

TRANSPORTATION ACCESS IN

in **WAUSAU**

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.

WAUSAU TRANSIT OVERVIEW

Public transportation has been central to the Wausau community for many years, dating back to the first street cars in 1906. Today, Metro Ride offers seven fixed routes throughout the City of Wausau. These routes operate on a “hub and spoke” pattern: routes start at a central Transit Center in downtown Wausau and travel on fixed routes throughout the city. Riders can transfer routes free of charge at the Transit Center.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM BARRIERS

Some of the main barriers for transit riders are the gaps in service hours and gaps in service territory. Metro Ride routes do not reach the Wausau Business Campus, one of the major employment hubs in the area. The recent decrease in Metro Ride service territory means that there is no transit access available outside of the City of Wausau. Additionally, Metro Ride does not operate on nights or weekends, providing significant gaps in access for Wausau residents who are unable to drive. Regional transportation is also a great and unmet need. Marathon County is a regional economic hub with many job opportunities for residents both within and outside of the county.



TRANSIT TO WAUSAU'S LARGEST EMPLOYERS

The map shows transit access to Wausau's 25 largest employers as well as median income levels (taken from the 2010 US Census). Marathon County is a regional economic hub with many job opportunities for residents both within and outside of the county. Only 64 percent of the employees who work in Marathon County live within the county. Currently, many important destinations in the urban area cannot be reached by bus because transit services are not available outside of the city.



The map was created by 1000 Friends of Wisconsin. For full report: sierraclub.org/wisconsin/ArriveTogetherReport

OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND SERVICE AND FUNDING

In recent years, Metro Ride has seen a decrease in service territory, rather than expansion. Weston, Rothschild and Schofield withdrawing from Metro Ride in 2015 has had a substantial impact on the system. Since the system now serves a smaller area, and therefore has become less convenient or entirely inaccessible to some riders, ridership numbers have declined. However, ridership within the service territory that was not cut has remained steady. Both the challenges of providing intercity transit and increasing transit funding could be met through the creation of a Regional Transportation Authority, and this solution is outlined in the Wausau Area Long Range Transportation Plan 2050.

If we are to have any success in 'fighting' poverty through employment [...], we need a strong public transit system. Officials at the federal, state and local levels seem unwilling to address the issue in a comprehensive manner."

-Ron Alexander, Wausau

"Public transportation is my car key to independence."

- Kathi, Wausau