



Strategic Plan Update

The evolution of public transit in Allegan County

Presented by
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October 26, 2023



Part 1:

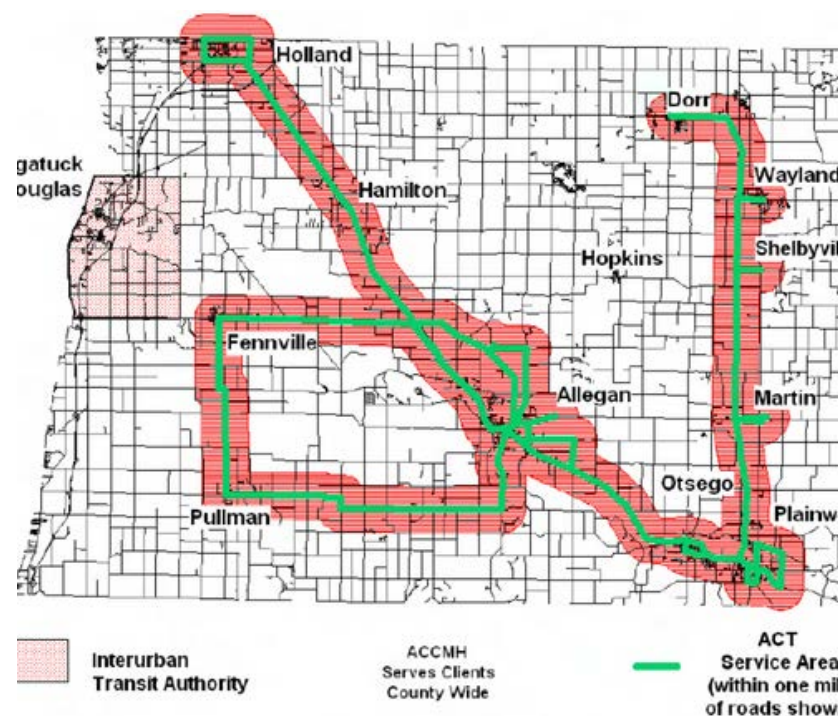
Previous state



Public Transportation prior to 2020

01

Service was only available for individuals that lived within 1 mile from major roadways. Service was not available on weekends and evenings. A study conducted during the development of the 2011 Transportation Strategic Plan found 25% of survey respondents stated a lack of transportation prevented them from looking for, getting, or keeping a job.



02

Program revenue was largely dependent upon partnerships with agencies. This limited the number of trips individuals were able to take, since agencies had scheduling priority. Consequently, 36% of respondents from the 2011 strategic planning study stated a lack in transportation services prevented them from attending medical appointments in that last year.



03

In 2019, there was an average of 269 trip denials per month - individuals were calling ACT for service, but their rides were unable to be scheduled to various limiting factors. Through the 2019 survey, the community expressed support towards the prioritized expansion of public transportation through a tax limitation restoration.



Public Transportation prior to 2020

04

Between 2018-2020, there was a heavy reliance on fund balance to maintain operations, with a rapid decrease in agency service and corresponding contract revenue. It was estimated that by 2021, fund balance would be depleted, and service would be limited to contracted service. There was also future funding uncertainty for Specialized Services.



05

Primarily, trips were reserved for Agency Partners (such as Commission on Aging, Outlook Academy, MDHHS, Michigan Works and Community Mental Health). Remaining availability was reserved for dialysis patients, medical trips, and seniors and individuals with disabilities. Only about 5 percent of trips were reserved for Job Access/Employment.



06

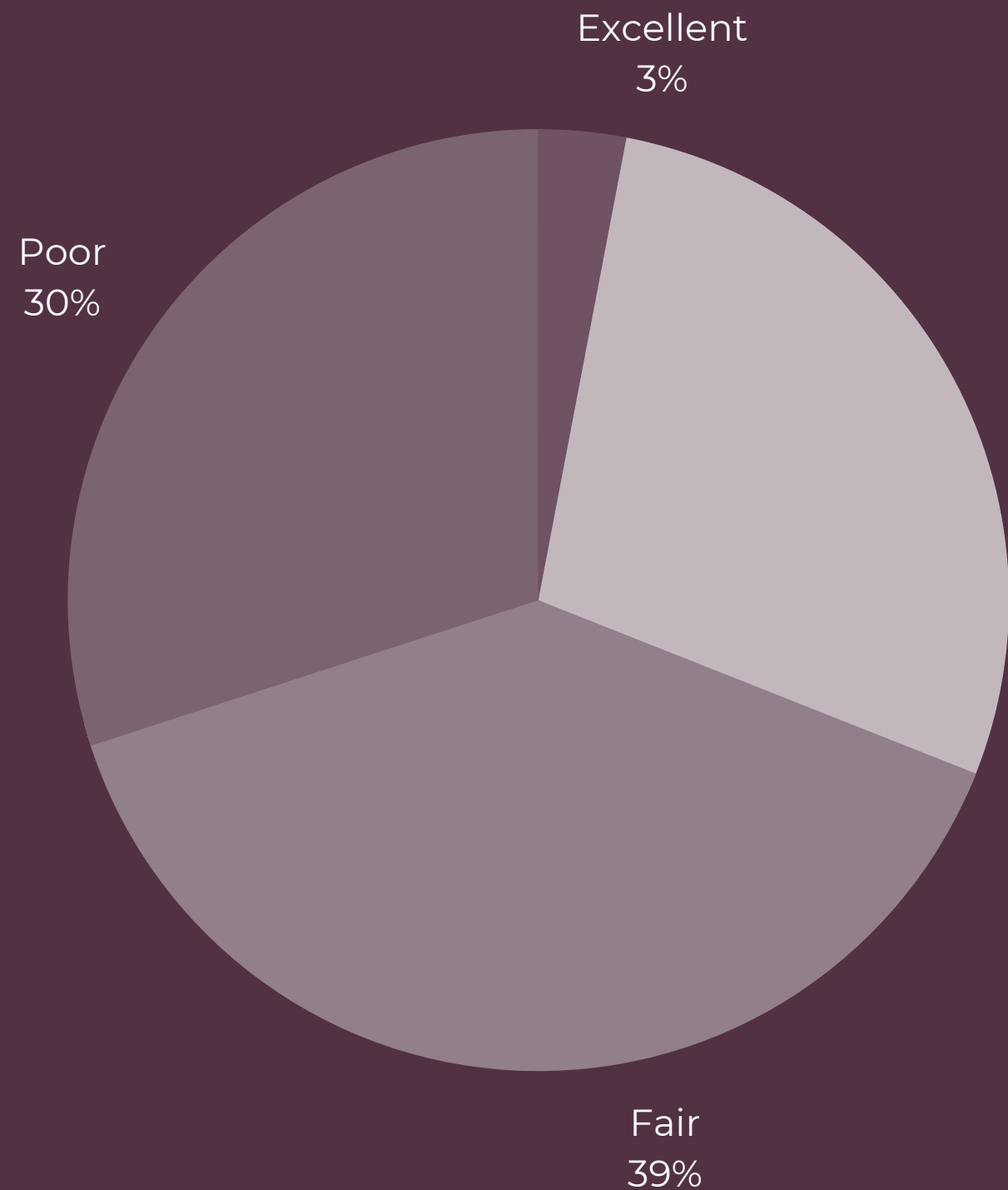
Unmet transportation needs included:

- Weekend Employment
- Rehab Providers
- Nursing Homes
- Probation & Parole
- Drug Treatment
- After-school programs
- School of choice
- Recreational Activities
- Weekend Dialysis
- Grocery Trips/Food Access



THE NCS™

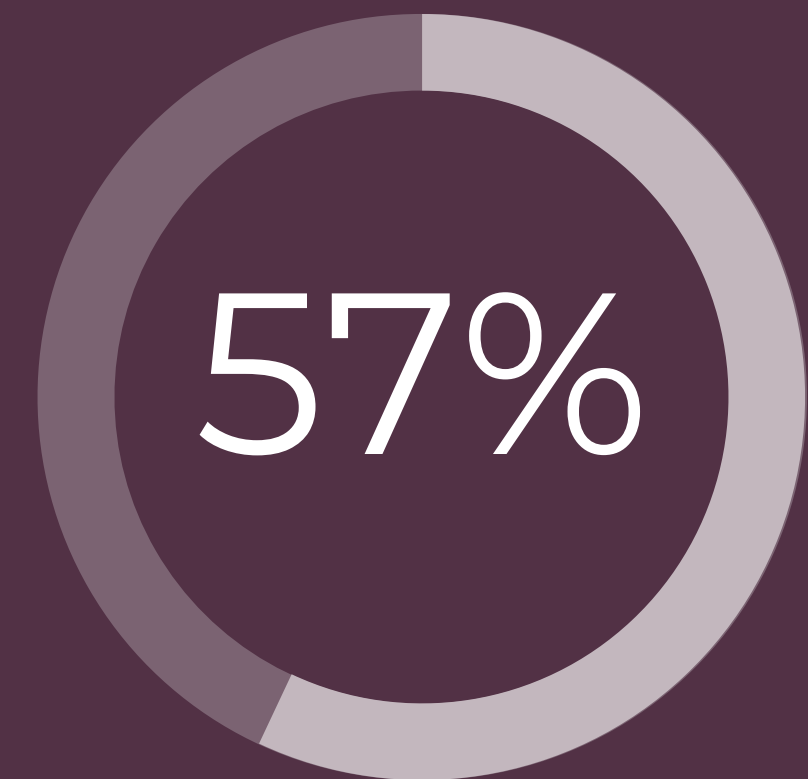
THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY SURVEY™



Good
28%

Overall quality of
Transportation
system in Alleghen
County, 2022

Please rate how important you think it is for the Alleghen County community to focus on the following in the coming two years:
Overall quality of transportation system



2022 National Community Survey.

Part 2:

Service Expansion





Service Expansion Impact

Impact # 1 Growth

Funding available to have more drivers on the road. There are now 21 drivers at ACT and trip denials have been cut in half. During the summer months, there were less than 50 trip denials/month (on average).

Impact # 2 Equity

Communities previously under-served by Public Transportation are now able to access employment opportunities and medical appointments. There are now more trip requests from outlying areas, and a wider diversity in trip purpose.

Impact # 3 Collaboration

The hiring of a new Transportation Director (June 2022) and Transportation Coordinator (April 2023) has enabled more staff hours to be allocated towards outreach and strengthening community partnerships. Current transportation initiatives are focused on the Community Health Improvement Plan areas.

Impact #1: Program Growth

Through a 2019 survey, the community expressed support towards the prioritized expansion of public transportation through a tax limitation restoration, which was later approved by the voters. As a result, Transportation service hours have now been expanded to Monday through Friday 5:30am - 7:00pm and Saturday 8:00am - 3:00pm.

“I’m extremely happy with the new drivers coming onboard. They are well-trained, cautious, and willing to listen. [I’m] blessed to have this service and plan to use it for years to come.”

Amanda Edwards, ACT passenger





Impact #1: Program growth

More drivers on the road - Increase to the number of routes per day (11-12 routes per day, increased to 17-19 per weekday)

Increase in revenue miles traveled
(17% increase from FY 2022 to FY 2023).

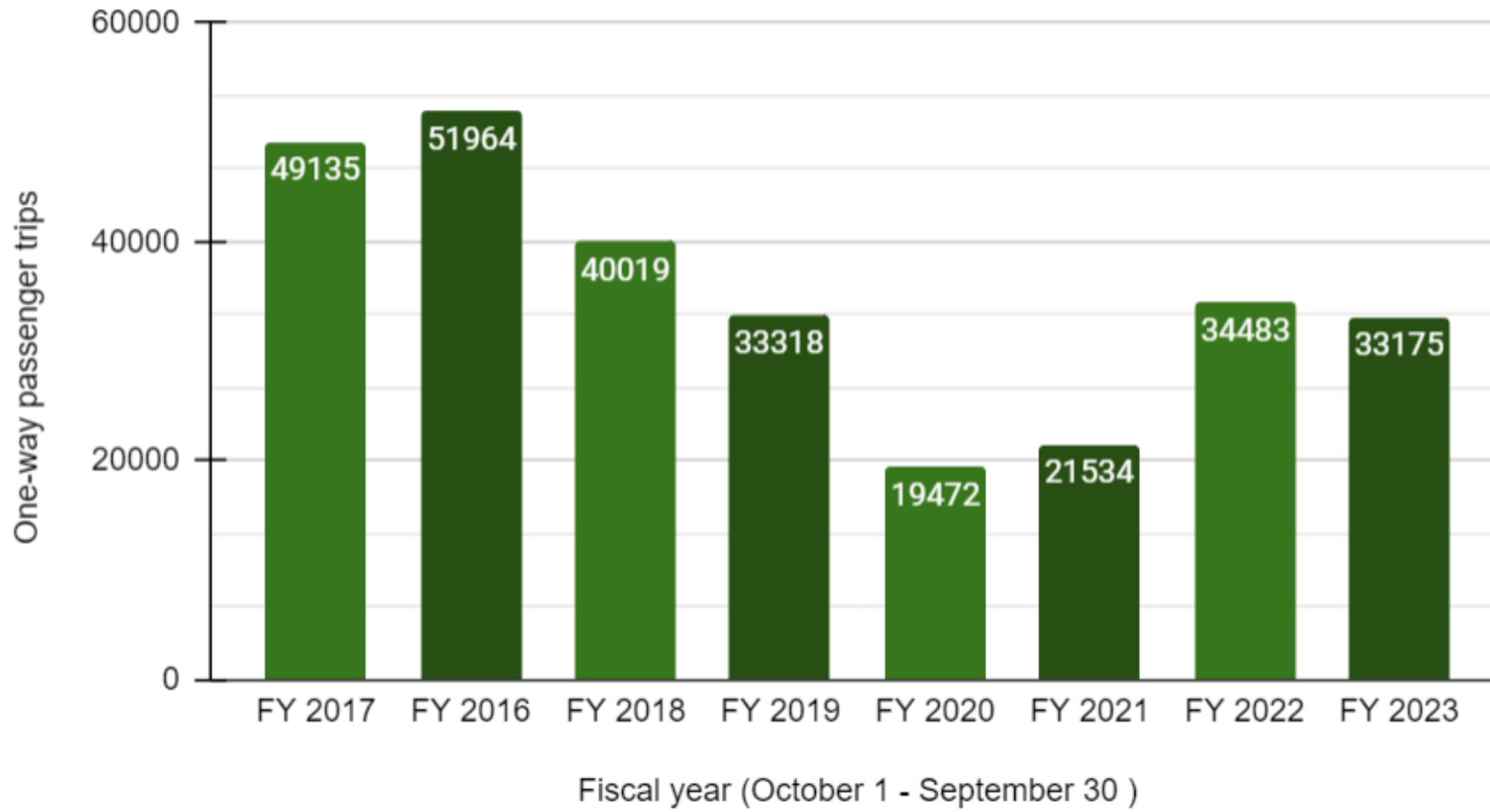
Less trip denials - up to 83 percent lower during the summer months

Expanded trip purpose - expanded transportation opportunities improves the quality of life for individuals.

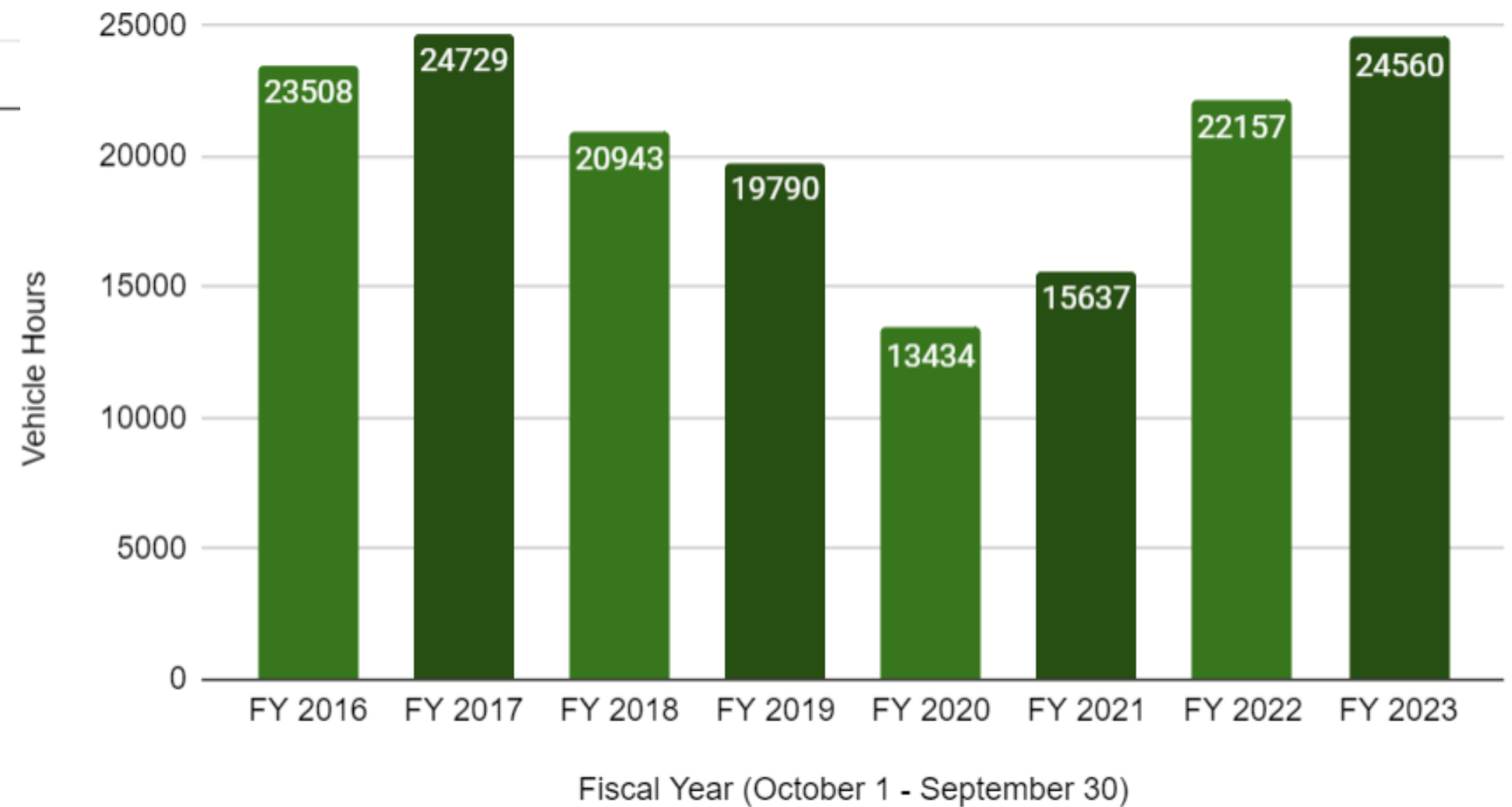
Farebox (cash) revenue - 24 percent increase
(higher frequency of \$5 one-way fare being paid for individual, non-agency out-of-county trips)

Impact #1: Program Growth

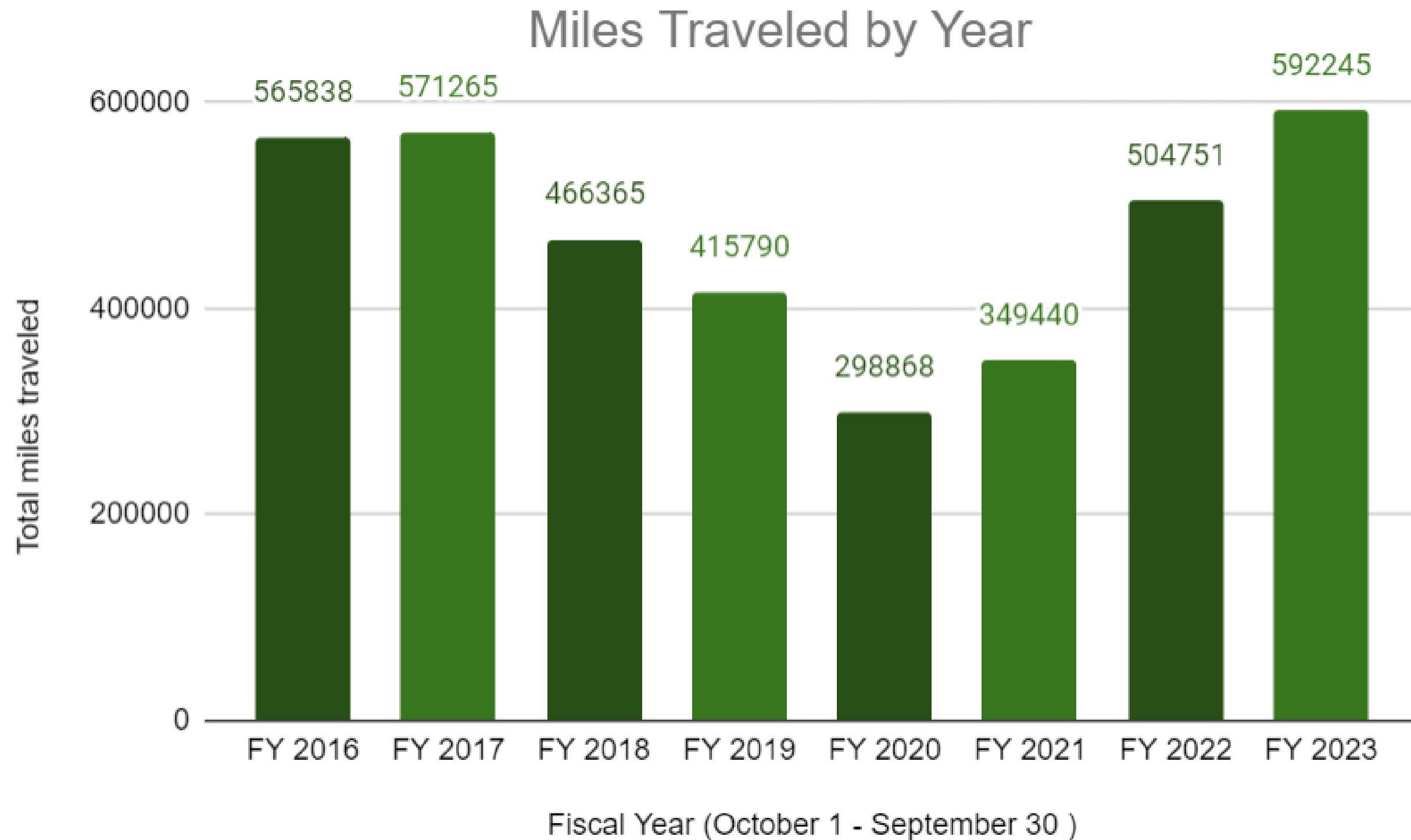
One-way passenger trips- FY 2016 - FY 2023



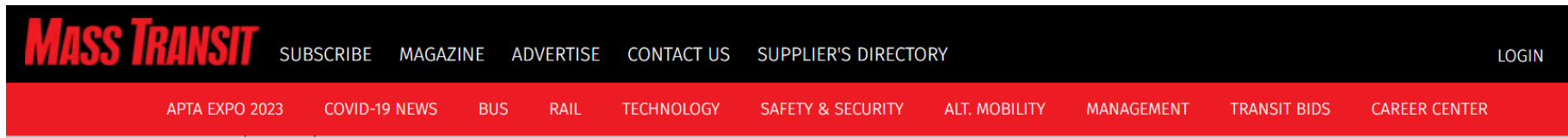
Vehicle Hours by Year



Impact #1: Program Growth



Impact #1: Program Growth



Allegan County Transportation begins switch to propane buses

The seven new propane buses are 90 percent cleaner than the Environmental Protection Agency's current emissions standards and help prepare the county for additional national emissions requirements set to be implemented in 2024 and 2027.

Sept. 1, 2023

Related To: [Allegan County](#)

Inside Allegan County's Switch Propane Transit Buses

Allegan County introduces propane-powered buses to boost air quality & save taxpayer money

TRANSPORTATION

Allegan County Transportation switches to autogas-powered buses, saving taxpayer dollars



Evan Sasiela
Holland Sentinel

Published 4:02 a.m. ET Sept. 5, 2023



Allegan County Transportation Switches to Propane Transit Buses



Allegan County Transportation switches to propane transit buses

Allegan County Transportation's propane buses better prepare the county for national emissions requirements set to be implemented in 2024 and 2027

Allegan County Transportation switches to propane transit buses

Allegan County Transportation now operates seven new buses powered by propane autogas to help the county meet air quality attainment goals and save taxpayer dollars.

"This month, Allegan

mental Protection Agency's classifies the fuel as a non-contaminant. Vehicles operated by propane autogas emit fewer greenhouse gases, less nitrogen oxides, less carbon monoxide and fewer particulate

of Services. "The Board of Commissioner's strategic plan includes ongoing expansion of transportation services County wide."

The county estimates it will save about 50% on fuel costs and up to 70% on maintenance costs.

er than EPA's current emissions standard, better prepare the county for additional national emissions requirements set to be implemented in 2024 and 2027.

"With propane vehicles, everyone benefits. Citi-



Robin Wall, American Red Cross

Robin learned more about ACT at an outreach event, and began riding three months ago.

“Everyone is friendly and the bus is always on time, accommodating, and the drivers don’t scare me.”

Robin says she now recommends ACT to everyone, including friends and family.

“[Riding with ACT] means I can see doctors and specialists outside of the community that I need to be connected to.”

Robin Wall, American Red Cross

Impact #2: Equity

Prior to 2022, routes were centered around contracted service with local agencies.

With local funding available to offset operational expenses, routes are built around individual needs.

Improved access to public transportation ensures a more equitable community, where everyone has an equal opportunity to get a trip.



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“[I’m] always recommending service for people I’m working with or any time I hear ‘I don’t have a ride.’”

Norma McDonald, ACT passenger

ALLEGAN COUNTY



2022



CHIP

Impact #2: Equity

Outreach initiatives are currently focused on incorporating the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which was adopted as the Allegan County Community Foundation's Strategic Plan for 2023.

The following have been identified as priority areas. Transportation can be an important resource to alleviating these community challenges.

- Priority #1: Access to Medical Care
- Priority #2: Food Security
- Priority #3: Housing
- Priority #4: Behavioral Health

"Judith called today to say what a 'wonderful' ride she had today...she felt very safe and the ride was comfortable. The drivers are knowledgeable of the area and a pleasure to talk to."

Dispatch Feedback, August 2023.



FARMER'S MARKET TRANSPORTATION

An occasion to honor regional agriculture. Explore the hues, flavors, and scents of our local farmer's markets!

CALL (269) 673 - 4229



Otsego

Downtown Otsego

Dates/Hours

Saturday

May - October

9 a.m. - 2 p.m.



Allegan

Corner of Water & Cutler St.

Dates/Hours

Thursday

May 5 - October 13

8 a.m. - 2 p.m.



Plainwell

200 Allegan St.

Dates/Hours

Thursday

May 4 - September 28

3 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Allegan County Transportation is a public transportation provider and this opportunity will not be operated as a shuttle or chartered service, rides must be scheduled before 12 Noon the day before.

Impact #2: Equity

The Farmer's Market transportation initiative was intended to help improve access to fresh food in addition to supporting local businesses and farmers. The goal next year is to expand the outreach of this program to include other parts of the county.

Expanded service countywide also helps ensure individuals are able to schedule trips to get groceries throughout the week.

"This is a lifeline for those of us that can't drive and have special needs. Thank you."

County Survey response, 2023.

Lacy's Story

Service expansion has opened up employment opportunities for community members, such as Lacy, who was a passenger prior to coming to ACT through Michigan Works.

Lacy was able to secure full-time employment status through a partnership with MI Works that paid for training expenses, including a CDL license. In her role, Lacy sees how service expansion is helping individuals in the community get to work, especially those with later work schedules.

“ACT helps get people where they need to go...The bus has helped my family tremendously.”

Lacy Bild



Impact #3: Community Presence.

Service Expansion enabled the hiring of a Program Coordinator in April 2023. This person is primarily responsible for building community relationships and strengthening agency partnerships.

In recent months, the Transportation service area has been represented at:

Boomer Bash
Creative Arts Festival
Island City Festival

Allegan Jubilee
Tulip Time Fly-In
Bridge Fest

Allegan County Fair/Parade
Wayland Community Expo
Balls, Books & Blocks

Goosefest Parade
OnPoint Resource Fair
Festive Fridays Parade



Impact #3: Community Presence.

In addition to participating in community events throughout the county, Allegan County Transportation staff have also been working on agency presentations and building community connections with organizations including:

People Helping People (Pullman)
Martin Area Resource Center
Chamber of Commerce
Area Agency on Aging
OnPoint

WorkForce, Express Employment, Manpower and MI Works
Kauhale, Ely Manor, Life Care and Evergreen Commons
Meals on Wheels, Allegan Food Pantry and Hungry for Christ
AAESA Adult Education, Allegan Tech Center (for adult education)
Medical facilities including specialists



Impact #3: Community Presence.

Allegan County Transportation has been selected as “Community Service Organization of the Year” by the Otsego Plainwell Area Chamber of Commerce.

“I see your buses everywhere!”

-Often said by community contacts



Part 3:

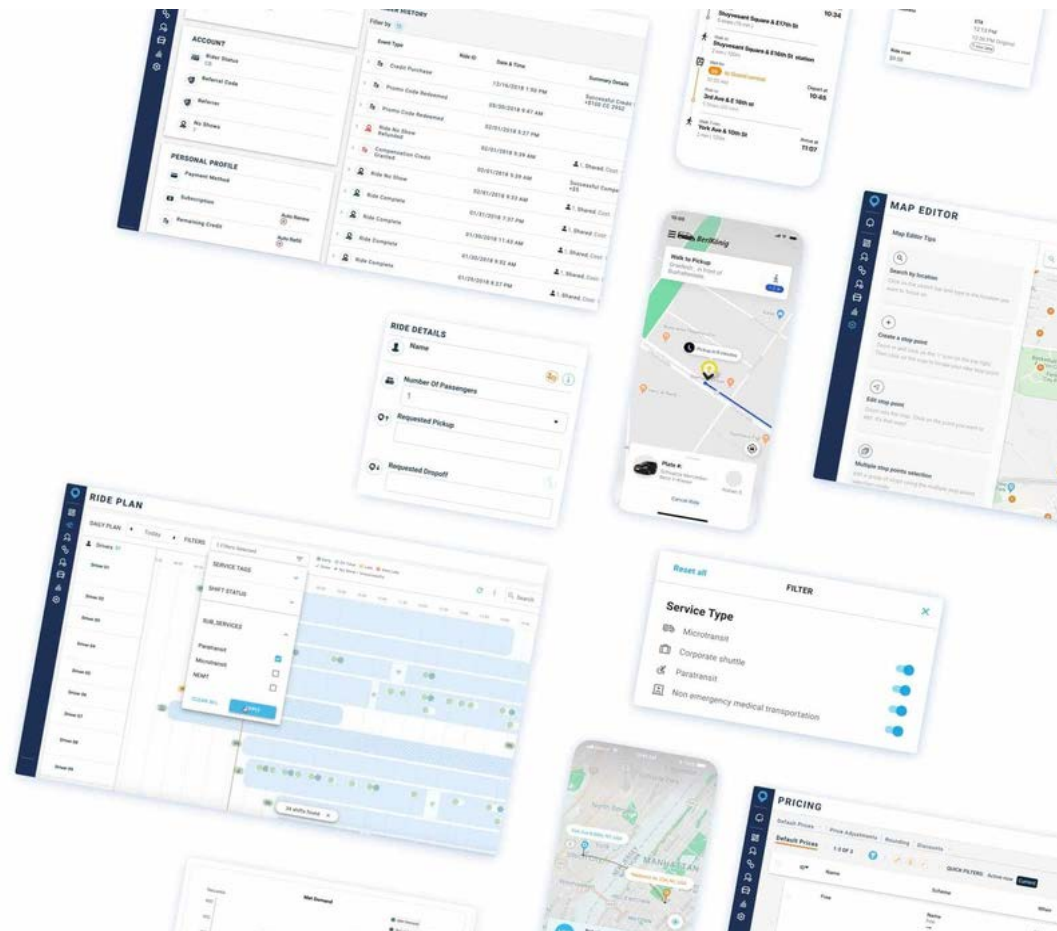
Future State



Future Projects

New Technology

By the end of the year, ACT will have new scheduling and dispatching software, called Via Mobility. This will improve efficiency and allow more flexibility and access. The new technology will greatly enhance the customer experience.



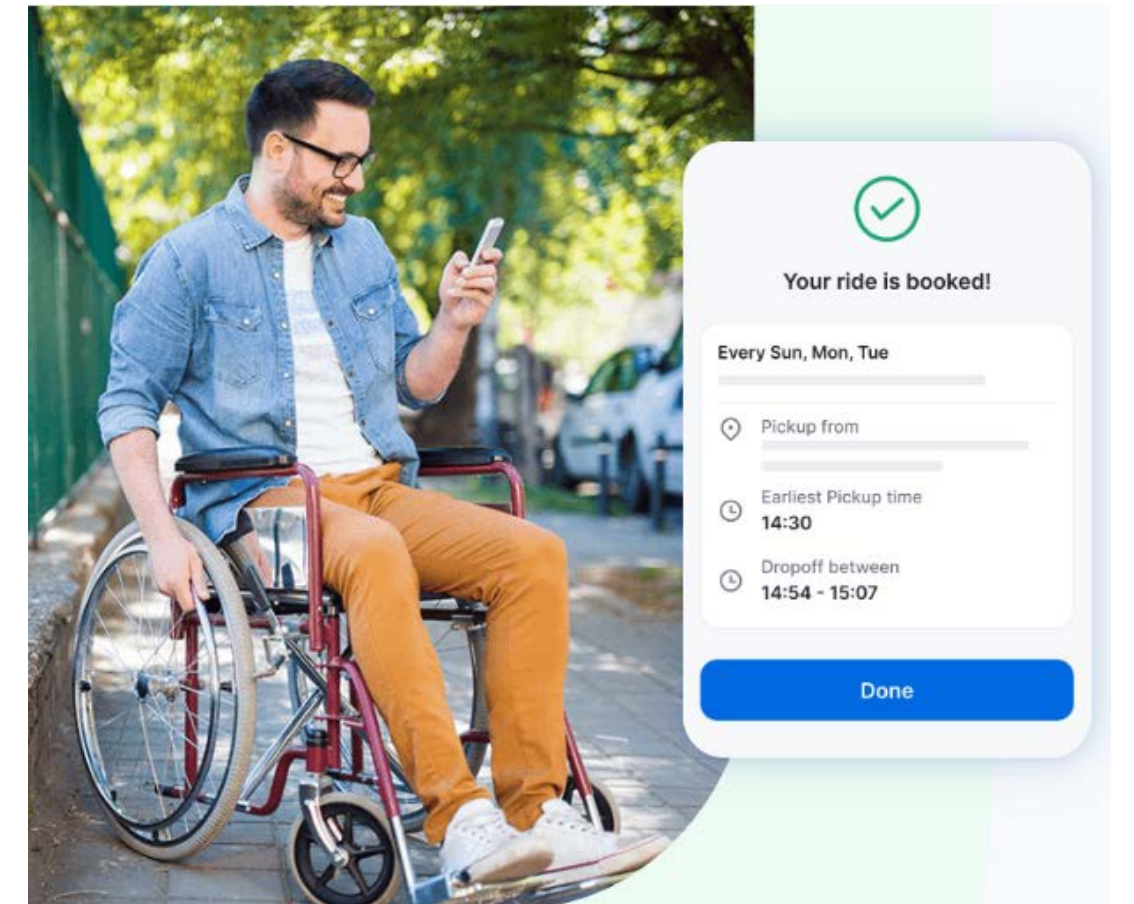
Propane Infrastructure

Upon the arrival of seven new propane-powered buses in Jul-Aug 2023, ACT will be looking into longer-term refueling infrastructure at the Transportation facility. On-site fueling will increase tax-payer savings.



Customer Experience

Future projects include launching a customer-facing mobile application for scheduling. Staff remain committed to community education on mobility options through travel training, agency presentations, and updated printed materials.



Future Projects

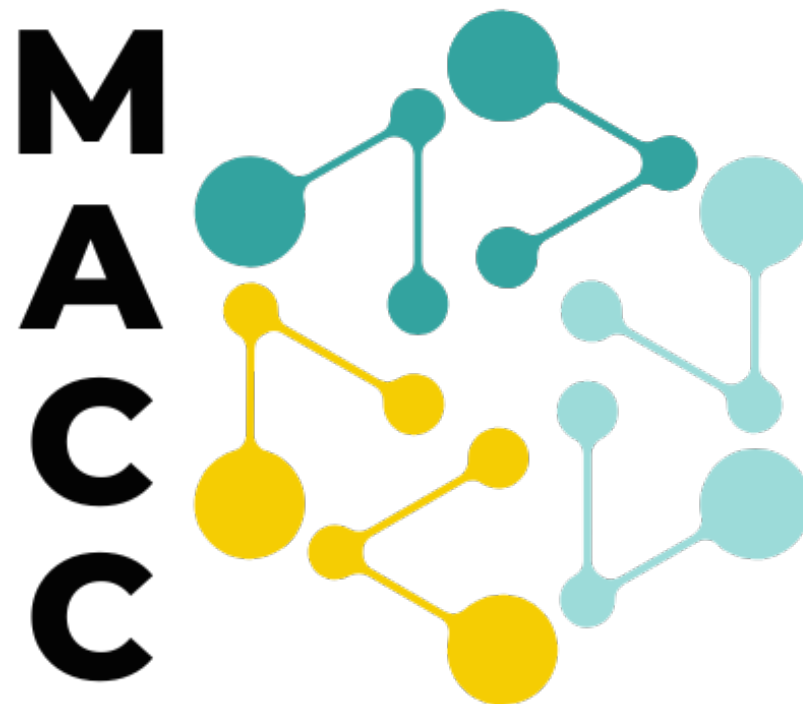
Regional Collaboration

The MAX in Holland, MI is currently undergoing route realignment. Members of the team at ACT have participated in focus groups and plan to coordinate with other transit agencies on future regional mobility initiatives.



Strategic Partnerships

Through participation in groups such as the Multi-Agency Collaborative Council, ACT remains committed to collaboration and coordination with area programs and services.



Multi-Agency Collaborative Council

Improved Visibility

Plans are underway to develop an outreach and marketing plan for 2024. There will also be an Open House at the Transportation facility at the beginning of the new year to highlight new and ongoing projects.





Thank you.

Please feel free to email questions to:
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