lowest fares and also allows the able-bodied to use the Reserve-A-MAX. Many transit systems require an ADA card to ride the complementary paratransit.

08.09.3b **Christine Cross:**
Cross felt the increase would penalize the able-bodied passengers who use the Reserve-A-MAX to get to and from work, but barely make more than minimum wage. Cross suggested "going across the board to raise everything" so the able-bodied would not feel targeted.

08.09.3c **Laurie Barry:**
Barry spoke on behalf of the disabled who want to be treated normal and not singled out as handicapped. Barry felt the increase from \$2.00 to \$4.00 was too much of an increase and everyone should be treated the same.

08.09.3d **Kathryn Gillen – Disability Network/Lakeshore:**
Gillen reminded the Board of the past transportation research projects conducted by Disability Network/Lakeshore and based on those studies and the current economic climate, an increase in the Reserve-A-MAX fare would not aide, but burden the citizens.

08.09.3e The following is a letter from Kathryn to the MAX Authority Board:

Disability Network Lakeshore
426 Century Lane
Holland, MI 49423
616.396.5326

This Changes Everything

DATE: September 22, 2008
TO: MAX Transportation Authority Board
FROM: Kathryn Gillen, Disability Network/Lakeshore
RE: Public Comment on Proposed Fare Increase

Good Afternoon Board Members,

As most of you know my name is Kathryn Gillen and I am the Public Policy Specialist at Disability Network Lakeshore. I am not only here today to represent myself, a resident of Holland, but I am here today to represent Disability Network's staff, clients, and members.

Over the 5 years, Disability Network has conducted several transportation research projects in the Greater Holland Area, many partnering with the MAX itself. Over the years we have identified several of the core unmet needs pertaining to MAX's services and prioritized them in such a way to further the support of public transportation. We have campaigned for a millage and increase fixed routes in order to begin meeting the growing needs within the MAX service area. As you debate the potential fare increase of the Reserve-A-Max riders, I would like to remind you and your fellow board members of our past study findings.

Just 9 months ago taxpayers in this area said that "MAX buses are too much money." While we note that the average annual household income in the Greater Holland Area is roughly \$50,000 we must remember that the average household income of the average MAX rider is just above or below the poverty line. Many riders rely solely on Reserve-A-Max to get to work, school, or medical appointments. Barely being able to pay the fee now, especially in such dangerous economic times, you are potentially about to cause families their jobs and their incomes, their education, or/and their health – all three essential necessities.

Our past research shows that riders believe that a reasonable fare would be between \$1 and \$2 as defined in our February 2008 *Multi-Stage Community Study Report*. Also, 51% of respondents preferred using the Reserve-A-Max because of the time constraints of using a fixed route. I have heard your past debate in wanting to move more riders to fixed routes. However, before you take the measure of increasing fares to move riders to fixed routes, make sure that the current fixed routes are reasonable. Most wait times are just under an hour or longer. During last month's meeting committee members noted the fare increase of the Rapids, hoping to reassure the public that this propose fair increase was something "everyone was doing".

However, it is important to realize that the wait time for the Rapids fixed route is 20-30 minutes, half the time of the MAX. If you would like to follow in the footsteps of the Rapids, then I suggest following their route times first.

There is much more factual data I can provide to you based on our past research projects. However, I believe you understand the stance I am taking. Public transportation does not just affect people with disabilities, seniors, and youth. It affects every citizen. Therefore, if you intend on increasing the fare to our most vulnerable population, the low-income, I sincerely hope you intend on taking full responsibility for the consequences that come with it.

Economic times are tough – but public transportation is there to aid citizens not burden them. As you vote on the proposed fare increase today, please remember why you are sitting where you are today. Remember what your job is and remember who you are representing.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Gillen

08.09.3f

Board Discussion:

DeVries reminded the public the fare increase was also to encourage able-bodied passengers to use the Fixed Route.

Dannenburg felt the \$8.00 round trip from

Holland to Zeeland would discourage transportation between the two cities because it wouldn't cost any more to commute by car.

08.09.3g

Amendment Proposal:

TeSlaa made a motion to amend the Proposed Fare Increase from \$2.00 to \$3.00 instead of increasing to \$4.00 and keep the rest of the proposal as written. Baumann supported the motion. Motion to amend the Fare Increase Proposal carried with four votes in favor. Diehl opposed.

08.09.3h

Proposed Fare Increase:

TeSlaa made a motion and DeVries accept the proposed fare increase as outlined below:

- Fixed Route Bus fares will stay the same and are not being increased.
- Seniors and ADA Cardholders will continue to ride for free on the fixed routes.
- Able bodied adults will pay \$3 for a one way Reserve a MAX trip. Able bodied adults currently pay \$2 for a one way Reserve A MAX trip.
- A fare of \$1 per one way trip will still apply to ADA Cardholders, Children and senior citizens on the Reserve A MAX.
- The pink ½ fare card will no longer enable passengers to a discount on the Reserve A MAX. They must obtain the white ADA card to qualify for the \$1 per one way trip fare.
- A pink ½ fare card will still allow passengers to ride the fixed route for .50 per one way trip.
- The \$3 fare will also include the Night Owl Service.

Motion carried unanimously.

08.09.4

Marketing Committee:

Diehl reported the Marketing Committee has been working on several projects:

- Passenger survey – the first survey since the route increase
- A manned booth at the Senior Expo
- Sherri Betz interview on the Holland City Connection
- Solicitation of Proposals for new TV spots to be aired starting in November
- The MAX Annual Report to be available in early November

08.09.5

Executive Committee:

08.09.5a

Proposed Fare Increase

Please refer to 08.09.3h

08.09.5b

Visioning Session Continues

LeFebre met with Brenda VanderMuelen from River Hills Consulting and VanderMuelen will continue the visioning and will prepare an agenda for the next Board meeting.

08.09.5c

Ridership Report – August 2008

There was no discussion

08.09.5d

Financial Report – August 2008

There was no discussion

08.09.5e

Expenditure Report – August 2008

LeFebre reported one of our buses needs major engine repairs exceeding \$10,000.

08.09.6

Other Business:

08.09.6a

West Michigan Transit Linkages

LeFebre participated in interviewing two consulting firms for the study.

08.09.6b

Eastern Ottawa Transit Project

Gillen reported a study on Public Transportation Community Impact for Hudsonville, Jamestown, Blendon Township, Georgetown Township and Allendale is underway. The study will be targeting stakeholders, unmet needs and elected officials. Periodic updates will be available to the Board.

08.09.6c

Safety and Security

LeFebre reported a new light pole is being installed at the northwest end of the Padnos Transportation Building. Betz has been consulting with the Holland Police Department on security cameras.

08.09.6d

MV Contract Amendment

A motion was made by DeVries and supported by TeSlaa to accept the First Amendment To Restated Transportation Services Agreement as written and to authorize the Board Chair and Secretary/Treasurer to sign the agreement on behalf of the Board.

Motion carried unanimously.

08.09.7

Adjournment:

A motion was made by TeSlaa and supported by DeVries to adjourn.

Motion carried unanimously.