

# A vehicle for change.

Developing a five year plan and  
creating techniques to market  
countywide rural transportation

A Transportation Research Project of  
Disability Network/Lakeshore

Allegan County Transportation receives numerous calls from residents and organizations who are not eligible for services and do not understand the services provided by Allegan County Transportation. ACT is consistently looking for ways to improve and increase ridership in the existing service area. These issues raise the underlying questions: What services do Allegan County residents need and support? How much factual information do residents have about ACT? What are the best ways to educate residents about ACT and the need for improved transit services? Funded by a \$120,000 MDOT grant, a team of community partners formed to answer these questions in order to develop a five-year strategic plan for ACT that will begin meeting the needs of Allegan County residents.

#### PHASE 1: GETTING DIRECTIONS

Seek input from community organizations

#### PHASE 2: FILLING UP THE TANK

Listen to people with unmet public transportation

#### PHASE 3: STARTING THE ENGINE

Develop draft strategic plan and present to community residents

#### PHASE 4: PICKING UP PASSENGERS

Gather feedback from taxpayers

#### POST-PROJECT: DRIVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Use data and feedback to modify and finalize five year plan

11,490

people with disabilities  
living in Allegan County

600

taxpayers surveyed via phone

354

people signed on to publicly  
support transit

27,871

individuals age 55 and older  
living in Allegan County

739

current and prospective  
riders surveys completed

45%

of current riders are unable to  
get to medical appts because  
of a lack in transit

188

stakeholders participated in a  
needs survey and focus groups



## COMMUNITY VOICES.

“We discovered a wide array of people whose needs are unmet, including seniors, people with disabilities, and people looking for work. If we could expand the system, we could service many people who have trouble getting to work, buying groceries, going to the hospital, or getting the social services they need.” —Dean Kapenga, Allegan County Board of Commissioners

“It’s very helpful to get feedback from the community, to learn what they value in public transit and how they envision a transit system meeting their needs.” —Dan Wedge, ACT Transportation Director

“This is the biggest irony because it is our vulnerable populations: people with disabilities, low income, senior citizens—shame on us, we need to find the political power, if we don’t change this we are failing.”

“What we bring in strengthens the economy. By bringing people into the area, we are bringing money to the area. But we need transit to bring people here.”

“If we can’t get patients in [because of a lack in transit], then that affects our income, and then you have to lay people off and that starts a vicious cycle. A lot is on the line—sometimes we are talking about the life or death of a person.”

# SURVEY RESPONSES.

Allegan County indicated both a need and support for transportation services.

## Taxpayers:

78% indicated they were either very or somewhat likely to support a transit millage in Allegan County

90% stated transit services offered by ACT are very or somewhat important to the community

60% said they strongly or somewhat strongly support the ACT Five Year Plan

## Stakeholders:

84% said they either or strongly somewhat strongly supported increased transit services

92% cited the need for regional transportation in the next three years as very or somewhat important

52% stated the inability to get people the services they need because of a lack in transit options

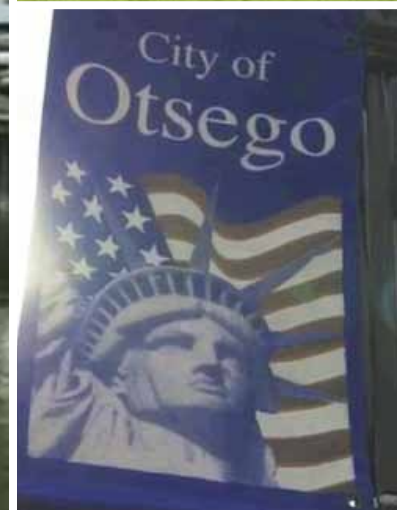
## Current and Prospective Riders:

65% of respondents indicated the need for increased regional transportation in West Michigan over the next three years

25% of respondents stated that a lack in transportation prevented them from looking for, getting, or keeping a job

36% of respondents stated that a lack in transportation services prevented them from attending medical appts in the last year

81% of residents indicated that the transportation services offered by ACT are very or somewhat important to the community



# THANK YOU

## Allegan County Transportation Workgroup Members

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



\*Statistics taken from the 2008 American Community Survey  
and the 2008-2011 Allegan County Transportation Action Research Study