



Age Friendly
Millinocket



“Transportation For All”

An Age-Friendly Millinocket/Thrive Penobscot Transportation Project

Report created November 2023

The “Transportation for All” project was established through the Age-Friendly Millinocket (AFM) Committee primarily focusing on serving older adults in the tri-town area of Millinocket, East Millinocket, and Medway. This audience was chosen after assessment data showed the need for transportation to maintain and increase social connectedness to reduce social isolation. Therefore, the “All” was to mean, all transit needs such as social outings and errands for all people, not just medical appointments for income eligible individuals that community members typically equate to the Penquis Lynx programs. The goal has been to boost use of Penquis Lynx Transportation services by covering costs and creating awareness surrounding the resource to community members.

The tri-town region lacks access to reliable and affordable public transportation for those who have limited income, who are homebound, disabled, and those who do not/cannot drive. This program offers free transportation to the most vulnerable in our communities and connects them to needed resources throughout Penobscot and Piscataquis Counties. Cost of each one-way trip is dependent on purpose and destination/distance.

The initial funding source for this project came from a Lifelong Communities mini-grant of \$2500 from Maine Community Foundation (MCF) which was awarded to the Town of Millinocket in March of 2020 as part of a pilot project of the Age-Friendly Committee. Due to the interruption of the pandemic just after the funding award, the project was dormant for over a year but reactivated in March 2021 to serve the tri-towns as intended. The initial funding was expended in 2022 but additional funding provided by Thrive Penobscot/ MRH sustained the program while new funding was sought. In 2023, additional funds were secured from MCF to continue and expand this project. Through this next phase, additional data will be collected to support the research of local level solutions in order to meet the transit needs of all community members.

With this new round of funding, the goal is to increase general public transportation rides provided by Penquis Lynx by more than 50%, and to see a 20% increase in rides of the self-declared disability option. With increased marketing and understanding throughout the community, raising the number of distinct riders by 25% would be considered a success. In sum, our goal is to reach 80 distinct riders in a month by the end of the grant year (May 2024), doubling the current high of 40 clients in October 2022.

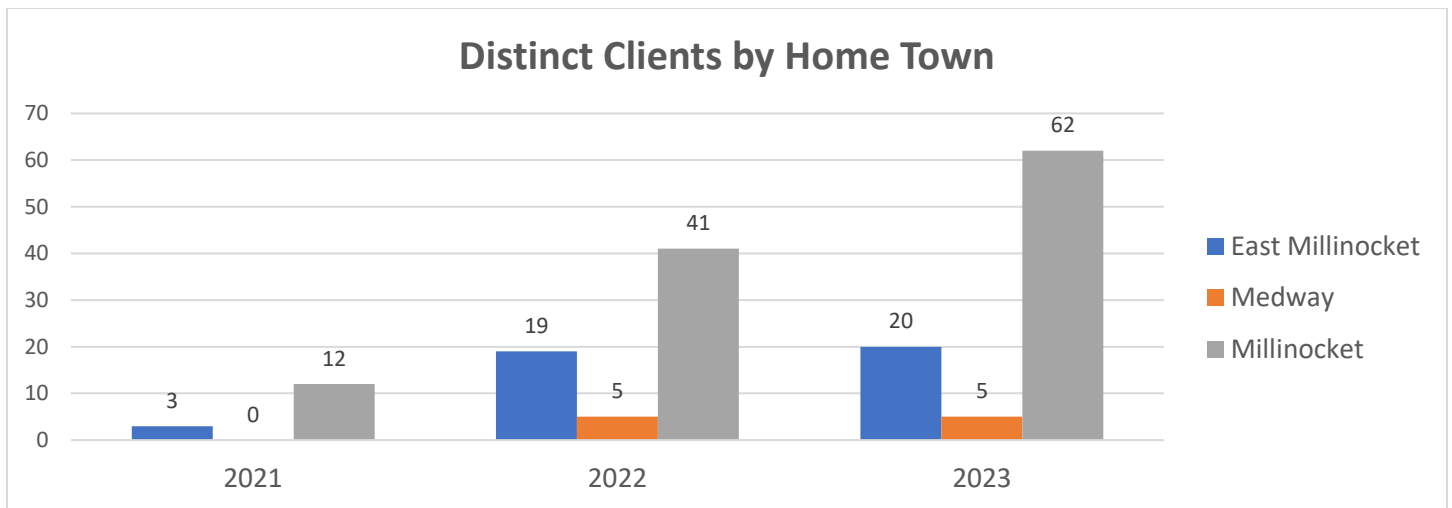


Figure 1. Data presented shows that over the lifetime of this project (up to Sept 2023), there has been increased use of transportation provided via Penquis in the tri-town area.

In 2021 there were a total of 15 distinct clients.

In 2022 there were 65 distinct clients.

In 2023 there have been 87 distinct clients as of September 2023.

- With the goal to be to double the # of distinct clients per month, this shows that additional marketing may be useful in increasing knowledge of this program and the availability of free fares.

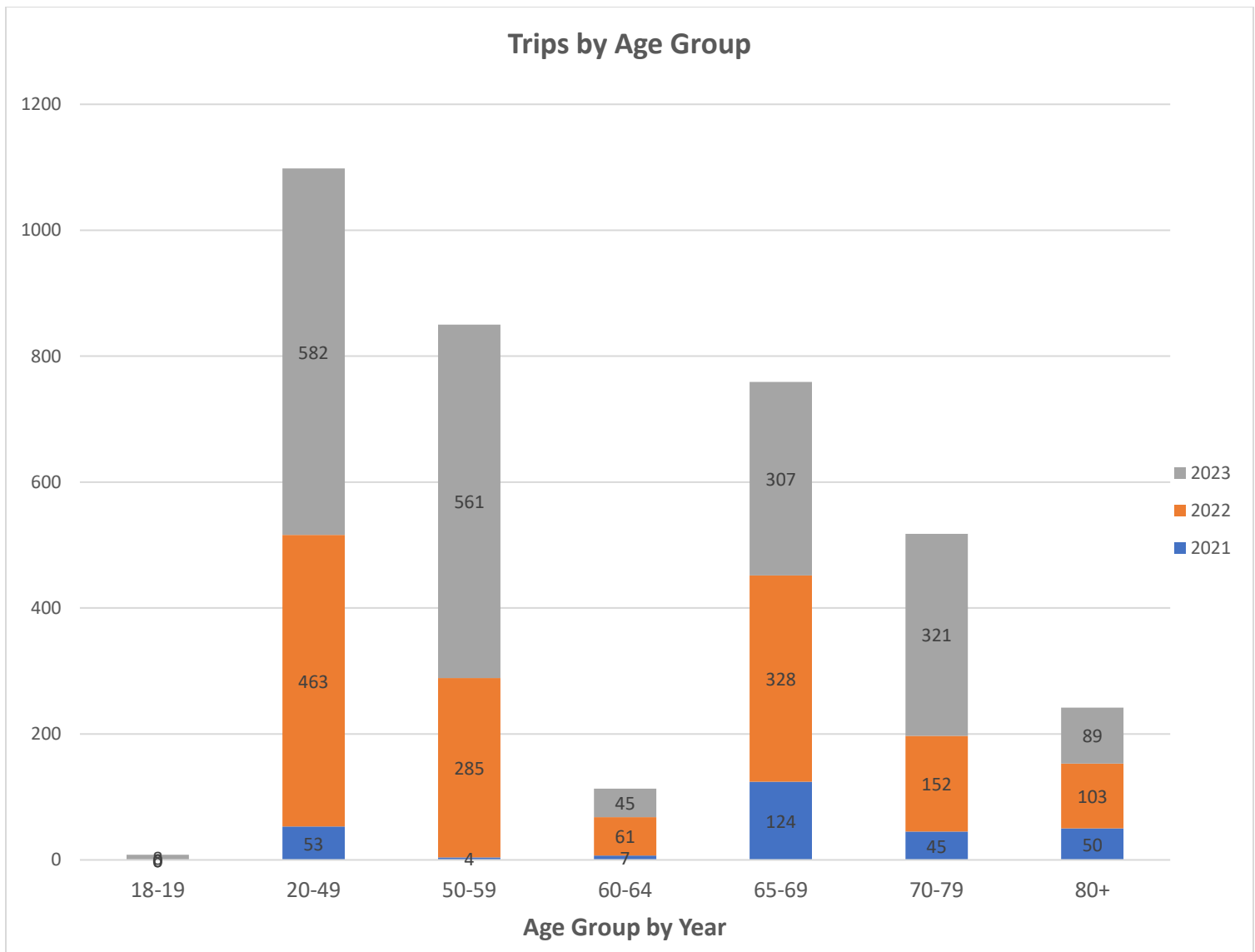


Figure 2. Data presented shows the number of trips by age group from Feb 2021 through September 2023.

From this, we can see that the two age groups using the service the most frequently are individuals aged 20-49 (1098 trips in total) and 50-59 (850 trips in total).

From Feb 2021 – Sept 2023:

- 1632 trips were provided to those 50 and older representing 60% of the riders.
- 1106 trips were provided to those under 50 representing 40% of the riders.

Note: This data shows duplicated clients (repeat customers).

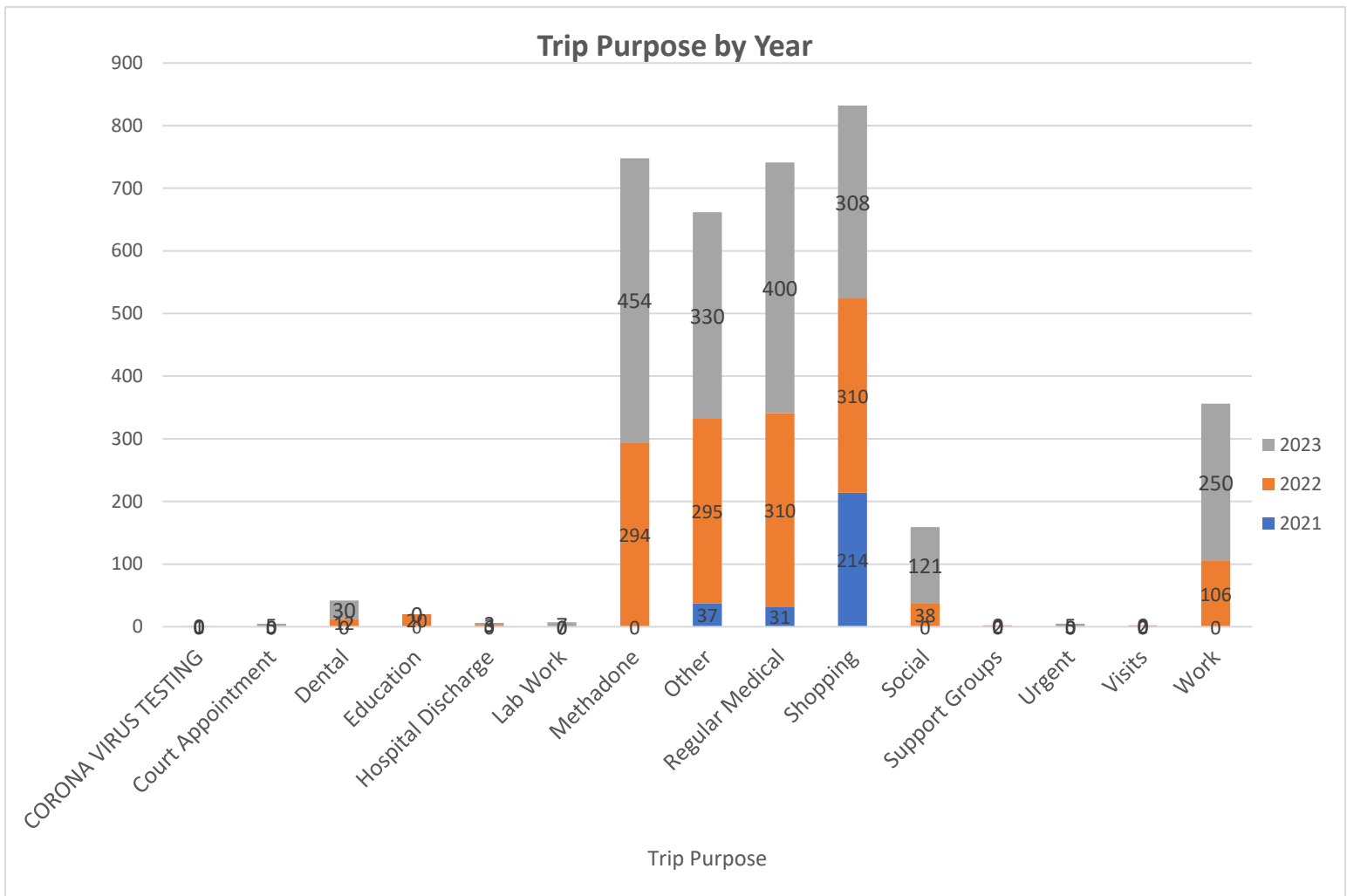


Figure 3. Data presented above shows trip purpose by year from Feb 2021- Sept 2023. From this we can see that most trips are for shopping, regular medical appointments, methadone clinic trips (Bangor) and other.

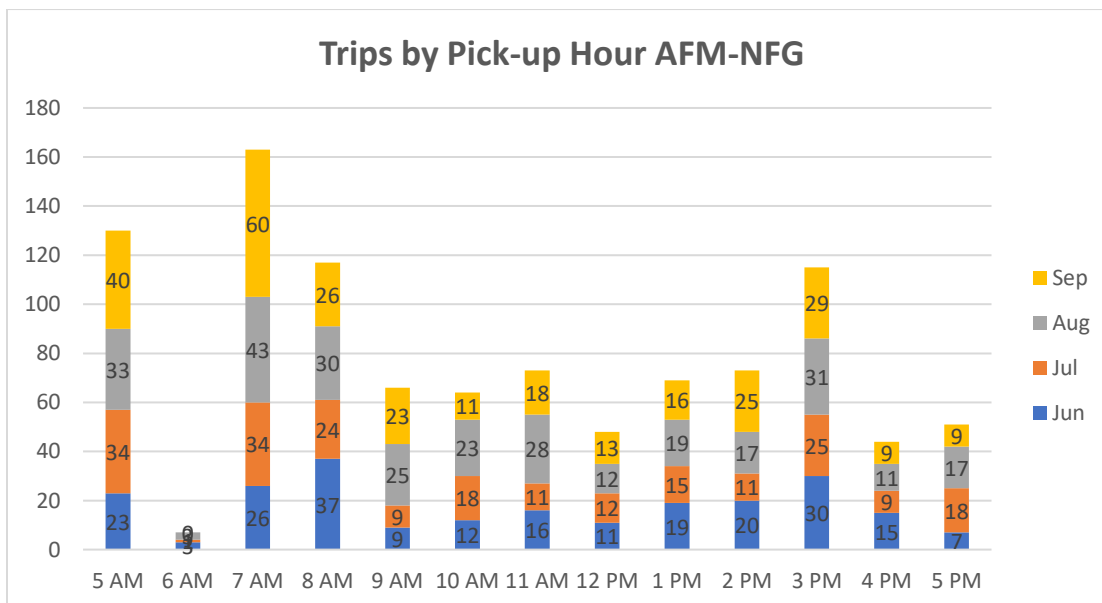


Figure 4- The data presented here is a 4-month snapshot of the pickup times of those scheduling rides. This does not capture those using the Lynx general public transportation program that runs on a set schedule.

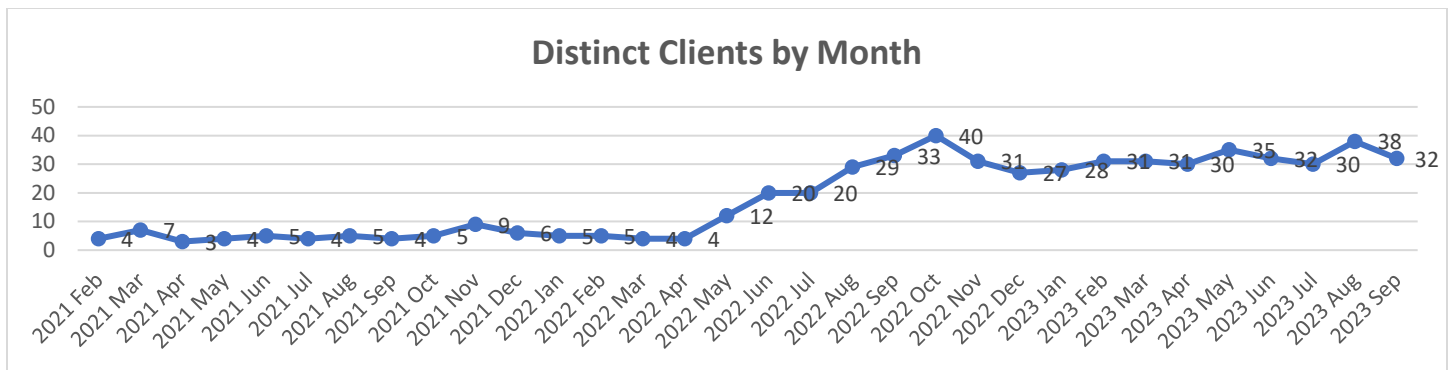


Figure 5. This figure shows the trend of distinct number of clients for the duration of the project, from February 2021 to September 2023. There was a steady increase after April 2021 when advertising began for the availability of rides at **no charge**. The number of distinct clients peaked in October of 2022 (N=40). From November 2022 to September 2023 the numbers were very steady suggesting that there are a number of return clients who regularly use and depend on this service. Our goal is to increase this number to 80 distinct clients each month.

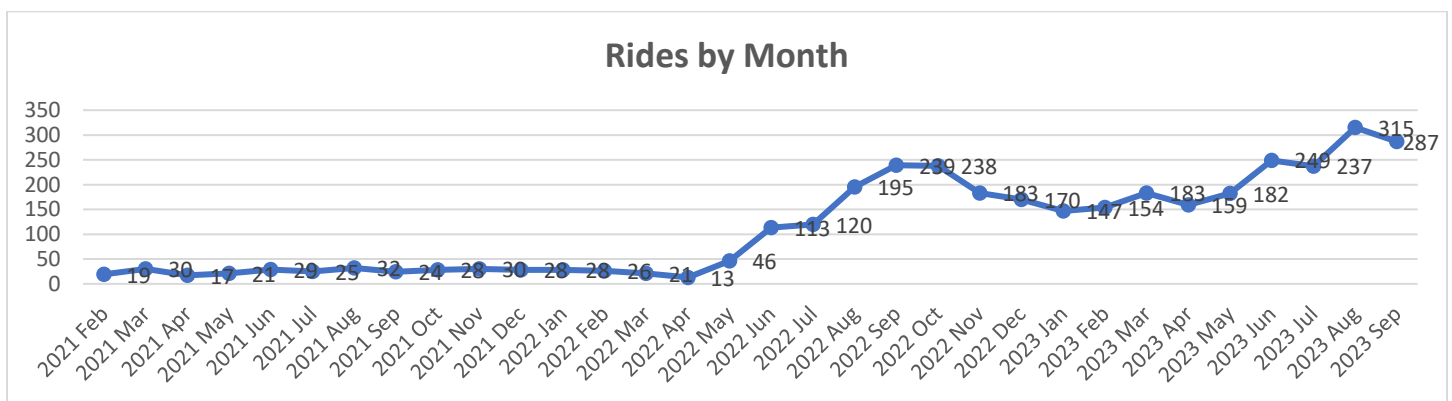


Figure 6. This figure shows the trend of number of rides given per month for the duration of the project, from February 2021 to September 2023. This trendline closely follows the trendline in Figure 5, Distinct Clients by Month, showing a gradual increase in rides and clients.

Finally, additional data recently provided by Penquis indicates that clients are mostly using Penquis Transportation by scheduling their own rides (labeled New Freedom Grant /NFG) and not as likely to use the fixed time/town option available through the Lynx’s General Public Transportation program. Penquis data from 6/23/2023- 11/28/2023 indicated 64 rides were provided for the fixed schedule vs 1105 rides in that same time frame for those with a self - declared disability scheduling rides as needed.

This progress report is created by Brittany Grutter and Jane Danforth and is respectfully submitted to the AF Committee. Many thanks to Penquis Transportation Services staff Tammy Tewhey, LeeAnn Stackpole and Julia Harrison for providing detailed data points.