

# A vehicle for change.

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

March 2012

A Transportation Research Project of Disability Network/Lakeshore



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# Executive Summary

In October of 2008, Disability Network/Lakeshore of Holland, MI was awarded a Service Development and New Technologies (SDNT) grant from the Michigan Department of Transportation for a study entitled, “Techniques to Market Countywide Rural Transportation.” This community change study seeks to increase awareness of and support for Allegan County Transportation (ACT).

ACT, the public transit system for Allegan County, MI, receives numerous calls from residents and organizations who are not eligible for services and do not understand the services provided by ACT. Also, 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 public transit? What are the best ways to educate residents about ACT and the need for improved transit services?

Disability Network/Lakeshore partnered with Daniel Bergan, PhD, and Genevieve Risner, PhD from Michigan State University to conduct this six-phase study in Allegan County, MI.

Additionally, a workgroup of 15 community partners representing social service organizations, schools, governmental entities, private transit providers, and residents formed to develop and implement a five-year community supported strategic plan for ACT with the goal to effectively and efficiently meet the transit needs of Allegan County residents.

The workgroup found several significant findings.

## Stakeholders:

- + 35% noted they use volunteers to help meet unmet transit needs
- + Work and medical appointments were the number one traveled destinations
- + 52% stated the inability to get people the services they need is how transit needs affected their organization or business
- + 84% said they either strongly or somewhat strongly supported increased transit services
- + 92% cited the need for regional transportation in the next three years as very or somewhat important

## Current and Prospective ACT Riders:

- + 65% of respondents indicated the need for increased regional transportation in West Michigan over the next three years
- + 25% of respondents stated a lack of transportation prevented them from looking for, getting, or keeping a job
- + 36% of respondents stated a lack in transportation services prevented them from attending medical appointments in that last year
- + 81% of residents indicated the transportation services offered by ACT are very or somewhat important to the community

### 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

A complete analysis on each phase of this study is available on Disability Network/Lakeshore's website ([www.dnlakeshore.org](http://www.dnlakeshore.org)). Each phase contains in-depth data analysis including survey tools and raw survey data.

# Laying the Foundation

## Create a workgroup

Following the best practices of Disability Network/Lakeshore's 2008 Service, Development, and New Technologies Grant study, a workgroup was created to facilitate the study. One person alone cannot affect systems change, but rather a group of individuals coming together actively can make change. This project was named as the "Allegan Transportation Workgroup." The term "workgroup" instills the idea that everyone works as a team and participates in the development, implementation, and success of the project.

The workgroup oversees the project and takes action research to accomplish the work. They determine how they will accomplish the goal or solve the problems, and divide the bulk of the work among themselves when action must be taken - functioning as a working group.

One member of the workgroup acts as facilitator. The facilitator's role is to keep the group organized and on track, and moderate discussion. By asking questions, the facilitator constantly encourages the workgroup to develop processes and solve problems that help the group reach its end goal(s).

There is not a specific number as to how many individuals should be part of the workgroup. For this particular project, twelve members were recruited. It is important to have a large enough representation to accomplish goals, yet also remain cognizant that too many members prevent consensus building.

In addition, special attention must be given to stakeholder skills and characteristics including: knowledge about the topic, connections and respect within the community, and ethnicity. A diverse group will yield better results.

Since all communities are different, you will have to choose who to include in your workgroup. Below is a list of the stakeholders represented in this community study project:

- + Disability Organization
- + Public School Systems
- + Municipalities (elected officials)
- + Faith Based Organizations
- + Interested Citizens
- + Transportation Providers
- + Metropolitan Planning Organization
- + Businesses

Some other organizations to consider include courts, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, homeless shelters, governmental agencies, tourism organizations, environmental groups, chamber of commerce groups, transit riders and regional transit boards.

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

- + Extensive positive relationships with other community members
- + Knowledge about transportation issues
- + Connection with 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
- + Creative
- + Willingness to commit time to the effort
- + Excellent follow-through

After you develop a wish list of workgroup members, begin to contact people and schedule 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: a volunteer description and agreement (Appendix A, and a draft process outline and timeline (Appendix B).

When you meet with people, explain the project and give each person an opportunity to share his/her thoughts and ideas. After you discuss the potential members' suggestions for the project, if you think the person meets the qualifications and characteristics of a great workgroup member, share the volunteer description with him or her. Since you only want to involve people who are willing to commit time to the project and are 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. Answers to this list of questions will help you understand the group dynamics before the workgroup meets. Understanding your group members' perceived strengths and weaknesses will help you feel more confident in asking people to take responsibility for specific tasks without 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.

Make sure all your workgroup members complete and sign the volunteer commitment form. 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, serving as a reminder of their commitment to the workgroup.

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

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

### Meeting with Stakeholders

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 workgroup 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 workgroup 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; a length of one page is usually sufficient. 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 workgroup 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 workgroup is convened, there is much work to be accomplished. First, the facilitator must prepare for the workgroup'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 workgroup organized, the facilitator should put together a toolkit for each member. The toolkit should be an 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 (Appendix B)
- + Project timeline (Appendix B)
- + Meeting agendas
- + Meeting minutes
- + Map of study area
- + Contact information for all workgroup members
- + Copy of only that member's volunteer agreement
- + Any other relevant reference information
- + Tabs separating each section

Once the binder is completed, the facilitator should prepare an agenda. Make copies of the agenda for all workgroup members, and three hole punch them so members can easily transfer meeting materials to their binders after the meeting.

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

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



# PHASE 1:

## Getting Directions

This phase one of the study in which the ACT Workgroup researched community stakeholders in Allegan County to further understand their perspectives on unmet transit needs in their communities. The workgroup used two research methods in order to complete an analysis on stakeholders, including an online stakeholder survey and six focus groups.

### Online Stakeholder Survey

In order to begin understanding the unmet transit needs in Allegan County, an online survey, created by Disability Network/Lakeshore and Daniel Bergan, PhD, of Michigan State University, was developed and distributed to community members as identified by the ACT Workgroup. The online stakeholder survey determined unmet transportation needs and opportunities in the Allegan community from the perspective of the local stakeholder.

The survey began in November 2008 and continued through January 2009. The community members were selected as those who work with people having unmet transportation needs including, but not limited to, non-profit agencies, employers, faith-based organizations, and units of government.

Completed surveys were compiled through Survey Monkey and downloaded for a complete analysis. Complete data analysis concerning Phase 1 can be found in the Phase 1 Report published in 2009. A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix C.

### Results

Completed by 143 respondents, community members represented included: church or faith-based organizations (32), organizations serving people with disabilities and/or low incomes (26), unit of governments (16), employers (10), educators (10), senior or health care organizations (9), realty / housing providers (4), transportation providers (3), chambers of commerce (3), and tourism/recreation groups (2).

Of the community members who completed the survey, they indicated representing the following populations: clients/consumers (51.8%), individuals with low income (39.7%), individuals with physical disabilities (36.2%), seniors (31.2%), individuals with developmental disabilities (31.2%), members / parishioners (24.1%), employees (20.6%), individuals with severe mental illness (20.6%), taxpayers (19.9%), and students (17.0%).

When asked how they currently meet people's transit needs, stakeholders stated: Volunteers (34.8%), Allegan County Transportation (27.0%), Saugatuck / Douglas Interurban Transit (12.8%), Macatawa Area Express (9.2%), Love In the Name of Christ (2.8%), In-house transit system (7.1%), Taxis (2.8%), and Voucher Program (2.1%).

Just over one-third (36.2%) do not provide or pay for transportation. One-fifth of respondents (22.7%) provide transportation through other venues.

When asked if their organization would be willing to implement programs in order to offer transportation to the people they serve or their employees, one-third (33.6%) of the respondents stated “Yes”, while 15.7% stated “No”.

Stakeholders were asked, “In the past 30 days, how many requests for rides did your organization receive?” Responses included: 1-19 (43.3%), 20-49 (6.0%), 50-79 (3.0%), 80 – 99 (1.5%), and 100 or more (11.9%).

They were also asked, “In past 30 days, how many rides did your organization provide?” Stakeholder responses included: 1-49 (30.4%), 50-149 (7.2%), 150-249 (2.9%), 250 – 349 (1.4%), and 350 or more (8.7%).

When asked if unmet transit needs affected their organization/business, 80% of stakeholders indicated they had been affected in some way by unmet transportation needs, while only 20% stated they had not been affected. Over half (54.2%) indicated an inability to get people services they need, followed by a decreased participation in programs (44.4%), lost revenue (22.5%), decreased productivity (17.6%), decreased pool of potential volunteers (12.7%), decreased pool of potential employees (11.3%), inability to employ people (9.2%), and loss of current employees (4.9%).

When asked where people needed to go but could not reach due to a lack of transportation, work was the destination with the most responses, followed by medical appointments. Other destinations with a number of responses included grocery or retail stores and social service organizations.

Nearly half of respondents (41.5%) noticed seasonal trends when transit needs are greatest. Approximately three-fourths (71.7%) of those respondents indicated that winter is when transit needs are greatest, followed by summer (31.7%).

When stakeholders were asked about their level of support for increasing transportation in Allegan County, most stated they strongly (56.3%) or somewhat support (27.3%) increased transportation services. No (0.0%) respondents stated they somewhat or strongly opposed increased transportation services.

When asked to rank factors according to which would have the greatest impact on improving unmet transportation needs, respondents stated the greatest impact would be through: 1) expanding the geographic area covered, 2) improving services in existing areas, and 3) increasing hours of services.

In the next three years, stakeholders believe the need for a regional transportation system will be very important (56.4%) or somewhat important (35.7%). A small number of stakeholders (1.4%) indicated regional transportation will not be important in the next three years.

Finally, when asked which surrounding county/ies would respondents like to see Allegan connect with in the next three years, stakeholders selected Ottawa County (82.0%), Kalamazoo County (60.2%), Kent County (46.9%), and Van Buren County (36.7%).

Results of the stakeholder online survey provided important insight into the current state of public transportation provided in Allegan County. In addition, these results communicate the perceptions of what people in the county face in terms of unmet transportation needs, how unmet transit needs affect organizations and businesses, and how future transit services could be improved to serve a greater population. After summarizing the online stakeholder survey results, the Allegan County Transportation Workgroup found it essential to elicit a more in-depth discussion of these issues through a series of six focus groups throughout Allegan County.

### Stakeholder Focus Groups

In January 2009, the ACT Workgroup conducted a series of six focus groups with over 45 community members representing organizations and businesses throughout Allegan County, using trained volunteer facilitators from the Transportation Workgroup. The purpose of the focus groups was to gather feedback on the online stakeholder survey results, discuss community perceptions of needs in specific areas of the county, and identify people with unmet transit needs.

In order to illicit responses that were specific to the needs of certain geographies within the County, the focus groups were held in five separate regions throughout the County including Southwest Allegan, Northwest Allegan, Southeast Allegan, Northeast Allegan, and the City of Allegan.

Participants in the focus groups included non-profits, employers, government agencies, faith-based organizations, medical institutions, transit providers, senior care organizations, tourism groups, educational organizations, financial institutions, and an elected official. Each focus group lasted between 60-80 minutes, and consisted of six open-ended questions. All focus groups sessions were tape-recorded for accuracy, however, after a full analysis was completed, the tapings were destroyed for confidentially purposes.

After securing transcripts and detailed notes from all six focus groups, Mr. Steve Faber from the Delta Strategy analyzed and compiled an initial draft summary. Then, Mr. Faber facilitated a work session of the focus group facilitators to further summarize themes, dissimilarities, consistencies and recommendations that surfaced from the geographical groups.

### Results

The results of the survey were consistent with what each focus group identified as needs. Several members commented that it verified what they see as the needs in the area. Some commented that the survey results clearly showed how Allegan County transportation needs are unique in the each region due to being a large rural county and also very reliant on volunteers and churches to meet the current transit needs. Obviously, this volunteer system has certain limitations for meeting the variety of needs in Allegan County. Some of these limitations include a coordinated

communication system, insurance costs and liability for vehicles, seasonal reliability and other variables associated with volunteer resources.

Groups were asked to identify other population groups that they believe to have transit needs. Most groups cited that seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals have the most need for an accessible and affordable transit system. Ex-offenders and people being released from jail were also listed as a population needing transportation services. Single- or no-car working families also experience challenges getting from home to work. Generally, people that live in the more rural areas of the county have fewer options for transit. Individual's experiencing an ongoing medical issue tend to also be more dependent on transit. There are also unique needs for families with young children, school of choice students, and alternative education students. There was some recognition that the general population has an unmet transit need, but may not know it. In order for that to happen, people will need to see transit as less of a social service and more as a reliable and quality service that they want to use.

Groups were asked to identify any impact that transit has on their organizations or businesses. Those groups offering a service to more vulnerable populations are affected by people not being able to make it to their location to receive quality services. Those groups helping with employment issues know that clients depending on ACT or volunteers for transportation are going to experience a barrier for gaining employment or staying employed. Those agencies offering medical services see that transportation can be a life and death issue if people are unable to keep appointments or get medical attention. People become isolated without transit options; this makes everyone's jobs more difficult. Additionally, there are costs associated with offering transportation services, and picking up or dropping off people in more remote areas of the county costs more money and takes more volunteer time. Senior services are very affected by transit services.

Groups were asked to describe their support for increased transit services. There was support for increased transit services. There was encouragement to look at other counties with a similar urban/rural or demographic make-up to Allegan County to see what options exist. There needs to be communication with legislators and increased awareness for citizens as to the options for increasing transit. People had a difficult time describing a preferred system of transit and specifically what it should look like for the county.

## Conclusions

The results of the stakeholder analysis provide valuable insight as the Allegan County Transportation Workgroup moves forward in developing a five-year community supported strategic plan for Allegan County Transportation. Overall, the perceptions of stakeholders in Allegan County agree that there is a large unmet transit need, especially when needing to travel to work, medical appointments, and shopping / grocery.

In not only understanding how unmet transit needs affect the stakeholders' service population, it was also important to understand how transit needs affect their organization or business. Stakeholders cited a decrease in participation in the

programs offered and an inability to get people the services they need as being the top two ways their organization or business is affected. Furthermore, stakeholders noted that a loss in revenue was seen as a result of unmet transit needs. Volunteers were ranked number one in how organizations or businesses try to meet the transit needs of their service population. Finally, when reviewing transit needs in terms of seasonality, stakeholders stated that transit needs were the greatest in the winter months. However, both Northwest and Southwest Allegan stakeholders mentioned that summer months were a time of great transit needs because of the boost in tourism in the Lakeshore area.

Many stakeholders agree there are several improvements that could be made to ACT in order to serve more residents. Most cited expanding geographical area covered and improving the existing services within the county. In addition to meeting the transit needs of residents within Allegan County, stakeholders noted that implementing regional transportation services is very or somewhat important, especially in connecting with Ottawa County.

Lastly, as the Allegan County Transportation Workgroup moves forward in increasing awareness of and support for ACT, stakeholders stated that they would strongly or somewhat support increased transportation services in Allegan County. In terms of marketing ACT services to the broader Allegan community, stakeholders stated that more detailed service materials were needed in order to inform residents of the services they currently, or will, provide.

Overall, the information the ACT Workgroup received through Phase 1 of this study provided a solid foundation in moving into phase two: understanding individual unmet transit needs through individual residential research methods.

# PHASE 2:

## Filling Up the Tank

### Current Rider Survey

In February 2009, Disability Network/Lakeshore, Bergan Consulting, Creative Inquiry, LLC and the ACT Workgroup created and developed this survey in order to understand the transportation needs of the current riders of ACT.

The survey was distributed by mail to a diverse population of current riders as recorded in ACT's database. The mailer included the current rider survey, a pre-addressed stamped envelope and an opportunity for respondents to participate in a drawing for 1 of 5 \$25 American Express gift cards. The survey was mailed in early February and collected in March 2009. A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix E.

Completed surveys (246) were compiled through Survey Monkey and downloaded for a complete analysis. A complete analysis of the current rider survey is available in the Phase 2 & 3 Report published in 2009.

### Results

Over one-third of respondents stated that ACT was their primary mode of transportation. Another one-third of respondents stated friends, family and neighbors were their primary mode of transportation. When respondents were asked, "When not using their primary mode of transportation, what was their second mode of transportation," most respondents stated family, friends and neighbors or ACT.

Almost half of respondents stated medical trips as their traveling destination but were unable to get there because of a lack in transportation. Second was destinations related to shopping and groceries. About one-fifth of respondents stated work/employment and visiting family, friends and neighbors as a needed travel destination. Traveling to court/jail and school were among the lowest two destinations with a lack of transportation.

A large percentage of respondents stated that a lack of transportation had not prevented them for looking for, getting, or keeping a job. Over 50 respondents stated that they had been prevented from looking for, getting, or keeping a job because of a lack in transportation. Ten percent of respondents were unsure if a lack in transportation had affected their job opportunities.

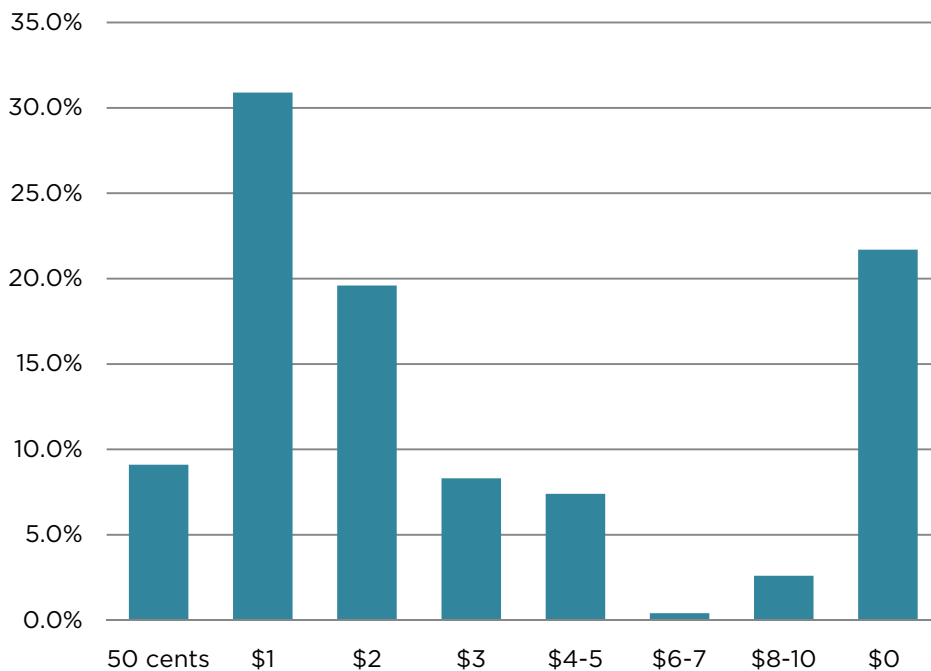
Roughly half of respondents stated the need to travel to another county/counties in West Michigan. The other half of respondents stated they did not need to travel outside of the County. Only 2.5% were unsure whether they needed to travel outside of the county.

With half of respondents stating a need to travel outside of the County, it is useful to know which county/ties respondents wanted transportation to. Respondents were able to choose from the four surrounding counties including Kalamazoo, Kent, Ottawa and Van Buren. Kalamazoo, Kent and Ottawa counties had over forty percent of respondents stating they needed to travel to that county. Van Buren received the lowest percentage of need.

Sixty-five percent of respondents stated they see the need for regional transportation in West Michigan increasing within the next three years. Nineteen percent of respondents stated they did not see the need for regional transportation increasing and 16.0% were unsure whether they would see an increase for regional transportation. The correlation between the current need to travel outside of Allegan County and the need for regional transportation increasing over the next 3 years demonstrates that Allegan continues to grow outside of a central location as many needs are located outside of Allegan County.

Over one-third of respondents stated that an affordable cost for one, one-way ride would be equal to \$1. Second, respondents stated that they had no money to pay for transportation. Roughly one-fifth of respondents stated that \$2 would be considered affordable. Only a few respondents saw \$3 or above as affordable cost for one, one-way ride. Thus, most respondents are only willing to pay between \$1 and \$2 for transportation, or nothing at all.

**Figure 1. Percentage of respondents by affordable cost for one, one-way ride**



Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with ACT services in order to gain a better understanding of how ACT services are perceived in the community. Over half of respondents stated they were completely satisfied or satisfied with ACT services.

Respondents were asked to rank the top three (3) solutions that would best meet their transportation needs. Public transportation that goes to the places I need to go and runs on the days and times I need was seen as the greatest solution to meeting transit needs in Allegan County. Second, was gas money. The third top solution to meeting transit needs was money for bus passes, taxi rides, etc.

### Prospective Rider Survey

In March 2009, Disability Network/Lakeshore, Bergan Consulting, Creative Inquiry, LLC and the ACT Workgroup created and developed this survey in order to understand the transportation needs of the prospective riders of ACT.

The survey was distributed to agencies, businesses, and organizations throughout Allegan County who may have had clients, members, employees who would potential use ACT's services. Distribution of the survey began in March and ran through May 2009, with all responses being collected by the end of May. A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix F.

Completed surveys (493) were compiled through Survey Monkey and downloaded for a complete analysis. A complete analysis of the prospective rider survey can be found in the Phase 2 & 3 report published in 2009.

### Results

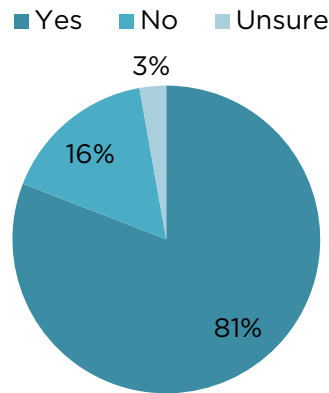
Almost three-fourths of respondents stated the personal automobile as their primary mode of transportation. Thirteen percent of respondents stated friends, family and neighbors were their primary mode of transportation. ACT ranked fairly low as a primary mode of transportation by prospective riders.

When respondents were asked, "When not using their primary mode of transportation, what was their second mode of transportation," most respondents stated family, friends and neighbors. Second was their personal automobile.

Over three-fourths of prospective transit riders had heard of ACT, while only 16.3% stated they had not.



**Figure 2. Percent of respondents who have heard of ACT**



Prospective riders indicated they did not currently use ACT services because of inconvenient hours (11.1%), inconvenient routes (10.0%), and it does not provide service in my area (8.6%). However, many (66.5%, 294 respondents) prospective riders indicated there was no need to utilize ACT service at this time.

A large percentage (79.5%, 380 respondents) of respondents stated that a lack of transportation had not prevented them for looking for, getting, or keeping a job. Roughly 80 respondents (17.4%) stated that they had been prevented from looking for, getting, or keeping a job because of a lack in transportation. Lastly, 3.1% (15 respondents) of respondents were unsure if a lack in transportation had affected their job opportunities.

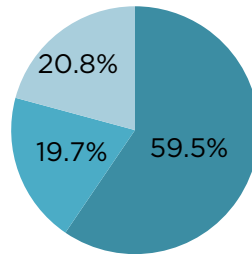
Roughly three-fourths (71.6%, 338 respondents) of prospective riders stated that seasonal weather does not affect their transportation needs. While a quarter (24.4%, 115 respondents) stated that the weather did affect their transportation needs. Four percent were “unsure”.

Over half (56.6%, 261 respondents) of respondents stated the need to travel to another county/counties in West Michigan. The other half (40.8%, 188 respondents) of respondents stated that they did not need to travel outside of the county. Only 2.6% (12 respondents) were unsure whether they needed to travel outside of the county.

Sixty percent (272 respondents) of respondents stated they see the need for regional transportation in West Michigan increasing within the next three years. Nineteen percent (90 respondents) of respondents stated they did not see the need for regional transportation increasing and 20.8% (95 respondents) were unsure whether they would see an increase for regional transportation. The correlation between the current need to travel outside of Allegan County and the need for regional transportation increasing over the next 3 years demonstrates that Allegan continues to grow outside of a central location as many needs are located outside of Allegan County.

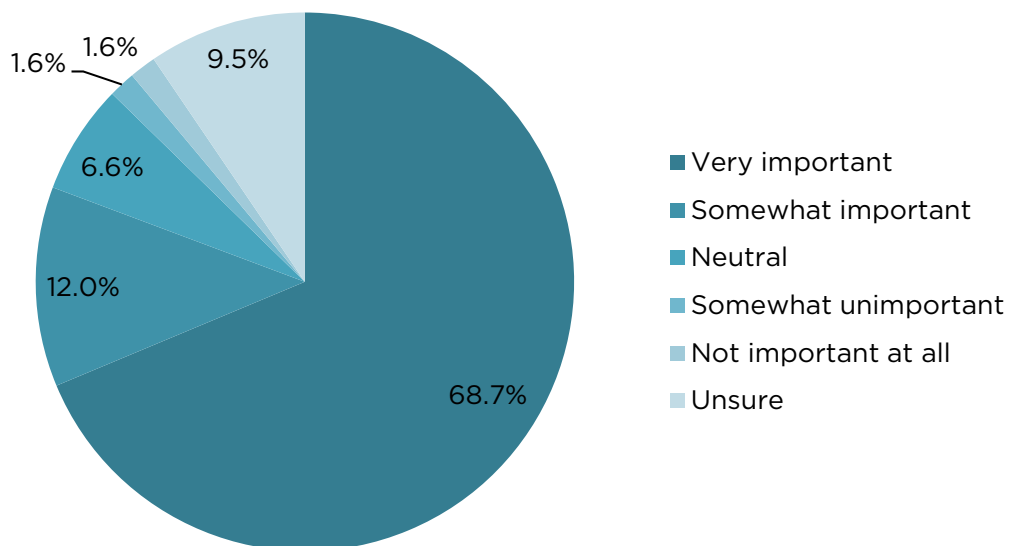
**Figure 3. Percent of respondents who see the need for regional transportation in West Michigan increasing within the next three (3) years**

■ Yes ■ No ■ Unsure



Respondents were asked how important ACT’s services are to the Allegan County. Over half (68.7%, 303 respondents) of respondents stated that ACT’s services are very important to Allegan County. Twelve percent (53 respondents) stated that their services were somewhat important. The remaining respondents were either neutral (6.6%, 29 respondents), somewhat unimportant (1.6%, 7 respondents), not important at all (1.6%, 7 respondents) or unsure (9.5%, 42 respondents).

**Figure 4. Percent of respondents by importance of ACT services to the community**



In order to find out which method of communication is most preferred by current riders, respondents were asked to select the best option for the way in which ACT could educate the community on the public transit options available. Overwhelming,

respondents choose mailings (54.5%, 120 respondents). The second type of communication preferred was the newspaper (20.9%, 46 respondents), followed by flyers (18.6%, 41 respondents), a phone call (15.0%, 33 respondents), the radio (7.3%, 16 respondents), email (5.9%, 13 respondents), a website (4.5%, 10 respondents), billboards (4.5%, 10 respondents), and a church bulletin (3.2%, 7 respondents).

### One-on-One Interviews

The ACT Workgroup conducted fifteen, 30 minute interviews during February and March 2009. The one-on-one interviews consisted of individuals with unmet transportation needs who have used Allegan County Transportation in the past as a transit provider. The purpose of the interviews was to determine the extent of people's transit needs and possible solutions for meeting those needs.

After the workgroup members completed the interviews, the responses were analyzed and collectively compiled for results. Individualized open-ended responses for each interviewee can be found in the Phase 2 and 3 Report.

# PHASE 3:

## Starting the Engine

### Development of Five-Year Plan

After completing Phase 1 and 2, the Workgroup detailed critical issues facing ACT, developed strategies to study these issues, created goals and recommendations to improve each area of concern, and provided a rationale for these recommendations. A copy of the ACT Five Year Strategic Plan can be found in Appendix G. The Workgroup relied on six primary studies to base its recommendations:

1. Survey and focus groups with Allegan County stakeholders, including but not limited to businesses, elected officials, nonprofit and governmental organizations, service clubs, faith based organizations, and schools, about transportation needs in Allegan County (ACT Stakeholder Survey 2008).
2. Analysis of current ACT operations, outlining the current services provided by ACT, as well as areas and suggestions for improvement (2009).
3. Survey of current ACT passengers to examine their transportation needs and usage of ACT (Current Rider Survey 2009).
4. Study of prospective ACT passengers to examine their transportation needs and reasons for not using ACT (Prospective Rider Survey 2009).
5. Input sessions to generate feedback from community members and stakeholders regarding the improvements and changes to ACT detailed in the five-year plan (2009).
6. Survey of Allegan County residents to identify their support for Allegan County Transportation and the changes recommended in the five-year plan (Allegan Taxpayer Survey 2009).
7. Use GIS data software to plot 2000-2008 US Census data including senior populations, people with disabilities, income levels, housing units and vehicles per household.

The recommendations of the Workgroup included:

- + Provide a Reserve-A-Ride transportation system to the general public in Allegan County.
- + Implement community service areas that allocate transportation service to each of the five regions in Allegan County.
- + Connect ACT with public transportation systems in the surrounding counties of Kalamazoo, Ottawa, Kent, and Van Buren.
- + Maintain the current fare structure of \$2 per trip for general public transportation and \$1 per trip for seniors, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) passengers, and children.
- + Provide transportation services Monday through Friday from 5:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., with limited employment related service from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m.

- + Provide Saturday and Sunday service on a limited basis up to 115 hours per weekend.
- + Maintain a user-friendly ACT website with current information on service, fares, updates, and contact information.
- + Create an ACT annual report with year-end updates, successes and trends to share with riders and stakeholders.
- + Work with the local press outlets to secure earned media on ACT updates and trends.
- + Maintain ongoing dialogue with ACT customer and stakeholders to gather feedback on whether the system meets their needs and research requests for service enhancements as appropriate.
- + Seek funding to support implementation of the improvements outlined in the plan.

Five transportation options were designed to beginning meeting the recommendations listed:

1. Option A: Maintain Current ACT System.
2. Option B: Dedicate transportation to connect Allegan City with Wayland/Hopkins and the Interurban in Saugatuck/Douglas, and provide transportation to Casco Township.
3. Option C: Dedicate an additional 56,617 rides for public transportation service by creating a county-wide zone transit system in Allegan County.
4. Option D: Dedicate an additional 88,614 rides for public transportation service by creating a county-wide zone transit system in Allegan County.
5. Option E: Dedicate an additional 130,123 rides for public transportation service by creating a county-wide zone transit system in Allegan County. Provide limited demand response service in high density areas.

### Community Input Sessions

From September to November 2009, the Allegan County Transportation Workgroup community input sessions throughout Allegan County to test support for the five proposed transportation options.

Over 10 organizations sponsored the community input sessions throughout Allegan County. The general public was invited to attend all of the above sessions. The sessions were promoted with flyers and with press releases in both the Holland Sentinel and Allegan County News.

A PowerPoint presentation was design to showcase the results of Phase 1 and Phase 2, as well as the educate attendees on the proposed transportation options for the five-year strategic plan.

### Results

Ten community input sessions were held with over 85 attendees. Overwhelming, the community supported proposed Option E, followed by Option D, and then Option C. There was little support for Option A or B. Full responses by community members can be found in the Phase 2 & 3 report published in 2009.

Options E, D, and C converted the current ACT service area into a community zoned system in which ACT became a true county-wide system by having the potential to serve all residents within Allegan County. This was very appealing to community members. Individuals also supported increasing service hours from 5:00pm to 9:00pm to provide for more employment related trips.

Individuals felt the fare structure at its current rates were suitable and ACT should continue to provide services at those rates. Individuals also discussed their potential support for a county-wide transportation millage.

Overall, attendees are very supportive of the proposed transportation options and were excited about the changes potentially coming to the county.

# PHASE 4:

## Picking up the Passengers

### Community Survey

In December 2009, 600 phone surveys (copy of survey found in Appendix H) 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%

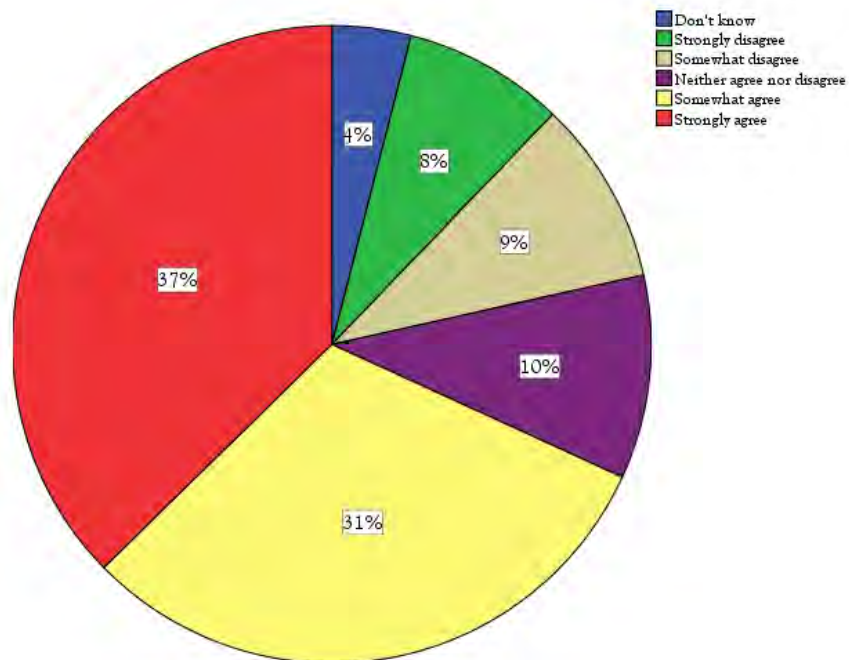
of respondents (354 people) who added their names to a list of public transportation supporters in Allegan County to be shared with local elected officials.

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.

### Results

Respondents were randomly assigned to a positive priming message, a negative priming message or no priming message about transportation in Allegan County. 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."

Figure 5. Support for expanding public transportation



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.

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.

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.

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, it increases the ability to get employment and training opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed, and it provides an affordable solution to rising gas prices.

For question ten, each respondent was asked 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%). 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 1. 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

Each respondent was asked, 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%). Thus, these would be important considerations to highlight in a marketing campaign.

**Table 2. 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

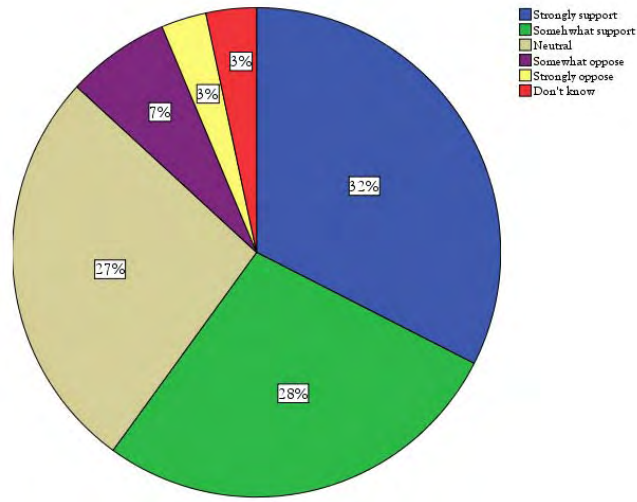
Respondents were asked, using a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being strongly oppose and 5 being strongly support, please tell me what number best indicates your attitude toward the Allegan County Transportation Five-Year Plan.

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. 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."

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 6. 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. The no message condition resulted in the next greatest support for the five-year plan, followed by the people like you message condition.

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.

Respondents were asked, 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

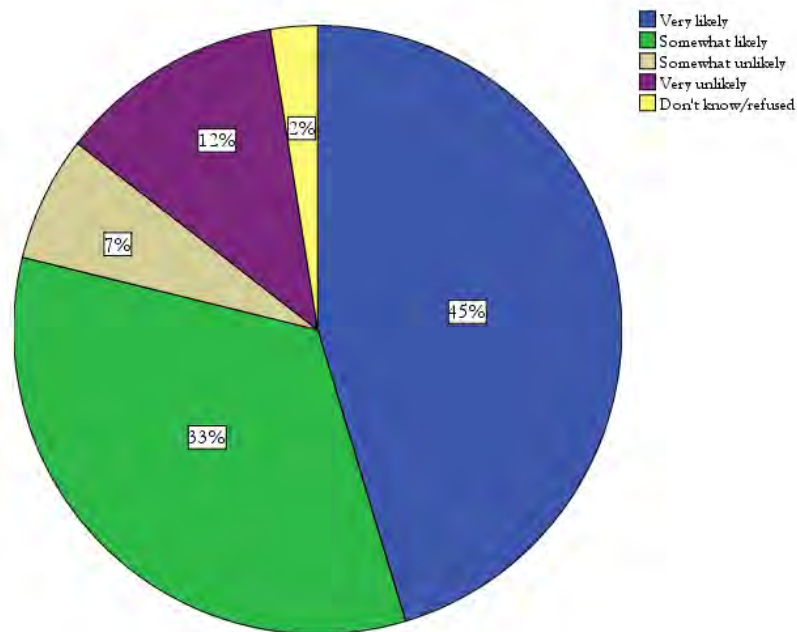
reliability coefficient of .70. Higher mean scores on items indicate more agreement with the statement.

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.

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.

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 7. 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, followed by a millage of \$18 per year and a millage of \$24 per year. Comparison of these mean scores demonstrated a statistically significant difference between \$9 per year and both \$18 and \$24 per year. Also, there was a statistically significant difference between \$18 and \$24 per year. 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. 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. 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.

# CONCLUSION

## Driving Forward Together

The framework presented in this final report provides a foundation for any organization or transit agency to replicate an unmet needs study, including increasing awareness of and support for a rural transportation system. In addition, this study developed a community supported five-year strategic plan for ACTas to effectively and efficiently begin meeting the transit needs of residents in Allegan County - which can be replicated to other rural transit agencies.

Additionally, a framework for educational transportation materials for a rural transportation agency has been designed based on messaging that creates the highest support for public transportation. Using this messaging research will give organizations and transit agencies the opportunity to best communicate to different populations using the messaging that best ensure public support.

As the results will demonstrate, the findings indicate that transportation affects a whole community, not just individuals who need rides. 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 authority and power to study and shape their future. When that balance is attained, essential community services such as transportation can be designed to meet community needs, elicit taxpayer and community support, and stimulate creativity and enthusiasm from providers - transforming ideas into reality.

# APPENDIX



# APPENDIX A: Volunteer Description and Agreement

## TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH TEAM MEMBER DESCRIPTION + AGREEMENT

### Description

Position: Transportation Research Team Member

Timeframe: September 2008 - December 2011

Time Commitment: approx. 5 hours per month  
(includes: 1 monthly meeting at 2 hours, plus 3 hours of research or marketing work)

### Goals:

- ★ increase awareness of and support for Allegan County Transportation.
- ★ develop a community supported five-year strategic plan for Allegan County Transportation

### Activities and Responsibilities:

- ★ Work with the Transportation Research Team to develop and implement research processes, survey tools, and interview questions and analyze results
- ★ Develop and test messages about the impact lack of transportation has on people and their networks; analyze results
- ★ Create communication strategies and tools to communicate transportation needs and issues to various stakeholders
- ★ Design, secure and participate in earned media activities and presentations to groups as appropriate

### Required Skills and Abilities:

- ★ Excellent follow-through
- ★ Ability to think big picture and “outside-the-box”
- ★ Excellent communication skills, including superior listening 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

### Agreement

I have read and understand the activities and responsibilities of action team members. I am willing to commit at least 5 hours per month from September 2008 until December 2011 of my time, energy, and creativity to making this project a success.

---

Signature

Date

**Please attach your business card or contact information to the completed form.**

**Completed volunteer agreements are due before August 29, 2008 to:**

*Disability Network/Lakeshore, 426 Century Lane, MI 49426*

Please note: Our first group meeting will be held on **DATE at TIME, LOCATION**

In an effort to ensure that your participation in this project is a mutually positive and beneficial experience, please take a few minutes 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

*[Contact Information of Project Coordinator]*

**THANK YOU!**

# APPENDIX B: Project Outline

**TITLE:** A Vehicle for Change: Developing a five year plan and creating techniques to market countywide rural transportation

**GRANT:** A Service Development and New Technology (SDNT) Grant from Michigan Department of Transportation

**STUDY AREA:** Allegan County, MI

**TIMEFRAME:** September 2008 – December 2011

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND GOALS:** This community change study seeks to increase awareness of and support for Allegan County Transportation. In addition, this study will develop a community supported five-year strategic plan for Allegan County Transportation as to effectively and efficiently begin meeting the transit needs of residents in Allegan County. This study is being conducted in Allegan County, Michigan.

## **Phase 1: Stakeholder Analysis (September 2008 – January 2009)**

1. Conduct online surveys with community stakeholder organizations, businesses, and elected bodies to determine unmet transportation needs and opportunities in the Allegan community from the perspective of the local stakeholder.
2. Hold focus groups with local stakeholders to gather feedback on online surveys, discuss their perceptions of needs in their areas, and identify people with unmet transit needs for one-on-one interviews.

## **Phase 2: Unmet Transportation Need Analysis (February 2009 – April 2009)**

1. An on board passenger survey will be conducted to determine rider demographics, travel patterns, unmet needs, and satisfaction with current transit service with current Allegan County Transportation and Saugatuck/Douglas Interurban Transit Authority riders.
2. A prospective rider survey will be conducted with potential riders through one-to-one intercept surveys to determine their reasons for not using the services, changes to the service that would increase their likelihood of using public transit, and their perceptions and awareness of Allegan County Transportation services.
3. Key informant interviews will be held with stakeholders and people with transportation needs through one-on-one conversations to better understand the quantitative data previously collected, acquire quotes and stories, and build relationships with key informants.

## **Phase 3: Community Perspectives (May 2009 – October 2009)**

1. Data gathered will be used to develop a draft five-year strategic plan for Allegan County Transportation to effectively and efficiently begin meeting the transit needs of residents in Allegan County.
2. Several community input sessions will be held throughout Allegan County to gather stakeholder feedback and input on the draft five-year strategic plan. Locations and times for input sessions will be thoughtfully considered to ensure maximum participation of multiple and diverse community residents and stakeholders. Staff and elected officials from Allegan County townships and cities will be invited to attend. One input session will be held with Allegan County Commissioners.

3. Considering all feedback given during the community input sessions, the five-year strategic plan will be modified to create a community supported plan.

**Phase 4: Taxpayer Analysis (November 2009 – December 2009)**

A telephone survey will be administered to registered voters in Allegan County to determine their awareness and perceptions of Allegan County Transportation services. In addition, services and potential millage rates will be tested for support.

**Post-Project (January 2010– December 2011)**

The results of all the feedback and data collected will be used to modify the community supported five-year strategic plan. The five-year strategic plan will be presented to the Allegan County Board of Commissioners for approval. After approval of the final plan, ACT will conduct an educational marketing process to educate residents and citizens on ACT services in a rural county.

## APPENDIX B: Project Timeline

	Activity	Month	Goals
<b>2008</b>			
	Pre-Project		
	Recruit action team + solicit feedback on process	June - August	12-15 members secured
	Phase 1: A Stakeholder Analysis		
	Online survey	October - December	143 surveys completed
	Focus groups	November - January	6 focus groups held
	Create Phase 1 Final Report	January	1 report completed
<b>2009</b>			
	Phase 2: An Individual Analysis		
	One-to-one interviews of people with transit needs	February / March	14 interviews completed
	Current rider survey	February - April	241 surveys completed
	Prospective rider survey	February - April	463 surveys completed
	Create Phase 2 Final Report	October	1 report completed
	Phase 3: A Community Analysis		
	Develop draft strategic plan	May - July	1 draft plan created
	Hold community input sessions	September / October	9 sessions held
	Phase 4: A Taxpayer Analysis		
	Modify ACT Plan	October	
	Taxpayer survey	November	600 surveys
	Create Phase 3 + 4 Final Report	January	1 report completed
<b>2010</b>			
	Phase 5: Post Research		
	Present Plan to commissioners for feedback	January	
	Modify and finalize plan	December - March	1 plan modified and finalized
	Seek commissioner approval	April	1-2 commissioner meetings
	Phase 6: Educational DVD		
	DVD Design, Concept, Shooting and finalization	May - July	1 educational DVD
<b>2011</b>			
	Phase 7: Marketing Plan		
	Develop and distribute marketing materials	August 2010 - May 2011	TBD

# APPENDIX C: Online Stakeholder Survey

1.

Welcome to the Allegan Stakeholder Survey!

As you know, a research project is underway in Allegan County to identify unmet transportation needs and develop a five year strategic plan for Allegan County Transportation. As a stakeholder, you intimately know of local transportation needs, and your input will be invaluable throughout this project.

The information you provide in this survey will be compiled and analyzed by Dr. Daniel Bergan of Michigan State University. The results of this study will also assist the Allegan County United Way in their community assessment project. Finally, your results will be used by Allegan County Transportation to develop a strategic plan for improvements to the public transit system. Therefore, your responses will be used to evaluate and understand local countywide transportation issues so solutions can be sought.

2.

The following survey contains 20 questions about transportation needs. It should take about 10 minutes to complete. Participation is completely voluntary. All individual responses will be kept anonymous.

3.

\* 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.

Name of organization	<input type="text"/>
Address of organization	<input type="text"/>
Name of respondent	<input type="text"/>
Work phone	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>



## 2. Please indicate what type your organization is:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Church or faith based
- Court of rehabilitation related
- Education
- Employer
- Environmental
- Organization serving people with disabilities or low incomes
- Realty/Housing
- Senior or health care
- Tourism or recreation related
- Transportation Provider
- Unit of Government

Other (please specify)

## 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. What municipalities in Allegan County does your organization serve?  
(Please select all that apply.)

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allegan City       | <input type="checkbox"/> Holland City      | <input type="checkbox"/> Plainwell City      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allegan Township   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hopkins Township  | <input type="checkbox"/> Salem Township      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Casco Township     | <input type="checkbox"/> Laketown Township | <input type="checkbox"/> Saugatuck Township  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheshire Township  | <input type="checkbox"/> Lee Township      | <input type="checkbox"/> Saugatuck City      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clyde Township     | <input type="checkbox"/> Leighton Township | <input type="checkbox"/> Trowbridge Township |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dorr Township      | <input type="checkbox"/> Manlios Township  | <input type="checkbox"/> Valley Township     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Douglas City       | <input type="checkbox"/> Martin City       | <input type="checkbox"/> Watson Township     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fennville City     | <input type="checkbox"/> Martin Township   | <input type="checkbox"/> Wayland Township    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fillmore Township  | <input type="checkbox"/> Monterey Township | <input type="checkbox"/> Wayland City        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ganges Township    | <input type="checkbox"/> Otsego City       | <input type="checkbox"/> All                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gun Plain Township | <input type="checkbox"/> Otsego Township   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heath Township     | <input type="checkbox"/> Overisel Township |  |

Other (please specify)

5. Currently, in what ways, if any, is your organization helping meet the transportation needs of the people it serves?(Please select all that apply.)

- Volunteers
- Taxis
- Voucher Program
- Macatawa Area Express (MAX)
- Allegan County Transportation (ACT)
- Saugatuck/Douglas Interurban Transit
- In-house transit system
- Love in the Name of Christ (Love INC.)
- We do not provide or pay for any type of transportation.
- Other (please specify)

6. Would your organization be willing to implement programs in order to offer transportation to the population you serve or your employees?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

7. In the last 30 days, how many request for rides did your organization receive?

1 - 19

20 - 49

50 - 79

80 - 99

100 or more

Did not receive any requests

8. In the last 30 days, how many rides did your organization provide? (Excluding rides provided by public transportation.)

1 - 49

50 - 149

150 - 249

250 - 349

350 or more

Did not provide any rides

9. How do unmet transportation needs affect your organization?  
(Please select all that apply.)

Lost revenue

Loss of current employees

Decreased pool of potential employees

Decreased pool of potential volunteers

Decreased productivity

Decreased participation in programs

Inability to employ people

Inability to get people services they need

Does not affect the organization

Other (please specify)

10. Based on your experience, please rank the top three destinations that people who live in Allegan County have the greatest difficulty reaching.

	Work	School	Grocery or Retail Store	Medical	Social Service Organization	Church or Worship	Court	Social or Recreational	Other
1 = greatest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 = second greatest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 = third greatest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Yes  No  Don't know

12. If you answered "Yes" to question 11, in what season do people you work with have the greatest unmet transportation needs? (Please select all that apply.)

Spring  Summer  Fall  Winter

13. Please rank the following factors according to which ones you believe would have the greatest impact in improving the current transit system.

1 = greatest impact

	1	2	3
Improving services in existing areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consolidating services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expanding geographic area covered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increasing hours of service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increasing days of service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lowering cost of service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving customer service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increasing accessibility of vehicles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adding amenities (benches, shelters, etc...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

14. How strongly would your organization support increasing public transportation in Allegan County?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Neutral
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose

15. A regional transportation system is a transit network that connects surrounding counties. 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

16. If you answered "very important" or "somewhat important" to question 15, which surrounding county/ies would you like to see Allegan County connect with in the next three years? (Please select all that apply.)

Kalamazoo County (Kalamazoo)

Van Buren County (South Haven)

Kent County (Grand Rapids)

Ottawa County (Holland)

Other (please specify)

5.

Please help us with the most important part of this study - putting a face with the transportation needs in Allegan County. Do you have an employee who needs transportation? Do you work with a senior who needs a ride to the doctor? Does a member of your church need rides on Sundays? These real life stories are essential to create transportation solutions. Please share any anonymous stories you have about a person who needs a ride(question 17) OR provide contact information for that individual (question 18).

17.

18. If you know of someone who has a transportation story, please list their information below.

Name:

City/Town:

ZIP:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

19. We plan to host a stakeholder focus group to acquire more detail about transportation issues and opportunities in Allegan County in the near future. Because we value your thoughts, we would like to include you in this conversation. Would you be interested in being part of a transportation focus group in the near future?

Yes

No

20. Would you like to receive a report of the findings from this survey?

Yes

No

7.

Thank you for your valuable input! We are incredibly grateful for your time and participation.

Please visit the transportation page at [www.dnlakeshore.org](http://www.dnlakeshore.org) to learn more about this transit project.



# APPENDIX D: Focus Group Letter

Dear Mimi,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in a **Transportation Stakeholder Focus Group** to discuss the community's transit needs and share the perspective of **Allegan County United Way**. Your input will be invaluable in helping us better understand unmet transportation needs in Allegan County. Included below is a reminder of the date, time, and location of the focus group you will be part of:

Date: Tuesday, January 13

Time: 11:00am to 12:15pm

Location: Allegan County DHS – Zimmerman Training Room  
(3255 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Allegan, MI 49010)

Holding this focus group is the next step in a lengthy process to understanding the barriers and opportunities surrounding unmet transit needs in Allegan County, as well as, producing a five-year strategic plan for Allegan County Transportation. In addition to holding stakeholder focus groups, our work will involve several steps over the next year including: interviewing people with unmet transportation needs, surveying current and prospective transit riders, surveying taxpayers, and surveying elected officials.

If you have not already completed the **Transportation Stakeholder Survey**, please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/AlleganTransitSurvey> and take time to answer all the questions *before* you attend the focus group. The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete. We sincerely hope you will answer each question as accurately and completely as possible. Our study is only as good as the data we receive from you and other participants.

If you have any questions about the focus group process, the survey, or the transportation study, please do not hesitate to contact Kathryn Gillen at 616.396.5326 or [kathryn@dnlakeshore.org](mailto:kathryn@dnlakeshore.org).

Your participation is critical to understanding people's unmet transit needs. Thank you very much for your time and help!

With sincere appreciation,

Kathryn Gillen  
Public Policy Specialist  
Disability Network/Lakeshore

# APPENDIX E: Current Rider Survey

## 1. Allegan County Transportation Current Rider Survey

### 1. In what township or city in Allegan County do you live? (Select one)

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Allegan    | <input type="checkbox"/> Heath Township    | <input type="checkbox"/> Otsego Township     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allegan Township   | <input type="checkbox"/> City of Holland   | <input type="checkbox"/> Overisel Township   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Casco Township     | <input type="checkbox"/> City of Hopkins   | <input type="checkbox"/> City of Plainwell   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheshire Township  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hopkins Township  | <input type="checkbox"/> Salem Township      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clyde Township     | <input type="checkbox"/> Laketown Township | <input type="checkbox"/> City of Saugatuck   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dorr Township      | <input type="checkbox"/> Lee Township      | <input type="checkbox"/> Saugatuck Township  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Douglas    | <input type="checkbox"/> Leighton Township | <input type="checkbox"/> Trowbridge Township |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Fennville  | <input type="checkbox"/> Manlius Township  | <input type="checkbox"/> Valley Township     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fillmore Township  | <input type="checkbox"/> City of Martin    | <input type="checkbox"/> Watson Township     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ganges Township    | <input type="checkbox"/> Martin Township   | <input type="checkbox"/> City of Wayland     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Glenn      | <input type="checkbox"/> Monterey Township | <input type="checkbox"/> Wayland Township    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gun Plain Township | <input type="checkbox"/> City of Otsego    |  |

Other (please specify)

### 2. What is your primary mode of transportation? (Select one)

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal automobile                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Love in the Name of Christ   | <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carpool                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends / Family / Neighbors | <input type="checkbox"/> Taxi / Cab Service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allegan County Transportation (ACT)    | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Church                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saugatuck / Douglas Interurban Transit | <input type="checkbox"/> School Bus                   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pioneer Resources                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Evergreen Commons            |   |

Other (please specify)

### 3. When not using your primary mode of transportation, what other mode do you use most often? (Select one)

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal automobile                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Love in the Name of Christ   | <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carpool                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends / Family / Neighbors | <input type="checkbox"/> Taxi / Cab Service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allegan County Transportation (ACT)    | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Church                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saugatuck / Douglas Interurban Transit | <input type="checkbox"/> School Bus                   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pioneer Resources                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Evergreen Commons            |   |

Other (please specify)

4. Do you own a personal automobile?

Yes

No

5. If you answered "Yes" to question 4, what is the total number of working automobiles in your household? (Select one)

0

1

2

3

4

5 or more

6. When was the last time you used Allegan County Transportation (ACT)? (Select one)

Today

Within the past month

Within the past week

Within the past six months

Within the past two weeks

Over six months ago (skip question 7, move to question 8)

7. How often have you used ACT to take you to and from the following destination in the past six (6) months?

	Daily	3 or 4 times a week	1 or 2 times a week	3 or 4 times a month	1 or 2 times a month	Never
Work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shopping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medical Appointments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Service Agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visiting Friends / Family Members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Activities (such as movies, out to eat, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. In the past year, what destinations did you need to travel to but a lack of transportation prevented you from getting there? (Select all that apply)

Work / Employment

Visit Friend / Family

Social Services Agency

Church

Court / Jail

Shopping / Grocery

School

Medical Appointment

None

Other (please specify)

9. In the past year, has a lack of transportation prevented you from looking for, getting, or keeping a job?

Yes

No

Unsure

10. In the past year, did you have a need to travel to another county/ties in West Michigan?

Yes

No

Unsure

11. If you answered "Yes" to question 10, please indicate to which counties you needed transportation. (Select all that apply)

- Kalamazoo
  Kent (Grand Rapids)
  Ottawa (Holland)
  Van Buren (South Haven)

Other (please specify)

12. Do you see a need for regional transportation in West Michigan increasing within the next three (3) years? (By regional transportation, we mean transportation to other counties.)

- Yes
  No
  Unsure

13. What would be an affordable cost for one, one-way ride to where you need to travel? (Select one)

- 50 cents
  \$3
  \$8-10  
 \$1
  \$4-5
  \$0, I do not have any money to pay for transportation.  
 \$2
  \$6-7

14. When thinking about your typical weekly schedule, what days and times do you need transportation?

	6 am - 10 am	10 am - 2 pm	2 pm - 6 pm	6 pm - 10 pm	10 pm - 2 am	2 am - 6 am
Monday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. Do you need personal assistance when you travel?

- Yes
  No

16. Do you need an accessible vehicle when you travel?

- Yes
  No

17. If the following public transit services were available, which would you rather use: (Select one)

- Fixed Routes (These are specific routes with buses traveling from bus stop to bus stop at regularly scheduled times.)  
 Demand Response (This is a door-to-door service that requires a reservation made 24 hours in advance.)  
 Unsure

18. How far would you be willing to walk to a bus stop to ride Allegan County Transportation (ACT)? (Select one)

- Less than 1/4 mile     
  3/4 mile     
  Will not ride  
 1/4 mile     
  One mile     
  Unsure  
 1/2 mile     
  Over one mile

19. If a new Allegan County Transportation (ACT) route opened within a half mile (approximately 4 city blocks) from your home and your destination, how likely would you, or any member of your family, be to ride ACT to and/or from:

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not likely at all	Does not apply
Work / Employment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shopping / Grocery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medical Appointment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Service Agency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friends / Family Members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>			

20. Please rate ACT on the following:

	Superior	Above average	Average	Below average	Inferior	Unsure
Quality of customer service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marketing of ACT	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friendliness of bus drivers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friendliness of management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friendliness of phone operators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Timeliness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comfort of vehicles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reliability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cost	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessibility for people with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helpfulness of bus drivers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helpfulness of management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helpfulness of phone operators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Efficiency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meeting your transit needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. Overall, how satisfied would you say you are with ACT's services?

- Completely satisfied     
  Satisfied     
  Neutral     
  Unsatisfied     
  Completely unsatisfied

22. What is the best way to educate you on the public transit services that are available in Allegan County? (Select one)

- Newspaper
- Radio
- Fliers
- Billboards
- Mailings
- Phone call
- Church bulletin
- Email
- Website

Other (please specify)

23. Please rank the top three (3) solutions that would best meet your transportation needs.

	Greatest	Second greatest	Third greatest
Getting my vehicle fixed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gas money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal assistance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My driver's license reinstated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Car insurance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Money for bus passes, taxi rides, etc...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public transportation that goes to the places I need to go and runs on the days and the times I need to travel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessible features for my vehicle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. Please select three (3) values from the following list that you think public transit promotes AND are most important to you.

- Independence
- Community
- Opportunity
- Happiness
- Individualism
- Freedom
- Safety
- Success
- Connection
- Equality
- Optimism
- Efficiency

Other (please specify)

Just a few final questions about you.

25. Are you currently employed?

- Yes
- No

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

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

27. Not including yourself, how many children live in your home who also need transportation?

- 0       1       2       3       4       5 or more

28. Do you own or rent your home?

- Yes       No

29. What is your gender?

- Male       Female

30. What is your age?

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

31. Which of the following best describes your ethnicity?

- African American / Black       Hispanic / Latin American       American Indian / Alaska Native  
 Caucasian / White       Asian / Pacific Islander       Unsure

Other (please specify)

32. Which of the following best describes your total family household income?

- Under \$10,000       \$30,001 - \$40,000       \$60,001 - \$70,000  
 \$10,001 - \$20,000       \$40,001 - \$50,000       Over \$70,000  
 \$20,001 - \$30,000       \$50,001 - \$60,000       Unsure

Thank you for your participation in our survey. The results of this survey will become available in May. All past and future reports and updates associated with this study are or will be published at [www.dnlakeshore.org](http://www.dnlakeshore.org).

# APPENDIX F: Prospective Rider Survey

## 1. Allegan County Transportation Prospective Rider Survey

A research study is currently underway in Allegan County to identify unmet transit needs and develop a five-year strategic plan for Allegan County Transportation (ACT). As a resident of Allegan County and a potential rider of ACT, your input will be invaluable as we move forward in this study.

The information you provide in this survey will be compiled and analyzed by Dr. Daniel Bergan of Michigan State University and Disability Network / Lakeshore. The results of this study will also assist the Allegan County United Way in their community assessment project. Finally, your results will be used by Allegan County Transportation to develop a five-year strategic plan for improvements to the public transit system. Therefore, your responses will be used to evaluate and understand local countywide transportation issues so solutions can be sought.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and all responses will be held in strict confidence.

By completing this survey in its entirety you will be entered into a drawing to WIN 1 of 5 \$25 VISA gift cards! Your contact information will be requested at the end of this survey for the drawing, however, it will NOT be associated with your responses!

To view earlier reports on this study and the final report of this phase to be posted in May, please see [www.dnlakeshore.org](http://www.dnlakeshore.org).

### 1. In what township or city in Allegan County do you live? (Select one)

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> City of Allegan    | <input type="radio"/> Heath Township    | <input type="radio"/> Otsego Township     |
| <input type="radio"/> Allegan Township   | <input type="radio"/> City of Holland   | <input type="radio"/> Overisel Township   |
| <input type="radio"/> Casco Township     | <input type="radio"/> City of Hopkins   | <input type="radio"/> City of Plainwell   |
| <input type="radio"/> Cheshire Township  | <input type="radio"/> Hopkins Township  | <input type="radio"/> Salem Township      |
| <input type="radio"/> Clyde Township     | <input type="radio"/> Laketown Township | <input type="radio"/> City of Saugatuck   |
| <input type="radio"/> Dorr Township      | <input type="radio"/> Lee Township      | <input type="radio"/> Saugatuck Township  |
| <input type="radio"/> City of Douglas    | <input type="radio"/> Leighton Township | <input type="radio"/> Trowbridge Township |
| <input type="radio"/> City of Fennville  | <input type="radio"/> Manlius Township  | <input type="radio"/> Valley Township     |
| <input type="radio"/> Fillmore Township  | <input type="radio"/> City of Martin    | <input type="radio"/> Watson Township     |
| <input type="radio"/> Ganges Township    | <input type="radio"/> Martin Township   | <input type="radio"/> City of Wayland     |
| <input type="radio"/> City of Glenn      | <input type="radio"/> Monterey Township | <input type="radio"/> Wayland Township    |
| <input type="radio"/> Gun Plain Township | <input type="radio"/> City of Otsego    |   |

Other (please specify)



2. What is your primary mode of transportation? (Select one)

- Personal automobile
- Love in the Name of Christ
- Bicycle
- Carpool
- Friends / Family / Neighbors
- Taxi / Cab Service
- Allegan County Transportation (ACT)
- Local Church
- Walking
- Saugatuck / Douglas Interurban Transit
- School Bus
- Evergreen Commons
- Pioneer Resources

Other (please specify)

3. When not using your primary mode of transportation, what other mode do you use most often? (Select one)

- Personal automobile
- Love in the Name of Christ
- Bicycle
- Carpool
- Friends / Family / Neighbors
- Taxi / Cab Service
- Allegan County Transportation (ACT)
- Local Church
- Walking
- Saugatuck / Douglas Interurban Transit
- School Bus
- Evergreen Commons
- Pioneer Resources

Other (please specify)

4. Do you own a personal automobile?

- Yes
- No

5. If you answered "Yes" to question 4, what is the total number of working automobiles in your household? (Select one)

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

6. Have you ever heard of Allegan County Transportation (ACT)?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

7. Why don't you currently use Allegan County Transportation (ACT) for transportation? (Select all that apply)

- No need
- Too expensive
- Unsafe
- Uncomfortable
- Inconvenient hours
- Inconvenient routes
- Unreliable
- Unfriendly bus drivers
- Takes too long
- Bus is not accessible for people with disabilities
- Bus cannot carry bikes
- Bus stop too far away
- Does not provide service in my area
- Bus stop is inaccessible (i.e. no sidewalk, difficult to navigate)
- Never heard of ACT
- Heard negative comments about ACT
- Unsure

Other (please specify)

8. If your car broke down and you needed another form of transportation immediately, what is the likelihood you would use Allegan County Transportation to take you to: (Please indicate your choice for each row)

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not likely at all	Does not apply
Work / Employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Church	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visit Friend / Family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Court / Jail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical Appointment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Services Agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shopping / Grocery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social activities (such as movies, out to eat, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If other please specify:

9. In the past year, what destinations did you need to travel to but a lack of transportation prevented you from getting there? (Select all that apply)

- Work / Employment
- Church
- School
- Visit Friend / Family
- Court / Jail
- Medical Appointment
- Social Services Agency
- Shopping / Grocery
- None

Other (please specify)

10. In the past year, has a lack of transportation prevented you from looking for, getting, or keeping a job?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

11. Does seasonal weather affect your need for transportation services?

Yes

No

Unsure

12. If you answered "Yes" to question 11, please indicate in which season you have the greatest unmet transportation need.

Spring

Summer

Fall

Winter

13. In the past year, did you have a need to travel to another county/ties in West Michigan?

Yes

No

Unsure

14. If you answered "Yes" to question 13, please indicate to which counties you needed transportation. (Select all that apply)

Kalamazoo

Kent (Grand Rapids)

Ottawa (Holland)

Van Buren (South Haven)

Other (please specify)

15. Do you see a need for regional transportation in West Michigan increasing within the next three (3) years? (By regional transportation we mean transportation to other counties.)

Yes

No

Unsure

16. What would be an affordable cost for one, one-way ride to where you need to travel? (Select one)

50 cents

\$3

\$8-10

\$1

\$4-5

\$0, I do not have any money to pay for transportation.

\$2

\$6-7

17. When thinking about your typical weekly schedule, what days and times do you need transportation?

	6am - 10am	10am - 2pm	2pm - 6pm	6pm - 10pm	10pm - 2am	2am - 6am
Monday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. Do you need personal assistance when you travel?

Yes

No

19. Do you need an accessible vehicle when you travel?

Yes

No

20. If the following public transit services were available, which would you rather use: (Select one)

Fixed Routes (These are specific routes with buses traveling from bus stop to bus stop at regularly scheduled times.)

Demand Response (This is a door-to-door service that requires a reservation made 24 hours in advance.)

Unsure

21. How far would you be willing to walk to a bus stop to ride Allegan County Transportation (ACT)? (Select one)

Less than 1/4 mile

3/4 mile

Will not ride

1/4 mile

One mile

Unsure

1/2 mile

Over one mile

22. If a new Allegan County Transportation (ACT) route opened within half mile (approximately 4 city blocks) from your home and your destination, how likely would you, or any member of your family, be to ride ACT to and/or from:

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not likely at all	Does not apply
Work / Employment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shopping / Grocery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medical Appointment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Service Agency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friends / Family Members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Activities (such as movies, out to eat, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)				
<input style="width: 300px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>				

23. Please rate your perception of ACT on the following:

	Superior	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Inferior	Unsure
Quality of customer service	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Marketing of ACT	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Friendliness	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Timeliness	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Comfort of vehicles	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Reliability	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Cost	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Accessibility for people with disabilities	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Helpfulness	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Efficiency	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Meeting community transit needs	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Safety	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

24. Overall, how important would you say ACT's services are to the Allegan County community?

- Very important
- Neutral
- Not important at all
- Somewhat important
- Somewhat unimportant
- Unsure

25. What is the best way to educate you on the public transit services that are available in Allegan County? (Select one)

- Newspaper
- Billboards
- Church bulletin
- Radio
- Mailings
- Email
- Fliers
- Phone call
- Website

Other (please specify)

26. Please rank the top three (3) solutions that would best meet your transportation needs.

	Greatest	Second greatest	Third greatest
Getting my vehicle fixed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gas money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal assistance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My driver's license reinstated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Car insurance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Money for bus passes, taxi rides, etc...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public transportation that goes to the places I need to go and runs on the days and that the times I need to travel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessible features for my vehicle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. Please select three (3) values from the following list that you think public transit promotes AND most important to you.

- Independence
- Individualism
- Connection
- Community
- Freedom
- Equality
- Opportunity
- Safety
- Optimism
- Happiness
- Success
- Efficiency

Other (please specify)

Just a few final questions about you.

28. Are you currently employed?

- Yes
- No

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

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

30. Not including yourself, how many children live in your home who also need transportation?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

31. Do you own or rent your home?

- Yes
- No

32. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

33. What is your age?

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

34. Which of the following best describes your ethnicity?

- African American / Black                       Hispanic / Latin American                       American Indian / Alaska Native  
 Caucasian / White                                       Asian / Pacific Islander                       Unsure

Other (please specify)

35. Which of the following best describes your total family household income?

- Under \$10,000                                       \$30,001 - \$40,000                                       \$60,001 - \$70,000  
 \$10,001 - \$20,000                                       \$40,001 - \$50,000                                       Over \$70,001  
 \$20,001 - \$30,000                                       \$50,001 - \$60,000                                       Unsure

36. Please share your contact information to be entered in a drawing for 1 of 5 \$25 VISA gift cards. You must complete the survey in its entirety to be eligible for the drawing. Your contact information will NOT be connected to any information you provide in the survey.

Name:

Address:

City/Town:

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

Thank you for your participation in our survey. The results of this survey will become available in May. All past and future reports and updates associated with this study are or will be published at [www.dnlakeshore.org](http://www.dnlakeshore.org).