Innovative Mobility Choices

We, living in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, get to choose how innovation affects our mobility. By prioritizing changes in transportation technology to focus on benefiting us collectively as human-beings, rather than artificial intelligence for its own sake, your convenience and overall customer experience will be put at the future's center.

Innovative mobility is sometimes called new mobility, but just because technology is new, doesn't automatically make it innovative.[1] There are lots of relatively new technologies available, promising increased ridership and general transportation improvements, with only a few that end up working out the way they were proposed. TheRide is responsible for being strategic in selecting how best to move ahead in this industry, choosing which technology innovations will most likely become successful.

Not everything innovative is completely new either, or it may be repurposing an older idea from elsewhere. Most innovations are normally smaller, baby steps tweaking earlier improvements, before trying to reinvent the wheel, and the value added lasts longer.[2] Variety is also important to generate and apply these creative ideas, helping stay ahead of the average curve without going over the bleeding edge because of extra risky disruptions in service delivery.

As a public transportation agency, TheRide must legally and ethically make sure equity is a foresight rather than an after-thought. What does equity mean exactly for mobility innovation then? Equity is inclusion. It includes actively pursuing socially just opportunities for diverse groups, as well as affordable access for lower-income households and individuals with disabilities. To include equity in this innovative mobility plan about technology and transportation will be a meaningful challenge, with assistance from the County Opportunity Index update. We need to incorporate an alternate approach that addresses the digital divide and unbanked issues, if you're without smart phones or credit cards, by providing the same level of choices throughout our district, regardless of race, earnings, or abilities, to be reflective of users.

Based on its organizational vision for future planning, TheRide recommends the following goals to be carried out through a long-range plan and innovative mobility choices completed by 2024 –

1. Improve ways our whole community gets around
sharing transportation options that help anyone go where they want and need to be in the area

1.A Modes
Deploy newer, shared ride solutions for every-day public trips
- Usual transit:
    - Active – walk, bike, or move with assistance (wheelchairs, scooters, etc.)
    - Bus – the local, express, and airport rides
    - Paratransit – door-to-door disabilities service parallel up to ¾ mile of routes
    - Vanpool – mainly business commutes that are agency-organized
    - Carpool – after-hours night taxis and other coordination (one-click/call)

---

[1] www.forbes.com/sites/frederickallen/2011/06/29/the-difference-between-new-and-innovative
[2] https://asq.org/quality-resources/innovation

- Newer mobility:
  - Bike share – transition toward electric pedal-assistance with accessible bicycles and discount passes; review docked vs. dockless plus bus storage
  - E-scooters – consider storage on-board and/or permit parking at major stops
  - Micro-transit – simulate models replacing lower-ridership bus lines with shuttles feeding into higher-frequency bus corridors; test out strong cases
  - Vouchers – evaluate coupon code subsidies for transportation network companies (TNCs) like Lyft, Uber, and MODE Car, as alternatives in less densely populated areas; implement combined with consolidated services
  - Car share – partner with companies to provide spaces at Park & Ride lots and selected major stops

1.B Program
Develop inclusive, flexible guidelines to adapt for greater access and sustainable projects
- apply call for ideas proposals
- leverage grants funding
- communicate education and awareness
- document pilot lessons learned
- develop process method

2. Create better travel connections serving all people
installing faster, safer, and more accessible equipment to support a healthy, attractive region

2.A Hubs
Build well-designed, collaborative spaces at key layover points to connect many different riders across multiple transport types with seamless efficiency, reliability, and comfort

A few possible initial locations, pending right-of-way, are along Washtenaw Ave, Route 4, at:
- Geddes near University of Michigan's Central Campus Recreation Building
- Pittsfield near Arborland Mall
- Carpenter/Hogback near the County Service Center,
- Golfside near Fresh Thyme Market
- Cross near Ypsilanti Water Tower and Eastern Michigan University's McKenny Hall

Related non-traditional facility options:

- Route 5 Packard at Platt and Stadium (without deviations)
- Innovative mobility enhancements at Blake and Ypsilanti Transit Centers
- Point of purchase kiosks at common-place stores
- Bus stop signs with stop ID numbers added systemwide
- LED lights on bus stop poles or nearby posts
- Added real-time and improved virtual information signage at major stops
- Wi-fi for customers at mobility hubs

- Design contests for public art at mobility hubs
- Seek out accessibility partners for coordination on design for filling in sidewalk gaps
- Hubs at or near where people do business (i.e. food, package, and product delivery)

2.B Vehicles

Boost system connectivity on buses, in shared-occupancy automobiles, and at boarding places, while updating cyber-security for each person's safety

Potential advancements can involve:
- signal priority
- mobile charging ports
- enhanced digital displays
- wi-fi for customers
- electric or other alternate propulsion systems
- connected infrastructure
- automation with technology training for operators

3. Simplify everybody's transportation information

making it easier to navigate modern technology applications here for every member of society

3.A Tools

Integrate an easy-to-use smart phone app that combines real-time alerts, trip planning, and fare-payment features across various services for the spectrum of passengers

3.B Data

Advance customer experiences through back-end data management to ensure great service
- oversee open, shareable yet privacy-protected database software
- identify reasonable performance indicator measures
- regularly review success metrics to meet evolving, equitable service standards

Examples of criteria that may be utilized for evaluation could include:
- ridership
- on-time performance
- customer satisfaction
- fairly distributed innovative services
- economic prosperity impacts
- job growth prospects
- modal shift
- maintaining single-occupancy vehicle rates
- congestion mitigation
- resource stewardship