

Charlevoix County  
Transit Master Plan  
*As Presented to the Charlevoix County  
Board of Commissioners - February 12, 2020*

Introduction

This report is a summary of the Transit Master Plan conducted by Charlevoix County Transit (CCT). This planning process is one that should be undertaken on a periodic basis by every transit system, and provided the opportunity to:

- Build upon and help to formulate and document goals and objectives for transit in Charlevoix County,
- Review and assess current transit services,
- Identify unmet transit needs, and,
- Develop an appropriate course of action to address the objectives in the short-range future.

The completed Transit Master Plan will serve as a guide for CCT, providing a roadmap for implementing service and/or organizational changes, improvements, or potential expansions over a five year timeframe. It can also serve as a basis for preparing grant applications for transit funding.

## CCT Services

This section provides a review of current CCT services:

### Public Transit Services:

- Countywide curb-to-curb demand response public transportation in Charlevoix County, through which customers call CCT in advance to schedule their rides. The countywide service operates Monday through Friday between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., with the last trip provided at 6:30 p.m. The CCT Transit Office is open from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. for customers to call and schedule rides. Saturday service is provided between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- Out-of-county medical trips to Petoskey.
- Beaver Island service, through two vehicles housed on the island located approximately 32 miles from the coast that is an unincorporated community of Charlevoix County.

CCT notes in the marketing materials for their demand response services that vehicle travel/routes are determined by customer demand, and therefore change daily. Scheduling is based on a first-come, first-served basis, and customers are encouraged to make advance reservations since these trips take priority over same-day requests. Advance reservations are available for a single trip, or for a longer period if the trips request will remain consistent for an extended time.

### Round the Lake Bus:

CCT operates the “Round the Lake Bus” that connects Boyne City, East Jordan, and Charlevoix. Customers need to call the CCT dispatch office to arrange for their trips, and are encouraged to pre-schedule. Same day requests are available as scheduling permits.

### Twilight Service:

CCT operates Twilight Bus Service that offers a bus in both Charlevoix and Boyne City from 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights. Customers can pre-schedule these trips, or call the CCT office and follow voice prompts to schedule a ride. The twilight service provides trips for any purpose and location in the community during these evening hours.

### Veterans Transportation:

CCT partners with Charlevoix County Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide non-emergency medical transportation to VA medical facilities in Northern Michigan. While initially projected to operate on a scheduled basis, this service is scheduled as needed in providing trips to clinics in Gaylord, Traverse City, and Saginaw.

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### Service Agreements / School Transportation:

CCT has agreements with specific agencies to provide transportation services. Currently transportation is coordinated with the Bergmann Center, Charlevoix County Probate, Head Start, and North Country Community Mental Health Authority.

The Michigan Department of Education Schools of Choice program allows students to determine which school within the resident district they will enroll, and non-resident students to enroll in a district other than their own. As a result, CCT's demand response services are used by local students to access schools throughout Charlevoix County.

### Local Funding/Millage:

CCT is currently supported through a local millage. The millage rate is the rate at which property taxes are levied on property, and a mill is 1/1000 of a dollar. The Charlevoix County 2018 Revised Apportionment Report provides the amounts that fund transit services by jurisdiction, based on a .2483 millage levy rate. It is anticipated that this millage will be up for a vote again in 2021.

### Operating and Performance Data:

While MDOT does not have prescribed performance measures for rural transit services in Michigan, there are industry guidelines that can serve as a tool to assess and monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of these services. Using these guidelines the review of services provided by CCT in 2018 indicates the following:

- Cost Per Hour: Typically this cost should be between \$45 to \$65 per hour, so at \$63.38 in 2018 CCT is within this range.
- Cost Per Mile: The typical acceptable range for this performance measurement is between \$2.00 and \$4.00 per hour, so at a cost per mile of \$3.65 CCT is meeting this criteria.
- Cost Per Passenger Trip:— Typically the cost per passenger trip should be within the \$7.00 to \$20.00 range, so CCT is slightly higher than the industry norm. This is most likely the result of the lower number of passenger trips that were provided in 2018.
- Passenger Trips Per Mile: The results of this performance indicator should be within the .15 and .30 range, so CCT is meeting this measure.
- Passenger Trips Per Hour – Typically a rural transit system should provide between 2.5 and 5 passenger trips per hours. CCT is meeting this standard.

While CCT is meeting many industry standards for rural demand response services, it should be noted that this type of service -- with the need for customers for call for nearly

every trip and with the numerous daily variables – is the most difficult type of transit to operate. The cost per trip is also higher than any other transit mode. Demand response service productivity is inherently low, and is impacted by a variety of uncontrollable factors. Therefore, the development of alternatives examined potential opportunities to operate scheduled services and improve productivity.

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## CCT Customer (Rider) Survey Results

An important task for the Transit Master Plan was the administration of a rider survey to receive feedback on CCT services from customers and develop a rider profile. With input from CCT staff an on-board survey was prepared for these purposes, and distributed by CCT drivers. Overall 61 surveys were collected, and the results are discussed in the following section.

### Trip Purpose Information and Use of CCT

Survey respondents were asked several questions pertaining to their trip. Riders were asked about the purpose of their trip, how often they use CCT, how long they have been using CCT services, and how they found out about CCT services. The majority of respondents (58.3%) were using CCT to get to and from work. Other common trip purposes were for shopping (25%) and running errands or conducting personal business (21.7%).

When asked how often they used CCT, over 61% of respondents indicated that they used CCT four times per week or more, and another 23% reported using transit service two-three times per week.

When asked how long they had been using CCT, most respondents stated they had been using CCT for more than 5 years (48.3%) and more than 2 years (20%).

Respondents were asked to identify how they initially found out about CCT. Over 60% of the respondents said that they already knew about the services, while 15% of respondents checked either “other” or that they asked someone who uses the service.

### Rider Satisfaction

The survey presented several questions to determine rider satisfaction and elicit suggestions for improvement. Riders were asked to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of CCT services and give their overall satisfaction level. Nearly 90% of riders were either “Satisfied” or “Strongly Satisfied” with CCT service, while no customers were either “Dissatisfied” or “Strongly Dissatisfied.”

Customers were most satisfied with:

- Driver customer service
- Cost of services
- Sense of safety and security

While only a small portion of respondents indicated that they felt dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied with any service, the following received the most responses:

- Telephone customer service
- Trip scheduling process
- On-time performance

The CCT website functionality also received few positive responses.

### Open Ended Comments

Respondents were asked provide comments on qualities of the CCT they liked most and the comments are summarized below:

- Drivers
- Convenience
- Low cost

Next, the survey asked respondents to comment on the quality that they liked least about the CCT. The most common answers were:

- Unreliable phone reservation services
- Late pick-up and drop-off
- Noisy and bumpy rides

Survey respondents were asked to identify places where service should be expanded. The comments are summarized below:

- Service to and from Petoskey
- Sunday service for church and errands

The survey also asked respondents to comment on their top three choices of improvements to be made to CCT. The comments have been summarized below:

- Phone service wait time
- On-time performance
- Saturday and Sunday afternoon service
- Increase the number of buses
- After work hours bus availability and late-night service
- Maintenance of buses (noise, seating, cleanliness)

Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional comments concerning the public transportation in Charlevoix County. There were 22 comments and the comments are summarized below:

### Customer Service

- Improve scheduling and phone service
- Increase driver training (driving, handling riders)
- Better information distribution

### Availability

- Increase the number of buses

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## Compliments

- “I love my bus journey. Good job!”
- “It is a wonderful service and now I can get to work on Saturdays”
- “I’m glad we have this service! Thanks”
- “Overall satisfied. Any time there is a mix up, they always do their best to get me to work. CCT makes it possible to live. Thank you!!”

## Rider Profile

Several questions on the survey asked riders to provide information about themselves. These responses are summarized below to form a CCT rider profile:

- The majority of respondents reported that they do not have an available vehicle in their household.
- Over 90% of respondents reported that they did not have a vehicle available at home to make their current trip.
- Over 60% of customer survey respondents reported that they did have a valid driver’s license.

## Customer (Rider) Survey Summary

While overall the customer survey provides important information from current CCT riders, there are several key results:

- CCT customers are frequent and long-time users of the service, particularly since their other transportation options are limited.
- CCT services are an important component of the community infrastructure and economic viability, as the most common trips are used to access employment and for shopping.
- Current riders are very satisfied with CCT services, particularly with the driver customer service skills. They are less pleased with the current telephone and reservation process.
- Current customers are dependent on public transit services, as often they do not have access to a personal vehicle and/or have a driver’s license.

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## Community Survey Results

In addition to the rider survey, a broader community survey was developed. This survey provided the opportunity to gather opinions from the general public on CCT services and public transportation as a whole. The survey was distributed on-line through the CCT website, publicized through a press release and other outreach efforts. Hard copies were also available at key community locations.

Overall, 236 completed surveys were received. Key results are summarized in the following sections.

### Primary Mode of Transportation

Respondents were asked to select their primary mode of transportation for work, medical, social/recreational, school, and shopping trips. Some key results include:

- Not surprisingly, for each type of trip respondents were most likely to drive themselves.
- Public transportation was most commonly used for social/recreational, medical, and shopping trips, with approximately 10% of respondents indicating that it was their primary mode of transportation for such trips.
- Across all five trip purposes, an average of 9.4% of respondents used public transportation as their primary mode of transportation.

### Awareness and Use of CCT

Respondents were asked about their awareness and use of CCT:

- Over 90% of respondents answered “yes” when asked if they were aware of CCT services.
- When asked if they currently used CCT, 43.7% of respondents answered “yes”.
- Those who answered “yes” were then asked how often they used CCT. Over 31% of respondents used CCT less than once a month, and 15.4% of respondents used it at least 4 times a week.

Respondents who do not use CCT were then asked to select the reasons why. The most common reasons were needing their car for work or school (34.2%), limited hours of operation (31.6%), and needing their car for emergencies or overtime (24.8%). 34.2% of respondents selected “Other” and gave another reason for not using CCT. Most of these reasons cited CCT’s limited service area, citing frequent destinations in Petoskey and other out-of-county places, limited service hours, and requiring at least 24 hour notice in advance.



When asked if they would consider using CCT if they offered a service that met their travel needs, 85.9% of respondents answered “yes”, and 77.7% of respondents think there is a need for additional or improved public transportation in Charlevoix County.

### Possible Public Transit Improvements

Respondents were asked to provide comments on locations or services they thought should be provided by public transit. Petoskey, Traverse City, and Beaver Island were often mentioned in the comments. Other respondents vouched for more hours of operation, specifically on nights and weekends. When asked if they would support additional funding to expand public transit services in the future, 83.6% of respondents said yes.

All respondents were asked what other improvements they thought CCT needed to make. The most desired improvements were extension of service days/hours -- 62.3% of respondents wanted Saturday day service, 55.7% wanted later service Monday-Thursday, and 43.1% wanted Sunday service.

### Demographics of Respondents

Respondents were also asked about their access to private vehicles, age, employment status, household income, and race/ethnicity. Some notable findings from these questions include:

- Most respondents (85.6%) had a valid driver’s license.
- A plurality of respondents had at least one working vehicle in their household.
- 57.6% of respondents were 56-75 years old.
- 49.0% of respondents were retired.
- 27.3% of respondents had an annual household income of \$75,000 or higher, while conversely 16.4% of respondents had an annual household income of less than \$15,000.

### Community Survey Summary

While overall this survey provided important information from the broader community, several key takeaways include:

- Expanded service hours and service outside Charlevoix County has the potential to attract new riders.
- While community survey respondents expressed an overall awareness of CCT services, they seemed to lack knowledge of specific services -- indicating the need for expanded marketing.

- Even if not currently using CCT services, community survey respondents overwhelming supported increased funding for public transit -- an important result with a millage vote looming in the coming years.

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## Service and Organizational Alternatives

This section discusses potential service and organizational alternatives for CCT to consider in efforts to improve transit services in Charlevoix County. These alternatives were developed based on a review of current services and input from customers, residents, and other stakeholders. Feedback on these alternatives from CCT staff and Transit Oversight Board was then used to refine the alternatives for inclusion in the implementation plan presented in the next section of the Transit Master Plan. These alternatives focus on:

- Scheduled Circulator Service
- Connector Service to Petoskey
- Modified Demand Response Service
- Possible Service Expansions (including evenings and Sundays)

The cost information for these service alternatives is expressed as the fully allocated costs, which means all program costs on a per unit basis are considered when contemplating expansions. These cost estimates were based on CCT 2018 operating expenses.

It should be noted that proposed services are conceptual in nature, and represent a fundamental change in service delivery towards more scheduled services while maintaining demand response services as appropriate. Therefore, proposed routes would need more specific service planning and detailed scheduling before future implementation.

In addition to these service alternatives, this section discusses additional considerations for providing more effective transit services and expanding community awareness of CCT. These options also include:

- Beaver Island Service Improvements
- Potential Modifications to Specialized Services
- Fare Policy Considerations
- Organizational Considerations (including expanded marketing)

### SCHEDULED CIRCULATOR SERVICE

Through the customer survey CCT riders expressed the need to decrease phone wait time and to improve on-time performance. These results are not surprising, as virtually all trips provided by CCT require a customer to call to schedule (increasing call volume to the dispatch office) and are to door-to-door (and impacted by numerous variables that can make staying on schedule challenging).

Though customers prefer door-to-door service, it is also the most expensive form of transit to operate on a per trip basis. It is very labor intensive, with the need for customers to contact CCT for nearly all rides. The variable nature of demand response services also makes it difficult to keep vehicles to their scheduled pickup/drop off times. As a result, many

rural and small urban communities look to other service designs that can accommodate the needs of their customers, including the use of more scheduled services.

This alternative proposes that CCT implement scheduled “Circulator” services in the Boyne City/Boyne Falls and Charlevoix areas. Both proposed local services would connect key residential and community locations, and share the following common characteristics:

- Scheduled services are intended to reduce the need for customers to call the CCT office, and would provide customers with a set schedule that they can use when making plans to access key local destinations.
- For planning purposes scheduled services are proposed to operate eight hours a day (i.e. from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) on weekdays.
- Two vehicles would operate on each route starting at opposite ends, allowing for bi-directional service.
- The Circulator routes would provide connections to the existing Round the Lake Bus and to the proposed Connector service to Petoskey (discussed later in this section).
- Routes would either have the ability to deviate, serving destinations within three quarters of a mile, or utilize complementary paratransit to serve customers unable to access a scheduled stop due to a disability.
- Demand response services would continue to operate outside the hours of the scheduled services in the Boyne City/Boyne Falls and Charlevoix area, as well in areas of Charlevoix County.

Extensive marketing efforts would be needed to educate current and future customers on the scheduled services. In addition, marketing efforts should include greater publicity of the Round the Lake bus that connects Boyne City, Charlevoix, and East Jordan, particularly since the proposed local service in Boyne City and Charlevoix would be coordinated to allow transfers to this service.

The CCT dispatch staff would also play a key role in the transition from demand response to scheduled services, as they will need to work with customers on how their trips can be completed on the new service until they become familiar with the ability to just catch the bus at a set time and stop.

### Boyne City/Boyne Falls Circulator

Proposed scheduled service, primarily in Boyne City and also extending to serve Boyne Falls, would connect residential locations such as apartments and trailer parks with community services like shopping and banking. The extension to Boyne Falls would provide a connection to possible employment opportunities at Boyne Mountain.

## Charlevoix Circulator

Proposed scheduled service in Charlevoix, similar to the Boyne City/Boyne Falls service, would connect key community locations through an established schedule. The Charlevoix Circulator could also be designed to serve locations as needed off the proposed route, i.e. Charlevoix Municipal Airport.

## CONNECTOR SERVICE TO PETOSKEY

When asked where they think service should be expanded, the top improvement expressed by current CCT customers through the rider survey was to Petoskey. Through the community survey non-riders also noted Petoskey as a location that should be served by public transit. The MSU survey results and the feedback from outreach events also indicated the need for service to Petoskey.

While CCT provides some limited service to Petoskey for the general public, this alternative proposes the implementation of scheduled Connector service that is fully marketed to the community. This proposed Connector service could be broken out into two segments:

- One Connector route that would link Boyne Falls and Boyne City to Petoskey.
- Another Connector route that would link East Jordan and Charlevoix to Petoskey.

Each Circulator route would directly serve McLaren Northern Michigan Hospital and Walmart, and also provide a link to the EMGO system and access to other locations in Petoskey.

For budgeting purposes this alternative proposes three Connector runs – one morning, one mid-day, and one afternoon.

Looking more long-term, more formalized routes between Charlevoix County and Gaylord could be considered. However, based on customer input the priority is service to Petoskey.

In addition to the proposed scheduled Circulator and Connector service, it is anticipated that the Round the Lake service would be maintained, though modified to allow for connectivity with the new scheduled services in Boyne City and Charlevoix.

## MODIFIED DEMAND RESPONSE SERVICE

With the implementation of the proposed Circulator and Connector routes, there are would be modifications to the existing CCT demand response services. Under this scenario demand response would be provided:

- In areas of Charlevoix County outside the scheduled routes in Boyne City/Boyne Falls and Charlevoix.

- Countywide before and after operation of the scheduled routes.
- Saturday as currently operated.
- Friday and Saturday twilight service as currently operated.
- Veterans and contracted services as currently operated.

### Proposed Restructured CCT System

Taking into account the proposed Circulator and Connector routes, and the modified demand response services, the following annual service hour projections are provided for the potential restructured CCT system. While possible service expansions are discussed later in this section, the intent of these projections are to ensure the revised system would be comparable to current service hours -- recognizing that additional funding to expand services is at this time uncertain. Two scenarios are proposed:

- The first scenario assumes that current contracted services through agreements with specific agencies (noted in Section 2) would be a component of overall demand response services. Projected total annual service hours are 29,692, slightly less than the 29,806 in 2018.
- The second scenario segments the contracted service, while still allowing hours for other demand response services. In this scenario projected hours would be 30,043, slightly higher than the annual service hours in 2018, so modifications to other services may be needed if additional funding is not available.

### POSSIBLE SERVICE EXPANSIONS

If additional funding for transit services is available in the future, this section discusses possible considerations based on customer input and comments from the community and key stakeholders.

#### Expanded Evening Service

Through the customer survey riders expressed the need for service later in the evening. Additionally, community survey respondents noted that the limited hours of operation were a primary reason for not using CCT. This alternative proposes the following:

- An expansion of CCT services in the evening, Monday through Thursday.
- Through this expansion, hours of services marketed to the public would be extended from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

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## Sunday Service

Another requested service expansion through the customer and community outreach was for Sunday service. Similar to evening service this request involves the need to access jobs that require weekend work hours, and also the desire to run errands and attend worship services. This alternative therefore proposes the following:

- Implementation of service on Sundays for six hours.
- Similar to the proposed expanded evening hours, it is anticipated that two vehicles would be utilized to provide this service.

## BEAVER ISLAND SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Based on input received through outreach efforts on Beaver Island, the following improvements should be considered:

- Improve the coordination between CCT services and the Beaver Island Ferry service.
- Improve marketing of available CCT services on Beaver Island so that customers can make arrangements for transportation upon on ferry. Additionally, the ability to book both the ferry trip and transit trip simultaneously should be explored.
- Operate a scheduled service during the peak summer period (that typically lasts 5-6 weeks). Potential operating hours could be between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday along with some Saturday service. Assuming seven hours of service on weekdays and four hours of service on Saturdays for five weeks, the estimated annual operating costs would be \$12,349 for this service.
- Greater opportunity for same day trips in the winter, particularly for medical trips.

## POTENTIAL MODIFICATIONS TO SPECIALIZED SERVICES

### “Rides to Wellness” Program

As noted in Section 2, CCT currently partners with Charlevoix County Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide non-emergency medical transportation to VA medical facilities in Northern Michigan. There may be opportunities to build upon this service and provide expanded medical transportation through a service similar to the “Rides to Wellness” program operated by the Mass Transportation Authority (MTA) in Flint. Through this program the MTA partners with their local Department of Veterans Services, and also with other governmental and non-profit agencies to provide door-to-door non-emergency medical transportation through a ride-hailing service.

## E-Hailing Microtransit

During the past decade urban areas have been inundated by privately operated e-hailing services such as Uber and Lyft (also known as Transportation Network Companies/TNCs). These services are complementing existing transportation networks, adding to the menu of shared-use services, and increasing the public's desire for transportation services that can be easily accessed through a smartphone app.

More recently, e-hailing services have started to serve lower-density communities, supplementing demand response and deviated fixed route bus service. In response to increasing demand and cost, unproductive service, and poor service quality, public transit operators are adapting their service models to include e-hailing as a component of their service operations. Often this involves a partnership with a technology-based company to either develop a user interface and/or operate the service.

The use of e-hailing microtransit in rural areas has been limited, and at times unsuccessful. However, recently the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) announced that they will be administering the federally funded National Center for Applied Transit Technology (N-CATT). The mission of this national technical assistance center is to translate emerging transportation technologies for states and localities across the United States. N-CATT will develop learning and planning resources for rural, small-urban and tribal transportation providers and communities, as well as provide community and state-specific technical assistance. Any resources or best practices that originate from N-CATT that could be considered by CCT will be included in the final version of this plan.

## Senior Transportation

CCT will be working with MDOT and AARP on a project regarding transportation for older adults. More information will be included in the Transit Master Plan as this project unfolds.

## FARE POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The Transit Master Plan process provides the opportunity to consider possible modifications to the existing CCT fare structure, especially if the proposed Circulator and Connector services are implemented. These considerations include:

- As noted in the review of existing services in Section 2, CCT's regular fare is \$2.00. To encourage the use of the Circulator routes, fares for this services should be lower such as \$1.00 (with half fare for people with disabilities and free fare for seniors assuming the subsidy through the Commission on Aging would continue). In addition, reduced passes or ticket books could be considered.
- Fares for the Connector routes could be in the \$4.00-\$5.00 range, with half fares for people with disabilities, free fare for seniors (assuming the subsidy through the Commission on Aging would continue), and consideration of reduced passes or ticket books.



- When planning any fare change, including amount charged and method of payment, changes should be designed to equitably impact the entire community. An analysis of Title VI implications must be conducted with any fare change proposal. This analysis must be done prior to making the final decision on implementation of any fare change.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

### Expand Marketing Efforts

It is encouraging that over 90% of community survey respondents indicated that they were aware of the services provided by CCT. However, based on the recent ridership decline it appears an expanded marketing campaign is needed to ensure that the community is aware of the services offered by CCT, and to counter any perception that the system is not open to all residents. It will also be critical that implementation of new or modified services be coupled with a broad marketing plan and specific strategies for building awareness.

Consideration for expanded marketing efforts include:

- Making incremental enhancements through use of the Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) Marketing Toolkit, available at <https://www.nationalrtap.org/Toolkits/Marketing-Toolkit>. This toolkit provides a variety of resources for building marketing materials, including templates for creating rider brochures, bus stop signs, news releases, etc. It also includes copyright-free images that can be used as well as copyright-free examples of graphics. The toolkit also includes template utilities such as a Microsoft Excel Schedule Maker template and instructions for customizing templates in Microsoft Publisher.
- Implementation of an updated website. The current CCT website is embedded within the Charlevoix County site. CCT would like to develop a standalone site that could be linked back to the County's website. This should be a priority to ensure the marketing of services to families and individuals more likely to obtain information through on-line sources. As noted in the RTAP Marketing Toolkit new riders to transit are likely to turn to the Internet for travel information, and can be a useful tool for gatekeepers (such as human service agencies) who often are charged with planning trips for their clients. The toolkit provides some basic guidelines for developing a customer-focused website that CCT can consider when finalizing an updated website.
- One of the goals of an effective branding effort is to create a positive image of the transit system. The RTAP toolkit notes that a logo is a graphic representation of the system's name, and should be used on everything associated with the transit system — vehicles, signage, printed materials, the website, and driver uniforms — using the same pallet of colors for every application.

While CCT has an attractive logo (and tagline) that is used effectively on their vehicles, this branding is not in place with drivers who are out in the community. Driver uniforms are needed that incorporate the logo and present a more professional image. At a minimum the CCT dress code should include uniform shirts and jackets so that vehicle operators are consistent in their appearance.

### Formalize a Transit Advisory Committee (TAC)

CCT has a Local Advisory Council (LAC) as required by MDOT. LACs vary greatly across transit agencies in Michigan, though each must:

- Be made up of at least half with people representing seniors and people with disabilities.
- Meet at least once a year.
- Review and comment on the transit system's accessibility plan.

In addition to the CCT has been convened another committee for one meeting to discuss possible partnerships.

This alternative encourages the formalization of an ongoing Transit Advisory Committee (TAC), comprised of community stakeholders who have an interest in preserving and enhancing transit in the community. The role of a TAC is to help the transit program better meet mobility needs in the community by serving as a link between the citizens served by the various entities and public transportation. A TAC is a good community outreach tool for transit programs, as having an ongoing dialogue with stakeholders allows for a greater understanding for transit staff of transit needs in the community, as well as greater understanding by the community of the various constraints faced by the transit program. Working with the proposed TAC, CCT can determine how often the Committee needs to meet to ensure members are engaged in activities and efforts, and how the committee will fully compliment the required LAC.

### Assess Opportunities to Coordinate or Consolidate Oversight and Administration of CCT, Ironton Ferry, and Beaver Island Ferry

The focus of the Transit Master Plan process has been on transit services operated by CCT. However, through planning efforts the multiple organization structures operating transportation in Charlevoix County were apparent:

- The Charlevoix Transportation Authority (Ferry) contracts with CCT for staff time. The CCT Transportation Coordinator is the liaison between the Authority Board, the Ferry's day-to-day operations manager, and the County. This position

handles a variety of ferry related issues including operating and grant applications, oversight of grant related projects, coordinates with Road Commission for service, communication with Coast Guard on compliance, etc.

- The Beaver Island Transportation Authority (BITA). According to the BITA website the authority was formed in 1993 pursuant of Public Act 196 to form a transit system in the greater Beaver Island area, and is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of five members appointed by St. James Township.
- BITA is the owner of the M/V Emerald Isle, though this vessel is operated by the Beaver Island Boat Company (BIBCO) that is governed by a separate Board of Directors. The M/V Beaver Islander is owned by BIBCO and is also used for the scheduled fixed route service. BIBCO retains all revenues and pays BITA the local match of fifty percent for operating assistance and ten percent for capital grants.

There appears to be opportunities to reduce the oversight and administrative of these various services, though a much more detailed assessment of the historical and institutional conditions -- and the implications of coordinating or consolidating functions would be needed and are outside the scope of this transit plan.

This section is the culmination of the planning process, providing a plan to guide transit services in Charlevoix County over the next five years. This plan was derived through an evaluation of existing services (Section 2), a needs assessment that included an analysis of rider and community input (Section 3), a comprehensive demographic review (Section 4), and input from the CCT staff and Board of Directors on a variety of service alternatives (Section 5).

The costs provided in this section are based on projected hourly operating costs and estimates of capital costs. Depending on timing and implementation choices, costs may differ due to inflation or variable market costs. All proposed services are conceptual, and may require operational planning before implementation.

The implementation plan is divided into the following sections:

- Service Plan – Brief narratives on the proposed improvements, broken into potential short, mid- and long-term implementation timeframes.
- Conceptual Financial Plan for Operating – Estimated operating costs for FY 2021 to FY 2025, based on existing operating costs and estimated operating costs from proposed improvements.
- Conceptual Financial Plan for Capital – Estimated capital costs for FY 2021 to FY 2025, based on data from GTS’s Annual Transportation Plan and estimated capital needs from the service plan.
- Conceptual Plan Overview – Brief review of the proposed improvements.

## SERVICE PLAN

The proposed plan is primarily based on the fundamental change in service delivery described in Section 5, shifting from a system that is fully demand-response to one where scheduled services are the foundation. As noted above, the service plan is organized into three potential phases: short- (years 1-2), mid- (years 3-4), and long-term (year 5 and over). While scheduled services can be implemented in different phases, they are proposed for implementation in the same short-term time period to take advantage of the connectivity and coordination opportunities between the various services.

Each of the improvements proposed in the service plan are derived from the review of alternatives in the preceding section. Therefore, only brief descriptions of the proposed improvements are provided in this section, with additional details found in Section 5.

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## Short-Term Improvement

### Implement Circulator Service

The initial step in the implementation of scheduled services would be the Boyne City/Boyne Falls and Charlevoix Circulators. These routes would connect key residential locations with community services through a scheduled service, reducing the need for customers to schedule a trip and providing CCT with greater control over operational costs.

### Improvement Highlights

- Connects residential locations with key community services through scheduled routes.
- Responds to comments from current customers regarding phone wait times by eliminating need to call to schedule local trips.
- Allows CCT to control costs with service that has specific operating hours.
- Provides connections to the current Round the Lake Bus and proposed Connector service to Petoskey, expanding mobility for Charlevoix residents through a scheduled route network.
- Utilizes vehicles in existing fleet.

### Implement Connector Service

The proposed Connector routes from Boyne City/Boyne Falls to Petoskey and East Jordan/Charlevoix to Petoskey responds to current customers who expressed the need for expanded transportation options outside Charlevoix County. The Connector routes also responds to the broader community that noted the need for expanded regional services. As scheduled services with specific hours, these routes also provide CCT with a greater ability to assess operating costs.

The Connector routes could be implemented separately from the Circulator service, though ideally at the same time so that a marketing campaign can be conducted that educates customers on the restructured CCT system.

### Improvement Highlights

- Responds to a top need expressed by current customers and the broader community.
- Allows CCT to control costs through a service with specific operating hours.

- Provides connections to the Round the Lake Bus and proposed local Circulator service, expanding mobility for Charlevoix County residents through a scheduled route network.
- Provides expanded access to services not available in Charlevoix County.
- Utilizes vehicles in existing fleet.

#### Implement Modified Demand-Response Service

With the implementation of the proposed Circulator and Connector routes, current demand-response services would be modified to only serve areas of Charlevoix County outside the scheduled routes, and before and after operation of the scheduled services. Saturday service, Friday and Saturday twilight service, and veterans and contracted services would continue as currently operated.

#### Improvement Highlights

- Continues mobility for Charlevoix County residents who live outside scheduled service areas.
- Continues transportation service outside hours of scheduled routes.
- Allows CCT to control costs through reduction of more variable and less productive demand-response services.

#### Mid-Term Improvements

##### Implement Beaver Island Service Improvements

Based on input received through outreach efforts on Beaver Island, the following improvements should be considered:

#### Improvement Highlights

- Improve the coordination between CCT services and the Beaver Island Ferry service.
- Improve marketing of available CCT services on Beaver Island so that customers can make arrangements for transportation upon on ferry. Additionally, the ability to book both the ferry trip and transit trip simultaneously should be explored.
- Operate a scheduled service during the peak summer period (that typically lasts 5-6 weeks). Potential operating hours could be between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday along with some Saturday service. Assuming seven hours of

service on weekdays and four hours of service on Saturdays for five weeks, the estimated annual operating costs would be \$12,349 for this service.

- Greater opportunity for same day trips in the winter, particularly for medical trips.

### Expanded Evening Service

Through the customer survey, riders expressed the need for service later in the evening, and community survey respondents noted that the limited hours of operation were a primary reason for not using CCT. If appropriate funding is available expanded evening service is projected as a mid-term improvement. In particular this service expansion would benefit CCT customers with limited mobility options who need to access jobs that require later evening work hours.

### Improvement Highlights

- Responds to a top need expressed by current CCT customers, as well as a factor prohibiting some in the community to use public transit.
- Expands access to important destinations, particularly employment opportunities that require evening work hours.
- Utilizes vehicles in existing fleet.

### Long-Term Improvements

#### Sunday Service

Current customers also expressed the need for Sunday service. Similar to expanded evening service this request responds to the need to access jobs that require weekend work hours.

### Improvement Highlights

- Implements public transit on Sunday, currently a day of the week with no service.
- Responds to a top need expressed by current CCT customers.
- Expands access to important destinations, particularly employment opportunities that require Sunday work hours.
- Utilizes vehicles in existing fleet.

## CONCEPTUAL PLAN OVERVIEW

This Transit Master Plan recognizes that future funding for public transit services is uncertain. Recommendations are fairly modest, and primarily centered on implementing more scheduled services that can continue to meet customer needs while providing a better opportunity to control costs. While the service improvements were developed to address issues identified during the review of needs, they are dependent on the future availability of new or additional funding.

Despite uncertain funding, it is important to remember that public transportation can contribute to the local and regional economy by providing a way for residents to get to work and school, access necessary medical services, and support local businesses and economic development. In particular the proposed service expansions would increase access to employment opportunities that require evening and weekend work hours.