

A vehicle for change.

Demonstrating how lack of
transportation affects people
and their communities

A Transportation Research Project of
Disability Network/Lakeshore

The impact lack of public transit has on an entire community is complex and reaches beyond the individual without transportation to several other residents and stakeholders. Individuals without transportation do not have full access to the community in which they live. As natural supports and community organizations with which people are connected transition into the role to transportation providers, they are affected too. This issue raises these questions: What is the impact lack of transportation has on a community without public transit? For each person who is affected by lack of transportation, how many other people become involved and in what way? What is the most effective way to communicate this complexity? Funded by a \$99,000 MDOT Grant, a team of community partners formed to answer these questions and demonstrate how lack of transportation affects people and their communities in Eastern Ottawa County.

PHASE 1: IDENTIFY THE NEED

Listen to people with transportation needs

PHASE 2: COMMUNITY INPUT

Gather feedback from taxpayers

PHASE 3: EDUCATING CITIZENS

Create educational DVD and website to inform community of transit needs

PHASE 4: NEXT STEPS

Share findings with elected officials and community leaders

1,000

taxpayers surveyed via phone

449

people with unmet needs surveyed within a nine month period

36

one-to-one interviews conducted with people who need transit and their networks

553

people signed on to publicly support transit

22,309

people with disabilities living in Ottawa County

21%

population of individuals age 55 and older living in Ottawa County

26

stakeholder organizations participated in an online survey



COMMUNITY VOICES.

Individuals with unmet transit needs:

“I would be much more independent. I would not have to rely on others to take me places.”

“I feel like I have become a bit afraid of strangers and more reclusive since I can’t get out anymore.”

“I could have a social life and get a job.”

“My transportation provider kept making me late to work, and I almost lost my job.”

Their Networks:

“I am greatly affected by the lack of public transportation in the community. Right now I home school our children so that I can cater to my husband’s schedule of work and medical appointments.”

“We could use a good dial-a-ride system in our area. Fixed route transportation would also be very helpful. We now have some people moving from this area because there is not a good transportation system.”

Community Organizations:

“I advocate for increasing the physical and social well-being of my clients and having a chance to get out of the house is a big part of that. I have one client I really worry about as she becomes increasingly sedentary and increasingly wary of outsiders.”

“I know it’s a rural area but to promote growth it would be necessary to add a bus route.”

SURVEY RESPONSES

Eastern Ottawa County indicated both a need and support for transportation services.

People with unmet transportation needs:

84% of people age 60 or older stated medical care as the purpose of their transportation trip

59% can afford between \$2 and \$5 for one, one-way ride to where they needed to travel

50% of transportation needs are medically related

36% of individuals with unmet transit needs are age 60 or older

21% said a lack of transportation has prevented them from looking for, getting, or keeping a job

Taxpayers:

87% said that improving area public transportation is either somewhat or very important

75% support public transportation services in Eastern Ottawa County

68% said they are very or somewhat likely to support a public transportation millage in their community

53% said traffic congestion was very or somewhat severe in Eastern Ottawa County

Stakeholders:

98% said the need for regional transit will be very or somewhat important in the next three years

65% said a lack of transportation results in their inability to get people the services they need



NEXT STEPS

We have identified the need and support for public transportation in Eastern Ottawa County. Public transportation impacts everyone; whether it is a senior, a businessman, a student, an elected official or a teacher. In moving forward, Eastern Ottawa requires this amenity to provide economic growth, foster youth development, increase job opportunities, and provide freedom to its seniors and people with disabilities. Citizens and community leaders are continuing to educate elected officials by collaborating with existing transit providers and coordinating potential transit options for Eastern Ottawa County. Together, we can do more than you think because TRANSIT MEANS MORE!

THANK YOU

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For more information, please contact Disability Network/Lakeshore at 616 396 5326. Full research reports are available at www.dnlakeshore.org.



*Statistics taken from the 2008 American Community Survey and the 2009 Eastern Ottawa Action Research Study.