

Allegan County Transportation Five-Year Strategic Plan

Prepared by:
The Allegan County Transit Workgroup

In partnership with:
Disability Network/Lakeshore

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February 3, 2011

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Allegheny County Transportation Workgroup, it is my pleasure to introduce the five-year strategic plan for Allegheny County Transportation, which is contained in the following document.

This strategic plan is the culmination of over two years of collaborative work by staff, volunteers, and interested citizens. During our work, we conducted surveys, one-to-one interviews, and community input sessions, held several meetings, and performed extensive research, data collection, and analysis. Our Workgroup, charged by the Allegheny County Transportation Department to create a five-year plan, has devoted an enormous amount of time and energy into this process. Our discussions have always centered on one central goal: how to best improve general public transportation services for the residents of Allegheny County.

As a result, we have decided to pursue the following improvements to Allegheny County Transportation over the next five years: offer general public transportation in Allegheny County through a Reserve-A-Ride, five community service area system 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. Additionally, limited Saturday and Sunday service will be offered up to 115 hours per weekend. ACT will maintain the current fare structure of \$2 per trip for adults and \$1 per trip for seniors, people with disabilities and children; as well as, engage in ongoing communication with stakeholders. ACT will seek local funding to implement these recommendations.

We remain committed to a mission of enhancing and promoting economic development and serving the transportation needs of Allegheny County residents by providing safe, reliable, barrier free travel.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Dan Wedge'.

Dan Wedge
Director, Allegheny County Transportation

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I. Executive Summary

The Allegan County Transportation Workgroup (Workgroup) is composed of local directors, employees, elected officials and residents serving or living throughout the Allegan County region. In September 2008, the Workgroup began discussing short-range improvements to Allegan County Transportation (ACT) and developing strategic research processes to solicit input from local organizations, businesses, elected officials and residents. The Workgroup's mission was to develop a five-year strategic plan for ACT to meet the growing transportation needs of the general public living in Allegan County.

Consultants hired to assist with the elements of the planning, research and marketing process included:

- Daniel Bergan, Ph.D., *Michigan State University, Bergan Consulting LLC, Principal*
- Lisa Dingman, *Square One Design, Graphic Designer*
- Brian Kelly, *Brian Kelly Photography, Videographer*
- Genevieve Risner, *Creative Inquiry LLC, Principal*

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. 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 census data including senior populations, people with disabilities, income levels, housing units and vehicles per household (Appendix D).

**These studies are available to the public upon request or by visiting the ACT website.*

The culmination of these studies and analysis of the findings resulted in the development of a five-year strategic plan for Allegan County transportation detailed in the following pages. The recommendations of the Workgroup include:

- 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.

II. Mission Statements

The Allegan County Board of Commissioners

Mission Statement

The Allegan County Board of Commissioners shall plan, develop and evaluate the necessary policies and resources to ensure our County continues to progress and prosper.

Vision Statement

The Allegan County Board of Commissioners is committed to providing our citizens superior and innovative services, being judicious and efficient in the expenditure of resources and promoting a safe, clean and healthy environment in which to live, work, and play.

Value Statement

The principles of Honest, Integrity, Commitment and Respect will serve as the foundation for all of our words, deeds and actions in providing services to the citizens of Allegan County.

Allegan County Transportation

Mission Statement

Allegan County Transportation's mission is to enhance and promote economic development and serve the transportation needs of Allegan County residents by providing safe, reliable, barrier-free travel.

III. Organizational History and Profile

In July 2000, ACT began providing transportation to residents in key areas throughout Allegan County. Since then, ACT has provided a reservation service for the last ten years, expanding its geographic coverage according to the availability of funding and the growing demand for service. Throughout this time, ACT services have been supported financially through state and federal programs such as Project Zero, Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC), and Specialized Services as well as funding from contracts with local organizations, Allegan County, and passenger fares.

Allegan County Transportation is a department of Allegan County and is governed by the Board of County Commissioners. The County owns all of the transportation buses, facilities, and equipment and is responsible for overseeing the Transportation Director. ACT contracts with Transportation Management, Inc. to conduct the daily transit operations. The contractual arrangement between ACT and Transportation Management, Inc. has existed since ACT's inception.

The current ACT service area encompasses the City of Allegan with transportation service following the M-40 corridor to Holland, the M-89 corridor to Otsego and Plainwell, and the M-89 route to the City of Fennville and Pullman. Additionally, ACT serves the US 131 highway cities of Shelbyville, Martin, Dorr and Wayland. The service area includes a one-mile radius around the road corridors listed. ACT does not provide a fixed route service.

Additionally, there are two public transit providers that provide transportation service to a limited amount of residents within Allegan County. The Interurban Transit Authority (ITA) has served over 1.2 million riders in the City of Saugatuck, Saugatuck Township and Douglas Township residents since 1980. In 2010, ITA provided 58,187 passenger trips, 6% increase from 2009 (54,789). However, many of these passengers would like to connect with ACT in order to travel outside of the ITA service area. The ITA is funded by both federal and state funds, as well as through a local millage.

Secondly, beginning in 2000, the Macatawa Area Express Transit Authority (MAX) has been serving the greater Holland and Zeeland area with a fixed route and demand-response system and provided over 339,422 passengers trips in 2010. Currently, ACT connects to the MAX through a transfer point located at the Family Fare on 40th Street in Holland. Similar to ITA, MAX receives funding from both the state and federal levels, as well funding through a local millage. In the future, ACT would like to work collaboratively with these two transit providers in order to better serve the residents of Allegan County.

Currently, ACT provides reservation service to specific populations as dictated by state and federal funding programs and the local organizations that contract with ACT for

service. This means that passengers must call 24 hours in advance during office hours to pre-schedule a ride and must be eligible for service.

In 2009, ACT provided 47,123 passenger trips (one trip equals one, one-way ride), a 20 percent increase in ridership from 2007 (39,420 passenger trips). ACT has provided over 290,000 passenger trips, traveled over 3.6 million miles, and spent just over 151,000 hours on Allegan roads since its inception in July 2000.

Passenger trips are categorized into three types of trips: Specialized Services, Job Access Reverse Commute or Regular Service. The majority of passenger trips, 35,817 (76%), were provided through regular service funding. Regular service funding primarily provides transportation to the customers, clients and consumers of organizations that contract with ACT for service. These organizations include, but are not limited to Department of Human Services, Allegan County Community Mental Health, Michigan Works!, and Allegan Area Educational Service Agency. Specialized Services, a state funded program, accounted for 7,823 trips (17%) and provides medical, shopping or recreational trips for seniors and persons with disabilities. The remaining 3,483 trips (7%) were provided through the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program, a state and federal funded program that provides trips for employment related services.

ACT service is currently available Monday through Friday from 5:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. No weekend service is available at this time. All reservations must be made 24 hours in advance; however, limited demand-response (same-day) service is available for emergency related trips as vehicles are available.

For one, one-way trip through the reservation service, fares are \$2.00 for the general public or \$1.00 for seniors, persons with disabilities, and children ages 5 through 11. Children under 5 years of age with an adult ride for free. For Specialized Service trips, the passenger fare amount is the remaining balance of total hours (\$45.00/hour) subtracted by the state grant funding (\$1.20/mile traveled). There is a \$5 minimum passenger fare for this service.

ACT uses a 28-vehicle fleet, including vans and buses, to accommodate their riders. Of these vehicles, 20 vehicles are wheelchair accessible.

ACT's 2009 budget totaled just over \$1.1 million. The budget includes salary and wages for one full time Transportation Director and one part time Administrative Assistant, both employees of the County. ACT's contract with Transportation Management, Inc. includes the employment of 27 people: one operations manager, one transportation coordinator, one mechanic, three operators/administrative support, and 21 drivers (Appendix B).

Federal grants contribute 16% per year (\$218,754) and State grants contribute 40% per year (\$538,385). Contracts with organizations/agencies throughout the County contribute 31% per year (\$417,110). Passenger fares contribute 10% per year (\$138,229). Additionally, ACT receives 3% per year (\$40,500) from the County and less than 1% (\$2,226) from non-operating revenues.

In 2008, ACT began construction of a new transit facility located at 750 Airway Drive, Allegan, MI. This facility houses all ACT operations in one location, which increased efficiency of operations and the management of the transit system. Construction was completed in June 2010.

Today, ACT continues to receive numerous calls from residents and organizations throughout Allegan County that are not eligible for service under one of the funding sources and do not understand the services provided by ACT. Most of these individuals reside in the service area, but because nearly all of ACT's local funding comes from contracts with local organizations general public riders are not able to access ACT services because of a lack in local funding. Thus, ACT's obligation is to meet the service needs of local organizations per contractual agreements, and general public transportation is provided when a general public trip need matches a contractual trip being provided.

ACT is consistently looking for ways to improve and increase ridership. ACT partnered with community organizations and residents to conduct a series of studies and develop a five-year strategic plan with recommended service improvements in order to enhance service delivery and meet the growing demand for ridership. The results of these studies are outlined in the following document.

IV. Critical Issues and Core Strategies

The current ACT structure does not adequately address the travel needs of the Allegan County general public.

The demand for ACT service exceeds the supply of available transportation. Since the ACT system is designed to meet the travel needs of the clients, customers, and consumers of local organizations that contract with ACT for service, not the general public, some residents of Allegan County have been unable to receive transportation service. Strategies selected to assess the travel needs for general public transportation include:

- Develop map plotting current ACT rider origins and destinations
- Compare the map to the current ACT deviated fixed route system
- Complete a current rider survey of ACT passengers to determine current riders travel needs
- Conduct one-on-one interviews with current ACT riders to determine the extent of current riders travel needs
- Conduct a transportation needs assessment survey of the general public, including prospective riders, to determine the travel needs of the Allegan County community
- Conduct focus groups with Allegan County stakeholders (including businesses, schools, churches, and organizations) to determine the transportation needs of the Allegan County community
- Conduct an assessment of services provided by transportation providers of similar sizes to compare to current ACT services
- Develop map plotting denied passenger trips
- Compare the map to the current ACT system
- Determine existing gaps in services
- Improve the ACT structure to address these service gaps and meet the needs of the Allegan County community

Public transportation fare structures must be affordable for those who need it most and competitive with fares of other transit providers of similar sizes.

Since ACT's inception fares have not been reevaluated. Thus, the Workgroup felt it was time to assess whether the fares were still appropriate to meet passenger needs, yet competitive with other transit providers. Strategies selected to assess fares include:

- Investigate fares collected by other transportation providers
- Conduct a transportation needs assessment of the general public, including prospective riders, to determine the fees members of the Allegan County community are willing to pay to ride ACT

- Conduct a transportation needs assessment of current riders to determine the fees they are willing to pay to ride ACT
- Compare the results of these studies to the current fares collected by ACT
- Develop a recommendation of a fare structure for ACT

Allegan County continues to grow and develop outside of a centrally located region.

Allegan County includes 34 municipalities and has large numbers of residents living outside of the central City of Allegan, approximately 137 persons per square mile with a land area of 827 square miles. Thus, the Workgroup examined whether the current transportation structure was the most appropriate match for the Allegan County community over the next five years. Strategies selected to address the current geographic coverage area of ACT include:

- Develop maps developed by the geographic information system (GIS) using 2000 census data to plot the population of seniors age 55 and older, population of seniors age 65 and older, population of people with a disability, occupied housing units with no or one vehicle, occupied housing units with no vehicle, occupied housing units with one vehicle, household income between \$10,000 and \$25,000, household income below \$10,000, and population under poverty level
- Compare these maps to the current ACT system
- Hold focus groups with stakeholders (including businesses, schools, churches, and organizations) to determine the regional transportation needs of residents of Allegan County
- Conduct a transportation needs assessment of the general public, including prospective riders, to determine the need for regional transportation
- Conduct a transportation needs assessment of current riders to determine needs to travel to the need for regional transportation
- Conduct an analysis of similarly sized rural transportation systems
- Improve the existing ACT transportation system to address regional transportation needs

Dependence on Federal and State grants, municipal funding from Allegan County, and revenue from local community organizations is inadequate to meet the transportation needs of Allegan County residents.

Currently, Allegan County Transportation is funded, primarily, by local organizations and agencies through contractual service agreements, which serves as a local match to bring in federal and state grant funding. This revenue is dedicated to providing limited and specific transportation trips to clients, consumers and customers. A limited amount of funding is available to provide rides to the general Allegan County public, but is not currently sufficient to meet prospective riders travel needs. Strategies selected to assess the funding structure of ACT include:

- Conduct an analysis of ACT revenues and expenditures
- Review the Allegan County Area Wide Coordinated Public Transit Human Service Plan
- Conduct an analysis of similarly sized rural transportation systems
- Determine the best funding structure to provide general public transportation service

The current ACT system is not equipped to advance economic development or environmental conservation opportunities in Allegan County.

Tourism opportunities in Allegan County necessitate the creation of a visitor-friendly transportation system. Also, current environmental trends provide an opportunity to create an environmentally friendly transit system that automobile owners might use. Strategies selected to address the potential transportation benefits of ACT for the general public include:

- Conduct a survey with stakeholders (including businesses, schools, churches, and organizations) in Allegan County to determine how unmet transportation needs effects their organization.
- Conduct a transportation needs assessment of the general public, including prospective riders, to determine how transportation effects their employment
- Conduct a transportation needs assessment of current riders to determine how transportation effects their employment
- Explore ways ACT transportation system could address the economic development needs of Allegan County

Allegan County residents do not understand ACT’s geographic coverage, scope of services, and funding structure and do not know how to access transportation service.

The Workgroup needed to address the best way to alleviate passenger confusion about ACT services. Strategies selected to explore education and marketing needs include:

- Conduct a focus group with stakeholders (including businesses, schools, churches, and organizations) in Allegan County to determine how to market ACT services
- Conduct a transportation needs assessment of the general public, including prospective riders, to determine the best way to educate residents about ACT services
- Conduct a transportation needs assessment of current riders to determine the best way to educate residents about ACT services
- Review the Allegan County Area Wide Coordinated Public Transit Human Service Plan

- Develop an education and marketing plan to educate Allegan County residents about ACT services

Service alterations must be tweaked as implementation occurs to ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency.

The Workgroup recognized the need to allow some room for flexibility once implementation of a modified transportation service was implemented. Thus, upon implementation, the committee identified the need for ACT to evaluate opportunities for adjustments that would meet resident's travel needs in the most efficient way.

V. Goals, Recommendations, and Rationales

A. Service Type

Critical Issues:

The current ACT structure does not adequately address the travel needs of the Allegan County general public.

Allegan County has several residents who need ongoing medical related transportation, especially to and from dialysis treatment.

Allegan County has over 11,400 residents with disabilities, particularly individuals served by Community Mental Health, who could be more independent with access to public transportation.

Goal:

Create a transportation structure that addresses the transportation needs of prospective general public transportation riders in Allegan County.

Recommendation:

Provide Reserve-A-Ride transportation system to the general public in Allegan County.

Rationale:

Overall, each year ACT’s ridership continues to grow, indicating an increasing demand for transportation service. Following is a chart detailing ACT ridership trends from calendar years 2001 through 2010.

Table 1. Ridership Levels by Service Year for Allegan County Transportation

Year	Number of Service Hours	Number of Ridership (Trips)	Number of Miles Driven	Percent Change in Ridership
2001	7,779	13,998	199,849	
2002	12,205	20,012	319,654	+ 42.9%
2003	11,917	25,208	299,777	+ 25.9%
2004	13,199	28,330	327,583	+12.4%
2005	15,353	36,673	350,573	+29.4%
2006*	15,046	35,926	371,686	-2.0%
2007	18,440	39,420	469,650	+10.0%
2008	27,666	44,989	616,495	+14.0%
2009	29,807	47,123	685,462	+4.7%
2010**	28,389	42,914	669,502	-8.9%

*Note: Fewer trips were provided, but covered more mileage - also the first year without Project Zero funding.

** Note: Michigan Works! decreased from 5days a week to 1 day a week service.

In addition, ACT has had to turn away hundreds of people requesting transportation over the years because the demand for rides exceeds the availability of transportation. Table 2 shows that from Jan. 2010 thru Dec. 2010, ACT was unable to service over 575 individuals, roughly 1.5 persons per day. A quarter of those trips were medically related followed by work related trips. Each month, more residents are turned away from ACT's services because of a lack in funding to provide more transit.

Table 2. Number of Riders Unable to Receive Service

Year	Medial Trips	Work Trips	School Trips	Shopping Trips	Other Trips
# of riders unable to be served	157	80	35	13	292

The Workgroup collected data on similarly sized transportation systems in Michigan to determine how they currently provide county-wide transportation service to their general public riders. While some transportation providers offer a reservation service, others also divide the county into zones, or community service areas, to allocate rides throughout the service area. Below is a chart detailing the total ridership from 2008 thru 2010 and type of service offered by transportation providers of similar sizes.

Table 3. Transportation Provider by Ridership and Service Type

Transportation Provider	Total Ridership (2010)	Total Ridership (2009)	Total Ridership (2008)	Service Type
Van Buren County	78,500	65,050	60,806	Reservation Service for entire county, Dial A Ride for South Haven and Paw Paw areas, South Haven Metro Loop (fixed)contracts
Kalamazoo Metro Transit	394,318 (2,305,969)*	730,917 (2,534,742)*	560,773	Demand Response for entire county (Care-A-Van), Demand Response (para-transit) one mile off fixed routes (Metro Bus), Regular Fixed routes (Metro Transit)
Benzie County	69,964	67,434	68,385	Reservation Service with Express Route in high-density areas
Barry County	75,120	74,030	82,936	Door-to-door service countywide and demand-response "quickie bus" service in Hastings and Middleville
St. Joseph County	77,258	70,151	70,170	Reservation service & contracts
Allegan County	42,914	47,123	44,989	Reservation service & contracts

*Additional ridership from Kalamazoo Metro Transit City service.

The Workgroup conducted two studies to gauge the type of public transportation service current and prospective riders would like to use. People were asked, “If the following public transit services were available, which would you rather use?” Then, people were given the option between Fixed Routes (These are specific routes with buses traveling from bus stop to bus stop at regularly scheduled times) or Demand Response (This is a door-to-door service that requires a reservation made 24 hours in advance.) If people didn’t know what type of service they’d prefer, their answer was recorded as unsure. Of the 237 current riders who answered this question, 49% would prefer to use a demand response-type system, 19% would like to use fixed routes, and 33% were unsure. Of the 427 prospective riders who answered this question, 43% would prefer to use a demand response-type system, 22% would like to use fixed routes, and 35% were unsure. Thus, likely ACT riders would prefer to use a Reserve-A-Ride service where they request a ride 24 hours in advance, and then a bus would provide them with door-to-door service.

The Workgroup also asked current and prospective riders about the types of destinations they needed to reach. People were asked, “In the past year, what destinations did you need to travel to but a lack of transportation prevented you from getting there?” Of the 201 current riders who answered this question, 45% indicated they did not have access to a medical appointment, 30% could not get to the grocery store, 23% could not visit friends or family, and 20% could not get to work. Of the 467 prospective riders who responded to this question, 65% indicated they were not prevented from accessing any destinations; however, 21% (103 people) said they could not reach a medical appointment, 16% (76 people) could not get to a grocery store, and 13% (69 people) were unable to get to work. Thus, current riders – to a large extent – and prospective riders – to a lesser extent – are having primary difficulty reaching medical appointments, followed by accessing grocery stores, visiting friends and family, and getting to work.

These findings were also supported by focus groups conducted with organizations, agencies, churches, schools, and other groups throughout the Allegan County community. Specifically, major issues include getting people to the only dialysis center in Allegan County, supporting the independence of individuals served by Community Mental Health, connecting seniors with the meal sites in Hopkins, and providing reliable transportation for employment opportunities for MI Works clients.

Allegan County has several residents who need ongoing medical related transportation, especially to and from dialysis treatment. Allegan County Transportation receives several requests for rides from Allegan County residents who need tri-weekly kidney dialysis treatment. There is only one kidney dialysis treatment center in Allegan County, Fresenius Medical Care, located in the City of Allegan. Fresenius serves over 40 individuals weekly for a total of 120 visits per week. The facility estimates that 60% of their customer base is transported by friends and family, while ACT provides only 11% of the transportation trips. Many of Fresenius’s customers would prefer to use ACT services, but there is no funding to provide this type of transportation. Additionally, there is not any affordable transportation for Allegan County residents to reach Fresenius, and accessing dialysis care can mean the difference between life and death for patients. Thus,

the Workgroup identified a need to link Allegan County residents with Fresenius Medical Care.

Allegan County Transportation continues to provide transportation services to seniors throughout the county. Just over one-fifth, or 21% (27,871) of Allegan County residents are age 55 or older. Many of these seniors rely on ACT to transport them to and from their medical appointments and recreational activities. Without ACT, many seniors become isolated from their surroundings and unable to participate in many of the county's senior activities.

Allegan County has over 11,400 residents with disabilities, particularly individuals served by Community Mental Health, who could be more independent with access to public transportation. Over the last two years, ACT provided an average of 7,400 rides to consumers of Allegan County Community Mental Health on a contractual basis for employment and social service related trips. However, several of these riders also need transportation to get groceries, pick up prescriptions, attend social events, and live independently in the Allegan County community.

Focus groups also indicated that a majority of their clients, customers, and consumers are unable to reach grocery stores to shop or pick up prescriptions, engage in social activities in the community like visit friends and family, go out to eat, watch a movie at the theater, or arrange ongoing transportation to places of employment. In particular, seniors are having a difficult time getting to and from meal sites located in Hopkins Township. Working parents have a need to take their children to and from daycare so that they may work. Over the last three years, ACT averaged 6,300 rides per year in order to service the growing demands of MI Work clients.

Also, several people located near South Haven need transportation to reach grocery, medical and employment destinations. Thus, the Workgroup identified a need to link Allegan County residents with grocery, social, daycare, and employment opportunities, especially in areas near South Haven, Wayland and Hopkins.

In its inception, ACT was designed to meet the contractual needs of countywide service organizations through contracts and grants; ACT was not designed to meet the general public's transportation needs. Therefore, it is not surprising that many of the unmet transportation needs mentioned by ACT riders, the general public, and community groups and organizations focus on medical, shopping, social, and employment related trips that are not covered under ACT's current contracts. For many residents, ACT's current level of service is not adequate to meet their transportation needs. As a result, the Workgroup believes the Allegan County community needs public transportation focused on addressing the medical, employment, shopping and social needs of the general public through a Reserve-A-Ride transportation system.

B. Service Area

Critical Issues:

Allegan County continues to grow and develop outside of a centrally located region.

The current ACT structure does not adequately address the travel needs of the general public residing in Allegan County.

The current ACT system is not equipped to advance economic development or environmental conservation opportunities in Allegan County.

Goal:

Offer public transportation services to Allegan County residents.

Recommendation:

Implement a five (5) region community service area transportation structure that allocates transportation service to each of the five regions in Allegan County (Appendix C).

Connect ACT with public transportation systems in the surrounding counties of Kalamazoo, Ottawa, Kent, and Van Buren.

Rationale:

Allegan County includes 34 units of government composed of 24 townships and 10 cities generating a total 2009 population of approximately 113,449. Much of Allegan can be classified as rural, with the highest densities of housing, businesses and service organizations located within select areas that are located at the outer edges of the county, with Allegan City being an exception (4,805 residents) - located closer to the center. The areas with relatively large populations include Dorr Twp. (7,852 residents), Gunplain Twp. (6,475 residents), and Laketown Twp. (5,948 residents). Remaining units of government have lower density populations and more dispersed housing. This geographic layout of the County results in higher density areas with businesses, social service organizations and medical facilities surrounded by pockets of low density rural areas.

In addition, Allegan County is surrounded by four other Counties (Ottawa, Kent, Kalamazoo, and Van Buren) where other medical, employment, and retail outlets are located. Because ACT receives requests for service to these Counties, the Workgroup felt it was critical to ask current and prospective riders about their need to travel to these areas. Therefore, the Workgroup asked current and prospective riders, “In the past year, did you have a need to travel to another county/ties in West Michigan?” Of the 241 current riders who answered this question, 50% said yes, 48% said no, and 3% were unsure. Of the 461 prospective riders who answered this question, 57% said yes, 41% said no, and 3% were unsure. People were also asked to which counties they need transportation. *People could select more than one county, so percentages exceed 100 percent.* Current riders needed to travel to Ottawa (61%), Kalamazoo (59%), Kent (48%), and Van Buren (35%) Counties. Prospective riders needed to travel to Kalamazoo (47%), Ottawa (46%), Kent (42%), and Van Buren (22%) Counties. Thus, most people had a

need in the last year to travel to another county and, primarily, needed to get to Ottawa, Kent, and Kalamazoo Counties.

ACT further investigated current ridership trends. First, ACT staff, with the help of Allegan County’s Geographic Information System’s (GIS) Department, gathered data on current rider’s trip origins and destinations, and plotted these locations on maps. Second, Allegan County’s GIS Department developed maps plotting: the population of seniors age 55 and older, population of seniors age 65 and older, population of people with a disability, occupied housing units with no or one vehicle, occupied housing units with no vehicle, occupied housing units with one vehicle, household income between \$10,000 and \$25,000, household income below \$10,000, and population under poverty level. Third, all of these maps were compared to the ACT’s current service area to determine current and projected gaps in transportation service. The results from this analysis indicated that there were primary destinations with a need for general public transportation, but underserved by ACT. These locations include: Casco Township, Wayland Township, Hopkins Township, and Townships located between the Interurban Transit System service area (Saugatuck Township) and the City of Allegan including Valley Township and Clyde Township.

The Workgroup conducted an analysis of the service areas covered by other transit systems of similar sizes. Results revealed that ACT was the only transportation provider that does not serve the entire county in which it is located. Following is a chart detailing the service area covered by similarly sized transit systems.

Table 4. Transportation Provider by Service Area Covered

Transportation Provider	Service Area
Van Buren County	Entire County split by zones
Kalamazoo Metro Transit	Entire County
Benzie County	Entire County
Barry County	Entire County
St. Joseph County	Entire County
Allegan County Transportation	Limited portions of the County

Understanding that ACT’s service area is very limited, the Workgroup conducted a survey of current and prospective riders and stakeholder organizations to determine the economic impact lack of transportation had on them. Current and prospective riders were asked, “In the last year has a lack of transportation prevented you from looking for, getting or keeping a job?” Of the 240 current riders who answered this question 25% (59

people) said yes. Of the 478 prospective riders who answered this question, 17% (83 people) said yes. Thus, out of 518 people, 142 have been unable to look for, get or keep a job due to lack of transportation.

Stakeholder organizations also participated in an online survey and indicated that lack of public transportation was affecting their organization. Stakeholders were asked, “How do unmet transportation needs affect your organization?” The majority of respondents indicated that they are unable to get people the services they need (52%, 77 stakeholders), have decreased participation in the programs (44%, 63 stakeholders) and lost revenue (23%, 32 stakeholders). Thus, local Allegan County organizations indicated negative economic and other effects due to lack of transportation for their consumers, clients and customers.

As an added benefit, the Workgroup recognized the potential for public transportation to create and enhance economic development. Although many Allegan County residents own a personal vehicle, public transportation offers the potential to encourage people to conserve environmental resources and can be an added community benefit for tourists who visit the area. Prospective ACT riders were asked, “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...” a variety of destinations. Although most people who participated in the survey do not currently use ACT and have a vehicle, 52% said they would be very or somewhat likely to take ACT to a medical appointment and 37% would be likely to take ACT to work should they need a ride. Thus, if public transportation were to be available to the general Allegan County public, it would not only serve individuals who need transportation on a daily basis to access critical destinations, but it would also provide general residents the opportunity to access transportation when they need it.

C. Fare Structure

Critical Issue:

Public transportation fare structures must be affordable for those who need it most and competitive with fares of other transit providers of similar sizes.

Goal:

Create an ACT fare structure that encourages ridership and is affordable for passengers.

Recommendation:

Maintain the current fare structure of \$2 per trip for general public transportation and \$1 per trip for seniors, ADA passengers, and children.

Rationale:

Three studies were conducted regarding fares. The Workgroup conducted the first study, comparing ACT’s current fares with those of other transportation providers. The following table summarizes these results and illustrates that ACT’s current fare structure is consistent with other transportation systems.

Table 5. General Public Fares by Transit Providers of Similar Size

Transportation Provider	Reserve-A-Ride Adult	Reserve-A-Ride Seniors/ ADA Passenger/Children	Fixed Route Adult	Fixed Route Seniors/ ADA Passenger/Children
Van Buren County	\$4.00 - \$6.00	\$2.00 - \$3.00	\$1.00	\$0.50
Kalamazoo Metro Transit	\$10.00 - \$12.00	\$3.00 - \$10.00	\$1.50	\$0.75
Benzie County Transportation	\$3.00	\$1.50	N/A	N/A
Barry County Transportation	\$2.00 in town \$3.00 if 5+ miles out of town	\$1.00 in town \$1.50 if 5+ miles out of town	N/A	N/A
St. Joseph County Transportation	\$8.00	\$4.00	N/A	N/A
Allegan County Transportation	\$2.00	\$1.00	N/A	N/A

The second study asked current ACT users about fares. The survey asked: “What would be an affordable cost for one, one-way ride to where you need to travel?” Out of the 230 current riders who answered this question, 31% reported that \$1 was affordable, 20% reported \$2, 9% reported \$0.50, 8% said \$3, and 22% indicated that no amount would be affordable as they do not have any money to pay for transportation. Thus, most current

riders (60%) indicated \$2 or less would be an affordable cost for one, one-way ride on ACT.

The third study asked prospective ACT users about fares and found very similar results. The survey asked: “What would be an affordable cost for one, one-way ride to where you need to travel?” Out of the 430 prospective riders who answered this question, 37% reported that \$1 was affordable, 20% reported \$2, 13% reported \$0.50, 11% said \$3, and 11% indicated that no amount would be affordable as they do not have any money to pay for transportation. Thus, most prospective passengers (64%) indicated \$2 or less would be an affordable cost for one, one-way ride on ACT.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that transportation providers charge no more than half the fare value of the adult public transportation fare. Thus, the Committee felt that maintaining \$2 adult fares and \$1 fares for seniors, children, and people with disabilities would be affordable for most people, consistent with fares sought by other transit providers, and meet the requirements established under the ADA.

D. Service Hours and Days

Critical Issue:

The current ACT structure does not adequately address the travel needs of the Allegan County general public.

Goal:

Provide transportation on the days and times when ACT riders need to travel.

Recommendation:

Offer public transportation Monday through Friday from 5:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. with limited employment transportation from 9:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Additionally, provide limited Saturday and Sunday up to 115 hours per weekend.

Rationale:

The Workgroup collected data on similarly sized transportation systems in Michigan to determine when they provide countywide transportation service to their general public riders. Most transportation providers begin service at either 5:30 a.m. or 6:00 a.m. and end sometime between 5:30 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. About half of the providers studied offer service Monday through Friday only while half also provided limited Saturday service. No transportation systems offered Sunday service. Following is a chart detailing the days and times service is provided by other transportation systems.

Table 6. Transportation Providers by Time and Days of Operation

	Time of Operation	Days of Operation
Van Buren County	6:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.	Monday - Friday
Kalamazoo Metro Transit	6:00 a.m. - 10:15 p.m.	Monday - Saturday
Benzie County	6:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. M-F, 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Sat	Monday - Saturday
Barry County	5:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Monday - Friday
St. Joseph County	6:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. M-F, 6:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Sat	Monday - Saturday
Allegan County Transportation	5:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Monday - Friday

The Workgroup conducted two surveys to ask current and prospective riders about their transportation needs. People were asked, “When thinking about your typical weekly schedule, what days and times do you need transportation?” Of the 194 current riders who answered this question, most need transportation between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Monday through Friday, on Saturday from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and on Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Close to half of current riders need transportation Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. as well as on Saturday between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Of the 300 prospective riders who answered this question, most need transportation between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m. Monday through Friday, on Saturday from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and on Sunday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Over half of prospective riders also need transportation Monday through Friday from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. as well as on Saturday between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. The charts provided below details people’s responses. Thus, a transportation schedule that provided service Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. would meet most current and prospective riders transportation needs.

Table 7. Current Riders by Days and Times Transportation is Needed

	6 a.m. – 10 a.m.	10 a.m. – 2 p.m.	2 p.m. – 6 p.m.	6 p.m. – 10 p.m.	10 p.m. – 2 a.m.	2 a.m. – 6 a.m.	Response Count
Monday	48.5% (66)	52.2% (71)	50.0% (68)	16.9% (23)	7.4% (10)	6.6% (9)	136
Tuesday	46.9% (67)	51.0% (73)	48.3% (69)	13.3% (19)	6.3% (9)	5.6% (8)	143
Wednesday	47.9% (67)	51.4% (72)	49.3% (69)	16.4% (23)	6.4% (9)	6.4% (9)	140
Thursday	47.3% (62)	50.4% (66)	49.6% (65)	15.3% (20)	6.9% (9)	6.1% (8)	131
Friday	46.6% (62)	51.9% (69)	49.6% (66)	18.0% (24)	8.3% (11)	6.8% (9)	133
Saturday	37.5% (24)	50.0% (32)	56.3% (36)	29.7% (19)	14.1% (9)	9.4% (6)	64
Sunday	43.1% (25)	55.2% (32)	43.1% (25)	22.4% (13)	8.6% (5)	5.2% (3)	58

Table 8. Prospective Riders by Days and Times Transportation is Needed

	6 a.m. – 10 a.m.	10 a.m. – 2 p.m.	2 p.m. – 6 p.m.	6 p.m. – 10 p.m.	10 p.m. – 2 a.m.	2 a.m. – 6 a.m.	Response Count
Monday	63.5% (155)	47.1% (115)	52.5% (128)	22.5% (55)	5.7% (14)	3.7% (9)	244
Tuesday	62.9% (151)	40.8% (98)	57.9% (139)	22.9% (55)	5.0% (12)	2.9% (7)	240
Wednesday	61.4% (156)	44.9% (114)	55.9% (142)	22.8% (58)	5.5% (14)	2.8% (7)	254
Thursday	62.3% (149)	43.1% (103)	56.9% (136)	23.0% (55)	5.4% (13)	2.9% (7)	239
Friday	63.0% (153)	45.7% (111)	53.5% (130)	21.4% (52)	5.8% (14)	3.3% (8)	243
Saturday	45.4% (74)	57.7% (94)	57.1% (93)	32.5% (53)	8.6% (14)	4.3% (7)	163
Sunday	46.0% (74)	60.9% (98)	45.3% (73)	27.3% (44)	6.2% (10)	3.1% (5)	161

E. Public Communication

Critical Issues:

Allegan County residents do not understand ACT's geographic coverage, scope of services, and funding structure and do not know how to access transportation service.

Service alterations must be tweaked as implementation occurs to ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency.

Goal:

ACT must work well for those who need it most.

Recommendation:

Maintain a user-friendly Allegan County Transportation website with current information on service, fares, updates, and contact information.

Create an Allegan County Transportation annual report with year-end updates, successes and trends to share with riders and stakeholders via mail.

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.

Rationale:

Each year, ACT hosts a feedback and planning session with community organizations, riders, elected officials, and interested citizens as part of the development of a coordinated human services plan. A primary issue identified at the 2008 planning meeting was the lack of awareness and accurate knowledge the Allegan County community has about ACT services. Thus, at the meeting, people placed the need to focus on marketing and education as a top priority for ACT in 2008 and coming years.

Following this planning process, The Workgroup conducted two studies (Reference: Current Rider Survey and Prospective Rider Survey), to determine the best way to educate current and prospective riders about ACT's services. Current and prospective ACT riders were asked, "What is the best way to educate you on the public transit services that are available in Allegan County?" The majority of respondents (55% of current riders and 45% of prospective riders) indicated that a mailing would be the best way to educate them about public transit services. The second best marketing strategy would be to educate people through the newspaper (21% of current riders and 43% of prospective riders). Thus, Allegan County Transportation should create an annual report that is distributed to current riders and other interested stakeholders/residents that includes yearly updates on ridership trends, revenues and expenses, successes, and other trends to educate the community about ACT services. In addition, ACT should continue

to work with the local newspapers to secure earned media on successes, trends, and updates concerning the transit system.

Finally, although the web was not a popularly selected marketing option selected by current and prospective riders (5% of current riders and 9% of prospective riders chose this option), the web remains an efficient and economic way to update and maintain current service information and make this information available to the Allegan County public. Thus, ACT should maintain a user-friendly website that provides current information on service, fares, updates, and contact information.

Additionally, after initial implementation of service changes occur, most likely, minor adjustments will be required. A critical component of the success of ACT alterations is follow up with riders and stakeholders. During this dialogue, stakeholders will be asked to evaluate ACT service changes and whether the new system is meeting their needs. As community input is gathered, additional thoughts about ways to continue to improve the system may arise. Thus, as appropriate, ACT staff should research the feasibility of additional changes and improvements to meet community needs.

F. Funding

Critical Issues:

Dependence on Federal and State grants, municipal funding from Allegan County, and revenue from local community organizations is inadequate to meet the transportation needs of Allegan County residents.

Goal:

Determine the best way to fund general public Allegan County Transportation services.

Recommendation:

Seek local funding to support implementation of the improvements outlined in the plan.

Rationale:

Allegan County Transportation conducted an analysis of funding sources among other similarly sized transportation providers in Michigan. A table detailing these funding sources is provided below. Results reveal that ACT is unique in that it receives a competitive amount of state and federal revenue; however, it is unable to provide a competitive number of trips due to limited local funding. While other transportation providers receive similar amounts of local funding, the source of this funding tends to come from millages. Nearly all ACT's local funding comes from contracts with local organizations. The ramification of this type of local funding is that stipulations are put on trip types that ACT can provide; and while ACT has similar costs comparable to other transit providers, they are restricted to the amount of general public riders they can serve. ACT's obligation is to meet the service needs of local organizations per contractual agreements, and general public transportation is only provided when a general public trip need matches a contractual trip being provided. A frequent lack of overlap between these needs causes ACT to have lower ridership numbers than other transit systems and makes it very difficult to provide "public" transportation to residents of Allegan County whose ride is not covered under a contractual agreement or specific grant source.

In order for ACT to provide general public transportation in Allegan County, the Workgroup has identified a need for additional local funding that is not tied to contractual agreements with local organizations or grant sources. With fewer restrictions on the people ACT can serve and the trip types ACT can provide, the transit system would have resources to offer rides to the general Allegan County public. Thus, the Workgroup recommends that local funding be sought to implement the transportation improvements outlined in this five-year plan, particularly for transit service to the general public residing in Allegan County.

Table 9. Transportation Providers by Expenses and Revenues

	Service Area Population (2009)	Total Ridership	Total Expenses	Total Revenues <i>Federal</i>	Total Revenues <i>State</i>	Total Revenues <i>Local</i>	Total Revenues <i>Farebox</i>	Type of Structure
Van Buren County	76,263	65,050	\$1,153,937	\$184,630	\$426,774	\$682,017	\$303,220	Transportation Agency, public, not for profit
Kalamazoo Metro Transit <i>(nonurban district)</i>	n/a	730,917	\$1,883,923	\$300,479	\$696,753	\$1,000,721	\$452,949	Transportation Authority as appointed by the County Commissioners
Benzie County	31,996	67,434	\$1,602,824	\$256,816	\$592,791	\$521,507	\$133,509	Transportation Authority – independent of county
Barry County	56,755	74,030	\$801,276	\$59,936	\$296,345	\$541,069	\$186,082	Department of County
St. Joseph County	62,964	70,151	\$1,182,061	\$173,967	\$437,175	\$616,624	\$260,868	Transportation Authority under County
Allegan County	112,975	47,123	\$1,101,211	\$176,882	\$407,274	\$27,108	\$543,124	Department of County

VI. Proposed Service Options

Option A: Maintain Current ACT System

Currently, ACT receives funding from the Federal and State governments, county-wide organizational contract agreements, Allegan County and passenger fares. The grants provided by the government include funding two unique programs: Specialized Services and Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC).

ACT currently operates as a reservation service in which requests must be made 24 hours in advance from time of requested pick-up. All general public transportation trips are scheduled on a first come, first serve basis after all contractual agreements have been scheduled.

ACT has a limited service area that follows the M-40 corridor from the City of Allegan to Holland, the M-89 corridor thru the City of Fennville and Pullman, the southeast M-89 corridor to Otsego and Plainwell, and the US 131 highway including the cities of Shelbyville, Martin, Dorr and Wayland. Based on the geographic areas served, ACT created a deviated route with a one mile radius. This is not a fixed route system, but rather a way for ACT to provide more trips in an efficient and timely manner. Service hours are from 5:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday, with minimal trips provided after hours for contract agreements.

Fares are set at \$2.00 for one, one-way ride, and \$1.00 for persons with disabilities, seniors and children between 5 and 11 years on the deviated route. Children under 5 ride for free. Trips designated under Specialized Services are calculated as the remaining balance of total hours (\$45.00/hour) subtracted by grant funding (\$1.20/mile traveled). There is a \$5 minimum charge for this service.

Option B: Dedicate transportation to connect Allegan City with Wayland/Hopkins and the Interurban in Saugatuck/Douglas, and provide transportation to Casco Township

Service Options B builds on the current reservation service system in which riders request service at least 24 hours in advance. This option services 56,757 rides per year (1,113 rides per week) to fund additional service areas in the county to serve more residents. All general public transportation trips are scheduled on a first come, first serve basis after all contractual agreements have been scheduled.

Expanding service areas include a connecting deviated route to the Interurban Transit Authority in Saugatuck/Douglas, a deviated route to the South Haven area, and a third deviated route to Wayland, going thru the Hopkins area. These deviated routes would only operate on certain days as determined by ACT and ridership demands. All fares, service hours and days remain the same.

If this option were chosen Specialized Services, a state funded program, would be eliminated. The current ACT funding structure would not be able to fund the additional hours needed to implement this option, thus a local millage would be required. ACT would receive a state match on the local millage dollars received and therefore, replace the funds previously provided by Specialized Services. All other funding would remain the same, including organizational contract agreements.

This option would also include the promotion of punch cards and operate as a Reserve-a-Ride system.

Option C: Dedicate 113,235 rides for public transportation service by creating a county-wide zone transit system in Allegan County

Service Option C expands ACT to provide a county-wide transit system in which the county is divided into 5 community service areas. Thus, the current route system would be discontinued allowing the entire county to be serviced, instead of just the current service area routes traveled. A total of 113,235 riders per year (2,220 rides per week) is included in this option. Each zone would be designated a certain amount of hours from the total amount of hours funded, as determined by ACT and ridership demands. These hours would then be divided among trip type including employment, medical, shopping, etc. The designation of hours ensures that each zone is fairly serviced.

This option would also extend service hours from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday thru Saturday.

In addition to the system requiring 24 hours notice for scheduling, the service days and fares remain the same as the current system. All general public transportation trips are scheduled on a first come, first serve basis after all contractual agreements have been scheduled. This option would also eliminate Specialized Services, as a local millage is required. All other funding would remain the same, including organizational contract agreements.

This option would also include the promotion of punch cards and operate as a Reserve a Ride system.

Option D: Dedicate 177,228 rides for public transportation service by creating a county-wide zone transit system in Allegan County

Service Option D mirrors all of the components of Service Option C; however the total number of rides increases to 177,228 per year (3,475 rides per week). This increase will allow for transportation service to extend to 11:00 p.m. All other components of this option remain the same as Service Option C.

Option E: Dedicate 260,247 rides for public transportation service by creating a county-wide zone transit system in Allegan County

Service Option E mirrors all of the components of Service Option D, however the total number of rides increases to 260,247 per year (5,103 rides per week). Additionally, this option will allow for limited demand-response system in high dense areas such as, City of Allegan, City of Otsego, City of Plainwell, and City of Wayland. Thus, ACT will not only provide a Reserve-A-Ride system, but also a demand response system. All other components of this option remain the same as Service Option D.

Additional Service Option**Option F: Expansion of Route Radius**

This additional service would only apply to Service Options A and B in which the one mile service radius to all routes would be extended to a two mile radius. For Option A an additional 25 hours would be required, and for Option B an additional 55 hours would be required. This service would assist providing a larger geographic coverage of the ACT service area.

** Options are based on 5 days a week, 51 weeks a year (5 holidays per year)*

VII. Projected Costs of Proposed Service Options

Table 10. Projected Costs of Proposed Service Options

	Option B	Option C	Hybrid Option (C/D)	Option D	Option E
Additional Hours (Year)	27,030	47,736	54,621	64,770	86,496
Additional Rides (Year)	56,757	113,235	149,403	177,228	260,247
Additional Rides (Week)	1,113	2,220	2,930	3,475	5,103
EXPENSES					
Cost per hour	\$43.95	\$37.35	\$37.00	\$36.70	\$35.73
Operational Cost (Year)	\$1,187,968.50	\$1,728,939.60	\$2,020,977.00	\$2,377,059.00	\$3,090,502.08
REVENUES					
State & Federal Funds	\$428,029.50	\$643,030.60	\$729,080.00	\$857,180.00	\$1,114,660.08
Local Funds	\$759,939.00	\$1,139,909.00	\$1,291,897.00	\$1,519,879.00	\$1,975,842.00
Estimated Annual Tax per Household	\$10.00	\$15.00	\$17.00	\$20.00	\$26.00
Millage Rate	0.181	0.272	0.308	0.362	0.471

VIII. Final Recommendation

The Workgroup desires to develop Allegan County Transportation into a county-wide transit system that effectively and efficiently meets the ridership demands of the general public. Additionally, the Workgroup encourages reliable and affordable transportation for passengers ensuring a comfortable and friendly ride.

Based on three years of research and dialogue, the Workgroup recommends a hybrid of options C and D. This option would include the characteristics outlined in Option D, but would scale back the number of hours served to 54,621 and additional rides per year to 149,403. Additionally, Option C only expands service hours to 9:30 p.m., whereas, Option D expands hours until 11:00 p.m. It is important to find a balance between number of hours served and hours of operation. This hybrid option does include the revenues from a 0.308 millage. It is important to note that based on economic variables, including a change in property values, the amount of the millage rate may increase or decrease accordingly. This balanced hybrid option will effectively and efficiently meet the current and future (within the five year projection) needs for Allegan residents.

Option D provides optimal transportation service throughout the County, as well as limited weekend services. Option C does not meet the transit demands of the community as identified in terms of yearly hours served; while Option E provides an unlimited, demand-response system that would be underutilized with ACT's current ridership levels.

Due to the fiscal constraints of the Allegan County General Fund and the decrease in state and federal transportation funding, the Workgroup recommends that Allegan County Transportation seek a local transit millage. This funding would allow general public riders to utilize the county-wide ACT system.

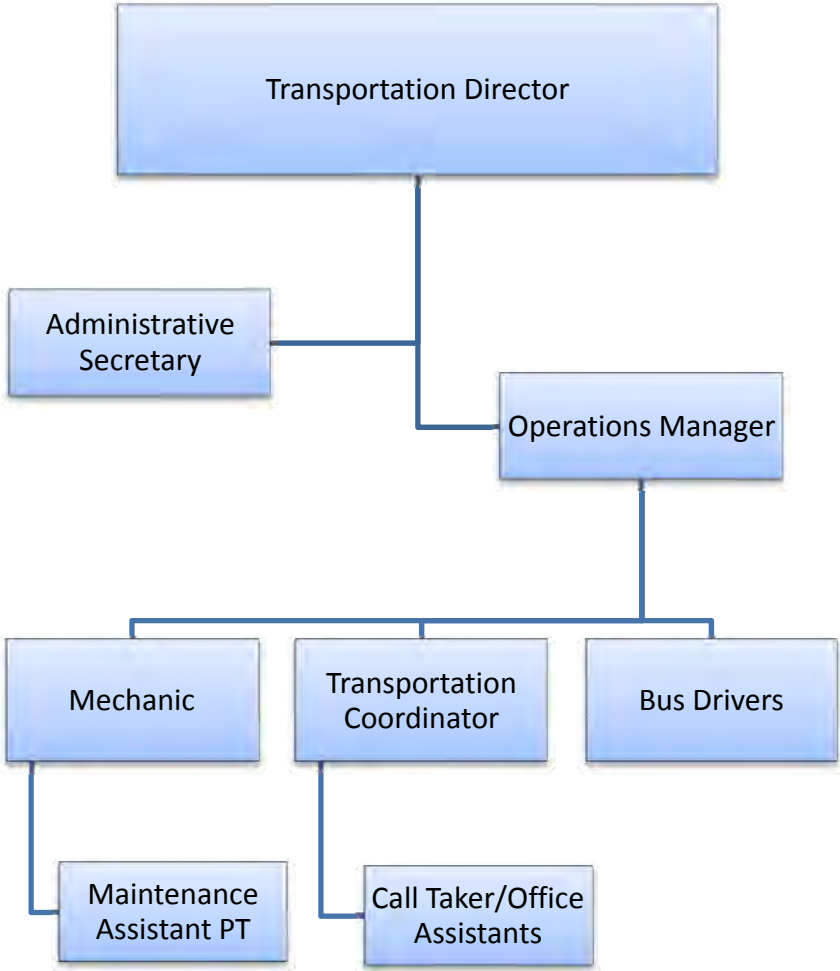
The Workgroup further recommends the re-evaluation of the ACT system after the completion and full implementation of the five-year strategic plan.

APPENDIX A:

Allegan Transit Workgroup Members

- Doug Bazuin
Herman Miller
- Chad Broersma
Operations Manager, Allegan County Transportation
- Beth Durkee
Allegan County Community Mental Health
- Kathryn Gray
Public Policy Specialist, Disability Network/Lakeshore
- Cherie Giller
Director, Interurban Transit Authority
- Susie Hernandez
WIC Specialist, Pullman Health Clinic
- Dean Kapenga
County Commissioner, Allegan County
- Shannon McVoy
Michigan Commission for the Blind
- Trinidad “Trino” Perez
Board Member, Commission on Aging
- Bob Poetsch
Board Member, Interurban Transit Authority
- Lisa Sheaffer
Treasurer, City of Fennville
- George Smeenge
Resident, Laketown Township
- Fritz Spreitzer
County Commissioner, Allegan County
- Ashley Thomson
Administrative Secretary, Allegan County Transportation
- Sherry Torres
Director, Allegan County Senior Services
- Dan Wedge
Director, Allegan County Transportation

APPENDIX B:
ACT Staff Organizational Chart



APPENDIX C:

Map of ACT Community Service Areas

Alleghan County Community Service Areas

