

call Wendy Page at the Ecology Center and volunteer some time and ideas for the education of Ann Arbor citizens on the value of Returnable legislation.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TELTRAN: PROBLEMS

Paul Schrodt

The Ann Arbor Transportation Authority, AATA, is moving quickly to implement the door-to-door "Teltran" system. The new system, made possible by a 2½ mill tax subsidy approved by Ann Arbor voters on April 2 will be introduced in stages. AATA chairman William Drake said a fare reduction will be one of the first steps. An "optimal" target date of July 1 has been set for implementing a 25¢ fare, 35¢ cheaper than the current Dial-a-Ride charge. Subsequent steps in the changeover to Teltran include: extension of operating hours, service for handicapped persons, system improvements in the center city area and geographic expansion to door-to-door service. The full system will probably not be operative for a year and one half.

Community Control for AATA?

Republican City Council members who opposed the transit millage during the election campaign apparently will not try to impede the Teltran's implementation. However, Mayor Stephenson has the power to appoint new AATA members to replace those whose terms have expired, the make-up of the authority could then be significantly altered.

Other Council members have spoken in favor of adding eight additional persons to the authority board to insure representation of diverse segments of the community. HRP Councilman Gerry DeGriek explained at the April 30 City Council meeting that adding new members would not insure community control, but would open AATA to greater community participation. HRP's proposal would add representatives of students, womens' groups, senior citizens, blacks, transit workers, commuters and business to the existing board. DeGriek argued that the authority should be controlled by people who ride the busses rather than persons with design expertise - he would not, however, exclude the latter group from AATA decision-making.

HRP's motion was defeated by a vote of 9-2. Democratic Councilwoman Carol Jones said she favored reconstituting the AATA board, but opposed the use of quotas to accomplish this end. Republicans argued that the authority should consist of planning experts, and that community input would come from AATA's citizen advisory committee.

Citizen Advisory Committee: How Much Real Say?

The citizen advisory committee, chaired by AATA member Marge Brazier, was formed after the April 2 election as a "feedback" committee for the Ford Motor Company consultants who will plan the Teltran's operation. The committee consists of 8-10 volunteers, including several persons who worked for the adoption of the transit millage.

How much impact this committee will have on AATA's decisions is difficult to assess. Marge Brazier asserts that the authority adopted nearly all of the committee's recommendations at its May 2 meeting. Yet, most of the issues discussed were of a noncontroversial nature. Also, the advisory committee does not represent all segments of Ann Arbor's population.

Service Outside the City?

One major decision the transit authority must soon confront is whether or not to expand service to Ypsilanti and other parts of the county. The Ann Arbor - Ypsilanti Mass Transit Study Policy Committee, chaired by Marilyn Thayer, has authorized a three-month study of mass transit alternatives for travel between the two cities.

The question for AATA is not simply: would expansion be a nice idea? Several political and economic factors intervene. If AATA operates service to Ypsilanti and adjacent townships, it receives the balance of the county's share of gas tax revenues for mass transit. If it elects not to serve the county, the authority forfeits those gas tax revenues to SEMTA (Southeast Michigan Transportation Authority), which serves the six-county Detroit Metro area, and would like to expand its operations to Washtenaw County.

If AATA decides to serve the county, another problem results. Who will pay for the expanded service, and how much will they pay? What if other townships are unwilling to subsidize the system through their property tax levy? Who benefits from the added service - students? commuters? low income families?

I raise these issues mainly to point out the political complexity of decisions regarding future Teltran policy. The Ecology Center, recognizing the potential social and environmental change offered by Teltran, worked hard in support of the transit millage. Yet, continued involvement on our part is necessary if the system is to reach that potential. I would be most eager to talk to anyone interested in the future of Teltran.

SEWAGE SITUATION: COMPLEX

Recently the Ann Arbor sewage treatment plant has been much in the news. The only definite fact revealed by this coverage is that the sewerage situation is complex. Perhaps some clarification is in order.

The present capacity of the Ann Arbor treatment plant is 15 million gallons per day (mgd). With the phosphate removal improvements now in operation the maximum plant capacity is 16.5 mgd.

Average daily flow into the plant is 17.1 mgd. Indisputably the treatment plant is operating over-capacity.

Over-capacity for a sewage treatment plant rarely leads to the dumping of raw sewage into a river or stream. Rather, it means