

# TRANSPORTATION ACCESS IN THE FOX CITIES

from **ARRIVE TOGETHER:**  
Transportation Access and Equity in Wisconsin

The report examined the effectiveness and equitability of transportation in nine cities and major metropolitan regions across Wisconsin. This examination is a culmination of 2010 U.S. Census data, figures provided by public transportation systems, the state of Wisconsin, and direct personal interviews with transit riders. The report concludes that, while each community faces unique challenges in providing transportation access to employment, medical services, major businesses, local attractions or other points of interest, the absence of consistent and sufficient funding for public transportation is a major hurdle across the board. Inadequate financial support from federal and state governments and an inability to raise additional resources through local funding mechanisms like Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) are making it increasingly difficult for local public transportation systems statewide to provide mobility for all.

## FOX VALLEY TRANSIT OVERVIEW

Valley Transit operates 19 fixed bus routes in a “hub and spoke” pattern used by many smaller transit systems, with a central location serving as the hub and routes spreading from there like spokes. Buses that connect from Valley Transit to the Oshkosh transit service leave seven times a day from Neenah and eight times a day from Oshkosh. The Valley Transit downtown Appleton hub also contains the Greyhound bus office that has daily service to Madison, Milwaukee, Chicago, Minneapolis, Green Bay and Wausau. Valley Transit also provides specialized service for those with disabilities. “The Connector” van provides access to transit service for those who work second or third shifts.

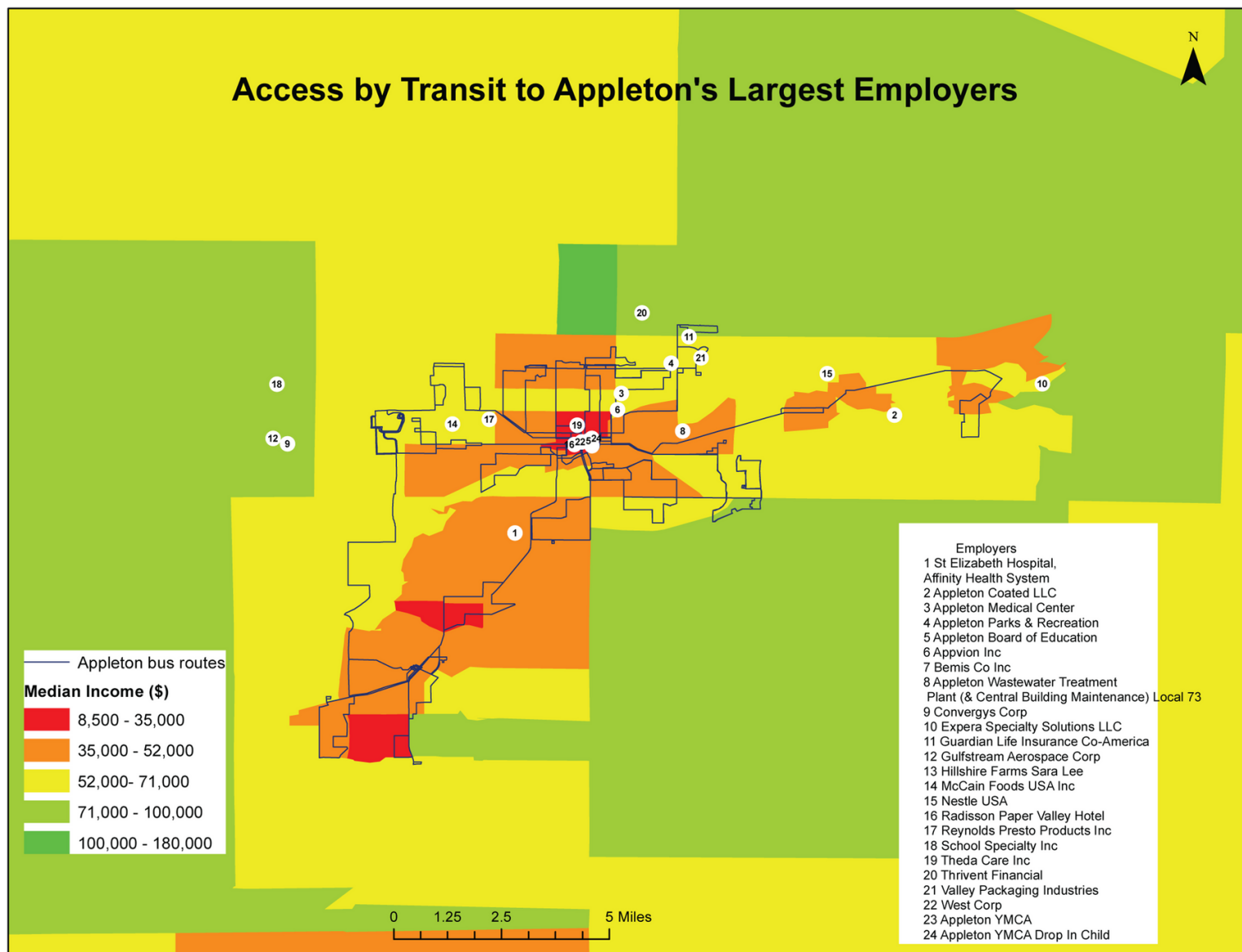
## TRANSIT SYSTEM BARRIERS

Transit in the Fox Cities does not run on Sundays. Bus service area and coordinating funding also presents a challenge. Because Valley Transit serves several municipalities in three counties, transportation planning proves difficult without an RTA. As the cities in the area expand, new housing tends to be built farther from the transit hub, and there are gaps in the service territory including the Town of Buchanan.



# Transit to Appleton's Largest Employers

The map shows transit access to Appleton's 25 largest employers as well as median income levels (taken from the 2010 US Census). Riders may reach most major employers and shopping areas on one or more routes as well as the Appleton Public Library, UW Fox Valley and Fox Valley Technical College.



The map was created by 1000 Friends of Wisconsin. For full report: [sierraclub.org/wisconsin/ArriveTogetherReport](http://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/ArriveTogetherReport)

## OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND SERVICE AND FUNDING

The bus and paratransit system that serves the Fox Cities is unique in Wisconsin for the complexity of its service area and funding mechanism. The fleet is aging, with an average vehicle age of nine years, making it helpful to have “spares.” The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) considers 12 years to be the useful life of a city bus. In 2013, management was optimistic about the possibility of bipartisan legislation allowing an RTA, enabling a stable source of funding for the foreseeable future for both capital and operating expenses, but this initiative stalled.

**“When I was released from prison and had my initial probation office visit, I asked what bus came out here and was told “none.” I am not eligible for my driver’s license for years and I rely on public transit for transportation. It seems that I’m set up to fail. If I don’t make my appointments, I go back to prison. I’ve had to walk in the streets without any sidewalks and in blizzards to make my appointment.”**

- G., Appleton (Story collected by ESTHER)