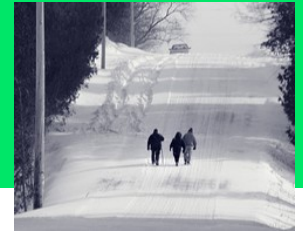


# Working to Expand Public Transit in Emmet County



## WHAT'S GOING ON?

Your neighbors are working to have expanded and coordinated public transit service provided throughout Emmet County.

## IS THERE A NEED FOR TRANSIT?

- Numerous studies done in our community over the past 20 years show the consistent need for public transportation.\*
- United Way's 2017 ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) study\* shows that 26% of Emmet County households are struggling to meet basic needs. In the most rural parts of the County, up to 58% of households live at the ALICE or poverty levels.
- The use of public transportation can lower household expenses and free up more income for other needs.
- 21% of area households have someone who doesn't drive or limits their driving due to weather or nighttime. 607 households have no vehicle.\*
- 19% of County residents are 65 years or older, and the population is aging. 13% of residents have a disability.
- Public transit can provide dependable and affordable access to jobs, school, health care, shopping, and recreation.
- Racks for bikes or skis and snowboards will give everyone greater access to our local outdoor amenities.
- Everyone benefits when public transit reduces traffic and parking congestion and pollution.

\* Date sources and details: [www.emmettranti.org](http://www.emmettranti.org)

## DON'T WE ALREADY HAVE BUSES?

- The Friendship Centers provides a transit service for senior and disabled riders. They do a good job around Petoskey, but are unable to meet the demand.
- Straits Regional Ride also provides minimal service in Emmet County on weekdays, but regularly turns down requests.
- A single, comprehensive transit system that serves all of Emmet County and coordinates with neighboring counties would better serve Emmet residents.

## WHO IS THIS FOR?

- Anybody and everybody! This includes people tired of the high cost of gasoline and maintaining a vehicle, traffic congestion, and even the dangers of driving in bad weather.
- Seniors, youth, people with disabilities, students, and families with fewer cars than workers will benefit most.

## IS THERE SUPPORT FOR THIS?

- YES! A 2015 survey\* done for Emmet County showed that 24% of voters ranked public transit a high priority, 28% said they would definitely or probably use it, 78% wanted the chance to vote on the project, and 66% said they would be willing to pay a modest tax for the system.
- Emmet County is the only county in northern Lower Michigan and the eastern U.P. without a transit system.
- Most other counties fund public transit with a modest millage (property tax) as well as fares, contracts and State and Federal funds.

# WHAT ARE THE POSSIBILITIES?

There are a number of ways that expanded transit could be provided. The most promising options are described below. The decision on how and when to proceed rests with the Emmet County Board of Commissioners.

## WHO COULD RUN IT?

- Contracting with existing transit providers Straits Regional Ride and/or Charlevoix Transit (rather than starting a new, Emmet-only service) to provide a multi-county system is the most efficient and quickest way to provide services.
- Emmet County could create a Transit Authority or a County Department of Transportation which would contract with the existing provider/s to provide services.
- The Friendship Center bus system would be folded into the new system and no longer be a stand-alone service.

## WHEN COULD THIS START?

- With Emmet County Board of Commissioners' approval, a millage proposal could be placed on the **November 2018 ballot**.
- Initial expansion of services could start by early 2019 and continue to grow as demand and support increase

## HOW CAN I HELP?

Contact your Emmet County Commissioner and let him or her know that you support expanded public transit. You can identify your Commissioner at

[www.emmetcounty.org](http://www.emmetcounty.org)

If you want to schedule or attend a Community Conversation let us know:

**FEET c/o Char-Em United Way**

231-487-1006      [info@charemunitedway.org](mailto:info@charemunitedway.org)  
[www.emmettransit.org](http://www.emmettransit.org)      Find us on Facebook.

## WHEN AND WHERE COULD IT RUN?

- A combination of fixed/flex routes along major roads (e.g. US 31 and MI 19) and circulator/dial-a-ride buses in towns and out-county areas could serve the entire County.
- Initial services could start small and expand as demand increased.
- The proposed hours of operation could be 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Evening and weekend hours could be added as demand increases.
- Community Conversations are being held around the county to seek community input.
- The details will be determined by transit managers and adjusted over time to meet local demands.

## WHAT MIGHT IT COST?

- The goal is to keep fares as affordable as possible, with discounts for seniors and the disabled.
- A modest (.30 - .50 mill) millage request would provide sustainable funding. For the median Emmet County homeowner this is \$12 - \$24/year.
- State and Federal funds can provide up to 50% of operating costs.

## WHO IS INVOLVED?

*This information is provided by*

**FEET- Friends Enhancing EMMET TRANSIT**  
*the Charlevoix Emmet Human Services Coordinating Body's  
Transportation Work Group*

*We are from health and human service agencies,  
businesses, government, groups representing senior  
and disabled, and the general community.*

***Join us!***