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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents ................................................................................................................................. 1

Alternative Approaches .......................................................................................................................... 1
  Background ........................................................................................................................................... 1
  Assets to Build On ............................................................................................................................... 2
  Tools and Strategies ............................................................................................................................. 2
    1. Improve integration of public transportation into Marquette’s city core .................. 3
    2. Define and coordinate the roles of NMU’s transit system and Marq-Tran’s service to community core ......................................................................................... 10
    3. Improve integration of public transportation into the Marquette area’s tourism economy .......................................................................................................................... 11
    4. Coordinate and integrate human services transportation into a broader mobility management effort ............................................................................................. 12
    5. Increase the focus on public transportation and mobility management in community planning, decision-making and marketing ........................................... 15
    6. Marketing and Communications ................................................................................................. 16
ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

The purpose of this document is to present a range of approaches for consideration by Marquette stakeholders in furthering a mobility management strategy in the region. Approaches are based on the State of the Practice report, discussions from the Existing Conditions meeting, and consideration of the unique characteristics of Marquette. The focus is on the city core, university, and the corridor that connects them, with strategies that affect the entire county. All strategies support the goal of a vibrant, sustainable and livable community, city and region.

Background

Marquette has chosen to develop regional mobility management strategies under the Michigan Sustainable Communities/Smart Growth America Demonstration Project, with a focus on the 3rd Street Corridor. These strategies and the corridor focus will be designed to optimize organizational structure and service delivery for public transportation services and serve as a model for statewide service delivery.

This is a working document to be used in the second stage of the planning process. Following a stakeholder meeting, the next step is to build an implementation plan including organizational structure, leadership, and responsibilities; financial needs and resources; reporting and performance measures; necessary policy changes; and public engagement and education strategies. The final report will summarize the full process and present a final implementation plan.

Mobility management strategies offer an effective approach to optimizing the value of transportation services. Mobility management encompasses and synthesizes a broad range of complementary strategies that include:

• Qualified professional mobility management staff who coordinate public transportation and human service transportation
• Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Technology designed and implemented using systems engineering
• Effective marketing and convenient service
• Creative, broad-based funding strategies including public-private partnerships, and strong community support and local funding that leverages federal and state funding
• Engagement in transportation demand management and local and regional planning efforts to ensure sustainable, transit oriented community design and growth patterns
Developing a Mobility Management Strategy for Marquette
Smart Growth America

Assets to Build On

“Marquette - The premier livable / walkable winter city in North America” – 2004 Community Master Plan (CMP)

Marquette enjoys many assets that provide a foundation on which to build a more robust network of transportation services that support community goals. It is well suited to take on mobility management strategies that go beyond human service transportation and also integrate and improve service to meet the needs of tourists, students and the general public. The community’s strong sense of partnership and shared commitment are evident in the city. The openness to work together to explore viable strategies to ensure the transportation mobility necessary for sustained economic success in the city is a vital cornerstone of any wide ranging and successful strategy.

The city further enjoys a vibrant year-round population and expanding major institutions who have demonstrated a vested interest in not only the 3rd Street corridor, but also the city core and University area as well. These institutions not only have the ability to make profound change based on their sheer size, but also based on the values and missions that drive them.

Change of any form, however, requires energetic leadership, relationship building and a continued diligence for progressive planning. There is a need to take this planning process to the next level by taking an in-depth look at transit for the city. In this arena too, the city is well positioned to chart and seize a holistic vision of mobility that serves residents, workers, visitors and students regardless of economic or physical ability. Marquette leaders at the citizen, city, and civic levels have shown the willingness to be bold in vision and committed in action. These leaders will be essential in sustaining the momentum and energy needed for what are often slow or sporadic advances.

Mobility management strategies tightly relate to the community vision laid out in the CMP and other planning documents. Mobility management typically focuses on human services, but Marquette has the opportunity to be innovative by designing strategies that integrate human service needs with many other goals the community has identified. The 3rd Street corridor can be a catalyst for implementing mobility management strategies with impact beyond the corridor. Mobility management stakeholders can leverage a timing coincidence with the projected May launch of the update to the Community Master Plan by incorporating ideas and recommendations form this effort.

Tools and Strategies

The working paper focuses on six areas for opportunity in Marquette. Discussion from the first workshop has been captured as potential strategies related to each area. Within each, several potential strategies are provided. These generally range from the most ambitious approach to ideas that are more modest changes, but good first steps. Each opportunity area starts with a list of potential champions. The tools represent a menu of viable approaches, several of which may and should be used in concert with one another.
The coordination between Marq-Tran and NMU is separated out as its own approach because there are many unique and specific issues. Also, in many college towns student, faculty, and staff ridership is a very significant percentage of overall ridership, and funding from the university is a very significant percentage of the transit budget. These strategies are broadly outlined approaches which will be further fleshed out in Working Paper #3 as to their mechanics, specific models to build from, and resources and roles for implementation.

3rd Street is not separated out as an approach because it is just a few blocks from the city core and connects to the university. There are very few (if any) mobility management strategies that make much sense, or that are likely to be viable, if they are exclusively focused on the corridor. This is especially the case because the concept of mobility management is to avoid being narrowly focused. Instead this document incorporates 3rd Street as an element in the range of approaches that benefit the entire community core.

1. Improve integration of public transportation into Marquette’s city core

   Make public transportation an essential element of an efficient, functional, and connected transportation system that helps achieve the community goals of a diverse downtown; livable neighborhoods; walkable community; and all-season quality of life. A central focus should be helping to achieve the goal of making the South 3rd Corridor a vibrant, resilient, mixed-use corridor that links downtown Marquette, Marquette General Hospital, and other large employers with Northern Michigan University (NMU) and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Potential champions: Downtown Development Authority (DDA), City of Marquette, student leaders at NMU

A. Within the city core, design and implement improved and expanded transit service based on an assessment of needs and available funding.

This strategy would be developed and implemented in three stages, with each stage involving a variety of elements that could be prioritized to adjust the project scope to match available resources. The stages would be assessment, service design and implementation.

Assessment: First, the champions would organize a transit needs assessment focusing on target populations and locations including those discussed during the first working group meeting. Target populations could include current public transportation riders; tourists; NMU students, faculty and staff; downtown area employees; evening bar and restaurant patrons; human services agency clients; and residents who live in or near the city core. The objectives would be to identify needs; to assess the extent to which current services are meeting needs as well as barriers to using current services; and to identify options for improving and/or expanding service to best meet needs. It would be particularly important to identify high priority locations for transit stops as well as times when there would be the greatest demand for service – for example: connections to the South 3rd Corridor; connections to beaches, parks, and other in-town recreational destinations; and service for large events in the community core. The assessment can be as simple as a few meetings with key players looking at a
map, or it could be expanded to be the focus of a full transit development plan. Assessment tools could include surveys, interviews, focus groups and public meetings.

It would be important to correlate the transit needs assessment with a consideration of the recent 3rd Street parking assessment and an assessment of parking capacity on campus, at beaches and parks, and downtown. This would help identify opportunities to attract choice riders who are frustrated by limited parking. It could also help guide implementation of parking-related transportation demand management strategies discussed below.

This stage would also include a two-part assessment of potential funding options for expanding and improving transit service in the city core. The first part would be a system-wide analysis of Marq-Tran's performance measures by location, time of day, and weekday/weekend to determine which routes and services are least cost effective. This data could then be compared to the estimated cost effectiveness of expanded service for the city core, providing the basis for a discussion with Marq-Tran to determine whether it would be possible to shift resources. This analysis could be conducted at any time, and could be one of the first actions taken. The second part of the funding assessment would be working with stakeholders in the city core to identify potential new funding sources. These discussions would be most productive once the needs and parking assessments are completed and there is a clear picture of the potential opportunities and benefits of expanded transit service.

Table 1 shows the parameters to consider when estimating costs. Based on a $60 per hour rate, the cost of added one bus operating 12 hours a day, five days per week, would be $184,000. This does not include capital costs of bus purchase, nor does it include the cost of bus stop furniture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Parameter</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operating cost per hour (per Marq Tran)</td>
<td>$60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Speed (mph)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holidays (no service)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual weekdays in operation</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturdays</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundays</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily hours in operation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional operational cost: 1 bus, 12 hours per day</td>
<td>$184,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Service Design:** In this stage, stakeholders would work closely with Marq-Tran to redesign services within the city core to meet the identified needs. It would be important to prioritize the needs so that, if necessary, service changes can be limited and/or staged to stay sustainable relative to available funding. As discussed at the first working group meeting, redesigning transit service within the city core will likely include priorities such as:

- Determining the best stops for NMU and the South 3rd corridor, likely including a stop at the beginning of NMU’s campus.
• Designing routes and identifying stops that integrate transit into the bicycle and pedestrian network, focusing on bicycle and pedestrian connectivity for students, commuters, and tourists, and identifying locations that currently have or should have bicycle parking.

• Exploring the idea of a city circulator route that changes twice a year so that it is focused on serving student needs during NMU’s spring and fall semesters, and focuses on tourist needs in the summer.

• Exploring the potential for creating a late-night route for bar and restaurant patrons.

• Designing routes in consultation with large employers including hospital and NMU.

• Ensuring that routes access other destinations that meet needs of choice riders and transportation disadvantaged riders, including human services destinations, shopping, and connections to residential areas in or near the community core.

• Redesigning other Marq-Tran routes to align with the new community core routes.

Figure 1 shows a concept for a downtown-campus 3rd Street route. This should be considered a starting point for discussion, not a final design. The 3rd Street conceptual route is 3.8 miles round trip, starting at the Marq-Tran Transit Center at 3rd & Spring, north on 3rd to a stop near the Berry Events Center parking lot, around to the NMU University Center, past Marquette General Hospital, and back south on 3rd to the Transit Center. Not all suggested stops are shown. Assuming a 12 mph design speed, one bus could run this service with 20-minute frequency. If the route operated 12 hours per day, 6 days per week, 9 months out of the year, it would cost approximately $166,000 (see Error! Reference source not found.). Any additional capital and infrastructure costs are not included in this estimate.

In the summer the route could be modified to serve popular parks and beaches, such as shown in Figure 2. The core portion of this route is 6.3 miles (orange), with a possible 2-mile extension to Presque Isle Park (red). We recommend running at least 2 buses in opposite direction to avoid the pitfalls of loop routes (a short travel time in one direction, long in the other). A 6-mile route running a bus in each direction (two in total) would have 30-minute frequency in each direction. A nine-mile route would have 45-minute frequency with two buses, which is a difficult frequency to communicate and connect with other services. An extended 12-mile route would have hourly frequency with two buses, or 30-minute frequency with four buses. Cost for a 6-mile route with two total buses (one running in each direction), 30-minute frequency, operating 7 days per week, 3 months per year, would be approximately $130,000. Any additional capital and infrastructure costs are not included in this estimate.
Figure 1: Conceptual 3rd Street Route
Figure 2: Conceptual Summer Route
Table 2: Rough Cost Estimate for Given Design Parameters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Parameter</th>
<th>3rd Street Trunk Route</th>
<th>Summer Shuttle</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual route length (miles)</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>6.3 with optional 2-mile extension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route length for estimate (mi)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles in operation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days of service per week</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours per day</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Months per year</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency (minutes)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational cost (no additional fixed cost)</td>
<td>$166,000</td>
<td>$130,000</td>
<td>$296,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Implementation**: As noted above, as long as priorities have been clearly established and funding sources have been realistically assessed, there should be flexibility and opportunities for staging implementation. For example, implementing a late-night service can clearly be staged separately from other changes, and if the South 3rd Corridor is identified as the highest priority then changes involving this area can be implemented first. Implementation may also be driven by funding or infrastructure considerations. If restaurants, bars and NMU students are highly motivated for late-night service and provide funding for it, this could be the first change to be implemented. Or if the South 3rd Corridor is the first area to install high quality bus stop infrastructure, implementation could begin in that area. However, it is important to note that frequent route changes are not recommended because of the transit management and operations problems they create, and because this can be confusing and frustrating to riders. It is best to make changes no more frequently than once a year.

**B. Explore Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Parking Management strategies**

TDM is complementary and closely related to mobility management. While mobility management has a strong focus on meeting the needs of transportation disadvantaged populations, TDM primarily targets choice riders, creating incentives to use transit, carpooling, vanpooling and other modes instead of personal vehicles. There are a number of TDM strategies that have the potential to encourage transit ridership in the city core.

For the South 3rd Corridor, TDM and transit design strategies should be explored as part of the process of developing a parking plan. Nelson\Nygaard recently completed a parking assessment for the corridor that concluded there is not a parking shortage. The objectives of the parking plan should be to ensure that parking is appropriately distributed throughout the corridor; that there is a good balance of different types of parking; and that parking does not unnecessarily consume space that could be used for higher value purposes that support the community’s goals and vision. Because transit service will help reduce the need for parking, ideally bus stops should be planned before the parking plan is finalized and should be prioritized over new parking. Other suggestions that were discussed at the first working group meeting included designating parking spaces specifically for
employers and employees; increasing on-street parking by removing curb cuts; and identifying areas where small parking lots could be developed on underutilized land through public-private partnerships.

Ideas out of the first stakeholder meeting are listed below. For further TDM discussion, refer to project reports from Grand Rapids and Ann Arbor.

- Outreach and education to employers/employees about incentives, tax breaks, etc.
- Explore the potential for employers to purchase transit passes for employees and/or invest directly in expanded transit service.
- Explore the potential to fund expanded transit service through revenue generated by parking meters and by charging fees for public parking lots.
- Discounted passes for Downtown development Authority members.
- Work with large employers to organize and promote carpooling and vanpooling.

C. Develop and implement strategies to increase commuter use of transit, carpooling and vanpooling.

The upgrade of city core transit services, the addition of street furniture (benches, shelters, and bus stop signs), and further marketing will attract more commuters to transit. Complete sidewalks, safe bicycle facilities, and land use decisions that allow people to live close to work will further help in providing transportation options.

For those who commute to the core of Marquette from outlying areas, the region could evaluate the effectiveness of current park-and-ride lots, and plan for improvement and expansion as appropriate. One location identified in our discussions was Chocolay Township. Each location should be assessed for installation of bike racks, bike lockers, benches and shelters. Finally, park-and-ride locations should be considered in any TDM effort to develop a vanpool network.

D. Improve snow management on sidewalks and at curbs

Snow berms left by street plows and snow-covered or icy sidewalks leave Marquette short of the vision of being “the premier livable / walkable winter city in North America” (2004 CMP). The community can look to Madison, Wisconsin for some of the best practices in the country; Duluth, Minnesota recently conducted a transportation study that included a sidewalk snow removal analysis, which could be a good methodology to measure Marquette’s snow removal, and an ordinance comparison¹.

The community could investigate practices that would reduce snow berms in the core of the community. Snow gates mounted on graders reduce, but do not eliminate, the size of a berm left in a driveway or intersection. In some downtown areas, snow is plowed to the center of the street then periodically removed by dump truck.

For sidewalks, the 3rd Street Corridor could be added to the DDA snow removal service. Other parts of the downtown walkable core outside the DDA district could be assessed for snow removal. Marquette has a snow removal ordinance that allows the City to clear snow or ice at the owner’s/occupant’s

expense, but based on the conditions we experienced during our January visit, this ordinance is not enforced.

Snow banks and snow covered sidewalks can be considered an obstacle to ADA access to buses. A bus stop snow removal plan for Marq-Tran would include an inventory of existing and proposed bus stop locations, and could include a prioritization of areas with high pedestrian volume and/or users with limited mobility. Working in cooperation with property owners, local jurisdictions, and contractors, responsibility and time requirements for clearance would be established.

2. Define and coordinate the roles of NMU’s transit system and Marq-Tran’s service to community core.

Hold a series of working group meetings between Marq-Tran and the university to assess how funding, vehicles and routes could be reconfigured to provide the best possible service.

Champions: Marq-Tran, students at NMU, NMU Facilities, City of Marquette

E. Define and coordinate the roles of NMU’s transit system and Marq-Tran’s service to the community core

NMU and Marq-Tran could work together to assess needs and determine how to allocate resources to configure service between campus and other destinations in the community core. Objectives would include avoiding providing parallel or duplicate services and seeking cost efficiencies. For example, on Friday the NMU service runs from campus to The Commons downtown and to Walmart. Would it make more sense for NMU to add stops, or is this a better role for Marq-Tran? Could NMU shift funding to Marq-Tran to incorporate this service into its routes on a daily instead of weekly basis?

F. Marq-Tran expansion of services along 3rd Street could allow further consolidation of some NMU services. Timetables should be adjusted to coordinate with class schedules. Outreach to NMU student, faculty, and staff to identify needs and build support.

In university towns it is typical for transit services to be built around the university demand and for students to be assessed a transportation fee in exchange for a free bus pass. Many universities have discovered that tools building effective transit, walking, biking, and carpooling are cost effective options for managing parking pressure. Diverse transportation options also offer students the opportunity of eliminating the cost of car ownership, estimated at $8,946 per year for 2012.

The NMU community should be at the center of the planning process discussed in 1. A, B & D above. In a survey and/or focus groups, student, staff and faculty could be consulted to understand needs and barriers. The champion could explore whether it is possible to have multiple Marq-Tran commuter routes from the county stop at NMU. This effort would be coordinated with the hospital to try to create strategies, route design, and timing that serve the needs of both NMU and the hospital.

When improved service is launched, simultaneously launch a promotional marketing campaign targeting students, staff and faculty. In particular, greatly increase Marq-Tran’s visibility on the NMU website and on hard copy materials about student life, parking, etc. The best strategy for NMU buy-in is to ensure that students are engaged and actively involved in this process.

It is common for universities to successfully partner with their local transit services. For example, Michigan State has done an outstanding job of using a variety of strategies to promote walking, biking and transit use. Ann Arbor has one of the premier bus systems in the country. San Luis Obispo, Eureka, and Bozeman are universities towns with successful partnerships that are more size-comparable to Marquette.

3. **Improve integration of public transportation into the Marquette area’s tourism economy**

*Make public transportation an essential element in the growth and vitality of the area’s tourism services and attractions including the airport, beaches, boats, and trails*

Potential Champions: Downtown Development Authority, county planning, a member of the walk-bike community, a member of the tourism community, taxi company.

**A. Identify optimal locations to connect transit to water transportation and bike/ped.**

Section 1 addresses the opportunity to design routes that serve the parks and beaches near the Marquette core. Opportunities can expand further when multiple modes of transport are connected. For example, as the Iron Ore Heritage Trail is planned spur development at key locations (trailheads 9, 10, and 11) could ensure transit stops along the trail with connections to the downtown area.

Kayak lockers at the two harbors in Marquette could encourage taking the bus or walking to downtown for dinner and a drink. Similarly, a bus stop at the snowmobile parking lot could enable access to downtown. Finally, parking lots downtown and at the university could be park-and-ride locations for transit access to beaches and waterfront areas, easing congestion and increasing downtown visitation.

**B. Coordinate with other tourism opportunities.**

The attractiveness of Marquette as a tourist destination for foreign travelers and others who prefer to travel car free could be enhanced by effectively marketing the transportation options and coordinating between all public and private carriers. This includes reviewing Marq-Tran service to coordinate with the casino shuttle and with services provided by taxis. There was some interest in improving Marq-Tran’s airport service, specifically for the early morning flight schedules.

Besides providing convenient service, the key to attracting tourists is to provide better information at the airports, hotels, visitor centers, attractors, and transportation websites about all of the available transportation options.
4. Coordinate and integrate human services transportation into a broader mobility management effort.

Achieve efficiencies and serve unmet needs – especially to maintain independence for the rapidly growing demographic of seniors with transportation challenges.

Potential champions: Superior Alliance for Independent Living (SAIL), Michigan DOT, Marquette County, Marq-Tran

In many communities mobility management is primarily focused on human services coordination, and mobility management leadership often comes from within the human services community. In contrast, in Marquette the human services community has not been a primary focus of community planning and visioning. Because transportation disadvantaged populations make up an important portion of public transportation ridership, it is important to fully involve the human services community to ensure the success of any transit changes, and to ensure that transit continues to meet the needs of these vulnerable populations if services are modified to better serve choice riders. There will always be a need for specialized demand-response service to meet some of the needs of transportation disadvantaged populations. However the cost per ride of these services is typically more than twice the cost per ride of fixed route service. The most cost effective approach for delivering transportation services is to create a community-wide system that, to the extent possible, is designed to provide fixed route service that meets the needs of choice riders and the general public while also meeting many of the needs of transportation disadvantaged populations.

C. Identify leadership for the process and identify someone who can fulfill the role of mobility manager.

Leadership can take the form of a working group or an executive committee, but there should be one individual or group that serves as the main point of contact and organization. The leadership structure may evolve over time, possibly with different iterations for each stage of the process. Ideally, a primary leadership objective would be to identify someone who can take on the role of mobility manager (MM) long term. The MM could be hired, or be assigned to someone who already is involved, and can be identified at any point in the process. The MM could be appointed at the completion of the process and be primarily tasked with implementation, or they could be appointed at the beginning to staff the coordination of the process, then transition to implementation.

More details about mobility management can be found in the State of the Practice memorandum.

D. Complete coordination plan and assess unmet needs.

Marquette County does not have a coordination plan because MDOT does not require such plans for areas that receive FTA funding for rural general public transportation (5311 funding), but we recommend developing a plan as a key component of mobility management. Human service providers are an essential piece of the transportation puzzle in all communities. These providers have detailed grassroots knowledge of the transportation needs of the populations who are most dependent on public transportation and other forms of transportation assistance. Additionally, the human services community potentially has access to mobility management funding that is not available to other players.
In our review of existing conditions and through the discussion at the first working group meeting, we identified many human service providers that fund and/or provide transportation services in the Marquette area. However, we also found that there is limited coordination between these providers.

Through researching the Existing Conditions Report and during the discussions at the first working group meeting we have compiled an inventory of human services providers that fund and/or provide transportation services. Over the course of this project, we may also include human services agencies who do not have the resources to provide transportation assistance, but whose clients have significant transportation needs. A next step – that is beyond the scope of this project – is to compile an inventory of funding amounts, vehicles and specific services provided by the various human services agencies. Government and non-profit agencies should both be included, along with any private transportation providers who are paid or contracted to provide rides.

To assess the area’s unmet human service transportation needs, useful tools include interviews, surveys and group discussions. It will be important to include the Sault Tribe in this process.

The coordination plan should have three broad areas of focus:

- Improving cost effective transportation service delivery through combining resources, partnering to pursue new funding opportunities, and minimizing duplication of services.
- Developing strategies to address unmet needs.
- Coordinating and improving communications and marketing.

E. Identify areas where transportation services for the general public and for transportation disadvantaged populations can be combined.

Although this is the area where some of the greatest cost efficiencies and service improvements can be achieved, these strategies cannot be developed until the previous stages have been completed and a clear picture of needs and opportunities has emerged.

Transit service involving the hospital, NMU and the South 3rd Corridor could provide an example of the potential efficiencies and improved service that may be possible. If fixed route transit service is expanded and improved for hospital and NMU employees as well as NMU students, the service changes should also be designed to expand opportunities for social service clients to access the hospital. Social service agencies will save money on every rider who is eligible to use demand response service to access the hospital, but who can instead switch to the fixed route service. If a
route was designed to meet all these needs while also running on the South 3rd Corridor – such as

Figure 1: Conceptual 3rd Street Route – the high passenger volumes such a route would likely attract could help support economic development along the corridor.
5. Increase the focus on public transportation and mobility management in community planning, decision-making and marketing.

Ensure that mobility management goals and objectives are included in the upcoming Community Master Plan update and other efforts to plan and implement community improvements. Also, work to increase overall community awareness and consideration of public transportation.

Potential Champions: local and county planners, SAIL, all mobility management stakeholders

With a Community Master Plan update scheduled to launch in May, 2013 and an economic development planning process currently underway, the timing is excellent for building momentum behind the mobility management strategies that will be developed through this project. Regardless of which strategies the working group chooses to focus on, their success will be largely determined by whether they gain strong, broad-based community support. There are four areas where public transportation could be more fully integrated into community awareness and action in order to achieve mobility management’s full potential to contribute to the community’s vision.

F. Incorporate transit into community planning.
The Community Master Plan update and the economic development planning process are both great opportunities to increase community awareness of the potential of public transportation and mobility management. Additionally, they may be excellent opportunities to combine resources and actually undertake some of the planning work needed to implement mobility management strategies. There was very limited focus on public transportation in the City’s 2004 Master Plan, and out of 274 questions in the October 2012 Community Economic Development Assessment only one mentions “transit”, “bus” or “public transportation”³: By actively participating and working to increase the focus on public transportation in important planning efforts such as these, mobility management stakeholders can discover new opportunities, and ensure that opportunities are not missed and mistakes are not made. Planners need to be aware of the needs of transit in order to ensure that roads, developments and individual facilities are designed and sited so that they are “transit oriented” and do not create barriers to transit service.

G. Incorporate bus infrastructure into design reviews, codes, and engineering standards.
We have worked in communities where transit needs are acknowledged in planning documents, but no standards or requirements have been codified. As a result, many opportunities are missed – especially for construction of bus stop infrastructure. For example, in a community where we recently worked, planners and engineers were frustrated that they could not require installation of a bus pull-out with a shelter and lighting when a large commercial development was proposed at an important intersection. They felt their hands were tied because the transit operator did not participate in the development review process, there were no regulations in the city codes nor any engineering standards for installing such infrastructure, and the bus stop was not included in any plans for the

³ http://www.mqtcty.org/Departments/Planning/Files/Community%20Economic%20Development%20Capacity%20Assessment%20-%20Marquette%201%20-%20Final.pdf. “Does the community provide public transportation available to workers within the community?” (question 142)
street even though buses are currently stopping there by pulling onto the shoulder in high speed traffic.

**H. Infuse mobility management into the decision-making process and the organizational culture.**

By becoming more involved in the community at all levels, mobility management stakeholders will gradually achieve a shift in organizational culture so that whenever there is a relevant public discussion, there will be an assumption that public transportation will be part of the discussion and that public transportation representatives and stakeholders should be at the table. In many communities, public transportation is at best an afterthought, if it is considered at all when important plans and decisions are being made – such as facility siting decisions. While it is possible to a certain extent to require consideration of public transportation, it is more effective when it becomes a standard part of the process because stakeholders have earned consideration through consistent, constructive participation over time.

**I. Include buses, taxis, walking and biking when describing Marquette’s transportation options.**

As discussed in more detail in the next section, good public transportation access can be a great selling point for a tourist destination, a business or a school, but only if you make it part of your sales pitch. Not only do you need to make sure people know public transportation is available, you also have to provide information that is both easily accessible and easy to understand that explains how to use the available services.

**6. Marketing and Communications**

*Make it easier for the public to understand and access information about transportation options.*

Potential Champions: Marq-Tran, city and county government, MDOT, SAIL

It is unlikely that any of the strategies proposed in this document will be highly successful unless they are supported by strong efforts to make it easy for the public to learn about and use transit services as well as other transportation options. One of the central goals of mobility management is to help people “find-a-ride”. Ideally, a newcomer to your community should be able to easily find the information they need regardless of whether they are a tourist, a senior citizen, a new NMU student, a disabled veteran or a new hire at the hospital. Whether they need to find a Marq-Tran fixed route to the grocery store, a carpool for commuting, a dial-a-ride service to get to their doctor, a taxi to their hotel, or the nearest bike trail they should not have to go on a completely different and difficult search for information on each different type of service. For many people, the web will be the first place they look, but hard copy information is important as well – especially bus schedules and bus stop signs.

**A. Find-a-Ride information on websites.**

The web – accessed from either a computer or a mobile device – is generally the first source where people will look for transportation information. In Michigan there is an effort to create a web-based, one-stop-shop for human service transportation information through the statewide Veteran’s Transportation Initiative, Michigan 2-1-1, United Way, and the Information and Referral Service as they
implement a statewide upgrade of the 2-1-1 website. It will be important to continuously maintain up-to-date information for Marq-Tran and all other human service providers. It will be equally important to make it easy to find this website. There should be links to it from the Marq-Tran website, all human services websites and possibly other stakeholder websites as well. This link should also be included on hard copy materials such as Marq-Tran schedules.

**B. Continuously improve bus schedules and ways to understand how to use the bus.**
A good web presence when coupled with good service and comprehensive branding, can help build the stature of a bus system in a community. In updating the Marq-Tran website, the designer can refer to the existing conditions report, which includes best practices for transit websites in small communities. Recommended components include Google’s transit trip planner and adding Google Translator to the website for use by non-English speakers and as required in updated FTA civil rights guidance.

We recommend working with someone who has experience with transit web sites, GTFS, and small transit systems. Building on a content management system, such as Word Press, makes it easy for Marq-Tran staff to quickly update information.

According to a community survey we recently conducted in Helena, MT a good brochure is the most important communications tool for the public transportation providers’ current riders and was second only to the website for people who are currently not riding. Quality maps, schedules, and brochures with good information design can ease use of the system and are key in building the brand. A brochure should be attractively designed and should include one or more maps showing fixed route services, easy–to-read schedules, and a riders’ guide explaining how to use the service. We like color-coded route names to ease understanding of the service, but be aware of the needs of people with impaired vision and color blindness when deciding how color-coded routes are described.

Bus stops can be the second most visible aspect of a transit business, behind the bus itself. Posting time tables at each stop is a straightforward way to expand the communications reach of a service. Shelters in high use areas provide additional a higher level of visibility.

Finally, a travel training program focused on people with disabilities helps people to improve the knowledge of routes, stop locations, fares, and other aspects of fixed route bus service. Marquette’s efforts can continue to evolve in this area.

**C. Take advantage of opportunities for free media coverage and other free publicity**
Include all transportation options, or a link to them, on all community websites describing transportation services. The approach can be described as “no wrong door”. Identify opportunities to market transit access to tourist destinations, including advertising transit access to Iron Ore Heritage Trail in hotel rooms.

**D. Invest in on-board GPS units that allow real-time transit information**
Within the next five to ten years we expect that riders (especially younger riders) will expect to have access to actual arrival times for any transportation provider regardless of size. Appropriate technology is currently available at a cost of $30 to $60 per bus per month. Any of these real-time
traveler information systems will allow access to real-time bus arrival times by web and text message. For high-volume bus stops and other strategic locations, departure times can be displayed on monitors or LED displays.
Figure 3: Bozeman Montana serves as a good example of a small college community with a comprehensive brand, an attractive web presence, and good community support.