

BATA Local Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 14, 2025

12:00–1:00 p.m.

Location: BATA Hall Street Transfer Station

Address: 115 Hall St, Traverse City, MI 49684

Virtual: Via Teams

Bill Clark began the meeting at **12:02 p.m.**

Council Members in Attendance

- **Linda Joppich:** Community Representative, Chair
- **Mandy Joppich:** Community Representative
- **Lena Vander Meulen:** Leelanau County Senior Services
- **Demarie Jones:** Disability Network Northern Michigan (virtual)
- **Mitch Treadwell:** Traverse City Commissioner
- **Caleb Lindgren:** Goodwill Northern Michigan (Virtual)
- And we welcomed **Teresa** as a guest representative for the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians

BATA Staff in Attendance

- Eric Lingaur, Communications Director
 - Bill Clark, Outreach Coordinator and Planner
 - Jeff “Miles” Meilbeck, Executive Director
 - Tracy Melville, Administrative Assistant
 - Keir Rasmussen, Technology
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1. Welcome and Introductions

Bill Clark welcomed everyone to the October meeting and introduced BATA’s new Executive Director, **Jeff “Miles” Meilbeck**.

2. Ridership – 4th Quarter Report

Bill Clark reported on BATA's FY25 Q4 ridership:

- Total rides: **138,813**, which is **129%** of FY24 Q4 ridership.
 - Fixed routes saw a **30,000-ride increase** from FY24 Q4, thanks in part to support from marketing and communications plus improved accuracy with our new Automatic Passenger Counters.
 - Link service rides remained steady.
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3. BATA Highlights Since the May 2025 Meeting

- **Bayshore Marathon:** Another strong year with **1,331 early morning rides**, up from **1,100** in 2024.
 - **Cherry Festival:** Second-highest ridership ever with **21,625 rides**, up from **19,639** in 2024. Bayline averaged **2,445 rides per day**, compared to the normal **450**. BATA also provided transportation for the open ramp and orchard tours.
 - **Cedar Polka Festival:** Ridership slightly decreased to **138 rides**, down from **209** in 2024.
 - **Leelanau Uncaged:** Continued annual growth, with **102 rides** provided in one day.
 - **Route 10 Bike-n-Ride:** Despite major construction, the service achieved **4,200 boardings** and transported **737 bikes**. An additional bus was added to assist ADA riders between **6:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.**
 - **Early Airport Link Service:** A pilot shuttle ran from **March–September**, Monday through Friday, averaging **1 ride per week**. The pilot has ended; riders can continue using the **Link Service** or **Route 14** to reach the airport.
 - **Public Outreach and Education:** At their highest levels since before COVID. Sessions teach riders about routes, schedules, services, passes, fares, and how to ride.
 - **Stop Improvements:** Added **12 new shelters**, **19 benches**, **10 paved ADA-accessible locations**, and **relocated 6 benches** to higher-traffic areas. New brochures indicate shelter and bench locations.
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4. Route Improvements – Effective October 20, 2025

- **Route 1:** Will no longer service Walmart on the inbound trip.
 - **Route 2:** Will no longer service Goodwill Inn; now services **LaFranier Transfer Station**, connecting to Routes **5, 7, and 13**.
 - **New Route 5:** Serves **NMC, Hastings, Garfield**, and **LaFranier Transfer Station**. Takes over portions of the former Route 7 service area.
 - **Route 7:** Will now serve **Goodwill Inn**, the **mall, SOS**, and the **Salvation Army**; will no longer serve Garfield Road.
 - **Route 10 Bike-N-Ride:** The Big-Bike-Bus service has ended following completion of construction and Route 10 returns on its normal schedule.
 - **Route 11:** Operates on the school schedule to support **Glen Lake School**.
 - **Route 12:** Construction paused for the season. Timetables back to normal.
 - **Route 13:** Now serves **Goodwill Inn** on the outbound trips from Hall St.
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5. Discussion

- **Mitch Treadwell** asked if next year's Bike-N-Ride route will mirror this summer's changes.
 - **Bill Clark** responded that ridership data will be reviewed to understand what next summer may look like.
- **Teresa** asked if Route 10 would run hourly instead every two hours to better serve casino employees.
 - **Bill Clark** noted that BATA recognizes the need to increase frequency, and would agree that every hour is best, but is currently limited by driver availability.
- **Mitch Treadwell** inquired about East Bay stop improvements.
 - **Bill Clark** shared that **new pavement pads** for the East Bay Adirondack chairs and future shelters are included in the 2026 Capital Improvement Plan.

- **Mitch Treadwell** asked when new brochures and information will be available.
 - **Bill Clark** responded that brochures are ready and all information is online.
- **Teresa** asked about service to the Tribe housing development on **Herkner Road**.
 - **Bill Clark** explained that a sign is posted at the safest current stop location for the WEST bus inside the development for deviation requests but could modify that locations once the Community Center is completed.
- **Mitch Treadwell** asked how the state budget impacts BATA.
 - **Jeff Meilbeck** explained that although BATA projected \$500,000 less in revenue, actual reimbursements came in **\$500,000 higher** than anticipated.
- **Mitch Treadwell** asked if Route 5 could travel on LaFranier Rd to serve the riders there.
 - **Bill Clark** noted that LaFranier corridor is served now with Routes 2, 7, and 13 that could transfer to Route 5 at the LaFranier Park-n-Ride.
- **Demarie Jones** expressed excitement about Route 5, noting ongoing rider feedback about long Link service trips.
 - **Bill Clark** commented that the **BATA LINK app** now helps riders identify and suggests nearby fixed-route options to standard riders to give scheduling preference for Link riders with disabilities.
- **Teresa** asked whether Route 10 will use a larger or smaller bus during the winter.
 - **Bill Clark** said that is still being determined.

Meeting adjourned at 1:07 p.m.

2025 Local Advisory Council Membership

- **Linda Joppich:** Chair / Community Representative
- **Matt Morritz:** Community Representative
- **Dan Buron:** Goodwill Northern Michigan
- **Lana Payne:** Commission on Aging
- **Mandy Joppich:** Community Representative
- **Lena Vander Meulen:** Leelanau County Senior Services
- **Amanda Molski / Heidi Gustine:** Area Agency on Aging
- **Demarie Jones:** Disability Network Northern Michigan
- **Susan Odgers:** Community Representative
- **Lacey Edgecomb:** Senior Center Network
- **Mitch Treadwell:** Traverse City Commissioner

CC: Alex Simonetti (MDOT), Jeff Meilbeck (BATA), Eric Lingaur (BATA), Bill Clark (BATA)