

## June Newsletter Content

**Subject:** Advancing Rural Mobility Program: Discovering Types of Transit Service and Data Specifications

### **Program Overview**

Public transit provides a critical lifeline in rural communities, but awareness of available services can be challenging. The [Advancing Rural Mobility Program \(ARMP\)](#) seeks to improve transit service discovery and trip planning in rural areas and provide passengers with access to static and real-time transit information.

### **Partner Agency Spotlight: Charlevoix County Transit**

[Charlevoix County Transit \(CCT\)](#) offers demand-response public transit service throughout Charlevoix County. CCT is a curb-to-curb service where riders are grouped within the same area and timeframe, utilizing one vehicle to optimize efficiency. It also offers out-of-county medical trips, free veterans rides, and a grocery delivery service. The agency operates service from 7:20 a.m. to 4:40 p.m.

Additionally, CCT manages the [Ironton Ferry](#), which navigates the Ironton Narrows. The round trip takes 15 minutes and can accommodate four passenger cars, as well as cyclists and pedestrians. The cable-guided ferry spans 600 feet and operates, weather permitting, from 6:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. between late spring and early fall.



### **Types of Transit Services and Supporting Data Specifications**

Rural agencies in Michigan provide an array of demand-response transit services for their communities. The pilot agencies in this project, [Benzie Transportation Authority \(Benzie Bus\)](#), [Cadillac/Wexford Transit Authority \(WexExpress\)](#), [Charlevoix County Transit](#), and [Roscommon County Transportation Authority](#), all provide curb-to-curb demand-response transportation services within their respective areas. Currently, these services are not easily discoverable on trip-planning platforms (e.g., GoogleMaps and Transit app), which typically lack demand-response service discovery support.

Generally, transit services are divided into two primary categories: fixed-route and demand-response transportation. **Fixed-route systems** operate vehicles that travel along predetermined routes at scheduled intervals. These systems feature printed or displayed timetables and specified stops where riders are picked up and dropped off.

**Demand-response transportation** is any flexible or non-fixed-route service that allows travelers to deviate from the predetermined route or arrive at a custom origin or destination point, typically requiring advanced booking. Demand-response transportation is more dynamic than fixed-route transportation because it adjusts routes and schedules according to passenger demand. This type of transportation is often better suited for servicing customers in rural areas because it offers greater responsiveness to riders' needs, which is important in areas with lower densities.

Essential transit information like route and schedule data is shared and displayed using open standard General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data feeds. Traditionally, GTFS data specifications were limited to describe fixed-route services only...

[Keep reading. Learn how data feeds help people discover the different types of transit service.](#)

### **Upcoming Technology Events/Tech Talks**

**June 17, 2024, 1-2 p.m.** – As more people turn to online resources for information, it's essential that transit agencies' websites contain useful, easy-to-find information. Jillian Otten, team lead for public engagement and communications for HNTB, and Cara Marcus and Erik Dickey of National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) will explain the benefits of a strong website, as well as provide valuable information and tools to identify the important content that should be on your site.

If you are not already receiving Tech Talk invitations and would like to, email Janet Geissler, MDOT mobility innovations specialist, at [GeisslerJl@michigan.gov](mailto:GeisslerJl@michigan.gov) to get added to the notification list. Meeting links are typically sent about two weeks before each event.

### **Stay Connected**

Please get in touch with MDOT Project Manager Sherry Vandevender at [VandevenderS@michigan.gov](mailto:VandevenderS@michigan.gov) with any questions or comments.