

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WAVE Announces Fiscal Year 2027 Service and Fare Updates, Effective October 1, 2026

Chelsea Community Ride frequency doubles, new Deviation Zones give riders more ways to get where they need to be

Western-Washtenaw County, Mich. — WAVE (Western-Washtenaw Area Value Express) will introduce a set of service and fare changes on October 1, 2026, the first day of Fiscal Year 2027.

"These changes come down to one thing: getting community members where they need to go while making every dollar count," said Marie Gress, WAVE Executive Director. "Letting riders request a pickup off the fixed route puts more control in their hands, makes service more dependable, and helps us manage rising costs. As we mark 50 years of service, this update helps ensure WAVE is just as strong for the next 50."

The announcement comes as WAVE marks 50 years of service to Greater Western Washtenaw.

More frequent service in Chelsea

The Chelsea Community Ride (CCR) will run every 30 minutes instead of every hour, with the first departure at 8:20 a.m. from CRC Campus. The CCR remains free for all riders.

Because buses deviate off-route to serve riders within City of Chelsea limits, the CCR may run up to 15 minutes behind schedule. During the CCR hours, the door to door service will be reduced in Chelsea.

A new way to ride: Deviation Zones

Riders on WAVE's deviated fixed routes can now request a deviation — asking the bus to come off its route to pick them up or drop them off at a location inside a designated Deviation Zone.

- Request a deviation through dispatch at (734) 475-9494 or bookmyride@wavebus.org, or in the RidePing app,
- Deviations are curb-to-curb — the bus meets you at the curb rather than at your door,
- Be at your pickup location on time; the bus cannot wait,
- Deviation fares are \$2.00 standard / \$1.00 discounted.

Deviation Zones apply to the Chelsea Community Ride (Chelsea city limits), the Jackson Road Connector, and the Community Connector. Maps and a full FAQ are posted at ridethewavebus.org.

Riders who live inside a Deviation Zone are encouraged to plan their trips on the deviated fixed route during its service hours. **Jackson Road Connector: updated route and schedule**

The Jackson Road Connector (JRC) will run every 40 minutes to allow time for deviations, and may run up to 10 minutes behind schedule. Weekday service runs from 6:30 a.m. to 6:32 p.m. between Woodview Commons, Scio Farms Main Entrance, UM West, and Meijer/AAATA.

Timepoints are published for the four primary stops, but WAVE still picks up riders at Willowtree & Stabler, Sunward Cohousing, Great Oak, and Lakestone. Riders at unpublished stops should arrive a few minutes before the next published timepoint — for example, be at Touchstone Cohousing by 10:10 a.m. ahead of the 10:15 a.m. stop at UM West. Riders are encouraged to download the RidePingo app to get realtime arrival times.

Community Connector: same schedule, updated Deviation Zone

Service between Chelsea, Dexter, and Scio is unchanged on weekdays and weekends. The Community Connector has an updated Deviation Zone and may run up to 10 minutes behind schedule to accommodate deviations.

Door-to-Door: updated hours

- City of Chelsea Door-to-Door: 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
- Washtenaw County Older Persons (60+): 6:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. Riders 60+ are strongly encouraged to use the Chelsea Community Ride during peak hours if you live in the Chelsea City Limits.

New fares, effective October 1, 2026

Service	Standard	Discounted*
Chelsea Community Ride (CCR)	Free	Free
CCR Deviation	\$2.00	\$1.00
Jackson Road Connector (JRC)	\$2.00	\$1.00
Community Connector (CC) — by distance	\$2.00 – \$4.00	\$1.00 – \$2.00
Door-to-Door — within Greater Western Washtenaw	\$6.00	\$3.00
Door-to-Door — anywhere in Washtenaw County	\$10.00	\$5.00

*50% fare discounts are available to students (K–12), persons with disabilities, non-Washtenaw County seniors (60+), and low-income riders who complete the WAVE ADVANTAGE form at ridethewavebus.org or through dispatch.

Washtenaw County residents 60+ continue to ride free once registered, thanks to the Older Persons' Millage.

Monthly unlimited ride passes are not changing in price. The Greater Western Washtenaw pass remains \$25, and the Unlimited Pass remains \$45, available on the website.

Why fares are changing

Two factors shaped the new fare structure. Cities and townships within WAVE's service area asked for fare adjustments to help offset rising operational costs and support long-term service reliability. Separately, the Michigan House has encouraged transit agencies to move toward covering 6% of total revenue through fares; WAVE currently sits under 1%. This update helps close that gap ahead of any future requirement, while keeping the Chelsea Community Ride free and holding monthly pass prices steady.

Riders who need help with fares can ask about the Pay it Forward Fund, supported by community donations to keep rides within reach for everyone.

Learn more

WAVE will hold a public FY2027 presentation for community members who want to see the new schedules and Deviation Zone maps and ask questions. Details are available at ridethewavebus.org. Riders can also download the RidePingo app to track buses in real time, book Door-to-Door rides, and request deviations.

Questions? Call dispatch at (734) 475-9494, email ride@wavebus.org, or visit ridethewavebus.org.

About WAVE

WAVE (Western-Washtenaw Area Value Express) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public transportation provider founded in 1976, serving Greater Western Washtenaw with connections across Washtenaw County. WAVE offers Door-to-Door service, the Community Connector, the Chelsea Community Ride, the Jackson Road Connector, Late Night Chelsea, and group shuttle trips. WAVE's mission is to provide safe, affordable, accessible transportation that improves independence, strengthens communities, and connects people to opportunities.

Rides for All.