

Connecting Community



2011 Annual Report Macatawa Area Express

MISSION STATEMENT

To create a sustainable transportation system to be used by all residents of the Macatawa area with linkages to other transit systems.

VISION STATEMENT

Enhanced mobility and community access that offer efficient and attractive transportation options for the citizens of the Macatawa area.

Our Key Values

Integrity
Competence
Trust
Knowledge
Community
Accountability

Authority Board Members

Polly Diehl, Chairperson, City of Holland
Joe Baumann, Secretary/Treasurer, Holland Charter Township
Steve Bulthuis, Member, Macatawa Area Coordinating Council
Al Dannenberg, Ex-officio member, City of Zeeland
Michael DeVries, Member, City of Holland
Dave Fackler, Member, Holland Charter Township
Russ TeSlaa, Vice Chairperson, Holland Charter Township
Mike Trethewey, Member, City of Holland
Laurel Ackerman, Youth Representative

Local Advisory Council

Leigh Bartels, Chairperson, City of Holland
Ron Martin, Vice Chairperson, City of Holland
Tracey Hoesch, Member, City of Holland
Judy Ryan, Member, City of Holland
Dian Williams, Member, City of Holland
Gert Vos, Member, City of Zeeland

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FROM THE TOP

It's heartening to know that the greater Holland/Zeeland area truly recognizes the social and economic benefits of public transportation, and values our contribution to making this such a vibrant community. In May, a resounding 76 percent of voters approved our transit millage renewal request, and we will strive to earn their continued trust by doing the very best we can with the resources we have.

This past year, we continued to focus on providing efficient and cost effective public transportation services that help people connect with their community. In 2011, we made 425,000 of these "connections," which represent a 23.3 percent increase in ridership over the previous fiscal year. Early in 2012, we anticipate reaching the milestone of three million boardings since our inception in 2000.

Not only are we moving more people safely and efficiently to their destinations, but our overall customer satisfaction rate is at 98 percent. Clearly, our dedicated staff and managers are doing a lot of things right.

Despite the challenges of declining local and state revenue and uncertainty over federal funding levels, we continued to make improvements and investments in our operations and staff while maintaining a balanced budget.

Among our accomplishments include enhancements to half of our fixed routes with the goal of shorter ride times for passengers. Passengers can now make on-road transfers between the routes without having to travel to the Padnos Center. For the first time this year, we also operated a free shuttle service during Tulip Time, which provided more than 3,000 rides to visitors and residents, helping to alleviate traffic and parking problems.

Other investments include the integration of our fixed routes into our Intelligent Technology System (ITS) so that we now have total system management of both demand response and fixed route operations. We can now monitor on time performance in real time, and collect passenger data electronically, eliminating manual tabulation. Our joint purchase and sharing of new web-based financial and human resources management software with the City of Holland also will allow us to manage data and reports with greater ease and efficiency.

Not only are we investing in operations, but we are investing in our employees, our most valued asset. During our first year operating as a unified workforce under the Authority, we implemented a structured training program as well as a formal employee recognition program. These help keep our employees motivated, energized and well-trained to do their jobs.

We're also making connections of our own in the community to build relationships and partnerships. We're actively involved with Michigan Public Transit Association, the Holland Area Chamber of Commerce, the Ottawa Co. Transit Coalition, Disability Network/Lakeshore, the Michigan Transit Pool, and Senior Marketing Group, among many other groups and organizations.

Going forward, we anticipate acquiring land for the construction of a new operations facility and bus garage in 2012 that will be funded with federal grants. A larger facility will provide the needed indoor storage for our growing fleet to keep our investments in good repair. We also have received federal grants to fund the purchase of a new telecommunications system to better support our centralized call center.

In the coming year, we will continue to focus on creative ways to improve service despite financial constraints, and our long term financial health and sustainability. We'll be developing a dashboard of performance measures to carefully monitor our progress in key areas. This information will be readily available on our website for complete transparency and accountability.

We are very proud to be a part of this transit organization, and its ongoing efforts to better connect people with our community for a higher quality of life. We are thankful to the community for its patronage and support. On behalf of the Board and managers and staff at MAX, we are pleased to present you with our 2011 Annual Report.

Polly Diehl, Authority Board Chairperson
Linda LeFebre, Transit Director



Polly Diehl
Authority Board Chairperson



Linda LeFebre
Transit Director

REARVIEW MIRROR

October 2010

Regional Friends of Transit Organized

To promote public transit regionally, the Disability Network/Lakeshore organized the Lakeshore Friends of Transit. The advocacy organization's membership includes interested citizens and stakeholders that promote improved, expanded and coordinated public transportation in Allegan and Ottawa Counties. The group works closely with transit systems to educate residents about the many benefits of public transit to a community.



December 2010

"Stuff the Bus" Continues Holiday Food Drive Tradition

The 2010 "Stuff the Bus" food drive gathered more than two tons of food and personal items worth about \$10,850. This was the seventh year MAX has sponsored the event to benefit clients served by Community Action House, which operates a soup kitchen, food pantry and thrift shop for local residents in need. This was the most successful year yet for raising donations.



Volunteer Opportunities Introduced

The Authority adopted a new Use of Volunteers policy and created three new volunteer opportunities for community involvement, including Adopt-A-Stop, Mystery Riders, and Bus Buddies. The positions allow groups and individuals to keep bus shelters tidy and clear of snow and ice, help teach new passengers how to ride the fixed bus routes, and secretly evaluate the quality and performance of transit services.



"Green" Hand Dryers Installed

In the Authority's goal toward greater sustainability, the old-fashioned bathroom hand dryers at the Padnos Center were replaced with new Dyson "Airblade" dryers. The dryers claim to be the fastest and most hygienic, removing 99.9% of bacteria. Also, they use up to 80% less energy than a warm-air hand dryer, saving MAX about \$166 in annual energy costs.



February 2011

'TransitSHARE' Web Resource Library Unveiled

MAX introduced a new web-based resource library for transit systems at the Michigan Public Transit Association's legislative conference. Funded with an FTA grant and known as TransitSHARE, the internet library was created on MPTA's website (www.mptaonline.org). The library contains information and files shared by transit systems that can be accessed by MPTA website users. The purpose of TransitSHARE is to facilitate collaboration and sharing among state transit systems to reduce redundancies and gain efficiencies.



Transit Advocate Presented Award

The Authority presented Ruth Stegeman, former executive director of Disability Network/Lakeshore, with its first Outstanding Advocacy Award at a January 21 reception at CityVu in Holland. Stegeman has been and continues to be a tireless advocate for public transportation, persons with disabilities, and sustainable and livable communities.

"Where's MAX?" Social Media Promotion Educates Public

All month long, photos of MAX's kangaroo mascot at different locations serviced by MAX buses were posted on Facebook and the MAX website. Viewers were invited to track MAX's location and turn their list in for a prize drawing. Places featured included Gentex, MVP Sports, and Jackie's Place. "Where's MAX?" messages were viewed over 26,000 times on Facebook and local media gave additional exposure to the game.

Blue Jeans Day to Help Charities

Authority employees adopted a "casual Monday" fundraiser that allows them to wear blue jeans to work with a \$2 donation to a designated charity. Donations from "Blue Jean Monday" are given to an area charity selected by bus operators. The first charity to benefit from the proceeds raised was the local chapter of the American Diabetes Association.

First MAX Bus Wrap Is Sold

ZR Graphics of Zeeland became the first area business to purchase a full advertising bus wrap to promote its products and services on a MAX bus. The graphics covered the bus from top to bottom, fender to fender with eye-popping designs and a large leaping frog along the sides. Gross bus advertising sales for FY2011 totaled nearly \$50,000.

March 2011

Electric Charging Station Installed

The City of Holland and Principal Shopping District installed an electric car charging station at the Padnos Center parking lot on Eighth Street behind the depot. The charging station is one of several that were purchased with grant funding for placement throughout the downtown Holland area.

Ridership Continues Upward Trend

For the third straight month in 2011, boardings sharply increased over the same months for the previous year, bringing the average monthly ridership to 30,033. About 73% of all rides were on the fixed bus routes.

April 2011

'MAX Moves Me' TV Ad Campaign

Three regular passengers who ride the MAX to work were featured in MAX's new TV ad campaign, "MAX Moves Me." The ads personalize the social and economic value that public transit has on a community and its residents. The three passengers profiled ride the MAX for different reasons ranging from having a disability and saving money to a strong social commitment to environmentalism.

MAX Moves Me

TV Commercial Campaign

In business and in life, I always ask if something meets my **triple bottom line**. One, does it **support the local economy**? Two, is it **environmentally sound**? And three, is it socially just, benefitting all people? If so, I'm in. That's why I ride the MAX. It's the **right choice for me.**

Ken Freestone

Environmentalist and Political Activist



May 2011

MAX Millage Passes with Over 76% Approval

Voters in the City of Holland and Holland Charter Township voted to renew 0.40 mills of funding for the Authority for the next five years. The final vote was 76.37% "yes" to 23.63% "no." The highest level of voter support was in Holland City with nine of the 12 wards approving the issue by over 80%.

Free Tulip Time Shuttle

Residents and tourists attending the annual Tulip Time Festival May 7-14 found this year's free shuttle service through the downtown area to be a convenient and pleasant way to avoid traffic and parking hassles. MAX and Tulip Time organizers teamed up to make the shuttle a reality. Nearly 3,000 rides were given during the festival week.

MAX Buses Get Wrapped ... Again

MAX received its second full bus advertising wrap with a signed contract by Mercantile Bank. Bus 501 received the black and brown wrap which depicted Mercantile Bank customers. The full wrap delivers excellent exposure throughout the community for advertisers and generates additional revenue for the transit system.

Green Commute Week

MAX staff participated in this year's Green Commute Week by participating in the five mile bike ride and offering free fixed route rides to employees at area businesses that pledged their support to environmentalism. Sponsored by the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council and area bike shops, the event challenged residents to leave their cars at home and use alternative means of transportation – such as carpooling, biking, walking and using the MAX – to commute to work.

Walmart Installs Bus Shelter

As a service and convenience to its customers that use MAX, Walmart purchased and installed a new bus shelter at the MAX bus stop there. Previously, customers waited alongside the Walmart building, exposed to wind, rain and snow.

June 2011

\$2 Daily Pass Introduced

A new \$2 daily pass was introduced, offering passengers one day of unlimited rides on the fixed bus routes. Sales of the new pass have been brisk, with many customers combining their trips into one day to save on bus fares.

Area Residents "Dump the Pump" on June 16

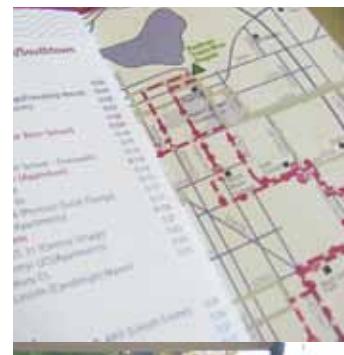
MAX Transit, along with public transit systems across the country, observed the 6th annual "Dump the Pump Day" on June 16 by giving free rides on its fixed bus routes. Sponsored by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), National "Dump the Pump Day" challenges people to use public transit (instead of driving) and save money.



July 2011

MAX Implements Enhancements to Routes 3, 5, 6 and 7

Changes to Routes 3, 5, 6 and 7 were implemented on July 5, 2011. These routes were revised with the goal of shorter ride times from origin to destination, greater convenience and access for passengers, and improved operational efficiencies. Routes 1, 2, 4 and 8 remain unchanged. It was a smooth transition for passengers, many of whom said they benefitted from the improvements.



August 2011

'America in Bloom' Judges Visit Padnos Center

During the first week of August, judges from the national competition "America in Bloom" visited the Padnos Transportation Center as part of its tour and evaluation of the City of Holland. This competition judges a community based on its tidiness, environmental awareness, heritage preservation, community involvement, urban forestry, floral displays, landscaped areas, and turf and ground covers in three different sectors, municipal, commercial, and private residences.



New Brochures Offered

Two new brochures were developed for customers interested learning how to use MAX's services. The *Rider's Guide for Using the Fixed Routes* explains how to read route maps, plan trips, pay fares, board and de-board, and make transfers, and includes several trip planning exercises. The new *Reserve-A-MAX* brochure includes in-depth information on using this premium demand response services.



Staff Attends MPTA's Summer Conference

Authority managers attend the Michigan Public Transit Association's annual summer conference at Crystal Mountain, Mich., themed "New Administration...New Vision." Transit systems were challenged to become more self-reliant and sustain service due to uncertainty of federal funding, growing ridership, and declining revenues.



September 2011

Investment in Employees for a Stronger, Healthier Workforce

Operations began a new "stretch and flex" exercise for bus operators to help reduce sprains and strains while working. All drivers are now required to do stretching exercises as a group for ten minutes prior to their shift. The Authority also conducted mandatory training on harassment and diversity to enhance interpersonal relationships with co-workers, customers and the general public. In addition, MAX awarded its first Golden Wheel Award to bus operator Dave Kaniff for his "excellent rapport with passengers and impressive safe driving record."



New Financial and Human Resources Software Goes Live

The Authority began training and use of new IP-based financial software that was purchased jointly and will be shared with local jurisdictions and the airport and library authorities. The New World Systems software provides multiple financial functions and greater efficiency and flexibility in data management and reporting.



Reserve-A-MAX Fare Increase

At its September meeting, the Authority Board adjusted the Reserve-A-MAX one way fare from \$1 to \$2 for ADA, senior and youth passengers, and from \$3 to \$5 for able bodied adults, effective Oct. 31, 2011. Demand response fares were raised to increase fare box revenues to help offset declining state and federal funding.

MAX Moves Me

TV Commercial Campaign

“

I'm a Navy veteran, and currently work as a disk Tec operator. I galvanize steel for a living. When I'm not working second shift, I'm shooting pool or hoops, or playing games with my family. I **don't own a car, and I don't like relying on friends.** That's why I ride the MAX to and from work every day. It's **reliable – always on time – and the people treat me right.**”

”

Lionel Wright

Disk Tec Operator



2011 RIDERSHIP

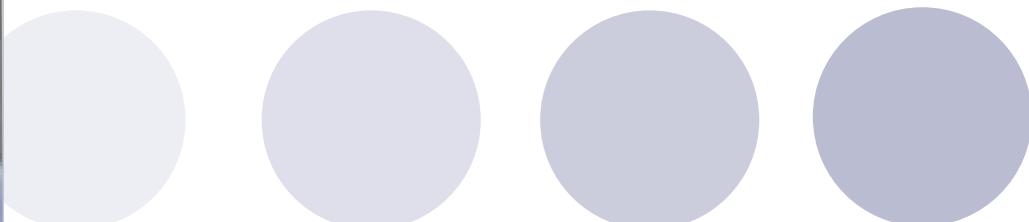
Ridership continued its upward surge in 2011

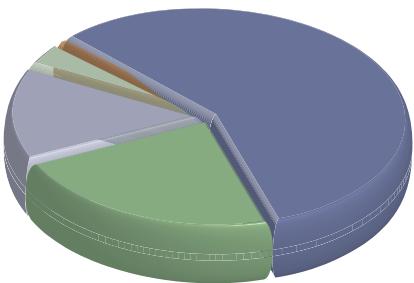
Total ridership of 418,496 in 2011 represented a 23.3 percent increase over last year. The strong increase in ridership is attributed to several factors, including service improvements, a sustained public information program, and a persistent recession. MAX continues to provide an affordable transportation alternative for passengers who are unable to drive or own and pay for operating a vehicle.

Our 2011 Passenger Survey indicated that more of our customers are falling into poverty. Thirteen percent more passengers (73%) than last year reported annual household incomes below \$20,000, and nine percent more (90%) indicated they now ride because they don't drive or have a vehicle. Until the economy improves, we anticipate historical levels of ridership again in 2012.

Ridership Figures for Fiscal Year 2011

Service	Fiscal Year 2011	Fiscal Year 2010	% Change
Fixed Route Passengers	310,768	242,230	28.29%
Demand Response Passengers	104,597	94,252	10.98%
Night Owl Passengers	3,131	2,940	6.50%
Total Ridership	418,496	339,422	23.30%
Fixed Route Vehicle Miles	428,478	436,038	-1.73%
Fixed Route Passengers/Mile	0.73	0.56	30.56%
Demand Response Vehicle Miles	418,511	379,602	10.25%
Demand Response Passengers/Mile	0.25	0.25	0.66%
Night Owl Vehicle Miles	23,409	25,035	-6.49%
Night Owl Passengers/Mile	0.13	0.12	13.89%
Fixed Route Vehicle Hours	33,878	33,564	0.94%
Fixed Route Passengers/Hour	9.17	7.22	27.11%
Demand Response Vehicle Hours	38,186	31,444	21.44%
Demand Response Passengers/Hour	2.74	3.00	-8.62%
Night Owl Vehicle Hours	1,855	1,803	2.85%
Night Owl Passengers/Hour	1.69	1.63	3.54%

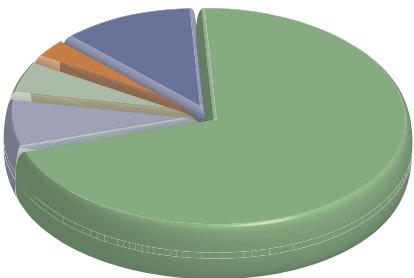




Fixed Route Passenger Breakdown

(FY October 2010- September 2011)

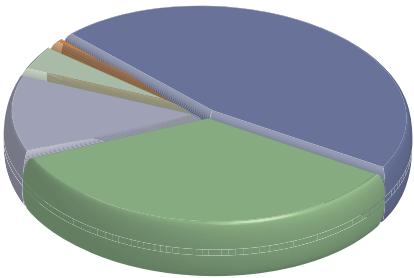
Rider Type	2011	2010
Regular	180,332 (58.0%)	156,801 (64.7%)
Disabled	70,075 (22.5%)	43,050 (17.8%)
Youth	45,013 (14.5%)	32,236 (13.3%)
Senior	13,380 (4.3%)	8,800 (3.6%)
Senior Disabled	1,968 (0.6%)	1,343 (0.6%)



Reserve-A-MAX Passenger Breakdown

(FY October 2010- September 2011)

Rider Type	2011	2010
Regular	13,145 (12.2%)	9,163 (9.4%)
Disabled	75,924 (70.5%)	65,508 (67.4%)
Youth	8,318 (7.7%)	8,196 (8.4%)
Senior	6,413 (6.0%)	9,664 (9.9%)
Senior Disabled	3,928 (3.6%)	4,661 (4.8%)



Overall Passenger Breakdown

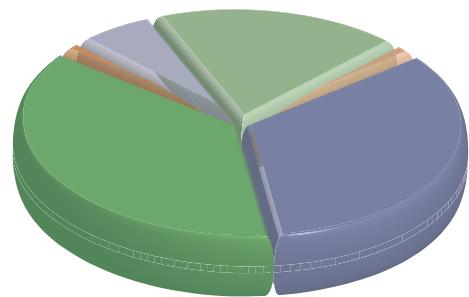
(FY October 2010- September 2011)

Rider Type	2011	2010
Regular	193,477 (46.2%)	165,964 (48.9%)
Disabled	145,999 (34.9%)	108,558 (32.0%)
Youth	53,331 (12.7%)	40,432 (11.9%)
Senior	19,793 (4.7%)	18,484 (5.4%)
Senior Disabled	5,896 (1.4%)	6,004 (1.8%)

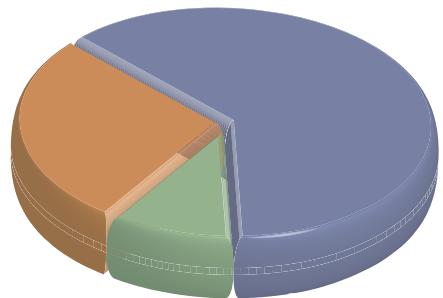
“ Macatawa Area Express, popularly known as MAX, is more than a bus system. It's really a lifeline for thousands of area residents who depend on it to get around town and participate fully in their community.”

Editorial, *Holland Sentinel*, April 17, 2011

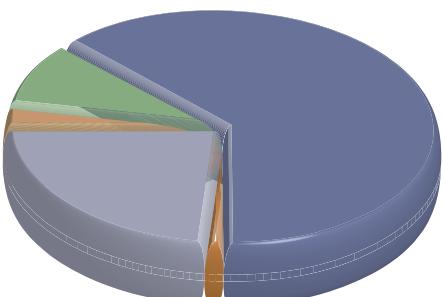
FINANCIALS



Revenue	2011	2010	% Change
Passenger Fares	\$ 256,400 (6.6%)	\$ 225,122	13.9%
Tax Levy	719,406 (18.5%)	819,161	-12.2%
Local Operating Assistance	76,977 (2.0%)	71,646	7.4%
State Assistance			
Operating & Planning	1,295,624 (33.4%)	1,305,590	-0.8%
Capital Grants	7,941 (0.2%)	173,853	-95.4%
Federal Assistance			
Operating & Planning	1,197,370 (30.8%)	1,142,482	4.8%
Capital Grants	265,291 (6.8%)	2,323,640	-88.6%
Interest & Other Reserves	65,772 (1.7%)	45,698	43.9%
Total	\$3,884,780	\$6,107,192	-36.4%



Operating Expenses	2011	2010	%Change
Operations	\$2,167,317	\$2,659,741	-18.5%
Maintenance	349,849	334,741	4.5%
General Administration	961,592	831,067	15.7%
Total	\$3,478,759	\$3,825,549	-9.1%



Breakdown of Expenses	2011	2010	%Change
Purchased Services	\$ 0	\$1,793,726	-100.0%
Wages/Salaries/Employee Costs	2,190,091	841,556	160.2%
Utilities	51,548	50,918	1.2%
Maintenance & Operations	794,969	675,540	17.7%
Casualty & Liability Insurance	105,493	141,178	-25.3%
Other Operating Expenses	336,659	322,631	4.4%
Total	\$3,478,759	\$3,825,549	-9.1%

MOVING FORWARD

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Fairly new fleet of vehicles in good repair
- Experienced and dedicated workforce with excellent customer service and morals
- Sustained public information program to create community awareness
- Active participation in community groups and organizations to increase understanding of the social and economic benefits of public transportation to the community
- New technology (Mobile Data Computers, scheduling software, VoIP System) investments for better efficiency, data accuracy, operational management and reporting capabilities

Weaknesses

- Funding unavailable for service improvements, such as evening and weekend service and shorter headways, that are needed to lure passengers of choice
- Service area excludes neighboring jurisdictions where public transportation is needed (Park and Laketown Townships)

Opportunities

- Expect ridership to grow at double digit rates annually as more people look to alternative means of transportation and begin choosing MAX
- Construction of new operations facility and bus garage for adequate storage and office space
- Possible linkages with other transit systems for a regional transportation system

Threats/Challenges

- Uncertainty of a federal transportation funding bill with potential funding delays that could impact service levels
- Declining property values resulting in lower revenue from transit millage
- Declining state share of funding to lowest historic levels
- Volatile fuel prices

MAX Moves Me

TV Commercial Campaign

“

About a year ago, I was diagnosed with ALS. I **promised my doctor I'd stop driving** when it became unsafe, but I still needed to get to work so I began riding the MAX. I'm part of a chat team that helps customers online. I really love my job. I'm lucky to **continue to go to work**, and do what I enjoy.”

”

Melissa Schwartz

Online Customer Service Banker





Keeping in Touch

MAX keeps the community updated with a monthly newsletter and via Facebook and Twitter.



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