

TRANSPORTATION ACCESS IN EAU CLAIRE

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.

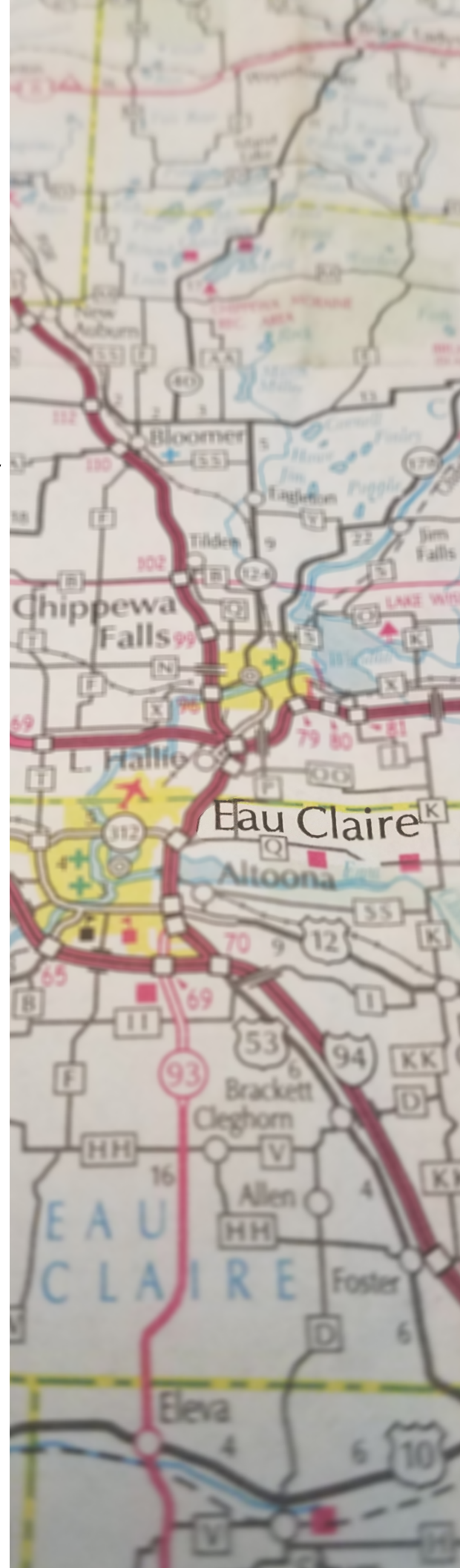
EAU CLAIRE TRANSIT OVERVIEW

The City of Eau Claire operates Eau Claire Transit, a fixed-route bus service in both Eau Claire and fast-growing Altoona. Eau Claire Transit also offers paratransit service in the City and Eau Claire County. Over the last ten years, ridership has averaged around one million rides per year. A route's duration is typically 30 minutes to one hour, depending on the distance covered. UW-Eau Claire's shortest routes are 20 minutes long. The route frequency decreases to only once an hour in the evening.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM BARRIERS

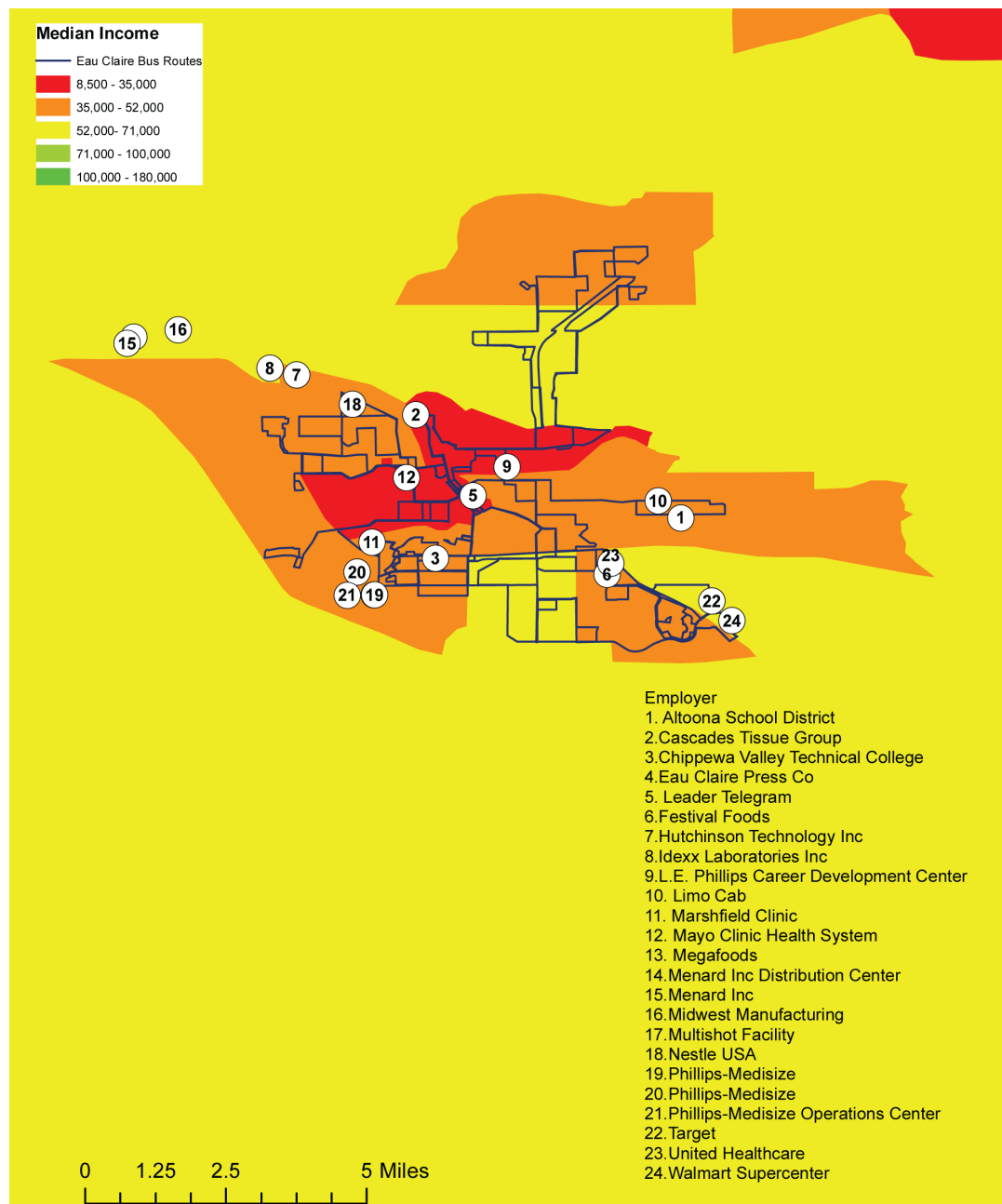
Northwestern Eau Claire is a notably underserved area of Eau Claire as, in addition to the newer CVTC campuses, it has relatively new housing developments and changing employment bases in the industrial sector. Together, Menard's Distribution Center, Midwest Manufacturing, Nestle and Silver Spring Foods employ thousands of people, yet have no transit service, bicycle routes, or pedestrian routes within one mile.

The park and ride, the Greyhound station and the base for Chippewa Valley Airport Service make up a regional hub in the northwest, but local transit service is at least three miles away.



TRANSIT TO EAU CLAIRE'S LARGEST EMPLOYERS

The map shows transit access to Eau Claire's 25 largest employers as well as median income levels (taken from the 2010 US Census). Eau Claire Transit serves medical facilities and retail centers. The service area covers much of the City of Eau Claire. The center of the city receives more frequent service and has a greater number of routes than the peripheral neighborhoods. UW-Eau Claire routes run as frequently as once every ten minutes, but most routes run either once every 30 minutes or hour.



OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND SERVICE & FUNDING

Sunday bus service is the most frequently requested service increase, followed by holiday service. There is also a lot of community interest in expanding hours later into the night or earlier in the morning because entry-wage workers have shifts outside of the 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. time period. Increasing frequency of buses on the current routes is also a major demand. Greater funding from the state or a funding mechanism, such as an RTA that allows for Eau Claire Transit to collaborate with neighboring communities and counties to fund routes that go across municipal boundaries, has long been considered crucial for the future of transit service in the Eau Claire area. Additional bus routes, have been discussed as important to better connect cities to better serve riders, because life does not stop at municipal lines.

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

"I have lived in Eau Claire without a car for 15 years since I moved here from Minnesota to attend college at UW-Eau Claire. While a student, I was able to explore the city and fall in love with Eau Claire partly because of the mobility that Eau Claire Transit offered. Unfortunately, despite the city seeing growth second in the state only to Madison, the level of bus service has not changed for 20 years, and the cost of the bus fare has doubled. The state has cut back on transit aids for local communities, and as a result, our bus system is leaving me and my neighbors behind."

- Jeremy, Eau Claire