



# A vehicle for change.

Identifying and prioritizing transportation opportunities:  
A best practice guide

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# This changes everything.

May 5, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

Before delving into the details of how to facilitate a transportation research project, it is important to share some underlying assumptions and values that were made before the pilot project started.

Value number one is **people matter**. People are the key to bringing about change in their own communities. Because people have the power to effect change, understanding their needs, encouraging their ideas, involving them in processes, and engaging them in finding solutions is critical to any project's success.

Value number two is **processes should emphasize the value placed on people**. Processes must facilitate open and honest dialogue, allowing people to freely communicate. In addition, it is critical to develop processes that engage people from multiple stakeholder groups, encouraging the broadest participation possible. Processes should provide people with the tools and resources they need to stay organized, focused, research and analyze problems, and encourage people's creativity and innovation in developing solutions. Finally, processes should emphasize building and gaining consensus among people.

Holding these two values close to our hearts and heads from conception to completion of this project, we worked under the assumption that **when people actively engage in researching community problems and identifying solutions, systems change is more likely to occur with overwhelming support**.

Often, effecting changes in policies and systems takes several years to accomplish. People working on these long term goals must find ways to achieve benchmarks for success along the

way. Since one person alone cannot change the world, people must engage in processes that develop the capacity for leadership and ownership of effecting change among others. As we developed this transportation research project, all of these factors played a role in the process we developed to engage people in meaningful, purposeful ways to improve local transit services, build ownership for our local transit systems, and create future leadership around this issue.

The information contained in the following pages details a process for identifying and prioritizing unmet transit needs in several municipalities in close proximity to each other, some with transit and some without. The process assumes you will begin with the draft plan provided to you in this report. However, as you move through each step, you may receive feedback that requires you to modify the process. Please use the process that works best for your community. The information contained in this report is merely a guide to help you identify transit needs and develop solutions through consensus. Therefore, we are confident that even if you modify portions of the process, the information we've provided will still be helpful to you.

If you have any questions about this report or the process we used, please contact us at 616 396 5326.

Sincerely,

Geneviève Risner  
Director of Public Policy

# Executive Summary

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.

The team found several significant findings.

People with transportation needs:

- + Work and medical facilities are the top destinations people need to reach.
- + \$1 or less for one, one-way ride is the maximum amount most people who need transportation are able to afford.
- + Most people need rides at times that correspond to a first shift work schedule (6 am – 6 pm).
- + Public transportation that runs where and when needed is the preferred solution to resolving transportation issues.

Community organizations:

- + All community organizations who participated in our study indicated the need for regional transportation will be important within the next three years.
- + Lack of transportation negatively affects organizations' ability to provide services, secure participation in their programs, and retain and employ people.

Taxpayers:

- + Most taxpayers who participated in our study said the need for regional transportation will be important in the next three years.
- + Many taxpayers support transportation services that provide rides to work and medical for people with disabilities and seniors.
- + If shown an efficient and effective detailed plan for improvements and the need for transportation services, most taxpayers are willing to support a homeowner's tax to provide transportation in their community.

# Laying the Foundation

## Create an action team

Since one person alone cannot affect systems change, you need a team to work with you throughout your project. We've called our group an "Action Team" to reflect that the purpose of each member is to participate and actively engage in the project. Without an emphasis on action, quickly, groups can fall into the trap of becoming an idea team.

The Action Team is the group that oversees the project and takes action to accomplish the work. Action Team members determine how they will accomplish the goal or solve the problem under consideration. They also divide the bulk of the work among themselves when action must be taken – functioning as a team.

One member of the Action Team will be the facilitator. The facilitator's role is to keep the group organized and on track, and moderate discussion. Through asking questions, the facilitator constantly encourages the Action Team to develop processes and solve problems that help the team reach its end goal.

There is not a solid rule for the number of people who should be part of the Action Team. In our project, we had 15 members. The key is to have enough representation of different stakeholder groups and sufficient people to accomplish the work that will take place, while not having so many people that consensus building will be difficult.

Action Team members should represent multiple and diverse stakeholder groups in your community. You also want a balance of skills and assets among your members, including: knowledge about the topic, connections and respect in the community, and diverse demographics. The more diverse your group, the more likely you will have better results from your project.

Since all communities are different, you will have to choose who to include in your Action Team. Here is a list of the groups represented by our Action Team members:

- + Metropolitan Planning Organization
- + Area Agency on Aging
- + Community Mental Health
- + Michigan Works
- + Disability Network

- + Regional Transit Authority Board
- + Transportation Providers
- + Transit Riders
- + Interested Citizens
- + Research Organization (at local college)
- + Chamber of Commerce
- + Municipalities (Staff and elected officials)
- + Businesses
- + Faith Based Organization

Some other organizations to consider include courts, schools, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, homeless shelters, Department of Health and Human Services, tourism organizations, and environmental groups.

In addition, you want Action Team members with specific characteristics. Here are a few qualities and skills to look for as you identify people for Action Team membership:

- + extensive positive relationships with other community members
- + knowledge about transportation issues
- + connection to current/potential riders
- + previous research experience and knowledge
- + excellent communication skills
- + marketing skills
- + ability to think big picture and identify outreach opportunities
- + ability to work well independently and as part of a team
- + creativity
- + willingness to commit time to the effort
- + excellent follow-through

After you develop a wish list of Action Team members, begin to contact people and set up a meeting with each person. Plan to meet with people for at least 30 minutes at a location of their choice. You will need to bring the following with you to each meeting: a draft process outline + timeline, and a volunteer description + agreement (Appendix G, Appendix H).

When you meet with people, explain the project and give each person an opportunity to share his/her thoughts and ideas. After you spend time discussing potential members' suggestions for the project, if you think the person meets the qualifications and characteristics of a great Action Team member, share the volunteer description with him/her. Since you only want to involve people who are willing to commit time to the project and capable of doing the work, you must be clear with people about what you are asking them to do, how much time it will take, and what skills and abilities they need to be successful.

After discussing the commitment involved, if the person is willing to participate in the project, ask them to fill out a volunteer commitment form. The volunteer commitment contains a series of questions on the reverse side. Answers to this list of questions will help you understand the group dynamics before the Action Team meets. Understanding your group members' perceived strengths and weaknesses will help you be more confident in asking people to be responsible for specific tasks and not asking them to do activities that might make them uncomfortable. Knowing what each member hopes to gain from the project will help you to ensure their experience is positive and meets their expectations – so they might be willing to work on another project with you in the future. Group members are also asked to list their birthday month and day. In order to remind your group members they are appreciated, you'll be able to send them a card, bring a birthday cake to a meeting, or give people a call on their birthday.

Make sure all your Action Team members complete and sign the volunteer commitment sheet. Then, make a copy for their records and keep the original for yourself. Hopefully, you won't need to pull this form out later in the project. However, should you have a group member who consistently does not follow through, you can always use the signed form as a tool for accountability and a reminder of the promises made to the group.

Once you have met with all of your prospective Action Team members and have secured signed volunteer forms, choose a date, time, and location for the first meeting. Call or email Action Team members well in advance (at least 4 weeks) to ensure they set aside time for the first meeting. About one week before the meeting, send out a brief reminder to the team members, along with an agenda.

After meeting with each potential Action Team member, send a handwritten thank you note for the person's time and interest in your project.

## Meet with township supervisors, city managers, metropolitan planning organization directors, and regional transit authority board members

Municipal staff and elected officials are important parties to involve in project planning and discussion. The best case scenario is to involve them up front to solicit their feedback, ideas, and recommendations. Plus, it's a great opportunity to invite them to participate on the Action Team and be part of the process.

Before sharing your project with elected officials, start the dialogue with municipal staff – either the city manager or the township supervisor. If there's a transit authority in your area,

Speak with the director of the transit agency. Share the draft plan and ask for their feedback and ideas. Some good questions to ask at these meetings include:

- What do you think of the draft plan and process? How would the information gathered through this project be helpful to you?
- What groups in your area do you think should be involved in this project?
- I would like to allow you and your board/council the opportunity to review the survey instruments and allow for modifications/additions before they are distributed to the public. Would you and your board/council be interested and willing to provide feedback and input as we move through the process?
- What's the best way to keep you posted on this project? What's the best way to keep your board/council up to date on this project?
- Would you or a board/council member be interested in being part of the Action Team to oversee the process?

We found the best process to keep board and council members up to date is to send out monthly memos via email. These only need to be about a page in length. Keeping these stakeholders involved in the process as much as possible creates more dialogue about your project and, in the end, results in better data that meets the needs of a broader audience.

After meeting with municipal staff, send each person a handwritten thank you note for his/her time and assistance.

## Reevaluate your plan

Review all the information you have collected to this point from potential action team members and municipal stakeholders. The key to a successful project is that you have a process that values input from the people with whom you have spoken. Therefore, analyze people's input and modify the process accordingly.

## Get organized

Before the Action Team is convened there is much work to be accomplished. First, the facilitator must prepare for the Action Team's first meeting. The facilitator should select a date, time, and location for the first meeting and communicate this to all members.

Now, in anticipation of keeping the Action Team organized, the facilitator should put together a toolkit for each member. The toolkit should be a one-inch binder with a cover that specifies the name and goal of the project and lists the name of the member to whom that binder belongs. It should contain the following items:

- + Table of contents
- + Project description
- + Meeting agendas
- + Meeting minutes
- + Lined paper for note taking
- + Project timeline
- + Contact information for all Action Team members
- + Map of study area
- + Copy of only that member's volunteer agreement
- + Any other relevant reference information
- + Tabs separating each section

Once the binder is put together, the facilitator should prepare an agenda. Make copies of the agenda for all Action Team members, and three hole punch them so they can easily be put into people's new binders after the meeting.

Finally, pick up some snacks for the Action Team members to enjoy at the first meeting.

For future meetings, agendas, minutes and supporting materials should all be three hole punched so Action Team members can immediately save these documents in their binders. Also, snacks are always a great way to demonstrate appreciation and hospitality.

# Phase One:

## Mapping the Territory

### Seeking input from community organizations

The Action Team's first charge was to develop a methodology for acquiring information about transportation needs and opportunities from community stakeholders. The team identified all the stakeholders in the study area who work with people who have unmet transportation needs as well as other groups with an interest in transportation services. Then, the team created seven categories of stakeholders: (1) senior and health care organizations, (2) organizations that work with people with disabilities and low income, (3) courts and rehabilitation organizations, (4) faith based groups, (5) large and small employers, (6) transportation providers, and (7) municipalities, environmental groups, tourism organizations and educational institutions. Ten key stakeholders were selected for each category. The remaining stakeholders were put in a separate group.

### Online survey with stakeholders

The Action Team determined that all identified stakeholders should be invited to share feedback on transportation needs and opportunities. An online survey would be the most cost effective and efficient way to collect this information. Plus, nearly all organizations have internet access, so an online survey seemed to be the best approach. Therefore, the Action Team developed an online survey instrument (Appendix A).

The online survey instrument was reviewed and approved by The Frost Research Center at Hope College. Then, Frost put the survey online for one and a half months. During this time, Action Team members implemented the following process for recruiting stakeholder participation:

- + Action Team members signed up to contact specific stakeholder groups.
- + Phone calls were made to identify the best person to take the survey.
- + Once survey participants were identified, Action Team members explained the project and asked for participation.
- + If people agreed to participate, they were asked to share their email address.
- + Action Team members followed up with an email reminder, a deadline to complete the survey, and a link to the survey instrument.

Eighty-one stakeholders completed the survey. The results were compiled and analyzed by Frost. A summary of the findings was used for conversation during stakeholder focus groups.

## Focus groups with stakeholders

The Action Team felt statistical information alone was insufficient to visualize a true snapshot of community needs. The team wanted more in-depth descriptions about the data that was uncovered in the online survey. Therefore, the team developed a series of stakeholder focus groups.

The ten key stakeholders that were identified for each of the seven categories were invited to participate in a focus group. Since these stakeholders were also asked to take the online survey, Action Team members invited them to attend a focus group at the same time. Once they confirmed attendance, the Action Team recruiter sent an email to the facilitator with the person's name, title, organization and email address. The facilitator emailed a confirmation to each focus group participant. A few weeks later, the facilitator sent a follow-up letter with the date, time, and location of the focus group and an agenda for the discussion to each participant.

Each focus group was divided by category. Thus, all senior and health care organizations were invited to attend the same focus group and so on. The first six focus groups were held during the same week. Each focus group lasted no more than one hour and fifteen minutes. Focus groups were held at Frost, a neutral centrally located destination. Snacks and beverages were provided. Frost facilitated each discussion. Two assistants typed comments verbatim during the focus groups. A tape recorder was also used to capture discussion. An agenda and a one-page summary of the findings were provided (Appendix B).

While the first six focus groups were held in no particular order, the last (seventh) focus group was held with municipalities, environmental groups, tourism organizations, and educational institutions. These groups do not have overwhelming direct contact with people who need

transportation. However, they are critical stakeholders. Therefore, the agenda with this group was slightly different. The discussion with the last group was focused on sharing the online survey and focus group results and soliciting their feedback and ideas for solutions.

Another unique component of these focus groups was that Action Team members were required to attend at least one focus group of their choice as an observer. Action Team members were encouraged to remain silent during the discussion and listen to the dialogue taking place. During observation, Action Team members sat in chairs located on the periphery of the table where the focus group discussion took place. Having Action Team members attend focus groups proved to be a critical element of the project, as Action Team members appeared to show increased support, connection, and enthusiasm for the project after observing at least one focus group. Some Action Team members attended more than one group, depending on their personal and professional interests.

Another critical element of the focus groups was the request at the end when each stakeholder was asked for their help in the next phase of the project. Since people with transportation needs are difficult to locate (a mostly hidden population), stakeholder's help would be critical in sharing names and contact information about the people they work with who need transportation. At the end of the first six focus groups, people were asked to write down their name and how they could help the Action Team locate people with transportation needs (conduct surveys on site, allow Frost to conduct surveys on site, share names and contact information with the Action Team, insert surveys in paychecks, or any other ideas). Then, each participant was given a set of 5 postcards and 5 self-addressed, stamped envelopes and asked to share contact information and demographics of five diverse people they work with who need transportation and live in the study area. Participants were given two weeks to mail these back to the Action Team. The people listed on the returned postcards would be our database for the next phase of research.

Forty-six stakeholders participated in the focus group discussions. The data was compiled and analyzed by Frost. The findings were used to design the next phase of the research process.

Major findings from the online survey and focus groups included:

Stakeholders listed work as the top destination to which people need rides, followed by medical facilities. Work related transportation was viewed as most important for temporary employees and people who work a shift-schedule. Medical related transportation was viewed as most important for seniors and people with disabilities. All focus groups discussed the need for

regional transportation – both within Ottawa County as well as to destinations in neighboring counties. One hundred percent of stakeholders said the need for regional transit in the next three years will be very (69.7%) or somewhat (30.3%) important. In addition, stakeholders shared that unmet transportation needs have the following impact: inability to provide needed services (44.4%), decreased participation in programs (39.5%), lost jobs (18.5%), and an inability to employ people (14.8%).

## Phase Two:

# Planning the Route

### Listening to people with unmet transportation needs

The Action Team's second charge was to acquire information from people with unmet transportation needs. The team wanted to acquire personal stories, quotes, and statistical information on as many people as possible, but finding people who need transportation was the most difficult task. The Action Team's solution was to rely on pre-identified stakeholders and earned media to locate the target population.

### Interviews with people who need transportation

Before designing and implementing a community survey, the Action Team wanted to learn more about the transportation needs among the target population. Therefore, the team created an interview guide to uncover any information or themes that might be missing from or inconsistent with stakeholder findings (Appendix C).

The goal was to contact fourteen people with transportation needs – two from each unit of government in the study area. Contacts would be selected based on diversity of age, income, ability, ethnicity, and reasons for transit needs (all information asked on the post cards given to stakeholder organizations.) Interviews were conducted by Frost via phone during a one-month timeframe. Respondent's names were kept anonymous.

Fifteen people with unmet transportation needs were interviewed. The data was compiled and analyzed by Frost. The results were used to design the next phase of research.

Major findings from the interviews included:

The need for transportation spans all economic and demographic social strata, is a complex issue that affects people in multiple ways, and affects more than just the individual with transportation needs by touching the lives of friends, family, and neighbors who transition into the role of transportation providers.

*\*If this project was to be repeated, I would recommend having Action Team members conduct the interviews in person. Depending on the size of your Action Team and study area, the number of interviews each person conducts would vary. However, in our project, each member would have conducted one interview. I think this would have given people further connection to the study and better understanding of the findings. Also, I think the face-to-face interviews of respondents over coffee or ice cream at a public, neutral location would have made interviewees feel valued and heard. Then, each interviewer could have typed up a “story” with quotes about the person they spoke with and their need for transportation.*

## Survey of people who need transportation

Since people with unmet transportation needs are difficult to locate, and the Action Team was relying on community stakeholders for their assistance in finding people, the team decided to use a variety of methods for collecting data, depending on what worked best for the stakeholder organization. The team also kicked off the community survey with earned media including radio interviews, public television interviews, and press releases of the survey findings to date and the upcoming community survey. Data collection methods included:

- + Scheduled surveys where Frost staff conducted on-site surveys
- + Self-administered surveys – surveys were conducted by stakeholder staff, distributed on buses, or made available at reception desks at local organizations
- + Mail surveys – included in employee checks, mailed to organization’s clients and distributed to migrant workers on site
- + Phone surveys – people who heard about the survey through earned media were asked to call Frost directly and take the survey via phone

The Action Team designed a survey that could be used in these various ways (Appendix D). The survey was in printed form, with one side in English and the other in Spanish. Fully completed, returned surveys were entered in a prize drawing for one of five \$100 debit cards. The survey lasted for two weeks as a point in time study. Approximately 5,000 surveys were sent out into the community.

The facilitator coordinated survey distribution and coordination among stakeholders. Two weeks before the survey “kick-off,” the facilitator created packets for each stakeholder that was distributing and collecting surveys. Packets included: a thank you letter, an instruction sheet, requested number of blank surveys, #2 pencils, and a labeled envelope for completed surveys. Action Team members delivered and pick up completed surveys.

Six hundred and ten surveys were completed and returned. These 610 people indicated living with over 1,085 other adults (692) and children (393) who also need transportation. Therefore, **1,695 people** with unmet transportation needs were found in two weeks.

Five surveys were selected in a random drawing. Prizes and thank you notes were sent to the winners within two weeks of the survey’s conclusion. Frost compiled and analyzed survey results. Also, results were separated and analyzed by municipality.

Major findings included:

Most survey respondents are females (58%) between the ages of 30 and 49 (43%) or under 30 (30%), live in Holland City (48%) or Holland Township (23%), need transportation to work (39%), medical locations (38%) or shopping/grocery destinations (33%) within Ottawa County (48%) during M-F 6am to 10am (34-35%) and 2pm to 6pm (28-31%), and said transportation would be affordable if one, one-way ride in greater Holland cost \$1 or less (56%).

Many respondents stated they need an accessible vehicle (50%) or personal assistance (29%) to travel and were prevented from looking for, keeping, or getting a job in the past year because of a lack of transportation (41%).

People with transportation needs shared their top solutions include:

1. Public transportation that runs where and when needed (61%)
2. Gas money (50%)
3. Money for bus passes, taxi rides, etc... (43%)
4. Car insurance (36%)

# Phase Three:

## Getting Onboard

### Gathering information from taxpayers

The Action Team's third charge was to gather information from taxpayers in the study area. When the team met with municipal staff, they heard a clear request to include taxpayer input in the study. Therefore, the team created a process to communicate with stakeholders and solicit their input.

#### Taxpayer survey

The Action Team appointed two members to serve on and recruit a temporary subcommittee to create the taxpayer survey instrument and process. Since the taxpayer survey was especially important to municipalities, the two Action Team members invited one municipal staff or elected official from each unit of government in the study area to participate, along with a representative from the local metropolitan planning organization and the regional transit authority. A date and time was selected that worked for most everyone. If someone could not attend, the draft survey and process was sent to non-attending representatives for feedback and input via email.

The subcommittee determined that a phone survey would be most efficient and cost effective. They also requested that a representative sample of taxpayers from each unit of government be contacted so data could be analyzed aggregately and by municipality. Then, the subcommittee reviewed a sample survey and made changes to meet their needs. A final survey was approved and developed by the subcommittee (Appendix E).

The survey was administered over two weeks by Frost via phone. Seven hundred and ninety nine taxpayers completed the survey. The respondents represented a statistically valid sample from each unit of government based on population size.

Major findings included:

Respondents felt important transportation challenges in their city/township were: helping people with disabilities get to their jobs (81.9%), transporting seniors to medical facilities (80.7%), and helping people transition from welfare to work (75.7%). While congestion was not seen as a problem and most people said they and their family members would not be likely to use public transportation, a majority of people said they would support a transportation program through a homeowner's tax of up to 0.40 mills provided the following information was made available to them: a detailed plan for changes, general cost of the plan, examples of plans and changes in comparable communities, and demonstrated community need for such services (73.6%). Also, a majority of respondents said transportation issues in their community should be addressed within 3 years (70.7%).

## Phase Four: Moving Forward

### Sharing findings with stakeholders and developing solutions

The Action Team's fourth charge was to share the research findings with stakeholders and develop solutions. In order to accomplish this goal, the team decided to host a community charrette. The charrette would provide a forum to bring all the participants together to determine the next direction for our community.

#### Community charrette

The Action Team determined the purpose of the charrette would be to: share the research findings, develop and prioritize solutions, and provide networking opportunities.

The team laid the groundwork for several event details. They decided the event should be held on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday from 8 am until noon to allow enough time to accomplish our goals and encourage maximum participation. It was also important to ensure the date and time selected did not interfere with any events that might draw the same

participants. A neutral centrally located employer was selected as our event location as the top unmet need was the ability to get to work. The employer had sufficient space to accommodate approximately 50 participants for a large meeting and breakout sessions. In addition, the space was modern, clean, and comfortable, providing an environment where participants would feel valued and inspired.

The team also selected a facilitator for the event. The purpose of the facilitator was to be a neutral moderator and guide during the charrette discussion. It was also important the facilitator be well respected in the community and skilled at his/her trade.

Once the location, date, time, and facilitator for the charrette were confirmed, the Action Team created a list of charrette participants. Then, team members volunteered to invite people to the event. Invitations were made by phone one month in advance. As guests confirmed their attendance, team members notified the project manager with confirmations. The facilitator kept a detailed database of guests, and two weeks before the event, confirmation letters, directions, and agendas were mailed.

During the month before the charrette, the Action Team created draft mission and vision statements, developed a list of the top ten transportation opportunities identified by the research, and created an agenda for the day (Appendix F). The team also divided the charrette participants into six small groups for discussion purposes, recruited presenters, organized food and beverages, and created nametags.

A walk-through of the day:

Forty-one people attended the event. The day started with light snacks and beverages while people hung up their coats and got their nametags. Then, people took their seats and our program began. The moderator introduced herself and the Action Team members then shared what the day would look like.

The first item on the agenda was to break into small groups and revise the draft mission and vision statements. Groups moved into break out rooms and talked for about 45 minutes. After 45 minutes, people came back together, and one person from each group presented the groups thoughts, ideas, and revisions. The moderator captured these ideas on flipcharts.

After all the presentations were made, the group took a 15 minute break, enjoyed some snacks, and viewed a series of 10 posters highlighting the top identified transportation

opportunities. During the break, the moderator created a set of guiding principles based on group discussion.

When the group came back together, the moderator handed out a brief 7 question quiz about the research findings; the group answered the questions together. Then, a series of presentations were made by people with other transportation projects happening in the study area. Each presentation was approximately 20 minutes long. The purpose of the presentations was to update stakeholders about all the transportation initiatives underway or beginning in the near future.

After the presentations, the facilitator revisited the mission statement, vision statement and guiding principles. The group engaged in further discussion about what should be included.

Then, people were asked to fill out an evaluation of the event and a sign up form for future participation in moving selected priorities forward. Completed forms were turned in at the end of the event and entered in a prize drawing for a “Night on the Town.” The prize included \$200 and free roundtrip transportation for up to four adults.

Upon conclusion of the event, guests were given boxed lunches and beverages to enjoy.

After the charrette, final versions of the mission statement, vision statement, and guiding principles were created along with the top three transportation priorities. Within one week of the charrette, thank you letters with the final versions of these items were mailed to participants.

Results from the charrette included:

### **Mission Statement**

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.

### **Vision Statement**

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
- + Attraction of knowledge workers, students, visitors, and new residents who use transportation other than their cars
- + 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

## Three transportation priorities

1. **Expansion + Connection** - Expand the geographic footprint of transportation to include neighboring communities and connect the triplex of Kent, Ottawa, and Muskegon Counties.
2. **Education** – Educate prospective riders, the general public, and community organizations about how to use existing transportation systems and the benefits of public transportation.
3. **Coordination** – Seek innovative partnerships among transit providers, business/industry, and other groups to meet current and future transit needs.

# Traveling Together

## Create a summary of the findings

Once the research phase concluded, information was condensed into an interesting informative tool that can be used to educate others about the process and findings, apply for grants, and design innovative projects and partnerships that meet identified needs.

It was important to condense, condense, condense as much as possible. Spend time selecting the most useful and critical information found in the research. Show people who were involved and who need rides. Tell people's stories. Share people's ideas. Tie the data back into real people, real lives, and real possibilities.

The Action Team worked with a marketing firm to design a final report. Four hundred copies were printed. Every charrette participant, unit of government, and Action Team member received a final copy. The summary was also made available on organization's websites. It was turned into a video and shared on public access television for the month following the project.

## Celebrate accomplishments

The Action Team has worked incredibly hard over the past several months. It's time to celebrate their work, time, energy, enthusiasm and accomplishments. Let them decide how they want to celebrate so it's meaningful to them. The Action Team decided to go bowling and out to lunch. In honor of our transportation theme, we took a local trolley and rode to and from our activities together.

Another nice gesture is to purchase a small gift for each team member and handwrite a thank you note highlighting each person's contribution to the project.

## Educate others

During the celebration or at a final meeting shortly thereafter, the Action Team should create a plan for educating the community about the project and findings. Each team member should make at least one presentation to a community groups and distribute copies of the final report.

Through this process, more people are educated about community needs and learn what priorities we are working toward, together.

## Results

As a result of our project, two transportation providers applied for New Freedom funds to address the top two unmet needs: work and medical transportation. One transit system developed a Night Owl service for employees that would run after public transit hours (from 7pm until midnight). The other provider developed an affordable bed-to-bed service for people traveling to and from medical appointments.

During the transit provider focus groups, people commented that was the first time they have all been in one room together. They learned so much from each other that they hoped to have ongoing conversations. Therefore, as an additional project, a transportation system applied for funds to coordinate communication among all local transportation providers.

Finally, other groups have expressed appreciation for this data as they move forward with other transportation projects. Data from this study can be used by the Ottawa County Coordinated Services Committee, Ottawa County Planning and Grants, the Long Range Regional Planning Committee, and Inter City Regional Employment Linkages group.

## Conclusion

Bringing people together to research and solve community issues can be an effective way to create change. The art of making this process successful is in maintaining harmony and balance between (1) giving people the tools, structure, and support they need to move forward and (2) giving people the authority and power to study and shape their preferred future. When that balance is attained, essential community services such as transportation can be designed to meet community needs, elicit taxpayer support, and stimulate creativity and enthusiasm from providers - transforming ideas into reality.

# Appendix A

## Sample Online Stakeholder Survey

### Welcome to the transportation stakeholder survey!

As you know, a research project is underway in the Macatawa area to identify and prioritize unmet transportation needs. Your input will be invaluable throughout this project.

The data you provide in this survey will be compiled and analyzed by the Frost Research Center at Hope College. It will also be shared with Ottawa County, which is conducting a countywide transit needs assessment. Therefore, your responses will be used to evaluate and understand local and countywide transportation issues so solutions can be sought.

### (Next)

The following survey contains approximately 20 questions about transportation needs. The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

Participation is completely voluntary. All individual responses will be kept anonymous.

### (Previous) (Next)

**1. In order to ensure only one response is given per organization, please fill out the information below. Neither the name of the respondent nor the organization will be attached to any specific responses you give in the survey.** (Response is required for the first four items.)

Name of organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address of organization \_\_\_\_\_

Name of respondent \_\_\_\_\_

Work phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Please indicate what type your organization is:

Transit Provider

Senior or Health Care Organization

Organization serving people with disabilities and low incomes

Court-Related

Education

Tourism-Related

Government

Church or faith-based organization

Environmental Agency

Chamber of Commerce

Temporary Employment Agency

Small Employer

Large Employer

Other, Please specify

\_\_\_\_\_

### (Previous) (Next)

**2. What municipalities in the Macatawa area does your organization serve? (Please select all that apply.)**

Fillmore Township    Holland City    Holland Township    Laketown Township    Park Township    Zeeland City    Zeeland Township

**3. My organization is completing this survey to represent the transit needs of \_\_\_\_\_. (Please select all that apply.)**

- Students
- Employees
- Clients/Consumers
- Members/Parishioners
- Taxpayers
- Seniors
- Individuals with low incomes
- Individuals with severe mental illness
- Individuals with developmental disabilities
- Individuals with physical disabilities
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Currently, how is your organization meeting people's transportation needs? (Please select all that apply.)**

- Volunteers
- Taxis
- Voucher program
- Macatawa Area Express (MAX)
- Pioneer Resources
- Allegan County Transportation (ACT)
- Saugatuck/Douglas Interurban Transit
- In-house transit system
- We do not provide or pay for any type of transportation
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**5. In fiscal year 2006, how much did your organization spend on providing transportation for people?**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**6. In fiscal year 2006, how many rides did your organization provide?**

Number of rides \_\_\_\_\_

**7. How do unmet transportation needs affect your organization?**

**(Please select all that apply.)**

Lost revenue

Lost jobs

Decreased productivity

Decreased participation in programs

Inability to employ people

Inability to get people services they need

Decrease pool of employees

Decreased pool of volunteers

Does not affect the organization

Don't know

Other, Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**8. In the past twelve months, approximately how many people has your organization worked with who have unmet transportation needs?**

Number of people \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Of the people you work with who have unmet transit needs, why are their needs unmet? (Please select all that apply.)**

Too costly to own and maintain a car

Don't have vehicle with wheelchair lift

Unsafe/bad experience on bus

No family/friends in area willing to drive

Bus has insufficient days

Bus has insufficient hours

Bus does not cover needed geography

Don't know how to use public transit

Gas prices too high

Don't have a license

Don't know

Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Of the people you work with, what days and times do people need transit when it's not available? (Please select all that apply.)**

6:00am - 10:00am - 2:00pm - 6:00pm - 10:00pm - 2:00am -  
 9:59am 1:59pm 5:59pm 9:59pm 1:59am 5:59am

**Monday**

<b>Tuesday</b>						
----------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

**Wednesday**

<b>Thursday</b>						
-----------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

**Friday**

<b>Saturday</b>						
-----------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

**Sunday**

Don't know

**11. In the past year, were there any destinations in West Michigan that people you worked with needed to go, but because of a lack of transit could not reach?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**12. If you answered "Yes" to question #11, please specify what places people needed to go but could not reach by listing the exact names of destinations.**

Work \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Grocery store \_\_\_\_\_

Retail store \_\_\_\_\_

Medical appointment \_\_\_\_\_

Social service agency \_\_\_\_\_

Church \_\_\_\_\_

Court \_\_\_\_\_

Social/recreational \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**13. What is the maximum amount people you work with would be able to pay for one (1), one-way ride to get where they needed to go in the Macatawa area?**

\$1.00 or less

\$4.01 - \$5.00

\$1.01 - \$2.00

\$5.01 - \$6.00

\$2.01 - \$3.00

Over \$6.00

\$3.01 - \$4.00

Don't know

**14. Does your organization notice any seasonal trends when transit needs are greatest?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**15. If you answered "Yes" to question #14, in what season do people you work with have the greatest unmet transportation needs? (Please select all that apply.)**

Spring

Fall

Summer

Winter

**16. From your organization's experience, what areas do you believe have the greatest unmet transportation needs? Please rank order the top three areas with the greatest unmet transit needs and PLEASE use each number only ONCE. 1 = greatest unmet need**

1    2    3    Not top three

**Fillmore Township**

Holland City

**Holland Township**

Laketown Township

**Park Township**

Zeeland City

**Zeeland Township**

Other, please specify

\_\_\_\_ Don't know

**17. Please rank the following factors according to which ones you believe would have the greatest impact on improving people's unmet transit needs?**

**1 = greatest impact**

1    2    3    Don't see great impact

**Improving transit services in existing areas**

Consolidating transit services

**Expanding transit services to new areas**

Other, please specify

\_\_\_\_ Don't know

**18. Please rank the TOP THREE of the following factors according to which you believe would have the greatest impact on meeting people's transportation needs in the existing public transit service area. Please use each number only once. 1 = greatest impact.**

1 2 3 Not in top three

**Increasing accessibility of vehicles**

**Improving customer service**

**Lowering cost of service**

**Increasing hours of service**

**Increasing days of service**

**Adding amenities (benches, shelters, etc.)**

**Expanding geographic area covered**

**Other (please specify)**

\_\_\_\_ Don't know

**19. In the next three (3) years, do you believe the need for regional transit will be:**

Very important

Somewhat important

Not at all important

Don't know

**20. To what regional destinations do you believe people will have the greatest need for transit in the next three (3) years? (Please select all that apply.)**

Places of employment

Medical facilities

Shopping and retail

Social service agencies

Schools

Courts

Churches

Don't know

Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**(Next)**

**Please share an anonymous story about someone you know with unmet transit needs, if you have one.**

**(Next)**

**If you have any additional comments or questions that you would like to share, please do so below.**

**(Next)**

**Thank you very much for your participation!**

**Please visit the transportation page at [www.dnlakeshore.org](http://www.dnlakeshore.org) to view the results of the survey. Results will be posted in June.**

**[www.dnlakeshore.org](http://www.dnlakeshore.org)**

# Appendix B

## Sample Stakeholder Focus Group Agenda

### Transit Focus Group Agenda (first six groups)

1. Welcome and introductions (3 minutes)
2. Overview of ground rules (3 minutes)
3. Provide project background information (3 minutes)
4. Review survey results from the online transportation survey (7 minutes)
5. Discussion (50 minutes)
  - How does this information compare with the unmet transit needs of the customers or clients you serve?
  - What transportation changes or improvements would allow you/your organization to better service your clients?
  - How might these changes or improvements be paid for? What resources are available?
6. Next steps in the process (7 minutes)
  - How would you like to become involved?
  - How would you like to be informed about the information gathered through this process?
7. Thank you (2 minutes)

**Transit Focus Group Agenda  
(last focus group)**

1. Welcome and introductions (3 minutes)
2. Overview of ground rules (3 minutes)
3. Provide project background information (3 minutes)
4. Review survey results from the online transportation survey (7 minutes)
5. Review focus group results (10 minutes)
6. Discussion (40 minutes)
  - How does this information compare with your perception of unmet transit needs?
  - What transportation changes or improvements do you think should be considered to better meet people's transit needs?
  - How might these changes or improvements be paid for? What resources are available?
7. Next steps in the process (7 minutes)
  - How would you like to become involved?
  - How would you like to be informed about the information gathered through this process?
8. Thank you (2 minutes)

# Appendix C

## Sample Unmet Transportation Needs Interview Questions

C: This is a list of transit providers used in questions below

Self (drive)	Georgetown Seniors Transportation
Self (bike)	Good Samaritan Ministries/Love Inc.
Self (walk)	Hope Network
Immediate Family	Indian Trails/Greyhound
Extended Family	J-N-R Taxi
Friends	Macatawa Area Express (MAX)
Neighbors	MOKA (Muskegon, Ottawa, Kent and Allegan)
Church congregation	Pioneer Resources Transportation
Allegan County Transportation (ACT)	Rosebud Taxi
Ambucab	Other Provider
American Medical Response (AMR)	(Comment or clarification)
Coleman's Shuttle Service	Not Applicable
Evergreen Commons	

Q:v1

Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ from the Frost Research Center at Hope College. We are conducting a brief survey about local transportation needs.

All of your answers will be kept strictly confidential -- your information will not be connected with your name.

Would you be willing to answer some questions about your transportation situation?

Q:v3

Please tell me about the transportation currently available to you and your family.

Do you or your family have consistent, reliable transportation to get to....

(Caller: read each one and check if they say yes.)

Work

School

Medical Appointments

Shopping

Social Activities (including family events)

Church/Religious Events

For Q:v5 to Q:v15, show Provider list, and Mark all that apply.

Q:v5

Who provides transportation for you or your family to get to work

Q:v7

Who provides transportation for you or your family to get to school

Q:v9

Who provides transportation for you or your family to get to medical appointments

Q:v11

Who provides transportation for you or your family to get to shopping

Q:v13

Who provides transportation for you or your family to get to Social activities (including family events)

Q:v15

Who provides transportation for you or your family to get to Church/Religious events

Q:v17

Are there any other places you or your family need transportation to?

1 = Yes

2 = No

8 = don't know

9 = refused

if (v17 > 1) skip v20

Q:v19

What other location or activity do you or your family need transportation to?

Q:v20

C: Make a list of all providers mentioned above in v5-v15. Then ask 2 questions for each provider mentioned. If (very unlikely) no providers mentioned, skip questions

Q:v21

What things do you like MOST about using \_\_\_\_\_ for transportation?

Q:v23

What things do you like LEAST about using \_\_\_\_\_ for transportation?

Q:v100

What changes in your transportation situation would make life easier for you and/or your family? (Caller: Do not read list)

- Get a car
- Expanded area covered by transit system
- Lower cost of rides from transit provider
- Driver's license renewal (cheaper, easier)
- Lower cost of gas for car
- Lower cost vehicle insurance
- Other
- None/Cannot think of any change

Q:v102

If those changes were (that change was) made, what would improve in your or your family's life?

Q:v104

What would an ideal solution to your/your family's transportation needs be?

Q:v105

What is the most you're willing to pay for transportation?

Q:v106

Do you have a valid driver's license?

- 1 = Yes
- 2 = No
- 8 = Don't Know
- 9 = Refused

Q:v108

Do you own or have full-time access to a reliable car or other vehicle?

- 1 = Yes
- 2 = No
- 8 = Don't Know
- 9 = Refused

Q:v110

Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?

- 1 = Employed Full-Time
- 2 = Employed Part-Time
- 3 = Retired
- 4 = Military
- 5 = Student
- 6 = Homemaker
- 7 = Unemployed, seeking work
- 8 = Unemployed, not seeking work
- 9 = Temporary Disability Leave
- 10 = Permanent Disability
- 11 = Other

if (v110 > 2) skip v114

Q:v112

Which shift do you normally work?

- 1 = First Shift (roughly 8-5)
- 2 = Second Shift (roughly 4-midnight)
- 3 = Third Shift (roughly midnight-8)
- 4 = Other schedule
- 8 = Don't Know
- 9 = Refused

Q:v114

Do you or someone in your family require special assistance or accessibility in regards to transportation?

For example, needing assistance walking from the vehicle to the door, or a wheel-chair accessible vehicle.

- 1 = Yes -- (If yes, please explain your special need and what is required)
- 2 = No
- 8 = Don't Know
- 9 = Refused

Q:v116

How old are you?

(enter age, enter 888 for Don't Know and 999 for Refused)

Q:v118

Which best describes your racial or ethnic heritage?

- 1 = White/Caucasian
- 2 = Black/African-American
- 3 = Hispanic/Latina/Latino
- 4 = Native American/American Indian
- 5 = Asian/Pacific Islander
- 6 = Multi-ethnic
- 7 = Other

Q:v120:

Including yourself, how many people live in your household?

(enter number, enter 88 for Don't Know and 99 for Refused)

Q:v122

Again, all of the information collected in this phone call will be kept strictly confidential and not connected with your name.

What is your annual household income?  
(enter amount, enter 888888 for Don't Know and 999999 for Refused)

if (v122 < 888887) skip v126

C: If would not give income, ask probe question above/below poverty

C: Calculate poverty line based on household size. If household size refused/DK, skip over probe question

HHM = v120

INCPROBE = ((3400 \* (V120-1))+9800)

if (v120 > 87) skip v126

Q: v124

Can you tell me if your annual household income is more or less than \$\_\_\_\_\_

1 = More than that

2 = Less than that

8 = Don't Know

9 = Refused

Q:v126

What is your address? (Caller: Get both street and city/zip.

If they are unwilling to give their street address, ask for the closest major cross streets)

Q:v128

Record gender: (Caller, do not ask unless you really do not know.)

1 = male

2 = female

Q:v130

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your current transportation situation or previous transportation experiences?

(Caller - prompt based on previous comments or enter info you've gotten along the way.)

Q:v132

May we contact you in the future if we need more information?

1 = Yes

2 = No

q:v1000

That's the last question. Thank you very much for participating.

# Appendix D

## Sample Unmet Transportation Needs Survey

### Need a ride?

By answering every question on this survey and turning it in by October 14, you will be entered for a **chance to win**

1 of 5 \$100 cash cards!

Prizes will be mailed by October 31.

**Please take this quick 3 minute survey if:**

**1** You have had **ANY** transportation problems in the past year that have kept you from getting where you needed to go

**AND**

**2** You live in Holland City, Zeeland City, Holland Township, Zeeland Township, Park Township, Laketown Township or Fillmore Township

Your completed survey will be sent to the Frost Research Center at Hope College. Your name will NOT be linked to any answers you share. Disability Network and community partners will use the results to seek solutions.

**1. In the past year, I needed to go to \_\_\_\_\_ but did not have a ride to get there. (Select all that apply)**

Work                       Visit friends/family                       Social services agency  
 Church                       Court/Jail                       Shopping/grocery  
 School                       Medical appt.                       Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Don't know/Does not apply

**2. In the past year, I needed to go to \_\_\_\_\_ County, but did not have a ride to get there. (Select all that apply)**

Kalamazoo    Muskegon    Allegan    Don't know/ Does not apply  
 Ottawa    Kent    Other \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Transportation would be affordable for me if a one-way ride in greater Holland did not cost more than...**

\$0    50¢    \$1    \$2    \$3    \$4-5    \$6-7    \$8-10

**4. I could get where I need to go if I had transportation on these days and times: (Select all that apply)**

Does not apply

	6 am - 10 am	2 pm - 6 pm	6 pm - 10 pm	2 am - 6 am
Mon.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**5. In the past year, lack of transportation has prevented me from looking for, getting, or keeping a job.**

Yes    No    Unsure/Don't know

**6. If I had a choice of public transit options, I would rather use:**    Fixed routes/Catch a Max    Demand response/Reserve a Max

Don't know

**7. I need an accessible vehicle when I travel.**    Yes    No

**8. I need some personal assistance when I travel.**    Yes    No

**9. In what city or township do you live?**

Fillmore Twp    Laketown Twp    Zeeland City  
 Holland City    Park Twp    Zeeland Twp  
 Holland Twp

**10. Who completed this survey?**

Self - person who needs transportation  
 Caregiver of person who needs transportation

**11. Please rank up to five top solutions that would best meet your transportation needs.**

a) Getting my vehicle fixed  
 b) Gas money  
 c) Personal assistance  
 d) My driver's license reinstated  
 e) Car insurance  
 f) Money for bus passes, taxi rides, etc...  
 g) Public transportation that goes to places I need to go and runs on the days and at the times I need to travel  
 h) Accessible features for my vehicle  
 i) Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**First solution**    a  b  c  d  e  f  g  h  i  
**Second solution**    a  b  c  d  e  f  g  h  i  
**Third solution**    a  b  c  d  e  f  g  h  i  
**Fourth solution**    a  b  c  d  e  f  g  h  i  
**Fifth solution**    a  b  c  d  e  f  g  h  i

**12. Are you currently using...**

MAX/Allegan Cty Trans.    Taxi  
 Pioneer Resources    Friends/Family/Neighbors  
 Good Sam./Love Inc.    Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Please tell us a little bit about yourself.**

**13. What is your age?**

Under 18    18-29    30-39    40-49  
 50-59    60-69    70-79    80 and over

**14. Not including yourself, how many adults live in your home who also need transportation?**

0    1    2    3    4    5 or more

**How many children live in your home who also need transportation?**

0    1    2    3    4    5 or more

**15. What is your gender?**    Male    Female

**16. What is your name and where do you currently live?**  
*(You may skip this question, but you will not be entered in the prize drawing without a name and address.)*

**Name and address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**17. If we may contact you in the future, what is your phone number and/or email address?**

Thank You!

# Appendix E

## Sample Taxpayer Survey

Q:v1

Good evening. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm calling from the Frost Research Center at Hope College. We are conducting a short survey about local transportation issues for a coalition of social services agencies. Your answers will help us understand public opinion about transportation concerns facing our area. All of your answers will be completely confidential. Do you have just a few minutes to share your thoughts?

Are you at least 18 years old?

(If not 18 ask: "Is there someone 18 or older at home with whom I may speak?")

(If no, ask if there's a better time to call, thank him/her and end call.)

(If a new person comes to the phone, start the introduction again.)

Do you live in: (Don't just ask where they live)

1 = Zeeland City

2 = Zeeland Township

3 = Park Township

4 = Fillmore Township

5 = Laketown Township

None of these areas - "Thank you, we're only surveying residents of these areas"

Q:v3

How much of a problem is traffic congestion in your community, including the greater Holland area? Would you say it is... (Caller: Read options 1-4 only)

1 = very much a problem

4 = not at all a problem

2 = somewhat of a problem

8 = don't know

3 = a little bit of a problem

9 = refused

Q:v5

By choosing good, fair, or poor, please indicate how well each of the following activities would reduce traffic congestion in our area.

Building more roads to accommodate increased traffic

1 = good (method to reduce traffic congestion in our area)

2 = fair

3 = poor

8 = don't know

9 = refused

Q:v7

Widening already existing roads

1 = good (method to reduce traffic congestion in our area)

2 = fair

3 = poor

8 = don't know

9 = refused

Q:v9

Providing public transportation options

1 = good (method to reduce traffic congestion in our area)

2 = fair

3 = poor

8 = don't know

9 = refused

Q:v11

Providing carpooling opportunities

1 = good (method to reduce traffic congestion in our area)

2 = fair

3 = poor

8 = don't know

9 = refused

Q:v13

Currently, how important to you is the need for better transportation options in your area? Is it...

1 = very important

2 = somewhat important

3 = somewhat unimportant

4 = not at all important

8 = don't know

9 = refused

Q:v15

In general, how important do you think the need for regional transportation will be in the next three years? Will it be...

1 = very important

2 = somewhat important

3 = somewhat unimportant

4 = not at all important

8 = don't know

9 = refused

Q:v17

How needed are public transportation or transportation programs for the following groups in the community? Please use a scale of greatly needed, somewhat needed, a little needed and not at all needed.

For Seniors - are they (public transportation or transportation programs)...

1 = greatly needed	4 = not at all needed
2 = somewhat needed	8 = don't know
3 = a little needed	9 = refused

Q:v19

For People with disabilities - are they...

1 = greatly needed	4 = not at all needed
2 = somewhat needed	8 = don't know
3 = a little needed	9 = refused

Q:v21

For People with low incomes - are they...

1 = greatly needed	4 = not at all needed
2 = somewhat needed	8 = don't know
3 = a little needed	9 = refused

Q:v23

For Youth - are they...

1 = greatly needed	4 = not at all needed
2 = somewhat needed	8 = don't know
3 = a little needed	9 = refused

Q:v25

For People with suspended licenses - are they...

1 = greatly needed	4 = not at all needed
2 = somewhat needed	8 = don't know
3 = a little needed	9 = refused

Q:v27

For Job seekers - are they...

1 = greatly needed	4 = not at all needed
2 = somewhat needed	8 = don't know
3 = a little needed	9 = refused

Q:v29

For Unemployed persons - are they...

1 = greatly needed

2 = somewhat needed

3 = a little needed

4 = not at all needed

8 = don't know

9 = refused

Q:v31

For Other groups - are they...

1 = greatly needed

2 = somewhat needed

3 = a little needed

4 = not at all needed

8 = don't know

9 = refused

Q:v33

If you needed a ride, who would you call?

(Do NOT read answers. Mark all that apply - Use Other as needed)

Parent

Brother or sister

Son or daughter

Other family

Friend

Neighbor

Church member

Macatawa Area Express - MAX

Pioneer Resources

Good Samaritan/Love Inc.

Allegan County Transportation

MOKA

Taxi

Other

No one - I wouldn't call

Don't know

Refused

Q:v35

Next I am going to read you a list of local transportation providers. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a good, fair or poor means of providing transportation for your community. If you are not familiar with the provider, please let me know.

Macatawa Area Express - MAX Bus

1 = good - means of providing transportation for community

2 = fair

3 = poor

4 = good, but doesn't solve all my transportation problems

7 = unfamiliar with provider

8 = don't know

9 = refused

Q:v37

Allegan County Transportation

1 = good - means of providing transportation for community

2 = fair

3 = poor

4 = good, but doesn't solve all my transportation problems

7 = unfamiliar with provider

8 = don't know

9 = refused

Q:v39

Pioneer Resources

1 = good - means of providing transportation for community

2 = fair

3 = poor

4 = good, but doesn't solve all my transportation problems

7 = unfamiliar with provider

8 = don't know

9 = refused

Q:v41

Rosebud Taxi / JNR Taxi

1 = good - means of providing transportation for community

2 = fair

3 = poor

4 = good, but doesn't solve all my transportation problems

7 = unfamiliar with provider

8 = don't know

9 = refused

Q:v43

Good Samaritan Ministries - volunteer driver program

1 = good - means of providing transportation for community

2 = fair

3 = poor

4 = good, but doesn't solve all my transportation problems

7 = unfamiliar with provider

8 = don't know

9 = refused

Q:v45

Friends and family

1 = good - means of providing transportation for community

2 = fair

3 = poor

4 = good, but doesn't solve all my transportation problems

7 = unfamiliar with provider

8 = don't know

9 = refused

Q:v47

Church members/volunteers

1 = good - means of providing transportation for community

2 = fair

3 = poor

4 = good, but doesn't solve all my transportation problems

7 = unfamiliar with provider

8 = don't know

9 = refused

Q:v49

Is there some other local transportation provider that you can think of?

1 = yes

2 = no

8 = don't know

9 = refused

*if (v49 > 1) skip to v55*

Q:v51

What provider would that be?

Q:v53

How is \_\_\_\_\_ (provider's name, or "that provider") as a means of providing transportation for the community?

1 = good

2 = fair

3 = poor

4 = good, but doesn't solve all my transportation problems

7 = unfamiliar with provider

8 = don't know

9 = refused

Q:v55

In the past year have you or someone you know had an unmet transportation need?

A transportation need could be:

not having access to a reliable vehicle when you need it;

not having a current driver's license;

insurance for your vehicle;

money for gas;

money for bus or taxi fare;

no public transportation where you live or where you need to go; or

needing special assistance or accessible features in your transportation.

1 = yes

2 = no

8 = don't know

9 = refused

*if (v55 > 1) skip to v59*

Q:v57

Could you please share what your or their unmet transportation needs were?

(Mark all that apply)

Do not have access to a reliable vehicle when needed

Do not have a current driver's license

Do not have insurance for vehicle

Do not have money for gas

Do not have money for bus or taxi fare

Do not have money to get car fixed/maintain car

No public transportation where I/they live or where I/they need to go

I/they need special assistance or accessible features in transportation

Other (specify)

Don't know

Refused

Q:v59

If public transportation were available in your community how likely would you be to use it, very likely, somewhat likely or not at all likely?

1 = very likely

2 = somewhat likely

3 = not at all likely

8 = don't know/undecided

9 = refused

Q:v61

If public transportation were available in your community, how likely would it be that other family members beyond yourself would use it, very likely, somewhat likely or not at all likely?

1 = very likely

2 = somewhat likely

3 = not at all likely

7 = no family in community

8 = don't know/undecided

9 = refused

Q:v63

Next, I'm going to read you a list of challenges that public transportation or transportation programs is expected to resolve in communities. Please indicate how important you think each is to YOUR CITY OR TOWNSHIP, by indicating if it is very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, or not at all important.

Helping people with disabilities get to their jobs

1 = very important

2 = somewhat important

3 = somewhat unimportant

4 = not at all important

8 = don't know/undecided

9 = refused

Q:v65

Helping people transition from welfare to work by providing transportation

1 = very important

2 = somewhat important

3 = somewhat unimportant

4 = not at all important

8 = don't know/undecided

9 = refused

Q:v67

Transporting customers and employees of local businesses

1 = very important

2 = somewhat important

3 = somewhat unimportant

4 = not at all important

8 = don't know/undecided

9 = refused

Q:v69

Transporting seniors to medical facilities

1 = very important

2 = somewhat important

3 = somewhat unimportant

4 = not at all important

8 = don't know/undecided

9 = refused

Q:v71

Transporting the unemployed and underemployed to employment and training opportunities

1 = very important

2 = somewhat important

3 = somewhat unimportant

4 = not at all important

8 = don't know/undecided

9 = refused

Q:v73

Providing transportation options that support the conservation of land

1 = very important

2 = somewhat important

3 = somewhat unimportant

4 = not at all important

8 = don't know/undecided

9 = refused

Q:v75

Providing transportation options to help reduce traffic congestion

1 = very important

2 = somewhat important

3 = somewhat unimportant

4 = not at all important

8 = don't know/undecided

9 = refused

Q:v77

Providing transportation options to help reduce environmental pollution

1 = very important

2 = somewhat important

3 = somewhat unimportant

4 = not at all important

8 = don't know/undecided

9 = refused

Q:v79

Is there any one item from this list that you feel your tax dollars should specifically support?

(Ask for ONE, but they can choose up to three responses, if needed)

Helping people with disabilities get to their jobs

Helping people transition from welfare to work by providing transportation

Transporting customers and employees of local businesses

Transporting seniors to medical facilities

Transporting unemployed/underemployed to employment/training opportunities

Providing transportation options that support the conservation of land

Providing transportation options to help reduce traffic congestion

Providing transportation options to help reduce environmental pollution

None

All

Don't know

Refused

Q:v81

How soon would you like city or township officials to address public transportation issues within your community?

1 = Within 1 year

2 = Within 3 years

3 = Within 5 years

4 = Over 5 years

5 = Would not like this issue addressed

8 = Don't know

9 = Refused

Q:v83

If you learned that there are people who live in your community who do not have adequate transportation, how much would you be willing to invest each year to help people get rides to where they need to go?

(Caller: Read each line 1-6 until they say no; mark each yes answer)

1. Would you be willing to invest some amount under \$25 per year?

2. Would you be willing to invest \$25 per year?

3. Would you be willing to invest \$40 per year?

4. Would you be willing to invest \$75 per year?

5. Would you be willing to invest \$100 per year?

6. Would you be willing to invest over \$100 per year?

Not willing to invest anything

Other -- use only if they wish to make comment on this question

Don't know

Refused

Q:v85

If your city/township developed a transportation plan that would help people in your community get rides where they need to go, and it would cost the owner of a home with a taxable value of \$100,000 up to \$40 per year, how much would you support or oppose the plan?

- 1 = strongly support
- 2 = somewhat support
- 3 = somewhat oppose
- 4 = strongly oppose
- 8 = don't know
- 9 = refused

Q:v87

What information would you need to know about transportation service improvements to help you make this decision? (Caller: Open ended responses -- if they mention any of these, mark them, otherwise use "Other")

Number of people served

Details about types of people served (elderly, disabled, unemployed, students)

Geographic area served

Destinations served

Methods used (buses, covering volunteers' costs, agency coordination, etc.)

Other

Q:v89

I have just three questions about you, and then we're finished.

Please indicate the range into which your age falls. Are you...

- |              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1 = 18 to 24 | 4 = 50 to 65   |
| 2 = 25 to 30 | 5 = Over 65    |
| 3 = 31 to 49 | 8 = Don't know |
|              | 9 = Refused    |

Q:v91

(Caller: record gender. Ask only if absolutely needed.)

- 1 = Male
- 2 = Female

Q:v93

Do you currently own or rent your home?

- 1 = Own
- 2 = Rent
- 8 = Don't know
- 9 = Refused

Q:v95

Keeping in mind that your answers are confidential and will only be used in the aggregate, which of the following ranges contains your annual household income?

1 = Less than \$25,000 per year

2 = \$26,000 - \$50,000

3 = \$51,000 - \$75,000

4 = Over \$75,000 per year

8 = Don't know

9 = Refused

Q:v97

Is there anything else you would like to say about what we talked about today?

(IF NO, LEAVE BLANK!)

Q:v99

That concludes our survey. Thank you very much for your time. Good-bye.

Indicate area code

1 = 269

2 = 616

Q:v101

Carefully enter 7-digit phone number, no dashes, just the numbers.

# Appendix F

## Sample Charrette Agenda

### TRANSPORTATION CHARRETTE AGENDA

- + Welcome/Overview
- + Vision Statement
- + Group Activity & Break
- + Long Range Regional Transportation Planning
  - Ruth Stegeman                      Disability Network/Lakeshore
  - Mayor Roger Bergman      City of Grand Haven
  - Mayor Al McGeehan          City of Holland
- + Local Transportation Projects/Grants
  - Tiffany Bowman                  Pioneer Resources
  - Linda LeFebre                      Macatawa Area Express
- + Group Reaction & Gap Analysis
- + Break
- + Action Planning
- + Assigning Accountability

**Please note:** As a gesture of appreciation for your participation, we will provide you with a boxed lunch at the conclusion of the charrette.

# Appendix G

## Project Overview + Timeline

**Timeframe:** December 2006 - April 2008

**Project description and goals:** Disability Network/Lakeshore proposes to survey and convene community stakeholders from the cities of Holland and Zeeland, and the townships of Holland, Zeeland, Park, Laketown and Fillmore to identify and prioritize unmet transportation needs.

### Activities:

#### Stakeholders

**March - June 2007**

Identify and recruit participants from nonprofits, governmental organizations, and for-profits to participate in focus groups. (The purpose of focus groups will be to educate each entity about the transportation research project, gather their feedback on questions to ask in the survey process, ask them to identify people with unmet needs for one-to-one interviews, and collect quotes about their perceptions of needs that we can use in the final report.)

#### People with unmet transportation needs

**June – October 2007**

Conduct one-to-one interviews with people about their unmet transit needs. (The purpose of the interviews will be to identify people in each municipality who need public transit, determine the extent of their transit needs, and provide a basis for developing survey instruments.)

Conduct survey of people with unmet transit needs. (The purpose of the survey is to identify unmet transportation needs.)

#### Taxpayers

**November – December 2007**

Conduct survey of taxpayers. (The purpose of the taxpayer survey is to understand support for transit services among taxpayers.)

#### Community

**January – March 2008**

Hold charrette that develops a plan for next steps and priorities, given all research.

#### Final report /Marketing tool

**March – April 2008**

Develop final report.

#### Education/Evaluation

**May 2008**

Develop and implement education plan. Evaluate project.

# Appendix H

## Volunteer Description + Agreement

Position: Action Team Member  
Timeframe: February 2007 – May 2008 (16 months)  
Time Commitment: 2-4 hours per month (1 action team meeting per month at 2 hours, plus 2 additional hours during months when recruitment or attending board meetings occurs)  
Goal: To develop and implement a process to identify and prioritize unmet transit needs

### Activities and Responsibilities:

- Develop a consensus building and data collection process
- Work with the Frost Research Center to develop survey instruments, techniques, and questions
- Recruit 2-3 participants for a focus group and charrette
- Coordinate, attend, and present at meetings with other stakeholder groups (such as township supervisors, township boards, and/or regional transit authority board members), as appropriate.
- Provide feedback and ideas during the development of the final report

### Required Skills and Abilities:

- Excellent follow-through
- Ability to think big picture and “outside-the-box”
- Experience building community consensus
- Excellent communication skills
- Established or ability to establish positive relationships with community members, organizations, and groups
- Willingness to work as part of a team
- Commitment to excellence

I have read and understand the activities and responsibilities of action team members. I am willing to commit 2 to 4 hours per month from February 2007 until April 2008 of my time, energy, and creativity to making this project a success.

---

Signature

Date

### Kindly return completed forms to:

Geneviève Risner at Disability Network, 426 Century Lane, Holland, MI 49423  
or [genevieve@dnlakeshore.org](mailto:genevieve@dnlakeshore.org)

**In an effort to ensure that your participation in this project is a mutually positive and beneficial experience, please take a few moments to answer the following questions:**

What skills and abilities do you possess that you feel are most helpful to groups in which you participate? In other words, what are your strengths when it comes to working within a group? What do you enjoy doing?

What activities or tasks, if any, do you dislike or feel uncomfortable doing?

How do you hope participation in this project will be beneficial to you?

What else would you like to share about yourself or your expectations for this project?

What is the month and day of your birthday?

\_\_\_\_\_

Month

Day

**Thank you!**