

A vehicle for change.

Identifying and prioritizing
transportation opportunities

Throughout Michigan, organizations are seeking ways to meet more transportation needs with less financial resources. This issue raises the questions: Are there enough needs to justify service in new areas? What results do taxpayers expect to get from a transit investment? What is the best process for getting the community involved? Backed by a \$90,000 MDOT grant, a team of community partners formed to answer these questions and identify transit opportunities for the Macatawa Area.

PHASE 1: Mapping the Territory
Seeking input from community organizations

PHASE 2: Planning the Route
Listening to people with unmet transportation needs

PHASE 3: Getting Onboard
Gathering feedback from taxpayers

PHASE 4: Moving Forward
Sharing findings with stakeholders and developing solutions

1,695

people discovered who are in need of transportation

610

people with unmet needs surveyed in one two-week study

46

stakeholder organizations participated in a focus group

799

taxpayers surveyed via phone

15

one-to-one interviews conducted with people who need transportation

81

stakeholder organizations participated in an online survey

40

community members used research findings to develop solutions

Survey Responses

Our community indicated both need and support for transportation services.

People with unmet transportation needs:

- 50% require an accessible vehicle to travel
- 29% need personal assistance when they travel
- 56% can afford \$1 or less for one, one-way ride in greater Holland
- 48% need to reach destinations in Ottawa County
- 39% need rides to work
- 38% need rides to medical
- 33% need rides to shopping/grocery
- 61% said public transportation that runs where and when needed was their top solution

Taxpayers:

- 86% said the need for regional transportation will be very or somewhat important in the next three years
- 74% said they would strongly or somewhat support a homeowner's tax of 0.4 mill to provide transportation in their community

Community organizations:

- 100% said the need for regional transit will be very or somewhat important in the next three years
- 44% said lack of transportation results in their inability to provide services
- 40% said lack of transportation results in decreased participation in their programs
- 19% said lack of transportation results in lost jobs
- 15% said lack of transportation results in their inability to employ people

Community Voices

Personal responses underlined the reasons for change.

“We work with so many people who have to go to dialysis, and that’s in Zeeland, Grand Rapids, and Muskegon. In order to get people to work, they need access to a broader geographic region.”

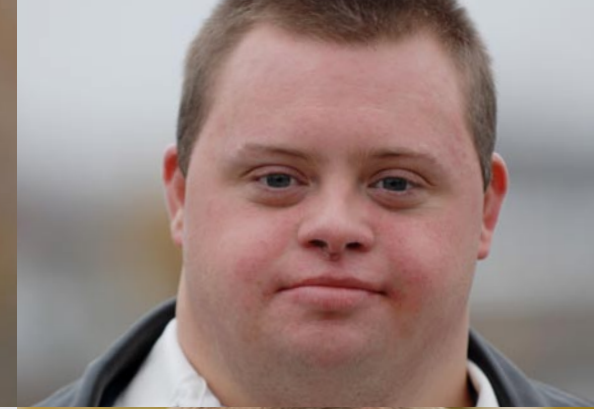
“We run an unemployment round table to help people find jobs, and we’ve found that getting transportation to work is one of the biggest problems.”

“Transportation is the biggest problem in my life. As a senior citizen, I have to be transported to medical appointments and am required to have someone else drive me. This is extremely difficult with my friends and family being far away.”

“People need to get on the ball and deal with transportation – and bigger, wider roads are not the answer.”

“We need an on-call type of transportation” for temporary and shift schedule employees who need to accept a same day job assignment or work overtime.

“...there needs to be improvements around transportation information so that clients can have all the information about resources that are available to them.”



Transportation Opportunities

The study identified 10 key areas for improvement and asked the community to prioritize.

Accessible vehicles

Many people with disabilities and seniors need vehicles with wheelchair lifts and other accessible features.

Affordability

Most people with unmet needs are able to pay \$1 or less for one, one-way ride in the greater Holland area.

Communication

We need increased communication about what transportation systems exist and where they go among people who need rides, community organizations, and transportation providers would all benefit from increased communication about what transportation systems exist and where they go.

Expanded service area

With transportation throughout Ottawa County and the triplex, people would have access to job opportunities and medical care.

Extended service hours

If service hours were extended, many people would be able to get to work, weekday worship services, and social/recreational activities.

New financial modeling

Securing funding from new sources positions transportation systems to increase services and achieve financial stability.

Personal assistance

Some seniors and people with disabilities are better able to travel when they are assisted by an attendant or caregiver.

Providing multiple modes of transportation

Providing multiple modes of transportation with options like trains, buses, cars, bikes, carpooling, and walking trails makes communities desirable places to live.

Same day service

Temporary and shift schedule employees would be able to accept same day job assignments or overtime opportunities if same day service was available.

Working across political boundaries

When we work together, we are better positioned to meet community needs and achieve regional transportation.

Charrette Results

Over 40 residents, organizations, and elected officials developed a collective mission and vision for community transportation.

Our Mission

To create a responsive, sustainable, community driven transportation system for the Macatawa Area that envisions opportunities for regional linkages throughout the triplex region of Kent, Ottawa, and Muskegon Counties.

Our Vision

To create a comprehensive, socially equitable, efficient, and economically viable network by capitalizing on cooperative and innovative partnerships, models, and sustainable practices. To create channels for effective communication, education, and feedback among all the stakeholders.

Guiding Principles

- Environmental preservation
- Vibrant and alluring neighborhoods of all types
- Affordable mixed-use development
- Enticement and retention of new and current industry and business
- Creative tourism, access to entertainment, and visitors who see our community from more than their car windows
- Creation of a customer-driven transportation network that is comfortable, affordable, and accessible to all residents of the region
- Educated users and potential users of the transportation network; people know how to use the system and its benefits
- Premium placed on stakeholder collaboration and coordination
- Action planning engages ambassadors from all stakeholder groups
- Our transportation network is enjoyable; it is something people want to use, rather than have to use
- Creation of a model community that would inspire all others



Transportation Priorities

Three priorities to focus on as we move ahead:

Expansion + Connection

Expand the geographic footprint of transportation to include neighboring communities and connect the triplex of Kent, Ottawa, and Muskegon Counties.

Education

Educate prospective riders, the general public, and community organizations about how to use existing transportation systems and the benefits of public transportation.

Coordination

Seek innovative partnerships among transit providers, business/industry, and other groups to meet current and future transit needs.

Thank you.

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*All research conducted in partnership with
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For more information, please contact Disability Network Lakeshore at 616.396.5326.
Full research reports are available at www.dnlakeshore.org.

