



# Techniques to Market Countywide Rural Transportation

in Allegan County, MI

Phase 4: A Community Survey

January 2010

Prepared by:

Daniel Bergan, PhD, Michigan State University

Kathryn Gillen, Disability Network/Lakeshore

Genevieve Risner, Creative Inquiry, LLC

## Executive Summary

In December 2009, 600 phone surveys were conducted with residents in Allegan County to determine awareness of and feelings toward Allegan County Transportation, support for the Five-Year Transportation Plan, and effective messages that could be used to promote public transit in Allegan County. Respondents resided throughout Allegan County; each unit of government was represented in the study. Respondents were selected through random-digit dialing, which accounts for the differential sample sizes.

Most respondents were females (66%) with an annual household income between \$25,000 and \$50,000 (27%). Most respondents were over the age of 50; 36% were 50 to 65 years old and 35% were over 65. A majority of respondents (77%) neither knew someone with nor had unmet transportation needs themselves in the past year. However, 55% of respondents correctly identified ACT as the public transportation provider in Allegan County.

The majority of respondents (57%) did not know how to rate the current service provided by Allegan County Transportation. It was also the case that many respondents (49%) did not know how to rate the job Allegan County Transportation does in meeting the transportation needs of the community with the resources available. Likely, this is due to the fact that many respondents did not have unmet transportation needs, and did not have personal experience with the service. However, among those who provided a response about ACT service, 21% rated current services as good or very good, and 29% rated the service as good or very good when considering the resources available. Overwhelmingly, 90% of respondents believe transit services offered by ACT are very or somewhat important to the community.

Respondents were most likely to agree with considerations that focused on transportation helping people with disabilities and the unemployed, and being a good way to deal with rising gas prices. Also, people were most supportive of the Five-Year Plan when they knew people would be transported to dialysis, although all three Five-Year Plan elements received support.

Overall, the findings suggest respondents are supportive of public transportation and are willing to provide financial support through a millage for increased public transportation services in Allegan County. Over two-thirds (78%) of respondents indicated they were either very or somewhat likely to support a transportation millage in Allegan County. While the greatest support was for a millage of \$9 per year, millages of \$18 and \$24 per year also received much support, especially when the millage amount was framed in terms of a good of equivalent value and not broken down to a weekly amount. Additional support was demonstrated by the 59% of respondents (354 people) who added their names to a list of public transportation supporters in Allegan County to be shared with local elected officials.

Messages that focused on positive public transportation experiences and transit opportunities elicited more support for expanding transit than negatively framed messages that focused on solving transit problems. Also, respondents were significantly more supportive of the Five-Year Plan when they knew it was developed by community leaders compared to citizens just like them.

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Table of Contents .....	3
Community Survey Results .....	4
I.    Residence.....	4
i.    Table 1. Number and percent of respondents by municipality.....	4
II.   Age.....	5
III.  Message Types and Support for Public Transportation.....	5
i.    Table 2. Message condition by support for expanding public transportation services ..	6
ii.   Figure 1. Support for expanding public transportation .....	7
IV.   Public Transportation Needs .....	7
V.    Allegan County Transportation.....	7
VI.   Public Transportation Considerations.....	9
i.    Table 3. Public transportation considerations by agreement.....	10
ii.   Table 4. Five-Year Plan considerations by likelihood of support .....	11
iii.  Table 5. Five-Year Plan considerations by knowledge .....	12
VII.  Support for Five-Year Plan .....	12
i.    Figure 2. Support for the ACT Five-Year Plan.....	13
ii.   Table 6. Participation messages by support for the ACT Five-Year Plan .....	14
iii.  Table 7. Efficacy by message conditions.....	15
VIII. Financial and Public Support for Public Transportation .....	15
i.    Figure 3. Likelihood of support for a transportation millage.....	16
ii.   Table 8. Message frames by likelihood of millage support.....	17
IX.   Respondent Demographics .....	18
Appendix	
A. Survey Instrument .....	19
B. Priming Messages .....	25
C. Participation Messages.....	26
D. Millage Messages.....	27

# Community Survey Results

## *I. Residence*

### Question 1. In what city or township in Allegan County do you live?

The 600 respondents in the study resided throughout units of government in Allegan County. Every unit of government was represented in the study. Respondents were selected by random-digit dialing, which accounts for the differential sample sizes per municipality. A number of respondents (66) did not know their specific municipality, and indicated they lived in Allegan County. Their responses were retained for analysis. Figure 1 details the number of respondents residing in each unit of government.

**Table 1. Number and percent of respondents by municipality**

Municipality	Frequency	Percent
Allegan City	24	4.0
Allegan County	66	11.0
Allegan Township	23	3.8
Casco Township	21	3.5
Cheshire Township	15	2.5
Douglas Township	4	.7
Fennville City	7	1.2
Holland City	27	4.5
Clyde Township	5	.8
Dorr Township	51	8.5
Fillmore Township	16	2.7
Ganges Township	19	3.2
Gunplain Township	32	5.3
Heath Township	13	2.2
Hopkins Township	11	1.8
Hopkins Village	4	.7
Laketown Township	42	7.0
Lee Township	12	2.0
Leighton Township	28	4.7
Manlius Township	8	1.3

Martin Township	12	2.0
Martin Village	4	.7
Monterey Township	11	1.8
Otsego City	9	1.5
Otsego Township	19	3.2
Overisel Township	14	2.3
Plainwell City	30	5.0
Salem Township	16	2.7
Saugatuck City	3	.5
Saugatuck Township	15	2.5
South Haven City	2	.3
Trowbridge Township	5	.8
Valley Township	6	1.0
Watson Township	9	1.5
Wayland City	10	1.7
Wayland Township	7	1.2
Total	600	100.0

## *II. Age Qualifier*

### **Question 2. Are you at least 18 years old?**

In order to participate in the study, respondents had to be at least 18 years old. All respondents (100%) who participated in the remainder of the study met this criterion.

## *III. Message Types and Support for Public Transportation*

**Question 3. "Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: I am supportive of expanding public transportation in Allegan County."**

Respondents were randomly assigned to a positive priming message, a negative priming message or no priming message about transportation in Allegan County (Appendix B). After the message was read the respondent was asked: "Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: I am supportive of expanding public transportation in Allegan County." (*Strongly disagree = 1, Strongly agree = 5*) Higher mean scores indicate more support.

A positive prime resulted in the greatest support for expanding transportation services (M = 3.8, SD = 1.4). The no prime message condition resulted in the next greatest support for public transportation (M = 3.7, SD = 1.5), followed by the negative prime condition (M = 3.5, SD = 1.5). These results are provided in more detail in Table 2.

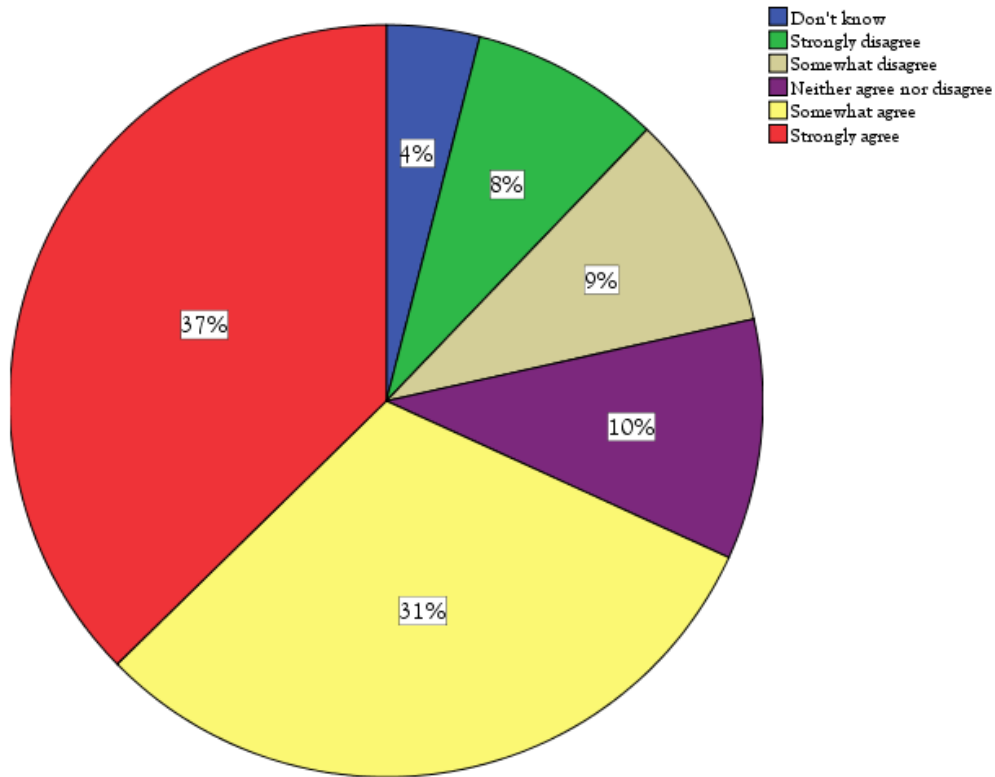
Further statistical analysis of the difference among these means revealed a marginally statistically significant difference between the positive and negative prime conditions (p=.08). This finding indicates that getting people to think about the transportation as an opportunity or positive experience is more effective in generating support than by focusing on negative aspects, liking “fixing the transportation problem” for people with unmet needs.

It is important to note that all of these conditions demonstrate above average levels of support for public transportation expansion. These findings suggest that 68% of people support expanding public transportation services in Allegan County, 10% are neutral on the topic, 18% do not support expanding public transit, and 4% are undecided (Figure 1).

**Table 2. Message condition by support for expanding public transportation services**

Support for Expanding Public Transit	Message Condition		
	Positive prime	Negative prime	No prime
1 (strongly disagree)	8% (16)	11% (22)	5.5% (11)
2	6.5% (13)	7.5% (15)	14% (28)
3	11% (22)	13% (27)	6.5% (13)
4	34% (68)	30% (60)	29% (57)
5 (strongly agree)	38% (76)	34% (68)	40% (80)
0 (don't know)	2.5% (5)	4.5% (9)	5% (10)
Total	100% (200)	100% (201)	100% (199)
Mean support	3.8	3.5	3.7
(Standard deviation)	(1.4)	(1.5)	(1.5)

Figure 1. Support for expanding public transportation



#### *IV. Public Transportation Needs*

**Question 4. Have you or anyone you know who lives in Allegan County had an unmet transportation need in the past twelve months?**

Most respondents (77%) indicated neither they nor anyone they know who lives in Allegan County had an unmet transportation need in the past twelve months. About one-fifth of respondents (21%) indicated that they or someone they know had an unmet transportation need in the past year. Only 2% of respondents were unsure of their or others' transportation needs.

#### *V. Allegan County Transportation*

**Question 5. What do you associate with the name "Allegan County Transportation"?**

Most respondents (55%) were able to correctly associate Allegan County Transportation as the local public transportation provider, while 35% could not correctly identify ACT, and 10% refused to answer this question.

After being asked this question, respondents were told that Allegan County Transportation is the name for the local bus system. Then, respondents were asked to rate ACT's performance and importance in a series of follow up questions.

**Question 6. All things considered, in your opinion, would you rate the current services of Allegan County Transportation as very good, good, fair, poor or very poor?**

Respondents rated the current services of Allegan County Transportation as very good (5%), good (16%), fair (10%), poor (6%), and very poor (6%). A large majority of respondents (57%) did not know or refused to answer this question.

Excluding those respondents who did not provide an answer provides a better picture of the service ratings for ACT. Among those respondents who answered this question, the current services of Allegan County Transportation were rated as very good (12%), good (36%), fair (24%), poor (13%), and very poor (15%). Of those who could rate ACT's service, 48% provided ratings of good or very good, 24% indicated average service, and 28% indicated poor or very poor service.

**Question 7. All things considered, in your opinion, would you rate the job Allegan County Transportation does in meeting the transportation needs of the community with the resources available as very good, good, fair, poor or very poor?**

Respondents rated the job Allegan County Transportation does in meeting the transportation needs of the community with the resources available as very good (6%), good (23%), fair (12%), poor (5%), and very poor (5%). A large number of respondents (49%) did not know or refused to answer this question.

Excluding those respondents who did not provide an answer provides a better picture of the service ratings for ACT. Among those respondents who answered this question, the job Allegan County Transportation does in meeting the transportation needs of the community with the resources available was rated as very good (12%), good (44%), fair (24%), poor (10%), and very poor (10%). Of those who could rate ACT's service, 58% provided ratings of good or very good, 24% indicated an average rating, and 20% indicated a poor or very poor job.

The difference in responses between questions 6 and 7 indicates that most respondents, who answered the question, feel ACT is doing a good or very good job in meeting the community's transportation needs with the resources available to them. However, some members of the public believe the services provided could be better, and understand that the difference between the service that is provided and what they would like is due to insufficient resources.

**Question 8. Do you feel the transportation services offered by Allegan County Transportation are very important to the community, somewhat important to the community or not important to the community?**

Half of respondents (50%) said the transportation services offered by Allegan County Transportation are very important to the community, 40% said they were somewhat important to the community, and 5% said they were not important to the community. There were 5% of respondents who were either undecided or refused to answer the question.

## ***VI. Public Transportation Considerations***

**Question 9. Would you say the following considerations about public transportation are very important, somewhat important or are unimportant?**

Eight considerations were provided to respondents. These statements focused on social justice, economic development, transportation service and environmental considerations. The statements were randomized for each respondent to prevent order effects.

Respondents were more likely to agree with considerations about public transportation that focused on social justice benefits or affordability. The statements that most respondents agreed with were that it helps people with disabilities get to their jobs ( $M = 4.15$ ), it increases the ability to get employment and training opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed (Mean = 4.03), and it provides an affordable solution to rising gas prices ( $M = 4.01$ ). (*Strongly agree* = 5, *Strongly disagree* = 1) Higher mean scores indicate greater agreement with the consideration. Detailed results are provided in Table 3.

**Table 3. Public transportation considerations by agreement**

Considerations	Agreement						Mean	Std. Dev.
	Strongly agree 5	4	3	2	Strongly disagree 1	(D/K) 0		
Public transportation services help people with disabilities get to their jobs	58% (350)	26% (154)	3% (19)	4% (21)	4% (34)	5% (32)	4.15	1.4
Public transportation increases the ability to get employment and training opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed	51% (303)	32% (194)	3% (16)	4% (24)	5% (30)	6% (33)	4.03	1.4
Studies have found that for every \$1 invested in public transportation, \$6 are returned to the community in the form of economic opportunities, decreased congestion and saved parking costs	23% (140)	33% (200)	10% (58)	7% (41)	7% (43)	20% (118)	3.00	1.8
Public transportation increases property values	17.5% (105)	25% (148)	12% (71)	16% (95)	11.5% (69)	19% (112)	2.65	1.8
In 2008, ACT provided about 45,000 rides	7% (43)	14% (85)	14% (81)	3% (19)	3% (18)	59% (354)	1.42	1.8
Since the start of 2009, ACT had to turn away hundreds of potential riders because of insufficient resources to meet the demand	15% (92)	17% (102)	13% (76)	7% (41)	3% (20)	45% (269)	2.00	2.0
Public transportation supports the conservation of land	20% (122)	25% (148)	10% (58)	15% (90)	9% (55)	21% (127)	2.68	1.8
Public transportation provides an affordable solution to rising gas prices	48% (289)	34% (203)	3% (16)	5% (31)	7% (39)	4% (22)	4.01	1.4

N = 600

**Question 10. For each of the following, do you think you would be more likely to less likely to support Allegan County Transportation (ACT) if:**

- + **transportation service hours were dedicated evenly throughout Allegan County**
- + **seniors could get to meal sites in many locations**
- + **people could get to Freisnuf Medical Center, the only dialysis clinic in Allegan County**

All three of the Five-Year Plan considerations generated increased likelihood of support. The consideration with the most support was getting people to the dialysis clinic (92%), followed by helping seniors travel to meal sites (88%), and dedicating service hours equally throughout the county (70%). (See Table 4). Focusing on specific populations and needs seems to generate the most support, especially when the travel need is related to preserving the health and well being of community members.

**Table 4. Five-Year Plan considerations by likelihood of support**

Five-Year Plan Considerations	Likelihood of Support		
	More likely	Less likely	Don't know
transportation service hours were dedicated evenly throughout Allegan County	70% (418)	15% (90)	15% (92)
seniors could get to meal sites in many locations	88% (527)	7% (41)	5% (32)
people could get to Freisnuf Medical Center, the only dialysis clinic in Allegan County	92% (552)	4% (24)	4% (24)

N = 600

**Question 11. Did you know that if Allegan County Transportation (ACT) does not have local funding, the following will happen:**

- + **Many seniors and persons with disabilities will be unable to get around**
- + **ACT will not be able to meet the transportation needs of many Allegan County residents**
- + **ACT will lose the opportunity to bring in state and federal dollars into Allegan County**

Most respondents were not aware that any of these things could occur if ACT does not have local funding. The greatest percent of respondents were most unaware of ACT losing the opportunity to bring in state or federal funding into the county (69%). A majority of respondents did not know that ACT would not be able to meet the needs of many Allegan County residents (58%), and

many seniors and persons with disabilities would be unable to get around (56%) (See Table 5). Thus, these would be important considerations to highlight in a marketing campaign.

**Table 5. Five-Year Plan considerations by knowledge**

Five-Year Plan Considerations	Knowledge		
	Yes	No	Refused
Many seniors and persons with disabilities will be unable to get around	43% (260)	56% (335)	1% (5)
ACT will not be able to meet the transportation needs of many Allegan County residents	41% (245)	58% (345)	2% (10)
ACT will lose the opportunity to bring in state and federal dollars into Allegan County	29% (175)	69% (411)	2% (14)

N = 600

### ***VII. Support for Five-Year Plan***

**Question 12. Using a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being strongly oppose and 5 being strongly support, please tell me what number best indicates your attitude toward the Allegan County Transportation Five-Year Plan.**

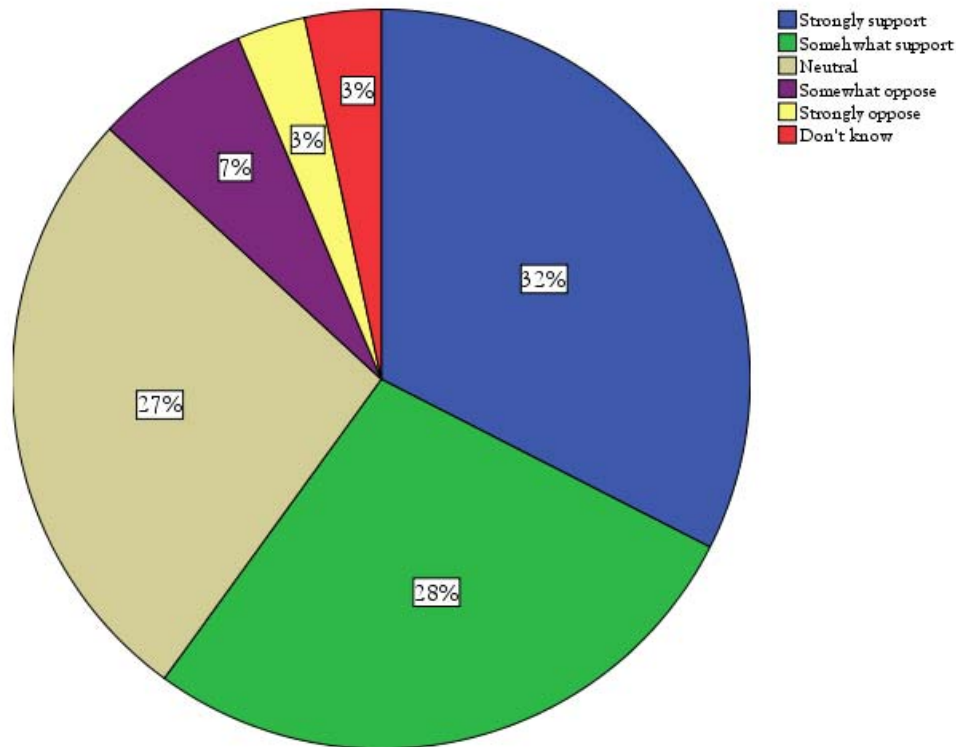
Before this question was asked, respondents were read the following statement: Allegan County Transportation has developed a five-year plan to improve transportation services for residents of Allegan County. It calls for dedicating service hours throughout Allegan County, providing rides to the senior meal site, and offering rides to the only dialysis clinic in the County.

Then, respondents were randomly assigned to one of five message frames: people like you participated in developing the plan, community leaders participated in developing the plan, 1,000 people like you participated in developing the plan, 200 community leaders participated in developing the plan, or no message. (Appendix C). After the message was read the respondent was asked: "Using a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being strongly oppose and 5 being strongly support, please tell me what number best indicates your attitude toward the Allegan County Transportation Five-Year Plan." (*Strongly oppose = 1, Strongly support = 5*) Higher mean scores indicate more support.

Regardless of the message condition, a majority of respondents (60%) of respondents either strongly or somewhat supported the five-year plan. Over one quarter of respondents (27%) were

neutral, and 10% did not support the plan. Only 3% of respondents did not know. Figure 2 displays these findings.

Figure 2. Support for the ACT Five-Year Plan



Messages that stated community leaders participated in the development of the plan resulted in the greatest support for the five-year plan ( $M = 3.92$ ,  $SD = 1.2$ ). The no message condition resulted in the next greatest support for the five-year plan ( $M = 3.77$ ,  $SD = 1.3$ ), followed by the people like you message condition ( $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = 1.2$ ). These results are provided in more detail in Table 6.

Further analysis revealed a couple statistically significant differences between messages. First, the general message emphasizing community leader participation in plan development resulted in a significantly greater amount of support for the plan than the message emphasizing 200 community leaders ( $p = .04$ ). In other words, emphasizing that 200 community leaders participated in plan development, significantly decreased support for the plan.

Second, there was significant difference between messages that emphasized people like you compared to community leaders. A marginally significant difference was found between the community leader message and the people like you message ( $p = .07$ ). This demonstrates that a message emphasizing community leader participation in plan development is more effective in generating support than one emphasizing general citizen participation. Also, a significant difference was found between the community leader message and the message emphasizing 1,000

people like you ( $p = .03$ ). This finding demonstrates that by adding a large number to the citizens who helped developed the plan significantly decreases support.

These findings suggest that five-year plan marketing should focus on community leader involvement in plan development. Also, specific numbers of community leader participants should not be used as this added feature significantly decreased support for the plan. However, the no message condition was as effective, statistically, as the community leader message. Thus, when developing a marketing plan, one might consider not adding any details about how the plan was developed and focus on the components of the plan itself.

**Table 6. Participation messages by support for the ACT Five-Year Plan**

Messages	Agreement						Total	Mean	Std. Dev.
	Strongly support 5	4	3	2	Strongly oppose 1	(D/K) 0			
People like you	28.5% (36)	27% (34)	31% (39)	9% (11)	3% (4)	1.5% (2)	126	3.64	1.2
Community leaders	44% (54)	23% (28)	23% (29)	6% (7)	2% (3)	2% (3)	124	3.92	1.2
1,000 people like you	27% (33)	31% (38)	26% (32)	7% (8)	6% (7)	3% (4)	122	3.57	1.3
200 community leaders	29.5% (36)	27% (33)	29% (35)	6.5% (8)	3% (4)	5% (6)	122	3.58	1.3
No message	34% (36)	30% (32)	24.5% (26)	6.5% (7)	0% (0)	5% (5)	106	3.77	1.3

**Question 13. Using a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree, please tell me how much you agree with the following statements:**

- + I don't think public officials in Allegan County care much about what people like me think
- + In general, people like me have an influence in local politics in Allegan County
- + Generally speaking, the opinions of people like me are important to Allegan County public officials

This question was used to create a scale to measure whether different messages altered perceptions of process efficacy, one's ability to influence policy. The scale's reliability was assessed. One item was removed from the scale as it proved to be a poor indicator. This item was "I don't think public officials in Allegan County care much about what people like me think." This item was measured on its own as a separate indicator and recoded. The other two items were averaged and had a reliability coefficient of .70. Higher mean scores on items indicate more agreement with the statement. These results are provided in Table 7.

Results indicate that there was not a significant difference in process efficacy or in feelings that Allegan County officials care what people “like me” think among different message conditions. All conditions indicate that respondents have an average sense of process efficacy and an average sense that officials care what they think; no messages significantly increased these outcomes.

**Table 7. Efficacy by message conditions**

Efficacy Conditions	Message Condition				
	People like you	Community leaders	1,000 people like you	200 community leaders	No message
I don't think public officials in Allegan County care much about what people like me think	3.08 (1.4)	3.04 (1.4)	2.91 (1.4)	2.99 (1.4)	3.08 (1.3)
In general, people like me have an influence in local politics in Allegan County AND Generally speaking, the opinions of people like me are important to Allegan County public officials	3.20 (1.2)	3.21 (1.3)	3.11 (1.2)	3.28 (1.1)	3.20 (1.1)

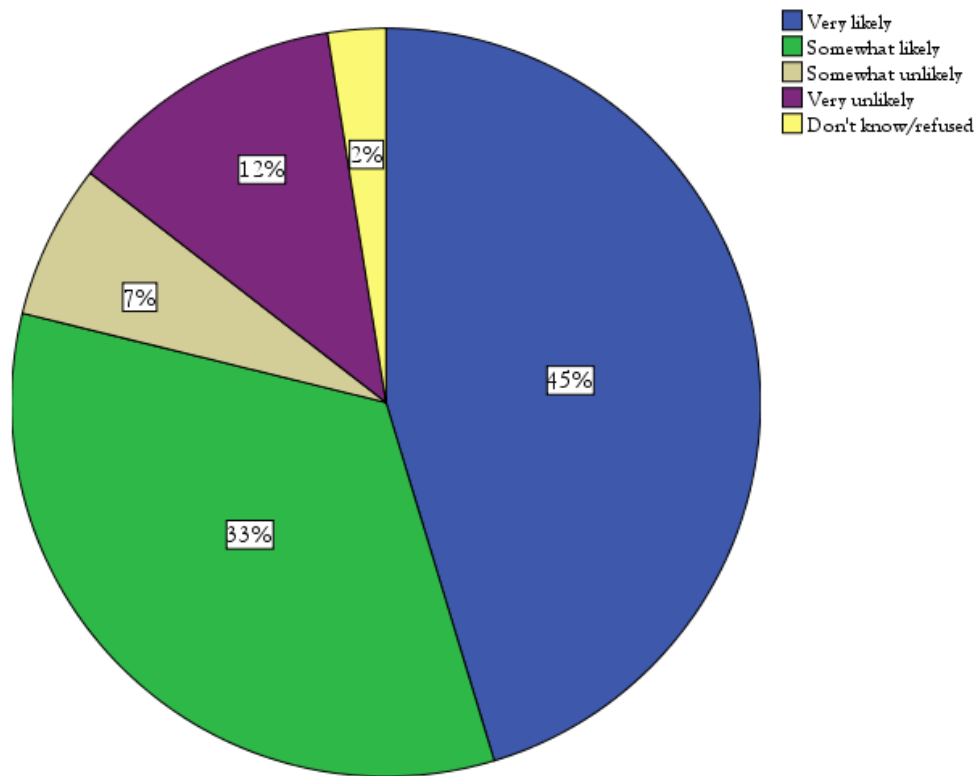
### ***VIII. Financial and Public Support for Public Transportation***

**Question 26. Would you be very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely to support a millage for public transportation services in Allegan County if it cost your household \_\_\_\_ per year?**

The 600 respondents surveyed were randomly assigned to one of 12 message frames about the potential cost of a public transportation millage, and then they were asked about their support. These message frames are provided in Appendix D.

Overall, respondents were supportive of a millage for public transportation. Forty-five percent of respondents were very likely to support a transportation millage, 33.5% were somewhat likely to support a millage, 7% were somewhat unlikely, and 12% were very unlikely. Only 2.5% of respondents were unsure or did not provide an answer. These findings are detailed in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Likelihood of support for a transportation millage



Messages linked to a specific millage amount were pooled together. For example, support for millage amounts framed as \$9 per year, one piece of bubble gum per week, and four 2-liters of pop per year were averaged together. This process was repeated for the other two millage amounts. Then, these averages were analyzed to determine whether certain millage amounts were statistically different from the others.

Analyses of potential millage costs demonstrated that a millage of \$9 per year received the highest support ( $M = 3.5$ ,  $SD = 0.8$ ), followed by a millage of \$18 per year ( $M = 3.2$ ,  $SD = 1.0$ ) and a millage of \$24 per year ( $M = 3.0$ ,  $SD = 1.0$ ). Comparison of these mean scores demonstrated a statistically significant difference between \$9 per year and both \$18 and \$24 per year ( $p < .001$ ,  $p = .02$ ). Also, there was a statistically significant difference between \$18 and \$24 per year ( $p = .04$ ). This means that support is higher for a \$9 per year millage compared to an \$18 or \$24 per year millage. Support is higher for an \$18 per year millage compared to one that is \$24 per year.

However, these results do not mean that respondents did not support a potential millage costing \$24 per year. The lowest support for a millage of \$24 per year occurred when the millage was framed as 46 cents per week ( $M = 2.77$ ,  $SD = 1.0$ ). When this same cost was framed as four dinners at a fast food restaurant like McDonalds per year, support increased by a marginally significant amount ( $M = 3.11$ ,  $SD = 1.0$ ,  $p = .06$ ). This message, equating to a total cost of \$24 per year, was

not significantly different from any of the \$18 millage messages. Thus, depending on the message chosen to promote a millage, a \$24 per year millage may receive as much support as an \$18 per year millage.

It is also important to note that the messages framed as weekly amounts generated less support in each respective amount category. It is possible that due to innumeracy, people are either unable to accurately translate the weekly cost into a total amount in their heads or feel like a weekly frame could be an attempt at deception. In either case, the results of this study caution against promoting a potential millage in weekly amounts, and finds that framing a millage in terms of an item/s per year appears to be a more effective strategy for gaining support.

**Table 8. Message frames by likelihood of millage support**

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Somewhat unlikely	Very unlikely	Don't know/Refused	Total	Mean (std. dev.)
Twenty four dollars per year	31% (13)	40% (17)	10% (4)	19% (8)	0% (0)	42	2.83 (1.1)
Two gallons of laundry detergent per year	37.5% (15)	40% (16)	7.5% (3)	15% (6)	0% (0)	40	3.00 (1.0)
Four dinners at a fast food restaurant like McDonalds per year	41% (23)	43% (24)	2% (1)	14% (8)	0% (0)	56	3.11 (1.0)
Forty six cents per week	26% (14)	42.5% (23)	11% (6)	18.5% (10)	2% (1)	54	2.77 (1.0)
One apple per week	47% (30)	28% (18)	6% (4)	16% (10)	3% (2)	64	3.10 (1.1)
One donut per week	40% (19)	35% (17)	13% (6)	10% (5)	2% (1)	48	3.06 (1.0)
Nine dollars per year	54% (20)	32% (12)	5.4% (2)	3% (1)	5.4% (2)	37	3.46 (0.7)
One piece of bubble gum per week	59% (30)	23.5% (12)	4% (2)	12% (6)	2% (1)	51	3.32 (1.0)
Four 2-liters of pop per year	67% (34)	25% (13)	4% (2)	2% (1)	2% (1)	51	3.60 (0.7)
Eighteen dollars per year	52% (22)	29% (12)	5% (2)	12% (5)	2% (1)	42	3.24 (1.0)

One miniature candy bar per week	47.5% (29)	24.5% (15)	6.5% (4)	13% (8)	8% (5)	61	3.16 (1.1)
Four gallons of ice cream per year	43% (23)	41% (22)	7% (4)	7% (4)	2% (1)	54	3.21 (0.9)
Total	45% (272)	33.5% (201)	7% (40)	12% (72)	2.5% (15)	600	3.15 (1.0)

**Question 27. We are collecting names of people who support public transportation to share with elected officials in your community. Your name will not be connected to your survey responses in any way. May I add your name to the list of public transit supporters?**

Of the 600 respondents contacted, over half (354, 59%) agreed to have their names added to a list of public transit supporters to be shared with their local elected officials, while 41% of respondents (246) declined.

### ***IX. Respondent Demographics***

#### **Age**

Most respondents were age 31 and older. About one fifth of respondents (22%) were between 31 and 49 years old, 36% were ages 50 and 65, and 35% were age 65 and older. Only 3% of respondents were between 25 and 30, 3% were between 18 and 24, and 1% refused to share their age.

#### **Income**

Respondents were also diverse in terms of income. Twenty percent of respondents indicated an annual household income in 2008 of less than \$25,000 per year, 27% reported making between \$25,000 and \$50,000, 18% said they made between \$50,001 and \$75,000, and 16% said they made over \$75,000. About one-fifth (20%) of respondents did not know or declined to answer this question.

#### **Gender**

Most respondents (65.5%) were female, while 34.5% were male. This unequal distribution is typical of phone surveys, as most females tend to answer the phone and agree to participate in surveys.

**Appendix A**  
**SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

**Michigan State University**  
**East Lansing, MI**

Introduction

Good afternoon/evening. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am calling from \_\_\_\_\_. We are conducting a survey about local transportation issues. Your answers will be extremely important in helping shape transportation solutions in your community. We would be very grateful for your time to talk about local transportation.

**1. In what city or township in Allegan County do you live?** [If respondent doesn't specify city or township, please clarify before selecting a residence.]

1. Allegan City
2. Allegan County
3. Allegan Township
4. Casco Township
5. Cheshire Township
6. Douglas City
7. Fennville City
8. Holland City
9. Clyde Township
10. Dorr Township
11. Fillmore Township
12. Ganges Township
13. Gunplain Township
14. Heath Township
15. Hopkins Township
16. Hopkins Village
17. Laketown Township
18. Lee Township
19. Leighton Township
20. Manlius Township
21. Martin Township
22. Martin Village
23. Monterey Township
24. Otsego City
25. Otsego Township
26. Overisel Township
27. Plainwell City
28. Salem Township
29. Saugatuck City

30. Saugatuck Township
31. South Haven City
32. Trowbridge Township
33. Valley Township
34. Watson Township
35. Wayland City
36. Wayland Township

(If respondent does not live in one of these areas, thank him/her and close the interview.)

**2. Are you at least 18 years old?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

(If respondent is not at least 18 years old, thank him/her and close the interview.)

**APPENDIX A. RANDOMLY ASSIGN RESPONDENTS TO ONE OF THE MESSAGE FRAMES**

**3. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: “I am supportive of expanding public transportation in Allegan County.”**

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Somewhat Agree
5. Strongly Agree
0. Don't Know, Refused (Don't read this statement)

**4. Have you or anyone you know who lives in Allegan County had an unmet transportation need in the past twelve months?**

1. Yes
2. No
0. DK/R

**5. What do you associate with the name “Allegan County Transportation”?** (Do not read the answers below. Enter ONE number only.)

1. Any answer which relates “Allegan County Transportation” with the bus system. *(Please code responses as #1 if the respondent provides an answer that refers to rides, bus, bus system or Dial A Ride. This could include responses such as: the bus system, the name of the bus system, Dial-A-Ride, transportation for seniors, the senior bus, rides for people, rides for seniors, rides for people with disabilities.)*

2. Unable to recognize or associate “Allegan County Transportation” name with the bus system, rides, or Dial-A-Ride. Don’t know.

0. Refused. No answer

**Read the following after completing Question 5:**

**Allegan County Transportation is the name for the local bus system.**

**6. All things considered, in your opinion, would you rate the current services of Allegan County Transportation as very good, good, fair, poor or very poor? (Read options 1-5. Enter ONE number only.)**

1. Very poor

2. Poor

3. Fair

4. Good

5. Very good

0. Don’t Know, Refused

**7. All things considered, in your opinion, would you rate the job Allegan County Transportation does in meeting the transportation needs of the community with the resources available as very good, good, fair, poor or very poor? (Read options 1-5. Enter ONE number only.)**

1. Very poor

2. Poor

3. Fair

4. Good

5. Very good

0. Don’t Know, Refused

**8. Do you feel the transportation services offered by Allegan County Transportation are... (Read options 3-1. Enter ONE option only.)**

3. Very important to the community

2. Somewhat important to the community or

1. Not important to the community

0. Undecided, Don’t Know, Refused

**9. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements:**

Strongly agree (5), somewhat agree (4), neither agree nor disagree (3), somewhat disagree (2), or strongly disagree (1), don’t know/refused (0)

[Randomize order]

[Social justice]

- a. Public transportation services help people with disabilities get to their jobs
- b. Public transportation increases the ability to get employment and training opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed

[Economic development]

- c. Studies have found that for every \$1 invested in public transportation, \$6 are returned to the community in the form of economic opportunities, decreased congestion and saved parking costs
- d. Public transportation increases property values

[Transportation service]

- e. In 2008, ACT provided about 45,000 rides.
- f. Since the start of 2009, ACT had to turn away hundreds of potential riders because of insufficient resources to meet the demand.

[Environmental]

- g. Public transportation supports the conservation of land.
- h. Public transportation provides an affordable solution to rising gas prices.

10. For each of the following, do you think you would be more likely or less likely to support Allegan County Transportation (ACT) if... (Read options A-C for each statement. Enter ONE option only for each statement.)

	More Likely	Less Likely	D/K Ref.
A. Transportation service hours were dedicated evenly throughout Allegan County	2	1	0
B. Seniors could get to meals sites in many locations	2	1	0
C. People could get to Freisnuf Medical Center, the only dialysis clinic in Allegan County	2	1	0

11. Did you know that if Allegan County Transportation (ACT) does not have local funding, the following will happen: (Read options A-C for each statement. Enter ONE number only for each statement.)

	Yes	Did not	NA, Ref
A. Many senior citizens and persons with disabilities will be unable to get around	2	1	0
B. ACT will not be able to meet the transportation needs of many Allegan County residents	2	1	0
C. ACT will lose the opportunity to bring state and federal transportation dollars into Allegan County	2	1	0

## APPENDIX B: RANDOMLY ASSIGN RESPONDENTS TO ONE OF THE MESSAGE FRAMES

12. Using a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being strongly oppose and 5 being strongly support, please tell me what number best indicates your attitude toward the Allegan County Transportation Five-Year Plan.

- 1 Strongly oppose
- 2 Somewhat oppose
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat support
- 5 Strongly support
- 0 Don't Know

13. Using a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree, please tell me how much you agree with the following statements.

[Randomize]

- a. I don't think public officials in Allegan County care much about what people like me think. (\*reverse code)
- b. In general, people like me have an influence in local politics in Allegan County.
- c. Generally speaking, the opinions of people like me are important to Allegan County public officials.

14. Would you be very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely to support a millage for public transportation services in Allegan County if it cost your household \$\_\_\_\_\_ per year:

## APPENDIX C: RANDOMLY ASSIGN SUBJECTS TO ONE OF THE MESSAGE FRAMES.

- 4 Very likely
- 3 Somewhat likely
- 2 Somewhat unlikely
- 1 Very unlikely
- 0 Don't know/Refused

15. We are collecting names of people who support public transportation to share with elected officials in your community. Your name will not be connected to your survey responses in any way. Your name will not be sold to any other agency; it will only be used to share your name with elected officials. May I add your name to the list of public transit supporters?

1 yes

0 no

If yes,

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Last name \_\_\_\_\_

I have a few more questions for statistical purposes only.

16. Please indicate into which range your age falls. Are you..... (Read options 1-5. Enter ONE option only.)

1. 18 to 24

2. 25 to 30

3. 31 to 49

4. 50 to 65

5. Over 65

0. Undecided, Don't Know, Refused

17. Into which of the following ranges did your annual household income for 2008 fall? (Read options 1-4. Enter ONE option only.)

1. Less than 25,000 dollars per year

2. 25,001 to 50,000 dollars per year

3. 50,001 to 75,000 dollars per year

4. Over 75,000 dollars per year

0. Undecided, Don't Know, Refused

This concludes our survey. If you would like to view the survey results, they will be available online at [www.dnlakeshore.org](http://www.dnlakeshore.org) in about a month. Thank you very much for your time. Good-bye.

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18. By observation, indicate the respondent's gender

1. Male

2. Female

**Appendix B**  
**PRIMING MESSAGES**

1. Please tell me about a time when transportation worked well for you and it was enjoyable. Transportation could mean a car, bike, motorcycle, plane, train, bus or any other vehicle that allows someone to travel.

There are a lot of people in Allegan County who would benefit from expanded public transportation, allowing them to travel throughout the community to get to medical facilities, grocery stores, and places of employment.

2. Please tell me about a time when transportation did not work well for you and it was frustrating. Transportation could mean a car, bike, motorcycle, plane, train, bus or any other vehicle that allows someone to travel.

There are a lot of people in Allegan County who are frustrated by a lack of public transportation, which makes it difficult for them to travel throughout the community to get to medical facilities, grocery stores, and places of employment.

3. No message

**Appendix C**  
**PARTICIPATION MESSAGES**

Allegan County Transportation has developed a five-year plan to improve transportation services for residents of Allegan County. It calls for dedicating service hours throughout Allegan County, providing rides to the senior meal sites, and offering rides to the only dialysis clinic in the County.

1. This plan was created after conducting several meetings, surveys, and input sessions during the past two years with Allegan County residents like you.
2. This plan was created after conducting several meetings, surveys, and input sessions during the past two years with Allegan County community leaders.
3. This plan was created after conducting several meetings, surveys, and input sessions during the past two years with 1,000 Allegan County residents like you.
4. This plan was created after conducting several meetings, surveys, and input sessions during the past two years with 200 Allegan County community leaders.
5. No Message

**Appendix D**  
**MILLAGE MESSAGES**

1. Twenty-four dollars per year
2. Two gallons of laundry detergent per year
3. Four dinners at a fast food restaurant like McDonalds per year
4. Forty-six cents per week
5. One apple per week
6. One donut per week
  
7. Nine dollars per year
8. One piece of bubble gum per week
9. Four 2-liters of pop per year
  
10. Eighteen dollars per year
11. One miniature candy bar per week
12. Four gallons of ice cream per year



Disability Network / Lakeshore

426 Century Lane

Holland, MI 49423

T 616.396.5326 F 616.396.3220

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