

Chapter 6

Public Transportation Programs

Peer County Analysis

In order to gain a perspective of the potential usage and costs associated with operating a transit system within Emmet County, several transit systems were reviewed in the State. The first step to selecting transit systems for review was to identify counties with similar demographics to Emmet County. Seven demographic characteristics from the 2000 US Census were compared: population, population 65 years and older, households with person(s) 65 years and older, number of persons 16 and 64 years with disability, households with no vehicle, population below the poverty level, percent of population below the poverty level, and non institutionalized population living in group quarters. The selection band was established for each demographic characteristic by calculating plus and minus 25 percent of Emmet County's numeric value for that characteristic. For example, the population for Emmet County in the 2000 US Census was 31,437. If a county had a population between 23,580 and 39,300 it was noted. Counties with transit systems that met the criteria on four or more demographic characteristics were chosen.

Six counties were selected for comparison: Antrim County (Antrim County Transportation), Charlevoix County (Charlevoix County Public Transportation), Gladwin County (Gladwin City/County Transit), Huron County (Huron Transit Corporation), Manistee County (Manistee County Transportation, Inc.), and Wexford County (Cadillac/Wexford County Transit Authority).

Table 6.1 provides a tabulation of peer county demographics.

County	Population	Population 65 years and over	Households w/ persons 65 years and older	Persons in Group Quarters	Population below poverty level	16 - 64 yrs % w / Work Disability	Households with No Vehicle
Antrim	23,110	4,033	2,734	104	2,064	2,642	368
Charlevoix	26,010	3,894	2,720	125	2,064	2,546	476
Gladwin	26,051	4,768	3,282	104	3,544	3,274	679
Huron	36,057	7,006	4,827	365	3,645	3,334	848
Manistee	24,527	4,435	3,106	204	2,403	2,334	587
Wexford	34,484	4,278	2,945	150	3,096	3,316	828
Emmet	31,437	4,495	3,031	299	2,266	2,704	715

Source: 2000 U.S. Census Bureau

Comparison of Public Transportation Programs

All of the counties have countywide demand response transit systems. The start dates for these systems ranged from 1975 to 1985. The Michigan Department of Transportation compiles operational data for all transit programs in the State. The information in **Table 6.2** covers a one year time frame for the fiscal year of October 2002 to September 2003.

The number of buses ranges from 15 for Antrim County Transportation to 30 for Huron Transit Corporation. Charlevoix, Huron, Gladwin, and Manistee all carried more than 100,000 passengers during the 2003 fiscal year. Manistee with 27 buses carried the greatest number of passengers at 201,723. Specialized populations carried by these transit systems are reported as passengers. Elderly and disabled ranged from 93,296 in Manistee County to 17,694 passengers in Antrim County. **Table 6.2** shows percent of total passengers that were elderly which ranged from 5 percent to 16 percent. In contrast, the percent total passengers with disabilities was much higher for all systems. In Wexford County over one half (52%) of the ridership were classified as having disabilities.

The Michigan Department of Transportation compiles performance indicators from annual reports submitted by state funded transit programs. **Table 6.3** displays performance indicators grouped by cost effectiveness, service effectiveness and resource efficiency. This information is provided for each of the six peer counties. The information summarized in this section will be used when developing a scenario for a countywide transit system and estimating system costs.

Fare boxes rarely cover the local match needed to operate a county transit program. The farebox revenue as a percent of cost per trip ranged from 11 percent to 26 percent with an average of 19 percent. Cost per passenger ranged from \$7.15 for Manistee County Transportation to \$13.28 for Cadillac/Wexford Transit Authority. The average cost per passenger for the six systems is \$10.63. Since efficiency of operation tends to be better with larger systems that move more passengers, a weighted average for cost per passenger was calculated to be \$9.36.

Service effectiveness examines passengers' usage on per vehicle mile and per vehicle basis. Passengers per vehicle hour ranged from 2.94 to 6.60 with 4.6 being the average. Passengers per vehicle mile ranged from 0.20 to 0.43 with an average of 0.27. Resource efficiency examines vehicle efficiency through costs per vehicle mile and vehicle hour. For the six peer counties cost per vehicle mile ranged from \$1.73 to \$3.44 per mile and averaged \$2.57 per mile. Finally, the cost per vehicle hour ranged from \$31.05 to \$64.71 per hour. The average for the six transit operations was \$44.73 per vehicle hour.

**Table 6.2
2003 OPERATIONAL DATA - PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM - NON-URBAN TRANSIT AGENCIES**

Location Operator	Start of Service	Service Area Population	Total Vehicles	# Lift Vehicles	Total Passengers	Vehicle Hours	Vehicle Miles	Passengers Elderly and Disabled	% Elderly	% Persons with Disabilities	% Elderly with Disabilities	Passengers Per Vehicle Hour	Passengers Per Vehicle Mile	Passengers Per Population
Antrim Co.	01/17/77	19,324	15	14	66,770	10,678	327,869	17,694	10	17	0	6.25	0.20	3.46
Charlevoix Co..	04/21-80	24,073	17	14	104,185	25,338	400,249	58,635	11	22	23	4.11	0.26	4.33
Gladwin Co.	05/13/75	23,879	21	16	106,043	36,092	513,708	51,715	9	37	3	2.94	0.21	4.44
Huron Co.	09/28/81	35,150	30	30	179,851	43,590	782,310	93,038	5	44	2	4.13	0.23	5.12
Manistee Co.	03/03/75	22,164	27	27	201,723	30,580	472,277	93,296	11	33	3	6.60	0.43	9.10
Wexford Co.	09/01/82	28,779	19	19	91,019	24,718	351,221	67,609	16	52	6	3.68	0.26	3.16

Source: UPTRAN, Michigan Department of Transportation

**Table 6.3
Transit Performance Indicators 2003**

System	Cost Effectiveness		Service Effectiveness		Resource Efficiency	
	Farebox as a % of Cost	Cost per Passenger	Passengers per Vehicle Hour	Passengers per Vehicle Mile	Cost per Vehicle Mile	Cost per Vehicle Hour
Antrim Co. Transportation	26%	10.35	6.25	0.20	2.11	64.71
Charlevoix Co. Public Transportation	11%	9.98	4.11	0.26	2.60	41.03
Gladwin City/County Transit	16%	12.10	2.94	0.21	2.50	35.56
Huron Transit Corporation	21%	7.52	4.13	0.23	1.73	31.05
Manistee Co. Transportation	22%	7.15	6.60	0.43	3.05	47.14
Cadillac/Wexford Transit Authority	18%	13.28	3.68	0.26	3.44	48.90
Average	19%	10.63	4.6	0.27	2.57	44.73
Source: UPTRAN, Michigan Department of Transportation						

Public Transit Agency Millages

Four of the peer county systems are supported in part by millages. Millages range from 0.02 mills in Huron County to 0.5 mills in Gladwin County.

Antrim County Transportation	Current:	0 mill
	Renewal Period:	
	Beginning:	
	Ending:	
Cadillac/Wexford Transit Authority	Current:	0.4 mill
	Renewal Period:	4 years
	Beginning:	Jan. 2003
	Ending:	Dec. 2006
Charlevoix County Public Transit	Current:	0.25 mill
	Renewal Period:	4 years
	Beginning:	Jan. 2005
	Ending:	Dec. 2008
Gladwin City/County Transit	Current:	0.5 mill
	Renewal Period:	5 years
	Beginning:	2003
	Ending:	2007
Huron Transportation Corporation	Current:	0.2 mill
	Renewal Period:	5 years
	Beginning:	2002
	Ending:	2007
Manistee County Transportation	Current:	1/3 mill
	Renewal Period:	5 years
	Beginning:	2002
	Ending:	2007