Final Report

HOUGHTON/ HANCOCK CITIES TRANSPORTATION NEEDS STUDY AND SERVICE PLAN

Submitted by:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

The Cities of Houghton and Hancock, Michigan conducted a transit improvement study in 2024 and 2025 to determine how transportation services may be provided in the future. The study was funded by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) (FTA 80%/MDOT 20%). The purpose of this study was to "…study consolidation of public transportation services for the Cities of Houghton and Hancock, as well as expansion of services outside of the cities to additional parts of Houghton County."

A consultant team led by Mp2planning prepared the study working with a steering committee from the two cities, representatives of Michigan Technological University, and local representatives of MDOT.

The study included several public engagement events over two periods and a mailback survey that was distributed to over 9,000 residents of the cities and the county at large.

Public Engagement

Two rounds of public meetings were held with one being in January and the follow-up in April. The meetings were held at: Heritage Manor, Lakeview Manor, Michigan Tech, and The Bluffs. The meetings were well-attended and garnered good input, which is documented in the Appendix. The overall theme was support for transit and interest in a variety of service expansion options (more weekday service, night service, weekend service, etc.).

Survey Results

The survey results suggest that there is awareness and support for public transit in general. Most people would like to see more services with fixed routes and expanded weekend daytime service as the highest ranked service requests. Almost every survey could in theory have some degree of non-response bias i.e., it is rare for almost every possible participant to take part in a survey (employee satisfaction surveys with required participation would be an example). It is an unknown factor, since the responses of non-responders are unknown without them taking the survey. Importantly, this survey had a significant number of respondents, an excellent response rate for this kind of survey, and

a respectable margin of error. The fact respondents came from a range of ages, employment status, and location (including half of the respondents being from outside the cities) suggest that there is valid support for transit and a millage. Would a millage pass? That is always an issue. The newspapers in the second week of April 2025 reported on the controversial millage issue surrounding the county jails. So, timing, marketing, etc. will be important if the communities decide to pursue a transportation option that needs public funding. There was good representation in the survey of responses from the out-county areas. Portage (86), Franklin (54), Stanton (38), and Torch Lake (31) had the highest number of responses. There may be a time in the future when these townships, particularly due to transportation needs to Wal Mart, etc. will want to have transit options available.

Organizational Options

Option 1 - Maintain Current Structure

1) Maintain Status-Quo with current service design.

2) As this option does not change services it will not be examined in depth as it appears there is sufficient support/agreement to consolidate services into one entity

Option 2 - Houghton/Hancock Service Consolidation into an Act 7 Authority

1) Maintain current contracted service with Michigan Tech and gradually expand Demand-Response in both cities. Both founding Authority members continue local appropriations for transit local share.

2) Maintain contracted service and gradually expand Demand-Response and add a timed route in Hancock.

3) Look to expand the scope of the service contract with Michigan Tech, which should reduce the local share amount. Maintain Demand-Response, timed routes, and possibly add a zoned micro transit service to enhance expanded services.

Option 3: Houghton/Hancock Service Consolidation into an Act 7 Authority with transition to Act 196 Authority in 2 years

1) Maintain current contracted service with Michigan Tech and expand Demand-Response in both cities. Both founding Authority members continue local appropriations for transit local share.

2) Maintain contracted service with expanded Demand-Response and timed route in Hancock.

3) Look to expand the scope of the service contract with Michigan Tech. Maintain Demand-Response, timed routes, add a zoned micro transit service to enhance expanded service options listed above.

4) Assist in forming a "Friends of Transit" type group to work with the Authority to focus on building community support for a millage proposal.

Option 4 - Houghton/Hancock Service Consolidation into an Act 196 Authority with a millage vote to secure local funding

1) Maintain current contracted service with Michigan Tech and expand Demand-Response in both cities. Both founding Authority members continue local appropriations for transit local share until a millage vote can occur. If a millage is passed, the local appropriations will no longer be required.

2) Maintain and explore additional contracted service with Michigan Tech along with expanded Demand-Response and timed route in Hancock.

3) Maintain Demand-Response, timed routes, add a zoned micro transit service to enhance expanded service options listed above.

Options were subject to more detailed analyses which are presented in this report. The consultant's recommendation is that Option 4 is the best path forward with the caveat that the authority be formed, allowed to develop for a period of about two years with the cities essentially providing the same funding they do today, and then the authority would pursue a local millage. At this point, the cities would effectively be out of the transit system. If a millage, is not approved, the authority (and the local units of government) would need to decide whether to continue as an authority or revert to how the services are provided today.

The authority, if formed, would likely continue to have state and federal revenue (as do both Houghton and Hancock today). Any transit agency that receives state and federal funds must have a balanced budget. State and federal funds are paid at a percentage of each agency's eligible expenses. Local funds (farebox revenue, contract revenue, and other local funding) are needed to 'balance' an operating budget. Local funds can come in the form of an appropriation or dedicated transit millage. Houghton and Hancock both provide a yearly appropriation currently to provide the local share. Houghton supplements their local share via a contract with Michigan Tech. There is the possibility that the current contract would be expanded as the Authority evolves presenting

opportunities for both the Authority and Michigan Tech to benefit by the mutual collaboration. It should be noted that there are key differences between Act 7 and Act 196. These are that under Act 7, the authority cannot levy a millage. Under Act 196, the authority cannot be dissolved based on an attorney general opinion (https://www.ag.state.mi.us/opinion/datafiles/1990s/op10073.htm).

Vehicles and Facilities

If consolidation of the transit systems is decided, there may be a need to revise the size of some vehicles in the fleet. Keeping the Medium Duty Buses would most likely be warranted, should the combined agencies decide to add new routes outside the city limits or seek out additional contractual services with Michigan Technological University (MTU). There may also be a need to either expand or reduce the fleet initially. It is recommended that the systems look at industry trends and partially revise the number of Cutaway and Small Duty Buses to Full Size Vans with respect to Demand Response service.

Currently, the city of Houghton does not have a transit facility. Buses are maintained at the city of Houghton garage, located at 1404 Gundlach Road, Houghton and are stored in a pole building adjacent to the garage. Dispatch and operations are conducted from the city office. Hancock has a facility, located at 1599 Tomasi Drive, Hancock is located near the city garage. The facility was constructed in 2010 and funded with FTA and MDOT funds at the cost of $638,646. The garage is in very good condition and currently can store six vehicles. It consists of a 3380 square foot maintenance area. It also includes a dispatch office, driver breakroom, employee lockers, and bathroom facilities. The Hancock facility is shown below. Depending on Michigan Tech's eventual involvement, there may be an opportunity for vehicle storage at the university or at one of the sites (near the high school and airport) where Lamars currently stores their buses.

If the authority option is pursued, the new authority can seek federal and state funding to expand the Hancock facility to include larger administrative, conference room, operations, and maintenance areas, to have a fully staffed facility. Vehicles could remain at the Houghton storage facility to retain an appropriate presence in the Houghton area. Under this option, the authority will be able to partially run operations at this location while seeking funds to expand to a full functioning facility. When dispatch software is available, the new authority will be able to function from there, while working with the city of Hancock to expand the facility.

Since the current Hancock facility was constructed with FTA funding, it is required that it be utilized for only public transit purposes for the life of the building. Additionally, if public services are combined, MDOT may decide to fold the vehicle and service from Baraga Houghton Keweenaw Community Action (BHK) into the public Authority. Should that occur, the garage facility which BHK operates from was paid for by State and Federal

funds. That facility may become another option for the new authority to use for operations.

Technology

Houghton and Hancock's current transit systems rely heavily on manual processes, which can lead to inefficiencies and potential safety hazards. Implementing dispatch and scheduling software could streamline operations, reduce the workload for drivers, and enhance overall safety. Transitioning to a digital system will require an initial investment and training, but the long-term benefits could significantly enhance efficiency and safety for both drivers and passengers. Public transit dispatching and scheduling software is designed to streamline operations for transit agencies.

Recommendation

The consultant recommendation is that the cities pursue development of an Act 196 Authority with the idea of operating as a consolidated system for a period of two years and then seeking a local millage to fund the system. There are systems that have evolved from consolidations that have been successful (BATA in Traverse City), and there are systems who have recently or are currently examining consolidation. The cities could also do this in a step-wise process as detailed in Option 3 if the need for a legislative change to dissolve a 196 proves to be an issue. The goal of this system would be to remove the day-to-day operation responsibilities from the cities while allowing for continuation of the existing valued service and enhancing that for the residents of the area. As shown in the survey, there was substantial response from residents outside the limits so future expansion into areas of the county not currently served is a distinct possibility. Finally, Michigan Tech has been a valued contributor to this study effort, and it is felt that contracting with and possibly expanding their collaboration with the new authority would benefit both the residents of the Houghton/Hancock area as well as the Michigan Tech community.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Cities of Houghton and Hancock, Michigan are conducting a transit improvement study to determine how transportation services may be provided in the future. The study is being funded in part by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Houghton Transit is a public bus system operating primarily in the City of Houghton, Michigan. Houghton Transit is a department of the City of Houghton and began service in 1982. Houghton Transit has no millage but relies on City appropriation for its local funding. Houghton Transit provides demand response service and also operates two timed routes - a Downtowner Route and a City Commuter Shuttle that is free for Michigan Technological University students, faculty and staff.

The City of Hancock provides most of their service in the Hancock/Houghton areas and has been operating since 2002. Like Houghton, Hancock transit buses are operated on a demand response basis and there is no local millage.

Baraga Houghton Keweenaw Community Action (BHK) also runs transit service in the area, with services primarily aimed at seniors and disabled persons. Goodwill Services also operates vehicles in the area which primarily serve their clients.

Michigan Technological University operates student transportation through a private contractor in addition to the service Houghton provides which they subsidize for the free rides.

The overall goal of the study has been to examine all the current transportation providers in the area and determine options for future consolidation of services along with other short- and long-term improvement strategies that can lead to more efficient and cost saving operations for both communities as well as enhanced services for the residents and visitors in the area.

This Final Report summarizes work conducted in the study leading to the study recommendations.

Figure 1 presents the project schedule.

Figure 1: Project Schedule					
Task *	Oct 24 – Jan 25	February	March/April	May	June – Oct 25
Data Collection	TM				
Surveys		TM			
Summation of Existing Conditions and Future Demand		TM			
Future Service Design and Cost Evaluation			TM		
Draft and Final Report				DRAFT	FINAL
Meetings	Staff***	Staff	Staff	Staff/Board	County
*TM - Technical Memorandum					
**May be extended depending on client review and public engagement needs ***Staff meetings may be held by zoom/conference call or in person					

2. DATA COLLECTION

Background

Houghton Transit was originally formed in 1982 as the Houghton Motor Transit Line by the City of Houghton. It is primarily a demand response system with timed routes that run in the City of Houghton. Hancock Transit was formed in 2002, and is a demand response system, operating primarily in the City of Hancock but also makes trips to Houghton.

Operations

Houghton Transit provides a demand response service in The City of Houghton. They relay rider information and trip manifests by phone, radio and paper respectively. As mentioned above, in addition to demand response service, two timed routes are offered: The Downtowner Route, which operates from 10 am- 12 pm M-F and the City Commuter Shuttle which operates from 7:15 am to 5:45 pm M-F. This route is subsidized by Michigan Technological University (MTU). Houghton Transit operates from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Evening service or after-hours service is not offered at present.

Houghton Transit

H

Hancock Transit provides demand response service for City of Hancock residents within Hancock and Houghton. When riders go to Houghton they primarily go to places of Employment, Social and Mental Health Services, Walmart, and other retail facilities. The transit's operating hours are from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. They currently do not offer evening or weekend service. Currently, the rider/trip information is taken by staff and relayed to the Drivers by radio or a driver answers the phone and will direct the other drivers.

Facilities

The City of Houghton stores its buses inside at the City Garage. Hancock Transit has a transit facility that was built in 2011 funded in part with Federal Transit Administration (FTA). It is located on City of Hancock property with the capacity to hold up to six buses and has a lift for repairs/maintenance (which can be used as a parking space when maintenance activities are not being performed). There is also an office area for the Transit Operation Manager along with a breakroom, employee lockers, and restroom facilities.

Vehicles

Houghton Transit operates a fleet of 8 vehicles: 2 Medium Duty Buses, 2 Light Duty Cutaway buses, and 4 Vans.

Hancock Transit's fleet consists of 6 vehicles: 5 Light Duty Cutaways and 1 Small Light Duty Van.

Baraga Houghton Keweenaw Community Action Agency has a fleet of 2 vehicles: 1 Full Size Van and 1 Small Light Duty Van.

Goodwill Industries' fleet consists of 4 vehicles: 1 Full Size Van, 1 Small Light Duty Van, and 2 Minivans.

A breakdown of the vehicle inventory follows in Table 1(a-d).

Table 1: Vehicle Fleets

A. Houghton Transit Vehicle Fleet

Vehicle Type	Year	Seats	# of Wheelchair placements	Mileage	Vehicle Length
Medium Duty Bus	2015	18	2	69,169	32'
Medium Duty Bus	2022	28	2	39,604	32'
Light Duty Cutaway	2021	14	2	22,741	24'
Light Duty Cutaway	2017	22	4	84,467	25'
Full Size Van	2020	12	2	42,157	21'
Full Size Van	2021	14	1	13,351	24'
Full Size Van	2021	14	1	12,532	24'
Full Size Van	2021	14	1	26,010	24'

Source: Michigan Department of Transportation

B. Hancock Transit Vehicle Fleet

Vehicle Type	Year	Seats	# of Wheelchair placements	Mileage	Vehicle Length
Light Duty Cutaway	2019	14	2	74,098	23'
Light Duty Cutaway	2018	10	2	79,165	24'
Light Duty Cutaway	2020	8	1	63,099	21'
Light Duty Cutaway	2017	10	2	104,130	21'
Light Duty Cutaway	2019	8	1	83,583	21'
Small Light Duty Van	2018	7	0	36,672	17'

Source: Michigan Department of Transportation

C. Baraga/Houghton/Keweenaw Community Action Agency Vehicle Fleet

Vehicle Type	Year	Seats	# of Wheelchair placements	Mileage	Vehicle Length
Full Size Van	2019	10	1	68,012	19’
Small Light Duty Van	2018	7	0	70,265	17’

Source: Michigan Department of Transportation

D. Goodwill Industries of Northern Wisconsin and Upper Michigan Vehicle Fleet

Vehicle Type	Year	Seats	# of Wheelchair placements	Mileage	Vehicle Length
Full Size Van	2024	10	1	1,628	20’
Small Light Duty Van	2016	10	1	64,179	19’
Minivan	2023	7	0	14,258	17’
Minivan	2016	7	0	80,100	17’

Source: Michigan Department of Transportation

Medium Duty Buses and Light Duty Cutaways have a service life of 7 years and/or 200,000 miles. Vans, minivans, and SUV’s have a service life of 4 years and/or 100,000 miles.

Michigan Technological University

MTU does not have its own vehicles, but contracts with Lamers Bus Lines for shuttle service, which they provide with three buses. Buses are stored at a facility adjacent to the high school and there is a larger facility near the airport.

Staff

Houghton Transit has 10 employees, 6 of whom are full-time. Staff include the Director, Assistant Director, a mechanic, and 8 drivers. All staff are employees of the city.

Hancock Transit has 9 employees, 3 of whom are full-time. Staff includes Director, Operations Manager, Mechanic and 6 Drivers.

Funding

Houghton Transit and Hancock Transit receive operational funding from a mix of state, federal, and local dollars. State Operating Assistance (Local Bus Operating or LBO) is set by legislative appropriation each year and is determined by the eligible budgeted expenses for all the transit agencies in the State. The percentage fluctuates from year to year, so a specific, set percentage is not available. LBO for Rural Transit Systems is historically 33-45% of eligible expenses. The current fiscal year funding (FY 2025) is 34.5050% of eligible expenses.

Federal operating funding is provided through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)'s Section 5311 Program. Current Fiscal Year reimbursement rate for Federal Section 5311 is 18% of eligible expenses. Federal Section 5311 funding is based on federal budget allocations to the state. In the current fiscal year (FY 25), Houghton and Hancock Transit will receive 52.5050% of its eligible expenses. The remaining 47.4950% will come from local appropriations/contracts, and the farebox to balance the budgets.

Local Revenues

Neither Houghton Transit nor Hancock Transit has a transit millage. Farebox revenue over the last four years averaged $59,936 (Houghton) and $50,154 (Hancock). Houghton Transit projects farebox revenue at $49,050 for the current year and Hancock Transit projects $82,472. Houghton Transit's local funds also include a $75,000 contract with MTU, and a projected local appropriation of $175,649. Hancock Transit's additional local funds include a projected local appropriation of $64,366.

Fares

Fares are based on one-way trips. Fares are summarized in Table 2A-B.

Table 2: Fare Summary

A. Houghton-Demand Pick up Service

Category	Fare-Within City	Fare-Out of City
Adults 18+	$5.00	$6.00
Students	$3.00	$4.00
Seniors	$2.50	$3.00
Persons with ADA Disabilities	$2.50	$3.00
Children under 12	$2.50	$3.00

Downtowner Route/City Commuter Shuttle

Category		
Service	Downtowner	City Commuter**
Adults	$2.00	$2.00
Seniors	$1.00	$1.00
Disabled Persons	$1.00	$!.00

**Shuttle is free for MTU Students, Faculty and Staff with ID
Source: Houghton Transit

B. Hancock Transit Fares

Category	Fare-Within City	Fare-Houghton
Adults	$5.00	$7.00
Students	$3.00	$4.00
Seniors (55+)	$2.50	$3.50
Persons with ADA Disabilities	$2.50	$3.50
Children under 12	$2.50	$3.50
Veterans	Free*	Free*

*With acceptable form of identification
Source: Hancock Transit

Transit Passes:
All transit passes have $20.00 worth of punches plus two free rides to be used for fares within Hancock and to/from Houghton. Veterans ride free with acceptable form of identification.

Operational Data

All public transit systems in Michigan use Performance Indicators (costs based on passengers, miles and hours) to determine costs and efficiencies in service operations. The Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) Office of Public Transportation maintains a database of all transit costs.

Houghton Transit and Hancock Transit's performance indicators (costs based on passengers, miles and hours) from 2019-2022 are summarized in Table 3A-B below.
Table 3:

A. 4 Year Performance Indicators-City of Houghton Transit Yearly and Cumulative

Fiscal year	Total Passengers	Total eligible expenses	Total Miles	Total Vehicle Hours	Cost/Pass.	Cost/Mile	Cost/hour	Pass/Veh. Hour	Pass./Veh. Mile
2023	50,057	$536,101	70,869	9,060	$10.71	$7.56	$59.17	5.53	.71
2022	40,574	$566,204	67,688	9,258	$13.95	$8.36	$61.16	4.38	.60
2021	20,319	$549,569	64,833	9,000	$27.05	$8.48	$61.06	2.26	.31
2020	42,944	$473,577	63,268	9,450	$11.03	$7.49	$50.11	4.54	.68
Totals	153,894	$2,125,451	266,658	36,768	$13.81	$7.97	$57.81	4.19	.58

Source: Michigan Department of Transportation

B. 4 Year Performance Indicators-City of Hancock Transit Yearly and Cumulative

Fiscal year	Total Passengers	Total eligible expenses	Total Miles	Total Vehicle Hours	Cost/Pass.	Cost/Mile	Cost/hour	Pass/Veh. Hour	Pass./Veh. Mile
2023	29,680	$396,623	84,786	6,253	$13.36	$4.68	$63.43	4.75	.35
2022	21,828	$341,835	68,367	6,126	$15.66	$5.00	$55.80	3.56	.32
2021	15,306	$277,031	52,569	5,121	$18.10	$5.27	$54.10	2.99	.29
2020	15,335	$253,882	53,116	4,911	$16.56	$4.78	$51.70	3.12	.29
Totals	82,149	$1,269,371	258,838	22,411	$15.45	$4.90	$56.64	3.67	.32

Source: Michigan Department of Transportation

The following table indicates performance indicators for 2023 with the other public transit agencies in the Western Upper Peninsula. (2023 is the most recent year with complete data)

Table 4: Performance Indicators for 2023

Houghton and Hancock Transit vs Neighboring Transit Systems

Transit System	Total Passengers	Total eligible expenses	Total Miles	Total Vehicle Hours	Cost/Pass.	Cost/Mile	Cost/hour	Pass/Veh. Hour	Pass./Veh. Mile
Ontonagon County Transit	29,435	$783,901	137,739	7,276	$26.63	$5.69	$107.74	4.05	.21
Gogebic County Transit	22,855	$703,287	202,714	13,231	$26.19	$3.47	$53.15	2.03	.13
City of Hancock Transit	29,680	$396,623	84,786	6,253	$13.36	$4.68	$63.43	4.75	.35
City of Houghton Transit	50,057	$536,101	70,869	9,060	$10.71	$7.56	$59.17	5.53	.71

Source: Michigan Department of Transportation

As Table 4 above demonstrates, Houghton and Hancock's cost per passenger is lower than both Gogebic and Ontonagon, and their passengers per hour and per vehicle mile are higher. Gogebic and Ontonagon's eligible expenses are higher, along with total miles, though both are county-wide systems, which explain those increases due to further miles traveled. Both Hancock and Houghton's total passengers exceed Gogebic's and Ontonagon's.

Baraga/Houghton/Keweenaw County Community Action and Goodwill Industries are not required to report the same expense data to MDOT. They receive funding from the Specialized Services Program, which is 100% State funded, and their funds are usually fixed for a period. They are reimbursed (up to the maximum per agency) based on miles or passengers.

BHK receives $55,503 yearly in Specialized Services funds, based on $1.76 per mile.

Goodwill Industries of Northern Wisconsin and Upper Michigan receives $44,380 yearly in Specialized Services funds, based on $1.76 per mile

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Table 5 below illustrates the total passengers and miles for both Baraga/Houghton/Keweenaw Community Action and Goodwill Industries of Northern Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. 2024 Data is available as they must report earlier than public systems.

Table 5:

Transit Agency	Fiscal Year	Total Miles	Total Passengers
Baraga/Houghton/Keweenaw Community Action	2024	30,418	4,672
	2023	28,838	5,068
	2022	21,937	3,485
	2021	14,621	3,371
Goodwill Industries of Northern Wisconsin and Upper Michigan	2024	30,414	6,054
	2023	18,711	3,905
	2022	17,687	3,296
	2021	14,328	2,246
TOTALS		174,954	32,097

Source: Michigan Department of Transportation

Michigan Technological University contracts Lamers Bus Lines in addition to Houghton Transit. Ridership for their 3 routes is outlined in Table 5a below. MTU's contract with Lamers Bus Line is approximately $600,000 yearly.

Table 5a:

Route	Dates	Total Passengers
Hancock Commuter	9/20/23-10/15/24	25,396
Houghton Commuter	11/9/23-10/15/24	191,217
Husky Shuttle	11/4/23-10/10/24	117,221

Source: Michigan Technological University

Revenues and Expenses

Tables 6A-B outline the total eligible expenses per year and the revenues by category. Transit agencies are required to have a balanced operating budget each year.

Table 6A: Revenues and Expenses for Houghton Transit

Fiscal Year	Total Eligible Expenses	Federal	State	Local	Farebox
2023	$536,101	$192,996	$189,642	$130,300	$36,482
2022	$566,204	$205,140	$213,899	$187,500	$33,124
2021	$549,569	$199,137	$230,884	$101,537	$91,737
2020	$473,577	$170,488	$198,552	$117,340	$78,403

Source: Michigan Department of Transportation

Table 6B: Revenues and Expenses for Hancock Transit

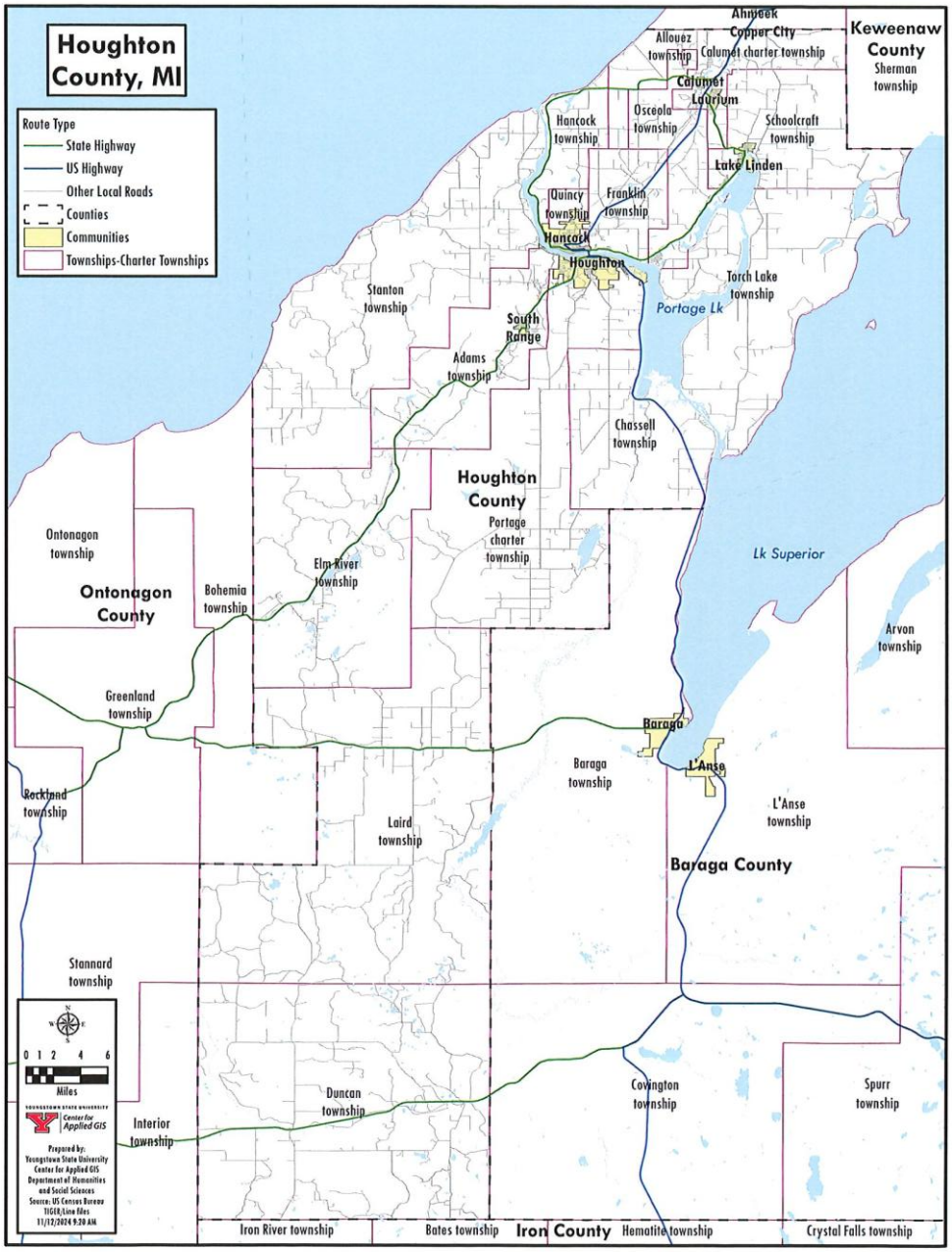
Fiscal Year	Total Eligible Expenses	Federal	State	Local	Farebox
2023	$396,623	$130,466	$140,303	$195,569	$73,095
2022	$341,835	$112,661	$129,138	$137,703	$53,648
2021	$277,031	$123,001	$116,386	$90,085	$37,065
2020	$253,882	$90,217	$106,443	$47,469	$36,806

Source: Michigan Department of Transportation

3. COMMUNITY PROFILE

Houghton County is in the Upper Peninsula of the state of Michigan (Figure 1). Its population is about 37,000. Houghton and Hancock represent the major urbanized area in the county with other cities being Calumet, Chassell, Lake Linden, South Range, Laurium, Dollar Bay, Atlantic Mine, Painesdale, Hubbell, and Copper City. The City of Houghton is known as the Gateway to the Keweenaw.

Figure 1: Study Area



Situated on the borders of the Portage Waterway, the Houghton/Hancock communities offer a wide range of housing, educational, recreational, and employment opportunities. Table 7 shows some basic demographic information for the area. From a transportation perspective, while there is little projected growth in overall population, there may be greater growth in the elderly and people with a physical or mental disability that requires a transportation option.

Table 7: Select Population Factors (based on US Census)

Factor	Houghton County*	Houghton City	Hancock City
Population	37,599	8,508	4,501
Households	14,173	2,385	1,810
Pop over 65	18.4%	8.6%	19.5%
With disability (under 65)	7.7%	3.6%	12.4%
Persons in poverty	13%	34.9%	20.4%

*Includes Houghton and Hancock

Apartment community outside Houghton

4. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT (First Round)

The community engagement program for the study included a survey and two rounds of public meetings.

Surveys

During the period January through March 2025, two survey efforts were conducted. The first is a mail back survey. The second was an outreach through posters and other means to provide links to the survey through QR codes. The methodology of each is presented below.

Mail back Survey

The mail back survey conducted for the project was mailed the last week of January 2025. The two-page (front and back) survey form was mailed with a postage-paid return envelope and also a survey link and pass code if the recipient elected to fill it out on line. Approximately 9,000 surveys were mailed with about half going to residents of Houghton and Hancock and the remainder to locations in the county.

QR Code and Intercept Survey

Members of the consultant team rode buses of both the city systems as well as some of the student transportation. These trips provided insight into the bus operations and provided some opportunity to distribute surveys. In addition, posters were placed in public locations in the cities of Hancock and Houghton:

1. Pat's Foods
2. Washtub Laundry
3. Portage Hospital
4. Keweenaw Food Coop
5. St. Vincent de Paul
6. Krist
7. Circle-K
8. Church of the Resurrection
9. Michigan Works
10. Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region (WUPPDR)
11. Library Restaurant and Bar
12. Tadych Foods
13. Dollar Tree
14. Family Foods
15. Firestation
16. Dept of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
17. Gogebic Community College
18. Goodwill
19. Northern Specialty Health
20. Douglas House
21. Jim's Food Mart

Results from these additional surveys collected on the buses and through the QR codes were tabulated separate from the mail back survey.

Public Meetings

On Thursday January 18, 2025 public meetings were held at the Heritage Manor and Lakeview Manor complexes operated by the Houghton Housing Commission. The meetings were attended by interested residents, many of whom use the service, and people participating in the study and members of the public. Generally, those in attendance were very supportive of the service provided. They would like to see some service improvements, particularly additional time on the city shopping route and for doctor pick-ups. Often, the time service is available is not sufficient for the desired trip. There was also discussion of providing more weekend and evening service as well as additional transportation to the ski hill and airport.

How many people use the transit service??? Public meeting, Lakeview Manor, January 2025

5. ORGANIZATION OPTIONS

The organizational options for the various transit entities operating in the Houghton/Hancock area are presented here as a starting point for a discussion about what a future transportation organization might be to provide public transportation in Houghton, Hancock, and the surrounding areas, including Michigan Tech.

Organizational Possibilities

The Urban Cooperation Act of 1967, PA 7 of 1967, MCL 124.501 et sec., provides that municipalities may, by agreement, jointly provide any function or service that they are authorized to provide individually. Therefore, under the Urban Cooperation Act of 1967 they could contract together to provide transportation services. Under the Urban Cooperation Act, a separate legal entity can be created which will be a public body, corporate or politic. It would possess the common power specified in the agreement including entering into contracts, employing agencies or employees, acquire, constructing or managing, maintaining or operating buildings etc. An entity formed under the Urban Cooperation Act may not levy any type of tax within the boundaries of any governmental unit participating in the interlocal agreement.

All of this is very similar to an authority created under Act 196 of 1986, MCL 124.451, et seq. A Public Transportation Authority is a public authority that is created pursuant to Act 196 which allows a political subdivision, or two or more political subdivisions to create a public transportation authority to provide public transportation services to the residents of their communities. It is created by the filing of Articles of Incorporation. An authority is a separate legal entity with the power to sue and be sued. One of the key differences between an authority under the Urban Cooperation Act and an Act 196 Authority is that an Act 196 Authority has the power to levy an ad valorem tax, up to 5 mills if approved by the electors in the area served by the Authority. As a result, once formed, the authority would be authorized to levy a millage (subject to normal millage rules) on property located within both the City of Hancock and the City of Houghton. A key distinction between Acts 7 and 196 is that an Act 196 cannot be disbanded without an act of the legislature based on an attorney general opinion (https://www.ag.state.mi.us/opinion/datafiles/1990s/op10073.htm).

Both entities are eligible for funds through the Michigan Transportation Fund, Act 51 of 1951, MCL 247.651 et seq. (“Act 51”). Act 51 creates the Comprehensive Transportation Fund (“CTF”). The CTF is to provide funds for planning, programming, operating and construction of public transportation systems. CTF monies are expended on debt service and also on administrative expenses. Most of the remaining CTF money is distributed to local transit agencies for operating capital grants for public transportation. Not less than ten (10) percent is to be used for intercity passenger and freight service. The remaining funds are allocated for specialized services and other public transportation purposes.

The information above was presented to the project steering committee at the monthly progress meeting for the study. There was discussion about the various options.

State of Michigan Transit Systems

Table 8 presents organizational information for systems in Michigan.

Table 8
Michigan Transit Systems' Organization

SMALL URBAN AND RURAL AGENCIES	ACT	**7**	55	94	196	204	279
Adrian Dial-A-Ride	Act 279						X
Allegan County Transportation	Act 94			X			
Alma Dial-A-Ride	Act 279						X
Alger Transit Authority	Act 196				X		
Antrim County Transportation	Act 94			X			
Arenac Public Transportation Authority	Act 196				X		
Barry County Transit	Act 94			X			
Bay Area Transportation Authority	Act 196				X		
Beaver Island Transportation Authority	Act 196				X		
Belding Dial-A-Ride	Act 279						X
Benzie Transportation Authority	Act 196				X		
Berrien County Public Transportation	Act 94			X			
Big Rapids Dial-A-Ride	Act 279						X
Branch Area Transit Authority	Act 196				X		
Cadillac/Wexford Transit Authority	Act 7	**X**					
Cass County Transportation Authority	Act 196				X		
Charlevoix County Public Transit	Act 94			X			
Charlevoix County Transportation Authority (Ironton Ferry)	Act 7	**X**					
Clare County Transit Corporation	Act 94			X			
Clinton Area Transit System	Act 196				X		
Crawford County Transportation Authority	Act 196				X		
Delta Area Transit Authority	Act 196				X		
Dowagiac Dial-A-Ride	Act 279						X
Eastern U.P. Transportation Authority	Act 7	**X**					
Eaton County Transportation Authority	Act 7	**X**					
Gladwin City/County Transit	Act 94(?)			X			
Gogebic County Public Transit	Act 196				X		
Greater Lapeer Transportation Authority	Act 196				X		

Greenville Transit	Act 279						X
Hancock, City of	Act 279						X
Hillsdale Dial-A-Ride	Act 279						X
Houghton Motor Transit Line	Act 279						X
Huron Transit Corporation	Act 94			X			
Interurban Transit Authority	Act 196						
Ionia Dial-A-Ride, City of	Act 279			X			X
Iosco Transit Corporation	Act 94			X			
Isabella County Transportation Commission	Act 7	**X**					
Kalkaska Public Transit Authority	Act 196				X		
Lenawee Transportation Corporation	Act 94			X			
Ludington Mass Transportation Authority	Act 196				X		
Manistee County Transportation	Act 94			X			
Marquette County Transit Authority	Act 7	**X**					
Marshall Dial-A-Ride, City of	Act 279						X
Mecosta Osceola Transit Authority	Act 196						
Midland County Connection	Act 279						X
Ogemaw County Public Transportation	Act 94			X			
Ontonagon County Public Transit	Act 94			X			
Otsego County Bus System	Act 94			X			
Roscommon County Transportation Authority	Act 196				X		
Sanilac Transportation Corporation	Act 94			X			
Sault Ste. Marie, City of	Act 279						X
Schoolcraft County Public Transportation	Act 196				X		
Shiawassee Area Transportation Agency	Act 7						
Straits Regional Ride							
St. Joseph County Transportation Authority							
Thunder Bay Transportation Authority	Act 196				X		
Van Buren Public Transit	Act 94			X			
Yates Township Transportation System	Act 94			X			

URBAN TRANSIT AGENCIES							
Ann Arbor							
TheRide	Act 55		X				
Battle Creek							X
Battle Creek Transit	Act 279						X
Bay County	Act 279						X
Bay Metro	Act 196				X		
Benton Harbor	Act 196				X		
TCATA	Act 196						
Detroit							
DDOT	Act 279						X
People Mover							
SMART	Act 204					X	
Flint							
MTA	Act 55			X			
Grand Rapids							
The Rapid	Act 196		X				
Grand Haven/Spring Lake							
Harbor Transit	Act 196				X		
Holland							
MAX	Act 279						X
Jackson							
JATA	Act 196				X		
Kalamazoo							
METRO	Act 196				X		
Lansing							
CATA	Act 55		X				
Livingston							
LETS							
Midland							
Midland DART	Act 279 (?)						X
Monroe County							
SMART Lake Erie Transit							
Muskegon							
MATS	Act 94			X			
Niles							
Niles DART	Act 279						X
Port Huron							

Blue Water Area Transit							
Saginaw							
STARS	Act 196				X		
FERRY BOAT AGENCIES					X		
Beaver Island Transportation Authority	Act 196						
Charlevoix County Transportation Authority (Ironton Ferry)	Act 7	**X**					
Eastern U.P. Transportation Authority	Act 7	**X**					

Notes:
Act 7 = Two or more Public bodies forming Authority
Act 55 = Mass Transportation System Authorities - City Authority
Act 94 = Revenue Bond Act (County Operations)
Act 196 = Public Transportation Authority Act (county, city, village, township or any combination)
Act 204 = Metropolitan Transportation Authorities – one or more contiguous counties
Act 279 = Municipality Home Rule Act - Cities

University Transit Systems in Michigan

Table 9 presents information about selected higher education providers' transportation operations.

Table 9
University Transit in Michigan

University	Transit Options on Campus	Provider	Free for Students/Faculty	Cost if not free
U of M	Yes	U of M operates its own, also uses AATA	Yes	
MSU	Yes	CATA (public transit)	Yes	
Eastern Michigan	Yes	AATA	Yes (limited number of passes)	$40 monthly pass
Grand Valley	Yes	The Rapid (public transit)	Yes	
Saginaw Valley	No	STARS, Bay Metro	No	Student fare rate
Ferris State	Yes	The Rapid (between campuses)	Yes	
Northern Michigan	Yes	NMU, Marqtran (public)	Yes	
Lake Superior State	Yes	LSSU	Yes	

Eastern Michigan has a limited number of passes available, when they run out, monthly passes are available for students to purchase. Grand Valley contracts with The Rapid to provide transit

service between its Allendale and Grand Rapids campus, and to student housing. Students can access shopping as well. Ferris State contracts with the Rapid to provide service between Grand Rapids and Big Rapids to transport students between campuses. Northern Michigan operates a shopping shuttle on Fridays for students. Students and Faculty can access the service via student or faculty ID. Lake Superior State offers the Seaward Shuttle for its students and faculty in the City of Sault Ste. Marie only.

6. REVIEW OF RELEVANT STUDIES

Several documents relevant to the Houghton/Hancock Transit Study were provided by the WUPPDRC. These include:

1. City of Houghton/City of Hancock Fixed Transit Route Modeling (prepared by the National Association of Development Organizations, 2022).

2. Regional Transit Mobility, Phase 3 (memorandum from WUPPDRC to MDOT, March 21, 2017).

3. Coordinated Human Service – Public Transit Plan and Accessibility Study for Baraga, Houghton and Keweenaw Counties – An Examination of services, community needs, alternatives, and recommendations (report prepared by the Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region, 2011).

4. Upper Peninsula of Michigan Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Study (prepared by Upper Peninsula Commission for Area Progress, January 2022)

5. Supporting Mobility Innovation in Michigan's Western Upper Peninsula (prepared by staff from the Mobility & Public Transportation Program at the Western Transportation Institute, August 2023).

A summary of the reports and their relevance to the Houghton/Hancock Transit Study follows.

NADO City of Houghton/City of Hancock Fixed Transit Route Modeling (2022/23)

The National Association of Development Organizations completed a report that detailed currently available services as well as recently modeled conceptual route options. They found that the demand response services in Hancock were being provided by 3 drivers and most requests were for same-day service. A log from one day showed that there were 20 riders per day.

Three conceptualized route options were explored:

- **Hancock only route with 9 stops**. The lowest cost estimate for 5 days /week/ 2 times per day was $15,278 - $27, 780. The most expensive option estimated cost for 7 days/week/ 3 times per day was $32,085 - $58,339. Farebox recovery estimates ranged from 5556 - 11,668 fares per year depending on the frequency of routes.

- **Hancock and Houghton route with 12 stops**. The lowest estimated cost for 5 days/week/2 times per day was 26,213 - 37,048. The most expensive estimated cost for 7 days/week/3 times per day was $42,448, - $77,050. Farebox recovery estimates were 7408-15,537 fares per year - depending on the frequency of routes.

- The all stops route includes all stop locations as identified - 23 stops. The lowest estimated cost for 5 days /week/2/times per day was $35,944 - 69,231. The most expensive cost estimate for 7 days/week/3 times per day was $75,483 - $145,385. Farebox recovery estimates were 13,846-29,077 per year depending on the frequency of the routes.

Regional Transit Mobility, Phase 3, 2017

Final Report for the USDA Rural Business Development Grant
Technical Assistance for Rural Transportation Systems: Connecting Rural Transportation with Economic Opportunity

Houghton County

1. **Lack of Private Vehicles** – Approximately 9.7% of households in Houghton County do not have access to a private vehicle, which is higher than the Michigan state average of 7.3%. This impacts earnings, financial stability, and access to essential services, particularly in emergencies and extreme weather.
2. **Transit Service Expansion Needs** – The county explored options for expanding transit service, including conceptual routes connecting various locations beyond the Houghton/Hancock area, such as the Houghton County Memorial Airport and communities like Hubbell, Lake Linden, and South Range.
3. **Crash Data and Active Transportation Safety** – Between 2018 and 2022, there were seven crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians.

The report *Supporting Mobility Innovation in Michigan's Western Upper Peninsula* provides an analysis of mobility challenges and opportunities in Houghton County, MI. Funded by the USDA Rural Business Development Grant and led by the Western Transportation Institute in collaboration with the National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, the project aimed to support regional transportation planning and economic development.

Key Findings:

1. **Mobility Challenges & Needs:**
    - Houghton County has a relatively high share of residents without private vehicles (9.7%) compared to Michigan’s average (7.3%).

- Transit services are fragmented, with multiple operators serving overlapping areas, leading to inefficiencies.
- There is a need for improved accessibility, workforce development in transit, and active transportation infrastructure.

2. **Project Activities:**
   - Conducted a **six-part webinar series** to share best practices in transit coordination, shared mobility, parking management, and active transportation.
   - **Analyzed existing transit services** and proposed potential **fixed-route expansions** to improve efficiency.
   - Assisted local transit providers in preparing for a **Transit Consolidation Study** to explore potential integration of services.
   - Conducted a **parking analysis** in Hancock to optimize off-street and shared parking strategies.
3. **Recommendations:**
   - **Strengthen Coordination:** Establish a regular working group among local transit providers to improve service efficiency.
   - **Focus on Workforce Development:** Address transit labor shortages through better recruitment, retention, and training.
   - **Enhance Active Transportation Infrastructure:** Improve pedestrian and bike safety, especially in downtown Houghton.
   - **Adopt Parking Management Best Practices:** Implement shared parking agreements and demand-based pricing to optimize space use.

Overall, the report emphasizes **regional collaboration, service integration, and multimodal solutions** to improve mobility and economic opportunity in Michigan's Western Upper Peninsula.

Coordinated Human Service – Public Transit Plan and Accessibility Study for Barago, Houghton and Keweenaw Counties, 2011

Introduction

The study evaluates non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) services for the Upper Peninsula's 300,000+ residents, focusing on accessibility beyond personal vehicles. It aims to inform policymakers, healthcare providers, and transportation agencies about current service levels and anticipated needs, particularly in light of an aging and urbanizing population.

Key Themes

1. **Aging Population** – Over 20% of residents are 65 or older, creating increased demand for medical transportation.

2. **Highly Rural Residency** – Low population density and limited tax bases make it challenging to provide public transportation, leading to reliance on regional hubs for medical care.
3. **Limited Regional Service** – Many residents must travel long distances for specialized healthcare, with few providers offering consistent regional transportation options.

Challenges Identified

- Insufficient funding for transportation services.
- Lack of coordination between healthcare providers and transit agencies.
- Seasonal weather conditions and geographic constraints affecting service availability.
- High demand for interregional medical transport, particularly to larger cities outside the region.

Recommendations

- **Expand Regional Transportation** – Develop more coordinated and cost-effective inter-county transit options.
- **Strengthen Partnerships** – Encourage collaboration between local governments, healthcare providers, and transportation agencies.
- **Increase Funding & Awareness** – Seek grants, state funding, and public-private partnerships to improve service availability.
- **Enhance Accessibility** – Improve marketing efforts to ensure residents are aware of available NEMT services.

This study serves as a foundation for discussions on improving non-emergency medical transportation in the Upper Peninsula, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between healthcare and transit sectors.

Upper Peninsula of Michigan Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Study, 2022

This study is a comprehensive transportation study for Baraga, Houghton, and Keweenaw Counties. It examines existing public, private, and human services transportation systems, identifies gaps and redundancies, and provides recommendations to improve transit coordination and accessibility.

Key points include:

- **Assessment of transportation needs** for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and low-income populations.
- **Inventory of available services** highlighting gaps and redundancies.

- **Proposed alternatives**, including maintaining the status quo, expanding services within the current framework, creating a Mass Transportation System Authority (Act 55 of 1963), or developing a Regional Transportation Authority (Act 196 of 1986).
- **Five-year implementation plan** that suggests expanding services within the existing framework while working towards a Regional Transit Authority.

The study was conducted by the Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region, with funding from the Michigan Department of Transportation. It involved stakeholder meetings, surveys, interviews, and literature reviews to support its findings and recommendations.

7. SURVEY FINDINGS

The primary purpose of the study was to examine the future of how transit is provided in the communities, particularly with a focus on examining the feasibility and cost and operational impacts of consolidation of services. As part of the study, surveys were conducted in the community. These included: 1) a mailback survey with an on-line component; and 2) an intercept type survey using QR codes and handouts at public events. The questionnaire used in the survey is shown in Appendix A. People had the option of mailing the survey back in a pre-postage paid envelope or going to a secure online tab to complete the survey. Most opted to mail it in as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Respondent Summary

Source

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Paper	1024	91.6	91.6	91.6
	Passcode Online	94	8.4	8.4	100.0
	Total	1118	100.0	100.0	

Area

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Hancock	288	25.8	25.8	25.8
	Houghton	291	26.0	26.0	51.8
	OCL	539	48.2	48.2	100.0
	Total	1118	100.0	100.0	

Source: Mp2planning

Mail-back Survey

The mail-back survey conducted for the project was mailed in the last week of January 2025. The two-page (front and back) survey form (Appendix A) was mailed with a postage-paid return envelope and a survey link and pass code if the recipient elected to fill it out online. Approximately 9,000 surveys were mailed with about half going to residents of Houghton and Hancock and the remainder to locations in the county. Surveys were mailed to owner-occupied and renter-occupied households with consideration given to the number of students living in rental housing in the community and ensuring that the mailout included that population as well as the senior population living in rental communities. The mail-back survey resulted in 1,118 completed surveys. These were aggregated in total and by jurisdiction (i.e., Houghton, Hancock, and the county outside the two cities). Table 11 presents the findings of the total of the mail back survey results. Specific breakdowns for the following are presented in Appendix B. appendix. Note that a definition of the terms (e.g., frequency, percent, etc) is included in Appendix B.

Table 11 - Total Sample 2025 Houghton/Hancock Transportation Study (see Appendix B for definition of terms used in the table).

Q1. Are you aware there is public transportation in the Houghton/Hancock area?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	1022	91.4	92.1	92.1
	No	88	7.9	7.9	100.0
	Total	1110	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	8	0.7		
Total		1118	100.0		

Q2. Which of the following services do you, or does anyone in your home, use:

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$Q2	Q2a. USE: Houghton Transit	104	9.2%	9.6%
	Q2b. USE: Hancock Transit	116	10.2%	10.7%
	Q2c. USE: University service	39	3.4%	3.6%
	Q2d. USE: None	873	77.1%	80.3%
Total		1132	100.0%	104.1%

Q3. What is the primary reason you use transit? (Select only one)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Working or seeking employment	27	2.4	14.7	14.7
	Shopping, banking and/or errands	60	5.4	32.6	47.3
	Attending school or training	15	1.3	8.2	55.4
	Medical or dental appointments	43	3.8	23.4	78.8
	Social/recreation	10	0.9	5.4	84.2
	Other	29	2.6	15.8	100.0
	Total	184	16.5	100.0	
Missing	System	934	83.5		
Total		1118	100.0		

Q4. How often do you use transit?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2-3 times per week or more	56	5.0	26.8	26.8
	Once a week	28	2.5	13.4	40.2
	Once or twice a month	37	3.3	17.7	57.9
	Less than once a month	88	7.9	42.1	100.0
	Total	209	18.7	100.0	
Missing	System	909	81.3		
Total		1118	100.0		

Q5. If you use the University City Commuter service, would you use the service more when school is not in session if it were free like it is during the school year?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	36	3.2	24.3	24.3
	No	11	1.0	7.4	31.8
	Does not apply	101	9.0	68.2	100.0
	Total	148	13.2	100.0	
Missing	System	970	86.8		
Total		1118	100.0		

Q6. What is the reason(s)for not utilizing public transit? (Select all that apply)

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$Q6	Q6a. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Own a car	907	62.2%	87.0%
	Q6b. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Have alternate transportation	110	7.5%	10.6%
	Q6c. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Hours of operation too limited	149	10.2%	14.3%
	Q6d. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Doesn't go where I need to go	191	13.1%	18.3%
	Q6e. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Cost to ride is a factor	47	3.2%	4.5%
	Q6f. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Did not know we had public transportation	55	3.8%	5.3%
Total		1459	100.0%	140.0%

Q7. Do you, or other adults in your home, choose not to drive or to limit the amount of driving when possible (to reduce fuel consumption)?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	491	43.9	45.5	45.5
	No	589	52.7	54.5	100.0
	Total	1080	96.6	100.0	
Missing	System	38	3.4		
Total		1118	100.0		

Q8. Because of gas prices or other convenience factors, would you or other members of your household consider using a public transportation service if it met your needs?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	596	53.3	54.6	54.6
	No	220	19.7	20.2	74.8
	Not sure	275	24.6	25.2	100.0
	Total	1091	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	27	2.4		
Total		1118	100.0		

Q9. If you were to consider using transit, please indicate what improvements you think would be important? (Select all that apply)

		Responses		Percent of
		N	Percent	Cases
$Q9	Q9a. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Later/evening weekday	317	15.2%	34.1%
	Q9b. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Weekend Daytime Service	355	17.1%	38.2%
	Q9c. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Weekend Evening Service	220	10.6%	23.7%
	Q9d. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Regularly scheduled bus route	386	18.5%	41.5%
	Q9e. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: On request transportation service	360	17.3%	38.7%
	Q9f. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Smart-phone scheduling	284	13.6%	30.5%
	Q9g. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Other	160	7.7%	17.2%
Total		2082	100.0%	223.9%

Q10. Do you support affordable public transportation for senior and disabled persons?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	1041	93.1	94.8	94.8
	No	18	1.6	1.6	96.4
	Not sure	39	3.5	3.6	100.0
	Total	1098	98.2	100.0	
Missing	System	20	1.8		
Total		1118	100.0		

Q11. Would you support additional funding (increased millage or special assessment) dedicated to expanding public transportation services in Houghton County?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	568	50.8	52.0	52.0
	No	177	15.8	16.2	68.2
	Not sure	347	31.0	31.8	100.0
	Total	1092	97.7	100.0	
Missing	System	26	2.3		
Total		1118	100.0		

Q12. What is your general impression of public transportation in the Houghton/Hancock area?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Adequately meets the community needs	113	10.1	12.6	12.6
	Should be expanded	378	33.8	42.1	54.7
	Works well for those who can't or don't drive	383	34.3	42.7	97.3
	Public transportation is not needed in our area	24	2.1	2.7	100.0
	Total	898	80.3	100.0	
Missing	System	220	19.7		
Total		1118	100.0		

Q13. What best describes your employment status: (Select all that apply)

		Responses		Percent of
		N	Percent	Cases
$Q13	Q13a. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Employed, full-time	331	28.0%	30.1%
	Q13b. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Employed, part-time	100	8.5%	9.1%
	Q13c. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Self-employed	52	4.4%	4.7%
	Q13d. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Student	23	1.9%	2.1%
	Q13e. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Unemployed	28	2.4%	2.6%
	Q13f. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Homemaker	42	3.6%	3.8%
	Q13g. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Retired	606	51.3%	55.2%
Total		1182	100.0%	107.7%

Q14. What is your age?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under 18	2	0.2	0.2	0.2
	18 - 55	326	29.2	29.7	29.9
	56 - 70	342	30.6	31.1	61.0
	Over 70	428	38.3	39.0	100.0
	Total	1098	98.2	100.0	
Missing	System	20	1.8		
Total		1118	100.0		

Q15. What is your gender?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	618	55.3	57.6	57.6
	Male	450	40.3	41.9	99.5
	Other	5	0.4	0.5	100.0
	Total	1073	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	45	4.0		
Total		1118	100.0		

Analysis

As reflected in the results of Q1, there is a good awareness of public transit in the community. Over 90% of the total respondents (with higher numbers in Houghton and Hancock) were aware of the transportation services available. About 9% of the total respondents report using Houghton Transit. Approximately 10% of the total use Hancock Transit, and about 3.4% use the University service. Seventy-seven percent report that they are not using transit.
Of those who reported using transit, about 15% reported using transit for work trips, 32% for shopping and errands, about 8% for school or training, and about 23% for medical or dental appointments. Questioned about how much they use transit, about 27% reported using it 2-3 times per week, about 13% once a week, 17% once or twice a month, and 42 percent less than once per month.

Question 5 focused on a hypothetical situation – would those using the university service use it when school is not in session if it were free like it is during the school year. About 24 percent of those who responded said they would use the service more often.
When asked about why they don't use transit (Q6) the answers pointed to the obvious (own a car) to less obvious – "hours of operation too limited" and "doesn't go where I need to go." Interestingly, cost or lack of awareness received about 3% and 4% respectively.

Question 7 queried about whether people factor use (and cost) of fuel as a limiting factor in their driving habits and 44% of respondents suggested they do. Similarly, when asked if they would consider using public transportation if it would save them money or time while meeting their needs, about 54% responded positively and 24 percent were not sure.

When looking at what system improvements that respondents felt were important, there were several that stood out with regularly scheduled bus route service being the highest ranked with "on request transportation service" and weekend daytime service being the next top ranked.

Question 10 investigated whether people supported provision of affordable public transportation for seniors and people with disabilities and the over 93% responded affirmatively. Question 11 followed up with a question as to whether the respondent would favor a millage and about 50.8 percent (of the total sample, which includes residents outside Houghton and Hancock) said they would support a millage and 31% said they were not sure. About 16% said they would not support a millage.

The next question (Q12) asked what respondents thought about transit. About 12 percent said the system as it exists is fine, 42% suggested it should be expanded, 43% said it works well for those who can't or don't drive, and slightly less than 3% thought it was not needed.

Per Q13, about 28% of respondents are employed full-time and 52% report being retired. About 2% of the respondents identified as students and 8.5% are employed part-time. Question 14 asked about age and there was a good distribution of ages among the respondents with 30% of

those of working age and 38% over age 70. There were a few more female respondents than male with about 55% of the respondents being female and 40% being male.

Analysis of Results from Houghton, Hancock, and the "out county," Respectively

The survey was analyzed in total and separate analyses were done of the individual communities and those respondents who did not live in Houghton or Hancock. Many of the results generally mirrored the total sample results. The full survey results from the three distinct groups are presented in the Appendix. This section focuses on three questions considered key to the objective of this study – those related to support of transit in general and, a millage, in particular. These are presented next.

Survey Results – Houghton (Selected Questions)

Results from surveys received from residents of Houghton suggest there is potential for the use of future transit services as well as possible support of public funding for transit through a millage or special assessment. Recognizing that millages in general are not always popular (who likes taxes), transit millages in Michigan generally pass. About 57% of respondents from Houghton would support a millage while 27% are not sure. Only 15% said no.

Q8. Because of gas prices or other convenience factors, would you or other members of your household consider using a public transportation service if it met your needs?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	178	61.2	63.1	63.1
	No	44	15.1	15.6	78.7
	Not sure	60	20.6	21.3	100.0
	Total	282	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	9	3.1		
Total		291	100.0		

Q10. Do you support affordable public transportation for senior and disabled persons?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	272	93.5	94.8	94.8
	No	5	1.7	1.7	96.5
	Not sure	10	3.4	3.5	100.0
	Total	287	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	4	1.4		
Total		291	100.0		

Q11. Would you support additional funding (increased millage or special assessment) dedicated to expanding public transportation services in Houghton County?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	162	55.7	57.0	57.0
	No	44	15.1	15.5	72.5
	Not sure	78	26.8	27.5	100.0
	Total	284	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	7	2.4		
Total		291	100.0		

Survey Results – Hancock (Selected Questions)

Like the Houghton results, surveys received from residents of Hancock suggest there is potential for the use of future transit services as well as possible support of public funding for transit through a millage or special assessment. About 58% of respondents from Hancock would support a millage while almost 32% are not sure. Sixteen percent said no. Similar to Houghton, while certainly this is not a sure-fire pronouncement of a successful millage, it suggests that an effective millage campaign could result in a positive result.

Q8. Because of gas prices or other convenience factors, would you or other members of your household consider using a public transportation service if it met your needs?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	169	58.7	59.9	59.9
	No	48	16.7	17.0	77.0
	Not sure	65	22.6	23.0	100.0
	Total	282	97.9	100.0	
Missing	System	6	2.1		
Total		288	100.0		

Q10. Do you support affordable public transportation for senior and disabled persons?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	278	96.5	97.2	97.2
	No	2	0.7	0.7	97.9
	Not sure	6	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	286	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	2	0.7		
Total		288	100.0		

Q11. Would you support additional funding (increased millage or special assessment) dedicated to expanding public transportation services in Houghton County?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	166	57.6	58.5	58.5
	No	32	11.1	11.3	69.7
	Not sure	86	29.9	30.3	100.0
	Total	284	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	4	1.4		
Total		288	100.0		

Survey Results – Out County Residents (Selected Questions)

The responses from the respondents of Houghton County who do not live in Houghton or Hancock are presented next. As can be seen, even in the out-county, where you might expect support to be lowest, fifty percent of the respondents were affirmative while 31% were not sure.

Q8. Because of gas prices or other convenience factors, would you or other members of your household consider using a public transportation service if it met your needs?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	596	53.3	54.6	54.6
	No	220	19.7	20.2	74.8
	Not sure	275	24.6	25.2	100.0
	Total	1091	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	27	2.4		
Total		1118	100.0		

Q10. Do you support affordable public transportation for senior and disabled persons?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	1041	93.1	94.8	94.8
	No	18	1.6	1.6	96.4
	Not sure	39	3.5	3.6	100.0
	Total	1098	98.2	100.0	
Missing	System	20	1.8		
Total		1118	100.0		

Q11. Would you support additional funding (increased millage or special assessment) dedicated to expanding public transportation services in Houghton County?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	568	50.8	52.0	52.0
	No	177	15.8	16.2	68.2
	Not sure	347	31.0	31.8	100.0
	Total	1092	97.7	100.0	
Missing	System	26	2.3		
Total		1118	100.0		

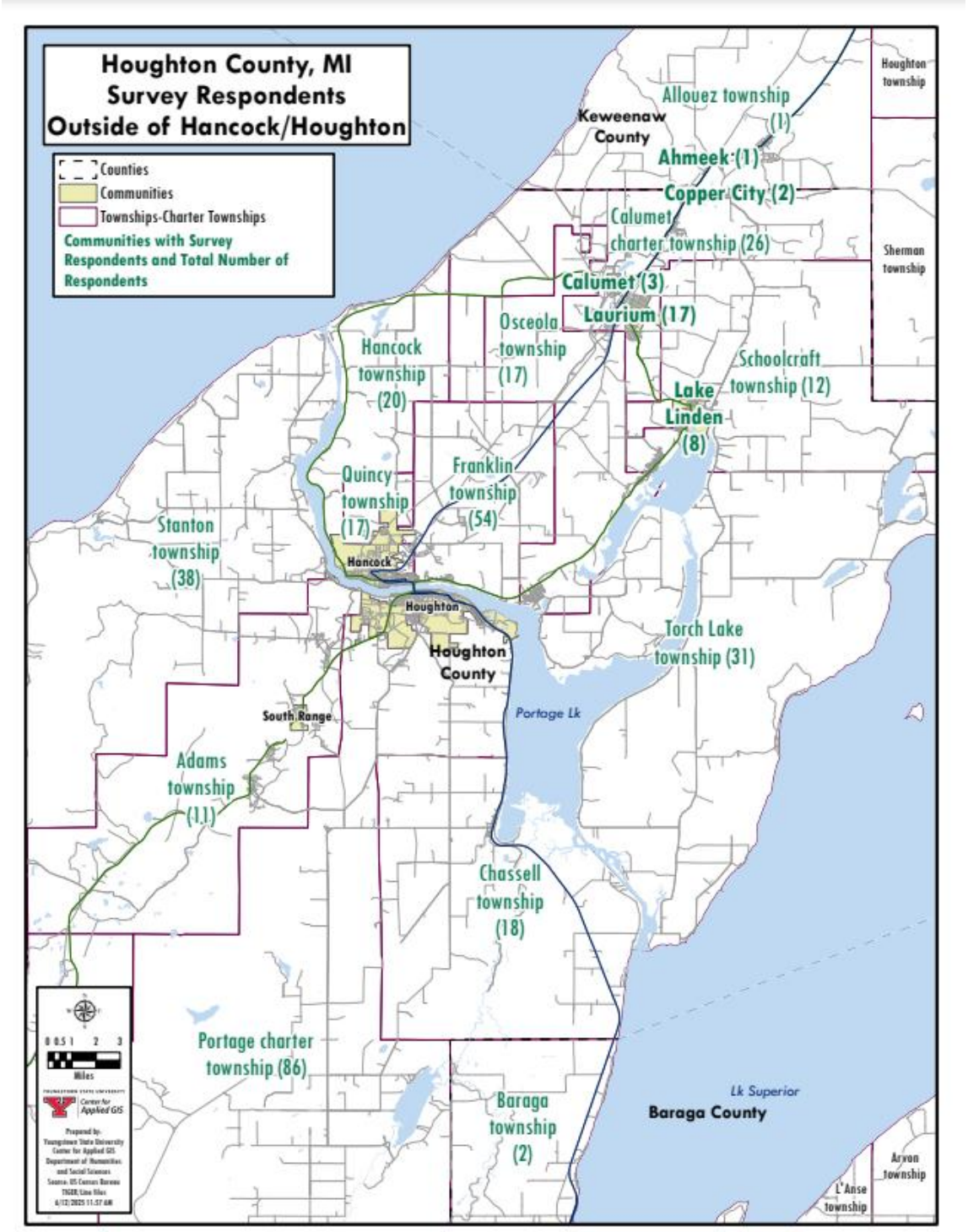
Conclusions

The survey results suggest that there is awareness and support for public transit in general. Most people would like to see more services with a fixed route(s) and expanded weekend daytime service as the highest ranked service requests. Almost every survey could in theory have some degree of non-response bias i.e., it is rare for almost every possible participant to take part in a survey (employee satisfaction surveys with required participation would be an example). It is an unknown factor, since the responses of non-responders are unknown without them taking the survey. Importantly, this survey had a significant number of respondents, an excellent response rate for this kind of survey, and a highly respectable margin of error.

The fact respondents came from a range of ages, employment status, and location (including half of the respondents being from outside the cities) suggest that there is valid support for transit and a millage. Would a millage pass? That is always an issue. The newspapers in the second week of April 2025 reported on the current controversial millage issue surrounding the county jails. So, timing, marketing, etc. will be important if the communities decide to pursue a transportation option that needs public funding.

Figure 2 shows the geographic distribution of responses that were received from the out-county areas. Portage (86), Franklin (54), Stanton (38), and Torch Lake (31) had the highest number of responses. There may be a time in the future when these townships, particularly due to transportation needs to Wal Mart, etc. will want to have transit options available.

Figure 2: Out-county Survey Responses

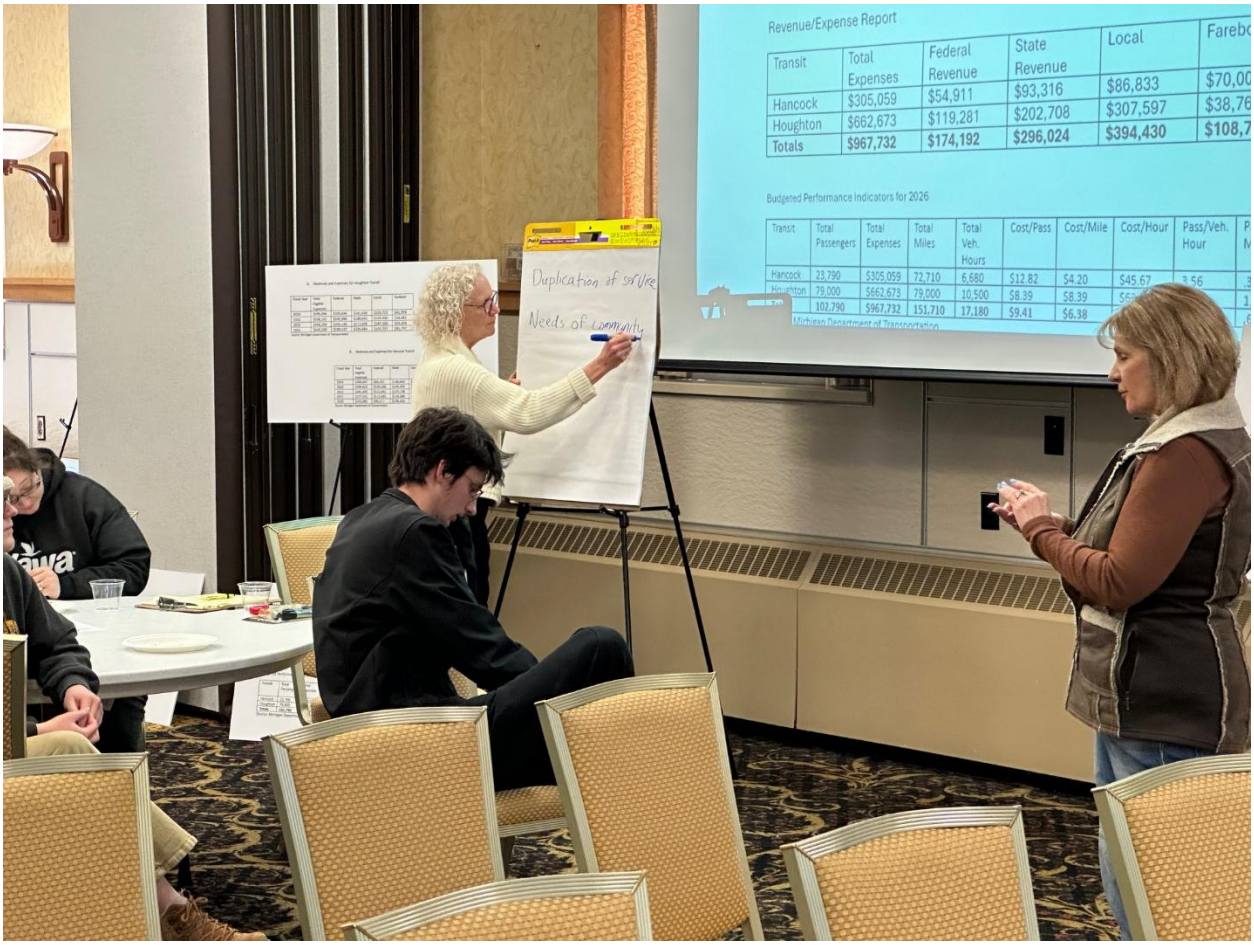


QR Code and Intercept Survey

Members of the consultant team rode buses of both the city systems as well as some of the student transportation. These trips provided insight into the bus operations and provided some opportunity to distribute surveys. In addition, posters were placed in public locations in the cities of Hancock and Houghton and distributed at Michigan Tech. The results indicated support for transit and the possibility of supporting a millage. However, these should be taken with consideration that many of these came from public meetings which had a larger population of transit users than the normal population.

8. SECOND ROUND OF PUBLIC MEETINGS

On April 9 and 10, a second round of public meetings were held. The meetings were held at Michigan Tech, Heritage Manor, Lakeview Manor, and the Bluffs. The meetings were attended by interested residents, many of whom use the service, and members of the public. Generally, those in attendance were supportive of the service provided.



Public meeting scribing – April 9/10 2025

Key themes that emerged from the meetings include the need for expanded service hours and routes, improved accessibility, better infrastructure, and enhanced connectivity to regional destinations. The report also highlights community interest in exploring alternative fare structures and innovative services. Specific action items are provided for the Houghton and Hancock Transit/Transportation Departments to address these needs and enhance transportation services.

The consultant team had discussions with community members, including the public library, local hotel operators, etc. During the discussion with the library, key points emerged and were

documented that resonate with other comments received during the project. These are presented below.

1. Extended Transit Hours (Until 8 PM) and Its Impact

    - Most library programs are held in the evening. Currently, they must choose between daytime programming for those without transportation or evening sessions for those who work during the day. Extending transit hours would allow individuals without transportation to attend programs that typically run from 6:00 to 7:30 PM.

    - Extended transit service would help people without cars access evening job opportunities.

    - Having reliable transit in the evening could benefit local restaurants and bars by providing safe transportation for those who have had a drink.

    - With many local businesses open until 8 PM, the additional transit service could attract more customers.

    - Evening civic meetings could see broader attendance, enabling a more diverse cross-section of the community to participate.

2. Cost Concerns with the Current Transit System

    - The current transit system is too expensive for some community members, which limits their ability to visit the library.

3. Challenges with Car Repairs

    - Difficulties in getting auto repairs done due to cost or time is a concern. Transit isn't always available to get work, due to limited schedules.

4. Accessibility Issues

    - The library's location on a steep hill, along with the current location of bus stops, makes it challenging for people with disabilities or families with small children

Houghton/Hancock Public Transportation Study

PUBLIC MEETINGS

The Cities of Houghton and Hancock are examining ways to best provide public transportation. Feel free to attend THESE MEETINGS. Please call Gail Kotajarvi-Gerard at the City of Houghton (906-482-1700) for more information. ***Pizza, donuts, and snacks will be provided.***

Wednesday, April 9, 5 – 6 p.m.

Memorial University Ballroom

Ballroom B, Room 207 B 123

1400 Townsend Dr, Houghton

Thursday, April 10

Heritage Manor, 10 – 11 a.m.

401 E Montezuma Ave, Houghton

Lakeview Manor, 12 – 1 p.m.

1401 W Quincy Ave, HancocK

The Bluffs, 2 – 3 p.m.

1000 Bluff View Dr, Houghton

Key Findings and Suggestions from Public Meeting Discussions

The following is a summary of the key findings and suggestions from the community meetings, organized by theme. They were developed during a meeting exercise with discussion and a scribe keeping notes on flip charts.

Summary of Findings

1. Service Expansion and Improvement

    - Expanded Hours: A significant need for expanded service hours, including evenings and weekends, was identified. This is particularly important for working students, residents without cars, and those needing access to weekend activities and events.

    - Expanded or modified routes to address both city and Michigan Tech needs.

    - Specific route expansions were requested, including service to the Copper Country Mall, the airport, Calumet (specifically UP Health System), and Portage Township areas.

    - A loop through the hospital and the inclusion of Hancock in existing routes were also suggested.

    - Consideration should be given to a route that includes the Farmer's Market.

    - Include senior centers on routes

    - Add convenience store in Ripley to the route

    - Event-Specific Shuttles: The community expressed a desire for event-specific shuttles, including those for Winter Carnival and Bridgefest.

    - Regional Connections: There is a need for improved regional connections, particularly on Saturdays. The Community Action Agency was mentioned as a potential partner.

    - Downtown Service: A significant need for transportation options for people without cars, specifically within the downtown area, was expressed.

2. Accessibility and Infrastructure

    - Bus Shelters: The need for more bus shelters, especially at the south end of the bridge, was emphasized due to the cold weather conditions.

- ADA Compliance: Assurance that all vans are ADA compliant was requested.

- Bike Racks: Adding bike racks to buses was suggested to promote multi-modal transportation.

- Improved Signage: The University community specifically requested improved routes and signage, developed with professional planners, and expressed concern about routes being altered without clear communication.

3. Fare Structure and Payment Options

- Free Fare: Exploring the possibility of free fares, either on Saturdays or during off-peak hours, was suggested. The potential benefits include increased ridership and greater community buy-in for millage.

- Farebox Concerns: Concerns were raised about the cost of the farebox system, the friction it adds for riders, and the administrative burden of managing it. Some participants indicated a preference for funding transit through taxes rather than a farebox system.

- Flat Fare: The current fare difference between Houghton and Hancock was cited as a disincentive for some riders, and a flat fare was suggested.

- Monthly Fare: An option for a monthly fare was requested.

- Digital Wallet: The possibility of using a digital wallet for fare payment was discussed, with some concerns raised about poor cell coverage and past negative experiences. The potential benefits for students and seniors were also noted.

- Gift Card Raffle: A suggestion was made to offer a gift card raffle to incentivize ridership (e.g., the first 20 riders receive a $20 gift card).

4. Other Issues and Suggestions

- Parking Challenges: Parking was identified as a significant challenge in the area.

- Competition with Private Services: The transit departments should be aware of the restrictions associated with competing with private transportation providers.

- Open Door Policy: The need to maintain an open-door policy was emphasized.

- Duplication of Service: Some community members noted a perceived duplication of service between the Houghton and Hancock transit systems.

- Community Involvement: Strong support for a transit authority was voiced by a specific homeowner.

- Chamber of Commerce Involvement: The importance of Chamber of Commerce involvement to promote the benefits of increased bus routes for local businesses was highlighted.

- Comparative Examples: A request was made for comparative examples of successful transit systems in similar sized towns with universities.

- Zipcar/Microtransit: The potential for a service type to provide regional weekend transportation for residents who do not own cars was mentioned.

- Route Map: The community wants to see route maps.

- Lakeview Manor Stop: A specific request was made for a dedicated stop at Lakeview Manor.

- Thanks for service: Appreciative comments were made about the bus drivers.

Possible Action Items

Based on the findings of the community meetings, the following may be part of an implementation plan that could be included in future transit plans. None of these are set in stone but could be part of a framework for continuing service development and improvement.

Service Improvements

- Conduct a feasibility study to assess the demand and cost of expanding service hours to evenings and weekends.

- Evaluate and optimize existing routes and explore the feasibility of implementing new routes to serve the Copper Country Mall, the airport, Calumet, Portage Township areas, and other key destinations identified by the community.

- Develop a plan for providing event-specific shuttle services, including Winter Carnival and Bridgefest, coordinating with event organizers.

- Explore opportunities for enhancing regional connections, potentially in partnership with the Community Action Agency and other regional transit providers.

- Analyze the potential for a downtown circulator route or other service enhancements to improve transportation access for residents without cars.

- Incorporate senior centers into route planning and scheduling.

- Add the 2nd-hand consignment store in Ripley to the route.

Infrastructure Enhancements

- Develop a plan for installing additional bus shelters, prioritizing locations with high ridership and exposure to harsh weather conditions.

- Ensure that all vehicles in the transit fleet are ADA compliant.

- Install bike racks on buses to support multi-modal transportation.

- Review and improve route signage to ensure clarity and visibility for riders, potentially in consultation with professional planners.

- Add a dedicated stop at Lakeview Manor.

Fare Structure and Payment Options

- Conduct a study to evaluate the potential impacts of implementing a free-fare system, either on Saturdays or during off-peak hours, considering the potential for increased ridership, revenue implications, and community support.

- Analyze the costs and benefits of the current farebox system and explore alternative fare collection methods, such as mobile ticketing or a digital wallet system.

- Consider implementing a flat fare for all rides within Houghton and Hancock to simplify the fare structure and encourage ridership.

- Introduce a monthly fare option to provide a more convenient and cost-effective solution for frequent riders.

- Investigate the feasibility of a digital wallet payment system, addressing concerns about cell coverage and ensuring accessibility for all riders, including seniors and low-income individuals.

- Consider a short-term incentive program, such as the gift card raffle suggestion, to boost ridership.

Other Actions

- Address parking challenges in collaboration with city planning departments and other stakeholders, considering the role of public transit in reducing parking demand.

- Maintain an open-door policy for community engagement, actively seeking and responding to feedback from residents.

- Conduct an efficiency review to identify and address any potential duplication of services between the Houghton and Hancock transit systems, seeking opportunities for consolidation or coordination.

- Continue to cultivate the existing positive relationship with bus drivers, and explore ways to formally recognize their contributions.

- Develop a user-friendly route map and make it readily available both online and in print.

- Engage the Chamber of Commerce to promote the benefits of public transit to local businesses and explore opportunities for partnerships.

- Research and document successful transit systems in similar-sized towns with universities to identify best practices and potential models for Houghton and Hancock.

Conclusion

The community meetings provided valuable insights into the transportation needs and priorities of Houghton and Hancock residents. By implementing the action items outlined in this report, the Houghton and Hancock Transit/Transportation Departments can enhance the quality, accessibility, and efficiency of transportation services, better serving the needs of the community and promoting a more sustainable and livable future. Appendix C presents notes taken during the meetings on flip charts. The basic text of the notes has remained the same as scribed during the meetings.

9. FUTURE SERVICE DESIGN OPTIONS AND COST

The Consultant team has developed four separate service design options: 1) Houghton/Hancock should service consolidation *not* occur; 2) on the assumption that Houghton/Hancock will form an Act 7 Authority to consolidate service; 3) forming an Act 7 that transitions to an Act 196 Authority; 4) forming an Act 196 Authority and transitioning to a millage based local share.

Service Design Options

Houghton Transit and Hancock Transit each provide transit services their cities, primarily via Demand-Response Service, though Houghton does provide timed stop route services in parts of the city. The Transit systems both provide general fund revenues to support their transit services.

Service design is dependent on a couple key factors, maintaining the current system or changing to a combined service via 4 distinct options. For ease of reviewing designs, we have separated the options between the four options.

It is important to note that the first year of operation (assuming FY 2026) the budget for both entities is set. If they consolidate, their total budget is the sum of both budgets. FY 2027 would be the first year for possible expansion, unless other services are changed or additional local funding is obtained in FY 2026.

Option 1 - Maintain Current Structure

- Maintain Status-Quo with current service design.
- As this option does not change services it will not be examined in depth as it appears there is sufficient support/agreement to consolidate services into one entity

Option 2 - Houghton/Hancock Service Consolidation into an Act 7 Authority

- Maintain current contracted service with Michigan Tech and gradually expand Demand-Response in both cities. Both founding Authority members continue local appropriations for transit local share.
- Maintain contracted service and gradually expand Demand-Response and add a timed route in Hancock.
- Look to expand the scope of the service contract with Michigan Tech, which should reduce the local share amount. Maintain Demand-Response, timed routes, and possibly add a zoned micro transit service to enhance expanded services.

Option 3: Houghton/Hancock Service Consolidation into an Act 7 Authority with transition to Act 196 Authority in 2 years

- Maintain current contracted service with Michigan Tech and expand Demand-Response in both cities. Both founding Authority members continue local appropriations for transit local share.

- Maintain contracted service with expanded Demand-Response and timed route in Hancock.

- Look to expand the scope of the service contract with Michigan Tech. Maintain Demand-Response, timed routes, add a zoned micro transit service to enhance expanded service options listed above.

- Assist in forming a "Friends of Transit" type group to work with the Authority to focus on building community support for a millage proposal.

Option 4 - Houghton/Hancock Service Consolidation into an Act 196 Authority with a millage vote to secure local funding

- Maintain current contracted service with Michigan Tech and expand Demand-Response in both cities. Both founding Authority members continue local appropriations for transit local share until a millage vote can occur. If a millage is passed, the local appropriations will no longer be required.

- Maintain and explore additional contracted service with Michigan Tech along with expanded Demand-Response and timed route in Hancock.

- Maintain Demand-Response, timed routes, add a zoned micro transit service to enhance expanded service options listed above.

Service Options Analysis

Option 1

1) Maintain Status-Quo with current service design. While this is the easiest option, it also doesn't allow for new or expanded service, nor does it address the issue of consolidation of services. The consultant team does not consider this a viable option under consolidation of services. No in-depth analysis for additional service will be reviewed as it is counter to the intent of the study.

2) Each system would maintain current service areas and could expand service hours to offer more Demand-Response Service. This option provides essentially the same Demand-Response service but increases the amount of service being provided during the week. This could be done by offering additional service earlier or later in the day and/or offering weekend service. Expand weekdays to include early morning/late evening service for job access; working with employers to make employees aware of service. Example-1: Begin service at 6:00am to allow for those going to work/school to have more transportation opportunities. Example-2: Increase service for each service area to include daytime Saturday service. This will be financially difficult unless each City is willing to increase local funding.

Option 2

1) Maintain contract service and expand Demand-Response to a program that allows for service anywhere within the Authority service area. This option allows residents to call at any time during service hours for rides regardless of location. Trips are booked on a first-come/first serve basis and are comingled when appropriate. This allows for multiple passengers on the bus at one time, however there is the possibility for an increased amount of single rider trips. Example: Add two (2) eight-hour shifts daily to manage the increase in Demand-Response Service. Vehicle deployment can be adjusted as needed for increases/decreases in service.

2) Add a timed route in Hancock similar to Houghton's and possible micro transit service to enhance expanded service options. Adding micro transit (which is more like a ride-hailing service such as an Uber/Lyft style service), would offer additional service in a smaller service area. This service is designed to allow passengers to take more control of their ride booking by utilizing apps/software and for the most part, bypasses the need for calling the dispatch office. Micro transit could be included in a service delivery model by initially creating several areas or service zones where the microtransit would be offered. Microtransit provided in predetermined zones could be parts of a community or an entire community, such as the University Campus or downtown areas.

3) Explore additional transit service options with Michigan Tech. Some options could include providing additional services (expanding the current Downtowner Route's hours) or possibly integrating micro transit services using the existing mobile application that Michigan Tech users currently employ for transit services.

Options 3 & 4

Under Options 3 and 4, the service options are similar to Option 2.

1) Maintain contract service and expand Demand-Response to a program that allows for service anywhere within the Authority service area. This option allows residents to call at any time during service hours for rides regardless of location. Trips are booked on a first-

come/first serve basis and are comingled when appropriate. This allows for multiple passengers on the bus at one time, however there is the possibility for an increased amount of single rider trips. Example: Add two (2) eight-hour shifts daily to manage the increase in Demand-Response Service. Vehicle deployment can be adjusted as needed for increases/decreases in service.

2) Add a timed route in Hancock similar to Houghton's and possible micro transit service to enhance expanded service options. Adding micro transit (which is more like a ride-hailing service such as an Uber/Lyft style service), would offer additional service in a smaller service area. This service is designed to allow passengers to take more control of their ride booking by utilizing apps/software and for the most part, bypasses the need for calling the dispatch office. Micro transit could be included in a service delivery model by initially creating several areas or service zones where the micro transit would be offered. Micro transit provided in predetermined zones could be parts of a community or an entire community, such as the University Campus or downtown areas.

3) Explore additional transit service options with Michigan Tech. Some options could include providing additional services or possibly integrating micro transit services using the current mobile application that Michigan Tech users currently employ for transit services.

4) Consider expansion by inviting nearby Townships to join the Authority.

Cost Evaluation and Funding Opportunities

Option 1: Maintain Current Organizational Structure

This option maintains status quo operationally with current service areas/fare structures. The table below outlines the FY 2026 Costs for Both Hancock and Houghton.

Table 12: FY 2026 Cost Summary

System	Total Eligible Expenses	Federal	State	Local	Farebox	% Federal	% State	% Local	% Farebox
Hancock	$305,059	$54,911	$93,316	$86,833	$70,000	18%	31%	28%	23%
Houghton	$662,673	$124,781	$202,708	$307,597	$38,764	19%	31%	46%	6%
Total	**$967,732**	**$179,692**	**$296,024**	**$394,430**	**$108,764**	**19%**	**31%**	**41%**	11%

Source: Michigan Department of Transportation

Maintaining current services would result in no changes for FY 2026. Future years would continue as in the past: develop an operating budget that is balanced.

Option 2: Form an Act 7 Authority

1. Maintain all current services both systems currently offer. Once the system is up and operating, consider adding two additional 8-hour shifts if resources (staff and vehicles) are available. This would be 2 vehicles at 8 hours per day to start at an estimated operating cost of $265,200 (16 hours x 255 days operated x $65 cost per hour). Or, add the 2 buses at 4 hours per day for an estimated cost of $132,600. The formula to determine additional costs can be applied to other expansion scenarios.

2. Add a timed route in Hancock like Houghton's, beginning with the same time configuration (10 am-12 pm). Cost to implement would be one vehicle at 2 hours per day, or $33,150.

3. Add micro transit service (though this would be more dependent on technology—software or mobile application) and would not be feasible until an appropriate technology is procured. Michigan Tech's current mobile application may be adaptable to this type of service. An additional 8 hours of service per day for this service would cost an estimated $132,000.

Option 3: Form an Act 7 Authority and Transition to an Act 196 Authority

1. Maintain all current services both systems currently offer. Once the system is up and operating, consider adding two additional 8-hour shifts if resources (staff and vehicles) are available. This would be 2 vehicles at 8 hours per day to start at an estimated operating cost of $265,200 (16 hours x 255 days operated x $65 cost per hour). Or, add the 2 buses at 4 hours per day for an estimated cost of $132,600. The formula to determine additional costs can be applied to other expansion scenarios.

2. Add a timed route in Hancock like Houghton's, beginning with the same time configuration (10 am-12 pm). Cost to implement would be one vehicle at 2 hours per day, or $33,150.

3. Explore additional service opportunities with Michigan Tech. Each additional service hour could be based on Michigan Tech picking up the local share of the cost. For example, using FY 2026 anticipated state and federal funding and the base cost of $65 per vehicle hour, approximately 48% of the $65 is from state and federal funding. So, $34 per hour would cover the local share in this example. For every additional hour of service provided to Michigan Tech students, faculty and staff could be contracted at $34 per hour. The additional total hours and total expenses would need to be incorporated into the following fiscal year's budget. If it is possible to use Michigan Tech's mobile application for any of the services, it would be prudent to use that interface until other technology can be procured.

4. Either prior to or after transitioning from an Act 7 to an Act 196 Authority, other adjacent townships may desire transit services for their residents. They could join and provide a commensurate amount of local share funding or for the same type of contracted amount as indicated above. Expansion could begin with demand response (either daily or certain days of the week for the interested townships), and the cost per 8 hours of service annualized would be $132,600.

Option 4: Form an Act 196 Authority to combine service

1. Maintain all current services both systems currently offer. Once the system is up and operating, consider adding two additional 8-hour shifts if resources (staff and vehicles) are available. This would be 2 vehicles at 8 hours per day to start at an estimated operating cost of $265,200 (16 hours x 255 days operated x $65 cost per hour). Or, add the 2 buses at 4 hours per day for an estimated cost of $132,600. The formula to determine additional costs can be applied to other expansion scenarios.

2. Add a timed route in Hancock like Houghton's, beginning with the same time configuration (10 am-12 pm). Cost to implement would be one vehicle at 2 hours per day, or $33,150.

3. Explore additional service opportunities with Michigan Tech. Each additional service hour could be based on Michigan Tech picking up the local share of the cost. For example, using FY 2026 anticipated state and federal funding and the base projected cost of $65 per vehicle hour, approximately 48% of the $65 is from state and federal funding. So, $34 per hour would cover the local share in this example. For every additional hour of service provided to Michigan Tech students, faculty and staff could be contracted at $34 per hour. The additional total hours and total expenses would need to be incorporated into the following fiscal year's budget. If it is possible to use

Michigan Tech's mobile application for any of the services, it would be prudent to use that interface until other technology can be procured.

4. After forming the Authority, other local units of government may want to join. They could be accepted as members and would pay a commensurate local share.

Financing Options for Service Expansion under Options 2,3, and 4:

Any transit agency that receives state and federal funds must have a balanced budget. As mentioned above, state and federal funds are paid at a percentage of each agency's eligible expenses. Local funds (farebox revenue, contract revenue, and other local funding) are needed to 'balance' an operating budget. Local funds can come in the form of an appropriation or dedicated transit millage. Houghton and Hancock both provide a yearly appropriation currently to provide the local share. Houghton supplements their local share via a contract with Michigan Tech which is currently $85,560. The current combined local shares for FY 2026 (less the Michigan Tech contract) stands at $308,870. Should the decision be made to form an Act 196 transit authority, the millage would likely have to be a minimum of .9 of a mil, which doesn't leave a lot of room for expansion. Table 13 illustrates millage amounts that could be realized at millage rate percentages of 1 mil.

Table 13: Millage Analysis

Millage Rate	Houghton	Hancock	Total
1.3	$252,426	$201,483	$453,909
1.25	$242,718	$193,734	$436,451
1.2	$233,009	$185,984	$418,993
1.1	$213,591	$170,486	$384,077
1 mil	$194,174	$154,987	$349,161
0.98	$190,291	$151,887	$342,178
0.95	$184,465	$147,238	$331,703
0.9	$174,757	$139,488	$314,245
0.88	$170,873	$136,389	$307,262
0.85	$165,048	$131,739	$296,787
0.8	$155,339	$123,990	$279,329

Source: Mp2planning

As stated above, local share and contract revenue are both required to balance a budget, as well as fare box revenue. Table 14 is an example of fares which a new authority could enact and revenues resulting.

Table 14

Regular Fare	Senior/Disabled Fare	Projected Regular*	Projected Senior/Disabled*	Total Revenue
$2.00	$1.00	59,630	43,160	$162,420.00
$2.50	$1.25	59,630	43,160	$203,025.00
$3.00	$1.50	59,630	43,160	$243,630.00
$3.50	$1.75	59,630	43,160	$284,235.00
$4.00	$2.00	59,630	43,160	$324,840.00
$4.50	$2.25	59,630	43,160	$365,445.00

*Ridership based on Houghton and Hancock's projected FY 2026 ridership and senior/disabled-regular split
Source: Mp2planning

In the case of a $2 base fare, utilizing ½ fare for Seniors/Disabled persons the annual farebox revenue projects to $162,420. If this fare is implemented, it would likely encourage more ridership in Hancock and in Houghton as well. It's significantly lower than Hancock's or Houghton's current fares (other than the Downtowner Route). The historical issue with setting fares too low however has been when they need to be raised. It causes a downturn in ridership for a period of time. It would likely be more practical to set regular fares at $3, which is still lower for all current services other than the Downtowner Route.

Local Funds to Balance

Table 15 illustrates the costs of each service option under an Authority and how much of a local appropriation/mil would be required in local funds. The total expenses are based on FY 2026's total expenses combined for both systems.

Table 15: Local Funding Requirement

Options	Total Expenses*	State Funding**	Federal Funding**	Farebox**	Contract Fares	Local Funding Needed
2-4	$967,732	$296,024	$179,692	$162,420	$85,560	$244,036

*Total expenses include FY 2026 plus additional service costs per option
**State funding estimated at 30.5895%, Federal at 18%, Farebox taken from table above
Source: Mp2planning

No matter which option is chosen, the budget amounts for FY 2026 are locked in, as it's not anticipated that the parties will agree on authority formation prior to August of 2025 (MDOT's last timeframe for adjusting budgets).

Note that the farebox amount was input at the $2 base fare from the farebox table. If the fares are set at a $3 base fare, the local share could be reduced by an additional $81,230.

All of the above estimated FY 2026 operating costs in Table 15 are based on Houghton and Hancock's FY 2024 cost per hour of $63.34. If cost per hour increases or decreases, the estimated costs will go up or down respectively.

Table 16 demonstrates a gradual increase in service each year for Options 2-4. The additions are 24, 20-, 16-, 12- and 8-hour increments annualized. The hourly operating costs are estimated at $65, a slight increase over the current combined cost per hour, but costs per hour likely will not decrease.

It is important to note that the State operating percentage is based on FY 2026's rate of 30.5895%. This figure could go up or down depending on the amount of funds appropriated by the legislature each fiscal year and the amount of increases other transit systems in Michigan experience in their budgets.

The Federal operating percentage is 18%, which it has been for some time. However, that percentage is dependent on the amount of federal funds the Michigan Department of Transportation receives each fiscal year as well.

For the projection above, a contract amount of $100,000 is used, which is based on the assumption that there would be some additional contract service with Michigan Tech. This is a very modest increase, and could certainly be more, less, or the same as currently received. Farebox reduction would likely increase use in Hancock and likely Houghton as well. These are estimates only based on Houghton and Hancock's projected ridership for FY 2026.

There are a number of variables which make it difficult to project 'hard' costs, but taking the cost per hour times the amount of hours of additional service gives a good estimate of what additional service will cost. The costs do not take the specifics of hiring an executive director or manager, but those costs are built into the hourly service cost. It's likely the combined agency will need to hire additional drivers, dispatchers, administrative staff (possible HR, accountant and general office help) and possibly mechanics. The accounting and maintenance/repair could be contracted out for a period of time if the agency desired instead of adding staff. Benefits will also fall under the new agency, so these types of conversations will need to occur at the board levels before formation.

If an Act 7 Authority is formed with the intention of transitioning to an Act 196 Authority, or if it is decided to just form an Act 196 Authority, the question will become a millage election to raise local funds and transfer that from the Cities. Examining the millage table above, along with costs to expand service it appears a .90 mil rate or above would be required to exceed the current level of support which is $308,870 combined. A .98 or a full 1 mil would be likely needed to support any expansion efforts, though local contract increases could mitigate that somewhat. If fares were set at $3, along with a gradual increase of 8 hours of service per day per fiscal year, the millage should sustain operations at .98 mil or higher. Again, it also depends on how many additional local contract funds are obtained. Basing operations on the lowest budget targets and gradually expanding makes the most fiscal sense.

Table 16: Incremental Service Cost

Table 16 - Future Service Cost

FY 2027-$2 Base Fare								
FY 2026 Budget	Expansion	Total Expenses	State	Federal	Contracts	Farebox	Local	+Hours
$967,732	$397,800	$1,365,532	$417,709	$245,796	$100,000	$162,420	$439,607	6,120
$967,732	$331,500	$1,299,232	$397,429	$233,862	$100,000	$162,420	$405,522	5,100
$967,732	$265,200	$1,232,932	$377,148	$221,928	$100,000	$162,420	$371,437	4,080
$967,732	$198,900	$1,166,632	$356,867	$209,994	$100,000	$162,420	$337,351	3,060
$967,732	$132,600	$1,100,332	$336,586	$198,060	$100,000	$162,420	$303,266	2,040
FY 2027-$3 Base Fare								
FY 2026 Budget	Expansion	Total Expenses	State	Federal	Contracts	Farebox	Local	+Hours
$967,732	$397,800	$1,365,532	$417,709	$245,796	$100,000	$243,630	$358,397	6,120
$967,732	$331,500	$1,299,232	$397,429	$233,862	$100,000	$243,630	$324,312	5,100
$967,732	$265,200	$1,232,932	$377,148	$221,928	$100,000	$243,630	$290,227	4,080
$967,732	$198,900	$1,166,632	$356,867	$209,994	$100,000	$243,630	$256,141	3,060
$967,732	$132,600	$1,100,332	$336,586	$198,060	$100,000	$243,630	$222,056	2,040
FY 2028-$2 Base Fare								
FY 2027 Budget	Expansion	FY 2028 Budget	State	Federal	Contracts	Farebox	Local	+Hours
$1,365,532	$397,800	$1,763,332	$539,394	$317,400	$100,000	$162,400	$644,138	6,120
$1,299,232	$331,500	$1,630,732	$498,833	$293,532	$100,000	$162,400	$575,967	5,100
$1,232,932	$265,200	$1,498,132	$458,271	$269,664	$100,000	$162,400	$507,797	4,080
$1,166,632	$198,900	$1,365,532	$417,709	$245,796	$100,000	$162,400	$439,627	3,060
$1,100,332	$132,600	$1,232,932	$377,148	$221,928	$100,000	$162,400	$371,457	2,040
FY 2028-$3 Base Fare								
FY 2027 Budget	Expansion	FY 2028 Budget	State	Federal	Contracts	Farebox	Local	+Hours
$1,365,532	$397,800	$1,763,332	$539,394	$317,400	$100,000	$243,630	$562,908	6,120
$1,299,232	$331,500	$1,630,732	$498,833	$293,532	$100,000	$243,630	$494,737	5,100
$1,232,932	$265,200	$1,498,132	$458,271	$269,664	$100,000	$243,630	$426,567	4,080
$1,166,632	$198,900	$1,365,532	$417,709	$245,796	$100,000	$243,630	$358,397	3,060
$1,100,332	$132,600	$1,232,932	$377,148	$221,928	$100,000	$243,630	$290,227	2,040
FY 2029-$2 Base Fare								
FY 2028 Budget	Expansion	FY 2029 Budget	State	Federal	Contracts	Farebox	Local	+Hours
$1,763,332	$397,800	$2,161,132	$661,079	$389,004	$100,000	$162,400	$848,649	6,120
$1,630,732	$331,500	$1,962,232	$600,237	$353,202	$100,000	$162,400	$746,393	5,100
$1,498,132	$265,200	$1,763,332	$539,394	$317,400	$100,000	$162,400	$644,138	4,080
$1,365,532	$198,900	$1,564,432	$478,552	$281,598	$100,000	$162,400	$541,882	3,060
$1,232,932	$132,600	$1,365,532	$417,709	$245,796	$100,000	$162,400	$439,627	2,040
FY 2028 Budget	Expansion	FY 2029 Budget	State	Federal	Contracts	Farebox	Local	+Hours
$1,763,332	$397,800	$2,161,132	$661,079	$389,004	$100,000	$243,630	$767,419	6,120
$1,630,732	$331,500	$1,962,232	$600,237	$353,202	$100,000	$243,630	$665,163	5,100
$1,498,132	$265,200	$1,763,332	$539,394	$317,400	$100,000	$243,630	$562,908	4,080
$1,365,532	$198,900	$1,564,432	$478,552	$281,598	$100,000	$243,630	$460,652	3,060
$1,232,932	$132,600	$1,365,532	$417,709	$245,796	$100,000	$243,630	$358,397	2,040

Two of the biggest issues in the public transit field are finding drivers and having enough vehicles to meet the needs. All of the ideas of adding service 'goes out the window' without an adequate number of employees. If you have adequate employees and not enough vehicles that is an issue as well. Conversely, if an agency has adequate vehicles but not enough employees it causes the same issue. As it has been taking 2-3 years from grant to receiving a bus, transit planning is extremely important.

Vehicle and Facilities Plan

Vehicles

Houghton – The city of Houghton operates a fleet of 8 vehicles: 2 Medium Duty Buses, 1 Light Duty Cutaway, and 5 Full Size Vans. See Table 17 below.

Table 17: City of Houghton Inventory

Vehicle Type	Year	Seats	# of Wheelchair Seats	Mileage	Vehicle Length
Light Duty Cutaway	2021	14	2	22,741	24
Medium Duty	2025	22	2	647	32
Medium Duty	2022	28	2	39,604	32
Full Size Van	2020	12	2	42,157	21
Full Size Van	2021	14	1	13,351	24
Full Size Van	2021	14	1	12,532	24
Full Size Van	2021	14	1	26,010	24
Full Size Van	2025	12	2	700	21

The city of Houghton is eligible for 4 replacement vehicles per the MDOT annual application for fiscal year 2026. Should they be awarded funding from this application, the projected cost for vehicles will be $440,000.

Hancock – The city of Hancock operates a fleet of 6 vehicles: 3 Small Light Duty Cutaway buses, 2 Light Duty Cutaway Buses and 1 Small Light Duty Van. See Table 18 below.

Table 18: City of Hancock Vehicle Inventory

Vehicle Type	Year	Seats	Wheelchair Seats	Mileage	Vehicle Length
Light Duty Cutaway	2019	14	2	81,369	14
Light Duty Cutaway	2018	10	2	83,135	24
Small Light Duty Bus	2020	8	1	73,509	21
Small Light Duty Bus	2017	10	2	111,180	21
Small Light Duty Bus	2019	8	1	92,602	21
Small Light Duty Van	2018	7	0	40,152	7

The city of Hancock is eligible for 5 replacement vehicles per the MDOT annual application for fiscal year 2026. If they are awarded funding from this application, the projected cost for vehicles will be $650,000. The breakdown is as follows.

- 4 Small Light Duty Buses - $580,000 at a cost of $145,000 per bus.
- 1 Small Light Duty Van - $71,000.

Consolidation

If the two cities decide to consolidate, they will have a total of 14 vehicles. If the type of vehicles remains the same as they are now, the breakdown for the combined systems will be:

- 2 Medium Duty Buses
- 3 Light Duty Cutaway Buses
- 3 Small Duty Buses
- 5 Full Size Vans

- 1 Small Duty Van

The consultant team recommends that neither system should downsize if consolidation occurs. Once the system is up and running, it will be possible to determine any fleet adjustments. It appears that the current mix of vehicles will be adequate to meet needs for the foreseeable future. Based on the funding program requested for all replacement vehicles, it is recommended that each system be watchful in applying for all Notice of Federal Funding Opportunities (NOFO) that are announced by the Federal Transit Administration.

If consolidation of the cities is decided, there may be a need to revise the size of some vehicles in the fleet after evaluation of services. Keeping the Medium Duty Buses would most likely be warranted, should the combined agencies decide to add new routes outside the city limits or seek out additional contractual services with Michigan Technological University (MTU). There may also be a need to modify the fleet size in the future by expansion or reduction, again depending on services offered. It is recommended that the systems look at industry trends and partially revise the number of Cutaway and Small Duty Buses to Full Size Vans with respect to Demand Response service.

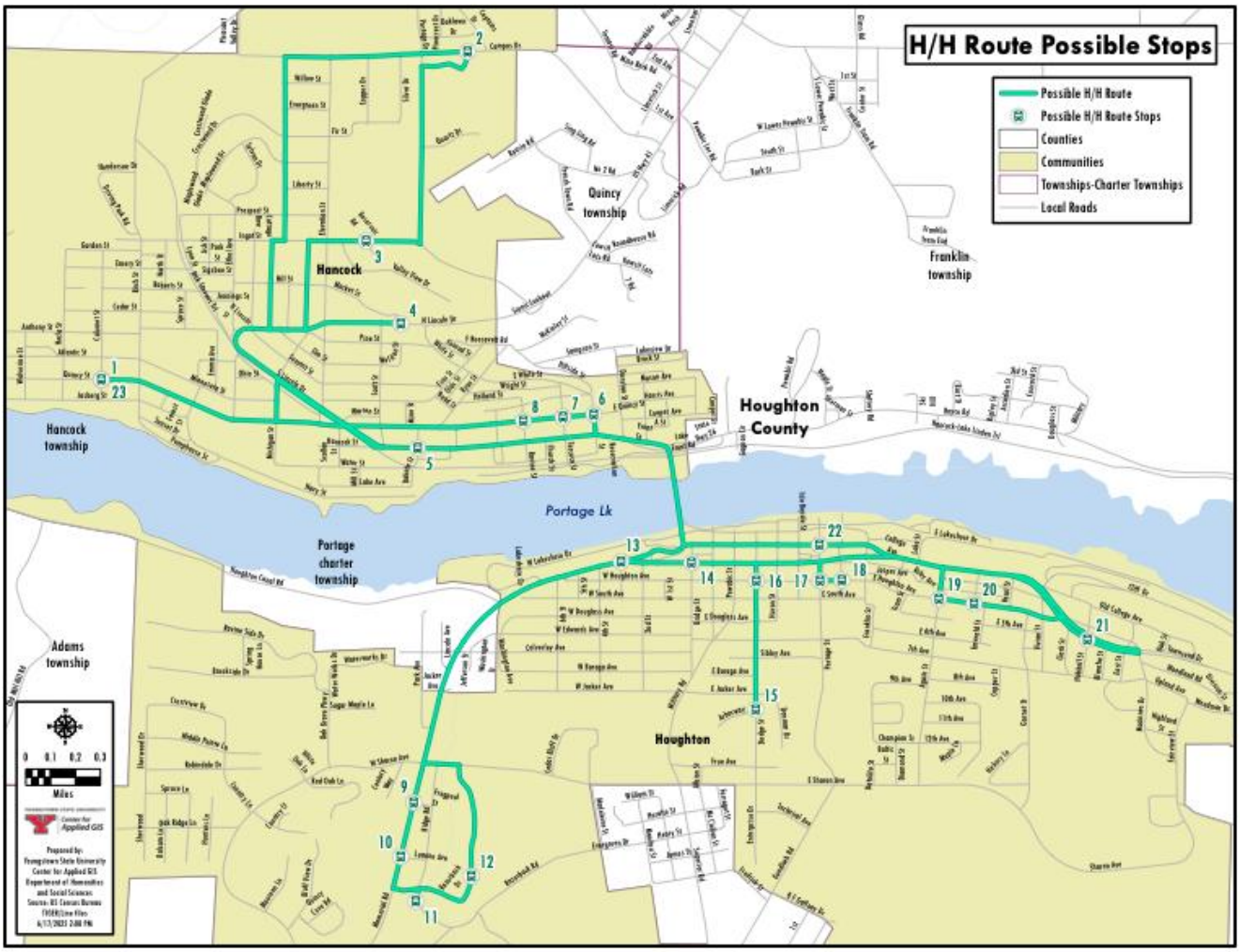
Potential Future Routes

Below are some service options that the new Authority may want to pursue in the future, along with projected hours and cost per each route option. The impetus for these proposals is a set of potential routes identified in a 2022 study sponsored by the National Association of Development Organizations, which included a fixed-route service analysis.

Option 1: Combined Houghton/Hancock Route

This route (Figure 3) combines a Hancock route with the existing Houghton Downtowner and the City Commuter Shuttle. It has 23 total stops. This route would begin and end at Lakeview Manor, and would have a headway of 64 minutes, so approximately an hour. This total includes projected dwell time of 13 ½ minutes (pickups and drop-offs at stops). Total distance is approximately 16 miles. If this route is run 8 hours per day, 255 days per year, the cost at $65 per hour would be $132,600. This route could combine some of the existing service in Hancock and Houghton, possibly reducing one or two vehicles in service. If other service hours can be reduced to offset the combined route, costs may not increase significantly.

Figure 3



This route combines a Hancock route with the existing Houghton Downtowner and the City Commuter Shuttle. It has 23 total stops (Table 19). This route would begin and end at Lakeview Manor, and would have a headway of 64 minutes, so approximately an hour. This total includes projected dwell time of 13½ minutes (pickups and drop-offs at stops). Total distance is approximately 16 miles. If this route is run 8 hours per day, 255 days per year, the cost at $65 per hour would be $132,600.

This route could combine some of the existing service in Hancock and Houghton, possibly reducing one or two vehicles in service. If other service hours can be reduced to offset the combined route, costs may not increase significantly.

Table 19 Combined Houghton/Hancock Timed Stop Route

1	Lakeview Manor	9	Walgreens	17	Houghton & Portage St.
2	UP Health	10	McDonald's	18	Houghton & Franklin St.
3	Hancock Apartments	11	Walmart	19	Houghton & Agate St.
4	Dollar General	12	Goodwill	20	Houghton & Emerald St.
5	Little Brothers	13	Houghton & 4th	21	MUB
6	La Cantina	14	Houghton & Bridge St	22	Houghton City Center
7	Clubhouse	15	Arbor Green	23	Lakeview Manor
8	Superior Nat'l. Bank	16	Houghton Courthouse		

Option 2: Southern Route

This route (Figure 4) would run from Houghton south to Chassell, west to Painsedale, north to South Range, and back to Houghton. Potential stops are shown in Table 20. This route would be approximately 25 miles long, with 8 stops. The total travel time with stops would be approximately 64 minutes. Cost for this route, running 6.4 hours per day (6 runs) five days a week would be $106,080. This route could be added sometime in the future and possibly 2-3 days per week to start, which would result in a lower cost. 104 days (2 days per week) at 6.4 hours per day would result in an approximate cost of $43,264. Starting at 3 days per week (152 days) at 6.4 hours per day would result in an approximate cost of $63,232. It would be prudent to start any new service as demonstration project to see if it would garner ridership.

Figure 4

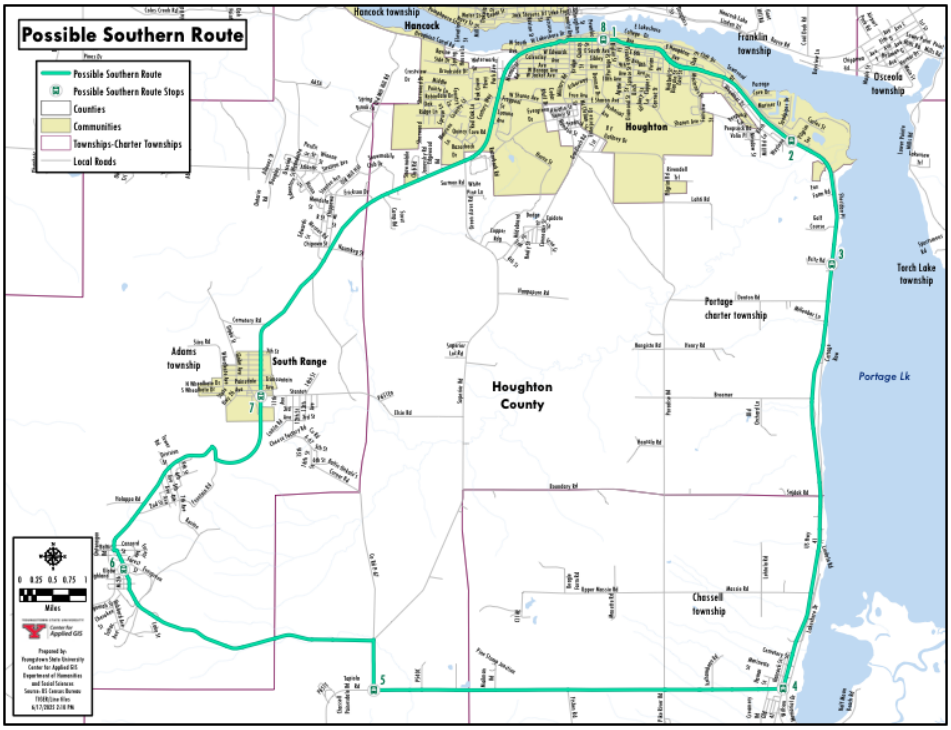


Table 20 Southern Route Stops

1	Houghton City Hall
2	Nara Nature Park
3	US-41 and Britz Rd.
4	US-41 and 5th St. (Chassell)
5	Superior and Chassell Painsedale Rd.
6	Kearsarge St. and Hulbert (Painesdale)
7	M-26 and Stanton Ave. (South Range)
8	Houghton City Hall

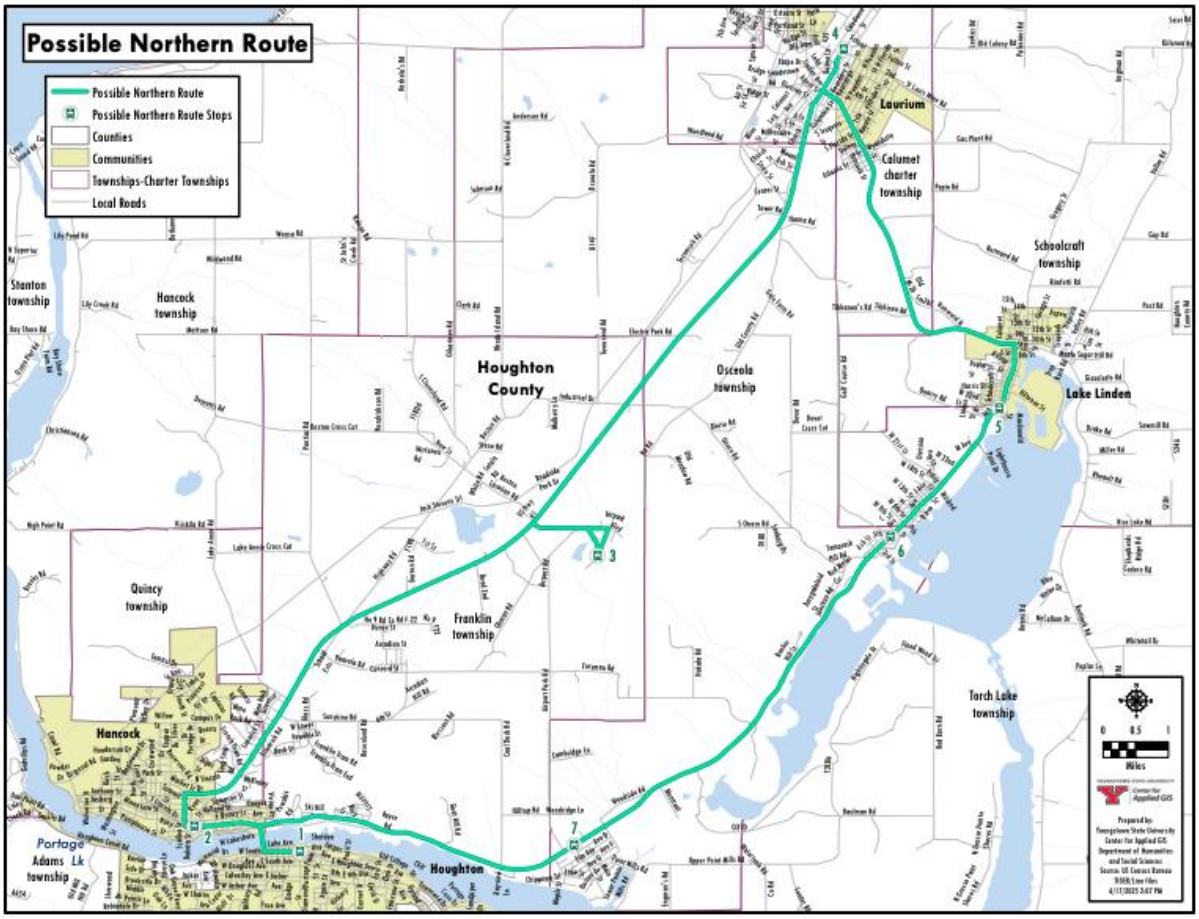
Option 3: Northern Route

This route (Figure 5) would cover just over 30 miles and take 70 minutes (including stops and dwell time). It would have 8 stops. Using a basis of running 5 days per week at 3 times per day, the route would require 3 ½ hours per day. The cost for this route service would approximately be $58,013 per year. If running twice a day at 5 days per week (2.33 hours per day), the approximate cost would be $38,619. Starting at two times per day would likely be the best option of the two. Potential stops for this route are shown in Table 21.

Table 21 Northern Route Stops

1	Houghton City Hall
2	Hancock City Hall
3	Houghton County Airport
4	Float Copper Memorial (Calumet)
5	Lake Linden Park (Lake Linden)
6	Tamarack Park (Hubbell)
7	M-26 & Main St. (Dollar Bay)
8	Houghton City Hall

Figure 5



Technology

Houghton and Hancock's current transit systems relies heavily on manual processes, which can lead to inefficiencies and potential safety hazards. Implementing dispatch and scheduling software could streamline operations, reduce the workload for drivers, and enhance overall safety. Transitioning to a digital system will require an initial investment and training, but the long-term benefits could significantly enhance efficiency and safety for both drivers and passengers. Public transit dispatching and scheduling software is designed to streamline operations for transit agencies. Here's an overview of its key features, benefits, and examples of popular solutions:

Key Features

- Real-time Dispatching: Allows for immediate assignment of trips to drivers based on their location and availability, optimizing response times.
- Automated Scheduling: Generates schedules based on demand, historical data, and current traffic conditions, ensuring efficient route planning.

- Mobile Applications: Drivers can receive trip assignments, updates, and communicate with dispatch in real-time via mobile devices.
- Improved Communication: A centralized system can provide real-time updates and communication between drivers and dispatchers, minimizing misunderstandings.
- Routing Optimization: Utilizes algorithms to find the most efficient routes, taking into account traffic patterns and passenger needs. By analyzing trip patterns, agencies can optimize their routes and schedules to better serve the community
- Trip Management: Facilitates the handling of trip requests, cancellations, and changes seamlessly.
- Data Tracking: Software can capture data on trip requests, driver performance, and customer feedback, which can be valuable for improving service quality.
- Reporting and Analytics: Provides insights into operational performance, ridership trends, and service quality to inform decision-making.
- Integration Capabilities: Can integrate with other systems such as fare collection, customer relationship management (CRM), and geographic information systems (GIS).

Benefits

- Efficiency: Reduces manual workload, allowing staff to focus on other critical tasks.
- Improved Service: Enhances responsiveness to passenger needs and reduces wait times.
- Improved Passenger Experience: Dispatch software provides passengers with accurate estimated arrival times (ETAs) and timely notifications about delays or route changes.
- Improved Response to Service Disruptions: Dispatch software enables quick and efficient communication and coordination between dispatchers, drivers, and passengers, facilitating a swift response to service disruptions and emergencies.
- Data-Driven Decisions: Analytics help transit agencies understand trends and improve service delivery.
- Cost Savings: Optimized routes and schedules can lead to reduced operational costs.
- Enhanced Safety: Minimizes distractions for drivers by reducing phone communications during service.

Key Considerations

- Scalability: Choose software that can grow with the agency's needs and handle increased ridership or service changes.
- User Training: Ensure that staff members are trained on the new system to maximize its benefits.
- Integration: Look for solutions that easily integrate with existing systems to create a cohesive operational environment.
- Support and Maintenance: Consider the level of customer support and maintenance offered by the software provider.
- Popular Software Solutions include: Ecolane; PCTrans; QRyde; RideCo; Trip Master; Trip Spark; and VIA.

The cost for software is dependent on several factors. Most Request for Proposals (RFPs) will require that the cost be broken down into several categories so the agency can understand the overall cost of a project. Those costs will include:

- Computer, network equipment, software and other materials
- Installation, configuration, data migration and any other services
- Licenses, fees or other costs necessary to complete the project
- Recurring monthly or annual support costs
- Tablet hardware, software and data
- Total cost of project over a given number of years

The choice between a cloud-based network and a transit system's server can lead to variations in upfront and annual expenses. Understanding the cost structure and timeframes of each proposal is crucial. For a dispatch and scheduling system, including tablets for up to 15 buses, the estimated total project cost over three years ranges from $250,000 to $350,000. Be prepared for potential additional costs related to cellular services and local IT support. Investing in dispatching and scheduling software can significantly improve the efficiency and safety of public transit operations. By automating many of the manual processes currently in place, agencies can better serve their communities while optimizing resources. *Efficiency in operations not only saves costs but also builds trust with your customers. Streamlined systems lead to happier passengers and a smoother ride for everyone involved.* When considering a solution, it's essential to evaluate the specific needs of the transit agency and how different software options align with those needs. Dispatch and Scheduling software can be applied for through MDOT's annual application process and also through Rural Task Force funds.

10. PROCESS FOR FORMING AN AUTHORITY

Act 7 Authority

To form an Act 7 authority in Michigan, a joint exercise of power agreement must be created through an interlocal agreement. This agreement allows two or more municipalities to cooperate on a particular project or function. The process involves determining that a cooperative venture is in the public's best interest, setting a public hearing, and then adopting the agreement after the hearing.

- Determine the Need and Purpose:

  The governing body of the involved municipalities must determine that it's in the public's best interest to cooperate on a specific project or function. This could be for economic development, infrastructure improvements, or other shared goals.

- Public Hearing:

  A public hearing must be held to allow for community input and feedback on the proposed authority. Notice of the hearing must be given to taxpayers within the proposed district and to the governing bodies of all affected taxing jurisdictions.

- Interlocal Agreement:

  After the public hearing, the municipalities can adopt the interlocal agreement, which officially creates the Act 7 authority. This agreement should specify the purpose, powers, and limitations of the authority, as well as the method for selecting its governing body and officials.

- Publication and Filing:

  The agreement must be published in a local newspaper and filed with the Secretary of State.

Both Cities can determine the number of board members as well as the board structure(i.e. 2 members appointed by each city and a member at large appointed by the 4). The agreement can specify the local share amounts and/or a methodology for determining the ongoing local contributions. In the option of transitioning, the same local share amounts would continue until the transition to an Act 196 Authority.

Act 196 Authority (formed from an existing Act 7 Authority or Initial Formation)

To form a Public Transit Authority (PTA) under Act 196 in Michigan, a political subdivision or combination of two or more such subdivisions must adopt articles of incorporation. This is done by a majority vote of the members elected to and serving on the legislative body of each participating political subdivision. The steps to Form an Act 196 Authority are addressed next.

Establish Intent:

The governing body (council, commission, etc.) of the political subdivision(s) interested in forming the authority must formally express their intent to do so. This typically involves passing a resolution.

- **Develop Articles of Incorporation:**

  A comprehensive set of articles must be drafted, outlining the name, purpose, and structure of the proposed authority.

- **Adoption by Political Subdivisions:**

  Each participating political subdivision must formally adopt the articles of incorporation by a majority vote of their governing body.

- **Filing and Publication:**

  The adopted articles must be filed with the Michigan Secretary of State and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and then published in a designated manner.

- **Membership:**

  Additional political subdivisions can join the authority after its formation by adopting a resolution and amending the articles of incorporation, which must then be approved by a 2/3 vote of the authority's board.

Key Considerations:

- **Boundaries:**

  A political subdivision or a portion of one (bounded by precinct lines) can participate.

- **Taxation:**

  The formation of the authority itself does not impose a tax, but participation in the authority means a jurisdiction's voters will have the opportunity to approve a future millage for transportation services.

- **Withdrawal:**
  A political subdivision can withdraw from the authority, subject to voter approval and certain conditions.

If transitioning from an Act 7 to an Act 196, the parties would agree to dissolve the Act 7 Authority once the Act 196 Authority is formed. Note, as mentioned elsewhere, there is an attorney general opinion that states that Act 196 authorities cannot be dissolved without an act of the legislature.

References: Link to Act 7: https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Laws/MCL?objectName=mcl-Act-7-of-1967-Ex-Sess-; Link to Act 196: https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Laws/MCL?objectName=mcl-Act-196-of-1986

11. RECOMMENDATION

A key question raised during this study has been what the costs to the cities in a combined operation will be as opposed to what they experience today. As mentioned earlier in the report, the best way to establish costs for public transit agencies is to use a cost allocation model. There are a variety of methods for this analysis. Because MDOT's basic metric for budgeting is based on cost per hour, this is the method used. This cost per hour includes all costs (wages, benefits, maintenance, utilities, insurance, etc). Cost per hour will increase with increased hours of service, increased wages and benefits, increased fuel cost, increased maintenance cost, etc. That cost will vary on a yearly basis. The local share (at present local government appropriations) is all dependent on how much service is provided and what the State and Federal percentages of cost are provided. Table 21 illustrates the cost impact of a consolidation program, which may lead to an authority.

The consultant recommendation is that the cities pursue development of an Act 196 Authority with the idea of operating for a period of two years and then seeking a local millage to fund the system. There are systems that have evolved from consolidations that have been successful (BATA in Traverse City), and there are systems who have recently consolidated or are currently examining consolidation (Cass County and Battle Creek/Calhoun County). The cities could also do this in a step-wise process as detailed in Option 3 if the need for a legislative change to dissolve a 196 proves to be an issue. The goal of this system would be to remove the day-to-day operation responsibilities from the cities while allowing for continuation of the existing valued service and enhancing that for the residents of the area. As shown in the survey, there was substantial response from residents outside the limits so future expansion into areas of the county not currently served is a distinct possibility. Finally, Michigan Tech has been a valued contributor to this study effort, and it is felt that contracting with and possibly expanding their collaboration with the new authority would benefit both the residents of the Houghton/Hancock area as well as the Michigan Tech community.

Table 21: Current and Possible Future Authority Revenues/Expenses

	Houghton FY 2026	Hancock FY 2026	Combined FY 2026	Authority	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
				Baseline Cost with 5% increase	$1,081,607	$1,135,688	$1,219,496
Expanded MTU Contract Service (10 hours per day, 144 days at $65)						$93,360	$93,360
Projected Operating Expenses	**$662,673**	**$305,059**	**$967,732**		**$1,081,607**	**$1,229,288**	**$1,286,072**
Anticipated Funding Sources for Operating							
State	$202,708	$93,316	$296,024		$330,858	$376,033	$393,403
Federal	$119,281	$54,911	$174,192		$194,689	$221,272	$231,493
Subtotal State/Federal Funding	**$321,989**	**$148,227**	**$470,216**		**$525,547**	**$597,305**	**$624,896**
Local							
Passenger Fares	$38,764	$70,000	$108,764		$114,202	$119,912	$125,908
Contract Fares	$85,560	$0	$85,560		$85,560	$179,160	$179,160
Local Funding	$222,037	$86,658	$308,695		$356,297	$332,911	$453,909
Interest Income		$175					
Subtotal Local	$346,341	$156,832	$503,173		$556,059	$631,983	$758,977
Total Projected Operating Revenue	**$668,350**	**$305,059**	**$973,409**		**$1,081,607**	**$1,229,288**	**$1,383,837**
Houghton Local Share @ 50%			$154,348		$178,149	$166,456	$0
Hancock Local Share @ 50%			$154,348		$178,149	$166,456	$0
Houghton Local Share @ 70%			$216,087		$249,408	$233,038	$0
Hancock Local Share @ 30%			$92,608		$106,899	$99,873	$0
Millage @ 1.3 mils							**$453,909**

APPENDIX A: SURVEY FORM

The City of Houghton and the City of Hancock are conducting a survey to gather public input for their transportation service plan. Please complete the enclosed survey. We are especially interested in evaluating the future demand for public transportation in the county where we do not currently serve and to see if the city systems in Houghton and Hancock can operate more efficiently or be merged. The survey is being conducted by Mp2planning. For questions about the survey, please contact Gail at the City of Houghton at gail@cityofhoughton.com or Mike at the City of Hancock at transit@cityofhancock.com. If you prefer to take the survey online, please go to ridersurvey.com and enter the following passcode 1000. Your passcode may only be used one time.

1. **Are you aware there is public transportation in the Houghton/Hancock area?**
   a. Yes b. No
2. **Which of the following services do you, or does anyone in your home, use:**
   a. Houghton Transit b. Hancock Transit c. University service d. None **(Go to Q6)**
3. **What is the primary reason you use transit? (Select only one)**
   a. Working or seeking employment
   b. Shopping, Banking and/or Errands
   c. Attending school or training
   d. Medical or dental appointments
   e. Social/recreation
   f. Other
4. **How often do you use transit?**
   a. 2-3 times per week or more
   b. Once a week
   c. Once or twice a month
   d. Less than once a month
5. **If you use the University City Commuter service, would you use the service more when school is not in session if it were free like it is during the school year?** a. Yes b. No c. Does not apply

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6. **What is the reason(s)for not utilizing public transit? (Select all that apply)**
   a. Own a car
   b. Have alternate transportation
   c. Hours of operation too limited
   d. Doesn't go where I need to go
   e. Cost to ride is a factor
   f. Did not know we had public transportation

OVER

7. **Do you, or other adults in your home, choose not to drive or to limit the amount of driving when possible (to reduce fuel consumption)?**

   a. Yes b. No

8. **Because of gas prices or other convenience factors, would you or other members of your household consider using a public transportation service if it met your needs?**

   a. Yes b. No c. Not sure

9. **If you were to consider using transit, please indicate what improvements you think would be important? (Select all that apply)**

   a. Later/evening weekday
   b. Weekend Daytime Service
   c. Weekend Evening Service
   d. Regularly scheduled bus route
   e. On request transportation service
   f. Smart-phone scheduling
   g. Other _____

10. **Do you support affordable public transportation for senior and disabled persons?**

    a. Yes b. No c. Not sure

11. **Would you support additional funding (increased millage or special assessment) dedicated to expanding public transportation services in Houghton County?**

    a. Yes b. No c. Not sure

12. **What is your general impression of public transportation in the Houghton/Hancock area?**

    a. Adequately meets the community needs
    b. Should be expanded
    c. Works well for those who can't or don't drive
    d. Public transportation is not needed in our area

13. **What best describes your employment status: (Select all that apply)**

    a. Employed, full-time
    b. Employed, part-time
    c. Self-employed
    d. Student
    e. Unemployed
    f. Homemaker
    g. Retired

14. **What is your age?**

    a. Under 18 b. 18 - 55 c. 56 - 70 d. Over 70

15. **What is your gender?**

    a. Female b. Male c. Other

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX B: SURVEY RESULTS HOUGHTON CITY, HANCOCK CITY, OUT-COUNTY (SEE MAIN TEXT FOR TOTAL SAMPLE)

Survey Terms

Survey question responses are often summarized using a table in the format below. (This is the standard format of output generated using SPSS software.) The table below shows fictitious results among 1,000 survey respondents who were asked about the color of their car. The wording of the question used in the survey is shown at the top of the table. Each of the possible answers to the question is shown in a different row of the table. In this example, the respondents were asked to indicate if their car is red, blue, or some other color. That is, the "Valid" response options in the survey were "Red," "Blue," or "Other."

What color is your car?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Red	200	20.0	25.0	25.0
	Blue	500	50.0	62.5	87.2
	Other	100	10.0	12.5	100.0
	Total answering	800	80.0	100.0	
Missing	(No answer)	200	20.0		
Total respondents		1000	100.0		

The number of respondents for each row is shown under "Frequency." For example, 200 respondents indicated that their car is "Red," while 500 selected "Blue."

In a paper survey, not every respondent will answer every question. In some cases, this may be accidental (e.g., the respondent planned to come back to it later but forgot). In other cases, the respondent may choose not to answer for various reasons, such as not wanting to reveal the information or being unsure about the correct answer. In an online survey, questions can be programmed to require a response before continuing, but questions are often not set to "Required" in case a respondent does not want to answer or is not sure how to answer a particular question. When a question in an online survey does not require a response, it is possible for some respondents to skip it, resulting in "Missing" data.

In the example above, 200 respondents did not provide an answer, and this is indicated in the row that begins with "Missing." The column labeled "Percent" shows the percentages based on all 1,000 respondents, regardless of whether the respondent gave a valid answer or not. This shows that 20.0% did not answer the question.

The column labeled "Valid Percent" shows the percentages based only on those who answered the question. For example, 25.0% *of those who answered the question* indicated that their car is red (i.e., 200 / 800 = 25.0%).

The "Cumulative Percent" adds "Valid Percents" going down. For example, 87.2% is the proportion of those answering the question who selected Red (25.0%) plus the proportion who selected Blue (62.5%). That is, 25.0% + 62.5% = 87.2%. This can be useful for some types of

questions but not necessarily all questions. If the "Cumulative Percent" information is not considered useful for a particular question, it can be ignored.

In some situations, a question might have answers for all respondents. For example, if it is known which respondents responded by paper survey and which respondents responded online, the table summarizing the results for survey mode wouldn't have any "Missing" data. In this case, the "Percent" would be the same as the "Valid Percent" for each row, and the "Missing" row would not show in the table. In the example table below, 90.0% of the respondents filled out a paper survey, and this is both the "Percent" and the "Valid Percent" answering by paper, because the source is known for all respondents.

Survey Mode / Source					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Paper	900	90.0	90.0	90.0
	Passcode online	100	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total		1000	100.0		

HOUGHTON CITY SURVEY RESULTS

Q1. Are you aware there is public transportation in the Houghton/Hancock area?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	279	95.9	96.9	96.9
	No	9	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	288	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.0		
Total		291	100.0		

Q2. Which of the following services do you, or does anyone in your home, use:

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$Q2	Q2a. USE: Houghton Transit	77	26.1%	27.7%
	Q2b. USE: Hancock Transit	14	4.7%	5.0%
	Q2c. USE: University service	13	4.4%	4.7%
	Q2d. USE: None	191	64.7%	68.7%
Total		295	100.0%	106.1%

Q3. What is the primary reason you use transit? (Select only one)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Working or seeking employment	14	4.8	19.2	19.2
	Shopping, banking and/or errands	21	7.2	28.8	47.9
	Attending school or training	8	2.7	11.0	58.9
	Medical or dental appointments	18	6.2	24.7	83.6
	Social/recreation	4	1.4	5.5	89.0
	Other	8	2.7	11.0	100.0
	Total	73	25.1	100.0	
Missing	System	218	74.9		
Total		291	100.0		

Q4. How often do you use transit?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2-3 times per week or more	23	7.9	26.4	26.4
	Once a week	10	3.4	11.5	37.9
	Once or twice a month	19	6.5	21.8	59.8
	Less than once a month	35	12.0	40.2	100.0
	Total	87	29.9	100.0	
Missing	System	204	70.1		
Total		291	100.0		

Q5. If you use the University City Commuter service, would you use the service more when school is not in session if it were free like it is during the school year?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	14	4.8	22.6	22.6
	No	4	1.4	6.5	29.0
	Does not apply	44	15.1	71.0	100.0
	Total	62	21.3	100.0	
Missing	System	229	78.7		
Total		291	100.0		

Q6. What is the reason(s)for not utilizing public transit? (Select all that apply)

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$Q6	Q6a. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Own a car	225	59.4%	84.3%
	Q6b. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Have alternate transportation	43	11.3%	16.1%
	Q6c. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Hours of operation too limited	45	11.9%	16.9%
	Q6d. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Doesn't go where I need to go	39	10.3%	14.6%
	Q6e. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Cost to ride is a factor	18	4.7%	6.7%
	Q6f. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Did not know we had public transportation	9	2.4%	3.4%
Total		379	100.0%	141.9%

Q7. Do you, or other adults in your home, choose not to drive or to limit the amount of driving when possible (to reduce fuel consumption)?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	141	48.5	50.5	50.5
	No	138	47.4	49.5	100.0
	Total	279	95.9	100.0	
Missing	System	12	4.1		
Total		291	100.0		

Q8. Because of gas prices or other convenience factors, would you or other members of your household consider using a public transportation service if it met your needs?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	178	61.2	63.1	63.1
	No	44	15.1	15.6	78.7
	Not sure	60	20.6	21.3	100.0
	Total	282	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	9	3.1		
Total		291	100.0		

Q9. If you were to consider using transit, please indicate what improvements you think would be important? (Select all that apply)

		Responses		Percent of
		N	Percent	Cases
$Q9	Q9a. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Later/evening weekday	102	16.4%	41.3%
	Q9b. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Weekend Daytime Service	115	18.5%	46.6%
	Q9c. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Weekend Evening Service	63	10.1%	25.5%
	Q9d. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Regularly scheduled bus route	113	18.2%	45.7%
	Q9e. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: On request transportation service	116	18.7%	47.0%
	Q9f. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Smart-phone scheduling	82	13.2%	33.2%
	Q9g. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Other	30	4.8%	12.1%
Total		621	100.0%	251.4%

Q10. Do you support affordable public transportation for senior and disabled persons?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	272	93.5	94.8	94.8
	No	5	1.7	1.7	96.5
	Not sure	10	3.4	3.5	100.0
	Total	287	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	4	1.4		
Total		291	100.0		

Q11. Would you support additional funding (increased millage or special assessment) dedicated to expanding public transportation services in Houghton County?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	162	55.7	57.0	57.0
	No	44	15.1	15.5	72.5
	Not sure	78	26.8	27.5	100.0
	Total	284	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	7	2.4		
Total		291	100.0		

Q12. What is your general impression of public transportation in the Houghton/Hancock area?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Adequately meets the community needs	37	12.7	15.7	15.7
	Should be expanded	95	32.6	40.3	55.9
	Works well for those who can't or don't drive	99	34.0	41.9	97.9
	Public transportation is not needed in our area	5	1.7	2.1	100.0
	Total	236	81.1	100.0	
Missing	System	55	18.9		
Total		291	100.0		

Q13. What best describes your employment status: (Select all that apply)

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$Q13	Q13a. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Employed, full-time	87	27.4%	30.3%
	Q13b. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Employed, part-time	26	8.2%	9.1%
	Q13c. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Self-employed	14	4.4%	4.9%
	Q13d. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Student	10	3.2%	3.5%
	Q13e. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Unemployed	12	3.8%	4.2%
	Q13f. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Homemaker	9	2.8%	3.1%
	Q13g. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Retired	159	50.2%	55.4%
Total		317	100.0%	110.5%

Q14. What is your age?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 - 55	93	32.0	32.7	32.7
	56 - 70	76	26.1	26.8	59.5
	Over 70	115	39.5	40.5	100.0
	Total	284	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	7	2.4		
Total		291	100.0		

Q15. What is your gender?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	168	57.7	60.0	60.0
	Male	111	38.1	39.6	99.6
	Other	1	0.3	0.4	100.0
	Total	280	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	11	3.8		
Total		291	100.0		

HANCOCK CITY SURVEY RESULTS

Q1. Are you aware there is public transportation in the Houghton/Hancock area?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	278	96.5	96.9	96.9
	No	9	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	287	99.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	0.3		
Total		288	100.0		

Q2. Which of the following services do you, or does anyone in your home, use:

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$Q2	Q2a. USE: Houghton Transit	12	4.0%	4.2%
	Q2b. USE: Hancock Transit	85	28.6%	29.9%
	Q2c. USE: University service	12	4.0%	4.2%
	Q2d. USE: None	188	63.3%	66.2%
Total		297	100.0%	104.6%

Q3. What is the primary reason you use transit? (Select only one)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Working or seeking employment	6	2.1	7.3	7.3
	Shopping, banking and/or errands	28	9.7	34.1	41.5
	Attending school or training	5	1.7	6.1	47.6
	Medical or dental appointments	21	7.3	25.6	73.2
	Social/recreation	4	1.4	4.9	78.0
	Other	18	6.3	22.0	100.0
	Total	82	28.5	100.0	
Missing	System	206	71.5		
Total		288	100.0		

Q4. How often do you use transit?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2-3 times per week or more	22	7.6	23.7	23.7
	Once a week	15	5.2	16.1	39.8
	Once or twice a month	9	3.1	9.7	49.5
	Less than once a month	47	16.3	50.5	100.0
	Total	93	32.3	100.0	
Missing	System	195	67.7		
Total		288	100.0		

Q5. If you use the University City Commuter service, would you use the service more when school is not in session if it were free like it is during the school year?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	12	4.2	18.5	18.5
	No	4	1.4	6.2	24.6
	Does not apply	49	17.0	75.4	100.0
	Total	65	22.6	100.0	
Missing	System	223	77.4		
Total		288	100.0		

Q6. What is the reason(s)for not utilizing public transit? (Select all that apply)

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$Q6	Q6a. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Own a car	236	63.6%	87.4%
	Q6b. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Have alternate transportation	22	5.9%	8.1%
	Q6c. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Hours of operation too limited	60	16.2%	22.2%
	Q6d. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Doesn't go where I need to go	32	8.6%	11.9%
	Q6e. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Cost to ride is a factor	17	4.6%	6.3%
	Q6f. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Did not know we had public transportation	4	1.1%	1.5%
Total		371	100.0%	137.4%

Q7. Do you, or other adults in your home, choose not to drive or to limit the amount of driving when possible (to reduce fuel consumption)?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	117	40.6	42.1	42.1
	No	161	55.9	57.9	100.0
	Total	278	96.5	100.0	
Missing	System	10	3.5		
Total		288	100.0		

Q8. Because of gas prices or other convenience factors, would you or other members of your household consider using a public transportation service if it met your needs?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	169	58.7	59.9	59.9
	No	48	16.7	17.0	77.0
	Not sure	65	22.6	23.0	100.0
	Total	282	97.9	100.0	
Missing	System	6	2.1		
Total		288	100.0		

Q9. If you were to consider using transit, please indicate what improvements you think would be important? (Select all that apply)

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$Q9	Q9a. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Later/evening weekday	113	18.9%	44.7%
	Q9b. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Weekend Daytime Service	120	20.1%	47.4%
	Q9c. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Weekend Evening Service	77	12.9%	30.4%
	Q9d. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Regularly scheduled bus route	101	16.9%	39.9%
	Q9e. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: On request transportation service	87	14.5%	34.4%
	Q9f. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Smart-phone scheduling	71	11.9%	28.1%
	Q9g. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Other	29	4.8%	11.5%
Total		598	100.0%	236.4%

Q10. Do you support affordable public transportation for senior and disabled persons?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	278	96.5	97.2	97.2
	No	2	0.7	0.7	97.9
	Not sure	6	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	286	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	2	0.7		
Total		288	100.0		

Q11. Would you support additional funding (increased millage or special assessment) dedicated to expanding public transportation services in Houghton County?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	166	57.6	58.5	58.5
	No	32	11.1	11.3	69.7
	Not sure	86	29.9	30.3	100.0
	Total	284	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	4	1.4		
Total		288	100.0		

Q12. What is your general impression of public transportation in the Houghton/Hancock area?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Adequately meets the community needs	23	8.0	9.5	9.5
	Should be expanded	100	34.7	41.2	50.6
	Works well for those who can't or don't drive	117	40.6	48.1	98.8
	Public transportation is not needed in our area	3	1.0	1.2	100.0
	Total	243	84.4	100.0	
Missing	System	45	15.6		
Total		288	100.0		

Q13. What best describes your employment status: (Select all that apply)

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$Q13	Q13a. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Employed, full-time	84	27.4%	29.4%
	Q13b. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Employed, part-time	27	8.8%	9.4%
	Q13c. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Self-employed	11	3.6%	3.8%
	Q13d. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Student	6	2.0%	2.1%
	Q13e. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Unemployed	7	2.3%	2.4%
	Q13f. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Homemaker	11	3.6%	3.8%
	Q13g. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Retired	161	52.4%	56.3%
Total		307	100.0%	107.3%

Q14. What is your age?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 - 55	83	28.8	28.9	28.9
	56 - 70	90	31.3	31.4	60.3
	Over 70	114	39.6	39.7	100.0
	Total	287	99.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	0.3		
Total		288	100.0		

Q15. What is your gender?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	168	58.3	60.0	60.0
	Male	111	38.5	39.6	99.6
	Other	1	0.3	0.4	100.0
	Total	280	97.2	100.0	
Missing	System	8	2.8		
Total		288	100.0		

OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS SURVEY RESULTS

Q1. Are you aware there is public transportation in the Houghton/Hancock area?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	465	86.3	86.9	86.9
	No	70	13.0	13.1	100.0
	Total	535	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	4	0.7		
Total		539	100.0		

Q2. Which of the following services do you, or does anyone in your home, use:

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$Q2	Q2a. USE: Houghton Transit	15	2.8%	2.9%
	Q2b. USE: Hancock Transit	17	3.1%	3.2%
	Q2c. USE: University service	14	2.6%	2.7%
	Q2d. USE: None	494	91.5%	94.1%
Total		540	100.0%	102.9%

Q3. What is the primary reason you use transit? (Select only one)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Working or seeking employment	7	1.3	24.1	24.1
	Shopping, banking and/or errands	11	2.0	37.9	62.1
	Attending school or training	2	0.4	6.9	69.0
	Medical or dental appointments	4	0.7	13.8	82.8
	Social/recreation	2	0.4	6.9	89.7
	Other	3	0.6	10.3	100.0
	Total	29	5.4	100.0	
Missing	System	510	94.6		
Total		539	100.0		

Q4. How often do you use transit?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2-3 times per week or more	11	2.0	37.9	37.9
	Once a week	3	0.6	10.3	48.3
	Once or twice a month	9	1.7	31.0	79.3
	Less than once a month	6	1.1	20.7	100.0
	Total	29	5.4	100.0	
Missing	System	510	94.6		
Total		539	100.0		

Q5. If you use the University City Commuter service, would you use the service more when school is not in session if it were free like it is during the school year?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	10	1.9	47.6	47.6
	No	3	0.6	14.3	61.9
	Does not apply	8	1.5	38.1	100.0
	Total	21	3.9	100.0	
Missing	System	518	96.1		
Total		539	100.0		

Q6. What is the reason(s)for not utilizing public transit? (Select all that apply)

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$Q6	Q6a. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Own a car	446	62.9%	88.3%
	Q6b. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Have alternate transportation	45	6.3%	8.9%
	Q6c. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Hours of operation too limited	44	6.2%	8.7%
	Q6d. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Doesn't go where I need to go	120	16.9%	23.8%
	Q6e. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Cost to ride is a factor	12	1.7%	2.4%
	Q6f. NOT UTILIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT: Did not know we had public transportation	42	5.9%	8.3%
Total		709	100.0%	140.4%

Q7. Do you, or other adults in your home, choose not to drive or to limit the amount of driving when possible (to reduce fuel consumption)?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	233	43.2	44.6	44.6
	No	290	53.8	55.4	100.0
	Total	523	97.0	100.0	
Missing	System	16	3.0		
Total		539	100.0		

Q8. Because of gas prices or other convenience factors, would you or other members of your household consider using a public transportation service if it met your needs?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	249	46.2	47.2	47.2
	No	128	23.7	24.3	71.5
	Not sure	150	27.8	28.5	100.0
	Total	527	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	12	2.2		
Total		539	100.0		

Q9. If you were to consider using transit, please indicate what improvements you think would be important? (Select all that apply)

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$Q9	Q9a. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Later/evening weekday	102	11.8%	23.7%
	Q9b. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Weekend Daytime Service	120	13.9%	27.9%
	Q9c. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Weekend Evening Service	80	9.3%	18.6%
	Q9d. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Regularly scheduled bus route	172	19.9%	40.0%
	Q9e. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: On request transportation service	157	18.2%	36.5%
	Q9f. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Smart-phone scheduling	131	15.2%	30.5%
	Q9g. IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS: Other	101	11.7%	23.5%
Total		863	100.0%	200.7%

Q10. Do you support affordable public transportation for senior and disabled persons?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	491	91.1	93.5	93.5
	No	11	2.0	2.1	95.6
	Not sure	23	4.3	4.4	100.0
	Total	525	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	14	2.6		
Total		539	100.0		

Q11. Would you support additional funding (increased millage or special assessment) dedicated to expanding public transportation services in Houghton County?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	240	44.5	45.8	45.8
	No	101	18.7	19.3	65.1
	Not sure	183	34.0	34.9	100.0
	Total	524	97.2	100.0	
Missing	System	15	2.8		
Total		539	100.0		

Q12. What is your general impression of public transportation in the Houghton/Hancock area?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Adequately meets the community needs	53	9.8	12.6	12.6
	Should be expanded	183	34.0	43.7	56.3
	Works well for those who can't or don't drive	167	31.0	39.9	96.2
	Public transportation is not needed in our area	16	3.0	3.8	100.0
	Total	419	77.7	100.0	
Missing	System	120	22.3		
Total		539	100.0		

Q13. What best describes your employment status: (Select all that apply)

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$Q13	Q13a. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Employed, full-time	160	28.7%	30.5%
	Q13b. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Employed, part-time	47	8.4%	9.0%
	Q13c. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Self-employed	27	4.8%	5.1%
	Q13d. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Student	7	1.3%	1.3%
	Q13e. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Unemployed	9	1.6%	1.7%
	Q13f. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Homemaker	22	3.9%	4.2%
	Q13g. EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Retired	286	51.3%	54.5%
Total		558	100.0%	106.3%

Q14. What is your age?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under 18	2	0.4	0.4	0.4
	18 - 55	150	27.8	28.5	28.8
	56 - 70	176	32.7	33.4	62.2
	Over 70	199	36.9	37.8	100.0
	Total	527	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	12	2.2		
Total		539	100.0		

Q15. What is your gender?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	282	52.3	55.0	55.0
	Male	228	42.3	44.4	99.4
	Other	3	0.6	0.6	100.0
	Total	513	95.2	100.0	
Missing	System	26	4.8		
Total		539	100.0		

APPENDIX C: APRIL 9/10 PUBLIC MEETING NOTES TAKEN DURING THE MEETINGS

- Bus stops with heat lamps
- Event specific shuttles
- Shuttles during Winter Carnival
- Parking is a challenge downtown
- (Need to maintain open door policy if have event specific shuttles)
- Can't compete with private
- Include senior centers on those routes

- Community Action Agency?
- (Need regional connection on Saturday)
- Explore free fare
- (Maybe just on Saturday or off-beat time)
- More ridership / more buy-in for millage
- Farebox adds friction
- (Cost of box, managing box)
- Would rather pay in taxes
- Wants to see route map
- For people who don't have cars – in downtown – heavy need
- Would not need to own car then – Zipcar?

- GTFS
- Routes / fixed route
- No way to get to the mall
- Loop through hospital / Hancock included route
- Authority = C
- Tractor Supply in city
- Portage Township areas
- Bus hop – south end of bridge
- Bus shelters
- Farmer Markets

- Chamber involvement
- Comparative examples of what has worked
- Not having flat fare for Houghton-Hancock
- Difference in fare discourages him from using bus based in Hancock
- Gift card raffle suggestion – first 20 riders get $20

- Bike racks on buses

- Carpooling lots sponsored
- Assure vans are ADA compliant
- Wants option for monthly fare
- Digital wallet
- ? Working for seniors
- Good for students
- Notes:
- Poor cell coverage around university
- Poor experience
- Low income
- Working students
- ---
- Duplication of service
- Needs of community
- Hours
- Weekend / evening
- Airports
- Especially summer evening hours
- Supports transit authority
- Specific homeowner's response
- University: improve routes & signage using professionals
- Maybe churches could collectively pay for church shuttle on Sundays
- Lakeview Comments
- Improve / Expand Routes
- Expand hours to weekends/evenings
- put on route 2nd hand consignment store in Ripley
- Transportation to booksale that is coming up
- Lakeview Manor needs own stop
- Thanks to transit for helping get walker on a bus
- ---
- Locations & Considerations
- Airport
- Aspirus Health Care
- Portage Hospital
- McLain State Park
- Rozsa Center
- Might not like combined routes → would make it too long
- Service & Driver Feedback
- Hours – expansion of downtowner service
- Honored 8 bus drivers
- On TV – appreciative of drivers
- Grade A drivers

- Monthly account
- Free fare may not ↑ ridership – “so cheap now”
- Lamars goes to ski slope w/ students 3x/day

- Routes & Services
- Routes:
- Airport
- Calumet – UP Health System
- Aspirus
- Expanded health care access
- Weekend/evening hours
- Copper Country Mall
- Rozsa Center → fewer handicap parking spaces, so need bus to help handicap
- Marquette shopping
- Downtown trolley –
- Make rules / different lines for where buses can go – for pick up
- Festival service (Bridgefest)
- Fri/Sat/Sunday
- Houghton transit Currently does transportation for some festivals